THE BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR.

HEBREWS.

THE

BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR:

OR,

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

BY

REV. JOSEPH S. EXELL, M.A.

HEBREWS.

VOL. II.

London:
JAMES NISBET & CO., BERNERS STREET, W.

THE BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR.

HEBREWS.

CHAPTER IX.

VERS. 1–10. **The first covenant had also ordinances.**—*The ancient tabernacle:*—The writer now proceeds to compare the old and the new covenants with reference to their respective provisions for religious communion between man and God, his purpose being to show the superiority of the priestly ministry of Christ over that of the Levitical priesthood. In the first five verses he gives an inventory of the furniture of the tabernacle pitched in the wilderness; in the next five he describes the religious services there carried on. "Now [οὖν leading back to chap. viii. 5] the first [covenant] had ordinances of Divine service and its mundane sanctuary." The epithet κοσμικόν here applied to the tabernacle evidently signifies belonging to this material world, in opposition to the heavenly sanctuary (ver. 11) not made with hands out of things visible and tangible. The purpose of the writer is to point out that the tabernacle belonged to this earth, and therefore possessed the attributes of all things earthly, materiality and perishableness. The materials might be fine and costly; still they were material, and as such were liable to wax old and vanish away. In vers. 2–5 is given a detailed description of the arrangements and furniture of this cosmic sanctuary. No valuator could be more careful to make an inventory of household furniture perfectly accurate than our author is to give an exhaustive list of the articles to be found in the Jewish tabernacle, whether in the holy place or in the most holy. Indeed, so careful is he to make the list complete, not only in his own judgment, but in the judgment of his readers, that he includes things which had no connection with religious worship, but were merely put into the tabernacle for safe custody, as valuable mementos of incidents in Israel's history—*e.g.*, the golden pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. It is further to be noted in regard to these articles, that they are represented as being within the ark of the covenant, though it is nowhere in the Old Testament said that they were, the direction given being merely that they should be placed before the testimony, and it being expressly stated in regard to the ark in Solomon's temple that there was nothing in it save the two tables on which the ten commandments were inscribed. Whether these things ever had been in the ark we do not know. The fact that they are here represented to have been does not settle the point. While his doctrine is that the ancient tabernacle was at best but a poor, shadowy affair, he takes pains to show that in his judgment it was as good as it was possible for a cosmic sanctuary to be. Its articles of furniture were of the best material; the ark of fine wood covered all over with gold, the altar of incense of similar materials, the pot with manna of pure gold. He feels he can afford to describe in generous terms the furniture of the tabernacle, because, after all, he will have no difficulty in showing the immeasurable superiority of the "true" tabernacle wherein Christ ministers. One single phrase settles the point—οὐ χειροποίητος (ver. 11). The old tabernacle and all its furniture were made by the hands of men out of perishable materials. The "gold, and silver, and brass," &c., were all liable to destruction by the devouring tooth of time, that spares nothing visible and tangible. This eulogistic style of describing the furniture of the cosmic tabernacle was not only generous, but politic. The more the furniture was praised, the more the religious service carried on in the tent so furnished was in effect depreciated by the contrast

inevitably suggested. The emphasis laid on the excellent quality of these really signifies the inferiority of the whole Levitical system. Looking now at the inventory distributively, let us note what articles are placed in either compartment of the tabernacle respectively. In the first are located the candlestick, the table, and the shew-bread, which was arranged in two rows on the table; to the second are assigned what is called the *θυμιατήριον*, and the ark of the covenant, containing, as is said, the manna pot, Aaron's rod, and the tables of the covenant, and surmounted by the Cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy-seat, or lid of the ark. The only article of which there is any need to speak "particularly" is the *θυμιατήριον*, concerning which there are two questions to be considered: What is it? and with what propriety is it assigned to the most holy place? As to the former, the word *θυμιατήριον* may mean either "the altar of incense," as I have rendered it, or "the golden censer," as translated in the Authorised and Revised Versions. I do not suppose there would be any hesitation on the subject, were it not for the consideration, that by deciding that the altar of incense is intended we seem to make the writer guilty of an inaccuracy in assigning it to the inner shrine of the tabernacle. I have little doubt that this consideration had its own weight with our Revisers in leading them to retain the old rendering, "the golden censer"; and the fact detracts from the value of their judgment, as based, not on the merits of the question, but on the ground of theological prudence. A clearer insight into the mind of the writer would have shown them that this well-meant solicitude for his infallibility was uncalled for. This brings us to the question as to the propriety of placing the altar of incense among the things belonging to the most holy place. The fact is, that the altar of incense was a puzzle to one who was called on to state to which part of the tabernacle it belonged. Hence the peculiar manner in which the writer expresses himself in reference to the things assigned to the most holy place. He does not say, as in connection with the first division, "in which were" (*ἐν ᾗ*), but represents it as "having" (*ἔχουσα*) certain things. The phrase is chosen with special reference to the altar of incense. Of all the other articles it might have been said "in which were," but not of it. Nothing more could be said than that it belonged to the second division. The question is, whether even so much could be said, and why the writer preferred to say this rather than to say that the altar of incense stood outside the veil in the first division. Now as to the former part of the question, in so putting the matter our author was only following an Old Testament precedent, the altar of incense being in 1 Kings vi. 22 called the altar "that was by the oracle," or more correctly, as in the Revised Version, the altar "that belonged to the oracle." Then the directions given for fixing its position, as recorded in Exodus xxx. 6, are very significant. The purport of this directory seems to be: outside the veil for daily use (for within it could not be used save once a year), but tending inwards, indicating by its very situation a wish to get in, standing there, so to speak, at the door of the most holy place, petitioning for admission. So the eloquent eulogist of the better ministry of the new covenant appears to have understood it. He thinks of the altar of incense as praying for admission into the inner shrine, and waiting for the removal of the envious veil which forbad entrance. And he so far sympathises with its silent prayer as to admit it within the veil before the time, or at least to acknowledge that, while materially without, it belonged in spirit and function to the most holy place. In stating the case as he does our author was not only following usage, but utilising the double relations of the altar of incense for the purpose of his apologetic. He wanted to make it felt that the position of that altar was difficult to define, that it was both without and within the veil, that you could not place it exclusively in either position without leaving out something that should be added to make the account complete. And he wished to press home the question, What was the cause of the difficulty? The radical evil, he would suggest, was the existence of the veil. It was the symbol of an imperfect religion, which denied men free access to God, and so was the parent of this anomaly, that the altar of incense had to be in two places at the same time: within the veil, as there were the mercy-seat and the Hearer of prayer; without the veil, because the incense of prayer must be offered daily, and yet no one might go within save the high priest, and he only once a year. How thankful, then, should we be that the veil is done away, so that the distinction of without and within no longer exists, and we may come daily to offer the incense of our prayers in the presence of God, without fear of evil, with perfect "assurance to be heard"! After the inventory of its furniture comes an account of the ministry carried on in the Jewish sanctuary (vers. 6–10); the description of which,

coming after the former, has all the effect of an anticlimax. One can hardly fail to say to himself, What a fall is here! The furniture was precious, but the worship how poor! Every one capable of reflection feels that a religious system in which the vessels of the sanctuary are so much superior to the service cannot be the final and permanent form of man's communion with God, but only a type or parable for the time of better things to come, that could last only till the era of reformation arrived. This truth, however, the writer does not leave to be inferred, but expressly points out and proves. On two things he insists, as tending to show the insufficiency and therefore the transitiveness of the Levitical system, and all that pertained to it. First, he asserts that the mere division of the tabernacle into an accessible holy place and an inaccessible most holy place proved the imperfection of the worship there carried on; and, secondly, he points out the disproportion between the great end of religion and the means employed for reaching it under the Levitical system. (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*) *The earthly sanctuary*:—I. EVERY COVENANT OF GOD HAD ITS PROPER PRIVILEGES AND ADVANTAGES. Even the first covenant had so, and those such as were excellent in themselves, though not comparable with them of the new. For to make any covenant with men is an eminent fruit of grace and condescension in God, whereon He will annex such privileges thereunto as may evince it so to be. II. THERE WAS NEVER ANY COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND MAN BUT IT HAD SOME ORDINANCES, OR ARBITRARY INSTITUTIONS OF EXTERNAL DIVINE WORSHIP ANNEXED UNTO IT. The original covenant of works had the ordinances of the tree of life, and of the knowledge of good and evil, the laws whereof belonged not unto that of natural light and reason. The covenant of Sinai, whereof the apostle speaks, had a multiplication of them. Nor is the new covenant destitute of them or of their necessary observance. All public worship and the sacraments of the Church are of this nature. III. IT IS A HARD AND RARE THING TO HAVE THE MINDS OF MEN KEPT UPRIGHT WITH GOD IN THE OBSERVANCE OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF DIVINE WORSHIP. By some they are neglected, by some corrupted, and by some they are exalted above their proper place and use, and are turning into an occasion of neglecting more important duties. And the reason of this difficulty is, because faith hath not that assistance from innate principles of reason, and sensible experience of this kind of obedience, as it hath in that which is moral, internal, and spiritual. IV. THAT THESE ORDINANCES OF DIVINE WORSHIP MIGHT BE DULY OBSERVED AND RIGHTLY PERFORMED UNDER THE FIRST COVENANT, THERE WAS A PLACE APPOINTED OF GOD FOR THEIR SOLEMNISATION. 1. This tabernacle with what belonged thereunto was a visible pledge of the presence of God among the people, owning, blessing, and protecting them. And it was a pledge of God's own institution, in imitation whereof the superstitious heathens invented ways of obliging their idol-gods, to be present among them for the same ends. 2. It was the pledge and means of God's dwelling among them, which expresseth the peculiar manner of His presence mentioned in general before. 3. It was a fixed seat of all Divine worship, wherein the truth and purity of it was to be preserved. 4. It was principally the privilege and glory of the Church of Israel, in that it was a continual representation of the incarnation of the Son of God; a type of His coming in the flesh to dwell among us, and by the one sacrifice of Himself to make reconciliation with God, and atonement for sins. It was such an expression of the idea of the mind of God, concerning the person and meditation of Christ, as in His wisdom and grace He thought meet to intrust the Church withal. Hence was that severe injunction, that all things concerning it should be made according unto the pattern shown in the Mount. For what could the wisdom of men do in the prefiguration of that mystery, of which they had no comprehension? But yet the sanctuary the apostle calls κοσμικον, "worldly." (1) The place of it was on the earth in this world, in opposition whereunto the sanctuary of the new covenant is in heaven (chap. viii. 2). (2) Although the materials of it were as durable as anything in that kind could be procured, as gold and Shittim wood, yet were they worldly; that is, perishing things, as are all things of the world, God intimating thereby that they were not to have an everlasting continuance. Gold, and wood, and silk, and hair, however curiously wrought and carefully preserved, are but for a time. (3) All the services of it, all its sacrifices in themselves, separated from their typical representative use, were all worldly; and their efficacy extended only unto worldly things, as the apostle proves in this chapter. (4) On these accounts the apostle calls it "worldly"; yet not absolutely so, but in opposition unto that which is heavenly. All things in the ministration of the new covenant are heavenly. So is the priest, his sacrifice, tabernacle, and altar, as we shall see in the process of the apostle's

discourse. And we may observe from the whole—V. THAT DIVINE INSTITUTION ALONE IS THAT WHICH RENDERS ANYTHING ACCEPTABLE UNTO GOD. Although the things that belonged unto the sanctuary, and the sanctuary itself, were in themselves but worldly, yet being Divine ordinances, they had a glory in them, and were in their season accepted with God. VI. GOD CAN ANIMATE OUTWARD CARNAL THINGS WITH A HIDDEN INVISIBLE SPRING OF GLORY AND EFFICACY. So He did their sanctuary with its relation unto Christ; which was an object of faith which no eye of flesh could behold. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *The simplicity of Christian ritual*:—The language of sign or symbol enters very largely into all the affairs of life. The human spirit craves and finds embodiment for its impalpable, evanescent ideas and emotions, not merely in sounds that die away upon the ear, but in acts and observances that arrest the eye, and stamp themselves upon the memory, or in shapes and forms and symbols that possess a material and palpable continuity. The superiority of sign or symbol as a vehicle of thought is in some sort implied in the very fact that it is the language of nature, the first which man learns, or rather which, with instinctive and universal intelligence, he employs. There is something, again, in a visible and tangible sign, or in a significant or symbolic act, which, by its very nature, appeals more impressively to the mind than mere vocables that vibrate for a moment on the organ of hearing and then pass away. Embody thought in a material representation or memorial, and it stands before you with a distinct and palpable continuity; it can become the object of prolonged contemplation; it is permanently embalmed to the senses. Moreover, it deserves to be considered that the language of symbol lies nearer to thought than that of verbal expression. As no man can look into another's mind and have direct cognisance of another's thoughts, we can only convey to others what is passing in our own minds, by selecting and pointing out some object or phenomenon of the outward world that bears an analogy to the thought or feeling within our breasts. And if further proof of the utility and importance of symbol were wanting, it might be found in the fact that all nature is but one grand symbol by which God shadows forth His own invisible Being and character. The principle on which symbolic language depends being thus deeply seated in man's nature, it might be anticipated that its influence would be apparent in that religion which is so marvellously adapted to his sympathies and wants. But when we turn to that religious economy under which we live, by nothing are we so much struck as by the simplicity of its external worship—the scantiness, unobtrusiveness, and seeming poverty of its ritual observances. And this absence of symbol in the Christian worship becomes all the more singular when contrasted with the sensuous beauty and splendour of the heathen religions amidst which Christianity was developed, and with the imposing ceremonial, the elaborate symbolism, of that earlier dispensation from which it took its rise. I. The simplicity of worship in the Christian Church is a sign of spiritual advancement, inasmuch as it arises, in some measure, from the fact THAT THE GOSPEL RITES ARE COMMEMORATIVE, WHILST THOSE OF THE FORMER DISPENSATION WERE ANTICIPATIVE. To the Hebrew in ancient times Christ was a Being of whose person and character and work he had but the most vague and undefined conceptions; to the Christian worshipper He is no shadowy dream of the future, no vague and visionary personage of a distant age, but the best beloved of friends, whose beautiful life stands forth before the mind with all the distinctness of history—whose glorious person and mission is the treasured and familiar contemplation of his secret thoughts. The former, accordingly, needed all the elaborate formality of type and ceremony, of temple and altar and sacrifice—of symbolic persons and objects and actions, to help out his idea of the Messiah and of His mighty work and mission. But to enable the latter to recall his Lord, no more is required than a few drops of water, a bit of broken bread, or a cup of wine. Around these simplest outward memorials, a host of thoughts, reflections, remembrances, are ready to gather. Deity incarnate, infinite self-sacrifice, reconciliation with God, pardon, purity, peace, eternal life through the blood of Jesus, union with Christ, and in Him with all good and holy beings,—these are some of the great Christian ideas already lodged in each devout worshipper's mind, and which awake at the suggestive touch of the sacramental symbols to invest them with a value altogether incommensurate with their outward worth. The very simplicity of these material symbols implies that the senses have less and the mind far more to do in the process of spiritual conception than in a system of more imposing and obtrusive materialism. II. The simple and unimposing character of the Christian ritual is an indication of spiritual advancement again, inasmuch as it arises from the fact,

THAT WHILST THE RIGHTS OF JUDAISM WERE MAINLY DISCIPLINARY, THOSE OF CHRISTIANITY ARE SPONTANEOUS AND EXPRESSIVE. The Jew could not eat or drink, or dress, or sow or reap, or buy or sell, arrange his household, hold intercourse with neighbour or friend, perform any one function of individual or social life, without being met by restrictions, forms, observances, which forced religious impression upon him, and, in combination with the more solemn ceremonial of the temple, left a constant deposit of spiritual thought upon the mind, and drilled the worshipper into religious habits. In a more spiritual and reflective age, on the other hand, in which the spiritual perceptions have become developed, and the mind has become receptive of direct religious instruction, such sensible helps to the formation of thought are no longer necessary. The mind in which truth has become an intuition needs no longer to spell out its conviction by the aid of a picture-book. The avenue of spirit thrown open to the worshipper, he no more requires to climb slowly up to the presence-chamber of the king by the circuitous route of sense. But if ritual may in such an age be dispensed with in great measure as a means of instruction, it still performs an important function as a means of expression. No longer necessary as a mould for the shaping of thought, it has still its use as a form in which religious thought and feeling may find vent. If the necessity for a visible temple and sanctuary to symbolise God's residence with man has ceased, now that He who is "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person" has dwelt amongst us—if to prompt our minds in conceiving of sin and sacrifice, no scenic show of victims slain and life's blood drenching earthly altars be needed, now that the stainless, sinless, all-holy One hath once for all offered up the sacrifice of a perfect life to God—still there is in the Christian heart the demand for outward forms and rites to embody the reverence, the gratitude, the devotion, the love of which it is inwardly conscious. The soul, in its relation to an unseen Father, still craves for some outer medium of expression that shall give form to feeling—that shall tell forth its devotion to the heavenly Friend as the smile, the look, the grasp of the hand, the meeting at the festive board, the gifts and tokens of affection, externalise and express our sentiments towards those we love on earth. And the conclusion to which, from this argument, we are led is obviously this, that the glory of our Christian ritual lies in its very simplicity. For the manifestation of our common life in God, and of our common faith in Christ, the mind craves some outward badge or symbol; and so, in gracious condescension to our needs, our Lord has instituted the two sacramental rites; but even these He has prescribed but in outline, leaving all accessories to be filled in, as the varied needs of His people, in different times and places and circumstances, should dictate. And in this lies the very grandeur of its worship, that in the "chartered freedom" of our Christian ritual, each nation and community, each separate society and church and individual, lifting up its own note of adoration, all are found to blend in the one accordant anthem, the one manifold yet harmonious tribute of the universal Church's praise. I conclude with the remark, that the simplicity of the Christian rites serves as a safeguard against those obvious dangers which are incident to all ritual worship. 1. The chief of these is the tendency in the unspiritual mind to stop short at the symbol—in other words, to transfer to the visible sign feelings appropriate only to the things signified, or to rest content with the performance of outward ceremonial acts, apart from the exercise of those devout feelings which lend to such acts any real value. A religion in which ritual holds a prominent place is notoriously liable to degenerate into formalism. The true way to avoid this error is, obviously, to remove as much as possible its cause. Let there be no arbitrary and needless intervention between the soul of the worshipper and the Divine object of its homage. Let the eye of faith gaze on the Invisible through the simplest and purest medium. Deprive it of all excuse to trifle curiously with the telescope, instead of using it in order to see. And forasmuch as, to earthly worship, formal aids are indispensable, let it ever be remembered that that form is the best which least diverts attention to itself, and best helps the soul to hold fellowship with God. 2. Moreover, the danger thus incident to an elaborate ceremonial, of substituting ritual for religion, is increased by the too common tendency to mistake æsthetic emotion for religious feeling. Awe, reverence, rapt contemplation, the kindling of heart and swelling of soul, which the grand objects of faith are adapted to excite, may, in a man of sensitive mind or delicate organisation, find a close imitation in the feelings called forth by a tasteful and splendid ceremonial. The soul that is devoid of true reverence towards God may be rapt into a spurious elation, while in rich and

solemn tones the loud-voiced organ peals forth His praise. The heart that never felt one throb of love to Christ may thrill with an ecstasy of sentimental tenderness, whilst soft voices, now blending, now dividing, in combined or responsive strains, celebrate the glories of redeeming love. It is easy to admire the sheen of the sapphire throne, while we leave its glorious Occupant unreverenced and unrecognised. Banish from the service of God all coarseness and rudeness—all that would distract by offending the taste of the worshipper, just as much as all that would disturb by subjecting him to bodily discomfort, and you leave the spirit free for its own pure and glorious exercise. But too studiously adorn the sanctuary and its services; obtrude an artificial beauty on the eye and sense of the worshipper, and you will surely lead to formalism and self-deception. (*J. Caird, D.D.*) *Christian sanctuaries material, but not worldly*:—I. THE ERECTION OF THE WORLDLY SANCTUARY. In contemplating the character of their "worldly sanctuary"—whether in the wilderness or on Mount Zion—we behold God dealing with men in a manner accordant with the character of the covenant under which He saw fit to place them. For whether we review the history of our world at large, or the history of God's dealings with His Church, we find it to be a law of the Divine procedure, that, in civilisation and scientific discovery, and in the attainments of knowledge and of arts, no less than in matters directly spiritual, He allows a period of lengthened infancy and childhood. In no respect does He allow men to attain at once to maturity. Thus, in mere secular things, how old was our world ere printing was invented, ere the powers of steam were discovered! Railways and electric telegraphs are but of yesterday. It is with the world at large and with individual nations, intellectually and socially, as with the individual man physically. We are born, not men and women, but babes; we speak, and think, and understand as children; we attain manhood slowly. It has been so with human society: it has been so with our own favoured land, where once savages swarmed, and Druids offered their bloody rites. The history of man in every country had been different had not this principle pervaded God's designs and government—intellectual and social infancy—growth from infancy to childhood—from childhood to manhood—the manhood of intellect, and science and art, and civilisation; from the Rome of Romulus and Numa to the Rome of Augustus; from the Gauls of Cæsar's day to the French of the nineteenth century; from the England of Roman conquest and Saxon rule and Norman triumph to the England of our birth. Apply this principle to the subject before us. Israel, long familiarised with material temples and carnal rites in Egypt, was spiritually a nation of children: their worship was wisely and mercifully adapted to their spiritual age and attainment. For the simple worship of the more spiritual dispensation they were wholly unprepared. Form and ceremony—material and sensuous splendour—were needful. To have elevated and simplified their minds and tastes for our simpler worship would have been, in fact, to have forstalled the progress of ages, and changed the whole course of God's procedure with His Church and with our world. II. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE WORLDLY SANCTUARY AND THE SPIRITUAL WORSHIP OF THE GOSPEL DISPENSATION. The blessed truth, that He who was at once the sacrificial Victim and the sacrificing Priest, by His one offering of Himself, hath made an end of sacrifice, and for ever perfected His people, as touching their justification—these truths discerned, experienced, bring with them true spirituality of mind and heart and life. The believer, while he rejoices in Christ Jesus, and has "no confidence in the flesh," exhibits also the other feature of the apostle's portraiture—he worships "God in the Spirit." The temple with which his eye and heart are filled is the spiritual temple, in which himself is a lively stone—the Church of the Father's election, of the Spirit's sanctifying. The glory of Christianity is not in tabernacles or temples, in carnal ordinances. The glory of Christianity is Christ; the glory of the gospel, its message, "God is love!" And in accordance with the spirit of simplicity which characterises its doctrines should be the spirit of its worship. (*J. C. Miller, M.A.*) **The candlestick.**—*The gospel of the golden candlestick*:—I. A type of the CHURCH (Rev. i. 20). 1. The end and use of the Church is to give light, and to hold forth the truth (Phil. ii. 15; 1 Tim. iii. 15). 2. The matter of the Church. As the candlestick was of gold, so the matter of the Church is saints. 3. The discipline of the Church as the golden snuffers (Exod. xxv. 38) did cut off the snuff of the candle, so discipline and censures cut off corruption and corrupt members. 4. The union and distinction of Churches. Several branches and seven lamps—therefore distinct; but all growing on one shaft—therefore one. II. A type of the MINISTRY.

As the candlestick supports the lamp and the light, so does the Church the ministry; and as the lamp or candle shines in the candlestick, so does the ministry in the Church. III. A type of the WORD (Psa. cxix. 105; xix. 10; 2 Pet. i. 19). IV. A type of the SPIRIT (Rev. iv. 5). 1. The lamps of the candlestick did shine and give light. So the Holy Spirit is a Spirit of light and illumination (Eph. i. 19). 2. The lamps were fed with oil (Exod. xxvii. 20). Now this oil is the Spirit (Isa. lxi. 1; Acts x. 38). Of a softening and healing nature. 3. The sacred lamps were ever burning, and never went out (Exod. xxvii. 20; Lev. xxiv. 3). So it is with the Spirit of God in the hearts of His people. The true believer cannot fall away totally and finally. 4. The dressing and trimming of the lamps signified the revivings of the work of the Spirit, in the hearts of His people, when it begins, or is in danger to decline. This teaches us both the Lord's goodness and our duty (Matt. xii. 20; 2 Tim. i. 6). Also Church discipline and mortification are taught us hereby (Matt. xxv. 7). Lessons: 1. Learn to prize and see the worth and excellency of Church society. 2. Prize the ministry. 3. Prize the Word. 4. Labour to find the Spirit burning and working in your hearts. (1) Get fresh supplies of oil (Psa. xcii. 10). Jesus Christ is the Fountain, and the Holy Ghost the immediate Dispenser of it (Zech. iv. 12). (2) Stir up that which you have (2 Tim. i. 6; Rev. iii. 2). (3) Snuff the wick (Jas. i. 23). (*S. Mather.*) *The candlestick*:—If the priests had had any duties to discharge at night in the holy place, I should have felt no necessity to make any inquiry at all about the significance of the seven lights; the impossibility of performing the sacred functions in total darkness would have been an adequate explanation. But there was no midnight ritual; why then, when the curtain, which was thrown aside during the day to admit the light of heaven, was closed for the night, was not the holy place left in darkness? There seems to me to be a perfectly obvious and natural answer. The holy place was in the thoughts of every devout Jew when he longed for the mercy of God to forgive his sin, or cried to Him for consolation in time of trouble. It was there that, day by day, the priest offered the incense, which was the visible symbol of all supplication and worship. That was the chamber in which the Lord received the prayers and homage of the nation, as the most holy place was His secret shine. And would not the lamps that burnt there during the darkness, and filled it with light, seem to say to every troubled soul, that God never slumbered nor slept; that the darkness and light are both alike to Him, and that at all times He is waiting to listen to the prayers of His people? (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*) **The tabernacle.**—*The tabernacle, and its three antitypes*:—The tabernacle, of course, was a type. What did it typify? Some say that it typified Christ, and, particularly, that it typified His incarnation (John i. 14). Others hold that the tabernacle represented the Christian Church. Yet a third opinion is that the tabernacle signified heaven. Which of these opinions shall we choose? We shall not choose any one of them to the exclusion of the others. We incline to adopt all three, and to hold that the tabernacle was a type of Christ, and of the Church, and of heaven. The Man Christ Jesus is God's tabernacle; so is the Church; so is heaven. God dwells most wondrously in Christ: He dwells most graciously in the Church; and He dwells most gloriously in heaven. Christ is God's tabernacle to the eye of the Church; the Church is God's tabernacle before the world; heaven is, and, with the gathered company of the redeemed set round the throne for ever will be God's tabernacle before the universe. (*Andrew Gray.*) **The golden censer.**—*The golden censer*:—You will have noticed the peculiarity of the expression at the commencement of the ver. 4; "which"—*i.e.*, the Holiest of all, "had the golden censer," or rather, "the golden altar of incense." Of the holy place it is said, in ver. 2, "Wherein was the candlestick and the table," &c. The change of expression is significant. The writer does not mean to say that the altar of incense was *within* the holy of holies, but that the altar of incense *belonged* to it. The altar actually stood in the holy place, but more truly belonged to the holy of holies itself. It is very wonderful that any man who had read this Epistle intelligently could imagine for a moment that it was possible for the writer to have been so ill-informed as to have believed that the altar was actually within the most sacred inclosure. Apart altogether from inspiration, the intimate and profound knowledge of the Jewish system which the whole of the Epistle indicates, renders it absurd to suppose that on such a simple matter as the position of the altar of incense the writer could have blundered. It would, to my mind, be just as reasonable to infer from some peculiarity of expression in Lord Macaulay, that the great historian had erroneously imagined that the Spanish Armada came against

this country in the reign of Charles I., or to infer on similar grounds that Dr. Livingstone was under the impression that the island of Madagascar formed part of the African continent. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*) **The ark of the covenant.**—*Christ typified by the ark of the covenant*:—I. THE ARK TYPIFIED THE DIGNITY AND PURITY OF CHRIST'S PERSON. It was made of incorruptible wood; was overlaid with pure gold; and had crowns of gold wrought round about it. Here is distinctly pointed out to us—1. The holiness and incorruptibility of Christ's human nature. 2. The divinity of Jesus. 3. The regal glory of Jesus. II. THE CONTENTS OF THE ARK TYPIFIED THE FULNESS AND WORK OF CHRIST. 1. In it were the two tables of the law. In Jesus these laws were embodied. He had them in His heart. He exemplified them in their fullest extent. 2. In it was the golden pot of manna. So in Jesus is the bread of life. "His flesh is meat indeed." He is the soul's satisfying portion. 3. In it was Aaron's rod that budded. Typifying Christ's exalted and abiding priesthood. III. THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE ARK TYPIFIED THE VICTORIES OF CHRIST. 1. The ark opened a passage through Jordan to the promised land. So by Christ a way has been opened through the grave to the heavenly Canaan. 2. By the ark's compassing the walls of Jericho they were thrown down. So Jesus by His Divine power spoiled the powers of darkness, and He shall finally overthrow all the bulwarks of Satan's empire. 3. The presence of the ark broke the idol Dagon to pieces. So shall the Saviour cast down all the idols of the heathen. IV. THE MOVEMENTS OF THE ARK TYPIFIED THE PROGRESS AND CONSUMMATION OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM. The ark was possessed by the Israelites, then it was in the hands of the Philistines, and finally it was laid up in Solomon's temple. Thus Christ was first preached to the Jews, the gospel kingdom was first set up among them, afterwards it was extended to the Gentiles; and when consummated, it shall consist of all nations in the heavenly temple, there to be permanently glorious for ever and ever. Application: Learn—1. The privilege you possess in having Christ the true ark with you. In it you have treasured up a fulness of all spiritual blessings. 2. With believing reverence draw near to it, and receive mercy, enjoy fellowship with God, and obtain grace to help you in every time of need. 3. Despisers of Christ must inevitably perish. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *The holy chest*:—What was the lesson taught by this wonderful article of tabernacle furniture? Are we not to look upon it as a picture of Jesus? I. Let us consider the OUTSIDE. What do we see? a chest most likely about three feet long, by eighteen inches wide, and eighteen inches deep. It is a box made of common wood, but covered with fine gold; and is not our Jesus both human and Divine? Both are there, and you cannot separate them; just as the ark was not perfect, though the right shape and size, till it was covered with fine gold, so Christ could not be Jesus without the gold of divinity. Still we do not overlook the wood, though it is covered with gold. It is sweet to know that Christ shares our nature. He passed over the cedar of angelic life, and took the common shittim, the tree of the wilderness. When we think of our sins, we are thankful that our Saviour was Divine, and therefore able to save to the uttermost; but when we think of our future, we are glad that we are to spend our eternity with the Man Christ Jesus. He is one of ourselves. Do you notice that at each corner there is a ring of gold? What are these rings for? To receive the staves which are passed through the rings. By these gold-covered staves the Levites carried the ark on their shoulders. The holy thing was portable; it went before, and led the people on their march. They were sure to be safe if they went where the ark led them. It would be a blessed thing if the Church of God would be persuaded to go only where Christ would have gone. But what are these figures which stand at each end of the ark—winged creatures, whose faces are looking with such earnestness at the gold on the top of the ark? These are the cherubim, the representatives of the angelic world. They gaze with interest upon the mercy-seat. Is it not Jesus who links heaven to earth? Upon what are the cherubim gazing so intently? Follow the direction of their eyes, and what see you? There is a spot of blood! Blood? Yes, blood. Blood on the pure gold? Yes, this ark is the meeting-place between God and man—the only place where the Holy God can be approached by Him who represents sinners. II. We will now lift the lid of the ark and look INSIDE. What do we see? "The golden pot." A vessel of gold filled with manna! Does not this teach that in Christ we have spiritual food? Just as the manna fell all the time the children of Israel were in the wilderness, so Jesus is the bread of life to us, all the time we are on this side Jordan. Have another peep inside, and what meets your gaze? "The rod that budded" (Numb. xvii.). What does this teach us? That in Christ is the true, God-chosen,

God-honoured, God-prevalent priesthood. Look again. What see you now? "The tables of the covenant." The stones upon which God wrote the law. Not the first tables: they were broken. Moses did not pick up the fragments and patch them together and put them in the ark. No, it was the new, unbroken tables which were put in the ark. And is not Christ Jesus our righteousness? Do we not glory in the fact that our Substitute was sinless? We have no righteousness to plead, but we have a perfect Saviour. Our efforts at reformation are but a clumsy piecing of the broken tables, but in Christ we have a perfect law. (*T. Champness.*) **The golden pot.**—*The pot of manna:*—I. THE MANNA (Exod. xvi. 11). II. THE GOLDEN POT IN WHICH IT WAS CONTAINED may be applied—1. To the Divine Word; which is more precious than gold, and which is the "Word of Christ," every part of which is full of Him. 2. To the holy ordinances; where He is so strikingly exhibited. 3. To the preached gospel; where Christ is the Alpha and Omega. 4. To the believer's heart. 5. To the holiest place; where He ever dwells in all His glory, as the infinite source of all the blessedness of the heavenly world. Application: (1) Be thankful for this heavenly bread. (2) Receive it with all cordiality and joy. (3) Constantly seek it in those means where His presence and blessing are promised. (4) Despisers of Christ must starve and die. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) **The cherubims of glory.**—*The cherubim and the mercy-seat:*—I. We are taught by this sacred symbol, an ark thus constructed and accompanied, that THERE IS NOW, UNDER THE EVANGELICAL DISPENSATION, A RELATION BETWIXT LAW AND GRACE. 1. The law was there because it is eternal, and must therefore harmonise with every dispensation of religion to man. 2. The tables of the law are there in the ark, and connected with evangelical symbols representing the dispensation of mercy to mankind, because it was the violation of the law by which the dispensation of mercy was rendered necessary. 3. But we see the tables of the law thus connected with evangelical symbols, to intimate to us another truth, that the grand end of the administration of grace to man is the re-establishment of the law's dominion over him. 4. This connection between the law and the mercy-seat indicates, finally, that the administration of grace is in every part consistent with law. II. There was not only a connection between the tables of the law and the mercy-seat, but over this mercy-seat the cherubims of glory were placed. We are therefore instructed in the fact, that THERE IS AN HARMONIOUS RELATION BETWIXT THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE TO MAN AND THE HEAVENLY WORLD. 1. We may, therefore, observe, with respect to the angelic powers, of whom the cherubim were the emblems, that they have an intellectual interest in this great subject. 2. We may go farther, and say, that we have evidence from Scripture that the connection of the angelic world with the Christian system is not one of mere intellectual curiosity and gratification, but likewise of large and important moral benefit. 3. There is another view in which we may regard the connection between the angelic world and the Church: they are angels and ministers; ministers to the Church, and ministers to individuals. III. THERE WAS THE PRESENCE OF GOD CROWNING THE WHOLE. In the sanctuary you have not only the ark of the covenant, the tables of the law, the mercy-seat, and the cherubim shadowing it, but the visible symbol of the Divine presence. God was there. And thus are we shown that all things are of Him, and by Him, and for Him. The tables of the law declared His will; the covenant sprang from His everlasting wisdom and love; the mercy-seat was His throne; the cherubim were His servants; the holiest of all was His "resting-place" (2 Chron. vi. 41). The people came to worship Him, and were dismissed with His blessing. As creation itself is from the will of God, so is redemption. All is the result of His benevolence. The whole plan of mercy sprang from the depths of His eternal love, and all its arrangements were fixed according to the treasures of His own knowledge and wisdom. This indicates, too, the necessity of Divine agency. As He originated the whole scheme of redemption, so must He be present with it to give it power and efficacy. (*R. Watson.*) **Of which we cannot now speak particularly.**—*The inexpediency of dwelling on curious questions:*—Sundry other things there were about the tabernacle, the narration whereof might have delighted the reader. But St. Paul here is a moderator to himself: you are desirous to hear more, but it is expedient to cut them off. Wherein he may be a precedent to all teachers. Though the discussing of curious and intricate questions would more delight the auditory, yet we must not feed their humour that way. Let us give them but a taste of them, and a whole mouthful of sound and wholesome food. Some, peradventure, in this place would have said, Oh, Paul, why dost thou so slightly handle the things belonging to the tabernacle? Repeat, I pray thee, every particular to us; it doth

us good to hear of them. Yet he doth not satisfy their itching ears in that. St. Paul hath more necessary matter. Let us especially be desirous to hear of Christ our High Priest and Bishop of our souls, of repentance, of faith in Him, of making our calling sure by good works, of the true sanctuary of heaven, than of those earthly things: these are more profitable for us. The Spirit of God passeth over sundry other things about the tabernacle, because He had more substantial points in hand tending to our salvation by Christ. (*W. Jones, D.D.*)

Ver. 8. **The Holy Ghost thus signifying.**—*The overtones of Judaism:*—Musicians tell us that the quality of the voice in song depends upon its overtones; that is, the accordant notes which are heard sounding faintly above the fundamental tones. It is the same peculiarity which gives the silvery ring to some voices in speech. And so as we listen to the voices of the Law and of the Prophets, we find a wondrous, and, to some, a mysterious charm. But the ear that has been trained by the same master-skill that taught their lips, solves the secret of the spell, and catches with delight, through the deep thunder utterances, the glad overtones of the coming gospel. (*Sarah F. Smiley.*) **The way into the holiest of all.**—1. He expoundeth what the high priest's going through the veil but once a year did mean, saying the Holy Ghost signified something thereby. Then—(1) The Holy Ghost is the Author of these ordinances of Levi, and of matters appointed about that old tabernacle, as of the expressions of His own mind to the Church, and so He is very God. (2) The Holy Ghost is a distinct Person of the Godhead, exercising the proper actions of a person, subsisting by Himself; directing the ordinances of the Church, and interpreting the meaning of the types unto the Church. (3) The Church under the Law was not altogether ignorant of the spiritual signification of the Levitical ordinances, because the Holy Ghost was then teaching them the meaning. (4) Those rites and ceremonies were not so dark in themselves, as they could not be in any sort understood, but were expressions of the mind of God to the Church of that time. 2. That which the Holy Ghost did signify was this: that the way unto the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing. (*D. Dickson, M.A.*) *The mind of the Holy Spirit manifested in the institutions of religion:*—I. THE DIVINE ORDINANCES AND INSTITUTIONS OF WORSHIP ARE FILLED WITH WISDOM SUFFICIENT FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF THE CHURCH IN ALL THE MYSTERIES OF FAITH AND OBEDIENCE. II. IT IS OUR DUTY, WITH ALL HUMBLE DILIGENCE, TO INQUIRE INTO THE MIND OF THE HOLY GHOST IN ALL ORDINANCES AND INSTITUTIONS OF DIVINE WORSHIP. Want hereof lost the Church of Israel. III. ALTHOUGH THE LORD CHRIST WAS NOT ACTUALLY EXHIBITED IN THE FLESH UNDER THE OLD TESTAMENT, NOR HAD ACTUALLY OFFERED HIMSELF UNTO GOD FOR US, YET HAD BELIEVERS THEN AN ACCESS INTO THE GRACE AND FAVOUR OF GOD, THOUGH THE WAY, THE CAUSE AND MEANS OF IT, WAS NOT MANIFESTLY DECLARED UNTO THEM. IV. THE DESIGN OF THE HOLY GHOST IN THE TABERNACLE, AND IN ALL ITS ORDINANCES AND INSTITUTIONS OF WORSHIP, WAS TO DIRECT THE FAITH OF BELIEVERS UNTO WHAT WAS SIGNIFIED BY THEM. V. TYPICAL INSTITUTIONS, ATTENDED DILIGENTLY UNTO, WERE SUFFICIENT TO DIRECT THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH UNTO THE EXPECTATION OF THE REAL EXPIATION OF SIN, AND ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD THEREON. VI. THOUGH THE STANDING OF THE FIRST TABERNACLE WAS A GREAT MERCY AND PRIVILEGE, YET THE REMOVAL OF IT WAS A GREATER; FOR IT MADE WAY FOR THE BRINGING IN OF THAT WHICH WAS BETTER. VII. THE DIVINE WISDOM IN THE ECONOMY AND DISPOSAL OF THE REVELATION OF THE WAY INTO THE HOLIEST, OR OF GRACE AND ACCEPTANCE WITH HIMSELF, IS A BLESSED OBJECT OF OUR CONTEMPLATION. VIII. THE CLEAR MANIFESTATION OF THE WAY OF REDEMPTION, OF THE EXPIATION OF SIN, AND PEACE WITH GOD THEREON, IS THE GREAT PRIVILEGE OF THE GOSPEL. IX. THERE IS NO ACCESS INTO THE GRACIOUS PRESENCE OF GOD, BUT BY THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST ALONE. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *An intimation of nearer worship:*—The idea is, that the exclusion from the inner part of the Jewish tabernacle, and the all but entire restriction of religious service to the outer part, signified "perfect intercourse with God not yet granted, the highest and therefore abiding form of religion a thing yet to come." The writer would have his readers see, in the mere fact of such a division of the tabernacle into a first and second chamber, a Divine intimation that there was a higher boon, a nearer approach to, a more intimate fellowship with God in store for men, which for the present was denied. The first part of the tabernacle, he would say, is yours; the second in its spiritual significance belongs to the future, to the time of Messiah, when all things are to undergo renovation. To cling to legal worship

then as something that must last for ever is to shut your ear to the voice of the sanctuary itself, by its very structure bearing witness to its own insufficiency, and saying to all who have ears to hear: "I am not for aye. I have a first and a second chamber, a near and a nearer to God. The first and the near is yours, oh, people of Israel, for daily use; the second and the nearer is as good as shut against you. When that which is perfect is come, the nearer will be accessible to all, and the veil and the place outside and all the services that now go on there will cease to exist." (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*)

Ver. 9. **Which was a figure.**—*Types*:—Prophecy is the prediction of the coming of the Redeemer in word; type is the prediction in act. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) The types are, indeed, pictures, but to understand the pictures it is necessary we should know something of the reality. The most perfect representation of a steam-engine to a South Sea savage would be wholly and hopelessly unintelligible to him simply because the reality, the outline of which was presented to him, was something hitherto unknown. But let the same drawing be shown to those who have seen the reality, such will have no difficulty in explaining the representation. And the greater the acquaintance with the reality, the greater will be the ability to explain the picture. (*Andrew Jukes.*) **Sacrifices.**—*Love in the ordinance of sacrifice*:—I. If we look over the religious practice of all men in all ages, unquestionably the most remarkable fact, common to them all, is the practice of SACRIFICE. What is its meaning? I find answer thus. Man's Fall was from love into selfishness. All sacrifice is an abnegation of selfishness; a devoting something to God, which otherwise would belong to self. All sacrifice is offering—bringing as a gift. Whether sin-offering, or thank-offering, or prayer, or thanksgiving, the essence of all these, which are equally sacrifices, is, the rendering up of ourselves or of that which is or seems to be ours, to God. And sacrifice is a direct recognition of One above us whom we wish thus to approach, and in approaching whom we must deny and go out of ourselves. The creature offered represents the person offering. From this, the transition is the simplest possible, if indeed it be strictly any transition at all, to regarding the death of that animal as representing the death which the offerer's sin has merited; and the infliction of that death as representing the expiation of that sin. And throughout the nations unenlightened by a written revelation, these things were regarded as not only representing, but as actually *being*, the expiation required. II. In order to be acceptable to God, the self-sacrifice must be UNRESERVED and COMPLETE. It must be the perfect rendering up of the will to His will, of the being to His disposal, of the energies to His obedience. Now it must be obvious to us, that such full and entire rendering up to God is impossible on the part of man, whose will is corrupted by sin. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Who can bring entire and perfect obedience out of one whose very leading principle is that of disobedience—whose thoughts and desires are, however his outward conduct may be ordered, in a continual state of rebellion against God? And accordingly the Law, in its typical enactments, set this plainly before the ancient Church. III. Every victim was to be WITHOUT BLEMISH. God would accept nothing which was corrupted, or imperfect, or contaminated. IV. Then again, if each man could not for himself fulfil this spiritual meaning of sacrifice—that sacrifice itself taught him something of a SUBSTITUTE for himself, who in his stead might be offered to God. And the Law, working on this, further continually familiarised the people with the idea of one such substitute for all. The lamb of the passover was chosen, one for each household. The daily morning and evening sacrifice was one lamb for the whole people of Israel. The great annual day of atonement witnessed one goat slain for a sin-offering for all the people. V. But there is plainly more than this—one important element in the meaning of sacrifice is yet unconsidered. Man, as sinful, rests under the just judgment of God. And the conflict of God's will and his own will within him, if it end in his becoming united again to God, must obviously include the entire subjection of his own will, as in all other points so in this—the SUBMITTING TO THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN as part of God's holy will. The animals offered in sacrifice were almost uniformly slain, and the remnants of them consumed by fire, which fire was the well-known symbol of the Divine wrath; which as uniformly, as we observed, were required to be without spot or blemish. VI. Again, in the substitution indicated by the sacrifice, if any adequate idea of reconciliation to God is to be conveyed, there must be represented a TRANSFERENCE OF GUILT from the offerer to the substitute. For this the Law also took especial care. To mention only one instance: in the ceremonies

of the day of atonement two goats are to be offered, typifying the double result of the Redeemer's sacrifice—His death for sin, and His life for righteousness; His dying for our sins, and rising again for our justification. VII. The next point is this: that some METHOD of COMMUNICATION of its virtue, and its acceptableness to the offerers, should be indicated. Suppose the one atoning sacrifice represented as offered; suppose God to be set forth as well pleased with it, and as accepting it: how was the offerer to apply these things to himself? In cases of offering for sin, and uncleanness, the blood of the slain animal was sprinkled or placed on the person of the offender for whom the victim was offered, or on the tabernacle or vessels which represented, in their use for holy things, the instrumentality of the whole people of Israel. In the great sacrifice first ordained, viz., that of the passover, this reconciliation by the imputation of blood shed in the offering was even more plainly pointed out. The blood was ordered to be sprinkled on the lintel and side-posts of the house-door of the family which offered the sacrifice; seeing which blood the destroying angel would pass over the house and would not touch them. VIII. But more than this participation was signified also by the ceremonial law. The offerers actually PARTOOK of the sacrifice. The substance of the victim actually passed into their bodies, and was assimilated into their substance, and thus the victim became identified with themselves—their flesh and their blood; and the union between the offerer and the offered became the closest possible. IX. The great and real sacrifice, when offered, is not only to reconcile man to God by the removal of guilt, but to possess a RENOVATING VIRTUE, by means of which man, unable before, shall be first enabled to offer himself, body, soul, and spirit, an offering acceptable to God. In other words, he is not only to be justified by the application of the atonement thus wrought to his person, but he is to be put into a process of SANCTIFICATION, whereby his whole body, soul, and spirit are to be made holy to the Lord. Did the Law in any way symbolise this, the ultimate object, as regards us, of what Christ has done for us? We may trace it in more ordinances than one. In the repeated washings and cleansings with water, of the priests, and all that belonged to the tabernacle service; in the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord," on the forehead of the high priest; but above all in the fact that every sacrifice was ordered to be seasoned with salt—that preservative and restoring power, representing the Spirit of holiness, by which the believers are renovated unto the life of God. X. The Law also set forth the Redeemer and His work by PERSONS as well as by ordinances. A more striking type of Him cannot be imagined than the Levitical high priest. It is an interesting question for us, though not the main question, how far these things may be supposed to have been patent to the Jewish worshipper of old—how far he took in his mind the idea of spiritual reconciliation by the sacrifice of a spotless Redeemer. The only answer to such an inquiry must be found in their own ancient interpretations of those remarkable prophecies which relate to the sufferings and atonement of Christ. And it is well known that in commentaries of theirs, written probably before the Christian era, those passages such as the fifty-third of Isaiah are interpreted as prophecies of their future Messiah. We may also surmise the answer to such a question from the fact that John the Baptist could make use, when speaking to Jesus, himself a Jew, of such words respecting our Lord as these—"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." From such facts as these, we are certainly justified in assuming that the meaning of the types in the Law was not altogether unknown to the pious Jew; though whether it influenced, or was intended to influence, his thoughts and the nature of his faith to any great extent, may well be doubted. It was perhaps enough for him to be taught, in distinction from all heathen nations, the utter inadequacy of sacrifice or offering to please God; and to be kept shut up under the ceremonial system, in a covenant with God of obedience and fidelity, in the abnegation, if he felt and lived God's law, of all self-righteousness—waiting for the consolation of Israel; looking for the prophetic promises to be fulfilled in God's good time. For he had not only types of Christ, but the voices of the prophets all point onward to the future Redeemer. (*Dean Alford.*)

Ver. 10. **The time of reformation.**—*The gospel a time of reformation:*—Christ then reformed the Law for our sakes, and all things that were in the Old Testament; old things are passed away, and shall we ourselves remain unreformed? As Christ hath reformed the Law for our salvation, so let us suffer Him to reform us. There is a formation, a deformation, and a reformation. The formation was

at the first Creation of the world; then God put all things into a good form and order: "He beheld all that He had made, and lo it was good, yea, exceeding good." After that came a deformation by the Fall of man, and that put all out of order again: upon that a reformation was made. 1. By a general deluge that purged all the earth. 2. By the patriarchs after the Flood. 3. By Moses, when the Law was published in writing. 4. By our Saviour Christ, and that is double: the one at His first coming, the other at the second. The Spirit of God here entreateth of the first. So that the time of the gospel is the time of reformation. Now especially ought Christians to endeavour a reformation. Every one will take on him to reform the Church: weavers and tailors will enterprise that. The Church is out of order; let that be reformed. But true reformation must begin at ourselves. He that will repair a house must begin at the foundation: so if ye will have a reformation, reform yourselves first: and in the reformation of yourselves begin with the heart: cast out the unclean lusts, the pride, envy, malice, covetousness; afterwards reform your eyes, tongues, hands, and all the members of your body: first wash the inside of the cup and platter, then the outside, else ye will be but whited tombs and painted sepulchres, as the Pharisees were: this is the best order in reforming. First let every man strive to reform himself, the vices whereunto himself is given. In the next place let him reform his family: after that, let every one in his place labour to reform the town wherein he dwells, to rid it of drunkards, of idle persons, to establish good orders in it for the credit of the gospel professed by us. This is the time of reformation, let us all in the fear of God reform ourselves: there shall not be a hair amiss on our head, but we will reform it: if we have a spotted coat or garment, we will reform it: and shall we ourselves remain unreformed? While the time of reformation lasts, let us reform ourselves: death may seize on us ere we be aware, and then it will be too late to reform. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *Reformation upon the gospel scheme*:—I. STATE THE NOTION OF REFORMATION. All things were defective and out of order when our Saviour appeared to set up a new dispensation of grace. But Christ came to fulfil the ancient types, to throw off human impositions, to establish a more pure and spiritual worship and government, and to give a system of doctrines, which, by the power of His Spirit, should make a blessed alteration in the Church and in the world. II. SHOW THE ADVANTAGES OF THE GOSPEL SCHEME TO PROMOTE A REFORMATION IN THE HEART AND LIFE. 1. It represents the atonement of Christ as the ground or basis of reformation. 2. It gives us the most excellent plan of righteousness as the rule of reformation. 3. It leads us to the best means and assistances for reformation. 4. It affords us the strongest motives and encouragements to a reformation. How inviting and engaging are gospel displays of the Divine philanthropy! III. POINT OUT SOME PROPER METHODS OF IMPROVING THIS SCHEME FOR THE REFORMATION WE ARE AIMING AT. 1. We should be deeply affected with a sense of the great degeneracies of the age which need to be reformed, and of the rich advantages of the gospel scheme which encourage our hopes of a reformation. 2. We should be earnest in prayer to God for His Spirit to reform us. 3. Every one should be seriously concerned about personal reformation upon the foot of the gospel scheme. 4. We should take the best care and pains we are capable of, in our respective stations, to promote the reformation of others together with ourselves. (*J. Guyse, D.D.*)

Vers. 11, 12. **Christ . . . an High Priest of good things to come.**—*The Lord Jesus as a High Priest*:—God never destroys for the sake of destroying, nor pulls down the old to leave a void in its place. The Divine method is to overcome evil by uplifting that which is good, and to remove the good, after it has served its purpose, by introducing that which is more excellent. I. Jesus Christ as a High Priest much excels in the GREATNESS AND PERFECTNESS OF THE TABERNACLE. Jesus Christ entered "by a greater and more perfect tabernacle." By the tabernacle here we are to understand, say some, the expanse above, the stellar firmament, through which Christ entered into the holy place. But the ablest commentators understand by it the body of Jesus Christ. And the author of this Epistle furnishes a strong ground for that interpretation in chap. x. 20. A hint to the same purport is to be found in the text, for it is averred of this tabernacle that "it is not of this building," that is, not of this creation. The humanity of the Lord Jesus is the beginning of a new creation. But it is not the visible body in itself that is intended by the tabernacle, as it is not the visible blood in itself that is meant by the "blood"; but human nature in the person of the Son of God, in which the Word has "tabernacled" among us, and by which He is the "beginning of the creation of God." II. Jesus

Christ as a High Priest much excels in the GREATNESS OF THE HOLY PLACE. There was no need for a special word in this place to denote the greatness of the holy place, as it follows naturally from the preceding words. "Christ, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, entered in once into the holy place"; and if the tabernacle were "greater and more perfect," it follows of necessity that the holy place was so likewise. The same thought belongs to both. Christ entered through the tabernacle of His untainted humanity to a corresponding holy place; He went into the holy place of the eternal world; He entered into the holy of holies of the universe. But God never does anything hurriedly; so Christ, after receiving the keys of the invisible world, took forty days to appear to His disciples at different times, in order to assure their minds that all power is given unto Him in heaven and on earth, and that a clear way, which no one may block, is opened unto them from earth to heaven. Then He ascended, in quiet unruffled glory, to take His proper place as the minister of the sanctuary, and sat down on the right hand of Majesty on high. There is not a higher place in all heaven than where Jesus Christ is to-day in our nature. He is as high as God Himself could raise Him. III. Christ as a high priest excels in the PRECIOUSNESS OF THE BLOOD. The worth of the blood was owing to the worth of the life, and the worth of the life to the greatness of the Person. When a man is martyred, the soul does not die; nevertheless, the soul imparts worth to the life of the body, and confers immeasurably more importance on the death of a man than the death of a beast. But notwithstanding the greatness of the difference between man and an animal, it is only a difference of degrees. Man is but a creature as well as the animal. But the difference between man and God is as great as that between a creature and the Creator. And yet, in the person of Jesus Christ, the Creator has come into closer union with humanity than that between our souls and our bodies. Though, perhaps, it be not proper to say that God died, yet the one who died was God. The infinite Person of the Son was in the obedience; the infinite Person was in the suffering; the infinite Person was in the death: imparting boundless worth and merit to all, so as to be a "propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." Because the Person is so great, the preciousness of the blood has filled all heaven, and has converted the throne of Majesty into a mercy-seat. IV. Jesus Christ excels as High Priest in the PERFECTNESS OF HIS WORK. The Jewish high priest was obliged to go to the holy place every year, because there was no effectual reconciliation; only the surface was a little washed, only temporal forgiveness was administered. But the sacrifice of Christ effected a thorough reconciliation—there is no need for a second attempt. V. Jesus Christ excels as High Priest in the NATURE AND EFFICACY OF THE REDEMPTION. He obtained eternal redemption or deliverance for us. This follows necessarily from the other part of the verse. As He went to the holy place in heaven, it must be that the redemption is eternal. There is not a higher court ever to reverse the verdict. The acquittal is from the throne of God Himself. (*Lewis Edwards, D.D.*) *The superiority of Christ's priesthood*:—The object of right worship has ever been the same, but its mode has undergone two great changes: 1. From no sacrifice to many sacrifices. 2. From many sacrifices to one—from the many mediations of Moses to the one mediation of Christ. I. CHRIST INTRODUCED HIGHER THINGS. A higher system of teaching. More spiritual, clear, and diffusive. 2. A higher form of worship. More simple, personal, attractive, and free. 3. A higher state of union. Marked by broader views, higher aims, more expansive benevolence. II. CHRIST OFFICIATES IN A HIGHER SANCTUARY. 1. Heaven is a more extensive sanctuary. "Greater." For all kindreds," &c. 2. A more Divine sanctuary. "Not made with hands." III. CHRIST PRESENTED A HIGHER SACRIFICE. His own life—the most precious of all. IV. CHRIST ACCOMPLISHED A HIGHER WORK. "Redemption" of forfeited rights and paralysed powers; redemption from guilt and spiritual influence of sin; impartation of pardon and purity to the condemned and corrupt; and all this eternal. (*Homilist.*) *The priesthood of Christ*:—I. CONSIDER THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST IN RELATION TO THE PAST—AND THE RETROSPECTIVE EFFICACY OF HIS WORK IN BEHALF OF THE WORSHIPPERS OF A FORMER AGE. To this view we are led by the whole course of the apostle's argument in this chapter, and the various allusions to sacrificial rites contained in the Old Testament. The doctrine of propitiation is the harmonising doctrine of the whole Bible. It makes the narrative of patriarchal, Levitical, and prophetical life one history. The men who lived under these dispensations all felt their need of mercy, and with certain differences of outward circumstances, all sought for mercy in the same way. The fundamental articles of religion have been the

same in every age of the world. Such is the antiquity of Christ's priesthood. It reaches far back through all the religious economies under which fallen man has ever lived. Christ is that true Melchisedec who has neither beginning of life nor end of days. "He has obtained for us," says the apostle, "eternal redemption." Rolling ages impair not the earnestness of His intercession, nor multitudinous offences the worth of the plea He brings. "He ever liveth." "He abideth a priest continually." II. CONSIDER THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST AS FULFILLING AND ANSWERING THE INDISPENSABLE CONDITIONS IN ORDER TO THE COVENANT OF FORGIVENESS BEING PERFECT. The priest, in the Levitical sense, is a public person who deals with an offended God in the name of the guilty, by offering an appointed sacrifice for sin upon the altar. 1. According to this definition, we see that in order to the desired reconciliation three things are necessary—a priest, a sacrifice, and an altar. (1) First, there must be a priest. There was no priest under the covenant with Adam upright, for this reason, there was no sacrifice. Man then was dealt with as innocent; he could come to God of himself. But the covenant with man fallen was altogether different; this was entered into with persons in a different moral state, and made for a totally different end. It was a covenant with sinners, with persons who had offended God and cast the words of the first covenant behind them. Hence the design of this new compact was to make peace, to reinstate man in the friendship of his Maker, and to repair the dishonour done to the Divine government. But to give effect to this covenant a mediating party was necessary. The prophet Zechariah expresses this necessity in that fine passage, "He shall be a priest upon His throne, and the council of peace shall be between them both." (2) But, secondly, there must in effecting this sublime negotiation be also a sacrifice. "Gather My sons together to Me," says the Psalmist, "those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." The importance of this element of the priesthood will appear to you, if you consider that if a sinless mediator had been all that was required, there seems nothing to forbid that our high priest should have been an angel. But this appended condition of sacrifice, the irrevocable necessity of blood-shed in order to remitted guilt made the mediation of angels impossible; for are they not all spirits?—therefore, having no blood to shed. Hence, while there was blood to be shed which shut out angels, it must be sinless blood which shut out men. And yet the dictates of natural equity would suggest that the blood should be that of a man, and that he who should bear the penalties of a broken covenant should be of the same nature with the covenant breaker. (3) And then, again, in order to a perfect priesthood there must of necessity be an altar—an altar too of such infinite worth and preciousness that it should both sanctify and enhance the gift. Now, considering that the sacrifice offered up was nothing else than the human nature of Christ, consisting of a body rent, broken, and a pure, holy soul, agonised, bruised, smitten of God and afflicted, the only thing there could be to sanctify a gift in itself so sanctified is the Divine nature with which this holy sacrifice was united. 2. Here, then, we have satisfactorily provided for the three pre-requisites for a perfect priesthood, namely, a priest, a sacrifice, and an altar. It should not lessen our confidence in this gospel priesthood, to find that all its constituent elements centre in the same glorious person—that the victim to be sacrificed is Christ, that the altar on which it is laid is Christ, that the priest who is to slay and offer and carry the blood into the most holy place is Christ; for if all these several parts be necessary to a perfect priesthood, how would it have vitiated the whole oblation to have encountered at any stage of its preparation a mixture of infirmity. If, for instance, a perfect sacrifice had been offered on a blemished altar, or if though the altar were unblemished, the offering must pass through the hands of a frail and erring priest. No, Christ will have none to lay hands on His work, none to join Him in it. The wine-press of humiliation shall be trodden by Himself alone. "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." III. CONSIDER THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST IN RELATION TO ITS MORAL EFFICACY. The apostle, as you perceive, takes as the basis of his comparison the two principal functions of the priestly office under the old economy, namely, the oblation, or the offering of the sacrifice in a part outside the precincts of the temple, and the presentation, or the carrying of blood once a year into the holy of holies to be exhibited and sprinkled upon the mercy-seat. Our Lord suffering without the camp exactly corresponds to the first feature of this Levitical system, whilst His appearing for us continually in the presence of God as plainly answers to the second. And in both, argues the apostle, you cannot fail to discern the measureless superiority of the gospel priesthood. Look at the character of the sacrifice itself. "Not by the blood of goats, but by

His own blood." Two verses further he puts the contrast still more strongly—"If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling," &c. The sacrifices of the law had a double use; the one real, and the other typical; the one ceremonial, and the other spiritual; the one actual, as conferring upon the worshipper certain church rights and privileges, the other contingent as requiring a definite act of faith in the promise of the Mediator. Well, the ceremonial efficiency of this it was no part of the apostle's argument to disparage. While the ancient ritual remained it served useful ends. They did sanctify to the purifying of the flesh. They enabled the excommunicated to join in public worship again, reinstated the sinner into the privileges and immunities of church fellowship, and as types reminded the worshipper of that higher union and fellowship from which he had become excluded by sin, and restoration to which would evidently require a nobler sacrifice and better blood; for how could the blood of bulls and goats ever take away sin? Hence the force of the apostle's distinction in the text just quoted, between purifying the flesh and purging the conscience. Temple blood may admit you to temple worship, and an outward cleansing may get you an outward interest in the covenant; but if you aspire to peace, to a realised fellowship with God, to anything of the tranquillity or joy of service—in a word, if you desire to get a cleansing and a peace within, any rest for the smitten troubled heart, you will feel that something better than blood of bulls and goats is needed, and with adoring thankfulness will look up to that great High Priest, who, carrying with Him His own all-cleansing blood, hath entered into the most holy place. And this is the second point of contrast on which the apostle insists—on Christ passed into the holy place, that is into heaven, as distinguished from that part of the tabernacle which was within the veil. As one of the patterns of things in the heavens, this inner part into which the priest went was guarded with zealous sacredness. The people were not allowed to follow even with their eyes whilst he was in the act of passing through the veil. Directly he had passed the curtains were drawn as close as possible that even the most curious might not see what was going on within: whilst enshrined in the most sacred part of the holy place itself were preserved time-honoured pledges of the presence and protecting power of God. But Christ, argues the apostle, has passed into a place far holier than your holiest. The curtain which separates Him from human sight is the cloud spread before the eternal throne. Ask we a pledge of the Divine protection—a pledge that He will not forget His holy covenant—a pledge that no penitent and believing sinners are ever to be turned away—we have it in the fact that our Melchisedec stands before the throne, that He combines in Himself all the functions of an everlasting priesthood, being Himself the tabernacle of witness, Himself the altar of sacrifice, Himself the Priest to offer, Himself the Lamb to die; and in the exercise of this priesthood He stands in the midst of the throne, exhibits the sacrificial blood openly that God may see it and pardon, that angels may see it and wonder, that redeemed ones may see it and adore, that the trembling sinner may see it and trust. Consider then, says the apostle, consider Him in all the dignity of His nature, in all the perfections of His sacrifice, in all the mightiness of His pleadings before the everlasting throne, and you will feel that you have, as you ought to have, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, you have, and should feel that you should have, a merciful and faithful High Priest over the house of God, so that if you will draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, in humble but joyous hope, in childlike and tranquil confidence, in and through the merits of the crucified, you shall both obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The high priesthood of Christ*:—The high priesthood of our Lord is a matter full of important consequences to us relating to His sacred Person and His work in our redemption. Of course the term is one derived from the Jewish ceremonial worship: and it is to the books in which that worship is ordained, that we must look for its explanation. I find the first ordinances respecting the high priest's office in Exod. xxviii. There Moses is ordered to take to him Aaron his brother, and with many prescribed ceremonies and adornments to consecrate him as priest; *i.e.*, as afterwards abundantly appears, as chief, or high priest. We need not follow these prescribed ceremonies, further than to cull out from them the general character of each portion of them, as applying to the office of our blessed Lord. As they were to be without blemish or deformity, as they were to be clothed in holy garments for glory and beauty, as they were not to defile themselves with any uncleanness, so was He, as the very first condition of this His office, holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. They, these priests of Israel,

were like their brethren in outward form, but, unlike them, were not to be made unclean by things which rendered others unclean. And so Christ took on Him the likeness of sinful flesh, but did not become sinful: He partook of the infirmities of our nature to the full, but did not partake of its pollution. But, when the high priest is thus constituted and apparelled, what is the first matter of which we read, belonging to his special duty and office? Precious stones are to be taken, two sets: upon both the sets are to be graven the names of the tribes of the children of Israel: once, on two onyx stones, which are to be worn on the shoulders of the high priest: the other time, on twelve separate stones, whose names are specially detailed; and this last tablet is to be worn on his heart. We have here a double feature of the office. The high priest is judge; the high priest is intercessor. And this too belongs to the reality of the high priesthood of Christ. All judgment is committed to Him. And thus judging, thus ordering His Church, He bears His people written on His heart. He can never forget them, for He represents them, and He loves them as Himself, and He bears them on Himself as a memorial before God continually. The next point which requires our notice is important, as introducing a whole class of duties which mainly constituted the high priest's office (see Exod. xxviii. 36–38). Here we have the high priest in a new character: that of one bearing the iniquity of others, who are made acceptable to God by that his bearing of their iniquity. The plate of pure gold—the "Holiness of the Lord" inscribed on it—must of course be taken as indicating, in connection with his bearing their iniquity, the acceptance before God, as holy, of the people of the Lord whom he represents. It will be enough at this part to say, that our blessed Redeemer here also fulfils the reality of which these high priests were a shadow. Not only does He carry His people engraven on His heart before God, but He presents them to God as holiness to Him, by virtue of His having Himself borne their iniquities. Take the apostle's testimony to this in Eph. v. 25. Then come, in the book of Exodus, the rites and ceremonies of the consecration, or setting apart of the priests to minister before God. Concerning these, one remark before all is suggested to us by the writer of this Epistle to the Hebrews:—viz., that no man took the office unto himself, but only those who were selected and consecrated by God, as was Aaron. The very name of the Lord by which we call Him, Messiah or Christ, signifies the Anointed. But we now come to that which was by far the larger portion of the duty of the priests of old, and of which we shall have much to say as concerning our great High Priest Himself. "Every high priest," says our Epistle, "is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices." This was the priest's especial office; to minister for the people in the things concerning God, and to offer sacrifices for sin. Now almost every particular is explained by the writer of this Epistle to have immediate reference to our Lord: and of those not so mentioned several are so obvious as to be unmistakable by any intelligent Christian. 1. First of all, why all these ordinances of sacrifice at all? Why all this taking away of animal life, and this sprinkling of blood, ceremonies of a kind painful and revolting now to our minds and habits? All these sacrifices, thus divinely appointed, were ordained to signify greater and spiritual truths: "the Holy Ghost thus signifying," as we have it written here: God having a matter to make known in His good time, which should be no type or shadow, but His own very truth: and that matter being, the death and satisfaction of our blessed Lord, His eternal Son. But let us follow this out, considering Him as our High Priest. "If He be a Priest," says the writer of our epistle, "He must of necessity have something to offer." And here we have God's High Priest, whom He hath consecrated and sent into the world. By what offering shall He propitiate God towards those His people? Who shall shed the blood that may sprinkle our holy things and make them pure? Who shall go far, far away, bearing upon his head the iniquities of us all? Hear His answer—"Lo *I* come to do Thy will, O God." He is spotless. He unites in Himself our whole nature: strike Him, and we are stricken: let His sacrifice be accepted, and we are cleared from guilt: let that blood of His be carried into the holy place of God's presence in heaven, and an atonement is made for us. There are several other, apparently minor, but really not less interesting points of comparison, between the high priests of old and our blessed High Priest and Redeemer. Their sacrifices were imperfect, and of no intrinsic value or avail. They therefore needed renewing continually, day by day. But His is perfect and all-sufficing. It needs only to be believed in, and applied by the obedience of living faith to the heart. Again: those high priests, by reason of their being mortal men, were continually renewed from time to time. None of them was permanent: they came as shadows,

and so departed: theirs was no abiding priesthood, to which all men might look for atonement and acceptance. But the Son of God abideth for ever: "He dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him: in that He died, He died for sin once: in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." For ever does the virtue of His blood endure: for ever does His holy priesthood avail. There is with Him no wearing out, no forgetting, no failure of earnestness, no vacillating affection, no exhausted pleading. He is for all, He is over all, He is sufficient for all, He cares for all. So then, once more—inasmuch as they were human high priests, they were fellows with their brethren. Was then theirs any advantage over Him? In that land of Judæa, under the shade of those walls of Jerusalem, you might perchance see the high priest holding conference with the erring or the penitent: might see the venerable man of God, on whose brow was His anointing, with the hand of the young offender laid in his, pleading eye to eye till the tears chased one another down the cheek glowing with shame: and then might trace the judge of Israel watching, reminding, building up the returning sinner in holiness. Shall we envy them? Were they better off than we? Ah no! The sympathising high priest on earth, what is he to the sympathising High Priest in heaven? Few indeed, and interrupted could be such interviews: narrow indeed and partial such sympathies. But our High Priest is not one who lacks leisure or power to receive all who come to Him at any time. It is for us, for the least among us, that the eternal Son of God is thus constituted a High Priest: for our sins, for our wants, for our daily feeling, and obeying, and approaching to God. It is to purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God, that His holy blood was offered: to make us pure, upright, clear in purpose, and like to our God and Father. (*Dean Alford.*) *Good things brought by Christ*:—Here we may see what they be that in truth deserve the name and title of good things. Not silver and gold, houses and lands. Christ at His coming brought none of these, yet He brought good things with Him, namely, remission of sins, faith and other graces of the Spirit. These indeed are worthy the name of good things. Forasmuch as our Priest bringeth such excellent things with Him, let Him be most welcome to us. David said of Ahimaaz, "he is a good man, and bringeth good tidings." Much more let us say of Christ our High Priest, "He is a good man, He bringeth good tidings," that by the blood of His Cross He hath reconciled us to God the Father, hath obtained a general pardon for all our sins, He hath prepared a place for us in His own kingdom; therefore let us receive Him with all joy. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *The body likened to a tabernacle*:—As Christ's body is a tabernacle, so is ours (2 Pet. i. 14; 2 Cor. v. 1). 1. The name of a tent or tabernacle imports warfare. Soldiers have their tents. 2. There is a between a tabernacle and a house; for a house is made of solid matter, wood, stone, &c. A tent is made of old clothes patched together. So our bodies are not made of the sun, of the stars, of the firmament, but of the earth, which is a brittle thing. 3. A tent is weak, easily pierced through. So our body. A knife, a pin may prick it, a fly may choke it. A tent is quickly up and quickly down. So is our body. We come suddenly, and we are gone again in the turning of an hand, though it be the body of a wise Solomon, of a strong Samson, a fair Absolom, yet remember it is but a tent or tabernacle. The time is at hand, says St. Peter, when I must lay down this tabernacle. Now as the tabernacle in the time of the Law was kept neat, clean, and handsome, it might not be polluted with anything. So let us keep our bodies from all pollutions. (*Ibid.*) **He entered in once.**—*Our Lord's entrance within the veil*:—I. THE SACRIFICE OF HIS ENTERING. 1. Unique. 2. Substitutionary. 3. Personal. 4. Of transcendent value. II. THE MANNER OF HIS ENTRANCE. 1. Once. 2. Only once. 3. In the fullest and most complete manner. III. THE OBJECTS OF HIS ENTRANCE. 1. He made atonement within the veil. 2. He enters there to appear for us. 3. He is there to perfect us. 4. He has entered in once that He may abide there. 5. He is there to admit us to the same nearness. IV. THE GLORIES OF THIS ENTRANCE. "Having obtained eternal redemption." When Aaron went in with the blood of bulls and goats, he had not obtained "eternal redemption"; he had only obtained a symbolic and temporary purification for the people, and that was all. 1. Our Lord enters in because His work is all done. 2. That which He had obtained was redemption. We do not fully know what the word "redemption" means, for we were born free; but if we could go back a few years, and mix with the negro slaves of America, they could have told us what redemption meant, if ever, by any good fortune, any one of them was able to buy his freedom. You that have groaned under the tyranny of sin, you know what redemption means in its spiritual sense,

and you prize the ransom by which you have been made free. We are to-day redeemed from our far-off condition in reference to the Lord God: we do not now stand outside the veil. This is a great redemption. We are also delivered from guilt, for "He hath washed us from our sins in His own blood." Also from the power of sin, its curse, its bondage, &c. 3. And now think of the nature of that redemption; for here is a grand point. He has obtained "eternal" redemption. If you carefully study the verses around the text, you will find the word "eternal" three times: there is "eternal redemption," the "eternal Spirit," and an "eternal inheritance." Why is redemption said to be eternal? He has obtained eternal redemption—a redemption which entered into eternal consideration. Redemption is the drift of creation, and the hinge of providence. 4. When our Lord entered in, He had by His sacrifice also dealt with eternal things, and not with matters of merely passing importance. Sin, death, hell—these are not temporary things: the atonement deals with these, and hence it is an eternal redemption. 5. Now, look forward into eternity. Behold the vista which has no end! Eternal redemption covers all the peril of this mortal life, and every danger beyond, if such there be. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The entrance of Christ into heaven:*—I. The entrance of our Lord Jesus Christ as our High Priest into heaven, to appear in the presence of God for us, and to save us thereby unto the uttermost, was a thing so great and glorious, AS COULD NOT BE ACCOMPLISHED BUT BY HIS OWN BLOOD. No other sacrifice was sufficient unto this end. II. Whatever difficulties lay in the way of Christ, as unto the accomplishment and perfection of the work of our redemption, HE WOULD NOT DECLINE THEM, NOR DESIST FROM HIS UNDERTAKING, WHATEVER IT COST HIM. III. THERE WAS A HOLY PLACE MEET TO RECEIVE THE LORD CHRIST, AFTER THE SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF; and a suitable reception for such a person, after so glorious a performance. IV. If the Lord Christ entered not into the holy place until he had finished His work, WE MAY NOT EXPECT AN ENTRANCE THEREINTO UNTIL WE HAVE FINISHED OURS. He fainted not until all was finished; and it is our duty to arm ourselves with the same mind. V. IT MUST BE A GLORIOUS EFFECT WHICH HAD SO GLORIOUS A CAUSE; and so it was, even "eternal redemption." VI. THE NATURE OF OUR REDEMPTION, THE WAY OF ITS PROCUREMENT, WITH THE DUTIES REQUIRED OF US WITH RESPECT THEREUNTO, ARE GREATLY TO BE CONSIDERED BY US. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *Christ's work on earth and in heaven:*—I. HIS WORK ON EARTH. "He obtained eternal redemption for us." 1. The blessing in question. (1) Redemption by our Lord Jesus Christ, or deliverance from the sentence of condemnation. (2) Redemption by power from the dominion of sin, from the vassalage of the world, and from the power of darkness. 2. The extensiveness of the attribute. "Eternal redemption." (1) Completely. (2) Absolutely. (3) Emphatically. 3. Eternal in its procuring. 4. Eternity of the benefit. (1) For men, in distinction from angels. (2) For believers. II. HIS APPEARANCE IN HEAVEN. 1. Where did He enter? "Into the holy place"—heaven. 2. With what did He enter? "With His own blood." 3. How often did He enter? "Once." (*W. Jay.*) **Having obtained eternal redemption for us.**—*Redemption by Christ:*—Calvary is the central point to which, as all former ages, with a vague expectancy, had looked onward, so all subsequent ages look back, with hearts filled to the full with gratitude and love. In the redemption there won for us, there are various points for us to notice. 1. Firstly, it was by His own blood that Christ entered in once into the holy place. It was a sacrifice centring absolutely in Himself. Christ trod the winepress alone. His own blood was shed for the salvation of the world; none other could mingle with it. 2. And Christ entered once into the holy place. We should mark this well. His death was the single act of One who need never repeat it. 3. And the redemption thus won is as eternal for us as it is for Him who won it. This side of the grave we have to struggle, to do battle as soldiers of the Cross, "not as though we had already attained, either were already perfect" (Phil. iii. 12). But we may have sure and certain hope of eternal life, and in this confidence may go forth conquering and to conquer. The redemption, as far as Christ's work is concerned, has been made; and if we will but take the crown from Him who offers it to us, no power of earth, nor of hell, shall be able to wrest it from our keeping without our consent. 4. And, lastly, Christ has obtained this eternal redemption for us. Without boastfulness or self-assertion, we may lay stress on that word, and remember that in it Christ associates with Himself the whole human family. We look back down the stream of time which has flowed on to the present. We think of all the lives that have been for a longer or shorter period borne upon that mighty river—lives known and unknown, a blessing or a curse to their generation. In all of these redemption has

played its part. It has had an influence and a power on those lives, whether it has been accepted or not. It has been either their hope and encouragement, or it has been a solemn witness rising up to protest against every deed of sin and shame. Man cannot live in the knowledge and light of immortality won for him by Christ, and be the same as if he knew it not. For that knowledge he must be either infinitely the better or infinitely the worse. And, for our great and endless comfort, let us never forget that the redemption is offered to each individual soul; for Christ by His death made each one of us His own, having paid the price which our salvation costs. And that act of surpassing love has been performed as though no other soul but thine required this tremendous sacrifice. Will you, then, reject so great salvation? will you refuse the eternal redemption Christ has obtained for you? (*C. W. H. Kenrick, M.A.*) *Our redemption*:—I. Our redemption from captivity is effected by our Lord in two ways: BY PRICE AND BY POWER. By price paid into the hand of God as the moral Governor; by power exercised on Satan, sin, the world, and death. II. Our Lord obtained eternal redemption for us BY SACRIFICE. This implies reconciliation (Col. i. 20–22; 2 Cor. v. 18–21). III. Our Lord obtained eternal redemption for us BY SUFFERING PUNISHMENT. This refers to law and justice. (*Jas. Kidd, D.D.*) *Redemption*:—Once when I was revisiting my native village, I was going to a neighbouring town to preach, and saw a young man coming from a house with a waggon, in which was seated an old woman. I felt interested in them, and asked my companion who they were. I was told to look at the adjoining meadow and pasture, and at the great barns that were on the farm, as well as a good house. "Well," said my companion, "that young man's father drank that all up, and left his wife in the poorhouse. The young man went away and worked until he had got money enough to redeem that farm, and now it is his own, and he is taking his mother to church." That is an illustration of redemption. In the first Adam we have lost all, but the second Adam has redeemed everything by His death. (*D. L. Moody.*) *Release*:—In the debtors' prison at Sheffield, Howard found a cutler plying his trade who was in jail for thirty cents. The fees of the court amounted to over a pound, and this sum he had been for several years trying to earn. In another jail there was a man with a wife and five children, confined for court-fees of about five shillings, and jailer's fees of about eightpence. This man was confined in the same apartment as robbers. All such debtors—and they were numerous in England—Howard released by paying their debts. (*Cyclopædia of Biography.*)

Vers. 13, 14. **How much more shall the blood of Christ?**—*The sacrifice of Jesus Christ*:—The sacrifice of our Lord admits of being considered from many different points of view. We may consider it as making atonement for our sins, and ask how any such transference and application of His merits to us, as is involved in this thought, is possible; or we may consider why any such atonement should have been necessary at all to satisfy the requirements of the Divine Righteousness in the moral government of the world. Both of these questions are legitimate, and the New Testament does in fact suggest answers to them. But there is another consideration, simpler perhaps than either of these, which is yet full of importance, and comes first in the order of thought; and that is, the nature of Christ's sacrifice, considered not in its effect on us, but simply in itself: of what sort was Christ's sacrifice, and wherein lay its acceptableness? I. HE OFFERED HIS SELF, HIS PERSON, HIS HUMAN LIFE TO GOD. This human life of ours is meant to move in various directions. It moves out to the interpretation and appropriation of nature; and so man gains in natural knowledge, and develops the resources of civilisation. It moves out again from each man towards his fellows, and so the bonds of humanity are knit, and society advances. It moves out also towards God, to present itself before Him, and enter into communion with Him. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." All the faculties of man are thus to be directed not only towards nature, towards his fellow men, but also deliberately Godward, and that first of all. It is "the first and great commandment." This was the original law of man's being. This is his ultimate goal in Christianity (Rom. xii. 1). This "reasonable service," which St. Paul calls a "sacrifice," though there be no death involved in it, is what is supremely exemplified in the human life of Jesus. It looked manward in love and ministry. "He went about doing good." But first of all it looked Godward in self-oblation. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." Aye, even before "Thy will be done" comes "Thy name be hallowed." For to please God, to present himself before God, to know God, this is the highest privilege and

the primary duty of man. II. HE OFFERED HIMSELF "WITHOUT SPOT" OR "BLEMISH." The metaphor is from the inspection of the victims prepared for sacrifice. In the Lamb of God the scrutiny of the all-seeing eye can detect no disqualifying flaw. A will always vigorous, single, unflagging; an intellect wholly unclouded and unsophisticated, of perfect receptivity and exquisite penetration; a heart of incomparable tenderness and force, which yet never moved out in uncontrolled passion; a perfect humanity which yet showed its perfection in unresisting dependence upon the movement of the Divine Spirit which filled it and directed it; a humanity rich and full in experiences, passing through all sorts of vicissitudes of circumstance, yet found as perfect in one situation as in another, in failure as in success; a humanity in which nothing approaching to moral decadence is to be detected, glorious in its issue as in its inception. He offered Himself to God without blemish. He fulfilled the ideal of humanity. He was the beloved Son in whom the Father —the great Scrutiniser of human oblations—was well pleased. III. THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS WAS A FULL, PERFECT, AND ADEQUATE SELF-OBLATION OF MAN TO GOD. It was perfectly "spiritual." He, the pattern Man, gave to God an undivided allegiance, an absolute homage. When His mission on behalf of truth, and meekness, and righteousness involved the martyr's death—He accepted the condition, and offered the shedding of His blood. But in God's sight the shedding of the blood had no value except as the symbol of obedience carried to an extreme. It is a great, a strange mistake to suppose that the death of Christ was, as it were, the act of God. It was the act in which (on the contrary) rebellion against God, the sin of man, showed itself in its true and horrible colours. What God does is to bear with this, as He has foreseen it, to spare not His only Son, to exempt Him by no miracle from the consequences of His loyalty to truth and meekness and righteousness—under the conditions of a sinful world, as things were, its inevitable consequences. God foresees, God bears with this, and He overrules it to the purposes of our redemption. But throughout, as St. Anselm says, in the greatest Christian treatise on the Atonement, what God the Father enjoined upon the Incarnate Son was, primarily, simple obedience; only as obedience in fact involved death, then, secondarily, did He enjoin upon Him to die. There are splendid instances in actual history, or imaginative history, of acts in which men have poured out their blood as a sacrifice for their fellow men. It is the deep moral feeling of Euripides which converts the unwilling sacrifice of Iphigenia in Aulis into a freewill offering for her country. "The whole of Greece, the truly great, is looking to me now," she cries to her mother, . . . "for all the Greeks and not for thyself alone, didst thou bear me; therefore for Greece I offer my body." So she gives herself to be sacrificed by the priest's knife, and the goddess Artemis accepts the freewill offering—but not the actual life; for as the knife is falling, the place of the maiden is, by the intervention of the goddess, taken by a doe. And of the maiden it is said that the same day beheld her dead and alive again. This is a splendid thought. But it is the nobility of the victim which is supposed to move the compassion of the goddess rather than the simple worth of a human life, and the atmosphere of religious conception as to the Divine nature is still far cloudier than among the Jews. On the Jewish stage a cognate but more truly historical scene is described in Maccabees, where the heroic martyrs for the honour and liberty of the chosen people offer up their lives to God. "And I," cries the youngest of the seven martyred brothers, "as my brethren, offer up my body and life for the laws of our fathers, beseeching God that He would speedily be merciful unto our nation, . . . and that in me and my brethren the wrath of the Almighty which is justly brought upon all our nation may cease." This is a self-sacrifice which comes very near to Isaiah's conception of the vicarious self-oblation of Jehovah's righteous servant. But it has still accompanying it some ring of the false thought of God as demanding for sin some positive quantity of expiatory death. Now when we describe the sacrifice of our Lord as perfectly spiritual, we mean that it carries with it, in all its silent implications and in the spoken words in which it found expression, the perfect truth about God and about man, as the flawless homage of the self-surrendering will. Jesus taught the perfect truth in words—the truth about God's pure Fatherhood; the truth that what God asks of man, who is made for sonship, is not mere isolated acts of obedience or sacrifice, but simply and altogether the homage of an unqualified submission and dependence. He taught the truth about man's sin, about his rebellion, about his need of conversion. He taught the truth about the unity of the human race—bidding men see that they may not live each for himself, but are bound to live each for all. He taught all this in words; He taught it in

deeds, in His own human relation to the Father; in His own relation to mankind. He taught it most of all in His sacrifice. For when obedience was shown to involve death, He spared not Himself, even as the Father spared Him not: He used no miraculous power to exempt Himself, though He declared that He possessed it. For us, in our manhood, before God He shed His blood. And this blood-shedding has, in God's sight, a perfect value, because it is the expression of a flawless will, of truth unqualified—the truth about God's claim on man, the truth about humanity's proper homage, the truth about sin. And the self-sacrifice of Jesus lives for evermore, over against all our lawlessness, our wilfulness, our slackness, our blindness, our self-sparing, as the perfect recognition in man's name and nature of the righteous claim of God, and of the responsibility of man for man. IV. As THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS WAS PERFECTLY SPIRITUAL, SO IT WAS OFFERED, NOT ONLY IN THE POWER OF THE PERFECT HUMANITY, BUT IN THE POWER ALSO OF THE ETERNAL SPIRIT. Truly was He acting in manhood, really under conditions of manhood: the sacrifice was genuinely human in its moral effort, in its moral and physical pain, in its genuine human faith. It was the Son of Man who offered Himself. But the mind and will expressed was also God's mind, God's will, and therefore the meaning and value of the act is unchangeable. It is true of all human action at its best that it has an eternal element. "The truly great have all one age." But the eternal element, the movement of God which lies hid at all times at the roots of humanity, is obscured and clouded by human independence of God, that is, human sin. In Jesus every human act is also the act of God. He who was acting under human conditions was very God; and the Divine Spirit which indwelt His humanity, indwelt Him perfectly, and found in Him a faultless organ in which His will could be done. Nothing, then, in the acts or sacrifice of Jesus is merely temporary, or imperfect, or inadequate. It belongs to all ages. It is eternal. (*Chas. Gore, M.A.*) *Gospel theology*:—I. THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL IS A LIVING PERSONALITY. This revelation of God as "living" stands opposed to—1. Heathen idolatry. 2. Secular philosophy. 3. Mere logical divinity. II. THE CHIEF END OF MAN'S EXISTENCE IS TO SERVE THE LIVING GOD. 1. This implies—(1) That He has a will concerning our activities. (2) A capacity on man's part to understand and obey the will of God concerning him. 2. There are three facts in relation to the service of God which we should always bear in mind, and which marks it off from all other service. (1) That acceptability does not depend either upon the kind, or the amount, or the results of our activity, but upon its principles. (2) That to serve God does not require that we should confine ourselves to any particular department of action. (3) That to serve God is the only way either to serve ourselves or others. III. MAN'S MORAL NATURE IS GENERALLY IN A STATE WHICH DISQUALIFIES HIM FOR THIS SERVICE. 1. The conscience is polluted. 2. The conscience is polluted through dead works. IV. THE GREAT END OF CHRIST'S MEDIATION IS TO REMOVE THIS MORAL DISQUALIFICATION FOR THE SERVICE OF THE LIVING GOD. 1. By furnishing man with the most complete exhibition of what the service of the living God is. (1) A personal consecration. (2) A voluntary consecration. (3) A virtuous consecration. (4) A consecration Divinely inspired. 2. By supplying the most effective means to generate in the heart the principle of true service—supreme love to God. 3. By providing a medium which renders the service approvable to God. V. CHRIST'S MEDIATION FOR THIS PURPOSE IS MOST UNQUESTIONABLY EFFICACIOUS. "If the blood," &c. 1. The object in the one case to be realised is of unspeakably greater importance than the other. 2. The means employed in the one case are immeasurably more costly than the other. 3. The agent employed in the one case to apply the means is infinitely greater than in the other. (*Homilist.*) *Christ the purifier of religion*:—I. MAN'S CONSCIENCE NEEDS PURIFYING. To perceive this, contemplate the Jewish ceremonial, and that will shadow forth the spiritual truth. The man who had touched a corpse, or the grave dust, was regarded as defiled—he felt defiled, he trembled to enter the presence of God. Paul says this is the symbol of an eternal fact. The conscience feels the touch of death. It trembles in worship. Therefore it needs purifying from its dead works to serve the living God. The more bright and keen the conscience, the deeper and more awful is the feeling of death that cleaves to us. II. THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST THE PURIFYING POWER. 1. A perfect and holy sacrifice. That awful expenditure of sinless agony is the only purification. The voice of condemnation pursues us through every path of life until it is hushed before the Cross. Then the death-stains of past sin are cleansed away. Then the spectral forms of the past are laid for ever. Then prayer loses its tremor, aspiration its sadness, praise its undertone of fear. We no more wish to escape from God, for

we are made pure by the blood of Christ. 2. A new spirit of devotion; for we need not only absolution but inspiration before we can serve God freely, lovingly, joyously. "He offered Himself"—not in fear, but voluntarily. Suffering, shame, death, stood in His path. He might have refused to endure them, and from the first turned aside: but daily He chose to bear the daily cross. "Through the Eternal Spirit." His was not an offering from the human to avert the Divine anger, but an offering from Himself. There was the true spirit of worship when the Eternal Spirit became enshrined in Jesus. And through that Spirit He offered Himself. III. THE PURIFIED CONSCIENCE RISES TO LIVING WORSHIP. 1. Living—in the reality of its spiritual emotions. The unpurged conscience is tempted to forget, to doubt, to deny God, or regard Him simply as some awful and mysterious power. The purified spirit feels Him near and can bear the glance of the Eternal without shrinking; for the dead past has been cleansed away by the blood of the Saviour. Thus prayer becomes real; it is no longer a vain cry breathed into the air; for the Spirit through which He offered Himself abides in us, constraining our devotion. 2. Living—for it pervades the whole life. The worship of fear is limited to time and place. But cleansed and inspired by Christ we feel He is everywhere. In suffering we bear His will, and our sighs become prayers. In sorrow, when the heart is weary, we feel ourselves near to the heavenly Friend who is leading us to find in Him rest for the restless and sad. In joys, He who hallowed social gladness by His first miracle—and amid the friendships of life, He who made friendship holy is close to our hearts. In our falls and failures we hear His voice in the hope of rising out of the gloom to a higher and purer state beyond it. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *The sacrifice of Christ*:—I. THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIAN SACRIFICE, the grand atonement on which we all rest, is, that it is not the blood of the inferior animals, as in the former dispensation; but the blood of Christ. 1. It was the offering of a human being. The death of Christ, considering Him simply as a man, shows a justice in the visitation of sin, as much greater as human life is above the life of irrational animals. 2. He was an innocent and spotless man. Here the value is heightened. It was not the case of one offender selected from many to be an example. He had no part in the offence. 3. But that which carries the value of the offering to its true height, is, that it was "the blood of Christ"; of the whole and undivided Christ, who was both God and man. For, though a Divine nature could not bleed and die, a Divine person could. II. ITS SPECIAL EFFICACY. It cleanses not the flesh, but "purges the conscience from dead works, that we may serve the living God." Two benefits are here marked as the foundation of, and leading to, all others. 1. The purification of the conscience. The "dead works," here mentioned, are sins; and the guilt from which we are purified is in another place termed "the conscience of sins." Sins are "dead works," because they expose us to present condemnation, and finally to eternal death. By "conscience" here is meant inward perception of such works as are chargeable upon us, with fearful apprehensions of the death they bring. But on this sacrifice you are to trust in order to salvation. To encourage you to this, think of the Father's love. Think of the love of the Son. Can you doubt of that love while He is evidently set forth crucified before your eyes? Think of the value of this sacrifice. If you can conceive of anything more valuable, then doubt the efficacy of this, and fear to trust. Then trust in it. Venture in the same vessel which has carried so many over the stormy waves which now surround you, and who shout to you from the shore beyond, and bid you trust, and not be afraid. 2. The second blessed consequence is, that we may "serve the living God." There is the service of worship. We have free access to God, and our services are acceptable. There is the service of obedience. We are delivered from the bondage of sin, and all our powers are consecrated to God. Learn: 1. The infinite evil of sin. It could not be forgiven without a Divine atonement. 2. The awful character of Divine justice. 3. The fulness of the blessings purchased by this sacrifice. The salvation corresponds with the sacrifice by which it was purchased, and comprehends every spiritual blessing, both in time and eternity. (*R. Watson.*) *The character, agency, and efficacy of Christ's sacrifice*:—I. THE AGENCY THROUGH WHICH CHRIST'S SACRIFICE WAS PRESENTED, AND THE CHARACTER OF THAT SACRIFICE. Christ offered Himself to God, both in obedience and in suffering. His whole life was one season of oblation. II. THE EFFECTS OF THIS SACRIFICE. St. Paul's representation rather embraces a point than extends itself to the whole of the effects of the atonement: the expression "dead works," denotes sinfulness in general, by which all our consciences are polluted, in opposition to those things by which spiritual uncleanness was removed. We have, then,

simply to inquire into the truth and meaning of the assertion, that the blood of Jesus cleanseth the soul of the believer from sin, and thus qualifies him for the service of the living God. And, first of all, we have full warrant for affirming that so soon as there is faith in the heart, binding a man to Christ as a member of the head, the sins of all men are swept completely away, being not only forgiven, but actually forgotten by God. It is membership with Christ which gives its might and its majesty to the gospel. Faith admits me into the invisible Church of Christ, and the members of the invisible Church make up one sinless body in the sight of the Father—the perfect righteousness of the Head being considered as belonging equally to the meanest of the members. So that when I have faith in Christ, I am literally one with Christ, and then where are my sins? The countless iniquities of my youth! the multiform transgressions of my riper years! where are they? "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgression, for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Oh! how unlike is His forgiveness to that of men, who may forgive but cannot forget! Oh! the word of the Lord is—"the blood of Jesus Christ shall purge your conscience from dead works." III. THIS "PURGING OF THE CONSCIENCE" IS PREPARATORY TO "SERVING THE LORD." The man of whom much has been forgiven will love much, and loving without obeying is a paradox which never yet deformed practical Christianity. Like as Christ offered Himself through the Eternal Spirit unto God, so also must we through the same Spirit present ourselves as living sacrifices to the Most High. This is the service to which we are pledged; this is the consecration bound upon us by all that is most solemn in duty and glorious in hope. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The red heifer*:—I. LET US DESCRIBE THE TYPE (see Numb. xix.). First, the type mentions ceremonial defilements, which were the symbols of the uncleanness caused by sin. The Israelites could very readily render themselves unclean, so as to be unfit to go up to the tabernacle of God. There were uncleannesses connected both with birth and with death, with meats and with drinks, with garments and with houses. A man might become unclean even in his sleep; so closely did the law track him into his most secret places, and surround his most unguarded hours. Even thus doth sin beset us. Like a dog at one's heels, it is always with us! Like our shadow, it follows us, go where we may. Yea, and when the sun shines not, and shadows are gone, sin is still there. Whither shall we flee from its presence, and where shall we hide from its power? When we would do good, evil is present with us. How humbled we ought to be at the recollection of this! The Israelite became unclean even in the act of doing good; for assuredly it was a good deed to bury the dead. Alas, there is sin even in our holy things. The evil of our nature clingeth to all that we do. The touching of the dead not only made the man unclean, but he became a fountain of defilement. Pollution went forth from the polluted. Do you and I sufficiently remember how much of evil we are spreading when we are out of communion with God? Every ungenerous temper creates the like in others. We never cast a proud look without exciting resentment and bad feelings in others. Somebody or other will follow our example if we be slothful; and thus we may be doing great mischief even when we are doing nothing. This uncleanness prevented the man from going up to the worship of God, and it separated him from that great, permanent congregation which was called to dwell in God's house by residing all around the holy place. He was, so to speak, excommunicated, suspended, at any rate, in his communion: he could bring no offering, he could not stand among the multitude and view the solemn worship, he was unclean, and must regard himself so. Do the children of God ever get here? Ah, so far as our consciences are concerned we too often come among the unclean. Until the pardoning blood speaks peace within your spirit, you cannot draw near unto God. We tremble, we find communion impossible until we are made clean. This much about the defilements described in the chapter; now concerning the cleansing which it mentions. The defilement was frequent, but the cleansing was always ready. At a certain time all the people of Israel brought a red heifer to be used in the expiation. It was not at the expense of one person, or tribe, but the whole congregation brought the red cow to be slain. It was to be their sacrifice, and it was brought for them all. It was not led, however, up to the holy place for sacrifice, but it was brought forth without the camp, and there it was slaughtered in the presence of the priest, and wholly burnt with fire, not as a sacrifice upon the altar, but as a polluted thing which was to be made an end of outside the camp. Even as our Lord, though in Himself without spot, was made sin for us, and suffered without the camp, feeling the withdrawings of God, while He cried, "My

God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Then the ashes were collected and laid in a clean place accessible to the camp. Everybody knew where the ashes were, and whenever there was any uncleanness they went to this ash-heap and took away a small portion. Whenever the ashes were spent they brought another red heifer, and did the same as they had done before, that always there might be this purification for the unclean, There was no other method of purification from uncleanness but this. It is so with us. To-day the living water of the Divine Spirit's sacred influences must take up the result of our Lord's substitution, and this must be applied to our consciences. That which remaineth of Christ after the fire hath passed upon Him, ever the eternal merits, the enduring virtue of our great sacrifice, must be sprinkled upon us through the Spirit of our God. Then are we clean in conscience, but not till then. II. LET US MAGNIFY THE GREAT ANTITYPE. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ?" How much more? He doth not give us the measure, but leaves it with a note of interrogation. We shall never be able to tell how much more, for the difference between the blood of bulls and of goats and the blood of Christ, the difference between the ashes of a red cow and the eternal merits of the Lord Jesus, must be infinite. Let us help your judgments while we set forth the exceeding greatness of our mighty Expiator, by whom we are reconciled to God. 1. First, then, our defilement is much greater, for the defilement spoken of in the text is on the conscience. We cannot have fellowship with God while there is a sense of unconfessed and unforgiven sin upon us. "Be ye reconciled to God" is a text for saints as well as for sinners: children may quarrel with a father as well as rebels with a king. There must be oneness of heart with God, or there is an end to communion, and therefore must the conscience be purged. The man who was unclean could have come up to the tabernacle if there had been no law to prevent it, and it is possible that he could have worshipped God in spirit, notwithstanding his ceremonial disqualification. The defilement was no barrier in itself except so far as it was typical; but sin on the conscience is a natural wall between God and the soul. You cannot get into loving communion until the conscience is at ease; therefore, I charge you, fly at once to Jesus for peace. 2. Secondly, our sacrifice is greater in itself. I will not dwell upon each point of its greatness, but just notice that in the slaughter of the heifer blood was presented and sprinkled towards the holy place seven times, though it came not actually into it; so in the atonement through which we find peace of conscience there is blood, for "without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." Death was our doom, and death for death did Christ render unto the eternal God. It is by a sense of our Lord's substitutionary death that the conscience becomes purged from dead works. Furthermore, the heifer itself was offered. After the blood was sprinkled towards the tabernacle by the priestly hand, the victim itself was utterly consumed. Read now our text: "Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered up Himself without spot unto God." Our Lord Jesus Christ gave not merely His death, but His whole person, with all that appertained unto it, to be our substitutionary sacrifice. Oh, what a sacrifice is this! It is added that our Lord did this "by the eternal Spirit." The heifer was not a spiritual but a carnal offering. The creature knew nothing of what was being done, it was the involuntary victim; but Christ was under the impulses of the Holy Ghost, which was poured upon Him, and He was moved by Him to render up Himself a sacrifice for sin. Hence somewhat of the greater efficacy of His death, for the willinghood of the sacrifice greatly enhanced its value. To give you another, and probably a better, interpretation of the words, there was an eternal spirit linked with the manhood of Christ our Lord, and by it He gave Himself unto God. He was God as well as man, and that eternal Godhead of His lent an infinite value to the sufferings of His human frame, so that He offered Himself as a whole Christ, in the energy of His eternal power and Godhead. One who is both God and man has given Himself as a sacrifice for us. Is not the sacrifice inconceivably greater in the fact than it is in the type? Ought it not most effectually to purge our conscience? After they had burnt the heifer they swept up the ashes. All that could be burnt had been consumed. Our Lord was made a sacrifice for sin, what remains of Him? Not a few ashes, but the whole Christ, which still remaineth, to die no more, but to abide for ever unchanged. He came uninjured through the fires, and now He ever liveth to make intercession for us. It is the application of His eternal merit which makes us clean, and is not that eternal merit inconceivably greater than the ashes of an heifer ever can be? 3. As the defilement and the sacrifice were greater, so the

purging is much greater. The purifying power of the blood of Christ must be much greater than the purging power of the water mixed with the ashes of the heifer. For that could not purge conscience from sin, but the application of the atonement can do it, and does do it. Now, what is all this business about? This slain heifer —I understand that, for it admitted the unclean Israelites to the courts of the Lord—but this Christ of God offering Himself without spot by the eternal Spirit —what is that for? The object of it is a service far higher: it is that we may be purged from dead works to serve the living God. The dead works are gone, God absolves you, you are clean, and you feel it. What then? Will you not abhor dead works for the future? Sin is death. Labour to keep from it. Inasmuch as you are delivered from the yoke of sin, go forth and serve God. Since He is the living God, and evidently hates death, and makes it to be an uncleanness to Him, get you to living things. Offer to God living prayers, and living tears, love Him with living love, trust Him with living faith, serve Him with living obedience. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Self-oblation the true idea of obedience*:—Christ offered up Himself. He was both Priest and Sacrifice. The atoning oblation was His perfect obedience, both in life and death, to the will of His Father. From chap. x. 5–7 we learn that the mystery of atonement began from the first act of humiliation, when He laid aside His glory, and was made in the likeness of men. It contains, therefore, His incarnation, His hope of earthly obedience, His spiritual and bodily sufferings, His death and resurrection. He overcame sin by His holiness, by perfect and perpetual obedience, by a spotless life, by His mastery in the wilderness, by His agony in the garden. His whole life was a part of the one sacrifice which, through the eternal Spirit, He offered to His Father; namely, the reasonable and spiritual sacrifice of a crucified will. I. First we may learn INTO WHAT RELATION TOWARDS GOD THE CHURCH HAS BEEN BROUGHT BY THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST. The whole mystical body is offered up to the Father, as "a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." Whatsoever was fulfilled by the Head is partaken of by the body. He was an oblation, and the Church is offered up in Him. Even now the Church is crucified, buried, raised and exalted to sit with Christ in heavenly places. In the same act of self-oblation He comprehended us, and offered us in Himself. And in this is our justification; namely, in our relation, as "a living sacrifice," to God through Christ, for whose sake we, all fallen though we be, are accounted righteous in the court of heaven. II. The next truth we may learn is, THE NATURE OF THE HOLY SACRAMENTS. Under one aspect they are gifts of spiritual grace from God to us; under another they are acts of self-oblation on our part to God. They are the emphatic expressions and the efficient means of realising the great mystery of atonement in us. The faithful in early times, in the very act of offering up the living sacrifice of themselves, saw in the bread and wine of the eucharist an expressive symbol of self-oblation, and a fulfilment of the prophet's words (Mal. i. 11). PRACTICAL INFERENCES: 1. We may learn from this view of the great act of atonement, what is the nature of the faith by which we become partakers of it, or, in other words, by which we are justified. Plainly it is not a faith which indolently terminates in a belief that Christ died for us; or which intrusively assumes to itself the office of applying to its own needs the justifying grace of the atonement. "It is God that justifieth." All that faith does at the outset, in man's justification, is to receive God's sovereign gift. 2. We may thus learn what is the true point of sight from which to look at all the trials of life. We hear people perpetually lamenting, uttering passionate expressions of grief at visitations which, they say, have come on them unlooked for, and stunned them by their suddenness: one has lost his possessions, another his health, another his powers of sight or hearing, another "the desire of his eyes," parents, children, husbands, wives, friends; each sorrowing for their own, and all alike viewing their affliction from the narrow point of their own isolated being: they seem to be hostile invasions of their peace; mutilations of the integrity of their lot; untimely disruptions of their fondest ties, and the like. Now all this loose and faithless language arises from our not recognising the great law to which all these are to be referred. It is no more than this: that God is disposing of what has been offered up to Him in sacrifice: as, for instance, when a father or mother bewails the taking away of a child, have they not forgotten that he was not their own? Did they not offer him at the font? Did not God promise to receive their oblation? What has He done more than take them at their word? And so likewise, when any true servants of Christ are taken away, what is it but a token of His favourable acceptance of their self-oblation? While they were with us they were not ours, but His: they were permitted to abide with us, and to gladden

our hearts awhile; but they were living sacrifices, and ever at the point of being caught up to heaven. And so, lastly, in all that befalls ourselves, we too are not our own, but His; all that we call ours is His; and when He takes it from us—first one loved treasure, then another, till He makes us poor, and naked, and solitary—let us not sorrow that we are stripped of all we love, but rather rejoice for that God accepts us: let us not think that we are left here, as it were, unreasonably alone, but remember that, by our bereavements, we are in part translated to the world unseen. He is calling us away, and sending on our treasures. The great law of sacrifice is embracing us, and must have its perfect work. Let us pray Him, therefore, to shed abroad in us the mind that was in Christ; that, our will being crucified, we may offer up ourselves to be disposed of as He sees best. (*Archdeacon H. E. Manning.*) *The more excellent ministry*:—Stress must be laid on each of three particulars: Christ offered Himself; in offering Himself He presented a spotless offering; He offered Himself through an eternal spirit. I. First, then, Christ's sacrifice possesses incomparable worth and virtue because the victim was HIMSELF. In this one fact is involved that Christ's sacrifice possessed certain moral attributes altogether lacking in the Levitical sacrifices: voluntariness and beneficent intention, the freedom of a rational being with a mind of his own and capable of self-determination, the love of a gracious personality in whom the soul of goodness dwells. Christ's sacrifice was an affair of mind and heart—in one word, of spirit. II. Christ's sacrifice possesses incomparable worth and virtue, secondly, because in Himself He presented to God a SPOTLESS sacrifice—spotless in the moral sense. He was a perfectly holy, righteous Man, and He showed His moral purity precisely by being loyal and obedient even to the point of enduring death for righteousness' sake. The victims under the law were spotless also, but merely in a physical sense. Christ's spotlessness, on the contrary, was ethical, a quality belonging not to His body, but to His spirit. III. We are now prepared in some measure to understand the third ground of the value attached to Christ's sacrifice; viz., that He offered Himself THROUGH AN ETERNAL SPIRIT. Putting aside for a moment the epithet "eternal," we see that Christ's sacrifice was one in which spirit was concerned, as opposed to the legal sacrifices in which flesh and blood only were concerned. It was a free, loving, holy spirit. But the writer, it is observable, omits mention of these moral qualities, and employs instead another epithet, which in the connection of thought it was more important to specify, and which there was little chance of his readers supplying for themselves. The epithet "eternal" suggests the thought: the act performed by Jesus in offering Himself may, as a historical event, become old with the lapse of ages; but the spirit in which the act was done can never become a thing of the past. The blood shed was corruptible; but the spirit which found expression in Christ's self-sacrifice is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and in its eternal self-identity lends to the priestly deed imperishable merit and significance. This fitly chosen phrase thus makes the one sacrifice of Christ cover with its efficacy all prospective sin. But it does more than that. It is retrospective as well as prospective, and makes the sacrifice valid for the ages going before. For an eternal spirit is independent of time, and gives to acts done through its inspiration validity for all time. One virtue more must be ascribed to this magic phrase, "through an eternal spirit." It helps us over the difficulty created by the fact that Christ's real self-sacrifice took place on earth, and yet ideally belongs to the heavenly sanctuary. When we think of Christ's sacrifice as offered through an eternal spirit, we see that we may place it where we please, in earth or in heaven, on Calvary or on high, as suits our purpose. Do you insist that Christ's proper offering of Himself took place in the celestial sanctuary after the ascension, even as Aaron's proper offering was the blood-sprinkling within the most holy place? I reply, Be it so; but it took place there through an eternal spirit which gave to it its value; and if we want to know what that spirit was, we must look to the earthly life of obedience and love culminating in the crucifixion, wherein it found its perfect manifestation. Through this eternal spirit Christ offered Himself before He came into the world, when He was in the world, after He left the world. It was as a spirit He offered Himself, as a self-conscious, free, moral personality; and His offering was a spirit revealed through a never-to-be-forgotten act of self-surrender, not the literal blood shed on Calvary, which in itself possessed no more intrinsic value than the blood of Levitical victims. Thus interpreted, the term "spirit" unfolds the implicit significance of "Himself," and gives us the *rationale* of all real value in sacrifice. It can have no value, we learn therefrom, unless mind, spirit be revealed in it. Death, blood, in its own place, may have

theological significance, but not apart from spirit. It goes without saying that the idea of spirit is essentially ethical in its import. Voluntariness and beneficent intention enter into the very substance of Christ's sacrifice. Another remark still may be added. In the light of the foregoing discussion we can see the vital significance of the death of Christ in connection with His priestly work. The least priestly act of the Levitical system becomes here the most important, the humble, non-sacerdotal first step the essence of the whole matter. Through the death of the Victim His spirit finds its culminating expression, and it is that spirit which constitutes the acceptableness of His sacrifice in the sight of God. On the epithet "eternal" attached to "spirit" it is not necessary further to enlarge. As the term "spirit" guarantees the real worth of Christ's offering as opposed to the putative value of Levitical sacrifices, so the term "eternal" vindicates for it absolute worth. It lifts that offering above all limiting conditions of space and time, so that viewed *sub specie æternitatis* it may, as to its efficacy, be located at will at any point of time, and either in earth or in heaven. "Eternal" expresses the speculative element in the writer's system of thought, as "spirit" expresses the ethical. (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*)

Purge your conscience.—*The purging of the conscience*:—I. First, consider THE SAD HINDRANCE WHICH LIES IN THE WAY OF THE SERVICE OF GOD. The apostle does not say, purge your conscience from evil works, because he wanted to turn our minds to the type of defilement by death, and therefore he said, "dead works." I think he had a further motive; for he was not altogether indicating wilful transgressions of the law, but those acts which are faulty because they are not performed as the result of spiritual life. I see a difference between sinful works and dead works which we may perhaps be able to bring into light as we go on. Suffice it to say for the moment, that sin is the corruption which follows necessarily upon spiritual death. First, the work is dead, and soon it rots into actual sin. 1. Upon our consciences there rests, first of all, a sense of past sin. Even if a man wishes to serve God, yet until his conscience is purged, he feels a dread of God which prevents his doing so. He has sinned, and God is just, and therefore he is ill at ease. 2. On the back of this comes the consciousness that we ourselves are sinful, and inclined to evil. We say rightly, "Who shall bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." We feel that we have not that perfect purity of heart and cleanness of hands which would fit us for the holy place; nor can we ever be saved from this fear, so as to take up our heavenly priesthood and serve God, till the precious blood of Christ shall be applied to the conscience, nor until we feel that in Christ we are accounted righteous. 3. But, besides this consciousness of sin and sinfulness, we are conscious of a measure of deficient life. About us there is a body of death. Dead works are the things we most require to be purged from. Without going into what the world calls actual sin, we carry death about us, from which we daily cry to be delivered. For instance, our prayer in its form and fashion may be right enough, but if it lacks earnestness, it will be a dead work. An alms given to the poor is good as a work of humanity, but it will be only a dead work if a desire to be seen of men is found at the bottom of it. Are not the sins of our holy things glaring before our consciences this day? Unless we are purged therefrom by the blood of Christ, who offered up Himself without spot to God, how can we serve this living God, and be as priests and kings unto Him? Once more: I told you that the Israelites were defiled by even touching a dead bone, and this teaches us the easiness of being polluted. We have to come into contact with evil in our daily dealings with ungodly men. Can we think of them, can we speak to them, can we trade with them, without incurring defilement? Nay, I go further: do we, as Christian men washed by Christ, ever associate with one another without a measure of defilement? Can we meet together at our homes and feel, when we separate, that everything we have said was seasoned with salt and ministered to edification? Is there not some taint about our purest friends; and does not the touch of that corruption which still remaineth, even in the regenerate, tend to defile us? II. Now, I want to show, in the second place, WHAT IS THE TRUE PURGATION FROM THIS EVIL. Under the law there were several methods of purification. These things did purify the flesh, so that the man who had formerly contracted impurity might mix with his fellow-men in the congregation of the Lord. Now, if these matters were so effectual for the purifying of the flesh, well does the apostle ask, "How much more shall the blood of Christ purge our conscience from dead works?" Why does he say, "How much more?" 1. First, because it is more truly purifying. There was not truly anything of purification about the blood of bulls and of goats. When the Lord Jesus gave His body, soul, and spirit a sacrifice

for sin, then in that deed there was a real atonement made, a true and effectual expiation was offered. Therefore he says "How much more?" if the shadow cleansed the flesh, how much more shall the substance cleanse the spirit? 2. Moreover, our Lord Christ offered a much greater sacrifice. One reason why the precious blood has such power to put away sin is because it is the blood of Christ, that is, of God's Anointed, God's Messiah, the Sent One of the Most High. Notice, it is not put concerning Christ that His life is purifying, though it had a wonderful relation thereto; nor is it said that His prayers are purifying, albeit everything is ascribable unto the intercession of our risen Lord; nor is it said that His resurrection is purifying; but the whole stress is laid upon "the blood of Christ," signifying thereby death, death as a victim, death with reference to sin. See in His agony and His death your joy and life. It is the blood of Christ that alone can make you fit to serve the living and true God. Note what it was that Christ offered, and be sure that you lay great stress upon it. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered *Himself?*" What a splendid word that is! Did He offer His blood? yes, but He offered "Himself." Did He offer His life? yes, but He specially offered "Himself." Now, what is "Christ"? The "anointed of God." In His wondrous complex nature He is God and man. He is Prophet, Priest, and King. He is—but time would fail me to tell you what He is; but whatever He is He offered Himself. The entire Christ was offered by Christ. 3. It is said in our text that this offering of Himself was "without spot." The sacrificial act by which He presented Himself was a faultless one, without spot. There was nothing in what Christ was Himself, and nothing in the way in which He offered Himself, that could be objected to of God: it was "without spot." 4. Further, it is added that He did this "by the eternal Spirit." His eternal Godhead gave to His offering of Himself an extreme value which otherwise could not have been attached to it. Observe, then, the sacrifice was a spiritual one. He entered with His whole heart into the substitution which involved obedience unto death. "For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross." It was by His Spirit that He offered up a true and real sacrifice; for He says, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." But then you must not forget that this Spirit was Divine—"by the eternal Spirit." The Spirit of Christ was an eternal Spirit, for it was the Godhead. There was conjoined with His deity the natural life of a perfect Man; but the eternal Spirit was His highest Self. What limit can you set to the merit of One who by the eternal Spirit offered up Himself? What bound can there be to a sacrifice Divine? You can no more set a limit to our Lord's sacrifice than to Godhead itself. Once more, I must call to your notice the use of that word "eternal,"—"who by the eternal Spirit"—for it gives to the offering of Christ an endless value. Now, all this tends to make us feel how clean are they who are purged by this sacrifice which our Lord offered once for all to God. 5. Once more upon this point: as I have shown you that the sacrifice of Christ was more real and greater, so I want you to notice that it was better applied; for the ashes of an heifer mixed with water were sprinkled on the bodies of the unclean; the blood of bulls and of goats was sprinkled upon the flesh, but neither of them could reach the heart. It is not possible for a material thing to touch that which is immaterial; but the sufferings of Christ, offered up through His eternal Spirit, were not only of a corporeal but of a spiritual kind, and they reach, therefore, to the cleansing of our spirit. That precious blood comes home to us in this way: first, we understand somewhat of it. The Israelite, when he was purged by the ashes of the red cow, could only say to himself, "I am made clean by these ashes, because God has appointed that I shall be, but I do not know why." But you and I can say that we are made clean through the blood of Christ, because there is in that blood an inherent efficacy; there is in the vicarious suffering of Christ on our behalf an inherent power to honour the law of God, and to put away sin. Then again, we appreciate and approve of this way of cleansing. The Israelite could not tell why the ashes of a red heifer purified him; he did not object to it, but he could not express any great appreciation of the method. We, as we see our Lord suffering in our stead, fall at His feet in reverent wonder. We love the method of salvation by substitution; we approve of expiation by the Mediator. Further, it comes home to us in this way: we read in the Word of God that "he that believeth in Him hath everlasting life," and we say to ourselves, "Then we have everlasting life, for we have believed in Him." We read, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin," and our conscience whispers, "We are cleansed from all sin." Conscience finds rest and

peace, and our whole consciousness becomes that of a forgiven and accepted person, with whom God is well pleased. III. Consider THE KIND OF SERVICE WHICH WE NOW RENDER. After so much preparing, how shall we behave ourselves in the house of God? You should present unto the Lord the constant worship of living men. You see it is written, "Purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Are you not under bonds to serve Him? From this time forth you should not have a pulse that does not beat to His praise, nor a hair on your head that is unconsecrated to His name, nor a single moment of your time which is not used for His glory. Should not our service be rendered in the full strength of our new life? Let us have no more dead works, no more dead singing, no more dead praying, no more dead preaching, no more dead hearing. Let our religion be as warm, and constant, and natural as the flow of the blood in our veins. A living God must be served in a living way. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The purification of the conscience:*—The offerings in the temple could not have satisfied the conscience; the offerings of Christ do. There are two aspects of sin which trouble the conscience. Sin by religious teachers is thought of as disturbing our relations with God. It stops our convictions, and prevents His Fatherly grace from coming to us. Another aspect of sin takes a place among the forces in the life of man to swell the sum of evil examples, to make virtue more difficult, and vice more natural. No repentance can ever recall what we have done, or make it cease to be a source of evil in the world. There is danger in the other extreme, but Christ is able to deal with the conscience, and set us right in our relations with God. There are principally three proposals for setting the relation right. They are—by man's contribution, by God's acceptance, and by Christ's transforming power. In the early ages of religion, when outward circumstances were held to be an indication of the favour or disfavour of God, the idea of propitiation took shape. They brought Him what they prized most, and supposed that He would prize it the same, and continued in this until the return of sunshine assured them that the Deity's wrath was assuaged. On the other side, some imagine that sin lapses after a term of years, or that by a certain system disorder in some things is balanced by the order in others. It is not that twenty years ago a certain deed was done: it is that in your sin you disclosed something in you which remains in you still. Let the same circumstances recur and your weakness reappears. In a very different age there grew up another theory of setting man right with God. Man had received life and power from God, and had used them against Him, and so they thought on the principle of displaying compensation against that which has to be compensated for. Thus there grew up acceptilation, a sort of diminutive of acceptation. God takes it as the best that can be given, and declares the account clear. But conscience will not accept such assurance. It still recognises sin clinging to it, and so long as that sin is there, conscience is not cleansed. The third proposal is in the transforming power of Christ. The blood of Christ cleanses the conscience. "If any man be in Christ," says Paul, "he is a new creature." Paul's writings are full of similar verses, in which he expresses the reasonable and joyful satisfaction of conscience. He says that sin is forgiven to all men in Christ Jesus. The relation that ought to exist between God and the soul is then restored. (*W. M. Macgregor, M.A.*) **Dead works.**—*Dead works:*—1. Dead things stink. If we meet with a dead carcase by the way, we hold our noses: even so sins, blasphemy, profanations, pride, envy, hatred, malice, covetousness; these stink in the nostrils of God Almighty: therefore let them be detested by us. 2. Dead men are forgotten. "I am as a dead man out of mind." So let not our minds run on these dead works, on the profits of the world, the pleasures of the flesh: let these dead things be no more remembered. 3. That which is dead must be buried: "Give me a place to bury my dead out of my sight," as Abraham said to the sons of Heth (Gen. xxiii. 4). Idolatry, blasphemy, all sins, are dead things, therefore let them be buried. 4. Dead things are abhorred of us. We shun dead things by the way, we will not come near them: so let these dead works be abhorred of us. 5. Dead things are heavy: a dead man. So these lie heavy on our consciences. Cain, Judas: they were not able to bear that intolerable burden. (*W. Jones, D.D.*)

Vers. 15–28. **Mediator of the new testament.**—*The two mediators:*—I. IN WHAT RESPECTS JESUS AND MOSES ARE MEDIATORIALLY ALIKE. 1. Both of Divine appointment. 2. Both give to the world the notion of a covenant with God. 3. Both proposed a covenant that was fundamentally the same. II. IN WHAT RESPECTS JESUS AND MOSES ARE MEDIATORIALLY DIFFERENT. 1. There is a difference of

natures. 2. Jesus is a Mediator with individuals. 3. Jesus is a Mediator giving to man the fullest possible knowledge of God. 4. Jesus is a Mediator giving to man sufficiency of power. (*D. Young, B.A.*) *The old and the new*:—It was a part of the mission of the apostles not to transfer the allegiance of the Jews from one God to another, but to teach them how to serve the same God in a higher dispensation, under a noble disclosure of His character, and by new and better methods. It was to be the same heart and the same God; but there was a new and living way opened. The old was good, the new was better. The new was not an antagonism of the old, but only its outgrowth, related to it as the blossom and the fruit are to the root and the stalk. The old was local and national in its prime intents, and in its results. The new was for all ages. The old was a system of practices. It aimed at conduct—of course implying a good cause for conduct. The new is a system of principles, and yet not principles in a rigid philosphical sense, but principles that are great moral impulses or tendencies of the heart. The old built men for this world. Therefore it hardly looked beyond this world. The whole force of the new dispensation is derived from that which scarcely appeared at all in the old—its supereminent doctrine of the future. That is its very enginery. The aims of Christianity are supramundane. The motives are drawn from immortality—its joys, honours, promises, rewards. The old addressed the conscience through fear, and soon overreached its aim, losing some by under-action, and others —and the better natures—by over-action. What the law could not do, in that it was weak, it is declared, God sent His own Son to do. The new aims at the very springs of moral power in the soul, and that through love. It is a total change, it is an absolute difference, in this regard. The old was a dispensation of secular morals. It lived in the past. The new is a system of aspirations. It lives in the future. We are the children of the new testament, and not of the old. Woe be to us if, living in these later days, we find ourselves groping in the imperfections of the old testament, instead of springing up with all the vitality and supereminent manhood which belongs to the new testament. We are the children of a living Saviour. We are a brood over which He stretches His wings. We ought to have more than a creed which is only a modern representation of an old ordinance or institution. We ought to have something more than an ordinance. To be a disciple of the new testament is to have a living Head. It is to have a vital connection with that Head. It is to be conscious, while all nature speaks of God, and while all the exercises of religion assist indirectly, that the main power of a true religion in the soul is the soul's connection with a living God. Ye are the children of the new and not of the old. Let your life mount up toward God. (*H. W. Beecher.*) **They which are called.**—*Called*:—To every one of you I say, you are called. You are called because you were baptized as infants, dedicated to the service of the gospel, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. You are called because you have been instructed from the days of childhood to the present hour to believe in the Lord Jesus. You are called because you are in a Christian land, surrounded by those who own that the gospel is the word of God, and having also many within your sight or hearing, who live according to the will of Christ. You are called by the ordinances of the Christian Church, by the voice of the Christian ministry; by the word and sacraments of Christ, and by the preaching of those pastors who address you by His commission, and in His name. This day, this hour I call you in His behalf; therefore you are called. This is your calling. May God give you grace to hear! May God help you to believe His promise! May God make you to enjoy His glory. (*C. Girdlestone, M.A.*) *Effectual calling*:—God draws His people, not with force, as mere machines, but "with the cords of a man and with the bands of love." The subject may be best unfolded by a familiar illustration. How was it that Jacob was drawn into Egypt? He was made to feel the pressure of a grievous famine; he was informed that there was plenty of corn in Egypt, and that his dearly-beloved Joseph was the lord of all that land, and that he disposed of the good things to whomsoever he would. He was told, moreover, that Joseph had expressly invited him, and had sent waggons for the conveyance of his family, together with abundant provisions for the way; and, finally, he was assured that, at the end of this journey, all the good of the land of Egypt should be his. Did he need, after this, to have a chain fastened round him to be dragged into Egypt? No; all that he needed was faith to believe the tidings; and when once he was persuaded of the truth of these things he was willing of himself to go into that good land. Thus God draws sinners. He causes them to feel their need of mercy; He

informs them that Jesus Christ has all heaven at His disposal; that He has sent to invite them, assuring them of all that is needful by the way, and all the glory of heaven at the end. Thus a thorough belief of these truths bends the most stubborn heart, and overcomes the most reluctant mind. (*C. Simeon.*) **A testament is of force after men are dead.**—*Christ's testament:*—I. CHRIST'S WILL IS EMBODIED IN A WRITTEN RECORD. 1. The record gives a definite meaning and fixed character to the mind of Christ. 2. The record gives to the mind of Christ an abiding existence among us. 3. The written Word renders the will of Christ accessible to all. II. CHRIST'S WILL IS EMBODIED IN AN AUTHENTIC RECORD. III. CHRIST'S TESTAMENT IS A WRITTEN AND AUTHENTIC RECORD OF WHAT HE HAS BEQUEATHED TO MEN. There are great bequests for each of us. We are guilty—Christ has willed our forgiveness. We are enslaved—Christ has willed our freedom. We are sorrowful—Christ has willed our peace. We are dying—Christ has willed us life for ever. IV. CHRIST'S TESTAMENT HAS BEEN RATIFIED AND BROUGHT INTO FULL AND EVERLASTING OPERATION BY HIS OWN DEATH. (*John Davies.*) *Christ's testamentary covenant:*—It seems to us that St. Paul took advantage of the double meaning of the Greek word which he uses, and illustrates his subject the more copiously by employing it in one place for a "covenant," and in another for a "testament"; and we shall possibly, as we advance, find reason to conclude, that the full sense of the passage is only to be evolved by our attaching to the word its double signification—by bearing in mind that a "covenant" and "testament" are alike designated by the word which the apostle employs. After all, there is not the wide difference which, at the first sight, we may suppose between a covenant and a testament. If I make a will, I may, in one sense, be said to covenant and agree to give certain things to certain parties upon the condition of my death; so that a testament is virtually a species of covenant. And if, on the other hand, two parties enter into a covenant, and the terms of this covenant require that one of them should die, you all see that, without any great forcing of language, the covenant may be considered as the testament or will of the sacrificed individual. God made a covenant with the Israelites, but then this covenant was ratified by the shedding of blood; in other words, there must be death to give the covenant its validity; and the covenant which required death in order to its completeness, might, as we have shown you, without anything overstrained in language, be designated a "testament." So that under these limitations, and under these conditions, we can attach the name of a "testament" to that covenant which God made with Israel at Sinai. The exhibition which we are called upon to survey is that of our Saviour under the character of a testator; as the maker, that is, of a will, which could only become valid by the death of the party who made it. Now you will see at once that there is a peculiarity in this exhibition which marks it off from other representations of the scheme of human salvation. If Christ Jesus is displayed as bequeathing to the world legacies, which legacies could not be paid except after His death, then it may be said that it was the fact, the simple historical fact of His death, and not any merit which there was in that death, which entailed the large blessings on the race of mankind. And if by parity of reasoning the Redeemer is to be considered as a testator, or will-maker, does not the representation take away from the meritoriousness of His death, and, at least, show that it was not because His sufferings were expiatory and precious that such and such blessings have been obtained for us? A few words will suffice for the removal of this objection. If a man is worth £1,000 he may bequeath me that £1,000; and thus his death, considered as the mere separation of his soul from his body, will make me the owner of the money. But take the following case which is perfectly supposable: a criminal is sentenced to die, but is allowed, if he can, to find a substitute. He offers £1,000 for a substitute, and an individual comes forward and agrees on these terms to die in his stead. Now certainly this substitute may will away the £1,000, and yet nothing but his death entitles him to the £1,000. He might, for example, have long striven in vain to earn a livelihood for his family; he might then, calculating that his family would be more benefited by his death than his life, determine to sacrifice himself in order to procure for them the proper remuneration; and, without question, he might make a will which would secure to his children the property to which the value of his death would alone give him right. He would thus unite the character of a testator and of a man who purchases, by dying, the goods which he bequeathes. Now this supposed case finds its precise counterpart in the matter of our redemption. The blessings of the gospel could only be procured by the sufferings and death of the Mediator. Hence, unquestionably, the blessings which Christ bequeathed were

blessings which His death, and nothing but His death, could give Him right to bestow; but, nevertheless, He might still be a testator, or still make a will. In dying He might bequeath what He was to obtain by dying; and thus real inconsistency, after all, there is none, between regarding Christ as the maker of the will, and at the same time as procuring by His death the blessings which He made over to His people. In what sense, then, did Christ make a testament or will, or what fidelity is there in such an account of the scheme of our redemption? Now we would, first of all, remark that there is nothing more frequent in Scripture than the speaking of true believers "as heirs of God," or as brought into such a relationship to the Almighty that heaven becomes theirs by the rights of inheritance. You cannot fail immediately to observe that the correspondence is most exact between this account of the believer as an heir and the representation of Christ as a testator. In dying Christ made us heirs. But this is exactly what would have been done by a testament; and, therefore, it is not possible that the effects of Christ's death should be more clearly represented than by the figure of Christ as a testator. But is there then, indeed, no registered will, no document to which we can refer as the testament of the Mediator? We shall not hesitate to say that there is not a single promise in the New Testament which ought not to be regarded as a line or codicil in the will of the Redeemer. If you ask us for a written testament we carry you along with us to the archives of the Bible, and we take out of it declarations which ensure to the faithful the crown and the rapture, and we join them into one continuous discourse, and we say to you, Behold the last will of the Saviour. What, we further ask, is this but an exact parallel to that which would take place in the case of a testament? Suppose you were permitted to read a will made in your own favour; there might be the bequeathment of a rich and noble estate, there might be the coffers of wealth and the caskets of jewellery consigned to your possession; but you would never think that you had a right to the domain, and you would never be bold enough to put forward a claim to the gold and the pearl, unless you knew that the testator was dead, and that thereby a force had been given to the testament. So that the correspondence is most accurate between the promises of Scripture and the consignments of a will. Had Christ (if we may bring forward such an idea) while suspended on the Cross, and exhausting the wrath which had gone forth against a disloyal creation, dictated a testamentary document enumerating the blessings which He bequeathed to all who believe on His name, not until He had bowed the head, and yielded up the ghost, would this register of the legacy have lived, overpassing in its wealth all the thoughts of created intelligences, and given right to a single child of our race to look and hope for the heritage of the redeemed. A testament is but a combination of promises becoming valid by the death of the promiser, we give the truest description of the promises of the Bible when we define them as "the last will and testament of Christ our Lord." Now we would refer for a moment to that connection which we show to subsist between a covenant and testament. The Father and the Son had, from all eternity, entered into a covenant; the Father engaging, on the performance of certain conditions, that blessings should be placed at the disposal of the Son for the seed of the apostate. The covenant between the persons of the Trinity engaged for the pardon and acceptance of all who, in every age, should believe on the Son. Hence, you must all perceive, that what was the covenant between the Father and Son was also a document in favour of man; but, certainly, the covenant could only become valid by death; that in the fulness of time the Son should die, being its grand and fundamental article. And if as a covenant it could only become valid by death, then as a document in favour of man it could only become valid by death; but that document in favour of a party, which only becomes valid by death, is, most strictly, a will or testament. So that by one and the same act Christ Jesus performed His covenant with the Father, and made His testament in favour of man; that, in short, which was a covenant considered relatively to God, was a testament considered relatively to man. It obtained blessings from God; it consigned blessings to man, and both equally through death. You cannot, therefore, view Christ as executing a covenant without also viewing Him as executing a testament. What He gained as a covenantor He disposed of as a testator; and whilst we say of Him, as making an agreement with God, "Where a covenant is, there must be the death of the covenantor," we say of Him, as bestowing gifts on men, "where a testament is, there must be the death of the testator." (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Christ's last will and testament*:—I. We have to inquire IN WHAT SENSE OR SENSES MAY WE SPEAK OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AS A TESTATOR. What

is involved in this idea? If a will is made, two things are implied—that there is something to leave: that there is some measure of interest felt in those who are mentioned as legatees. 1. Now in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ, we see one who has large and royal possessions, and who has these absolutely at His own disposal. All things are described as the property of Christ. All things were made by Him and for Him. Jesus Christ has power and authority to bestow all gospel blessings and privileges upon His people. He gives them grace here; He will crown them with glory hereafter. 2. And then, in making His will, Christ has distinctly in view those who are interested in its provisions—His friends, His relations—those for whom, though they had no natural claim upon Him, the Saviour has bound Himself to provide. And we have the means of determining very exactly who these are. His friends are those who love Him, and who show their love by keeping His commaudments. 3. A testator, in making his last will and testament, so far as there is in it any different disposition of property, supersedes, renders null and void, any will that may have been previously made. So Jesus Christ disannulled the law of the old covenant by establishing the new. Let us see to it that we put in our claim under the last will and testament of Christ. Let us not expect to receive under the law what can only come to us as a matter of free grace, under the gospel. 4. As in the case of a merely human testator, so in the case of Jesus Christ—where a testament is, for it to have force, for it to take effect, there must needs be the death of the testator; "otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." In this particular instance there was need for the death of the testator on several different accounts. Among men it is the death of the testator which renders a testament effectual. And so this testament was confirmed and ratified by the death of Jesus Christ, and but for that death it could have had no force at all. And as after death a will may not be altered or revoked by the testator, but remains the expression of his mind to be carried out as exactly as possible, so it may not be interfered with by others. You may question its meaning, you may question whether it be the will of him who is declared to have drawn it up, you may question his right to make it, or make it in that precise form, yet, admitting it as a will, though it be only a human will, "no man disannulleth or addeth thereunto." How much more truly is this the case with the testament, the will of Christ! And we must bear in mind, in the case of this testament, that there was a necessity for the death of Christ, which does not exist in the case of any ordinary testament. The death of Christ not merely rendered His will irrevocable, and afforded the heirs of promise a way of entering upon the enjoyment of their inheritance, as the death of every testator does, but there was this peculiarity —the very blessings which were disposed of by the will of Christ were secured and purchased by His death. A testator appoints executors in trust, who undertake, according to their ability, to see that all the provisions of his will are faithfully carried out. The Father and the Holy Ghost engage to carry out the will of Christ, and are ever actually doing so. But there is a high and important sense in which Christ is His own executor. "He ever liveth" to carry out those gracious designs which find changeless expression in His last will and testament. In the record of our Saviour's visible residence among men, we are told only "of all that Jesus began, both to do and to teach." II. Having considered Christ as the testator, let us now look at THE GOSPEL AS THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF CHRIST. We are presented with the will of Christ, not as so much mere hearsay—not as a vague and floating tradition—not as the "lingering echo" of His much-loved voice—not as a general and unaccredited expression of His intention: we have it in a written record, an authentic document. It is necessary that a human will should be written. And though it has been determined that an oral will, under certain circumstances (as in the case of soldiers on actual service, or mariners at sea), is valid, if properly attested, yet that even must be reduced to a written form. And so have we the will of Christ embodied in words of human speech. Nor can we be too thankful that it has been so handed down to us. It is not enough that a will and testament be written, it must be attested; it must be proved to be authentic and genuine. It must be shown to be the will of that very person whose will it purports to be. This last will and testament of Christ is proved by much concurrent testimony. The gospel of the great salvation, "which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both by signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will." I feel that I am safe in affirming that the proof which sustains the testament of Christ is immeasurably stronger and

more convincing than that which sustains any human and earthly will. There has been a practical proof of a twofold kind. For eighteen hundred years and more this will has been repeatedly disputed by the enemies of Christ. The wit and wisdom and science of the world have done all that they could do to invalidate it, but all these attempts have been in vain. For the same period the will has been proved by Christ's friends. We might summon a great cloud of witnesses, all of whom could bear the testimony of personal experience. There is, in every testament, provision implied or expressed that it should, with all convenient speed, be published and made known. This is necessary, that the legatees may become aware of that which has been bequeathed to them, and be in a position to put in their claim. Christ has ordained and provided that His disciples should publish His will and testament to all the children of men. We are "put in trust with the gospel." We are bound to publish the glad tidings in every direction. And we ought to ask ourselves how far we are discharging this obligation. This will and testament of Christ informs us of all that is provided for us. All that we enjoy, we enjoy under this will; all spiritual blessings and privileges come to us as they are bequeathed by the Lord Jesus Christ. This will of Christ is our sure and sufficient title to all that we possess as Christian believers. The provisions of a will constitute an absolute title as far as it goes. If you would invalidate my right to what is bequeathed, you must go back and question the right of him who bequeathed it. And so, does any one question us as to our right to the spiritual privileges and possessions we enjoy, we reply by pointing to the last will and testament of Christ, and any further question must be raised with Christ Himself. We must not look for our title to our own merit—to anything we are, or have done—but to the will and testament of the Saviour. (*T. M. Morris.*) *Christ's will*:—I. THE ESTATE WHICH HE HAS LEFT BY IT. 1. The pardon of all sin. 2. The merit of His own most glorious righteousness. 3. His own most Holy Spirit. 4. But the most glorious part of the property bequeathed by Jesus to His people is that "inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away," which is "reserved for them in heaven." II. THE EVENT BY WHICH IT IS MADE OF FORCE. Because He hath "poured out His soul unto death," that His heirs enter into possession of the property which He hath left them. Indeed, the death of Christ has a bearing on the privileges He has bequeathed among His people beyond what can be said with reference to man's bequests. Man's death must happen before his will can take effect because, whilst he lives, he enjoys his property himself. But Christ's death is, as it were, the purchase-money of the estate which He bequeaths. His death therefore was as essential to their enjoyment of these blessings as the payment of the sum demanded is to the possession of a piece of land. III. THE PERSONS INTERESTED IN ITS PROVISIONS. 1. Convinced of sin. 2. Men of faith. 3. Men of grace. (*A. Roberts, M.A.*) *The testament of Christ*:—I. WHO IS THE TESTATOR? God's everlasting Son, of the same essence, perfections, and glory with the Father. II. WHAT ARE THE LEGACIES CONVEYED BY THIS COVENANT? In their nature and number they are very great. The sum of them is expressed thus (Rev. xxi. 7). They have the noblest spring and fountain with all its refreshing streams. In few words, the particular bequests in this great will of the Divine Testator, are complete deliverance from the legal consequences of sin—redemption from the curse of the law—the regeneration of our moral nature, and adoption into the household of faith—support under the trials of life—foretastes of eternal glory—and a good hope through grace which shall issue at length in the full possession of the heavenly kingdom, where every Divine and moral excellence will be perfected in the soul, and the rejoicing spirit for ever supremely happy before the throne of God. III. WHAT ARE THE TERMS ON WHICH THIS DIVINE TESTAMENT BESTOWS ITS BEQUESTS? In all deeds disposing of property among men, there are certain conditions to be observed, in order to establish the validity of the claim. In some cases, the estate is conveyed charged with various encumbrances; in others, the observance of sundry specified acts is necessary to the legal holding of the property. Some inherit by descent, others by favouritism of the testator. In the case before us all is of pure mercy and love. There are terms, but they are not hard. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the sole condition of eternal life; but that faith is productive of holiness, of love, of obedience, and of all good works. IV. WHERE IS THE PROOF OF THE VALIDITY OF THIS TESTAMENT OF LOVE? There must be attestation in every case of a human will. In the conveyance of property there must be the seal. If we were to set up a claim to the right of any possession in a court of law, the case would break down if the seal of the party from whom we plead our title was not appended to the

deed of conveyance. So, likewise, a will is of no effect, till proof be given of the decease of the testator. Our blessed Lord has made His death, resurrection, and ascension to glory, the seal of His will. To conclude, Have you any part or portion in this testament? Many are anxious to know if some aged and wealthy relative has remembered them in his will. In this will all are remembered, save those who wilfully exclude themselves. (*Am. Nat. Preacher.*) *The dying will of Jesus Christ*:—Perhaps a consideration of the legal ideas of the time when the Epistle to the Hebrews was written may help to explain this difficult passage. The idea of a will was derived by the Jews from the Romans, and they probably associated with it the various ideas which had grown up around the Roman will. Let us see what these were. The origin of the ordinary form of a Roman will, was the old testament per æs et libram, by which the father of the family (generally when on his death bed) sold his whole family and estate to some friend in whom he had confidence (called the heres), on trust to carry out his wishes (an obligation which apparently was not originally legally enforceable, though afterwards it was recognised by law). This form was still kept up, though probably at the time when the Epistle was written, the familiæ emptor was not generally the same person as the heres. Still the familiæ emptor represented the heres, and served to keep the theoretical nature of the transaction before all parties concerned, and the heres was looked upon not merely as a distributor of goods, but as the purchaser and master of the family. It is therefore suggested that the argument is somewhat as follows. By the first διαθήκη the Hebrews were purchased and became the bondsmen of the Law (an idea already rendered familiar to them by Exod. xv. 16 and Psa. lxxiv. 2); but by a new διαθήκη our Lord purchased them with His blood (Acts xx. 28), as the heres or familiæ emptor purchased the inheritance, and having thus purchased the inheritance of the Law, became the new master of the bondsmen of the Law, and the mediator, or executor, of a new dispensation. But inasmuch as the right of the heres can only come into operation after the death of the testator (the Law), it is evident that, if the new dispensation has begun, the Law is dead and is no longer their master. In fact, the line of argument seems similar to that in Rom. vii. 1–4. (*H. S. Keating.*) **The blood of the testament.**—The blood of Christ is the ruby gem of the ring of love. Infinite goodness finds its crown in the gift of Jesus for sinners. All God's mercies shine like stars, but the coming of His own Son to bleed and die for rebel men is as the sun in the heavens of Divine grace, outshining and illuminating all. I. Of that death and of that blood we shall speak in a fourfold way; and first, we shall take the verse as it would most accurately be translated—the blood of Jesus Christ IS THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT. There cannot be much doubt that the word rendered "testament" should be translated "covenant." It is the word used for covenant in other passages, and though our translators have used the word "testament," many critics go the length of questioning whether the word can bear that meaning at all. I think they are too rigid in their criticism, and that it does bear that meaning in this very chapter; but, still, all must admit that the first, and most usual meaning of the word, is "covenant." Therefore, we will begin with that reading, and consider the blood of Jesus as the blood of the covenant. 1. The blood proves the intense earnestness of God in entering into covenant with man in a way of grace. 2. It displayed the supreme love of God to man. Seeing that He entered into a contract of grace with man, He would let man see how His very heart went forth with every word of promise; and, therefore, He gave up that which was the centre of His heart, namely, Jesus Christ. 3. The blood of the covenant, next, speaks to us and confirms the Divine faithfulness. The main object of thus sealing the covenant with blood is to cause it to be "ordered in all things and sure." 4. The blood of the everlasting covenant is a guarantee to us of its infinite provision. There can be nothing lacking for a soul redeemed by Christ between here and heaven; for He that spared not His own Son, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? 5. This blood manifests the depth of the need which the covenant was meant to meet. II. Now, I take our translators' own words—"THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE TESTAMENT." 1. Jesus Christ has made a will, and He has left to His people large legacies by that will. Now, wills do not need to be sprinkled with blood, but wills do need that the testator should be dead, otherwise they are not of force. And so, first of all, the blood of Jesus Christ on Calvary is the blood of the testament, because it is a proof that He is dead, and therefore the testament is in force. If Jesus did not die, then the gospel is null and void. Not without the sprinkled blood

does the promise of salvation become yea and amen. 2. It is the blood of the testament, again, because it is the seal of His being seized and possessed of those goods which He has bequeathed to us: for, apart from His sacrifice, our Lord had no spiritual blessings to present to us. His death has filled the treasury of His grace. 3. The blood of the testament, again, is a direction as to His legatees. We see who are benefited under His will. He must have left them to the guilty because He has left a will that is signed and sealed in blood, and blood is for the remission of sin. III. But now I must speak upon that blood from another point of view. IT WAS THE BLOOD OF CLEANSING. This blood of the covenant and of the testament is a blood of purification to us. Wherever it is accepted by faith it takes away all past guilt. And this is but the beginning of our purification, for that same blood applied by faith takes away from the pardoned sinner the impurity which had been generated in his nature by habit. He ceases to love the sin which once he delighted in: he begins to loathe that which was formerly his choice joy. A love of purity is born within his nature; he sighs to be perfect, and he groans to think there should be about him tendencies towards evil. Temptations which once were welcomed are now resisted; baits which were once most fascinating are an annoyance to his spirit. The precious blood when it touches the conscience removes all sense of guilt, and when it touches the heart it kills the ruling power of sin. The more fully the power of the blood is felt, the more does it kill the power of sin within the soul. IV. And then it is THE BLOOD OF DEDICATION. On the day when Moses sprinkled the blood of the covenant on the people, and on the book, it was meant to signify that they were a chosen people set apart unto God's service. The blood made them holiness unto the Lord. Now, unless the blood is upon you, you are not saved; but if you are saved you are by that very fact set apart to be God's servant. "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." A saved man is a bought man; the property of Jesus. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The blood of sprinkling* :—This blood sprinkled on the people was a significant type and figure of the blood of our Saviour Christ, whereby the new testament is confirmed to us. 1. That was the blood of goats and heifers; this of Christ the immaculate Lamb of God. 2. Moses was the sprinkler of that blood: the Holy Ghost is the sprinkler of this. 3. That was sprinkled on the face or garments of the people: this on our hearts and consciences. 4. The aspertorium, the sprinkling stick, there was made of purple wool and hyssop: the aspertorium here is faith. With that doth the Spirit of God sprinkle on us the blood of Christ. 5. That sprinkling did but sanctify the outward man: this the hid man of the heart. 6. The force and power of that sprinkling lasted but a while: the efficacy of this sprinkling continueth for ever. Therefore let us all be desirous of this sprinkling. (*W. Jones, D.D.*)

Ver. 22. **Without shedding of blood is no remission.**—*No remission without blood* :—I. ESTABLISH THE FACT. 1. The observances of the ceremonial law show that men were saved by blood under the Mosaic dispensation. 2. The same way of salvation still obtains under the gospel. The typical sacrifices are indeed superseded by the one sacrifice of Christ. But it is through His sacrifice, and through it alone, that any man is saved. (1) This is capable of direct proof from Scripture (1 Sam. ii. 17, 25; Heb. x. 26, 27). (2) It may be yet further proved by arguments, which, though of an indirect nature, are not the less satisfactory than the foregoing. *a.* If salvation be not by blood the whole Mosaic ritual was absurd. *b.* If salvation be not by blood, the prophets grossly misrepresented their Messiah (Isa. liii.; Dan. ix. 24, 26; Zech. xiii. 1; John i. 29). *c.* If salvation be not by blood, the declarations of the apostles, yea, and of Christ Himself, are far more likely to mislead than to instruct the world. Christ expressly told His disciples that His "blood was shed for the remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 28). And the apostles uniformly declare that God purchased the Church with His own blood (Acts xx. 28); that our reconciliation to God (Eph. ii. 16; Col. i. 20), and our justification before Him (Rom. v. 9), together with our complete redemption (Eph. i. 7; Rev. v. 9), are by blood, even by the blood of Christ, that spotless Lamb (1 Pet. i. 19). II. IMPROVEMENT. 1. The evil of sin. 2. The folly of self-righteousness. 3. The encouragement which the gospel affords to sinners. 4. The wonderful love of Christ. (*Theological Sketch-Book.*) *On the atonement* :—I. The mercy of God, however dispensed to sinners, ARISES SOLELY FROM THE BENIGNITY OF HIS OWN NATURE. It is not to be considered as moved and

excited by the means which they must use to obtain it. These are only the channel of its communication. II. GOD HAVING PROVIDED A PARTICULAR WAY IN WHICH HE WILL MANIFEST HIS GRACE, THAT WAY DERIVES ITS EFFICACY FROM HIS APPOINTMENT. III. We may remark, THAT THE METHOD IN WHICH GOD DISPENSES HIS MERCY DOES NOT SUPERSEDE THE NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE. IV. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE MUST ALSO OBSERVE, THAT OUR REPENTANCE DOES NOT SUPERSEDE THE NECESSITY OF FAITH. V. I PRESUME NOT EVEN TO ATTEMPT ANY EXPLANATION OF THE REASONS WHICH INDUCED THE ALMIGHTY TO CHOOSE THIS PARTICULAR MODE FOR THE DISPENSATION OF HIS MERCY TO SINNERS. It becomes us rather humbly to acknowledge our ignorance, and adore the depth both of the wisdom and goodness of God. He has ordained it, and let us be satisfied and thankful. We are permitted, however, to discover some reasons which prove the propriety of such a mode of dispensing mercy. It manifests exceedingly the grace of God, by showing that our salvation is wholly owing to it. Boasting is thus entirely excluded. And who can say whether it may not be suited to the Divine purity and justice, to confer salvation on man, only by subjecting him to the deepest humiliation, by constraining him to feel his own entire inability to save himself, and thus compelling him to ascribe his salvation solely to the Divine mercy? (*J. Venn, M.A.*) *The atonement*:—I. ITS NECESSITY arises — 1. From man's sin, and its necessary consequences. 2. Man's utter incapability to atone for himself. 3. The demands of the law cannot be relaxed with honour to the lawgiver. II. THE NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT. The person atoning must—1. Be of superior dignity to the persons for whom the atonement is made. 2. He must possess the same nature as the offender. 3. He must have a right to dispose of his own life, and freely offer himself to this end. 4. He must approve of the law, and recognise the justice of its claim. 5. He must be free from all charges of personal guilt. 6. He must answer all the demands of the law, and endure its curse. III. THE EFFECTS OF THE ATONEMENT. 1. All the perfections of Jehovah have been illustriously displayed. 2. The atonement leaves the impenitent without excuse. 3. The atonement has rendered man's salvation possible. Application: 1. Let the subject of the atonement be Scripturally investigated, that it may be rightly understood. 2. Let it be cordially received, by a hearty faith (Rom. x. 9). 3. Let a Scriptural knowledge, and a cordial reception of it, fill the soul with hope and joy. 4. Let not the dying sinner reject the only way of salvation. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *On the atonement*:—I. THE FACT OF HUMAN GUILT, AND MAN'S NEED OF MERCY. Remission signifies the forgiveness of a debt, or the withdrawal of the sentence of punishment, which has been pronounced upon a convicted offender. II. SIN IS REMISSABLE. It may be pardoned. Forgiveness is attainable. The guilt of sin can be cancelled, and the sentence of condemnation may be repealed. 1. Upon this ground the sacrifices of the law were instituted. Every victim that bled, every sacrifice of blood upon the altar of the tabernacle and temple, was a conclusive testimony to the pardoning grace of God. 2. The language of Scripture is quite decisive on this great question. It tells us that with the Lord there is mercy—that He is ready to forgive—slow to anger—plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon Him. 3. Scripture facts prove the doctrine which our text includes. If there were no collateral proof, the mission of Christ into the world as the Prophet and Priest of the Church would be quite enough. He came to save sinners. 4. We may also look at examples. Sin had been remitted, or forgiven. Paul says, "I obtained mercy." The penitent thief was pardoned and taken to paradise the same day. III. WHILE SIN MAY BE PARDONED IT IS ONLY THROUGH THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD. Some impurities might, under the law, be removed by water and fire, but the stain of sin could be removed only by blood. It is on this principle that the plan of salvation by the death of Christ is placed, and on this that God, in fact, bestows remission of sins. (*J. E. Everitt.*) *Remission of sins by substitution*:—I. REMISSION OF SINS IS NECESSARY FOR THE RECONCILIATION OF MAN WITH GOD. It is the first necessity. Till sin is totally removed there can be no agreement between God, the Holy One, and man, His creature. Sin first separated them, and the alienation has grown with every generation where sin has reigned. And so long as sin is present, they must remain separate, both in purpose and action. You will see then, further, it is not a question of only forgiveness. God, in His sovereign mercy, might forgive the sin of our life—He does forgive it—but that does not take the sin away. The heart is still a sinful heart; it has forfeited its rights, and though God forgives, these rights are not restored. If, then, we are at any time to be reconciled with God, and be the recipients of His favour, it must be on

the one condition that our consciences are purged from evil. Sin in its action will be removed only as sin in its source is taken away; and only as that is done can the soul have peace with God, or can God return to the soul. When sin is taken right away, there remains no barrier between the creature and his God. The soul, desiring to do right, loving the truth, desires to do what God would have it. The will of the creature, however feeble its action may be, is one with the will of God. Nothing remains, therefore, to prevent Him rendering the help of His favour and strength. And this, we are told, He will do. II. REMISSION OF SINS IS ONLY POSSIBLE BY SUBSTITUTION; THAT IS, ONE LIFE PAYING PENALTY FOR ANOTHER LIFE. This is the declaration of the sacrifices and services of the temple. It is not our province to explain, it is simply our duty to describe and tell, as well as we are able, God's plan for removing sin away from us, so that we might receive His Divine gifts. The animal thus sacrificed was the substitution for the life of the offerer. He died, as it were, for sin, in the beast who had been put into his place. The penalty being thus paid, he was free from sin, and now could stand before God as one who had become reconciled to Him. But of course you will observe, in thus acting, the sinner acknowledges the authority and power of God. He has put aside his own thoughts and purposes, and has done God's, thus indicating in the very act of sacrifice that there is a change of his heart. This finds its entire fulfilment in Jesus Christ. The fact was shadowed as a principle of the Divine purpose in redemption—without the shedding of blood, the substitution of life for sin, there could be no remission. We may and must look at His death on the Cross as the substitution of His life for the life of each one for whom He died. That death can have no other meaning, and when we put it side by side, as the apostle does here, with the Old Testament teaching, I don't see how we can doubt God's intention and method in the death of His Son. God's purpose is thus revealed. Sin is not simply forgiven, but it is taken away. The soul is cleansed from its guilt; the conscience is cleared. When the time comes for it to stand stripped of the material and mortal nature of the present, in presence of the seen and known Eternal One, it will be purified, and fit in its sympathies, thoughts, and feelings for companionship with the absolutely holy God. Thus freed from sin, it will for ever be pure, no sin ever again finding place in it, because it will be with God and like God. III. Having stated the principle, WE MUST SAY A WORD AS TO ITS APPLICATION. This substitution appropriated by faith secures our acceptance with God. Jesus died for and in the place of sinners; then are sinners freed from sin? Is there nothing more for us than to eat and drink and go on our way? It is not so. He died for sinners, it is true, but only for sinners who have, so to speak, presented Him to God as their sacrifice. (*H. W. Butcher.*) *Spiritual blood-shedding*:—I. SPIRITUAL BLOOD-SHEDDING OR SELF-SACRIFICE IS ESSENTIAL TO DELIVER OUR OWN SOULS FROM SIN. II. SPIRITUAL BLOOD-SHEDDING IS ESSENTIAL TO DELIVER THE SOULS OF OTHERS FROM SIN. 1. The necessary qualification of a spiritual reformer. 2. The spirit which has governed all genuine reformers. 3. The power of Christ in prosecuting His mission. (*Homilist.*) *The necessity of atonement*:—Atonement always supposes a party offending and a party offended. It supposes that the offended holds the offender justly bound to suffer penal consequences as merited by the offence. The question proposed for present discussion regards the necessity of the atonement of Jesus Christ, in order to God's remitting the sins of men. As a preliminary, we are constrained to protest against the adducing of any facts as bearing upon this question, which belong to the present gracious methods of God's dealing with the human race. The question is, whether, in order to the adoption of those gracious methods, an atonement was not necessary? The evangelical doctrine of atonement is founded in the independent, essential mercy of God. It originated in His infinite mercy. It was an expedient, devised by boundless wisdom, and furnished by boundless love, to supersede the rigorous execution of justice. The forgiveness of sin essentially depends on the whole character of God, on His moral views and feelings respecting sin, and on the reasons which render its punishment necessary. It is here that we should look for all the obstacles, if there be any, which obstruct the exercise of grace, and oppose the remission of sin, and for all the reasons which render an atonement in behalf of sinful men, with a view to their receiving that blessed benefit, indispensable. Here, then, let us commence the discussion. The doctrine which I propose to illustrate and establish is contained in the following proposition: The great moral reasons which require the punishment of sin render the atonement necessary in order to its forgiveness. I. I am to show that there are GREAT MORAL REASONS

WHICH REQUIRE THAT SIN SHOULD BE PUNISHED. 1. God's holiness and justice form the first moral reason. This is the "ground pillar and chief buttress" of my argument. If He is a holy and a righteous God, it is impossible that sin should pass unpunished. You ask me what is God's holiness; what is His rectitude? His holiness is an essential part of His eternal character. It is His immutable disposition toward all points that involve morality. I would say it is His most perfect perception of right and wrong: it is His most perfect approbation of right; it is His most perfect abhorrence of wrong. And His justice is also inherent and essential. It is the disposition of His nature to act, in all worlds, on all occasions, in the most exact conformity to His moral sense. In heaven, earth, or hell, no being shall ever have ground of complaint, that in His treatment of him, God has forgotten His own holiness and justice. 2. I proceed to state a second moral reason, intimately connected with the preceding, why sin should not be permitted to pass unpunished. It is necessary, as the means of leading intelligent beings to reverence and honour God as a Being essentially holy and righteous. We contend that even the benevolence of God demands that sin should not be permitted to pass unpunished. To Him the created universe looks up as the Parent of eternal holiness, order, and well being. These are to be found and enjoyed only in subjection to God, and in perfect, undeviating obedience to His laws. That He should enforce such subjection and obedience by holding the transgressor responsible for his misdeeds, and so administering His government as that sin shall not pass unpunished, is required by the best interests of the created system. II. THESE MORAL REASONS WHICH REQUIRE THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN, RENDER THE ATONEMENT NECESSARY IN ORDER TO ITS FORGIVENESS. No substantial reason can be given why a Being infinitely benevolent as well as just, who has been pleased to ordain the redemption of guilty men, should not, when the ends of justice are satisfied, remit their doom. And these ends are most fully secured in the atonement. With an efficacy which to that heart which contemplates it in its just light must prove irresistible, the atonement exhibits God as a Being infinitely holy and righteous, regarding Himself as supremely worthy of the entire homage, love, and obedience of all moral existences, whose rectitude is such that He can give no other laws than those which are founded in eternal and immutable right, can administer no other government but that which is conducted on principles of justice and judgment, can hold no communion with rational beings who are unholy, cannot mark sin but to abhor it, and as the Sovereign Ruler, to manifest towards it His abhorrence, cannot pardon it without bearing testimony, heard with astonishment by heaven, earth, and hell, that it is an endless evil. And what inducements does the atonement hold out to moral agents to esteem, admire, adore, and obey, the Most High and Holy God, and to persevere in this exalted and exalting course? As the attainment of a supreme regard for holiness and an entire detestation of sin must produce the most pure and enduring happiness, what measure could so directly and so powerfully tend to promote and extend the highest happiness of the created system as the atonement? (*John De Witt, D.D.*) *Atonement by blood*:—It is asserted by historians that there is not a nation mentioned in history, the blood of whose citizens has not been poured out on its altars as an atonement for their sins, or to propitiate their deities. Even in this nineteenth century, it is said that there is a custom, carefully kept secret by Mussulmen, which shows they believe that "without shedding of blood is no remission of sin." In time of great trouble and sorrow, when dreading the death of a favourite child, it is their custom to secretly kill a lamb and sacrifice it, crying, "Allah, take the life of this lamb for the life of my child." The flesh of the lamb is then carefully removed, and given to religious beggars, while the skeleton is buried without breaking a bone. (*C. W. Bibb.*) *The blood*:—The collector of railway tickets did not look to the character or education of the holder of the ticket, but to the ticket itself. In like manner the blood was a token which typically indicated the way they were to be saved. (*D. L. Moody.*) *The doctrine of blood*:—Some people said they did not understand the doctrine of blood. It was very offensive to the natural man. He knew a man to say that whenever he heard a minister speak of the blood in his sermon, he took up his hat and quietly walked out. But just as the bitterest medicine cured, so the doctrine of blood found that man and he was saved. (*Ibid.*) *Without shedding of blood there is no remission*:—An aged Jew said: "I have fasted for seven and twenty hours, praying with all possible earnestness, and trembling too, and after all I feel that my sins have not been atoned for." No; without shedding of blood there is no remission. "The only plank between the believer and destruction is the blood of the incarnate God." To make light of the blood,

therefore, is to make light of salvation, and miss it for ever. **The patterns of things in the heavens.**—*Drama of heaven:*—The life of Jesus Christ was a celestial drama which has revealed to mankind the nature of heaven. 1. The heavenly life is spoken of as a transparency. The densest thing we know is the pavement on which we walk. In heaven it is "transparent"; it is a pavement, but you can see through it like glass. You may recollect reading that a celebrated Roman once came before his fellow-citizens for their votes, saying that he wished there was a window in his breast, so that they might see the purity of his motive and the goodness of his heart. An old Puritan minister, on recording this incident, adds, "Poor creature, were he to have had such a window, he would at once have prayed God to give him a shutter to hide his nature from his fellow-men." Now, if you would take a part in heaven's drama, you are to learn to be transparent, that is sincere. Your daily life is to be so much "above the board," as we understand those words, that everybody can see, if they will but look with unprejudiced eye, that your words and actions are inspired by pure and honest motives. 2. We are told that the pavement of heaven is of the most valuable material, of "pure gold." If, therefore, we take part in the drama of heaven, let us see that our life rests on the purest foundation; let our character be as genuine as the purest gold. Though your outward dress be of the poorest material, see that your inward character is of pure gold. Cultivate within yourself a love for the good and the true, and become a man whose thoughts and feelings are inspirations of God. How beautiful is this peach, with its silken and crimson colour! yet is there not a hard bitter stone at the core? The world spends too much time now-a-days in seeking to be beautiful outside. Let us, who show the drama of heaven on the stage of the earth, seek to be beautiful within. 3. From the description given by John we learn that the light of heaven is superb and effulgent. It is not the blaze of the sun, nor the brilliant flash of electricity; it is the light of the Lamb. By what rule do you walk? Is it by the maxims of society? The light which guides the inhabitants of heaven is the spirit of the life of Jesus Christ; that sacred nature illumines heaven. The more men know the holy, loving God, whose human body was given for their redemption, the more will they abhor and forsake sin. The drama, therefore, which you and I have to play is to show men the character of God. 4. Notice, next, the clothing of the inhabitants of the land of light and love. It is said that they wear white robes. White is the emblem of purity and innocence. In order to exhibit heaven's drama on earth, we have to put on the white robes of Christian charity and self-denial. We are to wear the crown of a king, not the shackles of a slave. We should regulate our passions as a king is supposed to govern his kingdom—for the good of the whole. We have to dare to do pure deeds and to venture on humane exploits. 5. Then remember that in the drama of heaven, you are to show the palms of victory which are waved in the hands of the white-robed in paradise. Let it be seen that you can fight on until you conquer. You may have fallen in past conflicts, but in this drama of heaven you are to show that while we live on earth, God can save us from our sins. I have not time to tell you all the other glorious characteristics of heaven, how we shall hunger no more and thirst no more. Heaven is a state of satisfaction; nothing will be wanting. This life is full of wants, real or imaginary. (*W. Birch.*) **Into heaven itself.**—*On the ascension of Christ:*—I. It is remarkable that the Jews, as we learn from Josephus and the writings of the Hebrew doctors, considered THE OUTER COURTS OF THE TABERNACLE AS SYMBOLICAL OF THE EARTH, AND THE HOLY OF HOLIES AS AN EMBLEM OF HEAVEN. When, therefore, our Lord had by the sacrifice of Himself upon the Cross made expiation "for the sins of the whole world," it became Him, as the great High Priest of mankind, to enter into the holy of holies, not made with hands, even "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." II. It appears from many accounts, that while the high priest was making intercession in the most holy place, THE PEOPLE WERE WITHOUT, CONFESSING THEIR SINS, AND PROFESSING THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO THE ALMIGHTY. Among the uses which have been assigned to the golden bells, which were ordered to be suspended around the bottom of the pontifical robe, it has been supposed, with much probability, that they were to give notice when the high priest entered within the veil on this solemn business, that the people might behave with correspondent sobriety. In like manner, while our Master is in heaven, we in this earth, this outer court of God's universal tabernacle, have our work to do. There are conditions of the covenant on our part to be fulfilled. Christ hath instructed His Church to live here, in the exercise of faith and repentance, of patience, devotion, and charity, while He is interceding

for them with the Everlasting Father. III. It belonged exclusively to the priests, under the Mosaic dispensation, TO BLESS THE PEOPLE IN BEHALF OF GOD. In like manner, our High Priest hath received of the Father all gifts and blessings for His Church. With the voice of His ministers, He dispenses to the penitent assurances of the pardon of their sins. (*Bp. Dehon.*) *The ancient holy of holies, a type of heaven*:—1. The holy of holies was the dwelling-place of Jehovah, where He manifested Himself in visible glory. Even so in the upper sanctuary does Jehovah manifest the brightness of His glory to the innumerable hosts of holy angels and blessed spirits, by whom He is unceasingly worshipped. 2. The ancient holy of holies was the most splendid and magnificent part of the tabernacle and temple. In this respect also it was but the type and shadow of heaven. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God!" It is represented as the paradise of God, where grows the tree of life. It is spoken of as Mount Zion, the antitype of the earthly hill on which were erected the temple of Jehovah and the palace of Judah's kings, and which David celebrated as "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth." It is described as a city, the New Jerusalem, the city of the great King, whose foundations are garnished with all manner of precious stones. A still more impressive idea of the unrivalled magnificence of heaven is given us when it is described as the peculiar workmanship of the Almighty—as a place which His infinite power has been exerted to beautify, and which His boundless beneficence has been called forth to gladden and bless. Unlike the holy places in the ancient tabernacle and temple, this sanctuary has not been "made with hands"; it was not erected by any creature, neither was it formed out of any pre-existent matter, but created immediately by God Himself. It is the "true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man"; the sanctuary, "not of this building"; the "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." 3. The ancient holy of holies was, by Divine appointment, entirely concealed from the view of those who worshipped in the outer courts. With the most vigilant care it was kept sacred from all intrusion. Even from the holy place where the priests were wont to minister, it was separated by a thick curtain or veil of curiously embroidered tapestry, while the holy place itself was hidden from the people at large, who worshipped in the courts without, by means of a second veil of a similar description. There can be no question that all these arrangements were primarily designed to be emblematic of the particular character of that dispensation with which they were directly connected, as "signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." At the same time, however, they present us with a beautiful type of the physical concealment which invests the heaven of heavens. For "no man hath ascended up to heaven but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." Between these, the outer courts of the temple, and that loftiest shrine of this vast universe, God has been pleased to stretch an impervious and impenetrable veil. It is a great and glorious reality; but it is only by the eye of faith that it can be described on "this dim spot which men call earth." Even with all the light which the gospel has shed upon it, it is a glory that yet remains to be revealed. 4. In pursuing the analogy subsisting between the holy of holies and the heaven of heavens, it may be added that the office performed by the Jewish high priest in the former was a most significant emblem of the function to be discharged in the latter by Jesus, the anointed High Priest of our profession. (*Peter Grant.*) *Encouragement from Christ glorified*:—The ascension of our Lord into heaven is a subject not only of admiration, but also of infinite importance to us. Its consequences are countless in number, immeasurable in extent, and endless in duration. Man is actually in the highest glory of the divine majesty at the right hand of God, the same glory in which the blessed Son of God dwelt before He came into the world. It cannot but excite our admiring wonder to contemplate human nature so highly exalted. For "where He is, there shall we be also," if we are His true disciples, and shall "behold His glory," and be ourselves clothed with a body of resplendent light like that of the Lord. But when we compare what we ought to be, and what we really must become in order to our being permitted to follow Christ into His glorious kingdom, with what we actually are, we may be disposed to say, "Who then can be saved?" The great subject now before us comes to our relief in this awful question, cheering our anxious hearts with hope. "Christ," saith the apostle, "entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." "For us" means in our behalf, in order to take our part, to stand on our side. But who is this our Advocate?

Is He likely to act in our favour with any effect? Is He likely to have influence with the Father? Has He any power of His own? Hath He yet done anything for us? That the influence of Christ with the Father is all-prevailing we cannot doubt, when we consider that He is the only, the beloved Son of God. We shall be strengthened in this confidence if we call to mind that the blessed God gave Him for the very purpose of saving us (John iii. 16). And not only this, but also He hath made a covenant engagement, wherein He has graciously promised to receive all those for whom His Son pleads. The desire then of accomplishing His own benevolent purpose, the gracious love which He has for us, and His unfailing truth and faithfulness, all combine to strengthen our assurance that He will favourably hear the intercession of His beloved Son in our behalf (John xvi. 26, 27). Will not the consideration of this blessed truth encourage us to return to God, to "humble ourselves under His mighty hand," to implore that mercy promised to us through Christ, and render His Father favourable to us? Yes, if we seem as far from God as earth is from heaven, sunk as low in sin as the utmost depths of the ocean, yet when we look up and see One at the right hand of God ready to take our part, we may feel a cheering hope (Heb. vi. 19, 20; vii. 25). But has this our blessed Saviour any power of His own? (Matt. xxviii. 18; Rev. i. 18; Phil. ii. 9-11. Col. ii. 9, 10; Heb. vii. 25; Phil. ii. 12). Most important is this view of the Saviour's almighty power to the anxious Christian, who is "working out his own salvation with fear and trembling." Thoughtless people, who are not engaged in the struggle against sin, may not perceive its importance. They do not feel deeply concerned about their salvation. They allow their enemies undisputed possession of their heart. Wherefore passively acquiescing in their dominion, they do not feel their claims. But let a man endeavour to "rule himself after God's Word," and he will immediately find that he has powerful enemies to resist (Rom. vii. 15, 21-23). He finds strong tendencies to sin, dispositions, tempers, passions, disposing and urging him to unchristian language and ungodly practices, and withholding him from the due and faithful discharge of his duty. But looking to Christ, he finds that he has reason to thank God that "sin shall not have dominion over him." And thus having felt that of himself he could do nothing, he finds himself enabled to say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." But we shall feel greater confidence that the glorified Jesus will act in our behalf, if we can find that He hath already done anything for us. Now surely "the Lord hath done great things for us already." He has come down from heaven to earth for us men and for our salvation. He has endured the miseries of this sinful world for our sake. He has laid down His life for us. When we know that the blessed Son of God has done and suffered so much for us, what can there be which He will not do for our sake? St. Paul puts this argument very strongly (Rom. v. 6-9). Great therefore may be our hope when we think that we have One in heaven on our side, whose peculiar care we are, who has taken upon Himself our nature, and dwells in our form; who has made our cause His own; One of all-prevailing influence with our heavenly Father, who graciously desires to listen to His intercession in our favour; One of infinite might and dominion; One who has already done and suffered great things for us, exercised mighty power, wisdom, and love for our protection, guidance, and salvation. As each person is able to see what this blessed Saviour has done for his soul, he will experience proportionate encouragement. (*R. L. Cotton, D.D.*) *Presence of Christ incarnate in heaven*:—The presence in heaven of Christ incarnate is perhaps the sublimest doctrine to which a rational faith can reach. It is an extension of His atoning life and death on earth, and the renewal of the eternal glory (once briefly suspended) with the Father in heaven. Considering also how it affects us in the present time by its immediate influence, as distinct, I mean, from His acts in the past and future, it is strange that it does not more often fill our thoughts. There is in the human breast an inextinguishable longing for present sympathy. Love cannot bear separation: it is not content with memory, or expectation! As the heart feels the burden of the passing hour, so does it for every hour want its portion of sympathy and love. Thus the presence in heaven of Christ in the glorified Body is a truth most fruitful in thoughts of the dignity of human life, and in ministries of comfort to those who walk upon the earth. I shall recall some passages in Scripture which throw light on the question of a body possibly existing in heaven, then of Christ's Body in particular; and secondly, remark on the influence of His incarnate presence upon us:—I. To BEGIN WITH THE FIRST CREATED BODY. If Adam had kept his estate of innocence, he would not have died, nor would he, we imagine, have

continued for ever in Paradise, among the trees and beasts of the earth. We believe that he would have been translated in his body, glorified, to heaven. Enoch was thus removed, and afterwards Elijah. Next, coming to the Person of our blessed Lord. His Body after the resurrection was the same which had died, though the life to which He rose was not a return to that which had expired on the Cross. His Body was the same, but endued with new powers and living under other conditions. Again, angels declared that as He was taken up into heaven, so in like manner should He come. If so, in what state does He pass the interval between the ascension and the judgment, that is, the present time? Surely in the same spiritual, glorified Body. Moreover, He has been seen once, and heard once, since His ascension. Is it not too often the case, that Christ is regarded as existing in heaven only as God, in a certain omnipresent nature, as He was from all eternity? Do not men argue, that as a day will come when He shall put aside His mediation that is "when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father," so also He will then escape from the confines of His humanity, and return to simple God? Is it sufficiently taken into account that His condition there is altered by His Incarnation, and if His condition, then His influence over us? II. To the evidence of Scripture and our Church formularies, I WILL ADD A FEW REMARKS ON SELF-EVIDENT REASONS, WHY IT SHOULD BE SO. "The Word was made flesh"; the manhood of Christ was made perfect. He took not on Him the form of angels, but the seed of Abraham. It is a characteristic of human nature, that once man is man for ever. If then Christ is perfect Man, He is Man for ever. Not only that, but revelation informs us that man will rise in the body, and live in his body for ever. If Christ has risen according to the laws which govern our resurrection (and this Scripture declares), He now lives, and will live for ever, in the Body with which He rose. What else is meant by Christ being the "first-fruits of them that slept," "the first-Begotten of the dead," and, in contradistinction from Adam, "The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit," unless it be that Christ in His resurrection is the cause of our resurrection, and gives the law by which ours is determined? Once more, He is our Mediator. A mediator is one who represents both parties. In this case one party is God, the other is man. None can represent God but God, and Jesus is God; none can represent man but man, and Jesus is Man. If therefore we have need of a mediator in heaven now, He must be now, as heretofore, God and Man. III. I have now to speak of THE INFLUENCE WHICH THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST INCARNATE IN HEAVEN HAS UPON MAN BELOW; AND OF THE PRACTICAL DIFFERENCE WHICH THIS DOCTRINE CAUSES IN OUR ESTIMATE OF HIS WORK FOR US. Is Christ omnipresent? Some persons will answer broadly, "Yes," and go on to say that it is a man's faith which makes Him present everywhere—that no possible thing is needed but faith; therefore, that all attempts to give the Saviour's grace a local habitation is wrong; that particular ordinances and outward means of grace are superfluous, therefore superstitious. On the other hand, it is the creed of the Church that Christ has ordained that virtue shall go forth from Him in special and particular channels; and these we call outward means of grace. The sacred enclosure, within which these streams of grace are dispersed, is the Church. Now there is of course great diversity between these two views; but does not the difference arise chiefly from the advocates of the former view losing sight of the continuous agency of the Man Jesus Christ, and thinking that His manhood is now absorbed in His divinity. Would it not clear away doubts and misgivings from many, who sincerely love Christ, if they considered this point; viz., our blessed Lord is still in His Body, and many of His blessings He dispenses through the Body, being the fruits of the great things which He did and suffered in the Body. So far as He dispenses these through the Body, His dispensation of grace is not omnipresent, but regulated by orders of time, place, and conditions, as His will ordains. The participation of Christ through faith and obedience is not diminished by the act, which has attached to a particular ordinance a special grace of intimate communion with Him in the Lord's Supper. These particular ordinances are the mysterious pathways, down which the several rays, which issue from His glorified Body, travel to earth. Nor is it any objection to this view that the influence of His Body is spiritual. In ordinary language "body" means matter, and an immaterial body seems to be a contradiction of terms. We cannot explain it; but to some extent it is intelligible that a body should be present only spiritually. For instance, when our Saviour said to the nobleman, "Thy son liveth," was He not present by that sick-bed, though His natural Body was else-

where? And remember, while Christ acts by virtue of His Incarnation, and is to some extent guided in His operations by the laws of His human nature, yet the Body which acts, acts more mightily because of the Godhead which possesses it. Lastly, if Christ be not really and spiritually present in the ordinances which He has instituted, in a sense of more close and intimate communion than can be applied to the generally diffused mercy and power of God, then the idea of any Church is a fiction; then the very acts in which we have been engaged to-day are vain; the gifts of bread and wine, which Christ has bidden us prepare for His consecration of them, convey no grace, but are merely stimulants, by outward signs of the feelings of our hearts; then all means of grace whatever are solely our acts to God, not His acts towards us. How different is the truth! Angels in heaven see in His dispensations of grace within the Church signs of the power of Christ unto salvation, of which without the Church they would not be aware, "that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." Thus our acts of worship are not fictions, our sacraments are not representations. There is an electric current ever circulating from Christ Incarnate through the members of His Body, which is the Church. (*C. W. Furse, M.A.*) *Christ the intercessor:*—I. THE THINGS SUPPOSED BY THE ENTRANCE OF CHRIST INTO HEAVEN ARE THE SAME AS THOSE SUPPOSED BY THE ENTRANCE OF THE HIGH PRIEST INTO THE MOST HOLY PLACE; namely, that heaven and earth are at variance, that sin has occasioned the feud, that blood is the alone price of expiation, and that this price must be laid upon the altar of the Holy One before He will ever look kindly upon man again. The difference in the case of the two dispensations lies in the application of any permanent and satisfactory relief to the sinner's conscience. And this higher form of mediation, argues the apostle, we have in Christ, whose blood is no more to be compared to the blood of bulls and goats than is the heaven into which He has carried that blood to be compared with the holy place of the tabernacle. Christ is gone, therefore, to appear in the presence of God for us; gone to display a memorial of that sacrifice by which He has obtained eternal redemption for us; gone to exhibit the living virtue of His own blood, and to claim the crowns of immortality for those for whom it was shed. II. Christ has gone to appear in the presence of God for us, says the text; that is, AS THE INTERCESSOR, THE ADVOCATE, THE GREAT UNDERTAKER OF HUMAN CAUSES IN THE COURT OF HEAVEN. Let us consider some of His special qualifications for so great a work. 1. As, first, it is an intercession founded on right. Christ appearing as the slain man is a direct appeal to the righteousness of God. It is the pledge of a price paid, a ransom accepted, a claim substantiated, a covenant signed and sealed. Christ pleads His sufferings no doubt, but this He does not to move pity nor to ask favour, but just to assert His right over all the dispensations of mercy, His boundless and eternal prerogative to forgive. 2. But, secondly, we should have comfort in this mediation of the ascended Saviour, from knowing that He orders all our spiritual affairs with consummate prudence. We often ask and have not, but we little think why. Our Intercessor has been asking for us the direct contrary of that which we have asked for ourselves. He saw that which we did not see, namely, that in the then temper of our minds and spirit the good sought would be no longer good. 3. Further, there is that in the appearance of Christ in heaven which should suggest to His believing people the thought of an individual and personal remembrance. If any man sin—any one man—he has an advocate with the Father. That which I desire to realise, is that the eye, the thoughts, the solicitudes of Jesus are concentrated and fixed on me; my needs to supply, my infirmities to help, my cause to order, my decaying members to revive, my rising corruptions to subdue. 4. But, once more, this appearance of Christ in heaven is an affectionate, earnest, deeply interested appearance. His heart is in the cause. He is a merciful High Priest as well as faithful. In undertaking the cause of believers He is not content to have an eye to see their afflictions, or an ear to listen to their complaints, or a tongue to promote their suit; but casts His lot in with them. He is afflicted in all their afflictions. 5. He has gone to appear in the presence of God for us as the Conqueror. "Thou hast ascended on high; Thou hast led captivity captive; Thou hast received gifts for men." He who died as a Lamb rose as a Lion. With the head of the spiritual Goliath in His hand, the Son of David entered the streets of the New Jerusalem, there to appear in the presence of God for us. 6. Again, as a pledge and assurance that He both can and will order all things for the good of His Church, He appears in the

presence of God for us. In describing His own session to the high priest, He tells him, "Ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power"; power to execute wrath, power to cast down every high thing and every strong thing and every opposing thing that could exalt itself against the knowledge of Himself; power to direct and save; power to reward and bless. Let me note one or two practical thoughts, in conclusion, with which to associate the entrance of our Forerunner into the most holy place, there to appear in the presence of God for us. Thus we cannot but be impressed with a sense of the exceeding great honour which is put upon our human nature, in that one, in our likeness, should be the object of highest adoration to all the heavenly world. We are made more than conquerors in Christ Jesus, because Christ Himself was more than conqueror over all the misery He came to remedy, and all the enemies He came to subdue. And this suggests a kindred thought—the honour reserved for ourselves in that future world. We have a portion in that flesh and blood which is so highly exalted, and which now appears in the preseuce of God for us. Our interest with our Divine Head is one. If Christ reign, we shall reign; if He be taken up into glory, we shall not be beyond the circle of its diffused and effulgent rays. Lastly, how should our Lord's leaving us, to enter into the most holy place, remind us that we have no continuing city here. Christ did not sit down in heaven until He had finished His work on earth: and we must finish our work as Christ did His. He who now appears in the presence of God for us knew no rest, does not know it even now. He ever liveth to make intercession, to sprinkle consciences, to send down grace, to restrain the power of the evil one, to keep the feet of His saints, to suffer no weapon formed against them to prosper. This is Christ's work in heaven now, and will be for a time, and times, and a half a time, till the end of redemption is come. Then will come the great Sabbath; the Sabbath that shall sanctify the risen natures, the Sabbath that shall release our Great High Priest from all further appearance for us in the holy place, even the everlasting rest that remaineth for the people of God. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *Christ the only Mediator*:—I. THE TEMPLE IN WHICH HE MINISTERS. II. THE MINISTRY WHICH IN THAT TEMPLE HE CONTINUES TO EXERCISE. 1. The ministry of a sympathising friend. 2. Rendering acceptable to God all our worship and service. III. THE INFLUENCE WHICH THE KNOWLEDGE OF THESE TRUTHS OUGHT TO EXERCISE ON OUR FAITH AND CONDUCT. "Let us hold fast our profession." 1. As respects the writing on which it is based. 2. As regards the consolations which it affords. 3. As regards the hopes which it naturally encourages. (*W. Cadman, M.A.*) *The sacrifice, intercession, and sympathy of Christ in heaven*:—The sacrifice and intercession of Christ are of course distinct in idea, but in fact are so united, that it is more convenient to consider them together. Sacrifice is intercession, not in word, but in act. It makes atonement for man to God; that is, sets God and man at-one. It comes between; that is, in the literal sense of the word, intercedes, mediates between the two, reconciles them; all of which terms apply with equal propriety to the one office as to the other, sacrifice and intercession. Minds unused to meditation on the continuance of these offices in heaven are inclined to the opinion that the whole work of the Atonement was concluded in the sacrifice of the Cross, and to so complete an extent that nothing remains for Christ to do till He returns to gather in His elect. Their thoughts linger around such texts as these, which at first sight seem to imply that at the moment in which the Saviour said, "It is finished," His work was ended till the Judgment Day (Heb. x. 12; 1 Peter iii. 18). And all the passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews which draw out the contrast between the repeated sacrifices offered by the Jewish priests and the one oblation once made by Christ, favour the same opinion. The question is, do such words oppose the view that our great Mediator is ever working on behalf of men's souls in heaven?—"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Do they contradict the doctrine that Christ Jesus in His glorified body continues to exercise the virtue of His holy incarnation? Not in the least. The sacrifice once for all offered on the Cross is being perpetually represented and exhibited in heaven. This indeed is the meaning of the word in the text, inadequately translated "appear." It is not merely that Christ stands and is seen before the Father's throne; but He is arrayed in the vesture belonging to the Mediator, invested with all the symbols of His office as the Saviour of man, continually presenting to the eternal Father the sacrifice once for all made, interceding, pleading, advocating our cause. Hence it is, that in the Book of Revelation He is described as a "Lamb as it had been slain;" with the marks of death, the scars of the sacrifice upon Him, though His wounds

are healed, and His body raised in glory. And it may be observed, once for all, that every description of His high-priesthood establishes the truth that it is exercised now continually in heaven. The great difference in this respect between the continual sacrifice offered day by day and year by year by the Jewish priests, and that offered by Christ, is that theirs was repeated, His is represented; theirs was begun afresh, as if nothing had yet been done; His is the oblation of the Body sacrificed once for all. There are some who say, and profess to believe, that it is enough to know that Christ once died for sinners; but they do not speak the language of the human heart. Does not the sense of sin pierce them even now? Does not the shame and dread of sin overwhelm at times even those for whom Christ died? Do they not spread their hands abroad in vain, and look out for help against themselves, and seek for some place where they may hide themselves from the confusion and reproach which their own hearts cast upon them?—that is, they need a present Mediator and Advocate. Again, the effect which the continued intercession of Christ must exercise over our destiny cannot be measured by any estimate of ours. His prayers are uttered night and day, hour by hour, whether men pray or whether they sleep. And then, as to their secondary effect, that is, their influence upon us—conceive how great a motive it is for men to pray, that their prayers may vibrate along the chords of His! Lastly, consider what comfort exists in the possession of the sympathy of Christ; and in the knowledge that He exists in the body of man, alive to all the human wants and natural infirmities of the heart. Has not the disciple to bear his cross; to rejoice in suffering; "to fill up what is behind of the afflictions of Christ in His flesh for His body's sake which is the Church"; "to bear the marks of the Lord Jesus"; "to be crucified" with Him; to be "buried with Him"; "to be raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places" in Him; to have "our vile body changed that it may be like unto His glorious body"? And all this while there is His painless sympathy with pain" in the least as in the greatest things. Many a thought of trouble, too slight or too tender to be worth exposure to the nearest friends, is, we may believe, marked by Him and remembered in His prayer, especially if it be one (as all the most inexplicable troubles are) entangled with our own folly or sin. "For we have not an High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." But sympathy alone and in excess induces softness. Self-control and bardihood, a lofty carriage as of one born to great dignity, a resolute temper that will neither bend or break—these are as much the Christian's attributes as a childlike reliance and a looking out for love. How greatly does it add to the dignity of our life to see its perfection in the glorious body of Him who is the Head of the human race! (*C. W. Furse, M.A.*) **To put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.**—*The sacrificial work of Christ*:—I. THE SACRIFICE OF THE SAVIOUR, WHICH WE COMMEMORATE, WAS THE OFFERING OF HIMSELF. "No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself." Not the Sanhedrim, not Annas, not Caiaphas, not Pilate, not Judas, not the Roman Guard, not the excited mob took away the Redeemer's life; had they done so, Christ's would have been only a martyr's death. "For this cause came I into the world." II. THE SACRIFICE OF THE SAVIOUR WAS NOT ONLY THE OFFERING OF HIMSELF, BUT THE ONE OFFERING OF HIMSELF. The earth can see no second Gethsemane or Calvary! Never in the history of the human race can such another event be recorded, it stands alone as a monument of the august majesty of Divine law and the pitiful depth of Divine love. III. THE SACRIFICE OF THE SAVIOUR, WHICH WE COMMEMORATE, CONTRASTS WITH THE JEWISH LAW. They had the ceremonial and symbolical: we have the spiritual and the substantial. IV. THE SACRIFICE WE COMMEMORATE TEACHES US THAT NOT ONLY COULD THE SAVIOUR BE OFFERED BUT ONCE, BUT THAT HE COULD "SUFFER" BUT ONCE. V. THE SACRIFICE WE COMMEMORATE TEACHES US THAT CHRIST "APPEARED" TO PUT AWAY SIN. Ponder well the words—"He appeared." Salvation was accomplished in connection with Christ's incarnation. There could be no doubt of the actuality of the atonement: it was in the body that He assumed that He died for our sins, and we can test the validity of the sacrifice by the reality of the incarnation. (*W. M. Statham, M.A.*) *The one perfect offering*:—I. Such is THE ABSOLUTE PERFECTION OF THE ONE OFFERING OF CHRIST, THAT IT STANDS IN NEED OF, THAT IT WILL ADMIT OF, NO REPETITION IN ANY KIND. Hence the apostle affirms that if it be despised or neglected there remains no more sacrifice for sin. And this absolute perfection of the one offering of Christ ariseth—1. From the dignity of His person (Acts xx. 28). 2. From the nature of the sacrifice itself. (1) In the gracious actings of His soul; He offered Himself unto God through the Eternal Spirit.

Grace and obedience could never be more glorified. (2) In the punishment He underwent, answering and taking away the whole curse of the law; and further offering for atonement is highly blasphemous. (3) From the love of the Father unto Him and delight in Him. As in His person, so in His one offering, the soul of God resteth and is well pleased. (4) From His efficacy unto all ends of a sacrifice. Nothing was ever designed therein, but was at once accomplished by this one offering of Christ. II. This one offering of Christ IS ALWAYS EFFECTUAL UNTO ALL THE ENDS OF IT, EVEN NO LESS THAN IT WAS IN THE DAY AND HOUR WHEN IT WAS ACTUALLY OFFERED. Therefore it needs no repetition, like those of old, which could affect the conscience of a sinner only for a season. This is always fresh in the virtue of it, and needs nothing but renewed application by faith for the communication of its effects and fruits unto us. III. THE GREAT CALL AND DIRECTION OF THE GOSPEL IS TO GUIDE FAITH AND KEEP IT UP UNTO THIS ONE OFFERING OF CHRIST, AS THE SPRING OF ALL GRACE AND MERCY. In the preaching of the Word, the Lord Christ is set forth as evidently crucified before our eyes; and in the ordinance of the Supper especially is it represented unto the peculiar exercise of faith. IV. WHATEVER HAD THE GREATEST GLORY IN THE OLD LEGAL INSTITUTIONS CARRIED ALONG WITH IT THE EVIDENCE OF ITS OWN IMPERFECTION, COMPARED WITH THE THING SIGNIFIED IN CHRIST AND HIS OFFICE. The entrance of the high priest into the holy place was the most glorious solemnity of the law. Howbeit, the annual repetition of it was a sufficient evidence of its imperfection, as the apostle disputes in the beginning of the next chapter. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *The all-sufficient sacrifice*:—I. THE PERIOD WHEN. "In the end of the world," or, rather, "the ages." It refers to the several dispensations which have gone before, and which were brought to a close by Christ's appearing in the flesh. II. THE PURPOSE. "To put away sin," to render sin a legal nullity, so that in respect of condemnatory power it should be as though non-existent, and the law should cease to recognise its claims or inflict its penalties. III. THE MEANS BY WHICH THIS END HAS BEEN ATTAINED. "By the sacrifice of Himself." 1. It was not accomplished without means; it was not at once and off-hand that this result was attained. 2. The means employed had reference to the thing necessary to be done. (1) It had to be done by sacrifice—the substitution of one life for another. (2) The sacrifice was Christ Himself. The penalty once borne can never again be inflicted. The curse was not causeless when it came, for guilt had entailed it; but neither is the taking it away causeless, for "Christ hath redeemed us," &c. The reason is as valid in the one case as in the other; the removal of the wrath is as righteous as the manifestation of the wrath, and the whole universe is the witness to the reality and vitality of the stupendous deed. (*Thos. Main, D.D.*) *The Christian era*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN ERA IS GOD'S LAST DISPENSATION WITH MEN ON EARTH. II. THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST IS THE GREAT FACT OF THIS ERA. 1. Self-immolation. 2. Self-immolation for all ages. 3. Never to be repeated. III. THE GREAT END OF CHRIST'S SACRIFICE WAS THE PUTTING AWAY OF SIN. This fact serves—1. To correct theological errors. 2. To determine the value of our religion. 3. To show the true aim of philanthropy. 4. To foreshadow the happy state of the world when Christianity shall have accomplished its work. (*Homilist.*) *The one sacrifice of Christ sufficient*:—I. IT WAS INCONSISTENT WITH THE WISDOM, GOODNESS, GRACE, AND LOVE OF GOD THAT CHRIST SHOULD OFTEN SUFFER IN THAT WAY WHICH WAS NECESSARY UNTO THE OFFERING OF HIMSELF, NAMELY, BY HIS DEATH AND BLOODSHEDDING. It was not consistent with the wisdom of God to provide that as the ultimate means of the expiation of sin which was insufficient for it; for so it would have been if the repetition of it had been necessary. Nor was it consistent with His unspeakable love unto His Son that He should frequently suffer an ignominious death. And, moreover, it would have been highly dishonourable unto the Son of God, giving an appearance that His blood was of no more value than the blood of beasts, the sacrifice whereof was often repeated. II. IT WAS NOT CONSISTENT WITH THE GLORY OF HIS PERSON, ESPECIALLY AS IT WAS NECESSARY TO BE DEMONSTRATED UNTO THE SALVATION OF THE CHURCH. That He once emptied Himself that He might be obedient unto the death of the Cross, proved a stumbling-block unto the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles. The faith of the Church was secured by the evident demonstration of His Divine glory which immediately ensued thereon. But as the frequent repetition hereof would have been utterly inconsistent with the dignity of His Divine person, so the most raised faith could never have attained a prospect of His glory. III. IT IS ALTOGETHER NEEDLESS, AND WOULD HAVE BEEN USELESS. For, as the apostle demonstrates, by one offering of Himself, and that once offered, He took away sin, and for ever perfected them that are sanc-

tified. V. THE ASSURED SALVATION OF THE CHURCH OF OLD, FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, BY VIRTUE OF THE ONE OFFERING OF CHRIST, IS A STRONG CONFIRMATION OF THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH AT PRESENT TO LOOK FOR AND EXPECT EVERLASTING SALVATION THEREBY. VI. IT IS THE PREROGATIVE OF GOD AND THE EFFECT OF HIS WISDOM TO DETERMINE THE TIMES AND SEASONS OF THE DISPENSATION OF HIMSELF AND HIS GRACE TO THE CHURCH. Hereon it depends alone that Christ appeared in the end of the world, not sooner nor later, as to the parts of that season. Many things do evidence a condecency to Divine wisdom in the determination of that season. 1. He testified His displeasure against sin in suffering the generality of mankind to lie so long under the fatal effects of their apostasy without relief or remedy (Acts xiv. 16, xvii. 30; Rom. i. 21, 24, 26). 2. He did it to exercise the faith of the Church, called by virtue of the promise, in the expectation of its accomplishment. And by the various ways whereby God cherisheth their faith and hope was He glorified in all ages (Luke i. 70; Matt. xiii. 16; Luke x. 24; 1 Pet. i. 10, 11; Hag. ii. 7). 3. To prepare the Church for the reception of Him, partly by the glorious representation made of Him in the tabernacle and temple with their worship; partly by the burden of legal institutions laid on them till His coming (Gal. iii. 24). 4. To give the world a full and sufficient trial of what might be attained towards happiness and blessedness by the excellency of all things here below. 5. To give time to Satan to fix and establish his kingdom in the world that the destruction of him and it might be the more conspicuous and glorious. VII. GOD HAD A DESIGN OF INFINITE WISDOM AND GRACE IN HIS SENDING OF CHRIST AND HIS APPEARANCE IN THE WORLD THEREON, WHICH COULD NOT BE FRUSTRATED. "He appeared to put away sin." VIII. SIN HAD ERECTED A DOMINION, A TYRANNY OVER ALL MEN AS BY A LAW. Unless this law be abrogated and abolished we can have neither deliverance nor liberty. IX. NO POWER OF MAN, OF ANY MERE CREATURE, WAS ABLE TO EVACUATE, DISANNUL, OR ABOLISH THIS LAW OF SIN. X. THE DESTRUCTION AND DISSOLUTION OF THIS LAW AND POWER OF SIN WAS THE GREAT END OF THE COMING OF CHRIST FOR THE DISCHARGE OF HIS PRIESTLY OFFICE IN THE SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF. No other way could it be effected. XI. IT IS THE GLORY OF CHRIST, IT IS THE SAFETY OF THE CHURCH, THAT BY HIS ONE OFFERING, BY THE SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF ONCE FOR ALL, HE HATH ABOLISHED SIN AS TO THE LAW AND CONDEMNING POWER OF IT. (*John Owen, D.D.*)

The manner, time, and end of Christ's appearance:—I. CHRIST'S APPEARANCE is—1. His incarnation. 2. The manifestation of Him incarnate. 3. The presenting of Himself as a Priest, having sacrificed Himself unto His Heavenly Father, without which His incarnation and manifestation had been to no purpose. He appeared from the foundation of the world, in the word of the promise, and in types and figures; yet this was but obscure. At length He appeared really, when the Word was made flesh, died, and, as a Priest, offered Himself unto God the Supreme Judge for the sin of man. II. THE TIME of His appearance was the end of the world, which is opposed to the foundation of the world. This end of the world is called the fulness of the time (Gal. iv. 4), because, as some tell us, the time appointed by God was fully come; all things, which were decreed to be before His coming, were fully accomplished. And though we understand not the reasons, yet the end of the world was the fittest of all others for this appearance; and though the last times seem to have the greatest benefit of His exhibition, yet the first times were not without it, for the virtue of this sacrifice extended to all times. III. THE END of this appearance was to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Where we have two ends, the one subordinate to the other: the first was the sacrificing of Himself; the second by this sacrifice to put away sin. This putting away was not the abrogation of the law transgressed, but a taking away the moral effects and consequents of sin committed against that law, and principally of guilt. The effect of sin is to render the party sinning obnoxious and liable to punishment and God's vindicative justice, and by this virtue of the commination of the law. God, to make way for pardon, by a transcendent extraordinary power, makes Christ man's surety, and Christ voluntarily submits Himself, out of love to His brethren, to God's will, so far as to suffer death for man's sin, and offers Himself as being slain to the Supreme Judge. Upon His submission He becomes one person with sinful man, as a surety with the principal, and so is liable to that punishment which sinful man should have suffered, as a surety becomes liable to pay the debt of the principal. (*G. Lawson.*) *Jesus putting away sin*:—I. THE TIME OF THIS GREAT PUTTING AWAY OF SIN, in the end of the world, or the age—"in these last days," as one of the apostles words it. Why was that time selected? 1. Was it not in order to exercise the faith of ancient saints, who, like Abraham, saw Christ's day in vision—saw Him and were

glad? They rested in confidence in the Messiah that was to come, and their faith received its reward. 2. Did not God place the putting away of sin at the close of the age, in order to glorify His Son, by letting us see that the very anticipation of His death was sufficient for the salvation of men? 3. Was not this sacrifice placed at the end of the world to be, as it were, the crown of all Jehovah's works? The great Master of the feast hath kept the best wine until now. II. THE PERSON ACCOMPLISHING THE WORK. Once, in the end of the world, hath He appeared. Recollect who it was that came to take away sin, that you may find solid ground for comfort. He who came to take away sin did not come unsent. He was appointed and delegated by God. He came in His Father's name, clothed with His Father's authority: "I do not Mine own will," said He, "but the will of Him that sent Me." This ought to give us richest consolation. Attentively observe the constitution of His person. He who came to save men is no other than God; therefore capable of viewing sin from God's point of view, capable of understanding what was due to God: by bracing His Godhead to His manhood He was capable, in His two-fold nature, of sustaining pangs which humanity could not have endured apart from Godhead. Can you not trust Him? I have felt like John Hyatt who, when dying, said he could not only trust Christ with one soul, but he could trust Him with a million souls if he had them. III. THE APPEARANCE MENTIONED. "Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin." The way by which God has put away sin is one which is not obscure, concealed, recondite, inexplicable, but one which is eminently plain and manifest. IV. THE SACRIFICE ITSELF. "Once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin"—how? "By the sacrifice of Himself." Christ did not come into the world merely to put away sin by His example. Jesus did not come into the world merely to put away sin by His teaching; but we are told in the text that He came to put away sin by sacrifice. God comes into the world as Man—the Mediator dies. Now, what merit there must be in the blood of Him who, while He is Man, is nevertheless God! V. THE THOROUGHNESS OF THE WORK WHICH WAS CONTEMPLATED. In the end of the world Christ was revealed to put away sin. He did not come into the world to palliate it, but to put it away. Observe, He not only came to put away some of the attributes of sin, such as the filth of it, the guilt of it, the penalty of it, the degradation of it; He came to put away sin itself, for sin is the fountain of all the mischief. He did not come to empty out the streams, but to clear away the fatal source of the pollution. He appeared to put away sin itself, sin in its essence and being. VI. THE EVIDENT COMPLETION of this work demands a word because of its being rendered conspicuous by the word "once." "Once in the end of the world He hath appeared to put away sin." If He had not put away sin, He would have come again to do it, for Jesus Christ never leaves His work unfinished. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The putting away of sin*:—I. IT IS A VERY HARD THING TO PUT AWAY SIN. 1. All the Jewish sacrifices could not do it. 2. Repentance itself cannot do it. 3. No form of suffering in this world can do it. 4. Nor any form of self-denial. 5. Nor holy living. 6. Nor death. 7. Nor hell. II. CHRIST HAS PUT AWAY THE SIN OF ALL HIS PEOPLE. By what image shall I set forth the abolishing of sin! I do not know what metaphor to use about it, but one suggests itself which is far from complete. When Pompey was killed, Julius Cæsar obtained possession of a large casket, which contained a vast amount of correspondence which had been carried on with Pompey. There is no doubt, whatever, that in that casket there were many letters from certain of Cæsar's followers making overtures to Pompey, and had Cæsar read those letters it is probable that he would have been so angry with many of his friends that he would have put them to death for playing him false. Fearing this, he magnanimously took the casket and destroyed it without reading a single line. What a splendid way of putting away and annihilating all their offences against him! Why, he did not even know them, he could not be angry, for he did not know that they had offended. He consumed all their offences and destroyed their iniquities, so that he could treat them all as if they were innocent and faithful. The Lord Jesus Christ has made just such an end of your sins and mine. III. HOW SIN WAS PUT AWAY. 1. The text tells us that our Lord put it away by a sacrifice. Substitution is the very pith and marrow of the revelation of God. 2. Notice that the text tells us what His sacrifice was, it was Himself. Sin was not put away by the offering of His living works, nor by the incense of His prayer, nor by the oblation of His tears, nor even by the presentation of His pains before God, but by the sacrifice of Himself. The Lord Christ gave up for you His human body and soul and spirit, all that constituted "Himself" was given up freely to the

death that the punishment due to our sin might be borne. This leads you to remember who He was. He was God over all, blessed for ever; the Maker of all worlds, but He gave Himself. See the majesty of His sacrifice, He gave Himself; and then behold the infinite merit that there must be in that sacrifice. (*Ibid.*) *Will evil be everlasting?*—I. EVIL NEED NOT BE EVERLASTING IN THE INDIVIDUAL. II. EVIL WILL NOT BE EVERLASTING IN THE WORLD. III. EVIL MAY NOT BE—THERE IS THE HIGHEST PROBABILITY THAT IT WILL NOT BE—EVERLASTING IN THE UNIVERSE. 1. Because of the infinite forces of which our text speaks. (1) The infinite force in the Being who is putting away sin. There is no limit to His resources. (2) The infinite force in His case for the work He has undertaken. 2. Because of the very nature of evil. 3. Because of the character of God. (*Homilist.*) *The sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ:*—I. I SHALL PRODUCE SOME PLAIN TESTIMONIES OF HOLY SCRIPTURE, WHICH DECLARE THAT THE SON OF GOD, IN ORDER TO THE EFFECTUAL EXPIATION OF SIN, SUFFERED IN OUR STEAD, AND BORE THE WRATH OF GOD FOR US, AND MADE A PERFECT ATONEMENT FOR SIN, AND OBTAINED ETERNAL REDEMPTION FOR US. This the Scripture declares to us in great variety of expressions; as, that "Christ died for us, and for our sins"; that He was "a sacrifice for us, and a propitiation for the sins of the whole world"; that "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree," and "appeared to take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself"; that "we are justified in His blood," and "redeemed by the price of it." It is evident then from Scripture, that Christ died not only for our advantage but in our stead; as truly as any man ever did or can die for another, who lays down his own life to save another from death. For if Christ had not died, we had perished everlastingly; and because He died, we are saved from eternal death and misery. And though this be nowhere in Scripture spoken of by the name or term of satisfaction, yet it is said to be the price of our redemption; which surely is the same in effect with satisfaction. II. SHOW THAT THE EXPIATION OF OUR SINS WAS MADE BY THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST, FROM THE NATURE AND INTENTION OF EXPIATORY SACRIFICES, BOTH AMONG THE JEWS AND HEATHENS, to which the death of Christ is in the New Testament so frequently compared, and in point of virtue and efficacy to take away sin infinitely preferred to it. III. VINDICATE THIS METHOD AND DISPENSATION OF THE DIVINE WISDOM FROM THE OBJECTIONS WHICH ARE BROUGHT AGAINST IT, and to show that there is nothing in it that is unreasonable or anywise unworthy of God. I shall mention four objections which are commonly urged in this matter, and I think they are all that are considerable. 1. That this method of the expiation of sin by the sufferings of Christ seems to argue some defect and want of goodness in God, as if He needed some external motive, and were not of Himself disposed to forgive sinners. To which I think the answer is not difficult; namely, that God did not want goodness to have forgiven sin freely and without any satisfaction, but His wisdom did not think it meet to give encouragement to sin by too easy a forgiveness, and without some remarkable testimony of His severe displeasure against it; and therefore His greater goodness and compassion to mankind devised this way to save the sinner, without giving the least countenance and encouragement to sin. 2. How can our sins be said to have been forgiven freely, if the pardon of them was purchased at so dear a rate, and so mighty a price was paid for it? In answer to this I desire these two things may be considered—(1) That it is a wonderful grace and favour of God to admit of this translation of the punishment which was due to us, and to accept of the sufferings of another in our stead, and for our benefit, when He might justly have exacted it from us in our own persons. (2) It was in effect freely, too, notwithstanding the mighty price which was paid for our redemption. Because this price was not of our own procuring, but of God's providing. 3. It is yet further objected that this seems to be more unreasonable than the sacrificing of beasts among the Jews, nay, than the sacrificing of men among the heathen, and even of their own sons and daughters, because this is the offering up of the Son of God, the most innocent and the most excellent person that ever was. To which I answer, that if we consider the manner and the design of it the thing will appear to be quite otherwise. (1) As to the manner of it, God did not command His Son to be sacrificed, but His providence permitted the wickedness and violence of men to put Him to death. And then His goodness and wisdom did overrule this worst of actions to the best of ends. (2) And then if we consider the end of this permission of Christ's death, and the application of it to the purpose of a general expiation, we cannot but acknowledge, and even adore, the gracious and merciful design of it. For by this means God did at once put an end to that unreasonable and bloody way of worship which had been so long practised in the world; and after this one sacrifice, which was so

infinitely dear to God, the benefit of expiation was not to be expected in any other way, all other sacrifices being worthless and vain in comparison of this; and it hath ever since obtained this effect of making all other sacrifices to cease in all parts of the world where Christianity hath prevailed. 4. The last objection is the injustice and cruelty of an innocent person suffering instead of the offender. To this I answer, that they who make so great a noise with this objection do seem to me to give a full and clear answer to it themselves, by acknowledging, as they constantly and expressly do, that our Saviour suffered all this for our benefit and advantage, though not in our place and stead. For this, to my apprehension, is plainly to give up the cause, unless they can show a good reason why there is not as much injustice and cruelty in an innocent person's suffering for the benefit and advantage of a malefactor, as in his suffering in his stead. (*Abp. Tillotson.*)

Self-sacrifice:—I. I wish to fix your thoughts on THE EXAMPLE INVOLVED IN THE SACRIFICE WHEREBY CHRIST REDEEMED THE WORLD. I would press on you the duty, the blessedness, the happiness of self-sacrifice, and the present and urgent need for it. I would ask you to consider whether God does not summon all of you to the sacrifice of self to help the world, and some of you to such self-sacrifice in its fullest forms, as the very law of your highest life. II. You know well HOW THOROUGHLY HIS GREAT SAINTS AND SERVANTS HAVE LEARNED THIS LESSON. They have not been satisfied with the easy compromise and full-fed prosperity of a worldly, popular, and successful religionism. Instead of being content to swim with the easy streams of fashionable orthodoxy, they struck out vehemently against them. Instead of trimming their sails to the veering wind, they were ready to drive their frail shallops into the very teeth of the storm. Instead of answering the world or the Church according to their idols, they smote those idols in the face. Like the apostles, they held not their lives dear unto themselves; they left father and mother and lands and ease; they counted all things but dross, in comparison with the love of Christ their Lord. III. DOES CHRIST, THEN, CALL US TO AGONY AND RUIN, AND TO ALL THAT WE LEAST LOVE? Yea, and nay. "Yea," in so far as brief agony and apparent ruin may lie in the path of duty and holiness; and "yea," in so far as that which we least love ought rather to be what is dearest to us; but "nay," inasmuch as the cross borne gladly is itself the secret of blessedness. You pity the hated prophet, the burning martyr, the persecuted saint? And do you think that he needs your pity, rather than the man who, rich and successful, is torn, day and night, by the many-headed monster of unruly passions, which, the more they are gratified, ravin the more clamorously for gratification? Do you pity God's martyrs, and do you not rather pity those who, living to indulge their own vilest impulses, have, as the devil's martyrs, made their own bodies and minds a very curse to themselves and to all the world? Nay, you are wrong. It is Nero on his gilded chair who is to be pitied, not St. Paul in his rags and wretchedness. That man is blessed, blessed even in the dungeon or at the stake, who is pure, and just, and loving, and innocent. IV. BLESSEDNESS IS A LOFTIER AND A DEEPER THING THAN HAPPINESS; but I go further, and say that in self-sacrifice you will not only find blessedness, but even a joy, a happiness, a gladness such as the world can neither give nor take away. Disenchantment in success, weariness in riches, satiety in self-indulgence, inward wretchedness amid outward prosperity, are the heritage of the world. Tiberius is "tristissimus, ut constat hominum"; and Severus cries, "Omnia fui, et nihil expedit"; but joy in the Lord, joy in the Holy Ghost, joy in believing, joy unspeakable and full of glory, joy even amid much affliction, has ever been the unique and miraculous paradox of Christianity. Read the Epistle to the Philippians, written by a hunted fugitive in prison with weak eyes, in wretched health, a spectacle of shame; his name a hissing, the chain which coupled him to the rude soldier clanking with every motion of his hand: then read the "Tristia" of Ovid, or the letters of Cicero, or the "Consolatio ad Polybium" of Seneca, written in an exile incomparably less trying, and you will see that while the poet, and the orator, and the stoic are full of base adulation and womanish complaints, the letter of this poor, sick, deserted Jewish prisoner bursts again and again into irrepressible music, flashes from line to line with gleams of indomitable joy. V. So then, WHEN CHRIST CALLS YOU TO SELF-SACRIFICE, HE CALLS YOU TO JOY AS WELL AS TO BLESSEDNESS. He takes from you no single element of natural and innocent joy: neither the joy of nature, nor of art, nor of youth, nor of healthy life; nay, He would illuminate, He would intensify every one of these by expanding them to infinitude: or, if indeed He love you so much as to ask you for His sake to sacrifice them all, even then He gives you in the place of them a beatitude which no one can conceive

save he who possesseth it. And yet, alas! how few accept this call; how many prefer the sin, which can only be got rid of by the sacrifice of self. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*)

Putting away sin:—How is it possible for any ordinary man to grasp this whole question of sin—what it is in its essence as well as in its consequence—and to show how the death of Christ puts away sin? I cannot tell you everything contained in the word "sin"; but I can tell you enough to make it criminal for you to be a persistently wilful sinner. I cannot explore the deepest depths of redemption, but I can make it appear that redemption is an act in accord with our highest intuitions of what the Divine character should be; that assuming the Bible revelation that "God is love," redemption will be to that fact as consequence to cause. Now, it has been said, and with very good reason, that our views in regard to the fact of sin will affect everything else in our theology. In men generally we find two opposite conditions of feeling on this matter of sin. With one class the world is so full of sin that they can see nothing else greater than it. It fills their whole sphere of vision. Man is a sinner—more a sinner than a man. The world is black with sin, and this is the one overwhelming impression which the world makes upon them. At the opposite extreme we find a large class of men who make next to nothing of sin. The article of their creed most frequently proclaimed is, that there is a soul of goodness in all things evil. They try philosophically to evaporate the fact of sin in some such way as this. The body, being body, cannot sin, and the spirit, being an incorruptible essence, cannot sin, and, therefore, we have made a grand mistake. We are already in a sinless world. One cannot well believe that this kind of theological jugglery is very satisfactory even to those who practise it. Now they who see nothing greater than sin in the world must live lives of perpetual gloom bordering on despair. And they who make sin to be to the race as measles to the child can have no very adequate view of anything to which the word redemption can be properly applied. Sin is not by any means the greatest fact in this world's history, but it is a fact momentous and terrible, whether we regard it in relation to the individual, or to the race. If it were what the first class of whom I have spoken make it, would it not be a sufficient reason for arresting the further propagation and development of this race of man? But what I believe the providence of God teaches us, and what Scripture suggests, is this—that in every one born into this world there is more of man than of sin. No man is all sinner. It is not a convertible term, and, therefore, it seems to my own mind that the gloomiest views of man in his relation to sin are just as unrighteous, just as far astray from the truth, as those lax and shallow views which make sin to be as involuntary in its character as is physical disease. The men whose individuality God's Spirit specially prepared, that through it the voice of God might be heard in human tones, often speak of "sin" and "the sinner"—but how? Even in this wise—"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"; "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"; "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men"; "I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into subjection to the law of sin which is in my members." These, and many other passages that we might quote, all tend to show this—that sin is as much a spiritual fact as disease is a physical fact—a fact dark and dismal—not to be set aside as of little account, not to be explained away as though it were a mere figure of speech; but in Scripture there are other facts put alongside of sin, facts greater than sin, facts of man's relation to God, and God's relation to man, which make it impossible for the careful Bible student to despond, much less despair. Man is never identified with his sin as though it were a part of his very life. Man is a composite being, and sin is referred to as being an element that has entered into his nature altogether foreign to it—with which man's nature is, in some form or other, always at war—a poisonous element which his nature seeks to cast out, which it cannot assimilate. St. Paul was the spokesman for them all when he cried out, "Oh, wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me?" To him sin was a state of captivity from which man could not deliver himself. Therefore the cry for a deliverer. Therefore the assurance in his own soul that Jesus Christ was such a deliverer as he and all men needed. Theologians have been accustomed to speak of sin under two divisions, "original" and "actual." I will not trouble you with any such exposition of those terms as might be agreeable to speculators. I don't know that we can improve upon them. By "original sin" we mean that which belongs to us as being joined to a past sinful parentage—for who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean thing? Actual sin is that which belongs to us personally—which is our own. The

tendency to sin was born in us; there can be no denial of that fact. That we have indulged the tendency is undeniable, too. Whence did we get this propulsion? From past generations. Some ancestor stood behind us with his vices, and pushed us forward. It seems unfair that we should be linked to the vices of the past, and we complain of it—perhaps try to shift our responsibility on to the fathers who are dead, perhaps excuse ourselves to ourselves by the consideration that the evil we recognise is not of our own origination. Let us remember that the channel down which the vice which plagues us has come was originally constructed for the transmission of virtue. The pipes laid from a great reservoir to a large city for the purposes of health may, by neglect, become the channel of disease; but who shall say that the original conduits were not constructed on principles of beneficence, and for purposes which justified themselves? No faculty of man was so made that it could sin and not suffer. The suffering that sooner or later follows sin, that suffering proclaims that some law of God has been broken. The more earnestly we penetrate into them, the more thoroughly are we convinced that God's ways justify themselves. The Creator has made this race of ours so much a unit, that if one member suffer all the members suffer with it, and if one member rejoice all the members rejoice with it. That separateness of man from man, that absolute individualism which is at the base of much practical religious error, is more an imagination than a fact. As one has well put the matter, "No creature is, so to speak, merely itself in the world. It is where it is, or what it is, as the result of an indefinite advance and appropriation of preceding forms of existence." We cannot throw the blame of our actual transgressions on any ancestor. It is our own. We feel it to be our own. This linking of man with man, of father with child, of one generation with another, is God's grand provision and protest against that selfish individualism which is ever trying to assert and justify itself at the expense of all our social affections. The philanthropies of society are set going by the presence of pain and woe. And thus a new and higher life is manifested as operative in society—a spirit not legal, not of the nature of naked justice, not an exacting, but a self-sacrificing, spirit. And mark, this philanthropic spirit is evoked outside, as well as inside, the areas of religious profession. Let us be thankful that in this, as in other ways, pain is a sort of unlicensed evangelist in the world inducing men to act Christianly who are averse to thinking Christianly. I always cherish the most sanguine hopes in respect to philanthropic men. Those who go with us a mile have always a slumbering disposition to go with us twain. Such persons cannot do the good they do without getting good. Neither can they go into the battle with pain and suffering without having the inquiry started in their own minds as to what all this suffering means. And surely at times the truth about its origin must flash across their spirits. A man or woman who goes about doing good must, all the time, be approaching nearer and nearer to those central truths which lie at the heart of things. We are thrown back upon the fact of sin in us, of a disorder not curable by the patient, not curable by any man or any body of men—curable, if at all, only by God. When it is put away as sin, it still remains in its consequences as disease. God has forgiven it as sin, for "Jesus hath put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Accepting Christ Jesus as our Lord and Redeemer, we begin to realise that sin, as sin, is forgiven. But we still feel its power; it is a disorder within. But a disorder in the Great Physician's hands, who has forgiven it, will deliver us from it. So that the very hopelessness of our case is the source of our confidence. We cannot forgive our own sin; therefore God our Father, out of His own nature, for His own sake, is sure to forgive when we apply for forgiveness. We cannot cure sin, and, therefore, He who always delights to help the helpless is sure to take the cure into His own hands. (*Reuen Thomas.*) *Christ's sacrifice:*—I. THE PERSON WHO APPEARED, AND THE MANNER OF HIS MANIFESTATION TO THE WORLD. The original dignity of His nature we cannot fitly express but in the language of the sacred Scriptures, which testify concerning Him. There He is declared as the only begotten Son of God, the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of His person, the Word, that was God, by and for whom all things were created. This is that glorious Person whose manifestation in the world is celebrated in all the churches. When this Person condescends to visit the earth, He comes not apparelled in the majesty of Jehovah; no voice of thunder proclaims His descent from heaven, no clouds form themselves into chariots, no lightnings flash around Him; the hills melt not at His presence—all His glory is laid aside. Fulfilling the most gracious and friendly design for man, He appears in the likeness of man, that He may converse familiarly with his brethren, and with a most win-

ning grace accomplish the generous ends of His mission. II. THE DESIGN OF THE SACRIFICE—"to put away sin." For the redemption of a sinful world did the Son of God appear and suffer. There is no other way that we can fully account for our Lord's humiliation and death but the Scriptural fact that He appeared to put away sin by His sacrifice. What mean the presentiments of approaching evil which were expressed in the mournful complaint, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death"? What the exclamation on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" These violent agitations and horrors, in a mind so pure, so firm, so devout, and so magnanimous, must be ascribed to some awful cause; and to what other cause can we trace them, consistently with His character, than this, that He bore the sins of many, and that it pleased the Father to bruise Him with that anguish of soul which the guilt of a rebellious world deserved? "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." The just, being made sin for us, suffered the penalty which the unjust might have been called to pay. It remains to be observed that Christ appeared to put away sin not only in its punishment, but in its guilt and dominion, that He might be a complete Saviour, and recover mankind from all their degeneracy, their corruption, their vice, that they might become worthy of the Divine favour, might enjoy all the felicity of which their nature is made capable, and be fit for the fellowship of the glorious spirits, who, as they excel in strength, excel in faithful obedience to the will of their Father, who loveth righteousness, and whose command is holy, just, and good. III. THE TIME OF THIS DISPENSATION. "Now once in the end of the world." It pleased the wisdom and mercy of the Almighty, by various and progressive discipline, and dispensations of religion, to prepare the world for the appearance of the Messiah. This is called "the last days, the fulness of the time, the end of the world," literally, the end or perfection of the ages. The condition of the Church under the personal administration of the Son of man is the last of all, the most glorious and perfect, and is therefore called the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven. No propitiation shall supersede that of Jesus. No advocate rises after Him to plead our cause. There is no refuge for the unbelieving, who obey not the truth; the wrath of God abideth in them. Their obstinacy cannot set aside the statute of heaven, whereby Jesus is ordained to be both Lord and Christ. Their rejection of Him as a Redeemer cannot save them from appearing before Him as a Judge. Were the gospel but the beginning of a system, the opening of a plan; were it in anything imperfect; did its language indicate alteration and improvement at a subsequent period, then there might be reason to fear that if ever this alteration did take place, when the improvement was engrafted on the original design, some change might be necessary in your conduct; much, perhaps, to unlearn; something new to acquire, after your habits were fixed and your powers decayed; that your faith might be vain; that the principles of your conduct, and the life formed on them, might be unavailing to your spiritual comfort and eternal welfare. No such cause of uneasiness can ever agitate the Christian's mind. The gospel comes to wind up the gracious plan of heaven. Through many intermediate parts it has advanced to indestructible perfection. From the faint light dawning without the gates of paradise it has brightened to the splendour of noonday, whose sun shall never set; even the Sun of Righteousness, whose beams are the healing of the nations. (*L. Adamson, D.D.*)

"*Do*" *and* "*done*":—Said a lady to an unhappy man, "There is a great difference between your religion and mine; yours consists of two letters, D-O, and mine consists of four, D-O-N-E." (*J. H. Brooks, D.D.*)

Vers. 27, 28. **Appointed unto men once to die.**—*The two crises*:—There is a very cheerful emphasis on that word "once." I know people who have so much grace that death seems to be attractive to them, and they really talk as though they would be willing to die half a dozen times. It is not so with me. I submit to the idea only because I have to. But, thank God, we die but once. We take seventeen thousand breaths in a day, but there will be only one last breath. 1. I remark, in regard to the first crisis, that it will be the ending of all our earthly plans. If Napoleon wants to fight Austerlitz, he must do it before that, or never fight it at all. If John Howard wants to burn out the dampness of the dungeon, he must do it before that, or never do it at all. The last moments will snap off all our earthly schemes. If our work at that time be rounded, it will stay rounded. If it be incomplete, it will stay incomplete, like the national monument on Calton Hill, Edinburgh—a row of pillars showing what the building was meant to be, but is not. 2. Again, I remark that the first crisis spoken of in my text will be our

physical ruin. However attractive the body may have been, it must come to defacement and mutilation. Dissolution! 3. Again, I remark, in regard to the first crisis of which I speak, it will be the ending of all our earthly associations. From all our commercial, all our social, all our political, all our religious, all our earthly associations, we will be snapped short off. 4. Again, I remark, in regard to that first crisis, it will be the ending of the day of grace. Before that, plenty of bright sabbaths, and golden communion days, and prayers, and sermons, and songs; but at that point a messenger from God will stand with uplifted hand, bidding all opportunities of salvation "Stand back!" But I have given you only half the text. Is there anything after that? When our physical life is extinct, are we done? No! I am immortal. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment." In that one word of eight letters are piled up harps and chains, palaces and dungeons, hallelujahs and wailings of eternity. 1. I remark, in regard to that second crisis, that it will be our physical reconstruction. Paul will get back his body without the thorn in the flesh; Payson his, without the pang; Robert Hall his, without the lifelong excruciation; Nero his; Robespierre his; Napoleon III. his; the sot his; the libertine his. Some of the bodies built up into unending rapture, some of them into unending pang. 2. I remark, again, in regard to that second crisis, that it will be the time of explanation. Why is it that the good have it hard and the bad have it easy? Why that the Christian mother is deprived to-day of her only child, and the household of the godless left undisturbed? I appeal to the day of judgment. On that day God will be vindicated, and men will cry out, "He is right—everlastingly right!" 3. That last crisis, I remark, will be one also of scrutiny. I do not know how long the last trial will take, but I am very certain that all the past will rush through our recollection. And just imagine it, how that man, that woman will feel when displayed before him or her there shall be ten, twenty, thirty, or forty years of unimproved opportunities. 4. I remark, again, in regard to that crisis, that it will be one of irrevocable decision. If we lose our case in the Court of "Common Pleas," we take it to the "Circuit"; or, failing there, we take it to "Chancery," or "Supreme Court." If we are tried before a petit jury, and the case goes against us through some technicality of the law, we get a new trial. But, when the decision of the last day shall be given, there will be no appeal. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *Death and judgment:*—I. A SOLEMN EVENT—death and judgment. II. THE GLORIOUS WORK OF CHRIST—He was offered to bear the sins of many. III. THE FINAL AND TRIUMPHANT RESULTS—unto them that look for Him shall He appear a second time without sin, unto salvation. (*George Hall.*) *Death, judgment, and salvation:*—I. THE SENTENCE OF DEATH. When it is said "once to die," a resurrection from the dead and life after death are implied. Otherwise, had death been the extinction of being, it would have been sufficient to have said simply "to die"; for what could have remained beyond it to render repetition possible? One awful truth is established—that, dying once, we can die no more. Whatsoever state, therefore, we enter, whether of happiness or of misery, is eternal. II. THE SUMMONS TO JUDGMENT. The sin of another renders us liable to death; but associated with the last tribunal everything is personal. I shall be judged by myself, and must answer for myself. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." III. THE REVELATION OF LIFE. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." "Offered"—behold here the character of His death. The whole argument of this Epistle is, that the death of Christ was a sacrifice. Connect whatever else with it you please, this is its leading feature—"to bear the sins of many." In what sense to bear their sins? Assuredly as their substitute, to suffer in their stead. "To bear the sins of many." It is clear that they are not few who shall be saved. Bigotry and party find no ground on which to place their foot here. IV. THE RETURN OF THE SAVIOUR. "He shall appear the second time without sin," properly without a sin-offering. He appears not again to make an atonement for sin. For what purpose, then, shall He appear in all this glory the second time? "Unto salvation." To bring with Him the glorified spirits of His people; to raise their bodies from the grave, and to transform them into the likeness of His own, to give a public manifestation of their adoption, to place them upon His throne; and so shall they ever be with the Lord. To whom will this second appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ be fraught with such transcendant blessings? "Unto them that look for Him." In this fine figure of one watching until the day break and the shadows flee away, what lively faith, unyielding patience, established hope, fixed expectation, unslumbering vigilance, inextinguishable zeal, and ardent love, are implied!—all the graces of the

Spirit in full exercise—all present ills swallowed up in the anticipation of the approaching crisis. (*W. B. Collyer, D.D.*) *Death and judgment:*—I. HERE WE SEE AN APPOINTMENT, A DECREE, A SENTENCE: WHEREIN FOUR CIRCUMSTANCES ARE TO BE OBSERVED. 1. By whom this appointment is made, namely, by God Almighty, in whom there is not a shadow of turning, and which is able to bring that to pass which He hath appointed. Men are mutable; they appoint and disappoint; it is not so with God; hath He said it, and shall He not do it? Therefore, as sure as God is in heaven, this appointment shall stand. Who at any time hath resisted His will? who can break His appointment? 2. What it is that is appointed—once to die. What is death? Properly to speak, it is a separation of the soul from the body. 3. There is an extraordinary dying, and an ordinary. Some have died twice, as Lazarus, and those that rose with Christ at His resurrection; but ordinarily it is appointed to all men once to die. It is not appointed to all to be rich, wise, learned, but to die. 4. Why was this appointment made? Because of sin (Rom. v. 12), "at what time thou eatest, thou shalt die the death." Why are we afraid of the plague? Because it will kill us. Sin will kill both soul and body; therefore let us all be afraid to sin. 5. The persons to whom this appointment is made, to men—to all men. There is no man living but shall see death: it is appointed to kings to die, to dukes, earls, lords, knights, gentlemen, merchants, clothiers, husbandmen, to high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. It is appointed to the ministers to die, and to the people; to the master, and servant; to the husband, and to the wife. We read of a woman that had seven husbands, they all died, and in the end the woman died also. None can avoid the stroke of death: the physicians that cure others, at the length die; the godly die; so good men and women die, as well as bad, as the faithful are sick as well as the unfaithful, so also they die as well as others. II. DEATH GOES NOT ALONE, THERE IS ONE THAT FOLLOWS HER, AND THAT IS JUDGMENT. Judgment, either of absolution for the godly, or of condemnation for the wicked. If there were no judgment after death, the godly of all others were most miserable; and if no judgment, the ungodly were the happiest men. The drunkard must give an account of his drunkenness, the covetous man how he hath employed his riches; we must give an account of our oppressions, thefts secret or open, of our negligent coming to church and contempt of the Word of God. Let this cause us with a narrow eye to look into our lives, let us judge ourselves in this world, that we be not condemned hereafter. Yet there be a number in the Church that think it a scarecrow, and make a mock at this judgment, as the Athenians did at the resurrection (Acts xvii. 32). Let it be a means to pull us from sin, and to make our peace with God in this world, that we may stand without trembling before the Son of man. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *Death and judgment:*—I. This passage, beyond all its solemnity, DOES HONOUR TO MAN. It declares that death leaves his essential nature untouched. After death he is still man. No affection, no principle of human nature is lost. II. These TWO APPEARANCES OF MAN CORRESPOND WITH THE TWO APPEARANCES OF CHRIST, the representative Man of the race. As Christ inherits to eternity what He acquired in His earthly humanity, so shall we. III. Our brief planetary existence IS QUITE LONG ENOUGH FOR THE INNER, THE ESSENTIAL MAN, TO TAKE THE STAMP, SPIRIT, AND GENERAL CHARACTER OF HIS ENDLESS AFTER LIFE. IV. In the present outer court or vestibule of our nature OUR ESSENTIAL HUMANITY IS IN PROCESS OF FORMATION. And who can fail to admire the justice and mercy of the Divine provision by which the hereditary nature, formed independently of our personal choice, is not permitted to be our final nature; but every man's final nature shall be the result of the choice and co-operation of his own will and personality. V. A MAN IS UNDER NO ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF CONSIDERING THE BEARINGS OF HIS PRESENT LIFE ON HIS FUTURE. It is not more time we want, but more will. VI. Whether we are made out of heaven for heaven, or out of more dusky elements for the dusky world, WE SHALL HAVE TO KEEP OUR APPOINTMENT. VII. By death we go into THE SEARCHING ROOM OF TRUTH. That will not harm us if we invite the truth to search us beforehand. VIII. IT IS WISE AND FRIENDLY THAT TIME SHOULD CLOSE WITH US AND ETERNITY OPEN. IX. TIME IS A SURPRISING MERCY BEFORE ETERNITY BEGINS. X. EVERY MAN'S LOOK FORWARD DEPENDS ON HIS LOOK BACKWARD. XI. IF THE HEAVENLY NATURE IS NOT IN US, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE THAT THE JUDGMENT OF GOD SHOULD PUT US INTO THE SOCIETY OF HEAVENLY PERSONS. XII. YOU SHALL NOT BE ADJUDGED TO A PLACE OUTSIDE HEAVEN, UNLESS YOU ADJUDGE CHRIST TO A PLACE OUTSIDE YOUR SOULS. (*J. Punshon.*) *One death and one salvation:*—There are few things which more strike a reflective mind, one which seriously ponders the relation of the creature to the moral

Governor of the universe, than that the period of human probation should be so short, when compared with the period of recompense. There seems, at first sight, little or nothing of proportion between the thing done and the penalty incurred: and, accordingly, it is no unfrequent argument with those who wish to get rid of the plain statements of Scripture, that it cannot be just to visit the momentary gratification of a passion with everlasting pains, and that, therefore, there will come a termination of the torments of the lost. We need hardly pause to observe to you, that in every such reasoning there is a grievous forgetfulness of the very nature of sin, as committed against an infinite Being; for it is impossible that any sin should be inconsiderable, seeing that it offers violence to all the attributes of God, however insignificant it may appear in itself. But nevertheless, we are free to own, that had not Scripture been definite on the point, there would have seemed nothing wild in the supposition that men might be admitted to other states of probation, and that the whole of their eternity would not be made dependent on the single trial they pass through on earth. We do not know that we have a right to refer it to anything else but a Divine appointment, that those who fail in the single trial are not allowed to try again, so that no opportunity is afforded for endeavouring to retrieve what is lost: but certainly the statements of the Bible are sufficiently explicit, and leave no room for the supposition that the present life is to be followed by other periods of probation. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment"; and the judgment as delineated in the figures and assertions of Holy Writ, closes up God's dealings with the human race in its probationary character, and is followed by nothing but one interminable dispensation of happiness or misery. So that if there be but one death, and that one succeeded by the judgment, without the intervention of new seasons of trial, it is evident that man's portion for eternity is to be decided exclusively by what he now does on the earth: that in the brief space of his present life he is to lose or secure everlasting glory. And is there in this any just ground of complaint, anything that can be proved at variance with either the wisdom or mercy of God? We know that at first thought the persuasion will be, that if the appointment were somewhat less rigid—if men might die twice in place of only once, so that, having failed in the first trial, they might return to the second with all the experience derived from having actually entered the invisible world—there would be a vast increase in the numbers of the righteous; and we may possibly marvel that no further opportunity should be granted, when the result would be to throng heaven with a mightier multitude. But even if you put out of sight that sufficient has been done for every man in his present state of probation, we can have no right to wonder; and we see strong ground for questioning whether there would be any such increase in the number of the righteous as you are inclined to suppose. We rather think, if it had been appointed to men to die twice, far more would die eternally than now that it is appointed unto men to die once. If even now, when we tell you, if you die in your sins you are everlastingly lost, we are heard with indifference, what would it be if you had the thorough assurance that though you threw away the present opportunity, another would yet be vouchsafed? Indeed, if you could only die twice, we could hope to produce no moral impression on any man who had not yet died once. It is impossible to question, seeing that even under the present arrangement everybody is disposed to defer the work of repentance—it is impossible to question, that, with scarce an exception, men would put off seeking the Lord until after the first death; and the rarest thing on earth would be the spectacle of an individual who had resolved to forego the pleasures of sin, without waiting to undergo the second probation. So that we should have to seek the righteous almost exclusively among those upon whom the first death had passed. And here, perhaps, you think we should find them in great numbers. We do not think so. These men would enter upon their second season of probation, with a conscience hardened and seared by the despite done to God through the whole of their first. It is true, they would have been made to taste something of the recompence of sin, and that therefore they would be their own witnesses to the stern consequences of persisting in evil; but in a short time the testimony of sense wears away, and it becomes nothing more than the testimony of faith; and the man who is impervious to God's threatenings might easily become proof against his own recollections. And then you are to consider, that with this hardened conscience, and this ever-strengthening tendency to forgetfulness of their sufferings, they have before them the prospect of another long life, and therefore are as likely as ever to procrastinate. We now advance to the statements in the second verse of our text, between which and those of the first we are to search for

such a correspondence as may justify the form of expression which the apostle adopts. It will not be necessary that we insist on the great doctrine of the atonement, which is evidently affirmed by the words under review. Without enlarging on points on which we may suppose you to be agreed, we shall lay the stress where the apostle seems to lay it, on the fact that "Christ was once offered"—a fact which is made to answer to the other, that "it is appointed unto men once to die." We wish you again especially to observe how the apostle sets these facts one against the other. You strip his expressions of all force, unless you suppose that the appointment of a single death proves in some way the sufficiency of a single sacrifice. Why was Christ offered but once? Because "it is appointed unto men once to die." St. Paul states in the one verse what was the condition of man, and to what he was exposed in consequence of sin, and then he shows in the other verse that Christ had done precisely what was needed in order to man's deliverance and happiness. The one verse is the law, requiring that man should die and be then eternally condemned; the other verse is the gospel, proclaiming an arrangement through which death is abolished, and judgment may issue in nothing but salvation. And by putting the one verse in contrast with the other, St. Paul affirms the precision with which the provisions of the gospel meet the demands of the law; the former so answering to the latter, as to prove them constructed for the purpose of setting man free. The whole appointment of vengeance might be gathered into two articles, the death and the judgment. This was the appalling sum of the penalties which man incurred by disobedience to God; it is appointed to him once to die, and after this the judgment. And then there stood forth a Surety for the lost, a Surety so capable of suffering in their stead, that by one offering of Himself, He could redeem the whole race from the curse which had fastened on both body and soul. Yea, and so confident have we a right to be in the extent of that love which was felt for human kind, that we may be sure that had a second sacrifice been necessary, a second sacrifice would not have been withheld; but there remained nothing that love with all its anxiety could suggest, which has not been done for the welfare of its objects. The one death of the Mediator threw life into the dead, and gaining for Him the office of Judge, secured the final acquittal of all that believe on His name. And therefore might the apostle glory in this one death, and magnify it in comparison with the altars and sacrifices of the Mosaic economy; therefore might he insist on the fact that Christ was to die only once, as overwhelming evidence of the awful dignity of the surety, for that myriads were to be quickened through one death—the past, the present, the future being alike pervaded by the energies of one expiatory act. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *On death*:—I. UNDER WHAT PRACTICAL NOTIONS WE SHOULD CONSIDER DEATH. I. We should consider death as an event certain and inevitable, in consequence of the irreversible sentence once pronounced to our first parents, and, in them, to all succeeding generations. 2. We should consider death as an event removed at no great, though an uncertain, distance. For, how transitory is life! at the longest, how short! and at the best, how frail! 3. Again, we should consider death as an event that will consign us to an immediate state of happiness or misery. II. THE UTILITY OF THE RELIGIOUS CONSIDERATION OF DEATH. 1. It discovers to us the unimportance and vanity of all temporal enjoyments; which, however satisfactory or delightful, are yet short and transitory. It evinces the indiscretion of an intemperate attachment to the world. It serves to extend our views, and elevate our desires. 2. It is the best guard of innocence and virtue. Temptations surround us on all sides, to prevent which nothing can be more effectual than serious meditations on that eternity into which we must soon, and may suddenly, enter. 3. It is the best preparative for a comfortable death. Nothing dissipates the fears of death so much as due preparation for it; nothing so effectually disarms it of its terrors, as the consciousness of integrity. (*G. Carr, B.A.*) *Death a Divine appointment*:—I. ALL THE ANTECEDENTS AND PRELIMINARIES OF DEATH ARE INCLUDED IN THE APPOINTMENT. II. THIS APPOINTMENT, THOUGH UNIVERSAL, HAS VERY DIFFERENT ASPECTS. III. THIS APPOINTMENT ILLUSTRATES THE WISDOM AND GOODNESS OF GOD. IV. THIS APPOINTMENT SPEAKS INTELLIGIBLY AND IMPRESSIVELY TO ALL. V. THIS APPOINTMENT EXERTS A MOST SALUTARY INFLUENCE ON THE EXPERIENCE OF THE BELIEVER. VI. THIS APPOINTMENT DERIVES MUCH OF ITS SOLEMNITY FROM THE FACT THAT AFTER "DEATH THE JUDGMENT." (*J. Hewlett.*) *Man's mortality*:—I. That which I shall do, shall be, in an applicatory way, to make some REFLECTIONS UPON THE STUPIDITY OF MEN; who, though they know themselves mortal, yet thrust from themselves the thoughts of death, and neglect due preparations for it. 1. The generality of men are so immersed in the affairs and pleasures of life, that all

serious thoughts of death and preparations for it are swallowed up by them. 2. Men put off the thoughts of death and their preparations for it, because they generally look upon it as afar off. 3. Men generally put off the thoughts of death and their preparation for it, because of those frightful terrors and that insupportable dread which such apprehensions bring with them. II. The next thing shall be to lay down some CONSIDERATIONS, WHICH MAY FORE-ARM CHRISTIANS AGAINST THE FEARS AND TERRORS OF DEATH, and make them willing to submit unto this law of dying, unto which God hath subjected all men. 1. If the soul be immortal, as certainly it is, and that, parting from this, it enters upon a better life than this, we may well then be contented to die upon that account. 2. The whole life of a Christian is founded upon a hope that cannot be accomplished but by dying. 3. This death, though so much dreaded, is no other than a quiet sleep. III. But now, beside this general appointment of God, that all shall die, there is a PARTICULAR APPOINTMENT, which reacheth to every particular circumstance of man's death; the time when, the manner how, we shall die. These are unalterably determined, in God's secret counsel. IV. Let us now make some PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT of this. 1. If God hath thus appointed us to die, let this then serve to convince us of the gross folly of setting our affections eagerly upon this present world, a world which we must shortly leave behind us. 2. Seeing by the appointment of God we must all shortly die, let us be persuaded to be always in a readiness and preparation for it. (1) Wean your hearts from an inordinate love of the world. Death must and will pluck you from it: and, oh! it will be a violent rending, if your affections be glued to it. (2) Would you be prepared for death? Beware, then, that you do not defer your repentance one day or hour longer, upon any presumption of the continuance of your life. Death depends not upon the warning of a sickness. God doth not always afford it; but, sometimes, He doth execution before He shoots off His warning-piece. And why may it not be so with you? (3) Live every day so, as if every day were your last and dying day, and the very next day allotted to you unto eternity. If it be not so, it is more than any of us know; and, since we have no assurance of one day or hour longer, it is but wisdom to look upon every day as that which may prove our very last. (4) Be constant in the exercise of a holy life, and always doing of that which you would be content Christ should find you doing when He comes to summon you before His bar. (5) Labour to get an assurance of a better life, and this will prepare you for a temporal death. When you and all things in the world must take leave of one another and part for ever, then to have the sense of the love of God, of an interest in Jesus Christ, and the sight of your own graces; these will bear up your heart in a dying hour: these things are immortal, as your souls are. (*Bp. E. Hopkins.*) *Death*:—I. CONSIDER DEATH AS AN EVENT THE PERIOD OF WHICH IS UNCERTAIN. II. A GOOD LIFE IS THE BEST PREPARATION FOR DEATH. Every man dies as he lives; and it is by the general tenor of the life, not a particular frame of mind at the hour of death, that we are to be judged at the tribunal of God. III. CONSIDER DEATH AS BECOMING PRESENT TO US. How will the closing eye contemplate the glitter of life, the evil of avarice, the bustling of ambition, and all this circle of vanity to which we are now enchanted? IV. BY MAKING THE THOUGHT OF DEATH PRESENT TO US, LET US REGULATE OUR CONDUCT with respect to the friendships which we form, and concerning the animosities which we entertain. However some men choose to live, all men would wish to die at peace with their neighbours; there is no enmity in the grave. (*John Logan.*) *Death an appointment*:—I. IT IS APPOINTED UNTO MEN TO DIE. Man, then, is no exception to the universal doom, to the all-prevailing law of earthly life. We live in a dying world. At any time, under any circumstances, death is appalling. He is well called "the King of terrors." The dread of death crowns all our fears. He comes to the work of destruction blind, heartless, inexorable. All the approaches to death make it dreadful. The crowded way of pale disease, of corrupting beauty, of enfeebled powers, of grief and distressing care, of disconsolate old age, of life which enjoys life no longer, makes us dread death. For, if the way be such, what must it be to pass through that crowded gate. Moreover, dying is an utterly new experience, to be undergone alone, and not to be repeated. We cannot practise dying, nor can any one accompany us. II. OUR TEXT, HOWEVER, MEETS THIS DREAD, RELIEVES THE DARKNESS AND FURNISHES GROUND FOR HOPE. It speaks of death as an "appointment"—a Divine appointment, also, of an "after-death." It, moreover, brings our death into relation with the death of Christ, and our "after-death" with "His coming again without sin unto salvation." Death, then, is not an end, still less is it simply a punishment. III. NOW LET US SEE THAT DEATH IS

AN APPOINTMENT WHICH IS RETROSPECTIVE. The spirit in the full contents of its life looks back upon all opportunity and power, in relation to the possibilities of its being, as closed, and begins to learn from within what have been their use or abuse, and to anticipate their future consequences. IV. FOR DEATH IS AN APPOINTMENT WHICH IS RETROSPECTIVE BECAUSE IT IS ALSO PROSPECTIVE. It looks back, and from the past determines the future. There is an after-death to which our moral nature points, of which it makes demands. Things do not appear on this side the grave in their true relations. Strange combinations present themselves, which are often held together simply by the force of circumstances and the necessities of our temporal forms of life, against which we often carry a deep inward protest. But death resolves all these false combinations and unrighteous alliances, and separates from us all that is foreign to our real life, and restores to us all that is truly ours. (*W. Pulsford, D.D.*) *Life the preparation for death* :—Why is there such awe in that brief word, "death"? It is not the mere loss of this life or its joys, which gives that start of fear. Loss we may grieve over! It does not give that piercing shock of personal fear. The poet truly said, "Conscience does make cowards of us all." For the apostle said, "The sting of death is sin." Hence was it that a brave man, sent on a forlorn hope, turned back to meet a disgraced death. Death confronted him; one deadly unrepented sin flashed on his mind; he dared meet death; he dared not meet an unreconciled God. Why did the sight of the decayed remains of his pious and beautiful queen so affect the young Duke of Gandia (S. Francis Borgia), that for his thirty-three remaining years he never forgot that sight, and at once died to the world, that at his death he might live to God? Why, in our own days, did that chance glance at the morning dress laid aside for dinner, awakening the thought of our laying aside this our mortal frame, change in an instant the whole current of the life of a noble convert, while yet young, and make him give his life, his all to God? What gives to death this solemn aspect? The answer is simple. We can but die once. Every error, negligence, ignorance, sin, can be, in some sort, undone. But if we fail in death, it cannot be repaired. All of life is summed up there. "It is appointed unto all men once to die, and after that"—what, a second trial? a second plank after shipwreck? a fresh use of all the experience of life? However any may act, you too know that God saith none of these things, but, "It is appointed unto all men once to die, but after that, the judgment." But, because death is an act so alone, so single, so distinct and separate in its nature and its issue from all besides in life, does it therefore stand insulated? If one were to judge from the ways and words of mankind, it must surely be so. It is the one thing in this life, which is absolutely certain! All depends on it. Eternity hangs upon the moment of death; eternal bliss, eternal woe. And yet who prepares for it? The thought is an unwelcome guest, to whom men refuse entrance, if they can; if they cannot, they are fertile in excuses for dismissing him. They would fain never think of him, till he comes to carry them to judgment. We know that we must die. Why embitter life with the thought of it? And yet how should it be, that everything of moment in this life, which has to be done well, is to be studied, and that the weightiest act of all should need no study, no preparation? Is there no science of dying well? Life, will we, nill we, is the preparation for death. We live, but to die. Our death is not the end only, it is the object of our life. Time and eternity meet in that one point. As we are in that last moment of time, such are we throughout eternity. How then can we prepare for that moment, upon which our all hangs, and in which we can do so little, nay, in which almost all must be done for us? What can men do then mostly, but repeat what they have done before? Good, if by God's grace they are done sincerely; comforts to survivors. But are such few acts, even if God continue the grace to do them, are such few acts the turning-points of life and death? Would they replace a wasted life? Would they efface whole multitudes of lifelong sins? Death has a great work for grace to do, in itself, without weighting it with a work not its own. Every sort of death has its own trials. It has become a sort of proverb, "The ruling passion strong in death." What, if that ruling passion have been something antagonistic to simplicity of character, to the tranquil workings of grace? What if it have been vainglory, or love of praise, or vanity, or impatience, or love of ease, or again disputing, or censoriousness, what pitfalls there yawn on all sides for us, what opening in our armour (if spiritual armour we have) for Satan's deadly thrusts, what occasions for unreality, in the face of the truth itself, for loss of faith when faith is our all; for murmuring against Divine justice when about to appear at its bar! Probably those evil deaths after specious lives have had this in common,

that it was the evil passion to which such men had often secretly given way, a smothered, smouldering, but unextinguished fire, which burst out at last and destroyed them. I have known of relapse into the deadly accustomed sin on the bed of death. Since then death has enough of trial in itself for the grace of God to master, since those trials are aggravated by all unconquered evil in our whole life, since a good death is the object of our life, and such as we are in life, such we shall almost surely be in death, and what we are in death, such we shall certainly be in all eternity, what remains but that we make all our life a preparation for eternity? Heathen wisdom saw a gleam of this. "Who closes best his last day?" one was asked. "He who ever set before him, that the last day of life was imminent." Not without inspiration of God was that counsel, "In all thy works remember thy end, and thou shalt never do amiss." It was a good old-fashioned practice, morning by morning, to think of the four last things, death, judgment, heaven, hell, and to pray to live that day as one would wish to have lived when the last day came. Every day is a part of our death, and enters into it. For death, which sums up all, gathers into one the results of each of our days; and each day as we live well or ill, through the grace of God or our own fault, is the earnest of many like days beyond. It is a stern nakedness of truth, stern only because it is so true: "He is not worthy to be called a Christian, who lives in that state wherein he would fear to die." For nothing makes death fearful except the fear of all fears, lest we be separated from Christ. (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*) *Confessions of dying men*:—1. When men come to die, they are wont to feel, with a vividness of impression wholly unknown before, the shortness of life and the unspeakable value of time. Lord Chesterfield, though a sceptic, and devoted to a life of pleasure, was compelled to say, near the close of his days, "When I reflect upon what I have seen, what I have heard, and what I have done, I can hardly persuade myself that all the frivolous hurry and bustle and pleasure of the world are a reality; but they seem to have been the dreams of restless nights." Voltaire, after having spent a long life in blaspheming the Saviour and opposing His gospel, said to his physician on his dying bed, "I will give you half of what I am worth, if you will give me six months of life." "O time! time!" exclaimed the dying Altamont; "how art thou fled for ever! A month! oh, for a single week! I ask not for years, though an age were too little for the much I have to do." Said Gibbon, "The present is a fleeting moment, the past is no more, and my prospect of futurity is dark and doubtful." Hobbes said, as the last hour approached, "If I had the whole world to dispose of, I would give it to live one day." "Oh!" cried the Duke of Buckingham, as he was closing a life devoted to folly and sin, "what a prodigal I have been of the most valuable of all possessions—time! I have squandered it away with the persuasion that it was lasting; and, now, when a few days would be worth a hetacomb of worlds, I cannot flatter myself with the prospect of half a dozen hours. 2. Another confession which is wont to be made by dying men is, that there is nothing in this world that can satisfy the wants of the immortal soul. When Salmasius, one of the greatest scholars of his time, drew near to death, he exclaimed bitterly against himself—"Oh, I have lost a world of time; time, the most precious thing on the earth, whereof if I had but one year more, it should be spent in David's Psalms and Paul's Epistles. Oh, mind the world less and God more!" Grotius possessed the finest genius ever recorded of a youth in the learned world, and rose to an eminence in literature and science which drew upon him the admiration of all Europe; yet after all his attainments and high reputation, he was constrained at last to cry out—"Ah, I have consumed my life in a laborious doing of nothing! I would give all my learning and honour for the plain integrity of John Urick"—a poor man of eminent piety. Sir John Mason, on his death-bed, said—"I have lived to see five princes, and have been privy counsellor to four of them; I have seen the most important things in foreign parts, and have been present at most state transactions for thirty years together; and I have learned, after so many years' experience, that seriousness is the greatest wisdom, temperance the best physic, and a good conscience the best estate. And were I to live again I would change the whole life I have lived in the palace, for an hour's enjoyment of God in the chapel." Philip, the third king of Spain, when he drew near the end of his days, expressed his deep regret for a worldly and careless life in these emphatic words—"Ah, how happy it would have been for me had I spent these twenty-three years I have held my kingdom, in retirement." "Good God!" exclaimed a dying nobleman, "how have I employed myself! In what delirium has my life been passed! What have I been doing while the sun in its race

and the stars in their courses have lent their beams, perhaps, only to light me to perdition! I have pursued shadows, and entertained myself with dreams. I have been treasuring up dust, and sporting myself with the wind. I might have grazed with the beasts of the field, or sung with the winged inhabitants of the woods, to much better purpose than any for which I have lived." 3. When men are laid upon a dying bed they are wont to feel and to acknowledge the utter insufficiency of a mere moral life to prepare them to appear in the presence of God. "It is not giving up my breath," said the nobleman before referred to, "it is not being for ever insensible, that is the thought at which I shrink; it is the terrible hereafter, the something beyond the grave, at which I recoil. Those great realities which in the hours of mirth and vanity I have treated as phantoms, as the idle dreams of superstitious beings, these start forth and dare me now in their most terrible demonstrations." "Oh, my friends," exclaimed the pious Janeway, we "little think what Christ is worth on a death-bed. I would not now for a world, nay, for millions of worlds, be without Christ and pardon." "God might justly condemn me," said Richard Baxter, "for the best deeds I ever did, and all my hopes are from the free mercy of God in Christ." Said the meek and learned Hooker, as he approached his end: "Though I have by His grace loved God in my youth and feared Him in my age, and laboured to have a conscience void of offence to Him and to all men, yet, if Thou, O Lord, be extreme to mark what I have done amiss, who can abide it? And, therefore, where I have failed, show mercy to me, for I plead not my righteousness, but the forgiveness of my unrighteousness, for His merits who died to purchase pardon for penitent sinners." Such too were the feelings of our own venerated Hooker in his dying hour. To a friend who said to him, "Sir, you are going to receive the reward of your labours," he replied, "Brother, I am going to receive mercy." And not to mention other examples under this head, let me refer to the case of Dr. Johnson. He was a moral man; but his morality could not soften the terrors of a death-bed, nor give him the least peace in prospect of meeting his Judge. When a friend, to calm his agitated mind, referred him to his correct morals and useful life for topics of consolation, he put them away as nothing worth, and in bitterness of soul exclaimed, "Shall I, who have been a teacher of others, be myself cast away?" This great man had not then fled for refuge to the blood of atonement, as he afterwards did; and, therefore, notwithstanding his moral and useful life, he was afraid to die, and all beyond the grave looked dark and gloomy to him. And so it must look to all who come to the dying hour with no better preparation than is furnished in a moral life. 4. Men at the hour of death are constrained to acknowledge the folly and guilt of an irreligious life, and the supreme importance of a saving interest in the Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever apologies are made in the days of health and prosperity for the neglect, of religion, those apologies are found utterly worthless on a death-bed, and are renounced as vain and delusive. Religion is then felt to be indeed the one thing needful, and the whole earth too poor to be given in exchange for the soul. None find peace and hope in that hour but those who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel. The world retires then, and leaves its wretched votaries in poverty and despair. But heaven comes near to sustain and comfort the faithful servants of God; and they feel that an interest in Christ is of more value than a thousand worlds like this. Look at Enoch walking with God, who through faith was exempted from death, and was not, for God took him; at David comforting himself in the close of life in the assurance that God had made an everlasting covenant with him, ordered in all things and sure; at Paul joyfully declaring in the near view of death, "I know in whom I have believed"; at the dying missionary, Ziegenbalger, exclaiming, "Washed from my sins in the blood of Christ, and clothed with His righteousness, I shall enter into His eternal kingdom"; at Swartz sweetly singing his soul away to everlasting bliss; at Baxter, saying, amid the sinkings of nature, "I am almost well"; at Owen lifting up his eyes and his hands as in a kind of rapture, and exclaiming to a friend, "Oh, brother, the long looked for day is come at last, in which I shall see the glory of Christ in another manner than I have ever yet done"; at Edwards comforting his family, as they stood around his dying bed, with the memorable words, "Trust in God, and you have nothing to fear"; at Martyn in the solitudes of Persia, writing thus a few days before his death—"I sat alone, and thought with sweet comfort and peace of God, in solitude my company, my friend, and comforter"; at Dwight exclaiming, when the seventeenth chapter of John was read to him, "Oh, what triumphant truths!"; at Evarts shouting "Glory! Jesus reigns!" as he closed his eyes on

death; at Payson uttering the language of assurance, as he grappled with his last enemy—"The battle is fought! the battle is fought! and the victory is won for ever!" In a word, look at the great cloud of witnesses, who in the faith of Jesus have triumphed over death and the grave, and peacefully closed their eyes on this world in joyful hope of opening them in another and a better, and you will learn in what estimation religion is held, when the scenes of earth are retiring, and those of eternity are opening upon the vision of dying men. Think of it as we may, while the event is viewed as future and distant, we shall all find, when the last hour comes, that it is indeed a serious matter to die. A future state, said the Duke of Buckingham, dying in despair, may well strike terror into a man who has not acted well in life; and he must have an uncommon share of courage indeed who does not shrink at the presence of God. And even Lord Chesterfield, sceptic and devotee of pleasure as he was, was compelled to acknowledge, as the closing scene drew on, "When one does see death near, let the best or the worst people say what they please, it is a serious consideration." "Remorse for the past," exclaimed the dying Altamont, "throws my thoughts on the future. Worse dread of the future strikes them back on the past. I turn and turn, and find no ray of light. Death is knocking at my doors; in a few hours more I shall draw my last gasp; and then the judgment, the tremendous judgment! How shall I appear, all unprepared as I am, before the all-knowing and omnipotent God?" "O eternity, eternity," cried the distracted Newport, as he lay upon his death-bed, contemplating the solemn scenes before him, "who can paraphrase on the words for ever and ever?" Such are the confessions that are wont to be made by dying men; such the feelings and thoughts that crowd upon the mind as the last hour approaches. And in view of them we may remark: 1. They are founded in truth; there is just cause for them It is true that life is short, and that time is of infinite value. It is true that this world contains nothing which can satisfy the wants of the immortal mind. It is true that a moral life is utterly insufficient as a preparation for death and the judgment. It is true that an irreligious life is a life of extreme folly and presumption, and that a saving interest in Christ is a matter of supreme importance to every living man. And the wonder is, not that dying men should feel these things to be true, and be deeply affected by them, but that living men should treat them with indifference. 2. That many of my hearers will, in a short time, view the subject in a very different light from that in which they now contemplate it. Some of you are young, and in the buoyant feelings of youth and health scarcely think it possible that you may soon be called to death and the judgment. Some of you are profoundly careless of your immortal well-being, and are so enamoured of the things of the world that you seldom think of your latter end. Others of you are perhaps sceptical as to the reality of a change of heart to fit you for the closing scene; others of you still, who bear the Christian name, are probably deceived as to the ground of your hope, or are living in a state of backsliding from God, awfully unprepared for His summons to leave the world. To all such the Son of man is likely to come in an hour they think not of; and when He comes, they will be thrown into fearful consternation, and the dreams with which they are now deluded will vanish for ever. 3. It is the part of true wisdom to cherish those views and feelings now, which we know we shall regard as of supreme importance when we come to die. Why should any spend life in treasuring materials for sorrow, disappointment, and despair in the dying hour? Why should any gather food for the worm that never dies, or fuel for the fire that is never quenched? 4. The confessions of dying men are of no avail, only as they indicate the folly of sin and the value of religion. They do not change the character—they do not fit the soul for death or for heaven. The strong bands of sin are not so dissolved, nor is it so that the love of God and Christ is inspired in the bosom, and meetness acquired for a place among the redeemed in heaven. Be wise, then, in this your day, to attend to the things which belong to your peace, lest they be hid for ever from your eyes. Go learn the value of religion in the peaceful and triumphant death of those that die in the Lord; go learn its value in the remorse and despair of those that die in neglect of Christ and His salvation. (*J. Hawes, D.D.*)

The inevitable ending:—1. Consider the statement in itself. It affirms a universal law. "What man is he that liveth and shall not see death?" 2. How are we to account for this great law? (1) It is, says our science, a law of nature: it is an inevitable incident in the chemical development of animal organism. From the moment of our birth we carry within us the seeds, the secrets of our dissolution. The operation of the law may be delayed by precautions which interrupt the action

of the causes which would more immediately precipitate it: it may be prematurely enforced through the rapid development of some latent poison or weakness in the system; but in the end will have its way anyhow. (2) It is, says faith, a law of religion. I had better said, it is a law of the Divine government. We do not deny that death is the term of a process which the chemistry of the human body renders inevitable, because we also see in it a great moral act of the living God, a fact which belongs, in all its highest aspects, purely to the spiritual, to the supersensuous world. Death, it has been finely said by a modern writer, is the very masterpiece of the Divine justice. It is not merely a consequence, it is a measure, of sin. It is God's way of tracing out, as if before our very eyes, what, in His judgment, sin is, because sin has lodged itself in the inmost recesses of our complex being, where spirit and body find their unseen, their unimagined, point of unity, and so is transmitted with the inheritance of life from sire to son. Therefore, we may dare to say, it was necessary, if sin was to be exposed and vanquished, if it was to be torn forth by the very roots, from the nature with which it was so mercilessly interwoven, that God should sever the most secret bonds which unite soul and body—that He should break up this mould of life which had been so deeply dishonoured in the interests of His enemy. And yet in doing this He was only letting sin take its natural course, for sin is in its essence the germ of death. Death is merely the prolongation into the sphere of physical existence of that disorganisation which sin induces into the sphere of spirit. Death is destruction spreading downwards from a higher to a lower department of being, like a fire which has broken out in the upper story of a palace, and which goes on to enwrap in its fury the floors beneath. 3. The practical bearings of this appointment to die. It teaches us our highest work in this life. We live that we may prepare to die. There are four lines of preparation. (1) There is the discipline of resignation. It may seem hard to part with so many friends, so many interests, so much work, so many hopes, so many enthusiasms. But there is no help for it, and it is better, for our own sakes, and still more for the honour of our God, that we should bow to the inevitable. (2) There is the discipline of repentance. (3) There is the training of prayer—I should speak more accurately —of worship. When we pray, really shutting out the things and thoughts of time, cleansing the inner temple of the soul; when we behold the realities over which death has no power, the realities which have no relation to time —the everlasting throne, the unceasing intercession—we are not only insensibly suffused with the light which streams down from that other world; we learn here upon earth how to behave ourselves in that majestic presence; we learn the manners of another climate, the habits of another society, before our time. And this worship is a training for death. (4) There is the discipline of voluntary sacrifice. By sacrifice man does not merely learn to await death; he goes out to welcome it. He learns how to transfigure a stern necessity into the sublimest of virtues. His life is not simply to be taken from him: he will have the privilege of offering it to God; for each true act of sacrifice, each surrender, whether in will or in act, of self, carries with it the implied power of controlling the whole being, not merely on ordinary occasions, but at the crisis, at the trial time of destiny. Like his Lord, the Christian must, by many a free surrender of that which he desires, or of that which he loves, prepare himself for the last great act which awaits him when, anticipating, controlling the final struggle, the last agony, the rent, the pang of separation between his body and his soul, he will exclaim with the Redeemer, "Into Thy hands, O Father, I commend my spirit"; but he will add, because he is a sinner—a redeemed sinner—"for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth." (*Canon Liddon.*) *The time of each man's death Divinely appointed:*—The fact that God has chosen us to salvation does not make us careless of the means of salvation; so the fact that God has fixed the day, the hour, and the mode of my death, will not make me less attentive to the duties that devolve upon me as a rational, a sensible and a reasonable being. And the practical fact that we find, wherever that thought is cherished, is, that they who believe it most strictly are most attentive to present duties, but most fearless of possible perils. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *Death:*—I had an interview with death. The place, a lonely dell, winter-bound, swathed in spotless snow. The time, new-risen morn; the last star paling, as if in fear, retired, but not extinguished. A spirit strengthened me to brave the enemy of life, and gave me courage to upbraid his cruelty. My speech I do remember well, and death's reply. Said I, in heightened tone, as if to keep uncertain courage steadfast and ardent: "Monster, of thee no man speaks well.

Thy silent tread makes the house tremble, and in thy cold breath all flowers die. No little child is safe from death's all-withering touch: nor mothers dost thou spare, nor lovers weaving life's story into coloured dream, nor saints in lowly prayer. Why not content thyself with warring and succeeding in the gloomy jungle? Smite the tiger crouching for his prey, or the lion in his fierceness, or fly after the panting wolf, or lodge an arrow in the heart of the proud eagle. Why devastate our homes? Why kill our little ones? Why break our hearts and mock our thirst with the brine of useless tears? O death! I would that thou wert dead." Then death answered me, and filled me with amaze. "Believe me," said the weird defendant, "thy reasoning is false, thy reproach an unintelligent assault." His voice was gentle, and through all his pallor there gleamed the outline of a smile. I saw transfigured death. "I am God's servant. The flock must be brought home. I go to bring the wanderers to the fold. The lambs are God's, not yours; or yours but to watch and tend until He sends for them. Through your own fatherhood read God's heart. Through your own watching for the child's return conceive the thought that glows in love Divine." He paused. Said I: "Could not some brighter messenger be sent? An angel with sunlight in his eyes and music in his voice? Thou dost affright us so, and make us die so oft in dying once. If our mother could but come, or some kindred soul, or old pastor, whose voice we know; any but thou, so cold, so grim." "I understand thee well," said death, "but thou dost not understand thyself. Why does God send this cold snow before the spring? Why icebergs first, then daffodils? My grimness, too, thou dost not comprehend. The living have never seen me. Only the dying can see death. I am but a mask. The angel thou dost pine for is behind. Sometimes angel-mother, sometimes father, sometimes a vanished love, but always, to the good and true, the very image of the Christ. No more revile me. I am a visored friend." The dell was then transformed. The snow gleamed like silver. The day a cloudless blue. And suddenly living images filled the translncent space. And then I asked of death if he could tell whence came they? And he said: "These are mine. A reaper I, as well as shepherd. I put in the sharp sickle; I bound the sheaves; I garnered the precious harvest; and when I come angels sing 'Harvest home,'" (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Death common to all*:—A beautiful story is told of Buddha and a poor woman who came to ask him if there was any medicine which would bring back to life her dead child. When he saw her distress he spoke tenderly to her, and he told her that there was one thing which might cure her son. He bade her bring him a handful of mustard seed, common mustard seed; only he charged her to bring it from some house where neither father or mother, child nor servant had died. So the woman took her dead baby in her arms, and went from door to door asking for the mustard seed, and gladly was it given to her; but when she asked whether any had died in that house, each one made the same sad answer—"I have lost my husband," or "My child is dead," or "Our servant has died." So with a heavy heart the woman went back to Buddha, and told him how she had failed to get the mustard seed, for that she could not find a single house where none had died. Then Buddha showed her lovingly that she must learn not to think of her own grief alone, but must remember the griefs of others, seeing that all alike are sharers in sorrow and death. (*Heralds of the Cross.*) *Preparation for death*:—Prepare to die whilst you are in health. It is an ill time to calk the ship when at sea, tumbling up and down in a storm: this should have been looked to when she was in port. And as bad is it to begin and trim a soul for heaven when tossing on a sick bed. Things that are done in a hurry are seldom done well. Those poor creatures, I fear, go in an ill dress into another world who begin to provide for it when they are dying, . . . but alas, they must go, though they have not time to put on proper clothes. (*W. Gurnall.*) *Death should be first prepared for*:—There was a young man who once went to the city of Rome. He was an intense student. He had studied by the midnight lamp until his face was pale and his eyes were dim, and as he passed along the streets of Rome, he met one who asked him wherefore he had come. The young man replied: "I have come that I may improve and have opportunities for reading." "And when you have done that, what then?" The youth's eye brightened with the instinctive ardour of youth, as he said, "Who can tell? I may become a bishop." "And when you have become a bishop, what then?" It seemed almost a vain thing, but still elasticity and youthful hope were there; and he said, "I may become a cardinal." "And when you become a cardinal, what then?" "It seems almost madness," was the reply, "but who can tell? I may become Pope." "And when you have

become Pope, what then?" Poor lad! he had got to the end, and he said, "Well, I suppose I must die." "Ah!" said the wise old man, "first get ready for that which must be, and afterwards for that which may be. You may be a bishop; you must die. You may be a cardinal; you must die. You may be Pope; but you must die. First make ready for that which *must be.*" That was wise advice. (*S. Coley.*) *Certainty of death:*—A good old man who used to go about doing good in the Tasmanian "bush" stood, shortly before his death, in a small country place of worship to preach the gospel. In the course of his simple address he pulled out a large watch which had long been his faithful companion. "This watch of mine," said he, "has been going for many years—tick, tick, tick. It is one of the old-fashioned sort and a real trusty one, but it stopped the other day, and has refused to go again. Now, I have lived to old age, healthy and well for the most part: my heart has been beating and my pulse throbbing—tick, tick, tick—very much like the watch; but I shall stop some day, and be numbered with the dead." From the way in which the earnest pastor uttered those words, his little congregation knew he spake as a dying man to dying men, and that he realised that he was as likely to go as any. Hence the power which accompanied the exhortation that followed. (*Thos. Spurgeon.*) *Death inevitable:*—John Asgill distinguished himself by maintaining in a treatise, now forgotten, that death is no natural necessity, and that to escape it is within the range of the humanly practicable. But Asgill's biography, like every other, has for a last page the inevitable "And he died." (*Francis Jacox.*) *Death:*—Death is a black camel which kneels at every door. (*Persian proverb.*) *Exits:*—Death hath ten thousand several doors for men to take their exits. (*John Webster.*) *Death as a messenger:*—Death is like a postman, who knocks alike at the door of rich and poor; and brings to this man wedding cards, and to his neighbour a funeral envelope; to one the pleasant news that his richly-laden vessel has arrived in port, and to another tidings of disaster and bankruptcy. *Death as a liberator:*—Death is the liberator of him whom freedom cannot release, the physician of him whom medicine cannot cure, and the comforter of him whom time cannot console. (*C. Colton.*) *We can die but once:*—Daniel Webster once attended church in a quiet country village. The clergyman was a simple-hearted, pious old man, who rose and named his text with the utmost simplicity. He then said, "My friends, we can die but *once!*"—and paused. Said Webster: "Frigid and weak as these words might seem at first, they were to me among the most impressive and awakening I ever heard. I never felt so sensibly that I must die at all as when that devout old man told me I could die but once." *Death the universal lot:*—There is a fig-tree in India, the branches of which, after growing to a certain height, bend, and grow down into the ground. This tree is a symbol of every human life. From the dust we came, and to the dust we return. *Unprepared for death:*—It is said of the celebrated Cæsar Borgia, that in his last moments he exclaimed, "I have provided, in the course of my life, for everything except death; and now, alas! I am to die, although entirely unprepared." **After this the judgment.**—*The last judgment:*—I. THE CERTAINTY OF JUDGMENT TO COME. To get rid of the doctrine, a man must plunge into the gloomy absurdities of atheism. And is he safe there? He has conscience still left; he is rebuked for sin. There is its premonition. What passes thus in the court of conscience, may be called a kind of petty session, before the great assize, when the Judge shall come and call the nations round His bar. II. THE TIME OF JUDGMENT. At the end of the world. What epithets are attached to this "day" in Scripture! In some places it is called "that day." As if there were no other day. The day of days. In other places it is called "the day of Christ," the "day of the revelation of Christ"; to intimate that it is the day on which publicly He will be manifested in all His glory, as "the great God and our Saviour." It is called in other places "the day of the revelation of God's righteous judgment." Intimating that then the principles of His moral government are to be exposed and vindicated. In another passage it is called "the day of wrath." The impenitent sinner is said to be "treasuring up unto himself wrath against the day of wrath." It is called in other places "the last day." The close of time; the world's dying day. III. THE JUDGE. To call rational creatures to account for their conduct, with a view to final retribution, implies that they are the subjects of Him who thus deals with them. It is an act of authority, therefore, over them which belongs exclusively to God. And God has not only right, not only authority, but every qualification for calling us into judgment. Dwell upon His attributes. He is not only omnipresent, but He is omniscient All their history, their lives, their words, their thoughts, their

feelings. He is omnipotent. He can arrest the sinner. Where will the sinner go, and the hand of God cannot reach him? Then think of His justice. His award must be right. Power cannot awe Him; wealth cannot bribe Him; cunning cannot deceive Him. God is to be Judge. But the Father has delegated this awful commission to the Son. It is part of His mediatorial reward, as God-Man, to judge the world. And how fit that He, who to redeem the world assumed human nature, should in that human nature judge the world! How congruous, that He who came to fulfil the covenant of grace, should be Judge of those who have been placed under it! IV. WHO ARE TO BE JUDGED? "All." All kings and their subjects; all pastors and their flocks. All; the great and the small. V. FOR WHAT THEY WILL BE JUDGED. Everything. You must account for all your privileges. Your Bible; your minister; your sabbaths; your sermons; your sacraments. Your religious parents. Your judgment; your conscience; your memory. Your bodies; all the organs of sense. You must be judged as to your actions. All your secret actions; the deeds which many of you would be glad to forget. For your words. Your slanderous words; your impure words; your malicious words; your false words. The judgment will go further: it will go to the heart. The heart makes the character; motive gives character to action; it is as a man feels and purposes, that he is. There are a thousand thoughts for one action. And all those thoughts are to be brought into judgment. The secrets of all hearts are to be laid open. Oh! who would like to be known for an hour? What, then, must it be to have the life, the history of the heart, laid open? You must be judged, not only for what you have done, but for what you have not done. You are to be judged for your property. And for your influence. Influence is a talent, and we must give account of it to God. (*J. A. James.*) *Judgment to come*:—I. THERE ARE FACTS IN MATERIAL NATURE WHICH SUGGEST FUTURE RETRIBUTION FOR PRESENT WRONG. 1. The connection of suffering with transgression. 2. The power to adjust disturbances. 3. The frequent adjournment of punishment to a future time. II. THERE ARE FACTS IN HUMAN SOCIETY WHICH SUGGEST FUTURE RETRIBUTION FOR PRESENT WRONG. 1. All society implies laws: laws imply penalties. 2. In society the penalties of broken laws are often adjourned. III. THERE ARE FACTS IN MAN'S SPIRITUAL CONSTITUTION WHICH SUGGEST FUTURE RETRIBUTION FOR PRESENT WRONG. 1. There is a principle in the human soul which reproduces the past. (1) In actions. (2) In memory. 2. There is a principle in the human soul which excites forebodements of the future. (*Homilist.*) *Judgment*:—I. WE HAVE THREE DIRECTIONS TO GIVE YOU. 1. Our first direction regards the argument taken from the disorders of society. Do not confine your attention to those disorders which strike the senses, astonish reason, and subvert faith itself. Reflect on other irregularities which, although they are less shocking to sense, are yet no less deserving the attention of the Judge of the whole earth, and require a future judgment. Have human laws been ever made against hypocrites? See that man artfully covering himself with the veil of religion, that hypocrite, who excels in his art! See his vivacity—or his flaming zeal, shall I call it?—to maintain the doctrines of religion, and to pour out anathemas against heretics! Not one grain of religion, not the least shadow of piety in all his whole conversation. It is a party-spirit, or a sordid interest, or a barbarous disposition to revenge, which produces all his pretended piety. And the justice of God, what is it doing? My text tells you, "After death comes judgment." Have human laws been ever made against the ungrateful? Who shall punish this black crime? I answer again, "After death comes judgment." Have men made laws against cowards? I do not mean cowardice in war; the infamy that follows this crime is a just punishment of it. I speak of that mean cowardice of soul which makes a man forsake an oppressed innocent sufferer, and keep a criminal silence in regard to the oppressor. Pursue this train of thought, and ye will everywhere find arguments for a future judgment; because there will everywhere appear disorders which establish the necessity of it. 2. Our second direction regards the argument taken from conscience. Conscience is that faculty of our minds by which we are able to distinguish right from wrong, and to know whether we neglect our duties or discharge them. The judgment that constitutes the nature of conscience is founded on three principles, either fully demonstrable, or barely probable. First, I am in a state of dependence. Second, there is a supreme law; or what is the same thing, there is something right and something wrong. Third, I am either innocent or guilty. On these three principles an intelligent spirit grounds a judgment, whether it deserves to be happy or miserable; it rejoiceth if it deserve to be happy; it mourns if it deserve to be miserable; and this judgment, and this joy, or sorrow, which results

from it, constitutes what we call conscience. 3. Our third direction concerns the proof taken from revelation. II. BUT WHAT SHALL BE THE DESTINY OF THIS AUDIENCE? 1. We shall be judged as having lived under an economy of light. We shall be judged according to what is clear in the gospel itself; and not according to what is abstruse and impenetrable in the systems of the schools. But if this truth be comfortable to good people, it is also terrifying to people of an opposite character. Ye will be judged as reasonable beings, who had it in their power to discover truth and virtue. 2. We shall be judged as having lived under an economy of proportion; I mean to say, the virtues, which God requireth of us under the gospel, are proportioned to the faculties that He hath given us to perform them. Endeavours to be perfect will be accounted perfection. This very law of proportion, which will regulate the judgment of us, will overwhelm the wicked with misery. It is always an aggravation of a misery to reflect that we might have avoided it, and that we brought it upon ourselves. 3. We shall be judged as having lived under an economy of mercy. What can be more capable, at once, of comforting a good man against an excessive fear of judgment, and of arousing a bad man from his fatal security? (*J. Saurin.*) *A judgment to come*:—I. A judgment to come, or a future state, may be PROVED FROM REASON, OR THE PRINCIPLES OF NATURE. And hence it was, that every sect of men that did prescribe morality, did teach an after-life. Nothing was more generally believed among the heathens. Their tribunal below, where three most severe judges were appointed, meant the same thing with our last judgment; their elysian fields were but a poetical paradise; their Phlegethon, or river of fire, was set to express our lake of fire and brimstone. The notion of a future judgment is so obvious to the capacity of every natural man, that when St. Paul (Acts xxiv. 25) reasoned about it, Felix, though a heathen, trembled at it. The certainty whereof may appear to any considerative man from these three things—1. The unequal distribution of rewards and punishments in this world. 2. Those natural hopes and expectations which good men have of a state of perfect happiness. 3. Those natural fears which wicked men usually have of a state of torment. II. FROM SCRIPTURE AND DIVINE REVELATION. The principal evidence, therefore, of a future judgment is to be found in (2 Cor. v. 10; 2 Tim. i. 10). 1. The great Judge of heaven and earth hath clear knowledge. 2. Entire justice in God is no quality, that may be got and lost again; but His very nature and essence. And can there flow any injustice from the pure fountain of justice? (Gen. xviii. 25.) 3. A third property of the Judge of all the earth, which may render Him terrible to us, is His uncontrollable power, which no earthly judge can pretend to. For though man by sin runs away from his God, yet he is still in His chain; and though he may have put on the devil's livery, yet he is still within the verge and reach of God's power, who can deliver him up to Satan, and make his new master whom he serves his gaoler, his executioner. When Popilius, by order of the Roman Senate, required Antiochus to withdraw his army from the king of Egypt, and he desired time to deliberate upon it, Popilius drew a circle about him with his wand, and said, "Give me your answer and final resolution, which I may return to the Senate, before you stir out of this circle." The day of judgment is making its approaches towards you, and you must now, before you go out of the circle of this world, resolve whether you will withdraw from the service of sin and Satan, and thereby make it prove to you a joyful and a happy day. (*R. Neville, B.D.*) *Personal responsibility of man in the great account*:—To the Father who created us, the Son who redeemed us, the Holy Ghost who dwelleth in us, we have to give account, not merely by the enactment of a positive law, but by the declaration of an eternal necessity, which forbids the divorce of responsibility from the consciousness of privilege and power. And this is ours, not as being atoms merged in the corporate existence and workings of the Church, but as presented individually to Him with whom we have to do; brought face to face with Him at every turn of life; either consciously walking with Him, like the Prophet of the patriarchal world, or less consciously watched by a Divine Presence which we only recognise when it thwarts us, like the angel whom Balaam had not at first his eyes open to see. There is a general way of recognising this, which easily admits it, but with little fruit. But we further trace the lesson into its details; and confess ourselves accountable for the possession and the use of every one of those separate gifts which form or adorn the master of this world and heir of the next—1. Whether it be intellect—given us to comprehend, in a measure, that which passes comprehension in the deep things of God;—yet, when unsanctified, the characteristic attribute of the enemy of God. 2. Or speech—our glory, the best member that we have, when consecrated to the

praises of God and to the proclamation of His will;—yet in its misuse a fire, a world of iniquity, defiling the whole body, setting on fire the course of nature, itself set on fire of hell; made to bless God, used to curse men. 3. Or time—the stuff that our lives are made of, the seed-field in which we are permitted to sow for eternity; given us for work, thought, prayer; given to carry us on from strength to strength till we appear before the God of gods in Sion;—but wasted, it may be, abused in vanities and pleasures which perish in the using, in raking together stones for the tomb of our sepulture, or faggots for the fire that is to burn us. 4. Or money—the most hazardous, yet the real gift of God. It may open heaven to us if we have sent our treasure there before us. But oh! how much oftener it is carried with us on the downward road, as if we had a toll to pay to open the gates of hell! Aud as all these gifts, and the many others which might be instanced, go to mould a man's character, ay, go to mould the characters of others by the imperceptible, irresistible interdependence of society, for these things too we are responsible; for that which we have made ourselves, for that which we have made others. But in this multifarious responsibility there is necessarily something of vagueness and uncertainty. One by one the burdens upon us have seemed more than we could bear. But what is there cumulative effect? (1) It is, perhaps, bewilderment. Take the colours on a painter's palette, as they lie side by side so brilliant in their beauty. Try the experiment of blending them into one, and what will be the result? One undistinguishable blotch of mud! And so it may prove to be with the mind, overstrained in the attempt to grasp the total of that which has been so alarming in its details. (2) Or the result may be carelessness. The first impression may have been deep, the second slighter, the third slighter still; and before the catalogue has been gone through, attention flags; some new trick of the tempter's art dazzles the eyes; and the man turns again, forgetting the burden on his back, to chase the butterflies of his childhood. (3) Or it may be desperation;—and like a beast of chase that faces round and breaks away through the array of its pursuers, he may altogether break the yoke and burst the bonds. And thus life glides away; and while responsibility is accumulating, the sense of it grows dull; conscience loses its sensitiveness and power, becomes callous, is seared as with a hot iron. But if a man can live, if a man can die with his eyes shut or his heart hardened to the sense of his responsibility, is he therefore free? If death were the end of all, then those who were content to accept the life and the death of the brute, might be almost deemed impregnable in their position. Fallen so low, it might seem that they could fall no further. But though there are instances of this kind, how is it that they are so rare, even among those whose interest it would seem not to believe? How is it that conscience does make herself heard in the closing hours of life, when she has been bound and tongue-tied before? It is because at the approach of death there is something lifted of the veil that shrouds the unseen. Then the voice of warning assumes the voice of prophecy; and the message is, "It is appointed to all men once to die, and after this the judgment." Then, at last, all masks drop off, all veils fall away. It will be of little advantage to have silenced conscience, in the day when her whispers are replaced by the record written in the opened books. It will be no time to plead ignorance or lack of memory, when the light of the Judge's countenance shall illuminate the secret chambers of all hearts. Of all the terrors of that day, to men who, while the day of salvation lasted, have refused to be persuaded of the terrors of the Lord, which will be the chief? Will it be the exposure of all our sins and all our shame; the sins that we might have hidden, might have cleansed in His blood, but would not; the shame that we might have anticipated by taking shame to ourselves, clothing ourselves in our own confusion before Him, that we might receive from Him robes of grace and glory? This would be sufficiently terrible. Think, but for a moment, what an influence this sense of exposure to your fellow-sinners' judgment exerts over you even now. Ask yourselves, Has it ever happened that you have felt quite comfortable under the secret consciousness of an action, which has caused you agony as soon as you began to think that your neighbours knew it as well as yourselves? Is not this the plain and simple history of nine-tenths of the cases of desperate suicide that we hear of? But in that day all will be naked before all the world; no shelter in the present, no hope in the future! But amidst that great company—the first and last gathering of the universal human race—there are individuals whose presence may suggest a special pang. There are those whom we have known only too well, those whose companions we have been in vanity or in sin, those for whom we have to answer. If we have led souls into sin, either to

share our own wickedness or to follow it; if we have made them the victims of our vile passions, or have taught them to indulge their own; if our words have shaken their faith, or hardened them in ungodliness; nay, if our silence has left them unwarned and unreproved, when a word spoken in season might have saved them from sin; then indeed the burden of responsibility will be as lead upon our souls in that day. Again, there will be those there who had a responsibility for us, and who knew it, and did their best to discharge it; those who loved us in our childhood; those who have nursed us in our decline. Their Christian love cannot lack its reward for themselves. But if all this, their ministry, their devotion, has been without avail to us, with what feelings are we to meet their eyes in that day? But we are still lingering in the suburbs of that judgment-place; as if for very shame turning our eyes away from the throne and Him that sitteth thereon. But though the presence of the universal race of Adam in that day shall enhance its horrors for the wicked, it is not to them that we are responsible; it is not they that shall fix our doom. No trees of the garden will be there to shelter us; no rocks and mountains to cover us. And not of God only, but of Him who is God and Man—of the man Christ Jesus, to whom the Father has committed this judgment, even because He is the Son of man. (*R. Scott, D.D.*) *The blessing of judgment*:—A thing so universal as death must, we believe, prove a benefit to all, and this after-intensity of consciousness, this revelation of judgment, will be a blessing. For just those of us who need most a judgment day cannot obtain it on earth; memory is dull, the temper of the brain is such that remembrances are written in sand, and those things which ought to come into our minds to help us form a right estimate of ourselves or a fit determination for the future are covered over by oblivion, and we go blundering on, never knowing our own powers, never doing our right work, ever falling into the same snares, beaten by the same enemies. Here, cruel misunderstandings occur, leading to long tragedies in which good people are mutually estranged by misconception and falsehood; here, the egotist is blind to the direful malady from which he suffers; here, the hypocrite sometimes deceives himself as well as others; here, patient hearts bear and forbear without complaint, cling to the right amid sharp trial, and no one gives them credit for their fortitude; here, malice, covetousness, and sensuality make men's lives ugly and foul, and through training or heredity the truth is kept from them—conscience erects no throne of God in their gloomy souls to judge them—ignorant and unrepentant they die in their sins. God's judgment day shall set all these things right; His light shall shine into the darkest crypts of the soul; the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed; in heaven "the books shall be opened." It will be a blessing to us all to see ourselves as God sees us, to know the truth though it condemns us, to be driven out of the refuges of lies that we run to when conscience would upbraid us, to experience in the nakedness of our souls even the pains of hell, if so be that thereby we can enter heaven at last. Every wise man prepares for contingencies. This judgment day after death is the contingency we have to face—not to fear it, but to thank God for it and prepare for it. There is more good than evil in it for all of us, just as there is in this life if we will only find it. (*H. H. Snell, B.A.*) *The expectation of a judgment is reasonable*:—Our little life is rounded with a sleep: after sleep an awaking. We must expect judgment after death just as naturally as we experience it in the great crises of life. A drowning man sees in a minute his life flash through his mind, illuminating the track of all the years; memory, in the agony of that critical experience, accomplishes the marvel for him. Any great experience—a death, a misfortune, a grave temptation—will similarly vitalise memory and conscience. Is it not natural that death, the means by which our spirits pass into complete realisation of themselves, should be such a stupendous change that memory and conscience will be awakened into such vitality as is here unknown? By everything we know of Nature we must expect it, by the same laws which enable a worm to crawl into the chrysalis state and emerge therefrom a winged sylph, we must look for the rising of our spirits into a condition in which our conscience shall be winged to fly from end to end of our lives and discover what we really are when stripped of the disguises of mortality. (*Ibid.*) *Judgment*:—I have read somewhere of a company of young men who were jesting on sacred things. Suddenly a funeral passed by, and one of the company, pointing to it, said, "There goes the last affair of all." "Not so," answered a quiet bystander; "it is appointed to men once to die, and after this the judgment." It is a common mistake to speak of a man's death as the end of him; it is simply for him the beginning of eternity. (*H. J. Wilmot Buxton, M.A.*) *Certainty*

of the judgment day:—Let us suppose, that at the time when Britain was peopled by half-savage tribes, before the period of the Roman sway, some gifted seer among the Druids had engraven upon a rock a minute prediction of a portion of the future history of the island. Suppose he had declared that it should, ere long, be conquered by a warrior people from the south; that he should name the Cæsar himself, describe his eagle standard, and all the circumstances of the conquest. Suppose he should portray the Saxon invasion centuries after, the sevenfold division of the monarchy, the Danish inroad, the arrival and victory of the Normans. Our imagined prophet pauses here, or at whatever other precise period you please to suppose; and his next prediction, overleaping a vast undescribed interval, suddenly represents the England of the present day. Now conceive the forefathers of existing England to have studied this wondrous record, and to find, to their amazement, that every one of its predictions was accurately verified; that, as their generations succeeded, they but walked in the traces assigned for them by the prophetic inscription, and all it spoke progressively became fact. Can we suppose, that however far away in futurity was the one remaining event, and however impossible to them, at their early stage, to conceive the means by which all the present wonders of this mighty empire could ever be realised, they would permit themselves to doubt its absolute certainty after such overwhelming proofs of the supernatural powers of the seer who guaranteed it? Would they not shape their course as confidently in view of the unquestionable future as in reference to the unquestionable past? It should be thus with regard to the coming judgment. (*Archer Butler.*) *Judgment day forgotten*:—Is it not foolish to be living in this world without a thought of what you will do at last? A man goes into an inn, and as soon as he sits down he begins to order his wine, his dinner, his bed; there is no delicacy in season which he forgets to bespeak. He stops at the inn for some time. By and by the bill is forthcoming, and it takes him by surprise. "I never thought of that—I never thought of that!" "Why," says the landlord, "here is a man who is either a born fool or else a knave. What! never thought of the reckoning—never thought of settling with me!" After this fashion too many live. They eat, and drink, and sin, but they forget the inevitable hereafter, when for all the deeds done in the body the Lord will bring us into judgment. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) "*Contraband goods*":—A traveller crossing the frontier had to pass the custom-house. The examining officers said to him: "Have you any contraband goods?" "I don't think I have," he replied. "But we cannot allow you to pass until we have examined you," said the officers in charge. After he was examined he said to the officers: "Gentlemen, will you permit me to tell you what thoughts this examination has brought to my mind? We are all travellers to an eternal kingdom, into which we cannot take any contraband goods. By these forbidden things, I mean deceitfulness, anger, pride, lying, covetousness, and all such offences, which are an abomination in the sight of God Almighty. For all these, every man that passes the boundary line of the grave is searched far more strictly than you have searched me. God is the great Searcher of hearts, and from Him nothing is hid that shall not in that day be revealed." (*C. W. Bibb.*) *The backslider's dream*:—A young gentleman, being reproved by his mother for being religious, made her this answer: "I am resolved by all means to save my soul." Some time afterwards he fell into a lukewarm state, and was, besides, sick and nigh unto death. One night he dreamed that he saw himself summoned before God's throne, and from thence hurried into a place of torments; where, seeing his mother full of scorn, she upbraided him with his former answer, because he did not save his soul by all means. This was so much impressed upon his mind when he awoke, that, under God, it became the means of his turning again to Him; and when anybody asked him the reason why he became again religious, he gave them no other answer than this: "If I could not in my dream endure my mother's upbraiding my folly and lukewarmness, how could I be able to suffer that God should call me to an account in the last day, that the angels should reproach my lukewarmness, that the devil should aggravate my sins, and that all the saints of God should deride my folly and hypocrisy?" (*K. Arvine.*) **Christ was once offered.**—*On the sacrifice and atonement of Christ*:—1. On contemplating the death of Christ, let us consider that "it brought life and immortality to light"; and while it manifested in the most striking manner God's abhorrence of sin, it assured us of the riches of His Divine love in admitting such an expiation and atonement for it. 2. Farther, the death of Christ "sealed up the vision, and the prophecy," to use the language of the prophet, "caused the oblation and sacrifice to

cease, and brought in everlasting righteousness." 3. But, above all, the death of Christ set before us a heavenly example of those virtues, which in this world of discipline and trial we most want, and are chiefly required to practise. Let us distinctly consider His patience and forbearance, His charity and great humility. (*J. Hewlett, B.D.*) *The sacrifice of Christ*:—I. WHAT THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST SIGNIFIES. 1. It supposes man's revolt and fall from God (Rom. v. 18). 2. It supposes God's purpose to take vengeance for sin (Exod. xxxiv. 7). 3. It implies man's helplessness to recover himself (Psa. xlix. 7, 8). 4. It implies the necessity of Christ's being God and man (1 Tim. ii. 5). 5. It denotes the extremity of Christ's sufferings (1 Peter iii. 18). 6. It implies the gracious design of God to reconcile us to Himself at so dear a rate (John iii. 16). II. THE NECESSITY OF CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD. 1. This appears from the nature of sin (Rom. vi. 23). 2. The veracity of God requires it (Gen. ii. 17). 3. The justice of God admits not of relaxation. III. THE INFERENCES DEDUCIBLE. 1. It evinces the incomprehensible superiority of the Christian religion over all others. 2. Hence also the necessity of having true faith, in order to the possession of a state and sense of peace in the soul, with and from God. 3. If Christ be your high priest, and if His priesthood be felt as necessary for us, then you will freely acknowledge your utter incapacity to reconcile your own souls to God. 4. All you that believe can daily feel the absolute need of a Saviour every day, not only to plead your cause, but to render rich supplies to your souls, with all necessary help. 5. The strict duties of the best men do not supersede this sacrifice. 6. See the goodness of God in providing this sacrifice. 7. Let your souls exult whilst meditation is their employment respecting the glories and superlative excellency of Christ. 8. This sacrifice has only once been offered. 9. None but Christ could bear the sins of sinners. 10. The believing sinner shall never bear his own sins. (*T. B. Baker.*) *The sacrifice and the second coming of Christ*:—I. THE FACTS CONCERNING MAN. II. THE FACTS CONCERNING CHRIST. They are two, corresponding with the two concerning man. 1. The first fact is past. It corresponds to man's one certain death. He was once offered. 2. The second fact is future. It corresponds to the certain judgment. He cannot die the second time, but He can come the second time. He will come to judgment. Not Himself to be judged. Mark—(1) The fact itself. He will "appear." It is the word used in 1 Cor. xv. 5–8, to express His appearance after His resurrection. As then, He will be seen in His glorified body. (2) The persons interested in it. "Them that look for Him." They are distinctly taught to anticipate this event (Matt. xvi. 27; Acts ix. 11). Hence they stand in the attitude of believing, longing expectation (Rom. viii. 19, 23, 25; Phil. iii. 20, 21; Titus ii. 13; 1 Thess. i. 10). (3) The ends contemplated by it. (*a*) A contrast with the first coming. "Without sin." He was personally without it. At His second coming He will be officially without it. He will come in His glory as the Judge of men. (*b*) A resemblance to His first coming. When He came before He came to save. When He comes again it will be "unto salvation." This is equivalent to full salvation. It will be both the public manifestation of His position as the Saviour and the public acknowledgment of His people. The best preparation for His coming is the cultivation of faith, love, holy character (2 Peter iii. 11–14). (*John Rawlinson.*) *Christ the only Sin-bearer*:—Mr. Innis, a great Scotch minister, once visited an infidel who was dying. When he came to him the first time, he said, "Mr. Innis, I am relying on the mercy of God; God is merciful, and He will never damn a man for ever." When he got worse and was nearer death, Mr. Innis went to him again, and he said, "Oh! Mr. Innis, my hope is gone; for I have been thinking if God be merciful, God is just too; and what if, instead of being merciful to me, He should be just to me? What would then become of me? I must give up my hope in the mere mercy of God; tell me how to be saved!" Mr. Innis told him that Christ had died in the stead of all believers—that God could be just, and yet the justifier through the death of Christ. "Ah!" said he, "Mr. Innis, there is something solid in that; I can rest on that; I cannot rest on anything else"; and it is a remarkable fact that none of us ever met with a man who thought he had his sins forgiven unless it was through the blood of Christ. Meet a Mussulman; he never had his sins forgiven; he does not say so. Meet an Infidel; he never knows that his sins are forgiven. Meet a Legalist; he says, "I hope they will be forgiven"; but he does not pretend they are. No one ever gets even a fancied hope apart from this, that Christ, and Christ alone, must save by the shedding of His blood. *The sinner's substitute*:—A good old Christian woman in humble life was once asked, as she lay on her dying pillow, the

ground of her hope for eternity. She replied, with great composure, "I rely on the justice of God"; but seeing that the reply excited surprise, added, "justice, not to me, but to my Substitute, in whom I trust." *One for many*:—A deaf and dumb scholar once wrote on the slate to his teacher, "I cannot see how Jesus Christ alone should be able to die for all men." The teacher (Charlotte Elizabeth) thought for a while how she should open his mind to the blessed truth; and then she went out and brought in a whole apronful of dead leaves, which she put on one end of her desk; then she took off a diamond ring, and put it on the other end. The countenance of the mute scholar lighted up in a moment. "I see it now," he wrote, "Jesus is a diamond worth more than all the leaves of a dead world." (*Baxendale's Anecdotes.*) **Appear the second time.**—*The advent of our Saviour*:—I. WHO ARE THEY THAT LOOK FOR HIM? 1. Not all those who believe in, and anticipate, His second coming. There are many who desire the honour and happiness which they believe the second advent will bring; but they have not the mind to obey Christ when He comes, for they do not obey Him now. They are proud, envious, self-willed, unloving, unmerciful, and unjust; their Christian creed enters only their heads, while the creed of the world possesses their hearts and rules their lives. To such the day of the Lord will be darkness and not light; it will disappoint their vain hope. 2. There are those who look for Christ from other feelings. They believe that that day will bring joy to the world by a rule of righteousness; and out of love and pity for humanity they rejoice in the prospect. They look to His coming as the consummation of all which they are now striving after in themselves and in the world. And because they look for the time when truth will be revealed and righteousness rule, they the more hopefully labour to spread the one and establish the other. They only look truly for His personal coming who are now seeking union with Him in His spiritual presence; they only desire truly His future dominion who are earnestly seeking His rule within and around them now. II. HOW WILL THE APPEARING OF CHRIST BRING THEM SALVATION? 1. The coming will be personal and real. The personal presence of Christ was an immense power even in the days of His humiliation; and it may be safely believed that it will be far greater in His glorification. 2. The precise character of the power of the presence of Christ will be better understood if we remember that His coming will take place in the spirit-world. Now in such a world the spiritual predominates in all things. It will be so in the appearing of Christ in that world. He will be seen in bodily form; but the vision of His spirit will be more powerful than that of His form. I will try to illustrate my meaning by the impressions which we obtain from language. If we do not understand a language which we hear, we are wholly occupied with the sounds; but if we listen to words which we do understand, the mind takes in the sense and is more occupied with it than with the sounds of the voice. The mind, or spirit, in the words dominates over the sounds. So will it be with everything in a spiritual world; the mind in things will be more apparent to us, and will affect us more powerfully, than the external appearances. In Jesus Christ we shall see not only a glorious person, but yet more distinctly the glorious mind and spirit. We shall see Christ's thought, and it will enter our thought; we shall see Christ's heart, and it will affect our hearts; and we shall see all the moral perfections of Christ's character, and they will affect our characters. The bodily form of Christ, which is a spiritual body, will be only a medium for connecting us more closely with His Spirit. He will flow into us in the measure of our capability of receiving Him; and He will thus put forth in all our hearts the direct power of His own life. I think it will be apparent from this that to all them that look for Christ His appearing will be "unto salvation." Their faith will conjoin them more intimately with His thought; their love will unite them with His heart; and these will cause their characters to fall into perfect harmony with His. But salvation includes more than this. The glorification of the body and its entire deliverance from suffering is required. Now, in a spiritual state, not only does spirit dominate over body, but it makes the body what it is. A glorious soul makes a glorious body; a soul without disease makes a body without disease. And so also a society without sin will call for a world without darkness or evil of any kind. For in a spiritual world all things are images of the spirits which dwell in it. Thus at the appearing of Christ all things will be made new. The thought and life of God, which make heaven, will be set forth in the harmony, beauty, and variety of a heavenly world. (*R. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The two advents of Christ*:—I. The text asserts very plainly that as we are here twice—once in a life of probation, and a second time in the day

of judgment; so Christ shall be here twice—once in His life of suffering, and then again in His hour of triumph, THE TWO COMINGS OF CHRIST HAVE SOME DEGREE OF LIKENESS. 1. They are like each other in the fact that they are both of them personal comings. 2. Nor less shall the advents be like each other in the fact that they shall both be according to promise. 3. But we must remark in the next place that the second advent of Christ will be like the first in its being unexpected by the mass of people. 4. He will come to bless those who do wait for Him, just as He did at the first. 5. There is this further likeness; He comes, not only to bless His people, but to be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to them that believe not upon Him. II. THE UNLIKENESS BETWEEN THE TWO ADVENTS. 1. In His coming. Then a manger, now a throne. Then an infant, now the Infinite. 2. In His person. Ah! who would think to recognise in the weary man and full of woes the King eternal, immortal, invisible. WHO would think that the humble man, despised and rejected, was the seed-corn out of which there should grow that full corn in the ear, Christ all-glorious, before whom the angels veil their faces and cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth!" He is the same, but yet how changed! Ye that despised Him, will ye despise Him now? 3. In the treatment which He will then receive. 4. The difference appears once more in this; He comes again for a very different purpose. He came the first time with, "I delight to do Thy will, O God." He comes a second time to claim the reward and to divide the spoil with the strong. He came the first time with a sin-offering; that offering having been once made, there is no more sacrifice for sin. He comes the second time to administer righteousness. He was righteous at His first coming, but it was the righteousness of allegiance. He shall be righteous at His second coming with the righteousness of supremacy. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ's second coming:*—I. THE CERTAINTY OF OUR LORD'S RETURN. II. THE GRACIOUS DESIGN OF HIS APPEARANCE. 1. At His second coming Christ will raise the dead bodies of His servants, which will be a considerable addition to their felicity. 2. In that day the Church, which is called the body of Christ, shall be complete, which must add to the happiness of every saint in particular. 3. Then also shall believers be solemnly acquitted by the Judge Himself, and publicly acknowledged in the presence of an assembled world. 4. To complete the happiness of the saints, then shall there be the clearest discovery of all God's works. III. HIS APPEARANCE SHALL BE "WITHOUT SIN." 1. Without that guilt which was charged upon Him, while He sustained the character of Surety, and stood in the place of sinful man. 2. Without any of the effects of sin, such as pain, poverty, reproach, or infirmity of any kind. IV. THE CHARACTER OF THOSE TO WHOM THIS SECOND APPEARANCE OF OUR LORD SHALL BE COMFORTABLE. They are such as "look for Him." This short, but insignificant description, may be considered as including—1. A firm belief of this event. 2. The love and desire of this event (2 Tim. iv. 8). 3. A patient waiting for His appearance, in spite of all discouragements, 4. An habitual preparation for this event. (*R. Walker.*) *The second advent:*—He shall not come the second time to die for our sins as He did the first; this is the genuine sense. When He came to sacrifice for sin, He came in great humility; this low condition was suitable to the work He then undertook. But now He comes as King and Lord to judge the world, and therefore He comes in glory. The end of His coming is to reward, and the reward is salvation, and the parties to be rewarded are such as look for Him. By salvation is meant eternal life and full happiness, which He purchased by His precious blood, and it is so called because man in danger of eternal death shall then be fully delivered from all sin, and all the sad consequences of sin, and that for ever, for then death, man's last enemy, shall be destroyed. Yet this immunity from all evil believers do expect, and because they know they shall not fully enjoy it till His second appearance, they look for His coming from heaven, that then their joy may be full. Some think the apostle doth here allude to the order of the Levitical service. The high priest enters the sanctuary to pray and expiate sin, and the people stay without, and wait for his coming out to bless them. So Christ enters heaven, that glorious sanctuary, there appears before God, and stays a while, and all His saints do wait for His return and coming out from thence, that they may by Him be eternally blessed. These lookers for Him are they who shall be rewarded. For though Christ came the first time to die for all, so far as to make their sins remissible, yet He comes the second time to confer the ultimate benefit of His redemption only upon them that look for Him. To look for Christ from heaven doth presuppose the parties regenerate and renewed from heaven, justified, and in the estate of justification. And this looking for Christ is their

hope, with a longing desire, expressed sometimes by groans, and yet a patient waiting God's leisure, out of an assurance that He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. (*G. Lawson.*) *Christ's future appearance, without sin, unto salvation*:—When He shall again appear upon the world's surprised or expectant vision, He shall appear without sin. All those remedial agencies which during the past millenniums have been lifting the moral world out of darkness and superstition into the light of God's truth, mercy, and love, having served their purpose in the salvation of untold multitudes, find no longer any scope or occupation. He comes, not to present a sin-offering and provide more comprehensive remedies than Calvary saw or the Scriptures predicted. He comes no longer as an object of doubt, to be spoken against, to be written against, and to be followed with an interrogation mark wherever His name appears upon the pages of the world's literature. Criticism has expended its force and finished its work; its quiver is empty, its pen broken. He comes no longer to stand and wait as a suppliant, His garments moist with the dews of the night (Rev. iii. 20). But He comes without sin unto salvation to those that look for Him. He comes to complete salvation. Great and immediate results wait upon His reappearance upon this orb of ours. The righteous dead shall first be raised. Their bodies sleeping in the dust of the earth shall hear the voice of resurrection, and come forth into newness of life and beauty. Nor shall the living members of His Church on earth be neglected. Everything in its own order, and in the beautiful harmony established by the Scriptures (1 Thess. iv. 17). He comes to assume the judicial character, to manifest His royalty with unclouded splendour, and to award to every man according as his works, words, and thoughts. Now, too, shall be indicated the moral government of God, and all shall see how deeply its foundations have been laid in justice and truth, in mercy and love. Now, too, shall be unfolded the dread or glad realities of the great books of judgment, of life, and of remembrance. And now, too, the Church shall put on her garments of beauty. The Church triumphant shall become the pure gold that has been tried and refined by the fires of purification. But this day shall be to some a day of sorrow. All the impenitent shall call upon the rocks to hide them from judicial wrath, or to fall upon them and crush them. But unto them that look for Him shall His coming be with joy and unto full salvation. Those who have laid the foundation of faith and expectation in His first appearance as their sin-bearer, and have cast forward their hope as an anchor within the veil, where Christ now appears, will find themselves sustained in a day that to all others will prove one of lamentings and woe. (*Lewis O. Thompson.*) *Ready for the Lord's coming*:—There was an under-witted Scotch lad at the time of the great meteoric shower of November, 1833. When on every side men and women were that night in terror at the thought that the hour of final doom had come, this lad's mother aroused him from his sleep with a cry, "Sandy, Sandy, get up, will you? The day of judgment has come." Instantly the boy was alive to that call, and was on his feet, shouting, "Glory to God! I'm ready." (*Baxendale's Anecdotes.*)

CHAPTER X.

VERS. 1, 2. **The Law having a shadow of good things to come.**—*The Law had only a shadow*:—He is careful not to say that the Law was itself but a shadow. On the contrary, the very promise includes that God will put His laws in the heart and write them upon the mind. This was one of "the good things to come." The Law was holy, righteous, and good; but the manifestation of its nature in sacrifices was unreal, like the dark outline of an object that breaks the stream of light. Nothing more substantial, as a revelation of God's moral character, was befitting or possible in that stage of human development, when the purposes of His grace also not seldom found expression in dreams of the night and apparitions of the day. To prove the unreal nature of these ever-recurring sacrifices, the writer argues that otherwise they would have ceased to be offered, inasmuch as the worshippers, if they had been once really cleansed from their guilt, would have had no more conscience of sins. The reasoning is very remarkable. It is not that God would have ceased to require sacrifices, but that the worshipper would have ceased to offer

them. It implies that, when a sufficient atonement for sin has been offered to God, the sinner knows it is sufficient, and, as the result, has peace of conscience. The possibility of a pardoned sinner still fearing and doubting does not seem to have occurred to the apostle. To men who cannot leave off introspection and forget themselves in the joy of a new faith the apostle's argument will have little force and perhaps less meaning. If the sacrifices were unreal, why, we naturally inquire, were they continually repeated? The answer is that there were two sides to the sacrificial rites of the Old Covenant. On the one hand, they were, like the heathen gods, "nothings"; on the other, their empty shadowiness itself fitted them to be a divinely appointed means to call sins to remembrance. They represented on the one side the invincible, though always baffled, effort of natural conscience; for conscience was endeavouring to purify itself from a sense of guilt. But God also had a purpose in awakening and disciplining conscience. The worshipper sought to appease conscience through sacrifice, and God, by the same sacrifice, proclaimed that reconciliation had not been effected. In allusion to this idea, that the sacrifices were instituted by God in order to renew the remembrance of sins every year, Christ said, "Do this in remembrance of *Me*"—of Him who hath put away sins by the sacrifice of Himself. Such, then, was the shadow, at once unreal and dark. In contrast to it, the apostle designates the substance as "the very image of the objects." Instead of repeating the indefinite expression "good things to come," he speaks of them as "objects," individually distinct, substantial, true. The image of a thing is the full manifestation of its inmost essence, in the same sense in which St. Paul says that the Son of God's love, in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins, is the image of the invisible God. The gracious purpose of God is to forgive sin, and this was accomplished by the infinite humiliation of the infinite Son. God's will was to sanctify us; that is, to remove our guilt. We have actually been thus sanctified through the one offering of the body of Jesus Christ. The sacrifices of the Law are taken out of the way in order to establish the sacrifice of the Son. It will be observed that the apostle is not contrasting sacrifice and obedience. The dominant thoughts of the passage are the greatness of the Person who obeyed and the greatness of the sacrifice from which His obedience did not shrink. The Son is here represented as existing and acting apart from His human nature. He comes into the world, and is not originated in the world. The purpose of the Son's coming is already formed. He comes to offer His body, and we have been taught in a previous chapter that He did this with an eternal spirit. For the will of God means our sanctification in the meaning attached to the word "sanctification" in this Epistle—the removal of guilt, the forgiveness of sins. But the fulfilment of this gracious will of God demands a sacrifice, even a sacrificial death, and that not the death of beasts, but the infinite self-sacrifice and obedience unto death of the Son of God. This is implied in the expression "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ." The superstructure of argument has been raised. Christ as High Priest has been proved to be superior to the high priests of the former covenant. It remains only to lay the top-stone in its place. Jesus Christ, the eternal High Priest, is for ever King; for the priests under the Law stand while they perform the duties of their ministry. They stand because they are only priests. But Christ has taken His seat, as King, on the right hand of God. They offer the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins, and wait, and wait, but in vain. Christ also waits, but not to renew an ineffectual sacrifice. He waits eagerly to receive from God the reward of His effective sacrifice in the subjugation of His enemies. The priests under the Law had no enemies. Their persons were sacred. They incurred no hatred, inspired no love. Our High Priest goes out to war, the most hated, the most loved, of all captains of men. The foundation of this kingly power is in two things: first, He has perfected men for ever by His one offering; second, He has put the law of God into the hearts of His people. The final conclusion is that the sacrifices of the Law have passed away, because they are no longer needed. "For where there is forgiveness, there is no more an offering for sin." (*T. C. Edwards, D.D.*) *The Old Testament and the New*:—In the Old Testament the New Testament lies hid; in the New Testament the Old Testament lies open. (*Augustine.*) *Judaism and Christianity*:—Christianity lay in Judaism as leaves and fruits do in the seed, though certainly it needed the Divine sun to bring them forth. (*De Wette.*) *The Old Testament and the New*:—To pass from the doctrine of the Old Testament to that of the New is to enter a changed world. It is as if we had lived through an Arctic winter, our long night occasionally lit as by an aurora, or by stars the apparent revolutions of which made the mobility of

our own minds the more conspicuous, and had suddenly chanced upon a warm and glorious summer with its unsetting sun and nightless day. The age of symbols is no more. Faint administrations of heavenly truths under material forms have given place to the loud proclamation of the same truths under those less material forms of speech and life. (*Principal Cave, D.D.*) *The two dispensations* :—The former constitution was not abolished, but exchanged, and by that change perfected; and in this manner did Jesus say that He came not to abolish, but to complete or accomplish: secondly, that the former was a type, and merged into its reality, not so much dying as passing into a second existence, where a true sacrifice covered a typical oblation, where redemption given passed before redemption expected, where uncertainty had ripened into knowledge, and hope yielded its kingdom to faith. To illustrate the noble by the base, the former state was as that living but creeping sheath wherein lie infolded for a time the corresponding parts of a more splendid and gorgeous insect, which in due time takes upon itself the vital functions till then by the other exercised, and rises towards heaven—the same, yet different—a transmigration rather than an offspring. (*Cardinal Wiseman.*) **No more conscience of sins.**—*Conscience and forgiveness* :—Conscience naturally knows nothing of forgiveness; yea, it is against its very trust, work, and office to hear anything of it. If a man of courage and honesty be entrusted to keep a garrison against an enemy, let one come and tell him that there is peace between those whom he serves and their enemies, so that he may leave his guard, and set open the gates, and cease his watchfulness; how worthy will he be, lest, under this pretence, he be betrayed! "No," saith he, "I will keep my hold until I have express orders from my superiors." Conscience is entrusted with the power of God in the soul of a sinner, with command to keep all in subjection, with reference to the judgment to come; it will not betray its trust in believing every report of peace. No; but this it says, and it speaks in the name of God, "Guilt and punishment are inseparable twins." If the soul sin, God will judge. What tell you me of forgiveness? I know not what my commission is, and that I will abide by. You shall not bring in a superior commander, a cross principle, into my trust; for if this be so, it seems I must let go my throne—another lord must come in—not knowing as yet how this whole business is compounded in the blood of Christ. Now, whom should a man believe if not his own conscience? which, as it will not flatter him, so it intends not to affright him, but to speak the truth as the matter requireth. Conscience hath two works in reference to sin—one to condemn the acts of sin, another to judge the person of the sinner; both with reference to the judgment of God. When forgiveness comes, it would sever and part these employments, and take one of them out of the hand of conscience; it would divide the spoil with this strong one. It shall condemn the fact, or every sin; but it shall no more condemn the sinner, the person of the sinner, that shall be freed from its sentence. Here conscience labours with all its might to keep its whole dominion, and to keep out the power of forgiveness from being enthroned in the soul. It will allow men to talk of forgiveness, to hear it preached, though they abuse it every day; but to receive it in its power, that stands up in direct opposition to its dominion. "In the kingdom," saith conscience, "I will be greater than thou"; and in many—in the most—it keeps its possession, and will not be deposed. Nor, indeed, is it an easy work so to deal with it. The apostle tells us that all the sacrifices of the Law could not do it (ver. 2); they could not bring a man into that estate wherein he could have "no more conscience of sin"—that is, conscience condemning the person; for conscience, in a sense of sin, and condemnation of it, is never to be taken away. And this can be no otherwise done but by the blood of Christ, as the apostle at large there declares. (*J. Owen, D.D.*)

Ver. 3. **Remembrance again made of sins.**—*Sin remembered no more* :—Memory is the source both of sorrow and of joy: like the wind, which is laden both with frankincense and with unpleasant odours, which brings both pestilence and health, which both distributes genial warmth and circulates cold. The effect of memory depends on the subject of a particular recollection. This faculty is directed to past events, and if those which memory embraces have been joyous, the effect is joyous; if they have been grievous, the effect, unless there be some counteracting influence, is grievous. Among the multitude of sorrows which memory awakens, none is so bitter as that which arises from the recollection of sin. The recollection of sin is in this world variously originated. Sometimes pride leads a man to dwell on his past errors. He has a very high estimate of himself, and his complacency has

been disturbed by some act of transgression, upon which he is constantly looking back. Vanity moves men to remember their errors. The vain man is anxious that others should have a good opinion of him, and his mortified vanity occasions him to look back upon his past faults and failures. Or he has a selfish desire for his own happiness: he sees in the past actions which have interfered with his enjoyment, and he cherishes the remembrance of sin because sin has been drying up the fountain of his pleasures. But turning from the evil powers which originate such recollections, we may look at a broken and contrite heart. Contrition of spirit cherishes the memory of transgression. The recollection of sin is occasioned by various influences, and the effect of these remembrances is various. Sometimes the recollection of sin hardens a man; sometimes it produces strong rebellion. On other occasions it induces deep depression. "The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmities, but a wounded spirit, who can bear?" There is a provision for forgetting our sins. But there was no such provision under the Law, nor in any of the ceremonies that Moses ordained. On the contrary, "in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year." That Jew would not be a true disciple to Moses and true child of Abraham who did not on the Day of Atonement call to mind his trespasses, although he had presented a trespass-offering, and all the sins he had committed, although he had presented his sin-offerings. If you look at the chapter, you will find that this passage is introduced for the sake of forming a contrast between the dispensation under Moses and the dispensation introduced by Christ. "Now there is *no* remembrance again made of sins." We have had our day of atonement—the day upon which Christ hung on the Cross. We have had our sacrifice offered: it has been both offered and accepted. We have only to feel that it has been offered, and that it is accepted, and then the atonement which removes the outward guilt takes away also from the conscience the sense of guilt. "In these sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year." "But by this one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Here the writer penned these words for the sake of expressing something else which these words suggest to every Christian; such as these thoughts: First, God has made provision for the practical forgetting of sin in His own conduct towards a believing transgressor; and, secondly, the state of the penitent's heart should respond to this provision. This provision is revealed to him on purpose that he may take advantage of it—that he may get all the peace and joy it is calculated to minister. "Thou shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more." "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee." For the sake of cherishing the spirit of humility, it is right to remember sin; for the sake of learning patience and forbearance and a kind and forgiving spirit towards each other; for the sake of increasing our sense of obligation to the atonement of Christ, and stimulating our gratitude for the everlasting mercy of God, it is right to remember sin; but sin should be forgotten when the remembrance of it would operate as a barrier to intercourse with God. "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." "Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace"; not with the sullenness of Cain—"my punishment is greater than I can bear"—but with all the loving reliance of Abel—"come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." 1. As an obstacle to hope, there is to be no remembrance of sins. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" "Jehovah is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." 2. As a check to filial reliance, there is to be no remembrance of sin. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." 3. As marring our complacency in God, there is to be no remembrance of sin. He "hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ," and annihilated the distance. "You who were far off are brought nigh by the blood of Christ." 4. As hindering our enjoyment in God, there is to be no remembrance of sin. You are not to ask, "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?" as though you would go if you could, or as though it would be a relief to take your eye from God's eye and your lip from God's ear; but your resolve must be, I will "go to the altar of my God, to God my exceeding joy." 5. As darkening our prospects, there is to be no remembrance of sin. He has "blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins." Why is it that some Christians do not realise all this? Why is it that sometimes fear gets the mastery over them? The answer is at hand. Many persons think that they are Christians when they are not. Their repentance has been a thoroughly selfish state

of soul, and not a godly sorrow. (*S. Martin.*) *Reminders of sins* :—As they in the time of the Law had many sacrifices to put them in remembrance of sin, so we in the time of the Gospel have many remembrancers of sin—sundry monitors to admonish us that we are sinners. The rainbow may be a remembrance of sin to us, that the world was once drowned for sin, and that it might be so still but for the goodness and mercy of God. Baptism daily ministered in the Church putteth us in mind of sin; for if we were not sinners we needed not to be baptized. The Lord's Supper puts us in mind of sin: "Do this in remembrance of Me," that My body was broken for you and My blood shed for you on the Cross. The immoderate showers that come oft in harvest and deprive us of the fruits of the earth may put us in mind of sin; for they be our sins that keep good things from us. Our moiling and toiling for the sustentation of ourselves with much care and wearisome labour; for if we had not sinned it should not have been so. The sicknesses and diseases that be among us, the plague and pestilence that hath raged among us, the death of so many of our brethren and sisters continually before our eyes, &c., may put us in mind of sin; for if we had not sinned we should not have died. There be a number of things to put us in mind of sin; but there is nothing that can take away sin but Jesus Christ "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." Therefore let us all fly to this heavenly Physician for the curing of us. (*W. Jones, D.D.*)

Ver. 4. **The blood of bulls and of goats.**—*The insufficiency of Mosaic sacrifices* :—I. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THINGS MAY USEFULLY REPRESENT WHAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE THAT IN AND BY THEMSELVES THEY SHOULD EFFECT. This is the fundamental rule of all institutions of the Old Testament. II. THERE MAY BE GREAT AND EMINENT USES OF DIVINE ORDINANCES AND INSTITUTIONS, ALTHOUGH IT BE IMPOSSIBLE THAT BY THEMSELVES, IN THEIR MOST EXACT AND DILIGENT USE, THEY SHOULD WORK OUT OUR ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD. And it belongs to the wisdom of faith to use them to their proper end, not to trust to them, as to what they cannot of themselves effect. III. IT WAS UTTERLY IMPOSSIBLE THAT SIN SHOULD BE TAKEN AWAY BEFORE GOD AND FROM THE CONSCIENCE OF THE SINNER BUT BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. Other ways men are apt to betake themselves to for this end, but in vain. It is the blood of Jesus Christ alone that cleanseth us from all our sins, for He alone was the propitiation for them. IV. THE DECLARATION OF THE INSUFFICIENCY OF ALL OTHER WAYS FOR THE EXPIATION OF SIN IS AN EVIDENCE OF THE HOLINESS, RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND SEVERITY OF GOD AGAINST SIN, WITH THE UNAVOIDABLE RUIN OF ALL UNBELIEVERS. V. HEREIN ALSO CONSISTS THE GREAT DEMONSTRATION OF THE LOVE, MERCY, AND GRACE OF GOD, WITH AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO FAITH, in that when the old sacrifices neither would nor could perfectly expiate sin, He would not suffer the work itself to fail, but provided a way that should be infallibly effective of it, as is declared in the following verses. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *The inability of the legal sacrifices* :—As the legal sacrifices did not of themselves take away sins, so it was impossible that they should. There was an essential defect in them. 1. They were not of the same nature with us that sinned. 2. They were not of sufficient value to make satisfaction for the affronts done to the justice and government of God. 3. The beasts offered up under the law could not consent to put themselves in the sinner's room and place. The atoning sacrifice must be one capable of consenting, and must voluntarily substitute himself in the sinner's stead. Christ did so. (*Matthew Henry.*)

Vers. 5–7. **A body hast Thou prepared Me.**—*The body of Christ* :—These words of the Psalmist are a prophecy of the Incarnation. I. First, it plainly means THE NATURAL BODY, which He took of the substance of the Blessed Virgin. All that makes up the natural perfection of man as a moral and reasonable intelligence, together with a mortal body, He assumed into the unity of His person. II. As there was a natural, so there is A SUPERNATURAL PRESENCE OF THE BODY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. He said, "The bread that I will give is My flesh," &c.; "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man," &c. And when at the Last Supper He gave this great sacrament to His apostles, He said, "This is My body, this is My blood." It is not for us to attempt to explain the secrets of this mystery. Who can reveal the manner of the resurrection of the body or the mystery of the Incarnation? Then here let us stay our thoughts. What He has said, that He will give, in spirit, substance, and reality. It is enough for us to know that as truly as the life and substance of the first creation are sustained and perpetuated until

now, so in the second, which is the mystical Vine, He is root and trunk, branch and fruit; wholly in us, and we in Him. III. There is yet another and A WIDER MYSTERY SPRINGING UP OUT OF THE LAST. The natural body of our Lord Jesus Christ is, as it were, the root out of which, by the power of the Holy Ghost, His mystical body is produced; and therefore He seems to take this title, "I am the root and the offspring of David"—the offspring according to the descent of the first creation, the root as the beginning of the new. This great work of the regeneration He began to fulfil when, at His descent into hell, He gathered to Himself the saints who of old were sanctified through the hope of His coming; and although "they without us" could not, when on earth, "be made perfect," yet at His descent unto them they "came behind in no gift," but were made equal to the saints of the kingdom. Then began the growth and expansion of the mystical Vine. Upon this unity of patriarchs, prophets, and saints of old were engrafted apostles and evangelists, and all the family of the regeneration. The body which, in its natural and local conditions, was enclosed in an upper chamber or wound in grave-clothes, has multiplied its life and substance as the first Adam in the family of mankind throughout the generations of God's elect. Such is the mystical body of Christ. IV. ARE THERE, THEN, THREE BODIES OF CHRIST? God forbid; but one only—one in nature, truth, and glory. But there are three manners, three miracles of Divine omnipotence, by which that one body has been and is present—the first as mortal and natural; the second supernatural, real, and substantial; the third mystical by our incorporation. (*Archdeacon H. E. Manning.*) *A body prepared:*—It is one of the most striking things connected with our earthly existence that God sends no life into the world unclothed, bodiless. Every life has a body specially adapted for the service which that life has to render. The higher the life the more complex the organism; but in each case there is a wondrous harmony between every life and its embodiment and every body and its surroundings. If it be so, how much more when He will send His Son into the world will He prepare a body for Him—a body that shall be specially adapted for His great mission and for the accomplishment of His great design! The Incarnation is confessedly among the greatest of all mysteries. It is the Infinite One accepting a body. What does this mean? We cannot tell; we can only touch the fringe of the great subject. It means—it at least signifies this: that, for a time, the Infinite One—1. Accepts the limitations of a finite existence. We know that as man He hungered, was tempted, wept human tears; we know that He prayed to His Father, and that His was the joy of receiving the Father's approval. His acceptance of a finite existence made these things possible in His experience, and thus made Him an example to us. We are very, very far from seeing the full significance of the Incarnation, but we see enough to rejoice in it and glorify God for that Incarnation which, by virtue of the limitations it involved, made a gospel like ours possible. Again, by the Incarnation Christ accepts—2. The conditions of service, the submission of a servant: "Lo, I come to do Thy will." How does the Apostle Paul put it? (Phil. ii. 6–8). The Incarnation was the form in which the Lord Jesus could render the lowliest service. What a step in the path of obedience was that! Once we accept the story of the birth, and believe that the Christ has accepted a human body, Gethsemane and Calvary are perfectly intelligible and easily accepted. It is as man that Godward He has rendered the most perfect service, and that manward He has left a perfect example that we should follow His footsteps. Again, by the Incarnation He accepts—3. The highest possibility of self-sacrifice. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. . . . This Man, after that He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." The Incarnation finds its full significance in that sacrifice which was made possible by it. Without the Incarnation there could be no Cross. It is the manger that predicts Calvary. (*D. Davies.*) *A prepared body:*—Be careful to see clearly that Christ is the speaker, and that it is He who says to His Father. "A body hast Thou prepared Me." It is the Deity of the Second Person in the Trinity—not yet become incarnate, but at the very point—addressing God, and declaring the great mystery of the passing away of all sacrifice and offering—that is, of the death of animals and the presenting of gifts—as utterly inadequate, and nothing worth for the atonement of the soul. He introduces Himself—God's one great method with man, in the strange and inexpressible blending of the Divine and human, which was in Him. The God in our Emmanuel explains His own manhood, and traces it all up to the Father's pre-arranging mind: "A body hast Thou prepared Me." Let us look at the time of the "preparation." In the mind

and counsel of God that "body" was before all worlds (Prov. viii. 24–31). So was Christ ready before He came, and, or ever man sinned, the scheme was complete. Then came the Fall, and immediately the ready promise (Gen. iii. 15). As the ages rolled on, the plan developed. Then, as the time drew on, the "preparation," which was in the bosom of the Father, began to take form and substance. The whole Roman world was stirred, that that "body" should appear at its destined spot. Through the purest channel which this earth could furnish, by miraculous operation, that "body" should come into the world, human but sinless, perfectly human but exquisitely immaculate. By what unfathomable processes I know not. "Curiously wrought" in this lower earth, that "body"—the prototype, before Adam was made, of all that ever should wear human form—that "body" came. . . . But let us stand again by that little form laid in the manger outside the caravansaai, and let us reverently ask, For what is that "body"? 1. The text answers at once, For sacrifice. There is that dear Babe—lovely as no other babe was ever lovely—only a victim, a victim to be slaughtered upon an altar! . . . But let me ask, Is your "body" fulfilling the purpose for which it was "prepared"? Is it a consecrated body? Is it a ministering body? Ministering—to what? To usefulness, to mission, to truth, to the Church, to Christ? 2. And that "body" was "prepared" for sympathy. Therefore "He took not on Him the nature of angels," but He became the Son of Man, that He might have human instincts; that His heart might throb to the same beat; that He might be true, even to every nerve and fibre of the physical constitution of every child of Adam. When you have an ache or feel a lassitude or depression, do not hesitate to claim and accept at once the fellowship of "the man Christ Jesus." (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Care for the body*:—First of all, I shall name the sloven. We have all seen him at times, and a very objectionable fellow he is; clothes, gait, hair, hands, everything about him, denoting a lazy, indolent creature that is utterly without self-respect. If you keep in mind this little text, "A body hast Thou prepared me," you will feel it a sacred duty to keep in proper condition your physical frame. Secondly, I name the boor. It is the greatest mistake in the world to suppose that it is a token of manliness to disregard the courtesies of polite society. "Be courteous" is a Scriptural admonition. Whatever you are, don't be a boor! As little would I like to see you a fop. Dandyism is one of the most contemptible developments of humanity, and always betokens extreme littleness of mind. But I cannot dismiss the text without pointing out how it bears upon the sensualist. There is no language in Scripture more startling in its awful solemnity than that which condemns the man "who sinneth against his own body." "The body," says St. Paul, "is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." Scripture speaks in many a place of a man "sinning against his own soul." But there is something exceptionally terrible in the wickedness of those who sin against their own bodies. My subject compels me to warn you, in accents of earnest entreaty, against every form of impurity. Your body is God's temple; no marble fane that ever was reared is so beautiful or so perfect. Shudder at the thought of its defilement. "A body hast Thou prepared me, O God; it shall be kept stainless and immaculate for Thee"—let this be your daily vow. And if it is to be kept, you must first of all guard your heart-purity. There is no fuller's soap that will perfectly cleanse the imagination once it is defiled. If a harp be broken, skill may repair it; if a light be extinguished, the flame may be rekindled; but if a flower be crushed, what power can restore it to what it was before? Such a flower is purity. The first step on the down-grade taken, only a miracle of grace can bring you to the level again. The Scriptural doctrine of the resurrection invests this physical frame of mine with an infinite dignity and importance. Death is its temporary dissolution, not its destruction. With what magnitude of interest and importance does this invest these corporeal frames of ours! It confers upon them an awful indestructibility, at the thought of which even the perpetuity of mountains, of suns and stars, become as nothing. You have a bodily as well as a spiritual immortality. These bodies shall claim half of your individuality to all eternity. Can you, then, make them the instruments of sin, or defile them by unholy lusts? Must you not guard with utmost care the imperishable temple of the soul? (*J. T. Davidson, D.D.*) **Lo, I come . . . to do Thy will, O God.**—*The beautiful life of Christ*:—Our text presents an aspect of Christ of the highest charm. He is the great and only fulfiller of "the will of God" the world has ever seen. There was a "book" in which much concerning Him was "written." At different times, in different measures, in different ways, of type in institute and incident, of promise, of com-

parison and contrast with other men and other doings, did that "book" perpetually speak of Him. But howsoever diverse its utterances were, they were all wonderfully harmonised in their ascription to Him of the spirit of delighted obedience to God. I. THE LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL LIFE THAT HAS EVER BEEN LIVED IN THE WORLD. All sorts of beauty were bright in Him—the beauty of virtue, the beauty of godliness, the beauty of love, the beauty of sympathy, the beauty of obedience, and this without crack or flaw; the beauty of wise words, the beauty of holy action, the beauty of kind and gentle disposition; beauty which shone in the house, beauty which flamed in the temple, beauty which lighted up the cornfield and the wayside, beauty which graced alike the table of the publican and the Pharisee; beauty with smiles and tears, gifts and helps for men, women, and children as He found them. II. ONE GREAT REASON WHY THAT BEAUTIFUL LIFE HAS BEEN LIVED AMONGST US MEN IS THAT WE MAY MAKE OUR LIVES BEAUTIFUL BY IT. He came to be an example. He bade men follow Him. He called for imitation of His spirit and character. His servants held Him up in the same light; they bade men "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," "follow in His steps," let the same mind be in them as was in Him. There is not a single virtue in Christ that should not have its place and power in you. The scale of its play, the special circumstances and relations which throw such grandeur into His career, must, of course, present a vast disparity between Him and us. But in essence, in spirit, we are bound to cultivate His worth; the actual outworking in our lot and relations of each excellence of His is an obligation on our heart and conscience. III. THE SECRET OF THIS MOST BEAUTIFUL LIFE OF CHRIST IS TOLD US. Were you to see a rare and beautiful flower in another's garden, you would naturally wish that it might adorn your own also. You would ask whence it came, what soil it liked, and a dozen other questions, so that its true treatment might be learnt and your own garden enriched with it. And when you are truly roused to spiritual care you ask the like questions about a beautiful action that has struck you or a beautiful character that has crossed your path. Whence came it? What is its inspiration—its culture? Tell me the secret. Never were such queries more seemly than on the survey of Christ's beautiful life. Is its great secret ascertainable? Is it within my reach? Well, Christ's beauty all came from one thing—He did "the will of God." He delighted to do it. Its law was in His heart. IV. WHAT A BEAUTIFUL WILL THE WILL OF GOD MUST BE IF THE BEAUTIFUL LIFE OF CHRIST IS SIMPLY ITS OUTCOME! Few phrases are so inadequately welcomed by us as "the will of God." We invest it, perhaps, with all the reverence we can, with sublimity, authority, rectitude, and power, but not with beauty. It is not a charm to us, a ravishing delight. We submit to it rather than accept it. We bow, but we do not sing. Oh! let us correct ourselves. The will of God is beautiful beyond all expression. Each commandment it gives is beautiful, "holy, just, and good." The way of life it prescribes is as "the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The character it forms and moulds is radiant with a lustre that never dies. The good it diffuses is boundless in worth and variety. V. IF YOU WOULD MAKE YOUR LIFE BEAUTIFUL LIKE THE BEAUTIFUL LIFE OF CHRIST, YOU MUST DAILY STUDY THE WILL OF GOD, AND JUST BE AND DO WHAT THAT WILL ORDAINS. There is the philosophy of a high, noble, beautiful, glorious life—so simple that a child can understand it, so profound and far-reaching that no maturity of power, no elevation in lot, can ever carry you beyond it. It is the one grand law of time and eternity, of earth and heaven. (*G. B. Johnson.*) *Christ the substance of the ancient sacrifices of the Law*:—To take Jesus Christ for our Redeemer and for our Example is an abridgment of religion, and the only way to heaven. If Jesus Christ be not taken for our Redeemer, alas! how can we bear the looks of a God who is of purer eyes than to behold evil? If we do not take Jesus Christ for our Example, with what face can we take Him for our Redeemer? Should we wish that He who came into the world on purpose to destroy the works of the devil, would re-establish them in order to fill up by communion with this wicked spirit that void which communion with Christ leaves? I. First, we will consider the text AS PROCEEDING FROM THE MOUTH OF JESUS CHRIST. We will show you Jesus substituting the sacrifice of His body instead of those of the Jewish economy. 1. Our text is a quotation, and it must be verified. It is taken from the fortieth psalm. All that psalm, except one word, exactly applies to the Messiah. This inapplicable word, as it seems at first, is in the twelfth verse, "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon Me." This expression does not seem proper in the mouth of Jesus Christ, who, the prophets foretold, should have no deceit in His mouth, and who,

when He came, defied His enemies to convince Him of a single sin. There is the same difficulty in a parallel psalm (lxix. 50), "O God! Thou knowest My foolishness, and My sins are not hid from Thee." The same solution serves for both places. Jesus Christ on the Cross was the Substitute of sinners, like the scapegoat that was accursed under the Old Dispensation. The Scripture says in so many words, "He bare our sins." Is the bearer of such a burden chargeable with any exaggeration when He cries, "My iniquities have taken hold upon Me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of Mine head"? Moreover, the fortieth psalm is parallel to other prophecies, which indisputably belong to the Messiah. I mean particularly the sixty-ninth psalm, and the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. 2. A difficult passage, that needs elucidation. The principal difficulty is in these words, "A body hast Thou prepared Me." The Hebrew has it, "Thou hast digged, bored, or opened Mine ears." It is an allusion to a law recorded in the twenty-first chapter of Exodus, where they who had Hebrew slaves were ordered to release them in the Sabbatical year. A provision is made for such slaves as refused to accept of this privilege. Their masters were to bring them to the doors of their houses, to bore their ears through with an awl, and they were to engage to continue slaves for ever, that is to say, to the year of Jubilee, or till their death, if they happened to die before that festival. As this action was expressive of the most entire devotedness of a slave to his master, it was very natural for the prophet to make it an emblem of the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ to His Father's will. But why did not St. Paul quote the words as they are in the psalm? The apostle followed the version commonly called that of the Seventy. But why did the Seventy render the original words in this manner? (1) The word rendered "prepared" is one of the most vague terms in the Greek tongue, and signifies indifferently "to dispose," "to mark," "to note," "to render capable," and so on. (2) Before the Septuagint version the Mosaic rites were very little known among the heathens, perhaps also among the dispersed Jews. Hence in the period of which I am speaking few people knew the custom of boring the ears of those slaves who refused to accept the privileges of the Sabbatical year. (3) It was a general custom among the Pagans to make marks on the bodies of those persons in whom they claimed a property. They were made on soldiers and slaves, so that if they deserted they might be easily reclaimed. Sometimes they apposed marks on them who served an apprenticeship to a master, as well as on them who put themselves under the protection of a god. These marks were called stigmas (see Gal. vi. 17; Ezek. ix. 4; Rev. vii. 3–8). On these different observations I ground this opinion. The Seventy thought, if they translated the prophecy under consideration literally, it would be unintelligible to the Pagans and to the dispersed Jews, who, being ignorant of the custom to which the text refers, would not be able to comprehend the meaning of the words, "Mine ears hast Thou bored." To prevent this inconvenience they translated the passage in that way which was most proper to convey its meaning to the readers. Now as this translation was well adapted to this end, St. Paul had a right to retain it. 3. Jesus Christ, we are very certain, is introduced in this place as accomplishing what the prophets had foretold; that is, that the sacrifice of the Messiah should be substituted in the place of the Levitical victims. On this account our text contains one of the most essential doctrines of the religion of Jesus Christ, and the establishment of this is our next article. In order to comprehend the sense in which the Messiah says to God, "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldst not," we must distinguish two sorts of volition in God—a willing of a mean, and a willing of an end. God may be said to will a mean when He appoints a ceremony or establisheth a rite which hath no intrinsic excellence in itself, but which prepares them on whom it is enjoined for some great events on which their felicity depends. By willing an end I mean a production of such events. If the word "will" be taken in the first sense, it cannot be truly said that God did not will or appoint sacrifices and burnt-offerings. Every one knows He instituted them, and regulated the whole ceremonial of them, even the most minute articles. But if we take the word "will" in the second sense, and by the will of God understand His willing an end, it is strictly true that God did not will or appoint sacrifices and burnt-offerings; because they were only instituted to prefigure the Messiah, and consequently as soon as the Messiah, the substance, appeared, all the ceremonies of the Law were intended to vanish. II. TO WHAT PURPOSE ARE LEVITICAL SACRIFICES, OF WHAT USE ARE JEWISH PRIESTS, WHAT OCCASION HAVE WE FOR HECATOMBS AND OFFERINGS AFTER THE SACRIFICE OF A VICTIM SO EXCELLENT? The text is not only the language of Jesus Christ, who substitutes Himself in the place of Old-Testament sacrifices; but it is the voice of

David and of every believer who is, full of this just sentiment that a personal dedication to the service of God is the most acceptable sacrifice that men can offer to the Deity. Ye understand, then, in what sense God demands only the sacrifice of your persons. It is what He wills as the end; and He will accept neither offerings, nor sacrifices, nor all the ceremonies of religion, unless they contribute to the holiness of the person who offers them. 1. Observe the nature of this sacrifice. This offering includes our whole persons, and everything that Providence hath put in our power. Two sorts of things may be distinguished in the victim of which God requires the sacrifice; the one bad, the other good. We are engaged in vicious habits, we are slaves to criminal passions; all these are our bad things. We are capable of knowledge, meditation, and love; we possess riches, reputation, employments; these are our good things. God demands the sacrifice of both these. 2. Having observed the nature of that offering which God requires of you, consider next the necessity of it (1 Sam. xv. 22; Psal. l. 16, 17, li. 17; Isa. i. 11, 16; Jer. vii. 21, 22, 23). To what purpose do ye attend public worship in a church consecrated to the service of Almighty God, if ye refuse to make your bodies temples of the Holy Ghost, and persist in devoting them to impurity? To what purpose do ye send for your ministers when death seems to be approaching if, as soon as ye recover from sickness, ye return to the same kind of life, the remembrance of which caused you so much horror when ye were afraid of death? 3. The sacrifice required of us is difficult, say ye? I grant it. How extremely difficult when our reputation is attacked, when our morals, our very intentions, are misinterpreted; how extremely difficult when we are persecuted by cruel enemies; how hard is it to practice the laws of religion which require us to pardon injuries, and to exercise patience to our enemies! How difficult is it to sacrifice unjust gains to God, by restoring them to their owners; how hard to retrench expenses which we cannot honestly support, to reform a table that gratifies the senses! How difficult is it to eradicate an old criminal habit, and to renew one's self, to form, as it were, a different constitution, to create other eyes, other ears, another body! 4. But is this sacrifice the less necessary because it is difficult? Do the difficulties which accompany it invalidate the necessity of it? Let us add something of the comforts that belong to it, they will soften the yoke. What delight, after we have laboured hard at the reduction of our passions, and the reformation of our hearts; what delight to find that heaven crowns our wishes with success! 5. Such are the pleasures of this sacrifice: but what are its rewards? Let us only try to form an idea of the manner in which God gives Himself to a soul that devotes itself wholly to Him. "O my God! how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee!" My God! what will not the felicity of that creature be who gives himself wholly to Thee, as Thou givest Thyself to him! (*J. Saurin.*) *The Son incarnate to do the will of God:*—I. In the first place the text reminds us THAT INTELLIGENT CREATURES CAN FIND THEIR HAPPINESS AND PERFECTION ONLY IN THE HARMONY OF THEIR WILLS WITH THE WILL OF GOD. But what if the new-made man should abuse his freedom? Who can foresee the consequences? As to his body; what if its hand should pluck forbidden fruit—its tongue utter deceit—all its members become instruments of unrighteousness unto sin? As to the material universe around; what if he should take himself out of harmony with its laws—extracting poison from its plants, and maddening juices from its fruits, and forging its metals into weapons for the slaughter of his fellows? What if he should league with other self-willed beings like himself—league with them solely to augment his power for crushing others, and for openly disowning his allegiance to heaven? Nay, what if, in the progress of man's history, he should come to think of setting up a god of his own? Or worse still—there is a rebel angel at large in the universe—a sworn enemy to the righteous government of God; what if a man should be led captive by Satan at his will? And what if he should complete his degradation and his guilt by calling the worship of his own vices, religion; the thraldom of Satan, liberty? What if here, where the will of God should be done as it is in heaven, the will of Satan should be done instead, as it is in hell? II. I need not say THAT THIS IS HISTORY—THE HISTORY OF MAN. The hour of trial came; and he fell. A law was given him; and, oh, better had a star fallen from its sphere, and been falling still! he broke away from its sacred restraint—deranged the harmony of his own nature—disturbed the tranquillity of the universe—incurred the penalty of transgression. Mercy spared him, but he relented not; justice threatened him, but he quailed not. Generation followed generation, only to take up the quarrel and widen the breach. The Lord looked down from heaven to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek

after God. Alas! they had all revolted: there was none that did good; no, not one. III. But even then, WHEN TO ALL HUMAN EYES THE UNIVERSE WAS UTTERLY VOID OF AID, HELP WAS ON THE WAY. Even then, when infatuated man was saying, "We will not have God to reign over us," and was vowing allegiance to Satan, that God was saying, "As I live, I will not the death of the sinner." And even then a voice was heard replying to that purpose, "I come to do it—lo! I come to do Thy will, O My God. Thy will is My will—I delight to do it—it is within My heart." And that voice came from no uncertain quarter—from no angel ranks—it came, if I may say so, from the centre of the Deity, from the mysterious depths of the Triune God. And the world was spared on the ground of that engagement, and the angels of God held themselves in readiness to behold its fulfilment; and Judæa was prepared to be the theatre of the great transaction, and unnumbered eyes were watching for His coming, and unnumbered interests depending on it. But when He comes, what laws will He obey?—what appearance will He assume? What laws? the very laws which man had broken. What appearance? that of the very nature which man had degraded. And when the fulness of time was come, a body was prepared Him—God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law. And you know what He proceeded to do. All the powers of that body He placed at the disposal of the will of God. Yes, by His obedience unto death, the will of God was done on earth, as it had never been done even in heaven—done in a manner which makes earth, from its centre to its surface, holy ground—done so as to secure the means of converting even this sin-worn world into a loyal province of the King of kings. IV. And this brings us to the consideration of these MEANS. Do you ask how the will of the rebellious world is to be brought back into harmony with the will of God? "Not by might, nor by power"—not by coercion and force; "but by My Spirit, saith the Lord"—by My Spirit taking of the things of Christ—taking of His voluntary obedience; taking of His love, and showing how He wept over the infatuation of our disobedience; taking of His mediatorial glory, and showing that He is now seated on a throne to receive our submission, to place us once more in harmony with the will of God, and to assure us of His favour. 1. Now, do you not see that when the will of the penitent is secured, the whole man is secured? 2. Here, then, is a willing agent for God. Wonderful as was the creation of a finite will at first—wonderful as was the introduction into the universe of a second will—here is a greater wonder still—the recovery of a lost will to God—a will which had been led captive by Satan, set at liberty and restored, and once more moving in conformity with God's will. What if he could prevail on other wills to unite with his will—how vastly would that increase his power of serving God! V. The question naturally arises, then, How is it, if the Divine provision be all complete, and the sanctified human means so well understood—HOW IS IT THAT THE WILL OF GOD IS NOT UNIVERSALLY OBEYED, AFTER THE EXAMPLE OF OUR SAVIOUR CHRIST? Eighteen hundred years have elapsed since He said, "Lo, I come," and the redemption of the world was effected. How then, we repeat, is the present condition of the world to be accounted for? By the state of the Church. Whatever the doctrinal heresies of the day may be, the great practical heresy is that of a defective zeal. They seem to forget, that in praying that the will of God may be done in the world, they are presupposing that it is done already in the Church. We do not say that Christians have made no progress in learning this great lesson. All the success which they have achieved of late years, as a missionary Church, is owing to their partial obedience to the will of God. But partial obedience will only be followed by partial success. They have so far obeyed, that they are shut up to the necessity of obeying still further. God has quickened them; and they have given, and prayed, and laboured as the Church had long ceased to do. Let them copy the devotedness of their Lord, and the work will be done. Ask you for motives to such zeal? 1. Need I remind you that one of these motives is the sublime truth—that the brightest example of obedience which heaven now contains is not an angel form, but He who "learned obedience by the things which He suffered"? He now reigns in the same spirit in which He suffered. Think what He is doing as your representative there, and say, what ought you to be doing as His representatives here? He is doing your will—answering your highest requests—what ought not you to be ready to do in obedience to His will? 2. Need I remind you, as another motive, what a theme it is we have to obey and to proclaim? The merest despot finds ready instruments to do his will. 3. Think, next, of the happy results of the reception of this message, as compared with man's present state. 4. Think, again, how some, influenced by these motives, have copied the devotedness of Christ. 5. And then one motive there

is which adds force and solemnity to every other—the fact that He who is the subject and substance of our message, on leaving the world, hath said, "Behold, I come quickly." (*J. Harris, D.D.*) *The Atonement:*—It must strike any person, as something that wants accounting for, how it is that a doctrine which has called forth the moral affections of man so strongly, and presented so transcendent an object for them, as that of the Atonement has, should of all criticisms in the world be specially subjected to the charge of being an immoral doctrine. It is based, it is said, upon injustice. What can be the reason of this extraordinary discord in the estimate of this doctrine? Is it not that the Christian body has taken the doctrine as a whole, with all the light which the different elements of it throw upon each other, while the objection has only fixed on one element in the doctrine, abstracted from the others? The point upon which the objector has fixed is the substitution of one man for another to suffer for sin; but he has not taken this point as it is represented and interpreted in the doctrine itself, but barely and nakedly, simply as the principle of vicarious punishment. It is to be observed that, according to this idea of sacrifice for sin, it is not in the least necessary the sacrifice should be voluntary, because the whole principle of sacrifice is swallowed up in the idea of vicarious punishment; and punishment, vicarious or other, does not require a voluntary sufferer, but only a sufferer. The victim may be willing or unwilling; it matters not, so long as he is a victim; he endures agony or death in fact, and that is all that, upon the principle of mere substitution, is wanted. It was this low and degraded idea of sacrifice which had possession of the ancient world for so many ages, and which produced, as its natural fruit, human sacrifices, with all the revolting cruelties attending them. Such subtlety of cruelty was the issue of the idea that a mere substitution could be a sacrifice for sin; pain, due in justice to one, be escaped by simple transference to another. But this idea was totally extinguished by the gospel idea, when it was revealed that love was of the very essence of sacrifice, and that there could not be sacrifice without will. A victim then appeared who was the real sacrifice for sin. The circumstance, then, of the victim being a self-offered one, makes, in the first place, all the difference upon the question of injustice to the victim. In common life and most human affairs the rule is that no wrong in justice is done to one who volunteers to undertake a painful office, which he might refuse if he pleased. In accepting his offer this would not indeed always apply; for there might be reasons which would make it improper to allow him to sacrifice himself. But it cannot be said that it is itself contrary to justice to accept a volunteer offer of suffering. Is it in itself wrong that there should be suffering which is not deserved? Not if it is undertaken voluntarily, and for an important object. Upon the existence of pain and evil being presupposed and assumed there are other justifications of persons undergoing it besides ill-desert. The existence of pain or evil being supposed, there arises a special morality upon this fact, and in connection with it. It is the morality of sacrifice. Sacrifice then becomes, in the person who makes it, the most remarkable kind of manifestation of virtue; which ennobles the sufferer, and which it is no wrong-doing in the universe to accept. But this being the case with respect to voluntary sacrifice, the gospel sacrifice is, as has been said, specially a voluntary and self-offered one. It must be remembered that the supernaturalness of the sphere in which the doctrine of the Atonement is placed, affects the agency concerned in the work of the Atonement. He who is sent is one in being with Him who sends. His willing submission, therefore, is not the willing submission of a mere man to one who is in a human sense another; but it is the act of one who, in submitting to another, submits to himself. By virtue of His unity with the Father, the Son originates, carries on, and completes Himself the work of the Atonement. But now with regard to the effect of the act of the Atonement upon the sinner. It will be seen, then, that with respect to this effect the willingness of a sacrifice changes the mode of the operation of the sacrifice, so that it acts on a totally different principle and law from that upon which a sacrifice of mere substitution acts. A sacrifice of mere substitution professes to act upon a principle of a literal fulfilment of justice, with one exception only, which is not thought to destroy but only to modify the literal fulfilment. It is true the sin is committed by one and the punishment is inflicted upon another; but there is sin, and there is punishment on account of sin, which is considered a sort of literal fulfilment of justice. But a voluntary sacrifice does not act upon the principle of a mock literal fulfilment of justice, but upon another and totally different principle. Its effect proceeds not from the substitution of one person for another in punishment, but from the influence of one person upon another for mercy—a mediator upon

one who is mediated with. Let us see what it is which a man really means when he offers to substitute himself for another in undergoing punishment. He cannot possibly mean to fulfil the element of justice literally. What he wants to do is to stimulate the element of mercy in the judge. Justice is not everything in the world; there is such a thing as mercy. How is this mercy to be gained, enlisted on the side you want? By suffering yourself. It is undoubtedly a fact of our nature, however we may place or connect it, that the generous suffering of one person for another affects our regard for that other person. It is true that the sufferer for another, and he who is suffered for, are two distinct persons; that the goodness of one of these persons is not the property of the other; and that it does not affect our relations towards another upon the special principle of justice; that, upon that strict principle, each is what he is in himself and nothing more; that the suffering interceder has the merit of his own generosity, the criminal the merit of his crime; and that no connection can be formed between the two on the special principle of justice. And yet, upon whatever principle it is, it is a fact of our nature, of which we are plainly couscious, that one man's interceding suffering produces an alteration of regards toward the other man. But it will be said this is true as far as feeling goes, but it is a weakness, a confessed weakness; this impulse is not supported by the whole of the man. Can you carry it out? it may be said; can you put it into execution? We cannot, for very good reasons, that civil justice is for civil objects, aud in the moral sphere final pardon is not in our province. But because this particular impulse to pardon cannot be carried out or put into execution, it is not therefore a weakness. It is something true and sincere which speaks in our nature, though it cannot be embraced in its full bearings and in its full issue. Even if it is a fragment, it is a genuine fragment. It exists in us as a true emotion of the mind, a fact of our true selves; it is a fact of nature, in the correct and high sense of the word. The whole law of association, *e.g.*, is a law of mediation in the way of enlisting feelings for us, by means external to us. The laws of association do in fact plead for persons from the moment they are born; men have advocates in those they never knew, and succeed to pre-engaged affections, and have difficulties cleared away before them in their path. The air they breathe intercedes for them, the ground they have trod on, the same sights, the same neighbourhood. What is the tie of place, or what is even the tie of blood, to the essential moral being; it is a wholly extraneous circumstance; nevertheless these links and these associations, which are wholly external to the man, procure regards for him, and regards which are inspired with strong sentiment and affection. So good deeds of others, with which persons have nothing in reality to do, procure them love and attention. The son of a friend and benefactor shines in the light of others' acts, and inspires, before he is known, a warm and approving feeling. This, that has been described, is the principle upon which the sacrifice of love acts, as distinguished from the sacrifice of mere substitution; it is a principle which is supported by the voice of nature and by the law of mediation in nature; and this is the principle which the gospel doctrine of the Atonement proclaims. The effect of Christ's love for mankind, and suffering on their behalf, is described in Scripture as being the reconciliation of the Father to man, and the adoption of new regards toward him. The act of one, *i.e.*, produces this result in the mind of God toward another; the act of a suffering Mediator reconciles God to the guilty. But neither in natural mediation nor in supernatural does the act of suffering love, in producing that change of regard to which it tends, dispense with the moral change in the criminal. We cannot, of course, because a good man suffers for a criminal, alter our regards to him if he obstinately remains a criminal. And if the gospel taught any such thing in the doctrine of the Atonement, it would certainly expose itself to the charge of immorality. But if there is no mediation in nature which brings out mercy for the criminal without a change in him, neither on the other hand, for the purpose of the parallel, do we want such. Undoubtedly there must be this change, but even with this, past crime is not yet pardoned. There is room for a mediator; room for some source of pardon which does not take its rise in a man's self, although it must act with conditions. But viewed as acting upon this mediatorial principle, the doctrine of the Atonement rises altogether to another level; it parts company with the gross and irrational conception of mere naked material substitution of one person for another in punishment, and it takes its stand upon the power of love, and points to the actual effect of the intervention of suffering love in nature, and to a parallel case of mediation as a pardoning power in nature. There is, however, undoubtedly contained in the Scriptural doctrine of the Atonement, a kind,

and a true kind, of fulfilment of justice. It is a fulfilment in the sense of appeasing and satisfying justice; appeasing that appetite for punishment which is the characteristic of justice in relation to evil. There is obviously an appetite in justice which is implied in that very anger which is occasioned by crime, by a wrong being committed; we desire the punishment of the criminal as a kind of redress, and his punishment undoubtedly satisfies a natural craving of our mind. But let any one have exposed himself thus to the appetite for punishment in our nature, and it is undoubtedly the case, however we may account for it, that the real suffering of another for him, of a good person for a guilty one, will mollify the appetite for punishment, which was possibly up to that time in full possession of our minds; and this kind of satisfaction to justice and appeasing of it is involved in the Scriptural doctrine of the Atonement. And so, also, there is a kind of substitution involved in the Scripture doctrine of the Atonement, and a true kind; but it is not a literal but a moral kind of substitution. It is one person suffering in behalf of another, for the sake of another: in that sense he takes the place and acts in the stead of another, he suffers that another may escape suffering, he condemns himself to a burden that another may be relieved. But this is the moral substitution which is inherent in acts of love and labour for others; it is a totally different thing from the literal substitution of one person for another in punishment. The outspoken witness in the human heart, which has from the beginning embraced the doctrine of the Atonement with the warmth of religious affection, has been, indeed, a better judge on the moral question than particular formal schools of theological philosophy. The atoning act of the Son, as an act of love on behalf of sinful man, appealed to wonder and praise: the effect of the act in changing the regards of the Father towards the sinner, was only the representation, in the sublime and ineffable region of mystery, of an effect which men recognised in their own minds. The human heart accepts mediation. It does not understand it as a whole; but the fragment of which it is conscious is enough to defend the doctrine upon the score of morals. Undoubtedly the story of the Atonement can be so represented as to seem to follow in general type the poetical legends and romances of the infantine imagination of the world. In details—what we read in the four Gospels—not much resemblance can be charged, but a summary can be made so as to resemble them. And what if it can? What is it but to say that certain turning ideas, Divine and human, resemble each other; that there is an analogy? The old legends of mankind represent in their general scope not mere fancy, but a real longing of human nature, a desire of men's hearts for a real Deliverer under the evils under which life groans. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. But more than this, do not they represent real facts too? These legends of deliverers would never have arisen had there not been deliverers in fact; the fabulous champions would not have appeared had there not been the real; it was truth which put it in men's heads to imagine. Doubtless, in all ages, there were men above the level, who interposed to put a stop to wrongs and grievances; for, indeed, the world would have been intolerable had it been completely given up to the bad. The romances of early times, then, reflect at the bottom what are facts; they reflect the action of real mediators in nature, who interposed from time to time for the succour of mankind in great emergencies. When, then, a heavenly mediation is found to resemble in general language an earthly one, what is it more than saying that earthly things are types of heavenly? So rooted is the great principle of mediation in nature, that the mediatorship of Christ cannot be revealed to us without reminding us of a whole world of analogous action, and of representation of action. How natural thus does the idea of a mediator turn out to be! Yet this is exactly the point at which many stumble; pardon they approve of; reconciliation they approve of; but reconciliation by means of mediation is what they cannot understand. Why not dispense with a superfluity? they say; and why not let these relieve us from what they consider the incumbrance of a mediator? But this is not the light in which a mediator is viewed by the great bulk of the human race. It has appeared to the great mass of Christians infinitely more natural to be saved with a mediator than without one. They have no desire to be spared a mediator, and cannot imagine the advantage of being saved a special source of love. They may be offered greater directness in forgiveness, but forgiveness by intervention is more like the truth to them. It is this rooted place of a mediator in the human heart which is so sublimely displayed in the sacred crowds of St. John's Revelation. The multitude which no man can number are indeed there all holy, all kings and priests, all consecrated and elect. But the individual greatness of all is consummated in One

who is in the centre of the whole, Him who is the head of the whole race, who leads it, who has saved it, its King and Representative, the First-born of the whole creation and the Redeemer of it. Toward Him all faces are turned; and it is as when a vast army fixes its look upon a great commander in whom it glories, who on some festival day is placed conspicuously in the midst. Is there humiliation in that look because he commands them? there is pride and exaltation, because he represents them. Every one is greater for such a representative. So in that heavenly crowd all countenances reflect the exaltation of their Head. (*J. B. Mozley, D.D.*)

The coming Saviour and the responding sinner:—Who said this? He who of all who ever walked this earth alone could say—"I have done Thy bidding." And when did He say it? When all else had failed? When "Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings, and offering for sin, Thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein." Then, said He, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." It is the announcement of human weakness. It was the final and only way to harmonise the attributes of God, and to make it a just thing for a Holy God to pardon a sinner—to reconcile man to his Maker. And what was God's will? In the first instance God's will was to make a lovely creation, and a creature, man, who should be a free agent to occupy and enjoy it. So He made a happy world, and two persons to inhabit and enjoy it. Free agents! That free agency they broke, and so our whole world fell. Then, all praise to His glory and grace, God recalled this world to happiness, and the question was—How could that be done compatible with the truth and justice of His word? That was the problem Christ came to solve. In Him we have a Brother who is the sharer of our weaknesses and of our sorrows and of our temptations. But oh! at what a cost was all this done! With what intensity of anguish! This then is the lesson, "Lo, I come." But the Greek word which we have translated "I come" is more than that; it is "I am come. I am come." Observe, the expression denotes two things: that He came, and that where He comes He stays. "I am come" implies the two facts—the Advent and His presence. "I am come." He came to die, to be our Substitute. And now, having done that, He stays. "I am come." He is with us still—our Companion, our Brother, our Guide, our Friend. Can you not offer up an echo to such words as these in your heart and say to God; "Thou didst say 'I come.' To Thee, Lord, I will say back, 'I come to Thee! I come to Thee!'" (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*)

The volume:—"In the volume of the book." In olden times books were not made out of sheets of paper folded into four, six, or eight, or twelve, and so forming one compact volume, with page following page from beginning to end, from left to right as now. A book was made of one very long strip of papyrus or parchment, rolled like a window blind on a roller; or rather, let me say, it was on two rollers, one roller was attached to the top of the strip, the other roller was fastened to the bottom. The strip of parchment paper-rush was many yards long. The book began at the very top of the long strip. There were no pages and no turning over of the leaf, but the reader read straight down the strip, his book was written all over the yards of material. As he read the top lines he turned the top roller, and it rolled them up, and unrolled some more of the material with the writing on it from off the bottom roller. And when the reader came to the end of the book, he had rolled it all off the bottom roller on to the top one. When he began his book it was all rolled on to the bottom roller. When the words "volume of the book" are used, it means the roll of the book. A long book of several volumes was a book in several rolls. Our word volume is a Latin word and means a roll, such as a roll of calico or cloth at the draper's. This word was used before books were made as they are now, in blocks; when the fashion of making books changed the old name remained on, though it really applied only to books in rolls. When it is said by Christ of His life, "Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of Me, to fulfil Thy will, O God," it really means, "Lo, I come, to do Thy will, so it is written at the head of the scroll." At the head of every volume was written the title of the book. Now Christ is speaking of His life as if it were a book. As the title and heading of His life is this text, "I am come to do Thy will, O my God!" Many a book opens with a quotation which gives the key to the meaning of the book, just as a text stands at the head of a sermon. You may have seen how every chapter in Sir Walter Scott's stories begins with a piece of poetry, a quotation from somewhere or other, and it has reference to all that follows. So the text, the heading of the chapter of our Lord's life, is "I am come to do Thy will, O God." That was why He was born of a Virgin—to fulfil the will of God. Why He was born at Bethlehem—to fulfil the will of God. Why He was

circumcised—to fulfil the will of God. Why He fled into Egypt—to fulfil the will of God. (*S. Baring Gould, M.A.*) *Voluntariness of Christ's sacrifice*:—Who would say it was unjust of David, when Abigail took—voluntarily took—her husband's guilt on herself and said, "Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be" (1 Sam. xxv. 24)? Would it not have been unjust to refuse to her the privilege she asked of being allowed to take on herself a burden, that she might throw it off and secure David's pacification? Still less can we complain of injustice when Jesus, touched with pity, flies down from the eternal throne, and says to His Father in heaven, "Upon Me, My Father, upon Me let this iniquity be; let Me bear this burden, let Me set them free!" (*C. Clemance, D.D.*) *Christ in the Old Testament Scriptures*:—In all the Word of God there is not a page that does not testify of Him. Mr. Moody tells of a visit to Prang's chromo establishment in Boston. Mr. Prang showed him a stone on which was laid the colour for the making of the first impression toward producing the portrait of a distinguished public man; but he could see only the faintest possible line of tinting. The next stone that the paper was submitted to deepened the colour a little; but still no trace of the man's face was visible. Again and again was the sheet passed over the successive stones, until at last the outline of a man's face was dimly discerned. At last, after some twenty impressions, from as many different stones, were taken upon the paper, the portrait of the distinguished man stood forth, so perfect that it seemed only to lack the power of speech to make it living. Thus it is with Christ in the Scriptures, especially in the Old Testament. Many persons—even those who know Christ from the New Testament revelations of Him—read rapidly through and over the pages of the book, and declare that they do not see Christ in them. Well, read it again and again; look a little more intently upon these sacred pages; draw a little nearer into the light which the Holy Spirit gives to them that ask Him; read them on your knees, calling upon God to open your eyes, that you may see wondrous things out of His law, and presently the beauteous, glorious face of Him whom your soul loveth will shine forth upon you. Sometimes you will see that dear face in deep shadow, marred more than the face of any man: sometimes He will seem to you as a root out of dry ground; and, again, He will seem fair as the lily of the valley; and as we move toward the end He will rise upon us as the day-dawn and day-star, shining above the brightness of the sun. (*G. F. Pentecost, D.D.*) *The will of God*:—Socrates, when the tyrant did threaten death to him, told him he was willing. "Nay, then," said the tyrant, "you shall live against your will." "Nay, but," said Socrates, "whatever you do with me it shall be my will." And a certain Stoic, speaking of God, said, "What God will, I will; what God nills, I will not; if He will that I live, I will live; if it be His pleasure that I die, I will die." Ah, how should the will of Christians stoop and lie down at the foot of God's will; not my will, but Thine be done. (*J. Venning.*) **He taketh away the first.**—*The first and the second*:—The way of God is to go from good to better. This excites growing wonder and gratitude. This makes men desire, and pray, and believe, and expect. This aids man in his capacity to receive the best things. The first good thing is removed that the second may the more fitly come. I. THE GRAND INSTANCE. First came the Jewish sacrifices, and then came Jesus to do the will of God. 1. The removal of instructive and consoling ordinances. While they lasted they were of great value, and they were removed because, when Jesus came—(1) They were needless as types. (2) They would have proved burdensome as services. (3) They might have been dangerous as temptations to formalism. (4) They would have taken off the mind from the substauce which they had formerly shadowed forth. 2. The establishment of the real, perfect, everlasting atonement. This is a blessed advance, for—(1) No one who sees Jesus regrets Aaron. (2) No one who knows the simplicity of the gospel wishes to be brought under the perplexities of the ceremonial law. (3) No one who feels the liberty of Zion desires to return to the bondage of Sinai. II. INSTANCES IN HISTORY. 1. The earthly paradise has been taken away by sin, but the Lord has given us salvation in Christ and heaven. 2. The first man has failed; behold the Second Adam. 3. The first covenant is broken, and the second gloriously takes its place. 4. The first temple with its transient glories has melted away; but the second and spiritual house rises beneath the eye and hand of the Great Architect. III. INSTANCES IN EXPERIENCE. 1. Our first righteousness is taken away by conviction of sin; but the righteousness of Christ is established. 2. Our first peace has been blown down as a tottering fence; but we shelter in the Rock of Ages. 3. Our first strength has proved worse

than weakness; but the Lord is our strength and our song, He also has become our salvation. 4. Our first guidance led us into darkness; now we give up self, superstition, and philosophy, and trust in the Spirit of our God. 5. Our first joy died out like thorns which crackle under a pot; but now we joy in God. IV. INSTANCES TO BE EXPECTED. 1. Our body decaying shall be renewed in the image of our risen Lord. 2. Our earth passing away and its elements being dissolved, there shall be new heavens and a new earth. 3. Our family removed one by one, we shall be charmed by the grand reunion in the Father's house above. 4. Our all being taken away, we find more than all in God. 5. Our life ebbing out, the eternal life comes rolling up in a full tide of glory. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Mosaic dispensation abolished by the Christian dispensation:*—I. THAT THE MOSAIC DISPENSATION WAS ABROGATED BY THE GOSPEL. 1. The Mosaic dispensation was of such a nature that it might be abrogated. It was altogether a positive institution. It was founded on mutable and not immutable reasons. 2. It was predicted that the Mosaic dispensation should be abrogated by another and more perfect dispensation under the gospel. 3. The apostles assure us this did actually take place at the death of Christ. II. HOW THE MOSAIC DISPENSATION WAS ABROGATED OR SET ASIDE BY THE GOSPEL. There are two ways in which human legislators abrogate their own laws. One way is to pass them for a limited time, and when that time is expired they cease of course; and another way is to pass new particular acts to repeal them. But we do not find that the Mosaic dispensation was abrogated in either of these ways. There was no period specified in the Mosaic laws how long they should continue in force; nor did Christ authoritatively declare that the legal dispensation should be no longer binding. But there were two ways by which He took away the first and established the second dispensation. 1. By completely fulfilling the legal dispensation, which was designed to be typical of Him as Mediator. Just so far as the law had a shadow of good things to come it was entirely abrogated by the incarnation, life and death of Christ. 2. By appointing new ordinances which superseded it. III. WHAT THINGS UNDER THE LAW WERE ABROGATED BY THE GOSPEL. There is room for this inquiry, because the Mosaic laws were not individually and particularly repealed by anything that Christ did or said. They were only virtually abolished; which proved an occasion of a diversity of opinions on the subject in the days of the apostles, and indeed ever since. It is universally allowed by Christians that some part of the legal dispensation is abrogated, but still many imagine that some part of it continues to be binding. 1. All those things which were merely typical of Christ are undoubtedly abrogated. 2. All things of an ecclesiastical nature under the law are abrogated under the gospel. 3. All things of a political nature in the Jewish church were abrogated by the gospel. 4. All things which were designed to separate the Jews from other nations were abrogated by Christ. 5. The gospel abrogated every precept of a positive nature which was peculiar to the Mosaic dispensation. Improvement: 1. If the Mosaic dispensation ceased when the gospel dispensation commenced, then the apostles had a right to disregard, and to teach others to disregard, all the Mosaic rites and ceremonies. 2. In the view of this subject we may clearly discover the absurdity of Dr. Tindal's reasonings, who maintains that Christianity is as old as the creation. 3. If the Christian dispensation has superseded the Mosaic in the manner that has been represented, then there appears an entire harmony between the Old Testament and the New. 4. It appears from what has been said that the evidence of the truth and divinity of the Christian dispensation is constantly increasing by means of the Mosaic dispensation. 5. If the Christian dispensation has entirely superseded the Mosaic, then there is no propriety at this day in reasoning from the Mosaic dispensation to the Christian. 6. If the Christian dispensation has completely superseded and abolished the Mosaic, then it is a great favour to live under the Christian dispensation. 7. It appears from what has been said, that sinners are much more criminal for rejecting the gospel under the Christian dispensation than those were who rejected it under the Mosaic dispensation. The gospel was preached to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and to all the Jews under the law, but it was wrapt up in a multitude of mysterious ceremonies which it was difficult to explain and understand; and those who rejected it, generally rejected it through much ignorance. But those who live under the light of the gospel have no ground to plead ignorance. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) *The superiority of Christ's priesthood:*—I. The old was COMPLEX—the new SIMPLE. II. The old was RESTRICTIVE—the new UNIVERSAL. III. The old was TRANSIENT—the new ETERNAL. IV. The old was SENSUOUS—the new SPIRITUAL.

Ver. 10. **By the which will we are sanctified.**—*Perfect sanctification* :—I. THE ETERNAL WILL—"By the which will we are sanctified." 1. This will must, first of all, be viewed as the will ordained of old by the Father—the eternal decree of the infinite Jehovah, that a people whom He chose should be sanctified and set apart unto Himself. 2. This will by which we are sanctified was performed of the ever blessed Son. 3. This work is applied to us by the Holy Spirit. II. THE EFFECTUAL SACRIFICE by which the will of God with regard to the sanctity of His people has been carried out. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ." 1. This implies, first, His incarnation, which of course includes His eternal Deity. Jesus Christ, very God of very God, did certainly stoop to become such as we are, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. 2. All this is implied in the text, because it speaks of the offering of the body of Christ. But why does it specially speak of the body? I think to show us the reality of that offering; His soul suffered, but to make it palpable to you, to record it as a sure historical fact, He mentions that there was an offering of the body of Christ. 3. I take it, however, that the word means the whole of Christ—that there was an offering made of all Christ, the body of Him, or that of which He was constituted. III. THE EVERLASTING RESULT. 1. The everlasting result of this effectual carrying out of the will of God is that now God regards His people's sin as expiated, and their persons as sanctified. Offered, and its efficacy abides for ever. 2. They are reconciled. 3. They are purified. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **The offering of the body of Jesus Christ.**—*Sermon for Good Friday* :—I. No one can read the Gospels in the most careless manner without noticing THAT IN THEM IS A SPECIAL IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST, apart from that which belongs to His life, with its absolute sinlessness and perfect obedience. As a general rule, it will be found that Scripture attaches very little importance to a man's death, and lays all the stress upon his life. The solitary exception in the Bible is the death of Jesus Christ. Then notice also the way in which our Lord Himself speaks of it beforehand. Again and again He speaks of His death as a necessity, as if there was a Divine "must" which rendered it indispensable. There are frequent allusions to it in parable and allegory. The shadow of the Cross is resting upon Him. He speaks with the utmost plainness, and tells the Twelve that He has come "to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28). All this prepares us for the teaching of the apostles, namely, the fact that throughout their writings the utmost stress is laid on the death of Christ, as distinct from His life; and that the greatest blessings and highest gifts are always connected with His suffering and with the shedding of His blood. You will find that the Epistle to the Hebrews especially is full from beginning to end of the thought of the sacrificial character of the death of Christ. He was incarnate "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." "He needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins and then for the people's: for this He did once, when He offered up Himself." "By His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." "The blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God" shall "purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." "Once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." He was "once offered to bear the sins of many." "He offered one sacrifice for sins for ever." "We are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." We have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." It is the "blood of the covenant wherewith" we are "sanctified." "Jesus, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." II. THE ATONEMENT. What controversies have raged round it! What a stumbling-block it is even now to many! Let us beware not only of endeavouring "to explain the efficacy of what Christ has done and suffered for us beyond what the Scripture has authorised"—this is a danger on one side—but also let us beware of endeavouring to explain it away, and of "confining His office as Redeemer of the world to His instruction, example, and government of the Church"—this is danger on the other side. Both dangers are real ones. A great statesman once said in eloquent words of our own Church, "Take the history of the Church of England out of the history of England, and the history of England becomes a chaos without order, without life, and without meaning." And may we not say with all reverence, "Take the history of the death of Christ out of the history of the world, and the history of the world becomes a chaos without order, without life, and without meaning"? We must cling to the fact that Christ is "the Lamb of God, which taketh

away the sin of the world," and that by "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all," there was made "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." The fact of the Atonement is revealed, but how it is efficacious, or why it was "necessary," we are nowhere fully told. Still, we are not to make it more mysterious by shutting our eyes to what *is* told us; and we must not forget that the doctrine does not stand alone. It should never be dissociated from the great truths of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation. Take the doctrine of the Atonement in connection with these two central doctrines of the Christian faith, and then these three things follow, each of which is worthy of serious consideration: 1. He who bore our human nature, and wrought human acts, and died on the Cross for us was a Divine Person. "Not, indeed, God alone; for as such," it has been truly said, "He would never have been in the condition to offer, or to die; nor man alone, for then the worth of His offering would never have reached so far; but He was God and man in one person, and in this person performing all those acts; man, that He might obey and suffer and die; God, that He might add to every act of His obedience, His suffering, His death, an immeasurable worth, steeping in the glory of His Divine personality all of human that He wrought." 2. From the fact that He was God the Son, the Second Person in the Blessed Trinity, who is one with the Father, it follows that we must never, even in thought, imagine a discordance of will between the Father and the Son, nor so represent the Atonement as if there was a clashing of will within the Godhead. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," and "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And what greater proof of love can be imagined than this? 3. In considering the doctrine of the Incarnation, we are to remember that it was not the death of *a* man which brought about such great results. He who died for us was the "Second Adam," the Head of the redeemed humanity. If it is His Godhead which gives His offering its infinite worth, it is His position as the Second Adam which qualifies Him to represent us. It is often said that if you would win back to self-respect some poor despairing wretch who has fallen so low as to be utterly reckless, and lost to all sense of shame, you must begin by making him understand that there is some one who cares for him yet. And if we can learn at the foot of the Cross of Jesus Christ that though we are sinful and hardened, it may be, and despairing, yet, in spite of all, God loves us with that yearning, passionate love which led Him to give Himself for us, then I think that our hearts will be broken, and we shall yield to the power of that love which knows no rest, and can never tire until it has found those it died to win. (*E. C. S. Gibson, M.A.*)

Vers. 11–13. **This Man, after He had offered.**—*The eras of redemption:*—I. THE PAST ERA OF CHRIST'S REDEMPTIVE HISTORY. He has "offered one sacrifice for sins." 1. Christ's death was a self-immolation. (1) His self-proprietorship. (2) His unexampled philanthropy. 2. His death was a self-immolation for sin. He died to put away sin: to put it away in its guilt-form—in its idea-form—and in its habit-form. His death was a self-immolation for sin unrepeatable. "One . . . for ever." Sufficient for all lands and ages. II. THE PRESENT ERA OF CHRIST'S REDEMPTIVE HISTORY. "Sat down at the right hand of God." 1. Rest. 2. Heaven. III. THE FUTURE ERA OF CHRIST'S REDEMPTIVE HISTORY. "From henceforth expecting," &c. 1. Christ has enemies. Fallen angels and sinful men. 2. These enemies He will subjugate. Some will be subdued by the moral influences of His truth and love; and some by the resistless might of His retributive justice. Lessons: 1. The repugnance with which humanity should regard sin. 2. The true test by which we may determine the worth of our Christianity. The absence of sin. 3. The certainty of Christianity's ultimate triumph. 4. The absurdity of waiting for any further helps to conversion. (*Homilist.*) *The perfection of Christ's atonement:*—I. We see Him ON THE EARTH; and this is what He is said to have done here—"He offered one sacrifice for sins." The apostle, we must remember, is both comparing and contrasting Him with the Jewish priests. His object is to show us that He is all to the Church these priests ever were, and all in a much higher degree. He compares Him with them. Now one part of their office was to make reconciliation or atonement for the sins of the people. Thus far then our Lord resembles the Jewish priests—He really offered a sacrifice. But the apostle also contrasts Him with them. He made, he says, one sacrifice only. There was in His case no perpetual standing by the altar, no daily ministering, no multiplying of victims. His precious blood once shed, all is over; the fire on the altar goes out,

and the altar itself is soon thrown down and destroyed. And here become evident two blessed truths. 1. One sacrifice serves for all God's Church—not only one priest, but one offering. 2. This one offering of Christ serves effectually for all God's Church. Not only are all His people cleansed, they are all fully and eternally cleansed, by it. II. We must now follow our Lord INTO HEAVEN. The text carries Him there in His human nature; and more than that—in the character He bore here in His human nature, the great Expiator of our sins. The apostle's language intimates to us—1. The repose of Christ in heaven, a repose indicating the completeness and perfection of the work He had performed on earth. 2. The high exaltation of Christ in heaven. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *The sacrifice and triumph of Christ:*—I. THIS GOD-MAN OFFERED ONE SACRIFICE FOR SIN. That was the sacrifice of Himself, which we may consider as implying surrender. 1. He offered His body (Isa. l. 6; Psa. lxix. 21; Isa. lii. 14). These were sufferings of no common kind. 2. But, in suffering, He offered His mind. The sufferings of our Redeemer's soul must be considered as the soul of His sufferings. 3. He offered in sacrifice His glory—by which we understand how glory will follow up the shame. Now, our Redeemer's feelings were not blunted or stoical—nay, they were delicately fine; and when they called Him "a deceiver of the people," "a glutton, and a wine-bibber"; when they said He had a devil—that He was not fit to live: He must have felt the indignity with great acuteness. 4. He offered in sacrifice the consolations of heaven's protection (Matt. xxvii. 46). 5. He offered in sacrifice His life (John xv. 13; Rom. v. 8). 6. He offered in sacrifice His will. He prayed that the cup of suffering might pass from Him (Matt. xxvi. 42); yet He gave His person into the hands of those who put it to torture: He voluntarily resigned Himself to that train of overwhelming and distressing ideas, that threw His mind into an agony and bathed Him in a bloody sweat. II. FOR WHAT PURPOSE DID HE OFFER THIS SACRIFICE? Whenever we think, or read, about the sufferings of Christ, we are immediately directed to sin (1 Cor. xv. 3; 1 Pet. iii. 18, ii. 24; Isa. liii. 5). This Man offered Himself a sacrifice for sin—1. To avert the consequences of it. Jesus Christ paid the penalty, that He might deliver the sinner from the consequences of his sins. 2. He died that He might remove the presence of sin, by doing away the love of it; by cleansing the guilty in the "fountain opened for sin and uncleanness," —rendering the person "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." 3. He offered Himself a sacrifice to overcome the forfeiture of sin. III. THE EXALTATION OF OUR REDEEMER. 1. This was through the medium of His resurrection. 2. And He has now "sat down at the right hand of God." God is a great and invisible Spirit, with whom literally there can be neither standing nor recumbency. We must, therefore, understand this phrase figuratively; and it is—(1) Expressive of rest. (2) Honoured. (3) Power, authority, dominion. IV. THE PURPOSES OF HIS WILL SHALL BE FULFILLED. Of the adversaries of Jesus Christ we observe—1. That Satan is the most subtle, ancient, and formidable. 2. Error. Error may be said to be a hydra with many heads. These systems degrade God's creatures, rob the Redeemer, murder the souls of men; and as such they must come down: by the general diffusion of knowledge, by the spread of the Scriptures, by the piety of God's people. 3. Another enemy is to be found in wicked, unconverted men. But these enemies shall be the footstool of the "Lion of the tribe of Judah." Upon unconverted men, Jesus Christ will employ His gospel on their understandings, and His Spirit on their consciences, and His providence on their circumstances and their bodies; and these weapons shall be "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." 4. Another enemy of Christ is death. He is said to be the last enemy that shall be destroyed (1 Cor. xv. 26). 5. All these enemies have been made by one worse than the devil himself, and that enemy is sin. To destroy sin the Son of God was manifested—for this purpose He offered Himself a sacrifice—for this purpose He has commanded His gospel to be preached to every creature—for this purpose He is, at this moment, seated at the right hand of God, invested with all power, to employ whatever instrument He thinks proper, and to give a blessing to those means that they may be effectual. Application: 1. Here we discover the character of sinners. They are said to be enemies to Christ. 2. We learn, again, that these unconverted persons must be His footstool, whether at home or abroad. Will you be conquered by the sceptre of His grace; or will you be broken in pieces by the iron rod of His wrath? 3. We see the duty of the people to extend by conquest the triumphs of the Redeemer: to bring home His rebel outcasts, that they may be saved from sin and Satan's snare. (*W. Atherton.*) *The matchless Mediator:*—I. IN HIS RELATION TO CALVARY. 1. He accomplished

what all others failed to do. 2. He accomplished what none others need attempt after Him. II. IN HIS RELATION TO HEAVEN. 1. Enjoyment of tranquil repose. 2. Elevation to highest honour. 3. Execution of universal power. III. IN HIS RELATION TO THE MILLENNIUM. 1. He has opponents. 2. His enemies are in process of subjugation. 3. His ultimate supremacy will be complete. (*B. D. Johns.*)

One offering:—I. THE PERMANENCE OF THE REPETITION OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS IS NOT NECESSARY FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE ATONEMENT. If we look at the influence of it on other beings, good and bad, we can see that the transient acts of Christ's life, and the permanent assumption of our nature for our redemption, are an eternal guarantee of His love of the law. If we look at its effects on the pardoned, it is sufficient that Christ lived here thirty-three years, and died once. The mother that bore you, and cherished you in infancy's helpless years, needs not repeat all that, in order to convince you of her love, or to strengthen her claims upon your love. A stranger rushed into the flames, and saved you from a horrid death, when you were a child. Will you ever forget it? God needed only to express once, in this form, His unvarying grief at our sins—His uncompromising opposition to them. Nay, more: II. THE PERMANENT SUFFERING OF THE INNOCENT AND BENEVOLENT REDEEMER WOULD DEFEAT THE VERY END OF ATONEMENT. That end is, to diminish suffering in the universe. If we are to be saved at the eternal expense of such a Being; if He is to be for ever buffeted and spit upon, while we are crowned with glory; if He is to sink under the Father's frown, while we rejoice in the light of His countenance—then the cost is too great. To awaken the most generous sentiments in the hearts of the redeemed, and to sustain them, Christ must be rewarded with everlasting honour and joy. To enjoy heaven by the continued sufferings of our Friend and Redeemer, would make us selfish; to see His sufferings, and not be selfish, would make our own happiness impossible. (*E. N. Kirk, D.D.*) *Philosophy and sin*:—When Renan was once asked what he did with sin in his philosophy, he shrugged his shoulders, and laughed and said, "I suppress it." (*W. J. Dawson.*)

Sat down on the right hand of God.—*Christ exalted*:—I. THE COMPLETENESS OF THE SAVIOUR'S WORK. 1. He has done all that was necessary to make an atonement and an end of sin. He has done so much, that it never will be needful for Him again to be crucified. Oh! if the last thread had not been woven in the great garment of our righteousness, He would be spinning it now; if the last particle of our debt had not been paid, He would be counting it down now; and if all were not complete, He would never rest, until, like a wise builder, He had laid the top-stone of the temple of our salvation. No; the very fact that He sits still, and rests, proves that His work is finished. 2. And then note again, that His sitting at the right hand of God implies that He enjoys pleasure; for at God's right hand "there are pleasures for evermore." Now I think the fact that Christ enjoys infinite pleasure has in it some degree of proof that He must have finished His work. He has joys as God; but as the man-God, His joys spring from the salvation of the souls of men. That is His joy, which is full, in the thought that He has finished His work and has cut it short in righteousness. I think there is some degree of proof, although not, perhaps, positive proof there, that Jesus must have finished His work. 3. The fact that it is said He has sat down for ever proves that He must have done it. Christ has undertaken it to save all the souls of the elect. If He has not already saved them, He is bound to do something that will save them, for He has given solemn promise to His Father, that He will bring many souls unto glory. 4. Yet, the best proof is, that Christ sits at His Father's right hand at all. For the very fact that Christ is in heaven, accepted by His Father, proves that His work must be done. Why, as long as an ambassador from our country is at a foreign court, there must be peace; and as long as Jesus Christ our Saviour is at His Father's court, it shows that there is real peace between His people and His Father. Well, as He will be there for ever, that shows that our peace must be continual. But that peace could not have been continual, unless the atonement had been wholly made, unless justice had been entirely satisfied; and, therefore, from that very fact it becomes certain that the work of Christ must be done. II. THE GLORY WHICH HE HAS ASSUMED. "After He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." Now, by this you are to understand the complex person of Christ; for Christ, as God, always was on His Father's throne; He always was God; and even when He was on earth He was still in heaven. But Jesus Christ, as the man-God, has assumed honours which once He had not; for as man, He did not at one time sit on His Father's throne; He was a suffering man; but as God-man He has assumed a dignity next to God; He sits at the right hand of the glorious Trinity.

1. From this we gather, that the dignity which Christ now enjoys is surpassing dignity. There is no dignity to be compared to that of Christ. 2. In the next place, Christ has real dignity. Some persons have mere empty titles, which confer but little authority. But the man-Christ Jesus, while He has many crowns and many titles, has not one tinsel crown or one empty title. He overruleth all mortal things, making the evil work a good, and the good produce a better, and a better still, in infinite progression. 3. And once more: this honour that Christ hath received (I mean the Man-God Christ) was deserved honour; that dignity which His Father gave Him He well deserved. 4. We must consider the exaltation of Christ in heaven as being in some degree a representative exaltation. Christ Jesus exalted at the Father's right hand, though He has eminent glories, in which the saints must not expect to share, essentially He is the express image of the person of God, and the brightness of His Father's glory, yet, to a very great degree, the honours which Christ has in heaven He has as our representative there. III. WHAT ARE CHRIST'S EXPECTATIONS? 1. We are told, He expects that His enemies shall be made His footstool. In some sense that is already done; the foes of Christ are, in some sense, His footstool now. What is the devil but the very slave of Christ, for he doth no more than he is permitted against God's children? What are wicked men but the servants of God's providence, unwittingly to themselves? In that sense all things are now Christ's. 2. But we expect greater things than these at His coming, when all enemies shall be beneath Christ's feet upon earth. We are, therefore, many of us, "looking for that blessed hope; that glorious appearing of the kingdom of our Saviour Jesus Christ"; many of us are expecting that Christ will come; we cannot tell you when; we believe it to be folly to pretend to guess the time, but we are expecting that even in our life the Son of God will appear, and we know that when He shall appear He will tread His foes beneath His feet, and reign from pole to pole, and from the river even to the ends of the earth. 3. Christ will have all His enemies put beneath His feet, in that great day of judgment. Oh! that will be a terrible putting of His foes beneath His feet, when at the second resurrection the wicked dead shall rise; when the ungodly shall stand before His throne, and His voice shall say, "Depart, ye cursed." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The priests standing, Christ sitting:*—That the ministry of the priests under the law is ineffectual is seen from their continual standing and offering (comp. ver. 2). That the Son's is effectual appears from the fact which we know from prophecy fulfilled (Psa. cx. 1; chaps. ii. 9, viii. 1) in Him, that having made His one offering He sat down. He ceased, and no more offers, but awaits the final issue of His one offering, which shall be when He appears a second time unto salvation (chap. ix. 28). (*A. B. Davidson, LL.D.*) **From henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool.**—*The destined supremacy of Christianity:*—The Being presented by this inspired declaration is Jesus Christ; and Christianity is the system of truth of which He is the centre—its Alpha and Omega. Its supremacy is inferred—1. From the fact that God has established and introduced it to human knowledge. 2. From its interior structure, its fitness to man, the reply which it gives to His deepest demands. 3. From the fact that the supremacy of Christianity will nobly complete the circle of history; will give unity, wholeness to the annals of the race, and will show through their courses a sublime method. 4. The specific declarations of God in the Scriptures assure us of that result. 5. The historic progress of Christianity among men, with the nature of the arena on which it now acts, gives assurance of its supremacy. How then ought its friends to labour for Christianity, to spread its truth, its promise, and life! How vividly also does this last thought come to us: the personal obligation of each of us to submit from the heart to Christ's dominion. The ancient legend of the Church, that Julian died exclaiming as he expired, "Galilean, Thou hast conquered," is certain to be realised in the substance of its history in every soul not submitted to Christ. His rule at last shall be complete, and the period of that sway shall compass eternity. In that last and glorious age there will be found no place on earth, no place in heaven for him who hath not bowed to Christ! The dominion of Messiah hath no promises for him. (*R. S. Storrs, D.D.*) *Christ's confident expectation of ultimate victory:*—I know nothing more sublime in the inspired writings than that representation of the Lord given us in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which He is depicted as "seated upon His throne at His Father's right hand, expecting till His enemies become His footstool." Reflect for a moment upon the sight that must meet that omniscient gaze! A world black with appalling crime and hideous depravity. A world reeking with drunkenness, and lust, and violence, and bloodshed. A world wrapped in the night

of spiritual ignorance and heathen darkness. Angels beholding it, in ignorance of the Divine purpose, might well have despaired of it as a world too sunken to raise, too hopeless to deliver. Yet it is upon this sad world that the Saviour's eye is fixed with such confident anticipation. No fear agitates His mind, no doubt breaks His rest. In His view nothing hangs in uncertainty or remains in jeopardy. To Him the fulfilment is as sure as though it were already realised. Fixing our eyes upon intervening and secondary things, our heart often fails us; but He looks right on through present conflict to the victory beyond; He knows there can be but one result—"His enemies shall lick the dust." "All kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him." (*A. Bax.*) *The signs of advancing victory:*—Just as a man in early spring will fall down on some mossy bank over a pale primrose, with a keen joy in his heart, not so much for what it is in itself, but as the harbinger of the great glowing summer so surely advancing. As he looks at it, the leaden skies grow into sapphire clearness, the naked woodlands are once more dressed in living green, and the long winter silence is broken by the wild gushes of sweetest bird-music. He knows that behind that tender plant lies God's immutable covenant, that, "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter shall not cease"—lie those omnific forces that will soon fulfil all the promise of this prophetic flower. So Christ welcomed each little sign of His advancing victory. A few Samaritans, returning with the woman with whom He had previously conversed at the well of Sychar, drew from Him the exultant utterance, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." The faith of one centurion is regarded at once as the earnest of the whole Gentile world: "And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." On another occasion two or three Greeks express a desire to see Him, and that desire fills Him with a holy transport. "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. . . . Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the Prince of this world be cast out." An eloquent expositor has said that "they were to Him as the first-fruits of the great flock of humanity; and their presence as the first stroke of the bell which sounded the fatal but glorious hour." And His attitude to-day upon His throne is still that of calm, quiet, confident expectation. (*Ibid.*) *Christ will have the whole world:*—It is on record that, during the late civil war in America, and when victory was swaying from side to side, that commissioners from the Confederate States sought and obtained an interview with President Lincoln, with the view of trying to effect an arrangement for the independence of the territory they represented. They knew the tender-heartedness of Mr. Lincoln, and appealed to him to stay the effusion of blood which, at the moment, was flowing in torrents. They were willing to forego several of the States for which they had hitherto fought, if he would consent to the remainder being independent. They pleaded with him for hours, and made use of the strongest arguments and considerations they could adduce to gain their object. When they had finished, the President, who had patiently and attentively listened to all that had been said, raised his hand, and then bringing it down with emphasis on the map which lay before him, replied, "Gentlemen, this Government must have the whole." (*J. Fleming, D.D.*)

Ver. 14. **Perfected for ever them that are sanctified.**—*Perfection in faith:*—I. THE CHILDREN OF GOD ARE HERE INTENDED, UNDER THE TERM "SANCTIFIED"; they are described as sanctified persons. There are two meanings to the term "sanctified." One is, "set apart." God has set apart His people from before the foundation of the world, to be His chosen and peculiar inheritance. We are sanctified by God the Father. There is a second signification, which implies not the decree of the Father, but the work of the Holy Spirit. But the word here, I think, includes both of these senses; and I must try to find a figure which will embrace them both. And what is the apostle speaking about? In the ninth chapter he is speaking about the tabernacle, and the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread, and the sanctuary, and the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid with gold, and the pot of manna; he is talking about priests, and holy things; and he is declaring that all these things of which he speaks were sanctified things, but that though they were sanctified things, they wanted to be made perfect by the sprinkling of blood. Now I believe the sanctification of our text is to be understood in this sense. II. IN WHAT SENSE ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND THAT CHRIST HAS PERFECTED THESE THAT ARE SANCTIFIED? When the golden vessels were brought into the temple

or into the sanctuary, they were sanctified the very first moment that they were dedicated to God. No one dared to employ them for anything but holy uses. But they were not perfect. What did they need, then, to make them perfect? Why, to have blood sprinkled on them; and, as soon as the blood was sprinkled on them, those golden vessels were perfect vessels, officially perfect. God accepted them as being holy and perfect things, and they stood in His sight as instruments of an acceptable worship. Just so was it with the Levites and the priests. As soon as ever they were set apart to their office; as soon as ever they were born, in fact, they were consecrated, they belonged to God; they were His peculiar priesthood. But they were not perfect until they had passed through divers washings, and had the blood sprinkled upon them. Then God looked upon them in their official priestly character, as being perfect persons. Here is one sense of the text. The apostle says that we who are the priests of God have a right as priests to go to God's mercy-seat that is within the veil; but it were to our death to go there unless we were perfect. But we *are* perfect, for the blood of Christ has been sprinkled on us, and, therefore, our standing before God is the standing of perfection. Our standing, in our own conscience, is imperfection, just as the character of the priest might be imperfect. But that has nothing to do with it. Our standing in the sight of God is a standing of perfection; and when He sees the blood, as of old the destroying angel passed over Israel, so this day, when He sees the blood, God passes over our sins, and accepts us at the throne of His mercy, as if we were perfect. Therefore, let us come boldly; let us "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." And now we will have one more thought, and then I shall have given you the full meaning of the text. In the seventh chapter, the nineteenth verse, there is a word that is a key to the meaning of my text, and that helped me all through it. "For the law made nothing *perfect*, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*, by the which we draw nigh unto God." Then with this, compare the tenth chapter and first verse, "The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year, continually make the comers thereunto perfect." There is the word "perfect"; and we have it in the text; "for then," says he, if they had been perfect, "would they not have ceased to be offered." Why offer any more, if you are a perfect man? "If the sacrifice made is perfect, the worshippers, once purged, should have had no more conscience of sin." Now mark. The Jewish sacrifice was never intended to make the Jew's moral character any better, and it did not; it had no effect upon what we call his sanctification; all the sacrifice dealt with was his justification, and the perfection would be sought after; the perfection is not of sanctification, but of official standing, as he stood justified before God. Now that is the meaning of the word "perfect" here. It does not mean that the sacrifice did not make the man perfectly holy, and perfectly moral, and so forth; the sacrifice had no tendency to do that; it was quite another matter. It means that it did not perfectly make him justified in his own conscience and in the sight of God, because he had to come and offer again. But now behold the glory of Christ Jesus as revealed to us in our text. "Those sacrifices could not make the comers thereunto perfect." They could not feel in their own conscience that they were perfectly justified, and they wanted fresh offerings; but I see the slaughtered Lamb on Calvary. Years ago I sought Him and I found Him. I do not want another Lamb; I do not want another sacrifice. I can still see that blood flowing, and I can feel continually that I have no more conscience of sin. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The one perfect offering*:—1. The act is to perfect, which may be to a thing perfect; and seeing the end of Christ's sacrifice is man's full happiness, thererefore to perfect is to make us perfectly and fully happy. 2. The subject of this consecration are the sanctified. 3. The effect is glorious and most excellent, and includes regeneration, justification, reconciliation, adoption with the inferior degrees of them all, and also the resurrection and eternal glorification. And surely so rare an effect must have some excellent cause; and so it hath, and that is, that one offering of Christ. (*G. Lawson.*) *Perfected*:—The word "perfected" falls with a strange sound on those who are experiencing daily their sad imperfections. But the Christian is a strange paradox. We are unknown, yet well known; chastened, yet not killed; dying, and, behold, we live; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, yet possessing all things. Let me speak to you then of this twofold aspect of the Christian. You may be caught up into the third heaven, and yet the abundance of this revelation will not burn up the dross that is within you, or kill the old man, the

flesh which warreth against the spirit. We have died once in Christ, and in Christ are accepted and perfect; but our old nature is not dead, the flesh in us is not annihilated, there is still within us that which has no pleasure in the will and ways of God. Painful this struggle will ever be, though God is with us, and our joy is greater than our pain. We have in us the death of Adam, and we have in us the resurrection of Jesus Christ. By the one we are broken and tormented through sin, and darkness, and sluggishness, and earthliness, and gloom; by Christ we are raised, and strengthened, and comforted. We sin, we fall, we carry about with us a mind resisting God's will, criticising it, and rebelling; and we shall experience to the very last breath we draw on earth, that there is a conflict, and that we must strive and suffer in order to be faithful unto death. (*A. Saphir.*) *Importance of the death of Christ*:—Speculate on it how we may, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ is presented to us in the New Testament as the everlasting reason of every happy relation between sinful man and the moral government of God. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*) *By one offering*:—As our burnt-offering, Christ became our righteousness in full consecration; as our peace-offering, our life; as our sin-offering, the expiation for our sins; as our guilt-offering, He made satisfaction and plenary reparation in our behalf to the God on whose inalienable rights in us, by our sins we had trespassed without measure. (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*)

Vers. 15–18. **I will put My laws into their hearts.**—*The Bible written in the mind*:—Christianity in human life is better than Christianity in cold ink, because—1. It contains the Divine things, the other only the symbols. 2. It is the end of culture, the other only the means. 3. It is self-obvious, the other requires explanation. 4. It is imperishable, the other temporary. (*Homilist.*) *A Saviour such as you need*:—I. IT IS THIS WHICH CONSTITUTES THE GLORY AND SUPERIORITY OF THE NEW COVENANT OF GRACE—NAMELY, THAT IT GIVES TO ALL WHO ARE INTERESTED IN IT PERFECT SALVATION. Our text tells us that in two points the old covenant was far behind the new: first, in the matter of sanctification the old covenant did not do what the new one accomplishes, for the new writes God's law upon our hearts and upon our minds, whereas the old covenant was only written out on tables of stone; and, secondly, the old covenant could not put away the guilt of sin, whereas the new covenant runs on this wise—"And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." II. The doctrine, then, is that THERE IS NO MORE SACRIFICE FOR SIN, BECAUSE CHRIST SUPPLIES ALL THAT IS NEEDED. III. Lastly, does not this doctrine ANSWER A QUESTION that has often been propounded to me, namely, HOW IT IS THAT THERE ARE SO MANY HEARTS WHICH CAN FIND NO PEACE? Some people are always learning, but never coming to the truth. They are good people in many senses, but they cannot be happy. They are always discontented. Now, what do you think is the reason? I am sure it is this, they will not agree that Christ shall be all in all to them. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *God forgives and forgets*:—"Mother forgives me when I've been naughty," said a little girl; "but I see in her face all day after, though she does not frown, that she remembers what I did in the morning. She cannot forget. God forgives and forgets, for 'He makes it up' altogether." *Blotted out*:—A little boy was once much puzzled about sins being blotted out, and said: "I cannot think what becomes of the sins God forgives, mother." "Why, Charlie, can you tell me where are the figures you wrote on your slate yesterday?" "I washed them all out, mother." "And where are they, then?" "Why, they are nowhere; they are gone," said Charlie. "Just so it is with the believer's sins—they are gone; blotted out; 'remembered no more.'"

Vers. 19–22. **Boldness to enter into the holiest.**—*The Christian's exalted privilege*:—I. THE HOLIEST PLACE. 1. The special residence of the Deity. 2. The scene of holy services. 3. The residence of holy beings. 4. From this place those blessings are communicated that make us holy. II. THE WAY OF ACCESS. 1. A new way. 2. A living way. 3. A consecrated way. III. THE MANNER OF APPROACH. 1. With boldness. 2. With a true heart. 3. In full assurance of faith. 4. With hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. 5. With bodies washed with pure water. Application. Learn: 1. The gospel method of salvation. The blood of Jesus. Its expensiveness and its preciousness. 2. There must be personal application before we can enjoy its benefits. 3. All who thus personally approach shall obtain mercy. 4. How shall they escape who neglect so great salvation? (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *The house of God and the way to it*:—I. THE HOUSE OF GOD. What a Divine house is the physical universe, if we had but minds capable

of realising its unity and looking upon it as a whole! What a great house even this earth of ours is, full of things innumerable both great and small! And yet this is but the uttermost court to this house. But the physical universe, whatever be its glory, can never be the true house and home of intelligence, thought and will. Only men build up the home of man. And He whose image man wears, and whose child he is, says, "My people are My portion; Israel is My inheritance." What a sphere, then, of intelligence, love, and perfected will there must be as the aim and end of a physical universe which is so glorious! And if man's nature rests in nothing less than man, and demands a human home in which to dwell, what a sphere of voluntary thought and reflection there must be for God, the Maker of heaven and of earth, and the Father of us all! But just as within the sphere of the physical, we require the intelligent, so within the sphere of intelligence there must be that of friendship, for the house of God. The universe of His friends, of His innocent, as well as of His redeemed and happy creatures—these form the house of God; this is Mount Zion, "the mountain of the house of the Lord," the dwelling-place of the Most High—to which we are invited to draw near, "to an innumerable company of angels, to the General Assembly and Church of the first-born, to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to God, the Judge of all." The Father's dwelling-place is in the house of His children. But this, the house of His friends is a "house of many mansions"; it has its outer courts, its vestibule, its holy chambers, and its holiest; and between the outer courts, occupied by the children of earth, and that holiest of holies, what intervening abodes there are of angels, of elders, of principalities, of thrones, of dominions, of powers, and of the redeemed of all ages and experiences—throughout which, and in whom, God is all and in all! But within the holiest is enthroned, in meekest majesty, One who is "set over the House of God," and who, in bodily presence, is the House of God, in the express image of His person and the brightness of His glory, in whom it pleases all the Father's fulness to dwell, and who is the home of His eternal rest. II. THE WAY TO IT. We must not forget, in considering the way to this house, that the house itself is spiritual, that it is the home for the thoughts, for the affections, for the will of God; a sphere in which His Spirit finds fellowship, satisfaction and rest; in which He is all and in all—the spring, the source of all power and life, and of all the forms of life answering to the power. Then, clearly, it must be a house only accessible on certain definitely determined conditions: conditions, not arbitrary, but imposed by the very nature of things, given in the very nature of God and His relations to His creatures. Everything has its own way by which it may be entered. Things must be related to have access to each other. Spiritual things have spiritual ways of access, and require spiritual discernment. No wonder then that the text speaks of the way to the House of God as a "new way." It is not the original way of man's primitive nature, but a way newly opened up in view of the necessities of the state and circumstances into which man's sin and sinfulness had brought him, a way for sinners into the holiest of holies, the presence of God. The way of His descent to us may become the way of our ascent to Him. But, it is further called a "living way," not merely because it leads to life, nor because it gives life, nor because it vitally renews itself, nor because its use is restricted to the living—though in all these senses there is much truth; but because it is a way set up in Him who is the Life. Christ is the way to Christ, as the light is the way to the sun, and the seed-life of the flower the way to the flower. He is the life-fountain and also the stream which conducts to it. But, in addition to its being "a new and living way," it is also said to be a way which Christ has "consecrated for us through the veil of His flesh." By this expression, "the veil of His flesh," the apostle gathers up in unity of significance the whole incarnate relations of the Son of Man, in His representative character, on our behalf, and represents them as a veil of separation between Him and the house of His glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and says, "Only through that can there be a way for man to God." And this was true for Christ Himself as well as for us. Only by the rending of the veil of His flesh could He, who "came out from God," return to Him. III. THE SEVERAL CHARACTERISTIC QUALIFICATIONS WITH WHICH WE ARE EXHORTED TO DRAW NEAR TO GOD WITHIN THE VEIL. "Let us draw near in the full assurance of faith"; that is, being fully assured that this way of "access to God" for sinful men has been opened up; that God has solved His own problem; and that in Christ, His representative and ours, the Son of God and Son of Man, it stands a completed work, with its gate on this side the veil, for us as for Him—the cross, and, through the veil, its goal—the cross crowned in glory. Assured of this, let us draw near, none

daring to make us afraid; for should any arrest our course, and demand our right to enter within "the holiest," we can point them to the way, and to our hearts, sprinkled with the blood of Him who in our nature and in our name is set over the house of God. Having this assurance of faith, "let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering." An assured faith in the fact that we have the new and living way of access to God cannot fail to beget a stedfast hope. Faith not only warrants but demands hope, is in fact the substance of our hope. And He who is its Author has made abundant provision for its growth and expansion in the great exceeding precious promises He has given us, through which we "become partakers of the Divine nature," and "receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls." (*W. Pulsford, D.D.*) *Entering into the holiest*:—I. THE WARRANT "TO ENTER INTO THE HOLIEST." 1. "The blood of Jesus." This blood is the most precious thing that we can conceive of. It is set before us in Scripture in different views. (1) It is compared to the blood of the passover lamb. It may therefore be said to be the blood of protection and of deliverance. (2) It is compared with "the blood and water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop," used by Moses at Sinai. It may therefore be said to be the blood that ratifies the covenant. (3) It is compared with "the blood used on the day of atonement." It may therefore be said to be the blood by which we draw nigh unto God. (4) As under the Old Testament, "almost all things were purged with blood," so it is said to be "the blood which cleanseth us from all sin." (5) To show its unspeakable value, it is said to be "the blood of God" (Acts xx. 28). 2. Another warrant is, that we have "a new and living way"—that is, a way quite different from that which the high priest had of old to enter into the "holy of holies." 3. This way is said to be "consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh." Now, every obstacle is removed; and every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is warranted to enter for himself into the immediate presence of God, and there transact all the concerns of his own soul. 4. Another powerful and suitable warrant is expressed in these words—"and having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near." When we consider this High Priest, what He is, what He has done, and what He is continuing to do, we have encouragement inexpressible. He is God and man. He is our Brother—our Righteousness—our Sanctification—our Redemption. How glorious is our great High Priest! How happy to be under His guidance—His management—His care! II. YOUR WELCOME. 1. "Draw near with a true heart." This implies that you have nothing in view but the supply of grace which you find you need. Let this lead you to inquire of what graces you stand in the utmost need; and let this alone employ all your present desires and petitions to your heavenly Father. 2. Another evidence of your welcome is "full assurance of faith." This you can have by the study of Christ, in His person, and offices and intercession. In all He is, in all He does, and in all He has done, He is perfect. He can save every soul, be the condition of that soul what it may. But farther, He can give the Holy Spirit, to unite unto Himself—to conform to the Divine image. In one word, He can give "full assurance of faith." Did you ever ask this "assurance" from Him? Did He ever deny it to you? This "assurance" is your welcome. 3. A farther evidence of your welcome is to draw near with "hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." This is done by the Holy Spirit, for Christ's sake. When the Spirit enables you to believe, He at the same time applies to your heart the virtue of the precious blood of Christ. This removes all opposition to faith—to love—to every other grace in the mediatorial person of Christ. This "purges the conscience from dead works" (Heb. ix. 13, 14). With such attainments you may, with full welcome, draw near to the mercy seat; for these constitute your welcome there. 4. The last evidence of welcome mentioned in our text is, "our bodies being washed with pure water." This language is also figurative, and is taken from the act of consecrating Aaron and his sons to the priest's office. This is obtained by the promise (Ezek. xxxvi. 25–27). (*Jas. Kidd, D.D.*) *The true worshipper*:—1. I would first lead you to consider for a moment the term "brethren": "Having, therefore, brethren." There was a strong feeling of brotherhood amongst the Jews, not only on account of their original stock, but on account of their separation from the rest of the world; but the term here denotes the spiritual brotherhood of believers in Jesus Christ. It is not merely that believers are united by natural affections, without any intervening medium; but they are united to each other in Jesus—and that is the closest tie which the soul of man can ever know. What a difference it would make in our treatment of each other, if we could recognise with a loving heart our brotherhood in Christ Jesus! How many jealousies it would remove; and how many of those

heart-burnings, which eat as a canker into our spiritual life! 2. Notice, in the next place, the term "boldness." This is put in contrast with the fear under the law, which deprived the worshipper of all confidence; and it marks the holy liberty of the child of God, compared with the bondage in which he was held under the law. One of the great snares of Satan is to endeavour to beat men off from this point, as if it were presumption, But read the Word, and see for yourselves what is said upon the subject. "He suffered, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." 3. But still observe—it is by the blood of Jesus, because "without shedding of blood there is no remission." It is the blood of Christ alone that annihilates the distance between the believing sinner and God; there is no approach but through that blood, and "those who are afar off are made nigh" by it. 4. This is called "a new and living way," because it is peculiar to the new covenant of grace, and because it is always new and efficacious; it does not wax old, as did the first covenant; that was for a time only, till "the times of reformation," we are told, but this is for ever. And it may be called living, because it is the only way of entering into life. 5. But the apostle goes on to say, that our Lord has consecrated for us this way "through the veil, that is to say, His flesh." The meaning of this expression appears to be, that as when the veil was rent at the death of our Lord there was no longer any hindrance to entering into the holiest, so Christ's flesh being rent by His death, a way was opened to all believers, by the sacrifice which He offered, into the very kingdom of heaven. There is very much instruction for us here. Every other priesthood but the priesthood of Christ has the effect of keeping the worshipper at a distance from God; but His priesthood is put before us as a motive to draw near. 6. Another expression is made use of, which is full of point. "In full assurance of faith." Faith is needed in God's service, because "without faith it is impossible to please Him." "Full assurance" is to be understood of faith in the priesthood of Christ. It is the superiority of that priesthood which the apostle aims to establish throughout this Epistle. And the "assurance of faith" does not respect the assurance which a man has of his own salvation, but of the efficacy of Christ's priesthood, and the sufficiency of His atonement and intercession, as opposed to all other ways of access. 7. But the apostle goes on to say—"having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." This is a consequence of our having a "full assurance" of the efficacy of Christ's priesthood, that we get delivered from the burden of an evil conscience. The conscience of every man has been defiled by sin, nor could the offerings under the law perfect a man with respect to it; but the blood of Jesus can, and when applied to the conscience takes away the condemning power of sin, as respects the guilt of it. 8. Another effect is, that the man desires to "perfect holiness in the fear of God"; which is just what we are taught in the last phrase of the text—"our bodies washed with pure water." This denotes purity of life and conversation. Thus must we be careful to cultivate holiness of life, if we would approach Him with acceptance; as the former clause, "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience," had reference to our justification, so this latter clause has reference to our sanctification, or to our growth in grace and conformity to the image of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (*J. W. Reeve, M.A.*) *The rent veil:*—I. WHAT HAS BEEN DONE. 1. In actual historical fact the glorious veil of the temple has been rent in twain from the top to the bottom: as a matter of spiritual fact, which is far more important to us, the separating legal ordinance is abolished. Jesus has made thee nigh, as nigh to God as even He Himself is. 2. This rending of the veil signified, also, the removal of the separating sin. Pardon, which removes sin, and justification, which brings righteousness, make up a deed of clearance so complete that nothing now divides the sinner from his reconciled God. The Judge is now the Father: He, who once must necessarily have condemned, is found justly absolving and accepting. In this double sense the veil is rent; the separating ordinance is abrogated, and the separating sin is forgiven. 3. Next, be it remembered that the separating sinfulness is also taken away through our Lord Jesus. It is not only what we have done, but what we are that keeps us apart from God. Through the death of our Lord Jesus the covenant of grace is established with us, and its gracious provisions are on this wise: "This is the covenant, &c., I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." When this is the case, when the will of God is inscribed on the heart, and the nature is entirely changed, then is the dividing veil which hides us from God taken away: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." II. WHAT WE HAVE. 1. We have "boldness to enter in." 2. Let us follow the example of the high priest, and having entered, let us perform the functions of one who enters in.

"Boldness to enter in" suggests that we act as men who are in their proper places. 3. If you will look at the text, you will notice that this boldness is well grounded. "Having therefore boldness." Paul is often a true poet, but he is always a correct logician. 4. Why is it that we have boldness? Is it not because of our relationship to Christ which makes us "brethren" 5. We may have this boldness of entering in at all times, because the veil is always rent, and is never restored to its old place. III. How we exercise this grace. 1. We come by the way of atonement. 2. An unfailing way. 3. A living way. 4. A dedicated way. 5. A Christly way. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Objective religion necessary*:—To be ever lifting ourselves by our will, to be hanging round our own works, canvassing our defects, studying the pathology of our own evils, were enough, of itself, to drive one mad. The mind becomes wearied and lost in its own mazes, discouraged and crushed by its frequent defeats, and virtue itself, being only a conscious tug of exertion, takes a look as unbeautiful as the life is unhappy. Therefore we need, all alike, some objective religion; to come and hang ourselves upon the altar of sacrifice sprinkled by the blood of Jesus, to enter into the holiest set open by His death, to quiet our soul in His peace, clothe it in His righteousness and trust Him as the Lamb of God that taketh away our sin. In these simple, unselfish, unreflective exercises, we shall make our closest approach to God. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*) **A new and living way.**—*The new and living way opened by Jesus*:—1. The way is new, not the old road of outward sacrifice, but the devotion of willing hearts. 2. Jesus dedicated it to the use of the redeemed host by first travelling along it Himself (for the essence of the dedication ceremony consisted in a solemn opening for the first time to public use). 3. It is also a living way, the path of a living spirit, not a routine of mechanical obedience; by quickening in us His own spiritual life Christ brings us near to God, and unless His spirit live in us we cannot follow in His way. 4. This way leads through the veil of flesh. The flesh is a real veil, shutting men out from the sight and knowledge of God, just as the typical veil shut out all but the high priest from the holy chamber of God's presence. It forms an obstacle not only against the unclean and sinful, who desire to hide themselves from God's holy eye and wilfully build up a wall between themselves and Him, but even against God's own people who, in spite of an earnest desire to come to Him, are hindered by the necessary imperfection of their mortal nature. Even Jesus Himself had to make His way through this veil of flesh; for He was made subject to the infirmity of the flesh, and liable to temptation. Sinless as He was, He had the understanding and the will of the flesh, its thoughts and desires, its natural appetites and affections. He had therefore to crucify the flesh in will and to be crucified in deed, to put off His mortal garment, and pass through death unto life, before He could altogether pierce the veil of flesh. By passing through this Himself He opened a way for His brethren also to pass through. As the typical veil was rent asunder at His death, so a wide road was opened through the veil of flesh, that all those whom He hath consecrated in His blood may enter in the strength of His spirit into the presence of God. (*F. Rendall, M.A.*) *The new and living way*:—This way may be thus called in opposition to the typical way into the holiest of all, which was a dead way to all but the high priest; none but he might enter into it, nor he himself but once a year, and then not without blood; and that is a dead way through which no man passeth. Again, it is a living way, in opposition not only unto this which led into the most holy place, but unto that into Paradise: for this is a living safeway, and one may pass through it and live; both the other were dangerous and mortal. That in the tabernacle and temple was so: it was mortal to any but the high priest, and to him too at all times but once in the year; and then, too, if he presumed to enter without blood. The other passage into Paradise was obstructed with a flaming sword, and no man could have access to the Tree of Life, but must be slain and burnt to ashes. So that this is a way of life, permanent and safe. (*G. Lawson.*) *A new and living way*:—The apostle says it is "a new way." The literal translation of the word is, "a newly slain way"; it is evidently an allusion to the sacrifice of Christ. If the word be taken in its strict sense it is not new, for it is as old as Adam in Paradise, it is as old as Abraham journeying from Ur of the Chaldees; but in another sense it is new. It is old in years, but it retains its new and beautiful attraction. It is as if a person were to live a thousand years in the same condition as at thirty-six—he would be always young—he would be old in years, but he would retain the appearance of perfect manhood. So this way is old, in the sense that it has been long revealed; but it is new in this sense, that it retains and expresses on the heart

of him who walks in it all the joy that results from the novelty of a possession received for the first time, it is therefore, "a new way." We read in the Apocalypse of "the new song," that is, a song whose music never palls upon the ear, ever new, ever beautiful. So we say of the gospel, it is a new religion because it never parts with its attractions, it never becomes obsolete because the heart of him who receives it loves it the more he knows it, and the more he loves it the more he studies it; and every fresh view he has of that gospel only deepens the impressions of its excellence which he received when he first heard it. It is called also "a living way." If you walk upon a dead road your foot becomes weary as you walk; but this is a living way, it gives life to the walker. The more he walks upon it, the more vigorous, the more delighted, the more able he becomes. It is as if you could conceive a person walking upon a road, and having transferred from the road into his physical economy constant supplies of vigour that would make him walk and not faint, run and not be weary. So the longer you know this blessed gospel, the more you enjoy it; the more you draw from God, and the more you receive: you find real religion is not a dead dogma deposited in the intellect, but a living spring and fountain of life and power ever welling up into everlasting life. (*J. C. Cumming, D.D.*) *A new and living way*:—A way which was new, not only as being a way now opened for the first time, but as being a way which would never become old, worn and obsolete. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*) *The way to God should be inquired about*:—I was coming here (Larne) from Carrickfergus in a gig. Taking for granted that I knew the road well enough I drove right on, passing many people going to market. After a while I began to doubt whether I was right; and meeting a gentleman on horseback, I said to him, "How far is it to Larne?" "This is not the way," said he; "you are two miles past where you should have turned to the left up the hill. Come back with me and I'll show you the right way." Then, striking his forehead with his hand, he shouted, "You ould fool, why didn't you inquire in time?" So you go on from day to day, thinking you are going right to heaven: but you're in the wrong way. The great God has told you the right way in His blessed Bible. The priest says you mustn't read it; but if you don't inquire you'll find you're wrong, as I did. (*Gideon Ouseley.*) **An High Priest over the house of God.**—*The priesthood of Christ*:—I. THE DENIAL OF THE PROPER PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST BREAKS THE INTERESTING AND INSTRUCTIVE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS. Revelation is the glow of an early morning, shining to the perfect day. The foundation of the building was laid in the patriarchal ages; and it rose to the completion when by the ascension of Christ He became the head of the corner, and gave the weight and beauty of His majesty to give stability and ornament to the building. All the Scriptures testify of Him; to Him give all the prophets witness: as our great High Priest, Christ was seen with Moses and Elias, who "spake with Him of His decease" which He was about to "accomplish at Jerusalem." They had looked forward to His day, not with curiosity merely, but with lively interest, as to the consummation of that sacrifice of which theirs were but the types, and their faith in that alone was imputed to them for righteousness. II. As the connection between the two Testaments would be broken by the denial of the priesthood of Christ, so THE HARMONY BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT DISPENSATIONS OF REVEALED RELIGION TO MAN WOULD BE DESTROYED. The frame-work of revealed religion has been precisely the same in all ages: that man is a sinner; that on the ground of his own right he cannot be justified; that law, though it admits of atonement and satisfaction, is inexorable in the exaction of its penalty; that the guilty can only be pardoned through the sufferings of the innocent; that God can only be approached through mediation; and that intercession for the guilty is admissible only as it has respect to sacrifice for sin. How impressive, how solemn are these truths, transmitted as they are to us by the testimony of all ages, and marked and signalised by the rites of the Church wherever she has erected her temples! This is sufficient to prove that they are the expression of the counsels of the Divine mind; that they are the axioms on which He governs the guilty race; and that, like Himself, they are unchangeable. III. If we have not in the gospel a real sacrifice and a real priesthood, then CHRISTIANITY LOSES ITS EXCLUSIVE CHARACTER, and can no longer claim to be the religion of mankind. That the religion of Jesus Christ makes such a claim cannot be doubted; and that it was understood by its first preachers to have this exclusive character is matter of history and not of reasoning. IV. IF WE HAVE NO SACRIFICE, NO PRIESTHOOD, IN THE GOSPEL, THEN CHRISTIANITY, INSTEAD OF BEING THE CONSUMMATION AND

PERFECTION OF ALL OTHER DISPENSATIONS OF RELIGION TO GUILTY MAN, IS IN FACT INFERIOR, IMPERFECT, AND THE LOWEST IN HOPE AND CONSOLATION. Who can lay his hand upon his heart and appeal to God that he has never offended in thought, in word, in temper, or in deed? The same gospel which reveals the righteousness of faith reveals also the wrath of God from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God." No; thanks be to infinite mercy, we are not so left. We have a High Priest over the house of God. If any man sin, there is a sacrifice of infinite value: the death of the incarnate Son of God. Repentance, and a believing application to the blood of atonement, are followed by conscious pardon. The grace of the Holy Spirit is given to the humble and praying believer to realise in his experience and conduct the holiness of the gospel. (*R. Watson.*)

Vers. 22–24. **Let us draw near.**—*A triplet of exhortations:*—I. DRAWING NEAR. Observe by way of contrast—1. Moses at the burning bush. "Draw not nigh hither." Fire symbolic of judgment. God cannot thus be approached unto. 2. Children of Israel of Mount Sinai. The injunction given to stand off from the mount. God present in holiness, requiring perfect obedience to His law. This man could not render. Therefore there was no hope of being reconciled to God by the law. 3. Yet now the apostle says, "Let us draw near." How is this? Because—(1) Christ has fulfilled the law—He has become a daysman between us and God. (2) God has drawn near to us. (3) He Himself has invited us to draw near—"Come unto Me," &c. II. HOLDING FAST. A very necessary injunction in these days of apostasy from the faith. 1. What not to hold fast—(1) Human traditions. These are useful in so far as they are in accordance with Divine revelation, but are to be specially shunned when they make the Word of God of none effect. (2) The speculations of theologians. These vary as the wind, and are not to be relied upon. 2. But—(1) The profession or confession of our faith without wavering—"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, . . . thou shalt be saved." (2) The faith itself once delivered to the saints. Why? That others may see the good works that spring from a lively faith, and be led to ask for the old paths. III. CONSIDERING ONE ANOTHER. 1. How may we do this? (1) By loving rebuke—not from the love of fault-finding. Faithful are the wounds of a friend. (2) By showing love to our fellows. Christ's new commandment: "Love one another." (3) By obeying the injunction—"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." Bear one another's burdens. Wash one another's feet. 2. What would be the result of thus considering one another? (1) More unity among believers. (2) More power in the Church. (3) More blessing in the world. (4) More glory to God. Application: 1. To the sinner. You are yet afar off. Christ invites you to Him. He will abundantly pardon. 2. To the believer. You need every day—yea, every hour—to be coming to Christ for blessing. (*H. Whittaker.*) *Christian life:*—I. "LET US DRAW NEAR." "Us." All Christians. Christianity is a spiritual democracy. "Near." The "middle wall" is gone; Jews and Gentiles are near to each other. How? 1. With the heart. Some honour God "with their lips, but their heart is far from Him." You meet an acquaintance, and complain that he was distant, *i.e.*, he was not hearty. 2. With sincerity. "A true heart." We may be hearty without being honest. 3. With faith. Note the relative position of this. Only hearty and honest seekers will ever be true believers, such always will "in an honest and good heart receive the word." But though faith is placed after heartiness and honesty, let it not be overlooked—otherwise our coming is vain. 4. "With a pure heart." Sprinkled from an evil conscience, &c. Conscience no longer accuses; our sins are forgiven. Conscience no longer sleeps, allowing us to sin, but is restored to its original office. Conscience is no longer defiled; it is washed, purged. Outward life is, therefore, right—"Our bodies washed with pure water." II. "LET US HOLD FAST." 1. What to? "The profession of our faith," or, "the confession of our hope." This is a better rendering. Christianity is a hope—"Christ in you the hope of glory." That is Christianity in a sentence. The confession is the outward sign of the invisible hope. Duty to confess, and to hold fast to the confession. 2. "Hold fast." A drowning man, holding a rope, brings all the nervous force of his system into his hands, and clings for dear life. Put all the force of the soul into faith, and so cling to Jesus. 3. "Without wavering." Very fashionable now to doubt; and we are told if we certainly believe anything we cannot grow. Be it so. We can only

be safe, happy, strong, or useful, by being fully decided—by ceasing to waver. III. "LET US CONSIDER." A Christian man is a thoughtful man. From the nature of his position—saved from the wreck—he is in a position to look around—to think. 1. "To provoke one another." Not to say: "I am safe," or, "I shall enjoy religion"; but to consider the work of your fellows and the wants of others. Not to say: "How little can I do," but how much. 2. "Provoke one another." 3. "To love and good works." Who shall love most, who shall do most, is the only question worth asking—the only provocation Christianity allows. (*J. Colwell.*)

Faith, hope, and love:—The apostle's great argument is concluded, and the result is placed before us in a very short summary. We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way; and we have in the heavenly sanctuary a great Priest over the house of God. On this foundation rests a threefold exhortation. 1. Let us draw near with a true heart, in the full assurance of faith. 2. Let us hold fast the profession of hope without wavering. 3. Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works, labouring and waiting together, and helping one another in the unity of brethren. Faith, hope, and love—this is the threefold result of Christ's entrance into heaven, spiritually discerned. A believing, hoping, and loving attitude of heart corresponds to the new covenant revelation of Divine grace. 1. Having received, through Christ's sacrifice and Christ's present priesthood boldness, a full right of access into the holy of holies, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. The privilege is right of access unto God, the duty is that of approach; and no man values the right of access who does not desire to approach. There can be nothing which really satisfies the heart of any man in being told that he is at liberty to approach God, if he has no inclination to approach unto God. We can only approach with our heart, and by faith, which has its seat in the heart; with a heart which is in earnest, true, and purposeful in this very work of approach. God desireth truth in the inward part. A true heart is a heart which accepts the testimony of God, which distrusts itself, which believes God's Word, declaring our sin, guilt, and helplessness, and which responds simply, and without reservation, humbly and joyfully to the Divine gospel of the gift of God, eternal life through the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. A true heart is a heart purified by trust in Jesus. A true heart is a heart which desires to be with God aud to live unto Him. What is meant by full assurance of faith? Nothing else but faith in full, vigorous, healthy exercise. Faith in what? Not faith in our having faith, in our being accepted; but faith that we have a right of access, that Jesus is the living way, and that He is the High Priest in the holy of holies. The object of faitb, of the weakest and smallest spark of faith, as much as of faith in plenitude or full assurance, is not ourselves, but Christ in His person and work. The eye does not see itself; faith is not to stand on itself; your full assurance is to be that Christ's blood is precious, and that He has entered as the Forerunner. Then you are at peace. Faith means trust, reliance, confidence, leaning. There is no other worthy of trust, none else reliable but Jesus. But if you wish to have an additional object of faith in your own progress and spirituality, you are, like Peter, looking away from Jesus unto the unstable sea. Nor have I any other proof of my faith's genuineness yesterday, but my exercising faith this moment. It is an ever-present tense—"He that believeth hath eternal life." 2. We are exhorted to hold fast the profession of our hope without wavering. Before the First Advent believers looked forward in faith and hope to the good things to come. Believing the promise, they expected in hope the glory of Messiah's reign. With us this unity of faith and hope is substantially the same; but it appears now in a twofold manner. Faith rests on the past, the accomplished work of Jesus; hope looks to the future, the return of our Saviour. And the more we realise Jesus as the living Lord, the more shall we look forward, waiting for His coming, and going forth to meet Him. If we believe that He has come, we also hope that He will come. The profession of our hope is most practical and testing. Hereby we profess that we are strangers and pilgrims upon earth, that we are seeking heavenly things, labouring for heavenly rewards, laying up for ourselves heavenly treasures. We must forsake the sins, pleasures, and honours of Egypt; we must purify ourselves, as Christ is pure. If we profess hope, we must also rejoice, though we be in tribulation; we must view the sufferings and trials of this present life as not worthy to be compared with the coming glory. Then hope, resting on faith, supports faith, and fills us with courage and patience. "Till I come," is the voice of the Saviour,

when faith beholds His dying love; and going forth to meet Him, going forth out of the world's sin, bondage, gloom, is the response of the bride. 3. But in thus drawing near unto God, and holding fast the profession of our hope, we must bear in mind that we are called to be a brotherhood, and that faith and hope are to be exercised in love. We are the body of Christ, and members one of another. We are to please not ourselves, but our brother unto edification. We are to consider one another as fellow pilgrims; to study our brother's need and sorrow, difficulty and trial; to exercise our mind on our duty and relation to him, that thus we may be helpful to him in his course, and stimulate and encourage him to good works. To consider one another in the right spirit is to look above all at the Christian character of our brother; to regard him, not so much in the light of his natural disposition; to love him, not so much on account of qualities congenial and pleasing to us; still less to exercise criticism, and to cherish suspicion and uncharitable judgment; but to fix our thought on the one great fact of brotherhood in Christ. And running together in a holy rivalry the same race, we should behold in our brother features of Christian character and activity in which we are deficient. And in this spirit of love we should cherish Christian communion; "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." Christianity is eminently an individual heart-affair; but it is also eminently social. The promise of Christ's presence is to the assembly gathered in His name. (*A. Saphir.*) *Drawing near to God*:—I. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THIS, "Let us draw near." 1. Sin has set us at a distance from God (Isa. lix. 2). 2. Sinners stand at a distance from God till they be called, and that powerfully (John vi. 44). (1) Insensible sinners will not (John v. 40). (2) Sensible sinners dare not (Luke v. 8). II. WE MAY DRAW NEAR TO GOD. Glad news this to poor sensible sinners! Come in, ye blessed of the Lord; why do you stand back? you may draw near to God. For—1. God is on a throne of grace in Jesus Christ (2 Cor. v. 19). 2. There is a way to the throne never trod, nor designed to be trod, by any but sinners such as you, and the like of you. This is no back entry, but the most glorious way to the throne. Adam had a way to it, but that is blocked up; there is a new and living way consecrated for us (ver. 20). 3. He is a friend of ours who is set over the house of God (ver. 21). III. WE OUGHT TO DRAW NEAR: "Let us draw near." For—1. It is the command of God (James iv. 8). 2. If we do not draw near to God, we dishonour His Son, and so dishonour Himself, in so far as we frustrate the great design of the mystery of Christ (John v. 23). IV. PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF THE SUBJECT, in an use of exhortation. 1. Come back, sinners, draw near towards God and duty. What have you gained by going from Him? 2. Not only draw towards God, but come forward, and draw near to Him as a God in Christ. You may get near to Him ere you come to heaven; in His ordinances in the lower house, there you may have access to Him. Particularly, let us draw near to Him—(1) In prayer (chap. iv. 16). (2) In the holy sacrament of the supper. God is again coming to us in that ordinance: an ordinance appointed for the most special nearness out of heaven (1 Cor. x. 16). 3. Let us draw near in these ordinances—(1) As rebels accepting the King's peace, indemnity in the blood of His Son; draw near, and welcome (Isa. xxvii. 5). (2) As petitioners to the King. (3) As servants of the house, to serve our Lord, to wait upon Him, and behold His glory (Psa. cxvi. 16). (4) As friends; friends of God, to have fellowship with Him, who may freely converse with Him: to unbosom ourselves to Him, and to be let into the secrets of the covenant (John xv. 15). (5) As children to a Father in Christ, to receive the portion of children. (6) As a spouse to a husband, for our Maker is our Husband. Let us embrace Him in the arms of faith, give the love of the heart to Him a full vent (Sol. Song viii. 6). 4. But how must the business of our drawing near to God be managed? The apostle here lays down four directions: (1) Draw near to God sincerely. Hypocrisy is a disease in the vitals of religion; it pretends one thing and intends another. (2) Draw near in the "full assurance of faith." Faith's special object is the blood of Christ. (3) Get your hearts beforehand "sprinkled from an evil conscience." Are you to come to His table? pray that all controversies be done away between you and Him. If you are to appear before the Lord, go, dip, wash, bathe in the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness (Zech. xiii. 1) that you may be clean. (4) Let your outward conversation be blameless, free from scandalous sins (Psa. xxiv. 4). (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *Drawing near to God*:—I. THE DUTY HERE ENJOINED. To draw near to God, in the sense of our text, is to seek Him in the use of the appointed means of grace, that we may be restored to His favour and image, and enjoy a heartfelt sense of that restoration. 1. We draw

near to God when we engage properly in the solemn exercise of public worship. 2. Again, we draw near to God when we engage properly in the exercise of social worship. 3. We also draw near to God, in a peculiar sense, when we engage properly in the exercise of secret devotion. II. How THIS DUTY MAY BE ACCEPTABLY PERFORMED. To draw near "with a true heart," means to worship God with sincerity, which is an indispensable ingredient in Christian piety. But do not confound sincerity with worthiness: that is another thing altogether. If we wait for a blessing at the hand of God till we are worthy of it, we shall die unblessed, and be lost for ever. We have nothing to plead but the worthy name of Jesus, and we need no other; and while we pray in His name, we may know ourselves sincere, however unworthy. The "assurance of faith" is a firm persuasion, a satisfactory evidence, that God does accept, pardon, save, and bless us, for Christ's sake; and this firm persuasion, this satisfactory evidence, arises, not only from the exceeding great and precious promises of His Word, but chiefly from the direct influence of His Spirit, bearing witness with our spirit that we are His children. "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." There are some evils from which a man may escape; but shall a man flee from a guilty conscience? As well might he endeavour to escape from his shadow when the sun is shining. Wherever he goes, or whatever he does, he feels self-reproach and a sense of the displeasure of the Almighty. Now let us accept the call of grace, be sprinkled from an evil conscience, and restored to the favour and image of God, that, like the apostle, we may "have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men." "And our bodies washed with pure water," in Christian baptism. Water baptism is an outward sign of the inward grace of purification. III. A FEW BRIEF, PRACTICAL INFERENCES. 1. The first inference from the whole subject is, whoever neglects the means of grace, deprives himself of religious enjoyment. 2. The next inference is, they who use the means of grace will profit thereby. 3. Finally, we infer from this text, what is elsewhere plainly declared, "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." (*T. A. Morris, D.D.*) *Approach to God:*—On one occasion the Reformer paid a pastoral visit to a young scholar who was in his last illness, and one of the first inquiries made was, "What do you think you can take to God, in whose presence you are so shortly to appear?" With striking confidence the youth at once replied, "Everything that is good, dear father—everything that is good!" "But how can you bring Him everything good, seeing that you are but a poor sinner?" anxiously asked the Doctor. "Dear father," at once added the young man, "I will take to my God in heaven a penitent, humble heart, sprinkled with the blood of Christ." "Truly that is everything good," answered Luther. "Then go, dear son; you will be a welcome guest to God." (*Anecdotes of Luther.*) *Abiding in the holiest of all:*—Some speak as if the "Let us draw near" meant prayer, and that in our special approach to God in acts of worship we enter the holiest of all. No; great as this privilege is, God has meant something for us infinitely greater. We are to draw near, and dwell always, to live our life and do our work within the sphere, the atmosphere of the inner sanctuary. It is God's presence makes holy ground; God's immediate presence in Christ makes any place the holiest of all: and this is it into which we are to draw nigh, and in which we are to abide. There is not a single moment of the day, there is not a circumstance or surrounding, in which the believer may not be kept dwelling in the secret place of the Most High. (*Andrew Murray.*) *The effect of dwelling in the holiest of all:*—Enter into the holiest of all, and dwell there. It will enter thee, and transform thee and dwell in thee. And thy heart will be the holiest of all, in which He dwells. (*Ibid.*) **Full assurance of faith.**—*Assurance of faith, and assurance of salvation:*—The full assurance of faith is a firm and full reliance on God and on Christ, founded on a firm conviction that what is made known to us in the gospel is true. It has nothing to do with a belief in, or persuasion of, our own personal salvation. No one need wait, then, for this before he approaches God in prayer. Without any thought of self, except as we are conscious of weakness, of want, and of unworthiness, we may with boldness enter in the holiest of all, if we have a firm faith in God and in Christ. Is there, then, some may be ready to ask, no such thing as assurance of personal salvation? Granting that this is not to be confounded with that full assurance of faith of which the apostle speaks, may there not, nevertheless, be such a thing as this personal assurance of salvation, and may we not speak of it under other and more appropriate phraseology? To this I reply at once that there is such a thing, and that Christians may not only speak of it, but ought to seek earnestly, each one for himself, to attain to it. Christians are enjoined to examine

themselves, so as to ascertain whether they are in a state of salvation or not; to be very earnest and diligent to certify their calling and election of God; to desire and aim at the attainment of firm and steadfast hope of eternal blessedness: and to regard the possession of joy in the Lord as a blessing to be asked of God, and a state of mind to be continually cherished by the believer. But obviously all this would be in vain if it be not possible for Christians to have some well-founded assurance that they are in a state of salvation. But whilst this seems unquestionably true, and whilst, therefore, there is such a thing as personal assurance of salvation, the doctrine has often been presented in such a way as to engender serious mistakes and lead to very dangerous errors. To some of them I must now advert. 1. It is an error to suppose that assurance of personal salvation does not admit of degrees; in other words, that it may be as full and strong in one just entering on the Christian life as it can be in one who has kept the faith for many years, and has passed through the varied experience of the Christian course. "In ordinary cases," says a man eminent for his ability, piety, and experience, "I entertain a better opinion of the modest, doubting, and fearful professor than of the bold and assured one." 2. Another error on this head is, that assurance of personal salvation is essential to salvation. This is held by those who teach that the faith which justifies is a confident assurance that the individual is himself in Christ, and so saved; and it is involved in the opinion of those who teach that every man who is in Christ knows this, and so is assured of his own safety. Now nothing can be more unscriptural than such doctrines. In all the New Testament there is not a single instance in which the apostles indicate, in the most distant way, that saving faith is a man's belief in his own salvation. No; their invariable cry was, Repent, and believe in Christ; accept the offered salvation through faith in Him. Trust in Him; rest on Him; come unto God through Him and be saved. It is no doubt true that to believe in Christ is to trust in Him for our own individual salvation, for the forgiveness of our own sins and the salvation of our own souls. But to trust in Him for our salvation is a very different thing from believing that we are actually saved in Him; to have assurance that His work affords a sufficient ground for us to rest upon as well as others, is a very different thing from having assurance that we are actually resting on that work for salvation; to know that Christ "loved the Church, and gave Himself for it," is a very different thing from knowing that He loved us and gave Himself for us. "Nothing," says the sagacious Andrew Fuller, "can be an object of faith except what God has revealed in His Word; but the interest that any individual has in Christ, and the blessings of the Gospel, more than another is not revealed. God has nowhere declared concerning any of us, as individuals, that we shall be saved; all that He has revealed on this subject respects us as characters. He has abundantly promised that all who believe in Him, love Him, and obey Him shall be saved; and a persuasion, that if we sustain these characters we shall be saved is doubtless an exercise of faith; but whether we do or not is an object not of faith, but of consciousness. . . . The grand object on which faith fixes is the glory of Christ, and not the happy condition we are in as interested in Him. . . . If we be concerned only for our own security, our faith is vain, and we are yet in our sins." To these wise and weighty words I can add nothing, and nothing needs to be added. 3. The last error I notice is, that we can arrive at assurance of our own personal salvation otherwise than by means of a holy life. This is the criterion which Scripture everywhere proposes; and when any other is proposed, the door is opened for all manner of delusions and fanaticisms. If men imagine they can directly see the existence of faith in their souls, or if they suppose that a conviction of their being of the number of the elect is borne in on their souls by the Holy Spirit, or if they infer from some pleasant feelings in their own minds that they are the objects of God's favour, they are either deluding themselves with what is impossible, or they are trusting to what may be a mere fancy or passing emotion of their own minds. The only sure evidence of our being in a state of grace, is our being in heart and life holy. From this two things follow. The one is, that no man can in this life be absolutely sure that he is saved, because no man in this life can become perfectly holy; the other is, that as holiness of heart and life is salvation, it is only in proportion as this is attained that we have any real ground for believing that we are personally saved. "By their fruits," said our Lord, "ye shall know them." The great thing for us is to apply the right test to ourselves, and to look for those signs of salvation in ourselves which our Lord and His apostles have laid down, that we might try ourselves by them. (*W. L. Alexander*,

D.D.) *Full assurance of faith*:—Not with a quarter or half wind, but with full assurance, such a gale of faith as fills the sails of the soul, and makes it set up its top-gallant as it were. (*J. Trapp.*) **Hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.**—*Sins of ignorance and weakness*:—Among the reasons which may be assigned for the observance of prayer at stated times, there is one which is very obvious, and yet perhaps is not so carefully remembered and acted upon as it should be. I mean the necessity of sinners cleansing themselves from time to time of the ever-accumulating guilt which loads their consciences. We are ever sinning; and though Christ has died once for all to release us from our penalty, yet we are not pardoned once for all, but according as, and whenever each of us supplicates for the gift. By the prayer of faith we appropriate it; but only for the time, not for ever. Guilt is again contracted, and must be again repented of and washed away. 1. First consider our present condition, as shown us in Scripture. Christ has not changed this, though He has died; it is as it was from the beginning—I mean our actual state as men. The history of redemption, if it is to be effectual, must begin from the beginning with every individual of us, and be carried on through our own life. (1) When this is borne in mind, how important the Jewish Law becomes to us Christians! important in itself, over and above all references contained in it to that gospel which it introduced. To this day it fulfils its original purpose of impressing upon man his great guilt and feebleness. Those legal sacrifices and purifications which are now all done away, are still evidence to us of a fact which the gospel has not annulled—our corruption. (2) Next, to pass from the Jewish law, you will observe that God tells us expressly in the history of the fall of Adam, what the legal ceremonies implied; that it is our very nature which is sinful. Herein is the importance of the doctrine of original sin. It is very humbling, and as such the only true introduction to the preaching of the gospel. "Thy first father hath sinned": this is the legend on our forehead which even the sign of the Cross does no more than blot out, leaving the mark of it. This is our shame; but I notice it here, not so much as a humbling thought, as with a view of pressing upon your consciences the necessity of appearing before God at stated seasons, in order to put aside the continually-renewed guilt of your nature. Who will dare go on day after day in neglect of earnest prayer, and the Holy Communion, while each day brings its own fearful burden, coming as if spontaneously, springing from our very nature, but not got rid of without deliberate and direct acts of faith in the Great Sacrifice which has been set forth for its removal? (3) Further, look into your own souls and see if you cannot discern some part of the truth of the Scripture statement, which I have been trying to set before you. Recollect the bad thoughts of various kinds which come into your minds like darts; for these will be some evidence to you of the pollution and odiousness of your nature. Even if you reject them, still do they not answer Satan's purpose in inflaming your mind at the instant, and so evidence that the matter of which it is composed is corruptible? 2. Again, reflect on the habits of sin which we super-added to our evil nature before we turned to God. Instead of checking the bad elements within us, perhaps we indulged them for years; and they truly had their fruit unto death. Then Adam's sin increased, and multiplied itself within us; there was a change, but it was for the worse, not for the better; and the new nature we gained, far from being spiritual, was twofold more the child of hell than that with which we were born. So when, at length, we turned back into a better course, what a complicated work lay before us, to unmake ourselves! And however long we have laboured at it, still how much unconscious, unavoidable sin, the result of past transgression, is thrown out from our hearts day by day in the energy of our thinking and acting! 3. Further, consider how many sins are involved in our obedience, I may say from the mere necessity of the case; that is, from not having that more vigorous and clear-sighted faith which would enable us accurately to discern and closely to follow the way of life. We stand before God as the Israelites at the passover of Hezekiah, who desired to serve God according to the Law, but could not do so accurately from lack of knowledge; and we can but offer, through our Great High Priest, our sincerity and earnestness instead of exact obedience, as Hezekiah did for them. What I have said is a call upon you, in the first place, to daily private prayer. Next, it is a call upon you to join the public services of the Church, not only once a week, but whenever you have the opportunity; knowing well that your Redeemer is especially present where two or three are gathered together. Christ died once, long since: by communicating in His Sacrament, you renew the Lord's death: you bring into the midst of you that Sacrifice which took away the sins of the world; you appropriate the benefit

of it, while you eat it under the elements of bread and wine. (*J. H. Newman, D.D.*)

Healing the evil conscience:—Suppose that all the people in the place where we live had some disease of the eye, and that in consequence some were not able to see at all, while none of them were able to see anything clearly. What a sad state of things this would be! We read of persons in the Bible who were just in this condition (2 Kings vi.). It is a good thing that we have no such trouble with our bodily eyes; but the soul has an eye as well as the body. God has put these eyes in our bodies that we may see where to go and what to do. And so God has given to our souls that which we call conscience, and which shows us what is right and what is wrong—what we ought to do and what we ought not to do. But the apostle speaks in our text of "an evil conscience." This means a conscience that has been injured like a diseased eye, so that we cannot see clearly. I. WHAT IS THE USE OF CONSCIENCE? 1. To guide us and keep us from doing wrong. You know we have reins for our horses to keep them in the way they should go; and our consciences are the reins by which God guides us, and if we only mind the reins we shall save ourselves from sin and sorrow. 2. To keep an account of what we do. Conscience is God's scribe or private secretary; it writes down all that we do, or say, or think, or feel. During the reign of Queen Mary, Bishop Latimer was brought to trial for conscience' sake. In the room in which the trial took place was a curtain, and behind this curtain a man writing. Whenever the bishop answered a question he heard the sound of this man's pen as he wrote down each word that was spoken. The bishop said that the sound of that pen made him very careful to say nothing but what was strictly true. And this shows us how we should act at all times. Conscience, God's secretary, is writing down everything that we do, "whether it be good or whether it be evil." And the book in which this is written is "the book of God's remembrance," of which the Bible tells us, and out of which we are to be judged at last. 3. As a detector, to find out sin after it has been committed. You know we have what are called detective police. When a robbery has taken place, or a murder has been committed, the business of these men is to try and find out the guilty ones. And God makes use of conscience as His detective police to find out those who have sinned secretly. II. HOW MAY CONSCIENCE BE INJURED? 1. By not giving it good light. We have compared conscience to the eye of the soul. We may also compare it to the window of the soul. A window is of use for letting light into a room, and also for looking through, that we may see what is outside of the window. But if we wish to have a correct view of the things that we are looking at through a window, what sort of glass is it necessary to have in the window? Clear glass. Suppose that the glass in the window instead of being clear is stained glass—one pane red, another blue, another yellow, and another green. When we look through the red glass what colour will the things be that we are looking at? Red. And so, when we look through the blue glass all things will be blue, they will be yellow when we look through the yellow glass, and green when we look through the green glass. But suppose we have thick, heavy shutters to the window, and keep them closed. Can we see anything through the window then? No. And can we see anything in the room when the shutters are closed? No; it will be dark. And conscience is like a window in this respect. We must keep the shutters open and the windows clean, so that plenty of pure light can get in if we wish to see things plainly. God's blessed Word, the Bible, gives us exactly the kind of light we need in order to have a good conscience. Let us be careful that we do not injure our consciences by not letting in this light. 2. By not minding what they say. The apostle Paul speaks in one place of men's consciences, which, he says, have been "seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim. iv. 2). Notice how thin and tender is the skin on your hand or face. It is so delicate that it can feel the slightest touch. Not even a feather can rest upon it without your feeling it. But suppose you should have a red-hot iron applied to your hand. It would burn the skin off, and make a sore which would give you great pain. Afterwards it would heal over, and the skin would grow again, but the new skin would be very different from that on your hand now. Instead of being smooth and tender like this, it would be rough and hard, and have very little feeling. And the apostle means to say that if we do not mind what our consciences tell us we shall injure them just as the skin of our hand is injured by being "seared with a hot iron." You know what an alarum-clock is. It is a kind of clock made to wake persons at a particular hour by making a loud noise. Suppose you have one of these clocks, and you wish it to waken you so that you can rise every morning at four o'clock. You wind it up at night and set the index-finger on the dial-plate pointing to four. The clock keeps on through the night, ticking away, till four

o'clock in the morning. Then it begins to strike and ring, and makes such a racket as is sure to wake any ordinary sleeper. This is a very convenient way of being roused from sleep. Yes, it is a sure way, if you only mind the clock, and get up when it calls you. But if you turn over and go to sleep again for two or three mornings, the alarum-clock will lose its power, or rather you will lose your power of hearing it or of being awakened by it. No change will take place in the clock, but a great change will take place in you. The clock will continue to sound the alarm at the proper hour, and it will make as much noise as ever it did, but it will lose its effect. You will sleep quietly on, just as though the alarm had never been given. Now, conscience is God's alarum-clock. If we stop when it says "stop," if we do what it tells us to do, then we shall always hear it; but if we get into the habit of not heeding its warning, and not doing what it tells us to do, then by and by we shall cease to hear it. III. HOW MAY AN EVIL CONSCIENCE BE HEALED? The answer to this question will depend upon the way in which we injure our consciences. We may injure them by doing wrong to those about us, or by sinning against God. And this must be taken into account in saying how the injured conscience can be healed. Suppose we feel distressed in our consciences on account of some wrong done to a friend or neighbour; then the way to get rid of this trouble, and heal our injured conscience, is to go and tell that friend of the fault—to say that we are sorry for it, and ask his forgiveness, thus making up for the wrong we have done. But if our consciences are troubled on account of our sins against God, then how are they to be healed. How are we to get rid of this trouble? Oh, it is dreadful to feel that God is angry with us! When we know that this is the case we never can be happy till our sins are pardoned and our consciences are healed; and it is for this reason that the Bible tells us of Jesus as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." He shed His precious blood and died for us on purpose that our sins may be pardoned, and we may be at peace with God. And this is what the apostle refers to in the text when he speaks of "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *The cure for an evil conscience*:—Of course, the expression "sprinkled" is metaphorical. It means that we must receive into our hearts a sense and full belief of the efficacy of the death of Jesus Christ to cancel all our guilt and condemnation, and of the power of the Holy Spirit to make us yet good and holy and fit for the presence of God. And when we use the word "sprinkled," it is to convey the excessive strength and efficacy and virtue of the grace of God—so that even though we may not yet be flooded with that spiritual "blood" and that spiritual "water," its very drops will do the work! And if only you let your heart be imbued with the love of Jesus Christ and the faith which is in Him, and if you accept the gentle distillings of the Holy Ghost upon your soul, you shall be saved—saved from the torment of your own conscience now, and from "the worm that dieth not, and the fire that never shall be quenched" hereafter—because then the conscience that you are in Christ—and the conscience which God will give you of His perfect pardon and love—will entirely neutralise and destroy all power to hurt and distress you—in the conscience of all the sins you have ever done; and "the sprinkled heart" will kill the venom of "an evil conscience." That gnawing canker! that dogging fear! that burden too heavy to be borne! that black future! There they are! Who sent them? God. And why did He send them? Because He loves you. And who shall take them away? God. Only God. Place yourself under the "sprinkling"; if you cannot, ask Him to place you. Beg the great High Priest to "sprinkle" you; to do it at once, because you are at the worst, and just going to die. The "water" and the "blood" are always in His hand. And He is always pouring them out. Only lay bare your secret. Then open your heart of hearts to take it in. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *An evil conscience*:—When the compass loses its proper polarity at sea, the whole course of the vessel might be altered by it; and when the conscience loses its right direction, its responsibility to God, its deference and inclination to His law, by its continued violation of the higher duties, the heart is filled with fears, the dispensations of Providence are suspected to be judgments, when they may be real and satisfying mercies. *Conscience*:—Neighbour Jones has a conscience that looks forward and keeps him from doing wrong. But neighbour Smith's conscience is of the *ex post facto* order, never manifesting itself till after the wrong deed is done, and then acting as a terrible avenger. How many there are of this kind, always sinning and always repenting! No class of men, in a moral point of view, suffer so much as they. *An evil conscience*:—When Professor Webster was awaiting his trial, he brought against his fellow-prisoners the charge of insulting him through the walls of his cell, and screaming

to him, "You are a bloody man!" On examination it was found that the charge was wholly groundless, and that these accusing voices were imaginary, being but the echo of a guilty conscience. If such things can be done in earth's prisons, what are sinners to look for in a future world? Oh, what taunts and curses shall pierce the ears of those who lie down in hell! Conscience will have a terrific power of starting such accusations, and then an ear of keen sensibility to receive the echoes as they roll back upon the soul. What an occupation for eternity! What inconceivable agony to be shut up with the ghostly memories of past sin, and to hear, through long centuries of gloom and despair, only the uttered and echoed curses which sin brings down upon the soul! Oh for that grace which sprinkles our hearts from an evil conscience! *Saved from an evil conscience*:—The sailors on the French coast have a legend, that beneath the waters as they lap the shore, deep down, there are the ruins of a buried city, and that on still, quiet nights it is possible for a voyager to overhear the music of the church bells as they gently sound fathoms deep. So in the heart of every man there is, deep down, the buried power of conscience, and in days of pain and sickness and loneliness and bereavement, of holy ministry and quickening, the voice of conscience, fathoms deep, is heard in the breast of man, speaking for God and truth, and of judgment to come. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) **Hold fast the profession of our faith.**—*Holding fast our profession*:—I. WHAT WE ALREADY HAVE by the grace of God. If we read the text according to our present authorised translation, we have faith. We have made a public avowal of our faith. We have obtained what the apostle calls "like precious faith": it is a rare jewel, and he is rich that possesseth it. But another reading—and a very good reading too—runs thus: "The confession of our hope." If we have faith we have hope. We will take both renderings; for they are both correct in fact if not in the letter. We have a blessed hope, a hope most "sure and steadfast, which entereth into that which is within the veil." The day of our Lord's appearing will be the day of the redemption of the body from the dust with which it mingles. We have a joyful, glorious, blessed hope which purifies, and comforts, and strengthens, and sustains us, and this hope is in us now. Are we not enriched with the grace of God? Where faith and hope are found, love cannot be far off; for the three Divine sisters are seldom separated. Let us love the Lord who has given us the first two. II. We have made A PROFESSION OF OUR FAITH, AND A CONFESSION OF OUR HOPE. By the memories of the day when you made that profession, be firm in it to the end. If you were not false then, if you were not deceivers then, hold fast the confession of your hope without wavering, for "He is faithful that promised." Let us remember also the many times in which we have repeated that profession of faith, that confession of hope; for instead of retracting it, we have gone on to repeat it. We have been marked anew with the King's name. If you ask how you have renewed your vows, I reply: you have done it many a time at the table of communion. You have repeated your profession in the shop, and in the market, and in the place of business, and among your friends, and in your family, and to the partner of your life. Those around you know you to be professedly an heir of heaven, a child of God: it is well that they should. We have considered how we began this profession, and we have also seen how often we have made it since. Let us think for a minute what it has cost us. Religion has cost many of its disciples somewhat dear: but it has cost nothing compared with its worth. What bashfulness it cost you to make the first confession of your faith! What a struggle it then appeared! You cried to God about it and you obtained courage; and now you wonder how you could have been so foolishly timid. Do not in future fall into the same fears. But perhaps some of you lost the friendship of many by becoming disciples of the Lord Jesus. I know one who became a member of this Church: she had moved in high and fashionable circles, but she said to me, "They have left me—every one of them." I said, "I am very thankful; for it will save you the trouble of quitting them. They will do you no good if they profess to be your friends; and they will do you less harm by giving you the cold shoulder." It is about the best thing that happens to a Christian man when worldlings cut his acquaintance. III. WHAT ARE WE NOW TO DO? 1. We are called upon to hold fast the profession of our faith. (1) Of course this includes the holding fast of your faith. (2) Hold you next to your hope. 2. But that is not the text. It is hold fast your profession of faith, your confession of hope; that is to say, stand to what you have done by way of avowment of these things. Constantly keep up your confession. You made it once. Renew it. IV. WHY ARE WE TO DO THIS? We are to hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, because He is faithful that has promised. Have you found Him faithful? Has the

Lord failed you? Has the Lord been untrue in His promises to you? If He has, then do not hold fast your profession. If, after all, it has been a mistake and a delusion, then give it up. But if He is faithful that has promised—if till this moment you have proved the power of prayer, the wisdom of providence, and the truth of the Sacred Word, then deal with my Lord as He has dealt with you. Be not faithless to the Crucified. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Christian profession*:—I. THE PROFESSION REFERRED TO. 1. It is put on when we become the members of His visible Church. 2. It is one part of religion itself. 3. It will expose to difficulties and sufferings. (1) Assaults of Satan. (2) Opposition of world. (3) Indisposition of our own hearts. II. THE DUTY ENJOINED. 1. There must be decision of character. Not halting between two opinions. Not half-hearted. All our powers surrendered to God. 2. There must be constancy of spirit. Heart established, mind fixed, soul stayed upon God. Constant in duties; especially prayer, praise, reading the Divine Word, &c. Always setting the Lord before us, &c. Not as the morning cloud and early dew, &c. 3. There must be perseverance in practice. We only retain our hold by pressing onwards, &c. Not weary, but faithful unto death. 4. In short, we must hold fast our profession. (1) By the exercise of vigorous faith. (2) By the constraining influence of Christ's love. (3) By the cheering attractions of a lively hope. (4) By the supporting and staying effects of holy patience. (5) By the continual use of all the appointed means of grace. III. SOME MOTIVES BY WHICH THIS DUTY MAY BE ENFORCED. Love to Jesus is a powerful motive. Gratitude for past mercies. Our present happiness, and our prospect of eternal felicity. But Christ's faithfulness is here laid down as the great motive. 1. He has promised to give us grace to hold fast our profession; and "He is faithful." 2. He has promised to acknowledge our profession; and "He is faithful." 3. He has promised to reward our profession; and "He is faithful." Application: 1. Learn that religion requires both the devotion of the heart and the profession of the life. 2. The way to heaven is associated with conflicts. 3. Stedfastness is essential to our final salvation. 4. God has provided abundant resources for our comfort and safety. 5. The end will amply recompense for the trials of the way. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *An unwavering confession*:—Admiral Foote, of the American navy, was a very godly man. While pacing the deck at night, on the lonely seas, and talking with a pious shipmate, he became convinced of his need of a Saviour and became His disciple, remaining true to his profession to the last. He used to be called the "Stonewall Jackson of the Navy." He often preached to his crew on Sundays, and was ever forward in doing good. (*H. O. Mackey.*) *Steady to the pole*:—Late observations have shown that under many circumstances the magnetic needle, even after the disturbing influence has been removed, will continue wavering, and require many days before it points aright and remains steady to the pole. So is it ordinarily with the soul, after it has begun to force itself from the disturbing forces of the flesh and of the world. (*Coleridge's Aids to Reflection.*) *Standing fire*:—Some time ago, in one of our great ships of war, there was a solitary sailor who was not ashamed to own himself a follower of Christ. For a long time he was alone; no other sailor joined him. His place of prayer was amid the noise and din of the sailors. One evening he perceived a shadow by the side of the gun. Another Jack Tar was creeping along, and said, "May I come?" Oh, the joy of the young sailor to have a comrade with him! They met for many nights behind the gun, reading and praying. They became the butt of the men in two or three messes, but still continued, bearing and forbearing. It came to the ears of the commander, who was a Roman Catholic—but I mention this to his honour. The moment he heard that two of his sailors were meeting for reading and prayer behind one of the guns, he sent for one of them, and instantly ordered a portion of the lower deck to be curtained off, and gave orders that no one should molest them. For some nights they were the only occupants, but by and by the curtain was opened, and a blue-jacket said, "May I come in?" He was welcomed. Another came, and another, and the last account I heard from that ship was this, that every night thirty-two were meeting for prayer, thirty of them believed to be converted characters. And there, by "standing fire," by standing firm, true to what was his duty, God has blessed that solitary sailor, and made him a spiritual father to at least thirty of the men on board the ship. *Confidence in death*:—In the reign of Queen Mary of England, a man named Palmer was condemned to die. Before his death he was earnestly persuaded to recant, and among other things a friend said to him, "Take pity on thy golden years and pleasant flowers of youth before it is too late." His beautiful reply

was. "Sir, I long for those springing flowers which shall never fade away." When in the midst of the flames he exhorted his companions to constancy, saying, "We shall not end our lives in the fire, but make a change for a better life; yea, for coals we shall receive pearls." **He is faithful that promised.**—*A sure promise*:—1. We have a promise. We are secure; when one that is able hath passed his word, and by promise bound himself unto us, then we make sure thus far of the thing promised. The thing which we desire, and which is promised unto us, is not only the reward of eternal glory, which is the object of our hope, but power and ability with assistance to do all things necessary for the attainment thereof; for in the gospel, not only the reward, but power to perform our duty, are promised (Eph. i. 16–19). 2. This promise is not the promise of any man or angel, but of God; this is more than if all the best men and all the holy angels had bound themselves unto us and given us all security, which possibly they could. The reason hereof is that His power is absolute and almighty, and nothing can resist or hinder it if once it begin to work. Besides, God's mercy is like His power, and as He is able, so is He willing to do what He hath promised, and He hath signified His will and purpose, through faith, by His power to preserve us unto salvation. 3. Yet one may be able, and for a time willing, and yet upon several reasons and motives change his mind, for the miud and will of man or angel is not absolutely immutable; and so, though perhaps they will not, yet it is possible, they may fail us. But God will not, God cannot, for God who hath promised is faithful; for as He cannot forget or be hindered by any contrary power, so He cannot change His will. If He say the word, it must be done; if He pass His promise, He will perform. This faithfulness presupposeth His power and His promise, and it is the immutability of His will, for as He is unchangeable in His being, so He is in His promise (1 Sam. xv. 29; Malach. iii. 6). So that all is sure on God's part, and man hath no cause to waver, except he neglect his duty; and if he perish, his destruction must be of himself. And shall we, who have so great advantage, so many helps, so blessed an opportunity, and the promise of a faithful God, neglect and injure ourselves so much as to lose this glorious and incomparable prize? Shall we come out of Egypt, and come so near the borders of the heavenly Canaan, and turn back? or refuse to go forward? Let us detest and eternally abhor to waver; let us go on whatsoever it may cost us. (*G. Lawson.*) *The faithfulness of God the Christian's support in life and death*:—I. IT IS A FACT—"He is faithful that promised." 1. Of whom it is that our text speaks. "He is faithful that promised." Our text points to Him who fills the throne itself; we are contemplating Him as engaged to us by a covenant ordered in all things and sure; and as having communicated in consequence exceeding great and precious promises, while He is faithful to each and every promise which He has thus made. 2. We regard the Divine promises themselves. These promises are not mere movements of the Divine mind arising only under the exigencies of new circumstances or of events which spring up in the progress of time, but they flow from the deep fountains of His own grace and love; they embrace all that which is involved in the gift of His dear Son, the great work of the Saviour, the communications of the Divine Spirit, and in the application of every blessing which God has engaged to bestow on His Church on earth. They are all written with His own hand, they are all stamped with His own authority; and in His own Word they stand out in all their truth and in all their fulness. 3. We now consider the faithfulness of God to His promises. The first promise was that the seed of the woman should arrive in the fulness of time, and that He should bruise the serpent's head; that He should give Himself as a ransom, and purchase the Church with His own blood. That promise has been fulfilled. Then, the promise of the Holy Ghost. The Redeemer ascended up on high; and He has poured forth the Divine Spirit: it has been granted and it is still continued to the Church. II. AS IT IS THE EXPRESSION OF THE CHRISTIAN'S EXPERIENCE—"He is faithful that promised." When you are brought by the Holy Spirit to a just consideration of your own state as sinners, and with your eyes fixed upon the Infinite One, and stripped by transgression of all the rights with which you were originally invested, and when you see the manner in which God bestows everything out of His own fulness, and supplies your daily and your hourly wants; it is not on yourself or fellow-men that you can depend, for they are weak and evanescent as you are. It is not on your own works and your own productions that you can repose. It is not on your toil, your labour, your skill, or your acquisitions, that you can depend; for whatever your gains, they may take to themselves wings and fly and leave you desolate and utterly worthless. But

the eye of faith contemplates the Infinite Being. It takes hold of God through His gracious word of promise; it looks at the atoning sacrifice of Jesus; it stands by that sacrifice, and embracing that Saviour as the only hope, the soul contemplates a faithful God. (*Owen Clarke.*) *The security of the promise*:—I. THE NATURE OF THE PROMISES. 1. They flow solely from the free and sovereign good pleasure of Jehovah. 2. They have all an immediate connection with the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. i. 20). 3. The form in which they are directed is not always the same, but sometimes assumes a more absolute, and sometimes a more conditional, appearance. 4. None of the promises, how conditional soever in their form, are altogether beyond the reach of sinners, so long as they are in the land of the living and place of hope. 5. They are many and various, every way suited to the numerous and diversified wants both of saints and sinners. II. SOME CONSIDERATIONS TENDING TO ESTABLISH OUR CONFIDENCE IN THE DIVINE FAITHFULNESS AS A SECURITY THAT THE PROMISES WILL BE FULFILLED. 1. Faithfulness is an essential perfection of the Divine nature. The name of the Lord is faithful and true. 2. The promises upon the accomplishment so much of our comfort depends are promises of grace. 3. The truth of God is pledged in the most solemn manner for the accomplishment of His promises. 4. Nothing unforeseen or unexpected can occur as a reason why we should doubt the Divine faithfulness. 5. God is omnipotent, and therefore it is not the want of power that can render Him unfaithful. 6. God is unchangeable both in His nature and purpose; it is impossible, therefore, that He can ever disappoint the hopes that His goodness has raised. (*G. Campbell.*) *Divine promises*:—The doctrine of the Incarnation is a promise; it assures us that God has become man to save us from sin. The doctrine of the Atonement is a promise; it explains the ground on which God grants the pardon of sin. The doctrine of Justification is a promise that the penalty of sin may be cancelled; the doctrine of Sanctification, that the power of sin may be destroyed. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*)

Vers. 24, 25. **Consider one another, to provoke unto love.**—*Mutual consideration*:—This is a matter of very wide counsel. We consider ourselves—our health, peace, comfort, &c.—as a rule, quite enough. We consider, too, our families full well. But Christian life brings us into the great broad sweep of humanity. Wherever there is another, we are to consider him. Consideration implies thought, and thought is costly material burning up the brain. I. MUTUAL CONSIDERATION IS TO BE A CULTIVATED INFLUENCE. If you place your children under Christian culture, they will develop considerate natures. Just in proportion as you do that you will feel the need of the renewing grace of God, and you will ask God's help through the Holy Ghost. But you must train as well as teach and pray, because God will not rain graces into your children. The Divine counsel to us is: Go to work: get the soil ready; do your duty, and help will come. II. MUTUAL CONSIDERATION IS TO BE A PROVOCATIVE INFLUENCE. Provoke unto love. You can show persons so much love that they are obliged to love you in return. III. MUTUAL CONSIDERATION IS TO BE A CHURCH INFLUENCE. "Not forsaking the assembling," &c. What has that to do with mutual consideration? Why, this: it is only by commingling in the communion of the Church that we can get into these mutual relationships at all. If you forsake the assembling of yourselves together, how can we know your power or weakness, your want or your grief? How can there be something provocative to service, if you are not obedient to the roll-call, if you are not in the ranks? There is more than this in it—there is a subtle element in the fellowship of the saints that elevates the entire spiritual manhood and womanhood in us, that stirs up the flagging influence. (*W. M. Statham, M.A.*) *Mutual Christian incitement*:—It is better for a man to provoke himself to love and to good works than to be incited thereto by his fellows. But it is far better to be stirred by his fellows than to remain unloving and inactive. The highest state is that in which the goodness of love and the rightness of good works afford sufficient incitement; or in which love wells up, like the waters of a fountain, without any outward exciting cause, and good works are performed easily and naturally by the force of the inner life. This is the state of the Divine nature—a condition reached, it may be, only in measure by the most Godlike creatures of God. "Love is of God"—not of His creation and of His law merely, but of God Himself. "God is love." This is more than can be said of some other principles essential to our spiritual life. The universe did not teach God to love, or move Him to love, but the world was born into the arms of love. And this pre-existent goodness had much to do with the objects and designs of creation. Look at love from another point. God requires

us not only to love Him, but to love one another. Now, when we do love each other, we are in the best state to know God and to have the closest fellowship with Him. "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." "If we love one another God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love. Again, upon the supposition that God is love, we cannot conceive that any code of laws can issue from Him but that which love fulfils; or that in providing a remedial dispensation for man the principle of love would be overlooked. And what is the case? Love is not only the fulfilling of God's law, but, as embracing God and man, it is the inward realisation of God's great salvation. "This is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as He gave us commandment." In the same strain we might proceed to speak of "good works." There is that in any right and useful deed which, when contemplated, may justly move a man to perform it. When you do what is "true," "honest," "pure," "lovely," and "Christian," you are embodying an idea conceived in eternity; you are working out a deathless principle; you are rising into the ideal of your nature; you are expressing that which the Creator designed to utter in the creature; you are yielding to Christ the fruits of His mission; you are doing what in some form or other will never be destroyed; you are in harmony with those numberless and immeasurable spheres of creation that have never moved back to chaos; you are walking and working with God. Men at different times in the Christian age have been very busy defining good works—showing what must precede good works, and marking the precise position they occupy in the Christian life. And this philosophising has not worn itself out yet. We often feel moved to say, "Don't talk about good works, but do them." "Never mind what place they take in your creed, give them a chief place in your life." "Do not stay to explain them, for while thus engaged the opportunity to do some good is let slip." But let us try to get nearer the point of our text. We are required to incite each other to love and to good works—and to consider one another in order to incite one another. This is opposed to being careless and indifferent—to being envious and malicious—to efforts at practical deterioration and detraction. Let us meditate separately on the incitement and the consideration. I. THE INCITEMENT. 1. We need *stimuli* to unfold our souls and to open our hands. To see that a thing is right ought perhaps to be enough to incline us to be it, and to do it; but in many cases it is not enough. We are idle, and shrink from the exertion—self-willed, and kick at the constraint—dispirited and weakened by distrust—isolated, and we cry complainingly, "I am left alone." We need to be provoked. 2. And the text tacitly declares that we can incite each other. That men provoke each other to evil works and to hatred is a fact universally known—but the power to incite, and the susceptibility of being incited, are as really capacities for good as for evil. The electric telegraph can convey truth and falsehood, evil report and good report; and human influence may awaken human sympathy, and arouse purpose and will both for right and for wrong. 3. The incitement required is both general and special. There is that which shall make others "ready to every good work," and that which shall provoke to some particular ministration. For the former Paul instructs Titus when, having repeated the great facts of the dispensation of mercy, he writes, "These things affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God may be careful to maintain good works." So that, according to Paul, contemplation of the love of God and of Christ is one means of maintaining good works. This is like connecting a minor wheel in a piece of machinery with the main movement. Our heart is to be incited by connection with God's heart. For the more special incitement we have the pattern of Paul when he moved Corinth to imitate Macedonia in their liberality to the poor saints in Judæa. To say to our fellow believers with respect to any good work, "Do this—it needs doing—you can do it—you ought to do it—God will prosper your effort—I will help you—if you do it not the omission will be sin"—is to provoke to good works. And to make peace between those that are at enmity; to express faith in a good man when others utter causeless suspicion; to show hope where others are tempted to rejoice in alleged iniquity; to endure when others are irritated; to cover another's faults, and to set forth another's virtues—is to provoke to love. II. THE CONSIDERATION HERE REQUIRED. This is based upon observation—we must know each other, and to know we must observe. The incitement will be regulated by what we observe and by what we discern. One needs be moved to fear through warning, another moved to hope by encouragement, and another quickened by emulation. One may be incited by going before him, and letting

him see you lead; but another by following him, and making him hear the fall of your quicker step. But no one is to be left as savourless salt, and as reprobate silver, or as a broken vessel, until after we have exhausted our resources in attempts to incite him. We arrive by this text at certain facts connected with mutual Christian influence to which we shall do well to take heed. 1. There is a serious influence of which Christians are mutually capable and susceptible. No vocation or gifts raise a Christian disciple beyond it; and no station however low is beneath its reach. When by speech I undulate the atmosphere, I know not the effect of those air waves in the universe; they flow on until they reach the shore of our firmament, and then, it may be, subside to rise again in other spheres. But far exceeding this is the influence of soul upon soul. It is not confined to the spirit we immediately move, but is transmitted from spirit to spirit, and becomes an impulse in the world of mind, both infinite and eternal. How awful is the power of soul over soul! 2. Christians are within a certain limit responsible for their influence. They are accountable, not for what that influence does, but for what that influence is. We are to try to incite to kindness and to corresponding actions. This is a good and happy influence. The direction of our influence is to be a study. Those who need this incitement are not to be passed by—but their lack of love and of good works is to awaken our consideration. 3. In the Church of Christ there should be mutual and reciprocal influence of the holiest and happiest kind. All are not apostles, all are not prophets, all are not pastors and teachers; but all are taught of God to love one another, and all may provoke to love. If any member of our body were smitten with paralysis, we should try to excite the torpid nerves; if one particular branch of a tree were barren, we should neither cut it off nor overlook it until after we had pruned it; and on the same principle we are required specially to incite those who are barren and unfruitful in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nor is there any position in Christian life at which this incitement is needless, or from which it is to be withheld. 1. For Christianity's sake let us consider one another to provoke unto love. If careless of each other, we shall misrepresent the system to which we adhere, and those who from lack of incitement are unloving and inactive will misrepresent it too. The effect of this will be that men, instead of going to our Leader and searching His oracles to know if we correctly represent Christianity, will take our embodiment of it, and finding it not less exclusive and individual than false religion, or no religion, will refuse attention to our advocacy of its claims. 2. For God's sake, and for Christ's sake, let us consider one another to provoke unto love. Christianity is the means God has devised that His banished be not expelled from Him. The correct representation of the system is one means of applying it; so that when Christianity is misrepresented, God feels not Himself to be blasphemed merely, but His master-work to be retarded. 3. For each other's sake, and for our own sake, let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. Who of us would like to be surprised as were the foolish virgins, or to be rejected as the wicked and slothful servant? Let us provoke one another to take oil in our vessels with our lamps, and put out even our one talent to usury. Hearty discipleship to the Saviour will go far to secure this result. Love Christ yourself and you will incite others to love; do good yourself and you will provoke others to good works. Nor can you then measure your influence. The perfume which Mary's hand freed from its prison is fragrant still—the north wind has not driven it away; the odours of the east wind have not swallowed it up; the vapours of the south and west winds have not diluted it; but in every wind it has found an untiring wing, and we are refreshed by its sweetness in the present day. But we must intend to provoke; we must consider, and observe, and know, and attend to one another. There are many impediments to love and to good works which we are required to remove. There are wrong definitions of love—our making it a sentiment, not a principle—or complacency in existent good and not benevolence. There is our waiting to do some great thing, instead of doing what our hand finds to do. The liking to serve alone while yet we complain of it; the almost fear lest others should do what we do, and be what we are; the asking that God's kingdom may come, and yet fearing lest in coming, "myself," "my Church," "my ism," should be swallowed up—all this and much more needs removing. (*S. Martin.*) *The nature and source of true philanthropy*:—We may wind off this coil best by grasping the line at its outer extremity, and working our way inward to the heart. Or we may explore this river best by entering its mouth from the sea, and threading our way upward till we reach its

source. We begin our examination of the text, then, not at the beginning, but at the end. I. "WORKS." Work is the condition of life in the world. The law of both kingdoms alike is, "If any man will not work neither should he eat." Work has been made a necessity in the constitution of nature, and declared a duty in the positive precepts of Scripture. Idleness is both sin and misery. When a sinner is saved—when a man becomes a new creature in Christ, he is not set free from this comprehensive law. The Lord has a work of righteousness on hand, and the disciple yields himself a willing instrument. His heart is more hopeful now, and his hand more skilful. More honourable work is prescribed, and better wages wait him. Christ was a worker. He went about doing. "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business? My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Christ was a worker, and Christians are like Him. The world is a field. It must be subdued and made the garden of the Lord. Son, daughter, "go work to-day in My vineyard." II. "GOOD works." It is not any work that will please God, or be profitable to men. A bustling life will not make heaven sure. The works must be good in design and character. The motive must be pure and the effect beneficent. But does not the gospel decry good works? You make a grand mistake if, because you are warned not to trust in good works, you grow less diligent in doing them. If a skilful architect, observing you expending your summer days and your manhood's strength in an effort to build a house upon the sand, should benevolently warn you that the labour would be labour lost, you would poorly profit by his counsel if you should simply desist from the work, and loiter idle near the spot. The architect, your friend, did not object to the expenditure of your time and strength in building; but he saw that the higher your wall should rise on that foundation, the more certain and more destructive would be its fall. He meant that you should find the solid rock and build there—build with all your might. The gospel rejects good works, not as the fruit of faith, but as the meritorious ground of hope before God. Life does not spring from them; but they spring from life. As ciphers, added one by one in an endless row to the left hand of a unit, are of no value, but on the right hand rapidly multiply its power, so although good works are of no avail to make a man a Christian, yet a Christian's good works are both pleasing to God and profitable to men. III. "LOVE and good works." Verily good works constitute a refreshing stream in this world wherever they are found flowing. It is a pity that they are too often like Oriental torrents, "waters that fail" in the time of greatest need. When we meet the stream actually flowing and refreshing the land, we trace it upward in order to discover the fountain whence it springs. Threading our way upward, guided by the river, we have found at length the placid lake from which the river runs. Behind all genuine good works and above them love will sooner or later certainly be found. It is never good works alone; uniformly in fact, and necessarily in the nature of things, we find the two constituents existing as a complex whole, "love and good works"—the fountain and the flowing stream. The love is manifestly in this case human in all its exercise. It is love from man to man. Like the water, it flows visibly out of the ground in the fountain, and along the ground in the river's bed; but, like the water, it comes secretly at first all from heaven. IV. "PROVOKE unto love and good works." Let us attend carefully to the meaning of the term "provoke," bearing in mind, however, as we proceed, that whatever kind of action the word may be found to indicate, it is action on ourselves, and not on our neighbours. The term in the original signifies, For the purpose of stirring up, or sharpening, or kindling love. We need not be surprised to find that injunction here. The love that is current in the Church is defective in kind and quality. It greatly needs to be stirred up. It is like a fire smouldering, and ready to die. Oh, for a breath from heaven to quicken it! We would fain see it bursting into a blaze, and hear all our jealousies and hollow hypocrisies crackling off in the flame. Love must be kindled into a paroxysm; for that is the original term untranslated, and that term, even in our own language, truly indicates the inspired apostle's mind. All the really effective machinery for doing good in the world depends for propulsion on the love that glows in human breasts: with all the revival of our own favoured times, the wheels, clogged with the thick clay of a predominating selfishness, move but slowly. Up with the impelling love into greater warmth, that it may put forth greater power! V. "CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER to provoke unto love and good works." The exercise prescribed for provoking unto love conclusively determines the persons on whom the provocation was expected to take effect. It is the considerer, not the considered, who is provoked unto love. By thinking of my brother in his need I

may be stirred up to pity him, but the mental process that goes on within my breast does not touch him for good or for evil. He may not know that I am considering his case; he may not know that there is such a person in the world. When we consider the heathen in India and China our meditation takes effect, not on them, but on ourselves. It stirs up, not them to love us, but us to love them. The question here, let it be remembered, concerns not the Divine cause of love, but the human agency employed in kindling it. It is the Spirit that quickeneth; but at present we look only to the lower side—the instrumentality of men. When fire is kindled by light direct from the sun, the same two must always conspire—the descent of the burning ray from heaven, and the preparation for receiving it on earth. The solar rays must be concentrated on combustible material by means of a glass with a convex surface, held in a certain attitude, and at a certain distance. Without these preparations, even the sun in the heavens cannot kindle a flame. Thus it becomes a question of deep interest, What attitude must we assume, and what preparation must we make, in order that love, by the ministry of the Spirit, may be kindled in our hearts? Here is the prescription, short and plain: "Consider one another." To consider ourselves may be the means of begetting in us a desire for mercy; to consider Christ may be the means of begetting in us a trust in the Saviour; but in order to kindle in our hearts a self-denying, brother-saving love to men, the true specific is to "consider one another." VI. "AND consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works." I would not play with a word; I would not extract the doctrines of grace from a copulative conjunction. But in this passage the little word "and" is the link by which all that we have yet gotten hangs on the higher—hangs on the highest. The exhortation to consider is the last of three which are given in an exact logical series, occupying verses 22-24. Come to the Saviour for the cleansing of your own conscience, and abide in peace under the light of His countenance: then and thence look out upon your brother: the result of the combination will be thoughts of love and acts of kindness, as certainly and as uniformly as any of the sequences in nature. He who has drawn near and is holding fast, that is, he who has himself been forgiven through the blood of the Lamb, and is living in the consciousness of being accepted in the Beloved, cannot hate and hurt his brother. The act of considering or looking upon an object is of no avail to direct aright your own course, apart from the position in which you stand when you make your observations. A red light shines aloft at the narrow entrance of a safe harbour. A ship sweeping along the coast in a storm sees the light and makes straight for it through the waves and the darkness. She strikes a rock, and goes down in deep water. Why? This is the harbour, and the light she made for marks its mouth. Ah! it is not enough that you see the light; you must see it from a particular position, and make for it then. The right position is always correctly determined and laid down on the charts. Generally it is fixed by one or more other lights which you must see in line before you head for the harbour. "Consider one another"—that is the last and lowest of the three lights which lead to love. The course is marked for the Christian in his chart. One clause of the instruction is, Keep your eye on that light, and run in; but another clause in combination with it, equally Divine and equally necessary, intimates that ere you can go in with safety to yourself or benefit to others, you must get into line with these other two lights which stretch away upward, and lean at last on heaven. (*W. Arnot.*) *Motives and arguments to charity*:—I. I desire you to remember and consider that you are men, and as such obliged to this duty, as being very agreeable to human nature; the which, not being corrupted or distempered by ill use, doth incline to it, doth call for it, doth like and approve it, doth find satisfaction and delight therein. II. Let us consider what our neighbour is: how near in blood, how like in nature, how much in all considerable respects the same with us he is. III. Equity doth plainly require charity from us, for every one is ready not only to wish and seek, but to demand and claim love from others, so as to be much offended, and grievously to complain, if he do not find it. IV. Let us consider that charity is a right noble and worthy thing; greatly perfective of our nature; much dignifying and beautifying our soul. V. The practice of charity is productive of many great benefits and advantages to us; so that to love our neighbour doth involve the truest love to ourselves; and we are not only obliged in duty, but may be encouraged by our interest thereto: beatitude is often pronounced to it, or to some particular instances of it; and well may it be so, for it indeed will constitute a man happy, producing to him manifold comforts and conveniences of life, some whereof we

shall touch. VI. Charity doth free our souls of all those bad dispositions and passions which vex and disquiet them: from those gloomy passions which cloud our mind; from those keen passions which fret our heart; from those tumultuous passions which ruffle us, and discompose the frame of our soul. VII. It consequently doth settle our mind in a serene, calm, sweet, and cheerful state; in an even temper, and good humour, and harmonious order of soul; which ever will result from the evacuation of bad passions, from the composure such as are indifferent, from the excitement of those which are good and pleasant; "the fruits of the Spirit," saith St. Paul, "are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness," or benignity; love precedeth, joy and peace follow as its constant attendants, gentleness and benignity come after as its certain effects. VIII. Charity will preserve us from divers external mischiefs and inconveniences, to which our life is exposed, and which otherwise we shall incur. IX. As charity preserveth from mischiefs, so it procureth many sweet comforts and fair accommodations of life. X. Charity doth in every estate yield advantages suitable thereto; bettering it and improving it to our benefit. XI. We may consider that secluding the exercise of charity, all the goods and advantages we have (our best faculties of nature, our best endowments of soul, the gifts of Providence, and the fruits of our industry) will become vain and fruitless, or noxious and baneful to us; for what is our reason worth, what doth it signify, if it serveth only for contriving sorry designs, or transacting petty affairs about ourselves? What is wit good for, if it must be spent only in making sport, or hatching mischief? To what purpose is knowledge, if it be not applied to the iustruction, direction, admonition, or consolation of others? What mattereth abundance of wealth, if it be to be uselessly hoarded up, or vainly flung away in wicked or wanton profusion; if it be not employed in affording succour to our neighbour's indigency and distress? What is our credit but a mere noise or a puff of air, if we do not give a solidity and substance to it, by making it an engine of doing good? What is our virtue itself, if it be buried in obscurity or choked with idleness, yielding no benefit to others by the lustre of its example, or by its real influence? What is any talent, if it be wrapped up in a napkin; any light, if it be hid under a bushel; anything private, if it be not by good use spread out and improved to public benefit? If these gifts do minister only to our own particular advantage, to our personal convenience, glory, or pleasure, how slim things are they, how inconsiderable is their worth! XII. Charity doth hugely advance and amplify a man's state, putting him into the possession or fruition of all good things: it will endow, enrich, ennoble, embellish us with all the world hath of precious, of glorious, of fair; by appropriation thereof to ourselves, and acquiring of a real interest therein. XIII. If therefore we love ourselves, we must love others, and do others good; charitable beneficence carrying with it so many advantages to ourselves. We by charitable complacence do partake in their welfare, reaping pleasure from all the fruits of their industry and fortune. We by charitable assistance do enable and dispose them to make grateful returns of succour in our need. We thence assuredly shall obtain their good-will, their esteem, their commendation; we shall maintain peaceable and comfortable intercourse with them, in safety, in quiet, in good humour and cheer. Besides all other benefits we shall get that of their prayers; the which of all prayers have a most favourable audience and assured efficacy. XIV. We may consider that charity is a practice especially grateful to God, and a most excellent part of our duty; not only because He hath commanded it as such with greatest earnestness; nor only because it doth constitute us in nearest resemblance of Him; but as a peculiar experience of love and goodwill toward Him; for if we love Him, we must for His sake have a kindness for His friends, we must tender His interests, we must favour His reputation, we must desire His content and pleasure, we must contribute our endeavours toward the furtherance of these His concerns. XV. Seeing God vouchsafeth to esteem whatever is done in charity to our neighbour (if done with an honest and pious mind, as to his friends) to be done unto Himself; that in feeding our indigent neighbour we refresh him; in clothing our neighbour we comfort him; we do by charitable beneficence oblige God, and become in a manner benefactors to Him; and as such assuredly shall be requited by Him: and is not this a high privilege, a great honour, a mighty advantage to us? XVI. We may consider that charity is a very feasible and very easy duty; it requireth no sore pain, no grievous trouble, no great cost; for it consisteth only in good-will, and that which naturally springeth thence. XVII. We may consider that charity is the best, the most assured, the most easy and expedite way or instrument of performing all other duties toward our neighbour:

if we would despatch, love, and all is done; if we would be perfect in obedience, love, and we shall not fail in any point; for "love is the fulfilling of the law"; love "is the bond of perfectness"; would we be secure in the practice of justice, of meekness, of humility toward all men, of constant fidelity toward our friends, of gentle moderation toward our enemies, of loyalty toward our superiors, of benignity toward our inferiors; if we would be sure to purify our minds from ill-thoughts, to restrain our tongues from ill-speaking, to abstain from all bad demeanour and dealing; it is but having charity, and infallibly you will do all this; for "love worketh no ill to its neighbour; love thinketh no evil"; "love behaveth not itself unseemly." XVIII. Charity giveth worth, form, and life to all virtue, so that without it no action is valuable in itself, or acceptable to God. Sever it from courage; and what is that but the boldness or the fierceness of a beast? From meekness; and what is that but the softness of a woman, or weakness of a child? From courtesy; and what is that but affectation or artifice? From justice; what is that but humour or policy? From wisdom; what is that but craft and subtilty? What meaneth faith without it but dry opinion; what hope, but blind presumption; what alms-doing, but ambitious ostentation; what undergoing martyrdom, but stiffness or sturdiness of resolution; what is devotion, but glozing or mocking with God? What is any practice, how specious soever in appearance, or materially good, but an issue of self-conceit or self-will, of servile fear or mercenary design? XIX. So great benefits doth charity yield; yet if it did not yield any of them, it would deserve and claim our observance; without regard to its sweet fruits and beneficial consequences, it were to be embraced and cherished; for it carrieth a reward and a heaven in itself; the very same which constituteth God Himself infinitely happy, and which beatifieth every blessed spirit, in proportion to its capacity and exercise thereof. (*I. Barrow, D.D.*) *Mutual Christian duties*:—I. EXPLAIN AND ILLUSTRATE THE DUTIES IN THE TEXT. 1. Mutual consideration. (1) In the frailties of our common nature. (2) In the oneness of our calling as saints. (3) In our common exposedness to afflictions and dangers. (4) In our reciprocal duties both to the Church and to the world. In the body every member and part has its specific function—none without their use; so in Christ's Church every one must be an eye, or ear, or foot, or hand, &c. (5) In the prospect of our eternal fellowship in the heavenly world. 2. Affectionate provocation. (1) To greater love to God. Who demands our supreme affections—our undivided hearts. (2) To greater love to each other. For we must love each other even as Christ loved us. (3) To greater love to a dying world. For whom the Redeemer died, and to whom the gospel tidings must be constantly proclaimed. (4) To good works. Works of piety, justice, &c., but especially works of benevolence (Matt. v. 7; James i. 27; Heb. xiii. 16; Psa. xxxvii. 3). Now we must thus provoke our brethren—(1) By our own example. (2) By affectionate exhortation. (3) By fervent prayer with and for each other. II. ENFORCE THE DUTIES SPECIFIED IN THE TEXT. 1. Because of our liability to lukewarmness and indifference. 2. Because love and good works are essential to genuine godliness. 3. Because, if we abound in these, our usefulness and happiness must be greatly extended. 4. Because in proportion to these will be our reward in the heavenly state. Application: 1. We learn the true spirit which should dwell among Christ's disciples. 2. The necessity of mutual excitement, to the cultivation of that spirit, and the work it produces. 3. How many display the very opposite spirit, and are lamentably barren of good works. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *The duty of Christians to provoke one another into love and good works*:—I. REASONS. 1. Consider the many and weighty injunctions which are to be found in the Word of God upon the subject (Rom. xii. 9, 10; 1 Thess. iv. 9, 10; Heb. xiii. 1; 2 Pet. i. 7; John xv. 17; Col. i. 4; 1 John iii. 11, iv. 20, 21). 2. The character and conduct of Him whose disciples we profess to be. 3. The influence which our conduct will have on others. 4. Love is a grace greatly superior to either faith or hope. 5. Let ministers of Christ particularly cherish this temper and cultivate this spirit. II. MOTIVES. 1. The state of mankind in general—a state of darkness, sin, guilt, infidelity. 2. What God has done for us and requires of us. 3. Let the age in which you live, and the country in which a benign Providence has cast your lot, be considered another motive. 4. The brevity of human life, together with the precariousness of bodily health and strength, we mention as another motive to induce you to attend to the text. 5. Your responsibility. 6. The judgment to come. (*S. Mummery.*) *The provocation of love*:—Are we sufficiently sensible of the responsibility which we owe to each other in relation to these words of apostolic admonition? Love is a sacred fire, and the

measure of its glowing brightness and fervent heat is dependent on mutual fellowship and kindly interest. We may put water or oil on the fire. Words, looks, and deeds are as so much fuel or rubbish. An unkind word, an ungracious look, a cold touch of the hand, will lower the soul's temperature. A kindly look, a gracious word, a friendly grasp will thrill through the veins, and circulate the warm blood of the recipient heart. One red coal will speedily go out, but put others with it and they will burn into a clear and glowing fire. Live for self, and your heart will become frost-bitten. Live for others, and your soul shall be a focus of Divine sunbeams, provoking, by the soft compulsions of love, the frozen hearts around. *Sunday-school work*:—We have very imperfectly realised as yet the abundance of the fruit which may be gathered in the field of Christian fellowship. It is by no means an uncommon experience to meet with Christians who are unwilling to learn anything of those from whom they differ in something. The methods and forms their fathers used under other circumstances, must, in their opinion, be still Divinely ordained in present circumstances. They are quite incapable of seeing, what even Nature teaches, that God has many ways of fulfilling Himself; that He speaks in various voices in the world, but none of them is without signification. In those spheres of life which are lower than the religious, men are not so dull and prejudiced. A new invention is eagerly caught up with whomsoever it originated. Every man engaged in a trade or a profession is prompt to learn from the experiences of his neighbours, and even of his competitors. But unreadiness to learn of others ought to be less characteristic of Christians than of other men; indeed, it can only be characteristic of them when they are inconsistent with their own professions. Depend upon it, the duty urged in this verse is a test of our sincerity. If we are always ready to see faults, and close our eyes to virtues; if we can only appreciate what makes us seem superior to others, and ignore all that raises them above us; if, when excellences are so manifest that we cannot deny them, we are animated by envy, and seek to depreciate what we ought humbly to copy—then we are untrue to our profession. For we acknowledge that we are still learners, and that we are ready to humble ourselves that Jesus Christ may be exalted. Our feeling when we consider one another is a test, then, of our humility; and it is also a test of our love. A true mother is not envious when she sees her young daughter admired; and a true father has his face lit up with gladness over his son's success. If, therefore, you would win from knowledge of your fellow Christians what God wishes to teach you, you must pray to be free from prejudice and pride, from envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness, and this can only be when in the deepest sense you are a "new creature in Christ Jesus." It is to such that the exhortation before us is addressed. There is a special form of these good works to which I wish to ask your attention—namely, that of Sunday-school enterprise. I. THE LABOUR OF SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHERS IS EMPHATICALLY A GOOD WORK. 1. It concerns itself with the young in whom character is most plastic, and result is most probably to be looked for. 2. This work of teaching children is essentially good, because it affects the future. The destinies of the world lie in their hands. When we were on a plain, a little distance this side of Arizona, we were told that there, at a height of 7,300 feet, we were on the continental divide. The stream that we had just lost sight of, the river Colorado, flowed into the Gulf of California; and the one now rippling at our feet, the Rio Grande, was making its way into the Gulf of Mexico. In other words, a district not remarkable in its appearance, was the point whence water flowed so far apart, as to fall into the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. I feel sometimes as if standing at such a point as that, and you teachers in your classes may feel thus this afternoon. Here within your reach and sight are lives which may flow heavenward or hellward; and their whole future depends upon the channel into which, in a few short years or months, the stream of thought and feeling makes its way. 3. Sunday-school teaching may be called a good work, because it has an ennobling effect upon the teacher. How many of you have to thank God for a service which has been to your own soul an unspeakable blessing? Your contact with fresh, innocent, trustful childhood preserved you from becoming narrow and misanthropic, at a time mayhap when you were hardly dealt with in business. 4. Your work is good, not least on this account, that you feel yourself, while doing it, thrown back upon God, if you have seriously undertaken it. II. BUT IS THERE ANYTHING IN OUR METHODS WHICH COULD BE IMPROVED? Do other practical workers find any helps which we should be the better for? If so, let us in that aspect "consider one another" in a spirit of love. I visited Sunday schools in various parts of America. And throughout the United States it appeared to me

that their methods were superior to our own, whatever the results may be. 1. The expenditure of the church upon the children is far greater than with us. The class-rooms and schoolrooms are carpeted throughout, brightened by pictures and banners and flowers, presenting the appearance of comfortable parlours rather than of halls. 2. Nor could I help noticing the contrast between the teachers there and in some schools (happily not in all) here. Among us no sooner does a teacher get married, or even engaged, than the class is forsaken; but there men and women of ripe experience grow grey in the service, and this naturally does much to retain the elder scholars, whom we generally lose. 3. Another feature of American Sunday-school work I wish to touch upon. It is that all classes are represented among the scholars who attend. No parents keep their children away because, being richer and cleverer than their neighbours, they consider it derogatory to their dignity to allow their children to go into ordinary classes. You say you teach them at home. Do you, as a matter of fact? Is not such teaching often interrupted by visitors and friends? Is there not also practical difficulty in constituting into one class the children of the home, who are of different ages, but who might have teachers adapted for each, in the grades of a Sunday school? And, further, does not a comparative stranger often speak more directly on personal religion than a parent, and is it not a curious but indubitable fact that the first confession of faith is more easily made to one who is known as the religious teacher outside the family? (*A. Rowland, LL.B.*) *Love and good works*:—Every minister will sympathise with St. Paul's feeling, when he wished not only that he might stir up his people's hearts, but that they, equally, might stir up his. The obligation is mutual; but the reciprocity is not sufficient among us. "Provocation" is one of those many words which have gradually deteriorated, and taken a lower and severer sense than once, and more properly, belonged to it. To "provoke" is simply to call forth; and is used by many classic authors equally in a good sense as in a bad one. Therefore the literal sentence would be—"Consider one another to the stirring up, the inciting of love and good works." If there be yet ought of severity in that expression, it is qualified by the word which precedes it—"*Consider* one another"—which is a term of careful observation and tenderness. So that no one who "considered" would ever be really harsh! The whole sentence, too, assumes that those who "provoke" have "loved" and have "good works" already—only that they need to be brought out into greater clearness and power. Now my argument is first that your "love" falls short; that you do not love as you might, as you ought to love God and His Church. Now the first question is, How is love to be quickened or provoked in a man's heart? The answer is, Only by the work of Christ. Your love can never be anything but a reflection—the reflection of the love of God to you. Therefore you must feel that you are loved. And the more you feel that you are loved, the more you will love. For to feel loved, you must feel forgiven. Let me then "provoke you" first, to accept your forgiveness, and to believe, without the shadow of a doubt, that God loves you. Do not wait till you are holier. Do not place sanctification before justification. "I am forgiven. I am loved. God loves me." Is there no echo? Will you give Him no return? Now to make this "love," and to increase this "love," one way is to do good works; for good works make love, even as love makes good works; we all love those to whom we have been kind; the being kind makes us love them. So the two act and re-act; therefore I say, I say it reverently, but I say it literally, "Be kind to God!" Do you say, What are the "good works" I am to do? God will show you if you ask Him. You need not go far afield to find them. Love in the home! Shed love in your own family. Be great in love, specially where it is the hardest. There may be some one in the house who is to you continually provoking; that person is a provocation to you. Now turn the "provocation" the other way. "Provoke" that person first to love. Do it kindly, do it patiently, do it every day. Pray about it, persevere in it, and you will succeed. "Love and good works" will win the day. And there is another work for Christ. A church is, or ought to be, a fountain of work; and every member of a church should be a worker in the church. Is there not one amongst them whom you could "provoke?" to whom you could tell the happiness you find in God's service; and so stir that one up to join you in your blessed offices of more "love and good works!" "Love and good works!" never divide them. "Love and good works." For this you were created—for this you were redeemed. This is religion. This was Christ. This will be heaven. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Help one another*:—A traveller who was crossing the Alps, was overtaken by a snow-storm at the top of a high mountain. The cold

became intense. The air was thick with sleet, and the piercing wind seemed to penetrate his bones. Still the traveller for a time struggled on. But at last his limbs were benumbed, a heavy drowsiness began to creep over him, his feet almost refused to move, and he lay down on the snow to give way to that fatal sleep which is the last stage of extreme cold, and from which he would certainly never have waked again in this world. Just at that moment he saw another poor traveller coming along the road. The unhappy man seemed to be, if possible, even in a worse condition than himself, for he, too, could scarcely move; all his powers were frozen, and all appeared to be just on the point to die. When he saw this poor man, the traveller, who was just going to lie down to sleep, made a great effort. He roused himself up, and he crawled, for he was scarcely able to walk, to his dying fellow sufferer. He took his hands into his own and tried to warm them. He chafed his temples; he rubbed his feet; he applied friction to his body. And all the time he spoke cheering words into his ear, and tried to comfort him. As he did thus, the dying man began to revive, and he felt able to go forward. But this was not all, for his kind benefactor too was recovered by the efforts which he had made to save his friend. The exertion of rubbing made the blood circulate again in his own body. He grew warm by trying to warm the other. His drowsiness went off; he no longer wished to sleep, his limbs returned again to their proper force, and the two travellers went on their way together, happy, and congratulating one another on their escape. Soon the snow-storm passed away; the mountain was crossed, and they reached their home in safety. If you feel your heart cold towards God, and your soul almost ready to perish, try to do something which may help another soul to life, and make his heart glad; and you will often find it the best way to warm, and restore, and gladden your own. *Mutual aid*:—Surely Zionward travellers, who know the difficulties of the way and their own insufficiency to surmount them, should not be forgetful of one another. Though every member of Christ ought to sympathise with another, known or unknown, yet why does it please the Lord to bring us unto more particular connection or acquaintance with some, than others, but that they may be more especially objects of our concern and love? Let us be helpful to each other, then, in struggling up the steep, and pray the good Lord of the upper country so to fasten the hooks attaching the helping cord of love to our bodies, that, whenever we are for ceasing to climb, their points may make us feel it necessary to hold fast, and climb on. Oh, it is cheering to hear and see the genuine effects of the grace of God, displaying themselves in the circumstances that peculiarly prove their excellence and usefulness. May we be faithful to the benefit of others, as well as the good of our own souls. (*S. Martin.*) *Inspiring emulation*:—Themistocles, when a very young man, was observed, soon after the famous battle of Marathon, in which Miltiades obtained so much glory, to be often alone, very pensive, unwilling to attend the usual entertainments, and even to watch whole nights. Being asked by one of his friends what was the cause of all this, he answered, "The trophies of Miltiades will not suffer me to sleep." Thus fired with a love of glory, he became one of the most illustrious characters in Greece. (*J. Bruce.*) *Love and good works*:—We may be as orthodox as Athanasius and as scrupulous as Jerome; we may be daily and ostentatiously building to God seven altars, and offering a bullock and a ram on every altar, and yet be as sounding brass and as a clanging cymbal, if our life shows only the leaves of profession, without the golden fruit of action. If love shows not itself by deeds of love, then let us not deceive ourselves God is not mocked—our Christianity is heathenism, and our religion a delusion and a sham. (*F. W. Farrar.*) *Stimulating to good works*:—The good Duchess of Gordon set her heart upon the erection of a school and chapel in a needy district of her neighbourhood. The Gordon estates at the time were so encumbered that she did not know where to find the necessary funds. In a letter to her friend, Miss Home, she describes some of her efforts and the consequences. "I took up to London," she says, "a gold vase that cost about £1,200, in hopes of selling it, but could not find a purchaser, even at half-price. . . . I have still left it to be disposed of. . . . The Duchess of Beaufort, hearing of my vase, thought of her diamond earrings, which she got me to dispose of, for a chapel in Wales, and her diamonds made me think of my jewels; and as the Duke has always been most anxious for the chapel, he agreed with me that stones were much prettier in a chapel wall than round one's neck, and so he allowed me to sell £600 worth, or rather what brought that, for they cost more than double. The chapel is going on nicely, and I have still enough jewels left to help to endow it, if no other way should open. I do think I may with confidence hope for a blessing on this. It is no sacrifice to me

whatever, except as it is one to the Duke, who is very fond of seeing me fine, and was brought up to think it right." The chapel cost rather more than was expected, and the Duke, following up his wife's example, offered of his own accord to sell some of his horses to make up the deficiency. (*A. Moody Stuart.*)

Ver. 25. **Not forsaking the assembling.**—*The Church beneficent:*—We can scarcely help reading into a passage like this ideas which belong to our time, and not to the time of the writer; that is to say, ideas which are our own rather than his. Our notion as to Christians assembling themselves together is that which has been fixed in our minds by our custom, an old custom now, of attending church on Sundays. The truth is, however—and it is a point which has not received all the consideration to which it is entitled—meetings of Christians in those early times were not exactly of the same character as ours. Not only were they not as formal as we make ours by having an official person to conduct them, and, in fact, to take up most of the time with set religious discourse—not only were they not as formal as ours are thus made, they had, it is evident, different objects from those at which we aim in ours. These people who are here charged not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, did not meet to hear a sermon, or to pray and sing hymns; they met, it is plain, as Christian workers, to discuss their work and to carry it on. "To provoke unto love and to good works," to consider one another, to take steps for the relief of their poor, the succour of their sick, the instruction of the young, the conversion of heathen friends, the advancement of their faith, the promotion of every scheme which an enthusiastic philanthropy suggested for making the world better and happier; this was the business which brought them together. Their meetings did not end as ours regularly and systematically do, in nothing at all; if there is anything certain with regard to them, it is that they served to combine the intelligence and the energies of the Christian brotherhood for the accomplishment of a variety of objects which were none the less Christian that they were not always what you would call religious. And yet it is not to be supposed that on this account their meetings were less devotional than ours are. Because, instead of being devotional and nothing else, they were taken up chiefly with matters of Christian business, those primitive assemblies which are here in question would not, in the nature of things, be less favourable to the spirit of supplication or the spirit of thanksgiving, than Sunday meetings are now. I cannot but declare my conviction—I have long been firmly convinced—it is because we have no business in our meetings except devotion, that our devotion is so dull a business. I must take for granted for one thing, that every intelligent man, who is not strangely destitute of religious feeling, has known at times the need, or at any rate the good, of joining with numbers in acts of worship. There is something in the voices of a congregation united in the praise of God which lifts a dull worshipper out of his dulness as nothing else can. It is to be deplored, therefore, that so many nowadays forsake churches, and, in doing so, at any rate deny themselves whatever profit there is in public worship. It is obvious, whatever is the reason of it, our present system of what we call public worship is not what it once was in point of health and vigour, and rough-and-ready methods of putting new life into it, from which much is hoped, have little outcome. So far from the attendance at church increasing over the country, it is, I believe, steadily falling off. It may well be a question, therefore, whether we should not, along with the multiplication of churches or in place of it, begin to consider whether churches ought not to be somewhat different from what they are, and perhaps made a little more like what they were once. While we are thinking only of how to enlarge our ecclesiastical machinery, or to drive it faster, the question perhaps really is, whether it ought not first to be remodelled. The thing which is to be done, the only remedy for the evil, is to make the church a more attractive institution than it is. In the first place, it is obvious we deny ourselves much of the advantage we might have from attention to what is beautiful and pleasing. Independently of the sermon altogether—for the sermon is made the most important part of public worship, utterly against the nature of things—there should be excitement in our church services sufficient at any rate to keep people from falling asleep in the middle of them. Congregations, not ministers, no doubt are to blame if this excitement is often conspicuous by its absence. Wherever the blame may be supposed to rest, it is certain this part of our worship, not the least important part, is in general made as unattractive as complete neglect can make it. They complain that long extempore prayers, such as are common among ourselves, are often

sermons without a text, or Scripture in great disorder. They allege further, that as the sermon is generally made the most important part of the service, so it is generally the most tedious part. If this, then, or anything like this, is the account which is to be given of our public worship, or a great part of it, we can scarcely wonder if there are some who forsake it, and many who are not attracted by it. I hasten now to remark, that while we more or less deny ourselves the advantage of the beautiful, we altogether reject the far greater advantage of the practical and useful. To put the matter broadly: in connection with churches much good work is done, done by ministers and office-bearers, by committees, by associations of members, but as churches we do nothing. When we come together here on Sunday, after having been for hundreds of Sundays in the habit of coming, it is just to go through the old routine of prayer, praise, sermon, and go away home; the congregation, as a congregation, after the benediction, goes away home, that is to say, goes out of existence. Nothing equals the regularity with which our meeting takes place, except the regularity with which nothing comes of it. Take them as they commonly are, churches are like corn-mills carefully constructed and plentifully supplied with steam or water-power, but never put in motion, never made to grind a bushel of grain. In our congregational life it is all saying and not doing. It would involve the remodelling of our churches to an extent to which few of us, perhaps, would care to see them remodelled; but, if the practical and useful were as prominent in their arrangements as other things are, they would not have to complain so much as they have now of being forsaken. What is needed to fill churches and put life into them, is to revert to the original idea of a church, and make it a society "to provoke unto love and to good works." If we were, even in the loosest sort of way united as a congregation in an endeavour to further Christian objects, to relieve the poor, to comfort the sick, to instruct the ignorant, to reclaim the erring, to remove temptation out of the way of the young, to promote decency, sobriety, honesty, truth, gentleness—if we were ever so loosely united as a congregation in this endeavour, it is impossible, being as many as we are, that we should not accomplish something. Now, if there were this kind of business first, and devotion followed it, or if business and devotion were somehow combined in the order of our Sunday services, we should have what gives zest to meetings for other and inferior purposes—the sense that we are dealing with what is of immediate practial utility to ourselves and to others. Before I conclude, let me advert for a moment to an objection which may be urged. Would you, some one may ask, suppose it were possible, divert the activity of churches from those purely spiritual objects, which only churches are fitted to promote, and direct it to philanthropic but still secular ends, which other institutions and other agencies are intended to further, and are possibly better fitted to further? To this, however, it is to be answered, that charity never faileth, nor the need for that organised charity which a church ought to be. When all other institutions and agencies, even the most benevolent and most useful, have done their best, much will still remain to be done, for the welfare of mankind, much which only Christian philanthropy can do, or will attempt to do, and it is the business of churches to concern themselves with that. (*J. Service, D.D.*) *Public worship:*—I. THE ASSEMBLING TOGETHER. All on the same level, except so far as we may differ in spiritual things. 1. Assembling together is a duty. (1) God has commanded it. (2) The practice is co-equal in point of time with the existence of the Christian Church. (3) It is necessary for carrying out the Lord's work. (4) It is essential for the spiritual well-being of every Christian man. 2. A privilege. To neglect it is to starve the soul. II. THE OBJECT OF MEETING TOGETHER. 1. To draw near to God. 2. To receive spiritual blessings. 3. To exhort one another. III. THE INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF THIS MEETING TOGETHER AS THE PARTICULAR DAY NAMED IN THE TEXT DRAWS NEAR. 1. The day that you may be deprived of the opportunity of meeting. (1) From sickness. (2) From loss of inclination. 2. The day of trial and affliction. 3. The day of death. 4. The day of judgment. (*G. Sexton, D.D.*) *The importance of public worship:*—I. THE ADMONITION GIVEN. 1. That to assemble together is a Christian duty. 2. Some who profess attachment to Christ's cause neglect this duty. Some are once-a-day worshippers; others are fine-weather worshippers; while many are merely fancy-worshippers, and go to the Lord's house just when it may please them. Great reason is obvious, no spiritual relish, only a name to live, &c. Only form of godliness, &c. 3. It is of the utmost importance that we do not thus forsake the assembling of ourselves together. (1) On God's account, who demands and infinitely deserves our service. (2) On the Church's

account. The Church is to be visible. (3) Especially on our own account. We are deeply interested in these assemblies. We might "forsake," &c., if we had no mercies to acknowledge, no sins to confess, no blessings to crave, no enemies to overcome, no soul to sanctify, no hell to escape, no heaven to gain. II. A SPECIFIC DUTY STATED. We should exhort each other—1. To watchfulness and vigilance. 2. To determination and constancy. 3. To zeal and diligence. 4. To courage and perseverance. III. A POWERFUL MOTIVE. 1. The day is approaching. 2. This day is truly a momentous one. 3. The believer sees the day approaching. That is, he never loses sight of that truth. Learn: 1. The place of the Christian's delight will be God's house. 2 From our present circumstances, we all stand in need of exhortation (1 Thess. v. 11; 2 Tim. iv. 2; Heb. iii. 13). 3. We cannot fail to be stimulated, both to diligence and faithfulness, if we keep the truth before us that the day is approaching. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *The duty of Divine worship*:—I. THE NATURE AND REASON OF DIVINE WORSHIP IN GENERAL. Though it must be confessed to be a duty on many accounts to worship God in private, yet I think it may plainly appear that it ought to be performed publicly too. For what is it we mean by the worship of God but such acts as do immediately declare our love, fear, and reverence to Him; our obedience, gratitude and resignation towards Him? Now, if the nature of God's worship consists in our honouring Him, that must certainly be the most acceptable way of worshipping Him which tends most to His honour, and that is doing it in solemn and public assemblies; for by this we take away all suspicion of our being either afraid or ashamed of our duty to Him, and many seeing our devotion may be influenced thereby to glorify their Maker more abundantly. Besides this, we may consider that as there are two parts of worship, the one internal, by which we bow our souls before God, and the other external, by which we give visible signs of our inward devotion; such as uncovering our heads, kneeling, praying, and praising God with an audible voice, and the like; so the chief use of this latter part of worship is for public assemblies. Again, the reason on which Divine worship is naturally grounded declares for it being public. God is our Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, and doth not this as evidently demand our public as our private devotions? Doth not He bestow public blessings on us, and prevent or remove public evils from us, as well as private? But, furthermore, can we imagine that man was made a sociable creature for civil concerns only? Does not the affair of religion, and the immortal comforts that depend upon the true profession of it, as much deserve our united care and endeavours as the fading, transitory things of this lower world? II. GOD'S POSITIVE INSTITUTIONS CONCERNING IT. All the directions He gave to Moses concerning the tabernacle, concerning the priests, concerning the sacrifices, concerning the Sabbath and feasts, were institutions of a public nature, and supposed His worship, to which they all related, to be a public worship. He hath nowhere declared for the cessation of public worship; but, on the contrary, hath plainly intimated His will to have it continued, and promised that His presence shall propitiously attend on our Christian assemblies lawfully met in obedience to Him, as it formerly did on the Jewish. For the promise then was (Exod. xx. 24). So now it is wheresoever, *i.e.*, whether at Jerusalem as before, or in any other place, two or three, *i.e.*, any indefinite number, of you are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of you (Matt. xviii. 20). III. That public worship is the duty of all Christians may be proved likewise from THE VERY BEING AND ECONOMY OF THAT CHURCH. For, in the first place, if we consider what the Church simply is, we can have no other conception of it but of a number of people called together and chosen out of the unbelieving world, to profess the faith of Christ and to worship God according to the instructions which Christ gave. Now, a number of people, called out of the world to worship God after the same manner, and with unity and consent touching any instructions given them for that end, must in all reason be supposed to do this by meeting and assembling together. But if we consider it under that metaphor which the scriptures gives us of it when they call it Christ's body, and the several Christians that compose it, the members of that body (1 Cor. vii. 27). This will still further convince us that Christians are bound to worship God in communion; for why is the Church represented as a body but to signify to us its unity? And what can that agreement be which unites Christians so as to make them one Church or spiritual body but their joining together in the performance of those offices for which they were incorporated, and therefore surely in the worship of God, which is none of the meanest of those offices. And yet this will further appear from the order and government of it. For if it had no need of public worship, why are we

so solemnly admitted into it, and excluded out of it? (*Joseph Watson, D.D.*) *The duty of regular attendance at public worship*:—There is one fact implied in the text, you perceive, and one asserted. First, it is implied that even in the early time when this Epistle was written Christians were accustomed to meet statedly for the worship of God and to receive the word of exhortation. You do not doubt this. It is the dictate of our nature that God should be honoured and worshipped. Men are social, and constituted to act in concert. Then, moreover, Christianity is pre-eminently a social religion. There is another fact, you perceive, directly asserted in the text, that it was the manner of some to neglect this practice of statedly meeting together. It appears wonderful, indeed, that such individuals should have been among the members of any of the apostolic churches. But let us consider two or three circumstances that may mitigate our surprise. The parties spoken of had forsaken the practice of Christian assembling. They had once observed it. There was a time when they delighted to frequent the place of prayer, and to sit at the feet of those who had the rule over them, and to obey them. What had made them forsake them? For one thing, whether they were Jews or Gentiles, there was the scorn of the world, and often its wild and bloody violence. To be a Christian made a man the mark for obloquy and persecution. The attending at Christian assemblies was the most palpable avowal of having embraced Christianity. It was throwing down the gauntlet to the un-Christian world. With many, through God's grace, this only served to brace their minds to the conflict and endurance. With others we can hardly wonder the effect was different. The scorn and persecution were too much for them. They yielded and abjured the gospel. Some of them, perhaps, merely temporised and forsook assembling with their brethren. They gave up the Lord's Day and the sanctuary, vainly thinking that they might still retain their religion. For another thing, suppose that the "some" of whom the text speaks had been Jews. We can see how difficult it would be for them to part with their seventh day and adopt the first instead of it as their day of holy solemnities The step must have been a great shock to their established habits, and roused against them the fury of their countrymen who continued to reject the claims of Christ. For one thing more, suppose that the "some" of whom the text speaks had been Gentiles. How difficult must it have been for them to form the habit of keeping the Lord's Day! Here is a heathen man who has known nothing either of Sabbath or Sunday, of a day of rest or a day of worship. He is convinced by the preaching of the gospel, believes, is baptized, and received into a Christian church. But he is in business, perhaps, and has partners. If he will keep the Lord's Day, they know nothing about it; and they will not have their arrangements disturbed by his new-fangled notions and scruples. In whatever position of life he is, the assembling with other Christians subjects him to manifold annoyance, not to say loss, and marks him out as having separated from the mass of his countrymen. For a time, while he is powerfully under the influence of the Christian truth that has laid hold of him, he is seen regularly in his place in the sanctuary. By and by his new impressions begin to lose their vividness and his old habits to regain somewhat of their power. His attendance becomes irregular. These considerations help us to understand the melancholy fact mentioned in the text. But they do not justify it. The case of those "some" was adduced by the writer as a warning to others, and it may also serve as a warning to us. Allow me, by way of application of our subject, to ask you all to receive from it the word of serious exhortation. 1. Consider the fact implied in the text concerning the existence of a stated day for Christian worship among the Hebrews is a fact palpable and acknowledged by us. Here is the sacred ordinance. It is ours. We ought to use is according to its design, and not forsake on it the assembling of ourselves together. 2. Consider none of the circumstances which I described, not to excuse but to explain the conduct of the "some," condemned in the text, can be pleaded by us. We were not brought up Jews, and the keeping of the first day holy does not clash in our minds with any reverence which we have been accustomed to attach to the seventh. We were not brought up Gentiles, in ignorance of God and Christ and immortality, trained to be of the earth earthy, so that the keeping of the Lord's Day should be to ourselves something new, and to all around us a thing outrageous and revolutionary. We are not exposed to any violence of persecution if we obey the exhortation before us. We are verily guilty, we have no excuse to allege, if we forsake the assembling of ourselves together. 3. Consider what high ends are answered by our assembling ourselves on the Lord's Day. Strength and beauty are in the sanctuary. 4. Consider the consequences likely to result from

neglecting the ordinances of the sanctuary are disastrous. The man who neglects them declines the open profession of his faith; he cuts himself off from the highest exercises of his nature and the purest sources of virtue and happiness. His indifference and carelessness will grow on him, till backsliding becomes desertion, and desertion will become rebellion, which can only issue in his outcasting himself from the presence of God and the beatific vision of heaven; a life ruined and a soul lost,—without God, without hope. (*Professor Legge.*)

The daily service:—The first Christians set up the Church in continual prayer (Acts ii. 46, 47). St. Paul in his Epistles binds their example upon their successors for ever (1 Tim. ii. 8; Col. iv. 3). Observe how explicitly he speaks, "I will therefore that men pray in *every place*";—not only at Jerusalem, not only at Corinth, not only in Rome, but even in England; in our secluded villages, in our rich populous busy towns, whatever be the importance of those secular objects which absorb our thoughts and time. Or, again, take the text, and consider whether it favours the notion of a change or relaxation of the primitive custom. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." The increasing troubles of the world, the fury of Satan, and the madness of the people, men's hearts failing them for fear, the sea and the waves roaring, all these gathering tokens of God's wrath are but calls upon us for greater perseverance in united prayer. Consider how this rule of "continuing in prayer" is exemplified in St. Peter's history also. He had learned from his Saviour's pattern not to think prayer a loss of time. Christ had taken him up with Him into the holy mount, though multitudes waited to be healed and taught below. Again, before His passion, He had taken him into the garden of Gethsemane: and while He prayed Himself, He called upon him likewise to "watch and pray lest he entered into temptation." In consequence, St. Peter warns us in his first Epistle, as St. Paul in the text, "The end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." Stated and continual prayer, then, and especially united prayer, is plainly the duty of Christians. And if we ask how often we are to pray, I reply, that we ought to consider prayer as a plain privilege, directly we know that it is a duty, and therefore that the question is out of place. Surely, when we know we may approach the mercy-seat, the only further question is, whether there be anything to forbid us coming often, anything implying that such frequent coming is presumptuous and irreverent. Now, Scripture contains most condescending intimations that we may come at all times. For instance, in the Lord's Prayer petition is made for *daily* bread for *this* day; therefore, our Saviour intended it should be used daily. Further, it is said, "give *us*," "forgive *us*"; therefore it may fairly be presumed to be given us as a social prayer. If, however, it be said that family prayer is a fulfilment of the duty, without prayer in church, I reply, that I am not at all speaking of it as a duty, but as a privilege; I do not tell men that they must come to church, so much as declare the glad tidings that they may. This surely is enough for those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness," and humbly desire to see the face of God. Doubtless, even in your usual employments you can be glorifying your Saviour; you can be thinking of Him. Doubtless: only try to realise to yourself that continual prayer and praise is a privilege; only feel in good earnest, what somehow the mass of Christians, after all, do not recognise, that "it is good to be here"—feel this, and I shall not be solicitous about your coming; you will come if you can. I account a few met together in prayer to be a type of His true Church; not actually His true Church (God forbid the presumption!) but as a token and type of it;—not as being His elect, one by one, for who can know whom He has chosen but He who chooses?—not as His complete flock, doubtless, for that were to exclude the old, and the sick, and the infirm, and little children;—not as His select and undefiled remnant, for Judas was one of the twelve—still as the earnest and promise of His saints, the birth of Christ in its rudiments, and the dwelling-place of the Spirit; and precious, even though but one out of the whole number, small though it be, belong at present to God's hidden ones; nay, though, as is likely to be the case, in none of them there be more than the dawn of the True Light and the goings forth of the morning. Some, too, will come at times, as accident guides them, giving promise that they may one day be settled and secured within the sacred fold. Some will come in times of grief or compunction, others in preparation for the holy communion. Nor is it a service for those only who are present; all men know the time, and many mark it, whose bodily presence is away. We have with us the hearts of many. How

soothing and consolatory to the old and infirm who cannot come, to follow in their thoughts, nay, with the prayers and psalms before them, what they do not hear! Shall not those prayers and holy meditations, separated though they be in place, ascend up together to the presence of God? Who then will dare speak of loneliness and solitude, because in man's eyes there are few worshippers brought together in one place? or, who will urge it as a defect in our service, even if that were the case? Who, moreover, will so speak, when even the holy angels are present when we pray, stand by us as guardians, sympathise in our need, and join us in our praises? (*J. H. Newman, D.D.*) *Why go to church?*:—It is a rather remarkable fact that in this text we have the nearest approach that is found in the New Testament to a commandment enjoining what we now call attendance at public worship; and the reason for such attendance, which is suggested by this mild remonstrance against neglect of the practice, is rather notably different from that with which we have nowadays become familiar. We have been so long accustomed to regard going to church on Sunday in the light of a religious duty, and indeed as almost the chief religious duty of the week, that it must surprise us, I believe, to find that the duty is scarcely enjoined at all in the New Testament. The observance of the Sabbath was no part of the original motive of the early Christians for the weekly assembling of themselves together; and in the absence of any other express commandment, it is plain that some spontaneously felt need and desire led them to seek such fellowship. What that need and desire were could hardly be better expressed than in the first words of our text, "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works." It was consideration of one another as interested in one common cause, as devoted to one common Lord and Master, as having one great end of life in view, and as needing common counsel and encouragement in the pursuit of that end, that led them to practise the assembling of themselves together. They did not think they were serving or glorifying God in any specially sacred manner by meeting together for praise and prayer on the Lord's Day—Christ had given them very different ideas of how God should be served and honoured. It was because their whole life was consecrated to God and to the service of Jesus Christ, in the practise of love and of good works, that they felt the need and followed the practice of meeting together to consider one another, and comfort and encourage one another, in the difficult task of living such a life in the world. And it will be of little use, we may be sure, to admonish and exhort men to the maintenance of the ancient custom of meeting for prayer and praise on the Lord's Day, unless we can show in ourselves and excite in them the ancient spirit of consecration to God and devotion to Christ which first originated and inspired the custom. What we ought to aim at is not to get careless, unspiritual persons to come to church—that is putting the cart before the horse—but to get them awakened to some thoughtful interest in Christ and His salvation. It was Christ that drew men to the Church in the first place, not the Church that drew them to Christ; the ardour of faith and hope in Christ drew them together to form a Church, and the contagion of faith and example of love among those who first formed the Church was the strongest force to draw others into it. We have almost completely inverted this order of cause and effect now, and instead of awakening interest, first in Christ and then in the Church, we put the Church first, and trust almost entirely to the influence of the weekly assembly of the Church to bring men to Christ. When we do get back into the vivid conception of this primitive principle and motive of the "assembling of ourselves together," it will work great changes not only in the extension of the practice of going to church, but also in the way we organise and conduct the worship and teaching of the Church. Churches will not depend then so much upon good preachers and pastors as upon good people; ministers' sermons will then be fewer, more practical and business-like, serious and urgent as an "officer's address to his troops before a battle," "addressed by a soldier to soldiers." More, perhaps, of the ministers' time will be given to teaching the rudiments of the faith to the young, and less to reiterating first principles to the old. And Christians will meet not as "hearers," nor yet simply as "worshippers," but as ardent and hopeful co-operators in a great common cause which each is anxious to understand his own part in, and to which each daily and nightly applies all his own mind and heart and contriving skill and practical energy. (*J. C. Barry, M.A.*) *The duty and benefit of social worship*:—I. THE PRINCIPAL ENDS WHICH REAL CHRISTIANS HAVE IN VIEW IN ASSEMBLING THEMSELVES TOGETHER. 1. To express submission to the authority of the Lord their God. 2. To improve in spiritual knowledge. II. SOME OF THE IMPORTANT EFFECTS OF ATTENDING ON ASSEMBLIES FOR WORSHIP. 1. The

belief of a dependence upon God, as the Author of all our blessings, is preserved and enlivened in the mind. 2. We exercise and improve the benevolent affections of the heart. 3. We are training up for the devotional exercises of the heavenly temple. III. "EXHORTING ONE ANOTHER, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." 1. If exhortation was necessary in the days of the Apostle Paul, it may be easily admitted that it is equally so in ours. Let me exhort you to remember that weekly worshipping assemblies are not an appendage to Christianity which we may add or keep off at pleasure. 2. The text adds this awful reason for exhortation, "and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." A regular and devout improvement of the Lord's Day, is an excellent preparation for meeting the Lord when He comes. The transition seems natural and easy, from a house of prayer on earth to a house of praise in heaven. (*Robert Foote.*) *Attendance on public worship* :—I. CONSIDER OUR OBLIGATIONS TO ASSEMBLE TOGETHER FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD. 1. Public worship is sanctioned by Divine authority, and the example of the saints in every age. 2. Public worship has the special promise of the Divine presence. 3. The profit and advantage arising from public worship require also to be considered. Our own interest is concerned, as well as the glory of God (Psa. xxxvi. 8, xcii. 13). There the ignorant are instructed, the languid are quickened, the broken-hearted are bound up, and the wounded in spirit healed. II. INQUIRE INTO THE CAUSES OF NEGLECT. 1. In some instances it arises from a spirit of scepticism and infidelity. 2. In others it arises from a spirit of profaneness, daring to resist convictions, and to trifle with obligations which cannot be denied. 3. Neglect of public worship frequently proceeds from sloth and idleness. 4. It is often the effect of self-conceit and pride. There are some who think they know enough, and have no need of instruction; they are also good enough, and need not to be made better. 5. The interference of personal prejudices too frequently prevents an attendance on the means of grace, but can never be urged in justification. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *Public worship* :—The text does not point to secret devotion, but to open religious fellowship. There is a devotion which is to be hidden from all human knowledge, in which the soul discloses itself without reserve to the scrutiny of the Most High. To neglect such devotion is to dry up the springs which rise from the very rocks. Without it there can be no spiritual life. Yet there is something beyond it. What solitude begins sympathy completes. There is a subtle and indescribable power of sympathy in public worship. Individually we sing the more expressively because of the animating song of those who are round about us. Our idea of worship is enlarged. We get glimpses of that splendid possibility—a whole world engaged in common prayer! Public worship helps us to see deeply and clearly into the unity of human nature. On the streets we are many; in the sanctuary we are one. In taste and whim and special fancy we are an innumerable throng; but in the true hunger of the heart we are as one man. In other places we may meet as groups, but in the house of prayer we meet as a race. A wondrous, sad, glorious sight, is a great congregation of worshippers. What histories are represented! What madness of ambition, what recklessness of the best gifts, what sin done in darkness, what plots of avarice, what broken-heartedness, what wealth, poverty, loneliness, pain, what strength, fury, nobleness, truth! yet we are all one, one in sin, one in want. I pray God we may be one in the ineffable ecstatic joy of pardon through the Son of God. If I may put the matter personally, I do not hesitate to say that I must have the benefit of public worship if I would save myself from spiritual languor. Unrelieved solitude narrows a man's nature. We correct and complete one another. We settle each other into right proportions. We see greater breadths of the bounty and love of God when we compare our common experiences or utter our common thanksgivings. It is not uncommon to hear men talking in some such words as—"When I worship I go out into the temple of nature: I uncover my head in the aisles of the forest: I hush myself under the minster roof of the stars: I listen to the psalm of the sea." This kind of talk sounds as if it meant something. It touches one side of life; how far it touches the other remains to be seen. As Christians we claim to have sympathy with nature. From the rash talk of certain avowed lovers of nature it would seem that Christians, by reason of their Christianity, did not know the sea when they were looking at it, and that they required to have the sun pointed out with a rod before they could distinguish it from the moon. I love nature. I have seen some of her pictures, and heard many of her voices. She is always full of suggestion. But let me tell you something farther. I will be frank that you may understand me. Nature is to me often

the saddest of all sights. She is but a succession of phases. I cannot keep her at any point. The spring dies; the summer vanishes; autumn delivers her gifts and turns away; winter is a presence I would not detain; the sun is but for an appointed time, and the stars withdraw long before I have half-counted them. More than that. Nature is but an alphabet or, at most, a primer. I soon begin to find that she has no answer to my deepest wants, and that I can ask her questions which will stagger her with dismay. My heart aches, and I ask for a physician that can extract the pain. My conscience tortures me and I cry for rest. Then I find the spiritual sanctuary; I pass within the veil; I see the Cross, the Priest, the Sacrifice, and ever after, nature is but an outer court, and Grace is the presence-chamber of the Redeeming King. Application: 1. Come to worship. 2. Resist the influence of a bad example, "as the manner of some is." The object of public worship is twofold. 1. Edification, having in view the stimulus and encouragement of believers, and their defence from manifold temptation. 2. Conversion, having in view the salvation of those who are afar off. A special blessing is theirs who love the house of God; their own dwelling shall be watched and blessed. "They shall prosper that love Thee." (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Religious assemblies*:—Assemblies are of many kinds; amongst the many differences of them this is one, that some are civil for matters of this life; some are religious, for matters spiritual, wherein we do converse with God and amongst ourselves. These assemblies were instituted and observed for public converse with God, and these were occasional or more solemn and observed at set and determinate times, and in times of peace and liberty in certain convenient places erected or separated for that end and use. Hence synagogues and Sabbaths amongst the Jews. The heathen also had their temples and sacred places and their solemn times, yet abused to superstition and idolatry. The light of nature doth dictate that God is to be worshipped not only in private, but in public, and that this worship, if orderly performed, requires not only certain solemn times but also convenient places; yet the times were always more considerable than the places. To enjoy these assemblies and have liberty in public to serve their God, both in convenient places and at certain and solemn times, was a great mercy of God and a great benefit to man. For in these they testified their union and agreement in the same faith and worship. And we are very brutish or very inconsiderate if we understand not the excellency of these religious public assemblies, and very unthankful if we acknowledge not the benefit of them. The persecuting enemies of the Church knew full well if they could scatter these meetings and conventions, demolish their houses of worship, and deprive them of their solemn and sacred times, they might do much to destroy Christian religion. David did love the place where God's honour dwelt vehemently, desired God's presence in that place, and sadly complained to his God when he was banished from these holy and blessed assemblies, and yet those were far inferior to these of the gospel. And doleful was that lamentation of the captives of Jerusalem when God had taken away His tabernacle, as if it were a garden, destroyed the places of assemblies, had caused the solemn feasts and Sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and had despised in the indignation of His anger the king and the priest (Lam. ii. 6). (*G. Lawson.*) *Attendance on the means of grace*:—Bear with me while I set before you some of the causes which prevent them from obeying the decision of their consciences, and the command of God. The mechanic has been so severely wrought during the week, that he indulges a little longer in bed on the Sabbath morning, and the hour of meeting arrives and passes by ere he can get himself prepared; or if he happens to attend, he is so wearied out with the exercises, to him tedious, that he remains at home during the rest of the day, reading the newspapers, lolling in listless apathy, or entertaining a friend. The man of business is so much immersed in his merchandise that he can find no time to go to the house of God; what with arranging his books, answering letters, and conversing on the present position and future prospects of trade, he is entirely engaged; and if perchance he may drop in occasionally, his restless and discontented aspect bespeaks that his mind is not there. One considers he fully discharges his duty when he goes once to church; more than that he esteems unnecessary and inconvenient. Such seize upon the quiet that prevails, to amuse themselves with their families, spend an afternoon with a neighbour, or take a walk in the fields. Others are only found in the house of prayer, on the fashionable diet, forenoon or afternoon as it may chance to be; they would not be obeying the rules of etiquette if they departed from this custom, and if they transgressed would certainly be included among the common people, or be counted

too serious and strict; after this they could not appear at the gay tea-table, and to be excluded from any one of these is a punishment greater than they are able or willing to bear. Ought these things to be so? Oh! it is an awful and overpowering reflection, but not more alarming than it is true, that for every sermon which you have not heard, you will have to account, if you had an opportunity to hear it, but thoughtlessly or wilfully allowed it to glide past unembraced and unimproved. If ye despise the services of the Church militant, how do you expect to join those of the Church triumphant? By an immutable law of our nature, our happiness does not consist so much in the objects that surround us, as in the harmony which subsists between these and our own dispositions and tastes. Now suppose you were this instant translated to the general assembly and church of the first-born, do you think you could find any satisfaction in the fellowship of the saints above, when it is uncultivated and even avoided below? (*C. F. Buchan.*) *Attendance on the House of God*:—What do you mean, you who say, "If we do not go to church, we read good books—besides our Bible; and we are not guilty like some, of traversing the fields, and setting a bad example to others"? This will not stand examination. What would you think of a steward who, instead of assigning to each of the servants under him his work and his wages, should say, "I do not indeed do this, but I read my master's letters, and carefully peruse his instructions"? To what purpose, when you do not fulfil the design of the letter and instructions he sends? You read good authors, but to what purpose, since these very authors will be called to witness against you, that you did not attend to what they said in reference to the very first of duties—that of publicly calling upon God and hearing His Word? Oh think here again of precious opportunities neglected, past, never to be recalled! I went in by mistake, one Sabbath-day, to the house, not of the invalid I intended to visit, but of one in health. The inmates had not been in church; the mother was in the attitude of leaning half asleep upon a table, and another person, a stranger, slumbering by the fire; I asked the cause of absence from the house of God. The reply was, with sharpness of tone, "One cannot be always hearing preaching." No! said I, you will not always have it in your power; we had need to improve the day of visitation; now is the time accepted. A short time elapsed, when the individual who made the remark above expressed, sickened, and in a few hours expired! Various are the excuses for absence; one has not a seat he wished to have had; another wants some article of clothing; another thinks he or she got cold the last time of being in church; another says he intends coming again by and by, "and you will be sure to see me now and then at the church," for he at least has no idea of never coming more. Are your reasons of absenting frequently from church such as will appear satisfying to you on a death-bed? I once visited a man who had frequently defended the irregularity of his attendance at the house of God, on the ground particularly, that being somewhat skilful in treating the diseases of cattle, he was often sent for when he was on his way to church. This might have happened now and then, but as a defence of frequent absence was not tenable. I saw him when on his dying bed, and he then, with grief, acknowledged that he urged an apology which was very insufficient, and "Oh!" said he, "that I had it in my power to come and hear the Word of God; I did not go when I might and ought to have gone, and now gladly would I go, but am not able. What would I give to hear another sermon!" (*William Burns.*) *The public worship of God*:—There are many persons who, while they acknowledge themselves to be Christians, yet depreciate the public worship of God. The reasons assigned for this line of conduct are various. I shall mention some of those which I have actually heard urged. The labouring man says, "It may do very well for you rich people to go to church twice, but it is needful for a poor man to have some rest on the Sabbath." The rich man considers church-going habits as of great importance for the working classes, but he thinks such strictness unnecessary in his own station. One individual says that he can very well learn his duty in half an hour of a forenoon. Another, still supposing that to learn our duty is the only purpose of attending church, observes, "We hear more than we practise." A third, partly looking around him on the conduct of others, and partly judging by the state of his own mind, says that those who go to church twice a day are not better than their neighbours. A young man, possessing a highly intellectual mind, and ardent in the pursuit of knowledge, complains that at church he hears nothing new, nothing which he cannot learn as well from books, and therefore, while he goes once a day to please his parents or friends, he spends the rest of the day among his books. One who goes to church, perhaps merely from habit, without ever thinking of the principles on

which habit should be based, says that his ideas of God's power and goodness are much better excited by a walk among the objects of nature than by sitting in the close and unwholesome atmosphere of a church. Another individual of a speculating mind, quite absorbed in the pursuit of science, when in church finds that his attention is not arrested by the preacher, that his thoughts are unconsciously roaming among his favourite studies, and under the guise of avoiding this sin, which he thinks he cannot otherwise help, he forsakes the public worship of God, and makes his occupations entirely worldly. The example of our blessed Saviour I have heard stated as a reason why medical philanthropists should neglect or but rarely attend on the public exercises of religion; and to have been visiting the sick is considered an unanswerable excuse for absence from church. Lastly, it has been gravely alleged that there is no commandment in Scripture for going to church twice a day. To notice this last argument, in the first place, I at once acknowledge that there is no commandment for going twice to church; but it must be recollected that neither is there any commandment for going once. The Bible does not contain a code of minute rules, but a series of principles which are much better fitted for our guidance, and which we ourselves are to apply to even the smallest concerns of life. The man who has the fear of God in his heart, and who is constrained by the love of Christ, will need no specific commandment as to worshipping God in public as well as in private, on the Sabbath as well as on other days. It is urged, however, that God may be worshipped in any place; and a great deal is said about the suitableness of the God of universal nature being adored amidst His works of rural scenery. This is just. Those whom the providence of God plainly excludes from the sanctuary may enjoy His presence with them in the several places of their seclusion, and will find the want of public ordinances fully compensated by that gracious presence. But it is to be doubted whether the man who purposely takes a rural walk in preference to the service of the church, who makes Sunday the day for doing all the odd pieces of work which have been left over from the week—it is much to be doubted whether he can rationally expect the blessing of God on his soul. He is a God of order; He has blessed the Sabbath, and sanctified it specially for His worship; and the wilful forsakers of His ordinance have no right to expect His blessing on their voluntary substitutes for His appointed sacrifice. Christianity is a religion of mercy, and I would not for a moment depreciate or discourage the services paid to the sick on Sunday. But we must recollect, that our Lord never neglected the public worship of the temple or synagogue, and that His cures on the Sabbath were usually performed on those who had come to attend that worship. In the commencement of my professional life, while honestly desirous of regularly attending church, I yet satisfied myself that this was beyond my power, and considered it a subject of regret that my duty called me away from the house of God. I continued in this belief for a considerable time, till meeting with the life of Mr. Hey of Leeds, a name in the first rank as a surgical authority, I found it stated that "he rarely missed attending the morning and afternoon service of the Church." This impressed my mind much, and I argued with myself that if he, with his extensive practice, could accomplish this, it must be still more easy for a young man with a limited practice. I resolved, at least, to attempt it; and by a better arrangement of my time, by paying many visits on Saturday, and by leaving only the necessary ones for Sabbath, I generally found myself at liberty to attend divine service both forenoon and afternoon. (*Wm. Brown, M.D.*) *Weather or no*:—When Theodore Hook, the celebrated humorist, arrived at a friend's late for dinner, the host supposed "that the weather had deterred him." "Oh," replied Hook, "I had determined to come, weather or no." Be this the resolve of all who have no valid excuse, "I am determined regularly and punctually to attend the sanctuary, weather or no!" (*Sword and Trowel.*) *Christian fellowship*:—You and I know that it is one of the sweetest things outside of heaven to talk to one another, and to exchange notes of our experience. As nations are enriched by commerce, so are Christians enriched by communion. As we exchange commodities in trade, so do we exchange our different forms of knowledge while we speak to one another of the things of the kingdom. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Working men's objections to public worship*:—A meeting of working men was convened in Camden Town, in order to learn why they as a class were "conspicuous by their absence" from public worship. The following were twenty of the reasons assigned. No. 1. I like to walk out on Sundays to see the works of the Creator. 2. The church is hot and close, and I like to get into the fresh air. 3. The world is God's house; I can worship God anywhere. 4. What's the use of going to listen to a man reading a discourse? I could do that as

well as him. 5. I can read and pray at home quite as well as at church. 6. I work hard all the week; Sunday is the only day I can be with my family. 7. Sunday is the only day I've got to attend to my garden. 8. I mend my children's shoes on Sundays. 9. I go to see my daughter who is in service on Sundays. 10. The sermons are dull and the ministers want talent. 11. On Sunday mornings I attend to my private business, in the afternoons and evenings I rest. 12. I want to read the newspaper on Sundays. 13. I wouldn't go to be a hypocrite. 14. If I go I cannot have my pipe, which I enjoy after a week's work. 15. My dress is not good enough to go in. 16. They preach, but very few of them practise. 17. When I've got the will to go, I'll go. 18. Going to church won't carry me to heaven. 19. It's all done to frighten the people and to keep them down. 20. I had enough of religion and imprisonment at the Sunday school. (*The Christian.*) *Wanted*:—A patent umbrella, warranted to turn a Sunday rain, and protect the owner from a Sunday sun. The ordinary umbrellas are ample for all the other days of the week; but then you know that Sunday rains and Sunday sunshine are much more trying. Such an invention might swell the attendance at many of our churches on rainy and hot Sabbaths, and might bring out the very people who most need to "renew their strength." (*Anon.*) *The perils of religious isolation*:—The sun is necessary to health. Important changes take place in the constitution of the blood in consequence of the cutaneous vessels on the surface of the body not being freely exposed to its oxygenating and life generating influence. It is a well-established fact that, as the effect of isolation from the stimulus of light, the fibrine, albumen, and red blood-cells become diminished in quantity, and the serum or watery portion of the vital fluid augmented in volume, thus inducing a disease known to physicians and pathologists by the name of leukæmia, an affection in which white instead of red blood-cells are developed. This exclusion from the sun produces the sickly, flabby, pale anæmic condition of the face, or exsanguined, ghost-like forms so often seen among those not freely exposed to air and light. The absence of these essential elements of health deteriorates by materially altering the physical composition of the blood, thus seriously prostrating the vital strength, enfeebling the nervous energy, and ultimately inducing organic changes in the structure of the heart, brain, and muscular tissue. Now that which the sun is to the body, friendship is to the soul. Wherever you find a nature withdrawn from the genial influences of friendship you will observe traces of abnormal weakness and melancholy. In the shadow of solitude man loses the ruddy glow of joyousness, and a gloomy misanthropy and sometimes mental decrepitude are apt to derange all his affections. True friendship is the sun of the soul. It stimulates, strengthens, and gladdens our whole being. (*Scientific Illustrations and Symbols.*) *Worship no waste*:—Religious duties may be likened to the food and drink which are given to the reaper during his labours under the summer's sun; it is evident in a mathematical point of view, that he must lose a little time in eating his dinner, drinking, and taking a few moments' rest. Yet who would call that wasted time? (*Mons. Landriot.*) *The social genius of Christianity*:—Communion is strength, solitude is weakness. Alone, the fine old beech yields to the blast, and lies prone upon the sward; in the forest, supporting each other, the trees laugh at the hurricane. The sheep of Jesus flock together; the social element is the genius of Christianity. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Absence from week-night services*:—"Prayer-meeting and lecture as usual on Wednesday evening in the lecture-room. Dear brethren, I urge you all to attend the weekly meetings. 'Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together.'" Some of the "dear brethren" deported themselves in this way: Brother A. thought it looked like rain, and concluded that his family, including himself of course, had better remain at home. On Thursday evening it was raining very hard, and the same brother hired a carriage, and took his whole family to the Academy of Music, to hear M. Agassiz lecture on the "Intelligence of the Lobster." Brother B. thought he was too tired to go, so he stayed at home and worked at the sledge he had promised to make for Billy. Sister C. thought the pavements were too slippery. It would be very dangerous for her to venture out. I saw her next morning, going down street to get her old bonnet "done up." She had an old pair of stockings drawn over her shoes. Three-fourths of the members stayed at home. God was at the prayer-meeting. The pastor was there, and God blessed them. The persons who stayed at home were each represented by a vacant seat. God don't bless empty seats. (*United Presbyterian.*) *Influences which ought to radiate from the sanctuary*:—Ruskin discovered a very ancient inscription on the church of St. Giacomo di Rialto, Venice, which reads, "Around this temple let the merchant's law be just, his weights be true, and his

covenants faithful"—a beautiful epitome of the influences which ought to radiate from the sanctuary, to elevate and purify the world around. He says of the discovery, it is "the pride of my life." *Public worship—a reminder:*—A clergyman relates the following:—"Several little girls were in my study, seeking counsel to aid them in becoming Christians. One of them, a dear child, not much more than eleven years old, said, 'I have not been to two or three of the meetings lately.' Desiring to test her, I answered, 'It does not make us Christians to attend meetings, Lizzie.' 'I know that,' she replied at once; 'but it keeps it in my mind.'" *Absence from worship:*—One Sunday morning a lady, stepping into a hackney-coach in order to ride to a place of worship, asked the driver if he ever went to church. She received the following reply: "No, madam; I am so occupied in taking others there, that I cannot possibly get time to go myself!" *One benefit of regular church-going:*—A devoutly pious man, who lived some six miles from the house of worship, once complained to his pastor of the distance he had to go to attend public worship. "Never mind," said the good minister, "remember that every Sabbath you have the privilege of preaching a sermon six miles long—you preach the gospel to all the residents and people you pass." *A blessing attends public worship:*—One winter day, a gentleman riding on horseback along a Kentucky road met an old coloured slave plodding on through the deep snow to the house of God, which was four miles from his home. "Why, uncle," cried the gentleman, "you ought not to venture out such a distance on such a day! Why in the world don't you stay at home?" "Ah, massa," was the answer, "I darn't do dat! 'Cause, you see, I dunno when de blessing gwine to come. An' 'spose it 'ud come dis snowy mornin', and I away? Oh, no! dat 'ud nebber do." Would God's service ever be dishonoured by empty houses of worship were all Christians possessed of such faith?

Exhorting one another.—*Exhorting one another:*—Amongst the social and friendly duties which seem to be recommended, is the duty of exhortation. Exhort one another. To what? To good works, without question; to everything that a Christian ought to do. Much of the same nature is the precept, Admonish one another, and warn one another. Exhortation ought to proceed from brotherly love, else it would be faulty in its motives, and unsuccessful in its attempts; and because it often is so, this has given rise to two splenetic observations, made by those who view human nature in the worst light. First, that every man is liberal of advice; secondly, that no man is the better for it. If a person exhort another, purely because he is a friend, and desire his welfare, the very manner will show the man; for love has an air which is not easily counterfeited; he will temper his advice with discretion and humility; he will add whatsoever is necessary to recommend it; and if a person be persuaded that he who gives him his advice would also give him anything else that he could reasonably desire, he is not a little disposed to attend to it. Exhortation comes most properly from superiors and from equals. It is part of the duty of rulers to subjects, parents to children, masters to servants, the elder to the younger, and friends to friends, since friendship always finds or makes a certain parity. It cannot be convenient or decent that every man, upon every occasion, should exhort every man; but every person has his inferiors, or his equals, and towards them he is to exercise this office upon all inviting opportunities. Besides, there is a sort of indirect exhortation, if I may so call it, to virtue and to goodness, which every Christian ought to exercise, even towards his superiors; and that is, to speak well of all those who deserve well of him; to praise good things and good persons; to which I shall not add, that he has the same call to blame those who are deficient, and who want either the capacity or the will of acting suitably to their office and rank; because censure is often as nearly related to censoriousness in reality as it is in sound, and is not a weapon fit for every hand to wield. But here, likewise, there is an indirect censure, as well as an indirect exhortation; and surely every one may assume the honest freedom to pass by in neglect and silence those who deserve reproach and disgrace. The office of exhortation is, in a more particular manner, incumbent upon us who are the ministers of the gospel; and we are expressly required to exhort, warn, admonish, incite, and reprove, with humble authority, and modest resolution, and meek integrity, and prudent zeal. There are particular seasons and occasions for particular exhortations: as when a person is advanced to any high station in the Christian republic; it is then expedient that he should be admonished to beware of himself, and to remember what God and men expect from him; and every one who deserves such a station will take it kindly to be thus reminded of his duty. (*J. Jortin, D.D.*)

So much the more as ye see the day approaching.—*The growing urgency of religion:*—I. THE NECESSITY OF

RELIGION INCREASES AS THE DAY APPROACHES. 1. Duties become more numerous and complicated as you advance in life, and you need religion to enable you to discharge them. 2. Circumstances will become more and more trying as you advance, and you will need religion to enable you rightly to bear them. II. THE OBLIGATIONS TO RELIGION INCREASE AS THE DAY APPROACHES. Sinner, each drop in the rich showers of mercy that are rained upon thee every moment has a voice, and that voice says, with imperial emphasis, "Yield yourself to God." III. THE OBSTRUCTIONS TO A RELIGIOUS LIFE INCREASE AS THE DAY APPROACHES. 1. Your insensibility increases. 2. Your indisposition increases. 3. Your incapacity increases. (*Homilist.*)

The day approaching:—A note of time is struck here, and the context shows that the apostle makes use of this note as a stimulus to Christian earnestness in every department of the Christian life. The expression "day" is a very common one in the Bible. It is used, as other words are, in various senses. It is used to signify the natural day of four-and-twenty hours; it is used to signify the artificial day, the rising and the setting of the sun, which varies at different times and seasons, because of the obliquity of the sphere; it is used to signify the civil day, which varies in the manner of counting according to the habits of the various nations of the world. But the expression "day" is used in Scripture in a less direct manner than this, to signify an indefinite period of time. It is used to express the forty years during which the Jews were in the wilderness, called "the day of temptation," that is, the period of temptation. And in this larger sense we read in Scripture of a "day" of grace, a "day of vengeance," a "day of death," a "day of judgment." Let us consider these. I. The apostle did not say to the Hebrews that their "DAY" OF GRACE WAS "APPROACHING," nor can I say so to you. Their day of grace had come, and so has yours. Your day of grace did not approach with this new year; you had it last year, you have had it all your years, you have it still—it has followed you into this new year. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." The gospel sun has risen upon you in all its light, in all its warmth, in all its privileges, in all its responsibilities. But there is a setting of the gospel sun as well as a rising. Of this the Hebrews are warned. The gospel is not always left in the same country, nor in the same part of the country; not always in the same town, nor in the same congregation in a town. Now, avail yourselves of these opportunities while you have them, and tell your neighbours to do the same. You are not all doing this as you ought. II. But, then, secondly, in many places and in many persons, where a day of grace was long enjoyed, there has also succeeded a "DAY OF VENGEANCE." "God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"; and the reaping is often in this world as well as the sowing. The retribution is not always kept for eternity; there is retribution in time. Opportunities are put an end to; domestic circumstances occur, withdrawing men from means of grace, from the gospel; distances are enlarged, and prosperity is diminished; expenses cannot be incurred, and opportunities cannot be enjoyed, as before. There is a solemn calamity. Domestic judgments fall also upon families; I say not in anger, because of means abused, but as a matter of fact, whatever the motive may be in Him who brings them. Without presuming to scan His reasons, we are commanded to observe His doings; and these things He does. He brings, in various ways, domestic and relative and personal judgments, which cut short, or greatly diminish, the opportunities of grace. Now in other ways days of vengeance, putting an end to days of grace, are brought upon men, as in national calamities. A day is approaching which may shake every throne and every established church in Christendom. And what then? What should Christians be prepared for? We should all be prepared for storms. How do we prepare for natural storms? Why, we build a strong house and have it fortified against the tempest. We take care that the doors and windows are made capable of resisting the impetuosity of the gale. We seek a hiding-place from the tempest; and in a climate like this we should be considered mad if, with the means of having a house over our heads, we were to wait until the storm came to get a house. We prepare the house for the storm, and we prepare it with the more earnestness because we see the storm approaching. What is to be done here, then, as ye see a day approaching when your means of grace may be removed—a day when even our own favoured country, hitherto comparatively quiet, may be disturbed. Is there, then, no possibility of a day approaching? And where should Christians be found? We have a new and living way of access to God; we have a High Priest over the house of God. We should "hold fast our profession," for "He is faithful that promised." And we should "consider one another," have a friendly eye to things around, consider

where failures are, kindly, but firmly, point them out, to "provoke unto love and to good works," and this "the more as ye see the day approaching." III. Though no such day as I have imagined should approach our favoured nation within our time, yet is there another "day approaching" which calls for preparation—a day which no power can ward off, no riches bribe. It may come suddenly to many of us; to all it is approaching with gradual, but determined and decisive step. It is giving notes of warning as it comes in many of us. "WE HAVE THE SENTENCE OF DEATH IN OURSELVES." It was Dr. Watts who said to a friend that came to see him on his death-bed, "You come now to see an old friend; we have talked on many subjects of learning, and criticism, and controversy; now none of these things suit me; I must now take that view of the gospel which the poorest Christian in the town can take as well as I." And so he died, in simple reliance on Jesus. See, then, my brethren, that you realise this reliance, "so much the more as ye see the day approaching." IV. "WE MUST ALL APPEAR BEFORE THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST." Every one of you "must give account of himself to God," where there will be no possibility of concealment, no doubtful examination of witnesses, no hesitation about facts, no cross-examination to ascertain what the facts were, but where all will be transparent to the Judge—all that we have done in the flesh, whether it were good, or whether it were bad. How shall we be ready for the "day" which is thus "approaching"? The answer is as before: no man shall stand in that judgment but the man who is in Christ Jesus. This is the only preparation for the judgment—"the day" of the judgment of God. (*H. McNeile, D.D.*) *The day approaching*:—I. NOTICE THE DAY APPROACHING. 1. The day of providential trial, when the judgments of God will fall on the wicked, and the Church of Christ will have to pass through the fires and floods of persecution. 2. Then the day of death is approaching—approaching us all, and perhaps is much nearer to us than we generally suppose. We see it approaching in every grey hair on the head, in every attack of disease, in every puncture of pain, in every token of decay, in every symbol of mourning, in every funeral procession, and in every open grave. 3. And the day of general judgment is approaching. Oh what separations, what disclosures of character, what wrecks of false hopes, what shrieks of despair, what bursts of joy, what strange transitions, will then be seen and heard! II. THE INFLUENCE WHICH THE DAY APPROACHING SHOULD HAVE UPON OUR PRESENT CHARACTER AND CONDUCT. 1. Be diligent and earnest in seeking your own personal salvation, "and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." 2. Then, next to this, be diligent and earnest in the discharge of all Christian duties, and the improvement of all your Christian privileges, "and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." (1) The first is, to live near to God, in a new spiritual state of regeneration and grace, in covenant union, in a holy walk and conversation, in child-like obedience, in fervent love, and in ardent desire: "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." (2) The second is, steadfastness in our religious views and professions, amidst all trials and temptations: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." (3) The third is, mutual affection, influence, and co-operation: "Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works." (4) The fourth is, a careful observance of the appointed seasons of conversation and worship: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." 3. Then you should be diligent and earnest in a cultivation of a spirit of weanedness from the present world, and of attachment to heaven and heavenly things, "and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." When that day comes, what a poor insignificant thing will this world appear! How low and brief its pleasures! How vanishing its wealth and honours! How dim and fading its brightest glories! How infinitely below the capacities and wants of an immortal mind! (*Wm. Gregory.*) *The day approaching*:—Time is like a ship which never anchors; while I am on board I had better do those things that may profit me at my landing, than practise such as shall cause my commitment when I come ashore. (*O. Feltham.*) *The hour-glass in the hand*:—There was an ancient custom of putting an hour-glass into the coffin of the dead, to signify that their time had run out—a useless notification to them. Better put the hour-glass into the hand of every living man, and show them the grains gliding steadily out. Soon all will be gone. (*New Cyclopedia of Illustrations.*)

Vers. 26, 27. **If we sin wilfully.**—*Apostasy*:—I. THE PREVIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES ESSENTIAL TO THE COMMISSION OF APOSTASY. 1. An accurate and extended acquaintance with the disclosures of the gospel. 2. A decided conviction of the truth and

authority of the gospel. 3. A partial experience of the power and excellence of the gospel. 4. A distinct and open profession of the gospel. II. THE PECULIAR FEELING INVOLVED IN THE COMMISSION OF APOSTASY. It must be done wilfully. 1. From sin committed through want of due information and conviction. 2. From sin committed through hasty inconsideration. 3. From sin committed through powerful and unexpected temptation. 4. From the occasional falls of the true believer, which are subsequently followed by deep, and perhaps speedy repentance. Apostasy is not one act of sin, but a continued state of mind and conduct. It is a falling away, persevered in to the close of life, and issuing in a state of hopeless wretchedness. III. THE AWFUL CONSEQUENCES RESULTING FROM THE COMMISSION OF APOSTASY. 1. It occasions a necessary exclusion from the attainment of mercy. 2. It induces a terrifying apprehension of coming wrath. (*Essex Remembrancer.*) *Left without a sin-offering*:—For those that abandon their Christian profession—"sin wilfully after" that they "have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." They could not return to the temple, and plead with God for mercy over the offerings which their fathers had presented to Him. The old covenant had passed away. Its priests had lost their consecration. Its altars had lost their sanctity. Its sacrifices had lost their power with God. There was now only one atonement for sin which God would regard; and if they turned away from that, there was nothing for them "but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." For a Jew to be left with all his sins upon him, and no sin-offering by which to invoke the Divine pardon, was for him to be condemned to intolerable despair. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*) *The danger of apostasy*:—1. The apostle is not here speaking of the common infirmities which may attend the godly, but of wilful transgressions; or, as David calls them, "presumptuous sins," from which he prayed to be delivered (Psa. xix. 13). 2. Neither are sins of ignorance intended, but such as are against light and strong conviction. To sin against knowledge is one of the greatest aggravations, and that which leads on to perdition. 3. The text speaks not of sins in general, though knowingly or presumptuously committed, but of some sin in particular, and such as excludes from the hope of salvation. Now this appears to be no other than an absolute and entire rejection of the truth which had been professedly received. Those who cast the Son of God from His throne must expect that He will cast them into hell. They divest Him of His glory, and He will cover them with disgrace. I. THE DEATH OF CHRIST WAS A REAL AND PROPER SACRIFICE FOR SIN. The sacrifices under the law were figurative: this was real and effectual. They were shadows: this was the substance. II. THE DEATH OF CHRIST IS THE ONLY SACRIFICE FOR SIN. III. THOSE WHO REJECT THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST ARE LEFT WITHOUT HOPE. 1. If Christ became a sacrifice, this will account for the treatment He met with both from the hands of God and man. 2. If the death of Christ be the only sacrifice for sins, let us not only hold fast this doctrine, but actually build upon it as the foundation of all our hopes and comfort. 3. As the passage which we have now considered speaks terror to those who either never embraced the doctrine of Christ's atoning sacrifice, or who have shamefully apostatised from it, so it speaks terror to them only. Such indeed are running a dreadful risk of unpardoned guilt and Divine displeasure, and it behoves them to take warning. But let those who put their trust in Christ crucified, and who know no other hope, rejoice and be exceeding glad; for He is able to keep that which they commit unto Him until that day. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) **The knowledge of the truth**—*Receiving the truth*:—1. By the truth is meant the true, pure and most certain doctrine of the gospel concerning Christ already come, faith and salvation. This is called truth because it is true, and most eminently and infallibly true, which is noways in anything false and erroneous, as being at first immediately revealed from God, the God of truth. It is called also the truth by way of eminency, as the most excellent truth revealed for man's eternal happiness. 2. Truth may be truth, and yet not known to any man or angel, and the truth was first known only unto God; yet it pleased Him, out of His great mercy, to reveal His mind to man, and in particular this truth of the gospel by Christ and His apostles, who made it known unto others, who by that means came to know it. This knowledge was not mathematical, physical, political, or metaphysical, as some use to speak, but theological and Divine, and a light above the light of nature. The word may signify not only knowledge, but acknowledgment of this truth, by a full assent upon conviction. And this might be caused, not only by outward revelation, information, and miracles, but also by the illumination of the Spirit, and supernatural gifts: for God goes far

with man, and doth much to save him: He many times penetrates his inward parts, and by His Divine light and power enters into his very heart, and all this to convert him. 3. They received this knowledge. God did not only offer it, but give it, which He might be properly said to do when they received it. They had it not by nature; for it is far above the natural man. They acquired it, but not by their own power and industry; neither did they merit it. Yet in this receiving they were not merely passive, yet passive because they could be active. God must do something without man, before he can actively receive, He must prevent him by revelation and information without, and by illumination and operation within, and this done, man may be active. For, to receive it is certainly an act not only of the understanding which assents, but of the will which approves. So that he both wittingly and willingly receives, and that with some delight, and proceeds to profession, and continues for a while to believe, approve, profess. Though this receiving of knowledge may seem only to be acknowledgment, yet it is something more. Truth is opposed to error, knowledge to ignorance, acknowledgment to dissent, approbation to rejection of this truth. (*G. Lawson.*) **Fearful looking for of judgment.**—*Fiery judgment*:—I. The word judgment may inform us that this justice is not legislative, but judicial; and, as judicial, not remunerative, but vindictive, which presupposeth crime and guilt in the party to be judged. This judgment is the decree of condemnation which determiues the penalty: and to signify how dreadful it is, it is said, metaphorically, to be fiery indignation. The words may be translated, the heat, or boiling, or burning of fire; that is fiery heat. By these terms the Spirit informs us of God's high displeasure against apostasy, and the severity of His justice, whereby He is resolved most fearfully to punish that sin, which is not barely a disobedience of some particular law, but a plain revolt. II. The parties that must suffer are adversaries: adversaries are apostates, who are not merely disobedient subjects, but revolters. III. There remains a certain fearful looking for of this judgment. 1. Though they never fear it, nor think of it, yet they are obnoxious to it. 2. This will certainly be their doom; and as they are obnoxious by law, they shall certainly suffer that which they have deserved. 3. If they ever seriously reflect upon themselves, and remember what they have done; as conscience will now and then lash them, and mind them of their crime, they must needs expect it, and their fear will be very great. For as they apprehend the peril, so will their fear be; and they cannot apprehend the judgment, but as very grievous, pressing hard upon them, and unavoidable, and so it will torment them before the time of execution. (*Ibid.*) *Foreboding of the judgment day*:—Traverse the earth—enter the gorgeous cities of idolatry, or accept the hospitality of its wandering tribes—go where will-worship is most fantastic, and superstition most gross—and you will find in man "a fearful looking for of judgment." The mythology of their Nemesis may vary—their Elysium and the Tartarus may be differently depicted—the Metempsychosis may be the passage of bliss and woe—still the fact is only confirmed by the diversity of the forms in which it is presented. (*R. W. Hamilton.*)

Vers. 28, 29. **Trodden under foot the Son of God.**—*Aggravated apostasy*:—I. THE APOSTATE TREADS UNDER FOOT THE SON OF GOD. The expression is metaphorical, and presupposeth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and affirmeth that He, though the Son of God, is trodden under foot. To tread a thing under foot is—1. To undervalue it, if it be of any worth. 2. To vilify it. 3. To vilify it very much. 4. To express this contempt by casting it upon the ground and trampling upon it, which is the greatest debasement, and is sometimes an expression of utter detestation. Thus Jezebel was thrown down upon the earth, and trampled upon by Jehu's horses. To vilify and debase things that are base is no fault; and to despise unworthy men is tolerable; but the apostate undervalues the Son of God; and the greater His dignity, the greater the indignity. He is not mere man, though man, yet as man the best of men; for He is the Son of God, and that not any kind of son, but the only begotten and beloved Son of God, the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person; and so the Son of God, that He is God. Thus neither the Person and Deity of Christ, nor His natures, nor the personal union of them, nor His transcendent gifts, nor His heavenly wisdom, nor His glorious works, nor His rare virtues, nor His great work of expiation, nor His glory and power, which He enjoys at the right hand of God, could anyways move him; but he debaseth Him that was higher than the heavens, as low as the dust under his feet; yet this debasement was only an act of his base mind, but could not in the least degree obscure the excellency of Christ. This is the first aggravation of apostasy.

II. He counteth the blood of the covenant, whereby he was sanctified, an unholy thing. 1. By the blood understand the sacrifice of Christ, so much magnified in the former chapter; for it is that blood by which Christ, entering the holy place of heaven, obtained eternal redemption; that blood which purgeth the conscience from dead works to serve the living God; that blood which confirmed the everlasting covenant, in which respect it is called the blood of the covenant. This covenant is called the covenant of grace, wherein God promiseth remission of sins, and the eternal inheritance of glory, upon condition of repentance and faith in Christ. And it is called the blood of this covenant because upon it the covenant was grounded, and by virtue of it all the promises thereof are made effectual. 2. This was the blood by which this apostate, upon his receiving the knowledge of the truth, was sanctified. For—(1) This blood, as offered and accepted of God, made his sin remissible. (2) Upon the profession of his faith his sin was, at least conditionally, pardoned and purged. (3) So long as he continued in his profession, and so far as he proceeded according to certain degrees in faith and the profession of it, so far he might be said to be in a state of justification, and not only to justification, but sanctification. 3. Yet this sanctifying blood the apostate counts unholy or common. To be common blood may be understood—(1) Such as hath no expiating and purging power. (2) Such as is no better than the blood of bulls and goats sacrificed. (3) Such as differs not from the blood of other men. (4) Such as is the blood of a malefactor, guilty and vicious person, and that is impure and unholy blood. So that the apostate, though he had received some kind and measure of sanctification from it, yet ascribed no more virtue and excellency to it than to common blood; denied the sanctifying power of it, nay, did account it unholy. Yet you must note, that though it be so vile in his conceit, yet it is really in itself the only sanctifying blood to all such as do sincerely believe. This is the second aggravation. III. The apostate doth despite unto the Spirit of grace. 1. This Spirit is not the spirit of man, neither is it any angel, nor any created person of substance; but it is an uncreated Spirit, the Spirit of God, so as that it is God; therefore the perfections and operations of God are predicated of it. 2. This Spirit is said to be the Spirit of grace. Thus He may be called in opposition to the spirit of bondage and fear, which is the spirit proper to the law. For the Spirit by the law, which had no expiation for sin, no promise of power to keep it, nor of pardon if transgressed, could work nothing but fear, which was a continued slavery. The Spirit of the gospel, which is the Spirit of Christ, promised and given in the gospel, is a Spirit of comfort and confidence. 3. They do despite unto this Spirit. In this despite there are injury, reproach, contempt; and the greater the person to whom the despite is done, the more heinous it is. This here meant is not done to man, but God; because done to that Spirit which is so the Spirit of God, that He is God. This is committed—(1) By resisting the sanctifying power of God. (2) By undoing all that God, by His Spirit, had done in him for his salvation. (3) By accounting the gifts, notions, motions of this Spirit, the works, delusions, and impulses of the devil; and that not only in himself, but in others sanctified by this Spirit, and endued with His gifts. This is a sin against God the Father, who loved us, and sent Christ to redeem us; against God the Son, who had shed His precious blood for the expiation of our sins; against God the Holy Ghost, who had begun the work of sanctification and consolation in us. (*G. Lawson.*) *The folly of rejecting Christ*:—It is as if a Venice glass should dispute against a marble wall. It is as if a little ship should run itself against a rock; the rock would soon split the ship, but the ship could not have hurt the rock. (*Ralph Robinson.*) *The murdered Christ*:—I do believe that a murderer would rather see the ghost of his murdered victim standing by his side, sitting at his table, looking at him through the curtains of his bed, confronting him in every society he visits, haunting him in solitude—I believe a man would rather see the ghost of a murdered victim following him everywhere than you would like to see the murdered Christ, whom your sins pierced on the Cross. (*B. W. Noel.*)

Ver. 30. **Vengeance belongeth unto Me.**—I. Vengeance belongeth to the Lord. By vengeance is meant vindicative justice punishing offenders, the acts whereof are condemnation and execution; and it is proper to a judge, as here it may be taken either for the power or the act and exercise of the power. The party to whom it belongs is the Lord, as He is the supreme and universal Judge; for He that is the supreme Law-giver must needs be the supreme Judge. Angels or men may have the use of it, but the propriety is in God; and that you may understand

it more fully, you must know that this power of punishing is an universal, an original power, as it belongs to God and none else. It extends to all persons, to all causes, and to these in all respects; for He hath jurisdiction over angels, and the consciences and immortal souls of men, and can arrogate spiritual and eternal punishments. II. As vengeance, so RETRIBUTION BELONGS UNTO THE LORD; and it may be considered, not only as it is a power or right to recompense, but the act and exercise of vindicative justice, and may include both the sentence and the execution, which is nothing else but a returning evil for evil, the evil of punishment for the evil of sin. The apostle in this follows the Septuagint, which turn it, "I will recompense," which seems to imply, that as He is—(1) Just to punish sin. (2) Hath a power of retribution. So (3) He will recompense and exercise this power, and that certainly. III. HE WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE. This may be understood two ways. 1. That God will judge the cause of His oppressed and persecuted people, by punishing and destroying their enemies; and this the context in Deuteronomy seems to imply. 2. That He will judge His people, and punish severely all apostates among them. Men may threaten and never condemn, they may condemn and never execute; but God will certainly do both. IV. THE LORD SAITH SO. Man might have said it, and it might have been otherwise; out of ignorance he might have been deceived, or out of pravity he might deceive others; or if any earthly judge, who knew his own mind and power, should have said so, yet he might change his mind, or want power; and so recompense might fail. But it is God who is Supreme Judge, who cannot be deceived, cannot deceive, cannot change His mind; who hath almighty power that saith so, and His word is His deed. If therefore He say, "I will recompense, I will judge"; recompense and judgment will certainly follow, they cannot fail. V. THEY KNEW IT WAS GOD WHO SAID SO; THAT GOD WHO COULD CERTAINLY DO AS HE HAD SAID. If any other had said it, and they had been ignorant of it, their fear had been less, though the danger had been as great as if they had known it. Seeing, therefore, it is the Lord who said it, and they knew that it was said, and that by Him, their fear should be answerable to the danger, and so much the greater, as their knowledge was more clear and certain. They knew this, and that by Scripture, whioh they believed to be the Word of God. Ignorance of this truth makes men secure and presumptuous, and so doth unbelief; this seems to prove the punishment to be unavoidable. (*G. Lawson.*) *Accurate scales:*—In the reign of King Charles I., the goldsmiths of London had a custom of weighing several sorts of their precious metals before the Privy Council. On this occasion they made use of scales poised with such exquisite nicety that the beam would turn, the Master of the company affirmed, at the two-hundredth part of a grain. Noy, the famous Attorney-General, standing by, and hearing this, replied, "I shall be loath, then, to have all my actions weighed in these scales." (*Bazendale's Anecdotes.*) *God avenges wrong:*—When a Chief Justice was spoken to of showing mercy to a prisoner before him, he said, "Let me remember that there is mercy due to my country." Have you travelled in the Alps? You will come to a magnificent and beautiful valley with flowing streams and exuberant foliage. A few miles—it may be a few steps—further, and you have a great mountain with its awful shadows, and threatening to hurl its mass over you. You cannot have the sunny valley without the frowning mountain. So there are changes in the scenery when you study the Divine working. There is the lowly valley where the flowers of redemption grow, and the waters of grace curl their eddies; and there is also the great white throne, glorious indeed, but great and terrible in its shadows, because of the intense light that shines upon it. The same engine that beneficently draws the train along will be an instrument of wrath and destruction to anything that crosses its path. God moves on the track of perfect holiness, not only bestowing blessing, but avenging wrong for the benefit of His universe. If the sinner throws himself across that track, the same law that moves Him to love will cause Him to punish the unrepenting sinner. (*A. P. Pierson, D.D.*) *Vengeance a Divine prerogative:*—A person happened to complain in the hearing of a pious man of some conduct which had been manifested towards him by his neighbours, and concluded by saying that he had a large portion of vengeance in store for them. "You have stolen it, then," was the answer, "for I know it does not belong to you of right, because God says, 'Vengeance is Mine; I will repay.'"

Ver. 31. **A fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**—*Is God love?* (With 1 John iv. 16):—A sermon on these two texts was published by Mr. Charles

Voysey, and entitled, "A challenge to the orthodox." The heading of the sermon puts the matter in an interrogative form: "Is God love? OR, Is it a fearful thing to fall into His hands?" The two ideas are regarded as incompatible, and evidently it is suggested that they are startling opposites. Now it will be for us to consider whether they are really opposites, and whether there is any contradiction of moral idea in them at all. I. THIS SEEMING CONTRADICTION IS OFTEN HARMONISED IN HUMAN LIFE. Most of us have known the love of home, as amongst the dearest experiences of earthly life; and we shall not easily forget the dewy eyes that looked so carefully into the trunk that was being packed for us with sacrificial love. True! but yet we can remember times when it was "a fearful thing to fall into our earthly father's hands"! The fatherly spirit seemed turned into a consuming flame of righteous anger. Nay, in cases of guilty betrayal, the deeper the parental love, the more intense the indignation at the harm done to some dear child of the home. And who can measure the terrible influences of sin in God's fair universe? Is His voice the only voice that is to be silent? Is His hand the only one that is not to hold the sword of justice? Is He who is the author of the eternal moral law, and who is the inspirer and quickener of all moral intuition, to be assailed as wanting in love, if by the lips of one of His own inspired apostles He declares that "it is a fearful thing to fall into His hands"? II. THIS SEEMING CONTRADICTION WAS HARMONISED IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST HIMSELF. All ages since the Redeemer's advent have at least agreed in the testimony that He was a Lord of love. And yet, while His whole life is a revelation that "God is love," He casts some clear light upon the truth that "it is a fearful thing to fall into His hands." Wicked men trembled as He read their hearts. He saw where sin was taking the forms of hypocrisy and hardness. And would any universe be beautiful or desirable that had not a retribution for such as these hardened hypocrites? Would it not be a fearful thing, if it were not "a fearful thing for them to fall into the hands of God"? Were they to "devour widows' houses for nothing"? Were they to be "full of all uncleanness," and yet meet no condemnation from the immaculate God? Where is justice in the universe, if they escape from "the wrath to come"? III. THIS SEEMING CONTRADICTION IS NOT A CHRISTIAN ONE ALONE. It is "a fearful thing to fall into the hands" of Nature, if you disobey her laws. The tempest will not let you play with the lightning; the precipice will not let you tempt her indulgence by plunging into the depths; the sea soon casts upturned and ghastly faces on to the shore if you tack amid the rocks, even though there be "beauty at the prow, and pleasure at the helm"! And what are we reminded of when Nature thus resents our negligence and ignorance? We are told that all these laws and powers could not be altered for one instant in the smallest degree without injuring man, and that to secure his well-being and safety all these laws are established. What would be the good of saying, Now you must choose one horn of this dilemma—"You cannot say, Nature is love, and yet it is a fearful thing to fall into her hands"? IV. THESE SEEMING CONTRADICTIONS HAVE BEEN HARMONISED WITHIN BY CONSCIENCE ITSELF. Instincts are often truer than arguments. We feel in relation to what is called crime that a merely reformatory system is not enough. It would be wrong to pass over their crimes, wrong to make Nemesis impossible! What? with their miserable victims of yesterday tortured, pillaged, traduced, and murdered! Would it be right to say, as does Mr. Voysey, "Love makes no bargain, and imposes no conditions; can never so betray itself as to say, 'Believe and thou shalt be saved,' but, 'thou shalt be saved whether thou believest or not!'" A fearful enough universe such an one would be; an altogether unmitigated misery to live in it. "Love imposes no conditions"! Is it so? Is there to be no "Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow"? I venture to affirm that the righteous instincts of human nature say emphatically, "Amen," as of old, to all these condemnations. (*W. M. Statham, M.A.*) *Future punishment a fearful thing*:—I. The text asserts that "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," and our first statement shall be, that SURELY IT IS SO; as we may certainly gather from several considerations. 1. It must be a fearful thing for impenitent sinners to fall into God's hand when we remember the character of God as revealed in His judgments of old (Deut. vii. 10; Isaiah lxvi. 6). What instances does the Scripture give of what Paul calls "the severity of God," and how true is it that "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"! 2. Pursuing our heavy task, we shall not draw your solemn attention to the words of the Saviour. Our Lord Jesus Christ we believe to be the incarnation of God, and to represent our God under a most tender aspect. It is a very remark-

able fact that no inspired preacher of whom we have any record ever uttered such terrible words concerning the destiny of the lost as our Lord Jesus Christ. 3. We feel that it must be a fearful thing to be punished for sin when you remember the atonement. 4. The conscience of every sinner tells him that there will be a wrath to come. Dying men who have lived in impenitence, have often exhibited fears that are not to be accounted for, except upon the supposition that the shadow of a terrible doom had cast itself upon their minds. II. Let me urge you NOT TO ATTEMPT TO DEPRIVE YOURSELF OF THE BENEFICIAL EFFECT WHICH A PROPER CONSIDERATION OF THIS DOCTRINE WOULD HAVE UPON YOU. 1. Do not deny the fact, at any rate if you do, be consistent and deny Scripture altogether. 2. Do not have the edge of this truth taken off by those who suggest a hope that though you may be punished for a time in the next world you will ultimately be destroyed and annihilated. 3. Some suppose that instead of annihilation, restoration awaits the lost. What can there be about hell fire to change a man's heart? 4. Some ungodly men say, "Well, you do not believe for a minute that there is any material fire, do you?" But if it were not so, do you think that soul punishment is a trifle? Why, man, it is the very soul of punishment. It is far more dreadful than bodily pain. III. CONSIDER HOW THIS TEXT IS PUT. The punishment to be endured is here described as falling into the hands of the living God. Will not that be fearful? But what could there be that would alarm the soul in falling into the hands of the living God? Let me remind you. You sinners, when you begin to think of God, feel uneasy. In a future state you will be compelled to think of God. That thought will torment you. You will have to think of God as one to whom you were ungrateful. You will feel remorse, but not repentance, as you recollect that He did honestly invite you to come to Him, that He did call and you refused. As you think of the happiness of those whose hearts were given to Him, it will make your miseries great to think of what you have lost. Well may the wicked gnash their teeth, as they note the overthrow of evil and the establishment of good! IV. IF THESE THINGS BE SO, THEN ACT ACCORDINGLY. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The New Testament revelation of God:*—Not one jot or title of the old revelation of God as a God of Righteousness is lost or cancelled. The moral teaching is stern and uncompromising as ever. God's love, which is Himself, is not the invertebrate amiability or weak good-naturedness to which some would reduce it. "The New Testament," it has been said, "with all its glad tidings of mercy is a severe book" (Church). For the goodness and the severity of God are, as it were, the convex and the concave in His moral nature. (*Aubrey L. Moore.*) *Future punishment:*—The Almighty will not appear as an injured individual avenging his wrongs, but as a righteous Judge administering the law. (*J. Howard Hinton, M.A.*) *The ethical value of a belief in retribution:*—David Mallet was a great free-thinker, and a very free speaker of his free thoughts; he made no scruple to disseminate his sceptical opinions whenever he could with any propriety introduce them. At his own table, indeed, the lady of the house (who was a staunch advocate for her husband's opinions) would often in the warmth of argument say, "Sir, we Deists." She once made use of this expression in a mixed company to David Hume, who refused the intended compliment by asserting that he was a very good Christian; for the truth of which he appealed to a worthy clergyman present, and this occasioned a laugh, which a little disconcerted the lady and Mr. Mallet. The lecture upon the *non credenda* of the free-thinkers was repeated so often, and urged with so much earnestness, that the inferior domestics became soon as able disputants as the heads of the family. The fellow who waited at table, being thoroughly convinced that for any of his misdeeds he should have no after-account to make, was resolved to profit by the doctrine, and made off with many things of value, particularly plate. Luckily he was so closely pursued that he was brought back with his prey to his master's house, who examined him before some select friends. At first the man was sullen, and would answer no questions put to him; but being urged to give a reason for his infamous behaviour, he resolutely said, "Sir, I had heard you so often talk of the impossibility of a future state, and that after death there was no reward for virtue, or punishment for vice, that I was tempted to commit the robbery." "Well, but, you rascal," replied Mallet, "had you no fear of the gallows?" "Sir," said the fellow, looking sternly at his master, "what is that to you, if I had a mind to venture that? You had removed my greatest terror; why should I fear the lesser?" (*Thomas Davies, on David Mallet.*) *In the hands of the living God:*—We are all, in one sense, in "the hands of the living God" (Psa. cxxxix. 7–10). In conversion, too, the sinner, in some sense, "falls into the hands" of God. The alien is

restored—the rebel is welcomed back again—the prodigal returns to his Father's house, and sinks into his Father's arms. Glorious privilege!—And yet, the sacred writer testifies, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Jehovah is here regarded as the God of vengeance. To fall into the hands of Jehovah as the unreconciled Thunderer, is certain ruin for the guilty soul of man. In that case, the righteous Governor fulfils upon the sinner the curses of the broken covenant of works; the dark and dreadful threatenings of His word upon the workers of iniquity are carried into execution; God meets men as an enemy, and His wrath blazes out against them. Nor does the mercy with which Christianity is suffused interfere with the execution of the threatenings of heaven upon those who finally reject the "great salvation." The very greatness of that salvation, and the very "meekness and gentleness of Christ," serve to aggravate their guilt, and to augment their punishment. Oh, now let the sinner fall into His hands as the hands of God in Christ, bidding him welcome to their kind and sheltering embrace; lest, hereafter, he "fall into His hands" as the hands of an avenging potentate—an unreconciled and desolating foe. (*A. S. Patterson.*)

Vers. 32–34. **Ye endured a great fight of afflictions.**—*The believing Hebrews exhorted:*—I. THE SUFFERINGS TO WHICH THE APOSTLE ADVERTS. "A great fight of afflictions." The term affliction is usually employed by us to denote bodily indisposition; but it is evident that the reference here is to persecution. The words, "a great fight," show that these Hebrews had a severe struggle to maintain; and it would be well for us to contrast the sufferings of the early Christians with what we have to endure. In addition to this general representation, the apostle proceeds to enumerate some of the special evils which they had to encounter. By the term "reproaches," we are given to understand that they were the objects of false and slanderous accusations, which has been the case with the people of God in all ages (Psa. lxix. 20). This is a severe trial, especially to tender and sensitive minds. But what says the Saviour? (Matt. v. 11, 12). And what says the apostle? (1 Pet. iv. 14–16). With reproaches the apostle again connects the term "afflictions," or persecutions; and, from what is stated in the following verse, it is evident that the spoliation of their property is mainly intended. The notoriety connected with these proceedings added to their trials. "Partly, whilst ye were made a gazing-stock," &c. The object of their persecutors was openly to expose them to scorn, and to excite public feeling against them. Then their own sorrows were enhanced by the warm sympathy they felt for their fellow-sufferers. "Partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used." As believers, being united to Christ, partake of the fellowship of His sufferings; so, being united to each other, they cannot but share the afflictions which are accomplished in their brethren around them. II. THE ENCOURAGING CONSIDERATIONS WHICH HE ADDUCES (ver. 34). 1. The conduct of these persons demands our highest admiration. Simply to acquiesce without murmuring would have been no small matter; but to meet joyfully such a visitation, was strange indeed. When the harvest is suddenly blasted, the utmost we expect in the husbandman, after all his care and toil, is patient resignation; no one, under such circumstances, thinks of joy. But these persons took joyfully the spoiling of their goods—those goods including their earthly all. 2. They were influenced by the consideration of the treasure laid up for them in heaven, which the spoiler could not reach, nor aught else destroy. They knew that they had there a better and a more enduring substance than the possessions of this passing world. (1) More satisfying. (2) More enduring. III. THE DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS WHICH HE ENFORCES. 1. Confidence. This feeling is to be regarded as the fruit of faith, and is displayed by courage in the face of difficulties and oppositions. It includes freedom from bondage and fear, and also a prevailing persuasion of our acceptance with God. 2. Patience. This is another fruit of faith, and is not the least important of those things which are lovely and of good report. There are three things which call for the exercise of this grace. We have need of it—(1) In bearing provocation. (2) In suffering affliction. (3) In waiting under delays and disappointments. In each of these senses the Hebrews had to exercise this grace, but especially in the latter. What the apostle exhorts them to cultivate is the opposite of that impatience which cannot wait; but he tells them that they would not have to wait long. "For yet a little while," &c. The overthrow of the Jewish state would put an end to their power to annoy them. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted, think of this "little while." Every wave is numbered between thee and the desired haven; and then

the little while of time will be swallowed up in the unending ages of eternity. 3. Perseverance. "Now the just shall live by faith"—in the exercise of a calm and constant trust in God—"but if any man draw back, My soul," &c. To draw back, after putting our hands to the gospel plough, is a sin highly aggravating in its nature, and, if persisted in, one that will be most awful in its results (2 Pet. ii. 20–22; Heb. vi. 4–6, x. 26–31). Some years ago there was a shipwreck in one of our channels. Among the passengers were a father and his son. They were a considerable distance from shore, but, as their lives were at stake, they resolved to make an effort to reach it by swimming. Before long, the son became very faint, and the father, perceiving it, cried out, "Hold on! Hold on!" Again and again did he repeat the words, Hold on! and he did not cry in vain. The youth was stimulated thereby; and at length, in spite of the roaring winds and boisterous waves, they reached the shore in safety. Now, what this shipwrecked father said to his fainting son would we say to those who have named the name of Christ, especially to the young disciple. By all the fearful consequences with which backsliding will be attended we bid you, Hold on! (*Expository Sermons.*) *The conflict of the light*:—I. THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS NOT ONLY AN EXTERNAL REVELATION, IT IS ALSO AN INNER LIGHT. The first aspect it presents to us is of an objective revelation. Christ's mission fulfilled and transcended all the hopes of the past. In His person and work we have the materials of the world's illumination. He is the Sun of the spiritual universe. That revelation still advances. The historic work of Christ on earth is given in the volume of Revelation, closed in the first century. The work of Christ in the heavenly world, and in the hearts of men, constitute ever fresh gospels in that unending volume which contains the progressive manifestation of God. We are surrounded, then, on all sides, with this environment of light. But that light and the objects it reveals are not discovered by us until we are inwardly illuminated by the Holy Spirit. Then we are transformed by it, and become orbs of light enlightening the darkness about us. Only when these two conditions are met, is the spiritual world a reality to us. II. THE RECEPTION OF THIS LIGHT BRINGS CONFLICT. We should expect the possession of Christ to bring gladness, peace, power; and so it does, but only as the effect of battle. The influx of light ever arouses opposition. Why is this conflict inevitable? It is because of the antagonism of the light and that which it expels. It is because there is a Divine necessity that truth and error should come into collision. It is because it is the destiny of the light to rule. It must be diffused. It exposes all that is withered, noisome, dead. The aim of the light is to fashion a different world altogether. The face of Nature is the work of light. And the light of Christ is spreading, rising, will prevail. III. THE LIGHT THAT PROVOKES THE CONFLICT GIVES US FORTITUDE TO ENDURE AND CONQUER. All power is in the light. If we shut our eyes to any part of it, we are weakened, we are without the correlative energies that go with the light—fire, heat, electricity. IV. THE MEMORIES OF THE PAST VICTORIES OF THE LIGHT SHOULD BE CHERISHED FOR PRESENT HELP. "Call to remembrance." Is it dark with you now? Does your way lie through shadows? Remember that "He turns the shadow of death into the morning." The twilight of doubt shall be followed by the dawn of certainty. The night of sorrow by the morning of joy. The evening of life by the noontide of heaven. The present darkness of the world shall be succeeded by the universal shining of the light of the gospel. (*J. Matthews.*) *Loss suffered joyfully*:—A missionary in India says: I rode to Nallamaram and saw some people of the congregation there, together with the catechist. The clothes of one of the women were rather dirty, and I asked her about it. "Sir," said she, "I am a poor woman and have only this single dress." "Well, have you always been so poor?" "No, I had some money and jewels, but a year ago the Maravers (thieves) came and robbed me of all. They told me," she said, "if you will return to heathenism, we shall restore you everything." "Well, why did you not follow their advice? Now you are a poor Christian." "Oh, sir," she replied, "I would rather be a poor Christian than a rich heathen." (*W. Arvine.*) *Unsuspected joys*:—It is with wealth as with a water reservoir. When the drought has dried it up, you find in the deserted bed things that were lost years ago, and curious interesting things which but for this circumstance would never have been known. So, where it is a believing contented mind, it will discover, when the flood of fortune has drained away, in the deserted channel unsuspected sources of enjoyment and lost things, feelings which long since vanished, simple pleasures and primitive emotions which abundance had overflowed. *Joy in afflictions*:—You don't know, Christian friends, how much

harm some of you do by looking so gloomy and unapproachable. I remember one of my congregation telling me how, when she was a girl, she was nearly driven to shun the society of godly people by hearing the unhappy utterance of a friend of her father's, who was reputed to be a good man, but who, more than once, groaned in the hearing of herself and other young people, "Woe's me! the more grace a man has, the more he has to make him miserable." Let the world know that there is a fountain of joy and gladness. (*A. A. Bonar, D.D.*) *Reproaches and afflictions:*—I. They endured a great fight of afflictions, PARTLY BY BEING A GAZING STOCK, BOTH IN REPROACHES AND AFFLICTIONS. 1. They were reproached. Thus they might be used either by words or deeds. For so to speak or do anything that tends to our disgrace is to our reproach. Perhaps they called them sectaries, heretics, apostates, innovators, seditious persons, and also did so account them, and in this respect did hate them. These reproaches in themselves were bitter and grievous, yet they were more grievous because of afflictions, for they afflicted them by scourging, imprisoning, banishing them. 2. Yet these were made still more grievous, because they did reproach and afflict them not so much privately as publicly, in open view, to make their shame and ignominy the greater. They brought them as it were upon a stage, and as into a theatre, where multitudes, even thousands, might gaze upon them, revile them, scourge them, and make a sport of their sufferings. Every one must take notice of them as base persons, troublers of the world, the refuse and scum of mankind, and abhor them. 3. This was part of their great fight, and a great fight it was, because naturally we much desire to preserve our credit, honour, and reputation, which to some high spirits which the world terms generous is dearer than life, for men choose rather to die than live in disgrace and lose their honour. And as we desire respect in the world and abhor ignominy and contempt, so we love our liberty, ease, and peace, and are very unwilling to lose them. II. Partly they endured a great fight WHILST THEY BECAME COMPANIONS OF SUCH AS WERE SO USED. 1. Some part of the Church doth suffer sometimes and not another. The storm which fell upon them was past, yet another falls upon their brethren, and they are reproached and afflicted and made a gazing stock as they had been. 2. They became companions of these, for they owned them, were grieved inwardly for their sufferings, and did relieve and comfort them. By doing thus they were exposed to the derison of others: their former sufferings might be called passion, this compassion. 3. This also made a part of the great fight: for Satan's design in this was to strike a terror into them, and to let them know what a dangerous and restless condition they were in if they should continue to be Christians. And if he could not daunt and discourage them, yet he would at least grieve and vex them, for he knew the passion of their brethren would be their compassion, and that in their suffering they would suffer. (*G. Lawson.*) **Ye had compassion of me in my bonds.**—*Compassion with sufferers:*—1. He cometh to particulars; and first, their compassion towards himself in his bonds is remembered by him. Then—(1) Compassion with sufferers, especially when it is manifested to the afflicted party for his comfort, maketh the compassionate person a partaker with the sufferer. (2) Such compassion should be remembered by the sufferer thankfully, and recompensed by seeking their eternal welfare who have showed them such great kindness. 2. Another particular is, their joyful enduring the spoliation of their goods. Then—(1) When trial cometh of men's faith in Christ, such as mind to be constant must prepare themselves to quit their goods if God please so to honour them with employment. (2) When we see we must lose our goods for Christ's sake, or suffer any other inconvenience, we ought to do it cheerfully, and count our gain in Christ more than our loss in the world; seeing there is no cause of grief, if our eyes were opened, and our earthly affections mortified. 3. Their encouragement and cause of joy was the sensible feeling within themselves of the comfort of eternal riches in heaven keeping for them. Then—(1) It is the assurance of our heavenly inheritance which must make us ready to quit our earthly movables. (2) Whoso getteth a heart to quit anything on earth for Christ, shall have better in heaven than he can lose here. (3) God useth to give earnest of what He is to give, in sensible feeling of spiritual riches to such as believe in Him. (4) When men can esteem of things heavenly, as they are, that is enduring goods; and of things earthly as they are, that is perishing movables; then shall they readily quit the earthly in hope of the heavenly. (*D. Dickson, M.A.*) **A better and an enduring substance.**—*Heavenly possessions:*—I. THE APOSTLE'S BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THEM. 1. A "better" substance than

anything on earth, in its moral character, social enjoyments, spiritual services. 2. More "enduring." II. THE CHRISTIAN'S CONSCIOUS INTEREST IN THEM. 1. Attainable. 2. Valuable. 3. Needful. 4. Will soon be realised. (*Homilist.*) *The heavenly substance:*—I. CHRISTIANS POSSESS AN INVALUABLE PROPERTY IN ETERNITY. 1. The state where our possessions are placed. They are "in heaven." 2. The character by which our heavenly possessions are distinguished. We have property in heaven substantial and valuable—far superior to all the productions of the globe, and which is to last for ever. 3. The certainty with which the heavenly possessions are regarded—"Knowing in yourselves." The Divine word informs us—and here let the heart rest in joyous confidence—that the blessing is prepared for all those who are believers in the Son of God. II. THE CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPERTY POSSESSED BY CHRISTIANS IN ETERNITY OUGHT TO POSSESS A POWERFUL INFLUENCE UPON THEM IN TIME. 1. If we know that we have "in heaven a better and an enduring substance," we shall not allow inordinate affection for the things of the present world. 2. If we know that we have "in heaven a better and an enduring substance," we shall exercise patience and fortitude under the privations and sufferings of life. 3. If we know that we have "in heaven a better and an enduring substance," our dispositions and thoughts will be imbued with the spirit of heaven, and testifying a growing meetness for its enjoyments. (*J. Parsons, M.A.*) *The Christian's preference of heavenly riches:*—I. THE TRIAL THEY WERE CALLED TO ENDURE was imprisonment and the spoliation of their property. You can all understand the misery that must attach to the violent invasion of your freedom and of your possessions. You know that such are among the heaviest sufferings of an external kind that human nature can experience; and that they require the highest degree of fortitude to sustain them with patience. But these were, in all probability, very frequent sufferings among those first disciples of Christ. II. THE TEMPER OF MIND WITH WHICH THIS TRIAL WAS SUSTAINED. They exhibited a Christian generosity, crowned with a Divine devotion; they remembered their fellow-sufferers, and forgot their own sufferings. And, what is much more remarkable, "ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods." Simply to acquiesce unmurmuring in such a dispensation of Providence as this; not to be driven by it to dissemble; not to flinch from an honourable adherence to truth; might have been thought all that could be expected of human nature. But "joyfully" to meet the severest of circumstantial distresses, rendered the more severe by its cruel injustice, this is an elevation to which Christian piety only can ascend! III. THE PRINCIPLE WHICH CHERISHED AND MAINTAINED THIS DIVINE TEMPER: "knowing in yourselves," &c.; not taking this prospect upon probable testimony, but relying on it as a certain reality. 1. In how many respects this heavenly substance is "better" than any that is of an earthly nature. (1) It is better, in as much as earthly substance is merely the instrument of enjoyment: while heaven is enjoyment itself, essential felicity. (2) Again, earthly objects have no power to satisfy the mind; they cannot tranquillise the heart: on the contrary, by an unhappy tendency, they enlarge the desires which they gratify; they inflame the passions which they indulge, nor can they ever fill the vast vacuity which they are condemned to leave in an immortal mind. (3) Earthly treasure can only enable its possessor to surround himself with superfluous pomp, to "walk in a vain show"; it can only gratify the taste and imagination, or catch the applause of the multitude: it has no power to come into contact with the soul; none to calm the perturbations of conscience, heal the corrosions of remorse, or give comfort to the dying. 2. This is also an enduring substance. Temporal wealth is extremely transient. Lessons: (1) How much we are indebted to God for that kind of evidence of Christianity which arises from the sufferings of its first disciples! (2) How ought we to magnify that almighty grace which enabled them to suffer! (3) Let us apply their example for our own improvement. Piety must rise above the world in a holy superiority to its alluring pleasures. (*R. Hall, M.A.*) *The Christian's inheritance and assurance:*—I. THE CHRISTIAN'S FUTURE INHERITANCE. 1. By contrast. It is designated "substance," as opposed to shadow. All the pleasures and enjoyments of the world are a shadow; there is nothing solid or substantial in them. Afflictions are but a shadow (2 Cor.; v. 17). Our present existence is but a shadow (James iv. 14). It is like an eagle in the air, like a ship in the sea, a flower on the earth; as a tale that is told, a watch in the night, a hireling accomplishing his day: man fleeth also as a shadow. Death is a shadow; there is no substantial evil in it to the Christian. But religion is a substance; the gospel is a substantial reality. There

is a most delightful promise in the book of Proverbs, where Christ is represented as speaking under the character of wisdom, "I will cause them that love Me to inherit substance; I will fill their treasures." Heaven is all substance: its pleasures and enjoyments, its worship and devotions. 2. By comparison. It is called "a better substance." It is better in comparison with the present state of our existence, because there is some good in this world. We must not despise God's providential mercies, nor undervalue our temporal supplies. We should thank Him for the atmosphere that vivifies, but most of all for the air of holiness and the breath of devotion. We should thank Him for the bread which perisheth, but most of all for the bread of life, the hidden manna. We should thank Him for the water that quenches the thirst, refreshes, and purifies, and revives, but most of all for the streams of salvation, the water of which if a man drink he shall never die. We should thank Him for the use of our bodily limbs, but most of all if we have been taught to walk at liberty in God's laws, and run in the way of His commandments. We should thank Him for the faculty of reason, but most of all if, by a spiritual perception, our senses are exercised to discern both good and evil. How much better will the enjoyments of heaven be than the highest degree of happiness realised by believers in a state of grace! 3. By continuation. It is an enduring substance. It is a city which hath foundations—a kingdom which cannot be moved—an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away—a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens—a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. When the angel of death shall spread his cloud over everything terres trial, the celestial abodes shall shine forth with a grandeur which nothing can demolish, and which eternity itself will but increase. II. THE CHRISTIAN'S PRESENT ASSURANCE. 1. Believers have a present title to this inheritance. They have the promise of it. The gospel is God in a promise; and the saints in glory are said to be inheriting the promises. They have the hope of it, which is no more nor less than the prospect of future good grounded on present evidence. They have preparation for it, being "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." They have a title to it, and this by virtue of their adoption. 2. They shall have the future possession. There must be the trial of faith, the exercise of patience, the sifting of your motives, the test of principles, and the examination and pondering of the heart. 3. They have inward assurance. "Knowing in yourselves," &c. Assurance is a pearl that most want, a crown that few wear. It may be ascertained by the testimony of the Spirit, accompanied with the witness of personal experience. (*Essex Remembrancer.*) *A better and an enduring substance*:—"Knowing that ye have yourselves as a better and an enduring possession." I. THE TRUE POSSESSION. We own ourselves only on condition of being Christian men. For, under all other circumstances and forms of life, the true self is brought into slavery and dragged away from its proper bearings by storms, and swarms of lusts, and passions, and inclinations, and ambitions, and senses. A man's flesh is his master, or his pride is his master, or some fraction of his nature is his master, and he himself is an oppressed slave, tyrannised over by rebellious powers. The only way to get the mastery of yourselves is to go to God and say, "Oh, Lord! I cannot rule this anarchic being of mine. Do Thou take it into Thine hands. Here are the reins; do with me what Thou wilt." Then you will be your own masters, not till then. II. THE SUPERIORITY OF THIS POSSESSION. 1. It is better in its essential quality. The apprehension of union with God is the one thing that will satisfy the soul; the one thing which having, we cannot be wholly desolate, however dark may be our path; and without which we cannot be at rest, however compassed with succours and treasures and friends; nor rich, however we may have bursting coffers and all things to enjoy. 2. It is an enduring possession. These things, the calm joys, the pure delights of still fellowship with God in heart and mind and will—these things have in them no seed of decay. These cannot be separated from their possession by anything but his own unfaithfulness. There will never come the time when they shall have to be left behind. Use does not wear these out, but strengthens and increases them. The things which are destined "to perish with the using" belong to an inferior category. III. THE QUIET SUPERIORITY TO EARTHLY LOSS AND CHANGE WHICH THE POSSESSION OF THIS TREASURE INVOLVES. When you strike away the false props, the strength of the real ones become more conspicuous. If we possess this true treasure which lies at our doors, and may be had for the taking, we shall be like men in some strong fortress, with firm walls, abundant provisions, and a well in the courtyard, and we can laugh at besiegers. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *A better house in heaven*:—Zinzendorf became of age in 1721, and in the following

year purchased the estate of Berthelsdorf, near his aged relative, the Baroness of Gersdorf, writing up over his dwelling, "The tenant of this has a better house in heaven." *Meetness for heaven*:—It is worth something to be in a readiness for mercy, for afflictions, for death, or for judgment, as those who are meet for heaven. The speech of Basil was noble, when Modestus, the prefect, threatened confiscation, torment, and banishment. He answered, "He need not fear confiscation that hath nothing to lose; nor banishment, to whom heaven only is a country; nor torment, when his body would be crushed with one blow; nor death, which is the only way to set him at liberty. (*O. Heywood.*) *Heaven the right place for the Christian*:—Heaven is as suitable for a saint as a lock is fitted to receive its key; and as the fashion of a lock might be inferred from the key, so may the glorious state be guessed at from the gracious man. He has, moreover, sips of sweetness, which give him no merely fanciful notion of the hill country, and he knows somewhat of what the full-blown flower must be as he gazes at the beauty of the bud; but he looks not that in the revelation of the glory the invisible should be only a reproduction of the visible; for he knows that the spiritual exceeds the natural even as the heaven is above the earth. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *No home beyond the grave*:—I have been told of a wealthy man who died recently. Death came unexpectedly to him, as it almost always does; and he sent out for his lawyer to draw his will. And he went on willing away his property; and when he came to his wife and child, he said he wanted them to have the home. But the little child did not understand what death was. She was standing near, and she said, "Papa, have you got a home in that land you are going to?" The arrow reached that heart; but it was too late. He saw his mistake. He had got no home beyond the grave. (*D. L. Moody.*) *The better substance*:—1. The happiness of the saints in heaven is substance, something of real weight and worth; all things here are but shadows. 2. It is a better substance than anything they can have or lose here. 3. It is an enduring substance; it will outlive time, and run parallel with eternity. They can never spend it; their enemies can never take it from them as they did their earthly goods. 4. This will make a rich amends for all they can lose and suffer here. In heaven they shall have a better life, a better estate, better liberty, better society, better hearts, better work, everything better. 5. Christians should know this in themselves. (*Matthew Henry.*) *Heavenward*:—My horse invariably comes home in less time than he makes the journey out. He pulls the carriage with a hearty goodwill when his face is towards home. Should not I also both suffer and labour the more joyously because my way lies towards heaven, and I am on pilgrimage to my Father's house, my soul's dear home and resting-place? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Heaven—a sustaining prospect*:—One Palmer, of Reading, being condemned to die, in Queen Mary's time, was much persuaded to recant, and among other things a friend said to him, "Take pity on thy golden years and pleasant flowers of youth, before it be too late." His reply was as beautiful as it was conclusive: "Sir, I long for those springing flowers which shall never fade away." When he was in the midst of the flames he exhorted his companions to constancy, saying, "We shall not end our lives in the fire, but make a change for a better life; yea, for coals we shall receive pearls." Thus do we clearly see that, although "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable," yet the prospect of a better and enduring substance enables us to meet all the trials and temptations of this present life with holy boldness and joy. (*Ibid.*) *How to meet adversity*:—If a heathen could say, when he saw a sudden shipwreck of all his wealth, "Well, Fortune, I see thou wouldst have me to be a philosopher," should not we, when called to quit our movables, say, "I see that God would have me to lay up treasure in heaven, that is subject neither to vanity nor violence"? (*John Trapp.*)

Ver. 35. **Cast not away, therefore, your confidence.**—*Spiritual confidence*:—I. WHAT THIS SPIRITUAL CONFIDENCE IS. 1. Confidence in Christ. (1) In His inherent goodness. (2) In His power and will to save. 2. Confidence in the riches which Christ will give. II. SPIRITUAL CONFIDENCE IS TO BE FIRMLY HELD. For the better understanding of this, it is well to bear in mind the difference there is between confidence and faith. They are much the same in their exercise; still they are different. Confidence is the outcome of faith. Confidence is stronger than faith, and leads the soul onward to be bold and daring. Faith is as the root; confidence the branch springing out of the root. Confidence grows on faith, and cannot live without it; but faith may exist without confidence, though there can

be no doubt that the one is affected by the other, and that as the one strengthens the other strengthens, or that as the one wanes the other also wanes. We see, therefore, that we may cast away our confidence by unbelief. Once begin to doubt the power and will of Christ to bless us, and our confidence is gone. The faith may not altogether have departed, but confidence is thrown away. In fact, it seems to be possible for one to have all the evidences of Christ's character and goodness set before him, so that he cannot doubt, but must believe in Christ's divinity and salvation; and yet to have no real confidence in Him, no confidence which leads one to trust Him fully, and to go forth in His name in all boldness and with Christian courage. If, then, you are a possessor of this confidence, hold it fast. It is a step in advance of the ordinary Christian plan. It leads to something more, something higher, bolder, and grander, for Christ and for His cause. Hold it fast, and exercise it. The more it is cultivated and exercised, the more it will grow and the stronger it will become. III. SPIRITUAL CONFIDENCE BRINGS ITS OWN REWARD. 1. We have it here upon earth. You cannot confide in Christ one single hour without receiving some blessing. If you have this confidence, it matters but little what may befall you here. There may be war, or jealousies, or collapses in business, or bodily suffering, or temptation, or any other kind of trial as sharp as death itself, yet your mind is calm amidst it all; and, like the bird which sits on some secluded twig and sings sweetly while the thunder roars and the lightning flashes, so you are joyful in the Lord, and amidst every storm can sing to the praise of your Saviour. 2. We shall have a further reward hereafter. Self-devoting unselfishness for Christ's sake will be its own reward in heaven. Can any soul absolutely confide in Christ and not be made holier in heaven than he is here? He will also be rewarded with the rest of heaven—blessed, peaceful rest, after his toils and sufferings here. He will have the glories of heaven poured upon him in such a measure as he never anticipated, and of a kind of which he had not conceived. (*H. F. Walker.*) *The Christian's confidence:*—The confidence here mentioned is not merely that trust in the personal sacrifice of Christ whence springs pardon of sin. It is the filial trust of a believing heart, washed from guilt in the redeeming blood, already an heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ. And in what is this confidence placed? In self-goodness, or self-power? No; but in God, through Jesus Christ alone. The more of this confidence the Christian possesses, the more humble will he be; for it makes Christ supreme in the heart. And on what is it immediately grounded? This rejoicing confidence is not founded on dim speculations, on vague hopes, on boasted deeds, but on the clear testimony of the Divine Spirit. In this must be the basis of all the enjoyment in the blessings of the kingdom of grace here, and all for which we may look in the glory hereafter. In hours of distress it ministers consolation. In danger it brings preservation and rescue. In trouble it gives support and relief. It realises not only a deliverance from all evil, but a communication of all that is good. Who can tell how rich in delight earth may be, with this confidence in God keeping the soul; with the kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and joy as its government; with the sure promise that the maintenance of this confidence is constantly adding to the lustre of our heavenly crown! But its highest, its supremely great "recompense of reward" is beyond the grave. With expanding and quickened facilities, with ever-opening objects for thought and feeling, with closer approach to the infinite, and changing into the Divine likeness, the faithful saints shall reap the eternity of their reward. The apostle here alludes to the conduct of the ancient warrior. The Lacedæmonians were celebrated for a valour which chose death before an ignominious defeat; therefore they threw their lives away rather than shrink from the foe. The mothers of their young men often gave them, as they departed for the fight, the shield of the father, and commanded them to bring it back, or be brought back upon it—that is, to return victorious or slain. So the loyal, valiant Paul bids the soldier of the cross never to give up his shield, never cast it away in foul retreat. Ours is a mighty moral conflict. If we can cast this away, we can have no hope of succour and deliverance from Him. We must fall a prey to the devourer. Let us, then, resist the various devices to ensnare us. Cast not away your confidence in any sore temptation. Cast it not away should the prosperity and flattery of the world try to attract you from it. Perhaps this is the least dreaded, but it is the most dangerous combatant; for, like Judas, it first kisses, then betrays. (*S. B. Bangs.*) *Hold fast your shield:*—I. WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF THIS CONFIDENCE of which the apostle speaks? It is not very easy to explain this word in one English word. It means that freedom, that peace, that at-home-ness which makes a man feel bold, free, confident. The

elements of it seem to me to be these. 1. Confidence in the principles which you have espoused. There must be certain undoubted truths about which you can sing, "O God, my heart is fixed, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise"—things which you perceive to be plainly taught in the Scriptures—things brought home by the power of the Holy Spirit. 2. This is the groundwork of true confidence; but to make it complete there must be an open avowal of our belief in our Lord Jesus. 3. To do all this you must know your own interest in those truths. A man will readily let go a truth which may condemn him. Who will die for a truth in which he has no share? The man who can live and die for Christ is the man who believes that Christ has lived and died for him. 4. This means, besides, a full and firm reliance upon the faithfulness of God, so that we are free from all mistrusts and fears, and simply rest in God. 5. Where this confidence really reigns in the soul, it takes the form of full acceptance before God. 6. Upon this there follows that further confidence, of which John says, "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He heareth us"—confidence that when we pray we shall be heard. 7. Over and above that, how delightful to feel that even what we do not pray for, by reason of our ignorance or forgetfulness, our gracious God will bestow. 8. You may add to all this the confidence that He is able to keep that which you have committed to Him; for we have this confidence—that whether we sleep or wake we shall be together with Him. II. HOW THIS CONFIDENCE MAY BE CAST AWAY. 1. By changing it for self-confidence. Be empty, and Christ will be your fulness, but if you become full in yourself you have done with Christ. Cast not away your confidence by leaving your simple reliance upon Jesus Christ. 2. Some, however, cast away their confidence by giving way to sin. Old Master Brooks says, "Assurance will make us leave off sinning, or sinning will make us leave off assurance." You cannot grieve your Heavenly Father and yet feel the same confidence towards Him. 3. Another way of losing our confidence is by getting into worldly company and mixing up with the gay and frivolous. A child would soon lose his loving, confident feeling towards his father if his father had an enemy opposite, and he constantly went into that enemy's house, and heard all the language that was used there. 4. You can very easily lose your confidence by changing your aim in life. While your object is God you will be bold as a lion, but a sordid motive is the mother of cowardice. 5. Some unhappy professors have apparently cast away their confidence in utter unbelief. III. THE REASONS GIVEN FOR HOLDING FAST OUR CONFIDENCE. 1. "Cast not away therefore your confidence." What does this "therefore" mean? Why, it means this—because you have already endured so much. Do not lose the victories which you have already gained. If it was wise to go so far, it will be wise to go on to the end. I recollect going over the Col D'Obbia on the Alps, and when I got a little way down I found myself on a steep mountain side upon a mass of loose earth and slates. There seemed to me to be some miles of almost perpendicular descent and no road. My head began to swim. I set my feet fast down in the loose soil, turned my back to the scene below me, and my face to the hill-side, and stuck my hands into the earth to hold as best I could. I cried to my friend, "I shall never go down there: I will go back." He coolly replied, "Just look where you have come from." When I looked up it appeared to be much worse to try and clamber up than it could possibly be to go down, and so he remarked, "I think you had better go on, for it is worse going back." So we must go on, for it will be worse going back. Let us gird up the loins of our mind, and push onward with firm resolution, by the help of the Spirit of God. 2. Do not cast away your confidence, for it has great recompense of reward. There is a reward in it now: for it makes us happy. Do not cast away your confidence, since it yields you such pure delight. But it makes you strong both to bear and labour. When you are like a child in confidence before God, you can endure pain and reproach right bravely. And, moreover, it makes you victorious. And, best of all, there is a recompense of reward to come. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Discouragements and comforts in Christian life*:—1. There are many discouragements which follow false conceptions of life, and which result from the practical rectification of those conceptions. There are those who enter upon a Christian life expecting to be borne, as it were, by the Divine afflatus, straight through their course. When they find, on the other hand, that God only works in them to will and to do, and that the effect of the Divine influence upon them is to make the necessity of work in them still more emphatic, they are disappointed. There are those who have supposed a religious

life to be a tide of joyful emotion. They thought religion was some Cleopatra's barge of ivory and gold, with purple sails, and with music and joyfulness within; and though there would be savage barbarians along either shore, that would shoot arrows at them, they meant to fire out of the barge a great deal better than was sent at them; and when they find that instead of being a Cleopatra's barge, it is a galley, as it were, and that they are galley-slaves, they are despondent. The dispersion of these illusions destroys all that they stood on; and yet, at that, it is far better. There is many a man who is much nearer the kingdom of God at the point of discouragement than he was at the point of hope. The point of hope was the point of misconception; this discouragement is more wholesome than was their hopefulness, because it is nearer to the truth. 2. There are those who begin a religious life upon the nourishment abundantly supplied to them in the peculiar circumstances in which they are born, but who have a slender capacity for supplying themselves with nourishment. They lack that motive force which makes religion, and that inspiration which gives them vital courage. Those who are slenderly endowed in this respect, find, as soon as they begin to live a Christian life for themselves, that it is very dull. It is for such persons that the external routine of church duties is peculiarly useful. If they could be held to some set, stated exercises allied to religion, they would find themselves, both by the regularity of these exercises and by their routine nature, to be greatly sustained and helped. For they are persons that are living upon a low plane. 3. Men suffer discouragements arising from the misconception of the relations of joy to the Christian life. They think while they are joyful that they are growing, and when they are not joyful, then they are going behind-hand. But pain is a far more growing element than joy. Sunshine is not more indispensable to harvests than rains and cloudy days. And in the Christian life the yoke and the burden are eminently profitable to men. There are many men who think that religion is an invitation to go into the house and sit before a great fire that has been built for them. Religion is an invitation to more than that. It is also an invitation to the felling, hauling, and preparing of the fuel. And is not this rational? Is not this the way to make true and wholesome natures? 4. There are discouragements arising from conflicts and rivalries between lawful secular occupations and religious emotions. Our whole life is a religious life. The experiences of inspiration may be spiritual in the closet; but the real life of every man is that into which he puts his energy, his strength, his vitality, his power. Wherever men are, there they ought to put their power of understanding, their power of sentiment, their power of feeling, their power of planning and execution. That is the thing for a Christian man to do. And the kind of power which he has, and the moral quality of it, depend upon the influence of the interior and invisible life. 5. A large element of discouragement arises in minds of fine temper, on account of the discrepancy which must always exist between ideality and practical reality. There will always be a chasm between duty and performance. The higher our conception of justice is, the harder it will be to reach it. The fact is, a person of a vivid imagination will conceive of an amount of duty and a fineness of experience which it would be impossible, except by a tutoring of years and years, to meet. Do not you suppose that Raphael's mind, before his hand was trained to paint, painted pictures that were infinitely more beautiful than any that his hand painted? No men are so apt to be discouraged as those who are living far up along the scale. They judge themselves by a high ideal of life. I would not have them discouraged finally; but it does not do any hurt for a man to be enough discouraged to keep down pride and vanity. Men are discouraged, frequently, from a perception of the weakness and unfruitfulness of their will-power—their power of executing what they mean to do. Men resolve, and do not accomplish. The relation between the power of the will and the thing to be executed is different in different people. I have often said that moral stamina lay in the will more than anywhere else. The will is like a rudder. Some ships are very hard to steer, and some are very easy. Some you can hardly turn from their course, and some you can set about by the least touch of the wheel. So it is with men. And they are discouraged, usually, if they find it hard to direct their course aright, because they think it is owing to some wickedness in them. Persevere, and work manfully, with weakness and temptation, in darkness and light, and you will reach your Heavenly Father soon. No father on earth was ever so lenient with the faults of his boy who wanted to do right, as God is with your faults if you want to do right, and will try to do right. In a little time you will know that this is so. Not to mention the other classes of discouragement,

I remark, in closing, that behind and within all our personal labour is our God. No man will ever reach heaven that does not himself strive; but no man will ever reach heaven simply through his own striving. There are two co-ordinate lives; there is power within a power; there is God in us; and that is the secret of the power by which we are saved. It looks as though the pointers of a watch kept time; but is it the strength of the pointers that carries them round? No. Down deep below there is the coiled spring that moves the wheel, and, in obedience, the pointers move and register the time. But suppose the pointers were taken off? Then all the springs in the world, though they might set the wheels playing round, would not indicate the time. The measuring power would be gone. Both of them, the spring and the pointers, must be concurrently adjusted in order to keep time. It is God that is the mighty spring within us; and it is we that on the great dial of time are moving round in obedience to this interior force. There is, behind our own will and within our own purposes, the Divine influence; and this truth affords a ground whereon we may comfort ourselves in discouragement. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Carrying the sword a little further*:—I recollect a brother minister saying to me when I was a very young man, "I remember being sent for, and going to see a very blessed old man. I had never seen a dying Christian; and as I had read a lot of poetry about the deathbeds of the Lord's people, I had got the notion that they all died very quietly. As I drew near to his bedside, I said, 'Oh, sir! it is all peace now.' It took the old man a little while to get breath enough to speak; and when he did, the sound of his voice seemed to come from beneath the bed-clothes, and chilled me. I could almost have fallen, but I waited a minute, and I then heard what he said. He said, 'No, it is not all peace yet. I must wear the halbert a little longer, and I must carry the sword a little further. It is a hard fight; but I shall get the white robe and the crown by-and-by. It is a hard fight; but it is worth it.' I have never forgotten the lesson I learned at that death-bed." (*S. Coley.*) *Christian confidence*:—The celebrated Philip de Morney, Prime Minister of Henry IV. of France, one of the greatest statesmen, and the most exemplary Christian of his age, being asked, a little before his death, if he still retained the same assured hope of future bliss which he had so comfortably 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 I ever was of any mathematical truth from all the demonstrations of Euclid."

Ver. 36. **Ye have need of patience.**—*The need of patience in an over-active age*:—Amongst the many ominous characteristics of our age, there is hardly one which stands out so glaringly and alarmingly as the growing want of quietly enduring patience. In various forms this spirit penetrates the Christian world, and tends to bring into it a certain feverishness, haste, and restlessness. I. How PATIENCE IS TO BE HELD FAST. Patience is composed of confidence, hope, and belief in future perfect redemption; it prevents our becoming faint-hearted (Rom. viii. 25). Two other ingredients of patience are obedience and humility, which keep the spirit calm and submissive. 1. If we cast away confidence and the joyful hope of a better future, all capacity for patience is gone. Thence the answer of the text to the question, "How can we hold fast patience?" is, by resisting the temptation to cast away confidence and joyousness. This is particularly great at the present day. (1) In private life, where vice is gaining the upper hand, many impure passions are fostered, so that the capacity for earnest labour and quiet endurance is lost. If everything does not go quite smoothly; if health and fortune are squandered; if this sad seed begins to ripen into a sad harvest, then weariness of life lays hold on the guilt-laden soul, which finds itself more and more firmly clasped in the temptation to cast away all confidence, and with it often life itself. Resist the temptation. Life is, and always will be, a great blessing; and so long as Christ and forgiveness of sins is preached, there is no cause for despair. (2) In the spiritual life and work of the time, pessimism is, to many, the fashionable philosophy of the day, *i.e.*, the casting away our confidence in a better future. As if those promises no longer stood firm. (3) In social life: you all know how many, at the present time, have cast away confidence in a satisfactory development of our social conditions, and devise plans of annihilation; how their number increases in many lands, so that here and there a throne is trembling. What are they? What but an embodiment of that hopelessness which refuses to know anything of the blessing and support of our Christian faith in the guidance of the world by God in Christ. (4) Even in Christians there is no lack of temptation to cast away confi-

dence; here, heavy, manifold, and long-continued sufferings, or the sudden loss of apparently indispensable props; there, the too slow march of the kingdom of God, so that zeal outruns all discretion, and here and there turns to new and questionable methods of a more rapid line of procedure for the spreading abroad of the kingdom. 2. But how, then, are confidence and joyfulness to be held fast in spite of all temptations to the contrary? If confidence is steadfastly to endure, look not unto men and unto the circumstances that lead into temptation, but cast thyself wholly upon God. The more thou growest in the knowledge of Him, the more strength wilt thou receive to persevere in cheerful confidence and patience. Then, too, look upon Christ. He is the visible form of the patience of God, the Lamb of God, who bore without a murmur so much contradiction. Is it a time to cast away confidence, now in the midst of the rapid extension of Christ's kingdom at home and abroad? And in order that it may become easier for us to hold fast our confidence, the text adds another weighty reason and stimulus: "which hath great recompense of reward." II. WHY IS IT SO INDISPENSABLE TO SHOW OPENLY THAT WE POSSESS THIS PATIENCE? 1. Without it we cannot do the will of God. It is the will of the God of patience that we should be patient as His children (2 Cor. vi. 4). Let us do the will of God patiently upon earth, by patient continuance in well-doing seeking for eternal life (Rom. ii. 7). Have we patience not only with ourselves, and the slow progress of our work, but with others also? (1 Thess. v. 14; Eph. ii. 14). But specially by patience in suffering must we learn to do the will of God. Learn not to shrink from little troubles, but to bear them quietly, so that, in time, thou mayest be able to endure great ones (Rom. xii. 12; Heb. xii. 1). All virtue is, as it were, shorn of half its glory, if it be not crowned with patience (ver. 38). 2. Patience is also indispensable for the receiving of the promise. He alone that doeth the will of God and endureth in faith and patience, can receive the whole rich contents of the Divine promises of grace for this life and for the life to come. Hence the exhortation (chap. vi. 12). It is impossible for Him who loses patience, and with it hope, to have a part in the future fulfilment of hope. (*T. Christlieb, D.D.*) *Patience*:—One who had never thought of it before might be amazed at discovering how often the word "patience" occurs in the Bible; with the force almost of a revelation might the fact break upon his mind. Patience! It seems to be referred to on every page of God's written Word; it is the inner habit of His people. This word is found through the Bible, everywhere, excepting in one section, where notably it is absent, as I shall presently show; nor is it the voice of this life only, for behind the veil, in that place where the souls under the altar cry to God, the tone is still the same (Rev. vi. 10). And as this human voice calls evermore for grace to bear whatever is God's will, so, at last, there comes also the full reward (Rev. iii. 10). There is something altogether memorable in this; and think how it comes home to every soul! Let us collect some of these sayings, to give fulness to our meditations—Jas. v. 7, 8; Heb. xii. 1, 2; Jas. i. 3, 4; 1 Thess. i. 3; 2 Thess. i. 4; Heb. vi. 12; 1 Thess. v. 14; Psa. xl. 1; Rev. ii. 2, xiv. 12, 13. What, then, is this, whereof such marvellous things are spoken? Take heed to distinguish it from all similes, all faint reflections of itself. There is a patience which is mere enduring, mere mute, uncomplaining submission. But in religion, patience is far more than that. It is "the endurance of any evil, out of the love of God, as the will of God." That is the full meaning of the word; that is the mark of His children; it is this which calms the storms in the soul, which refines, which makes men like Christ, and ensures to them the crown hereafter. But now, since this is a Christian virtue, involving conquest over self, and leading those who practise it, step by step, in the path which the Lord's saints have trodden, shall we think of it as too high for the ordinary daily life? We are always making that mistake about religion. We separate it from our common experiences; we do not apply it to little things. Be sure of this: that you cannot rise to what you ought to be in great things, unless you practise in small matters. It is eminently so, in the case of this virtue of patience. You have it not, because you do not strive after it day by day and hour by hour. You have it, and are collected and calm: it is because you have disciplined yourself in things so little that an ordinary mind would give them no second thought. But that is the way to prove our sincerity: the only way to gain and grow. From little daily matters, from petty trials, by the endurance of what you feel ashamed that you think of seriously, are you to grow to the likeness of the saints, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Patience is the endurance of any evil. How small are most evils! How rarely come the

great ones! No hour in the day without its foolish little trial; but everything turns on how you bear yourself there; so only shall you be fitted to stand without flinching when the mighty battles must be fought. What, then, is the field on which you are to be taught the sublime lesson of the Master? Find it in your own house; in your own heart; where you meet with others; when you are alone with your restless thoughts. But you will ask: How shall I learn that Divine art? We answer, patience is a special gift of grace. So much is intimated by the apostle: "the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God." What is the characteristic sign? To bear all things, not with animal courage, not with iron resolve, not with that mere pagan fortitude which is a natural virtue only, and which the world applauds, but out of the love of God. Try to feel this in a simple, practical way. Even in little trials, that love of God is proving you; it is as truly an act of religion to check yourself in angry words, to give a gentle answer when some one torments you in waywardness or malice, as to go to the church, and approach the Table of the Lord: try to act lovingly and patiently towards others, because you know that God loves them also. But you may ask whether this be possible to bear, to endure in silence, without complaint? Does not the vexed soul demand relief? Is there not a cry in the heart which must make itself heard? We know the danger of repression; it brings on outbreaks and explosions; it betides mischief, sudden and terrible, if there be no safety valve, no escape for surplus force. It is so with men; just as much so with God's patient servants as with machinery or mobs. What is in the troubled heart must make an utterance for itself. Patience is not inconsistent with complaint. Cry to the Almighty, yet not as murmuring against His dispensations, nor as rebelling against His will, nor as angrily criticising His providences, but cry to Him because He is our Father, because He knows all, because, when things seem perplexing to us, it is a comfort to know that to Him all is clear. I said before that this word "patience" is woven into the whole texture of the Sacred Books, except in one section. It is scarcely to be found in the four Gospels. Why should this be? Perhaps, because he needs no exhortation to patience who studies the life of Christ. For Christ was patience itself; in Him patience had her perfect work; of all examples of the virtue none ever came up to that. But another reason may be imagined: who needed to be patient while Christ was in the world? His presence was the fulness of joy, and at His right hand was pleasure for evermore. Not while He was with them in the flesh did they need homily or counsel to be patient, who, in having Christ Himself, had all. And so He said (Matt. ix. 15). And so it was; after He departed, began the watch for His return; and as that return was delayed, patience became the sign of the faithful. It has ever been so; it shall be so till the end. Nor is it among the living only; it is thus also with the dead, wheresoever they are sleeping, in the dust of the earth, or under desert sands, or beneath the blue water, their bones expect the resurrection; it is even thus behind the veil, where the souls of the departed call on God the Lord to hasten His kingdom. Think it no hardship, then, to wait and watch, but rather think of the joy that is set before you in the Second Advent of the Lord. To those whom that great vision holds firm with a controlling power each day is counted gain, because it brings them nearer to the triumph of the Redeemer in whom they trust. (*Morgan Dix, D.D.*) *The need of patience*:—Certainly this is the most difficult lesson of life, patience; for we have many of us imperious desires, hasty wills, and petulant ambitions. We too often seek speedy harvests, and expect swift recompense for our strenuous toil. The age we live in feeds the fallacy that harvests must be immediate. Results rule. Men haste to be rich. Such precipitation, however, is dangerous. We are to "run with patience." We have need of patience; it is a spiritual exercise of great preciousness not to be lightly esteemed, in the Divine outworking of the Christian life. I. PATIENCE IS NEEDED FROM THE NATURE OF OUR WORK. The will of God rules all. Let us beware, therefore, of the hasty work of impetuous desire. Patience is something sublime, august, working itself out through hindrances to our aims. Patience! for the veil will one day be torn down, and the beautiful statue appear. Patience! for what testimony to the power of truth so potent as that it sustained men in their hours of grief and gloom? II. PATIENCE IS NEEDED FROM OUR OWN PERSONAL CONSTITUTIONS. These constitutions differ. But for the most part we find our active powers in royal ascendency. We can do, we can dare; but we have little power to wait and to endure. When the waterfloods rise to our waist and to our throat, and almost overwhelm us, our patience fails. Thus we need Divine chastening in relation to our weakest point. We need patience day by day,

not only that our natures should work, but that they should work to beautiful ends, and in humble and submissive ways. I have stood by the white water-wash when the mill sent forth two boiling streams, with fleecy foam and rushing roar; and at another time I saw one cascade, at another none. What silence then! To work the mill is not enough. The stones must be patiently adjusted, with corn there to be ground, or there is noise without result. So remember that work is not enough; it must have in it patience as well as strength. We have need of patience under disappointment: we forget that to be set right in God's way is best. A child learning music dislikes the discipline that keeps to "the scales." To play pleasant tunes is so much easier and brighter; but that would only end in inefficiency and imperfection. Even philosophy has glimpsed the truth that the way of success is a way of non-haste: as the Spanish proverb has it, "The world is his who waits." But what in life can compare with life itself? The great soul within us, that is all in all. For that to be redeemed and saved, for that to be made meet for the inheritance of the "saints in light," who would not endure? III. PATIENCE IS NEEDED BECAUSE OF THE RELATIONSHIP WE SUSTAIN TO OTHERS. Life is full of varieties. Nature is. And so is human history. We are not all alike. Our opinions differ. Friendship has to learn how to live, not in the absence of differences, but in spite of them. It is a sorry thing if people must see eye to eye before they come heart to heart. We all have faults which must grieve others, but human forbearance is the very life of love. Without it we become petulant, prejudiced, and proud. How patient we ought to be with our children! And in Church life how needful it is that we be patient with each other in all diversities of taste and judgment. IV. PATIENCE IS NEEDED BECAUSE OF THE DELAY OF HARVEST TIME. It seems so long! Whatever field we walk in, we are tempted, like the children in Longfellow's tale, to dig up our plants after a few days to see if they are taking root. We are discontented if we do not see the result of our labours. We forget the patience of God. And perhaps no really good work in this world was ever done without patience. Things hastily done are generally ill done. The great painters, what toilers they were! The great speakers, what elaborate skill they used! What evils have been wrought in the Church of God by endeavours after a speedy harvest! What sensationalisms have had to be endured; what strained excitements have ended in sad relapse! We need in all real work to wait for the harvest. But then the real lasts and lives. There is principle in it; there is permanence in it; there is health in it. The forced plant soon droops and dies. V. PATIENCE IS NEEDED BECAUSE THE HARVEST IS IN HEAVEN. The harvest is to be eternal life. Our light afflictions are but for a moment. The revelation of immortal rest is the only one that will satisfy the heart, or, indeed, the intellect. We cannot understand the meaning of our sorrows unless we look to the great reward. (*W. M. Statham, M.A.*) *Christian patience*:—I. THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN PATIENCE. Patience is not an insensibleness of present evils or an indifference for future good: "No affliction for the present is joyous, but grievous." But Christian patience is a disposition that keeps us calm and composed in our frame, and steady in the practice of our duty, under the sense of our afflictions or in the delay of our hopes. 1. Patience secures the possession of our souls in every circumstance that tends to discompose our minds. 2. Patience will prevent hasty and rash conclusions, either from present troubles or from the suspension of desired good. 3. Patience will fortify against any unlawful methods for accomplishing our deliverance or desires. 4. Patience disposes a man to go on in the way of his duty, whatever discouragement may arise from the pressure of his troubles or the deferring of his hopes. II. THE NEED AND OCCASION WHICH A CHRISTIAN HAS FOR THE EXERCISE OF PATIENCE. 1. A Christian has need of patience to persist in doing the will of God, even in his ordinary course. 2. A Christian hath need of patience to persist in bearing the will of God, and in doing his duty under it, when his course is peculiarly embittered. For instance, to bear the shock of sudden and unexpected trials, which are apt to overset a man at once and to produce hasty thoughts and unadvised words, both of God and man (Psa. xxxi. 22; cxvi. 11). To suppress a tumult, and keep the mind in frame upon such an occasion, is a very great attainment. To bear a succession of exercises, one after another, is still more. To have God's waves and billows to pass over us, and yet keep our heads above water, neither thinking Him unkind, nor unjust, nor unfaithful, nor losing the use of reason and grace, is a noble firmness of mind (Job i. 20–22). To bear the long continuance of exercises. Many who have behaved well upon the first attack have been tired out by the length of afflictions. To bear the hand of God when He touches us in a most tender point; not only in small trials, but in great and heavy afflictions. To bear God's rod

when we cannot account for His reasons or ends in it. To bear sharp afflictions when natural spirits are decayed. To bear affliction patiently when an unlawful way of deliverance seems directly to offer itself and to promise relief. It is hard in such circumstances to choose suffering rather that sinning; to be content to bear our burden still rather than be eased of it upon such terms. 3. A Christian hath need of patience to persist in waiting to the end to receive the promise, especially if he has lively views of a happy state before him, and comfortable hopes of his own title to it; if his course be greatly embittered in the meanwhile by bodily infirmities, by troubles in the world, by the removal of many of his pious friends and acquaintance to heaven before him; if his service and usefulness are to appearance much over; if he hath long thought himself going, just at harbour, but finds himself driven back again to sea: every such instance is a fresh trial to him. III. THE WAY TO WHICH CHRISTIANITY DIRECTS US FOR SUPPLYING THIS NEED, OR FOR FURNISHING US WITH THE PATIENCE REQUIRED. 1. Whatever is a trial of our patience, we should consider it as the will of God concerning us. 2. We should strengthen our faith in the discoveries of the gospel and live in the daily exercise of it. 3. We should carefully cultivate the principle of love to God. 4. Let us often represent to our minds the present advantages of patience. It is its own reward, as impatience is its own punishment. 5. We should often contemplate the great examples of patience. 6. We should be earnest in prayer to God for this grace (James i. 4, 5). For a close—(1) Let those who are destitute of the principle be sensible of their need, and solicitous that they may obtain it. (2) Let us be solicitous to have this necessary principle daily strengthened, to exercise it upon every proper occasion, and that it may "have its perfect work." Be solicitous to exert its most excellent acts. Not only that we may be preserved by it from sinking and murmuring and notorious misbehaviour, but that there may be the most complacential acquiescence in the will of God, that we may be in a frame for praise in the darkest day: "Blessed be the name of the Lord." Study to have the actings of patience easy and ready to you as there is occasion; to be able to say with Paul, "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts xxi. 13). Be careful that the exercises of it be lasting; that it be a fixed habit, and not only by starts; like Moses, who made the exercise of patience so constant a practice that we find but one instance to the contrary through his whole story. (*John Evans, D.D.*) *Necessity, advantages, and confirmation of patience*:—I. THE CALL WHICH THE CHRISTIAN LIFE MAKES ON US FOR THIS GRACE OF PATIENCE. The need of patience results from two things—the presence of sufferings or the privation of blessings; patience is exercised either in the enduring of evils or in waiting for desired good. There are trials, besides those common to man, which are peculiar to Christians. There are spiritual trials within, from the corruptions of the heart, which none but those who have experienced them can understand. II. THE GREAT ADVANTAGES OF PATIENCE. 1. It lightens affliction, disarms it of half its sting. Impatience greatly adds to the momentum of affliction; but the firmness which belongs to patience prepares us to bear the pain. What, indeed, is fortitude but patience? 2. Patience gives room for those moral effects which are designed in the affliction. A tranquil state of mind gives us an advantage for receiving the benefits of our affliction; being purified, having the unholy fires of the soul quenched, the beauties and beatitudes of the Spirit imparted. But these Divine purposes are not fulfilled in a turbulent mind. 3. Affliction endured with patience redounds to the glory of God. Nothing is a more practical proof of devotedness to God than submission; nothing more recognises God as the great Governor of the world than obedience to Him, as well in what He inflicts as in what He prescribes. III. CONSIDERATIONS ADAPTED TO STRENGTHEN THIS VIRTUE. 1. Affliction is sent by God; His hand is there. 2. Consider the gracious and glorious design which God has in afflicting us; it is "for our profit"—for nothing less than this—"that we may be partakers of His holiness!" 3. There are some familiar comparisons, naturally suggested to a reflecting mind, which tend to support the afflicted. One is the comparing of our trials with those of many others among the people of God. What are ours to theirs? to those of David; Isaiah, supposed to have been sawn; Jeremiah, cast into a dungeon; or the martyrs of later times? 4. What are our troubles compared with our deserts? 5. What are our sufferings compared with our eternal prospects and hopes? 6. The time is hastening on when all these afflictions will be no more. (*R. Hall, M.A.*) *The need of patience in our times*:—Great things are spoken in Scripture of this grace (Rom. v. 4; James i. 4, &c.). "The God of patience" is one of the Divine titles, and consolation goes with it. May it not be said that some

of the worst evils of life spring out of impatience? I need not speak of its effects and workings in hearts and homes. In high places impatience may ruin a country. Impatience is, I think, one of the vices of our generation; nothing is allowed time to grow, room to develop, or opportunity to mend itself. Patience has two ingredients. The beautiful word for it in the original conveys definition in the very name. Patience is, being interpreted, "submissive waiting." It is often treated as if it were identical with resignation. But there is altogether another element, too, in patience, and that is expectation. Patience is willing to wait; patience does not for a moment think that the past or the present is all, and that now to look back or to bear is just the one possibility and the one duty. On the contrary, "Onward" is its watchword; it submits, but it also waits. Subjection is one part of patience, but expectation is the other. "Submissive waiting" is its name and its definition. More and more as life advances do we understand why patience should be made so much of in Scripture. "Behold, we count them happy which endure"—it is the word before us—"them that have patience." We can all see why the apostle should have preached patience to these Hebrew Christians, to whom the text was first addressed. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Patience:*—Patience is not one of those stupid experiences which have been sometimes in vogue. It is not the grace of indifference or of laziness. Neither is it a kind of dogged obstinacy under difficulties. It is the sequence of enterprise and of endeavour, and is an act of self-control. In the text the teacher points to a very common experience, namely, impatience because labour does not bring forth its results immediately. Divine providence is conducting a double system in this world, or rather a single system with two developments. Constantly these two elements in it are clashing, by reason of men's misunderstandings; but they are co-operative and harmonious in the plan of God. He is perpetually administering His government as we that are wise parents administer ours in the family. We take care of our children's bodies, of their food, of their dress, of their physical comfort. At the same time it is with reference to an ulterior manhood. And in every instance, if there is a choice in reference to truth-telling, purity, delicacy of mind, and generosity of love, we teach the child to sacrifice the lower for the sake of keeping the higher. We are in our households carrying on a duplex education, which is at its base physical and in its higher developments moral and social; and that which we are doing in the small God is doing in the large sphere. And the human race are being developed at the bottom physically and at the top spiritually. There is, however, one element which runs through both parts of this providence, viz., the time element. In general, the time legitimately required for the accomplishment of an end or the production of an effect measures the value of that effect; or, in other words, the things that you can do very quickly are usually of the least value. Physical qualities and physical objects are very near at hand. A man clears up a forest, and lays down his farm, and sees from day to day what he is doing. We raise our harvests in the same way. The distance between the establishment of the cause and the reaping of the effect is very short in physical things; and we can see from hour to hour, from week to week, the results of our work. The lowest sphere is the place where we can quickest realise the fruits of our labour. As when you touch powder to fire there is an instantaneous explosion, so there is the greatest instantaneity between cause and effect the lower down you go toward base matter; and the higher you go above base matter, the wider is the interval between cause and effect. Next above the physical department of life is the intellectual. This is far higher. A man can learn to use his body in a day or two, or in a few weeks, and, in complex trades, in a few years; but a man does not learn how to make use of his intellectual faculties in that length of time. And we call it the education, the developing of our faculties, and the teaching them comprehensive philosophy—the knowledge of how to use themselves so that they shall control the natural globe. This is a slower work. If we regard the perception of the beautiful, the fine, and the harmonious as a higher development of the intellectual or as dependent on a yet higher class of faculties, we shall find that this test which I have employed is still true, viz., that no man can produce the beautiful (the beautiful in truth, I mean) half as fast as he can the lower elements. In other words, truth, in its higher and finer elements, is a product that requires more time for development than truth in its lower forms. But moral qualities stand higher than even the intellectual and artistic in their higher forms. Love (not that instinct which comes to all, but spiritual love, comprehensive, discriminating, fine), joy (not that giggling joy of the senses, but the inspiration of the spirit, joy in the Holy Ghost, that high and blessed enjoyment which comes with

faith and with hope)—love, joy, peace, faith, gentleness, goodness, truthfulness—how few there are that possess these! How rare is it to see men who are fully armed with them! And where they are possessed, how long a discipline it was that produced them! It is a long trial that makes strong, impetuous, rude, harsh, cruel men gentle—sweetly gentle—voluntarily gentle. How long it takes to subdue power to humility! How long it takes to turn a man's self-esteem into a patronising magnanimity! How long it takes to transform man's native conception that he is born and built for his own using into the conception that he is born and built to use himself for others, "in honour preferring others, and pleasing others to their edification"! As you go higher, the work is more difficult. It is larger, it is finer, and the period of time between the starting and the ending is longer. The journey between a man's volition and his higher moral traits is a very long one, ordinarily speaking. Here, then, is a brief delineation of this spiritual law of growth and labour. I will make some applications of it. 1. In a new religious life all reformations which are physical in their nature should be speedy. Evils in this sphere are to be cured at once. Absolute and total discontinuance is the law for the flesh. A man who begins a Christian life must recollect that, so far as the body is concerned, the law is that there is but a very short space between cause and effect in the lower elements of it. 2. But the strictly religious elements go on. These are the elements of negation—those which involve leaving off and not doing. The moment you enter upon the sphere of the higher elements of religious experience, which is the sphere of change or development, the results cannot be immediate. The term between cause and effect will vary in duration with the peculiar advantages which different persons have; with the peculiar susceptibilities of different persons; with the intensity of inspiration which is brought to bear upon them, and under which they are called to act; yet growth in grace is, in the nature of things, a gradual growth. Every single step upward implies and requires the harmonisation of all the elements below in a man's nature and in his surroundings, and that often is comprehensive and very difficult. Not only is all growth in grace gradual which implies development of the higher nature, but you must make up your mind that you will oftentimes set in operation courses which will finally fulfil themselves and disclose beneficial effects. You will set them in operation; and then you will have to wait a great while before you come to the result. And you are not to be discouraged because in labouring for spiritual qualities you do not find them as soon as you could wish. A man cannot say to his temper what he can say to his body. A shrew, being converted, can hold her hand so as not to beat the child, and a little later she can control her tongue, so as not to scold the servant, perhaps; and by and by she can manage her temper, but that takes much longer; and at last she develops a spontaneous emotion of kindness where before there was temper, and that takes longer yet. But still there is a regular progress all the way up; and although there seems to be but little progress made, many persons actually cover a sphere so much wider, and there is so much contained in the little which they do that they really, in the sight of God, are lifted far higher than they are in their own sight, because they are always looking to see physical results—results that the eye can measure, or that the outward senses can recognise, instead of the hidden elements of moral excellence. We have need of patience, after we have done the will of God, before we reach the results. God is dealing with men by difficulties, by tasks, by bereavements, by sorrows, by trials, to prove the higher part of their nature. Give me, now, a bit of wax, and see how soon I will take it in my hand and mould it into any form that I want. Give me a bit of alabaster, and I cannot work that as I can the wax, because it is harder. Give me a bit of marble, and that must be cut more slowly. But give me a diamond, rough and rude, and tell me to cut the faces on that by which it shall reflect all the rays of light and show its hidden powers of beauty, and it is a long task. Yet though it is a long task to cut a diamond, when it is once cut it is worth all the labour that it has cost. Wax is quickly done, but it is of very little use after it is done. A diamond, on the other hand, is long in doing, but once done it lasts for ever. We are not, therefore, to suppose that God is angry with us because we have blow upon blow, and grinding upon grinding, and stroke upon stroke, day after day. He deals with us as with sons. How little we know about this! How little we know what is being done to us! There is a great part of God's providence that must always be mysterious to us—for that is the term by which we speak of ignorance. In labouring for others, therefore, we ought to bear in mind this principle, that perpetually we are to carry along together both the physical and the moral development of the world, and that he who lays out his work

so as to see the result as he goes along must of necessity be a low worker. He that sees at the end of the day all that he has done during the day has done very little. He that is a true worker is always throwing effects over beyond himself to which he will not come for months, or for years, it may be; and he is a true worker who, after he has done the will of God, has patience till he receives the promised reward—the legitimate effect. This comes home to parents. There are parents who say, "How much I have laboured with that child! and with what discouraging results! There are my neighbours—they have no trouble at all with their children; but my children, it seems to me, are bound to the gallows or the gaol." Now, you take a child that is knit from single threads, take a child that has no particular force, and that is reasonably well balanced, and it is not hard to bring him up, for a little effort here and there is sufficient to turn him. A man can put his hand at the spout of a watering-pot and turn the stream here or there or anywhere; but let a man turn Niagara with his hand if he can. Here is a child that has intensity in him. The child would do very well if the mother would let it alone. Let her wait. It takes a great while to unfold a nature, if it be a large nature. Have patience. Believe and understand that the lower things can be speedily done, but that the intermediate affections require a long time for their development, and that the higher moral nature requires a still longer time. Have faith in God. Work, work, and wait! Do not remit any work; but the worry—remit that. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The duty and reward of the Christian:*—I. THERE IS A WAITING TIME. "Ye have need of patience." 1. The world in which we live is hostile. 2. We are in an imperfect state in body, mind, and heart; hence suffer affliction. 3. We wait for the fulfilment of the promise that Christ will come again. II. THERE IS A LABOURING TIME. "After ye have done the will of God." 1. It is a righteous work. 2. It is a work that secures benefit for ourselves. 3. In this labour we have Divine assistance, for it is God's will we do. III. THERE IS AN ENJOYING TIME TO COME. "Receive the promise." 1. Rest (chap. iv. 9). 2. An inheritance (1 Pet. i. 4). 3. Companionship with Christ (John xii. 26; 1 John iii. 2). 4. A speedy deliverance (ver. 37). Conclusion: 1. To bear patiently our present trials is our present duty. 2. Faith, which prompts us to do the will of God, secures for us, through Christ, our salvation. (*B. Knepper.*) *Need of patience:*—This passage is interesting if only as an evidence of the care with which the apostles studied the spiritual conditions of the separate churches which were committed to their care. They conceived of their office, not as a temporary lectureship, but as, in modern phrase, a "cure of souls." Preaching was for them only a means to an end. That end was the salvation and sanctification of human souls. Wherever anything went wrong, there the anxious eye of the apostle rested, to warn, to encourage amendment. At Thessalonica they had forgotten present duties through their absorbing interest in the second coming of the Lord. At Rome the strong-minded members of the Church were dealing with the scruples of their weaker brethren in a spirit of scornful indifference. At Corinth party spirit had reached an unexampled height, and an incestuous union was actually tolerated in a man who remained a member of the Church of the apostles. In Galatia baptized Christians were for having themselves circumcised as if they were merely Jews. At Colosse a theosophy, which afterwards became Gnosticism, was dethroning the Divine Redeemer in many a man's intellect. At Philippi there was the public scandal of a quarrel between two prominent ladies—Euodias and Syntyche. And so, as the apostle, probably dictating what he had to say in general terms to St. Luke, thinks of this church of converts from Judaism, and of the dangers which encompassed them, and of the shortcomings which were peculiar to them, we read the words, "Ye have need of patience." I. PATIENCE NEEDED UNDER PERSECUTION. Why did the Hebrew Christians need patience? These Hebrew Christians needed patience, first of all, because they had been exposed and were still exposed to persecutions involving some degree of physical suffering. They had been, on some occasion respecting which no details have reached us, "spoiled of their goods." This trouble, the writer says, the Hebrew Christians had borne "cheerfully, knowing that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance." They had suffered also, it would seem, as objects of popular ridicule. It is hard to be identified with a cause which is treated as ridiculous; and, when ridicule is accompanied by legalised robbery, and by worse things than robbery looming in the distance, then the exercise of patience becomes exceedingly difficult. On the other hand, it seems clear that, as yet, in this particular Church no life had been taken. There had as yet been no martyr. "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood." This

is interesting if only as showing that the Hebrews addressed in the Epistle cannot have been members of the Church of Jerusalem. Many years had passed in that Church since Stephen had sunk outside the city gate beneath the stones of his murderers, many since James the son of Zebedee had been slain by the sword of Herod. But the fact that there had been no martyr is of moral as well as critical and historical interest. It shows that the persecution which called especially for the exercise of patience was a moderate persecution—moderate as persecutions went in those days; and for this reason patience may have been more difficult to practise than would have been the case had the persecution been fiercer. II. LESSER TRIALS MAY DEMAND MORE PATIENCE THAN GREATER. Many a man will not utter a murmur when he knows that he is lying in agony between life and death, and when those around him know that each hour may be his last; but let that same man be afflicted with a malady which entails great distress, but something less than very acute suffering—which implies no danger to life, but which nevertheless makes him a confirmed invalid—which is of a character to allow those who wait on him to reflect less frequently on the seriousness of his illness than on the trouble which it entails upon themselves, and patience becomes, in average cases, very difficult. There is here felt to be no demand for a supreme effort at self-mastery—an effort which cannot or may not be necessary for long. There is here no sense of such support as is yielded by friends kneeling around a bedside—by sympathies stimulated to the very highest point of tension. It is more difficult to be patient when the irritation is great and when the situation is commonplace. III. MENTAL PERPLEXITY DEMANDS PATIENCE. In their time of trouble their Jewish neighbours would have plied the recent converts with arguments for returning to the old synagogue which they had left. To begin with, it would have been urged that they would thus escape a great deal of trouble. The Jewish religion was an old, respectable religion, well known to the authorities of the empire, and, in ordinary circumstances, tolerated, if not very much liked. It was legally recognised, and by belonging to it a man escaped numberless annoyances which attached to membership of a body which, in the eyes of the pagan world, was a new sect, to which neither law nor society as yet had much to say that was not offensive or insulting. Why not, then, come back to the synagogue, the old religion which, besides having a recognised place in the world, was in possession of so much with which Christians had presumably parted company? IV. SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. The sum of the answer is that in possessing Jesus Christ our Lord Christians had everything that the religion of Israel could possibly give them and a great deal more. The angels ministered to Christians, too, as the heirs of salvation; but Christ was greater than the highest angel, to none of whom—no, not to the highest—had it ever been said, "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee." Moses was, no doubt, a ruler in the house of God, but he ruled as God's viceroy. Christ ruled in it as a Son over His own house. He ruled that which He had made and which He owned. And if the glories of Aaron's priesthood were undisputed, Christ, too, was a priest, but in a higher sense—after the order of Melchisedek. And the Jewish sacrifices—what were they but "shadows of the good things to come"—shadows of the realities which Christ brought with Him from heaven? That most solemn action of all—the entry into the earthly Holy of Holies—what was it but a figure of the entrance of our ascended Lord into the inmost sanctuary of the heavens, where His presence is of itself an intercession? V. THE HEBREW CHRISTIANS NEEDED PATIENCE WHEN DEALING WITH EACH OTHER. They could keep at times and to a certain extent, out of the way of their pagan persecutors, out of the way of Jewish controversialists. They were thrown into intimate and constant contact with other members of the Church; and it seems more than probable that the Church of Alexandria, like the Churches of Rome and Corinth, contained in those first ages very different elements, the co-existence of which was a trial to patience. At Rome we know there was a quiet but vigorous struggle between the converts from Judaism and the converts from heathenism. At Corinth, to the indignation of the apostle, Christians even went to law with Christians in the courts of the pagan empire, or, as he puts it, "brother with brother, before the unbelievers." At Alexandria there would have been, from the nature of the case, very different degrees of Christian attainment, very different ways of dealing with questions of the day. It is impossible that the whole Church of Alexandria can have been meant by the writer's vivid description of those "dull of hearing," who needed "milk" when they ought to rejoice in "strong meat," who, considering the time that had elapsed since their conversion,

ought to have been teachers, and yet needed that some one should teach them what were "the first principles of the doctrines of Christ." There must have been others to whom this description did not apply, but who may well have been tempted to irritation with those to whom it did. For them, perhaps, such sentences as the following were intended:—"Lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for the feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed"; "Follow peace with all men." VI. THE SLOW GROWTH OF CHARACTER. In no department of life is patience more necessary than in dealing with human character. The young, the slow, the undeveloped, the timid, claim it at our hands. No character that is worth anything develops all at once—develops at a single impulse. It grows gradually, first from silence and reserve to decision and explicitness, and then to full productiveness and beauty. As our Lord has said, "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." And yet how often is patience wanted on the part of older people when dealing with and judging of the young. We expect the work of ten years to be crowded into ten weeks. We expect the growth of character to reveal itself to some moral microscope of ours, or to the naked eye, when we will. VII. PATIENCE DEMANDED IN THE PRESENT DAY. The great change which Jesus Christ introduced into man's estimate of conduct was the exaltation of the passive virtues. The old pagan world meant by a "virtuous" man a brave, strong, just, energetic human being, who might be, but who probably would not be, humble, submissive, self-subduing. The gospel ideal of character is described under the title of "the works of the Spirit," and it runs thus: "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." For the old pagan or for his modern representative virtue is mainly active, pushing, aggressive, demonstrative. Virtue is the warrior; it is the athlete; it is the ruler of men. Anyhow, it is the proud self-assertion of conscious force. It thinks cheaply of Christendom, with its ideal of patience and submission. It has a quiet contempt for the martyr, as though he were wanting in manly dignity and self-respect. Christian patience, it says, is the slave cringing beneath the lash of his master—cringing because he is weak and ignorant. VIII. PATIENCE IS STRENGTH. If "better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city," then most assuredly the action of the will represented by patience is higher than the action of the will represented by physical courage; for, in the latter case, will is exerted upon something external to man; in the former it is turned in upon man himself: it is engaged in controlling the very force which animates it. It would be far easier, I apprehend, for nine men out of ten to join a storming party than to lie on a rack or to hang on a cross without repining. Yes, patience is strength, and patience is moral strength: it is wisdom. In exercising it we, the creatures of a day, make one of the nearest approaches possible for us to the life of God. IX. PATIENCE OF GOD. Of God, St. Augustine has finely said, "*Patiens quia æternus*" (Because He lives for ever, He can afford to wait). X. PATIENCE THE LAW OF PROGRESS. Is not patience the very law of your conquests in science? Those revelations of new powers in nature which from time to time astonish the world—those discoveries which make man's power over the conditions of his existence sensibly greater than they ever were before—have been prepared for, are being prepared for, by a group of moral and intellectual efforts under the presidency of patience—patience which neglects no facts, patience which is wearied by no disappointments, patience which inspires, which controls, which combines all the group of workers which obey her. And is not patience, I will not dare to say the law, but the hope of your art? Why does our architecture at its very best fall so far short of those great creations of days when our forefathers had neither our knowledge, nor our wealth, nor our marvellous resources? There may be more answers to that question than one, but one is that we have not the patience which is needed for these splendid efforts. We care more to see what we attempt in its completeness than to forego our personal satisfaction for the sake of the grandeur of our work, and our work is dwarfed and impoverished accordingly. Or what is the most necessary quality for any who would promote man's social or political welfare? Wisdom, no doubt, is necessary, and energy, and freedom from the chains of prejudice, and buoyant courage, and readiness to recognise the conditions under which success is possible; but above all these is patience. XI. CONDITIONS OF INDIVIDUAL LIFE UNCHANGED. And as for individual life its conditions are just as they were eighteen centuries ago. Here the modern is just as the ancient world. Sin remains; death remains. When science has so revolutionised our life as not only to alleviate but to banish pain, as not only to postpone but to do away with

death, then we may do away with patience. Till then patience is as necessary as it ever was. Patience is needed to enable us to meet the inevitable, and to transfigure it by joyfully accepting as a Father's will that which else must overtake us as if it were the iron will of a relentless fate. And in this, as in all other virtues, Jesus Christ our Lord is our highest model. (*Canon Liddon.*) *Patience*:—The first and most obvious thing which occurs to our minds when we try to call up those things which will make patience needful is positive suffering and pain. Who but those who have actually felt the heavy load of severe bodily pain, protracted day by day, know the bitter and impatient thoughts and feelings which it has power to stir up in our hearts? Which of us can tell how sadly we may need patience before we come to die? But suffering, whether great or small, always tends to make us impatient; and oftentimes those little, insect cares and pains which are of daily and hourly occurrence, and which seem, perhaps, too small and insignificant to need any great exercise of patience to enable us to face them, yet suffice to spur us on to an impatience and fretfulness which are sinful and humiliating. And the very fact, to which experience testifies, that we are even more ready to grow impatient at little troubles than at great ones, because for great troubles a Christian man gathers up his endurance and seeks to receive them submissively as coming by the appointment of God, while little ones he somehow does not think of in connection with the Almighty, and meets them in his own unaided strength—I say this very fact only shows us the more strongly that a very ordinary lot, with very ordinary trials, may yet furnish a great field for the exercise of patience—patience not the heathen virtue, not the worldly prudence, but the Christian grace. A second case in which patience will be very needful to us all is when our hopes and wishes are deferred, when we have to wait and wait, day after day, week after week, year after year, for some expected good. And how many human beings have to wait away in this fashion the best years of life! How many a human being never gets the thing which he or she has waited for till the power of enjoying it is gone! But surely patience, implanted by God's Spirit, is mightily needed in such a case; for, if it be not given, how often it proves bad for man to linger out these days of expectancy: how often to do so sours the heart, withers up the affections, jaundices the views, turns the fresh hopeful being of youth into the gloomy, solitary, despairing misanthrope of scarcely middle age! Who does not know that in this evil world things almost invariably turn out just in that way which we least wished and hoped? That day is nine times out of ten a rainy one which we especially desired should be fair; any little accident is pretty safe to happen just at the most inconvenient time; any little illness is almost certain to come when we most wished to be well. It is just on the day when you expect an important letter that something goes wrong with the mail train; it is just when the physician is wanted in a case of life and death that of course he is twenty miles away. So we pass to the more practical question, As we need patience so much, how are we to get it? Where does it come from? Now, we reply that patience is a Christian grace, the gift of God, the operation of the Holy Spirit; and it is to be obtained as all Christian graces are, by earnestly praying for it and by patiently striving after it, and by humbly submitting to all those means which the Holy Spirit makes use of to implant it in our hearts. "Tribulation worketh patience," says the Apostle Paul; and how often long-continued affliction is sanctified of God to subdue the soul into a calm submission. We will grant you, indeed, that in working patience the Holy Spirit finds very different kind of material on which His gracious operations must be wrought. It is much easier in some cases than in others to produce what looks like patience. Extremely stupid people often seem remarkably patient; but here, in truth, there is no true patience at all. You would not call a stone patient, let it bear what it might; and why? Because it feels nothing. And the nearer people approach to the insensibility of the stone the less they have of real patience. It is not patience to await composedly the decision of some question which would make another tremble with eagerness if the reason of your composure be that you do not care how the matter goes. Ah, the true patience, which God's Spirit works, and oftentimes by the slow wear of suffering years, is not the dull torpor of a clod, but the sensitive, eager, vehement resistance of a human soul against that to resist which it is by itself utterly unequal. But let us see to it that none of us should fancy that because we find it hard to exercise patience therefore we may be excused seeking to exercise it at all. If any among us feels within himself that impatience is his most easily besetting sin, then let such an one remember that here is his battle-ground; and let us be sure of it, that "the God of patience and consolation"—

He who "knoweth our frame," and who has told us how sorely we "have need of patience"—will be ready by His Spirit and His grace to "strengthen us to all patience," to enable us to "possess our souls in patience," to "run with patience the race set before us," "patiently waiting for Christ" and His coming at the last. Oh! if the story be true how one who stands out in the long ages past as the purest and the best of heathens (Socrates) bore still upon his passion-scarred face the traces of storms gone by, after the discipline of years had made him the mildest and most self-subdued; if the tale be true that when one who professed to read men's hearts upon their brow said that the gentle philosopher must be the most irritable of men, that tranquil heathen stayed the derisive laughter of the standers by and the physiognomist's mistake, and exclaimed, "He is right; I *was* naturally so, but Philosophy has cured me"—oh! if days of self-conflict and self-control could change the swarthy and puny being, with his satyr nature of old still written upon his satyr face, into the very best and gentlest, shall it ever be said that the mighty grace of God and the constant working of a Divine Spirit will not suffice to calm the heats and storms and acerbities of nature, and to work out a loftier than the patience of the philosopher," even the serene, happy "patience of the saints"? May that patience be yours and mine! (*A. K. H. Boyd, D.D.*) *Patient endurance recommended to believers*:—I. THE NATURE OF PATIENT ENDURANCE. Patience is one of the many valuable graces that enrich the Christian character. It cannot be too carefully cherished. From the pen of inspiration it appears that Christian patience is a certain hallowed, dignified, serene possession of the soul in the midst of the raging storm and of impending danger; it is the sitting of the noble and Heaven-taught spirit upon the munitions of rocks in, at least comparatively, undisturbed and silent majesty, smiling at the noise and fury of the tempest; it is the valiant bearing up under great perplexities and sorrows, even when surrounded by them on every side. Undismayed by the gloomiest prospects, this grace reigns and shines in leading its possessor to venture or suffer anything in obeying the commandments of God and in professing the faith of Jesus, making him well-pleased with whatever God appoints respecting him. Like every other good thing, it is the gift of God. II. TO SHOW THAT THE TRUE BELIEVER HAS NEED OF PATIENCE. 1. Where is our dwelling-place? It is on earth, which is not the place of our rest. The heavenly is the only inheritance that is undefiled either with sin or with sorrow. We are also in a strange land. What have we to look for but trials, of which all are partakers? The present is also a state of warfare. We are in an enemy's land. 2. What is our life? It is a scene of sorrow and trouble, of vanity and vexation of spirit. 3. What is our character? We are followers of God, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling; not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world. 4. What is our peculiar situation in reference to the richer and better part of our treasure and inheritance? We are children of hope. Truly it is said, "The greatest part of the saint's happiness is as yet in promise." Now, "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick"; and the object of our desire as Christians not always being within grasp or at our own command, we must with patience wait for it. 5. What is the will of God with which we have a special concern, in the observance of which we are neither to tire nor to rest until all be fulfilled in reference to ourselves? The will of God is twofold—that of His purpose as shining through all the wise and mysterious arrangements of His providence respecting His people, and that of His command as connected with the whole extent of required duty. With both of these we who are called by God's grace must unhesitatingly comply. To the former, or what may be termed His providential will, as Christians we must without murmuring bow. The mind is to be prepared for whatever may befall us. Oh, what need of patience! To the latter, or what is often called God's revealed will, we must ever have respect. Self is not only to be denied and the cross taken up, but the will of God is to be done. And this is the will of God, even our sanctification; and that not in part, but wholly. As far as in us lies we must walk in all the statutes and ordinances of the Lord blameless, however great the disrelish which may sometimes be felt for duty, however fierce the opposition we may meet with. Who, then, can doubt whether Christians have need of patience? III. THE EXCITING REASONS TO CALL FORTH THE EXERCISE OF THIS CHRISTIAN VIRTUE. 1. The first shall be drawn from the source of afflictions. The hand of the Lord is in all these things. 2. The second shall be taken from the promised reward. (*Essex Remembrancer.*) *Patience*:—Observe patience in its poise and pose. It is the consummation of a thing which determines its appreciation. Nothing that is desirable looks to be such in its preliminary stages. On the contrary, whatever is exquisite in its com-

pleteness may be unsightly in its incipience. Patience alone comprehends the cases and fulfils the course. Patience sees things as they are by seeing things as they shall be; patience puts things together and makes sense of them. It is the Divine glory to see the end from the beginning; it is human wisdom to see the beginning from the end. Right triumphs in the sequel. Great truths move over the world at their own paces. Ships move when they seem only to rock, cutting their curves against the sky. Prejudices die, truth comes out by the witness of reason and the facts of history, as the kernel of grain comes out, just when the husk drops away. Any great cause seems, for a long time, to be a struggling and a sorry cause. Generations always scout what is to be the pride of coming generations. That old maxim, "*Magna est veritas et prevalebit*," is not correct in any sense of immediate consequence. Justice is the latest arrival, the last intelligence upon earth, but justice comes to stay. Justice once done is done for ever. Its final decision is distinct. No man is so sure to be righted as the man who is wronged; no heart is so sure to be remembered as the heart that was slighted; no character is so likely to be lauded as the character which has been scouted; no man is so certain to be remembered as he who had been forgotten, he who, for sake of others, could forego himself. These all hoard their claims, and put them out at interest, as the provident pinch themselves to invest their savings, that the present may lay up for the future. It is the sequel that determines any fact, as the *dénouement* determines a fiction. Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof, and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. Now, look a little further, taking a wider range. The patience of faith is the self-possession of fact; the long agony of time is the long suffering of eternity. Most unbelief is petulant impatience. If there be a God, to worship is to wait; to wait is to worship; to wait upon Him is to have Him for waiting. Tread softly; speak gently amid these ranges and mazes. Look cheerfully upon these mysteries. God is busy with His own arrangements. His kingdom is coming by His own processes, in His own time and ways. (*H. S. Carpenter.*) *Patience*:—Patience is the guardian of faith, the preserver of peace, the cherisher of love, the teacher of humility. Patience governs the flesh, strengthens the spirit, sweetens the temper, stifles anger, extinguishes envy, subdues pride; she bridles the tongue, restrains the hand, tramples upon temptations, endures persecutions, consummates martyrdom. Patience produces unity in the Church, loyalty in the State, harmony in families and societies; she comforts the poor and moderates the rich; she makes us humble in prosperity, cheerful in adversity, unmoved by calumny and reproach; she teaches us to forgive those who have injured us, and to be the first in asking forgiveness of those whom we have injured; she delights the faithful and invites the unbelieving; she adorns the woman and approves the man; she is beautiful in either sex and every age. Behold her appearance and her attire. Her countenance is calm and serene as the face of heaven unspotted by the shadow of a cloud, and no wrinkle of grief or anger is seen in her forehead. Her eyes are as the eyes of doves for meekness, and on her eyebrows sit cheerfulness and joy. Her mouth is lovely in silence; her complexion and colour that of innocence and security; while, like the virgin, the daughter of Sion, she shakes her head at the adversary, despising and laughing him to scorn. She is clothed in the robes of the martyrs, and in her hand she holds a sceptre in the form of a cross. She rides not in the whirlwind and stormy tempest of passion, but her throne is the humble and contrite heart, and her kingdom is the kingdom of peace. (*Bp. Horne.*) *Want of patience*:—He who wanteth patience in this world is like a man who standeth trembling in the field without his armour, because every one can strike him and he can strike none; so the least push of pain, or loss, or disgrace, doth trouble that man more which hath not the skill to suffer than twenty trials can move him which is armed with patience, like a golden shield in his hand, to break the stroke of every cross and save the heart though the body suffer, for while the heart is whole all is well. (*H. Smith.*) *Learning patience*:—There is no such thing as preaching patience into people unless the sermon is so long that they have to practise it while they hear. No man can learn patience except by going out into the hurly-burly world and taking life just as it blows. Patience is but lying to and riding out the gale. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Patience related to pleasure*:—There is no music in a "rest," that I know of, but there's the making of music in it. And people are always missing that part of the life-melody, and scrambling on without counting; not that it is easy to count, but nothing on which so much depends ever is easy. People are always talking of perseverance, and courage, and fortitude; but patience is the finest and worthiest part of fortitude, and the rarest too. I have known

twenty persevering girls to one patient one; but it is only the twenty-first one who can do her work out and out and enjoy it; for patience lies at the root of all pleasures as well as of all powers. (*J. Ruskin.*) *Impatient fussiness*:—Men sometimes, in their eagerness to act, act too far—act by wrong motives; and in their impatient fussiness overlook the processes of God and the harmonious working of all things. It is a great thing very often to be patient; not to talk much about it, not to try to do much about it, but to wait and trust. And this is all, sometimes, that we can do. (*E. H. Chapin.*) *A wise prayer*:—Lord, perfect what Thou hast begun in me, that I may not suffer shipwreck when I am almost at the haven. (*Beza.*) *God's time best*:—Were you prematurely rending the calyx which contains the coming rose or lily, perhaps it would refuse to blow at all, or at best you would only get a crumpled, stunted flower. God's way is better. With gushing summer He fills the bud within; with sap and strength He makes it glad at heart, till the withering cerement bursts and the ripened fragrance floats through all the air of June. The soul must be ripe within, and then it easily puts off this tabernacle. (*Jas. Hamilton, D.D.*) *Patience*:—When Judson was labouring in Burmah, unable at the first to report conversions to the American churches, to their desponding letters he replied, "Permit us to labour on in obscurity, and in twenty years you may hear from us again." *Patience perfected*:—Dr. Morison, of Chelsea, for thirty years editor of the *Evangelical Magazine*, was not more distinguished by abundant labours than by manifold sufferings. For nearly twenty-five years he was so afflicted with asthma as to be obliged generally to leave his bed by two or three o'clock in the morning. Four sons, full of promise, were in succession cut off; then came the death of his daughter, Mary Legge, of China, the unexpected end of a "life of beauty and brightness." The friend who broke to him this terrible news said: "I shall never forget the sublime resignation with which Dr. Morison bowed his head and held his peace." Only one child was then left, and she was brought home with mind wrecked by sunstroke in Tasmania. The last illness of this grand sufferer lasted forty-two months. Though by nature keenly sensitive to pain of every kind, no word of impatience escaped from his lips or his pen. He once said: "At this moment there is not an inch of my body that is not full of agony"; yet his voice was steady and his face unruffled as he spoke. Of his dying words his biographer, Dr. Kennedy, says: "I could only listen in reverent and grateful silence. . . . I felt as if I stood on the confines of heaven and was listening to one who was more in heaven than on earth. In the patience and peace and love and hope which I was witnessing there seemed to be a demonstration of the divinity of the gospel." (*J. F. B. Tinling, B.A.*)

Ver. 37. **Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come.**—"*Yet a little while*":—He who has a house ready furnished does not mind the dismantling of his lodging. True, it is not pleasant to have the furniture of even our lodging disturbed and broken, to have the things in it scattered and pulled to pieces; for even a lodging becomes dear when we are used to it, every corner an old acquaintance and almost an old friend: every part of it brings some thoughts, habits, and employments to remembrance. We do not leave it without pain, nor are we driven from it without some natural sorrow. But if we have a house ready when the lodging is gone, our sorrow is less, our regret slighter, for it is not our all: we are not left houseless. The Hebrews were in trouble: persecution had fallen upon them. Therefore, when the heathen were let loose upon them, and the malice that was not allowed to take their lives was allowed to spoil their goods, they "took it joyfully," remembering that "they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance," that, though men destroyed the lodging and its furniture, they could not reach or touch the home. They had thus "done the will of God," not only by active obedience, but by patient submission. However, the promise on which their hopes were fixed, even "the hope of eternal life," was still at a distance. They must wait on till it should be fulfilled. To be able thus to wait they needed "patience"; and to exercise that patience St. Paul wrote our text: "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." "A little while!" says the unbeliever, as he hears it—"a little while! are one thousand eight hundred years a little while"? Such are the thoughts of the sceptic. If we were to weigh time in man's puny scales, it would not be a little while. To us worms, creeping along the earth for a small space, for our few years, it is not a little while. But He who spoke these words, "I come quickly," is the same "to whom a thousand years are but as a day," the same that "inhabiteth eternity." To Him years are as

seconds on the stop-watch, and centuries roll round as swiftly as the hands on the dial. The humble Christian does not understand this, but he believes it; for it is the word of Him whom he has found to be the truth of God. And those words, "Yet a little while," are a fruitful source of comfort to his soul. Come with me to the death-bed of a Christian missionary, and see what those words do there. Morning is just beginning to break over the eastern hills. The missionary's wife has been watching all night by the bedside of her fever-stricken husband. In an hour or two she will be a widow and desolate. "Yet a little while." He knows that he is leaving her: he knows that he shall soon cease to behold that face on which for so many years he has never looked but in love, and which has never looked but in love upon his own. Yet a few more years or months and her work also will be done; and she also shall be where he is, and the loving fellow servants shall meet never to part again in their Father's home. Come with me, yet not to foreign lands, but to our own, and not to a distant part, but near at hand. Come to the abode of poverty; poverty brought on by no crime—poverty which God's visitations have brought on. "Yet a little while." It will soon be over: I shall soon have done with this little room, this scanty furniture, these poor garments: I shall soon want not even the little food I now want for my mortal body. "Yet a little while," and He who for my sake became poor will make me eternally rich through His poverty. Yes, we might run through the whole range of Christian faith: we might look into Christians of every rank of life, from the peer that wears a coronet down to the aged widow driven at last even from her little room into the shelter of a workhouse: we might ask the princely Christian merchant at his desk, the Christian tradesman at his counter, the Christian soldier at his post, the Christian mechanic at his work, yea, the Christian pauper (for such I have met) breaking stones by the roadside of the country, or picking oakum in the town, and they would all tell us, if we asked them, to what they are looking, and what assurance cheers them in their way, and they would all say, "Yet a little while." But do these words bring comfort to any but the Christian? Ask the wealthy worldling with his splendid mansion, its costly furniture, its comforts and its luxuries. Oh no; it is his misery to think that all these are only for a little while—that he must leave them all so soon; and it would mar everything if on his splendid furniture, his majestic trees, his noble mansion, were written in clear, plain characters, "a little while." Ask the bright girl, who is only a creature of this world, full of life and spirits, bounding with joy and health, enjoying with keen relish all the enjoyments of the world, the excitement of the dance; would that bright child of fashion, that joyous and excited creature of amusement, desire to have written on her wardrobe, on her novels, and to meet her wherever she goes—"a little while?" "Happy Christian!" for thou dost believe what thy God has said. Thou does not believe that this life is all of life, nor this world all: thou dost believe that this is God's school, and above is God's home, and that thou art now under tutors, and that now afflictions are thy teachers, troubles thy discipline, temptations the searching tests of thy truth, thy purity, thy integrity, thy love to God, thy sense of sin; that this is all meant to make thee fit for thy Father's house, to form thy Saviour's likeness in thy soul; and, believing this, thou dost rejoice to think, "that yet a little while," and when the fires have melted thee and taken off thy dross, thou wilt not be sorry that the heat is over—when trial is done, thou wilt not be sorry to receive the crown of righteousness. (*W. W. Champneys, M.A.*) *Faith during delay*:—I. THE DELAY OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PROMISES IS A GREAT EXERCISE OF FAITH AND PATIENCE. II. IT IS ESSENTIAL UNTO FAITH TO BE ACTED ON THE PROMISED COMING OF CHRIST TO ALL THAT LOOK FOR HIS APPEARANCE. III. THERE IS A PROMISE OF THE COMING OF CHRIST SUITED UNTO THE STATE AND CONDITION OF THE CHURCH IN ALL AGES. IV. THE APPARENT DELAY OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF ANY OF THESE PROMISES REQUIRES AN EXERCISE OF THE FAITH AND PATIENCE OF THE SAINTS. V. EVERY SUCH COMING OF CHRIST HATH ITS APPOINTED SEASON BEYOND WHICH IT SHALL NOT TARRY. VI. THIS DIVINE DISPOSITION OF THINGS GIVES A NECESSITY UNTO THE CONTINUAL EXERCISE OF FAITH, PRAYER, AND PATIENCE, ABOUT THE COMING OF CHRIST. VII. Although we may not know the especial dispensations and moments of time that are passing over us, yet ALL BELIEVERS MAY KNOW THE STATE IN GENERAL OF THE CHURCH UNDER WHICH THEY ARE, AND WHAT COMING OF CHRIST THEY ARE TO LOOK FOR AND EXPECT. VIII. FAITH IN ANY CHURCH SATISFIES THE SOULS OF MEN WITH WHAT IS THE GOOD AND DELIVERANCE OF THAT STATE; ALTHOUGH A MAN DO KNOW OR IS PERSUADED THAT PERSONALLY HE SHALL NOT SEE IT HIMSELF, NOR ENJOY IT. The faith of this kind

is for the Church, and not for men's individual persons. IX. UNDER DESPONDENCIES AS TO PECULIAR APPEARANCES OR COMINGS of Christ, IT IS THE DUTY OF BELIEVERS TO FIX AND EXERCISE THEIR FAITH ON HIS ILLUSTRIOUS APPEARANCE AT THE LAST DAY. X. EVERY PARTICULAR COMING OF CHRIST, IN A WAY SUITED UNTO THE PRESENT DELIVERANCE OF THE CHURCH, IS AN INFALLIBLE PLEDGE OF HIS COMING AT THE LAST UNTO JUDGMENT. XI. EVERY PROMISED COMING OF CHRIST IS CERTAIN, AND SHALL NOT BE DELAYED BEYOND ITS APPOINTED SEASON, WHEN NO DIFFICULTIES SHALL BE ABLE TO STAND BEFORE IT. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *The appointed time:* —As the herbs and flowers which sleep all winter in their roots underground, when the time of spring approacheth presently start forth of their beds, where they had lain so long unperceived, thus will the promise in its season do. He delays who passeth the time appointed; but he only stays that waits for the appointed time and then comes. Every promise is dated, but with a mysterious character; and for want of skill in God's chronology we are prone to think that God forgets us, when indeed we forget ourselves in being so bold to set God a time of our own, and in being angry that He comes not just then to us. (*W. Gurnall.*)

Ver. 38. **The just shall live by faith.**—*Those who are justified by faith are heirs of life:*—There is a slight transposition in the words of our text, which is warranted by the original Greek, and which, while it does not materially affect the meaning of the passage, appears to set it in a clearer light. We may read the text thus—"The just by faith shall live." The expression is descriptive of a child of God. The "just," or "justified man," is not merely a person who is equitable in all his dealings, and who maintains a character for honesty, but one who has received by faith the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has been renewed in the spirit of his mind by the power of the Holy Ghost. I. THE JUSTIFIED MAN SHALL LIVE IN THIS WORLD. A man's outward condition forms no correct criterion by which we may ascertain the measure of his acceptance with God. The possession of riches and honours does not necessarily imply that the possessor is the favourite of heaven, or that he is peaceful and happy in his own mind. How often do we see the true Christian labouring under the pressure of poverty—struggling hard against the tide of adverse circumstances; or if, in a higher sphere of society, he engages in the pursuits of business, "all things are against him," and every exertion which he makes proves painfully abortive. But in the midst of all these vicissitudes he "lives," and his is a happy life. Again, behold the believer when he is stretched upon the bed of sickness. He may be exhausted by weakness, or racked by pain, yet "he lives." Though a dark cloud passes over him his soul is serene. Again, behold the Christian in the day of persecution. It is to this point the apostle makes special allusion in the context. The early disciples of the blessed Jesus derived no worldly advantage from the profession of their faith in Him. What enabled them to sustain the rage of their persecutors? It was faith in their Master—it was confidence in His promises. And in one word, what in every age has supported the people of God under the pressure of calamity, or the prospect of a dying hour? Not certainly the remembrance of the good they had done, or the glory they had achieved—not the contemplation of their own merits, or their moral and intellectual attainments, but simply the inwrought principle of a living faith—that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. II. THE JUSTIFIED MAN SHALL LIVE IN THE WORLD TO COME. Faith, indeed, is not the procuring cause of eternal life. The possession of faith gives us no absolute or inherent claim on the Almighty for the pardon. It is merely the instrument of our justification. It is the link that connects us with the Saviour, and in virtue of this connection we receive every blessing we enjoy. Eternal life is the purchase of the Saviour's sacrifice. (*A. B. Parker.*) *Of living by faith:*—These words are used four times (Hab. ii. 4; Rom. i. 17; Gal. iii. 11, and here). In the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians they respect justification, Paul making use of them to prove that we are justified by faith. In Hab. ii. 4, and the text, they respect our conversation, and hold forth what should support a righteous man in all dangers and necessities. I. WHAT IS IT TO LIVE BY FAITH? This living by faith is not a single and transient act, but something habitual and permanent. And therefore its nature, as of other habits, will best appear in its acts and objects. 1. The acts of faith. The Scripture holds them forth under the notion of dependence and recumbency. And we may thus describe it: living by faith is constant dependence on God as one without whom we cannot live. Three things concur to its constitution. (1) A sense and acknowledgment that we cannot live without God. This is

presupposed. Our life depends on Him; and it is our life to depend, life in its latitude; life and all that pertains to it; life and livelihood; life of body and soul; in its being and well-being; in its being and actings, and all that maintain it in both. God is that to the soul which the soul is to the body, enlivens it and acts it; so Christ quickens and acts the soul. (2) There is a relying on God for all these, for continuance of what we have, and supply of what we want; rolling ourselves and the burden of our affairs on God. This is the formal act of faith. (3) Constancy, frequency. It is a continued thing; a life of faith, not one act of believing; a whole life of acts. Since we always stand upon the brink of sin and death, and have no security from falling but God's maintaining and our apprehending of Him, we should continually depend and hang upon God, never let go our hold. 2. The object of faith is God in Christ as made known in His attributes, offices, relations, promises, and providences. We may refer the objects and support of faith to these heads. (1) Divine attributes. Those are the pillows and grounds of faith, rocks of eternity, upon which faith may securely repose: "Though the earth shall be removed," &c. (2) The offices of Christ. These are strong supports to faith as any though less made use of: in special His—(*a*) Priestly office (chap. iv. 14-16). (*b*) Regal office (Acts v. 31). (*c*) Prophetical office (Deut. xviii. 15). (3) Mutual relations betwixt God and His people. These are the sweet food of faith, which, digested, nourish it into strength, and enable it to vigorous actings; and to this end we find them frequently used by the saints (Psa. cxix. 94; Jer. xiv. 9); and from particular relations: servant Psa. cxliii. 12; Jer. iii. 14); Father (Isa. lxviii. 15). "Doubtless Thou art our Father"; where there are the strongest actings of faith upon divers relations. (4) Promises. These and faith are so usually joined as though they were relatives. These are the wells of salvation out of which faith draws joy, &c. (5) Providences of God are objects and encouragements to faith. The consideration of what He has done for others, and for themselves, has supported the saints. These are the hands of God stretched out on which faith takes hold (Psa. cxix. 132; 1 Sam. xvii. 37; 2 Tim. iv. 17, 18). II. How DO THEY, HOW MUST WE LIVE, BY FAITH? Here I shall give particular directions how faith may act with most advantage upon its several objects formerly propounded, and show what encouragement faith may find from them in all its actings. 1. Attributes of God. For the direction and encouragement of faith in acting upon them, observe eight particulars: (1) Study the attributes. Labour to know them distinctly, effectually. Though faith be not knowledge, yet it is not without it. Nay, the more we know the more we believe (Psa. ix. 10). (2) Assure thy interest in the attributes. Let thy knowledge be applicatory. Be not satisfied that thou seest God, till thou see Him to be thine; what He is in Himself, but what He is to thee. (3) When thou art acting thy faith, so methodise the attributes of God as thou mayest thereby prove and make it evident to faith that God is both able and willing to do what thou wouldst believe. That God is willing and able are two handles on which both the hands of faith may take hold, and so act more strongly (as we do) than if it use but one. A man ready to drown, if he can lay hold upon anything with both hands to keep him from sinking, is more secure than if he can but stay himself by one. Faith is but weak when it fastens but upon one of these; the doubting of either will keep off faith from its steadfastness. (4) Let faith fix on that attribute which is most suitable to thy condition. And here faith may meet with many encouragements: first, there is no condition thou canst possibly fall into but some attributes afford support; secondly, there is enough in that attribute to uphold thee, as much as thou standest in need of, as much as thou canst desire; thirdly, there is infinitely more; though thy condition were worse than it is, worse than ever any was, yet there is more than thou needest, more than thou canst desire, more than thou canst imagine, infinitely more. Some one attribute will answer all thy necessities; some most, some many. For, first, some of God's attributes encourage faith in every condition. Omnipotency. When thou art surrounded with troubles and dangers there is the power of God to rely on; so Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx.). Art thou afraid to fall away? Stay thyself on God's power: "We are kept by the power of God through faith." Omnisciency. Wantest thou direction, knowest not what to do, at thy wit's end? Eye Omnisciency (2 Chron. xx. 12). Fearest thou secret plots of Satan, crafty conveyances of wicked men, such as no eye can see or discover? Trust omnisciency. Immensity. Art thou deserted by friends, or separated from them by imprisonment, banishment, infectious diseases? Let faith eye immensity; as Christ, "Yet I am not alone," &c. All-sufficiency. Let faith set this against all thy wants. I want

riches, but the Lord is all-sufficient; liberty, children, friends, credit, health; He is liberty, &c. I want grace, the means of grace, comfort; He is these. Dost thou fear death? The Lord is life. Dost thou fear casting off? The Lord is unchangeable. Mercy. This will hold when all fail. It is the strength of all other supports, and that in all conditions. It bears up faith when nothing else can, under the guilt of sin and sense of wrath; in misery, that is the time when faith should eye mercy. Hence you may argue strength into faith. If one attribute answer many, yea, all conditions, will not all answer one? Secondly, there is enough in any one attribute to support thee as much as thou needest or desirest, let thy corruptions be never so strong, thy wants never so many. Thirdly, there is more than enough that thou needest or canst desire; more than is necessary for thy condition, for a worse than thine, for the worst that ever was. (5) There is no condition possible but some attribute encourages faith; so there is nothing in God that discourages faith in any condition, the most formidable condition. (6) Learn to draw arguments for confirmation of faith in acting upon attributes. These we may raise: first, from ourselves, laying this ground, that whatever engages God encourages faith; for it is easier to believe that one will act for us who is engaged, than one who has no inducement thereto. Secondly, from the attributes themselves separately considered. To instance in two that faith makes most use of power and mercy. Power renders everything easy. This consideration much strengthens faith. Then for mercy this pleases Him. "He delights to show mercy." Now can we doubt the Lord will do that for us which He delights to do? (Jer. ix. 24). Thirdly, from attributes associated. We may doubt of creature power because it is limited, but He is omnipotent. The creature may have strength but want wisdom, and this may disable him, and weaken our confidence; but God is omniscient. A friend may have strength and wisdom too, but may be far from us; oh, but He is omnipresent. A man may have all these but be prevented by death; but God is eternal. A man may have power, wisdom, propinquity, life, but not be willing; but God is merciful, gracious, compassionate, and joins other attributes to His mercy, the more to confirm faith. Fourthly, from God's design in manifesting His attributes, viz., His glory. Here is a stronghold for faith. (7) Compare the attributes with what men usually trust, and see how infinitely they transcend; how much more reason there is to rely on God's attributes than on riches, strength, princes. (8) Learn from the attributes to answer all objections that may discourage faith, viz., I cannot believe, have used all means, &c.; God is able to work faith. But my own impotency is moral, sinful, contracted by sin; God is merciful. But I am unworthy; He is gracious. But I have turned grace into wantonness; He is patient. But I have abused patience, and what reason to expect He should longer forbear me? His love. But I have played the harlot; He is unchangeable. 2. The offices of Christ. To direct and encourage faith herein, take the rules: (1) Acquaint thyself with the offices of Christ, what they contain and hold forth to us and for us. (*a*) Kingly office. 1. As He is King He is lawgiver; writes laws in our hearts. Gives not only laws to be obeyed, but hearts to obey; laws for obedience and principles of obedience. 2. To subdue our enemies (Psa. ii. 6, 8), our lusts, the world, the powers of darkness. He will bruise them with a rod of iron. 3. To rule us. The government is on His shoulders. He sets His throne in our hearts, and takes care that we live under His government in peace, plenty, safety; peace of conscience, plenty of grace, perseverance. (*b*) Prophetical. To declare His Father's will, to make us understand it; to enlighten our minds; to send the Spirit of Truth to clear up obscurities, resolve doubts, remove scruples, satisfy cases of conscience. (*c*) As priest. So He suffered and intercedes. His sufferings are both satisfactory and meritorious. (2) These offices are purely relative; wholly ours, for us, in reference to us; relative both in their constitution and execution. He was made King, Priest, &c., for us, and does exercise these for us. (3) These being the offices of Christ, He is to perform them *ex officio* as a duty. He who was independent, and stood in no need of us, was pleased, for the encouragement of our faith, to come under the engagement of a duty. (4) Christ, as He is Mediator, is both God and man, and executes His offices as Mediator. Here then faith hath all the encouragement that both heaven and earth can afford. (5) Let faith begin first to act on the priestly office. This is the basis of the other. Persuade thyself that He is thy Priest, and it will be easy to believe Him thy King and Prophet. If He have executed that He will execute these. (6) They are adequate to our conditions. This is necessary for the life of faith, that in every condition possible it have something to rely on. (7) Consider how affectionately

Christ executed these offices on earth, and it will be a strong ground to believe He will not neglect them in heaven. (8) The Father and the Spirit are engaged for the execution of these offices. 3. Promises. How faith may act with most advantage upon promises, and get support and encouragement from them in its actings. (1) Consider the latitude of them. There are promises suitable to all estates. (2) Collect the promises, treasure them up, methodise them aright, meditate on them; many in one. (3) Accustom yourselves to a holy kind of discourse and reasoning. Faith does not abolish but improve reason. (4) Confine not God in His performances to things, degrees, times, or persons. (5) As to conditional promises, if you have the qualification in sincerity, let not the want of degrees discourage you from application. The lowest degree of grace entitles to the promise. (6) He that can lay just claim to one promise has interest in all; he that can apply any one, has property in every one. (7) The Lord's word is more valuable in His account than all His works; He will suffer all the works of His hands to perish rather than fail in the least degree to perform the most inconsiderable promise. (8) Persuade thyself that God had a particular respect to thee in every promise. (9) Consider, it is all one with God to do as to say, to perform as to promise; it is as easy, He is as willing, as able, to one as the other. (10) Believers have a just and unquestionable title to all things promised besides that title which the promise conveys. They have right to them, and therefore have no reason to doubt but the gracious God will bestow them, especially when He has confirmed the former title by promise. All that is promised was bequeathed to believers by the eternal will of the Father, and purchased for them by the precious blood of Christ, and they are instated therein by many endearing and interesting relations. They have as much right thereto as an heir to his inheritance, or a wife to her jointure; for they are co-heirs with Christ and married to Him (1 Cor. iii. 23). (*D. Clarkson, B.D.*) *On faith*:—I. The first instructions in Christian knowledge inform us of THE IMPORTANCE AND NECESSITY OF FAITH TO OUR ETERNAL HAPPINESS. We are assured that the just shall live by faith; and that without it it is impossible to please God. 1. It seems absolutely essential to the nature, and necessary to the design and success of a Divine revelation, that the messenger of it should, upon producing sufficient evidence and proper attestations from Heaven, insist upon an acknowledgment of its truth, as proceeding from that Being who cannot deceive His creatures, whose admonitions would not be offered but for our advantage, and whose authority cannot be disobeyed without danger. 2. The principal reason why faith is so indispensably required and declared to be the condition of salvation is because it is the surest principle of holiness, the basis of obedience, the natural foundation of universal virtue. If, for instance, we believe in our hearts, and are persuaded of the existence of a God, supremely powerful, wise, and good, possessed of every conceivable and possible perfection, we cannot but reverence and adore a nature so infinitely superior; and every sentiment of our heart must pay homage to Him. If we apprehend Him to be the original of good, the fountain of mercy, we shall be naturally led to acknowledge His goodness in all the expressions of worship, praise, submission, and obedience. If we believe that He sent His Son into the world to purchase, on certain conditions, the pardon of our sins, and an eternity of happiness; we must think ourselves obliged to obey the precepts of His doctrine, to imitate the examples of His life, to comply with the conditions required, and be grateful for so amazing an expression of mercy. II. I SHALL NOW PROCEED TO OFFER SOME OBSERVATIONS SUGGESTED BY THE PRECEDING DOCTRINE. 1. If faith be the ground of holiness we may hence learn the reason of the general prevalence of iniquity in the world; which is a want of faith, or want of attention to the objects of it. 2. If faith be subservient to holiness, and derive its value from its efficacy and influence on our manners, we may hence learn to estimate the intrinsic value of every doctrine, and to weigh the degrees of malignity and danger in particular errors. Doctrines are valuable in proportion to their moral importance, or subservience to virtue; in proportion to their influence in inclining us to preserve in our minds a constant sense of our dependence on our Maker, and of the duties we owe Him, and of our obligations to observe integrity, and justice, and equity, and charity, in all our dealings. 3. If the design of faith was to lead us to the practice of all righteousness let us not rest our hopes of salvation on a bare acknowledgment or belief of the gospel, in an ineffectual barren faith, productive of no virtue, but let our faith have its proper influence; let our manners correspond with our principles, and let us live as we believe. (*G. Carr, B.A.*) *The vital force*:—I. A DOCTRINE. 1. Doth not the text plainly teach us that faith

is the continued act of the Christian? Just as long as he lives here below, if he doth live to God at all, he lives by faith. 2. Faith is a great practical virtue. The text does not say that the just man shall study the doctrine of faith in his retirement, and be able to frame a correct definition of what faith is. It is true that the just man should be meditative, studious, a man well instructed in the history of revelation and the mystery of the kingdom of God; but that is not what the text saith. It doth not say that the just man shall converse about faith, and make the object of faith the constant theme of his discourse. It will be so: what is in the heart will be sure to come out in the tongue. But that is not the truth taught here. In plain English, it is this—the righteous man will carry his faith into his ordinary life. He will live by faith. 3. Faith hath a great quickening power over all the faculties of the spiritual man. This is the Prometheus that stole the heavenly flame, and brought it down to men made of clay, and made them live the lives of the immortals. This it is that brings immortality to us through Jesus, who brought life and immortality to light. Whenever faith rules in a man it quickens all his graces. The believer is the man to love—to love his God, his neighbour, his enemy. The believer is the man to hope—to hope for deliverance out of present affliction; to hope for the eternal outgoing of the issues of all this life's battle and strife. If there be any patience, if there be any forgiveness, if their be any generosity, if there be any loving-kindness, if there be any zeal, if there be anything lovely and of good repute, all these are quickened and brought out into their life and force according to the life and power and energy of the faith which a man possesses. 4. Turning this doctrine over in rather a different form, but still keeping to it, let me say that the believer lives only by faith. All other kinds of living are to him spiritual death. II. A PROMISE. My faith shall ensure my life. Oh, 'tis joy to have faith that makes you immortal! The faith of the just shall constrain them to live. They cannot die; they must not die. God Himself shall as soon die as they shall. The just shall live by faith. This is not true of any other but those who have faith. You know the story I have told you sometimes, of the good old soul whose minister called to see her when she was dying, and amongst other things he said to her, "My sister, you are very weak; don't you feel yourself sinking?" She looked at him, and gave no answer, but said, "Did I understand you, minister? Please tell me what you said; I hope you didn't say what I thought I heard?" "Why," said he, "my dear sister, I said to you, don't you feel yourself sinking?" And then she said, "I did not think my minister would ever ask me such a question as that! Sinking? Did you ever know a sinner sink through a rock? I am believing in Jesus Christ; if I were resting anywhere else I might sink, but as I am resting upon Him, did you ever know a sinner sink through a rock?" Yes, and that is just the very point. It is so. God does in the very words of our text seem to assure us that if we believe, we have got on a rock, that if we believe, we shall live. We shall live by our faith under all circumstances and difficulties. III. A KIND OF PRECEPT. Is it not clear that as life is the main thing for us to look to, nature itself having taught us by its instincts to guard with all care our life, therefore our faith, upon which our life so evidently depends by virtue of our union to Christ, ought to be the object of our most sedulous care. Anything which comes in the way of our faith we should strive against, while the promotion of our faith should be our first endeavour. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The just man and his life:*—I. DESCRIBE THE JUST MAN OF THE GOSPEL. 1. The term "just" not used in its comparative and popular sense. It is so used sometimes in the sacred Scriptures, as in Rom. v. 7. There are those who are "just before men." Their words are true, their promises faithfully kept, their actions irreproachable. Measure them by the Divine standard, and they dwarf down to nothing; see them as God sees them, and all their righteousness is as filthy rags. 2. Not in its strictly legal sense. There was a time when there were just men on earth; that time was brief. There are just men "made perfect," but they are before the throne of God, and serve Him in His temple. There are none on earth now. 3. The term is used in the evangelical sense—justified. (1) Not to make just. The term is a law term, and has a proper legal meaning, which is, (2) To pronounce just (Deut. xxv. 1; Rom. iii. 4; Exod. xxiii. 7). How, then, can it apply to us? We give the satisfactory reply in the language of the apostle (Rom. iii. 21-24). 4. This declaration is connected with the faith of the justified person. Luther at one period suffered so much from a sense of sin, that his health rapidly gave way. An old monk entered his cell and spoke kindly. He knew little but his creed, which contained something that gave him comfort, and he said in his simplicity, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins."

Luther repeated, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." "Ah!" said the monk, "you must not only believe that David's or Peter's sins are forgiven—the devils believe that. The commandment of God is, that we believe our own sins forgiven. Hear what the Holy Ghost says: 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.'" He renounced the thought of meriting salvation, and trusted with confidence in God's grace in Christ Jesus. II. THE LIFE HE ENJOYS. He "shall live by faith." 1. Observe the import of this assurance. "There is, then," said Luther, after studying these words, "for the just another life than that possessed by the rest of men, and this life is the fruit of faith." What is that other life? The elements of life are (1) Sensation and perception. There is a world of sense for the natural man; there is an ideal world of speculation for the philosopher; there is a spiritual world for the believer. It has another sun, other produce, other inhabitants (chap. xii. 22, 23). It is life to see this spiritual world, and faith is the eye that sees it (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10). (2) There are vital functions which are necessary for its support. A tree or an animal live because they can derive nourishment from the material world. "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." Christ says, "I have meat to eat which the world knoweth not of," and He promises to His disciples that He will give them the hidden manna. How different are the Bible, the sanctuary, godly discourse, sermons, means and ordinances to the believer and the unbeliever! All these exercises are conducted by faith. (3) There is activity. The missionary Luther was distinguished for his zeal. The Thessalonians from whom the Word sounded out. The heroes in Heb. xi. all worked by faith. (4) There is enjoyment. Healthy life produces enjoyment. This is a common use of the term "life" as distinguished from mere existence (Rom. v. 1–5). Whence we see that true happiness flows from faith. 2. The truth of this assurance. (1) God has said it (Phil. i. 6; 1 Cor. i. 8; 1 Pet. i. 5). (2) He has provided for it (Col. i. 19; John xiv. 19; Gal. ii. 20; John i. 16). (3) History and experience prove it. Whenever Christ has been exalted, the Church has lived. Do you not feel that as you look to Him you live? Application: 1. Sinner, are you dead? This voice bids you live by faith. 2. Let believers cleave to this doctrine. (*The Evangelical Preacher.*) *The Christian's life of faith*:—I. THE CHARACTER MENTIONED. "The just." 1. As found in Christ. 2. As conformed to Christ. 3. As practically just. Their faith produces good works; they are honest, upright, abhor evil, and cleave to that which is good. II. THE FACT AFFIRMED. "Shall live by faith." 1. Because by faith they are united to Christ, and derive from Him all needful influence. 2. Because faith anticipates the glories of heaven, preparatory to which the Christian contest is carried on. 3. Because faith overcomes temptation. III. THE RESULT PRODUCED. 1. They live by faith in the darkest seasons. 2. They live a holy and pleasant life, because faith brings into exercise all other Christian graces. 3. By faith they live in constant expectation of heaven. (*Homilist.*) *Living by faith*:—1. We have faith, which is a Divine practical assent unto the saving truths of the gospel, and a reliance upon the promises of God. 2. Upon faith followeth righteousness; for the just have faith, and are just and justified by faith: for by "just" are here meant the justified by faith according to the tenour of the new covenant. For man being sinful and guilty cannot be justified by his own innocence, purity, inherent righteousness, and perfect obedience. For he that hath faith is just; he that continueth in faith, continueth just; and he that is finally believing is finally just. 3. As guilty man is just by faith, so being just he shall live by faith. By life in this place is meant a spiritual, happy, and eternal life; the life of glory, which is the great reward, which will certainly follow upon final faith; for it is faith which, by virtue of Christ's merit and God's promise, gives a right to life; and upon a final faith, the possession and full enjoyment of this blessed life doth certainly follow. The duty therefore which the apostle urgeth is final perseverance in faith; and the motive whereby he seeks to stir them up to performance is the certain full possession of the great rewards for which he allegeth God's own Word and promise recorded in the prophet. And if they will hearken unto God speaking by the prophet, and take His Word and promise, there is great reason why they should persevere. (*G. Lawson.*) *Faith*:—Faith consists of two parts: Belief, which accepts certain declarations as true, and trust in the person about whom those declarations are made. Neither will do without the other. On the one hand, we cannot trust a person without knowing something about him; on the other hand, your knowledge will not help you unless it leads to trust, any more than it avails the shivering wretch outside the Bank of England to know that the vaults are stored with gold. A mere intellectual faith is not enough. The holding

of a creed will not save. We must pass from a belief in words to trust in the Word. By faith we know that Jesus lives, and by faith we also appropriate that life. By faith we know that Jesus made on the Cross a propitiation for sin, and by faith we lay our hand reverently on His dear head and confess our sin. Faith is the open hand receiving Christ. Faith is the golden pipe through which His fulness comes to us. Faith is the narrow channel by which the life that pulses in the Redeemer's heart enters our souls. Faith is the attitude we assume when we turn aside from the human to the Divine. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *The life of faith* :—Have you ever thought of the life of a child? Why, the life of a child is a perfect life of faith. That little child—what can that little child do? Why that little child could not find its way to the street end and back again. It would be lost if you trusted it alone. That little child could not find the next meal. If you left that little child it would die of want. That little child could not furnish a shelter for its own head to-night; and yet, has that little child any fear about it? Has that little child any sort of alarm about it? Not at all! How comes it that the child's life is the happy life it is? Because, instinctively and beautifully, it is a life of faith. That child could not buy the next loaf, but it has a firm belief that "father" can. That child could not provide for itself the garments for to-morrow, but it has an unbounded belief in "father's" power to do it, and "mother's" power to do it. That child could not do it for itself one day, but it never costs that child a moment's concern. Its life is a life of perfect faith in its parents. (*S. Coley.*) *Description of faith* :—Mr. Stewart, in his Journal of a Residence in the Sandwich Islands, relates, that whilst on board a ship sailing from America to those Islands, he felt it his duty to instruct the sailors; and he had several proofs that his labours were not in vain. One sailor named R——, had been brought to trust in Christ for salvation; and shortly after meeting with another who was anxiously inquiring the way of salvation, he thus addressed him, "It was just so with myself once; I did not know what faith was, or how to obtain it; but I know now what it is, and I believe I possess it. But I do not know that I can tell you what it is, or how to get it. I can tell you what it is not; it is not knocking off swearing, and drinking, and such like; and it is not reading the Bible, nor praying, nor being good: it is none of these; for even if they were to answer for the time to come, there is the old score still, and how are you to get clear of that? It is not anything you have done or can do: it is only believing and trusting to what Christ has done: it is forsaking your sins, and looking for their pardon and the salvation of your soul, because He died and shed His blood for sin: and it is nothing else." (*Churchman's Monthly.*) **If any man draw back.**—*On apostasy* :—By the expression "to draw back," must certainly be understood a total and final apostasy, as is evident from ver. 39. 1. Some who once were accounted disciples of Christ have drawn back into open profanity and infidelity (2 Pet. ii. 20, 21). Persons of this character, who have stifled conviction, and hold the truth in unrighteousness, become generally the most hardened and daring in wickedness. Common restraints are removed—the voice of conscience is silenced—the Spirit of God ceases to strive, and they are given over to a reprobate mind—to fill up the measure of their iniquities, and at last to perish in unbelief. 2. Others who apostatise from Christ fall into gross and dangerous errors (2 Tim. ii. 17, 18). I add—3. There is still a more secret and disguised kind of apostasy, which is not on that account the less ruinous; I mean when persons who have once had a profession of religion become careless, lose all zeal about the things of God and eternity, and discover a proportionable eagerness in worldly pursuits. This is a way of apostatising from Christ the more dangerous, because it is the least apt to be perceived. The decay is so gradual and insensible. They have changed their views, their manners, their company. Perhaps some alteration in their outward circumstances has produced these unhappy effects. Raised from a state of dependence to wealth, their minds have been intoxicated with worldly prosperity; and by a strange kind of infatuation. Or, perhaps, without any visible cause, their profession of religion has gradually declined, and their devotion to the service of their God and Saviour proved as the morning cloud and early dew, which soon pass away. After maintaining for a while an appearance of serious godliness, they have gradually sunk into sloth, possibly into bad habits, which deaden every religious feeling. In conclusion: 1. Let gratitude to the Redeemer for the blessings you have received constrain you to cleave to Him with full purpose of heart. 2. Let a regard to your best interests urge you to cleave steadfastly to Christ. Solid sense and real piety, instead of being incompatible, are closely and intimately united. 3. Let the dreadful doom of apostates deter you from the aggravated sin

of drawing back from Christ. (*A. Ramsay, M.A.*) *The danger of apostasy from the true religion*:—I. THE NATURE OF THIS SIN. To make a man an apostate, it is not necessary that a man should solemnly renounce his baptism and declare Christianity to be false; there are several other ways whereby a man may bring himself under this guilt; as by a silent quitting of his religion, and withdrawing himself from the communion of all that profess it; by denying an essential doctrine of Christianity; by undermining the great design of it, by teaching doctrines which directly tend to encourage men in impenitence, and a wicked course of life. II. THE SEVERAL SORTS AND DEGREES OF APOSTASY. The highest of all is the renouncing Christianity, or of some essential part of it, which is a virtual apostasy from it; but there are several tendencies towards this which they who are guilty of are in some degree guilty of this sin. 1. Indifferency in religion, and want of all sort of concernment for it; when a man, though he never quitted his religion, yet is so little concerned for it, that a very small occasion or temptation would make him do it. 2. Withdrawing from the public marks and testimonies of the profession of religion, by forsaking the assemblies of Christians for the worship and service of God; to withdraw ourselves from those, for fear of danger or suffering, is a kind of denial of our religion. 3. A light temper of mind, which easily receives impressions from those who lie in wait to deceive and seduce men from the truth. 4. A departure from the purity of the Christian doctrine and worship in a gross and notorious manner. III. THE HEINOUSNESS OF THIS SIN. What an affront it is to God, and how great a contempt of Him! IV. THE TERRIBLE PUNISHMENT IT EXPOSES MEN TO. This sin is placed in the highest rank of pardonable sins, and next to the sin against the Holy Ghost, which our Saviour declares to be absolutely unpardonable. And indeed the Scripture speaks very doubtfully of the pardonableness of this sin (chap. vi. 4–6; 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21; 1 John v. 16). (*Archbp. Tillotson.*) *Transgressions and infirmities*:—Warnings such as this would not be contained in Scripture, were there no danger of our drawing back, and thereby losing that "life" in God's presence which faith secures to us. Faith is the tenure upon which this Divine life is continued to us: by faith the Christian lives, but if he draws back he dies; his faith profits him nothing; or rather, his drawing back to sin is a reversing of his faith; after which God has no pleasure in him. And yet, clearly as this is stated in Scripture, men in all ages have fancied that they might sin grievously, yet maintain their Christian hope. Now I quite grant that there are sins which faith is the means of blotting out continually, so that the "just" still "lives" in God's sight in spite of them. There is no one but sins continually so far as this, that all that he does might be more perfect, entire, blameless than it is. We are all encompassed by infirmities, weaknesses, ignorances; and all these besetting sins are certainly, as Scripture assures us, pardoned on our faith; but it is another thing to assert this of greater and more grievous sins, or what may be called transgressions. For faith keeps us from transgressions, and they who transgress, for that very reason, have not true and lively faith; and, therefore, it avails them nothing that faith, as Scripture says, is imputed to Christians for righteousness, for they have not faith. Instead of faith blotting out transgressions, transgressions blot out faith. 1. No one surely can doubt that there are sins which exclude a man, while he is under their power, from salvation (see 1 John iii. 8, 10; Phil. iii. 18, 19; Gal. v. 4). (1) All habits of vice are such (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10). (2) Next, it is fearful to think (fearful, because, among ourselves at this day, men are almost blind to the sin), that covetousness is mentioned (Eph. v. 5) in connection with sins of the flesh, as incurring forfeiture of grace equally with them. This accords with our Lord's warning, "ye cannot serve God and mammon;" as much as to say, If you serve mammon, you forthwith quit God's service; you cannot serve two masters at once; you have passed into the kingdom of mammon, that is, of Satan. (3) All violent breaches of the law of charity are inconsistent with a state of grace. "Thieves, revilers, and extortioners." "Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and murderers." (4) And in like manner all profaneness, heresy, and false worship (chap. xii. 16; Gal. i. 8). (5) And further, "hardness of heart," or going against light (chap. iv. 7, 11). Such are greater sins or transgressions. They are here specified, not as forming a complete list of such sins, which indeed cannot be given, but in proof of what ought not to be doubted, that there are sins which are not found in persons in a state of grace. 2. That there are sins of infirmity, or such as do not throw the soul out of a state of salvation, is evident directly it is granted that there are sins which do; for no one will pretend to say that all sins exclude from grace, else no one can be saved, for there is no one who is sinless. However, Scripture expressly recognises sins of

infirmity as distinct from transgressions, as shall now be shown. For instance: St. Paul (Gal. v. 17) allows that it is possible for the power of the flesh and the grace of the Spirit to co-exist in the soul; neither the flesh quenching the Spirit, nor the Spirit all at once subduing the flesh. Here then is a sinfulness which is compatible with a state of salvation. Again, the same apostle says, that we have a High Priest who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," in that He had them Himself, all but their sin:—this implies that we have sinful infirmities, yet of that light nature that they can be said to be in substance partaken by One who was pure from all sin. Accordingly, in the next verse St. Paul bids us "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy." Such words do not imply a return into a state of salvation, but pardon in that state, and they correspond to what he says (vers. 19–22; Rom. v. 2). In like manner St. John says, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another: and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." It seems then that there is sin which is consistent with "walking in the light," and that from this sin "the blood of Christ cleanseth us." And St. James says, "In many things we all offend," that is, we all stumble. We are ever stumbling along our course while we walk; but if we actually fall in it, we fall from it. And St. Jude: "Of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire." Distinct kinds of sin are evidently implied here. And lastly, our Lord Himself had already implied that there are sins which are not inconsistent with a state of grace, when He said of His apostles, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." 3. It remains to show that these sins of infirmity tend to those which are greater, and forfeit grace; which is not the least important point which comes under consideration. An illustration will explain what I mean, and may throw light on the whole subject. You know it continually happens that some indisposition overtakes a man, such that persons skilled in medicine, when asked if it is dangerous, answer, "Not at present, but they do not know what will come of it; it may turn out something very serious; but there is nothing much amiss yet; at the same time if it be not checked, and, much more, if it be neglected, it will be serious." This, I conceive, is the state of Christians day by day as regards their souls; they are always ailing, always on the point of sickness; they are sickly, easily disarranged, obliged to take great care of themselves against air, sun, and weather; they are full of tendencies to all sorts of grievous diseases, and are continually showing these tendencies, in slight symptoms; but they are not yet in a dangerous way. On the other hand, if a Christian falls into any serious sin, then he is at once cast out of grace, as a man who falls into a pestilential fever is quite in a distinct state from one who is merely in delicate health. I conclude with advising you one thing, which is obviously suggested by what I have said. Never suffer sin to remain upon you; let it not grow old in you; wipe it off while it is fresh, else it will stain; let it not get ingrained; let it not eat its way in, and rust in you. It is of a consuming nature; it is like a canker; it will eat your flesh. And then again, sin neglected not only stains and infects the soul, but it becomes habitual. It perverts and deforms the soul; it permanently enfeebles, cripples, or mutilates us. Let us then rid ourselves of it at once day by day, as of dust on our hands and faces. We wash our hands continually. Ah! is not this like the Pharisees, unless we wash our soiled souls also? (*J. H. Newman, D.D.*)

Religious declension:—I. THE CASE SUPPOSED: 1. The person here meant is one who has made some professions of religion, and has taken some steps in it. (1) First, he must have been convinced in his conscience and judgment of the truth and excellency of religion. (2) Secondly, the person here supposed must not only have been convinced of the excellency of religion, but must have come to a resolution of choosing it for himself. (3) Thirdly, the person here supposed did actually enter on this way; he chose religion and he followed it; he gave clear and practical evidence of the purpose which he had formed, and plainly showed that he was in earnest. 2. The person of whom we are speaking, having walked for a longer or shorter time in the way described, is now drawing back. He has been deterred, perhaps, by the difficulties which seemed to stand in his way, and to oppose his progress; I say seemed, because if he had persevered he would have found that they would have yielded and have come to nothing. Or perhaps he has been overcome by the persuasion and influence of worldly friends and relations. Or perhaps the world has involved him in its cares or pleasures, in its business or dissipations; and these, like thorns, have choked the good seed which was beginning to shoot, and have rendered it unfruitful. Or, to mention only one other cause, he has not watched against his favourite sin; he has not denied and mortified it.

To make this part of the case, however, more plain, I will state to you some few of the particular symptoms which distinguish it. When a person is drawing back in religion, he will discover his retrograde movement by many proofs, those who know what religion is, and have the means of observing his conduct. It does not follow that he will return exactly into the same paths in which he was walking before he appeared to become a religious character; but he will plainly show that he is not now the same religious character which he lately was. He will insensibly become less correct in his conduct and conversation. He will not now be so careful of his company. He will gradually become less frequent and regular in his attendance on public ordinances; while the devotion and attention that used to mark his behaviour there are too visibly declining. If, in addition to these outward marks of declension, you were to follow this person home, and observe his conduct in private, you would see the Bible less frequently consulted, and religious duties less diligently performed. Communion with God is no longer his delight and enjoyment. II. THE AWFUL THREATENING DENOUNCED. "If any man draw back." If there should be a person in the state that has been here described, what does the Lord declare respecting him? "My soul shall have no pleasure in him." We are told that the Lord does "take pleasure in His people." —"The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him; in those that hope in His mercy." He regards such persons with favour and complacency. He delights over them to do them good. But He hath no pleasure in them that "draw back." He sees, but He cannot approve them. But further, the expression in the text has a still more alarming sense. It is a dreadful thing to be excluded from the loving-kindness of the Lord; but it is a far more dreadful thing to be shut up under His displeasure. Yet such is the case with the person of whom we are speaking. Such is the real meaning of the text. No persons are so offensive to Him, as those, who, having for a time walked in His ways, at length draw back. For such conduct is the greatest affront, and most direct indignity which can be offered to God. The man who draws back does in a manner say, that the ways of sin and of the world are preferable to the ways of religion. Can anything be more dishonourable to Jesus Christ, or show a greater contempt of His mercy and grace? Address three kinds of persons. 1. Those who have entered, as they suppose, on the paths of religion, and are now walking in them. Take heed that ye draw not back. To this end "be watchful and sober." Those who would walk safely, must walk humbly. The Lord will guide and keep the meek. Watch against the sin that most easily besets you. Be regular and fervent in private prayer, and in secret communion with God. This is the life and source of religion in the soul. If you would not draw back, go forwards. Press towards the mark; grow in grace, add one Christian virtue and temper to another, so will your progress be clear and certain: your calling and election will be made sure. 2. I would address those who in their hearts may be conscious, at least fearful, that they have drawn back. Consider from whence you are fallen. 3. I would, in conclusion, address another class—those who perhaps may be saying to themselves: "We are free from this charge. We have never made any particular profession of religion, so that we cannot be said to have renounced it. We are at least no hypocrites. God cannot accuse us of having drawn back from His ways." Because you are not hypocrites, and have made no pretentions to religion, shall you escape the judgment of God? Why have you not made pretentions to religion? Be assured, that so long as you are in this state, the Lord hath no pleasure in you. He abhors ungodliness and sin, and both hates and will punish all the workers of iniquity. (*E. Cooper, M.A.*) *Moral relapse*:—The pansy only develops its beauty under cultivation, and when neglected soon relapses into its native condition. There are men who keep conspicuously moral so long as they are constantly cultivated by their minister, but who relapse into their former littleness if his care is withdrawn. Such men, like the pansies, give a deal of trouble. But if you want to exhibit either them or the flower, you have no option but to give them constant cultivation. Whether the result in either case is worth the trouble is another matter. (*Scientific Illustrations and Symbols.*) *All do not reach home who set out for it*:—I heartily desire that ye would mind your country, and consider to what direction your soul setteth its face; for all come not home at night who suppose they have set their face heavenward. (*S. Rutherford.*)

Ver. 39. **Draw back unto perdition.**—*Apostasy*:—Apostates have martial law, they run away, but into hell-mouth. Runaways are to be received as enemies, and to be

killed wherever they be found. (*J. Trapp.*) *Looking back:*—Dr. Donne says that Lot's wife looked back and God never gave her leave to look forward again. God hath set our eyes in our foreheads to look forward, not backward; not to be proud of that which we have done, but diligent in that which we are to do. (*E. P. Thwing.*) *Way to heaven:*—"I know the way to heaven," said little Minnie to little Johnny, who stood by her side, looking on a picture-book that Minnie had in her hand. "You do?" said little John. "Well, won't you tell me how to get there?" "Oh, yes! I'll tell you. Just commence going up, and keep on going up all the time, and you'll get there. But, Johnny, you must not turn back." (*New Cyclopædia of Illustrations.*) *Perdition—the state of the lost:*—Milton's "Paradise Lost," Dante's "Inferno," Doré's cartoons, the weird word-painting of the pulpit, dreadful fancy pictures of hell—all of this cannot make us understand what it is to be lost. It was not to purgatory or hell that Christ went, but it was into this world of ours that He came to seek and to save the lost. They were here. To be lost is to get away from where we belong. The lost sheep, the lost prodigal, were wanderers. They were not dead, they were not in hell; but they were lost. The soul does not belong to sin and the devil; it belongs to God. And if you want to know how lost the soul is, then learn how far it has got away from God. That is the thing to know. Heaven and hell are incidentals. If you take care to be saved from your sins, to be brought back to the image of God from which you have wandered, heaven and hell will take care of themselves. Now, if you would know how lost you are, put your life, with all its selfishness and littleness, beside the life of Jesus; your motives by His, your thoughts by His, your heart by His. Try and see how far you have got away from the perfect image of the God-Man. He is the perfect specimen of man, of which the rest of us are ruins, it matters not how magnificent those ruins may be. He shows us a speciman of man who is not lost. The image of Christ will teach us more about the lost than Doré's cartoons could ever do. (*R. S. Barrett.*) **Believe to the saving of the soul.**—*Saving faith:*—I. THE NATURE OF FAITH. 1. Belief in another's testimony. We go to places, and attend meetings; we write letters, and maintain intercourse with others; we transact business, and conduct our affairs; we sail for foreign ports; we do ten thousand things, trivial or important, simply on the testimony of others, because we believe in them and what they say. 2. Belief in God's testimony. His testimony is contained in the Scriptures. In them He reveals His nature, perfections, government and laws; His relations and designs towards us; judgment to come, and future states of being; things unseen and eternal. We accept the testimony—that it is from Him, and, consequently, that what it declares and unfolds, promises and threatens, is true and real. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater." 3. Belief in God's testimony concerning the Redeemer. He has testified that Jesus Christ is His eternal, only-begotten, well-beloved Son, one with Him in nature and operation; that "in the fulness of the time" He was born of a woman, became partaker of flesh and blood, and was made in our likeness," &c. We believe the testimony concerning Jesus Christ, because He who testifies cannot deceive. 4. Trust in Christ as our Saviour. Believing the testimony God has given us concerning His Son, concerning His Divine person and mediatorial office—that He came "to seek and to save the lost." We cast ourselves unreservedly and wholly on Him; we confidently give up ourselves to Him; we trust in Him. II. THE ORIGIN OF FAITH. 1. It is of God. The Godhead is the fountain of all blessings, the primary cause of all gracious effects. We have neither the inclination nor the ability to believe unto salvation. The desire and strength must be granted. If we have a true apprehension of our demerit and exposure to perdition, and are disposed to flee to Christ: and if we have a full persuasion of His sufficiency to save, and are able to cast ourselves on Him, it is of Divine favour and operation. 2. God produces faith by the Holy Spirit. Convicted, illumined and made willing by the power of the Holy Ghost, we realise our sinfulness, our awful danger; we see Christ in the beauty and excellency of His Divine person, and in the suitableness and sufficiency of His atoning work; and we surrender every other ground of hope, and rest altogether and only on Him for salvation. III. THE INSTRUMENT OR MEANS BY WHICH FAITH IS PRODUCED AND MAINTAINED. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." IV. THE DEGREES OF FAITH. The rock on which saved sinners stand is equally stable to all, but the foothold of all is not equally firm. Faith may decline; how far it would be difficult to determine. Even the believer, in a time of desertion and darkness, may question his interest in Christ, and fear coming short of heaven. On the other hand, faith is sometimes strong. V. THE

EFFECTS AND EVIDENCES OF FAITH. 1. It imparts peace. The storm is changed into a calm. The dark night is past, and morning dawns. The fever, the agony, is over. And in proportion as faith is maintained, so is peace. If faith languish, and be temporarily interrupted, distress of soul returns; if it flourish, and be strong and vigorous, tranquillity continues. 2. It produces holiness. "The operation of God," its tendency is to godliness. A holy principle, it produces holy practice; good seed, it yields good fruit; a pure spring, pure streams flow from it; a latent power, it manifests itself in godly deeds. 3. It purifies the heart. A believing sight of Christ crucified, imparted by the Holy Ghost, reveals the terrible evil of sin, and fills us with repugnance of it. Faith in vigorous exercise, we cannot but loathe sin. The heart purified, sanctified, "holiness to the Lord" shall be inscribed on all pertaining to us. 4. In producing holiness, faith works by love. Believing in Jesus Christ, we are assimilated, though very imperfectly, to His human disposition and conduct. How attractive and effective are words and deeds of love! Faith and love are beautiful graces and potent factors. 5. It overcomes the world. (*Alex. McCreery.*) *How to own ourselves*:—The writer uses a somewhat uncommon word in this clause, which is not altogether adequately represented by the translation "saving." Its true force will be apparent by comparing one or two of the few instances in which it occurs in the New Testament. For example, it is twice employed in the Epistles to the Thessalonians; in one case being rendered, "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain" (or, more correctly, to the obtaining of) "salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ"; and in another, "called to the obtaining of glory through Jesus Christ." It is employed twice besides, in two other places of Scripture, and in both of these it means "possession." So that, though substantially equivalent to the idea of salvation, there is a very beautiful shade of difference which is well worth noticing. The thought of the text is substantially this—those who believe *win* their souls; they acquire them for their possession. We talk colloquially about "people that cannot call their souls their own." That is a very true description of all men who are not lords of themselves through faith in Jesus Christ. "They who believe to the gaining of their own souls" is the meaning of the writer here. I. First, then, IF WE LOSE OURSELVES WE WIN OURSELVES. All men admit in theory that a self-centred life is a blunder. Jesus Christ has all thoughtful men wholly with Him when He says, "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life shall find it." There is no such way of filling a soul with blessedness and of evolving new capacities as self-oblivion for some great cause, for some great love, for some great enthusiasm. Many a woman has found herself when she held her child in her arms, and in the self-oblivion which comes from maternal affections and cares has sprung into a loftier new life. But whilst all these counterpoises to the love of self are, in their measure, great and blessed, not one of them will so break the fetters from off a prisoned soul and let it out into the large place of glad self-oblivion as the course which our text enjoins when it says: If you wish to forget yourselves, to abandon and lose yourselves, fling yourselves into Christ's arms, and by faith yield your whole being, will, trust, purposes, aims, everything—yield it all up to Him; and when you can say, "We are not our own," then first will you belong to yourselves and have won your own souls. Nothing else is comparable to the talismanic power of trust in Jesus Christ. When thus we lose ourselves in Him we find ourselves, and find Him in ourselves. I believe that a life must either spin round on its own axis, self-moved, or else it must be drawn by the mass and weight and mystical attractiveness of the great central sun, and swept clean out of its own little path to become a satellite round Him. Then only will it move in music and beauty, and flash back the lustre of an unfading light. Self or God—one or other will be the centre of every human life. It is well to be touched with lofty enthusiasms; it is well to conquer self in the eager pursuit of some great thought or large subject of study; it is well to conquer self in the sweetness of domestic love; but through all these there may run a perverting and polluting reference to myself. Affection may become but a subtle prolongation of myself, and study and thought may likewise be tainted, and even in the enthusiasm for a great cause there may mingle much of self-regard; and on the whole there is nothing that will sweep out, and keep out, the seven devils of selfishness except to yield yourselves to God, drawn by His mercies, and say, "I am not my own; I am bought with a price." Then, and only then, will you belong to yourselves. II. Secondly, IF WE WILL TAKE CHRIST FOR OUR LORD WE SHALL BE LORDS OF OUR OWN SOULS. I have said that self-surrender is self-possession. It is equally true that self-control is self-possession; and it is as true about this application about my text as it was about the former, that Chris-

tianity only says more emphatically what all moralists say, and supplies a more efficient means of accomplishing the end which they all recognise as good. For everybody knows that the man who is a slave to his own passions, lusts, or desire—that the man who is the sport of circumstance, and yields to every temptation that comes sweeping round him, as bamboos bend before every blast—is not his own master. He "dare not call his soul his own." What do we mean by being self-possessed, except this, that we can so rule our more fluctuating and sensitive parts as that, notwithstanding appeals made to them by external circumstances, they do not necessarily yield to these. He possesses himself who, in the face of antagonism, can do what is right. Trust in Jesus Christ, and let Him be your Commander-in-Chief, and you have won your souls Let Him dominate them, and you can dominate them. If you will give your wills into His hands, He will give them back to you and make you able to subdue your passions and desires. What does some little rajah, on the edge of our great Indian Empire, do when troubled with rebels that he cannot subdue? He goes and makes himself a feudatory of the great central Power at Calcutta, and then down comes a regiment or two and makes very short work of the rebellion that the little kinglet could do nothing with. If you go to Christ and say to Him, "Dear Lord, take my crown from my head and lay it at Thy feet. Come Thou to help me to rule this anarchic realm of my own soul," you will win yourself. III. Thirdly, IF WE HAVE FAITH IN CHRIST WE ACQUIRE A BETTER SELF. The thing that most thoughtful men and women feel after they have gone a little way into life is not so much that they want to possess themselves, as that they want to get rid of themselves—of all the failures and shame and disappointment and futility of their lives, and that desire may be accomplished. We cannot strip ourselves of ourselves by any effort. The bitter old past keeps living on, and leaves with us seeds of weakness and memories that sometimes corrupt, and always enfeeble; memories that seem to limit the possibilities of the future in a tragic fashion. Ah, we can get rid of ourselves; and, instead of continuing the poor, sin-laden, feeble creatures that we are. The old individuality will remain, but new tastes, new aspirations, aversions, hopes, and capacities to realise them, may all be ours. You can lose yourselves, in a very deep sense, if, trusting in Jesus Christ, you open the door of the heart to the influx of that new life which is His best gift. Faith wins a better self, and we may each experience, in all its blessedness, the paradox of the apostle when he said, "I live" now, at last, in triumphant possession of this better life: "I live" *now*, I only existed before; "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." And with Christ in me I first find myself. IV. Lastly, IF BY FAITH WE WIN OUR SOULS HERE, WE SAVE THEM FROM DESTRUCTION HEREAFTER. I have said that the word of my text is substantially equivalent to the more frequent and common expression, "salvation"; though with a shade of difference, which I have been trying to bring out. And this substantial equivalence is more obvious if you will note that the text is the second member of an antithesis, of which the first is, "we are not of them which draw back into perdition." So, then, the writer sets up, as exact opposites of one another, these two ideas, perdition or destruction, on the one hand; and the saving or winning of the soul on the other. Therefore, whilst we must give due weight to the considerations which I have already been suggesting, we shall not grasp the whole of the writer's meaning unless we admit also the thought of future. So, then, you cannot be said to have won your souls if you are only keeping them for destruction. And such destruction is clearly laid down here as the fate of those who turn away from Jesus Christ. Now it seems to me that no fair interpretation can eject from that word "perdition," or "destruction," an element of awe and terror. However you may interpret the ruin, it is ruin utter of which it speaks. Now, remember, the alternative applies to each of us. It is a case of "either—or" in regard to us all. If we have taken Christ for our Saviour, and, as I said, put the reins into His hands and given ourselves to Him by love and submission and confidence, then we own our souls, because we have given them to Him to keep, "and He is able to keep that which is committed to Him against that day." But I am bound to tell you, in the plainest words I can command, that if you have not thus surrendered yourself to Jesus Christ, His sacrifice, His intercession, His quickening Spirit, then I know not where you find one foothold of hope that upon you there will not come down the overwhelming fate that is darkly portrayed in that one solemn word. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Saving faith*:—It is not the quantity of thy faith that shall save thee. A drop of water is as true water as the whole ocean. So a little faith is as true faith as the greatest. A child eight days old is as really a man as one of sixty years; a spark of fire is as true fire as a great flame; a sickly

man is as true living as a well man. So it is not the measure of thy faith that saves thee—it is the blood that it grips to that saves thee; as the weak hand of a child that leads the spoon to the mouth, will feel as well as the strong arm of a man; for it is not the hand that feeds thee—albeit, it puts the meat into thy mouth, but it is the meat carried into the stomach that feeds thee. So if thou canst grip Christ ever so weakly, He will not let thee perish. (*J. Welsh.*) *Gripped by the Lord:*—A convert, at the Golden Lane Mission, in London, said: "I'm a corster and doin' well, for I've got nearly a score o' barrers. Many a time I've had a lark at the meeting, and tried to upset 'em. One day the Lord spoke to my 'art, an' it feeled ready to bust in me—an' I couldn't sleep until I got down on my knees an' prayed for forgiveness. Since then I've had plenty o' things tryin' to pull me back from the Lord, but He's got such a firm grip that I'm not afeerd." *What and how to believe:*—"Can you tell me," said an unhappy sceptic to a happy old saint, "just what is the gospel you believe, and how you believe it?" She quietly replied, "God is satisfied with the work of His Son—that is the gospel I believe; and I am satisfied with it—that is how I believe it." (*J. H. Brooks, D.D.*)

CHAPTER XI.

VERS. 1, 2. **Now faith is the substance.**—*The use of history:*—Hitherto the Jewish Christians had continued to celebrate the ancient ritual, and their presence in the temple and the synagogue had been tolerated by their unbelieving countrymen; but now they were in danger of excommunication, and it is hardly possible for us to conceive their distress and dismay. Their veneration for the institutions of Moses had not been diminished by their acknowledgment of the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus; for them, as well as for the rest of their race, an awful sanctity rested on the ceremonies from which they were threatened with exclusion. Therefore, the writer of this Epistle calls up the most glorious names of Jewish history to confirm his vacillating brethren in their fidelity to the Lord Jesus Christ. It was not by offering sacrifices, nor by attending festivals, nor by the pomp and exactness with which they had celebrated any external rites and ceremonies, that the noblest of their forefathers had won their greatness, but by their firm and steadfast trust in God. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*) *What is faith?*—The word "faith" is sometimes used for the object of faith, for the thing to be believed; as when it is said in Acts, "A great company of priests were obedient to the faith." But it is quite evident, from the whole series of the examples by which the definition is followed, that it is not of the thing believed, but of the act of believing, that the apostle speaks in the chapter before us. Yet when used of the act of believing, faith will be found to have different senses. Thus it is applied to what may be called historical faith—a bare assent to the truths revealed in Scripture; and this would seem to be the strict use of the term when St. James says, "Faith, if it have not works, is dead." Then, besides historical faith, there is what may be called temporary faith—faith which for a time seems productive of true fruits, and then comes to nothing. There is also another kind of faith mentioned in the New Testament; but it does not similarly occur amongst ourselves. This is what divines call the faith of miracles, belief in some particular promise or power, through which, whether as an instrument or as a condition, some supernatural work is wrought. Many had faith in Christ's power to heal their bodies who knew nothing of Him as the Physician of their souls. But, confining ourselves to the cases of historical faith and temporary faith, as being those which are but too likely to pass with us for saving faith, will either of the two answer strictly to the definition which constitutes our text? Let us look carefully at the definition. It consists of two parts; and the one is not to be considered as a mere repetition of, or a different way of putting the other. First, the apostle calls faith "the substance of things hoped for." Now "things hoped for" are things which have no present subsistence; so far as our enjoyment or possession of them is concerned, they must be future. But "faith," the apostle says, "is the substance of things hoped for." It is that which gives a present being to these things. It takes them out of the shadowy region of probability, and brings them into that of actual reality. Faith is, moreover, the "evidence of things not seen." By "things not seen" we understand such as are not to be ascertained to us

by our senses, or even by our reason—not seen either by the eye of the body or by the far more powerful eye of the mind. These are the truths and facts revealed to us by the Word of God, and of which, independently on that Word, we must have remained wholly ignorant. Its province is with invisible things, and of these it is "the evidence"—the demonstration, or conviction—as the original word signifies. It serves as a glass by which we can see what we cannot see without a glass; not putting stars where there are none, but enabling us to find them where we saw none. Now will the historical faith, or the temporary faith answer to this description of faith? We may put out the case of temporary faith, for this is excluded not so much by not corresponding to the definition while it lasts, as by not lasting. We may not be able to show its defects while alive, but we can of course detect them when dead. But historical faith—the believing what is represented of Jesus Christ, in the same sense, mode, or degree as they believe what is represented of Julius Cæsar—this, which passes with many men for the faith which Scripture demands—will this answer to the Scriptural definition of faith? Is, then, this historical faith "the substance of things hoped for"? Nay, the heart, the affections must be interested, before there can be "things hoped for." And, by a similar brief process, we may prove the want of correspondence between historical faith and the second clause of St. Paul's definition. Is such faith "the evidence of things not seen"? Does it make things not seen as certain to a man as things seen?—for this is the force of the definition. Does it, for example, make hell, which is not seen, as certain to the sinner as the gallows, which is seen, to the criminal given over to the executioner? None of you will maintain this. Unseen things, which, if they exist at all, must immeasurably transcend things seen, cannot be as certain to a man as things seen, if that man give them not the preference, and far more if he treat them with neglect. Now this turns the definition in our text to good account, forasmuch as it operates to the separating historical faith from saving faith, the faith of the great mass of men from that intended by the apostle when he said, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." If, then, we now turn to justifying faith, we shall have to give it a seat in the heart as well as the mind—and see whether this will not make it correspond with the apostle's definition. And when a man thus believes with the heart as well as with the mind, faith will be to him "the substance of things hoped for." The things on which his expectation rests will be the things promised in the Bible. These, as the chief good, will seem to him immeasurably preferable to any good already in possession. They will, therefore, be the objects of his hope. But will they be mere shadows, brilliant and beautiful, but perhaps only meteors, which may cheat him to the last, and vanish within his grasp? Not so; faith gives them a present subsistence. And this "faith is" moreover "the evidence of things not seen"; it gives to the invisible the sort of power possessed by the visible. A thing may be unseen and yet have just the same power as if it were seen. Let me be only sure that a man concealed by a curtain is taking aim at me with a murderous intent, and I am moved with the same fear, and make the same spring for my life, as if the curtain were away and I were face to face with the assassin. Now faith takes away the curtain; not that faith which is only the assent of the understanding, for this may leave me indifferent as to the emotions of the mind, but that faith which, having its seat in the affections, must excite dread of danger and desire to escape. This faith takes away the curtain; not so, indeed, as to make the man visible, but so as to make me as sure of his being there, and with the purpose of bloodshed, as if he were visible. Therefore is such a faith the conviction of things not seen; and the believer, he who believes in God's Word with the heart as well as with the understanding, may be said, in virtue of that great principle, to draw back the veil which to every other eye hangs so darkly between the temporal and the spiritual, and therefore suited to inspire him with confidence. It is in this way, then, that faith, which is such an assent of the mind to the truth of God's Word as flows into the heart, and causes the soul to build upon that Word, answers thoroughly to both parts of that definition of faith which St. Paul has laid down in our text. But now you will say to me, Is this justifying faith? have I not rather given a description generally of faith, than of that particular faith which is represented as appropriating the blessings of the gospel? Not so. True, saving faith has for its object the whole revealed truth of God, though we call it justifying faith, as it fixes specially on the promise of remission of sins by the Lord Jesus Christ. It may be my faith in one particular declaration or doctrine which justifies me, but, nevertheless, my faith in that one particular doctrine is noways different from my faith in every other

doctrine similarly announced and similarly established. The "things hoped for" from Christ are especially the pardon of sin, the gift of righteousness, and admission to the kingdom of heaven. Of these things is faith the substance; to these it gives a sure and present subsistence, making them as though not only promised, but performed; so strong while faith is in true exercise, is the sense of acceptance, the assurance of being "heirs of God," yea, "joint heirs with Christ." And the "things not seen" are the past work of Christ in His humiliation and the present work of Christ in His glory. But of these "things not seen" faith is the evidence or conviction. The believer is just as sure of Christ's having died for him, as if he had seen Him die; just as sure of Christ's ever living for him, as if, with Stephen, he "saw heaven open and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." There is, however, one caution which should be here introduced; for otherwise, whilst we wish to give instruction, we may but darken knowledge, and minister to anxiety. You are not to confound faith and assurance, as though no man could be saved by believing, unless he believe himself saved. "It seems," says Archbishop Usher, "that justifying faith consisteth in these two things, in having a mind to know Christ and a will to rest upon Him; and whosoever sees so much excellency in Christ, that thereby he is drawn to embrace Him as the only rock of salvation, that man truly believes unto justification. Yet it is not necessary to justification to be assured that my sins are pardoned and that I am justified, for that is no act of faith as it justifieth, but an effect and fruit that followeth after justification. For no man is justified by believing that he is justified—he must be justified before he can believe it; no man is pardoned by believing that he is pardoned—he must be pardoned before he can believe it. Faith as it justifieth, is a resting upon Christ to obtain pardon. But assurance, which is not faith in Christ, but rather faith in my faith, may, or may not follow on the justifying faith. You see, then, that our text accurately defines what is justifying faith, though it does not distinguish that faith from faith generally, neither does it leave us to confound it with assurance. You are not to go away and say, "Oh! saving faith is something altogether strange and mystical, unlike any other species of faith"; it is not a kind by itself, it is peculiar only in its object. All faith which is not merely historical, is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"; and he who has this faith in the truth that God made him, has the principle of which he has but to change the direction, and he has faith in the truth that Christ redeemed him. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Faith*:—This is the only place in the Bible where we have what we can call a definition of faith. That faith which is the foundation of all other Christian graces—the title by which we keep our place as Christians—the inward working which has its fruit in good works—the hand by which we lay hold on God and on Christ, is here said to be the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen; and by substance, no doubt, is here meant firm confidence, and by evidence is meant conviction. Faith is the laying hold of the future in the midst of the present, of the unseen in the midst of the seen. It is this which marks the true disciple of Christ, that he walks by faith and not by sight. If the world were what it ought to be, there would be little trial of this faith. But though the world was made very good, and though all that cannot be touched by the influence of our sins is still very good, yet the world, as we have made it, is by no means like the handiwork of God. We see all around us a strange contradiction to what we are told, that justice, and truth, and goodness are the most precious of all things known to man. We see often wrong prevail over right; we see the highest honour constantly given to what we know not to be the highest desert; we see mere strength, whether of body or mind, receive the consideration which ought to be reserved for real goodness. How often do we see plain instances of the success of mere rude strength; sometimes of forwardness; sometimes even of cunning and want of strict truth. Nor is this all. Besides this incessant evidence that good does not govern the world, we are perpetually betrayed in the same thought by a traitor within ourselves. At every moment temptation comes; and the temptation is ever close at hand; the evil consequences of yielding seem far away. However much we may be convinced that in the end obedience to duty is better than sin, we find it hard to remember our conviction at the moment that it is wanted. But in the midst of all this, in spite of what our eyes perpetually tell us, and in spite of the strange forgetfulness which our inclinations perpetually cast over us, in spite of contradictions without and weakness within, there is a voice from the depths of our own souls that never ceases to repeat that right is really stronger than wrong, and truth is better than falsehood, and justice is surer than injustice. To

believe this voice, and to obey it; to surrender to it the guidance of the life in the firm conviction that it will guide us to the true end of our being; to do this is faith. This trusting to the voices that speak within, even when they flatly contradict the voices that speak without, is obviously not peculiar to Christians. The Jew had put into his hands the Word of God as far as it was then written. He was put under a system which God had commanded to be observed. Both in one and in the other he found much that was unintelligible, much that seemed either without a purpose or with a purpose not worth pursuit. Through all that was strange and dark, and even contradictory, it was impossible not to know in his heart that the Spirit which inspired the Bible was the same Spirit as that which sometimes whispered and sometimes thundered in his own conscience, an authority which he could not awe, and could not influence, entering into the very secrets of his soul, and yet no part of himself, and that this Spirit was the voice of God. To throw himself unreservedly on the power which was thus revealed to him, both from within and from without, to accept with unconditional submission the guidance of that Word of God which was, in fact, the fuller expansion of the message given by conscience, to trust in Him who was thus revealed, in spite of every trial and every temptation; this was the faith of the Jew. Their revelation was imperfect. There still remained one question unanswered. The enemy which is hardest for us to encounter is not after all the sight of this world's wrong and injustice. It is when conscience, at the very moment of demanding our obedience, proclaims also our sinfulness. We would believe, and live by our belief, in spite of all the contradictions and evil with which the world is filled: but we are so weak, so wicked, so hampered with the fetters both of nature and of habit. Will that awful voice, whose authority we dare not doubt, really lead us to peace or to our own destruction? The gospel gave the answer. We read there of One whose life, and words, and death force us to confess that He is the express image of that Father of whom our own conscience, and the prophets of old, have ever told us. We read of One who laid hold on human nature and made it His own, and consecrated it with a Divine power. We read His promises exactly corresponding to that very need which our souls feel every day more keenly. And all this is written down not merely in words but in the deeds of a history such as never man passed through beside, of a history whose every word touches some feeling of our heart, echoes some whisper of our spirit. He bids us surrender ourselves to Him, following His leading, trust in His protection, His power; He promises us by sure, though it may be by slow degrees, but with the certainty of absolute assurance, to join us to His Father and to Himself: He promises not merely to undo some day the riddle of the world, and give the good and the just a visible triumph over the evil and the wrong, but, what we need much more, He promises to give us the victory over sin within ourselves, and to prove to us that God has forgiven us by the infallible token of His having cleansed us. To throw ourselves on these promises, to purify ourselves in the full assurance that Christ's love can carry us through all that we shall encounter, to cling to Christ not only in spite of pain and darkness, and strange perplexity, but in spite of our own sins also, this is our substance of things hoped for, this is our evidence of things not seen, this is Christian faith. This is, St. John tells us, the victory which overcometh the world. This is the power which, both in great things and in small, both in hard trials and in easy, ever supports the disciple of Christ by bringing within his reach all the strength of his Master. (*Bp. Temple.*) *Faith defined*:—I. FAITH IS THE CONFIDENT PERSUASION OF UNSEEN THINGS. The word translated "substance" occurs in chap. iii. 14; 2 Cor. ix. 4; xi. 17, and is translated "confidence." The word translated "evidence" is from a verb which signifies "to convince." "Faith is the confidence of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." 1. Faith is not belief on the evidence of the senses. 2. Faith is not credulity. God is essential truth, then it is reasonable to repose in what He has said. 3. Faith is not a mere assent of the understanding. II. FAITH IS THE SOURCE OF ALL SPIRITUAL ACHIEVEMENT. "By it the elders" achieved all that this chapter records. Faith was the secret of what they were and did. 1. The New Testament ascribes all Christian life to faith. "Whosoever believeth shall not perish," &c.; "sanctified by faith"; "this is the victory that," &c.; "wherein believing ye rejoice," &c.; "kept by the power," &c. 2. This is due to the fact that all Christian life is the result of heavenly influences, and faith lifts it into these. It raises the soul into the heavenly world; brings future things near, and makes Christ live before us. The effect of this on our spiritual nature is its development, like that of a tropical plant brought from a cold

land into its native clime and proper conditions. III. FAITH IS THE MEANS OF SECURING THE DIVINE COMMENDATION. "Obtained a good report." 1. This shows our personal responsibility with regard to faith. 2. This is a strong consolation to infirm and secluded believers. (*C. New.*) *Saving faith* :—There were those who one time asked the Saviour, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" To this He replied, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." The issue, then, between God and men is narrowed down to this—"only believe." I. THE MEANING OF THE TERM. 1. Sometimes the word refers merely to a creed, with no notion in it of spiritual experience at all (1 Tim. iv. i.; Jude 3). 2. When the Bible speaks of faith, it sometimes means mere belief in facts (ver. 3). This kind of faith is necessary, in a certain sense, to salvation: "for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." The facts of the Saviour's life are to be received in that way. But this is not saving faith at all. 3. Again; faith sometimes means that conviction of the understanding which results from proofs laid before it, or arguments adduced. This is that which the woman wrought among her neighbours when she came back from the conversation with Jesus at Jacob's well. This also is the faith which Thomas had when asked to put his hand in the side of his Lord. But this is not saving faith; for our Lord immediately added, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." 4. And sometimes the Bible means the faith of miracles. This was a peculiar gift, bestowed by Christ upon His immediate followers. Now, whatever was the nature of this peculiar endowment, it is evident enough that there was no grace in it to save the soul; for the Saviour Himself declared (Matt. vii. 22, 23). 5. Then, lastly, the Bible means saving faith; the true belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, through which we are justified, and by which we live. II. THE NATURE OF THIS EXERCISE. The old writers used to say that faith was composed of three elements: a right apprehension, a cordial assent, and an unwavering trust. Let me seek to exhibit these in turn in a very familiar way. 1. To apprehend is really a physical act, and means to seize hold of. When applied to mental operation, it signifies to conceive clearly any given object, and hold it before the mind for examination and use. It does not always include a full comprehension. A drowning man may catch a rope that hangs near him, and be rescued by it, without knowing who threw it to him, or who will draw it in, or what vessel it trails from. He apprehends it, but he does not comprehend it. He sees it, but he does not see all with which it is connected. The two essential things for every man to apprehend, are his own need and Jesus Christ's fitness to supply it. There is the inward look, and then there is the outward look. I cannot help myself, and the Saviour can help me are the two thoughts that must lie buried deep in his soul. It matters little how these things are learned. 2. Then comes the second element of faith, already mentioned —namely, assent. This is a step in advance of the other. A simple illustration will make plain what is meant by it. An invalid is sometimes very unwilling to admit his danger, even when he has nothing to oppose to the reasoning of one who proves it. He feels his weakness, but he resorts to a thousand subterfuges to avoid yielding to the physician. His judgment is convinced, but his will is unbroken. He apprehends his danger, and knows the remedy; but he refuses to be helped. What he needs now is assent; and this requires humility and the renunciation of self-will. Faith includes this. It calls for a cheerful submission to God's requirements, the moment we apprehend them, no matter how humiliating the assertion of our ill-desert may be. 3. The third element of saving faith is trust. By this I mean reliance on the truth of what God said He would do; a quiet resting on His promises to accomplish all we need for salvation. III. THE USE TO BE MADE OF THIS ANALYSIS comes next to view. Your experience hitherto has been something like this. You have seen your need; you have gone in prayer to Jesus confessing it. You said in your prayer, "O Lord, I am vile, I come to Thee; I plead Thy promise that Thou wilt not cast me out; I give myself away in an everlasting surrender; I leave my soul at the very foot of the Cross!" And then you rose from your knees, murmuring, "Oh, I am no better; I feel just the same as before!" You saw that you had made a failure. Now, where was the lack? Simply in the particular of trust. You would not take Jesus at His word. When you have given yourself to Christ, leave yourself there, and go about your work as a child in His household. When He has undertaken your salvation, rest assured He will accomplish it, without any of your anxiety, or any of your help. There remains enough for you to do, with no concern for this part of the labour. Let me illustrate

this posture of mind as well as I can. A shipmaster was once out for three nights in a storm; close by the harbour, he yet dared not attempt to go in, and the sea was too rough for the pilot to come aboard. Afraid to trust the less experienced sailors, he himself stood firmly at the helm. Human endurance almost gave way before the unwonted strain. Worn with toil, beating about; worn yet more with anxiety for his crew and cargo; he was well-nigh relinquishing the wheel, and letting all go awreck, when he saw the little boat coming with the pilot. At once that hardy sailor sprang on the deck, and with scarcely a word took the helm in his hand. The captain went immediately below, for food and for rest; and especially for comfort to the passengers, who were weary with apprehension. Plainly now his duty was in the cabin; the pilot would care for the ship. Where had his burden gone? The master's heart was as light as a schoolboy's; he felt no pressure. The pilot, too, seemed perfectly unconcerned; he had no distress. The great load of anxiety had gone for ever; fallen in some way or other between them. Now turn this figure. We are anxious to save our soul, and are beginning to feel more and more certain that we cannot save it. Then comes Jesus, and undertakes to save it for us. We see how willing He is; we know how able He is; there we leave it. We *let* Him do it. We rest on His promise to do it. We just put that work in His hands to do all alone; and we go about doing something else; self-improvement, comfort to others, doing good of every sort. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *Faith convinced of the invisible*:—I. No faith will carry us through the difficulties of our profession, from oppositions within and without, giving us constancy and perseverance therein unto the end, BUT THAT ONLY WHICH GIVES THE GOOD THINGS HOPED FOR A REAL SUBSISTENCE IN OUR MINDS AND SOULS. But when by mixing itself with the promise which is the foundation of hope, it gives us a taste of their goodness, an experience of their power, the inhabitation of their first-fruits, and a view of their glory, it will infallibly effect this blessed end. II. The peculiar specifical nature of faith, whereby it is differenced from all other powers, acts, and graces in the mind, lies in this, THAT IT MAKES A LIFE ON THINGS INVISIBLE. It is not only conversant about them, but mixeth itself with them, making them the spiritual nourishment of the soul (2 Cor. iv. 18). III. THE GLORY OF OUR RELIGION IS, THAT IT DEPENDS ON AND IS RESOLVED INTO VISIBLE THINGS. They are far more excellent and glorious than anything that sense can behold or reason discover (1 Cor. ii. 9). IV. GREAT OBJECTIONS ARE APT TO LIE AGAINST INVISIBLE THINGS, WHEN THEY ARE EXTERNALLY REVEALED. Man would desirously live the life of sense, or at least believe no more than what he can have a scientifical demonstration of. But by these means we cannot have an evidence of invisible things; at best, not such as may have an influence into our Christian profession. This is done by faith alone. 1. Faith is that gracious power of the mind, whereby it firmly assents unto Divine revelations, upon the sole authority of God the revealer, as the first essential truth, and fountain of all truth. 2. It is by faith that all objections against invisible things, their being and reality, are answered and refuted. 3. Faith brings into the soul an experience of their power and efficacy, whereby it is cast into the mould of them, or made conformable unto them (Rom vi. 17; Eph. iv. 21–23). (*John Owen, D.D.*) *Shadow and substance*:—I. THE HOPE OF ATTAINING A PERFECT LIFE IS ONLY TO BE REALISED BY FAITH IN CHRIST. II. THE HOPE OF PERFECTING OUR LIFE-WORK CAN ONLY BE REALISED BY FAITH IN CHRIST. III. THE HOPE OF PERFECTING OUR HAPPINESS IS ONLY TO BE REALISED BY FAITH IN CHRIST. (*R. Balgarnie, D.D.*) *Faith*:—First, then, this chapter shows us the different ways and modes of the working of faith. And secondly, it speaks to all characters of persons, showing the manner in which faith will affect particular characters. Now men declare faith to be unreasonable. "Acting on trust!" says a godless man, "how strange a mode of acting! Surely those who do it are trusting to some vague fancy or feeling, they scarce know what, and call it faith." I answer, Although the thing which we believe, the object of faith, is most marvellous, yet faith itself, belief in the object, is no such strange or unusual thing. Every man constantly acts on faith, and the very man who laughs at another for acting on faith acts on faith himself every day. 1. That man trusts his memory. He does not now see or feel what he did yesterday, yet he has no doubt it happened as he remembers it. 2. Again, when a man reasons he trusts his reasoning powers; he knows one thing is true, and sees clearly that another follows from that. For example, he sees long shadows on the ground; then he knows the sun or moon is shining without looking round to see. But some one raises an objection. He says, "Very true; but in memory, reason, and daily life we trust ourselves; in religion we trust the word of another, and

that is hard." But there is no real difficulty. In this world we act on the evidence of others. What do we know without trusting others? Are there not towns and cities within fifty miles of us we never saw, yet we fully believe they are there. (*E. Munro.*)

Faith :—Out of the first clause let me observe—That a lively faith doth give such a reality and present being to things hoped for and yet to come, as if they were already actually enjoyed. And thus it is said of Abraham (John viii. 56). I. How DOES FAITH GIVE A SUBSISTENCE OR PRESENT BEING TO THINGS HOPED FOR? How can we be said to have that happiness which we do but expect? 1. By a lively hope it doth as it were sip of the cup of blessing, and foretaste those eternal delights which God hath prepared for us, and affects the heart with the certain expectation of them, as if they were enjoyed. It appears by the effect of this hope, which is rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Pet. i. 8). 2. Faith takes possession, and gives a being to the things hoped for in the promises. There is not only the union of hope, but a clear right and title; God hath passed over all those things to us in the covenant of grace. When we take hold of the promises, we take hold of the blessing promised by the root of it, until it flows up to full satisfaction. Hence those expressions, believers are said "to lay hold of eternal life" (1 Tim. vi. 12–19), by which their right is secured to them; "And he that heareth My words, and believeth in Me, hath eternal life" (John v. 24). Christ doth not only say, He shall have eternal life, but he hath a clear right and title to it, which is as sure as sense, though not as sweet. Faith gives us heaven, because in the promise it gives us a title to heaven; we are sure to have that to which we have a title; he hath a grant, God's Word to assure him of it. He is said to have an estate that hath the conveyance of it, but it is not necessary he should carry his land upon his back. 3. We have it in our Head. That is a Christian's tenure; he holds all in his head by Christ. Though he be not glorified in his own person, he is glorified in his Head, in Jesus Christ. Therefore as Christ's glorification is past, so in a sense a believer's glorification is past; the Head cannot rise, and ascend, and be glorified without the members (Eph. ii. 6). 4. Faith gives being in the first-fruits. The Israelites had not only a right to Canaan given them by God, but had livery of Canaan, where the spies did not only make report of the goodness of the land, but brought the clusters of grapes with them; so doth God deal with a believing soul, not only give it a right, but give it some first-fruits. A believing soul hath the beginnings of that estate which it hopes for; some clusters of Eschol by way of foretaste in the midst of present miseries and difficulties. This is the great love of God to us, that He would give us something of heaven here upon earth, that He will make us enter upon our happiness by degrees. II. THE BENEFIT AND ADVANTAGE OF THIS ACT, AND THE USE OF FAITH IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE. 1. It is very necessary we should have such a faith as should substantiate our hopes, to check sensuality, for we find the corrupt heart of man is all for present satisfaction. And though the pleasures of sin be short and inconsiderable, yet because they are near at hand, they take more with us than the joys of heaven, which are future and absent. 2. It gives strength and support to all the graces of the spiritual life. The great design of religion is to bring us to a neglect of present happiness, and to make the soul to look after a felicity yet to come; and the great instrument of religion, by which it promoteth this design, is faith, which is as the scaffold and ladder to the spiritual building. Use 1. To examine whether you have this kind of faith or no, which is the substance of things hoped for. To discover how little of this faith there is in the world, consider—(1) Many men say they believe, but alas, what influence have their hopes upon them? Do they engage them as things present and sensible do? (2) You may discern it by your carriage in any trial and temptation. When heaven and the world come in competition, can you deny present carnal advantages upon the hopes of eternity? do you forsake all as knowing you shall have a thousand times better in another world? (3) If faith do substantiate your hopes, though you do not receive present satisfaction, you may discern it by this, you will entertain the promises with much respect and delight. Are they dear and precious to you? You would embrace the promises if you looked upon them as the root of the blessing. (4) You may discern it by this, the mind will often run upon your hopes. Where the thing is strongly expected, the end and aim of your expectation will still be present with you. Thoughts are the spies and messengers of the soul. Hope sends them out after the thing expected, and love after the thing beloved. (5) You may discern it by your weanedness from the world. They that know heaven to be their home reckon the world a strange country. (6) There will not be such a floating and instability in their expectation. You have already blessedness in the root, in

the promises; and though there be not assurance, there will be an affiance, and repose of the mind upon God: if there be not rest in your souls, yet there will be a resting upon God, and a quiet expectation of the things hoped for. Faith is satisfied with the promise, and quietly hopes for the performance of it in God's due time (Lam. iii. 26). Use 2. To exhort you to work up faith to such an effect, that it may be the substance of things hoped for. (1) Work it up in a way of meditation. Let your minds be exercised in the contemplation of your hopes (Matt. vi. 21). (2) Work it up in a way of argumentation. Faith is a reasoning grace (ver. 19). (3) Work it up in a way of expectation. Look for it, long for it, wait for it (Tit. ii. 13; Jude 21). (4) Work it up in a way of supplication. Put in thy claim—Lord! I take hold of the grace offered in the gospel; and desire the Lord to secure thy claim (Psa. lxxiii. 24). (5) Work it up in a way of close and solemn application. In the Lord's supper, there thou comest by some solemn rites to take possession of the privileges of the covenant, and by these rites and ceremonies which God hath appointed, to enter ourselves heirs to all the benefits purchased by Christ, and conveyed in the covenant, especially to the glory of heaven; there you come to take the cup of blessing as a pledge of the "new wine in your Father's kingdom" (Matt. xxvi. 29). God here reacheth out to us by deed, our instrument, which was by promise due to every believing sinner before. (6) Work it up in your conversations by constant spiritual diligence. Is heaven sure, so sure as if we had it already, and shall I be idle? Oh what contriving, striving, fighting, is there to get a step higher in the world! How insatiable are men in the prosecution of their lusts! and shall I do nothing for heaven, and show no diligence in pursuing my great happiness! Use 3. To press you to get this faith. There are some means and duties that have a tendency hereunto. (1) There must be a serious consideration of God's truth, as it is backed with His absolute power. (2) You must relieve faith by experiences: by considering what is past we may more easily believe that which is to come. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Faith a substance*:—I. FAITH IS A SUBSTANCE. I know this is not generally received, for such are the vague, carnal, infidel notions that are abroad in the world, that not a grace of the Holy Spirit is owned; and instead of faith being admitted to be a principle of grace, it is spoken of as nature's actings, and is sometimes said to consist merely in the credence of a revealed fact. An opposite party, however, makes faith to consist in a crouching, a cringing, and a conformity to a crafty priesthood. Now I have no such faith as either of these. The one is the faith of the infidel; the other is the faith of heathenism. And they neither of them have any substance. I want a faith that will manifest itself as having substance. I have seen it printed that faith is nothing more than the credence of a revealed fact. But we know that infidels and devils have that sort of faith; for infidels credit thousands of revealed facts, and cannot deny them as matters of fact, yet they have no faith after all. Faith is a substance; and they who are taken up with shadows and vanities do not know the value of it. They cannot value it. They cannot possess it. Faith is a substance worth more than all the miser's stores, than all the monarch's revenue, than all the wealth of India. Faith is a substance that can never be frittered away. It overcomes all the world, repels all the devils in hell, and lays hold on eternal life. But, most probably, you will better understand what I mean by this substance of faith if I lead your attention to its origin and its object. Its origin: It grows not in nature's garden. It is not the produce of the schools. It is not hereditary from father to son. It is far above that. Like every good gift, and every perfect gift, it cometh down from the Father of Lights. It is of the operation of the Holy Ghost, and its object will prove its substance. Its object is Christ; the Person of Christ; the official character of Christ; the perfect work of Christ; the covenant headship of Christ. And the faith of God's elect fastens on all these. Further, the object of faith lies greatly in the enjoyment of Christ as well as in confidence in Him. And this will perhaps bring the nature of your faith to the test better than any other principle. I must have a Christ who will bring heaven to me on earth in the enjoyment of Him here. And this will prove whether your faith is a substance or not. The soul which possesses this living, saving faith, sighs, waits, and cannot be satisfied without the sensible enjoyment of the presence of Christ. That faith which is a substance hath a saving power communicated with it. Hence it is called, sometimes properly, sometimes improperly, a saving faith. Bring your faith up to this test again. It is spiritual faith—the substance of things hoped for, that discovers all that is in Christ; the wisdom, the righteousness, the sanctification, and the redemption that are in Him; the pardon, the peace, the justification, the joy, the security, the victories, the

triumphs of all the Church of God in Christ, seen wholly in His Person. II. This saving faith which so discovers and appropriates IS SURE TO GO AND PLEAD BEFORE THE THRONE IN EXERCISE; "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin," and cannot be acceptable before God; and there it pleads the merits, the name, the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ for acceptance, relying upon the declaration of the precious Lord Himself, "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, believing, ye shall receive." Now I pray you let us look closely into this substance, and raise the inquiry, Does it belong to me? "Faith is the substance of things hoped for." Then the first part of the interrogation here would be, What are the things that I hope for? I know if I were to ask the worldling this question, he would reply that he thinks upon worldly prospects, emoluments, and personal gratifications. But not so the Christian; not so the household of faith. Well, now, if I might simplify this, and put it in the plainest possible manner, I should say that the believer hopes to know more and to enjoy more of Christ to-day than he did yesterday, or than ever he had done before. Faith is the substance of it. The believer in Jesus hopes to be more conformed to the image of Christ; "that as he has borne the image of the earthly, he shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Faith is the substance of that. The believer in Jesus—the real Christian—hopes to attain to more intimacy with heaven and to have a measure of heaven begun in the soul on earth. Let us inquire as regards experimental participation. There is such a thing as the joy of faith. There is such a thing as the triumph of faith. There is such a thing as the race of faith, and it is always a winning race. There are joys experienced in this substance which none but the possessor can know. I hasten on to mark its sanctifying operations. The apostle says concerning this, in his account of the progress of the gospel, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, that God "put no difference" between Jews and Gentiles, "purifying"—mark the expression—"purifying their hearts by faith." That faith that will not purify the heart, is not the substance. It may illumine your head till you are giddy; it may enlighten your understanding till you are as proud as Lucifer; it may inflame your pride as a professor till you are as vain as the devil can wish you to be; but if it does not purify the heart, it is not of God—"purifying their hearts by faith." III. I will now proceed to speak of THE WEALTH WHICH THIS FAITH REALISES. It is a substance. Now, most people are ready to travel a good many miles in order to learn how to acquire wealth. They forego much carnal ease to get riches. But, after all, they make a terrible mistake. This is not true wealth. Riches make to themselves wings, they fly away, and defy all control. But the wealth which faith realises is altogether of a different kind. It has no wings. It is not subject to thieves. It cannot be hoarded up and be useless to its possessor; for it is that good principle which works by love. And thus faith realises the inheritance both of grace and of glory, and by it the title deeds to both are clearly read and lodged in the bosom of Deity. Oh, happy man, who goes so far in the attainment of faith! The wealth which faith realises is an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for all who are kept by the power of God through faith. I am not fond of relating anecdotes in the pulpit, but I cannot refrain on the present occasion from telling you one which I heard from my dear father's lips when I was a boy. It was of a godly man who possessed much wealth, and used it for the glory of God, but who lived to prove that he could not clip its wings. All flew away, and he was reduced to living in a furnished room, where he was supported entirely by the charity of his friends. One of his visitors who had been very kind to him, once asked him this question, "How is it that I find you to be as happy now as when you were in possession of all your wealth?" His immediate answer was, "When I possessed all this world's goods I enjoyed God in all; and now I possess none I enjoy all in God." Now that is faith; that is substance; a fine specimen, a fine witness of it. (*J. Irons.*)

Faith:—1. Faith is the confidence—the firm persuasion—of things hoped for. In the ancient games the runner hoped to win the race, to wear the crown of pine or olive leaves around his brow, and to have his name handed down as victor to untold generations; so, in the confidence of this, he strained every nerve and sinew to reach the goal. That was natural faith. The student hopes to win the prize and find his name in the honours list, and he gives his days and nights to reading. The farmer ploughs the land and sows the field, in hope that in due season he shall put in the sickle and gather the harvest. The merchant and tradesman hope to gain a competency or to make a fortune, and put forth their efforts day by day. These are illustrations of natural faith. So it is with the faith that has to do with spiritual things. The Christian sets before him, not the crown of fading leaves,

but the crown that shall never fade away, which the Lord will place upon the brow of all who endure unto the end. He seeks for the smile and approbation of the Saviour, for the treasures in heaven, for the bags which wax not old. This is spiritual faith. 2. Faith is the demonstration of things not seen. Columbus believed that there was another world in the western hemisphere; he was as fully assured of its existence as if it had been demonstrated by mathematical proof. Yet he had not seen the new world; he had never looked upon its mighty rivers, or upon the broad expanse of its prairies and savannahs. He had not even seen in the dim distance the peak of any of its mountains, or the outline of its coast. No navigator had told him, "I have seen the new world; I have cast anchor in its harbours; I have set foot upon it." Yet, in the full conviction that there was another world, he toiled and waited many years, until his eye rested upon it and he landed on its shores. This was natural faith—the demonstration of things not seen. Some years ago the astronomers, Mr. Adams of Cambridge, and M. Leverries of Paris, were convinced that there must be a large planet that had never been seen through a telescope or marked down in any star-map; so they watched the midnight heavens in a certain direction until the planet came within the range of their glass. This was the way the planet Neptune was discovered. This was natural faith. It is even so with the faith that has to do with spiritual things. God is unseen; His glory is dimly reflected in His works. We see the work of His fingers in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. Creation is a book in which we may read, page after page, His handwriting, His own Divine autograph; but the Almighty Writer is unseen. In the flowers of the field we see the forms of beauty which He has pencilled and coloured and enamelled; the Divine Artist we see not. We stand and gaze with wonder and admiration upon a part of this beautiful temple of creation, but we see not the Divine Architect; yet, as in St. Paul's Cathedral, we read of the architect, Sir Christopher Wren, "If you seek his monument, look around," so we see in the skill and wisdom displayed in this glorious creation the monument of the Almighty Builder. We believe that God is, and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. We believe in the great love which He has towards us, which He has revealed in Jesus Christ; that, like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him; that He watches over us by day and by night, that His ear is open to our prayer, His arm stretched out for our defence. We believe that He is present with us in the house of prayer, and we can say with the confidence of Jacob, "Surely the Lord is in this place," &c. We believe that He has given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that we may be partakers of the Divine nature; and that, although the heaven and the earth pass away, not one of these promises will fail. We believe in an unseen Saviour, &c. (*W. Bull, B.A.*) *Evangelical faith*:—I. THE THINGS TOWARDS WHICH FAITH IS DIRECTED ARE INVISIBLE. II. SOME OF THE INVISIBLE THINGS ARE AT ONCE DESIRABLE AND ATTAINABLE. III. THOSE INVISIBLE THINGS, WHICH ARE DESIRABLE AND ATTAINABLE, FAITH MAKES POWERFUL IN THE PRESENT LIFE. (*Homilist.*) *The value and importance of faith*:—Faith is the source of all truly religious feeling, and the ground of all acceptable service. Without it we can neither come to God nor perform any work which is acceptable to Him. 1. Faith is the condition of justification: "Being justified by faith"; "He that believeth is not condemned; he that believeth not is condemned already." 2. It is the source of spiritual life: "The just shall live by faith." "He that believeth hath everlasting life; he that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." 3. It puts us in possession of every Christian privilege. (1) The gift of the Spirit: "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise." (2) Adoption into the Divine family: "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name;" "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." (3) Peace with God and peace of mind: "Being justified by faith we have peace with God;" "He that believeth shall not make haste." Joy in God: "In whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." 4. It is the source of all Christian feeling and action. Our hearts are "purified by faith." Our prayers to be acceptable must be offered "in faith." If we would ask successfully, we must "ask in faith, nothing wavering." (*W. Landels, D.D.*) *What is faith*:—Faith has many workings, many results, many fruits—and some select one of these and call it faith itself. But the text goes to the source when it says, "What faith *is* is *this*." The word here rendered "substance," means properly the act of "standing under" so as to support something. Thus in philoso-

phical writings it was applied to the essence which forms, as it were, the substratum of the attributes; that supposed absolute existence (of thing or person) in which all the properties and qualities, so to say, inhere, and have their consistence. In this way the word is once applied in Scripture, in the third verse of this Epistle, to the essence of God Himself, and the Divine Son is said to be "the express image of His person"—the very "impress," as it might be otherwise rendered, "of His essence." But there was another use of the word, in which it meant the act of the mind in standing under (so as to support, and bear the weight of) some statement or communication, making, as we say, a heavy demand upon the faculty of believing. It thus passes from the idea of "substance" into that of "assurance" or "confidence." It is thus used by St. Paul in two passages of the second Epistle to the Corinthians, where he speaks of his "confidence" in the readiness of their almsgiving, and again of the "confidence of his glorying," though it be in weakness, about himself. And so, once again, in the third chapter of this Epistle to the Hebrews, we find the expression, "If we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." There can be no question as to the meaning of the word in the verse now before us. "Faith is the assurance of (confidence in) things hoped for." Faith is that principle, that exercise of mind and soul, which has for its object things not seen but hoped for, and which, instead of sinking under them as too ponderous, whether from their difficulty or from their uncertainty, stands firm under them—supports and sustains their pressure—in other words, is assured of, confides in and relies on them. It is not the Christian only who lives by faith. Faith is no dreamy, imaginative, or mystical thing, which it is fanciful if not fanatical to talk of. The schoolboy who expects a holiday, to be earned by his diligence or forfeited by his misconduct, exercises faith in that expectation. The husbandman who expects the harvest is exercising that "confidence in things hoped for" which is faith. The parent who anticipates the manhood of his child is an example of that "walking by faith" which only madmen and fools disparage or dispense with. When Christ bids us to be men of faith, He is not contradicting nature, He is not even introducing into the world a new principle of action; He is only applying a principle as old as Nature herself, to matters beyond and above nature, which it needed a new revelation from the God of nature to disclose and to prove to us. If this proof be given us, it becomes as reasonable to anticipate and to prepare for eternity as it is reasonable to anticipate and to prepare for a holiday or a harvest, a wedding, or a profession. "Faith is confidence in things hoped for"; and whether the expected future be a later day of this life, or a day which shall close this life and usher in an everlasting existence, the principle which takes account of that future is one and the same—only debased or elevated, profaned or consecrated, by the length of the vision and by the character of the object. We *must* walk by faith if we would not be the scorn and laughingstock of our generation. The only question is, What, for us, are those "things hoped for," which faith makes its object? Are they the trifles of time, or are they the substances of eternity? Are they the amusements, the vanities, the luxuries, the ambitions, which make up the life of earth—or are they the grand, the satisfying, the everlasting realities which God has revealed to us in His Son Jesus Christ—such as the forgiveness of sins, peace with God, victory over evil, the communion of saints, a growing likeness to Christ, a death full of hope, and a blessed immortality in God's presence? (*Dean Vaughan.*)

Faith the substance and evidence:—An unseen and heavenly world is required to correspond to our faith just as much as a material world to correspond to our senses. I stand in the midst of nature on some lovely spring morning. The fragrance of flowers from every bright and waving branch, dressed in pale and crimson, floats to me. The song of matin birds falls on my ear. All this beauty, melody, and richness are the correspondence to my nature of the material world through my senses. Now there are inward perceptions and intuitions just as real as these outward ones, and requiring spiritual realities to correspond with them, just as much as the eye requires the landscape, or as the ear asks for sounds of the winds and woods and streams, for the song of birds, or the dearer accents of the human voice. To meet and answer the very nature of man, a spiritual world, more refined modes of existence, action, happiness, must be, else his nature, satisfied and fed in one direction, and that the lowest, is belied and starved in another direction, and that the highest. But, without illustrating further, in this general way, the rooting of faith in the primary ground of our being, let me show the peculiar light in which the great doctrines and practical influences of religion are brought to us, by thus considering "faith" itself as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of

things not seen." And first the great doctrine or fact of the being of a God is one of the things that corresponds to our faith, of which faith itself, as a faculty of the soul, is the basis and evidence. We want no other reason for believing in God. Faith itself is the reason, and the best reason. "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." We need nothing put under our faith to support that, any more than under our direct outward perceptions, our positive knowledge, the dictates of our consciences, or the affections of our hearts, going forth to fix upon their appropriate objects. Like them, it is a radical part of our very constitution—only a part which Christ has come specially to bring out, enrich, and ennoble with the truth he utters, and the actual objects he presents. To the man in whom this principle or sentiment of faith is thus enlivened by meditation, prayer, and the whole stimulus of the gospel, the Supreme One does not appear simply as a first Cause, an original Creator, far back out of our present reach, but as the perpetual Sustainer and Renewer of all things, to whom he joins with the angelic choir of the poet in singing, "Thy works are beautiful as on the first day." His God is near him, nay, with him; breathes upon him in the freshness of the morning; folds him tenderly in the shades of night, and answers every entreating or confiding desire which he silently ejaculates, with peace, sanctity, assurance that can be felt; "the benediction from these covering heavens falling upon him like dew." As, sailing in northern latitudes, the needle dips to an unseen power, so his heart inclines to the unseen power of heaven and earth. With an ever-quickening sense of the Divine Being, comes also, through this vitally unfolded power of faith, the feeling of a share in the permanence of that Being; a persuasion, and, so far as in the flesh such a thing can be, realisation of the immortality of the soul. As we believe in the world below because we have senses, and not because somebody attempts logically to prove it to us, so we believe in the world above by the inner perceptions of faith. In fine, the same faith, while convincing us of this durableness of our real life, redeems us from the bondage of death, to which many, all their lifetime, are subject. Thus the apostle declares of Christ, that he "abolished death." For just in the degree that, through a religious faith, the feeling of immortality grows in the soul, the death of the body loses power to disturb or alarm it. Principles and affections are developed, on which, we know and are inwardly assured, death cannot lay that icy finger which must chill every flowing drop in the circulation of animal life. The spirit, alive to its relations to God and to all pure beings, is conscious of nothing in common with the grave, has nothing that can be put into the grave save the temporary garment that it wears; and its mounting desires, its ardent love, its swelling hopes, its holy communings, are not stuff woven into the texture of that garment, but are as separable from it as the lamp from its clay vase, as the light of heaven from the clod it for a passing moment illumines. In fact, in this state of inward life, the ideas of the spirit and death, of dust and the soul, cannot be brought together, any more than can the ideas of virtue and colour, thought and material size. (*C. A. Bartol.*) *Faith, the substance of things hoped for:*—It is a certain and evident fact that every one of us is living, every moment, in two worlds: a material world and a spiritual world. All nature, all with which our bodies only have to do is one; all thought and memory and hope, and the inner workings of the mind, all that lies far away out of sight, all beyond the grave, all that concerns other worlds than this, that is the other world. The spiritual world which we cannot see is as real as the material world which is always before us. The power which makes the spiritual world a fact, by which we *realise* it, is "faith." And that power is one with which it has pleased God to endow us all for that end. And where that "faith" is in full exercise, the unseen becomes more real than the seen—for the seen can only be when it is actually present, and must cease with our natural life, while the unseen, though invisible now, will soon be all that we shall see, and will last for ever. Hence, "faith," which is the sight of the mind, is a far greater thing than the sight of the eyes; for it has to do with the inner nature of a man which he carries with him everywhere, which is always going on: and it takes in, and makes real and present, God and heaven, and all that God hath said and done, or will say and will do; and all the grandnesses of the eternity. It makes "substance" of all these things, and gives "evidence" of our hope that these substances are ours. If I had to define "faith" I should call it a loving trust, a loving, personal approbation, merging into a holy life. But what is the groundwork of faith? what is its warrant? what justifies you in believing all this? God's voice. How does God's voice speak to me? Partly in His word, partly in His works, partly in His whisperings to my soul. There are two things which must never be forgotten about "faith." The one is that

though faith is a reasonable and intellectual exercise of the mind, nevertheless it lies more in the heart than in the head. It is not written without a distinct point and sufficient reason, "The evil heart of unbelief." How can you believe and sin? The belief comes from God only. And the second and most important consideration is that all "faith" is a gift. However much you may read and study and think, you will never obtain faith except by prayer. It lies in the sovereignty of God. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Faith a sign of human progress*:—Faith is really a sign of human progress. It is the first thing that distinguishes us from the beasts of the field. Let me use an illustration: If there is grass for the ox, the ox feeds; if there be none it dies. It knows nothing of tillage or preparation of the soil for its provender. It knows no future. So, in a measure, is it with the savage. In his rudest state he is only one step above the brute. He hunts for his food, or gathers the wild fruit of the earth. Then take the stage of human life next above this—the simple, wandering, pastoral life. The shepherd or herdsman has to shift his flock from one district to another. He looks forward but a very little. Then comes the agricultural life, in which some provision has to be made for the future. The field is ploughed and sown in prospect of the next year's harvest. Then comes a more civilised age, that of building and teaching. The pious ecclesiastic lays the foundations of some grand cathedral, in which he has faith to believe that future generations will worship. The poet or the prophet speaks, content that men unborn shall acknowledge the truth of his message or his song. And this indicates the onward progress. According as a man is animated by some lofty purpose, so his view is wide and far-reaching. As he is simply selfish, and believes only in his present gains and in what serves his present purpose, so his view and place is small. It is faith, or trust in what is distant and unseen, which alone raises him and makes him great. (*H. Jones, M.A.*) *Faith a well-worn word scarcely realised in meaning*:—These key-words of Scripture meet the same fate as do coins that have been long in circulation. They pass through so many fingers that the inscriptions get worn off them. We can all talk about faith and forgiveness and justifying and sanctifying, but how few of us have definite notions about what these words that come so easily from our lips mean. There is a vast deal of cloudy haze in the minds of average church and chapel goers as to what this wonder-working faith may really be. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Faith not blind confidence*:—Faith—true, living faith—is not mere blind confidence; it is confidence for a reason. (*Hy. Dunn.*) *The repose of faith*:—Faith might perhaps, not improperly, be denominated the repose of the intellect and the repose of the affections; *i.e.*, the understanding perfectly admitting the Divine testimony and the heart confidently trusting the Divine assurances. (*T. Binney.*) **The evidence of things not seen.**—*Faith, the evidence of things not seen*:—I. First, concerning the ACT. Faith is said to be "the evidence." It is a grace that representeth the things of religion with such clearness and perspicuity of argument, that a believer is compelled to subscribe to the truth and worth of them; as a man yieldeth, when he seeth clear evidence to the contrary. There are in faith four things: 1. A clear light and apprehension. As soon as God converteth the soul, He puts light into it. 2. Faith is a convictive light, that findeth us corrupt and ill-principled, and full of prejudices against the doctrine of the gospel; and it is the work of faith to root out of the soul those carnal prejudices, counsels, reasonings, and carnal excuses which shut out that doctrine which the gospel offereth to us. 3. It is an overpowering and certain conviction, that is, such as dispossesseth us of our corrupt principles, and argueth us into a contrary opinion and belief. 4. It is a practical conviction. He that believeth is so convinced of the truth and worth of these things, that he is resolved to pursue after them, to make preparation for his eternal condition. Use: To put us upon examination and trial, whether we have such a faith or no, as is an evidence or convincing light; you may try it by the parts of it. There is the assent of faith and the consent of faith; a clear light and firm assent, and a free consent to the worth of the things of God. 1. There is a clearness and perspicuity in the light of faith, which doth not only exclude the grossly ignorant, but those that have no saving knowledge. 2. We may know whether faith be an evidence by the firmness of our consent. If men were more convinced there would be a greater conformity in their practices to the rules of religion. II. I come to the OBJECT, "Things not seen." Faith is an evidence, but what kind of evidence? of things that cannot be otherwise seen, which doth not disparage the evidence, but declare the excellency of faith. "Not seen," that is, not liable to the judgment of sense and reason. What are those "things not seen"? Things may either be invisible in regard of

their nature, or of their distance and absence from us. Some things are invisible in their own nature—as God, angels, and spirits; and all the way and work of the Holy Ghost in and about the spiritual life. Other things are invisible in regard of their distance and absence; and so things past and to come are invisible; we cannot see them with our bodily eyes, but they are discovered to us by faith. In short, these "things not seen," are either matters of constant practical experience, which are not liable to outward sense, or principles of knowledge, which are not suitable to natural reason. 1. Matters of practical experience. The blessings of religion as the enduring substance (Heb. x. 34), the benefit of affliction, the rewards and supplies of the spiritual life, answers of prayer, they are things not seen in regard of the bodily eye and carnal feeling; but faith expects them with as much assurance as if they were corporeally present, and could be felt and handled, and is assuredly persuaded of them, as if they were before our eyes. 2. Principles of knowledge. There are many mysteries in religion above reason; until nature put on the spectacles of faith, it cannot see them. That the evidence of faith is conversant about things unseen by sense or natural reason. 1. Because much of religion is past, and we have bare testimony and revelation to warrant it; as the creation of the world out of nothing, the incarnation, life, and death of Christ; these are truths not liable to sense, and unlikely to reason—that God should become a man and die. Now upon the revelation of the word, the Spirit of God makes all evident to faith. 2. Much of religion is yet to come, and therefore can only be discerned by faith. Fancy and nature cannot outsee time, and look beyond death (2 Pet. i. 9); unless faith hold the candle to hope we cannot see heaven at so great a distance. Heaven and the glorious rewards of religion are yet to come; faith only can see heaven in the promises and look upon the gospel as travailing in birth with a great salvation. 3. That of religion which is of actual and present enjoyment, sense or reason cannot discern the truth or worth of it; therefore faith is still the evidence of things unseen. If the object of faith be things unseen, then—1. Christians should not murmur if God keep them low and bare, and they have nothing they can see to live upon. As long as they do their duty, they are in the hands of God's providence. 2. In the greatest extremity that can befall us there is work for faith, but no place for discouragement; your faith is never tried till then. 3. A Christian is not to be valued by his enjoyments, but by his hopes. "He hath meat and drink which the world knows not of" (John iv. 32). 4. Christ may be out of sight, yet not out of mind. Reproof to those that are all for sense and for present appearance. 1. Such as do not believe without present feeling. 2. Such as cannot wait upon God without present satisfaction. (1) This is a great dishonour to God, to trust Him no further than we see Him. You trust the ground with your corn, and can expect a crop out of the dry clods, though you do not see how it grows, nor which way it thrives in order to the harvest. (2) It is contrary to all the dispensations of God's providence. Before He gives in any mercy there are usually some trials. (3) It is contrary to the nature of faith. (4) It will weaken our hands in duty when we look to every present discouragement. If faith be such an evidence of things not seen, then let us examine—have we this faith that can believe things not seen? This is the nature of true faith. Hope built upon outward probability is but carnal hope; but here is the faith and hope we live by, that which is carried out to things not seen with the bodily eye. Take these directions to discover it. 1. How doth it work as to Christ now He is out of sight? Alas! to most Christians Christ is but a name, a fancy, or an empty conceit, such as the heathens had of their topical gods, or we of tutelar saints, some for this country and some for that. Do you pray as seeing Him at God's right hand in heaven pleading your cause, and negotiating with God for you? 2. How doth it work as to His coming to judgment? Is the awe of that day upon your hearts? and do you live as those that must give an account even for every idle word, when the great God of recompenses shall descend from heaven with a shout? 3. How can you comfort yourselves in the midst of all your straits and sorrows with the unseen glory of another world? Do not you faint in your duty, but bear up with that courage and constancy which becomes Christians (2 Cor. iv. 16). 4. How doth it work as to the threatenings of the Word? Can you mourn for a judgment in its causes, and foresee a storm when the clouds are but a gathering? 5. How doth your heart work upon the promises in difficult cases? Thereby God tries you, and thereby you may try yourselves (John vi. 5, 6). 6. You may try your assent to the promises by the adventures you make upon God's word. 7. You may know whether you have this faith, which evidenceth things to come, and find out the weakness or strength of it by observing the great dis-

proportion that is in your affections to things of sense, and things of faith. It is true, a Christian is not all spirit, and therefore sensible things work more with the present state of men than things spiritual. But yet certainly in a child of God, one that believes, that hath the evidence of things not seen, there will be some suitableness. 8. You may know whether you have this faith by your thoughts of the ways of God, when they are despised or opposed. Faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, can see a great deal of beauty in a despised way of God, and glory in a crucified Christ; as the good thief upon the cross could see Christ as a king, when he hung dying on the cross in disgrace (Luke xxiii. 42). To press you to get this faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, that you may believe that which God hath revealed in His Word, and that solely upon God's authority and the account of His Word; to quicken you to get this faith, which is of such great use to you. 1. Consider that all the difficulty in assenting to doctrines of Scripture was not only in the first age. 2. Consider the benefit of a sound conviction. A clear evidence of the mysteries of salvation is a great ground of all reformation of life. 3. The more faith depends upon the warrant of God's Word the better; and the fewer sensible helps it hath, the more it is prized (John xx. 29). 4. Sensible things will not work, if we do not believe the Word; those that think Moses and the prophets are but a cold dispensation in comparison of this, if one should come from the dead, for then they would repent and turn to God, let them read (Luke xvi. 29–31). 5. We have need now to look after this faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, because the great reigning and prevailing sin is infidelity and unbelief; which is seen by our cavilling at every strict truth, by our carelessness in the things of God, by the looseness and profaneness of those that would be accounted Christians. 6. We ought to look to this faith, because none are so resolved in the great matters of faith, but they may be more resolved; no man doth so believe but he may believe more (1 John v. 13). Direction to get and increase this faith. 1. Beg the illumination of the Spirit of God to show you the truth of the Word, and the good things offered therein. This evidence is from the Spirit; thereof Paul prays for the Ephesians (Eph. i. 17, 18). 2. Employ your reason, serious consideration, and discourse. The devil throws the golden ball in our way, of honour, pleasure, and profit, to divert us from heavenly things; and the intention of the mind being diverted, the impressions of religion are weak and faint. 3. Labour to get a heart purged from carnal affections. Where there is more purity there will be more clearness (Matt. v. 8). (*T. Manton, D.D.*)

Faith:—What a mighty thing as a motive-power this faith must be! If a man is possessed by it, that something can be done; in some sure sense, it is done already, and only waits its time to come into visible existence in the best way it can. Just as one of those noble groups John Rogers fashions for us is done the moment the conception of it has struck his heart with a pang of delight, though he may not have so much as the lump of clay for his beginning; while I might stand with the clay in my hand to doomsday, and not make what he does, because I could not have the "Faith . . . the evidence of things not seen." What cannot be done, cannot be of faith. There can be no real faith in the soul toward the impossible; but make sure that faith is there, and then you can form no conception of the surprises of power hidden in the heart of it. And, trying to make this thing clear to you, I know of no better way to begin, than by saying, that faith is never that airy nothing which often usurps its place, and for which I can find no better name than fancy—a feeling without fitness, an anticipation without an antecedent, an effect without a cause, a cipher without a unit. A mere fancy, to a pure faith, is as the "Arabian Nights" to the Sermon on the Mount. Then faith is not something standing clean at the other extreme from fancy, for which there is no better name than fatalism—a condition numbers are continually drifting into, who, from their very earnestness, are in no danger of being sucked into the whirlpools of fancy; men who glance at the world and life through the night-glass of Mr. Buckle; who look backward and there is eternity, and forward and there is eternity; and feel all about them, and conclude that they are in the grasp of a power beside which what they can do to help themselves is about what a chip can do on the curve at Niagara. And yet their nature may be far too bright and wholesome to permit them to feel that the drift of things is not on the whole for good. They will be ready even to admit that "our souls are organ-pipes of diverse stop and various pitch, each with its proper note thrilling beneath the self-same touch of God." But, when a hard pinch comes, they smoke their pipe, and refer it to Allah, or cover their face and refer it to Allah; but never fight it out, inch by inch, with all

their heart and soul, in the sure faith that things will be very much after all what they make them—that the Father worketh hitherto, and they work. And these two things—the fancy that things will come to pass because we dream them, and the fatalism that they will come to pass because we cannot avoid them—are never to be mistaken for faith. It is true that there is both a fancy and a fatalism that is perfectly sound and good—the fancy that clothes the future to an earnest lad with a sure hope; that keeps the world fresh and fair, as in nature like that of Leigh Hunt, when to most men it has become arid as desert dust;—the bloom and poetry, thank God, by which men are converted, and become as little children. And there is a fatalism that touches the very centre of the circle of faith—which Paul always had in his soul. When sounding out some mighty affirmation of the sovereignty of God, he would go right on, with a more perfect and trusting devotion to work in the line of it. Fancy and fatalism, are the strong hand-maidens of faith; happy is the man whose faith they serve. But what, then, is faith? Can that be made clear? I think it can. A young man feels in his heart the conviction, that there in the future is waiting for him a great destiny. Yet that destiny depends on his courage, and that courage on his constancy; and it is only when each has opened into the other, that the three become that evidence of things not seen, on which he can die with his soul satisfied—though all the land he had to show for the one promise was a graveyard; and all the line for the other, a childless son. Another feels a conviction, that here at his hand is a great work to do—a nation to create out of a degraded mob, and to settle in a land where it can carry out his ideas and its own destiny. But the conviction can be nothing without courage; and courage, a mere rushing into the jaws of destruction, without constancy. Only when forty years had gone, and the steady soul had fought its fight, did conviction, courage, and constancy ripen into the full certainty which shone in the eyes of the dying statesman, as he stood on Nebo, and death was swallowed up in victory. And yet it is clear, that, while courage and constancy in these men was essential to their faith, faith again was essential to their courage and constancy. These were the meat and drink on which the faith depended; but the faith was the life for which the meat and drink were made. A dim, indefinable consciousness at first it was, that something was waiting in that direction, a treasure hid in that field somewhere, to be their own if they durst but sell all they had, and buy the field. Then, as bit by bit they paid the price in the pure gold of some new responsibility or sacrifice, the clear certainty took the place of the dim intimation, and faith became the evidence of things not seen. This is the way a true faith always comes. Conversing once with a most faithful woman, I found that the way she came to be what she is lay at first along the dark path, in which she had to take one little timid step at a time. But, as she went on, she found all the more reason to take another and another, until God led her by a way she knew not, and brought her into a large place. Yet it was a long while before any step did not make the most painful drafts on both her courage and constancy. And so the whole drift of what man has done for man and God is the story of such a leading—first a consciousness that the thing must be done, then a spark of courage to try and do it; then a constancy that endures to the end; and then, whatever the end may be—the prison or the palace, it is all the same—the soul has the evidence of things not seen, and goes singing into her rest. Now, then, we want to make sure of three things, then we shall know that this faith is our own—1. That God is at work without me—that is, the Divine energy—as fresh and full before I came, as the sea is before the minnow comes. 2. That He is at work through me—that is, the Divine intention—as certainly present in my life as it was in the life of Moses; and—3. That what we do together is as sure to be a success as that we are striving to make it one. There may be more in the grave-yard than there is in the home. In the moment toward which I have striven forty years with a tireless, passionate, hungry energy, my expectation may be cut off, while my eye is as bright and my step as firm as ever. It is no matter. The energy is as full, the intention as direct, and the accomplishment as sure, as though God had already made the pile complete. And when, with the conviction that I can do a worthy thing, and the courage to try and the constancy to keep on, I can cast myself, as Paul did, and Moses and Abraham, into the arms of a perfect assurance of this energy, intention, and accomplishment of the Eternal—feel, in every fibre of my nature, that in Him I live and move and have my being—I shall not fear, though the earth be removed, because—

"A faith like this for ever doth impart
Authentic tidings of invisible things;
Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power,
And central peace, subsisting at the heart
Of endless agitation." (*R. Collyer, D.D.*)

The evidence of things not seen:—I. THE OBJECT IS SOMETHING NOT SEEN. Things unseen are not only such things as are invisible, and such as cannot be received by the eye, but also such as are not perceivable by any of our senses. Neither are things insensible meant, but such as are above the reach of reason. So that things unseen are such as are neither perceivable by the sense nor reason, so as to have either an intuitive or demonstrative knowledge of them. These are such as are conveyed to the soul by Divine revelation, without which man could not have known them; and such propositions as the connection of the terms depend upon the will of God. II. FAITH IS THE EVIDENCE OF THESE THINGS UNSEEN; because we, having a certain knowledge of God's veracity, and His revelation of these things, are as certainly persuaded of the truth of them; and give as firm assent unto them as if they were seen and intuitively and demonstratively known unto us. Yet here you must consider—1. That though the things and propositions be above reason, yet this persuasion or firm assent and this certain knowledge of the Divine revelation are acts of reason, and in the book of reason are they written. 2. That this object is of greater latitude than the former. For things hoped for, which are to come, are not seen; and not only they, but many things past and present. 3. That the things not seen in this place are not all things not seen, but such as God hath revealed to be the matter and object of our Divine faith. 4. That though substance and evidence may differ, yet both are a firm assent; but in respect of the things hoped for, may include a firm confidence and a certain expectation; for in respect of that object, that assent is more practical than this evidence which respects things unseen; so that here wants but little of a perfect definition. 5. The faith here defined is Divine faith in general, not that which is called justifying as justifying, for that is but a particular branch of this general, looking at a particular object, which is Christ's sacrifice and His intercession. (*G. Lawson.*) *Faith proving and reproving*:—In the realm of the unseen faith examines and discriminates. Faith is not credulity. Faith is not the promiscuous acceptance of this, that, and everything which lies out of sight. Faith is the criterion and touchstone of things unseen. When one comes to her with a professed doctrine, saying, "In the world out of sight, the world of spirit and heaven, there exists such or such a truth, such or such a reality, such or such a being;" faith, the faculty by which we take account of the unseen, applies herself to the subject, puts it to the test of Scripture, asks its evidences and examines them, rejects the worthless, ratifies the true, and finally gives judgment upon the result and upon the issue. Faith has lived long enough to know—even from Scripture—how confident sometimes are "lying wonders," how easy it is to find evidences for any folly, how far we might drift from the moorings of truth and duty if we gave heed to every doctrine which professed to rest (as St. Paul once expressed it) upon "spirit, or word, or letter as from us." It is the office of Faith to test and to discriminate things unseen—to decide whether they belong to the revealed invisible, or to the conjectured, imagined, fancied invisible—and according to her judgment upon this question, so to determine the further question, Shall I accept, or shall I refuse? Faith takes God's Word, and tests every professed truth by it. Faith is the touchstone of all matters lying in the region of spirit—she decides whether, for her, they are true or false, by seeing whether they agree, or whether they conflict, with her own one guide, which is the revelation, the inspiration, of God. This exercise of faith implies, then, one earlier. Before faith can test things unseen by the Word of God, she must have that Word, and she must know it. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Things not seen*:—"Things hoped for" are "things not seen." St. Paul says in the 8th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, "Hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" But the "unseen" is not coextensive with the "hoped for." There are "things not seen" elsewhere than in the future. Faith is wider than hope. Faith has other spheres than futurity. Whatever is invisible, whether past or present or future, is an object of faith. Every fact in history is apprehended by faith. Every past event, every record of birth and death, of battle and revolution, of dynasty founded and fallen, of historical person and character, can be grasped, can be accepted, only by faith.

To be assured that certain portions of this island were successively occupied by Roman, by Saxon, by Dane, by Norman—that the established religion of this country was once Pagan, once Romanist, once Puritan—that a sovereign of this country was executed at Whitehall and buried at Windsor—that there ever was such a person as Alexander or Cæsar or Napoleon—is an exercise, a strong exercise, of faith. That which is not at this moment seen and handled and tasted —that storm or that shipwreck or that fire which the public paper tells of as having happened a month ago or happened yesterday, but which we ourselves did not see happen and can only know of by testimony—belongs, for that reason, to the realm of faith. The province of faith is coextensive with "things not seen." And those unseen things may be either future, or past, or present. It is idle to deny that there are such. If we spoke only of earthly existences, how many of these, of the most certain of these, are at this moment out of our sight! The friend from whom you heard yesterday—the person dearest to you in the world, not now by your side—it is faith, it is not sight, which represents that existence to you as real. But which of us, of the most sceptical of us, denies the fact of spiritual existences, spiritual agencies, which are of necessity, not by accident, but essentially, not now only, but always, things unseen? Faculties, habits, feelings, affections, motives, principles, processes and conditions of thought, laws of cause and consequence, souls and spirits of the dead and living, beings above us, a God of creation and providence, a Father and Saviour and Comforter—in whatever degree, to whatever extent, we have information or conviction of any of these, however confidently or however tentatively we have hold upon any of these, it is faith, faith alone, which grasps or deals with them—they too belong to that vast realm of the unseen, for the contemplation of which faith is the one faculty—that faith which is not only the assurance of things hoped for, but also—it is a far larger and wider term— "the evidence of things not seen." (*Ibid.*) *The visions of faith*:—Faith is a certain image of eternity; all things are present to it; things past and things to come are all so before the eyes of faith, that he in whose eyes that candle is enkindled beholds heaven as present, and sees how blessed a thing it is to die in God's favour, and to be chimed to our grave with the music of a good conscience. Faith converses with the angels, and antedates the hymns of glory. Every man that hath this grace is as certain that there are glories for him, if he persevere in his duty, as if he had heard and sung the thanksgiving-song for the blessed sentence of doomsday. (*Bp. Jeremy Taylor.*) *The prospect of faith*:—Faith, having seated itself upon the high tower and mountain—God's omnipotency and all-sufficiency—hath a great prospect. It can look over all the world, and look into another world too. (*W. Bridge.*) *The tense of faith*:—Faith altereth the tenses, and putteth the future into the present tense. (*J. Trapp.*) *Faith a telescope*:—Faith is to sight and reason what the telescope is to the naked eye. By the use of this wondrous instrument the most distant planets are now made known to us in detail. A map of Mars has been published showing canal-like seas, islands and large mountains or table-lands covered with snow. Faith brings the distant near, makes the spiritual the most real, and gives us to dwell in heavenly places. (*H. O. Mackey.*) *Faith a corrective*:—Men who see the invisible, estimate the more correctly the things temporal and the things eternal. (*T. B. Stephenson, LL.D.*) *Believing in the unseen*:—Dr. Parker, preaching when a dense fog prevailed, said "the fog had taught him to believe in the unseen world more than ever before. Close to him there were oak trees that were hidden the previous day by mist. But he knew them to be there. Men might say, 'If they were there we could see them.' But they are there and you cannot see them! A schoolboy would have laughed in his face if he had said the trees did not exist because the fog hid them. Yet there are men going on to old age who deny the unseen world because they cannot see it. But the trees are there and so are the angels!" (*Christian World.*) *An appeal to the great names of the past*:—We know the power of any appeal to the great names of our secular history. There is no scholar, however humble or obscure, whose exhausted energy is not renewed when he is reminded of the famous students of former times. The honours which cluster and thicken, as the ages roll by, sound the names of great poets, artists, philosophers, statesmen, stimulate the enthusiasm and sustain the energy of those who, in distant times and countries, strive for the same glory. When nations are struggling for freedom, it is not living patriotism alone which gives strength to their arms and daring to their hopes—the memory of the patriots of other lands and of other centuries kindles enthusiasm and inspires heroic endurance. Defeated, while living, in their

conflicts with tyranny, they triumph gloriously after death. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*) **By it the elders obtained a good report.**—*A good report obtained by faith*:—I. THE FATHERS UNDER THE LAW HAD THE SAME KIND OF FAITH THAT WE HAVE. The same promises; upon the same terms; through the same merit of the blood of Christ. II. THE APOSTLES ASCRIBE THEIR RENOWN IN THE CHURCH TO THEIR FAITH. Though the private soldiers do worthily in the high places of the field, yet the general bears away the honour, he gets the battle and wins the day; so here, all graces have their use in the holy life, all do worthily in their order and place; love worketh, hope waiteth, patience endureth, zeal sparkleth, and obedience urgeth to duty; but faith bears away the prize, this is the chiefest pin and wheel in the whole frame of salvation. Partly because it is the grace of reception on our part, by which we receive all the influences of heaven, and partly because it directs and quickens all other graces. It feeds hope, it teaches patience to wait, it makes zeal to sparkle, it gives relief to self-denial, and encourageth obedience. Faith is like a silken string, which runs through the chain of pearl; or like the spirits that run with the blood throughout all the veins. III. THE FAITH OF THE ELDERS WAS AN ACTIVE FAITH, that discovered itself by good fruits and gracious actions; otherwise it could not have brought them into credit with the Church. God only knows the heart. It is actions that discover their faith, and the strength of their assent. IV. ONE OF THE REWARDS OF AN ACTIVE FAITH IS A GOOD REPORT. 1. For the reasons of God's ordination and appointment. I shall touch upon those that are of a chief regard and consideration. (1) That every necessary blessing may be adopted and taken into the covenant, and provision made against all inconveniences that may befal us in the way of religion. As the Psalmist saith of Zion (Psa. xlviii. 12, 13). (2) Because of the great inconveniences of reproach and infamy, either to God and religion itself, or to good men. (3) That God may retaliate with faith. Believers honour Him, therefore He will honour them (1 Sam. ii. 30). (4) That this may be a bait to draw in others to a liking of His ways. 2. In what manner doth the Lord dispense this privilege? And it is grounded upon an objection, that may be framed thus; the servants of God are often clouded with black reproaches, "They took away the spouse's veil" (Cant. v. 7), that is, her honour and name. David complains (Psa. xxii. 6). Therefore how doth God give in this recompense to the active faith? I answer, in several propositions. (1) The blessing is not absolutely complete in this life. As long as there is sin we are liable to shame. A good name is an outward pledge of eternal glory. When sin is abolished then may we expect perfect glory. In a mixed estate we must look for mixed dispensations. (2) The wicked are not competent judges when they judge of the faithful (Luke vi. 26). General applause can seldom be had without compliance, and without some sin; therefore it is spoken as a cursed thing to gratify all, and seek to draw respect from all. There is one rare instance in the third Epistle of John, ver 12. (3) We have the approbation of their consciences, though not the commendation of their lips; and their hearts approve when their mouths slander; and we have their reverence, though not their praise. (4) There are some special seasons when God will vindicate His people from contempt. There is a resurrection of names as well as of persons. 3. Whether in the exercise of faith we may eye a good report? is not this vain-glory? I answer in four things. (1) Our chief care must be to do the duty, and trust God with the blessing; this is the temper of a Christian. (2) If we expect it as a blessing of the covenant, we must rather look for it from God than from men, expect it as the gift of His grace for our encouragement in the ways of religion. (3) All the respect that we have to men is by a greater care of duty, to prevent undue surmises and suspicion (2 Cor. viii. 21). (4) The glory of God and the credit of religion must be at the utmost end of all (Matt. v. 16). Uses: 1. Prize this blessing; it is a sweet encouragement to you in the work of God. I observe that usually men first make shipwreck of a good name, then of a good conscience. 2. Be careful how you prejudice the good name of a believer; you cross God's ordination. How ought you to tremble, when you go about to take off the crown which God hath put on their heads! 3. To press you to this active faith. There is great reason for it upon these grounds. (1) Because there are so many censures abroad. (2) Because there are so few good works abroad. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *The renown of faith*:—I. INSTANCES OR EXAMPLES ARE THE MOST POWERFUL CONFIRMATIONS OF PRACTICAL TRUTH. 1. Who these "elders" were is put beyond dispute by the ensuing discourse. All true believers from the foundation of the world, or the giving of the first promise, unto the end of the dispensation of the Old Testament, are intended. 2. This testimony was given

them in the Scriptures; that is, it is so in particular of many of them, and of the rest in the general rules of it. II. THEY WHO HAVE A GOOD TESTIMONY FROM GOD SHALL NEVER WANT REPROACHES FROM THE WORLD. III. IT IS FAITH ALONE WHICH FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD WAS THE MEANS AND WAY OF OBTAINING ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD. IV. The faith of true believers from the beginning of the world, WAS FIXED ON THINGS FUTURE, HOPED FOR, AND INVISIBLE; THAT IS, ETERNAL LIFE AND GLORY IN AN ESPECIAL MANNER. V. That faith whereby men please God ACTS ITSELF IN A FIXED CONTEMPLATION ON THINGS FUTURE AND INVISIBLE, from whence it derives encouragement and strength to endure and abide firm in profession, against all opposition and persecutions. VI. HOWEVER MEN MAY BE DESPISED, VILIFIED, AND REPROACHED IN THE WORLD, YET IF THEY HAVE FAITH, IF THEY ARE TRUE BELIEVERS, THEY ARE ACCEPTED WITH GOD, AND HE WILL GIVE THEM A GOOD REPORT. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *Faith and its exploits:*—I. FAITH GREATENS MEN. II. FAITH MIGHTILY AFFECTS OUR ORDINARY HUMAN LIFE. III. FAITH IS POSSIBLE TO ALL CLASSES. IV. FAITH IS CONSISTENT WITH VERY DIFFERENT DEGREES OF KNOWLEDGE. V. FAITH CAN MASTER INSUPERABLE DIFFICULTIES. Stormy seas forbid our passage; frowning fortifications bar our progress; mighty kingdoms defy our power; lions roar against us; fire lights its flaming barricade in our path; the sword, the armies of the alien, mockings, scourgings, bonds and imprisonment—all these menace our peace, darken our horizon, and try on us their power; but faith has conquered all these before, and it shall do as much again. Reckon on God's faithfulness. Look not at the winds and waves, but at His character and will. Get alone with Him, steeping your heart and mind in His precious and exceeding great promises. Be obedient to the utmost limit of your light. Walk in the Spirit, one of whose fruits is faith. So shall you be deemed worthy to join this band, whose names and exploits run over from this page into the chronicles of eternity, and to share their glorious heritage. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *The best acquirement:*—1. All obtain some kind of report. 2. Some obtain a great report. 3. All may obtain a good report. 4. All ought to endeavour to obtain a good report. 5. A good report is not easily and at once obtained. 6. A good report is the best of all things that can be obtained. It is the only passport to heaven, and the only imperishable possession. (*D. Thomas.*) *The faith of the ancient worthies:*—Christ crucified for us forms the great object of faith under the Christian dispensation. But the apostle's words, no less than the facts of the case, forbid the supposition that all God's testimony concerning His Son was embraced in the faith of these ancient worthies. In the case of Enoch, for example, the faith which the apostle's argument attributes by implication to him is the general belief "that God is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." In Noah's case no mention is made of any testimony or object of faith, except the Divine warning concerning the coming flood. In the case of Rahab, again, there is nothing in the book of Joshua, or in what the apostle says of her here, which can be construed as pointing to the Messiah. But supposing that in these cases, at least, their faith did not consciously embrace the Messiah, because the Messiah had not been revealed to it, it does not therefore follow either that they were saved in virtue of their faith as a meritorious act, or that they were saved independently of Christ. It is to be noticed, moreover, that the reason why their faith did not embrace so much as we are required to believe, was not because of anything defective in that faith, viewed as a mental act—the effects it produced forbid that supposition—but simply because of the want of a fuller revelation. They had not received the promise in its full and perfect form. Compared with that which we enjoy, their light was but as the dim dawn. And it is a striking testimony to the excellence of the principle, that a faith to which so little was revealed should sometimes so far surpass ours in the wonders which it wrought. Their faith is in fact a model for our own. It was proportioned to the degree of light which they possessed. They believed God's Word in so far as God had spoken to them. It was not that they received only one part of the Divine testimony, and wilfully rejected another—true faith never does that, but receives with equal readiness and confidence whatsoever God says. To believe only so much of what God says as suits our wishes, or accords with our prejudices, or commends itself to our reason, is not to believe the Divine testimony. The result of our own judgment, or our own fancy, it is in no sense faith. He is in no sense a believer who receives only so much of God's Word as pleases him, and gives the lie to all the rest. We insist the more on this because of the practical issues which it involves. Not only is our faith worthless, if it be not ready to give credence to all that God has said, but it will prove ineffectual for salvation, however much it

may embrace, if it receive not the one truth which assures us of the freeness of the Divine love to us through Christ Jesus—that truth which constitutes the burden and substance of the gospel message. Even the faith of those earlier saints, limited as was the testimony presented to it, tended to this result. The revelations of God which they had received, declared or implied His righteousness and His friendship for man—a righteousness which would not allow sin to pass with impunity, and a friendship which promised mercy to those who would repent of sin and seek after God. Faith in these would naturally suggest to the believing soul the difficulty of their being exercised consistently with each other. But it would also convince them that, notwithstanding that difficulty, the Divine promise would be fulfilled. If the revelation given said *how* it was to be done, the same faith would receive its testimony. But if not—if the dim foreshadowing of the coming Saviour left them in ignorance of how God's promise could be fulfilled consistently with His righteousness—faith would nevertheless assure them of its fulfilment, and calmly receive it and rely on it, leaving Him to determine how it was to be accomplished; for the province of faith is to receive what God says, simply because He says it, not to show how God's Word can be true. In this way, we imagine, the faith of some of these earlier saints operated. Believing in God's righteousness, and yet believing His promise to forgive and receive those who came to Him, they verbally and by sacrifice made confession of their sins and evil deserts, and yet trusted to Him to find a way of rendering the fulfilment of His promise consistent with His own righteousness. Thus their faith wrought in them reconciliation to, and trust in God, and thereby proved the means of their salvation. It will now appear how it is that, although they might be saved, without conscious and intelligent faith in Christ we cannot—how it is that the revelation we are favoured with places us in a position entirely different from theirs. It is because that revelation is a test of the true state of our minds in relation to God. Possessed of it, if we do not believe in Christ we reject the Divine testimony, and prove that we have no faith in anything which God says, but are still in a state of unbelief and rebellion and enmity. In fine, in the absence of a revelation, confidence in God and submission to His will were possible, though under the circumstances faith in Christ was impossible. Whereas, in possession of a revelation, the want of faith in Christ shuts us out from a state of confidence in God, and submission to His will, and must therefore debar us from the enjoyment of salvation. (*W. Landels, D.D.*) *Antiquity of faith:*—The "for," like so many "fors" in Scripture, rests upon a word or two unwritten. As if it were said, "A mighty grace"—"An ancient grace"—"A world-wide and an age-long grace"—"for by it"—or rather, "in it," on the subject of it, on the strength of it—"the elders," they of the old time, the saints and servants of God from the very beginning, "obtained a good report"; "were attested," were borne witness of, received an approving testimony, from Him who alone is the faithful and true witness, God Himself in His holy Word. In many things they and we are widely separated. But this verse teaches us the unity of all ages and all countries in one single comprehensive principle. In this "faith," the apostle says, to which I exhort you—this "faith" of which you will have so special a need in these coming days of trial and temptation—in this "faith" they lived and died to whom God in Scripture bore His emphatic testimony: in this, and no other—this same assurance of things not possessed but hoped for—this same discrimination of things not seen nor touched nor handled, yet existing in all the changeless reality of a world indestructible because immaterial, eternal because Divine. If we would ever know unity, we must seek it in the life of faith. Unbelief, like sin—unbelief, which is sin—is division, is disunion, at once. No two unbelievers, no two sinners, can be at one. Unity is to be found only in faith. Two men who are distinctly conscious of one God, one Lord, one Spirit—two men who are resolutely bent upon giving up everything contrary to the Divine Will as they read it—two men who are living holy lives in the pursuit of a life beyond death, everlasting and eternal—are at one with each other, whether they know it or not—for they are both living that life of faith in which the elders, like the men that are now, obtained a good report. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Faith the foundation and strength of character:*—Character is man's noblest possession, the accomplished design of renewing grace, the crown and glory of human life. By virtue of it a man takes rank with the peerage of heaven, and holds an estate in the general goodwill. It is much more true that character is power than that knowledge is power. History teaches us that *moral* forces are the real rulers of the world. The influence of wealth is feeble in comparison with the influence of tried worth. No one is shut out from obtaining

this best of all distinctions, this most priceless of all possessions. Every one should aim to deserve a good report. The text admonishes us how it is to be obtained. "By faith" the elders attained that excellence of character which gave them favour in the sight of God and man. Faith is declared to be the foundation and strength of character. I. FAITH MAKES MEN MASTERS OF THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES. There are some persons who seem to have no character of their own. When hemmed in by moral restraints and moving in an atmosphere of religion, they exhibit a negative colourless goodness; but let them be thrown into a tide of dissipation and they yield without a struggle, and go with the multitude to do evil. The first truth, then, for faith to grasp is this: "I am a spiritual and immortal being, with power to choose my own lot, determine my own course, and form my own character. If I allow myself to be the sport of circumstances, I shall be unstable as water and never excel; but if I have faith in the invisible might of energy, and in the ultimate success of perseverance, I shall obtain the prize of my high calling." II. NEXT COMES THE CONVICTION OF OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD FOR THE USE OF THIS POWER. A great many wise decisions and virtuous struggles with temptation go to the building up of a good character. Human nature is a marshy soil for such a structure, and needs a great deal done under ground and out of sight before its stability can be secured. There must be a strong foundation of moral concrete, of conscientiousness. But this cannot be laid without frequent appeals to conscience, and its judgments will be wavering and obscure unless faith unstops the ear to hear the sanction of God's voice. It is a sheet-anchor to a man in temptation, if he have sufficient faith in God's presence and authority to make him say, "How shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Again, faith in God as our omnipotent Father and the Judge of all, creates a habit of referring everything to conscience. Believe that for every opinion you adopt you will be called to answer before God, and you will be careful not to take up hastily with any, and not to hold them in the clenched fists of prejudice. III. MOST MEN WHO HAVE ATTAINED A GOOD REPORT HAVE HAD A DEFINITE PURPOSE IN LIFE, AND A CLEARLY DEFINED NOTION OF THE PLACE GOD INTENDED THEM TO FILL. Our forefathers had a deep impression of the Divine hand shaping the course of an ordinary man's life; hence they spoke of his business or occupation as his "calling." So long as a man's trade is useful to the community, fitted to serve the comfort or refinement of society, he has as much reason to believe that God has called him to it as he has to believe that God designed the earth to bring forth food for man's support. And, depend upon it, a man will turn out all the better work, and do his duty with all the greater care, for believing that God accepts it as a service to Himself. In every walk of life we shall find scope for a career of usefulness and happiness, provided we buy up its opportunities. To begin with the duty lying nearest to us is the way to fulfil our mission. IV. FAITH IN THE IMPERISHABLE WORTH OF TRUTH is another most necessary element in the formation of an honourable character. Integrity in word and deed is the backbone of character, and loyal adherence to veracity its most prominent characteristic. Seldom has a finer eulogium been pronounced upon any man than was spoken by the late Duke of Wellington on the occasion of the death of Sir Robert Peel. He said: "I was long connected with him in public life. We were both in the councils of our sovereign together, and I had long the honour to enjoy his private friendship. In all the course of my acquaintance with him, I never knew a man in whose truth and justice I had greater confidence or in whom I saw a more invariable desire to promote the public service. In the whole course of my communication with him I never knew an instance in which he did not show the strongest attachment to truth; and I never saw, in the whole course of my life, the smallest reason for suspecting that he stated anything which he did not firmly believe to be the fact." V. BY FAITH, FEELING THEIR OWN WEAKNESS, THE EXCELLENT OF THE EARTH LAID HOLD ON THE STRENGTH OF GOD. In reference to all the distinctive traits of Christian character, we may say without the slightest qualification, "Severed from Christ, and without faith in His helpful Spirit, you can do nothing." These heavenly fruits of character do not grow on the wild olive-tree of humanity, but only after it has been grafted into the good olive-tree, the Lord Jesus Christ. They imply the possession of so much which a man who has only the prudential virtues, after the fashion of the world, is wholly destitute of. They imply faith in God's omniscience and care and a hope of eternal glory; they imply convictions which have broken the heart, made it jealous for God's honour, humbled it at the feet of Divine mercy, and inspired it with a love of peace and gentleness. Without these convictions and sentiments such traits of character are impossible. There is

neither motive for them nor meaning in them. They are the fruits of the Spirit, and only possible, therefore, in those who have the Spirit. But in every age God has given His Holy Spirit to such as sought His aid. (*E. W. Shalders, B.A.*) *The roll-call of the illustrious dead*:—Auvergne, a Breton warrior, called Grenadier of France, died fighting for his country. As a memorial, his comrades decided that his name should still stand on the rolls. It was regularly called, and a comrade answered for him, "Dead on the field." So is Hebrews xi., a roll-call of the victorious dead, a regimental register of God's heroes. *The victories of faith*:—In almost every capital of Europe there are varieties of triumphal arches or columns upon which are recorded the valiant deeds of the country's generals, its emperors, or its monarchs. You will find, in one case, the thousand battles of a Napoleon recorded, and in another you find the victories of a Nelson pictured. It seems, therefore, but right that faith, which is the mightiest of the mighty, should have a pillar raised to its honour, upon which its valiant deeds should be recorded. The apostle undertook to raise the structure, and he erected a most magnificent pillar in the chapter before us. It recites the victories of faith. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 3. **The worlds were framed by the word of God.**—*Spirit in matter*:—The whole order of the natural world and man's physical being may be said to be the expression of chemical combination, and of the various forces resulting therefrom. The whole is presented to us, after scientific examination, as a most elaborate and exquisite piece of mechanism. Some would also explain man's mental and moral life as only a higher development of this same mechanism. To prevent misunderstanding, I may state that, while I am willing to admit that these higher parts of man's life are affected by, and partly dependent upon, this mechanism of things, it seems to me certain that the phenomena of human life require us to believe that there is, over and above that which is mechanical, a "free spirit." What I seek at present is a common ground with scientists, from which to start in an inquiry; and that I find in admitting the mechanism of all physical being. This mechanical and orderly system of being is generally known as the material world. All parts of the universe are in an intimate relation with each other. This relation is commonly conceived of as government by laws. There are, for example, what are termed the laws of gravitation and magnetic attraction, and the laws of combining proportion. Now, it is necessary to keep before us the strictly scientific idea of the laws of nature; that they are in fact nothing more than the observed mode of action of the forces in nature. They have no real existence of themselves, apart, that is, from the things in which they are observed. For example, there is, so far as science teaches, no material bond between the stone and the earth which are attracted to each other; no link like a string reaching from the one to the other. The stone is not drawn by an elastic-like band which connects it with the earth; but something in the inner nature of the matter causes them to approach. The same is true of magnetic attraction, and also of chemical affinity. So far we have kept strictly to the results of science. It is now that we proceed a step further by inference from what science has taught explicitly to something which its teaching implies. We find that the stone and the earth, the magnet and the iron, and also chemical atoms, enter into those relations which result from attraction or affinity *only by reason of what is in them.* What, then, is in them by which they can do these things? The earth attracts the stone which has been thrown a distance from it, and the stone, instead of continuing to ascend, comes back of itself towards the earth. This attraction is because the stone is affected by the earth, by a body of matter which is in a certain direction. The effect of the earth's presence is sufficient to direct the stone to itself; *i.e.*, the earth so affects the inner state of the stone that it is sensible of an attraction of a certain degree and in a particular direction. It knows it is attracted, and its movement is the result of that consciousness. And it knows in what direction it is attracted, and so takes the right path. The phenomena of gravitation and magnetism evidence therefore a degree of conscious life in matter. But the most comprehensive and fundamental kind of attraction is chemical affinity, since all material organisation is built up from it. And it is also the most wonderful, and even skilful, in operation. The atoms which combine by affinity to form water must have a sense of affinity sufficient to cause them to unite; they must be aware of the effect upon them of the other's presence, or they would remain unmoved. And so with all chemical combinations, both of atoms and molecules; they must have a degree of consciousness to enter into union, to remain in union, and also to allow them to be disunited

chemically. The action and reaction of all parts of the physical universe, because it is from the inner states of matter, necessitates the existence of a certain measure and kind of consciousness and intelligence in all matter. We have thus crossed the boundary into a spiritual sphere; but we must advance yet further. That these inner states of atoms, which we find to be conscious states, are not separate and independent of each other, science shows most clearly. All atoms of any given element act exactly alike and are affected exactly alike. There is then one conscious mind in each kind of element. But to go another step: we observe in the chemical combinations of various elements that they have all an inner relation to each other, according to which each element is affected, and affected in one particular way, by its combinations with others. There is, in other words, a necessity in the relations of all chemical elements to each other—a necessity which is the ruling of their inner states. All these inner states and their movements and combinations are in some sort of unity. And as it is the unity of conscious being in manifoldness, there is a large consciousness which is inclusive of all. But we must examine these atoms a little closer. What they are we have seen to some extent. Can we find out more about them? Can we discover their origin? We are informed that atoms—all atoms—are vortices of ether. Ether is something which pervades all space and permeates all things. It *is*, and yet is itself non-phenomenal—it has none of the properties of matter. It is therefore the invisible *substans*, or that which *stands under* all atomic being as its cause and foundation. It is a living entity, with consciousness and will, and the power to create out of itself an order of life different from itself. Here we come to the fact of spiritual Being as the basis and origin of the vast mechanism of nature; for mechanism never makes mind, but always proceeds from mind. And yet we do not say that ether is God, or that God is ether; but we say that it is essential to those functions which ether is credited with, that it shall be pervaded by that living and moving consciousness which demands the idea of God. We see, then, how science permits us, and indeed requires us, to believe that "things which are seen were not made of things which do appear"; and that the position to which faith leads us is borne out by the facts of science—that "the worlds were framed by the word of God." "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," is still, and ever will be, true for us; as also that "He upholdeth all things by the word of His power." His works rivet our gaze and excite our wonder; yet not they, but *He* is the object of our worship and our chief good. Before Him, higher than all creation, yet present in all, so that He is not far from any one of us—before Him we bow in deep adoration. (*R. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The mystery of creation revealed to faith*:—The word rendered "worlds" means "life," then that through which life extends—"an age," a cycle of ages, and next the stage on which life appears—"the world." Of course the author of this Epistle was not thinking of the worlds which modern astronomy has discovered in the heavenly bodies, but of this world in its successive ages, and possibly of unseen worlds inhabited by spiritual intelligences. To "frame" means to found or create, as a city may be said to be created by its founder. "Things which do appear," is the translation of a word which is naturalised in our own language as "phenomena." We might, then, read the text thus: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were created by the word of God, so that that which is seen—the visible universe—did not originate from existing phenomena." The present order of things—the configuration of rocks and hills, of rivers, seas, and plains—has been brought about by the altered disposition of previous land and water; the vegetation which clothes the earth, and the living creatures which roam upon it or swarm in its waters, are all descended from former generations of vegetable and animal life—the whole of that which is now seen has sprung immediately from similar phenomena; but it has not always been so. The living world we see around us was originally founded by the Word of God. This is one way of reading the text. Another is, to understand it as denying the eternity of matter, and affirming the creation of the world out of nothing. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," when there was nothing to make them with. "He spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast." But whether we understand the phrase, "things which do appear," to stand for natural phenomena or for the material elements, the conclusion is the same, that the visible order of creation came into existence by the simple fiat of the Almighty. Our knowledge of such a fact may be a spiritual intuition or it may rest solely on the testimony of revelation. Either way, it is knowledge of a thing not seen and only perceived by faith. The origin of all we behold around and above us must ever be an

undiscoverable secret to the researches of the astronomer, the geologist, and the chemist. For though science may some day learn to read the changeful history of our globe with tolerable accuracy, it can never extract from it the story of its birth. All it can do is to take things to pieces. But simply taking a watch to pieces will tell us nothing of the nature and origin of the metals and gems of which it is made; neither will anatomy discover the nature of life, nor chemical analysis explain the origin of the ultimate forms of matter. They are as inscrutable by such analysis as metals and gems are by the tools of the mechanic. Creation out of nothing is at once inexplicable and incomprehensible. No strictly creative act comes under our observation in any of the phenomena of nature. Philosophy, unaided by the higher teaching of faith, has always taken for granted the eternity of matter. It has uniformly declared that things which are seen were made of things which do appear. The first philosopher with whose speculations we are acquainted maintained that water was the origin of all things. The substitution of gases for water is the necessary result of modern chemistry; it does not make the speculation one whit the wiser, nor, again, the resolution of these gases into primordial atoms. The later speculation which ascribed the origin of all things to fire or heat is just as plausible and just as false. The authors of these theories, ancient or modern, were all on the wrong track. They were seeking in the paths of observation and inductive reasoning the answer to a question which is beyond their range. The only certain answer is that which faith may have guessed, and which revelation endorses. The most illiterate peasant who hears and ponders the declaration of God's Word, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," is as wise in this matter as the most learned scientist the world contains. Observe, how strictly practical revelation is. That which no science could discover, which only minds finely organised and deeply imbued with spiritual feeling could guess, but which still was necessary for men to know, that they might give to God the glory due to His name, it reveals; but what human intelligence and perseverance would be sure in time to discover, it leaves untouched. The Scripture account of creation is a retrospective prophecy, turning its gaze towards an unknown past instead of towards an unknown future. I regard the Mosaic narrative as a sublime poem on God's creative work, as accurate in the letter of it as was consistent with its being intelligible to minds unacquainted with scientific discovery, and truer to the real moral significance of creation than any account which science has yet been able to render. But I am concerned to give this subject a more practical bearing. To doubt the opening words of Scripture, "In the beginning," &c., is not your temptation; but it is your temptation, for it is every man's, to feel and act as though the things that are seen were made of things which do appear. In one sense, indeed, they are, but in another and more important sense, they are not. In one sense, all you see has come from things like them whence you can trace their origin; and, whatever the forms of animate or inanimate objects around you, they all consist of materials which were in existence before them. Properly speaking, no new materials have been called into existence since God first weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance. The original atoms of our globe still exist. They are neither more nor fewer than in the first moment of creation. Ever entering into fresh combinations, they are either held in solution in the air and form the rainbow arch, or having fallen and mingled with the soil they appear in the lowly herb and spreading tree; thence they are assimilated to nourish or protect animal life, and are cast off again to pursue the same round of endless change. But the power which gives them substance and form, the force which imparts to light, heat, and electricity their characteristic energies, the plastic power which possesses plants and animals, so that they appropriate surrounding materials and mould them after their own form and structure—in short, the vital energy which fills all nature, is a thing unseen, by which all we behold is made and sustained in existence. By the Word of God the worlds were made, and by that Word they stand fast. Things seen are not made of things that appear, in anything more than the order of their appearance. They spring from the unseen creative energy of God, operating through those familiar methods which His wisdom has adopted. (*E. W. Shalders, B.A.*) *The work of creation:*—I. WHAT SCRIPTURE IS TO BE ACTUALLY CONSIDERED AS TEACHING US RESPECTING THIS SUBJECT. 1. Let us set out by remarking that the object of this inspired account of the world's framing or formation is not scientific, but religious. The Bible is meant for the instruction of those of every age, country, and class; it is not meant to teach only a few superior minds, but to afford spiritual food for the whole human race. It is meant to be a book of duty, not a system of natural philosophy. 2. It is also

to be borne in mind that the sacred narrative of the creation is chiefly and prominently to be regarded as of a moral, spiritual, and prophetical kind. Man's original relation to his Maker, as a responsible being, is directly taught; his restoration from moral chaos to spiritual beauty is figuratively represented; while, as a prophecy, it has an extent of meaning which will only be fully unfolded at a period yet future; perhaps that spoken of as "the times of the restitution of all things." II. THE MANNER IN WHICH GOD'S WORK IN CREATION DISPLAYS AND CALLS UPON US TO CONSIDER HIS PERFECTIONS. 1. Creation exhibits to us God as supreme in power. When we reflect how much labour and difficulty generally accompany the forth-putting of human power, the idea of creative power becomes peculiarly impressive. Surely reverence and adoration should be prompted, together with humility and trust. 2. The work of creation also exhibits to us God as supreme in wisdom. Everywhere we trace the working of One who is "perfect in knowledge." In even the smaller parts of the Creator's workmanship we trace the operation of a wisdom, alike in larger and in smaller objects; in the star, and in the insect; in the elephant, and in the fly; in the mightiest of forest trees, and in the smallest tuft, or even blade of grass. There is nothing lost sight of; nothing has been imperfectly done; each thing answers a defined end. This wisdom of God shown in creation is assuredly not meant to be devoid of influence upon His rational, responsible creatures; it should teach submission on the part of man, and beget pious trust in his heart. 3. The work of creation likewise exhibits to us God as supreme in goodness. Most justly is the earth said to be "full of the goodness of the Lord"; inasmuch as throughout the system of things we behold what must, at the least, be pronounced, on the whole, to be fitted to promote the good of both rational and animated beings. There are what may seem to be defects; but the latter arise out of the infirmity, sinfulness, and dereliction of the creature. (*A. R. Bonar.*) *Faith revealing God as Creator:*—I. CONSIDER THE STATEMENT THAT IT IS ONLY THROUGH FAITH WE KNOW THAT THE WORLD WAS CREATED BY GOD. 1. Reason could not discover the Creator. 2. Scripture reveals the Creator. 3. Faith knows God as Creator by her simple dependence on Scripture declaration. II. CONSIDER THE PRACTICAL USES OF THIS TRUTH. 1. It teaches the nature of faith. 2. It teaches the character of God. 3. It teaches the consolation of the saints. 4. It teaches the condemnation of the impenitent. (*C. New.*) *Faith apprehending the mystery of creation:*—The province of faith is the unseen. The past and the future lie all out of sight, and are therefore its undisputed domain. The present is a mixed and compound thing—shared between faith and sight. The apostle takes his first example of faith from the past. Everything that we ourselves have not seen, though it be the most strongly attested of all facts is apprehended by us through faith alone. That which the senses cannot tell us can only be accepted on testimony. The facts of history come to us in books. In many cases there is a conflict of testimony, occasioning either a perpetual difference of opinion or an occasional reversal of opinion with regard to the events or the characters of a past nearer or more remote. Christian faith also rests upon testimony. In this it is like all belief in things not seen. The difference lies in the source of the testimony. History is written and received on what professes to be human testimony. Christian faith believes itself to have the word of God Himself for its evidence and its authority. To ascertain this Divine testimony is an anxious and responsible task. First of all these disclosures for which faith is demanded, is that one of which the text speaks—the creation of the universe by the fiat of Almighty God. We have here—none can dispute it—a subject lying altogether in the province of faith. Either faith, or nothing, can apprehend this fact. Not only is it a thing out of sight, as all the past is; not only is it a thing belonging to the most remote past, inasmuch as it involves that fact which is the condition of all facts: more than this—it is that one fact of which by the nature of the case there can be no human testimony; the origination of the creature itself is the very subject of the revelation, and if it be true—in other words, if it have any witness—that truth must be one of God's "mysteries," that witness must be God alone. We will look for a moment into the particulars of the statement. "By faith." It is by an exercise of that principle which has been called above the assurance of things unseen. "By faith we understand," we apprehend, or grasp with the mind, that fact which follows. Here mind is set in motion by faith. And that as to a fact—a fact of the pre-Adamite past—a fact which may lie long millenniums before human existence—but a fact, of which the results and consequences still are and are mighty. What is this fact? "That the worlds have been framed," settled, or fitted in order and coherence, "by a word of God." The word here used for

"the worlds" is very peculiar. It is that word which, properly meaning "ages" or "periods," is applied to the material universe as an existence not in space only but in time—having a vast succession of ages and periods inside eternity, as well as a vast expansion of parts and substances inside immensity. The same word occurs in the first chapter—"By whom also He made the worlds." Now the point of the statement lies in this—not that faith apprehends the existence of matter, or the order, the beauty, the variety, the adaptation of matter, or even the fact, taken by itself, of the non-eternity of matter: these things are not in the special province of faith; some of them are matters of sight, others are matters of theory; the action of faith is this—she grasps the revealed fact, that the material universe, seen to exist, surveyed by the senses in its manifoldness and its harmony, was originally framed "by a word of God." Once more, the end and result of this "framing by a word." "So that things which are seen"—or, according to the true reading, "the thing which is seen"—speaking of the whole sum of created being, the vast mass and aggregate of the material universe—"the thing which is seen hath not come into being out of things which appear." The original of the universe was itself created. God Himself is the alone eternal, as He is the alone self-existent. The subject before us is deeply important, specially seasonable, and directly practical. 1. First of all, it is essential to the right posture of the creature towards the Creator. 2. Not only the posture of the soul, but the whole management of the life, depends upon this primary principle. A thousand motives of self-interest and of gratitude conspire to teach the duty of obedience. We disparage none of these—we want them all. But there is one groundwork of duty which lies at the root of all—and that is, the living vital apprehension of the relationship which cannot be modified of the creature to the Creator. 3. Finally, it is this faith in creation which furnishes the strongest presumption of the truth of redemption itself. He who thought it worth while, having a clear foresight of everything, to call into existence, out of nothing, a world that should be the theatre, and a creature that should be the agent, of sin, may be believed when He says (though we durst not have said it for Him) that He counts us worth redeeming—that He intends to restore to holiness and happiness lives and souls made originally in His image—nay, by a process most wonderful to beings nearest His throne, to introduce "a dispensation of the fulness of times," in which to gather together all the scattered elements in Jesus Christ, and "in the ages to come to show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us" in the Son of His love. It is thus that faith in an unseen past allies itself with faith in an invisible future, and breathes forth in one petition the whole of its confidence and the whole of its hope—"I am Thine: oh save me!" *(Dean Vaughan.)* *Understanding God's works:*—This chapter teaches much by what it omits as well as by what it includes. There is no mention of Adam, or of Lot, or of faith during the forty years in the wilderness (see the gap between verses 29 and 30). There are several most suggestive associations. Faith is associated with hope (ver. 1), with righteousness (ver. 4), with holiness (ver. 5), with diligence (ver. 7), with trial (ver. 17), and with conflict (vers. 32–37). The element of assured confidence runs right through the chapter. Abel "obtained witness"; Enoch received a "testimony"; Abraham "looked for a city," and many of the patriarchs were "persuaded" (Gr., *πειθω*—the same word in Rom. viii. 38) that there was reality in God's promises, and that they would be fulfilled. "The evidence" (R. V., "the proving") "of things not seen." Those who believe in God's Word are not in doubt as to the existence of the things He has promised. His Word is proof positive of their reality, and if we believe that Word they become realities to us. We are just as sure of their existence as we should be if we could see them. I. FAITH WELL GROUNDED. The Hebrews knew of but one ground of faith. It was their habit to ask, "What saith the Scriptures?" (John vii. 42). The writer of this Epistle would know this, and when he spoke of faith he meant faith in the declarations of the Old Testament. This chapter from beginning to end takes us back to this Divine standard, and, without discussing the question, assumes, what every Jew would readily grant, that its statements are absolutely true. The faith of this chapter is therefore belief in the testimony of God. II. FAITH ENLIGHTENING THE MIND. "Through faith we understand" (Gr., *νόεω*). Atheism is folly (Psa. xiv. 1). To be without faith in God's Word is to be "void of understanding" respecting His works. The history of human philosophy consists largely of a series of records of the vain efforts of men to account for the universe apart from the true cause of its origin. The variety of opinions expressed by sceptics upon the subject of the origin of the world casts discredit upon the whole of these opinions, just as half a dozen discordant testimonies in

defence of a prisoner would cast discredit upon the whole case for the defence. By the light of philosophy we guess, we speculate; but "by faith we understand." Well might the Psalmist say, "The entrance" (or opening) "of Thy Word giveth light" (Psa. cxix. 130). Faith sees a beginning of the universe (John i. 1). It sees "in the beginning God" (Gen. i. 1). It sees God as a Creator ("God created"—Gen. i. 1). It sees Him as the author of order ("the worlds were framed"; Gr., *καταρτίζω*, to make thoroughly right or fit). It sees His continuous working ("the world"; Gr. *αἰὼν*—age. The birth of worlds was the birth of time, and therefore the history of worlds is fitly called that of the ages). III. FAITH CONSONANT WITH REASON. The understanding approves what faith makes clear, just as the eye takes in the minute objects revealed by the microscope. It could not have seen those objects without the aid of the microscope, but, having seen them, it can admire them, and the mind, instructed by the eye, can realise and rejoice in the beauty and fitness of what is so revealed. There is much in what faith reveals that reason demands and requires. Reason tells us, for instance, that there can be no effect without a cause, and that no cause can give to an effect what it has not in itself. If we see personality in an effect, reason says there must have been personality in the cause. We see personality in man, and therefore we infer that the author of his being must have been a person. Faith satisfies this demand of reason by the revelation of a personal God. Reason connects order with the operations of mind. Type set up for the printing of a book must, it cannot but infer, have been set up by a person possessed of an amount of intelligence equal to the task. A thousand infidels could not convince a rational being that the setting up of the type was the result of chance, or that it could have been brought about in any way without the direction of a mind. Reason sees in nature the most absolute order, and it infers that if a mind is required to produce order in the setting up of the type, it is much more required in this vaster display of order which is apparent everywhere in the material universe. Faith endorses the wisdom of this inference as it gazes at nature in the light of revelation, and says with Milton:—

> "These are Thy glorious works, Parent of good,
> Almighty! Thine this universal frame."

Faith speaks of God ordering things "according to the good pleasure of His will" (Eph. i. 5), and reason hears and is satisfied. IV. FAITH ABOVE REASON. Reason has no opportunity of observing the process by which something is made out of nothing, and so it has made the rule, "*Ex nihilo, nihil fit*"—out of nothing nothing comes. Now in opposition to this axiom faith recognises God as a Creator. Faith sees more than reason does, as a man looking at the stars through a good telescope sees more than another who looks with his unaided sight. One sees farther than the other, but the view spread out before the one is not necessarily in conflict with that seen by the other. V. FAITH REGARDING THE UNSEEN. He who believes in God as the framer of the universe believes in what he has not seen. He was not present at the time of the creation. (Note the question in Job xxxviii. 4.) He has not seen, and yet he believes. This is, however, what men are doing every day. A man takes a ticket on a steamer bound for New Zealand. He has never seen New Zealand, but he so thoroughly believes in its existence that he spends his money and enters upon a long voyage that he may get there. Sight doesn't always secure certainty, and there may be the most absolute certainty without it. (*H. Thorne.*) *Faith's attitude towards the creation*:—I. IT IS A NECESSARY EXERCISE FOR THE CHILDREN OF GOD TO TURN THEIR MINDS TO THE CREATION. 1. It discovereth much of God. (1) His essence. (2) His attributes, goodness, power, wisdom. 2. It is a wonderful advantage to faith to give us hope and consolation in the greatest distresses. 3. It puts us in mind of our duty. (1) Reverence. (2) Humility. (3) Kindness. II. WE UNDERSTAND THE TRUTH AND WONDERS OF THE CREATION BY FAITH, AND NOT BY REASON. 1. There are three sorts of lights which God hath bestowed upon men: the light of nature, the light of grace, and the light of glory. There is the daylight of glory, which is the sun when it arises in its strength and brightness; and there is the light of faith, which is like the moon, a light which shines in a dark place; then there is the weak and feeble ray of reason, which is like the light of the lesser stars. By the first light, we see God as He is in Himself; by the second, God as He hath discovered Himself in the Word: by the third, God as He is seen in the creature. 2. In this world reason had been enough, if man had continued in his innocency. His mind then was his only bible, and his heart his only law; but

he tasted of the tree of knowledge and hereby he and we got nothing but ignorance. It is true, there are some relics of reason left for human uses, and to leave us without excuse (John i. 9). But now in matters of religion, we had need of external and foreign helps. Man left to himself would only grope after God. 3. The only remedy and cure for this is faith, and external revelation from God. The blindness of reason is cured by the Word; the pride of reason is cured by the grace of faith. Revelation supplies the defect of it; and faith takes down the pride of it, and captivates the thoughts into the obedience of the truths represented in the Word; so that reason now cannot be a judge; at best it is but a handmaid to faith. 4. The doctrine of the creation is a mixed principle; much of it is liable to reason, but most of it can only be discovered by faith. If by faith only we can understand the truth and wonders of the creation, then—(1) It informs us, that reason is not the judge of controversies in religion, and the doubts that do arise about the matters of God are not to be determined by the dictates of nature. If then we leave the written Word and follow the guidance of our own reason, we shall but puzzle ourselves with impertinent scruples, and leave ourselves under a dissatisfaction. (2) It informs us that the heathens had never light enough for salvation. Certainly they are blind in the work of redemption, since they are so blind in the work of creation. (3) It shows us the great advantage that we have by faith, and by the written Word. (4) It informs us that religion is not illiterate. Grace doth not make men simple, but rather perfects human learning. None discern truths with more comfort and satisfaction than a believer; it solves all doubts and riddles of reason. (5) We learn hence the properties of faith to have knowledge, assent, and obedience in it; therefore it is not a blind reliance, but a clear, distinct persuasion of such truths, concerning which human discourse can give us no satisfaction. (6) It is the nature of faith to subscribe to a revelation in the Word, though reason give little assistance and aid. It serves to stir you up to act faith. What is the use of faith upon the creation? To answer all the objections of reason, and settle the truth in the soul, and to improve it for spiritual uses and advantages, and to facilitate the belief of other truths upon this ground; did He make the world out of nothing? Many truths are less wonderful than this. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Of the work of creation*:—I. WHAT WE ARE TO UNDERSTAND BY CREATION, or what it is to create. 1. It is not to be taken here in a large sense, as sometimes it is used in Scripture, for any production of things wherein second causes have their instrumentality, as Psa. civ. 30. 2. We are to take it strictly for the production of things out of nothing, or the giving a being to things which had none before. (1) There is an immediate creation, as when things are brought forth out of pure nothing, where there was no pre-existent matter to work upon. (2) There is a secondary and mediate creation, which is the making things of pre-existing matter, but of such as is naturally unfit and altogether indisposed for such productions, and which could never by any power of second causes be brought into such a form. Thus all beasts, cattle, and creeping things, and the body of man, were at first made of the earth and the dust of the ground; and the body of the first woman was made of a rib taken out of the man. II. THAT THE WORLD WAS MADE, THAT IT HAD A BEGINNING AND WAS NOT ETERNAL. This the Scripture plainly testifies (Gen. i. 1). And this reason itself teacheth: for whatsoever is eternal, the being of it is necessary, and it is subject to no alterations. But we see this is not the case with the world; for it is daily undergoing alterations. III. WHO MADE THE WORLD AND GAVE IT A BEGINNING? That was God, and He only. 1. The world could not make itself; for this would imply a contradiction, namely, that the world was before it was: for the cause must always be before its effect. 2. The production of the world could not be by chance. 3. God created all things, the world, and all the creatures that belong to it. He attributes this work to Himself, as one of the peculiar glories of His Deity, exclusive of all the creatures (Isa. xliv. 24, xlv. 12, xl. 12, 13). None could make the world but God, because creation is a work of infinite power, and could not be produced by any finite cause: for the distance between being and not being is truly infinite, which could not be removed by any finite agent, or the activity of all finite agents united. IV. WHAT GOD MADE. All things whatsoever, besides God, were created (Rev. iv. 11). The evil of sin is no positive being, it being but a defect or want, and therefore is not reckoned among the things which God made, but owed its existence to the will of fallen angels and men. Devils being angels, are God's creatures; but God did not make them evil, or devils, but they made themselves so. V. OF WHAT ALL THINGS WERE MADE. Of nothing; which does not denote any matter of which they were formed, but the term from which God brought

them; when they had no being He gave them one (Col. i. 16; Rom. xi. 36). VI. How ALL THINGS WERE MADE OF NOTHING. By the word of God's power. It was the infinite power of God that gave them a being; which power was exerted in His Word, not a word properly spoken, but an act of His will commanding them to be (Gen. i. 3; Psa. xxxiii. 6, 9). VII. IN WHAT SPACE OF TIME THE WORLD WAS CREATED. VIII. FOR WHAT END GOD MADE ALL THINGS. It was for His own glory (Prov. xvi. 4; Rom. xi. 36). And there are these three attributes of God that especially shine forth in this work of creation, namely, His wisdom, power, and goodness. IX. IN WHAT STATE WERE ALL THINGS MADE? I answer, They were all "very good" (Gen. i. 31). The goodness of the creature consists in its fitness for the use for which it was made. In this respect everything answered exactly the end of its creation. Again, the goodness of things is their perfection; and so everything was made agreeable to the idea thereof that was formed in the Divine mind. There was not the least defect in the work; but everything was beautiful, as it was the effect of infinite wisdom as well as almighty power. Inferences: 1. God is a most glorious being, infinitely lovely and desirable, possessed of every perfection and excellency. Whatever excellency and beauty is in the creatures is all from Him, and sure it must be most excellent in the fountain. 2. God's glory should be our chief end. And seeing whatever we have is from Him, it should be used and employed for Him: For "all things were created by Him and for Him" (Col. i. 16). 3. God is our Sovereign Lord Proprietor, and may do in us, on us, and by us, what He will (Rom. ix. 20, 21). 4. We should use all the creatures we make use of with an eye to God, and due thankfulness to Him, the Giver; employing them in our service, soberly and wisely, considering they stand related to God as their Creator, and are the workmanship of His own hands. 5. There is no case so desperate, but faith may get sure footing with respect to it in the power and Word of God. Let the people of God be ever so low, they can never be lower than when they were not at all (Isa. lxv. 18). 6. Give away yourselves to God through Jesus Christ, making a cheerful and entire dedication of your souls and bodies, and all that ye are and have, to Him as your God and Father, resolving to serve Him all the days of your life: that as He made you for His glory, you may in some measure answer the end of your creation, which is to show forth His praise. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *The fact of creation an object of faith:*—Our object is to inquire what is implied in our really believing the fact of the creation. There is the widest difference between your believing certain truths as the results of reasoning or discovery, and your believing them on the mere assertion of a credible witness, whom you see and hear, especially if the witness be the very individual to whom the truths relate. The truths themselves may be identically the same. But how essentially different is the state of the mind, and how different the impression made on it! I. WE MAY ILLUSTRATE THE DIFFERENCE BY A SIMPLE AND FAMILIAR EXAMPLE. Paley makes admirable use of an imaginary case respecting a watch. He supposes you to be previously unacquainted with such a work of art. You hold it in your hand; you begin to examine its structure, to raise questions in your own mind, and to form conjectures. How did it come there, and how were its parts so curiously put together? You at once conclude that it did not grow there, and that it could not be fashioned by chance. You feel assured that the watch had a maker. You gather much of his character from the obvious character of his handiwork. You search in that handiwork for traces of his mind, his heart. You speculate concerning his plans and purposes. But now, suppose that while you are thus engaged, with the watch in your hand, a living person suddenly appears before you, and announces himself, and says, It was I who made this watch—it was I who put it there. Is not your position instantly changed? Your position, in fact, is now precisely reversed. Instead of questioning the watch concerning its maker, you now question the maker concerning his watch. You hear not what the mechanism has to say of the mechanic, but what the mechanic has to say of the mechanism. You receive, perhaps, the same truths as before, but with a freshness and a force unknown before. They come to you, not circuitously and at second hand, they come straight from the very being most deeply concerned in them. II. NOW, LET US APPLY THESE REMARKS TO THE MATTER IN HAND. You are all of you familiar with this idea, that, in contemplating the works of creation, you should ascend from nature to nature's God. It is most pleasing and useful to cultivate such a habit as this. Much of natural religion depends upon it, and holy Scripture fully recognises its propriety. "The heavens declare the glory of God; the firmament showeth his handicraft." "All Thy works praise Thee, Lord God Almighty." "Lift up your eyes on high,

and behold, Who hath created these things." "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches." It is apparent, however, even in these and similar passages, that created things are mentioned, not as arguments, but rather as illustrations; not as suggesting the idea of God, the Creator, but as unfolding and expanding the idea, otherwise obtained. And this is still more manifest in that passage of the Epistle to the Romans which particularly appeals to the fact of creation, as evidence of the Creator's glory, evidence sufficient to condemn the ungodly (chap. i. 20, 21). So that the Scriptural method on this subject is exactly the reverse of what is called the natural. It is not to ascend from nature up to nature's God, but to descend from God to God's nature; not to hear the creation speaking of the Creator, but to hear the Creator speaking of the creation. We have not in the Bible an examination and enumeration of the wonders to be observed among the works of nature, and an argument founded upon these that there must be a God, and that He must be of a certain character and must have had certain views in making what He has made. God Himself appears and tells us authoritatively what He has done, and why He did it. Thus "through faith we understand that the worlds were made by the Word of God; so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." We understand and believe this, not as a deduction of reasoning, but as a matter of fact, declared and revealed to us. For this is that act of the mind which, in a religious sense, is called faith. III. But it may be said, ARE WE, THEN, NOT TO USE OUR REASON ON THIS SUBJECT AT ALL? That cannot be, for the apostle himself enjoins you, however in respect of meekness you are to be like children, still in understanding to be men. Certainly you do well to search out all those features in creation which reflect the glory of the Creator. Nay, you may begin in this way to know God. It is true, indeed, that God has never in fact left Himself to be thus discovered. He has always, as He did at first, revealed Himself, not circuitously by His works, but summarily and directly by His Word. We may suppose, however, that you are suffered to grope your way through creation to the Creator. In that case you proceed to reason out from the manifold proofs of design in nature's works the idea of an intelligent Author, and to draw inferences from what you see respecting His character, purposes, and plans. Still, even in this method of discovering God, if your faith is to be of an influential kind at all, you must proceed, when you have made the discovery, just to reverse the process by which you made it; and having arrived at the conception of a Creator, you must now go back again to the creation, taking Him along with you, as one with whom you have personally become acquainted, and hearing what He has to say concerning His own works. He may say no more than what you had previously discovered. Still, what He does say, you now receive not as discovered by you, but as said by Him. You leave the post of discovery, the chair of reasoning, and take the lowly stool of the disciple; and then, and not before, even on the principles of natural religion, do you fully understand what is the real import, and the momentous bearing of the fact, that a Being, infinitely wise and powerful, and having evidently a certain character as just and good, that such a Being made you, and is Himself telling you that He made you, and all the things that are around you; "that the things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." IV. THUS, IN A RELIGIOUS VIEW, AND FOR RELIGIOUS PURPOSES, THE TRUTH CONCERNING GOD AS THE CREATOR MUST BE RECEIVED, NOT AS A DISCOVERY OF YOUR OWN REASON, FOLLOWING A TRAIN OF THOUGHT, BUT AS A DIRECT COMMUNICATION FROM A REAL PERSON, EVEN FROM THE LIVING AND PRESENT GOD. This is not a merely artificial distinction. It is practically most important. Consider the subject of creation in the light simply of an argument of natural philosophy, and all is vague and dim abstraction. But consider the momentous fact in the light of a direct message from the Creator Himself to you. Are you not differently impressed and affected? 1. More particularly—see, first of all, what weight this single idea, once truly and vividly realised, must add to all the other communications which He makes on other subjects to you. Does He speak to you concerning other matters, intimately touching your present and future weal? Does He tell you of your condition in respect of Him, and of His purposes in respect of you? Does He enforce the majesty of His law? Does He press the overtures of His gospel? Oh! how in every such case is His appeal, in its solemnity, and its power, enhanced with tenfold intensity, if you regard Him as, in the very same breath, expressly telling you, I who now speak to you, so earnestly and so affectionately, I created all things—I created you. 2. Again, on the other hand, observe what weight this idea, if

fully realised, must have, if you regard the Lord Himself as saying to you, in special reference to each of the things which He has made: I created it, and I am now testifying to you that I created it. What sacredness will this thought stamp on every object in nature, if only you are personally acquainted with the living God; and especially if you know Him as the Lawgiver, the Saviour, the Judge. (*R. S. Candlish, D.D.*) *That the world was framed in an accurate, orderly, and perfect manner*:—I. TO ILLUSTRATE THIS BY SOME SIMILITUDES OUT OF SCRIPTURE. 1. The perfection and order of the world is compared to the body of a man (1 Cor. xii. 12). 2. It is compared to an host or army (Gen. ii. 1). 3. It is compared to a curious house (Job xxxviii. 4-6). II. WHEREIN THIS ORDER AND BEAUTY OF THE WORLD DOTH CONSIST. 1. In the wonderful multitude and variety of creatures, distributed into so many several excellent natures and forms, they all do proclaim the beauty and order of the whole world. 2. The beauty and artificial composition of all things. 3. The disposition and apt placing of all things. 4. The wonderful consent of all the parts, and the proportion they bear one to another. 5. The mutual ministry and help of the creatures one to another. 6. The wise government and conservation of all things according to the rules and laws of creation. III. IF GOD MADE THE WORLD IN SUCH HARMONY AND ORDER, WHENCE CAME ALL THOSE DISORDERS THAT ARE IN THE WORLD? We see some creatures are ravenous; other creatures are poisonous; all are frail, and still decaying and hasting to their own ruin. Whence come murrains, sicknesses, and diseases? Whence come such dislocations, and unjointings of nature by tempests and earthquakes? All these confusions and disorders of nature are the effects of sin. Our sins are as a secret fire that hath melted and burnt asunder the secret ties and confederations of nature. 1. It discovers the glory of God. The whole world is but God's shop, where are the masterpieces of His wisdom and majesty; these are seen very much in the order of causes, and admirable contrivance of the world. (1) The wisdom of God and His counsel is mightily seen. The world is not a work of chance, but of counsel and rare contrivance. (2) The majesty and greatness of God. 2. It showeth us the excellency of order; how pleasing order and method is to God: God hath always delighted in it. All order is from God; but all discord and confusion is from the devil. Order is pleasing to Him in the state and civil administrations in the Church, and in the course of your private conversations. 3. It discovers the odiousness of sin that disjointed the frame of nature. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Faith realising the invisible Creator*:—In that beautiful part of Germany which borders on the Rhine there is a noble castle which lifts its old grey towers above the ancient forest, where dwelt a nobleman who had a good and devoted son, his comfort and his pride. Once when the son was away from home, a Frenchman called, and, in course of conversation, spoke in such unbecoming terms of the great Father in heaven as to chill the old man's blood. "Are you not afraid of offending God?" said the baron, "by speaking in this way." The foreigner answered with cool indifference, that he knew nothing about God, for he had never seen Him. No notice was taken of this observation at the time; but the next morning the baron pointed out to the visitor a beautiful picture which hung on the wall, and said, "My son drew that!" "He must be a clever youth," returned the Frenchman, blandly. Later in the day as the two gentlemen were walking in the garden, the baron showed his guests many rare plants and flowers, and, on being asked who had the management of the garden, the father said, with proud satisfaction, "My son; and he knows every plant almost, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop on the wall!" "Indeed!" observed the other. "I shall soon have a very exalted opinion of him." The baron then took his visitor to the village and showed him a neat building which his son had fitted up for a school, where the children of the poor were daily instructed free of expense. "What a happy man you must be," said the Frenchman, "to have such a son!" "How do you know I have a son?" asked the baron, with a grave face. "Why, because I have seen his works; I am sure he must be both clever and good, or he would not have done all you have shown me." "But you have never seen him!" returned the baron. "No, but I already know him very well, because I can form a just estimate of him from his works." "I am not surprised," said the baron, in a quiet tone; "and now oblige me by coming to this window and tell me what you see from thence." "Why, I see the sun travelling through the skies and shedding its glories over one of the greatest countries in the world; and I behold a mighty river at my feet, and a vast range of woods, and pastures, and orchards, and vineyards, and cattle and sheep feeding in rich fields." "Do you see anything to be admired in all this?" asked the baron. "Can you

fancy I am blind?" retorted the Frenchman, "Well, then, if you are able to judge of my son's good character by seeing his various works, how does it happen you can form no estimate of God's goodness by witnessing such proofs of His handiwork?"

Ver. 4. **By faith Abel offered.**—*External worship rendered by two kinds of men:*—I. CARNAL MEN MAY JOIN WITH THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN EXTERNAL DUTIES OF WORSHIP. 1. Natural conscience will put men upon worship. 2. Custom will direct to the worship then in use and fashion. 3. Carnal impulses will add force and vigour to the performances. (1) Vainglory. (2) Secular aims and advantages. Use 1. It serves to inform us that the bare performance of the duties of religion is no gracious evidence. Cain may sacrifice as well as Abel. A Christian is rather tried by his graces than by his duties; and yet this is the usual fallacy that we put upon our own consciences. Use 2. If it be so, that carnal men may join with the people of God in duties of worship, here is direction: in all your duties put your hearts to this question, Wherein do I excel a hypocrite? So far a natural man may go. As Christ said (Matt. v. 47). II. THAT THERE IS A SENSIBLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE GODLY AND THE WICKED IN THEIR SEVERAL DUTIES AND PERFORMANCES. 1. Why is it so? (1) They have another nature than wicked men. Water can rise no higher than its fountain; acts are according to their causes; nature can but produce a natural act. The children of God have the Spirit of grace bestowed upon them (Zech. xii. 10). (2) They have other assistance. The children of God have a mighty Spirit to help them (Jude 20). 2. Wherein lies the difference between the worship of the godly and the worship of carnal men that live in the Church. I answer, In three things mainly—in the principle, in the manner, and in the end. (1) In the principle. Natural men do nothing out of the constraints of love, but out of the enforcement of conscience; duty is not their delight, but burden. (2) There is a difference in the manner how these duties are to be performed; this is to be regarded as well as the matter. A man may sin in doing good, but he can never sin in doing well. A man may sin though the matter be lawful, for the manner is all (Luke viii. 18). (3) There is a difference in regard of the end. Now there is a general and a particular end of worship. (*a*) A general end, and that is twofold; to glorify God and to enjoy God; the one is the work of duty, and the other is the reward of duty. Now carnal men are content with the duty instead of God and satisfy themselves with the work wrought, though there be no intercourse between God and their souls. Therefore a godly man looks at this, what of God he hath found. You must not be content with the duty instead of God. (*b*) There is a peculiar aim, and that is always suited to the particular part of worship, and that is a right intention. III. THIS SENSIBLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DUTIES OF THE GODLY AND THE WICKED IS OCCASIONED BY THE INFLUENCE AND EFFICACY OF FAITH. Here I shall state—(1) What this faith of Abel was; (2) I shall handle the general case. What this faith of Abel was. 1. There was a faith of his being accepted with God when his service was suited to the institution. Such a promise was intimated to them, as appears by God's expostulation with Cain (Gen. iv. 7). 2. It was a faith in the general rewards and recompenses of religion. Abel looked to the good things to come, and so his hopes had an influence upon his practice: Cain's heart was altogether chained to earthly things, therefore he looks upon that as lost which was spent in sacrifice. 3. It was a faith in the Messiah to come. For the reasons of the point, Why faith makes this difference between worship and worship, that it makes the duties and worship of believers to be so different from that of carnal men? 1. I answer, because it discerneth by a clearer light and apprehension. Faith is the eye of the soul. A beast liveth by sense, a man by reason, and a Christian by faith. 2. Faith receives a mighty aid and supply from the Spirit of God. Faith plants the soul into Christ, and so receives influence from Him; it is the great band of union between us and Christ, and the hand whereby we receive all the supplies of Jesus Christ. Christ lives in us by His Spirit, and we live in Him by faith. 3. As it receives a mighty aid, so it works by a forcible principle, and that is by love; for "Faith works by love" (Gal. v. 6). We live by faith, and we work by love. Where faith is, there is love; and where love is, there is work. Affection follows persuasion, and operation follows affection. 4. It discourseth and pleads with the soul with strong reasons and enforcements. Faith is a notable orator to plead for God; it pleads partly from the mercies, and partly from the promises of God. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Abel's offering:*—I. THE NATURE OF ABEL'S OFFERING. II. THE PRINCIPLE BY WHICH HE WAS ACTUATED IN PRESENTING IT.

III. THE TOKEN OF THE ACCEPTANCE OF ABEL'S SACRIFICE. Learn: 1. The value of religious observances. 2. In order to be accepted, our observances must proceed from right views. 3. It is not on the footing of innocence we are accepted, but of expiation. 4. Your services are not less acceptable because there may be others who engage in the same acts of worship whose character is such as God cannot approve. 5. However holy your character may be, it is hereafter, not here, that you are to look for your reward. (*R. Brodie, M.A.*) *Abel; or, man's religion*:—I. THE RELIGION OF MAN HAS TO DO WITH SACRIFICE. II. THE RELIGION OF MAN IS VALUABLE ONLY AS IT IS BASED ON EVANGELICAL FAITH. III. THE RELIGION OF MAN HAS EVER BEEN OF IMMENSE WORTH. Paul speaks of faith as doing three things. 1. Giving Divine acceptableness to existence. 2. Giving moral righteousness to existence. 3. Giving an honourable and lasting significance to existence. (*Homilist.*) *The voice of Abel*:—I. ABEL'S FAITH SPEAKS. "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (ver. 6). Homage to the all-wise Creator, gratitude to the all-bountiful Benefactor, submission to the all-powerful Ruler, sacrifice to the all-loving Father, are not enough. The first and indispensable element in all acceptable service is faith in the Redeemer, and implicit confidence in "Him who justifies the ungodly." II. ABEL'S OFFERING TESTIFIES: "Without shedding of blood there is no remission" (chap. ix. 22). It was an embodiment of the truths which were afterwards more fully developed in the sacrificial system of the Mosaic economy, and which are now revealed in the gospel in all their clearness, simplicity, and fulness. Not that Abel understood them in all the height and depth, length and breadth of their spiritual significance. Abel looked upon the bud: we behold the flower. Christ having come, and having offered up Himself as a sacrifice for human sin, "a lamb without spot and blemish," a light is reflected back upon all the sacrificial offerings of ancient days, which enables us to see that one grand truth was prefigured by them all, and that one solemn voice was uttered by them all. "Without shedding," &c. III. ABEL'S ACCEPTANCE HAS A VOICE: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted unto righteousness" (Rom. iv. 5). The important point is, that God gave him evidence of his acceptance in response to his faith. And what was this but another version of the great gospel doctrine that "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law," yet not by a faith which is unaccompanied by works, but by a faith which reveals itself through works? Abel believed God's promise, and complied with God's prescription as to offering a bleeding sacrifice; and Abel's faith was counted unto him for righteousness: that is, God, in justifying Abel, had regard to faith. IV. ABEL'S DEATH CRIES: "They who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii. 12). The account of Abel's untimely end is simply given (Gen. iv. 8). It was an early and a bitter fruit of sin, a ghastly revelation, and a woeful foretaste of the promised enmity between the serpent's seed and the woman's. A decisive indication that these two seeds were to be found in two different sections of the human family. That fratricide was the first blow in the world-wide and time-long conflict that had already been predicted. The culmination of the battle was when Christ despoiled the principalities and powers of evil by His cross. Yet the enmity is not ended. In consequence of Christ's death the victory of the seed of the woman is secure; but till the final triumph comes, they must suffer persecution. Just because they are the woman's seed and Christ's seed, the thing is inevitable. V. ABEL'S GRAVE SHOUTS: "The Lord will avenge the blood of His servants" (Deut. xxxii. 43). God regards the saints as His peculiar possession, as the work of His hands. Christ esteems His people, not simply as His servants, disciples, followers, friends, but as members of His body, linked to His heart by the most tender ties of sympathy. Hence He watches over them with jealous care, protects them when in danger, feels for them and with them when they suffer, and avenges them when they are wronged. Sometimes in His wise but mysterious Providence He may suffer their liberties to be destroyed and their lives to be spilt; but "Vengeance is mine; I will repay!" saith the Lord. Witness Cain, Pharaoh, Ahab, Jezebel, Haman, Belshazzar, Herod, Nero, and others. VI. ABEL'S MEMORY ECHOES: "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance" (Psa. cxii. 6). For sixty centuries at least the name of Abel has been enshrined in affectionate remembrance, not for great deeds done, but for simple faith cherished, and for bitter suffering endured. Worth observing that being and suffering are sometimes as sure passports to renown as doing. Not the great actors on time's stage alone have their names transmitted to posterity, but the great sufferers as well. Not those alone who have lived brilliantly, but those also who have walked humbly. And this

perhaps is right, for after all it may be questioned if to believe strongly, to live humbly, and to suffer patiently are not greater achievements than to act largely and to speak loudly. (*Thomas Whitelaw, M.A.*) *Accepted of God*:—I. EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE IN SUFFERING SHALL ADD TO THE GLORY OF THE SUFFERER; and those who suffer here for Christ without witness, as many have done to death in prisons and dungeons, have yet an all-seeing witness to give them testimony in due season. "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance"; and nothing that is done or suffered for God shall be lost for ever. II. WE ARE TO SERVE GOD WITH THE BEST THAT WE HAVE, the best that is in our power, with the best of our spiritual abilities; which God afterwards fully confirmed. III. God gives no consequential approbation of any duties of believers, BUT WHERE THE PRINCIPLE OF A LIVING FAITH GOES PREVIOUSLY IN THEIR PERFORMANCE. IV. OUR PERSONS MUST BE FIRST JUSTIFIED, BEFORE OUR WORKS OF OBEDIENCE CAN BE ACCEPTED WITH GOD; for by that acceptance He testifies that we are righteous. V. THAT THOSE WHOM GOD APPROVES MUST EXPECT THAT THE WORLD WILL DISAPPROVE THEM, and ruin them if it can. VI. Where there is a difference within, in the hearts of men, on the account of faith and the want of it, THERE WILL FOR THE MOST PART BE UNAVOIDABLE DIFFERENCES ABOUT OUTWARD WORSHIP. So there hath been always between the true Church and false worshippers. VII. GOD'S APPROBATION IS AN ABUNDANT RECOMPENSE FOR THE LOSS OF OUR LIVES. VIII. THERE IS A VOICE IN ALL INNOCENT BLOOD SHED BY VIOLENCE. *Abel's offering*:—I. ABEL'S OFFERING HAD REFERENCE TO A DIVINE COMMAND AND PROMISE. Abel acknowledged his sin, and believed what God had said in reference to pardon, hence his sacrifice was one of faith. II. THE COMPARATIVE WORTH OF ABEL'S OFFERING. By faith he offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. The meaning is that it was a fuller sacrifice, it embraced more, it meant more than that presented by Cain. "Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof." The latter phrase evidently indicates that the life was taken before the sacrifice was offered. Hereby was admitted—1. The deadly nature of sin. Sin leads to destruction. The fact of atonement being necessary proves the enormity of sin. 2. The hope of pardon. To Abel it became apparent that there was a way by which man could rise, a plan by which he could become reconciled to God. III. THE ASSURANCE OF ACCEPTANCE ABEL RECEIVED. "He obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." This assurance would probably be twofold, the outward and the visible, and the inward and spiritual. The witness from without would be given by fire descending and consuming the sacrifice. But there was also the inward testimony Abel receives. He obtained witness that he was righteous. His sins were blotted out, he was at peace with God, and the Spirit of God was his witness that he was accepted. He was made a partaker of the righteousness, which is by faith. IV. ABEL, BECAUSE OF HIS FAITH AND SERVICE, IS YET SPOKEN OF. "He being dead, yet speaketh." (*Richard Nicholls.*) *Abel's sacrifice*:—I. WHAT WAS THE SPECIAL OCCASION OF THIS SACRIFICE? That may be gathered out of the phrase used (Gen. iv. 3). God taught Adam by revelation, and he his son by instruction, that men should at the year's end, in a solemn manner, sacrifice with thanks to God, when they had gathered in the fruits of the earth. This tradition was afterwards made a written law (Exod. xxii. 29). These solemn sacrifices at the end of days had a double use. 1. To be a figure of the expiation promised to Adam in Christ. 2. To be a solemn acknowledgment of their homage and thankfulness to God. 1. The general use of these sacrifices was to remember the seed of the woman, or Messiah to come, as the solemn propitiatory sacrifice of the Church. And indeed there was a notable resemblance between those offerings and Jesus Christ: Abel offered a lamb; and Christ is the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world (John i. 29). And because of these early sacrifices, therefore is that expression used (Rev. xiii. 8). And He also is the first-fruits (Psa. lxxxix. 27). Though God had other children by creation besides Christ, yet He is the first-born. What shall we gather from hence? That in all our addresses to God we must solemnly remember and honour Christ. We must do duties to God, so as we may honour Christ in them. It may be you will ask, How do we honour Christ in doing of duties? (1) When you look for your acceptance in Christ, as Abel comes with a lamb in faith. (2) This is to honour Christ in duties, when you look for your assistance from the Spirit of Christ. (3) When the aim of the worship is to set up and advance the mediator. 2. The special use of this worship was to profess their homage and their thankfulness to God. They were to come as God's tenants, and pay Him their rent. Therefore God puts words into the Israelites' mouths (Deut. xxvi. 10). The note from

hence is—That in the times of our increase and plenty we must solemnly acknowledge God. The best way to secure the farm, and keep it in our possession, is to acknowledge the great Landlord of the whole world—Lord, I have been a poor creature, and Thou hast blest me wonderfully. There is a rent of praise and a thank-offering due to God. II. The second question is, WHAT WAS THE WARRANT OF THIS WORSHIP? Was it devised according to their own will, or was it commanded by God? The reason of the inquiry is because some say that before the law the patriarchs did, without any command, out of their private good intention, offer sacrifice to God; and they prove it, because the Gentiles that were not acquainted with the institutions of the Church used the same way of worship. But this opinion seemeth little probable—1. Because this is above the light of corrupt nature to prescribe an acceptable worship to God. 2. It was by some appointment; for no worship is acceptable to Him but that which is of His appointment. 3. There could have been else no faith nor obedience in it, if the institution had been wholly human; there is no faith without some promise of Divine grace, no obedience without some command. 4. The wonderful agreement that is between this first act of solemn worship and the solemn constitutions of the Jewish Church doth wonderfully evince that there was some rule and Divine institution according to which this worship was to be regulated, which, probably, God revealed to Adam, and He taught it, as He did other parts of religion, to His children: therefore it was done by virtue of an institution. Abel looked to the command of God, and promise of God, that so he might do it in faith and obedience. The note from this—That whatever is done in worship must be done out of conscience, and with respect to the institution. But you will say, What is it to do a thing by virtue of an institution? For answer—1. I shall show you what an institution is. Every word of institution consists of two parts—the word of command, and the word of promise. 2. What is it to do a duty in respect to the institution? I answer, it is to do it in faith and obedience: faith respects the word of promise, obedience the word of command. But now how shall I know when I do duty in faith and obedience? I answer—1. You come in obedience when the command is the main motive and reason upon your spirit to put you upon the duty. It is enough to a Christian to say, "This is the will of God" (1 Thess. v. 18). 2. Would you know when you come in faith? when you look to the word of promise? You may know that by the earnest expectation and considerateness of the soul. III. The third question is, WHEREIN LIES THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO SACRIFICES? 1. In the faith of Abel. Abel's principle was faith, Cain's distrust. 2. In the willing mind of Abel. Cain looked upon his sacrifice as a task rather than a duty; his fruits were brought to God as a fine rather than an offering, as if an act of worship had been an act of penance, and religion was his punishment. 3. In the matter offered. It is said of Cain's offering (Gen. iv. 3), "That he brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord." The Holy Ghost purposely omits the description of the offering. Being hastily taken, and unthankfully brought, it is mentioned without any additional expression to set off the worth of them; it should have been the first and the fairest. But for Abel, see how distinct the Spirit of God is in setting forth his offering (ver. 4); not only the firstlings, that the rest might be sanctified, but he brought the best, the chiefest, the fattest. All these were afterwards appropriated to God (Lev. iii. 16, 17). Now observe from hence—That when we serve God, we must serve Him faithfully, with our best. 1. God must have the best of our time. Consider, we can afford many sacrilegious hours to our lusts, and can scarce afford God a little time without grudging. Is not there too much of Cain's spirit in this? 2. With your best parts. You come to worship God not only with your bodies, but your souls, with the refined strength of your reason and thoughts (Psa. cviii. 1). (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Abel*:—The text carries us back to the world's youngest days, and it introduces us to the world's earliest brothers, the children of the first man. But how different the after history of the brothers who were thus named! Cain, the fondly imagined destroyer of the serpent, growing up into his slave; Abel, the first to experience death, and the first to triumph over it by a power that was mightier than his own. Cain, the first rebel—Abel, the first pardoned sinner; the one Divinely branded as "that wicked one who slew his brother," the other bearing his appropriate and lasting surname of "righteous Abel." I. FIRST, HE IS BROUGHT BEFORE US AS OFFERING AN ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE. Perhaps the main difference will be found in the fact that Cain's was a eucharistic, Abel's an expiatory sacrifice. In the one there was a recognition, in the other there was a refusal of the ordinance

of God, that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin. Moreover, the apostle declares that the sacrifice of Abel was offered in faith. Now, faith must have respect to some revelation that has been previously given, as well as to some other blessing which the future will reveal. Some have wondered sometimes why, if sacrifice were of Divine origin, there should be no express enactment on record. But even if there be no record of it, it would be rash to conclude that there was therefore no revelation. There lurks in this supposition the fallacy of believing that the book of Genesis bore to the Jewish the same relation which the book of Leviticus bore to the Mosaic dispensation—that it was written not by the historian but by the law-giver. But we cannot imagine that the patriarchs knew no more of truth than is recorded in the historian's narrative. Indeed, we know they did; for Abraham had revelations of a future state, and Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, as we learn from the New Testament, concerning the coming of the Lord in judgment. Neither of these things is recorded in the book of Genesis. Whatever this promise is, it is a promise of spiritual blessing. You look into it further, and you discover that there is in it a promise of a Redeemer—a promise of a Redeemer of superior nature to the destroyer, and yet to be of the seed of the woman. You look further into the promise, and find that He is to be bruised. If His essential power is greater than the power of His adversary, then any suffering that comes upon Him must be endured by His own consent. If it be voluntary, then this leads you to another step in the argument—it must be vicarious; it must be undertaken for some one else; undertaken as a substitute for some one whom He has voluntarily pledged Himself to redeem. Then here comes the great idea of satisfaction—suffering endured by a Saviour in the room and in the stead of another. But if vicarious, you go further still. In such a Being—in a Being of such acknowledged power, it must be available; it must be efficacious for the destruction of the evils that were introduced by the adversary. Now, if you will just think of this argument, I fancy you will find that it will hold, and that it is not improbable that, in the absence of direct revelation our first parents discovered in the earliest promise the Divine nature of the Redeemer, the mystery of His incarnate life, and outlines of that grand and wonderful scheme of redemption by which He offered Himself, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. Here, then, is the foundation of the rite of sacrifice; and you cannot wonder that the faith of Abel, resting upon the scheme of mediation, should find visible expression, analogous to the way in which the offering was to be wrought out, by the offering of the firstling upon the altar, nor that God attesting that sacrifice, and honouring the spirit which prompted it, should have accepted it in the consuming fire. II. We find, in the second place, THE RESULTS OF THIS FAITH—THAT GOD GAVE HIM A TESTIMONY. He received a Divine testimony: "by it he obtained witness that he was righteous—God testifying of his gifts." God is said to have testified to the acceptance of his offering, and to have witnessed to his own personal acceptance as well. The manner of this testimony is not distinctly stated, but the analogy would be that it was given by fire. God testified to his gifts and to his faith. God testified to his gifts; and those gifts were the gifts of blood. He was the first saved sinner, and he stands typal and exemplary of all the rest. God set His seal thus early upon the one method of reconciliation that all the ages might learn the lesson. Human nature, if it would be accepted in heaven, must not come and stand in its erectness, as if it had never sinned; it must be contrite in its trust; it must be firm in its reliance upon the sacrifice which has purged its sin away. Here is salvation costlier than human price can buy; here is salvation fuller than imagination can conceive; here is salvation lasting through all the ages of eternity; and it is offered—offered upon understood and easy terms. Here is a Redeemer gifted with every qualification, and infinite in His willinghood of love. And this Redeemer wills to save you; He has paid the price; He does not want any paltry price of yours. III. Abel is presented in the text as EXERTING AN UNDYING INFLUENCE. "By it he being dead yet speaketh." He is brought before us as an historical exemplification of the power of faith. He has gained by it an undying memory; he is thrown by it among the moral heroes of the olden times. There issues from him, because of it, an influence which spreads and grows for ages. He teaches to after generations many great lessons; he teaches the lesson of contrition, and of gratitude, and of humble hope, and of far-sighted reliance which fastens its gaze upon the Cross, and stays its spirit there! (*W. M. Punshon.*) *Abel:*—The great lesson we learn is this: there is one appointed way of approaching God, and

only one; no other way devised by human cunning or human invention can or will bring us to God; and faith is the principle by which we do thus approach God. There are two classes which this speaks to—1. Those who are convinced of the right way to heaven, and willing to walk in it. 2. Those who are wholly mistaken as to the way of salvation. Of the latter first. There is an inclination in man to strike out a way of his own, and that, usually, exactly contrary to God's appointed way to final happiness. Thus here is God the Creator appointing a way for man to walk in, and man refusing to walk therein is therefore lost. The common occasion on which men will choose their own way is in the means of salvation being by Christ, in the necessity of the aid of the Spirit, in the necessity of showing forth that work of the Spirit by holy living; very often such men begin their whole scheme of contradiction by denying the doctrine of original sin. By this means men try to make their way to heaven, What in these particulars is God's appointed way? 1. Man says he is not a sinner by birth and practice, root and branch a sinner, but he is only very weak, very various, some better than others, and so forth. God says, "There is none that doeth good; no, not one." 2. Or again, some say, Your amiability and morality are so great you need not think of any means of salvation; you may deserve heaven by the beauty of your own character or the force of your own works. 3. Again, some men talk of their own unaided strength helping them to perform good works. 4. And again; some men tell us there is no need of good works at all, but that a man may live in the constant habit of sin, and yet please God, and consider himself a servant of God; what says the Word of God? "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." "We are His workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works." Thus, then, man's way in the world greatly differs from God's way of salvation. But again, the example of Abel speaks to Christians too. Do I speak to some such now—men who will not accept the means which God has appointed to bring them near to Himself? who wish to belong to Him, and try to be reconciled, and believe Christ only can do it, and yet will not go to the means ordered by God, but strike out ways of their own, and then wonder why they do not gain their end? 1. There are some such who will not receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, choosing to expect a fitness which the Bible does not speak of: and thus, though Christ has appointed this way of approaching Him, they persist in refusing to walk in it. How is it you dare thus to trifle with God? How can you hope to be better or happier while, like Cain, you will come to God in your own devised manner, however well arranged, and not in His revealed, appointed method of approach? 2. Or again; some men will not pray; they think hearing is enough, or knowing is enough, or feeling is enough, or thinking is enough. They will not pray, while prayer is the very life of the soul. 3. Or again; some men will not read the Bible; the call of business or domestic life is the excuse they plead against ever reading the Word of God; and yet we are told to "search the Scriptures." 4. Again; some men will not come to church, thinking they can serve God as well at home, not seeing how it can matter, if they pray at home, whether they pray there or at church; not seeing that the whole consists in one being God's appointed means, the other not. Thus do men, good on the whole, sin as Cain, by choosing their own ways, in certain particulars, to approach God, and despising and neglecting others. Remember, it is by faith you will follow Abel. Use God's appointed means—faith. (*E. Monro.*) *Abel:*—I. ABEL AT THE ALTAR. 1. The principle of the offerer—"Faith." 2. The material of the offering—"A more excellent sacrifice." (1) Select. (2) Suitable. (3) Surprising. "More excellent than Cain." (*a*) The privileges of both were the same. (*b*) The mother esteemed Cain, but ignored Abel. (*c*) Revelation was very meagre. (*d*) The bad example of a constant associate. Wickedness is contagious. The religion of Abel was sin-proof. The Divine in him was mightier than the satanic in his brother. II. ABEL THE RECIPIENT OF A DIVINE TESTIMONIAL. Previously we saw Abel giving to God; here we see him receiving from God. Those who give also get (John i. 12). 1. The testimonial. "Righteous"—justified—absolved from all wrong—accepted as one right in all his relationships—with conscience, the world, death, judgment, God. 2. The testifier, "God." The authority is the highest and the truest. The keys of destiny hang at His girdle. His smile is heaven. III. ABEL THE PROCLAIMER OF DIVINE TRUTH. "Being dead, yet speaketh." Most men speak before death; many speak when dying; but Abel speaks after death. There is a peculiarity in the influence of Abel. He teaches—1. That fallen man may again approach God. 2. That worship must be through the medium of sacrifice. 3.

That acceptance with God is the highest favour. 4. That a godly life is immortal in its influence. (*B. D. Johns.*) *Faith the secret of accepted worship* :—Faith is spiritual sight. It is the apprehension of the unseen. It is the realisation of the Invisible. "By faith," by an exercise of that soul's sight which faith is, "Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." The Searcher of hearts saw in Abel, saw not in Cain, that sight of the Invisible which is the condition of worship. The difference lay not in the form of the offering, but in the spirit of the offerer. In vain we obtrude our poor human assistance for the discrimination of the two sacrifices. God required no outward sign, no visible or tangible material, to inform or to guide His judgment. His eye could pierce, at once and by intuition, to the discerning of soul and spirit. And here we read what He judged by—not the substance of the sacrifice, but the heart's heart of the worshipper. "By faith" —by that soul's sight of which the Omniscient alone can take knowledge—"Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." "By which" sacrifice— or, "by which" faith—for the relative is ambiguous in the Greek—"he obtained witness that he was righteous"—"he was attested as righteous"—the testimony of God, in Holy Scripture, was borne to him as being righteous—"God testifying of his gifts." It was not the sacrifice which made him "righteous"—it was the "righteousness" which offered, and which consecrated the offering. "He was attested as righteous, God testifying of His gifts." We know not how, by what visible or invisible token, the acceptance, the "respect," was evidenced to the one offerer, and its absence indicated to the other. The reference of the text is to the record in Scripture. "And by it he being dead yet speaketh." The same ambiguity rests upon "by it" as upon "by which" above. "By the sacrifice"? or, "by the faith"? By the sacrifice offered in faith? or, by the faith in which the sacrifice was offered? It is a distinction without a difference as regards the doctrine. We have three lessons to learn. 1. "By faith Abel offered." Faith has a province in the present. The past belongs wholly to her—the future belongs wholly to her—the present belongs to her in part. There are things present of which sight and sense can take notice. But the spiritual, the heavenly, the Divine, is ever present—and of this the senses tell nothing. There are two kinds of worship, as there are two characters and classes of worshippers. There are those who come to worship with "earthly, sensual, diabolical" minds. There are those who bring something in their hands—it may be a few herbs or flowers, it may be a sheaf of corn or a bag of money, it may be the bread and wine of a Sacrament, it may be the bended knee or the uttered liturgy of a Church calling itself Reformed, calling itself Evangelical—and who yet never "stir up themselves to lay hold of" the Invisible and the Eternal—come together with earthward eyes and earth-bound souls—do not speak one word to God Himself as Spirit and Life and Love—do not breathe really into His ear one syllable of deep heartfelt confession, praise, or prayer—go as they came, self-satisfied or else murmuring, earth-filled or else empty, giddy and trifling or else disconsolate—at all events, without that faith which is the realisation of God Himself—and therefore to them and to their offering He has not, cannot have, respect. 2. "God testifying of His gifts." There is a worship to which God "has respect." That worship varies in shape and form. Once it was embodied in ritual. A service of rule and ceremony, of incense and vestment, of gift and sacrifice. Now it is a service of greater simplicity —of words read from a book, of Psalms recited or chanted, of hymns sung and accompanied, of instruction and exhortation spoken and listened to. Yet the idea of worship is one and the same. Six thousand years ago Abel worsbipped: we worship to-day. The idea, as the object, of worship, is unchanged. If it is effectual, if it is successful, God "testifies" of it still. Generally, in His Word— assuring us of its acceptance if it be this and this. Personally, in the soul—giving an answer of peace—calming, satisfying, strengthening, comforting, according to the need of each one. 3. Finally, "he being dead yet speaketh." The immortality of faith is a voice also. Abel speaks still. He, you will say, has a place in the Bible—and the text is of course exceptionally true of Scripture saints. Those to whom God hath borne witness in that Book which hath immortality, of course share the immortality of the Book and of its Author. It is true even of the wicked —even of the bad immortality which a place in the Bible gives if it give not the good. It is true of the Cains as well as the Abels—of the Ahabs as of the Elijahs —of the Gallios and the Demases as much as of St. Luke and of St. Paul. But we speak now of the undying voices of the faithful. Is it not true of them that they almost gain in audibility by distance? When did Paul himself ever speak as he

spoke in the great Reformation, fifteen hundred years after he fell on sleep, quickening Luther and Calvin, quickening Germany and England, with that life which has carried mind and might with it across two hemispheres? Nor is it only of inspired men, or of Bible characters, that the words of the text are true. "Being dead he yet speaketh" has an application, not to heroes of faith alone, but to very common inmates of very obscure homes. This will be in exact proportion as they have been enabled to live and to die in the light of a Divine revelation which is no respecter of persons. It is not only where biographies have kept alive the memory, and made the example of some Brainerd or Swarz, some Martyn or Patteson, vocal for ever to Christian homes and Christian Churches. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *The sacrifices of Cain and Abel*:—Both these sacrifices were in themselves acceptable to God, for under the Levitical institutions, wheat and barley were offered by the Divine command, as well as lambs, and bullocks, and goats. But the "faith" of Abel made his sacrifice "more excellent" than that of Cain; and "by his faith," not by his sacrifice, "he obtained witness that he was righteous"—"God" in some way, "bearing testimony" to him when he was presenting "his gifts." (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*) *Abel's faith*:—God is not taken with the cabinet, but with the jewel; He first respected Abel's faith and sincerity, and then his sacrifice; He disrespected Cain's infidelity and hypocrisy, and then his offering. (*S. Charnock.*) **He being dead, yet speaketh.**—*Posthumous influence*:—1. It is a natural desire of the human heart to prolong its relations to the world after death. All expect to die, but no one desires to be forgotten. We want to get the better of death. 2. This is, in one sense, a strange desire. Can we not trust our fellows without stretching out one dead hand from the grave to guide? Would it not be better to be forgotten? Still, we do not love to think of sundering wholly our relations with this world. 3. The desire for posthumous influence is an instinct implanted by God, a sign of the grandeur of the human soul, and suggestive of its destiny. 4. This desire of posthumous influence can be realised in three ways. (1) First, by our speech. It is not by the mastery of words alone that influence is perpetuated—by poet, scholar, or philosopher. You may lead a humble life, but your deliberate or casual speech will do a blessed or a baneful work ages hence. (2) By what we do. While one may with his wealth found a hospital, endow a college, equip a library, or build a fountain in the central square of some city, it is possible that an inconspicuous life may become a perpetual fountain for good after that life on earth has closed. (3) By what we are. Character is of all the most potent. Invisible as the wind and inaudible as the light, it is a real and enduring force. It is here that man exerts the greatest power for good or evil. It is here that a soul propagates influence on and through the ages for ever. 5. The influence that lives after us is not always what we intended it should be. In a moment of forgetfulness or passion we may speak that which will be remembered when all the good words we have uttered are forgotten. Lessons: 1. We infer from these solemn facts the immense extension of responsibility. "Plant a tree, Jamie," said Sir Walter Scott, "it will be growing while you are sleeping." So with our acts. 2. Those who have left us are still with us by their posthumous influence. 3. Remember that this continued activity of the dead is not the whole of the idea of a future life. We have a grander goal. There is another shore beyond the blue horizon, which the ship will surely reach; another nest to which we fly, where our ears again shall be gladdened by songs from those we have known, and by those whom, not having known, we influence. Those whom God has taken, who were, still are. (*E. B. Coe, D.D.*) *The teaching of the dead*:—I. THAT ALL THOSE PROJECTS AND ANTICIPATIONS, THOSE PURSUITS AND ENJOYMENTS, WHICH HAVE NOT A REFERENCE TO OUR ETERNAL STATE, ARE VAIN, FOOLISH, AND DELUSIVE. Ambitious men! some of these dead cry to you, "I have been surrounded by that glory which dazzles you; I have possessed those dignities for which you are struggling; I have been eulogised and applauded by men: but whither have all my honours conducted me? To the tomb! Whither will yours conduct you? To the tomb!" Covetous men! listen to what some of these dead cry to you: "I have accumulated riches; I have acquired revenues almost exhaustless. But of them all, what have I carried with me to the grave? A coffin and a shroud! What will you carry with you of the riches that you are amassing? A coffin and a shroud!" Sensualists! listen to what some of these dead cry to you: "I have indulged myself in every pleasure; I have refused nothing to my senses; I have rioted in sensual joys. But where did these joys terminate? In the tomb, in remorse, in perdition! What you are, I have been; what I am, you will shortly be." II. THAT LIFE IS BOTH SHORT AND UNCERTAIN. Visit the

repositories of the dead, and learn that "man that is born of a woman, is of few days: that he fleeth as a shadow, and continueth not." Do you not there hear those who were most advanced in age saying to you: "My associates spoke of the length of my life, of the number of my years, but now that I compare this life with the eternity which for me has swallowed up all time, how does it appear? Less than an atom, compared to the immensity of the universe; less than a drop of water, compared to the extended ocean." (*H. Kollock, D.D.*) *Influence after death:*—Those who spend their days on earth usefully and well, live after death by their example. A father's worth, and a mother's care, and a neighbour's kindness, will be remembered long, and, in many cases, be imitated by those who come after. The upright live after death by their precepts. They may have been wholly disregarded by those to whom they were first addressed; but the good seed will take root, and, sooner or later, yield fruits of increase. On the other hand, we are told that "the name of the wicked shall rot" (Prov. x. 7). Their influence may have been exceedingly great, but it shall become less and less, until it wholly dies away. If any one desires, then, that his name shall be remembered after death with feelings of gratitude and satisfaction, let him strive to be good. I. A MOTHER'S influence after death. "When I was a little child," says one, "my mother used to bid me kneel beside her, and place her hand upon my head while she prayed. Before I was old enough to know her worth, she died, and I was left too much to my own guidance. In the midst of temptations, whether at home or abroad, I have felt myself, again and again, irresistibly drawn back by the pressure of that same soft hand. A voice in my heart seemed to say: 'Oh, do not this wickedness, my child, nor sin against God!' I did not dare to disregard the call." Who has not heard of reprobate sons, after years of vice, stopped short in their course by remembrances of scenes of innocence and peace, in which a mother's anxious concern, a mother's reproving look, and a mother's gentle voice, speaking from the dead, exerted an influence more powerful than she could possibly have possessed while sitting under her own roof, and by her own fireside? Let Christian parents use this influence well, and the effect of their instructions shall never die. II. A TEACHER'S influence after death. The instructor's office is seldom estimated aright. How many difficulties to be overcome! How much discretion to be used! The tear of fond regret will glisten in the eye as the scholars, grown to adult age, make mention of their old teacher—the teacher in his grave. "He, being dead, yet speaketh." Have not instructors a high incentive to prove themselves faithful? III. The PHILANTHROPIST'S influence after death. Kind and compassionate ones, go on in your useful ways. You are purchasing for yourselves immortality. IV. An AUTHOR'S influence after death. "Books," says Addison, "are the legacies that a great genius leaves to mankind." The author dies. Not so his works. He still speaks through many lands by many tongues. Though already entered into his rest, he is, in reality, vigorously at work. He is moulding the minds, and influencing the hearts of untold thousands. V. The CLERGYMAN'S influence after death. His life may have passed noiselessly away. His spirit—the fragrant memory of his life—lingers with his flock, and "He, being dead, yet speaketh." VI. The influence of every GOOD PERSON after death. (*J. N. Norton, D.D.*) *The moral influence we exert after death:*—Every man that plays a part in the great drama of human life, leaves, at his departure, an impress and an influence, more or less extensive and lasting. No fact is more self-evident, or more universally admitted, than the text; and no fact withal is more generally disregarded by the living. And, just in proportion to the width of the sphere in which the departed moved, and the strength of intellectual and moral character they possessed and developed, will be the duration and the plastic power of that influence they have left behind them. This is the fair side of the portrait; and were the influence left behind by the dead universally of this holy character, then would men be throughout their biography like visitant angels of mercy passing athwart our miserable world, distilling balm and scattering light among men's sons; or as transient gales from the spicy lands of the East, or glorious meteors arising in rapid succession amidst the moral darkness of the earth, imparting light and fearlessness to its many pilgrims, and this would be bettered by every successive generation, till it arose and expanded to its millenial blessedness and peace. But alas! if many of the dead yet speak for God, and for the eternal welfare of humanity, many, many also speak for Satan, and ply after, as before their death, the awful work of sealing souls in their slumber, and smoothing and adorning the paths that lead to eternal death. Thus the departed sinner, as well as the departed saint, "being dead yet speaketh." Thus our sins as

well as our virtues survive. Thus we exert a posthumous influence which adds either an impulse upon the advancing chariot of salvation, or throws stumbling-blocks and obstacles in its way. If any earth-born joys are admitted as visitants amid the celestial choirs, the joy that springs from having written saving and sanctifying works, is the sweetest that reaches the hearts of the saved. And I can fancy a Baxter, a Newton, a Scott, a Rutherford, rejoice with exceeding joy when the angels that minister to them that are to be heirs of salvation, bring word that, in consequence of the "Awakening Call to the Unconverted," or "The Force of Truth," or the "Letters from the Prison of Aberdeen," some sinner has been aroused from his lethargy, and made a partaker of grace, and mercy, and peace. And if, as we believe, any poignant recollections from this side "the bourne whence no traveller returns," reach the memories of the lost, not the least bitter will be the remembrance of having written volumes which are circulated by every library, and sold by every vender, in which the foundations of morality are sapped, and the youth of our world poisoned throughout the whole range of their moral economy. Oh, it will be the sorest sting of that worm which never dies, that their name, and their creed, and their principles after them, gather converts on earth, and carry fell desolation to homes that had otherwise been happy, and corruption to hearts that had else beat high with philanthropy and piety. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *A voice from the grave:*—I. THE FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN MINISTER "BEING DEAD, YET SPEAKETH" IN HIS WRITINGS. II. A CHRISTIAN MINISTER "BEING DEAD, YET SPEAKETH" BY THE MOUTH OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BORN AGAIN UNDER HIS MINISTRY. III. THE FAITHFUL MINISTER OF CHRIST "BEING DEAD, YET SPEAKETH" THROUGH HIS EXAMPLE. It is said of the virtuous and amiable Fénélon, that his life was even more eloquent than his discourses. IV. A FAITHFUL MINISTER "BEING DEAD, YET SPEAKETH," THROUGH THE MEMORY AND CONSCIENCE OF THEM THAT HEARD HIM. (*M. Leishman.*) *The speech of the dead:*—St. Paul seems to make it part of the recompense of Abel that he speaketh, though dead. The speaking after death appears given as a privilege or reward; and it will be both interesting and instructive to survey it under such point of view. I. Let us, therefore, examine, in the first place, THE FACT HERE ASSERTED OF ABEL, and then consider it as constituting a portion of his recompense—a recompense which, if awarded to one of the righteous, may lawfully be desired by all. We conclude that Adam was not left to invent a religion for himself when he carried with him from Paradise a prophetic notice of the seed of the woman. In the words which precede our text, the apostle states that "by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." It would be hard to define wherein the faith was exhibited, if not in the nature of the offering. Cain, as well as Abel, displayed faith in the existence of God, and owned in Him the Creator and Preserver. But Abel alone displayed faith in an appointed expiation, conforming himself, on a principle of faith, to what had been made a fundamental article in the theology of the guilty. So that, by and through his sacrifice and its consequences, was Abel the energetic preacher of the great scheme of redemption, the witness to our race, in the very infancy of its being, of a Mediator to be provided and a Mediator to be rejected. And not only then. He sealed his testimony with his blood, but he was not silenced by death. We still go to his sepulchre when we seek an eloquent and thrilling assertion of the peril of swerving from the revealed will of God. He rises up from the earth, which drank in the blood of his offering and then of himself, and warns the self-sufficient that their own guidance can lead them to nothing but destruction. I hear the utterances of this slaughtered worthy. They are utterances, loud and deep, against any one amongst us who is too philosophical for the gospel or too independent for a Redeemer. They denounce the rationalist who would make his theology from creation, the self-righteous who would plead his own merit, and the flatterer who would think that there may be a path to heaven which is not a path of tribulation. II. And now let us consider the fact alleged in our text under THE LIGHT OF A RECOMPENSE TO ABEL. The manner in which the fact is introduced indicates that it was part of the reward procured to Abel by his faith, that he should be a preacher to every generation. But that with which a righteous man is rewarded must be a real good, and, as such, may justly be sought by those who copy his righteousness. This opens before us an interesting field of inquiry. If Abel were recompensed by the being appointed, as it were, a preacher to posterity, it seems to follow that it may fitly be an object of Christian desire to do good to after-generations, and that it is not necessarily a proud and unhallowed wish to survive dissolution and be remembered when dead. It cannot indeed become us as Christians to make our own fame or reputation our end;

but it is another question whether Christianity afford no scope for the passion for distinction which beats so high and prompts to so much. Let it be, for example, a man's ruling desire that he may be instrumental in spreading through the world the knowledge of Christ, and we may say of him that he is actuated by a motive which actuates the Almighty Himself, and that there is something in his ambition which deserves to be called god-like. It is not possible that a grander aim should be proposed, nor a purer impulse obeyed, by any of our race. And where this ambition is entertained—and it is an ambition in which every true Christian must share—can there lawfully be no consciousness of the worth, no desire for the possession of the recompense awarded to Abel? We believe of this worthy that, having his own faith fixed on a propitiation for sin, he must have longed to bring others to a similar confidence. Would it then have been no recompense to him had he been assured that the memory of his sacrifice was never to perish? Could it have been a recompense only on the supposition that he craved human distinction and longed, like candidates for earthly renown, to transmit his name with honour to posterity? Not so. It has been for the good of the Church that Abel has preached, and still preaches, to the nations. Many, in every age, have been strengthened by his example, many animated by his piety, many warned by his death. Thus the result of his surviving his dissolution has been the furtherance of the objects which we may suppose most desired by Abel. And the like may be declared of others. I take the case of some great champion of the faith, some bold confessor, who zealously published the truth and then sealed it with his blood. The place where this man preached, and that where he died, are hallowed spots; and the tomb in which his ashes sleep is an altar on which successive generations consecrate themselves to God. The martyr survives the stake or the scaffold, and leads on in after-ages the armies of the Lord. The tyrant who crushed him made him imperishable, and he died that he might be life to the faith of posterity. And is it not reward to the worthies of an earlier time that they are thus instrumental in upholding the doctrines which they contended for as truth; that they still publish the tenets in whose support they lifted up their voices till the world rang with the message; and that districts or countries are so haunted by their memories, that the righteous seem to have them for companions and to be cheered by their counsels? And who further will doubt that a reputation such as this, thus precious and profitable, might be lawfully desired by the most devoted of Christ's followers. There is something grand and ennobling about such ambition. It seems to me that the man who entertains and accomplishes the desire of witnessing for truth after death, triumphs over death in the highest possible sense. I could almost dare to say of such a man that he never dies. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Speech from the speechless:* —These are strange words, are they not?—a dead man speaking. Yet they are true, although Abel has been dead a long time. But we must attend to what Abel is saying just now to us, for he being dead is yet speaking. 1. He says, "Take care how you worship God." Do not be misled by bad examples. When you come to worship, come as Abel did, to worship before the Lord, and to hear what He says, and try to do it. 2. But Abel speaks this also—"Beware," he says, "of envy." The Bible tells us that Cain hated Abel, because Abel's works were good, while his were evil. Bad people always hate good people, just because they are good, and so different from themselves. They begin with envy, then envy becomes prejudice, and prejudice grows into spite, and then spite becomes hatred. 3. Abel's tone gets graver still when he says, "There are some things that can never be mended." No, never! When once Cain had struck that blow at his brother, could he bring Abel back to life again? When you are ten years old, can you go back and become just nine? When a man is thirty years old, can he ever again become ten? No; you see there are some things that can never be undone. Now the Lord says, they that seek Him early shall find Him. 4. But Abel also says, There is not such a thing as a secret. Cain thought, maybe, he could easily hide his crime. But no! God saw it. (*J. R. Howatt.*) *Earthly immortality:*—Very little is known of Abel, of whom this is spoken, except that he represented before God the spiritual element, while his brother represented the carnal and the secular. He must have been a man whose moral nature was impressive, mild, gentle. Yet he produced an effect, not only upon his own time, but upon after times. This living after a man is gone, may almost be said to be a universal aspiration. Almost all men, when they rise out of the savage state, begin to come under the influence of this ambition. We are not content, either, with our individual sphere. We desire to be known and felt outside of ourselves, outside of our household, outside of our neighbourhood. And

our satisfaction grows if we find that our life affects the life of larger communities, and goes out through the nation and through the world. To a highly poetic nature, it seems as though it were a kind of earthly immortality. There is, however, a great difference in men's ambitions for such prolonged life. There is a great difference in the moral values of this longing for extended being and influence. If it be the ambition of vanity; if men desire, while alive, to be felt in order that they may be praised; if their thought of other persons is simply how to draw from them revenue for themselves, or how they can make themselves idols, and make men believe that they are gods—if it be this, then it is a base and perverted form of that which is a very good thing in its nobler and higher form. And such men are very poor indeed, and contemptible, after death. Selfishness, by its own law, not only moves in simple circles, but is short-lived. What men do for themselves is soon expended, and is soon forgotten. Only that part of a man's life which includes other men's good, and especially the public good, is likely to be felt long after he himself is dead. The physical industries of this world have two relations in them—one to the actor and one to the public. Honest business is more really a contribution to the public than it is to the manager of the business himself. Who built that old mill which has ground the bread of two generations? Men do not know. His name may be on some mouldering stone in the graveyard. But it is the man who built it that is working in it still. It was his skill and engineering industry that put it up. The builders of stores, and warehouses, and shops, and dwellings, are not building them for wages merely. They build them upon contract, to be sure; but their interest in them does not expire with the fulfilment of that contract. It is not how much these things have done for them that limits their interest in them, but how much they were able, through these things, to make the brain work in the future, and so to incorporate their usefulness into the lower ranges and economies of human life. So not alone are those men benefactors who are warriors, and statesmen, and scholars, and poets. These other men, too, in a humbler way, but really, ought to have a share of our thought and credit. They who promote industry, and make it more prolific of profit, are benefactors. Oh! that men might know how much benefit there is in mechanical operations and in benevolent art! Oh! that men might take comfort in knowing that when they are dead they shall yet speak. Experience shows that these advances in physical things are more beneficently felt by the poor than by others. They are felt by the rich; but everything that contributes to the convenience and prosperity of the community, and so raises it in the scale, is, first or last, a greater benefit to the poor than to any others. It is not the selfish or personal element that prolongs one's life. A man that is dead is not to be remembered simply because he invented something. He is to be remembered because that which he invented goes on working benefit after he is dead. And so long as it is doing good to men, so long he is to be remembered. It is that which we do for the public good that makes our physical industries virtuous and beneficent. Next, men who organise their money into public uses, live as long as the benefaction itself serves the public. There is many a man who, having money, says to his right hand, to which the Lord denied the sculptor's art, "Thou shalt carve a statue"; and he takes some poor unfriended artist from the village, and endows him, and sends him to Rome, and brings him back, and puts him into life. Powers and Jacksons carve beauteous figures to last for generations; and it is the rich man who patronised them who is working through the men that he fashioned and formed. There is many a man who says, "Oh, tongue! thou art dumb; but thou shalt have tongues that shall speak." And he searches out from among the poor those that are ambitious to learn, and that are likely to become scholars, and puts them forward, and sees that they are educated. And thereafter this worthy minister, this true statesman, that wise and upright lawyer, and this unimpeachable judge, become, as it were, an extension of its own self. A man has the gift of wealth-amassing; and he says to himself, "Selfish gains will die with me, and be buried with me so far as I am concerned." And he thinks of the village where as a boy he played, and remembers its barrenness from want of taste and from poverty, and says, "I will go back there, and that village shall be made beautiful." And not only does he build there, within moderation, and with taste and beauty, a dwelling, but his house becomes the measure and the mark of all the houses in the neighbourhood. It is his fence that set all the people in the village putting their fences right. And more generous ideas in regard to houses and grounds are instilled into the minds of the young. And the young men and maidens, when they get married and settle down in life, exercise better taste in fitting up their homes. Their houses, though

small and plain, are more tastefully planned, and there are more trees about their grounds, and more flowers in their gardens. There springs up on every side an imitation of that rich man's example. And in the course of twenty or twenty-five years, he will have generated the taste of the community. Or he goes beyond that. He inspires in all the neighbourhood a disposition for beauty by planting trees along the highway. And when he shall have been dead a hundred years, he will be remembered as the man who made that long walk of beauty. Not only may wealth be organised into institutions of secular pleasure and comfort and beauty, but it may be organised still more potently into institutions of mercy—into houses of refuge; into retreats for the unfortunate; into hospitals for the sick; into orphan asylums; into houses of industry and of employment. You will die in a score of years, perhaps; but not a score of centuries need slay the institution which you have reared. Oh! what a benefaction for any man that has money, and has faith to see how it can work after he has gone, and a heart to set it to work. Being dead, he speaks, and speaks chorally. But even more important are those institutions which go before society, march ahead, as it were, and by distributing intelligence and promoting virtue, prevent suffering. Take, for instance, that single foundation, the Bampton Lectures. A New England man, dying, left a fund the income of which every year was to be devoted to paying for a course of lectures which were to vindicate the authenticity of the Scriptures and the divinity of our Lord, and the evangelical religion. From that fund there has sprung a line of lectures that constitutes one of the most noble monuments of learning and piety that has been known in any language on the globe. Could money be made to work such important results in any other way? These endowments have in them immortality on earth. This is the reason why I say that men ought not to be poor if they can be rich. We may rise to a higher grade and to a more familiar ground, therefore, since it is more frequently inculcated in the pulpit. As virtue and spirituality are higher than physical qualities; as the wealth of society lies more in the goodness of Christian institutions and Christian men than in ease, or abundance, or pleasure, so he most wisely prolongs his life to after-days who so lives as to give form and perpetuity to spiritual influences. Whoever makes the simple virtues more honourable and attractive among men, prolongs his own life. The evil of untruth I need not expound to you. He who makes truth beautiful to men in his day; he who makes men want to be true, and seek after truth, and believe in it, becomes a benefactor. So that I think one single character in Walter Scott's novels is worth more than all the characters put together of many more fashionable novels. All who have opened the Divine nature to men; all who have developed to men higher moral truths, and made them like their daily bread; all who have lifted the life of the world up into a higher sphere—they, although dead, yet speak. They may not be spoken of; but, what is more to the point, they themselves speak, and speak the same language; and all the better, because when a man is dead the prejudices and the imperfections that lingered about him are dead too. And then his voice becomes clearer, and his testimony is more widely received. Lastly, those who have the gift of embodying moral truths and noble experiences (which are the best truths that ever dawn on the world) in verse; those who have the power to give their higher thoughts and feelings the wings of poetry—they, being dead, speak far back. We hear Homer chanting yet, and chanting the best things that men knew in his day. And the world is still willing to listen to the oldest poet. And he who has had permission to write one genuine hymn, to send forth one noble sonnet, to sing one stately epic, may well fold his wings and his hands, and say, "Now let Thy servant depart in peace." What are you doing? Young man, what do you propose? Will you build pyramids of stone, or will you build pyramids of thought? He that puts his life into doing good; he that would purify men; he that would suffer for the sake of suffering men; he that puts the enginery of feeling and the power of business into the work of beneficence in this world, though he may be subject to obloquy, though he may be under a cloud, though he may lose himself, will be remembered when he is dead. The time will come when his name will shine out brighter than the morning star. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Abel, the model speaker:*—From what the apostle says of Abel in our text, we may consider him as the model speaker. It may seem strange to take this view of him when we do not know a single word that he ever spoke. "Actions speak louder than words." I. THE MATTER OF ABEL'S SPEAKING, or what he spoke about. When a person is going to make a speech, it is very important for him to choose a good subject. Abel did this. The thing to which the apostle here refers, as that by which Abel

speaks to us, is the sacrifice which he offered. Abel was a model speaker because, by what he did, he spoke about Christ and His death. And this is the most important thing that any one can ever speak about. 1. This is an important subject to speak about, because we cannot be good till we know about Jesus and His death. 2. We cannot be happy till we know about Christ and His death. 3. We cannot be safe till we know about Jesus and His death. II. Abel was a model speaker also because of the MANNER of his speaking. He spoke by his life, or actions; and there are three ways in which this made him a model speaker. 1. In the first place, it made him a plain speaker. Everybody who has heard what the Apostle Paul says about Abel's sacrifice, understands what it meant. When he spoke by that action, Abel was speaking plainly. 2. This made him a loud speaker. He spoke so loudly by that act, that all round the world, wherever the Bible has gone, the voice of what he did has been heard. And if we wish to speak so loudly, that we may be heard for a long time and to a great distance, we must speak by our actions, by doing what God tells us to do. 3. Abel was a model speaker, because the action by which he spoke made him an effectual speaker. The action of Abel in offering his sacrifice spoke very effectually to the Apostle Paul. And nothing that Abel could have said by words about the sacrifice of Christ would have had so much effect in making people feel the importance of that sacrifice as his quiet action in standing by his altar and presenting on it the sacrifice which God had commanded to be offered. (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *The dead speaking:* — There is a double solemnity in the life that we lead. We believe we are to be judged at God's bar for the deeds done in the body; but by those same deeds we are doomed to help or hurt all with whom we are or shall be connected here below. This is not an arbitrary decree: it is the necessary condition of human life. It is a monitory, and at the same time a cheering doctrine. One might think the joyful side of the alternative would alone suffice to make every man good and faithful. As the tree dies, but in its very decay nourishes the roots of a new forest; as the little silkworm dies, but his fine fabric does not perish; as the coral-insect dies, but his edifice breaks the angry wave that has traversed the ocean, and becomes the foundation of greenness and future harvests: so, when you die, be your place lofty or lowly, your self-sacrificing endeavours shall leave enduring riches and a moral bulwark. With what new interest does this thought clothe all the relations of human life! It speaks to you, parents. The dead speak, however brief the term of the moral career, and even though that career be closed while the moral nature still sleeps in God's own charge. The little child, fading like a tender plant, has not wholly perished even from the earth. Though it came but to smile and die, yet has it left an influence not fleeting, but long abiding. That gentle image of innocence, that strange power of patience, shall soften your heart, and make it move with tender sympathy to the distresses of your kind, even to the end of your own days. But a peculiar power belongs to those who have been wayfarers upon earth, who have fought the battle of life, and gained the victory over temptation. They encourage me in my toils; they say to me, "Here is the end of thy griefs"; they warn me against the indulgence of my errors and sins—

> "Soft rebukes in blessings ended,
> Breathing from their lips of air."

What, then, are we doing, what principles cherishing, what dispositions manifesting? How shall we reappear to the contemplative eye of those who shall here outlive us? How would you return in the survivor's memory, were you now to receive from God your summons? As a faithful father who let slip no opportunity to train up his offspring in the way of virtue, who never sacrificed the welfare of his family to his own pursuit of profit and pelf, but sought for them the treasure that is better than gold? And how would it be with you, children, were you called out of the world? You would not utterly vanish. Your parents, at least, would still behold you? Would it be with unmingled satisfaction that your reappearing images would inspire them? But the appeal is to every mortal. "No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Place thyself in thought on the other side of the grave, and, with reverted eye, mark how it will be. From that position, dost thou look back, and see selfishness, meanness, pride, envy, lust, passion, absorbing love of the world, all from thy life working ruin, according to their nature, on thy associates and fellow-men? God forbid! (*C. A. Bartol.*)

Posthumous influence:—Who can estimate the influence of the great departed on successive generations? Achilles, the Grecian hero, as described by Homer, is said to have formed Alexander, and Napoleon had the Macedonian conqueror ever before his mind. Julius Cæsar was the hero of Wellington, and the Commentaries of that Roman general were, like the Iliad to Alexander, his constant text-book. Socrates and Plato, Aristotle and Euclid, have long held sway in the schools of the learned, and continue to form the minds of modern youth as they did those of old. Moses moulded Hebrew legislation, and David gave to his nation a character. Luther breathed his ardent spirit into the piety and church of his fatherland, and Calvin's clear intellect and systematic thought pervaded a large portion of Christendom. The myriad-minded Shakespeare, the sententious Bacon, the translators of the Bible in their expressive Saxon, moulded English literature, while the galaxy of illustrious statesmen, warriors, and merchants of bygone days, made England what it has become. Wallace and Bruce, Knox and Melville, are the representative men of Scotland, and the fathers of their country. (*S. Steel.*) *Dead, yet living*:—"The cedar," says a Christian writer, "is the most useful when dead. It is the most productive when its place knows it no more. There is no timber like it. Firm in the grain, and capable of the finest polish, the tooth of no insect will touch it, and Time himself can hardly destroy it. Diffusing a perpetual fragrance through the chambers which it ceils, the worm will not corrode the book which it protects, nor the moth corrupt the garment which it guards; all but immortal itself, it transfuses its amaranthine qualities to the objects around it. Every Christian is useful in his life, but the goodly cedars are the most useful afterwards. Luther is dead, but the Reformation lives. Bunyan is dead, but his bright spirit still walks the earth in his 'Pilgrim's Progress.' Baxter is dead, but souls are quickened by the 'Saints' Rest.' Elliot is dead, but the missionary spirit is young. Howard is dead, but modern philanthropy is only commencing its career. Raikes is dead, but the Sunday-schools go on." *Influence lost in form but not in force*:—The Amazon, the River Plata, Orinoco, Mississippi, Zaire, Senegal, Indus, Ganges, Yangtsee, or Irawaddy, &c., &c.—these, and such like stupendous rivers, extend their influence to a considerable distance from the coast, and occasionally perplex and delay the navigator in open sea, who finds himself struggling against a difficulty wholly unconscious of the cause. The River Plata, at a distance of six hundred miles from the mouth of the river, was found to maintain a rate of a mile an hour; and the Amazon, at three hundred miles from the entrance, was found running nearly three miles per hour, its original direction being but little altered, and its water nearly fresh. We are reminded by this of other influences which also lose their form, but not their force. Though the man dies, his influence still lives. He no longer acts upon the world in the capacity of public speaker, writer or statesman, but his influence has gone forth and joined the great ocean of thought. The sect or party changes its form and loses its individuality, but its influence has gone forth and is felt in the current of opinion. All the separate and distinct influences of men and sects become universalised in the great sea of eternity. (*Scientific Illustrations and Symbols.*) *The ministry of the dead to the living*:—When, says Louis Figuier, the leaves have performed their functions, when the fruits have appeared, matured, ripened, vegetation has entered into a new phase; the leaves lose their brilliant green and assume their autumnal tint. A certain air of sadness pervades these ornaments of our fields which proclaims their approaching dissolution. The leaves, withered and deformed, will soon cumber the ground to be blown hither and thither by the wind. But when separated from the vegetable which has given birth to and matured them, they are not lost to the earth which receives them. Everything in nature has its use, and leaves have their uses also in the continuous circle of vegetable reproduction. The leaves which strewed the ground at the foot of the trees, or which have been disseminated by the autumn winds over the country, perish slowly upon the soil, where they are transformed into the *humus*, or vegetable moulds, indispensable to the life of plants. Thus the *débris* of vegetable purposes for the coming and formation of a new vegetation. Death prepares for new life; the first and the last give their hands, so to speak, in vegetable nature, and form the mysterious circle of organic life which has neither beginning nor end. When man has performed his functions here and ended his labours, he too fades like the leaf, and is borne away by the cold breeze of death. But like the leaf in death, so man, though dead, ministers to the living. He has not merely consumed so much of the productions of the earth, leaving nothing in return. He has left behind him his thoughts, his

act, his example, his experiences, written or unwritten, and these will all perform their valuable ministration to the living, as do those leaves of autumn to the younger life which grows over their graves. (*Ibid*) *Dead, yet speaking* :—About the middle of the seventeenth century, the venerable John Flavel was settled at Dartmouth, where his labours were greatly blessed. On one occasion he preached from these words : "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, maranatha." The discourse was unusually solemn. At the conclusion of the service, when Mr. Flavel arose to pronounce the benediction, he paused, and said, "How shall I bless this whole assembly, when every person in it who loveth not the Lord Jesus Christ is anathema, maranatha?" The solemnity of this address deeply affected the audience, and one gentleman, a person of rank, was so much overcome by his feelings, that he fell senseless to the floor. In the congregation was a lad named Luke Short, then about fifteen years old, a native of Dartmouth, who, shortly after the event just narrated, entered into the seafaring line, and sailed to America, where he passed the rest of his life. Mr. Short's life was lengthened much beyond the usual term; and when a hundred years old, he had sufficient strength to work on his farm, and his mental faculties were very little impaired. Hitherto he had lived in carelessness and sin; he was now a "sinner a hundred years old," and apparently ready to "die accursed." But one day, as he sat in his field, he busied himself in reflecting on his past life. Recurring to the events of his youth, his memory fixed upon Mr. Flavel's discourse, already alluded to, a considerable part of which he was able to recollect. The affectionate earnestness of the preacher's manner, the important truths which he delivered, and the effects produced on the congregation, were brought fresh to his mind. The blessing of God accompanied his meditations; he felt that he had not "loved the Lord Jesus Christ"; he feared the dreadful "anethema"; conviction was followed by repentance, and at length this aged sinner obtained peace through the blood of Christ, and was found "in the way of righteousness." He joined the Congregational church in Middleborough, and till the period of his death, which took place in his one hundred and sixteenth year, he gave pleasing evidence of true piety. (*K. Arvine.*) *Posthumous influence* :—Da Vinci's famous painting of "The Lord's Supper," originally adorning the dining-room of a convent, has suffered such destruction from the ravages of time, war, and abuse, that none of its original beauty remains. Yet it has been copied and engraved; and impressions of the great picture have been multiplied through all civilised lands. Behold a parable of posthumous influence. (*New Cyclopædia of Illustrations.*) *Posthumous influence* :—Some stars are so distant that their beams may have occupied thousands of years in journeying to the earth, and yet these bodies, if suddenly annihilated, would still continue to shine upon us for thousands of years to come. So, too, there are great men whose existence has long since terminated, but the influence of whose spirit still irradiates our world. Milton, Shakespeare, and Christ, though gone from our sphere, still shine upon it as spiritual stars of the first magnitude. (*Scientific Illustrations and Symbols.*) *Influence seen after many days* :—Between the sowing and the reaping there may be a long interval. The hand that gave either the rich man's abundance or the poor widow's farthing for the spread of the gospel, and the lip that either falteringly or eloquently spoke for Christ, may lie cold in the grave; but the good seed sowed in God's husbandry shall yet yield a glorious harvest. I have seen a little four-paged tract, written half a century ago, that recently found its way into a heathen hamlet, and converted a whole household. There lives on yonder Pacific coast a faithful follower of Jesus whose youthful waywardness brought down a parent's grey head in sorrow to the grave. But the while her weeping words of prayer had buried themselves deep in the boy's bosom; and when they told him of her death it was as if a spirit had come back from eternity to glide through his chambers of imagery, breathing again her tender words, and looking on him with her eyes of weeping love—and the strong man was a child again, a child of grace—yea, a child of glory. (*C. Wadsworth.*) *The after-glow of life* :—When the sun goes below the horizon he is not set; the heavens glow for a full hour after his departure. And when a great and good man sets, the sky of this world is luminous long after he is out of sight. Such a man cannot die out of this world. When he goes he leaves behind much of himself. Being dead he speaks. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Ver. 5. **Enoch was translated.**—*Enoch* :—I. A CAREER DISTINGUISHED FOR ITS GODLINESS. "Walked with God." His life was an embodiment of the Divine. 1.

Devoted to God. (1) Intimately acquainted with God. (2) In constant fellowship with God. (3) Full of confidence in God. (4) Engaged in active service for God. 2. Satisfactory to God. 3. Commended by God. II. A CAREER REMARKABLE IN ITS TERMINATION. "Translated." 1. Exempted from the great trial of life. He was too full of the living God to die. (1) A special honour for his extraordinary holiness. (2) An intimation how all might have been taken out of the world, had there been no sin. (3) A prophecy of victory over death for all the good at the resurrection. 2. Removed from the world in a unique manner. (1) Pleasant. (2) Mysterious. (3) Final. (4) Suggestive. Proving—(*a*) That there is a future state. (*b*) That the body and soul exist hereafter. (c) That the departed good dwell with God for ever. (*B. D. Johns.*) *Enoch, one of the world's great teachers*:—1. It is strange that so little is said about Enoch. 2. The comparative shortness of his stay upon earth. 3. The manifest singularity of the life he lived. I. HE TAUGHT THE WORLD BY HIS LIFE. 1. He walked with God. This implies—(1) An abiding consciousness of the Divine presence. (2) Cordial fellowship. (3) Spiritual progress. 2. He pleased God. As the loadstar seems to beam more brilliantly in the firmament the darker grow the clouds that float about it, so Enoch's life must have been a luminous power in his age of black depravity. II. HE TAUGHT THE WORLD BY HIS TRANSLATION—1. That death is not a necessity of human nature. 2. That there is a sphere of human existence beyond this. 3. That there is a God in the universe who approves of goodness. 4. That the mastering of sin is the way to a grand destiny. III. HE TAUGHT THE WORLD BY HIS PREACHING. 1. The advent of the Judge. 2. The gathering of the saints. 3. The conviction of sinners. (*Homilist.*) *Faith the secret of holy life and triumphant death*:—I. THE FAITH BY WHICH THIS HOLY LIFE WAS MAINTAINED. 1. It was a belief in the nature of God. Enoch believed Him to be real, with a belief which reverenced, obeyed, trusted, loved Him. 2. It was also a belief in God's gifts to all who seek them. II. THE HOLY LIFE WHICH RESULTED FROM THIS FAITH. 1. Faith led him to please God. 2. This pleasing God was accompanied with the testimony that he pleased Him. 3. This testimony enabled him to walk with God. III. THE TRIUMPHANT DEATH WHICH RESULTED FROM THIS HOLY LIFE. 1. This death is promised to faith. 2. It is the natural consequence of a holy life. 3. It is assured by the Divine love to those who please God. (*C. New.*) *God's testimony to the faith of Enoch*:—I. BY WHAT AGENCY THIS STATE OF EXISTENCE IS SECURED. It must always be regarded as of the first consequence to ascertain the sources of human characters and human habits, and to what supports they are indebted for their permanence. For many purposes it is important to ascertain and to acquire information with respect to what we may call the secondary virtues of man—that is, those virtues which do not affect his relation towards God; but infinitely more important respecting those dispositions of mind which tend towards futurity. It is, then, above all things important to know how men are led to please God. 1. And here, it must be observed, that men never attain to the state of existence which is now to be described, whilst they are left to the ordinary operation of their own faculties, and governed by the ordinary impulses of their own passions and desires. While men remain in their original condition, under the government of the primitive tendencies of their nature, they are in fact the uniform and positive objects of Divine disapprobation. 2. This fact having been established, we are prepared to advert to a corresponding fact, which may also be scripturally established, namely, that men are brought into a state of existence that is pleasing to God, they are placed in it, and continued in it, solely and entirely by the exertion of the power of the Spirit of God Himself. II. BY WHAT CHARACTERISTICS THIS STATE OF EXISTENCE IS DISTINGUISHED. 1. It comprehends faith in the Divine testimony. Faith has a peculiar connection with the approbation of God, in consequence of its being the ordained means of imputing to man the merit of a justifying righteousness, that in itself is sufficient to secure his final acceptance as the Judge of the universe. 2. This state of existence also comprehends obedience to the Divine commandments. It cannot be justly questioned by any one that the pleasure of God in man is connected with the conformity of man in heart and in life to the laws of God. The Being who, by the necessity of His moral nature, abhors iniquity, by the same necessity of His moral nature must delight in holiness. But one thing must be remarked by the way of caution. God is not pleased with man's holiness because there is anything of original or independent merit in it; He is pleased with it because He contemplates in it His own work; just as He was pleased when, after the Creation, He is said to have looked on it, and pro-

nounced that it was all "very good": He is pleased with it, because it sheds His own lustre, and reflects back the beauty of His own perfections: He is pleased with it, because it advances the revenue of His glory, because it secures the happiness of those in whom it dwells. 3. This state of existence comprehends gratitude for the Divine goodness. The offering of praise by believing men to God cannot but be pleasing in His sight; it is so with the gratitude which is offered in heaven, and it cannot but be so with the gratitude offered on earth. III. BY WHAT ADVANTAGES THIS STATE OF EXISTENCE IS COMMENDED. 1. Those who exist in a state that is pleasing to God are privileged with near and intimate communion with God. 2. Those who exist in this state possess also the consolations and supports of God in all times of difficulty and of danger. 3. Those who exist in the state which is now described have the security of eternal and perfect happiness in heaven. Pleasing God has an especial connection with the joy of God. (*J. Parsons.*) *Enoch's translation*:—I. THAT THE END AND THE GREAT PRIVILEGE OF FAITH IS TO BE TRANSLATED OUT OF THE WORLD INTO THE HAPPINESS OF THE ETERNAL STATE. 1. I shall prove the point by Scripture: "Receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls" (1 Pet. i. 9). Heaven is there proposed as the chief reward of faith; all that we do, all that we suffer, all that we believe, it is with an aim at the hope of the salvation of our souls. The last article of our creed is everlasting life. 2. I shall by a few reasons prove the interest of believers in eternal life, and why faith gives a title to glory. (1) Because by faith we are made sons; all our right and title is by adoption. Children may expect a child's portion. (2) These are the terms of the eternal covenant between God and Christ, that believers should have a right to heaven by Christ's death; therefore, whenever the Father's love and Christ's purchase are mentioned, faith is the solemn condition. (3) Because faith is the mother of obedience, which is the way to eternal life; faith gives a title, and works give an evidence. (4) By faith that life is begun which shall only be consummated and perfected in glory. The life of glory and the life of grace are the same in substance, but not in degree. Here faith takes Christ, and then life is begun, though in glory it is perfected (1 John v. 12). Use 1. To press you to get faith upon this ground and motive, it will give you an interest in heaven. Use 2. It serves to direct you how to exercise and act faith in order to the everlasting state. Five duties believers must perform. (1) The first work and foundation of all is to accept of Christ in the offers of the gospel; there is the foundation of a glorious estate. (2) It directs you to exercise your faith to believe the promise of heaven which God hath made. (3) Get your own title confirmed; lay claim to your inheritance. (4) Let us often renew our hopes by serious and distinct thoughts. This is the way to anticipate heaven, by musing upon it (ver. 1). (5) Another work of faith is earnestly to desire and long after the full accomplishment of glory. Faith bewrayeth itself by desires as well as thoughts. All things hasten to their centre. Use 3. To exalt the mercy of God to believers; once sinners, and by grace made believers. Observe the wonderful love and grace of God in three steps—(1) That He hath provided such an estate for believers. What a miracle of mercy is this that God should think of taking poor despicable dust and ashes, and planting them in the upper paradise, that they should be carried into heaven and made companions of the angels. (2) That this state is provided freely, and upon such gracious terms. (3) That God should send up and down the world to offer this salvation to men. Use 4. Comfort to God's children against wants, and against troubles and persecutions, and against death itself. II. THOSE THAT WOULD LIVE WITH GOD HEREAFTER MUST LEARN TO PLEASE GOD ERE THEY DEPART HENCE. 1. What it is to please God. It implies both coming to God, and walking with God. 2. The necessity of pleasing God. (1) Because this is the means and condition without which we shall never come to enjoy God; it is the way to fit the sons of God for glory, though not the cause of glory (chap. xii. 14). (2) There is a necessity of it by way of sign, and as a pledge of our living with God hereafter—"Before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." (3) It is necessary by way of preparation. Those that walk with God are meet to live with God; they change their place, but not their company; here they walk with God, and there they live with Him for ever. 3. The necessity of pleasing God in the present life—"For before his translation," it is said, "he had this testimony, that he pleased God." There is a time for all things, and the time of pleasing God is in the present life. (1) Because this is the time of grace. Here we are invited to walk with God: now we have the means, then we have the recompenses; here Christ saith (Matt. xi. 28). (2) This

is the time of our exercise and trial. 4. The sooner we begin the better. (1) Because you make a necessary work sure, and put it out of doubt and hazard. The time of this life is uncertain (James iv. 14). (2) In point of obedience, God presseth to "now." God doth not only command us to please Him, but to do it presently (chap. iii. 7, 8). It were just with God, if you refuse Him, never to call you more. (3) In point of ingenuity. We receive a plenteous recompense for a small service. When a man thinketh what God hath provided for them that love Him and serve Him, he should be ashamed that he should receive so much and do so little; and therefore he should redeem all the time that he can, that he may answer his expectations from God. (4) It is our advantage to begin betimes, both here and hereafter. (*a*) Here. The sooner you begin to please God, the sooner you have an evidence of your interest in His favour, more experience of His love, more hopes of being with Him in heaven; and these are not slight things. (*b*) The sooner you begin with God, the greater will your glory be hereafter; for the more we improve our talents here, the greater will be our reward in heaven (Luke xix. 16–19). Use 1. If there be such a necessity of pleasing God, and giving up ourselves to the severities of religion, then it serves for reproof of divers sorts of persons; as—(1) Those that, though they live as they list, as if they were sent into the world for no other purpose but to gratify their carnal desires, yet lay as bold a claim and title to heaven as the best; they doubt not but glory belongs to them, though they cannot make good their title. (2) It reproves them that think that every slight profession of the name of God will serve the turn; no, you must walk with God and please God. (3) It reproves those that would please God, but with a limitation and reservation so far as they may not displease men or displease the flesh. (4) It reproves those that adjourn and put off the work of religion from time to time, till they have lost all time; that use to put off God to the troubles of sickness or the aches of old age. Use 2. If there be no hope of living with God without pleasing God, oh, then make it the aim and scope of your lives to please the Lord! (1) Look to the commandments as your rule (Mic. vi. 8). (2) Let the promises of God be your encouragement. (3) You should make the glory of God your chiefest end, or you will be very irregular, and cannot keep pace with God in a constant course of duty. Look, as a man that hath a nail in his foot may walk in soft ground, but when he comes to hard ground he is soon turned out of the way, so when a man hath a perverse aim, he will soon be discouraged with the inconveniences that will trouble him in religion. The spiritual life is called "a living to God" (Gal. ii. 19). The end must be right, otherwise the conversation will be but a vain pretence, that will please men but not God (Prov. xvi. 2). (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Faith exceptionally rewarded:*—I. WHATEVER BE THE OUTWARD DIFFERENT EVENTS OF FAITH IN BELIEVERS IN THIS WORLD, THEY ARE ALL ALIKE ACCEPTED WITH GOD, approved by Him, and shall all equally enjoy the eternal inheritance. II. GOD CAN AND DOTH PUT A GREAT DIFFERENCE AS UNTO OUTWARD THINGS, BETWEEN SUCH AS ARE EQUALLY ACCEPTED BEFORE HIM. Abel shall die, and Enoch shall be taken alive into heaven. III. THERE IS NO SUCH ACCEPTABLE SERVICE UNTO GOD, NONE THAT HE HATH SET SUCH SIGNAL PLEDGES OF HIS FAVOUR UPON, AS ZEALOUSLY TO CONTEND AGAINST THE WORLD IN GIVING WITNESS TO HIS WAYS, HIS WORSHIP, AND HIS KINGDOM, OR THE RULE OF CHRIST OVER ALL. IV. IT IS A PART OF OUR TESTIMONY TO DECLARE AND WITNESS THAT VENGEANCE IS PREPARED FOR UNGODLY PERSECUTORS and all sorts of impenitent sinners, however they are and may be provoked thereby. V. The principal part of this testimony CONSISTS IN OUR OWN PERSONAL OBEDIENCE, OR VISIBLE WALKING WITH GOD IN HOLY OBEDIENCE, according to the tenor of the covenant (2 Pet. iii. 11, 14). VI. As it is an effect of the wisdom of God to dispose the works of His providence, and the accomplishment of His promises, according to an ordinary established rule declared in His Word, which is the only guide of faith; SO SOMETIMES IT PLEASES HIM TO GIVE EXTRAORDINARY INSTANCES IN EACH KIND, BOTH IN A WAY OF JUDGMENT AND IN A WAY OF GRACE AND FAVOUR. Of the latter sort was the taking of Enoch into heaven; and of the former was the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire from heaven. Such extraordinary acts, either the wicked security of the world, or the edification of the Church, do sometimes make necessary. VII. FAITH IN GOD THROUGH CHRIST HATH AN EFFICACY IN THE PROCURING OF SUCH GRACE, MERCY, AND FAVOUR IN PARTICULAR, AS IT HATH NO GROUND IN PARTICULAR TO BELIEVE. Enoch was translated by faith; yet did not Enoch believe he should be translated, until he had a particular revelation of it. So there are many particular mercies which faith hath no word of promise to mix itself withal, as unto their actual commu-

nication unto us; but yet keeping itself within its bounds of reliance on God, and acting by patience and prayer, it may be, and is, instrumental in the procurement of them. VIII. THEY MUST WALK WITH GOD HERE WHO DESIGN TO LIVE WITH HIM HEREAFTER; or they must please God in this world who would be blessed with Him in another. IX. THAT FAITH WHICH CAN TRANSLATE A MAN OUT OF THIS WORLD, CAN CARRY HIM THROUGH THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH HE MAY MEET WITHAL, IN THE PROFESSION OF FAITH AND OBEDIENCE IN THIS WORLD. Herein lies the apostle's argument. And this latter the Lord Jesus Christ hath determined to be the lot and portion of His disciples. So He testifies (John xvii. 15). (*John Owen, D.D.*) *The translation of Enoch*:—After the testimony borne to the life of Enoch, his translation scarcely surprises us. We almost look for some such apotheosis of his exalted virtues. Already he has more of the celestial than the earthly in his character; and is more fit to be the companion of angels than to associate with an apostate race. Even the outer nature has experienced the transforming influence of a long course of faith and devotion. Refined and purified beyond the ordinary state of a mortal body, we can conceive of it as fitly entering on immortality without undergoing the purification which death effects. Through a less trying ordeal it may soar to its place among the sons of God; and our moral sense is not shocked when such a superhuman reward is granted to one possessed of such superhuman excellence. Heaven must attract towards itself that which so much resembles itself. And what if the attraction be so strong, that the process of dying and the long waiting for the resurrection be dispensed with, and Heaven at once takes to itself that which is so manifestly its own? Although permitted to enter heaven by a path different from that which ordinary mortals tread, his body would no doubt undergo the change necessary to fit it for the kingdom into which flesh and blood cannot enter—a change in all probability similar to that which takes place in the bodies of the saints who are alive at the coming of the Lord. We have no account of how or where Enoch's translation took place. Perhaps it was promised before as the reward of his holiness, and that his faith in the promise might sustain him under his trials. In that case it would be a long-expected, much desired event. Or, perhaps, it was unexpected, and he was ignorant of what was taking place until the glories of heaven burst upon his view. But the conjecture most pleasing to us is that it was while he was entranced in devotion. When his soul left the world for awhile and soared upward to hold intercourse with God, when loth to disturb the vision and return to battle with the cares, and to be pained with the wickedness of the world, his body rises too, caught up by an invisible power, changing as it ascends, until it becomes pure as the home to which it hastens. Whether it came thus, or otherwise, is of small consequence. Come when and how it might, the transition must have been unspeakably glorious. His translation must have been designed to serve some important purposes. To him it was at once a dispensation of mercy and a mark of honour. A dispensation of mercy, because it severed him from the scenes of wickedness, which had vexed his righteous soul. God took him: properly, took him away. Away from the society of ungodly men, from their taunts and persecutions. Away from the wickedness over which he mourned. Away from the privations of this wilderness state. Away from the many ills to which flesh is heir, and the peculiar troubles which afflict the just. God had tested the fidelity of His servant. He took him away to be with Himself, and the weary one had rest. A mark of honour—for had not God sought to honour him, He might have removed him from all occasions of suffering in the ordinary way. To his neighbours his translation was a testimony to the truth of his prophecy. That prophecy (Jude 14, 15) was addressed, without doubt, to the ungodly men of his own generation, and predicted the punishment which awaited them because of their ungodliness. And when even this terrible prediction failed to check them in their downward career, how fitted was his translation to make them pause and consider. From the apostle's words "he was not found," we suppose that the event was known, as if he had been missed by the men of his neighbourhood from his accustomed haunts. Doubtless there were eye-witnesses of the event, by whom the manner of his removal would be made public. And thus his absence would be a standing testimony to the truth of his prediction. Most forcibly would it say—Death is not the end of man; for Enoch, though not dead, has departed. As regards ourselves it is fitted most powerfully to commend to us the principle which produced in him such remarkable results. His character was a noble testimony to the power of faith; but his translation shows more impressively what wonders faith can achieve. See in this mighty work the evidence and illus-

tration of the truth that all things are possible to him that believeth. And remember that a faith like Enoch's can only be acquired through fellowship with God. While there must be faith in order to fellowship, fellowship fosters and strengthens faith. (*W. Landels, D.D.*) *The translation of Enoch*:—Did you ever witness the transit of a planet across the disc of the sun? Ah! but the transit of a soul from truth to truth, by what glass shall we notice that? By what glass shall we tell how the mind marches in its orb—how the spirit advances in its sphere? By what chronology shall we estimate the translation of the soul? But here we have that wonderful fact in the history of man—the history of a soul's translation. On this world God will never allow His children to be found longer than they can be useful, either for His glory or their own growth. Even on earth, amidst all the blunders of our most imperfect sociology, what the man is after his translation, is, in more sensible circles, to be inferred from what he was before. There is a young man in my chapel who, to-morrow, will vacate an old inferior seat, held for many years at his desk, and mount to that envied and coveted place—first in the office; second only to that confidential post in the second room. Yesterday, in the office of the principal of the firm, his vigilance, his conscientiousness, his disposition, were all subjects of praise; and before this translation he has had this testimony—that he has pleased his employer. Among the long dun wolds of Kent there was great and unusual merry-making, on the farm of Henry Gibbons, this Christmas; for, although he was leaving his farm of one hundred and fifty acres, he was going to one of five hundred acres. To him, six months since, said his landlord, "Henry, you know at Christmas the farm of Beechy Hollow will be vacant, and I love that farm. I was born and brought up there, and I must have somebody there I can trust. Now, that farm you shall have, for I can trust you." Thus in all the translations that are exemplary on earth, and which are removed from the influences of corruption and error, in every state of the advance the progressive spirit has this testimony—that he has pleased before his translation. What right have we to expect a higher rank before we have filled our present duty? You covet more. You have, I assure you, as much honour as you can bear. You have as many duties as you can fulfil. Believe me, there is an exact relation between your power of profitable possession and your power of expenditure. "He had this testimony, that he pleased God." It was the testimony of faith. "By faith Enoch was translated." In the scale of greatness, by which we rise to please God, the first place is assigned to faith, because it interprets the life; amidst abounding iniquity and hardness of heart, he yielded himself to God, to God's pleasure and will. "He pleased God." He walked with God. By this sublime phrase, I believe something more is intended than we can understand. Amidst the sublime scenes of those primeval woods and vales, what secret communings he held! There were then few illustrious progenitors: kings, statesmen, seers, and poets—he could not walk with those; he could only walk with God. With him now, the simple, poor man, to whom the Bible unfolds its treasures and prayer its armoury, and meditation its sacred refectory, and paradise its distant gleaming palace—with him may this man compare. Like Enoch, he walks alone with God in his simplicity and holy dignity. "He pleased God"—he was a preacher of righteousness, and part of his sermon has come down even to our own age. Very dreadful are the words of a man who comes from intimate fellowship with Divine holiness, to pour his pathos and his pity and his indignation over a lost world. Like Jonathan Edwards, a soul—a pity—a heart of holiness—a hermit existence—and a speech of fire. And then God took him—after three hundred and sixty-five years had been given to him, God took him; to show to the ungodly world that he was not limited to the ordinary operations of the laws of Nature, and to proclaim to the race of giants, the children of Cain, His authentication of His servant's life—He translated him. (*E. P. Hood.*) *Walking up to our ascension*:—There may be a little difficulty in seeing how the "translation," or "ascension" of Enoch, was the result of Enoch's "faith." Did he believe in an "ascension"? and was it given to his trust and expectation of that very thing? Where did he learn it? Yet, "by faith Enoch was translated." We must enlarge the question. It is not always necessary, in order to secure a blessing, that we have "a faith" in that particular gift. No doubt a special "faith," in a special thing, is often given and sometimes required. But "faith" goes to a certain level, while God goes far beyond the level of the "faith." And it is a comfort to know that a general trust in God commands and secures individual mercies. You cast yourself universally upon God's faithfulness: and, beyond a doubt, God will

fill in the details, which you never thought of, and which details He sees that you want. And death is a solemn thing. Death may be bitter, even to a child of God! Else, it would not have been said, as a part of the mercy, to Enoch, that he was "translated that he should not see death." Nor would it be made the running over of the cup of Jesus's sorrow, that "He tasted death for every man." Nevertheless, if it please my heavenly Father to order otherwise, and that I should pass through my grave and gate of death to my body, it will be all well! There is no danger! there is nothing to fear! no real solitude! but only just enough to draw out my Saviour's love! It very little matters whence I ascend, or how: I only care for the whither. But "who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart." Pray for the gift of the "faith" in your ascension. See the degrees of "faith" as they are laid out in the opening of this chapter of "faith's" triumphs. The understanding "faith" in the Omnipotence of creation (ver. 3). Then the justifying "faith" in sacrifice (ver. 4). And then, in the third degree, translating "faith"—the faith of glory (ver. 5). "Walk" the walk of faith higher and higher—above the things that are seen. "Walk," as Enoch walked—"walk," as Elijah walked—"walk," as Jesus walked—"walk" up to your ascension! (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*)

Enoch opposing the current opinions of the day:—The main and grand distinction between the child of God and the servant of sin is, that the one lives by faith and the other by sight. 1. A man is sometimes dishonest because the object which he sees engrosses his attention beyond the fear of punishment, which is a matter of faith; and he defrauds or steals. Again, in their judgments men of sin act by sight, not by faith, though men who do these things are compelled sometimes to declare them wrong, and to pronounce a judgment against their actions. They settle those things to be sins which appear to do the most immediate harm, and those to be less sins, or none at all, which do not cause so much immediate perceptible harm. Again, in their religion men of sin act on sight, and men of God on faith. See the worldly man in his religion, as he calls it. It is all the sight parts of religion, none of the faith parts. (1) They come to church, that is something to be felt. There is the doing something that worse people do not do; therefore they hope by the irksomeness of the act to clear away some sins; they can realise the religion of that. (2) They read the Bible sometimes; there is a little trouble in that, and it is something they can lay hold of. (3) They give money in alms; this is something seen and felt; they are doing something more than others. (4) They speak respectfully of the Church of the land and the ministers of the Church, because there is something easy in it, and by doing so they throw a garb of devotion over themselves, which they see many others have not got. So much is their religion, and here it ends. Men of sin act on sight, not on faith; they are only religious when they see and feel the good of it. Now turn to the religious man influenced by faith. 1. He judges sin by the law of God; he knows coveting is as bad as stealing, because it leads to it; and he knows God condemns the evil thought as well as the evil action. 2. In his duties he acts on faith. He foregoes the indulgence of angry passion, remembering the greater happiness and peace of a loving spirit and the favour of the Saviour who has declared the peacemaker blessed. 3. Above all, in his religion behold the man of faith. What he does is not to be seen of men, but of his Father in heaven, who shall reward him openly. I. The 11th chapter of Hebrews is, as it were, a bright roll, unfolding to us the men who, in days gone by, have lived by faith and not by sight; they shine like fixed stars in the dark expanse of human life. Let us contemplate the character of Enoch, as showing forth a character influenced by faith, and behold in him another fruit of faith. 1. It seems to mean he knew God, had a just knowledge of God. 2. But it seems to mean, too, that he was intimate and familiar with God. 3. And again, "he pleased God." His religion was not only feeling, taken up to-day, put down to-morrow; his religion influenced his practice, altered his conduct, helped him to stand forth the bold supporter of truth in the midst of a wicked generation. Such was his character. Now how was this the result of faith? This character, through a coming Saviour, procured for him translation to glory. He lived above the present world, and apart from the present people, by faith; that is, the tastes, the conversation, the occupation of all around would naturally have made his mind the same with theirs, had it not been for the exercise of the principle of faith. This was Enoch's character, and this is the way it was affected by faith. Now let us apply this to ourselves. The fruit or working of faith, which Enoch's character shows, consists in living separate from the opinions and practices of the day we

live in, and protesting against the errors of that day by word or example; and this by faith. But, in matters of practice, there are false opinions about in the world, which are against God's revealed Word, and which consequently are to be rebuked and opposed by the man of faith. 1. Men tell us all devotion is enthusiasm. If a man spend much time in prayer; if a man give up the world's society; if he be cheerful under affliction; if he have his happiness fixed in another world, not this, the world calls him an enthusiast pursuing a phantom, a dreamer, wholly mistaken as to what religion is, not a soberminded man. Now what does the man of faith answer? what does Enoch answer to the false report of an undiscriminating world? Behold the man of faith. He reads such passages as these, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." 2. But again, it is a prevailing error of the day that men need not give up the world; that the doing so is gloomy, melancholy and unnecessary. The man who is directed by faith, whose eye is looking for the unseen hereafter, who is not dazzled by the lamps of present pleasure and excitement, answers the erroneous opinion of the world by an appeal to the Bible. (1) He may demand, What is the world, and what does the Bible mean by the world, if the utmost excess of gaiety—gaiety dissipating devotion, gaiety and pleasure inviting the support of infamous characters, gaiety ruining the health and wasting the time, company where God is never mentioned, where religion is never introduced, and where its introduction would be misplaced—if this is not the world, what is? (2) He may show that the Bible plainly declares that "the friendship of the world is enmity with God"; "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (3) He may show that while such pleasure and such society is given up, we need not be gloomy; far, very far from it. Thus the man influenced by faith may answer and refute, like Enoch, the current opinions of the day, that the world need not be given up, and that those who withdraw from it are morose and gloomy. (*E. Monro.*) *The man that is missed when he is gone*:—The suggestion is very beautiful as to the way in which he was wanted and missed when he was gone. It seems to point to some scene, veiled in one of God's august silences, when Methuselah and the other sons and daughters found the tent or the chamber empty, sought the saintly father everywhere and found him not—found not even the body—could but infer, till God inspired and wrote it down, that which had happened—namely, that the life was so full of God, the walk with God so close and so intimate, the sight of God by faith so constant and so intuitive, that it had pleased the Divine Companion to "make a new thing in the earth," to "send down a hand from above" and deliver His servant "out of the waters" of time, from the surrounding of the "strange children" of an "untoward generation," and to carry him by a short and direct passage to the land of an everlasting rest and peace. We who know what one righteous man may be, in a house or in a city—how dear to his own, how necessary to a wider circle, whose counsellor, whose oracle, probity and wisdom and piety have made him—can faintly picture that sorrowful morning, when "Enoch was not found, because God had translated him;" when the life of that household, that neighbourhood, that country, must henceforth be lived without him—without his help, without his example, without his sympathy, without his prayers. I know not that we ought to desire to be missed when we are gone; but I know that, whether desiring this or no, we ought all so to live as that we *shall* be wanted when we are "not found." There is no replacing, on earth, of the really missed one. That house, that town, that Church must learn to do without him. If the loss really leads any one to inquire into the secret of it—to ask why he was so much to others and to his own—to discover the royal road, which honest prayer is, into the sanctuary which he frequented, and into the companionship which was his strength; then the life, and the "translation," will together have explained the mystery of the Divine purpose in ordaining both. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Enoch*:—He changed his place, but not his company, for he still walked with God, as in earth, so in heaven. (*J. Trapp.*) *Enoch's translation*:—Referring to the translation of Enoch, Rev. J. Chalmers, M.A., spoke of the two ways by which men have been taken from this world: the one, "the golden bridge" of translation, which only a few have been privileged to cross: the other, the "dark tunnel" of death, by which way the majority have had to go. But whether by the one way or the other, all who walked with God reach their glorious end—are with God. (*King's Highway.*)

He pleased God.—*He pleased God*:—I. THE NECESSITY FOR PLEASING GOD. There is a God to please—a living God, who takes a continual interest in all human things; who thinks, feels, loves, and is grieved; and whose great endeavour, by all

this complicated world-work that He carries on, is to educate human spirits, that they may, like Him, hate the wrong and love the right, and do it. There is a God who is pleased always when the least cause for pleasure is presented to Him. Just as we are glad when a child succeeds in a lesson; when a boy takes a prize; when a young man does some difficult work in a noble way; when a girl is like her mother in goodness; so God is glad when His children do well. All this shows, surely, that there is a necessity for pleasing God; that no man can be right, safe, happy, who does not aim to do this; and, in a measure, succeed in doing it. If God is not pleased with us, we cannot be right. Some say that the attempt to please God is an inferior aim, and that the real end we ought to keep in view is, to be right in everything. Let a man try to be right without any regard to God, and how far will he go? How do we know fully and clearly what is right without God's gracious information? A little we know by our native moral sense, but for the perfect ideal of goodness we are indebted solely to Him. Therefore we must try to please Him. God, being God, is an infinite, absolute, all-perfect Being; holding in Himself all principles, all relations, all truth, order, and beauty; to please Him must, in the very nature of the case, be to do right. II. Now, as to THE METHOD of this; of course I do not pretend to give a full description of the method. That would be to describe the whole Christian life; for all duty, service, and suffering are with a good man parts of the one grand endeavour to please God. But I will say this, that it is not difficult to please God if only we take the right way of it. He is not a hard master. I believe we have no idea how simple, how natural, how human-like in the best sense is the joy of God in the obedience of His children. We have only to attain a simple, purified sincerity as to the motive, and then put a glow into the action, when God, beholding, will say, "It is well." "I am pleased; pleased with the action—with the worker—above all, because I can now give the reward." But we shall suppose the case of one who has not yet pleased God at all. How must he begin to do so? I should say that to him the first feeling, if he is now wishing to do the will of God, would be a feeling of regret that he has not done it, a feeling of unfeigned sorrow; in other words, repentance. Then faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as representing the will of the Father, as communicating the Father's grace, as crucified for our offences, and raised again for our justification. He is the propitiation for our sins, and the rectifier of our lives, and the guide of our steps, Redeemer from sin, and death, and hell. Then, after repentance and faith, there comes the whole process of practical obedience, filial and loving. When the yoke is taken in this spirit, it is easy; when the burden is lifted so, it is light. And life then is simple. It is but to "walk with God" and "please" Him so. It is but to see Him where He is; to hear Him when He speaks; but to serve and enjoy Him with a loving heart. That God will be pleased with such a course is just as certain as that a good father or mother will approve a loving obedieuce in a child. Just as certain as it is that God loves order and beauty, and goodness and truth. III. THE RESULTS of doing this will be manifold, and very good. 1. We shall in this way please ourselves as we never can do in any other. It is well when a man brings himself up to the bar of his better self. There is something of God in a good man; the enlightened conscience is the echo of the Divine authority and will. A noble ideal is surely to be cherished, a generous purpose is to be held fast, and the soul is to be encouraged in doing this in every possible way. Now there is no way so direct and sufficient as the way of pleasing God; by a loving obedience to Him we reach and please and satisfy our better self. 2. Then, further, if we please God, we shall ourselves have pleasure in life and the world. He can make our enemies to be at peace with us, and He will, if we please Him. In the world we are to have tribulation, and yet we may be of good cheer, for we are victors. 3. Finally, come what may in this life, that always is sure. "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." He is the great rewarder even in this life. Do but a little service heartily to Him, and He will come to you with His rewarding love. You cry in wonder of so much munificence, "My cup runneth over." All this will God give into your bosom and pour about your life, even here and now. Then what will He do hereafter to those who love and please Him? Earth does not hold the secret. It is "reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *The duty of pleasing God*:—I. If we ask WHOM WE ARE TO PLEASE, reason, uninstructed by revelation or experience, would immediately say ourselves, or if reason did not say so, feeling would. We accordingly find that man, as soon as he begins to act, acts solely with a view to his own gratification. It would never enter his mind to act otherwise were he left alone. But then

none of us are left alone. We are mixed up with our fellow-men, and are trained from our earliest infancy more or less to please them. And these two things, pleasing ourselves and pleasing our fellow-men, we contrive to carry on together. We please the world, and in doing so, we please ourselves, for we gain something that we desire from the world by pleasing it—if nothing more, its good opinion. But God comes in and disturbs all this. "Please me," says self. "Please me," says the world; and while we are striving to obey both, there is a voice from heaven which says, "Neither must be obeyed: you must approve yourselves to Me." There appears before us a third competitor for our powers of pleasing; one of whom we never thought, and to whom not a feeling or principle of our nature inclines us to listen. So perverse are we that we cannot do it. "They that are in the flesh," says the Scripture, "cannot please God." You see then that we have no merely moral, half-heathen duty before us; it is a Christian duty. II. How we are to please God. 1. We must begin with accepting the offers of His grace. We know that in order to please a fellow-creature we must fall in with his disposition and character. If he is a man of a kind disposition, we must on no account repulse his kindness, but yield ourselves up to it, and let him do us all the good he will. Now the great God of heaven is a God of infinite kindness towards us. "Here is pardon for you," He says; "here is peace; here is My love for you, My presence, My likeness, My joy, My kingdom. Look through My universe—there is everything for you that is worth your having." Now to please Him is to accept these offers. It is to let Him see that we value His kindness and care for His blessings. 2. To please God, we must conform ourselves to His mind and will. And this will show itself by our ceasing to be angry and discontented with His dealings with us; and still more clearly by our efforts to do His will. He pleases God the most who places himself entirely in God's hands, and who strives the most after the holiness which God loves. 3. To please God we must aim to please Him supremely, far above all. Our first, supreme desire must be to approve ourselves in God's sight. III. Why we should thus seek to please God rather than any one else. 1. It is easier to please Him. Only let us once accept the offers of love He has made us in His Son, and we can please Him; anything that we offer will be acceptable in His sight; the mere desire to please will give Him pleasure. Is it difficult for a child to put pleasure into a father's heart? Does a mother require much from her infant to afford her delight? But what is a father's or a mother's love to the love of the great God for us? As a shadow to a substance. His mighty love for us then makes it easy for us to please Him. But turn to the world. It is hard work to please that. What a multitude there is in it to gratify! every one wanting to be gratified in his own way, regarding you as nothing but the mere instrument of his pleasure. We may sacrifice ourselves on the world's altar, but, alas! we shall gain nothing; the greater part of the world will be angry because the sacrifice has not been made for them only or as they would have it made. And then what a weathercock is the mind of man! How light and mutable! What pleases him to-day, he is tired of to-morrow, and offended with the day after. He who seeks to please God, has only one to please instead of multitudes; and He One who is considerate and merciful, and never requires us to hurt ourselves in order to please Him, and is always of one mind. That which pleases Him once will please Him for ever. 2. It is better to please God than any one else, more for our advantage. Think how little man can do for us, even if he is disposed and continues so, to do his best. Our greatest sorrows he can do little indeed to lighten, and our heaviest wants he can do nothing at all to supply. We cling to him as though he were all in all to us; an hour will come when we shall feel him to be a shadow. But think what God is. He is that God who made heaven and earth, and who could in a moment unmake them, bring them all into nothing again. He governs all things. He can give us whatsoever He will, and withhold from us whatsoever He will. 3. It is more ennobling to please God than to please any one else. The effort to please Him elevates the soul; seeking to please others debases it. We become like God by seeking to please Him. By keeping Him constantly before us we are changed into His image. This is not theory. I may appeal to every-day facts. Take the poor cottager whose heart God has touched, and taught to seek His favour. Apparently with everything around him to depress him, there is often an elevation in that man's mind which constrains us to wonder at him. He has risen to a loftiness of thought and feeling which we can scarcely understand. And it is his piety alone which has raised him, his simple and earnest desire to please his Lord. And then look at some of the world's great men, men who live on the world's favour and applause.

How low do we frequently see them sink! We marvel at the littleness they betray. 4. Hence we may observe that a supreme desire to please God conforms us more than anything else to Christ our Lord. He "pleased not Himself," the Scripture says. As we read His history we never suspect Him of having done so. It was not His own gratification that brought Him out of His Father's world and kept Him in our world amid pollution and sorrow. He sought not His own honour here, He did not His own works, He would not speak even His own words. And a careful reader of His history will never suspect Him of having been a pleaser of men. He points upwards to His Father, and says, "I do always those things that please Him." Now there is a blessed resemblance between Christ and His people. They have the same spirit that He had, and it is their joy and delight to have it. We say that it forms their character, they feel that it is a main part of their happiness. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *Pleasing God:*—I. HE WHO WOULD BE HAPPY MUST PLEASE GOD. 1. God is a pleasable Being. 2. God is pleasable by man. II. HE WHO WOULD PLEASE GOD MUST COME TO HIM. Christ is the way into the loving presence of the Great Father. Man pleases Him by trusting in His Son, cherishing His Spirit, and following His example. III. HE WHO WOULD COME TO HIM MUST BELIEVE ON HIM. 1. In the fact of His existence. 2. In the fact of His retributive ministry. (*Homilist.*) *Pleasing God:*—I. THE PRE-REQUISITES TO THAT STATE IN WHICH WE SHALL ACTUALLY PLEASE GOD. 1. A principle of faith in the revealed testimony of God. 2. A distinct faith in Jesus Christ, as Mediator, Advocate, and Redeemer. 3. The Divinely-formed elements of a new character within us. II. THE COURSE OF THOSE PERSONS WHO ACTUALLY PLEASE GOD. 1. Righteousness predominating. 2. Devotion accompanying. 3. Zeal inflaming and animating. III. THE TESTIMONY GIVEN OF THIS FACT. 1. The inspired declarations of Holy Writ. 2. Conscience divinely aided and corroborated. 3. The outward events of life, as proved from the ordinary history, and from the experience and lives of God's people. (*J. Leifchild.*) *What makes men please God?*—There are four things which must concur to please God—all which are accomplished by faith, and by nothing else. 1. The person of him that pleaseth God must be accepted of God (Tit. i. 15). God had respect unto Abel (Gen. iv. 4). 2. The matter that pleaseth God must be agreeable to His will (chap. xiii. 21; Rom. xii. 2). 3. The manner of doing that which pleaseth God must be with due respect to God, and that is in these and other like particulars—(1) In obedience to God: because He has demanded it. In this case we must say as Peter did, "At Thy word I will do it" (Luke v. 5). (2) In humility, denying of ourselves, as he that said, "Not I, but the grace of God which is with me" (1 Cor. xv. 10). (3) In sincerity, as having to do with Him that searcheth the heart. Thus did Hezekiah (Isa. xxxviii. 3). (4) With sedulity: like the two faithful servants with whom the Lord was well pleased; but not like the slothful servant (Matt. xxv. 20, &c.). (5) With alacrity and cheerfulness: for God loveth a cheerful giver (2 Cor. ix. 7). (6) Within compass of our calling (1 Cor. vii. 17). (7) With constancy. If any draw back, God's soul will have no pleasure in him (chap. ix. 38). (8) In assurance that God, who accepteth the person, accepteth also the work that is done. Hereby did Manoah's wife infer that God was pleased with that which they did (Judg. xiii. 23). 4. The end, which is God's glory (1 Cor. x. 31). The foresaid four general points are those four causes whereby everything is made perfect. Faith is the means whereby all of them may be effected and accomplished. (1) By faith in Christ the person is accepted of God (Eph. i. 6). (2) Faith makes men subject themselves to God's will. (3) Faith makes men have respect, even to the manner of what they do to Godward; that it be done in obedience, in humility, in sincerity, with sedulity, with alacrity, orderly, constantly, and with assurance of God's acceptance. All these may be exemplified in Enoch. (4) Faith, of all graces, most aimeth at God's glory. (*W. Gouge.*) *Enoch's religion:*—His religion was not a speculation or a theory, which he took up to-day and laid down to-morrow. It was not the vain dream of enthusiasm, which is founded on no steady and tried principles of reason, by which he was actuated. It was not the momentary impulse which induced him to take God's side to-day and which left him at liberty to desert it to-morrow. It was rather a religion of reason and deliberation; a religion of faith in the Divine character and promises; a religion which influenced, and guided, and sustained him, at one moment as at another. It was the allegiance of the heart, flowing from the decisions of the understanding. It was the obedience and homage of the soul. It was the tribute of dependence, gratitude, and love. It was the sacrifice of the whole man, a reasonable and acceptable service. Probity, and truth, and righteousness were its bright results. Hence Enoch pleased God—God graciously owned his allegiance

and accepted his intercourse. His aim was to please God, and it was accepted as such. He was the child of mercy, the disciple of truth and charity. Whatever might be the judgment which men formed of his character, God was ready to avow, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord." (*G. T. Noel, M.A.*)

Ver. 6. **Without faith it is impossible to please Him.**—*The nature and importance of faith*:—I. THE NATURE OF FAITH IN GENERAL. Now the term, faith, "expresses a confidence or persuasion of the truth of anything not self-evident, received upon the testimony of another." To have faith in the subjects of human testimony, requires a certain comprehension of the nature of the subjects, and a confidence in the credibility of the testimony under which those subjects are presented to our knowledge. Precisely the same circumstances appear to take place in reference to Divine testimony. We are satisfied as to the credibility of the testimony—that it comes from God. But the objects presented to us upon that testimony will become the actual objects of our faith, exactly to the extent and no further in which we understand them. Our comprehension of the object will always be the limit of our faith; and this faith will diminish or augment in the very degree in which our perception is clear or confused. But it is needful here to remark that the Divine testimony, though depending upon precisely the same process of mind as to its existence, and growth, and contraction, is far more difficult of acquirement and of retention than faith in human testimony. Is it inquired wherefore? The answer is that sin has crippled our power of judgment—that sin has deadened the spiritual sensibility which is absolutely essential to the perception of Divine truth. Supposing, therefore, the powers of understanding and of imagination to be equal in any two persons, he will comprehend the Christian revelation the most clearly who has the purest affections, who is in the highest degree detached from human objects, and who is the most conversant with the objects of the heavenly world. The purity of God; the evil of sin; the love of Christ; the manifestation of that love to the human soul; the hidden and holy intercourse of the heart with God; the necessity for atonement; the freeness of Divine grace; the renovation of the heart by the power and compassion of the great Comforter; the value of prayer; the fervour of gratitude; the desire to be with Christ; the secret calm of confidence in His eternal love—these, and many other subjects embodied in the testimonies of God, are subjects with which an unholy, earthly heart cannot come into full contact. There may be a distant perception, indeed, even of these; but the affections that are low and sensual cannot perceive them so as to taste their value. And such is essential to their perception. The value which the Scriptures attach to faith, is hence no ground of surprise to him who has felt Christianity to be dear and healing to his heart. It has been by a Divine influence that he has come into contact with the spiritual meaning of Christianity; and his faith in that spiritual meaning has been the medium through which he came into such contact. He is therefore aware that no language can do justice to the worth of faith. It will thus appear that to faith belong all the essential blessings of Christianity. We come into intercourse with God; we rest under the shelter of the atonement; we are renewed in our tastes and inclinations; we acquire a home, a refuge; we regard the future as serene and bright; these blessings we acquire by faith, and by faith only. Nor is there any other conceivable way of embracing all the great and consoling realities of the gospel. Faith is, hence, the confidence of the penitent, and devout, and affectionate heart, as it reposes its weary sensations amidst the gracious assurances of God! It is farther evident from these statements, that faith will be often progressive, and often retrograde. Let the true Christian become unduly eager about earthly emoluments; let him diminish voluntarily the time he passes in secret converse with God; let him call away his thoughts from the character and friendship of his Saviour; let him thwart the precious influences of the Holy Spirit—and his faith will necessarily contract its operations; the finer and more ethereal parts of Christianity will begin to grow indistinct; his affections will be disordered; he will believe less, in reference to God and eternity, than he did before; his faith will shrink, or will vacillate as to real good and evil. On the other hand, let him grow more familiar with the lofty thoughts and aspirations of the gospel; let him discover more of the glory of Christ; let him derive from Him larger accessions of holy peace and joy; let the earth remove farther from his interior fellowship—and heaven, with all its bright anticipations, come into closer union with his understanding and his affections; and he

will necessarily believe more of Christianity than he did before—he will know more of its hidden worth, as the increased purity of his affections is throwing down more of the barrier which sin had interposed between his soul and God; or, which is the same thing, between him and the richer parts of Christianity. II. THE MORE LIMITED SENSE OF THE TERM FAITH, in the passage of Scripture before us. Faith in this chapter has special reference to those tenets of Christianity which unveil the future world—the triumph and the "rest" of the righteous; and in the text it seems to refer more specially to the confidence of the soul as to God's intentions to render it eternally happy. The man who thus confides believes that God is, not simply that He exists, but that He exists as a kind, compassionate, generous God, to the soul that seeks Him. III. THE INFLUENCE OF THIS FAITH UPON OUR HABITUALLY PLEASING GOD. No one can read the Scriptures with attention without being struck by the intense anxiety of God to produce and perpetuate confidence in His mercy and grace. The whole of God's intercourse with man is to excite his gratitude and attachment; to prove to him that God's thoughts, in reference to generosity and compassion, are far higher than the thoughts of men; and to rectify the fatal mistake that happiness lies in external objects, and in the emoluments of earth. Christianity is the exhibition of the Divine character. Its chief feature is holy mercy. Hence faith is essential to our intercourse with God. He who doubts God's goodness, he who voluntarily severs himself from God's care, and casts himself as an orphan upon his own resources, thus forces back the hand which is lifted up in his defence, and rejects the succours of omnipotence. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Is it then presumption to believe God's assurances, and to rest the full burden of our hopes upon His promises? Shall we still cling to the deceptive assurances of the world, and rest upon the poor broken reeds of earth? Earthly blessings, moderately enjoyed and gratefully received, may embellish and smooth in part the rugged journey of life; but they cannot build up a final dwelling-place; they cannot occupy the place of God in the heart; they cannot fill up the deep void which sin has left in the human soul. They can have no fellowship with all its inner necessities. They can carry no balm to the wounds of conscience; they can draw out no sting from death; they can achieve no victory over the grave. This is the work of God; this is the victory of Jesus Christ! Thrice happy those whom God has made willing to confide in His power. "Their defence is the munition of rocks." The outward walls may crumble to decay; but nought can touch "their citadel of peace in Jesus's blood." (*G. T. Noel, M.A.*) *Of the nature of faith in general:*—I. WE WILL CONSIDER THE CAUSE OF FAITH, OR THE ARGUMENT WHEREBY IT IS WROUGHT. 1. Sense; hence it is commonly said that "seeing is believing," that is, one of the best arguments to persuade us of anything. That faith may be wrought by this argument appears both from the nature of the thing, nothing being more apt to persuade us of anything than our senses, and from several expressions in Scripture. I will instance in one for all (John xx. 8). 2. Experience, which, though it may be sensible, and then it is the same argument with sense, yet sometimes it is not, and then it is an argument distinct from it. As for example, a man may by experience be persuaded or induced to believe this proposition—that his will is free, that he can do this, or not do it; which is a better argument than a demonstration to the contrary, if there could be one. 3. Reasons drawn from the thing; which may either be necessary and concluding, or else only probable and plausible. 4. The authority and testimony of some credible person. Now two things give authority and credit to the relation, or testimony, or assertion of a person concerning anything; ability and integrity. II. The second thing to be considered is THE DEGREES OF FAITH, AND THE DIFFERENCE OF THEM. Now the capacity or incapacity of persons are infinitely various, and not to be reduced to theory; but supposing a competent capacity in the person, then the degrees of faith or persuasion take their difference from the arguments, or motives, or inducements which are used to persuade. Where sense is the argument, there is the firmest degree of faith, or persuasion. Next to that is experience, which is beyond any argument or reason from the thing. The faith or persuasion which is wrought in us by reasons from the thing, the degrees of it are as the reasons are: if they be necessary and concluding, it is firm and certain in its kind; if only probable, according to the degrees of probability, it hath more or less of doubting mixed with it. Lastly, the faith which is wrought in us by testimony or authority of a person takes its degrees from the credit of a person, that is, his ability and integrity. Now because "all men are liars," that is, either may deceive, or be deceived, their testimony partakes of their infirmity, and so doth the degree of persuasion wrought by

it; but God being both infallible and true His testimony begets the firmest persuasion, and the highest degree of faith in its kind. But then it is to be considered, that there not being a revelation of a revelation *in infinitum*, that this is a Divine testimony and revelation we can only have rational assurance; and the degree of the faith or persuasion which is wrought by a Divine testimony will be according to the strength of the arguments which we have to persuade us that such a testimony is Divine. III. For the efficacy or operation of faith we are to consider, THAT THE THINGS WE MAY BELIEVE OR BE PERSUADED OF ARE OF TWO SORTS. Either, 1. They are such as do not concern me; and then the mind rests in a simple belief of them, and a faith or persuasion of such things has no effect upon me; but is apt to have, if ever it happen that the matter do concern me: or else, 2. The thing I believe or am persuaded of doth concern me; and then it hath several effects according to the nature of the thing I am persuaded of, or the degree of the persuasion, or the capacity of the person that believes or is persuaded. If the thing believed be of great moment the effect of the faith is proportionable, and so according to the degree of the persuasion; but if the person be indisposed to the proper effects of such a persuasion by the power of contrary habits, as it often happens, the effect will be obtained with more difficulty, and may possibly be totally defeated by casting off the persuasion; for while it remains it will operate, and endeavour and strive to work its proper effect. IV. FOR THE KINDS OF FAITH, THEY ARE SEVERAL, ACCORDING TO THE VARIETY OF OBJECTS OR THINGS BELIEVED. I shall reduce them all under these two general heads. 1. Faith is either civil or human, under which I comprehend the persuasion of things moral, and natural, and political, and the like; or, 2. Divine and religious; that is, a persuasion of things that concern religion. I know not whether these terms be proper, nor am I very solicitous, because I know none fitter, and tell you what I mean by them. (*Abp. Tillotson.*) *Of a religious and divine faith*:—I. A PERSUASION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF NATURAL RELIGION, such as the light of nature could discover; such are the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and a future state. 1. Whether it may truly and properly be called faith or not? If the general notion of faith which I have fixed before, viz., that it is a persuasion of the mind concerning anything, be a true notion of faith, then there is no doubt but this may as properly be called faith, as anything can be; because a man may be persuaded in his mind concerning these things that there is a God, that our souls are immortal, that there is another state after this life. But besides this, if the Scripture speaks properly, as we have reason to believe it does, especially when it treats professedly of anything as the apostle here does, then this question is fully decided; for it is evident to any one that will but read this verse that the apostle doth here in this place speak of this kind of faith; that is, a belief or persuasion of the principles of natural religion. 2. What are the arguments whereby this faith, or the persuasion of these principles of natural religion, is wrought? They are such reasons as may be drawn from things themselves to persuade us hereof; as either from the notion and idea which we have of a God, that He is a being that hath all perfections, whereof necessary existence is one, and consequently that He must be; or else from the universal consent of all nations, and the generality of persons agreeing in this apprehension, which cannot be attributed reasonably to any other cause than to impressions stamped upon our understandings by God Himself; or (which is most plain of all) from this visible frame of the world, which we cannot, without great violence to our understandings, impute to any other cause than a Being endowed with infinite goodness, and power, and wisdom, which is that we call God. As for the other two principles of natural religion, the immortality of the soul, and a future state, after we believe a God we may be persuaded of these from Divine revelation; and that doth give us the highest and firmest assurance of them in the resurrection of Christ from the dead. 3. Whether this faith or persuasion of the principles of natural religion admit degrees or not? And what differences are observable in them? That it does admit degrees, that is that a man may be more or less persuaded of the truth of those principles, is evident from the heathens, some of whom did yield a more firm and unshaken assent to them; others entertained them with a more faint persuasion of them, especially of the immortality of the soul and a future state, about which most of them had many qualms and doubts. Of all the heathens Socrates seems to have had the truest and firmest persuasion of these things; which he did not only testify in words, but by the constancy, and calmness, and sedate courage which he manifested at his death. So that this faith and persuasion admits of degrees the difference whereof is to be resolved partly into the

capacity of the persons who believe, and partly into the strength, or at least appearance of strength, in the arguments whereby it is wrought. 4. What are the proper and genuine effects of this faith or persuasion? Now that, in a word, is natural religion which consists in apprehensions of God suitable to His nature, and affections towards Him suitable to these apprehensions, and actions suitable to both. 5. In what sense this faith or persuasion of the principles of natural religion may be said to be Divine? In these two respects: (1) In respect of the object of it, or matters to be believed, which are Divine, and do immediately concern religion, in opposition to that which I call a civil and human faith, which is of such things as do not immediately concern God and religion. (2) In respect of the Divine effect of it, which are to make men religious, and like God. II. The second sort of faith, which I call A PERSUASION OF THINGS SUPERNATURALLY REVEALED, OF THINGS WHICH ARE NOT KNOWN BY NATURAL LIGHT, BUT BY SOME MORE IMMEDIATE MANIFESTATION AND DISCOVERY FROM GOD. Thus we find our Saviour (Matt. xvi. 15–17), opposeth Divine revelation to the discovery of natural reason and light. 1. Whether this may truly and properly be called faith? And that it may is evident, because the general definition of faith agrees to it; for a man may be persuaded in his mind concerning things supernaturally revealed; and the Scripture everywhere calls a persuasion of these matters by the name of faith. But besides this, it seems this is the adequate and only notion of faith as it hath been fixed by the schools, and is become a term of art. For the definition that the schools give of faith is this, that it is an assent to a thing credible, as credible. Now, say they, that is credible which relies upon the testimony of a credible person; and consequently a human faith is that which relies upon human testimony; and a Divine faith that which relies upon the testimony or authority of God. 2. What is the argument whereby this faith or persuasion of things supernaturally revealed is wrought in us? And this, by the general consent of all, is the testimony or authority of God some way or other revealing these things to us; whose infallible and unerring knowledge, together with His goodness and authority, gives us the highest assurance that He neither can be deceived Himself, nor will deceive us in anything that He reveals to us. 3. As to the degrees of this faith. Supposing men sufficiently satisfied that the Scriptures are the Word of God, that is, a Divine revelation; then all those who are sufficiently satisfied of this do equally believe the things contained in the Scriptures. Supposing any man be unsatisfied, and do make any doubt whether these books called Holy Scriptures, or any of them, be the Word of God, that is a Divine revelation; proportionably to the degree of his doubting concerning the Divine authority of the Scriptures, there will be an abatement of his faith as to the things contained in them. And upon this account I think it is that the Scripture speaks of degrees of faith; of growing and increasing in faith; of a strong faith; and of a weak faith, that is such a faith as had a great mixture of doubting; by which we are not to understand that they doubted of the truth of anything of which they were satisfied by a Divine revelation; but that they doubted whether such things were Divine revelations or not. 4. What are the proper and genuine effects of this faith? The proper and genuine effects of the belief of the Scriptures in general is the conformity of our hearts and lives to what we believe; that is, to be such persons and to live such lives as it becomes those who do heartily believe, and are really persuaded of the truth of the Scriptures. And if this be a constant and abiding persuasion it will produce this effect; but with more or less difficulty according to the disposition of the subject, and the weakness or strength of contrary habits and inclinations. More particularly the effects of this faith are according to the nature of the matter believed. If it be a history or relation of things past, or prophecy of things to come, it hath an effect upon men so far as the history or prophecy doth concern them. If it be a doctrine, it hath the effect which the particular nature and tendency of such a doctrine requires. 5. In what sense this faith of things supernaturally revealed may be said to be a Divine faith? Not only in respect of the matter and object of it, which are Divine things, such as concern God and religion and in respect of the Divine effects it hath upon those who believe these things (for in these two respects a persuasion of the principles of natural religion may be said to be a Divine faith); but likewise in respect of the argument whereby it is wrought, which is a Divine testimony. (*Ibid.*) *Of the faith or persuasion of a Divine revelation:*—I. WHAT WE ARE TO UNDERSTAND BY A DIVINE REVELATION. A supernatural discovery or manifestation of things to us. I say supernatural because it may either be immediately by God, or by the mediation of angels; as most if not all the revelations of the Old Testament were; a

supernatural discovery or manifestation, either immediately to our minds and inward faculties, or else mediately to our understandings, by the mediation of our outward senses; as by an external appearance to our bodily eyes, or by a voice and sound to the sense of hearing. II. WHETHER A PERSUASION OF A DIVINE REVELATION MAY PROPERLY BE CALLED FAITH? To this I answer, that according to the narrow notion of faith which the schools have fixed, which is an assent to anything grounded upon the testimony and authority of God revealing it, a persuasion of a Divine revelation cannot properly be called faith, because it is irrational to expect that a man should have another Divine revelation to assure him that this is a Divine revelation; for then, for the same reason, I must expect another Divine revelation to assure me of that, and so without end. But according to the true and general notion of faith, which is a persuasion of the mind concerning anything, a persuasion of the mind concerning a Divine revelation may as properly be called faith as anything else, if men will but grant that a man may be so satisfied concerning a Divine revelation, as verily to believe and be persuaded that it is so. III. HOW WE MAY COME TO BE PERSUADED OF A DIVINE REVELATION THAT IT IS SUCH; or by what arguments this persuasion is wrought in us? 1. As to those persons to whom the revelation is immediately made, the question is by what arguments or means they may come to be assured that any revelation which they have is really and truly such, and not a delusion or imposture. (1) God can work in the mind of man a firm persuasion of a thing by giving him a clear and vigorous perception of it; and if so, then God can accompany His own revelations with such a clear and overpowering light as shall discover to us the divinity of them, and satisfy us thereof beyond all doubt and scruple. (2) God never persuades a man of anything that contradicts the natural and essential notions of his mind and understanding. For this would be to destroy His own workmanship, and to impose that upon the understanding of a man which, whilst it retains its own nature and remains what it is, it cannot possibly admit. (3) Supposing the thing revealed do not contradict the essential notions of our minds, no good and holy man hath reason to doubt of anything, whether it be a revelation from God or not, of which he hath a clear and vigorous perception, and full satisfaction in his own mind that it is such. (4) A good and holy man reflecting upon this assurance and persuasion that he hath may be able to give himself a reasonable account of it, and satisfy himself that it is not a stubborn belief and an obstinate conceit of things without any ground or reason. 2. What assurance can other persons, who have not the revelation immediately made to them, have of a Divine revelation? To this I shall answer by these propositions: (1) That there are some means whereby a man may be assured of another's revelation that it is Divine. (*a*) Otherwise it would signify nothing, but only to the person that immediately had it; which would make void the chief end of most revelations, which are seldom made to particular persons for their own sakes only, but, for the most part, on purpose that they may be made known to others, which could not effectually be done unless there be some means whereby men may be assured of revelations made to another. (*b*) None could be guilty of unbelief but those who had immediate revelation made to them. For no man is guilty of unbelief that is not obliged to believe; but no man can be under any obligation to believe anything, who hath not sufficient means whereby he may be assured that such a thing is true. (2) The private assurance and satisfaction of another concerning a revelation made to him can signify nothing at all to me, to assure me of it. For what satisfaction is it to me that another may say he hath a revelation, unless I have some means to be assured that what he saith is true? For if I must believe every spirit, that is every man that says he is inspired, I lie open to all possible impostures and delusions, and must believe every one that either foolishly conceits or falsely pretends that he hath a revelation. (3) That miracles wrought for the confirmation of any Divine testimony or revelation made to another are a sufficient means whereby those who have not the Divine revelation immediately made to them may be assured that it is Divine; I say these are sufficient means of assurance in this case. But here we must distinguish between doubtful and unquestionable miracles. IV. WHETHER THIS FAITH CONCERNING A DIVINE REVELATION MADE TO OTHERS DO ADMIT OF DEGREES? That it doth is evident from these expressions which the Scripture useth, of "increasing faith," of "growing in it," of "a weak and strong faith," all which plainly supposeth degrees. And here it will be proper to inquire what is the highest degree of assurance which we can have concerning a Divine revelation made to another, that it is such; whether it be an infallible assurance, or only an undoubted certainty. 1. That infallibility is not essential to Divine faith, and necessarily included in the

notion of it; which I prove thus. Divine faith admits of degrees, as I have showed before; but there can be no degree of infallibility. Infallibility is an impossibility of being deceived; but there are no degrees of impossibility, one thing is not more impossible than another; but all things that are impossible are equally so. 2. That the assurance which we have of the miracles wrought for the confirmation of the gospel is not an infallible assurance. 3. That an undoubted assurance of a Divine revelation that it is such, is as much as in reason can be expected. No man pretends to a Divine revelation that there is a God; but only to have rational satisfaction of it, such as leaves no just or reasonable cause to doubt of it. And why then should any desire greater assurance of a Divine revelation than he hath of a God? 4. An undoubted assurance is sufficient to constitute a Divine faith. Do not men venture their estates in traffic to places they never saw, because they have it from credible persons that there are such places, and they have no reason to doubt their testimony; and why should not the same assurance serve in greater matters if an undoubted assurance of a lesser benefit and advantage will make men venture as much? Why should any man desire greater assurance of anything than to have no just reason to doubt it; why more than so much as the thing is capable of? I shall only add this: that nothing hath been more pernicious to Christian religion than the vain pretences of men to greater assurance concerning things relating to it than they can make good; the mischief of which is this—that when discerning and inquisitive men find that men pretend to greater matters than they can prove, this makes them doubt of all they say, and to call in question Christianity itself. Whereas if men would be contented to speak justly of things, and pretend to no greater assurance than they can bring evidence for, considerate men would be apt to believe them. V. WHAT IS THE PROPER AND GENUINE EFFECT OF THIS FAITH OF A DIVINE REVELATION? I answer, a compliance with the design and intention of it. VI. IN WHAT RESPECT THIS MAY BE CALLED A DIVINE FAITH. To this I answer, not only in respect of the object of it, and the argument whereby it is wrought, and the effect of it; but, likewise, in respect of the author and efficient of it, which is the Divine Spirit. (*Ibid.*) *Of the testimony of the Spirit to the truth of the gospel*:—I. IN RESPECT OF THE OUTWARD EVIDENCE WHICH THE SPIRIT OF GOD GIVES US TO PERSUADE US TO BELIEVE. And if this be not that which divines mean by the testimony of the Spirit in this matter, yet I think it is that which may most properly be so called. Now the Spirit of God did outwardly testify concerning Jesus, that He was the Messias, and came from God; and that the doctrine which He taught was Divine. 1. In the voice from heaven, which accompanied the descending of the Spirit upon Him (Matt. iii. 17). 2. In those miracles which Christ Himself wrought by the Spirit of God, which were so eminent a testimony of the Spirit of God, that the resisting of the evidence of those miracles, and the attributing of them to the devil, is by our Saviour called a blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. 3. In the great miracle of His resurrection from the dead. 4. In the effusion of the Spirit upon the apostles, who were to preach Christ and His doctrine to the world; and that it might carry its evidence along with it. II. FAITH IS IN A PECULIAR MANNER ATTRIBUTED TO THE SPIRIT OF GOD, IN RESPECT OF THE INWARD EFFICACY AND OPERATION OF THE DIVINE SPIRIT UPON THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF THOSE WHO SINCERELY AND EFFECTUALLY BELIEVE AND ENTERTAIN THE GOSPEL. 1. By strengthening the faculty, that is, raising and enabling our understanding to yield assent to the gospel. God is said, in Scripture, to "enlighten the eyes of our understandings," which we may, if we please, understand in this sense; although that may be done by propounding such truths to us as we were ignorant of before, and could not have discovered, unless they had been revealed. 2. By enlightening and discovering the object, or thing to be believed. In the case we are speaking of, the object or thing to be believed is the gospel: now we may imagine the Spirit of God may work a faith or persuasion of this in us, by revealing or discovering to us this proposition, that the gospel is true. 3. By propounding and offering to us such arguments and evidence as are apt to persuade us of the truth of the gospel. And this, the Spirit of God, which inspired the writers of the Scripture, doth mediately by the Scriptures, and those characters of Divinity which are in the doctrines contained in them; and by those miracles which are there credibly related to be wrought by the Spirit of God, for the confirmation of that doctrine. And besides this, the Spirit of God may, when He pleaseth, and probably often doth, immediately suggest those arguments to our minds, and bring them to our remembrance. 4. By holding our minds intent upon this evidence, till it hath wrought its effect upon us. 5. By removing

the impediments which hinder our effectual assent to the gospel. And in this and the last particular I conceive the work of the Spirit of God, in the producing of faith, principally to consist. 6. By furthering and helping forward the efficacy of this persuasion upon our hearts and lives, in the first work of conversion and regeneration, and in the progressive work of sanctification afterward, both which the Scripture doth everywhere attribute to the Spirit of God, as the author and efficient cause. Lessons:—1. We may learn from hence to attribute all the good that is in us, or that we do in any kind, to God. III. THOUGH "FAITH" BE "THE GIFT OF GOD," YET THOSE THAT BELIEVE NOT ARE FAULTY UPON THIS ACCOUNT, THAT THEY QUENCH AND RESIST THE BLESSED MOTIONS OF GOD'S SPIRIT, and the influence and operation of the Spirit of God, which accompany the truth of the gospel to the minds of men, and produce their effect wherever they are not opposed and rejected by the prejudice and perverseness of men. IV. Let us depend upon God for every good gift, and EARNESTLY BEG THE ASSISTANCE AND INFLUENCE OF HIS HOLY SPIRIT, WHICH IS SO NECESSARY TO US TO BEGET FAITH IN US, AND TO PRESERVE AND MAKE IT EFFECTUAL UPON OUR HEARTS AND LIVES. Bread is not more necessary to the support of our natural life, than the Holy Spirit of God to our spiritual life. For our encouragement to ask this gift of God's Holy Spirit, our Saviour hath told us that God is very ready to bestow it upon us (Luke xi. 11–13). (*Ibid.*) *The efficacy, usefulness, and reasonableness, of Divine faith*:—I. WITHOUT FAITH THERE CAN BE NO RELIGION. And this will appear by inquiring into the nature of all human actions, whether civil or religious; and this is common to both of them, that they suppose some kind of faith or persuasion. For example, husbandry, or merchandise; no man will apply himself to these, but upon some belief or persuasion of the possibility and necessity, or at least usefulness and convenience, of these to the ends of life. So it is in Divine and religious things; nothing is done without faith. No man will worship God unless he believe there is a God; unless he be persuaded there is such a being, which, by reason of his excellency and perfection, may challenge our veneration; and unless he believe the goodness of this God, that "He will reward those that diligently serve Him." So likewise no man can entertain Christ as the Messias and Saviour of the world, and yield obedience to His laws, unless he believes that He was sent of God, and ordained by Him to be a Prince and a Saviour. So that you see the necessity of faith to religion. II. THE INFLUENCE THAT A DIVINE FAITH HATH UPON MEN TO MAKE THEM RELIGIOUS. 1. A true Divine faith supposeth a man satisfied and persuaded of the reasonableness of religion. He that verily believes there is a God, believes there is a being that hath all excellency and perfection, that is infinitely good, and wise, and just, and powerful, that made and preserves all things. Now he that believes such a Being as this, cannot but think it reasonable that He should be esteemed and adored by all those creatures that are sensible and apprehensive of these excellences; not only by constant praise of Him, but by a universal obedience to His will, and a cheerful submission to His pleasure. For what more reasonable than gratitude? And seeing He is truth itself, and hath been pleased to reveal His will to us, what can be more reasonable than to believe all those discoveries and revelations which "God, who cannot lie," hath made to us, and to comply with the intention of them? And seeing He is the original pattern of all excellency and perfection, what can be more reasonable than to imitate the perfections of the Divine nature, and to endeavour to be as like God as we can? And these are the sum of all religion. 2. A true Divine faith supposeth a man satisfied and persuaded of the necessity of religion; that is, that it is necessary to every man's interest to be religious; that it will be highly for our advantage to be so, and eminently to our prejudice to be otherwise; that if we be so we shall be happy, if we be not we shall be miserable and undone for ever. (1) From the nature and reason of the thing. Every man that believes a God, must believe Him to be the supreme good; and the greatest happiness to consist in the enjoyment of Him; and a separation from Him to be the greatest misery. Now God is not to be enjoyed but in a way of religion. Holiness makes us like to God, and likeness will make us love Him; and love will make us happy in the enjoyment of Him; and without this it is impossible to be happy. (2) Every man who believes the revelations which God hath made, cannot but be satisfied how much religion is his interest from the promises and threatenings of God's Word. APPLICATION: 1. This shows why there is so little of true religion in the world; it is for want of faith, without which it is impossible for men to be religious. If men were verily persuaded that the great, and holy, and just God looks continually upon them, and that it is impossible to hide from Him any-

thing that we do, they would not dare to commit any sin in His sight, and under the eye of Him who is their Father and Master, their Sovereign and their Judge, their Friend and Benefactor; who is invested with all these titles, and stands to us in all these relations, which may challenge reverence and respect. Did men believe that they shall live for ever, and that after this short life is ended they must enter upon eternity; did men believe this, would they not with all possible care and diligence endeavour to attain the one and avoid the other? Did men believe the Scripture to be the Word of God, and to contain matters of the highest importance to our everlasting happiness, would they neglect it and lay it aside, and study it no more than a man would do an almanac out of date. 2. If faith have so great an influence upon religion, then the next use shall be to persuade men to believe. No man can be religious that doth not believe these two things: (1) The principles of natural religion—that there is a God; that His soul is immortal; and that there are future rewards. (2) That the Scriptures are the Word of God; or, which comes all to one, that the doctrine contained in them is a Divine revelation. Therefore whoever would persuade men to be religious, he must begin here; and whoever would improve men in religion and holiness, he must labour to strengthen this principle of faith. (*Ibid.*) *Faith:*—The old Assembly's Catechism asks, "What is the chief end of man?" and its answer is, "To glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever." The answer is exceedingly correct; but it might have been equally truthful if it had been shorter. The chief end of man is "to please God"; for in so doing he will please himself. He that pleases God is, through Divine grace, journeying onward to the ultimate reward of all those that love and fear God; but he who is ill-pleasing to God must, for Scripture has declared it, be banished from the presence of God, and consequently from the enjoyment of happiness. If then, we be right in saying that to please God is to be happy, the one important question is, how can I please God? And there is something very solemn in the utterance of our text: "Without faith it is impossible to please God." That is to say, do what you may, strive as earnestly as you can, live as excellently as you please, make what sacrifices you choose, be as eminent as you can for everything that is lovely and of good repute, yet none of these things can be pleasing to God unless they be mixed with faith. I. First, for the EXPOSITION. What is faith? 1. The first thing in faith is knowledge. "Search the Scriptures," then, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Christ"; and by reading cometh knowledge, and by knowledge cometh faith, and through faith cometh salvation. 2. But a man may know a thing, and yet not have faith. I may know a thing, and yet not believe it. Therefore assent must go with faith; that is to say, what we know we must all agree unto, as being most certainly the verity of God. 3. But a man may have all this, and yet not possess true faith; for the chief part of faith lies in the last head, namely, in an affiance to the truth; not the believing it merely, but the taking hold of it as being ours, and in the resting on it for salvation. Recumbency on the truth was the word which the old preachers used. You will understand that word. Leaning on it; saying, "This is truth, I trust my salvation on it." Now, true faith, in its very essence rests in this—a leaning upon Christ. It will not save me to know that Christ is a Saviour; but it will save me to trust Him to be my Saviour. II. And now we come to the ARGUMENT—why, without faith, we cannot be saved. 1. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." And I gather it from the fact that there never has been the case of a man recorded in Scripture who did please God without faith. 2. But the next argument is, faith is the stooping grace, and nothing can make a man stoop without faith. Now, unless man does stoop, his sacrifice cannot be accepted. The angels know this. When they praise God, they do it veiling their faces with their wings. The redeemed know it. When they praise God, they cast their crowns before His feet. 3. Faith is necessary to salvation, because we are told in Scripture that works cannot save. To tell a very familiar story, and even the poorest may not misunderstand what I say: a minister was one day going to preach. He climbed a hill on his road. Beneath him lay the villages, sleeping in their beauty, with the cornfields motionless in the sunshine; but he did not look at them, for his attention was arrested by a woman standing at her door, and who, upon seeing him, came up to him with the greatest anxiety, and said, "Oh, sir, have you any keys about you? I have broken the key of my drawers, and there are some things that I must get directly." Said he, "I have no keys." She was disappointed, expecting that every one would have some keys. "But suppose," he said, "I had some keys, they might not fit your lock, and therefore

you could not get the articles you want. But do not distress yourself, wait till some one else comes up. But," said he, wishing to improve the occasion, "have you ever heard of the key of heaven?" "Ah! yes," she said, "I have lived long enough, and I have gone to church long enough, to know that if we work hard and get our bread by the sweat of our brow, and act well towards our neighbours, and behave, as the catechism says, lowly and reverently to all our betters, and if we do our duty in that station of life in which it has pleased God to place us, and say our prayers regularly, we shall be saved." "Ah!" said he, "my good woman, that is a broken key, for you have broken the commandments, you have not fulfilled all your duties. It is a good key, but you have broken it." "Pray, sir," said she, believing that he understood the matter, and looking frightened, "What have I left out?" "Why," said he, "the all-important thing, the blood of Jesus Christ. Don't you know it is said, the key of heaven is at His girdle; He openeth, and no man shutteth; He shutteth, and no man openeth"? And explaining it more fully to her, he said, "It is Christ, and Christ alone, that can open heaven to you, and not your good works." "What, minister," said she, "are our good works useless, then?" "No," said he, "not after faith. If you believe first, you may have as many good works as you please; but if you believe, you will never trust in them, for if you trust in them you have spoilt them, and they are not good works any longer. Have as many good works as you please, still put your trust wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ, for if you do not, your key will never unlock heaven's gate." 4. Again: without faith it is impossible to be saved, and to please God, because without faith there is no union to Christ. Now, union to Christ is indispensable to our salvation. If I come before God's throne with my prayers, I shall never get them answered, unless I bring Christ with me. 5. "Without faith it is impossible to please God," because it is impossible to persevere in holiness without faith. III. And now in conclusion, THE QUESTION, the vital question. Have you faith? 1. He that has faith has renounced his own righteousness. 2. True faith begets a great esteem for the person of Christ. 3. He that has true faith will have true obedience. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Faith essential to pleasing God*:—I. THE APOSTLE ASSERTS THAT FAITH IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL TO THE PLEASING OF GOD. 1. For, first, without faith there is no capacity for communion with God at all. The things of God are spiritual and invisible; without faith we cannot recognise such things, but must be dead to them. 2. Without faith the man himself is not pleasing to God. Faith in Christ makes a total change in our position towards God—we who were enemies are reconciled; and from this comes towards God a distinct change in the nature of all our actions: imperfect though they be, they spring from a loyal heart, and they are pleasing to God. 3. Remember that, in human associations, want of confidence would prevent a man's being well-pleasing to another. When the creature dares to doubt his Creator, how can the Creator be pleased? 4. Unbelief takes away the common ground upon which God and man can meet. According to the well-worn fable, two persons who are totally different in their pursuits cannot well live together: the fuller and the charcoal-burner were obliged to part; for whatever the fuller had made white, the collier blackened with his finger. If differing pursuits divide, much more will differing feelings upon a vital point. It is Jesus whom Jehovah delights to honour; and if you will not even trust Jesus with your soul's salvation, you grieve the heart of God, and He can have no pleasure in you. 5. Want of faith destroys all prospect of love. 6. Want of faith will create positive variance on many points. 6. By what means can we hope to please God, apart from faith in Him? By keeping all the commandments? Alas! you have not done so. If you do not believe in Him you are not obedient to Him. We are bound to obey with the mind by believing, as well as with the hand by acting. Remember the impossibility of pleasing the Lord without faith, and do not dash your ship upon this iron-bound coast. II. THE APOSTLE MENTIONS TWO ESSENTIAL POINTS OF FAITH. He begins by saying, "He that cometh to God must believe that He is." Note the key-word "must": it is an immovable, insatiable necessity. Before we can walk with God, it is clear that we must "come to God." Naturally, we are at a distance from Him, and we must end that distance by coming to Him, or else we cannot walk with Him, nor be pleasing to Him. Believe that God is as truly as you are; and let Him be real to you. Believe that He is to be approached, to be realised, to be, in fact, the great practical factor of your life. Hold this as the primary truth, that God is most influential upon you; and then believe that it is your business to come to Him. But there is only one way of coming to Him, and you must have faith to use that

way. Yet all this would be nothing without the second point of belief. We must believe that "He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." We seek Him, first, when we begin by prayer, by trusting to Jesus, and by calling upon the sacred name, to seek salvation. Afterwards we seek God by aiming at His glory, by making Him the great object for which we live. III. WE WILL NOW GATHER A FEW LESSONS FROM WHAT THE APOSTLE HAS TAUGHT US. 1. First, then, the apostle teaches us here by implication that God is pleased with those who have faith The negative is often the plainest way of suggesting the positive. 2. Learn, next, that those who have faith make it the great object of their life to please God. 3. Next, note, the apostle teaches us here that they who have faith in God are always coming to God; for He speaks of the believer as "He that cometh to God." You not only come to Him, and go away from Him, as in acts of prayer and praise; but you are always coming; your life is a march towards Him. 4. God will see that those who practise faith in Him shall have a reward. God Himself is enough for the believer. 5. Those who have no faith are in a fearful case. (*Ibid.*) *Trust gratifies*:—The "Cottager and Artisan" gives the following anecdote of the late Lord Shaftesbury:—"I was one day," he said, "about to cross the street in one of the great thoroughfares of London. It was very crowded, and a little girl all alone was much puzzled as to how she was to get over. I watched her walking up and down, and scanning the faces of those who passed to see if there were any whom she could trust, but for a long time she seemed to scan in vain. At last she came to me, and looking timidly up in my face, whispered, 'Please, sir, will you lift me over?' And," Lord Shaftesbury adds, "that little child's trust was the greatest compliment I ever had in my life." *Value of faith*:—A New-Year's wish of Romaine for his people and for himself was: "God grant that this may be a year famous for believing." That is a wish that the most advanced century will never outgrow. Such a year will be famous indeed. Mighty works and mighty men are found where there is famous faith. The measure of the possibility of a year great in believing is the measure of the Infinite God Himself. (*Sword and Trowel.*) **He that cometh to God.**—*Access to God*:—It is a wonderful idea, the idea of the infinite, almighty, eternal Being, as to be approached and communicated with by man. If we might allow ourselves in such an imagination, as that the selected portion of all humanity, the very best and wisest persons on earth, were combined into a permanent assembly, and invested with a sovereign authority—the highest wisdom, virtue, science, and power thus united—would not a perfectly free access for the humblest, poorest, most distressed, and otherwise friendless, to such an assemblage, with a certainty of their most kind and sedulous attention being given—of their constant will to render aid—of their wisdom and power being promptly exercised—would not this be deemed an inestimable privilege to all within the compass of such an empire? But take a higher position, and suppose that there were such an economy that the most illustrious of the departed saints held the office of being practically, though unseen, patrons, protectors, assistants, guides, to men on earth; that the spirits of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, could be drawn, by those who desired it, to a direct personal attention, and to an exercise of their benignity and interference—would not this appear a resource of incalculable value? But there is another far loftier ascension. We are informed of a glorious order of intelligences that have never dwelt in flesh; many of whom may have enjoyed their existence from a remoteness of time surpassing what we can conceive of eternity; with an immense expansion of being and powers; with a perpetual augmentation of the goodness inspired by their Creator; and exercising their virtues and unknown powers in appointed offices of beneficence throughout the system of unnumbered worlds. Would it not seem a pre-eminent privilege, if the children of the dust might obtain a direct communication with them; might invoke them, accost them, draw them to a fixed attention, and with a sensible evidence of their indulgent patience and celestial benignity? Would not this seem an exaltation of felicity, throwing into shade everything that could be imagined to be derived to us from the benevolence and power of mortal or glorified humanity? Now, here we are at the summit of created existence; and up to this sublime elevation we have none of these supposed privileges. What, then, to do next? Next, our spirits have to raise their thoughts to an awful elevation above all subordinate existence in earth and heaven, in order to approach a presence where they may implore a beneficent attention, and enter into a communication with Him who is uncreated and infinite; a transition compared to which the distance from the inferior to the nobler, and then to the noblest of created beings, is reduced to nothing; as one lofty eminence

on an elevated mountain—and a higher—and the highest—but thence to the starry heavens! But think, who is it that is thus to "come to God?" Man! little, feeble, mortal, fallen, sinful man! He is, if we may speak in such language, to venture an act expressly to arrest the attention of that stupendous Being. The purpose is to speak to Him in a personal manner; to detain Him in communication. The approaching petitioner is to utter thoughts, for God to admit them into His thoughts! He seeks to cause his words to be listened to by Him whose own words may be, at the very time, commanding new creations into existence. But reflect, also, that it is an act to call the special attention of Him whose purity has a perfect perception of all that is evil in the creature that approaches Him; of Him whom the applicant is conscious he has not, to the utmost of his faculties, adored or loved: alas! the very contrary! What an amazing view is thus presented of the situation the unworthy mortal is placed in, the position which he presumes to take, in "coming to God." A sinful being immediately under the burning rays of Omnipotent Holiness! The idea is so fearful, that one might think it should be the most earnest desire of the human soul that there should be some intervention to save it from the fatal predicament. No wonder, then, that the most devout men of every age of the Christian dispensation have welcomed with gratitude the doctrine of a Mediator, manifested in the person of the Son of God, by whom the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man are, as it were, kept asunder; and a happy communication can take place through the medium of One who stands before the Divine Majesty of Justice, in man's behalf, with a propitiation and a perfect righteousness. Thus far, and too long, we have dwelt on the wonderfulness of the fact and the greatness of the privilege of "coming to God." We have to consider, a little, with what faith this is to be done. "Must believe that He is." Must have a most absolute conviction that there is one Being infinitely unlike and superior to all others; the sole Self-existent, All-comprehending, and All-powerful; a reality in such a sense that all other things are but precarious modes of being, subsisting simply in virtue of His will;—must pass through and beyond the sphere of sense, to have a spiritual sight of "Him that is invisible"; and, more than merely a principle held in the understanding, must verify the solemn reality in a vitally pervading sentiment of the soul. And what a glory of intellect and faith thus to possess a truth which is the sun in our mental sphere, and whence radiate all the illuminations and felicities that can bless the rational creation! And what a spectacle of debasement and desolation is presented to us, when we behold the frightful phenomenon of a rational creature disbelieving a God! But how easily it may be said, "We have that faith; we never denied or doubted that there is such a Being." Well; but reflect, and ascertain in what degree the general tenor of your feelings, and your habits of life, have been different from what they might have been if you had disbelieved or doubted. The effectual faith in the Divine existence always looks to consequences. In acknowledging each glorious attribute, it regards the aspect which it bears on the worshipper, inferring what will therefore be because that is. It is not a valid faith in the Divinity, as regarded in any of His attributes, till it excite the solicitous thought, "And what then?" He is, as supreme in goodness; and what then? Then, how precious is every assurance from Himself that He is accessible to us. Then, is it not the truest insanity in the creation to be careless of His favour? Then, happy they who obtain that favour, by devoting themselves to seek it. Then, let us instantly and ardently proceed to act on the conviction that He is the "rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." This faith is required in consideration of the intention (might we presume to say, reverently, the sincerity?) of the heavenly Father in calling men to come to Him. "I have not said, Seek ye Me in vain." To what purpose are they thus required to make His favour the object of their eternal aspiration; to forego all things rather than this. Why thus summoned, and trained, and exercised, to a lofty ambition far above the world? Not to frustrate all this labour, not to disappoint them of the felicity to which they continually aspire! They "must believe that He is a rewarder"; that He is not thus calling them up a long, laborious ascent, only that they may behold His glorious throne, come near to His blissful paradise, do Him homage at its gate, and then be shut out. Consider again: it is because there is a Mediator, that sinful men are authorised to approach to God, seeking that—no more than that—which the mysterious appointment was made, in Divine justice and mercy, for the purpose of conferring on them. Then they must believe that this glorious office cannot but be availing to their success. What has been appointed, in the last resort, in substitution and in remedy of an antecedent

economy, because that has failed, must be, by eminence, of a nature not itself to fail. They that "come to God" in confidence on this new Divine constitution, will find that He, in justice to His appointment of a Mediator, will grant what is promised and sought in virtue of it; in other words, will be a "rewarder" for Christ's sake. And what is that in which it will be verified to them "that He is a rewarder"? For what will they have to adore and bless Him as such? For the grandest benefits which even He can impart in doing full justice to the infinite merits of the appointed Redeemer. But the important admonition, to be repeated here in concluding, is, that all this is for them "that diligently seek"; so habitually, importunately, perseveringly, that it shall in good faith be made the primary concern of our life; so that, while wishes and impulses to obtain are incessantly springing from the busy soul in divers directions, there shall still be one predominant impulse directed towards heaven. And, if such representations as we have been looking at be true, think what might be obtained by all of us, who have them at this hour soliciting our attention, on the supposition that we all should henceforward be earnest applicants to the Sovereign Rewarder. Think of the mighty amount of good, in time and eternity, as our collective wealth; and of the value of every individual share. (*John Foster.*) *Postulates of prayer:*—"He that cometh to God"—this is a special characterisation of prayer. It seems to localise the omnipresent God. To come to Him is to be vividly conscious of Him, and to realise His goodness and grace; to touch Him, and speak to Him. I. The first postulate of prayer is BELIEF IN THE PERSONALITY OF GOD. If I think of God as a universal ether, as a highly-sublimated steam which pervades and works the machine of the universe, I can no more pray to Him than I could pray to the steam of the locomotive to put me down at such and such a station. If I think of God as an unconscious something, idea, or what else, which is necessarily and unconsciously developing itself into the universe, I can no more pray to that than I can to the principle of evolution. If God be not a person, if He be a mere force, as pray to that I might as well say to gravitation, which has broken my head, "Heal me," or to time, which has left me behind, "Wait for me." II. We must not only believe that God is, but also that He is the rewarder of them that seek after Him, which involves as a second postulate of prayer that GOD HAS POWER TO HEAR AND ANSWER PRAYER. Prayer, it is said, has a great reflex action. It certainly has. Going over and giving thanks for God's mercies excites my gratitude, even though there be no God to receive my thanks. But I would not so befool myself as to give thanks, if I did not believe God is to reward my thanks by receiving them. A celebrated scientific lecturer, while insisting on the operation of law, once said: "The united voice of this assembly could not persuade me that I have not at this moment the power to lift my arm if I wished to do so." And if, in spite of gravitation, man has this power, surely we cannot deny a corresponding power to God. In answer to my child's prayer I can lift my arm, though gravitation operates to keep it down. And in answer to my prayer, God my Father, being no less personal than I, can do what is analogous to my lifting my arm. He can subordinate, combine His laws according to His mighty power and wisdom, so that, without dishonouring, but rather honouring them in using them, He brings about the result which is the reward of my prayer. III. But to reward, there must be something more than the power; there must be the grace. We note, then, as the third postulate of prayer, GOD'S WILLINGNESS TO REWARD. Some, learning that this earth is but a small part of the solar system, and the solar system but a mote in the sunbeam of the universe, say, with more than the psalmist's meaning: Well, what is man that God should be mindful of him, or the son of man that God should visit him? Why should God answer the prayers of one so insignificant? The question would have force if man were nothing more than matter. But there is a spirit in man, and the breath of God hath given him understanding; we are His offspring. A solar system, therefore, might expire, but it would touch God less than the cry of one of His children. Insignificant man is materially, but not spiritually. He has a quality transcending all matter; he has a life which shall flourish with immortal energy when the fires of the sun are sunk into cold ashes. God will hear His child, though the child be small. Ah, but we are sinful, and He is holy; will He suffer us to come near Him? Verily, God is willing that the sinful, being penitent, should draw near to Him. Why, has He not drawn near to them in every inviting word and gracious deed of prophet and saint? Has He not drawn near to them in Christ Jesus? Yea, does He not draw near to us sinful now? What is that loathing of sin which sometimes comes upon the sinner? What is that sense of shame and feeling of

disgust which sometimes fills him? What is that longing for good, that wistful looking back to the days when the heart was pure? What are these but God coming to the sinner? What are our hungerings for righteousness, our longings for truth, our aspirations for goodness, but God in us, working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure? To meet, then, such operations is to fulfil His own desires; to reward such feelings is to satisfy Himself. If God has come thus to us, how can we doubt that He will reward us coming to Him? How can He deny our prayer, when to fulfil it is to fulfil His own will? (*A. Goodrich, D.D.*) *The existence of God*:—1. First, the belief in His existence is universal, and what is a universal belief has the force of a law of nature. This belief we see alike in the savage and the highly civilised. The soul has it sunk into itself that it is an uncompounded spiritual substance. But this impersonalness in the soul implies a personalness in Him who made it. 2. Our moral nature attests the same thing. Conscience in every man says: "Thou shalt and thou shalt not." We are conscious of responsibility, and this implies a personal being to whom we are responsible. This is the testimony of the moral nature. Besides, there is an instinct of the infinite in every mind. This, indeed, is the highest part of our nature. Unless there is an answering reality in God, that part is an enigma—eyes without light, lungs without air. 3. We see, thirdly, a progress in history. It is absurd to suppose that all the tangled elements of early European history—Greek, Phœnician, Roman, Scythian—of themselves made Europe's present civilisation, as to suppose that a combat of Arctic and Tropic winds could have made the Yale College of now. 4. We see, fourthly, the Scriptures coming to assert a God, not proving Him, but bringing Him to light; affording an explanation of all things in Him, and it is in a sense a proof. 5. We have, fifthly, evidence that God is of the highest purity and holiness. We must have that answering fact in Him, for it is in us. This leads us to ask how we may find Him? Discern Him? It is the greatest of questions, for all of our highest living depends on it. (1) We cannot find Him by the senses. We cannot see gravitation steady the mountains; we cannot hear light drop on the world, with its vivifying power. We can see the jewel, but not the crystallising power. Life shows itself in the flushing cheek, the beaming eye, the bounding step, but we cannot see it. We could not see it go if it should fly away from our dearest one. It eludes us, and so does God. (2) We cannot find Him by physical analysis. In Shakespeare's brain, the knife finds no Othello; in Raphael's, no mother and child; in Angelo's, no high poised dome; in Napoleon's, no moving armies, as if they were but fingers. That scientists cannot find God thus must grieve them, till they can pull out genius with a pair of forceps, or showy character and probe. (3) We cannot find Him by metaphysical analysis. We are to find Him rather through our highest part; through that in us which accords with Him. Love finds love. "The pure in heart shall see God." We see now why scientists do not find God. They do not use the right instruments. We cannot find love with a microscope, nor sweep up music with a broom. We see why the failures of scientists to find God do not discourage believers. It matters not to him who has seen them that a man pronounce Naples a dream of the fancy; Venice, that dream in stone, reposing ever in blessed stillness on its lagoons, a myth; Mont Blanc, as seen from Geneva, gleaming like the very throne of God on earth, a speculation. We see what a magnificent democracy God has set up on earth to come to this sublimest knowledge in the universe. No university lore, and no grand diploma are essentials. The poorest, the humblest, may have it. We see the sphere of the Church. The objective point is to bring to the world the capability of so seeing God, and then by all good ordinances and methods to develop this seeing of Him and growth toward Him. (*R. S. Storrs, D.D.*) *On coming to God*:—I. IT IS THE NATURE OF FAITH TO MAKE A MAN COME TOWARDS GOD, AND TO GET COMMUNION WITH HIM THROUGH CHRIST. 1. What it is to come to God. Coming to God notes three things, for it is a duty always in progress. (1) The first address of faith. To come to God is to desire to be in His favour and covenant—to be partakers of His blessings in this life, and of salvation in the life to come (Heb. vii. 25). (2) Our constant communion with Him in holy duties. In all exercises of religion we renew our access to Christ, and by Christ to God; in hearing, as a teacher; in prayer, as an advocate for necessary help and supply; in the Lord's Supper, as the Master of the feast (Prov. ix. 2). (3) Our entrance into glory (Matt. xxv. 34). 2. There is no coming to God but by Christ (John x. 9), "I am the door"; there is no entrance but through Him (John xiv. 6). (1) By His merit. As paradise was kept by a flaming sword, so all access to God is closed by His justice; there was no pressing in till Christ opened the

way, God became man, drawing near to us by the veil of His flesh (Heb. x. 19, 20). (2) By His grace. II. THAT THE FIRST POINT OF FAITH, IF WE WOULD HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH GOD, IS TO BELIEVE THAT THERE IS A GOD. This is the primitive and supreme truth, therefore let me discuss it a little; the argument is not needless. 1. Partly because the most universal and incurable disease of the world is atheism; it is disguised under several shapes, but it lies at the root, and destroys all practice and good conscience. 2. Because supreme truths should be laid up with the greatest certainty and assurance. Christians are mistaken very much, if they think all the difficulty of religion lies in affiance, and taking out their own comfort, and in clearing up their own particular interest. Oh, no; a great deal of it lies in assent; there is a privy atheism at the root, and therefore doth the work of God go on so untowardly with us—therefore have we such doubtings and so many deformities of life and conversation. 3. I would handle this argument, that there is a God, because it is good to detain the heart a little in the view of this truth, and to revive it in our souls. (1) That there is a God may be proved by conscience, which is as a thousand witnesses. (2) As conscience shows it, so the consent of all nations. There are none so barbarous, but they worship some God. (3) It may be evident also by the book of the creatures. Surely there is a God, because these things are made in such exactness and order. (4) Providence also discovers a God. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *How to seek God*:—1. Only: "Aut Cæsar, aut nullus"—Him only shalt thou serve. We must not with Ahaziah seek to Beelzebub, the god of Ekron: but to Jehovah, the God of Israel. 2. We must seek Him diligently, as Saul did his father's asses, the woman her lost groat: there must be no stone unrolled, as the Ninevites, who cried with all their might. 3. At all times. In health, in wealth, in honour (Hos. v.). "In their affliction they will seek Me diligently: in health as well as in sickness." We will seek to a man so long as we need him: we need God at all times, therefore at all times let us seek unto Him. 4. In time, not as the five foolish virgins, who sought too late, and could have no admittance into the marriage feast. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) **Believe that He is.**—*Faith in God*:—The apostle commences this chapter by defining the nature of faith; and then proceeds to adduce, from the narratives of the Old Testament, a variety of instances wherein this grace had been prominently exhibited. But he pauses in his enumeration, that he may indicate, in the words of the text, that, apart from the possession of this qualification, it can be to no purpose that men use the language of prayer. And yet, when immediately afterwards he comes to explain what the measure of that faith is, without which we cannot acceptably betake ourselves to the footstool of our Maker; it seems certainly, at first sight, as though exceedingly small demands were made upon us in this direction. The first requisite, in "coming to God," is stated to be, that we are to "believe that He is." Now, might it not have been supposed that the specifying of such a condition as this would have been altogether superfluous? You will notice, however, that the thing demanded was not that there should be belief in the existence of some Supreme Intelligence, who presides over the affairs and movements of the universe; but that the Deity Himself was to be the object of faith. Now, you cannot believe that "God is," without bringing your conceptions of His character into accordance with the delineations of it given in the Inspired Volume. And, when this is borne in mind, can it be affirmed with certainty that Christians, in the present day, stand in need of no caution in relation to this very point? One man, for instance, lets his mind be wholly occupied with impressions of the love of God. He cannot think that the Being who has stored the universe with such abundant demonstrations of His benevolence, will eventually, on the score of transgressions unrepented of, consign any to the abode of the fire and of the worm. Now, is it not evident that the man fails to recognise the Deity of the Scriptures, in the Being concerning whose future proceedings he thus conjectures?—and that, so long as he confines himself to this one-sided view he cannot "come to God,"—since "he that cometh to God must believe that He is,"—must recognise Him in all the comprehensiveness of His revealed character,—must beware of the substitution of an idol of the fancy, for the Lord of heaven and earth. But another man is thoroughly persuaded that he is walking along the road which will conduct him to eternal life: and this, simply, because he bears a fair character for morality, and is not chargeable with any flagrant crime. He may devote little or no attention to those religious exercises, public and private, which can with safety be neglected by none; but still it seems not to occur to him that he is endangering the interests of his soul. Now, remembering that "they that worship God, must worship Him in spirit and in truth"; and that "there is none other name given among men,

whereby we can be saved, but the name of Jesus"; you will perceive that the individual who unhappily abandons himself to spiritual indifference, must be necessarily, meanwhile, far from the kingdom of heaven. And if he believes not, therefore, in the God of the Bible, in what terms shall we address him, and what course shall we mark out for his guidance? Oh! the man must indeed be directed to "come to God"; but nothing beyond what is essential will be uttered, when, at the same time, he is informed that before he can "come to God," he "must believe that God is." And how frequently is it the case, that the most solemn words of prayer are repeated by the lips, and yet quite unfelt by the heart! Now, is it not so manifest as scarcely to require to be dwelt upon, that if God have connected a large amount of efficacy with earnest prayer, then they who, notwithstanding the proclamation, persist in disbelieving, either wholly or in part, the fact, do not recognise, in the object of their nominal adoration, the prayer-hearing "Lord of all power and might"; that imagination has created an unfaithful representation of Him; that thus the Divine reality is kept out of view; and that, accordingly, before they can "come to God," they must, in the first place, "believe that He is." Such, as you will perceive, is the doctrine of our text; wherein the apostle, who had, in the preceding verses, given two instances of the happy results of faith, remarks parenthetically, ere continuing his list, that, if destitute of this gift, man cannot possibly find acceptance; since, in order to his doing so, he must recognise the Deity—recognise Him, of course, as described in His holy Word; and must thus approach Him as "a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." (*H. B. Moffat, M.A.*) *Two things presupposed in coming to God*:—"He that cometh to God"—and that is religion; "he that is perpetually approaching God," as a worshipper, as an applicant, as one who would live with Him and walk with Him, and that continually; "must believe"—must (the phrase is) "have believed," first of all and once for all—"that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." There are two parts, then, in this primary, this preliminary belief. First the existence of God. A man cannot "come to" a phantom, to an idea, to a non-entity. It is self-evident. The very phrase here used for religion implies the reality of the Object. "He that cometh to God"—and that is religion—must know and feel that he comes to some one. He that would "walk with" God—and that is religion—must know and feel that that desired Companion exists. The other part of the belief is less obvious, but no less instructive. It is the certainty of blessing for the seeker. "That He is a rewarder," a recompenser, "to them that diligently seek Him." It is no humility, it is an irreverence, to doubt God's will to bless. It is one thing to be conscious of a want of "diligence" in "seeking"—it is another thing, altogether, to mistrust the willingness of God to be found. To suppose Him reluctant to bless, is to paint Him in a repulsive form; is to make Him less gracious, less merciful, less bountiful, than any very ungracious, unmerciful, ungenerous, and churlish man; is to deny to Him one of those attributes which make Him God. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Faith in God*:—What an odd conceit was that of the Cretians, to paint their Jupiter without either eyes or ears! And what an uncertainty was she at that prayed, "O God, whoever thou art, for whether thou art, or who thou art I know not" (Medea). This uncertainty attending idolatry caused the heathens to close up their petitions with that general "Hear, all ye gods and goddesses!" And those mariners (Jonah i. 5), every man to call upon his god; and lest they might all mistake the true God, they awaken Jonah to call upon his God. (*J. Trapp.*) *Faith in God's personality*:—A certain famous German, at a certain stage of his spiritual life, though he was at the time a critical writer on the side of Christianity, said to one of us, "Oh that I could say *Thou* to my God, as you do!" (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *Faith and prayer*:—Prayer is the voice of faith. (*J. Horne.*) *Belief in God and prayer*:—It is worthy of note that the very day after M. Renan wrote that the God of Victor Hugo was a God to whom it may be useless to pray, Victor Hugo himself, with one stroke of his pen, from the shadow of the grave, overturned this laboured and subtle rhetoric. "I ask," he wrote, "for prayers from all souls. I believe in God." *God and atheism*:—God's character, as portrayed in the Bible, is the most beautiful and perfect conceivable. He is there represented as at once righteous and merciful, a just God and a Saviour. I admire this character as one worthy of the Creator of the world; so much so, that if, when in another state I were assured that the God of the Bible was nowhere to be found, I should ask, with amazement, Who, then, is God? If, instead, there were pointed out to me any other, such as Heathen, Mohammedan, or Papist gods, I should not find it possible, in my nature, to render the homage required, even at the peril of my life.

The atheist is so foolish and blind, that he can no more than a mole discern the eternal power and Godhead in the wonderful structure of his own frame, in the curious formation of leaf and flower, or in the marvellous glory of all created things; therefore he comes to the conclusion that there is no God. So may the mole, who has never seen them, make sure there is neither king nor palace. Thou atheistic mole, who hast never travelled nor inquired enough to decide there is no God, all thou canst say is, that thou hast not yet seen Him, and hast no desire to see. How knowest thou that His existence is not so manifest beyond the river of death, and throughout the whole realm of eternity, that denial or even doubt is impossible. The mole may, of course, maintain that there is no Grand Lama in Thibet, because he has never been so far in his travels; but his testimony would have no sort of value. So the atheistic worm must have been through all the regions of death, misery and destruction, and explored all the realms of happiness through the Heaven of heavens, embracing in the circuit of his travels the whole of time and eternity, and able also to comprehend all the modes and forms in which it is possible for Deity to exist, before he can successfully deny the existence of a God. (*Christmas Evans.*) *Believing prayer:*—Is it not a sad thing that we should think it wonderful for God to hear prayer? Much better faith was that of a little boy in one of the schools in Edinburgh, who had attended a prayer-meeting, and at last said to his teacher who conducted it, "Teacher, I wish my sister could be got to read the Bible; she never reads it." "Why, Johnny, should your sister read the Bible?" "Because if she should once read it, I am sure it would do her good, and she would be converted and be saved." "Do you think so, Johnny?" "Yes, I do, sir, and I wish the next time there's a prayer-meeting, you would ask the people to pray for my sister that she may begin to read the Bible." "Well, well, it shall be done, John." So the teacher gave out that a little boy was very anxious that prayer should be offered that his sister might begin to read the Bible. John was observed to get up and go out. The teacher thought it very rude of the boy to disturb the people in a crowded room, and so the next day when the lad came, he said, "John, I thought it was very rude of you to get up in the prayer-meeting and go out. You ought not to have done so." Oh, sir," said the boy, "I did not mean to be rude; but I thought I should just like to go home and see my sister reading her Bible for the first time." Thus we ought to believe, and watch with expectation for answers to our prayer. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Faith in prayer:*—Prayer is the bow, the promise is the arrow: faith is the hand which draws the bow, and sends the heart's message to heaven. The bow without the arrow is of no use; and the arrow without the bow is of little worth; and both, without the strength of the hand, to no purpose. Neither the promise without prayer, nor prayer without the promise, nor both without faith, avail the Christian anything. What was said of the Israelites, "They could not enter in, because of unbelief"; the same may be said of many of our prayers: they cannot enter heaven, because they are not put up in faith. (*H. G. Salter.*) *God answers prayer:*—Canon Wilberforce, referring to the struggle preceding the abolition of the slave trade, said he was in a position to state that the leaders in that great movement never took a single step in it without earnest and constant communion with their Lord. On the very night when the leader went down to the House of Commons to plead with silver voice and tender eloquence for the abolition of the evil, on that very night in a little chamber there was gathered a band of praying men; and that night was the night of victory in the House of Commons. (*Proctor's Gems.*) *Confidence in prayer:*—A negro slave in Virginia, whose name we will call Jack, was remarkable for his good sense, knowledge of the leading truths of the gospel, and especially for his freedom from all gloomy fears in regard to his future eternal happiness. A professing Christian, a white man, who was of a very different temperament, once said to him, "Jack, you seem to be always comfortable in the hope of the gospel. I wish you would tell me how you manage to keep steadily in this blessed frame of mind." "Why, massa," replied Jack, "I just fall flat on the promise, and I pray right up." We recommend Jack's method to all desponding Christians, as containing, in substance, all that can be properly said on the subject. Take ground on the promises of God, and plead them in the prayer of faith—pray "right up." (*K. Arvine.*)

A Rewarder.—*God a rewarder:*—This God taketh upon Him. 1. That every one might have a reward. No creature can be too great to be rewarded of Him, and the greatest needs His reward. On the other side, God is so gracious, as He accounteth none too mean to be rewarded of Him (1 Sam. ii. 8; Luke xvi. 21, 22). 2. That believers might be sure of their reward. For God is faithful (Heb. x. 23; Eph. vi.

8). 3. That the reward might be worth the having. For God in His rewards considereth what is meet for His Excellency to give, and accordingly proportions His reward. (*W. Gouge.*) *Rewards in religion* :—The Christian religion holds out rewards to encourage our obedience. Now how far should rewards and punishments be motives of action? The man of reason immediately informs us, that goodness derived from such motives is no goodness at all—that it is merely the desire of happiness, and the fear of misery. He will add perhaps, as the devil said formerly with regard to Job, that the Christian does not serve God for nought: but that proper rewards are judiciously set before him, to keep his disinterested virtue from swerving. Had the rewards, which the Christian religion places before its worshippers, been such as the Arabian impostor promised—sensual pleasure in all its full-bloom delights—the objection might have weight. The expectation of such rewards is calculated certainly to debase the mind. But if the reward be holy, the expectation of it, or, if you please, the making it a motive of action, must be virtuous likewise. Now it is the excellence of the object that elevates the pursuit. We put youth on the acquirement of learning, and have no conception that the attainment of knowledge, which is the reward annexed, can debase his mind. It has a contrary effect. In the same manner, with regard to the rewards of another world, the very pursuit of them is health to the soul; as the attainment of them is its perfection. They are pursued through the exercise of these great principles of faith and trust in God. These virtues, which have nothing earthly about them, tend to purify the mind in a high degree. They abstract it from earthly things, and fix it on heavenly. It might also be shown that the fear of future punishment is a just motive of action. To the wicked, indeed, it is the natural dread of those consequences which attend guilt; and serves merely to rouse them to a sense of their wickedness. But when it acts upon a well-disposed mind, it consists in the fear of displeasing God. A just, rational, and religious motive of action. (*W. Gilpin, M.A.*)

Ver. 7. **Noah.**—*Faith moving to obedience* :—I. IT IS A HIGH COMMENDATION TO FAITH, TO BELIEVE THINGS ON THE WORD OF GOD, THAT IN THEMSELVES AND ALL SECOND CAUSES ARE INVISIBLE, AND SEEM IMPOSSIBLE (Rom. iv. 17–21). II. NO OBSTACLE CAN STAND IN THE WAY OF FAITH WHEN IT FIXETH ITSELF ON THE ALMIGHTY POWER OF GOD AND HIS INFINITE VERACITY (Rom. xi. 23; Tit. i. 2). III. IT IS A GREAT ENCOURAGEMENT AND STRENGTHENING UNTO FAITH WHEN THE THINGS WHICH IT BELIEVES AS PROMISED OR THREATENED, ARE SUITABLE UNTO THE PROPERTIES OF THE DIVINE NATURE, HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, HOLINESS, GOODNESS, AND THE LIKE; SUCH AS IT BECOMETH GOD TO DO. Such was the destruction of the world when it was filled with wickedness and violence. IV. WE HAVE HERE A PLEDGE OF THE CERTAIN ACCOMPLISHMENT OF ALL DIVINE THREATENINGS AGAINST UNGODLY SINNERS AND ENEMIES OF THE CHURCH, THOUGH THE TIME OF IT MAY BE YET FAR DISTANT, AND THE MEANS OF IT MAY NOT BE EVIDENT. Unto this end is this example made use of (2 Pet. ii. 5). V. A REVERENTIAL FEAR OF GOD, AS THREATENING VENGEANCE UNTO IMPENITENT SINNERS, IS A FRUIT OF SAVING FAITH, AND ACCEPTABLE UNTO GOD. VI. IT IS ONE THING TO FEAR GOD AS THREATENING WITH A HOLY REVERENCE; ANOTHER TO BE AFRAID OF THE EVIL THREATENED, MERELY AS IT IS PENAL AND DESTRUCTIVE, WHICH THE WORST OF MEN CANNOT AVOID. VII. FAITH PRODUCETH VARIOUS EFFECTS IN THE MINDS OF BELIEVERS ACCORDING TO THE VARIETY OF OBJECTS IT IS FIXED ON; SOMETIMES JOY AND CONFIDENCE, SOMETIMES FEAR AND REVERENCE. VIII. THEN IS FEAR A FRUIT OF FAITH WHEN IT ENGAGETH US UNTO DILIGENCE IN OUR DUTY, AS IT DID HERE IN NOAH: "BEING MOVED BY FEAR, HE PREPARED AN ARK." IX. THAT ALL THESE THINGS TEND TO THE COMMENDATION OF THE FAITH OF NOAH. Neither the difficulty nor length of the work itself, nor his want of success in preaching, nor the scorn which was cast upon him by the whole world, did discourage him in the least from going on with the work whereunto he was divinely called. A great example it was to all that may be called to bear testimony for God in times of difficulty. X. WE HAVE HERE AN EMINENT FIGURE OF THE STATE OF IMPENITENT SINNERS, AND OF GOD'S DEALING WTH THEM IN ALL AGES. 1. When their sins are coming to the height, He gives them a peculiar space for repentance, with sufficient evidence that it is a season granted for that end. 2. During this space, the long-suffering of God waits for their conversion, and He makes it known that it doth so. 3. He allows them the outward means of conversion, as He did to the old world in the preaching of Noah. 4. He warns them in particular of the judgments that are approaching them, which they cannot escape, as He did by the building of the ark. And such are the dealings of God with impenitent sinners in some

measure in all ages. They, on the other side, in such a season—(1) Continue disobedient under the most effectual means of conversion. (2) They are secure as unto any fear or expectation of judgments, and shall be so until they are overwhelmed in them (Rev. xviii. 7, 8). (3) There are always amongst them scoffers, that deride all that are moved with fear at the threatenings of God, and behave themselves accordingly, which is an exact portraiture of the present condition of the world. XI. THE VISIBLE PROFESSING CHURCH SHALL NEVER FALL INTO SUCH AN APOSTASY, NOR BE SO TOTALLY DESTROYED, BUT THAT GOD WILL PRESERVE A REMNANT FOR A SEED TO FUTURE GENERATIONS (Isa. vi. 11–13; Rom. ix. 27; Rev. xviii. 4). XII. LET THOSE THAT ARE EMPLOYED IN THE DECLARATION OF GOD'S PROMISES AND THREATENINGS TAKE HEED UNTO THEMSELVES TO ANSWER THE WILL OF HIM BY WHOM THEY ARE EMPLOYED, WHOSE WORK IT IS WHEREIN THEY ARE ENGAGED. XIII. IT OUGHT TO BE A MOTIVE UNTO DILIGENCE IN EXEMPLARY OBEDIENCE THAT THEREIN WE BEAR TESTIMONY FOR GOD AGAINST THE IMPENITENT WORLD WHICH HE WILL JUDGE AND PUNISH. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *The wicked warned of judgment*:—When we look around us on the world, there seems to be in it a great deal of disorder; and yet it is all under the direction of Him who does everything with the most perfect wisdom. Study, for instance, the science of botany, and you will perceive how correctly He has classified the boundless variety of plants and flowers and trees that spring out of the earth. Read over the pages of natural history, and you will observe the same order existing amongst the equally astonishing diversity of birds and beasts and creeping things. And as it is in the natural so it is also in the moral world. To a mere superficial observer there seems to be a great deal of confusion—a promiscuous mingling of truth and error, of virtue and vice, of pious and wicked people; and yet they are all classified by God. "The Lord knoweth them that are His," and the Lord knoweth them that are not His; for "His eyes go to and fro in the earth, beholding the evil and the good"; and all the attributes and perfections of His nature have been employed from generation to generation, in rewarding the righteous and in punishing the wicked. Perhaps one of the most extraordinary judgments of this kind which ever was inflicted upon the earth, was that universal deluge by which it was once visited. I. THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT WAS MADE OF THIS THREATENED CALAMITY. "Noah" was "warned of God"; whether by a dream or by a vision, or by an audible voice, is not stated. He was "warned of God of things not seen as yet"—quite different from anything which had previously transpired in the world. Prior to his receiving this intimation, rain had descended in genial showers, fructifying the earth and causing it to bring forth and bud, and give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; and every stream and every rill and every river had flowed back again to the great ocean from whence they had proceeded, and yet it kept within the limits assigned it, when God said, "Hitherto shall thou go, but no farther." But, at length, this regularity was to suffer interruption. The cause was this:—"The sons of God had intermarried with the daughters of men"—the professors of the true religion had united themselves with those who made no pretension to religion; the consequence was a speedy and universal degeneracy of morals—and hence God determined that He would sweep them away with the rod of extermination. What is this intended to typify to us? There seems to be something of a similarity between our circumstances and those in which Noah was placed. We also have been "warned of God of things not seen as yet." Since we have known the world, it has continued much the same as it was at the beginning of our existence. That sun has regularly risen in the morning and set in the evening, and risen in the eastern and set in the western sky; these heavens have continued to present much the same serene or cloudy aspect, according to the state of the weather; and every hill and mountain and valley present the same appearance to-day as when we first saw them. It is true that other things have been more fragile; that tree has been withered and stripped of its luxuriant foliage; death, too, has made a vast change in our family circles, and amongst our friends and acquaintances. This, however, is only as it has been always. No interruption has been given by all this to the general course of the world; that still goes on as if nothing of the kind had occurred. But a period is coming when you will see, in those heavens and upon this earth, an entirely different spectacle—when you will see these mountains and hills and valleys becoming victims of fire. Now, when Noah was "warned of God of things not seen as yet," he believed; he gave credence to it immediately; and so ought we, when we look for these still more solemn events which are shortly to come to pass. And yet, alas! how many are there over whom these truths have

no practical influence whatever? If an astronomer tells them, as the result of his calculations, that a comet will appear, they mount their observatories, and get ready their telescopic instruments, and they anxiously wait for the extraordinary luminary; and yet, when we tell them of "signs in heaven and signs on earth," the sign of the Son of Man coming to judge the world in righteousness, they regard it as "a cunningly-devised fable." Noah's faith influenced his passions—he was "moved with fear," his mind was solemnly impressed with awe while contemplating the approaching judgments of the Almighty. And yet there are many in our days who are neither moved by fear nor charmed by love. Noah's faith influenced his actions; he "prepared an ark," God having given him directions how it was to be made. Now, this would require considerable expense and considerable labour; and it would expose him to the ridicule of his surrounding neighbours; but he commenced, and he carried on until it was completed. We are not required, it is true, to build an ark; but we are required to repair to one—to "fly for refuge, and lay hold on the hope set before us." And in order to this, we must cherish a lively apprehension of our danger. We observe, further, that Noah, by his conduct, "condemned the world." How did he do this? He was a preacher of righteousness; and he gave them line upon line, precept upon precept, and expostulation upon expostulation. He condemned them, too, by preparing the ark; for every time they saw it rise from one stage to another, and every time they heard the sound of his implements they were warned. Precisely in the same way is the world condemned now. Thank God! there are preachers of righteousness still; and there is no blessing which you ought more highly to appreciate. And then there are righteous people still; and whenever you come into contact with a believer in Jesus Christ, you hear a warning addressed to you; and if you continue in a state of impenitence, this will be one ground of your condemnation—that you saw people living in the same world, living in the same neighbourhood, living to God and getting ready for heaven, when you were walking on in your trespasses. Oh, there is something irresistibly convincing in an holy life! II. THE BLESSEDNESS WHICH RESULTED FROM NOAH'S BELIEVING GOD. Upwards of a century—nearly a hundred and twenty years—had elapsed, and no interruption whatever had been given to their sensual delights, and they ate and they drank, and they married wives and they were given in marriage. But though the deluge came slowly, it came surely; and at length the hour arrived when God said to Noah, "Come, thou and all thy house, into the ark; and the Lord shut him in"—He who openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth. And then the ancient landmarks of the sea were taken away, and then the windows of heaven were opened and the rain came down, not in gentle and genial showers, but in appalling torrents. Oh, what a scene was this! Parents weeping for their children, and children weeping for their parents; husbands lamenting for their wives, and wives lamenting for their husbands; and the sound of music, and the voice of social converse, and all the delights of companionship subsiding in a moment into the dismal howlings of death! And still the waters continue to prevail, until the summits of the everlasting hills were overtopped; but the ark arose majestically above. Still the beautiful vessel floated on the surface of the great deep, till at length it had landed all its inhabitants in safety upon Mount Ararat. And thus you see, by believing God, Noah and his house were preserved safe from the deluge, and he became heir of righteousness which is by faith—entitled to all the blessedness and privileges of a true believer. Thank God there is no difference in religion now! Noah was saved by faith then, and we are saved by faith now. What, then, are we to learn from this? You have heard that a day of judgment is to come. There is no appearance of it at present. The destruction of the old world by water, was a specimen or emblem of the destruction that now is, by fire. There are not only reservoirs of water beneath the earth, but there are also magazines of flame. What mean those subterraneous fires that issue from Mounts Etna and Vesuvius? They bear testimony to this fact. And then there are fires in these heavens as well as water. What mean those vivid flashes of lightning which you sometimes see gleaming through the vast expanse, and menacing you with ruin? They bear testimony to this fact. And hence the apostle Peter very properly argues "The heavens and the earth that are now, by the same word" that announced the destruction of the antediluvian world, "are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." Oh, what a day will that be to the wicked! Parents will again be seen weeping for their children, and children weeping for their parents. Oh, what a day it will be to the righteous!

You will see them in the ark completely safe! (*John Watson.*) *Noah's faith and ours*:—The creed of these Old Testament saints was a very short one, and very different from ours. Their faith was the very same. And that is a principle well worth getting into our minds, that the scope of the creed has nothing to do with the essence of the faith. I. LOOK FIRST AT NOAH'S FAITH IN REGARD TO ITS OBJECT. His faith grasped the invisible things to come, only because it grasped the Invisible Person, who was, is, and is to come, and who lifted for him the curtain and showed him the things that should be. So is it with our faith, whether it lays hold upon a past sacrifice on Calvary, or upon a present Christ dwelling in our hearts, or whether it becomes telescopic, and stretches forward into the future, and brings the distant near, all its various aspects are but aspects of one thing, and that is personal trust in the personal Christ that speaks to us. What he says is a matter of secondary importance in this respect. The contents of God's revelations vary; the act by which man accepts them is always the same. So the great question for us all is—do we trust God? Do we believe Him, and therefore accept His words, not only with the assent of the understanding, which of all idle things is the idlest, but do we believe Him, revealing, commanding, promising, threatening, with the affiance of our whole hearts? Then, and then only, can we look with quiet certainty into the dim future, which else is all full of rolling clouds, that sometimes shape themselves to our imaginations into the likeness of stable things, but alas! change and melt while we gaze. Only then can we front the solemn future, and say: "I do not expect only, I know what is there." II. Still further, notice NOAH'S FAITH IN ITS PRACTICAL EFFECTS. If faith has any reality in us at all, it works. If real and strong, it will first effect emotion. By "fear" here we are not merely to understand, though possibly it is not to be excluded, a dread of personal consequences, but much rather the sweet and lofty emotion which is described in another part of this same book by the same word: "Let us serve Him with reverence and with godly fear." Such holy and blessed emotion, which has no torment, is the sure result of real faith. Unless a man's faith is warm enough to melt his heart, it is worth very little. A faith unaccompanied by emotion is, I was going to say worse, at any rate it is quite as bad, as a faith which is all wasted in emotion. It is not a good thing when all the steam roars out through an escape pipe; it is perhaps a worse thing when there is no steam in the boiler to escape. I am very sure that there is no road between a man's faith and his practice except through his heart, and that, as the apostle has it in a somewhat different form of speech, meaning, however, the same thing that I am now insisting upon, "faith worketh by love." Love is the path through which creed travels outward to conduct. So we come to the second and more remote effect of faith. Emotion will lead to action. "Moved with fear, he prepared and ark." If emotion be the child of faith, conduct is the child of emotion. III. AND SO, LASTLY, LET ME POINT TO NOAH'S FAITH, IN REGARD TO ITS VINDICATION. "He condemned the world." And so the faith of the poor, ignorant, old woman that up in her garret lives to serve Jesus Christ, and to win an eternal crown, will get its vindication some day, and it will be found out then which was the "practical" man and the wise man. And all the witty speeches and smart sayings will seem very foolish even to their authors, when the light of that future shines on them. And the old word will come true once more, that the man who lives for the present, and for anything bounded by Time, will have to "leave it in the midst of his days," and "at his latter end shall be a fool." Whilst the "foolish" man that lived for the future, when the future has come to be the present, and the present has dwindled away into the past, and sunk beneath the horizon, shall be proved to be the wise, and shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Noah's faith, fear, obedience, and salvation*:—I. First, notice that in Noah's case FAITH WAS THE FIRST PRINCIPLE. The text begins, "By faith Noah." We shall have to speak about his being "moved by fear"; we shall also remember his obedience, for he "prepared an ark to the saving of his house." But you must take distinct note that at the back of everything was his faith in God. His faith begat his fear: his faith and his fear produced his obedience. Nothing in Noah is held up before us as an example, but that which grew out of his faith. To begin with, we must look well to our faith. 1. Notice, first, that Noah believed in God in his ordinary life. Before the great test came, before he heard the oracle from the secret place, Noah believed in God. We know that he did, for we read that he walked with God, and in his common conduct he is described as being "a just man, and perfect in his generations." To be just in the sight of God is never

possible apart from faith; for "the just shall live by faith." It is a great thing to have faith in the presence of a terrible trial; but the first essential is to have faith for ordinary every-day consumption. 2. Note, next, that Noah had faith in the warning and threatening of God. Faith is to be exercised about the commandments; for David says, "I have believed Thy commandments." Faith is to be exercised upon the promises; for there its sweetest business lies. But, believe me, you cannot have faith in the promise unless you are prepared to have faith in the threatening also. If you truly believe a man, you believe all that he says. 3. Furthermore, Noah believed what seemed highly improbable, if not absolutely impossible. There was no sea where Noah laid the keel of his ark: I do not even know that there was a river there. He was to prepare a sea-going vessel, and construct it on dry land. How could water be brought there to float it? That faith which believes in the probable is anybody's faith: publicans and sinners can so believe. The faith which believes that which is barely possible is in better form; but that faith which cares nothing for probability or possibility, but rests alone in the word of the Lord, is the faith of God's elect. God deserves such faith, "for with God all things are possible." 4. Noah believed alone, and preached on, though none followed him. 5. Noah believed through a hundred and twenty solitary years. 6. Noah believed even to separation from the world. II. FEAR WAS THE MOVING FORCE. 1. A loyal reverence of God. 2. A holy fear of judgment. 3. A very humble distrust of himself. III. OBEDIENCE WAS THE GRACIOUS FRUIT. Faith and fear together led Noah to do as God commanded him. When fear is grafted upon faith, it brings forth good fruit, as in this case. 1. Noah obeyed the Lord exactly. 2. Noah obeyed the Lord very carefully. 3. Noah obeyed at all costs. 4. Noah went on obeying under daily scorn. 5. Noah's obedience followed the command as he learned it. IV. RESULTS DID NOT FAIL TO COME. 1. He was saved and his house. 2. He condemned the world. His preaching condemned them: they knew the way, and wickedly refused to run in it. His warning condemned them: they would not regard it and escape. His life condemned them, for he walked with the God whom they despised. Most of all, the ark condemned them. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Noah: activity in providing for the real interests of oneself and family:—This description of the faith of Noah involves several distinct parts—1. The warning of God. 2. The motive of Noah—fear. 3. The preparing the ark—the result of fear. 4. The consequence of this—the saving of his house. 5. The work this did for others around—condemned them. I. THE WARNING OF GOD. The men whom God had made had all rebelled against Him; the world was turned against its Maker. As men grew older and more experienced they increased in arts and sciences, but they decreased in religion and the fear of God. These men lived by sight, not by faith. God determined to punish the godless world, and looking around, He saw only one man worth saving. Only one family worth saving! I doubt not many then would have said it was uncharitable to say there are few who would be saved; uncharitable to say that among many professors there were few who from the heart feared God. But "God seeth not as man seeth." Such, then, was the warning of God. Now is not this account like that of our day? "As it was in the days of Noah," so is it now. Is not the advance of trade, and science, and agriculture, and knowledge, thought of before the advance of religion? Now see the part of Noah. He obeyed the warning, and prepared the ark, and saved his family. God ordered an ark to save Noah, and Noah made it; he did not trust to the invention of his own brain as to what would be the best thing in all probability to save him from the water, but he made the ark. God had ordered an ark, and the ark of gopher wood, and Noah made it; the ark—only the ark, could save Noah from death. Why? Not because it was the most scientific mode of salvation, not because it was the most learned way of safety, not because it was the most likely means of salvation; no, it was not on this account that Noah made the ark; he made it because it was the appointed means of safety, because God had ordered it. 2. Noah was active in his work, and while he worked he preached. Why was Noah active? Because he feared God and loved his family. Now some men invent one way of escaping the last deluge of fire, and some another. 1. Some say God's mercy shall be our ark, which we will hope for without seeking. 2. Some say, our own works shall be our ark, an ark we will provide by our own labour, but not after the fashion God has ordered, an ark not made of gopher wood. 3. Some say, we will make an ark with our works like what God orders, but we will not begin it yet, we will wait till the clouds begin to darken for the storm, that will

be soon enough; we will repent on a death-bed. 4. Some say, we will make something like an ark, but we will not take much trouble about it; we will make it after the material God orders, but we will be satisfied with a mere framework, we will trust to our general religious character to bear us safely through the dreadful fire; we will not concern ourselves about individual acts. 5. Some say, we will have none; no flood will come. Such are all the schemes we have to provide against the last flood. But what shall happen to them? (1) Those who make no ark will find no ark. Those who trust to God's mercy without seeking God's mercy, shall find no mercy. (2) Those who make their own ark shall enter it, but it will dash to pieces against the first obstacle, and sink its terrified crew against the rocks of everlasting despair. Those who trust to their own works will find they stand them in no stead. (3) Those who put off making the ark till the clouds darken the sky shall have scarce struck a nail in it before they shall be arrested by the flood. 4. Those who are satisfied with the outward framework, will find the fire pierce through every open crevice of the ark, and they shall be burnt up in the ark which they have made. (5) Those who made no ark at all shall be swallowed up quickly. 6. And then, who shall be saved? Only he who shelters in the true ark, that only rides upon the waters safe and secure; the ark made according to God's direction. II. But again, THE MOTIVE which induced Noah to build the ark—fear, produced by faith, and love, inducing fear. "By faith in things not seen as yet, Noah moved with fear, prepared an ark, wherein eight souls were saved." He believed God's word. Faith, then, was the spring of all. If he had not believed, he would have been idle, as the idle world. His faith produced works. And again, it awakened him as to the real interest of his family; he was not concerned about their present pleasure, but about their future safety. (*E. Monro.*) *Noah: things not seen as yet:*—I. The things not seen as yet are THE GREATEST THINGS IN HUMAN HISTORY. 1. The greatness of human nature. 2. The solemnity of human life. II. Some of the things not seen as yet are DIVINELY REVEALED TO MAN AS ARTICLES OF FAITH. 1. The universal triumph of the gospel in the world. 2. The termination of that mediatorial system of things under which the human race has been living ever since the fall. 3. The separation of the righteous from the wicked. III. Man's faith in the things not seen as yet is CAPABLE OF EXERTING A MIGHTY INFLUENCE UPON HIS LIFE. 1. Noah's faith in the unseen impelled him to the most trying work. It was trying to his—(1) patience; (2) social nature; (3) reason. 2. His faith impelled him to the most serviceable work. In carrying out God's idea, he saved the world. 3. Sin-condemning work. 4. Self-rectifying work. (*Homilist.*) *Noah:*—I. A GOOD MAN IS THE SPECIAL OBJECT OF THE DIVINE FAVOUR. "Being warned," &c. 1. Information of the approach of coming evil. 2. Instructions to prepare for the coming evil. (1) Man cannot do without Divine guidance. (2) Man will not do without human effort. Work tests and develops character. 3. Assurance of safety from the coming evil. God condescended to bind Himself by an agreement that was comprehensive and everlasting. (1) It contains reward for excellence of character, and is the basis of all honours to come. (2) It is eternal. II. A GOOD MAN IS AN OBEDIENT SERVANT TO THE DIVINE WILL. "Moved with fear," &c. 1. He was actuated by the sublimest motive. Profound regard for the truthfulness of the Divine admonitions, and implicit trust in the power of God to carry out His threatenings. He was extraordinarily subservient to the Divine plan. (1) He did precisely according to the Divine plan. (2) He did precisely at the Divine time. (3) He did precisely according to the Divine expectation. In spite of cost, labour, care, ridicule, long delay, other engagements, his faith triumphed over all. There was no arguing, no murmuring, no relapsing, no desponding, but daily work, and daily progress, and daily trusting, until at last the huge ship was ready for its cargo, voyage, and destination. III. A GOOD MAN IS THE EFFICIENT MEDIUM OF THE DIVINE PURPOSE. By faith and works Noah influenced the whole of the world. He fixed universal destiny. 1. He was the efficient medium in preserving his family. 2. He was the efficient medium in punishing his contemporaries. 3. He was the efficient medium in promoting himself. (*B. D. Johns.*) *Faith the power for right-doing:*—I. LOOK AT THE SIMPLICITY AND STRENGTH OF NOAH'S FAITH. 1. The Divine word predicted what seemed unlikely to happen. 2. The fulfilment of this prediction was long delayed. 3. The belief of the prediction was opposed by the ungodly atmosphere in which he lived. II. NOTICE THE RIGHT-DOING WHICH NOAH'S FAITH ENABLED HIM TO FULFIL. 1. The discharge of arduous duties. Building, peopling, stocking the Ark. 2. The endurance of severe trials. Scorn and mockery from his contemporaries. 3. The rebuke of a wicked world.

"Preacher of righteousness." III. REMEMBER THAT THE RIGHT-DOING BY FAITH IN NOAH'S CASE REVEALS THE POWER FOR ALL RIGHT-DOING. Have you hard things to do? You need faith. 1. Faith in the grace of God. That is, in your acceptance by Him through Christ. The love in that is the sufficient motive for right-doing. 2. Faith in the character of God. God is good, wise, faithful, loving. He cannot, therefore, call us to any duty or experience which is not in harmony with what He is. 3. Faith in the word of God. That what He has promised (of help, &c.) He will certainly perform. That is encouragement and support in right-doing. Conclusion. Where did Noah get this victorious faith? Faith comes from knowing God; the more we know Him the better we trust Him; we know Him the more the more we are with Him. (*C. New.*) *Noah's faith*:—I. THE REVELATION WITH WHICH NOAH WAS FAVOURED. 1. It is characterised as a warning. 2. It was a warning from God. 3. It was a warning from God which concerned "things not seen as yet." II. THE MANNER IN WHICH NOAH IMPROVED THE REVELATION WITH WHICH HE WAS FAVOURED. 1. He believed it. 2. He was "moved with fear." In the affairs of this life a prudential, stimulating fear is not only permitted, but applauded. Hence the child who so fears his parents as always to obey, is beloved; the scholar who so fears his master as always to excel, is admired; the merchant who, through fear, lingers in the port because he knows that a powerful pirate scours the neighbouring seas, is commended; the tradesman who, through fear, refuses to trust his property in doubtful hands, is accounted wise; and the traveller who, through fear, takes a circuitous route because he knows that the nearest road is infested with robbers, is deemed prudent. Since this is the case in the affairs of this life, how comes it to pass that the fear of the Lord is so generally despised? And why are those who live under its influence so generally regarded as men of mean and melancholy minds? Is it because the rod of a mortal is more to be dreaded than the wrath of God? Is it because the loss of earthly property is a greater evil than the loss of the soul? 3. He prepared the ark. (1) The building of such a vessel must have consumed a great deal of time. Let those who neglect the whole round of religious duty, pleading as their excuse that they have no time to perform it, consider this trait in Noah's piety, and stand reproved. What! no time to serve God, and save your souls? The rebel might just as well say to his insulted sovereign, "Sire, I had no time to be loyal." (2) It must have occasioned him great expense. It is a striking peculiarity in the economy of God to His people, that before He gives them all that He has, He requires them to consecrate to Him everything which they possess. He acted thus towards Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and the apostles. And before He gave Noah his life, and the lives of his household for a prey, He set him upon constructing a vessel, which, considering its magnitude, must have abridged his portion, not only of the superfluities, but even of the necessaries, of life. Judging from the Divine conduct in other cases, we think it not at all extravagant to suppose that the last nail was driven as the last item of his estate was gone. But Noah believed God; and therefore the greatness of the cost was no obstruction to the completion of the work. By the light of faith he discerned that riches and worldly goods are means of honour and of happiness only so far as they are consecrated to God, and employed for Him. (3) It must have subjected him to much reproach. It is exceedingly probable that the king and the peasant, the philosopher and the fool, the rich and the poor, the hoary headed father and the lisping boy, would all unite in making him and his ark a proverb of reproach and scorn. They would blame him for rendering religion offensive to rational and intelligent men; and they would charge him with cruelty to his family, in spending his substance upon such an extravagant undertaking. III. THE EFFECTS WHICH RESULTED FROM NOAH'S DILIGENT IMPROVEMENT OF THE REVELATION VOUCHSAFED TO HIM BY GOD. 1. He saved his house. Let all heads of families aim at the same thing. See that your domestic arrangements and private conduct be such as shall entail the blessing, and not the curse, of God upon your offspring. 2. "He condemned the world." (1) In the same sense as a witness may be said to condemn a criminal, when he furnishes incontestable evidence of his guilt. His faith, in this sense, condemned their unbelief; for it demonstrated the sufficiency of the revelation given, and was, moreover, a pattern for their imitation, and a motive stimulating them to action. (2) Inasmuch as he deprived them of all ground of excuse. He was a "preacher of righteousness"; and, as such, he no doubt instructed them in the nature of righteousness; its necessity and advantages; together with the means of acquiring it. 3. He "became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." The righteousness of which Noah is said to have become

"heir," or possessor, is in other places called "the righteousness of God"; "the righteousness which is of God by faith"; "the gift of righteousness which is by Christ"; and sometimes simply, "the righteousness of faith"; by all which expressions is meant, that free justification from all past guilt which we obtain when we believe on Him that justifieth the ungodly. That Noah not only believed all that was revealed concerning the flood; but also all that was made known respecting the perfections of God, the fall of man, and the scheme of redemption by Jesus Christ, is evident from the sacrifice which he offered on quitting the ark, and the gracious acceptance which it obtained from God. (*P. McOwan.*) *How to receive God's warnings*:—What entertainment did Noah give to this warning? Did he contemn it or set light by it in his heart? No verily; he reverenced it. We must reverence the judgments of God. When Daniel pondered in himself the fearful fall of Nebuchadnezzar, that such a fair and beautiful tree which reached to heaven should be cut down, he held his peace by the space of one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. When the angels were to blow their trumpets, there was silence in heaven, they were stricken with a kind of astonishment, and could not speak. When the book of the law was read before Isaiah, his heart melted at it, he reverenced the judgment denounced in it. When this proclamation was made in Nineveh, yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed, they all reverenced it, from the king to the beggar, &c., they put on sackcloth, fasted, and prayed to God. Noah hearing of a flood to come, fears it after a godly manner, and provides against the coming of it. But some there be that are no more moved with them than the stones in the church wall (Jer. xxxvi. 24). Let the preacher thunder out God's judgments against abominable swearing, lying, flattering, and dissembling, and other sins that reign among the people. Some laugh at it in their sleeves; tell them of the day of judgment, when as all nations shall appear before the Son of Man; they set not a straw by it, they are worse than Felix: he trembled when St. Paul discoursed of righteousness and the judgment to come. They are worse than the devils, for they believe that there is a God, and tremble at it. There is great difference between trembling and reverencing. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *Judgment preceded by warning*:—God never brought a judgment upon any nation without previous, distinct, and intelligible warnings. This is a principle of the Divine government, illustrated by the whole history of the Church and the world. Lot warned Sodom; the Israelites, Egypt; their prophets, the Israelites; Jonah, Nineveh; Jesus and His apostles, Jerusalem and Judæa. And thus Noah, both by his actual declaration of the "word of the Lord" and his building in the view of the people the vessel of safety, testified the Divine intentions, and warned the world of the "coming wrath." (*T. Binney.*) *Faith accepts all God says*:—Faith, in the simple and practical view we are attempting to take, consists in a regard to the whole of the Divine testimony, to whatever that testimony relates. If, for example, the truth specifically contemplated be a simple intellectual announcement, faith is the acquiescence of the understanding in its absolute certainty. If it be a promise of good, faith is confidence in its fulfilment. If it be a threatening of evil, combined as all threatenings are with the merciful provision of a method of escape, faith is apprehension concurring with flight to the appointed refuge. It was thus that it first operated in the mind of Noah. (*Ibid.*) *Warning despised*:—Not far from the place of St. Paul's shipwreck in the Mediterranean, a noble frigate once set sail. A gallant admiral, Sir Cloudesley Shovel, was her commander, and thought himself fully competent to guide her course. But there was an experienced seaman on board who knew better than he the dangers which surrounded them. However, on his venturing to say so, he was immediately hanged at the yard-arm for his impertinence. Not long did the cruel commodore survive him. In the darkness of the night the ship struck on the fatal rock concerning which the seaman had uttered his warning voice, and soon became a total wreck. A few escaped a watery grave, but the greater part, with the headstrong Sir Cloudesley himself, were drowned. (*J. Large.*) **Moved with fear.**—*Fear as a motive in religion*:—Here is an instance of a man, in his relations to God, acting under the impulse of fear, and good came of it. Of course this is not one and the same thing as saying that in the moral sphere fear is the highest motive. A thing may be good, without being the best. Men start from different levels, and they live upon different levels. Some there are who never know what it is to turn unto God from the low plane of immorality. Others, again, take their first step heavenward from the very mouth of the pit. And this varied inception of the Christian life is proof enough that fear cannot be held up as the general or even the best motive. There may be those who never felt it, who have never needed to feel it. There may be those who run in the

paths of obedience and righteousness, urged only by a higher and nobler impulse. Neither is it necessary to hold here, when looking upon an example of its beneficent operation, that fear must remain a permanent moral motive even in such a case. An apostle speaks of a "love" which "casteth out fear." So the one who commences in fear may rise unto this love. The one ascending from the earth in a balloon, gradually but surely rises above the smoke and mist which lie in low clouds over the earth's surface. Soon he moves, he sails in the clear abyss of the heavens. So with the human life, as it rises unto truth and virtue and God. It may rise above the murky atmosphere of its first motives and earlier days. But let us turn to the direct consideration of the subject in the text. I. Let me say, first of all, THAT THERE IS FOUNDATION LAID IN THE HUMAN CONSTITUTION FOR THE OPERATION OF THE MOTIVE WHICH WE ARE CONSIDERING. Fear is a universal attribute of human nature. It is as natural for a man to fear as to hope, or trust, or love. And this susceptibility, like all other natural capacities of human life, must have been conferred upon man for beneficent ends. She holds as good a title to her place as does hope; both are patents issued by the hand of the Creator; and not only are they of equally high origin, they are also co-ordinate in dignity, mutually dependent and helpful. If it were not for hope, man would hold back from attainable good. If fear were wanting, he would rush headlong upon invincible danger. Hope cries unto man: "Dare it, dare it!" But some risks are foolhardy, and fear points these out. Man is saved by hope, being swept forward; he is saved by fear, being held back. And now, from the survey of this great law upon the lower levels, I ask: Why scout at fear in the moral realm? Why attempt to scourge her from the temple of religion? Has God bestowed upon your soul a useless or misleading sense, a susceptibility to be devoted unto inactivity and death? Why, He has not done such a thing in the body; and surely the Creator has shown as much wisdom in the adaptation of your spirit to its surroundings as in the adaptation of your body to the material world. Why not, then, grant unto these intimations in these two different spheres equally solemn audience? When in this world Fear cries out: "There is the danger of poverty ahead; there is the possibility of suffering ahead; there is the loss of reputation ahead"—you are not unmindful of her warnings. But again this same Fear, through the voice of Conscience, cries out: "Wrath is coming; judgment lies ahead, and the great eternity." In this case also, why not listen to her signal notes? Unmanly to fear! You say so, with the great cyclones of the awful forces of the universe, boiling, sweeping around you! Unmanly to fear! Then God made you an unmanly man. Irrational to be influenced by fear! Then are you showing yourself a fool every day. II. THE RELATION OF DEITY TO MAN LEGITIMATISES THE MOTIVE OF FEAR. Two revelations of God have been given—one in the moral constitution of man, and one in the Bible. These two revelations agree in this, that they present God in the act and attitude of one warning men of possible danger. First, the Bible does this. "Flee to this voice; give it your fullest confidence." But shall men love the God who loves, trust the God who promises, and not fear the same God when He warns? III. THE PUBLIC TEACHING AND LIFE OF JESUS OF NAZARETH BEARS IN THE MOST EMPHATIC MANNER UPON THIS SUBJECT. We notice two things. First, Jesus was no fanatic. On the contrary, never was character so well balanced as His. From such a character would you expect an exaggerated statement of an uncertain dogma, of an unessential partialism? Then, again, consider His great sympathy with men, His measureless benevolence. Yet concerning future punishment and suffering He spake some of the most awful words which this world has ever heard. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." And the revelation of Nature does the same. It shows physical law relentlessly pursuing the transgressor. If lifts up the picture of human suffering before the eye. It stirs the conscience of the individual and the race with the apprehension of possible evil and suffering beyond the present world. And now, what will you do? Mind, I do not ask you to ignore any other attribute of Deity which has been revealed to man. There is love shining forth in most beautiful characters. Answer this, as you ought, by hope and trust and gratitude. There are words of sweetest invitation written upon the pages of the Bible. Sweetly let your heart respond. IV. IN A SUBJECT SO INDEFINITE AS THIS, DEMONSTRATION IS, OF COURSE, IMPOSSIBLE. It seems to me, however, that the suggestions which have been made are so many grave intimations to every thoughtful mind. But comes there up in reply from any human life the voice: "I cannot fear, I see the flashing danger-signal—I mark its lurid light. I hear those awful words as they drop from the lips of Jesus. I see it all, I hear it all; and yet no apprehension of danger is awakened within me"? In reply

let me say, perhaps you do not need to fear. The Divine Father has many ways of drawing men unto Himself. Possibly in your case love is doing its work. If this be so, all is well. But the spectacle of a human life unto which the mandatory word of God has come in vain, which is consciously moving forward in disobedience, consciously out of harmony with itself and moral law—for any such life as this to lift up the words, "I cannot fear"—this is a very different matter, and this, it seems to me, is passing strange. What shall I say to you? Exhort you to fear? Stand up here and cry: "Be afraid, be afraid"? This were absurd. Emotions cannot be manufactured to order in the laboratory of the will. This let me say: Perhaps your fear is artificially, unnaturally repressed. Perhaps it is, by the hand of a moral thoughtlessness, or a moral bravado, battened down in the hatchways of your being. The ship had crashed into an iceberg, and immediate death seemed inevitable to every one on board. A gentleman from out that scene said to me: "Very few were calm in that hour; there were very few who did not fear then." But, possibly, had these same terror-stricken ones spoken on the subject an hour before the collision, many of them would have said: "As a moral being I am incapable of fear." Nevertheless fear was in them. So it may be with you. Again, let me say that inability to fear may be due to moral hurt. The hand may become so callous that a living coal of fire can be held within the palm, and no pain felt. Through paralysis the arm may die, so that the heaviest blow gives no sensation. So the Bible declares that the moral nature may be so seared as to be past feeling. Perhaps this is the case with some who say they cannot fear. Perhaps a false and unworthy life has smitten you with moral paralysis. In either case, whether it is due to unnatural repression or moral paralysis, this inability to fear is not something to be satisfied with, much less to boast of. The paralytic does not run about with his dangling arm, crying out: "Pinch it; I do not feel! Hit it; your blow hurts me not! Ha, ha, I cannot feel!" Neither should the moral paralytic so boast. Rather let him betake himself to the electric battery of moral law, and see if he cannot quicken the insensate nerves, irrigate with new life the callous tissues of his moral being. Closely connected with this subject is an insinuating delusion which is exercising the most pernicious influence upon thousands. Human voices cry out: "The spirit of the age is against this whole matter of fear, indeed forbids it." I cannot appreciate the force of this retort, or see what the spirit of the day has to do with the great matter of a man's relation to his Creator and Judge. The age of Louis XIV. had its spirit; so had the age of Charles II. and of Frederick the Great. What were these spirits? Thin, vaporous films, blown from the mouths of men, curling for a brief moment around the everlasting mountain of Bible truth. And the spirit of our day, if it is contradictory of the living Word, shall prove as evanescent. The spirit of the age is the atmosphere through which walks the creature of a day. It extends upward from earth—say, as high as a man's heart; say, as high as his head; while all above this, all around this, are the awful depths of the moral ether, unchanged since the days of Noah—ay, unchangeable, as is the God whose breath they are. The spirit of the age to be called in to modify the eternal conditions of the moral universe! The six-foot atmosphere of this our little world to beat over, to pour itself through, to reproportion the shoreless, soundless ocean of the eternal nature of things! The very thought is enough to awaken laughter throughout the universe of God! The spirit of the age, forsooth! A few hours' cholera, a few days' fever, a falling brick, a runaway horse, a passing locomotive may sweep away a human life out of it, and for ever. Let us not make fools of ourselves. We are not too big to be warned of God, and we shall not belittle ourselves by giving thoughtful heed to His warning. (*S. S. Mitchell, D.D.*)

Use of fear:—The Honourable Robert Boyle, distinguished alike as a philosopher and as a Christian, acknowledged (though "he blushed it was so") that his fear, during a tremendous thunderstorm in the night, while he resided in Geneva, "was the occasion of his resolution of amendment"—a resolution to which he faithfully adhered through life. (*J. F. B. Tinling, B.A.*) *Fear in religion*:—The testimony of one of the most genial and successful of preachers is that "of all the persons to whom his ministry had been efficacious only one had received the first effectual impressions from the gentle and attractive aspect of religion; all the rest from the awful and alarming ones—the appeal to fear." Take again the testimony of one of the wisest and most successful of our schoolmasters. "I can't rule my boys," he says, "by the law of love. If they were angels or professors I might; but as they are only boys, I find it necessary to make them fear me first, and then take my chance of their love afterwards. By this plan I find that I generally get both; by

reversing the process I should in most cases get neither." And God does not deal with us now as He will do when perfect love has cast out its preparative fear. (*Marcus Dods, D.D.*) *Fear:*—The tragic event that led to Peter Waldo's conversion reminds us of the similar circumstance that awakened in Luther's mind the conviction of sin. On a certain day he was sitting at a banquet of distinguished citizens when one of the guests at his side suddenly became a corpse. The solemn emotion that seized all present became a life-long force in the heart of Peter Waldo. He gazed forward in fear to the account he must himself give at the bar of God. His sins rose in remembrance before him. How shall I appease an awakened conscience? was the question that filled his soul. The Romish Church had its answer ready: "By almsgiving"; and Waldo from that day devoted part of his wealth to the relief of poverty. Every quarter of the town felt his beneficence: but his heart was not at peace: his alms-deeds could not assure him of the forgiveness of sins. (*C. A. Davis.*) *Salutary influence of fear:*—That Luther was not an angel in his youth we may know, for he tells of himself that he was whipped fifteen times in one day in his first school. But all this did not beat grace into his heart, though it may have beaten letters into his head. He made brilliant progress in study, and at twenty years of age received his degree at the university as a Bachelor of Arts. Up to this time his heart was in the world. His father designed him for the law, and his own ambition no doubt aspired to the honours within easy reach in that line of life. God designed otherwise. Just at that critical time, when the very next step would be the first in a life-long profession, one of his fellow-students, dear to him as a brother beloved, one Alexis, was assassinated. The report of this tragic affair coming to Luther's ear, he hurried to the spot and found it even so. Often before, conscience, and the Spirit in his heart, had urged him to a religious life, in preparation for death and the judgment. And now, as he stood gazing upon the bloody corpse of his dear friend Alexis, and thought how in a moment, prepared or unprepared, he had been summoned from earth, he asked himself the question, "What would become of me if I were thus suddenly called away?" This was in A.D. 1505, in summer. Taking advantage of the summer's vacation, Luther, now in his twenty-first year, paid a visit to Mansfeldt, the home of his infancy. Even then the purpose of a life of devotion was forming in his heart, but not yet ripened into full and final decision. On his way back to the university, however, he was overtaken by a terrific storm. "The thunder roared," says D'Aubigné; "a thunderbolt sank into the ground by his side; Luther threw himself on his knees; his hour is perhaps come. Death, judgment, eternity, are before him in all their terrors, and speak with a voice which he can no longer resist. 'Encompassed with the anguish and terror of death,' as he says of himself 'he makes a vow, if God will deliver him from this danger, to forsake the world, and devote himself to His service.' Risen from the earth, having still before his eyes that death must one day overtake him, he examines himself seriously, and inquires what he must do. The thoughts that formerly troubled him return with redoubled power. He has endeavoured, it is true, to fulfil all his duties. But what is the state of his soul? Can he, with a polluted soul, appear before the tribunal of so terrible a God? He must become holy"—for this he will go into the cloister, he will enter a convent, he will become a monk and a priest in the Augustinean order. He will there become holy and be saved. (*W. E. Boardman, D.D.*) *Conversion and fear:*—One dear old man, who at the ripe age of seventy-eight, became a humble childlike Christian, and who twice in the week used to walk eight miles to hear me, had one favourite version of the words which caused his conversion, to which he adhered with frightful fixity and retailed to every one he met. "There were three of us old men a-settin' together, and you turned and you shook your little finger at us, and you said, 'You old men there, you are going to hell as fast as your old legs can carry you!' I never felt so afeared in my life, and I have been a changed man ever since." (*Ellice Hopkins.*) *Fear and faith:*—Fear and faith do not at first sound very likely companions. It is just because we think this, because we fancy ourselves a little wiser than God's Word, that our fear and our faith fail to act as they ought. Let us try to learn a better lesson now; and it will help us to do this if we set about studying what Noah did a little more closely than perhaps we have done before. We will take his fear first, for I suppose it would come first. He heard the tremendous words of wrath from the God whom he walked with, and he knew He would not speak without acting. He said to himself "Is not God's word gone forth, 'I will destroy all flesh'? I cannot rest easy; what shall I do? what can I do?" I think Noah must have had a longer or a shorter time when fear was over-

whelming—but it was not allowed to go long uncorrected. Almost in the same breath with the threat, we hear the voice which called out the faith. Imagine him told to make an ark. He may have said to himself, It is strange—it is what man never did before—but I know that my God would not tell it me and mean me to be a mere laughing-stock to the world. The triumph shall be on my side in the end. So we see his fear made ready for his faith, and his faith told his fear how far it was to go and what it was to do. They showed him his own helpless state—they took him to God for help. And now see what his action was. It was simply doing his little part in God's great plan. And what was the result? A specimen of that great Divine plan—God's strength and our weakness hand in hand; the saving of his house; the keeping at bay of all the terrific onsets of those torrents of rain and buffetings of waves. That is how faith and fear do work together. In the first place the sense of fear is a most necessary thing, and a thing we are not often left to go without. Does it come home to us—the truth of an offended Father who will by no means clear the guilty, and whom it is absurd to think we can satisfy. Faith then comes in and applies this very helplessness, this very sinfulness, this very fear. Faith bids us look within and see the things which are unseen—put present likings, strong temptations, selfish instincts, stifling voices aside, and see that there are joys to come, and there is a wrath to come—that there has been a marvellous work done, which eye never saw the like of, and which mind cannot take in—a work of love whereby God came down from heaven and took upon Him man's lowly likeness and suffered for sin, in order to help the helpless, in order to provide an ark which shall float over the very waves of God's justice and be lifted up by them out of harm's reach. But what will be the working of the fear and the faith? Noah built the ark and entered into it. We have but to do a very little thing, but that we must do—not even to build an ark at God's bidding—but in the first place simply to enter in and be on the safe side of the door which God will close upon us. That entering in is not quite nothing; it means feeling very helpless: but only seek you to be taught your own unsatisfactory self, and can you find it so hard to win safety by casting off all refuges but the only safe one. Now I think we see how faith and fear go together. Fear is not dismay—and faith is not self-security. Safe within the ark of Christ's Church—safe in the love of Christ Himself, you yet "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." That very fear ought to strengthen our faith, to drive us out of any holdfast but the one only one, and make us unite ourselves with Him under whose leadership we are the surer to conquer, the surer we are of our weakness. (*John Kempthorne, M.A.*)

Vers. 8–10. **Abraham.**—*The faith of Abraham:*—I. THE FAITH EXHIBITED BY ABRAHAM IN HIS OBEDIENCE TO THE DIVINE CALL. It was neither poverty, nor restless discontent with the monotony of daily toil, that sent him out of Ur of the Chaldees. Nor does Scripture drop any hint of persecution. The simple urgent reason was a Divine command, "Get thee out," &c. Mighty consequences hung upon his obedience. It was the first link in a long chain of acts of faith by which the knowledge of the true God was to be preserved in the earth, and the redemption of mankind accomplished. The greatest and happiest consequences have flowed from single acts of righteousness and faith. Men simply did their present duty; they took counsel with none but their own conscience; one step before them on life's path stood clearly revealed, and they ventured, notwithstanding all being dark beyond. By faith they acted thus, believing that if a man can only see his way a yard before him in the path of duty, he may step it as boldly as though the whole road were clear right up to the gate of heaven. When Wicliff, the pioneer of the English mind in that unknown land of promise which lay hid in the Bible, first led the way by translating it into his mother-tongue, he went forth in faith, not knowing whither. When John Hampden resisted the unrighteous impost of ship-money, he committed himself in faith to a struggle the issue of which no sagacity could predict. Little did he think that he was making himself a name as chief among the founders of his country's liberties; it was the duty of the hour, and that was enough for him. When the crew of the *Mayflower* left our shores to seek a home in the New World, they went out not knowing whither; in their grandest dreams they could never have imagined what a stronghold of civil and religious liberty would arise out of the foundation they were laying in obedience to conscience and by their faith in God. II. ABRAHAM'S SOJOURN IN CANAAN, AS IN A LAND NOT HIS OWN, THOUGH IT WAS THE LAND OF PROMISE. Similar trials of faith have fallen to the lot of other men who, obeying God and conscience, have gone out not knowing whither. Not always have

they found the promised land. Many have died without witnessing the accomplishment of their hopes, sometimes without catching a glimpse of the splendid results to which their faith and courage ultimately led. Exemption from such trials must not be expected. Brave lives are sacrificed in the forefront of battle that the soldiers in the rear may pass on to victory; so in every battle of principle the faith and courage of many a good soldier appear to be spent without result. Without result indeed they would be, if the conflict ended with their lives and their example perished. But since, in every contest for truth and right, the victory has first to be won inwardly, in the hearts of many earnest men, before it can be made palpable to eye and ear, so those who help the spiritual preparation contribute as much to the victory as they who actually accomplish it. (*E. W. Shalders, B.A.*) *The obedience of faith*:—Obedience—what a blessing it would be if we were all trained to it by the Holy Spirit! How fully should we be restored if we were perfect in it! Oh, for obedience! It has been supposed by many ill-instructed people that the doctrine of justification by faith is opposed to the teaching of good works, or obedience. There is no truth in the supposition. We preach the obedience of faith. Faith is the fountain, the foundation, and the fosterer of obedience. Obedience, such as God can accept, never cometh out of a heart which thinks God a liar, but is wrought in us by the Spirit of the Lord, through our believing in the truth and love and grace of our God in Christ Jesus. There is a free-grace road to obedience, and that is receiving by faith the Lord Jesus, who is the gift of God, and is made of God unto us sanctification. We accept the Lord Jesus by faith, and He teaches us obedience, and creates it in us. The more of faith in Him you have, the more of obedience to Him will you manifest. I. THE KIND OF FAITH WHICH PRODUCES OBEDIENCE. 1. It is, manifestly, faith in God as having the right to command our obedience. He has a greater claim upon our ardent service than He has upon the services of angels; for while they were created as we have been, yet they have never been redeemed by precious blood. 2. Next, we must have faith in the rightness of all that God says or does. We hear people talk about "minor points," and so on; but we must not consider any word of our God as a minor thing if by that expression is implied that it is of small importance. We must accept every single word of precept or prohibition or instruction as being what it ought to be, and neither to be diminished nor increased. We should not reason about the command of God as though it might be set aside or amended. He bids: we obey. 3. Furthermore, we must have faith in the Lord's call upon us to obey. We, who are His chosen, redeemed from among men, called out from the rest of mankind, ought to feel that if no other ears hear the Divine call, our ears must hear it; and if no other heart obeys, our soul rejoices to do so. 4. Obedience arises out of a faith which is to us the paramount principle of action. The kind of faith which produces obedience is lord of the understanding, a royal faith. The true believer believes in God beyond all his belief in anything else and everything else. II. THE KIND OF OBEDIENCE WHICH FAITH PRODUCES. 1. Genuine faith in God creates a prompt obedience. "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed." There was an immediate response to the command. Delayed obedience is disobedience. 2. Next, obedience should be exact. "Abraham, when he was called to go out . . . went out." That which the Lord commands we should do—just that, and not another thing of our own devising. Mind your jots and tittles with the Lord's precepts. Attention to little things is a fine feature in obedience: it lies much more as to its essence in the little things than in the great ones. 3. And next, mark well that Abraham rendered practical obedience. The religion of mere brain and jaw does not amount to much. We want the religion of hands and feet. I remember a place in Yorkshire, years ago, where a good man said to me, "We have a real good minister." I said, "I am glad to hear it." "Yes," he said; "he is a fellow that preaches with his feet." Well, now, that is a capital thing if a preacher preaches with his feet by walking with God, and with his hands by working for God. He does well who glorifies God by where he goes and by what he does; he will excel fifty others who only preach religion with their tongues. 4. Next, faith produces a far-seeing obedience. Note this. "Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance." How great a company would obey God if they were paid for it on the spot! Those who practise the obedience of faith look for the reward hereafter, and set the greatest store by it. To their faith alone the profit is exceeding great. To take up the cross will be to carry a burden, but it will also be to find rest. 5. Yet, remember that the obedience which comes of true faith is often bound to be altogether unreckoning and implicit;

for it is written, "He went out, not knowing whither he went." Even bad men will obey God when they think fit; but good men will obey when they know not what to think of it. It is not ours to judge the Lord's command, but to follow it. 6. The obedience which faith produces must be continuous. Having commenced the separated life, Abraham continued to dwell in tents and sojourn in the land which was far from the place of his birth. His whole life may be thus summed up: "By faith Abraham obeyed." He believed, and therefore walked before the Lord in a perfect way. Do not cultivate doubt, or you will soon cultivate disobedience. Set this up as your standard, and henceforth be this the epitome of your life—"By faith he obeyed." III. THE SORT OF LIFE WHICH WILL COME OF THIS FAITH AND OBEDIENCE. 1. It will be, in the first place, life without that great risk which else holds us in peril. A man runs a great risk when he steers himself. Rocks or no rocks, the peril lies in the helmsman. The believer is no longer the helmsman of his own vessel; he has taken a pilot on board. To believe in God, and to do His bidding, is a great escape from the hazards of personal weakness and folly. Providence is God's business, obedience is ours. What harvest will come of our sowing we must leave with the Lord of the harvest; but we ourselves must look to the basket and the seed, and scatter our handfuls in the furrows without fail. 2. In the next place, we shall enjoy a life free from its heaviest cares. If we were in the midst of the wood, with Stanley, in the centre of Africa, our pressing care would be to find our way out; but when we have nothing to do but to obey, our road is mapped out for us. Jesus says, "Follow Me"; and this makes our way plain, and lifts from our shoulders a load of cares. 3. The way of obedience is a life of the highest honour. By faith we yield our intelligence to the highest intelligence: we are led, guided, directed; and we follow where our Lord has gone. Among His children, they are best who best know their Father's mind, and yield to it the gladdest obedience. Should we have any other ambition, within the walls of our Father's house, than to be perfectly obedient children before Him and implicitly trustful towards Him? 4. But this is a kind of life which will bring communion with God. Obedient faith is the way to eternal life; nay, it is eternal life revealing itself. 5. The obedience of faith creates a form of life which may be safely copied. As parents, we wish so to live that our children may copy us to their lasting profit. Children usually exaggerate their models; but there will be no fear of their going too far in faith or in obedience to the Lord. 6. Lastly, faith working obedience is a kind of life which needs great grace. Every careless professor will not live in this fashion. It will need watchfulness and prayer, and nearness to God, to maintain the faith which obeys in everything. "He giveth more grace." The Lord will enable us to add to our faith all the virtues. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Abraham forsaking the world*:—I. THE RESULT OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH, which we are now called upon to consider. There are three distinct points before us:—1. The first part of what is mentioned as the work of Abraham's faith, showing the Christian what he should give up. 2. What he should bear. 3. What he should live for. What had Abraham to give up? "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house." What a command! Consider what he had to forsake. And in the eyes of his family how absurd and fanciful must his scheme have been! But Abraham was supported by a certain hope. "He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Thus, then—1. Abraham gave up the world and endured hardships. 2. Lived on the hope of a future blessing, which he did receive. 3. And all this he did by faith. II. AND NOW LET US APPLY ABRAHAM'S CASE AND CONDUCT TO OUR OWN. First, then, what is the world you have to give up? It is the world, the objects to which we are drawn, the objects around us, which draw forth our sinful inclinations, which we are now to consider. 1. It depends upon different dispositions what becomes our world. To one man nature is his world: he has a mind to enjoy extremely the beauties and the works of nature. The feelings produced by a rich sunset or a beautiful view are his very religion; he gazes at the beauty of a flower till he thinks he worships the God who made it; he forgets the Creator in the creature, and mistakes the one for the other. Poetry is his religion, or sentiment, or some such natural feeling. Now suppose such a man called by duty, *i.e.* by God, to live in a place where he is cut off from all such objects of admiration, to live quietly and without excitement amid what are to him the dull realities of life, obliged to give up all his taste and refinement, and put up with quiet, dull, sober, everyday work—at least what is so to him naturally; and suppose this man refuses to do it, or lingers in doing it: he thinks if he gives up nature and his admiration that all his religion will go too. All his religion

depended on a place, and nature is that man's world. It is what Abraham's family and home were to him, and if he refuse to desert it at the call of duty, he is not living above the world. 2. Again: in another man applause and praise is his world; he lives for this, and has lived for it all his life; every act of his life is governed by what men think of it. Now suppose such a man withdrawn from the sphere in which he had been admired, courted and flattered; suppose him called by duty to work in a sphere where his brightest acts would be unknown, and there would be none to admire even his most creditable denials; and suppose he hesitated to do this—then that man's world would be human applause. 3. Or again; to some men mere worldly success is their world, what they call getting on in life; they live for this; their whole views of right and wrong are almost bounded by their chance of success in their profession, their trade, their farm, their place. 4. But to some, like Abraham himself, their family is their world. If your family interfere with any single duty to God, that family is your world. 5. To others—in the common use of the word—pleasure is their world; society, whose only object it is to gratify the sense or entertain the imagination. Good-natured society; dissipated society; intellectual society; idle society, whose object it is to pass away the dull hours of life by the empty reading of novels, or by lounging in listless carelessness through the precious fleeting hours of time. Ambitious society, whose great object it is to surpass each other in display of wealth. 6. To some, activity is a kind of world. 7. To some a particular set of circumstances connected with religion is their world, a particular minister, whom they almost worship, particular religious friends, whose word, with them, would almost surmount the authority of Scripture. This, then, is what he must do and give up for Christ's sake and the gospel's. The believer must show forth his faith, like Abraham, by forsaking and coming out from the world. III. And UNDER THIS WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE? IV. BUT ALL THIS IS THE RESULT OF FAITH. By faith Abraham gave up the world and rested on future promises. And by faith you must give up the world and rest on future promises. For example—1. If your world is the admiration of nature, of trees and hills, and the objects of the earth around you; then, if called by duty to cease to spend days in contemplating these, to work in a line which to you is dull and uninteresting, faith helps you by opening your eyes to see a world where are objects like those you yield, which you shall enjoy freely hereafter; where are hills without their toil, suns without their burning, trees without their dying, flowers without their fading, nature unstained by sin, unvisited by death, in the very presence of death for ever. 2. If your world is the praise of man, you are called to give it up; faith offers you the praise of God instead, the approval of your Saviour. 3. If your world is success in your earthly calling, and you are called by conscience to resign hopes of high success here, faith points through the veil of humiliation to the everlasting hills, where you shall reign as kings and priests for ever. 4. If your world is your family, whose affections God calls you willingly and cheerfully to resign, faith points to a re-union in heaven. 5. If your world is society, with its vain, empty, delusive, dissipating pleasure, faith points you to a society whose whole object is God, whose whole religion is praise, and whose whole will is obedience; a society of angels and saints, gathered from the earliest ages, and purified by the influence of the Spirit. 6. If your world is activity, and passive suffering to the call of God, faith offers a field of active service before God for ever. 7. If your world is a particular sphere of religious circumstances, faith points you to God, and bids you trust in Him, not in man. (*E. Monro.*) *Self-renunciation at the call of God*:—I. It becomes the infinite greatness, and all-satisfactory goodness of God, at the very first revelation of Himself unto any of His creatures, TO REQUIRE OF THEM A RENUNCIATION OF ALL OTHER THINGS, AND OF THEIR INTEREST IN THEM, IN COMPLIANCE WITH HIS COMMANDS. II. THE POWER OF SOVEREIGN GRACE, IN CALLING MEN TO GOD, AND THE MIGHTY EFFICACY OF FAITH COMPLYING THEREWITH. III. IT IS THE CALL OF GOD ALONE THAT MAKES A DISTINCTION AMONGST MANKIND, AS UNTO FAITH AND OBEDIENCE, WITH ALL THE EFFECTS OF THEM. Abraham thus believed and obeyed God, because he was called. And he was called, not because he was better, or wiser than others, but because it pleased God to call him and not others (1 Cor. i. 26–31). IV. THE CHURCH OF BELIEVERS CONSISTS OF THOSE THAT ARE CALLED OUT OF THE WORLD. The call of Abraham is a pattern of the call of the Church (Psa. xlv. 10; 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18). V. SELF-DENIAL IN FACT OR RESOLUTION, IS THE FOUNDATION OF ALL SINCERE PROFESSION. Abraham began his profession in the practice of this, and proceeded unto the height of it in the greatest instances imaginable. And the instruction that our Saviour gives herein (Matt. x. 37, 38, xvi. 24, 25), amounts but unto this—If you

intend to have the faith of Abraham, with the fruits and blessings attending it, you must lay the foundation of it in the relinquishment of all things, if called thereunto, as he did. VI. THERE IS NO RIGHT, TITLE, OR POSSESSION, THAT CAN PRESCRIBE AGAINST THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD, IN THE DISPOSAL OF ALL INHERITANCES HERE BELOW AT HIS PLEASURE. VII. GOD'S GRANT OF THINGS UNTO ANY, IS THE BEST OF TITLES, AND MOST SURE AGAINST ALL PRETENCES OR IMPEACHMENTS (Judg. xi. 24). VIII. POSSESSION BELONGS UNTO AN INHERITANCE ENJOYED. This God gave unto Abraham in his posterity, with a mighty hand, and stretched out arm; and He divided it unto them by lot. IX. AN INHERITANCE MAY BE GIVEN ONLY FOR A LIMITED SEASON. The title unto it may be continued unto a prefixed period. So was it with this inheritance; for although it is called an everlasting inheritance, yet it was so only on two accounts. 1. That it was typical of that heavenly inheritance which is eternal. 2. Because, as unto right and title, it was to be continued unto the end of that limited perpetuity which God granted unto the church-state in that land; that is, unto the coming of the promised Seed, in whom all nations should be blessed; which the call and faith of Abraham did principally regard. X. THAT IT IS FAITH ALONE THAT GIVES THE SOUL SATISFACTION IN FUTURE REWARDS, IN THE MIDST OF PRESENT DIFFICULTIES AND DISTRESSES. So it did to Abraham, who, in the whole course of his pilgrimage, attained nothing of this promised inheritance. XI. THE ASSURANCE GIVEN US BY DIVINE PROMISES IS SUFFICIENT TO ENCOURAGE US TO ADVANCE IN THE MOST DIFFICULT COURSE OF OBEDIENCE. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *Faith the power for severing old ties*:—I. THE HARD TASK TO WHICH ABRAHAM WAS CALLED. 1. It involved painful separation from the past. 2. It involved the risk of being misunderstood in the present. 3. It involved great uncertainty for the future. II. THE SIMPLE FAITH BY WHICH THIS HARD TASK WAS FULFILLED. 1. This faith was based on a Divine call. 2. Sustained by abundant promises. 3. Expressed by absolute surrender. III. THE WONDERFUL BLESSING TO WHICH THIS SIMPLE FAITH LED. What came of this act of obedience? All the blessedness the world has ever had. (*C. New.*) *Abraham's prompt obedience to the call of God*:—I. WHAT WAS ABRAHAM'S SPECIAL EXPERIENCE WHICH LED TO HIS BECOMING SO REMARKABLE A SAINT? 1. He had a call. 2. He obeyed it. 3. He obeyed it because he believed God. II. WHAT WAS THERE PECULIAR IN ABRAHAM'S CONDUCT? 1. That he was willing to be separated from his kindred. 2. That he was ready for all the losses and risks that might be involved in obedience to the call of God. 3. That he waived the present for the future. 4. That he committed himself to God by faith. 5. What he did was done at once. III. THE RESULT OF ABRAHAM'S ACTION. Did it pay? That is the inquiry of most people, and within proper bounds it is not a wrong question. Our reply is, it did so gloriously. True, it brought him into a world of trouble, and no wonder: such a noble course as his was not likely to be an easy one. What grand life ever was easy? Who wants to be a child and do easy things? Yet we read in Abraham's life, after a whole host of troubles, "And Abraham was old and well stricken in years, and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things." That is a splendid conclusion—God had blessed Abraham in all things. Whatever happened, he had always been under the Divine smile, and all things had worked for his good. He was parted from his friends, but then he had the sweet society of his God, and was treated as the friend of the Most High, and allowed to intercede for others, and clothed with power on their behalf. What honour, also, the patriarch had among his contemporaries; he was a great man, and held in high esteem. How splendidly he bore himself; no king ever behaved more royally. His image passes across the page of history rather like that of a spirit from the supernal realms than that of a mere man; he is so thorough, so childlike, and therefore so heroic. He lived in God, and on God, and with God. Such a sublime life recompensed a thousandfold all the sacrifice he was led to make. Was not his life a happy one? One might wisely say, "Let my life be like that of Abraham." As to temporal things the Lord enriched him, and in spirituals he was richer still. He was wealthier in heart than in substance, though great even in that respect. This very day, through his matchless seed, to whom be glory for ever and ever, even Jesus Christ of the seed of Abraham, all tribes of men are blessed. His life was, both for time and for eternity, a great success; both for temporals and for spirituals the path of faith was the best that he could have followed. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Adventuring for God*:—We can hardly read those words without at once thinking how all this common life around us would be both simplified and made noble if men generally, in laying out their plans and carrying on their ordinary work, were moved and guided in the same Divine way!—*i.e.*, if they inquired first, at every

important decision, every new start and every new turn in the road, where their Lord called them to go; and then, leaving all other questions aside, were to go straight on, no matter what comfort, like the familiar country that the patriarch was leaving, they might be obliged to give up, and no matter how untried or bleak the regions before. I suppose one chief hindrance to its having this effect on most of us will be the difficulty of our realising that, with respect to each one of us, in our personal insignificance, God just as truly has a plan and a particular place, both of work and of communion, as He had for Abraham or Moses, for Enoch or Samuel, for St. John or St. Paul, for any hero or any saint. But He has. Ours may not be so high a place or so much honoured with usefulness as theirs. We have no concern with that; but the whole tenor of our Christian religion tells us our place is there; that when He created us God designed each one, in every station of society, of either sex, in all kinds of employment, for a particular service in His Church, in His family on earth, and in His heaven for ever. You may forfeit it by not believing in it, and by trying to live and die for yourself; God may hereafter fill up the vacancy and finish the full harmony of His heavenly multitude by the river of life without you. But in the millions of wayward lives entangled with each other He will never for one instant lose sight of the thread of yours. He formed you with a loving intention, and all His affection and mercy to the rest have not diminished a particle His affection and mercy for you. Next observe the large meaning of one small word—the word "out." This faithful man was "called to go out," and he "went out." We are to draw from that a new inference, viz., that in his journeying one place did not look to him just like another, equally attractive and desirable. On the contrary, between the past and the future there was a contrast. What he must leave behind is familiar; what he must turn toward is strange. What he must leave behind is known, tried and safe and agreeable; what he must encounter is hazardous. Going out implies a giving up of something like a home, with the warm, bright, sheltering, endearing attributes always associated with that beloved name. Within are security and comfort; without are exposure, peril, sacrifice. Here, then, is a new rule for the Christian life. Where that life is regenerate, what a Christian life ought to be, fulfilling the gospel idea, it does not merely run on from one scene to another on the same level, nor does it consist in merely moving about through the routine of an easy experience without progress, without trying new difficulties, gaining greater heights, or by fresh sacrifices coming into a closer and more spiritual sympathy with Christ. Every step needs faith in God, faith in the better country to come, faith in the end to be reached, or else he would look back and perhaps sink down in the road. Take in, then, with this another strong element in the doctrine of the text—the superiority, in this going forward of the disciple after his Lord, of faith over knowledge. We knew the low country we left by eyesight, by the senses, or the intellect; but what lay before was always unknown, invisible, a land of promise, only believed in. In all our approaches to God, in making up our minds to come out on Christ's side in an open confession, in baptism in maturer years, in coming to be confirmed, in every victory over the evils of the world, we cannot depend merely on the understanding. "He went out, not knowing whither he went." That was the crown and the glory of his obedience. He did know who called him, and in whom he believed, and that was enough. It might seem, at first sight, in reading this passage, as if the principal stress were laid on the obedience. And then some of you who are more advanced in the higher privileges of the gospel, and accustomed to discriminate in spiritual matters, might say: No; obedience is a low and elementary stage; obedience is of the law; we are not under the law, but under grace; we are not Jews; Christ has come, and it is the faith and love which go out to Him for what He is in the beauty of His holiness, and what He has done for us in the atonement of the Cross, that constitute the special advantage of our position in the Christian Church. Nothing can be more true than this. The whole object of this chapter is to celebrate, not the bare keeping of commandments, but faith in the invisible, and the glory of acting freely with reference to the absolute God rather than present profits, or any outward reward. Hence it runs all through the passage that there are two kinds of obedience, not distinguished from each other by the outward appearance of the obedient action—for this may be precisely the same in the two cases—but by the motive which prompts the obedience, or the feeling that impels us to act as we do. Two different kinds of character are produced by these two sorts of obedience. One is the obedience of calculation; the other is the obedience of faith. (*Bp. F. D. Huntington.*) *Abraham's faith*:—What did God

mean to teach Abraham, by calling him out of his country, and telling him, "I will make of thee a great nation"? I think He meant to show him, for one thing, that that Babel plan of society was utterly absurd and accursed, certain to come to nought, and so to lead him on to hope for a city which had foundations, and to see that its builder and maker must be, not the selfishness or the ambition of men, but the will, and the wisdom, and providence of God. Let us see how God led Abraham on to understand this—to look for a city which had foundations; in short, to understand what a state and a nation means and ought to be. First, God taught him that he was not to cling, coward-like, to the place where he was born, but to go out boldly to colonise and subdue the earth, for the great God of heaven would protect and guide him. Again: God taught him what a nation was: "I will make of thee a great nation." As much as to say, "Never fancy, as those fools at Babel did, that a nation only means a great crowd of people—never fancy that men can make themselves into a nation just by feeding altogether, and breeding altogether, and fighting altogether, as the herds of wild cattle and sheep do, while there is no real union between them." For what brought those Bable men together? Just what keeps a herd of cattle together—selfishness and fear. Each man thought he would be safer forsooth in company. Each man thought that if he was in company he could use his neighbour's wits as well as his own, and have the benefit of his neighbour's strength as well as his own. And that is all true enough; but that does not make a nation. Selfishness can join nothing; it may join a set of men for a time, each for his own ends, just as a joint-stock company is made up; but it will soon split them up again. Each man, in a merely selfish community, will begin, after a time, to play on his own account, as well as work on his own account—to oppress and over-reach for his own ends, as well as to be honest and benevolent for his own ends, for he will find ill-doing far easier and more natural, in one sense, and a plan that brings in quicker profits, than well-doing; and so this godless, loveless, every-man-for-himself nation, or sham nation, rather, this joint-stock company, in which fools expect that universal selfishness will do the work of universal benevolence, will quarrel and break up, crumble to dust again, as Babel did. "But," says God to Abraham, "I will make of thee a great nation. I make nations, and not they themselves." So it is: this is the lesson which God taught Abraham, the lesson which we English must learn nowadays over again, or smart for it bitterly—that God makes nations. The Psalms set forth the Son of God as the King of all nations. In Him all the nations of the earth are truly blessed. He the Saviour of a few individual souls only? God forbid! To Him all power is given in heaven and earth; by Him were all things created, whether in heaven or earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers; all national life, all forms of government, whether hero-despotisms, republics, or monarchies, aristocracies of birth, or of wealth, or of talent—all were created by Him, and for Him, and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist and hold together. Believe me, it takes long years, too, and much training from God and from Christ, the King of kings, to make a nation. Everything which is most precious and great is also most slow in growing, and so is a nation. But again: God said to Abraham, when He had led him into this far country, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." This was a great and a new lesson for Abraham, that the earth belonged to that same great invisible God who had promised to guide and protect him, and make him into a nation—that this same God gave the earth to whomsoever He would, and allotted to each people their proper portion of it. How this must have taught Abraham that the rights of property were sacred things—things appointed by God; that it was an awful and heinous sin to make wanton war on other people, to drive them out and take possession of their land; that it was not mere force or mere fancy which gave men a right to a country, but the providence of Almighty God! Now, Abraham needed this warning, for the men of Babel seem from the first to have gone on the plan of driving out and conquering the tribes around them. Now, in Genesis xiv. there is an account of Abraham's being called on to put in practice what he had learnt, and, by doing so, learning a fresh lesson. We read of four kings making war against five kings, against Chedorlaomer, king of Elam or Persia, who had been following the ways of Nimrod and the men of Babel, and conquering these foreign kings and making them serve him. We read of Chedorlaomer and four other kings coming down and wantonly destroying other countries, besides the five kings who had rebelled against them, and at last carrying off captive the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and Lot, Abraham's nephew. We read then how Abraham armed his trained servants, born

in his own house, three hundred and eighteen men, and pursued after these tyrants and plunderers, and with his small force completely overthrew that great army. Now, that was a sign and a lesson to Abraham, as much as to say, "See the fruits of having the great God of heaven and earth for your protector and your guide; see the fruits of having men round you, not hirelings, keeping in your company just to see what they can get by it, but born in your own house, who love and trust you, whom you can love and trust; see how the favour of God, and reverence for those family ties and duties which He has appointed, make you and your little band of faithful men superior to those great mobs of selfish, godless, unjust robbers; see how hundreds of these slaves ran away before one man, who feels that he is a member of a family, and has a just cause for fighting, and that God and his brethren are with him." Now, as sure as God made Abraham a great nation, so if we English are a great nation, God has made us so; as sure as God gave Abraham the land of Canaan for his possession, so did He give us this land of England, when He brought our Saxon forefathers out of the wild barren north, and drove out before them nations greater and mightier than they, and gave them great and goodly cities which they builded not, and wells digged which they digged not, farms and gardens which they planted not, that we too might fear the Lord our God, and serve Him, and swear by His name; as sure as He commanded Abraham to respect the property of his neighbours, so has He commanded us; as sure as God taught Abraham that the nation which was to grow from him owed a duty to God, and could be only strong by faith in God, so it is with us: we English people owe a duty to God, and are to deal among ourselves, and with foreign countries, by faith in God, and in the fear of God, "seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," sure that then all other things—victory, health, commerce, art, and science—will be added to us. (*C. Kingsley, M.A.*) *The spiritual production and practical development of true religion:*—I. THE SPIRITUAL PRODUCTION OF TRUE RELIGION. 1. Divine sovereignty. 2. Special revelation. 3. Earnest faith. II. THE PRACTICAL DEVELOPMENT OF REAL RELIGION. 1. Renunciation of old mode of life. 2. Adoption of new. (1) Implicit trust in God. (2) Conscious strangeness on earth. (3) Glorious prospect. (*Homilist.*) *Faith making light of present privations:*—I. GOD'S PEOPLE ARE OFTEN CALLED TO STRANGE PRIVATIONS. 1. One hard feature of these privations was that they had come in the way of obedience to God. 2. Moreover, they seemed to involve unfulfilled promise on God's part. II. THESE PRIVATIONS ARE, HOWEVER, ACCOMPANIED WITH BRIGHT PROSPECTS. 1. The present and visible does not limit our history. 2. The future will be as good as even God can make it. 3. In that future the delayed promises will be fulfilled, and the fruit of present obedience and discipline enjoyed. III. FAITH DWELLING ON THIS PROSPECT CAN ENDURE THE PRIVATIONS. 1. Assuring us of this future, faith gives songs in present trouble. With the joy of hope we can sing as we suffer. 2. Lifting us unto this future, faith dwarfs present need. "The sufferings of the present time are not worthy," &c. 3. Showing us the possibilities of this future, faith endures present discipline. Discipline is to make the future greater. "These light afflictions work for us a far more," &c. "While we look," &c. Conclusion: Feed and exercise this faith that it may grow. By it often climb the mount and see the land that is very far off. (*C. New.*) *Abraham's faith and pilgrimage:*—THE OBJECT OF ABRAHAM'S DESIRE: "A city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God." This was the view under which the future state was presented to him; and it suggests—1. The immortality of its inhabitants. The city "hath foundations," and shall evermore endure. 2. The changelessness of its enjoyments. This is also intimated by the term "foundations." Its happiness is permanent. 3. The glory of the state. "Whose Builder is God," that is, in a special sense. It displays, in a peculiar degree, His power, wisdom, and goodness. 4. Common participation. There is society. This multiplies happiness to angels and saints. 5. Perfect moral order. "Whose Maker is God." II. PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS WHICH THIS SINGULAR, BUT INSTRUCTIVE, CONDUCT OF ABRAHAM SUGGESTS. He chose the pilgrim's life, and dwelt in tents rather than inhabit a city on earth. 1. We are taught by this conduct of Abraham the true ground of the eminent piety of God's ancient saints. 2. We are taught to regulate our choice in life by our superior regard to the interests of the soul. 3. We are taught a noble indifference to the accommodation of our pilgrimage. 4. We are taught to be willing to make sacrifices for the religious good of others. (*R. Watson.*) *Abraham's faith:*—I. Where faith enables men to live unto God, as unto their eternal concerns, IT WILL ENABLE THEM TO TRUST UNTO HIM IN ALL THE DIFFICULTIES, dangers, and hazards

of this life. To pretend a trust in God as unto our souls and invisible things, and not resign our temporal concerns with patience and quietness unto His disposal, is a vain pretence. II. If we design to have an interest in the blessing of Abraham, WE MUST WALK IN THE STEPS OF THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM. Firm affiance in the promises for grace, mercy, and eternal salvation, trust in His providence for preservation and protection in this world, with a cheerful resignation of all our temporal and eternal concerns unto His disposal, according to the tenor of the covenant, are required hereunto. III. WHERE FAITH IS ONCE DULY FIXED ON THE PROMISES, IT WILL WAIT PATIENTLY UNDER TRIALS, AFFLICTIONS, AND TEMPTATIONS, FOR THEIR FULL ACCOMPLISHMENT; as did that of Abraham, which is here celebrated. IV. FAITH DISCERNING ARIGHT THE GLORY OF SPIRITUAL PROMISES, WILL MAKE THE SOUL OF A BELIEVER CONTENTED AND WELL SATISFIED WITH THE SMALLEST PORTION OF EARTHLY ENJOYMENTS, &c. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *On travelling*:—There is a time when a man may leave his own country and travel into strange countries, yet great circumspection is to be had in it. 1. A man must be called to it: we must do nothing without a calling. Not as if every one should expect such a calling as Abraham had by God's immediate voice. We have our callings, but mediate. If a man be employed in an ambassadage to a foreign prince, he hath a calling to leave his country for a time. If a man cannot live in his own country, and can more conveniently maintain himself and his charge in another, he may go to it, so as he make not shipwreck of religion. If a man abound in wealth, and be desirous of tongues, arts, and sciences in another country, he hath a calling to it. 2. We must take heed that our families in the mean season be not neglected. He that careth not for them of his house is worse than an infidel. A man under pretext of travelling may not run away from his wife and children. 3. We must have no sinister respect in it. We must not make travelling a cloak to cover theft, murder, adultery, and other gross and notorious vices. God can find us out in all places; for whither shall we fly from His presence? 4. We must not imagine our travelling to be meritorious, as pilgrimages were in former times. 5. Let us take heed in travelling that we travel not away faith and good conscience; wheresoever we become, let us keep ourselves undefiled of the superstitions and corruptions that be in other countries. Let us keep our religion safe and sound, that the least crack be not found in it. Travelling is a dangerous thing. Let us not take it on us unless we be some way or other called to it, as Abraham was. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *The illusiveness of life*:—I. GOD'S PROMISES NEVER ARE FULFILLED IN THE SENSE IN WHICH THEY SEEM TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN. Life is a deception; its anticipations, which are God's promises to the imagination, are never realised; they who know life best, and have trusted God most to fill it with blessings, are ever the first to say that life is a series of disappointments. And in the spirit of this text we have to say that it is a wise and merciful arrangement which ordains it thus. Abraham had a few feet of earth, obtained by purchase—beyond that nothing; he died a stranger and a pilgrim in the land. Isaac had a little. So small was Jacob's hold upon his country that the last years of his life were spent in Egypt, and he died a foreigner in a strange land. His descendants came into the land of Canaan, expecting to find it a land flowing with milk and honey; they found hard work to do—war and unrest, instead of rest and peace. During one brief period in the history of Israel the promise may seem to have been fulfilled. It was during the later years of David and the earlier years of Solomon; but we have the warrant of Scripture itself for affirming that even then the promise was not fulfilled. In the Book of Psalms David speaks of a hope of entering into a future rest. They who believe that the Jews will be restored to their native land, expect it on the express ground that Canaan has never been actually and permanently theirs. A certain tract of country—three hundred miles in length, by two hundred in breadth—must be given, or else they think the promise has been broken. To quote the expression of one of the most eloquent of their writers, "If there be nothing yet future for Israel, then the magnificence of the promise has been lost in the poverty of its accomplishment." I do not quote this to prove the correctness of the interpretation of the prophecy, but as an acknowledgment which may be taken so far as a proof, that the promise made to Abraham has never been accomplished. And such is life's disappointment. Its promise is, you shall have a Canaan; it turns out to be a baseless, airy dream—toil and warfare—nothing that we can call our own; not the land of rest, by any means. But we will examine this in particulars. 1. Our senses deceive us; we begin life with delusion. Our senses deceive us with respect to distance, shape, and colour. That which afar off seems oval turns out to be

circular, modified by the perspective of distance; that which appears a speck, upon nearer approach becomes a vast body. All experience is a correction of life's delusions—a modification, a reversal of the judgment of the senses: and all life is a lesson on the falsehood of appearances. 2. Our natural anticipations deceive us—I say natural in contradistinction to extravagant expectations. Every human life is a fresh one, bright with hopes that will never be realised. There may be differences of character in these hopes; finer spirits may look on life as the arena of successful deeds, the more selfish as a place of personal enjoyment. With man the turning-point of life may be a profession—with woman, marriage; the one gilding the future with the triumphs of intellect, the other with the dreams of affection; but in every case life is not what any of them expects, but something else. It would almost seem a satire on existence to compare the youth in the outset of his career, flushed and sanguine, with the aspect of the same being when it is nearly done—worn, sobered, covered with the dust of life, and confessing that its days have been few and evil. Where is the land flowing with milk and honey? With our affections it is still worse, because they promise more. Man's affections are but the tabernacles of Canaan—the tents of a night; not permanent habitations even for this life. Where are the charms of character, the perfection, and the purity, and the truthfulness, which seemed so resplendent in our friend? They were only the shape of our own conceptions—our creative shaping intellect projected its own fantasies on him: and hence we outgrow our early friendships; outgrow the intensity of all: we dwell in tents; we never find a home, even in the land of promise. Life is an unenjoyable Canaan, with nothing real or substantial in it. 3. Our expectations, resting on revelation, deceive us. The world's history has turned round two points of hope; one, the first, the other, the second coming of the Messiah. The magnificent imagery of Hebrew prophecy had described the advent of the Conqueror; He came—"a root out of a dry ground, with no form or comeliness; and when they saw Him there was no beauty in Him that they should desire Him." The victory, predicted in such glowing terms, turned out to be the victory of submission—the law of our humanity, which wins by gentleness and love. The promise in the letter was unfulfilled. For ages the world's hope has been the Second Advent. The early Church expected it in their own day. "We, which are alive, and remain until the coming of our Lord." The Saviour Himself had said, "This generation shall not pass till all things be fulfilled." Yet the Son of Man has never come; or rather, He has been ever coming. Unnumbered times the judgment eagles have gathered together over corruption ripe for condemnation. Times innumerable the separation has been made between good and bad. The promise has not been fulfilled, or it has been fulfilled, but in either case anticipation has been foiled and disappointed. There are two ways of considering this aspect of life. One is the way of sentiment; the other is the way of faith. The sentimental way is trite enough. Saint, sage, sophist, moralist, and preacher, have repeated in every possible image, till there is nothing new to say, that life is a bubble, a dream, a delusion, a phantasm. The other is the way of faith: the ancient saints felt as keenly as any moralist could feel the brokenness of its promises; they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims here; they said that they had here no continuing city; but they did not mournfully moralise on this; they said it cheerfully, and rejoiced that it was so. They felt that all was right; they knew that the promise itself had a deeper meaning; they looked undauntedly for "a city which hath foundations." II. THE MEANING OF THIS DELUSIVENESS.. 1. It serves to allure us on. Could a man see his route before him—a flat, straight road, unbroken by bush, or tree, or eminence, with the sun's heat burning down upon it, stretched out in dreary monotony—he could scarcely find energy to begin his task; but the uncertainty of what may be seen beyond the next turn keeps expectation alive. The view that may be seen from yonder summit—the glimpse that may be caught, perbaps, as the road winds round yonder knoll—hopes like these, not far distant, beguile the traveller on from mile to mile, and from league to league. In fact, life is an education. The object for which you educate your son is to give him strength of purpose, self-command, discipline of mental energies; but you do not reveal to your son this aim of his education; you tell him of his place in his class, of the prizes at the end of the year, of the honours to be given at college. These are not the true incentives to knowledge; such incentives are not the highest—they are even mean, and partially injurious; yet these mean incentives stimulate and lead on, from day to day and from year to year, by a process the principle of which the boy himself is not aware

of. So does God lead on, through life's unsatisfying and false reward, ever educating: Canaan first; then the hope of a Redeemer; then the millennial glory. 2. This non-fulfilment of promise fulfils it in a deeper way. The account we have given already, were it to end there, would be insufficient to excuse the failure of life's promise; by saying that it allures us would be really to charge God with deception. Now, life is not deception, but illusion. We distinguish between illusion and delusion. We may paint wood so as to be taken for stone, iron, or marble; this is delusion: but you may paint a picture, in which rocks, trees, and sky are never mistaken for what they seem, yet produce all the emotion which real rocks, trees, and sky would produce. This is illusion, and this is the painter's art: never for one moment to deceive by attempted imitation, but to produce a mental state in which the feelings are suggested which the natural objects themselves would create. Let us take an instance drawn from life. To a child a rainbow is a real thing—substantial and palpable; its limb rests on the side of yonder hill; he believes that he can appropriate it to himself; and when, instead of gems and gold hid in its radiant bow, he finds nothing but damp mist—cold, dreary drops of disappointment—that disappointment tells that his belief has been delusion. To the educated man that bow is a blessed illusion, yet it never once deceives; he does not take it for what it is not, he does not expect to make it his own; he feels its beauty as much as the child could feel it, nay, infinitely more—more even from the fact that he knows that it will be transient; but besides and beyond this, to him it presents a deeper loveliness; he knows the laws of light, and the laws of the human soul which gave it being. He has linked it with the laws of the universe, and with the invisible mind of God; and it brings to him a thrill of awe, and the sense of a mysterious, nameless beauty, of which the child did not conceive. It is illusion still; but it has fulfilled the promise. In the realm of spirit, in the temple of the soul, it is the same. All is illusion; "but we look for a city which hath foundations"; and in this the promise is fulfilled. And such was Canaan to the Israelites. To some doubtless it was delusion. They expected to find their reward in a land of milk and honey. They were bitterly disappointed, and expressed their disappointment loudly enough in their murmurs against Moses, and their rebellion against his successors. But to others, as to Abraham, Canaan was the bright illusion which never deceived, but for ever shone before as the type of something more real. And even taking the promise literally, though they built in tents, and could not call a foot of land their own, was not its beauty theirs? Were not its trellised vines, and glorious pastures, and rich olive-fields, ministers to the enjoyment of those who had all in God, though its milk, and oil, and honey, could not be enjoyed with exclusiveness of appropriation? Yet over and above and beyond this, there was a more blessed fulfilment of the promise; there was "a city which had foundations"—built and made by God—toward which the anticipation of this Canaan was leading them. The kingdom of God was forming in their souls, for ever disappointing them by the unreal, and teaching them that what is spiritual and belongs to mind and character alone can be eternal. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Mysteriousness of life*:—It is not unusual for captains to receive their commands from their country to set sail, especially in times of war and danger, knowing not their destination. They cannot open their commission, perhaps, until they have reached a solitary, silent part of the great ocean. And we "sail under sealed orders"; we all go out "not knowing whither we go." (*E. P. Hood.*) *Reason may hinder faith*:—I suppose you will all say that if a man were able to go a journey of two or three hundred miles a-foot, he were a very good footman; yet if you will tie him to carry a child of four or five years old with him, you will say it would be a great luggage to him; and the man would say, "Pray, let this child be left alone; for though he may run along in my hand half a mile, or go a mile with me, yet notwithstanding I must carry him the rest of the way; and when I come at any great water, or have to go over any hill, I must take him upon my back, and that will be a great burden to me." Thus it is between faith and reason. Reason at the best is but a child to faith. Faith can foot it over mountains and difficulties, and wade through afflictions, though they be very wide; but when reason comes to any affliction, to wade through that and to go over some great difficulties, then it cries out, and says, "Oh Faith, good Faith, go back again; good Faith, go back again." "No," says Faith, "but I will take thee upon my back, Reason." And so Faith is fain to do, indeed, to take Reason upon its back. But oh, what a luggage is Reason to Faith! Faith never works better than when it works most alone. The mere rational con-

sidering of the means, and the deadness thereof, is a great and special enemy to the work of believing. (*William Bridge.*) *Faith stimulating endeavour*:—See the spider casting out her film to the gale; she feels persuaded that somewhere or other it will adhere and form the commencement of her web. She commits the slender filament to the breeze, believing that there is a place provided for it to fix itself. In this fashion should we believingly cast forth our endeavours in this life, confident that God will find a place for us. He who bids us pray and work will aid our efforts and guide us in His providence in a right way. Sit not still in despair, O son of toil, but again cast out the floating thread of hopeful endeavour, and the wind of love will bear it to its resting-place. *The tent life*:—The tent life will always be the natural one for those who feel that their mother country is beyond the stars. We should be like the wandering Swiss, who hear in a strange land the rude old melody that used to echo among the Alpine pastures. The sweet sad tones kindle home sickness that will not let them rest: no matter where they are, or what they are doing, no matter what honour they have carved out for themselves with their swords, they throw off the livery of the alien king which they have worn, and turning their backs upon pomp and courts, seek the free air of the mountains, and find home better than a place by a foreign throne. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) **A city which hath foundations.**—*The way to the city*:—There are some men who are like the patriarch Abraham in this—they have no fixed dwelling-place in the earth. They go from one city to another at the different seasons of the year, arranging to come to each just at the season of its highest bloom. This is thought to be a pleasant, but it is a very poor way of spending life. Men who are always seeking pleasure are never happy. They soon wear all freshness out of their hearts. Better far be at the hardest work all the year round than be such a man. In the intervals of work, however, it is a good thing to see, as one can, the famous cities of the world. It is a relief to leave the well-known streets and the scenes of accustomed occupation for a time; and some expansion of the mind is attained amid the new and varied scenes which come into view. Now, suppose a man on pilgrimage going through a number of such cities, and coming at last of purpose to the best. May we not suppose such a man pausing and saying, "Is this all? Have I seen the strongest that man can build, the fairest that he can paint? Is there no other city which I have not seen, no fairer lands than those which I have traversed? I have been refreshed, I am thankful; but alas for my immortality if this be all!' Could you not suppose such a man, at such a time, rejoicing in the privilege of taking his place beside Abraham, and "looking for a city which hath foundations"? I. THE CITY. How far we are to carry forward the ideas which we have about a city on earth, and fix them on that celestial place which God has prepared for the dwelling of His people through all eternity, it is difficult to say. It is with this as it is with the natural and spiritual body: there is a resemblance and yet a difference. To transfer our ideas just as they are, without purification or expansion, would be to vulgarise and degrade heaven. But to rise by their means to higher ideas like them, is just what the teaching of Scripture enables us to do. "A city." Let us thank God for that word—or these: "a country," "a better country, that is, an heavenly." How do these familiar terms fill up for us the dim and vast obscure! They make a home for our wandering thoughts. They give an answer to our wondering inquiries. 1. This city is very ancient. Not the plan of it merely in Divine thought, nor parts of it merely in course of construction, but the whole city was built and finished, and Abraham journeyed to it through the quietness of the patriarchal days, just as a man now might journey to Paris or Rome. 2. This city is very strong and stable. "It hath foundations." It is designedly put in contrast with those frail and movable structures in which Abraham dwelt during his pilgrimage. And what a contrast with the strongest cities and securest abodes of men! Nature and time wear down all man's works. As soon as a house is finished, it begins to vanish away. As soon as a tower is erected, it begins to decay. Man is still weaker than his house. His outward man is perishing far more rapidly than walls and towns, and rooms and pictures. It is to a being mortal in himself, and dwelling thus amid things, that this grand vision is revealed of "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." 3. This city is all built by God. He is Architect and Artificer. He designs and builds. How grand is this conception of heaven as the masterpiece of Divine skill! a meet dwelling-place for those who have been cleansed and perfected by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. II. THE WAY to the city. The way to the city is to "look for it," to "expect it." It is the way of faith. Without faith, showing itself by a life-long

looking, we have no interest in the place. If we do not look, we reject the whole. This is the way in which heaven is lost to innumerable multitudes. The heart, the soul is in the look, and where a man looks his soul will go. A whole city for a look! Only it must be the look of the whole soul, continued through the whole life, until the city appears. There are those who would be willing enough to think themselves into a celestial city, to speculate concerning a future life, its probable scenes and characteristics, and then to have it as their fancy had feigned. That is not the way to the city. There are those who would be very willing to buy themselves into it. They would give a great many religious services, much money, and some suffering to get there. Neither is that the way to the city. "It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof." They cannot discern it by knowledge. They may measure and weigh the heavenly bodies with the lines and balances of their thought; they may analyse those beams of light which are shot down on us, and describe the chemistry of the stars; but after they have said all, and told all they know, there is still no sign of the city. They cannot win it by strength. Men do not ascend the snowy summits of the mountains, and then go up to a nobler world. Alas! they all go downwards—down, down to the grave. They cannot win it by merit. Do men so live in this world that they would be justified in saying, "We do not need to look beyond this life. There must be another world prepared for us, and we can well afford to wait for the day of entrance"? Benjamin Franklin said, "As this world was all prepared for me before I came here, so the world to which I am going will be ready when I go there." But there is a fallacy in this reasoning; it is to place a man who has lived responsibly, who has, of his own will, chosen good or evil for threescore years, in the same category as an infant who has never lived at all. God has said that this is the way to the city, the way of the faith-look; and if we are to be wise, we must walk in this way, on and on, until the city comes in sight. This "looking" is the whole soul acting in faith, rising in desire, answering to the word and assurance of God in reference to the life to come. No test of a man's state could be deeper or truer than this, and therefore it is good and worthy of God to make faith the condition of salvation, and to give a city of eternal glory for a life-long look. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *The hope of Abraham*:—It is an interesting fact, that though Abraham was selected by Providence to be the head of a great nation, and though he had in those days of his much cattle and a great company of dependents, yet he had no special or particular home in the land he traversed. His habitation was a tent, like that of the traveller of the desert; and this he pitched in the "land of promise," as a pilgrim "in a strange country." The reason given by the apostle for this conduct is expressed in the words, "He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God." Here we have the object of the patriarch's faith; and in considering it briefly, let us notice a few of its peculiar features, as well as the nature of his faith itself. 1. OBSERVE IT IS A CITY OF DIVINE ORIGIN. 1. Abraham may not have had any mysterious vision of this city as St. John had of the heavenly Jerusalem, described in the twenty-first chapter of the Book of Revelation. But it is possible that he might have thought of that which is distinguished by the peculiar advantages of a city; such as a central spot of splendour, of security, of unity, in which the tribes of earth could meet together in social harmony and friendship; and, lastly, as the seat of government. It is not impossible but what one of the most beautiful cities of the Canaanites might have suggested the idea to his mind. But be that as it may, he readily drew a distinction between an earthly and a heavenly city. The earthly he well knew would perish. But the heavenly city, having God for its Builder and Creator, its foundations and its glory would be eternal. Thus it would seem that Abraham had a belief in the soul's immortality, by his having an expectation of permanent rest and happiness after death. Hence Christians of the present age are linked to Abraham through centuries long past by this simple faith and hope in the glorious future. 2. As the city is Divine in its origin, so we may rightly conclude that its inhabitants would correspond in character with its Supreme Founder. Abraham no doubt included this view of the city in his expectations. He must have well known that if the character of the heavenly citizens did not differ from that of the earthly ones, he could neither expect within its walls rest, nor security, nor permanency. Consequently, while expecting it he must have disciplined himself in all goodness, and in all obedience to the commands of God, as a qualification for entering it and for associating with its inhabitants. II. THINK UPON THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM. 1. It induced a purpose worthy of a life like that of Abraham. This purpose was to

realise the glory and greatness of the object which faith acknowledged. Can we imagine a purpose of life more inspiriting, more fraught with greatness, and more suited to give an elevation to thought and feeling? The purposes generally for which men live here, when properly considered, are beneath the capacity, the calling, and the destiny of man. They are very limited as to their duration, and very uncertain as to their possession. But the purposes of a Christian life are eternal; and the very certainty of the promise on which they rest leaves no regret or disappointment in the hour of death. What brighter vision can pass before the spirit, when leaving its earthly tabernacle, than the home-city of the faithful, whose Maker and Builder is God? 2. The faith of Abraham, furthermore, induced his co-operation with the Divine purposes and power. No doubt many of his neighbours derided him for what they might have thought an act of folly; and it is more than probable that in travelling over wide and lonely deserts he felt the difficulty of his undertaking. But Abraham did not turn back, neither did his faith falter, nor did the peril of the day or of the night change his purpose. Thus we are taught a lesson of co-operation, by giving a ready obedience to the Divine will in the use of means adapted to meet the ends of Christian faith and worship. We are called upon to come out from the world, from its spirit, and to separate ourselves from its hurtful maxims, and from its dangerous companionship. 3. The faith of Abraham was childlike and humble. A faith which led him in its moral influence to tread only in one path, and that path was Christ. It is not a broad way, giving a wide scope to earthly passions, and favouring the selfish ease which knows not the force of the struggle between the downward tendency of the flesh and the upward strivings of the renewed spirit, but it is a narrow way. Yet withal, though the way is in some places steep and rugged, it is safe, and its end is peace and rest for evermore. (*W. D. Horwood.*) *The believer's earnest desire for heaven*:—I. WHY HEAVEN IS LIKENED TO A CITY. The description implies—1. Safety. Its walls are too high to be scaled by the wily foe, too firmly built to be beaten down; its gates are too strong to be forced, and He who possesses the keys too wise not to discover a friend from a foe, under whatever disguise, when seeking admittance. He that laid the foundations of the holy city is Himself its Guardian. 2. Society. It is a delightful thing to think of meeting with our Christian friends who have long since gone to their rest, to see the prophets who foretold the day of Christ. 3. The permanence of its enjoyments. Heaven is a city that stands; the stream of time, the ocean of eternity, as it washes its base, shall in vain attempt to undermine it, for it has foundations that cannot be moved. II. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THE EXPRESSION THAT ABRAHAM LOOKED FOR THE CITY. 1. A belief in its existence. 2. A desire to have a place in it. 3. An actual preparation for it. III. THE EFFECTS RESULTING FROM THE CONTEMPLATION OF THE HEAVENLY STATE. 1. It should moderate our attachment to worldly objects. 2. It should endue us with patience under all the afflictions and trials which it may be ours to suffer. 3. It should make us anxious to lead others to seek it. (*Jas. Clason.*) *The heavenly city*:—1. A CERTAIN EXPECTATION OF THE HEAVENLY REWARD, GROUNDED ON THE PROMISES AND COVENANT OF GOD, IS SUFFICIENT TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE THE SOULS OF BELIEVERS UNDER ALL THEIR TRIALS IN THE WHOLE COURSE OF THEIR OBEDIENCE. II. HEAVEN IS A SETTLED QUIET HABITATION. A suitable dwelling for them that have had a life of trouble in this world. III. ALL STABILITY, ALL PERPETUITY IN EVERY STATE HERE AND HEREAFTER, ARISETH FROM THE PURPOSE OF GOD, AND IS RESOLVED THEREINTO. IV. This is that which recommends to us the city of God, the heavenly state, THAT IT IS, AS THE WORK OF GOD ALONE, SO THE PRINCIPAL EFFECT OF HIS WISDOM AND POWER. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *The expected city*:—I. THE CITY IS DESCRIBED FROM THE STABILITY AND THE BUILDER THEREOF. A city is sometimes taken for a multitude and vicinity of buildings: sometimes it is taken for a political community; sometimes it is taken for the condition and estate of these societies. In this place the word "city" must be taken spiritually, for such a kind of habitation, society, and estate as is not found in this world. 1. It hath foundations; for nothing can be firm which is not firmly fixed upon an immovable ground. This doth difference it from tabernacles and tents, and also from all other buildings, habitations, societies, states, kingdoms, and their prosperity; for they are obnoxious to change, decay, and ruin. Experience doth sufficiently prove this by the ruin of so many castles, palaces, cities, societies, states, and kingdoms, which have flourished in great splendour, power, and strength, yet now lie in the dust and do not appear. This city is no such thing; but the place of abode, the persons, and their felicity, endure for ever. 2. The Builder and Maker is God. All

other cities, societies, and their condition is from men; but in this man hath no hand at all; for God made it according to the model contrived by Himself. These words are added to inform us—(1) That it was so far above the art and power of man, that only God could make it. He was not only the Principal, but the sole Efficient of it. (2) That it was most excellent, and far above all other cities of the world for firmness, duration, beauty, and felicity; for the peace, pleasures, and felicity of it are full and everlasting. II. ABRAHAM'S EXPECTATION OF THIS CITY BY FAITH. This looking for, or expectation, includes many things; as—1. He had a title to it by virtue of God's promise and his qualification; and this was not a mere title, but something more; for there was a time limited in the grant of the full enjoyment, and he had received the first fruits of glory. 2. He desired and longed after the enjoyment of this city far more than for anything in this world. 3. These desires were very effectual and working upon his soul, and stirred him to seek this city, and constantly to use all means appointed by God for to attain it; and the whole course of his life was a continued approach towards this eternal rest and glorious estate. 4. The actual possession of this blessed estate was deferred; yet he with patience did wait for it, and made no doubt but to attain that which he so much desired. And here it is to be observed—(1) That no man can be a right sojourner on earth who doth not look for a city eternally stable in heaven; for that which most effectually draws the heart of man off from this world is the expection of a far better estate in the world to come. (2) That believers and expectants of heaven, who are candidates of eternity, are of a most noble and Divine spirit. Amongst men of this world, the ambitious, who aspire to crowns and kingdoms, and aim at perpetual fame by their heroic virtues and rare exploits, are judged persons of far greater gallantry than covetous muck-worms or brutish epicures; yet in their thoughts and highest designs they are very base in comparison of these pilgrims, in whose breast the sparks of heavenly fire do ever burn and move, and carry them upward, far above the world. (3) That neither Abraham, nor any other, without faith could look for this glorious city; for by it they did not only understand how glorious it was, but also were verily persuaded of God's promise and fidelity; and without this faith they could not possibly hope or look for it. And as by faith they did sojourn, so by the same faith they did look for this city. (*G. Lawson.*) *The hope of Abraham:*—Abraham, the friend of God and the father of the faithful, was a homeless man in a strange country, dwelling in tents like an Arab or a Tartar. This fact, though not inexplicable, is so far singular as to deserve our particular attention. 1. Why, then, was Abraham a wanderer, a homeless man, a sojourner in the land of promise? I remark that it was not on account of poverty. Abraham was rich, by inheritance, by acquisition—rich by the blessing of God on the increase of his possessions, and rich through the favour of the kings and chiefs whose friendship he enjoyed. 2. Was it, then, because he had no real estate, no landed property, to which he could lay claim and on which he might reside? The whole land of Canaan was in one sense his own. It was his by express grant from Jehovah—made sure to him and to his heirs for ever. 3. We read that when Abraham first crossed the Jordan from the East, "the Canaanite was in the land." The Hivite, the Hittite, the Jebusite, the Amorite, and other sons of Canaan, had possession of the country. And so thickly were they settled, in the central part at least, that there was not room for Abraham and Lot to live together. May it not be, therefore, that these actual possessors of the country would not suffer him to dwell among them? Had they known his pretensions, or, to speak more properly, his rights, they might have hated him and driven him away. But as he made no efforts to enforce those rights, and as he came among them from the East with flocks and herds, and as an independent chieftain, they received him with respect, and this respect increased. It was not, therefore, on account of any enmity between him and the Canaanites that, instead of founding a great city, he preferred to live a wandering life. There must be other reasons for his course. 4. It may be suggested that his perseverance in a wandering course shows him to have been a mere barbarian, one who was unable to appreciate the comforts of a settled life, or rather, who had never had experience of them. Thus we find that in Arabia there are tribes of Bedouins who regard their wandering life as the most honourable possible, and laugh to scorn those pleasures and advantages of civilised society about which they know nothing by experience. But let it be observed that these tribes inhabit the Arabian desert, where cultivation exists only in detached spots, and where the herdsman is obliged to change his pasture-ground and home continually. Abraham, on the other hand, was in a fertile, cultivated, thickly settled country,

full of proud cities, walled towns of inferior size, and villages innumerable. It was not because he knew no better that he chose to dwell in tents instead of houses, and to govern an encampment, not a city or a kingdom. 5. Was it, then, because he thought it wrong to lead a settled life in towns and cities, that he dwelt in tents? There is no trace of such a doctrine in the Word of God, and Abraham was too well grounded in the Divine will to hold it as a superstition. He was no ascetic. 6. To some the thought may here occur that we are searching for the explanation of a fact which needs none. Why should Abraham's wandering be considered stranger than the wandering of any other Eastern chief? And as those of the highest rank lead such a life to this day, it need not be regarded as below the dignity even of the Father of the Faithful and the Friend of God. He came into the country with his flocks and herds; and as the land was densely peopled, he was under the necessity of frequently changing his encampment and his pasture. This would be wholly satisfactory but for the apostle's mention of the patriarch's unsettled life as a remarkable evidence of faith. 7. Having thus determined negatively that it was neither poverty nor want of title to the land, nor opposition on the part of the inhabitants, nor ignorance, nor mere ascetic self-denial, nor a regard to temporal convenience that induced him to reside in tents rather than in a palace and a city worthy of so great a prince, we are ready to receive the explanation of the text, which is this: "he looked," or was looking, "for a city." The sense is not that Abraham was wandering in search of a city upon earth, but that he lived in quiet expectation of a city. "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." It was this "patience of hope" that rendered Abraham indifferent to the walled cities of the Canaanites around him, whose antiquity was of ancient days, and whose defence was the munition of rocks. Nothing so effectually breeds indifference to present objects as the hope of better things to come. The traveller pressing homewards after a long absence can pass, with a contemptuous smile or absolute unconsciousness, those very objects which the homeless traveller dwells upon with rapture. 8. And what sort of a city did he look for, in contempt of those around him? How did the city of his expectations differ from the cities of the Canaanites and the Philistines, from old Damascus, and from Ur of the Chaldees? It had foundations. And had not they foundations? In one sense they had none. They were liable to change. In the same sense, Abraham's city, which he looked for, had foundations—has them now; for observe the present form of the expression. It was a city, therefore, not of this world; for in this world there are no foundations time-proof. And whence had the city of his hopes these firm foundations? From the Architect. 9. Whose Builder and Maker is God. God does not build like man. The foundations of His structures are laid deep in His decrees, and the cement has been growing hard from all eternity. His power over the materials He uses is not merely the disposing power of a builder, but the absolute power of a maker. What He builds He creates. The city of which He is the Maker and Builder is eternal; it has foundations which decay can never weaken, and which laugh at the violence of storm and earthquake. And who are its inhabitants? (Rev. xxi. 24–26). And are none to be excluded? Ah, yes! (Rev. xxi. 27). This is the grand distinction of the city for which Abraham looked. It is a city free from sin. In this it differs from all earthly cities. And why is it called a city? Because with a city we associate ideas of substantial strength, immense wealth, regular government, social intercourse, refinement of manners, and external splendour. But what are all these, in the cities of the earth, to the surpassing glories of that city for which Abraham looked, and where the saints shall be enthroned as kings and priests unto God? 10. Here, then, we begin to see a marked resemblance between his case and our own. However remote from our experience what has hitherto been said of his condition, at last we are alike, we are all sojourners and strangers upon earth, we seek the same city as the patriarch. However well we may be pleased with it, however fully satisfied with what it can afford, we know that our abode in it is only for a time; it is not the place of our rest. And of this we are receiving constant admonitions. 11. Now this feeling of uneasiness, this sense of homelessness, is, as you well know, incompatible with happiness. In order to be happy you must have a home, either present or in prospect. Have you such a home? Remember that earthly homes, in reference to eternity, are nothing worth. Look at the households breaking up around you, and say whether these can be your solace and your stay for ever. What will you do then? Will you waste yourselves in misanthropic discontent! No! do as Abraham did: look forward to the city which hath foundations, whose

Builder and Maker is God. The more unsatisfactory you find this world, look the more eagerly and steadfastly on that which is to come. 12. But here let us guard against a fatal error—the error of imagining that mere expectation is alone required. Believe me, multitudes have looked for that city who have never reached it. There is but one path to it through the wilderness of life, and that path is a narrow one. It was by that path that the Father of the Faithful gained the object of his faith and hope. If you would gain it likewise, you must walk in the footsteps of the Friend of God. Do you ask what path he travelled? I reply, the path of humble, childlike faith. 13. And now let me turn to you who have your faces turned to Zion, and are already looking for that city to which Abraham aspired, and where he reigns in glory. It is said that when the caravan of pilgrims to the sepulchre of Christ cross the mountains of Judæa, worn with hunger and fatigue, they are sometimes ready to relax their efforts, and despair of safe arrival. They may even repent of their own folly in attempting so adventurous a journey, and wish themselves in safety at their own distant firesides. But these thoughts all vanish when the summit is attained, and from the mountain's brow they catch a glimpse of Olivet and Zion, and the forsaken city seated in her widow's weeds upon her throne of hills. That sight reanimates their courage and renews their strength. With simultaneous energy they rise and hasten onward, and the roughness of the journey is forgotten in the presence of Jerusalem. Oh! we are also strangers and pilgrims, and our way through the world may be precipitous and rugged, and so long as we look only at the things around us, our hearts may well grow faint and our knees feeble. But amidst these discouragements, look upward to the heavenly hills, and, through the dust and smoke of this world's troubles, keep the eternal city steadfastly in view. That sight will make your hearts beat with new vigour. It will nerve your arm for battle and your bosom for resistance. It will enable you to look down with contempt upon the pleasures and temptations of the world; it will preserve you from illusions, painful even to the Christian, and, ah! how often fatal to the unbeliever. (*J. A. Alexander, D.D.*) *The city Abraham looked for*:—Here he had a tent, but there he looked for a city; *τὴν*, for that city which alone deserves the name of a city. It excels all earthly cities. Aholiab and Bezaleel made the tabernacle, Hiram the temple; carpenters and masons set up these cities; but God Himself is the Maker and Builder of this city. These cities may be overthrown by waters; the sea may come in tumbling and sweep them away; these towns and cities may be consumed with fire, there be burnings almost every day; these may be sacked with the enemy, and made even with the ground, as Jerusalem and the temple are, which were the wonder of the world; we may be driven by famine and pestilence out of those towns and cities. Howsoever they stand awhile, and we in them; the time shall come when the earth, with all the goodly buildings that be on it, shall be burned with fire. Therefore let us use these cities as we used them not. Let our hearts and affections be in this city, whose Maker and Builder is God. We have not here an abiding city. London is no abiding city; York, Norwich, no town is an abiding town. Death will give us a remove out of all towns. But in this city we shall abide for ever, and reign with Christ for evermore; therefore let us all long for it. He doth not say that he believed there was such a city; but he looked for it (Jud. v. 28). We look out of our windows on sights in the streets, gardens, orchards, &c., but not out of the windows of our hearts for this city. He that looks shortly for a new coat, will not be much in love with his old; for a fair house, will not care for a cottage. We look after our wool and cloth, houses, and lands, &c. Let us look daily for Christ's coming; that will put us in possession of this city. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *A hold upon eternity*:—As in some sea-weed, far out in the depths of the ocean, the tiny frond that floats upon the billows goes down, and down, and down, by filaments that knit it to the basal rock; so the most insignificant act of our fleeting days has a hold upon eternity, and life in all its moments may be knit to the permanent. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Vers. 11, 12. **Sara.**—*Faith triumphing over physical incapacity*:—I. THE DIFFICULTIES OF FAITH IN THIS CASE. The desired good was contrary to—1. Nature. 2. Experience. 3. Personal worthiness. II. THE BASIS OF THIS FAITH. Grounded entirely on God's will. The removal of the difficulty may be—1. The subject of distinct promise. 2. Necessary for obedience to certain commands. 3. The secret purpose of God, which faith leaves Him to fulfil, if so He pleases. III. THE RESULT OF THIS FAITH. 1. Itself a source of victorious power. 2. Rewarded

by God with victorious power. (*C. New.*) *Sarah's faith*:—I. THE PERSON BELIEVING. A woman, weak in sex, may be strong in faith. 1. Many times the word doth not work presently: Sarah laugheth at first, but afterwards believeth. Some that belong to the purposes of grace may stand out for a while against the ways of God, till they are fully convinced; as Sarah laughed till she knew it to be a word not spoken in jest, but a promise made in earnest. 2. Usually before the settling of faith there is a conflict. "Shall I have a child who am old, my lord being old also?" Reason opposeth against the promise. So it is usual when we come to settle the heart in the belief of any promise. Look, as when the fire beginneth to be kindled we see smoke first before flame, so it is here before our comforts be established, we are full of doubts; so that doubtings are a hopeful prognostic—it is a sign men mind their condition. 3. With great indulgence, God hideth the defects of His children and taketh notice of their graces. II. THE COMMENDATION OF HER FAITH. From the influence of her faith. 1. "She received strength to conceive seed." Learn hence—(1) That though bringing forth of children be according to the course of nature, yet God hath a great hand in it. (2) Let us improve it spiritually. (3) Faith hath a great stroke in making way for blessings. "By faith she received strength to conceive seed." Means can do nothing without God, and God will do nothing without faith (Matt. xiii. 58). 2. From the effect of this influence—"And was delivered of a child"—I observe hence—(1) Every promise received by faith will surely be seconded with performance. (2) Faith is the best midwife. By faith Sarah was delivered of a child. 3. From the application of her faith. "When she was past age." There were two difficulties—she was naturally barren (Gen. xi. 30) and she was now ninety years of age, and it ceased to be with her "after the manner of woman"; and therefore here lay the excellency of her faith, that she could believe that she should be the mother of a mighty nation. Barren I say she was by natural constitution, and now no better than dead, having so long outlived the natural time of bearing children. Learn hence—That no difficulty or hindrance should cause a disbelief of the promise. The reasons are two—partly from God, that maketh the promise; partly from faith, that receiveth the promise. (1) From God's nature. God is not tied to the order of second causes, much less to the road of common probabilities; He will turn nature upside down rather than not be as good as His word. (2) From the nature of faith, which is to guide the soul when reason and sense faileth. III. THE GROUND OF HER FAITH. Because she judged Him faithful that had promised. Hence observe—1. Wherever we put forth faith we must have a promise, otherwise it is but fancy, not faith. It is not a ground of expectation barely what God is able to do, but what God will do. As the two pillars of Solomon's house were called Jachin and Boaz (1 Kings vii. 21)—the one signifies "Strength," and the other "He will establish it." 2. In closing with the promise, we should chiefly give God the honour of His faithfuluess. (1) Because God valueth this most, He standeth much of His truth. Heaven and earth shall pass away before one jot or tittle of His word shall pass (Matt. v. 18). The monuments of His power shall be defaced to make good His truth (Psa. cxxxviii. 2). "Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy name." All other attributes give way to this. (2) Because this giveth support and relief to the soul in waiting (chap. x. 23). "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for He is faithful that promised." God hath promised no more than He is able to perform; His word never exceeded His power. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Faith triumphing over difficulties*:—I. FAITH MAY BE SORELY SHAKEN AND TOSSED AT THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF DIFFICULTIES LYING IN THE WAY OF THE PROMISE, WHICH YET AT LAST IT SHALL OVERCOME. And there be many degrees of its weakness and failure herein. As—1. A mere recoiling, with some disorder in the understanding, unable to apprehend the way and manner of the accomplishment of the promise. 2. It ariseth to a distrust of the event of the promises or their accomplishment, because of the difficulties that lie in the way. 3. When there is for a season an actual prevalency of unbelief. So it was with the apostle Peter, when he denied his Master, who yet was quickly recovered. It is therefore our duty—(1) To watch that our faith be not surprised or shaken by the appearance of difficulties and oppositions. (2) Not to despond utterly on any degree of its failure, for it is in its nature, by the use of means, to recover its vigour and efficacy. II. ALTHOUGH GOD ORDINARILY WORKETH BY HIS CONCURRING BLESSING ON THE COURSE OF NATURE, YET HE IS NOT OBLIGED THEREUNTO. Yet—III. IT IS NO DEFECT IN FAITH, NOT TO EXPECT EVENTS AND BLESSINGS ABSOLUTELY ABOVE THE USE OF MEANS, UNLESS WE

HAVE A PARTICULAR WARRANT FOR IT; as Sarah had in this case. IV. THE DUTY AND USE OF FAITH ABOUT TEMPORAL MERCIES ARE TO BE REGULATED BY THE GENERAL RULES OF THE WORD, WHERE NO ESPECIAL PROVIDENCE DOTH MAKE APPLICATION OF A PROMISE. V. The mercy here spoken of, concerning a son unto Abraham by Sarah his wife, WAS ABSOLUTELY DECREED, AND ABSOLUTELY PROMISED; YET GOD INDISPENSABLY REQUIRES FAITH IN THEM FOR THE FULFILLING OF THAT DECREE, and the accomplishment of that promise. VI. THE FORMAL OBJECT OF FAITH IN THE DIVINE PROMISES IS NOT THE THINGS PROMISED IN THE FIRST PLACE, BUT GOD HIMSELF IN HIS ESSENTIAL EXCELLENCIES OF TRUTH, OR FAITHFULNESS AND POWER. VII. EVERY PROMISE OF GOD HATH THIS CONSIDERATION TACITLY ANNEXED TO IT, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" There is no Divine promise, but when it comes unto the trial, as unto our closing with it, no promise of the new covenant, but we apprehend as great a difficulty and improbability of its accomplishment unto us, as Sarah did of this. VIII. Although the truth, veracity, or faithfulness of God be in a peculiar manner the immediate object of our faith, yet IT TAKES IN THE CONSIDERATION OF ALL OTHER DIVINE EXCELLENCIES FOR ITS ENCOURAGEMENT AND CORROBORATION. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *Faith counting all things possible*:—That which is elsewhere made characteristic of Abraham is in this one place ascribed to Sarah. It may have been in the mind of the apostle to suggest to his readers, at this point of his appeal, the thought that "in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female." Woman, no less than man, needs, and is capable of, the grace of faith. The soul's life of woman, redeemed and glorified by the gospel, is a life of faith, in every submission, and in every effort, and in every heroism, of the soul's life of man. "Through faith Sarah also herself"—Sarah in her proper sphere, as Abraham in his—became the inheritor of that privilege of blessing, from which sprang a vast nation, to be the trustee of God's oracles, and the country, on earth, of Christ Himself. This is that example of faith—and it is instructive to remember it—to which the explicit testimony is attached, "He believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness." It was not that first exercise of faith, which triumphed over the attractions of home, and reconciled the patriarch Abraham to a life of exile and wandering. It was not that third exercise of faith, which triumphed over the love of offspring, and enabled the father to give back by his own act the precious life of his child into the hand of Him whose very promise that obedience seemed to be defeating. Neither of these self-devotions is connected in the sacred records with the faith that "justifies." It is the mental act—it is the looking up into that clear night-sky, and responding, in heart, to the Voice which says, "Count those stars—so shall thy seed be"—it is this, the most elementary and the most entirely secret "taking God at His word"—it is that particular state of the mind, which has no action at all in it—which is altogether, and from first to last, mental—just the standing instead of sinking under God's disclosure and God's promise—it is this which God looks at. All else is consequence, natural consequence: the obedience which leaves the home—the obedience which sacrifices the son—all this is but the expression in action of the mind's mind and the soul's soul. 1. What Abraham believed was a physical impossibility. Over that difficulty his faith triumphed. The impossibility presented to our faith is not physical but spiritual. We have to believe, not in the suspension of what we call "laws of nature"—in other words, of God's ordinary methods of procedure in regard to suns and stars, to water and earth, to disease and infection, to life and death—but in certain other things, which, to eyes spiritually enlightened, are at least as difficult. We have to believe in the actual forgiveness of things actually done. We have to believe that that black hateful thing done or said yesterday—even though it had fever in its breath and corruption in its influence—can be, shall be, obliterated in the blood of Jesus Christ, God's own Son, shed, outpoured, for that very purpose. We have to believe in the power of sanctification through the Eternal Spirit. We have to believe that that bad habit, formed in boyhood, weakly yielded to in manhood, still predominant, can by the grace of God—shall by the grace of God—be vanquished in us, burnt out of us, so that we shall be more than conquerors through Him that loved us. These are the improbabilities, the impossibilities — not physical perhaps, but worse than physical—worse, because invisible, worse, because entering into a nature more intricate, more sensitive, more suffering, than any most thrilling fibre, most throbbing nerve, of this body—which we Christians, not by guess-work, but by proof—not by wishing or willing, but by receiving and embracing on the authority of God the Creator, God the Redeemer, God the

Sanctifier—have to apprehend, to realise, and to live by. This, this is faith. 2. There is one peculiarity in the instance before us, and that is the connection which it indicates between spiritual faith and physical consequence. Other Scriptures tell of the rewards and recompenses of faith in a world out of sight. But this passage says, Because of a faith in Him who had promised, "therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable." You may say, The promise was of a supernatural birth. The promise was physical. It looked not beyond earth, and the consequences were "in the like material." God makes not these sharp distinctions between the life that is and the life that shall be. "Godliness," St. Paul tells us, "hath promise" of both. And though we would not so read that text as though it offered riches and pleasures and honours to the righteous, whose very faith counts all these gifts not only precarious but perilous; still it certainly says that God's gifts to His own are not all future: there is a reward for His people here; there is a supernatural offspring, there is a birth, not of accident, not of circumstance, not of the self-will, but all of grace, which turns the thing that is into a foretaste and promise of the thing that shall be: there is a love, and there is a happiness, and there is a home, which derives all its lustre from the ideal and antitype of these out of sight: by faith man and woman, born again of water and of the Spirit, receive back, the second time, out of God's fulness, that which before had been grasped eagerly out of the hand of Nature and of the Fall—and, so receiving, find in each thing a grace and a beauty unseen, unfelt before—find in Faith itself, not the opposite, but the complement, of sight, and enjoy twice over the thing that God created, and the thing that God redeemed and that God sanctifies. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Faith, sense, and reason*:—It is the nature of faith to believe God upon His bare word, and that against sense in things invisible, and against reason in things incredible. Sense corrects imagination, reason corrects sense, but faith corrects both. (*J. Trapp.*) **Therefore sprang there even of one.**—*The increase of the Church*:—I. WHEN GOD IS PLEASED TO INCREASE HIS CHURCH IN NUMBER, IT IS ON VARIOUS ACCOUNTS A MATTER OF REJOICING UNTO ALL BELIEVERS, and a subject of their daily prayers, as that which is frequently promised in the word of truth. This blessing of a numerous posterity is variously set forth, illustrated, and heightened. 1. From the root of it. It was one, one man, that is, Abraham. Unto him alone was the great promise of the blessing Seed now confined. And he, though but one, was heir of all the promises. 2. From the consideration of the state and outward condition of that one, when he became the spring of this numerous posterity: "of him as good as dead." His body naturally was as useless unto the end of the procreation of such a posterity as if it had been dead. II. GOD OFTENTIMES BY NATURE WORKS THINGS ABOVE THE POWER OF NATURE IN ITS ORDINARY EFFICACY AND OPERATIONS. So by weak and dead means He often produceth mighty effects. (*John Owen, D.D.*)

Vers. 13, 14. **These all died in faith.**—*The attachments and detachments of faith*:—I. HOW FAITH FILLS EYE AND HEART WITH THE FUTURE. As some traveller topping the water-shed may see far off the white porch of his home, and wave a greeting to it, though it be distant, while his heart goes out over all the intervening, weary leagues; or as some homeward-bound crew catch, away yonder on the horizon, the tremulous low line that is home, and welcome it with a shout of joy, though many a billow dash and break between them and it, these men looked across the weary waste, and saw far away; and as they saw their hearts went out towards the things that were promised, because they "judged Him faithful that had promised." And that is the attitude and the act which all true faith in God ought to operate in us. So, then, here are two things to think about. One, faith's vision; the other, faith's greeting. People say, "Seeing is believing." I should be disposed to turn the aphorism right round, and to say, "Believing is seeing." The sight that faith gives is solid, clear, certain. If I might so say, the true exercise of faith is to stereoscope the dim ghost-like realities of the future, and to make them stand out solid in relief there before us. Well, then, still further, there is suggested that this vision of faith, with all its blessed clearness and certitude, is not a direct perception of the things promised, but only a sight of them in the promise. And does that make it less blessed? Does the astronomer, that sits in his chamber and when he would most carefully observe the heavens looks downwards on to the mirror of the reflecting telescope that he uses, feel that he sees the starry lights less really than when he gazes up into the abyss itself and sees them there? Is

not the reflection a better and a more accurate source of knowledge for him than even the observation direct of the sky would be? And so, if we look down into the promise, we shall see, glittering there, the starry points which are the true images adapted to our present sense of reception of the great invisible lights above. And then, still further, let me remind you that this vision of faith varies in the measure of our faith. It is not always the same. Refraction brings up sometimes, above the surface of the sea, a spectral likeness of the opposite shore, and men stand now and then upon our southern coasts, and for an hour or two, in some conditions of the atmosphere, they see the low sand-hills of the French or the Belgian coast, as if they were in arm's length. So faith, refracting the rays of light that strike from the throne of God, brings up the image, and when it is strong the image is clear, and when it flags the image "fades away into the light of common day"; and where there glowed the fair outlines of the far-off land, there is nothing but a weary wash of waters and a solitary stretch of sea. My brother! do you see to it that this vision of faith be cultivated by you. Do you choose whether you shall, like John Bunyan's man with the muckrake, have your eyes fixed upon the straws and filth at your feet, or whether you will look upwards and see the crown that is glittering there just above your head, and ready to drop upon it. "These all in faith saw the promises." Yes! And when they saw them they greeted them. Their hands and their hearts went out, and a glad shout came to their lips as they beheld the fair vision of all the wonder that should be. And so faith has in it, in proportion to its depth and reality, this going out of the soul towards the things discerned. They draw us when we see them. II. How FAITH PRODUCES A SENSE OF DETACHMENT FROM THE PRESENT. "They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." A "stranger" is a man who, in a given constitution of things—in some country with a settled government, owes allegiance to another king, and belongs to another polity. A "pilgrim" or a "sojourner" is a man who is only in the place where he now is for a little while. So the one of the two words expresses the idea of belonging to another state of things, and the other expresses the idea of transiency in the present condition. But the true Christian consciousness of being "a stranger and a sojourner" comes, not from any thought that life is fleeting, but from the better and more blessed operation of the faith which reveals the things promised, and knits me so closely to them that I cannot but feel separated from the things that are round about me. Men that live in mountainous countries, when they come down into the plains, be it Switzerland, or the Highlands, or anywhere else, pine and fade away, sometimes with the intensity of the "Heinweh," the homesickness which seizes them. And we, if we are Christians, and belong to the other order of things, shall feel that this is not the native soil, nor here the home in which we would dwell. III. How THIS SAME FAITH TRIUMPHS IN THE ARTICLE OF DEATH. "These all died in faith." That is a very grand thought as applied to those old patriarchs, that just because all their lives long God had done nothing for them of what He had promised, therefore they died believing He was going to do it. So for us the end of life may have a faith nurtured by disappointments, made more sure of everything because it has nothing; certain that he calls into existence another world to redress the balance of the old, because here there has been so much of bitterness and woe. And our end like theirs may be an end beatified by a clear vision of the things that "no man hath seen, nor can see"; and into the darkness there may come for us, as there came of old to another, an open heaven and a beam of God's glory smiting us on the face and changing it into the face of an angel. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *An inscription for the mausoleum of the saints:*—"These all died in faith." Believers constitute a class by themselves—"These." They are the people that dwell alone, and shall not be numbered among the nations. Believers are a class by themselves, even when they die. It is idle to think that we can mark out a spot in the cemetery where none but saints shall sleep; but yet there is a truth at the bottom of that folly. There is a separation even in death between the righteous and the wicked. As for those who died without faith, they died indeed; but as for His people, a glorious resurrection awaits them. I. DYING IN FAITH. What does it mean? 1. Does it not mean that when they came to die, they had not faith to seek, but having had faith in life, they had faith in death? I will pronounce no opinion upon death-bed repentance. I would not like to lie upon a sick-bed, much less upon a dying-bed, and have a Saviour to seek there. The pains and dying strife are usually enough to occupy a man's thoughts. 2. They did die, however, although they

had faith, for faith is not given to us that we should escape death, but that we may die in faith. 3. These all persevered to the end. 4. Does it not mean, also, that they never got beyond faith? 5. But then, while they did not get beyond faith, the mercy is that they never got below it. II. WHAT WAS THE FAITH THAT THEY DIED WITH? 1. They had received a great deal, but they had not received the fulness of the promises. 2. Yet they saw them. Faith touched their eyes with eye-salve. 3. They were persuaded of them. 4. They embraced them. The Greek word signifies "salutes," as when we see a friend at a distance. In the clear atmosphere of Mentone, I have sometimes stood on quite a lofty mountain, and seen a friend down in the valley, and I have spoken his name; and at first it was greatly to my astonishment when he replied, "Where are you?" I held a conversation with him readily. I could not have actually reached him for a long time, but I saluted him from afar. At times we can see God's promises afar off, and we salute them. We are within hail of the glory-land, and we send up rockets in the dark; or, if it be daylight, we signal to the shore. III. THE FAITH TO LIVE WITH—the life of faith. 1. We are strangers by nature. Born from above, our life differs from those about us. "The world knoweth us not." We are in it, but not of it. 2. We are strangers as to citizenship. Here we are aliens and foreigners, whose privileges are connected with another city, and not with earth. 3. We are strangers as to pursuits. We are wayfaring men hurrying through this Vanity Fair. The men of the fair cry, "Buy! buy!" but they have no wares that we care to purchase. We buy the truth, and they do not trade in that commodity. 4. We are pilgrims in object. We have not come hither for a pleasure excursion; we are journeying to the temple to behold the face of our Lord. Our cry is, "Onward! Hinder me not. I must away to the glory-land, where my home is, where my God is!" 5. We are pilgrims as to continuance. We do not expect to be here long. Do not wonder if you are found to be strangers as to usage, for the world uses foreigners roughly; and they that are really of Christ must expect to be misunderstood and misrepresented. IV. And what is THE FAITH BY WHICH WE ARE ABLE TO ENDURE SUCH A LIFE AS THIS? Why, it is this faith: "They that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country." Our faith is one which we dare to avow. We declare plainly that we seek a country. We are not ashamed to say that this is not our rest, that we do not expect to find pleasure here. We are speeding over this stormy sea to the Fair Havens, where we shall cast anchor for ever. We are not ashamed to say this, however others may ridicule our hope. And we say it because we believe it. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Dying in faith*:—I. It is the glory of true faith, that it will not leave them in whom it is, THAT IT WILL NOT CEASE ITS ACTINGS FOR THEIR SUPPORT AND COMFORT IN THEIR DYING; when the hope of the hypocrite doth perish. II. THE LIFE OF FAITH DOTH EMINENTLY MANIFEST ITSELF IN DEATH, WHEN ALL OTHER RELIEFS AND SUPPORTS DO FAIL. III. THAT IS THE CROWNING ACT OF FAITH, THE GREAT TRIAL OF ITS VIGOUR AND WISDOM, NAMELY, IN WHAT IT DOTH IN OUR DYING. IV. HENCE IT IS THAT MANY OF THE SAINTS, BOTH OF OLD AND OF LATE, HAVE EVIDENCED THE MOST TRIUMPHANT ACTINGS OF FAITH IN THE APPROACH OF DEATH. V. The due understanding of the whole Old Testament, with the nature of the faith and obedience of all the saints under it, depends on this one truth, THAT THEY BELIEVED THINGS THAT WERE NOT YET ACTUALLY EXHIBITED NOR ENJOYED. This is the line of life and truth that runs through all their profession and duties; the whole exercise of their faith and love, without which it was but a dead carcase. It was Christ in the promise, even before His coming, that was the life of the Church in all ages. VI. GOD WOULD HAVE THE CHURCH FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD TO LIVE ON PROMISES NOT ACTUALLY ACCOMPLISHED. For although we do enjoy the accomplishment of the great promise of the incarnation of the Son of God, yet the Church continues still to live on promises which, in this world, cannot be perfectly fulfilled. VII. WE MAY RECEIVE THE PROMISES AS TO THE COMFORT AND BENEFIT OF THEM, WHEN WE DO NOT ACTUALLY RECEIVE THE THINGS PROMISED (ver. 1). VIII. AS OUR PRIVILEGES IN THE ENJOYMENT OF THE PROMISES ARE ABOVE THEIRS UNDER THE OLD TESTAMENT, SO OUR FAITH, THANKFULNESS, AND OBEDIENCE, OUGHT TO EXCEL THEIRS ALSO. IX. NO DISTANCE OF TIME OR PLACE CAN WEAKEN FAITH AS UNTO THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF DIVINE PROMISES. There are promises still left unto us upon record, that are, it may be, afar off; such as those which concern the destruction of antichrist, and the glory of the kingdom of Christ in the latter days. The rule of faith concerning them is given us (Hab. ii. 3, 4). X. QUIET WAITING FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PROMISES AT A GREAT DISTANCE, and which most probably will not be in our

days, IS AN EMINENT FRUIT OF FAITH. He that believeth will not make haste. XI. This firm persuasion of the truth of God in the accomplishment of His promises unto us, upon a discovery of their worth and excellency, is the SECOND ACT OF FAITH, WHEREIN THE LIFE OF IT DOTH PRINCIPALLY CONSIST. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *Faith triumphant*:—This chapter is a little book of martyrs. It discovers the life and death of the holy patriarchs, and by what means God's children are brought into possession of that that they have an interest and right unto upon earth. It is by faith. There is one faith from the beginning of the world. As there is one Christ, one salvation, so there is one uniform faith for the saving of our souls. We hope to be saved by Jesus Christ as they were. Then again, here is implied a continuance and perseverance in faith. Faith first makes a Christian, and then after, he lives by faith. It quickens the life of grace, and then he leads his life by that faith. He continues in it till he come to death, which is the period of all, and then he dies by that faith. "They died in faith." In the faith of the Messiah, in faith of Canaan, in faith of heaven. When death closed up the eyes of their bodies, then with the eye of faith they looked upon Christ, upon God in Christ reconciled to them. I. THE GRACE OF FAITH, IT IS SUCH A GRACE THAT IT CARRIES A CHRISTIAN THROUGH ALL THE PASSAGES OF THIS LIFE. It enableth him to hold out to the end, to suffer those things that he is to suffer, and in the end by it he dies. And when all things else leave him in death, when riches, friends, honour, and great places leave him, when his life and senses leave him, yet faith will never leave him till it have put him in full possession of heaven, and then it ceaseth when it hath done the work it hath to do, which is to bring us to heaven. What is it to die in faith? To die in faith is to die in the Lord by faith; and it looks to the time past, present, to come. 1. To the time past. To die in faith is to die in assurance of the forgiveness of sins, when by faith and repentance we have pulled out the sting of sins past. For faith looks upon Christ, and Christ hath taken the sting of death in His own, and death ever since hath been stingless and harmless to His members. 2. For the present. In the present instant of death, to die in faith is to see God reconciled to us in Christ, and with the eye of Stephen, to see Christ ready to receive our souls (Acts. vii. 59). This is to die in faith; to see ourselves there with our Head, where we shall be ere long. Therefore our flesh rests in hope till the resurrection; because God did not suffer His Holy One to see corruption. This is to die in faith. 3. And for the time to come. To die in faith is by faith to overcome all the horror of death. Faith seeth the faithfulness of God, that God in Christ hath taken these bodies of ours in trust. "I know whom I have believed, and He is able to keep that I have committed to Him" (2 Tim. i. 12). And then for the pangs of death, which nature trembles at, faith considers of them as the pangs of child-birth. Now, what is death but the birth to immortality, the birth of glory? It is a little dark passage to an eternal glorious light. Then for the parting of two friends, soul and body, faith sees that it is but for a while, and then that that parting is a bringing in a better joining; for it brings the soul immediately to her beloved, our Saviour Christ Jesus. And then for friends. Faith sees, indeed, that we shall part with many sweet friends; but faith saith we shall have better friends. We go to God, we go to the souls of perfect men, we go to [an] innumerable company of angels (Heb. xii. 22), we go to a better company a great deal. And for all the employments we have here, that we have below, faith sees that there will be exercise in heaven. We shall praise God with angels and all the blessed and glorious company of heaven. So consider what you will that is bitter and terrible in death, faith conquers it. It sees an end of it, and opposeth to it better things; because, notwithstanding death cuts off many comforts, yet it brings better. And it is the beginning of happiness that shall never end. So, indeed, faith sees that the day of death is better than the day of birth. When we come into misery, it is not so good as when we go out of misery, and enter into happiness. This is to die in faith. This should stir us up, if this be so, to get this grace of faith; above all graces, to get assurance that we are in Christ Jesus, that so we may live with comfort, and end our days with comfort, and live for ever happy in the Lord. It is only faith that will master this king of fears—this giant that subdues all the kings of the earth to him. Oh, let us labour, therefore, to get it while we live, and to exercise it while we live, that we may live every day by faith. It is not any faith that we can die by. It must be a faith that we have exercised and tried before. It is a tried, a proved faith, that we must end our days by. For, alas! when death comes, if we have not learned to live by faith before, how can we end our days in faith? Let us all labour for this faith; for though it

cannot be said of us that we die rich, or that we die great in the world, perhaps we may die a violent death, as there be divers diseases that lead the body into distempers. It is no matter how we die distempered, and in any estate, so it may be said of us we die in a blessed faith. It is said here, they "all died in faith." He saith not they all died in feeling. A man may die in faith, and yet not die in feeling; and sometimes the strongest faith is with the least feeling of God's love. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises." For God promised them Canaan, and they died many hundred years before. Their posterity came into Canaan. He promised them Christ, and they died long before Christ came. He promised them heaven, and they entered not into heaven till death. So they received not the promises, that is, they received not the things promised; for else they received the promise, but not that that was promised. They received not the type, Canaan, nor the things typified—Christ and heaven. This is added as a commendation of their faith, that though they received not the things that they looked for, yet notwithstanding they had such a strong faith, that they continued to live by faith and died in faith. The promises here are taken for the blessed things promised. This should teach us this lesson, that God's promises are not empty shells; they are real things. And then, whatsoever God promiseth it is not barely propounded to the soul, but in a promise. It is wrapped up in a promise. He gives us not empty promises nor naked things; but He gives us promises of things which we must exercise our faith in, in depending upon Him for the performance of them till we be put in possession. "They received not the promises." He speaks in the plural number, though he mean but one main promise, that is, the Messiah, for all other were types of Him. Believers are called "children of the promise" (Gal. iv. 28). Here they are called promises, for the repeating of them. The promise of the same thing it was made oft: there was no new promise. The promise of the same thing it was seven times repeated and renewed to Abraham presently one after another. So they are called promises, to show that the promise can never be too much thought on, though it be the same promise of life everlasting; the same promise of grace and of comfort; the same promise of the resurrection, &c. All the promises of good things to come we cannot think of too oft, nor receive the sacrament, the seal of the promise, too oft. "They received not the promises." They were comforted notwithstanding, that their posterity should receive them. Canaan was a type of Christ and of heaven. I observe this by the way that God doth not reveal all things at all times. God doth leave diverse things to be revealed in diverse ages of the Church. God doth not reveal everything in every time, to comfort all ages of the Church. We see not everything in our times; we must be content. "They saw them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them," &c. This is the order of God's Spirit; first to open the eye to see, and by sight to persuade, and upon persuasion to stir up the heart and affections to embrace; for good things are brought into the soul through the understanding, by the spiritual sight of the understanding, and from that into the will and affections by embracing the things we know. This is God's course daily. Therefore he saith they first saw them, and then were persuaded of them, and then embraced them. "They saw them afar off." By what eye? By the eye of faith. Faith makes things present, though in themselves they be far off. It is the nature of faith to make things that are absent to be present to the believing soul; and it affects the soul somewhat as if it were present. It sees things far off in place. Faith sees things in heaven; it sees Christ there; it sees our place provided for us there; it sees God reconciled there; by it we see ourselves there, because we shall be there ere long. Faith sees all this; it breaks through and looks through all; it hath most piercing beams, the eye of faith. And it works in an instant; it goes to heaven in a moment and sees Christ. And for distance of time, the eye of faith it sees things past and things to come. It sees things past. It sees the creation of the world; it sees the redemption of us by Jesus Christ; it sees our sins there punished in Christ our surety; it sees us crucified with Christ Jesus; it sees all discharged by Him. When we believe Christ was crucified for us and died for us, faith makes it present. And so for the time to come, faith hath an eye that looks afar off. It sees the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Faith sees the general judgment. If sees eternal happiness in heaven; it sees things afar off. It is the evidence of things not seen. What is the reason of it? It makes things not otherwise seen to be seen, and presently seen; it gives a being to things. It is a strange power that faith hath. The Spirit works an eye of faith in the soul, and then it discovers to it the things of God. "They saw them afar off."

God created a new eye in the soul, a new sight which they had not by nature; for even as the natural eye cannot see things that are invisible, so the natural man cannot see the things of God, which are seen not by a natural but by a supernatural eye (1 Cor. ii. 10, 11). The eye therefore that must see things afar off, it must be a supernatural eye; and the light that must discover them must be the light of God's truth. For reason cannot see the resurrection of the body, and the life to come, and such glorious things as the Word of God reveals to us. If you ask why this sight of faith is so necessary, this supernatural sight, I answer, nothing can be done in religion without the supernatural eye of the soul; for a man may see heavenly things with a natural eye and be never a whit the better. A man may see the joys of heaven, and think, Oh, these are good things; but yet notwithstanding he doth not see these things with a supernatural eye; he doth not see these things to be holy and gracious, and to be fit for him; he wisheth them with conditions, but not with the altering of his disposition. Our duty, then, is to labour to have our faith clear, to have this eye of faith, to have a strong faith, a strong sight. When is the sight of faith strong? When it is as the faith of these patriarchs was. There are three things that make a strong sight, that make us conceive that the sight of faith is a strong sight. (1) When the things are far off that we see, then if the eyes see them, it is a strong sight. A weak eye cannot see afar off. (2) When there are clouds between, though the things be near. Yet when there are clouds between, to break and pierce through them there must be a strong sight. (3) When there is but a little light. When there are many obstacles in the midst, and to break through all by a little light to see things remote, here is a strong eye; and this was the sight of these blessed men. They had a strong eye. Now to help our sight to heaven, this sight of faith, that we may every day ascend with the eye of our souls with this blessed sight—1. Let us take heed of the god of this world, Satan, that he do not with the dust of the world dim our sight. 2. And withal desire God to open our eyes every day, to take the scales from the eye of our souls, that we may see the promises, that we may see Christ, that we may see God shining on us in Christ; that He would take away the veil from the things by exposition, that He would open the truth to us by His ministers. 3. Then, again, to help our sight of Christ and happiness, let us get a fresh sight of our corruption and sin every day; let us every day look on the terrifying object of our corruption of nature, hang it in the eye of our souls as an odious object, to humble us. "They were persuaded of them." It was such a sight of the things as was with convincing, with persuasion. And indeed this follows well upon sight, for sight of all other senses persuades best. All the men in the world cannot persuade the weakest man in the world when it is day or night, when the sun shines or it is dark, that it is not so. When he sees it, he will believe his own eyes more than all the world besides. And as it is in sensible things we believe our own eyes, so much more in spiritual things we believe our eyes. When there is a spiritual light of revelation in the word discovering such things, and also to spiritual light a spiritual eye, when the Spirit puts an eye into the soul to see supernatural things that reason cannot attain to, then there is persuasion. Persuasion comes divers ways. There be divers degrees tending to persuasion. 1. The poorest degree of the apprehension of things is conjecture, a guessing that such a thing may be so or otherwise, but I guess it rather to be so. 2. Beyond conjecture there is opinion, when a man thinks it is so, upon more reasons swaying him one way; and yet in opinion there is fear on the contrary, that it may be otherwise. 3. And the third degree beyond opinion is certain knowledge. That is science and knowledge when the mind is persuaded by arguments. But that is not so much here meant, the persuasion by argument. 4. There is another degree then of knowledge, which is by the authority of the speaker, a persuasion from thence. When I know not the thing by the light of the thing so much, because I see the reason of the thing, but because I know such a one saith it, that is the persuasion of faith; when one is persuaded of a thing not so much out of his own knowledge, out of the principles of the thing, setting out the causes of the thing, as out of the credit of the person that speaks. Now, this persuasion riseth out of faith in the authority of the person. We conceive that he is wise, and holy, and able withal; one that we trust. If together with this knowledge and persuasion from the authority, and truth, and goodness, and wisdom of the speaker, there be joined sense and experience, we see it proved; and when there is experience, there is reason why we should believe that he saith, because we have found the thing to be so. Now, both are here meant in some degrees, "they saw the things afar off," both by the authority of the promise, as

likewise by their own sight, and some taste they had. For God reserves not all for heaven. God gives His children some taste and feeling, some little joy and comfort, the "first-fruits of the Spirit" here (Rom. viii. 23). So they were persuaded from the authority of the speaker, and some sense and feeling of the thing in some measure. "And embraced them." They embraced the promises, the good things promised: Christ's coming in the flesh, and Canaan, the type of heaven, and heaven itself. Though they had not these things, yet they embraced what they had, they embraced the promises. That is the nature of faith. If it have not that it looks for, as it hath not till it come to heaven, yet it makes much of that it hath; it embraceth the promises, and in the promises the thing itself promised. Now these things follow one another in a most natural order; for sight brings persuasion, sight and conviction bring strong persuasion, and persuasion breeds embracing. For we embrace that in our affections that we are persuaded of to be good. According to the strength of conviction and persuasion is the strength of the affections. Let us try the truth of our estate by our affections, by our embracing of good things, by opening our hearts to the best things, by our joy and delight in them. Is there a holy wonderment at them? "O how I love Thy law!" (Psa. cxix. 97); and "One day in Thy courts is better than ten thousand elsewhere" (Psa. lxxxiv. 10); and "O the depth of His mercies!" (Rom. xi. 33); and "One thing have I desired of the Lord; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life" (Psa. xxvii. 4). When the soul stands in admiration of God and good things, when it is ready to welcome Christ and heavenly things and the state of religion: now away all former vanities! away all lusts of youth! away all confidence in beauty, and strength, and riches! The soul had seen better things. There is a discovery of better things; and now the respect of all other things falls down in the soul when there is a discovery of better things. Let us therefore labour more and more to have our affections wrought upon. As we are in our affections, we are in religion. It is impossible that a Christian should be spiritually convinced that there are such excellent things belonging to religion, and that he hath his part and portion in them, and not be transformed to a spiritual state and frame of soul, to love and delight in holy things, and to despise that which is contrary. What be the affections whereby the soul embraceth these good things it is persuaded of? The soul embraceth these things in the affections of faith and hope in the first place; for faith is an empty grace in itself; it is carried to somewhat out of itself that it embraceth and layeth hold on; and hope is with faith alway. Together with the work of faith and hope there is a sanctified affection of the embracing soul; there is a love of the things promised, which is embracing, and a love of the means, and likewise joy and delight in them expressed by thankfulness. How shall this be wrought upon the soul? This embracing we see it follows upon persuasion, and persuasion follows seeing: "They saw them far off, and were persuaded of them, and thereupon they embraced them." Therefore let us labour for a clear understanding of Divine things. That which the eye sees, the heart grieves for in ill, and that that the eye sees the heart embraceth in good. And in what measure our eyesight of heavenly things is clearer, and our persuasion stronger, in that measure our embracing is lovely and full of joy and delight. Therefore let us labour to grow in knowledge, that our persuasion may be stronger every day, that our affections will grow, and will be carried to the things discovered. And there is nothing more effectual to commend knowledge to us than this, that it is a means to work a holy and heavenly disposition and temper in us, especially if it be spiritual. And let us meditate upon what we seem to know and are persuaded of. "They confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on earth." These words contain what they were in regard of earthly things; their disposition and carriage to all things besides the promises, to the things below. They were strangers and pilgrims in regard of their condition below. It sets down how they apprehend themselves to be, and how they discovered themselves to the world to be. They were in regard of heaven indeed, heirs of happiness, heirs of a kingdom; in regard of the world and earthly things they were "strangers and pilgrims." And as they were, so they made themselves to be no better than they were. They confessed it. They apprehended themselves to be as they were, and they carried themselves answerable. Their life and course spake as much as their tongues. They confessed both in word and in deed that they were "strangers and pilgrims." II. IT IS THE DISPOSITION OF HIM THAT HATH TRULY INTEREST IN BETTER THINGS TO BE A STRANGER AND A PILGRIM IN REGARD OF ALL THINGS HERE BELOW. If a man were on the top of a great mountain, he would see the things below to be very little, and the things above

would appear greater to him; so when the soul is raised up to see great things, though they be afar off, as these did with the eye of faith, at the same time, his soul looking to things below must needs apprehend them to be little in quantity, as indeed they are. If a man were in body lifted up to heaven, and should look upon the earth, what were the earth but a poor silly point, the whole earth itself, much more a man's own possession; so when the soul is lifted up to heaven by faith—which sets a man in heaven before his time—when it looks from thence to the earth and earthly things, it must of necessity consider them, as they are, to be poor mean things. Therefore this follows, that being persuaded of the promises, that is, of the good things promised in religion in the Word of God, to earthly things they were "strangers and pilgrims." 1. First of all, a stranger is travelling to another country—to join both in one; for the one follows the other. He that is a stranger, that apprehends what he is, and apprehends that he hath a country to go to, he travels towards it. 2. A stranger that is travelling homeward, he is content with his present condition, for he knows he shall have better at home. 3. So he will be patient if he meet with unkind usage: he will not stand quarrelling by the way, and so hinder himself in his journey; he will be patient in the injuries and wrongs in this life. If a prince be misused in another country, he is contented, and thinks with himself, I have a country where I shall be more respected; and therefore he bears it the more willingly. So a Christian is a king, he is an heir; and being a stranger, he shall meet with dogs in this world; as, who do dogs bark at but at strangers? 4. Likewise the knowledge of this that we are strangers and pilgrims, it will make a man not only content and patient, but thankful for any kindness he finds in this world; that God sweetens his pilgrimage on earth somewhat: what a mercy is this! He is thankful for any contentment; he is thankful to the world, to those that do anything for him, that afford him any courtesy here that may help him in his pilgrimage, and make it less troublesome. 5. He that is a stranger, he is glad of any good company. Oh, if he meet with a man of his own country, he is a man alone for him; so it is with a Christian that walks in the way to heaven with him, he is comforted much in it. 6. A stranger, he hath his prime intention home to his country, and what he doth in the way, it is in virtue of his prime intention, though he doth not, in every particular action that he doth, think of it. A traveller when he rides on the way he doth not think of home in every step. Ay, but he doth that that he doth in virtue of his prime intention when he first set out, and calls to remembrance ofttimes as he goes home; he thinks of his journeys. 7. And hence it is that there is another property of a stranger that is going to a place, perhaps he may step out of the way, yet notwithstanding, by virtue of his first intention, he gathers himself homeward again. If he take other matters in hand, he gathers home still, though he go out of his way, in he comes; he considers, this is not my way. So a child of God, sometimes he diverts and turns aside, yet notwithstanding he considers, doth this way lead to Godward, to heavenward? Be these actions Christian actions? Are they the way to heaven? If he see they be not, though he have stepped awry, he comes in again, and is gathering homeward. 8. A traveller and stranger provides beforehand for all encumbrances. He knows though he meet not with troubles, yet he may, therefore he will be sure to go with weapons, and he will go with that that may sustain him by the way. Religion teacheth a man to gather out of the Word of God comforts beforehand, and munition beforehand, to carry with him. When we travel, and are going on in our journey towards heaven, it is good to consider higher things, it is a good meditation. Therefore to go on a little further. 9. A traveller and stranger is inquisitive of the way, whether he be in the way or out of the way. He asks not at random. That doth not content him, whether he go west, or north, or south, or east: it doth not content him to ask where lies my country, eastward? &c. No; but he will ask the particular towns, and particular turnings, how he may avoid going out of his way, and which is the right way, and he will ask upon every occasion, because he knows if he go but a little out of his way it will be a long time ere he shall recover it, and he will be ashamed to come back again; and the more he goes out of the way, the more trouble it is to come back again. So it is with a Christian, he doth not only desire to know in general, but he desires to have daily direction, what shall I do in such a case of conscience, and in such a case? How shall I overcome such a temptation if I meet with it? And so he is willing to have daily direction how to walk with God day by day, that he go not out of his way in anything. 10. And even as a traveller considers of things by the way as they make to his end, to further his journey or hinder his journey, he looks to heaven

as his country that he hopes for, and therefore he doth not tangle himself with any more than may help him home. If they hinder him once, away they go; if they may help him, he takes them. If I find that things, though they be indifferent in themselves, if they trouble me in my way to heaven (it may be they are not so to another, but they are to me), though another can do it, yet I must consider whether I can do it, and find myself enlarged to heaven as at other times. If not, away with it. It is not indifferent to me, because it hinders my journey to heaven. 11. Again, he that accounts himself a stranger here, he doth not value himself by outward things. Faith teacheth a man, when he is an heir of heaven, not to value himself by earthly things. He thinks himself a stranger in his own house, as David did, though he were a king, as I said. Every Christian is a stranger at home. He values not himself by his honours, nor dignity, nor by the things that he hath here; nor he doth not disvalue himself by poverty or disgrace. He knows he is a stranger; he is going home; therefore he values himself by that he hath at home. 12. A traveller in his way must of necessity have refreshings by the way, or else he will fail; therefore sometimes he sings, and sometimes useth other refreshings. Now, what said David? "Thy statutes have been my song in the house of my pilgrimage" (Psa. cxiv. 54); that is, when I want other comforts, they are my song, my joy, my delight. A traveller must needs have comforts that may revive him in his fainting; he must have some pleasant walks for meditation. Let us therefore, when we grow weary, refresh ourselves in walking, in holy meditation. (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) *Faith eying the promises in life and death*:—I. WHAT IS IT TO DIE IN FAITH? It is a great question, a man's all depends upon it. To die mistaken in this is to die mistaken for ever. 1. It is not to die barely in a profession of faith. To die owning Christ and His cause, bearing witness to the truth, exhorting our Christian friends "that with purpose of heart they would cleave to the Lord"; this is sweet dying. It is not what a man believes of Christ that saves, but his believing in Him, yielding up himself only and wholly to Him. To die in an outward barren profession of faith, is not to die in faith. 2. Nor is it necessary always that there be a transporting joy arising from a sense of interest in Christ in order to a believer's dying in faith. A man may die in faith when he doth not die in feeling. There may be no assuring sense of God's love, and yet a strong and firm dependence on His promise. The strength of faith is most where there is least of sight; every believer finds the path of life (Psa. xvi. 11), but every one does not see it as he walks through Jordan. 3. To "die in faith," is to die trusting Christ, and commending our souls to him by faith. All faith includes trust, though it is not necessarily connected with joy. II. WHAT IS THE GREAT SUPPORT OF A BELIEVER, CONSIDER HIM EITHER AS LIVING OR DYING? The text says, the promises are so, though the blessings contained in them are not received. Two things faith sees in the promises which support and comfort the soul though the promised blessings are not received. 1. Faith sees God's Christ and salvation in the promise, therefore in the absence of promised good it supports the soul. 2. Faith sees God's heart in the promise. What is a promise but an expression of the love of God's heart in word (2 Sam. vii. 21). That is the secret in all God's promises, and none but a believer can spell it out. III. HOW, IN PARTICULAR, FAITH ACTS TOWARDS THE PROMISES IN A BELIEVER'S SUPPORT, LIVING OR DYING? 1. Faith sees the promises afar off. It does not require the presence of the thing, but only the promise of it. Christ was not manifest in the flesh till many hundred years after; but faith beheld these things as present in God's counsel, His covenant, His word of promise, and fixed and centred in them. Is anything too hard for God? Did His promise ever fall to the ground? Is He not truth itself? Are not all His paths judgment? This is the reasoning of faith. 2. It is persuaded of these things. They are realities, though invisible to every one but the man who has the eyes of his understanding enlightened. (1) This persuasion relates to the things themselves. Gospel-principles, gospel-doctrines, privileges, duties, they are inlaid in the soul as well as gospel-promises. (2) This persuasion refers to the sense which a believer may have of his interest in them: This is not common to saints as such; it is but at special times and seasons, given and taken away by God, for wise and gracious ends. 3. "It embraces them"; the word signifies "to salute," a metaphor taken from the manner of parting between two intimate friends. Two things are implied in it. (1) Intimate acquaintance. The saints of old were very chary of God's promises, they were searching into them to know "what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify" (1 Pet. i. 11). 2. But principally is meant endearing affection. The will chooses them, cleaves to

them, and if any delight a believer has it is in them. Use 1. Did all these "die in faith"? Have you this faith? It is sad to have faith to seek when you need it to use. If thou art a stranger to Christ, thou art a stranger to faith. Hath thou given up thy soul to Him now? Then thou mayest trust Him with body and soul both another day. Use 2. How little just ground is there for a believer in Christ to fear death? The love of God, the covenant of grace, the care of Christ, the being and stability of the promise, the life and faith, all last till death. Use 3. What a slight character do most of this world leave behind them; though thou diest rich, honourable, esteemed, easy, what is this to dying in faith! Use 4. What need have believers of the help of the blessed Spirit in life and at death? The spiritual eye is His gift, and all spiritual persuasion is His work: Scripture arguments will be of no avail if the Spirit of God does not make the application. Use 5. Think more of home, and live more above life: if you profess to be heirs of God's promise, live above the crosses and comforts of life too. (*John Hill.*) *Of dying in faith:*—1. In the profession of the faith. They held fast the truths of God to the death. They denied not, they made not shipwreck of faith; they suffered not Satan or his instruments to cheat them of it; exchanged it not for fancies, delusions; made not their opinions subservient to carnal interests; did not tack about, not carried about with every wind. Judgments firmly anchored in truth could ride out foul weather, bear up against storms. 2. In the state of faith. As they lived, so they died, believers. Having begun in the Spirit, they did not end in the flesh. They lost not the habit of faith, but bore on towards perfection; that when their outward man decayed, faith increased, and was strongest in the greatest weakness, in death. 3. In the expression of faith. 4. In the exercise of faith. As they acted faith in their life, so in their death. Their life was the life of faith, as Paul (Gal. ii. 20). Faith had an influence into every act of their life. Abel sacrificed by faith (ver. 4); ordinary acts: Abraham's travel (ver. 8); extraordinary: Noah's building an ark (ver. 7). What they did, they did by faith, *i.e.*, depending upon Christ for strength, believing the promise for assistance and success. Thus they lived, and thus they died in faith, with confidence that God would perform what He had promised, even after their death, to them or theirs. Directions: 1. That you may live and die in the faith of Christ, take this golden rule: "Receive the truth in the love of it" (2 Thess. ii. 10). If you would continue in the truth, and have the Lord establish you in it, love the truth for itself, and love it above all inferior respects whatsoever. 2. That you may live and die in the state of faith, get into that happy state. Get faith rooted and grounded in your hearts, and then you are sure: "Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." 3. That you may live and die in the expression of faith; *i.e.*, that you may not deal unfaithfully in the covenant; consider how horribly wretched such unfaithfulness is. Those that use to deal unfaithfully with men, lie, or forswear, to get some advantage, there may be some temptation to this; but he that deals unfaithfully with God deals unfaithfully with God to ruin himself. 4. That ye may die in the exercise of faith, (1) Learn to live in the exercise of it. The more faith is acted, the easier it will be to exercise. (2) Treasure up the promises in your memories. No such treasure as this. You will find riches a vain thing in that hour, they cannot deliver from death; but faith acted on the promises will both support in it, and deliver from it. (3) Clear up your evidences for heaven. While your title is dark, faith will be weak. How can ye be confident of the eternal blessings of the covenant, while ye have no assurance that you are in covenant? How can ye with confidence go out to meet the bridegroom when ye know not whether ye have oil in your lamps? When you have cleared this evidence, endeavour to keep it clear. Sin blots it, guilt is a blur in the evidence. If you avoid not these in your lives, you will scarce read your evidence at death, and then faith may be nonplussed and to seek, when most needed. Endeavour to keep a good conscience always, in all things, towards God and man, that so you may have the testimony of God and of your conscience on your deathbeds (2 Cor. i. 12). (4) Lay up experiences. The remembrance of experiments of God's mercy and faithfulness in your lives will be a sweet support to faith in death. God's people have made good use of experiences to this purpose (2 Tim. iv. 18). (*D. Clarkson, B.D.*) *Faith constraining to a pilgrim life:*—1. THE DISTANT FULFILMENT OF UNFULFILLED PROMISES. II. THE ATTITUDE OF FAITH WITH REGARD TO THIS. 1. Faith assured them that the city was their fatherland. 2. Faith recognises the promised blessings in the city. 3. Faith reaches forth with eager desire towards these promised blessings. III. THE BEARING OF THIS FAITH ON OUR PRESENT LIFE. It makes "strangers and pilgrims" of us. A pilgrim life includes—1. A pressing on

through the present to the future. The great concern of the pilgrim is concerning the home to which he is going. The road and the present accommodation are something, but not chief. 2. An endurance of privation by the prospect of the coming satisfaction. The discomforts of the way are a small matter when we are going home. A lively faith goes far to break the power from time-sorrows. 3. A growing happiness in the consciously advancing journey. Men do not naturally like to get old. That, in the Christian's case, must arise from limiting the view of life by what is seen. Let faith go beyond the seen, and make real to our hearts the glory there, and we shall pass on with joy and hope and quickened step. (*C. New.*) *The power of the future upon the present*:—I. GOD'S REVELATION TO MAN UNFOLDS A FUTURE. This meets both (1) A tendency and (2) A necessity of our nature. II. SOME OF THE EVENTS OF THE FUTURE WHICH GOD'S REVELATION DISCLOSES, MAY NOT COME TO PASS UNTIL WE HAVE SLEPT FOR AGES IN OUR GRAVES. 1. God's plans are independent of our efforts. 2. Success is not the rule of duty. III. HOWEVER DISTANT IN THE FUTURE THOSE EVENTS MAY BE, FAITH IN THEM WILL HAVE A PRACTICAL POWER OVER OUR PRESENT LIVES. Observe—1. The description of their faith in these promises. 2. The influence of this faith. (*Homilist.*) *The feelings of the ancient saints*:—I. THEIR FEELINGS GODWARD. They believed in Him, and that with a strong faith, whereby they gave glory to His name. Their faith and patience were severely tried; but they knew that it was "a good thing both to hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." II. THEIR FEELINGS EARTHWARD. "And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." 1. Their affections were not set on earthly things. 2. Their happiness was not derived from earthly objects. 3. They were not conformed to earthly habits. III. THEIR FEELINGS HEAVENWARD. "For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country," &c. Their knowledge of a future state is here clearly involved. But to know that there is a state of blessedness beyond the grave is one thing, and for that knowledge practically to influence the whole of our present course and conduct is another thing. These worthies declared in the most unmistakable manner that their great concern was to reach it. It is said of Cicero and Demosthenes, that when the one was banished from Rome and the other from Athens, they wept whenever they thought of their own country. Alas! that the spirit of patriotism should be so much stronger in them than the spirit of the gospel is in us. (*Expository Sermons.*) *Living and dying in faith*:—I. GOD'S PROMISES SEEM, AT FIRST, TO ASSURE EARTHLY GOOD. I would not discourage you from seeking the cheer of such promises, for "godliness has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." But I may say this, Let the years pass on, and you will surely find that God is dealing with you so as to purify all your hopes. Your Canaan will come to be a "better country, that is a heavenly." Your Jerusalem will be the "holy city, new Jerusalem, which comes down from God out of heaven," into which "there shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie." II. LIFE BUT SELDOM FULFILS THE PROMISES JUST AS WE SHAPE THEM. 1. Life seldom is, even in its outward circumstances, what we picture to ourselves that it will be. F. W. Robertson, with some intensity of expression says, "Herein lies a principle, which, rightly expounded, can help us to interpret this life of ours. God's promises never are fulfilled in the sense in which they seem to have been given. Life is a deception; its anticipations, which are God's promises to the imagination, are never realised; they who know life best, and have trusted God most to fill it with blessings, are ever the first to say that life is a series of disappointments." 2. Life seldom permits any great work to be accomplished right through by the man who begins it. Moses must climb Nebo to die before his life-work was completed in the possession of Canaan. Joshua died before the whole country was cleared of the idolatrous inhabitants. David died before the Temple could be built. There is even a sense in which our Lord's life was "cut off," and He left an unfinished work to be completed by His apostles. Indeed, to do any entire work from beginning to end seems to be too great an honour, too high a trust, for any one man. III. GOD, BY THE SEEMING FAILURE, GRACIOUSLY LIFTS US UP TO THE HIGHER VIEW OF THE PROMISES. How failure can open men's eyes! How disappointment with life as we find it, tends to lift our eyes away from earth, and make us feel that this is not our rest! As one thing after another disappoints, we begin to see that the time and place for God's fulfilment of His promises is—yonder and there; not here and now. We begin to repeat after the storm-tossed Psalmist and say, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness." We even begin to find out that the, seeming, earthly look of the promises in reality only

veiled the heavenly meaning for us; veiled it until we had grown strong enough to bear the light. Is not this just the sanctifying work that advancing life does for us all under God. (*The Weekly Pulpit.*) *Dying gladly*:—Behold here the secret of dying! "These all died in faith." Bad men die reluctantly; life is extorted from them as if by main force. The believer dies willingly; his will is sweetly submitted to his Father's will; he makes it a religious act to die. Just as Jesus Himself commended His human soul to His Father, saying, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46): so His believing disciple commends his soul to Jesus, and through Him to the Father. Here, I repeat, is the secret how to die happily. To those who know not that secret, it is a fearful thing to die. It is a serious matter for any. But to the worldly-minded and ungodly, if not past feeling, to die must be, as one of the heathen philosophers (Aristotle) confessed it, "of all formidable things the most formidable." Only mention a neighbour's death in a gay circle; lo, you have thrown a gloom over the whole assembly—all are evidently sorry that the topic was introduced. The ancient Romans would not mention death in plain words, if they could avoid it, but only by circumlocution and implication. Even serious Christians are often in bondage through fear of death. It is such a venture; a mistake may be so fatal; to go before God is so awful; judgment will bring to light such secrets, that many think, How can I die? Yet you all must. Be persuaded, give your soul to Jesus now; do it again from day to day: and then, when your dying day is come, again approach the Saviour, and say, "Lord, I hear Thee calling for my spirit; I see the waggons sent to fetch me home to Thee; in the hand of death I recognise Thy hand of love; Thou askest for my soul; take it, for it is Thine. Do with it what Thou wilt, I have given it to Thee to be washed in Thy blood, and sanctified by Thy Spirit; I am sure Thou wilt do it no harm!" (*J. Hambleton.*) *Dying in faith*:—The friends of Archbishop Whately said, with unbecoming praise, when they visited him as he lay on his death-bed: "You are dying as you lived—great to the last." He replied, "I am dying as I lived—in the faith of Jesus." At another time it was said: "The great fortitude of your character supports you." "No," was his reply, "it is not my fortitude that supports me, but my faith in Christ." *The soul committed to Christ in death*:—The emigrant who sees the blue hills of his native land sink beneath the wave, and goes away to the land of gold, has seen and handled the gold dug from the mines or washed from the waters of that distant land. He has seen those who have been there; he has seen them go out poor and come back rich; he has seen them go out empty and come back full. These have taught him to believe in a land beyond the waters; but I believe in a land, not beyond the seas, but beyond the grave, to which I have seen hundreds go, but none come back to unveil its secrets. I believe in a Saviour I never saw, and never saw the man that saw; and commit to His keeping, not my money, but what is more precious than all the gold of the Bank of England—I commit to Him my precious soul. (*T. Guthrie.*) *The forecasting of faith*:—The discovery of the New World, as the continent of America and its islands are called, was not, like many discoveries, an accident; it was the reward of faith—the reward of Christopher Columbus's faith. He found fruits on the shores of Western Europe, cast up by the Atlantic waves, and brought there, as we now know, by the Gulf Stream, perfectly diverse from any that the temperate, fiery, or frozen zones of the Old World produced. So one day, let me say, strolling by the sea-shore, he saw a nut. He takes it in his hand and looks at it; he takes it into his capacious mind, and out of that little seed springs his faith in another world beyond that watery horizon, where, as he believed, and events proved, the sea had pearls, and the veins of the earth were filled with silver, and the rivers that flowed through spicy groves ran over sands of gold. (*Ibid.*) *Dying in faith*:—"My father's death," says the son and biographer of Cæsar Malan, "will remain for those who witnessed it the most astonishing of all his actions. The doctor, on quitting him, said to me one day: 'I have just seen what I had heard spoken of, but what I had not seen before. Now I have seen it, as I see this stick which I hold in my hand.' 'And what, then, have you seen?' I asked him. 'I have seen faith. I say the faith, not of the theologian, but of the Christian. I have seen it with my eyes,' he replied." (*Tinling's Illustrations.*) *Faith sees eternal life*:—As he that is to pass over some broad and deep river must not look downward to the current of the stream, but must set his foot sure, and keep his eye on the bank, on the farther shore; so he that draws near death must look over the waves of death, and fix his eye of faith on eternal life. (*Cawdray.*) *Faith in death*:—A monk near his end was heard to exclaim, "I care little for earthly things now; soon I shall travel

among the stars." (*H. O. Mackey.*) *Dying in faith*:—It has often been my privilege to test the power of religion when I have been sitting by the bedside of the dying. There is a young girl in heaven now, once a member of this our church. I went with one of my beloved deacons to see her when she was very near her departure. She was in the last stage of consumption. Fair and sweetly beautiful she looked; and I think I never heard such syllables as those which fell from that girl's lips. She had had disappointments and trials; but all these she had not a word to say about, except that she blessed God for them: they had brought her nearer to the Saviour. And when we asked her whether she was not afraid of dying, "No," she said, "the only thing I fear is this, I am afraid of living, lest my patience should wear out. I have not said an impatient word yet, sir: I hope I shall not. It is sad to be so very weak; but I think, if I had my choice, I would rather be here than be in health, for it is very precious to me. I know that my Redeemer liveth; and I am waiting for the moment when He shall send His chariot of fire to take me up to Him." I put the question, "Have you not any doubts?" "No, none, sir; why should I? I clasp my arms around the neck of Christ." "And have you not any fear about your sins? "No, sir," they are all forgiven; I trust the Saviour's precious blood." "And do you think that you will be as brave as this when you come actually to die?" "Not if He leaves me, sir; but He will never leave me, for He has said, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'" (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims.**—*Faith's pilgrimages*:—You have here, in few words, the "Pilgrim's Progress" from the wilderness of this world to an everlasting "city of habitation." You learn what it is which induces him to commence the journey; in what manner he complies with that inducement; what sustains his hope as he proceeds; and in what state of mind he finishes his course. True faith includes five things: I. A SIGHT OF DISTANT, PROMISED BLESSINGS. Not that the believer is left destitute of comforts and privileges connected with the present life. Nevertheless, his greatest prize is yet to come: he "sees" it indeed, but he has not yet received it—it is "afar off." II. A PERSUASION OF THEIR REALITY. God is able to keep His word; and therefore, after all the mockery of an ungodly world, I come to the deliberate conviction that "Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth." III. AN ACTUAL EMBRACING OF THEM. "Oh yes!" says the worldly man, "to be sure I believe the Bible—I have no doubt that good people will go to heaven!" And perhaps you might not find it easy to convince him that he disbelieves these things: but you have no difficulty in discovering that he takes no interest in them. Here, then, is a faith "persuaded" of the truth, but not "embracing" the truth! Do you ask, then, "How shall I embrace the salvation thus offered?" The answer is plain—"By coming to Christ for it, in the way prescribed—repenting, converting, trusting in Him." IV. A VISIBLE INFLUENCE ON THE HEART, THE LANGUAGE, AND THE LIFE. Let a man gaze upon the sun till he can without pain examine its splendours; he will find, on recalling his eyes to this lower world, that their power is gone for a season. And such is the effect where faith is in full exercise: one upward glance at "the glory that shall be revealed" is enough to eclipse the most glittering earthly bauble. V. A STEADFAST RELIANCE ON THEM EVEN IN DEATH. After "seeing," "being persuaded," "embracing," and walking as "pilgrims and strangers," the black river of death still remains to be crossed, before we "receive the promise." But "the righteous hath hope," even then; and they that "walk by faith" will assuredly "die in faith." (*J. Jowett, M.A.*) *Strangers and pilgrims on the earth*:—I. AN ACCURATE DESCRIPTION OF HUMAN CONDITION. The fact which it asserts, it is a very easy thing to acknowledge in words; but nothing can be harder than to realise it particularly. The truth is admitted indeed, just because the denial of it would be utterly beyond hope. Every funeral procession, every tolling bell, furnishes a memorial of what awaits each one of us in our turn. Infirmities, to which our flesh is heir, and ailments, are nothing else but God's messengers to accomplish God's sentence of universal mortality. And there is evidence in the restless and the far-reaching character of human wishes, that the whole sphere of our being cannot possibly lie within the horizon which now circumscribes our dwelling-place. Man looks to the future; he draws on the expectation of other days for the enjoyment of the present. What we have to labour for, is not the admission of the truth, but the imparting to it an operative influence. The brevity of human life is a matter which belongs to observation and not to experience; we see it in others, but as yet we know nothing of it in ourselves. But it is very hard to bring home to our bosoms the certainty that the hearts which are now full

of hopes and fears and wishes shall soon cease to beat. No man believes himself to be immortal; and yet there is no truth so difficult to get embodied as one's own mortality. And all this while the world present environs us about and shuts us in closely on every side. It is visible to the eye of sense; it excludes the world unseen and spiritual. And we remember what Scripture tells us concerning one who, through his usurpation, is called "the prince of this world." We know that it is his business to separate the souls of men from Him who is the only source of their happiness and their good. And he accomplishes his end in the most effectual way when he casts about them the fetters of an utter worldliness, preventing the free spirit from soaring aloft into a better atmosphere and into communion with the Father of all spirits, by binding it down gradually closer and closer to the concerns and the interests of this earth that we tread. He does much indeed for his object, when he can plunge men into sensuality, when he can entangle them in vicious pursuits; for then they must needs, if they would be at peace, administer an opiate to conscience. But we entreat you to remember that the peril arises not merely from things which are in themselves bad and forbidden; but from things in themselves and in their commencement blameless or even praiseworthy—the business of daily life, its thousand schemes and its thousand toils, in the midst of which a man may move forward with his integrity unimpeached, maintaining a character for honour that has never known a stain. He forgets the world that is to be. Now these considerations will furnish, as you will immediately perceive, a great motive why we should enforce the assertion of our text. But it is not the eloquence of the advocate, nor the urgency of the appeal, nor the frequency of the warning, that can dislodge the earthliness of mind whereof we have spoken. The grace of God must come into the heart of man, "teaching him so to number his days that he may apply his heart unto wisdom." II. AN AVAILING MOTIVE FOR HUMAN CONDUCT. We must, as a preliminary, call upon you to observe that the text includes a reference to the future. The patriarchs believed not merely that they had "no abiding city here"; they believed also that "God had prepared for them a city," "which hath foundations, whose Maker and Builder is the Lord." And the informations of the Bible are more and wider and of greater encouragement than what would be contained in a mere detail of the world's barrenness and insufficiency. It sets faith in operation; of which the apostle says, it is "the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen." And it so wrought in the patriarchs of old time, who are the subjects of our chapter, that "they that said such things declared plainly that they sought a country." Now what we find operative in the case of godly people many centuries ago, is still the only availing principle whereby we can turn men aside from pursuits and pleasures unsatisfying and perilous, and bring them to follow after Him who alone can satisfy an immortal and redeemed spirit. We cannot turn them aside from the love of this present world, its business or its painted vanities, by sermons alone on its insufficiency; we must tell them of a world that shall be hereafter, where all is true and good and lovely. And whatsoever may have been the man's particular object of pursuit, there is most mercifully provided for him in the gospel something better in that very department, which shall so through the grace of God lay hold upon his very heart as to separate it from the things whereby it was once enslaved. And if you will think awhile you cannot but perceive that there is a remarkable safety in looking unto that "rest which remaineth for the people of God." It is like the home thoughts which come into the heart of an exile, and which return again and again with the potency of an irresistible charm; they come about the heart of the wanderer, sometimes to preserve him from seductions which would otherwise be insurmountable. And sometimes they sustain him under suffering, carrying him through weary days through the power of the principle of hope, which is strong in his bosom. And thus while God's pilgrims are passing through a world thickly set with perils, encompassed on all sides by foes, they are safe while they think of the land where there are holy affections and dutiful obedience, where there is no sin, where there are no tears, and where trial cannot come any more. And if these things are truly impressed upon the heart, not merely shall we believe the fact which is asserted in our text, but we shall make a correspondent movement. We shall immediately prepare for our journey. And whoever has these thoughts upon his heart will remember that a reckoning must follow. He possesses all things in stewardship; he possesses nothing as a proprietor. "All things are of God," and to be used for His glory. And, finally, in the enumeration of the various motives brought to bear upon the heart of man through the receiving

practically the truth which is affirmed in our text, we must by no means forget the sympathy with the great family of man which is thus engendered in the heart. Points of difference may have seemed considerable while we lived as though there were no scene to be entered on but the present; but let us only read our own poverty and dependence and the transitory nature of everything we possess, and straightway there is a brotherhood established large enough to embrace all men—a wider and a wider circle, till it includes every individual of the whole race of man. (*S. Robins, M.A.*) *Strangers and pilgrims*:—"Wherefore they are not to be heard," says the seventh article of our Church, "which feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises." It is well known that in all ages of the Church there have been men who have taken this unworthy view of Old Testament theology—believing that the saints of the Old Testament did look for transitory promises, and nothing else. On what ground have they come to such a conclusion? Well, they took down the Books of Moses; they searched them from beginning to end; and what did they find there? Anything about heaven? Anything about hell? Anything about a great scheme of retribution, such as we have brought before us in the parables of our Lord, or in the writings of St. Paul? No, they found nothing of this. They saw that rewards were temporal, that punishments were immediate; the whole economy of moral government seemed to be constructed only upon present recompenses, limited to the present life, and never pointing at any other. Now if these objectors had taken the pains to understand the genius of Old Testament teaching, or the nature and design of Old Testament types—if they had mastered the simple fact which every devout Jew well understood, that the dispensation under which he lived was to be succeeded by another—this their difficulty would have vanished. For then they would have seen that the land of Canaan, the great subject of Old Testament promise, was a declared and understood type of the heavenly city. They would have understood further that all the historical antecedents of the Jewish people were typical also. Their wilderness wanderings were to be a type of man's life to the end of time. Their warfare in the desert was an emblem of man's constant struggles with the power of evil. Their redemption from Egypt was a sign of man's deliverance from the bondage of sin: and their settlement in the good land shadowed forth the blessedness and repose of heaven. Hence you will observe, that in the chapter before us, the apostle does not hesitate to attribute to all the children of faith under the Old Testament an insight into the spiritual purposes of God. He supposes them to understand that a great scheme of pictorial truth was being brought before their eyes, even in the facts of their external history. They dwelt in tents because they knew there were mansions in store for them. They knew that there was to be a more complete development of God's purpose. They knew that His promises were to have a spiritual fulfilment. They saw the day of Christ afar off. They were persuaded of all the blessings promised to them in and through Him: they embraced these promises. Thus while in possession of those temporal privileges, which God in His mercy had vouchsafed unto them, they learned to sit loosely to them, because they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. I. THE IMAGE WHICH IS HERE GIVEN US OF LIFE. Notwithstanding their possession of these outward advantages, the fathers confessed that they were "strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Other Scriptures express the same thought (Psa. xxxix. 12; 1 Pet. ii. 11). 1. Such an idea of life would be suggested by the very nature of the human constitution, and the relation in which we stand to the world around us; for everything in that world will be found to suggest the conclusion of this being a passage world, and not a resting world. For this world cannot satisfy those higher instincts with which God has endued us. 2. Such an idea of life would be suggested by its constant changeableness and instability. The strange admixture of good and evil which we experience in our passage through life is no chance arrangement. Our world seems to be evidently arranged upon the principle that we should have so much of good in our lot as to enable us to bear the evil, and yet so much of evil commingled therewith that our hearts may not be unduly set upon the good. Now, all this exactly answers to the pilgrim's condition. 3. The text would suggest to us an infinite and everlasting existence; for he that is a stranger in a country has another country which he calls his own; and he that is a pilgrim has a place and destination towards which he is hastening. II. PRACTICAL LESSONS SUGGESTED BY SUCH A VIEW OF LIFE. 1. The duty of contentment—the duty of acquiescence in that lot which God has appointed for us, whether it be fixed here or there—a holy indifference whether, in the arrangements of the social household, we be set down in a higher or a lower room. 2. Reference should be constantly had

to Divine guidance and direction. We are not pilgrims only, says the apostle, but strangers. Now, the stranger in a strange land does not know his way. Misled by delusive appearances, he may take a way which seemeth right unto him, "but the end thereof are the ways of death." He takes one path for its smoothness, and he finds that it is beset with perils and hidden snares; he takes another path for its shortness, and afterwards finds that he has but gone so far out of the way. Oh! how wisely does the prophet remind us, "The way of man is not in himself. It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps!" 3. The duty of exercising in all things a holy moderation and sobriety. The patriarchs might have lived in tents in Chaldea, or they might have lived in palaces in Canaan, but they would not have palaces, and they would not return to Chaldea. Why? Because these tents were designed of God to be a standing protest against a worldly spirit, even as Canaan itself was also to be an emblem of the spiritual and eternal state. They kept to their tents because they would testify to the simplicity of the patriarchal character, because they would witness against the pride, the covetousness, and the ostentation too often found to accompany a season of prosperity. And thus we are to "let our moderation be known unto all men." Be sober in your joys, sober in your griefs, sober in your gains, sober in all the pursuits of life. 4. Having no continuing city here, being strangers and pilgrims upon the earth, we should seek one to come. The patriarchs had no home in Canaan, and yet they loved it. Why? It was not the fertility of its valleys, nor the beauty of its hills, nor the wealth of its fig-trees, nor the luxuriousness of its vines, that made them love the land in which they were strangers. It was because Canaan was typical of the rest of the covenant. It was because it was the place where God had promised to honour and meet and bless His people. It was because it was associated in their minds with the most inspiring tokens of the Divine presence, as well as all their most lofty anticipations of the life of the world to come. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *Strangers and pilgrims*:—I. THE CHARACTER OF OUR PRESENT CONDITION. 1. Aliens. Not of same race as world; not having same desires, aims, thoughts, affections. 2. Travellers. Only staying for a time; ever passing on from one stage to another. II. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS STATE. 1. Fearless, independent. The world is almost a matter of indifference. It can neither give nor take away anything worth possessing. 2. Earnest ambition for a better state. 3. Patient resignation. When a state will so soon be over it matters little what is its nature. III. THE INCUMBENT DUTY. "They confessed." This implies a realisation of the important truth. The great cause of our indifference and negligence and consequent loss is a failure to realise our state and to apprehend what our actions involve. (*Homilist.*) *Saints pilgrims on the earth*:—I. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE METAPHOR. 1. The pilgrim's original home was in the city of destruction. 2. His pilgrimage commenced through the influence of the gospel on his heart. 3. By faith in God's testimony he set his face towards the heavenly Zion. 4. As a pilgrim he claims no possession in the country through which he passes. 5. As a pilgrim he travels onwards towards the city of habitation. II. THE QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES INVOLVED IN IT. 1. A pilgrim's heart. And that is a renewed heart; one delivered from the love of sin and the world. 2. A pilgrim's head. A knowledge of his way; of the good old way; the way revealed in the Holy Scriptures; a way written in the luminous words of God; a way trodden by all preceding pilgrims journeying to Zion. 3. A pilgrim's spirit. The spirit which has animated every child of God. (1) Of devotion and direct intercourse with God. (2) Of praise; singing His statutes, and rejoicing in His grace. (3) Of self-denial: sacrificing self, and submitting fully to the will of God. (4) Of faith and hope: believing and trusting in the truth and goodness of the promises of God. (5) Of vigilance, to watch against enemies and perils. (6) Of perseverance: holding on his way. 4. A pilgrim's resources. (1) His staff on which to lean. And this is the pledged promise of God, that His own presence shall go with him, and never, never leave him. (2) His provisions: bread and water given him from heaven. The true manna and the streams of salvation. "If any man thirst." (3) His houses of entertainment. Places where he can be welcomed to the hospitable board and chamber of repose. These are the ordinances of religion, and the various social and private means of grace. (4) Suitable raiment, and especially sandals for his journey. "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass," &c. "Feet shod," &c. Application: 1. How really happy is the Christian pilgrim; his sorrows and crosses will soon be over, and that for ever: his present comforts and blessings are rich and numerous. 2. How glorious the end of his journey. The heavenly Jerusalem; the city of God; world of light, and life, and glory. 3. Urge sinners to set out on

this spiritual pilgrimage. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *Strangers and pilgrims*:—I. ALL MEN, BOTH GOOD AND BAD, ARE STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH. "The life of man is a kind of pilgrimage," are words which Plato quoted as proverbial; and Cicero puts this speech into the mouth of one of his characters: "Our departure from this life is like leaving not our home but an inn, for nature hath given us this world as a place to rest in, but not that we should fix here our permanent habitation." In how many respects does this life resemble a pilgrimage! How full of labour, of inconvenience, of privation! Even when no particular calamity presses; when we are free from bodily suffering, from anxiety, even then there is a vacuity, a certain unsatisfactoriness in our very prosperity itself. Men endure in this world sorrow enough, and pain enough, disappointment enough, to convince them that they are strangers and pilgrims here. One of the greatest pleasures of travel consists in our meeting with good and agreeable people, whom we feel it is a privilege to have met. But one of the pains of travel is, that these persons must be parted with so soon; as if we had enjoyed just enough of the pleasures of their society to qualify us for feeling the pain of losing it. The societies of this life, its closest relations, even those of families and bosom friends, what are they but the casual meeting of travellers at an inn? II. ALL ARE STRANGERS HERE IN FACT; THE SAINTS ALONE ARE STRANGERS IN SPIRIT. Others must die and leave this state like them—they would leave it. They hold the world by that loose grasp—they view it in that light as merely a temporary residence, as a tabernacle or tent to dwell in, that they feel no deep regret when it is taken down; nay, they long ofttimes for its dissolution (2 Cor. v.). They converse with the end of life. It is a door of hope. Why should the captive, burdened with the load of mortality, weep when about to put off that burden? Although "to be absent from the body" were some pain in itself, it becomes a pleasure when it is the condition of our being "at home with the Lord." III. THOUGH THE SAINTS CONFESS THEY ARE STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH, THEY ARE NOT WITHOUT A HOME. It is their prospect of something higher, more glorious, which exiles the affections of holy men from the earth. Their tastes have been purified and exalted, till this world has become unfit for them, and they have become unfit for it, except to be disciplined in it. Whenever our perceptions are so corrected as to apprehend what good is, it is from that moment impossible we should be at home anywhere but in heaven, in which the "illuminated eyes of the mind" (Eph. i. 18) discern every character of a secure and eternal habitation. There sin is not, and the soul, panting for release from that burden, sees in heaven the land of its liberty. There God, who is "light," dwells no more in "light inaccessible," and there the spirit is at home who earnestly desires to know God, to enjoy God, to be like him. Lessons: 1. Though the saints are dissatisfied with this earth, as their home, yet they are content, yea, cheerfully resigned to endure it as their schoolhouse. 2. As we are strangers and pilgrims here, let our thoughts and affections be more set on the place which is our home, being the house of our heavenly Father. 3. Let us, knowing this is not our country in which we dwell, take care to behave ourselves innocently and circumspectly. 4. Is there not good reason to apprehend that many who profess to be strangers and pilgrims on the earth, are so as Nabal was, and as Saul was, and as Ahab was, only because they cannot help it? If not, why such deathless animosities? Such grasping to get and to keep the mammon of unrighteousness? Such holding to this world? Such forgetfulness of the next? Such intemperance? Such sensuality? Is this the character of strangers and pilgrims? (*R. Lee.*) *Strangers and pilgrims*:—I. THE POSSESSOR OF FAITH IS A STRANGER IN THE EARTH. What a change! In unbelief we were strangers to God (Eph. ii. 12). By faith strangers to world. Because—1. We are now more sensible of our frailty. "Make me to know how frail I am." 2. Our Master was a stranger. His love made Him a stranger. 3. We, like Him, are born from above. Life Divine will re-seek its source. Sparks fly to sun. 4. The true Christian even now lives elsewhere. He is a non-conformist to the world. Thus an enigma. II. THE LIFE OF FAITH IS A PILGRIMAGE ON THE EARTH. 1. A well-trodden path of pilgrimage. 2. A brief pilgrimage. 3. A pilgrimage in which we have an excellent guide. III. THE EXPECTATION OF FAITH IS A COUNTRY BETTER THAN THE WORLD. 1. Heaven is our legal inheritance. 2. Heaven is our rest. 3. Heaven is our "city of foundations." 4. Heaven is the ultimate "place of assembly" of God's people. IV. THE DUTY OF FAITH IS TO CONFESS THIS TO THE WORLD. 1. By word (ver. 14; Numb. x. 29). 2. By conduct. (1) Let us not seek our happiness here. (2) Let us be satisfied with our portion here. Enough for a journey. (3) Let us remember that our way to heaven lies not only through duties

of religion, but also through duties of our calling; self, families, fellow-men have demands, though subordinate. (4) Let us look for a change of place. (5) Let us fit ourselves for a change of place. (*R. S. Latimer.*) *Strangers and pilgrims*:—This is a confession which all the patriarchs made; if not in words, more emphatically in deeds. We find it expressly made on five occasions in the Old Testament. I. The first two instances of this confession occur in historical narratives, and may be considered by themselves. 1. Abraham says to the sons of Heth: "I am a stranger," &c. (Gen. xxiii. 4). You are alone, and would fain be let alone, in your grief. You care not for companionship; you shrink from it. "Leave me to myself," may be your instinctive cry. "Only give me liberty in quietness to bury my dead. Earth may have many things attractive to you: for me, it can furnish only one thing I care for; a grave for my dead." This may be a morbid frame; and it may have a fascination for the mourner; and such a fascination as is apt to grow. It may become the luxury of woe; and, like all luxury, it will enervate and enslave. It is to be resisted in its beginning. As a lover of men, you have much to live for; to do good as you have opportunity. As a lover of Christ, you have more; for to you to live is Christ. In this spirit, you may well and warrantably use the language of the patriarch; with fullest fellowship and sympathy, "Have pity upon me, O my friends!" "You may have been wont to regard me simply as a stranger; separated from you; moving in a different sphere, and following different ways. You may have seen perhaps, with some not unnatural grudge, my prosperous state; thinking it hard that such an uninvited intruder into your country should possess such wealth in flocks and herds: or the simple worship of my household may have provoked your indignation or contempt. I was not one of you. You saw me as a stranger; as one whom you did not understand, and could not altogether like. But see me now, a stricken mourner, a desolate old man, fain to come to you and ask from you a grave in which to bury my dead." There is that in sorrow which makes men kind; which makes them kin. How precious, in this view, may a season of distress be to one labouring among his neighbours on behalf of Christ! 2. The Lord says to Israel, "The land is Mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me" (Lev. xxv. 23). This may be regarded almost as a kind of rejoinder to the pathetic appeal which we have heard Abraham making to the sons of Heth. "Thou art here again, after a long interval, in the land where thou wast once a wanderer. Then thou was a stranger and sojourner with the sons of Heth. Now thou art a stranger and sojourner with Me. Then thou didst acknowledge them to be thy hosts, and thyself to be their guests. Now thou art to feel that I am thy Host, and thou art My guest. For the land is Mine. Thou sojournest with Me." There is comfort in this thought applied retrospectively. Thou didst indeed then succeed in purchasing a few feet of ground, that thou mightest bury thy dead in no borrowed tomb, but in a sepulchre thou hadst by purchase made thine own. But, after all, it was in a land possessed by alien tribes, a land of strangers. Is it not a satisfaction, a solace, to reflect now that it was in a land which is the Lord's? This comfort may be yours, believer. You too bury your dead in a land that is the Lord's. And the land is the wide earth; for the earth is the Lord's. Whenever you have to bury your dead, it is in a land of which the Lord says, It is Mine. To leave loved remains on a foreign strand, slowly and sadly to lay down the brave where the foe is sullenly firing; to lose the weary adventurer in the wild jungle, abandoned to his fate among its beasts of prey; to cast with measured plunge into the deep sea the cold form which you prize above all its treasures: ah! what a hard sore trial of love and faith. But courage. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof!" There is admonition also in the thought. If you were hospitably received in some great and good man's house, seated at his table, and allowed the full range of his wide domains, you would not think of taking liberties as if all were your own. You would be on your guard, lest you should abuse his hospitality. You would beware of encroaching on his condescension. And you would pay him the decent compliment of showing how much you valued him and his company above all his goodly fare. Then again you would be careful not to set your heart too much upon your temporary residence, and its temporary entertainment. You would moderate your taste for the enjoyments and indulgences which are yours only for a brief and uncertain time; allowed to you by him whose guest you are. And you would not think of giving away to foolish friends the goods stored up in his cellars; or cutting down the timber of his woods for your own pleasure or aggrandisement. This figure or parable may explain and enforce the right and safe way of using this world

without abusing it. As the Lord's guests you cannot be indifferent or stand neutral in the great strife that is going on in the land of which He says, It is Mine. You must take a side. Nor can there be room for doubt what the side is to be. The buried bones of your pious dead, whose graves are all over the field of battle, forbid all hesitancy or indecision, all cowardice or compromise. The earth is indeed the Lord's. And it is ere long to be triumphantly vindicated and gloriously occupied as His. But meanwhile it is the Lord's, as a kind of debateable territory, every inch of which has to be fought for, to be won and kept as it were, by force of arms; like the parcel of ground which Jacob bought, but which, nevertheless, his sons had to conquer by their swords and their bows. And it has in its bosom a countless multitude of redeemed bodies, belonging to redeemed souls; bodies now vile perhaps, but destined to be conformed to the Lord's own glorious body. You cannot be idle while the battle is raging that is to end in such a victory. Two things in particular you must have much at heart. The first is to break every tie that ever bound you, or could bind you, to the usurper's service; the service of the prince of this world. You cannot now be brought under Satan's bondage; for greater is He that is for you than all they that can be against you. You cannot now be blindfolded by the great deceiver. You know the truth, and the truth makes you free. Surely now you will not betray your Host with whom you dwell, by shrinking from knowing His name and defending His cause, or by keeping up a treacherous correspondence with the enemy. Rather, secondly, knowing His mind and heart, seeing how intensely He longs to clasp to His bosom, and welcome into His home, and entertain as His guests each and all of those fighting in the rebel host, will you not be ever appealing to every one of them whom you meet with, every stranger wandering afar off, every unwary youth enlisting himself as a recruit? II. The three other instances of this confession of the text occur in devotional exercises, and they may be made to fit into one another. 1. "We are strangers before Thee and sojourners, as were all our fathers" (1 Chron. xxix. 15). Here the thought "we are strangers before Thee and sojourners" is brought in to heighten the admiring and grateful joy with which David contemplates the amazing goodness of God, in permitting him and his people to do so much, to do anything, for the building of His house and the glory of His name. What grace, what condescension, is there in this! The Proprietor and Lord of all things enables and inclines us who are His guests, sojourning with Him in the land that is His own, to offer as our gift what already, as His property, belongs to Him alone; and most generously consents to accept the offering! 2. "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not Thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with Thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were" (Psa. xxxix. 12). This is your sad cry as you suffer under the inevitable evils of a stranger's lot, even though you may have the blessedness, in the land in which you are strangers, of being sojourners with him whose land it is. For, however hospitably he with whom you are sojourning may entertain you, it is still, as it were, within the precincts of an inn, nor can you expect to escape the vexations and troubles inseparable from that mode of accommodation. Then you must remember that the land in which as strangers you are for the present entertained as sojourners, is the earth which has been cursed for your sin, and on which, with whatever mitigation, the sentence still lies. You may think it strange, perhaps hard, that you should be thus lodged, even temporarily; in the midst of creation's groans, mingling with your own. But for wise ends your gracious entertainer considers this to be right. And may you not always be appealing to Him, and reminding Him of your relation to Him? 3. "I am a stranger in the earth: hide not Thy commandments from me" (Psa. cxix. 19). The point and pith of this prayer would seem to lie in the continual need which one who is a stranger on the earth has of communion with Him whose guest he is; with whom, as a stranger, he is a sojourner. In that character, as a stranger on the earth, I do not now desire to have more fellowship with the people of the land than is necessary for pious ends; for the comely burial of my dead, or for the discharge of my duty of love to the living. I would rather converse with Him who says, "The land is Mine." And the medium of conversation with Him is His word, or His commandments. His commandments, His communications of whatever sort, precepts, promises, histories, prophecies, warnings, encouragements, all sayings of His, for they are all commandments, I desire to use as means of real personal converse with Him. But I cannot do so unless He opens my eyes. Therefore, I pray, "Hide not Thy commandments from me." (*R. S. Candlish, D.D.*) *Of living as strangers:*—The people of God are strangers and pilgrims. 1. In respect of their

station, the place of their abode. While they are in the world they are in a strange country; while they are present in the world they are far from home. The world is a strange country, and their habitations in it, how much soever their own in civil respects, are but as inns in that journey homeward. The world is a strange country to the people of God, and the men of the world are men of a strange language, strange customs, strange laws, far differing from that of their own country. 2. In respect of their design, their motion, it is still homewards. This strange country likes them not, nor they it; they are travelling towards another, that which is, that which they account, their home, that better country, that heavenly country, that city prepared for them, that city whose builder and maker is God. 3. In respect of their enjoyments. They are but accommodated here like strangers. Much would be a burden, a hindrance to them in their journey; they have more in hopes than hand. Their treasure, their crown, their glory is at home, their Father's house; till they come there they are strangers. 4. In respect of their usage. They are not known in the world, and so are often coarsely used. In this strange country they meet with few friends, but many injuries. Their habit, language, practices, must be after their own country fashion, such as become heaven; now this being contrary to the world, meets with opposition, scorn, reproaches, hatred. 5. In respect of their continuance. Their abode on earth is but short. They dwell but as Abraham in tabernacles (ver. 9), in tents, moveable dwellings, quickly, easily removed; no dwelling that has a foundation, that is lasting, durable, till at home (ver. 10). 6. In respect of their relations. Their dearest relations are in another country. Their Father, their Husband, their Elder Brother, their dearest Friend, their Comforter, and the far greatest part of their brethren and fellow-members, are all in heaven. Use 1. Reproof of those who profess themselves to be the people of God, and yet live not like His people; live on earth as though earth was their home, and mind heaven as little as they mind a strange country; suffer their thoughts, affections, endeavours, to be so taken up with the earth, and the things of it, as though the world were all the home they expect; instead of being strangers to the world, are strangers to the thoughts of, to the employments of, to the endeavours for heaven; rise up early, &c., to lay up treasure on earth, and lap up their hearts and souls with it. Use 2. Exhortation to the people of God. You are strangers and pilgrims, oh endeavour to live as strangers. You expect to die in the faith, oh live then as you may so die. (1) Be not familiar with the world. Let the pleasures, the carnal interests of it, be strange things to you (1 Pet. ii. 12; Rom. xii. 2). (2) Be patient under sufferings, under the affronts, reproaches, hard usages you meet with from the world. It is the portion of strangers. Expect no vindication till in your own country. (3) Be content with what things you enjoy. Though it seem small or poor, it is enough for a stranger. More would be a burden to you, and travellers should avoid burdens, if they long to be at home. (4) Set not your hearts upon anything here below. Remember, while you are on earth, you are but in an inn. Mind the things here below as *in transitu;* use them as though ye used them not. (5) Make haste home. Make no longer stay than needs must in this strange country. Make straight steps to your feet; disburden yourselves of worldly cares, projects, fleshly lusts, that weight that does so easily beset you. What you have to do here, do it with all your might, that you may be fit for home. Despatch, make haste; remember whither you are going, and to whom. Your Father expects you; the Bridegroom thinks long till you come, He that will delight in you for ever. (6) Be not too fearful of death. It is a sleep now; Christ's death did change the property of it? and will a pilgrim, a weary traveller, be afraid of sleep? (*D. Clarkson, B.D.*) *Christian pilgrims*:—I. CHRISTIANS DO EXERCISE A TRUE FAITH IN THE PROMISES OF GOD. 1. The faith of Christians in the promises of God implies that they understand them. 2. Their faith in the promises of God implies that they have a full and undoubting conviction of their truth and certainty. 3. The faith of true Christians in the promises of God implies a cordial approbation of them. II. SUCH A FIRM AND CORDIAL BELIEF IN THE GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES OF GOD LEADS CHRISTIANS TO LIVE AND ACT AS STRANGERS ON THE EARTH. 1. Pilgrims never feel at home. They find no place which they can call their own; where they can reside as long as they please. They are constrained to go from stage to stage, and to change their situation from day to day. And though they may sometimes find pleasant and desirable places, yet they can find no place at which they can feel at home. 2. Pilgrims feel very much alone in the world. They find but a few travelling their way; and if some now and then fall into their company, yet they are strangers to their views and feelings, and afford them but very little comfort or entertainment,

and generally they obstruct rather than animate and quicken them in their journey. 3. Pilgrims always feel themselves exposed to danger. Travelling in a foreign country, they are unacquainted with the disposition of the inhabitants, and unused to their customs and manners. On these accounts, they never know whenor where they are safe. They cannot place entire confidence in those with whom they converse, whether they wear a friendly or unfriendly aspect. They are exposed to contempt from the great, to fraud from the unjust, and to every evil from the lawless and malevolent. 4. Pilgrims feel thankful for all the agreeable accommodations which they meet with on their way. They are sensible of their dependence on Providence, and on the favour and assistance of their fellow-men. They are thankful for plain and smooth paths, for pleasant weather, and for good stages for rest and refreshment. And they are thankful to every stranger who faithfully directs them and kindly treats them. 5. Pilgrims take nothing with them but what they deem necessary for their journey. They throw aside the superfluities as encumbrances. 6. Pilgrims never think of turning back on account of any difficulties which they meet with in their way. If they are lame, or sick, they stop only till they recover, and then go forward. If the season be unfavourable, they wait only till it becomes better. Or if the roads be obstructed, they wait only till the obstructions are removed. Improvement: 1. If those who cordially embrace the promises of God are real pilgrims, then it is to be expected that they will profess their faith before men, and confess that they are pilgrims and strangers on the earth. 2. If those who profess to be Christians at the same time profess to be pilgrims, then there is a great impropriety as well as criminality in professors of religion being conformed to the world. 3. If all real Christians are pilgrims, and live and act as such, then they are living monitors to sinners. They admonish both by their profession and practice. 4. If all real Christians are pilgrims, then those have little reason to think that they are pilgrims who do not make it appear so in the sight of the world. 5. If Christians are pilgrims, who are entitled to the great and precious promises of God, then they will be peculiarly happy when they finish their pilgrimage, and reach their long home. All their labours, and dangers, and trials, and sufferings, will work for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) *Soul-pilgrimage*:—I take the idea of pilgrimage to illustrate the life of a true soul in the world. I. Soul-pilgrimage involves a DEPARTURE. 1. From a dominant materialism. 2. From controlling selfishness. 3. From practical atheism. II. It involves a PURSUIT. Not of wealth or happiness, but of godliness. Following on to know the Lord. Pressing toward the mark. (*Homilist.*) *The pilgrim*:—I. WHAT IS IT TO FEEL AND CONDUCT OURSELVES AS STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH. It is to feel and conduct ourselves as not being at home in the flesh, but as travelling on a journey to the world above. A wise pilgrim will not encumber himself with a load of toys which will only impede his progress towards home; which, instead of adding to his enjoyments, will only perplex him on his journey; and which at last he cannot carry into his Father's house to possess, but must lay down and leave at the threshold. A stranger on earth, if he is wise, will not expend his all in procuring the riches of the country which he cannot carry with him when he returns, as he shortly must to his native land. His principal object will be (besides those temporary supplies which will support him by the way) to lay in copiously those riches which he can carry with him when he returns to his abiding habitation. II. SOME REASONS WHY WE OUGHT TO FEEL AND CONDUCT OURSELVES AS STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH. 1. A pilgrim's way is the only way to heaven. We are by nature as far from home as we are from God. In order then to find an entrance into the peaceful doors of our Parent's house, we must say with the prodigal, "I will arise and go to my Father." 2. Heaven is the only good worth setting our hearts upon —the only place where unsullied enjoyment is to be had—the only spot where untainted excellence is found. It alone contains pleasures which will never fade away. 3. There is a sweetness in feeling ourselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth. It is sweet to feel ourselves not at home in the flesh, just on the wing to be gone, and arising to a better habitation. It is sweet to feel the world beneath our feet, to stand above it and converse with God. The man that does this is not indebted to the unsteady shifting objects of time and sense for his principal satisfaction, but possesses a happiness which the world can neither give nor take away. He can remain unruffled amidst the changes of life. 4. A stranger and pilgrim on earth has everything that he needs; why then should he wish for any closer alliance with the world? "God's favour is life, and His loving-kindness is better

than life." He who enjoys Him has all and needs no more. 5. To relax into friendship with the world, to feel earth our home, and to say, It is good to be here, is very dangerous; as it draws the soul from God, clouds out of sight the glory of spiritual objects, exposes us to temptation, and is the chief cause of all our miseries. 6. We are here in an enemy's country, while our dearest friends are in heaven. 7. This earth was never designed for the Christian's home. It is a field in which he is sent to labour. 8. The more of strangers we are on the earth, and the more intercourse we have with heaven while here, the more welcome and happy shall we be when we arrive at glory. III. THE DUTY OF BELIEVING AND TRUSTING IN THE PROMISES OF GOD. 1. To believe and trust in the promises of God is an exercise of faith and an essential mark of a Christian. 2. We should not distrust the promises of God on account of their not being yet fulfilled, or because at particular times we cannot see the fulfilment of those which relate to the present life. It was never designed that the promises which relate to the life to come should be fulfilled at present. It is not fit we should receive our reward till our work is done. 3. The want of a realising belief in the Divine promises is the great reason of our impatience at the thought of being strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 4. There is a sweetness in believing and trusting in the promises of God. The Christian then feels as secure and immovable as unchanging truth and almighty power can make him. 5. The promises of God are absolutely unfailing. And dare any who have the Bible in their hands deny their truth? Let us then--(1) Reprove ourselves for our worldly attachments, and for not feeling more like strangers and pilgrims on the earth. (2) Let us reprove our impatience and despondency at a distant view or disbelief of the promises. (*E. Griffin, D.D.*) *God's people are strangers* :—1. A stranger is no medler in the country wherein he is; he takes that which is requisite for him; he looks to his own business; but he doth not interpose himself in the affairs of the commonwealth, he leaves them to those that be of the country. Even so being strangers in the world, let us meddle no more with the world than needs must. But we are drowned in the world, our minds are on the world all the week, all the year long; we meddle little with the Scripture, with prayer, heavenly meditations; we are altogether in and about the world. 2. Strangers must not think to bear sway in the town and country where they dwell, the natural inhabitants will not digest that (Gen. xix. 9); the Sodomites could not endure that Lot should be a king among them. So we, being strangers in the world, must not make account to domineer in it, to have all men at our control, we must be content to be underlings here that we may be aloft hereafter; the faithful are often put to the wall and the wicked are lords over them. This we must take patiently because we are strangers. 3. Strangers and pilgrims are wont to be abstemious (1 Pet. 2. 11); a stranger, a traveller, if he be a wise man, doth not set his mind on feasting and banquetting, he takes a morsel, and so away. So, being strangers here, we must lead a sober life, take no more of the world than will serve us for our journey; we must reserve our feasting till we come to that place where we shall eat bread with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, 4. Strangers must look for no great love; for the most part they are hated in the country where they be, and they are wished to be out of it; even so the world loveth her own; we are not of the world, we are men of another world, therefore marvel not that we find little friendship in the world. 5. Strangers have a longing desire to be at home. If an Englishman be in Spain, Turkey, India, he thinks every day two till he be in England. Oh that I were with my wife and children, with my friends and neighbours at home! So, being strangers in this world, let us not make too great account of it; let us desire to be at home in our heavenly Jerusalem; let us say with St. Paul, I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, which is best of all. 6. Strangers do not heartily love that country wherein they be; they may love it in some sort, but nothing to their own country; so being viatores we may take viaticum; but let us not love the world; let us use it as if we used it not. Let the heavenly Canaan, our native country, have all our love. 7. If a stranger come to an inn he looks about him and says, This is a fair inn, here I have a goodly chamber; I fare well for my money; but this is no place for me to tarry in. So we should think and say of the world, I have a convenient dwelling, meat and drink enough; I thank God I want nothing; but this is not my place of abode, I am but a stranger here, all these things I must forego. I would to God that this were deeply engraven in the hearts of us all that we did effectually consider we were strangers on the earth. We say we are strangers, but we live as lords. A strange thing that strangers should be so bewitched with a strange country as we are

with the earth. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *The journey of life*:—I. OUR PASSAGE THROUGH LIFE IS COMPARED IN HOLY SCRIPTURE TO VARIOUS THINGS—sometimes to an arrow flitting through the air—sometimes to a flower which is to-day in the field, to-morrow cut down and withered. But no figure, I think, more comprehensively describes it than that of a journey. 1. The first great resemblance may be found in the various stage of each. In the common journeys of this world some are long, and marked, of course, with a great variety of circumstances. Others, again, are short, quickly performed, and little varied with any particular occurrences. Exactly thus is our great journey through life. In our great journey through life we cannot make the stages as we please. They are laid out for us. We have only to prepare ourselves properly for them. 2. A second great resemblance which may be traced between a journey and our passage through life arises from the various roads which present themselves in both. Every one accustomed to travelling knows there are various roads commonly leading to the same place. Some are bad, others indirect, while there is generally but one which is the best, and which every prudent traveller would wish to pursue. Such too is our journey towards eternal life. Ask any who are not quite abandoned and they will tell you they hope to go to heaven—that this at least is their aim; but through what a variety of paths do they often pursue it! It may be hoped indeed that all these wanderers will in time see their error, and at length arrive safely at their heavenly home. But what toil, what distress might they have prevented if they had not suffered themselves to be led astray through all the bye-paths of pleasure or worldly allurements; but had from the first pursued the direct road! 3. As a journey thus resembles our passage through life in being a progress through various stages to a destined end, so does it resemble it in the many difficulties and inconveniences with which it is incommoded. No man can pass through life without meeting them. From our early youth they begin, and as we advance our difficulties increase. The cares and mischances of the world—or the knavery and malice of mankind—or sickness—or the ingratitude of friends—or the miscarriages, if not of ourselves, at least of our near connections, present us with a great variety of distress. Then again, they who are of a feeling nature have their compassion daily exercised by their fellow-travellers whom they see toiling under various burdeus and cannot relieve. As we advance towards the end of life new distresses arise. The infirmities of age and the difficulty of mixing with a younger generation, all tend to lessen our relish for the world and teach us more and more to depend on happiness hereafter. 4. Another resemblance, nearly allied to the last, between a journey and our passage through life arises from the different manner in which its different stages affect us. At first, during the warmth and inexperience of youth, everything strikes us with pleasure. The world is new to us—our spirits are high—our passions are strong—the gaieties of life get hold of us—and it is happy, if we can enjoy them with moderation and innocence. Now and then we meet a rebuke from the world, but we lay it not to heart; youth is prone to forget untoward circumstances, and other objects catch our attention. But as years come on—as the inconveniences of life increase and the satisfactions arising from it diminish—we grow fatigued with so tiresome a march, and if we are those strangers and pilgrims upon earth of whom the text speaks we begin to think with pleasure of finishing our earthly toil. 5. From these inconveniences which meet us in every stage another resemblance arises, the last I shall suggest, which is, that we must never expect to find in a journey the comforts we look for at home. Many people have no idea of a heavenly home. Of them I speak not. They must, if they choose it, wander about in this world without any aim till they drop into their graves, and must take the consequence. II. IF THEN LIFE IS A JOURNEY AND CAN BE COMPARED SO PROPERLY TO NOTHING ELSE, LET US CONSIDER IT AS SUCH. 1. In the first place, let us not set our hearts upon anything in it. 2. If, again, life is a journey, let us not loiter in it. 3. Lastly, if life be a journey, let us keep the great end continually in view. We are journeying to our great home—the eternal mansion of spirits. What is there here to detain us from such an end? Our valuables are not about us; they are at home, at the end of our journey. Where our treasure is, there then let our hearts be also. (*W. Gilpin, M.A.*) *The pilgrim not a hermit*:—It seems a very common thing to take the word "pilgrim" in its religious sense as very nearly identical with the word "hermit"; but the two not only differ, but in some respects very strongly contrast. The hermit is a personage who never appears in the Bible; or if he does appear, it is in some very distant glimpses indeed. He is not found, either in the Old or the New Dispensation, as having any part in the appointments of the people of God;

but the hermit is one of the favourite institutions of heathenism, and was, in olden times, prevalent over all the great ancient countries. The idea was early adopted in Egypt, and from Egypt it diffused itself over all the West, even to our own country. The hermit is one who has a quarrel with human society, and takes it to be his business to get as far away from mankind as circumstances will permit him. He may effect the separation by locality, by getting into a desert; he may effect it by confining himself within the walls of a convent, by getting up a tree, or living on the top of a pillar, as has sometimes been done. He may confine that separation to costly and particular habits and vows; but still his great idea is, to separate himself from human society and so cut out that part of human nature that does not lie built up within the four walls of his own person. Now, this is by no means the character of the pilgrim. The pilgrim is quite another personage. He has no quarrel with human society. He does not purpose to separate himself from mankind. On the contrary, pilgrims have been remarkable in every age and nation for being social, for seeking in their pilgrimage as many companions as they can possibly gather together, and for cheering their pilgrimage with as many comforts as they can carry through the journey, and with as many songs, and as much intercourse, and as much vivacity and pleasure of every kind as they can possibly command. But the pilgrim is one who has a point at which he is aiming, and a purpose for which he aims at it; and no matter what land he has to traverse, however pleasant it may be, it must not tempt him to stay, or however foul it may be, it must not discourage him so that he turn back. He has to go on; if it be a desert, to cross it in spite of its difficulties; if it be a garden, to cross it in spite of its flowers, and still to go on. (*W. Arthur, M.A.*) *An exile on earth*:—A holy indifference to present things makes it easy to part with them, and death less fearful. Chrysostom, in a letter to Ciriacus, who was tenderly sensible of his banishment, wrote to him, "You now begin to lament my banishment, but I have done so for a long time; for, since I knew that heaven was my country, I have esteemed the whole earth as a place of exile. Constantinople, from which I am expelled, is as distant from paradise as the desert to which they send me." *Home yet distant*:—A father, with his little son, is journeying overland to California, and when at night he pitches his tent in some pleasant valley, the child is charmed with the spot, and begs his father to rear a house and remain there; and he begins to make a little fence about the tent, and digs up the wild flowers and plants them within the enclosure. But the father says, "No, my son. Our home is far distant. Let these things go, for to-morrow we must depart." Now, God is taking us, His children, as pilgrims and strangers, homeward; but we desire to build here, and must be often overthrown before we can learn to seek "the city that hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God." (*H. W. Beecher.*) **They seek a country.**—*Longings for the heavenly city*:—I. THE LONGING WHICH THE GODLY HAVE FOR SOMETHING BETTER THAN THIS WORLD CAN GIVE. Here we may notice first of all the difference in kind between this longing and sinful discontent on the one hand, and the difference between it and the noble aspirations of worldly minds on the other. 1. Discontent is the spirit of self-will, displeased with the ordinances of God, or denying a providence and complaining of its destiny. This temper is insubordinate, for it would remove the disposal of things out of God's hands: it is proud and selfish, for so far from being willing to take an humble place in the universe, it would take the highest, and bend everything to its own arrangements: it is worldly, for the excessive desire of earthly good, which by the nature of the case must be ungratified, gives it birth: it is not only miserable in itself, but the source of new misery, for it leads the soul to look on the dark side of its earthly lot, and to make the most of whatever counteracts the desires. Compare with this discontent the temper of the godly man, as he looks with dissatisfaction upon this world. He is not like the chained beast which howls with rage and bites his chain, nor even like the caged bird that sings as he flies about the walls of his little prison but seizes the first chance to escape: he is rather like the soldier in the garrison, with whom he has often been compared, weary, it may be, with the constant vigilance and the toilsome defence, but stationary until his commander allows him to depart, and giving himself up meanwhile, with energy of will, perhaps with heroic joy, to the defence of the fortress. 2. The feeling of the godly man towards this world, so unlike the spirit of discontent, resembles much more the higher aspirations of mere human nature. There are men who seem to have by nature a high standard of character and attainment, who, if they lived alone and were uneducated, would have a certain dignity about them which is not allotted to all. These men are not

made to be worldlings; the toils of covetousness, the intrigues of ambition they despise. Now these men have this resemblance to the godly who are our true pilgrims, that they are at a wide remove from earthly-mindedness in its worst sense, that they never reach the goal of their choice, and that thus they gather a dissatisfaction, often a very great dissatisfaction, with themselves and the world.[1] But they differ from them in this; that they have not surrendered their native self-will, and that their standard, however lofty, is not spiritual. II. The text leads us to remark in the second place THAT THE GODLY HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO RETURN TO THEIR FORMER STATE AND MAKE THIS WORLD AGAIN THEIR PORTION. By not doing this they show that they seek a heavenly country. The confessions which proceed from their lips and lives prove that the world has not yet satisfied them. But if their earthly desires are not controlled by heavenly principles, they have abundant facilities for making new experiments upon the world. They can immerse themselves in it again, as they did in their days of thoughtlessness. The world is ready to welcome them back, for it does not relish the silent reproofs which a non-conformist to its rules utters, as he withdraws from it. But he with opened eye is seeking for a better country, that is a heavenly. It is not the extent of his dissatisfaction with the world, or the strength of his resolution, or the force of circumstances, or a peculiar nature which leads him on in his chosen course, but the conviction that there is a better country to which he can attain. And it is better not simply because it promises a greater amount of good, or more lasting good such as the earth gives for a few years, but because it lays before his hopes another kind of good, as different from earthly as possible. This difference between spiritual and temporal good was always a reality of infinite importance, but he could not perceive it until his eye was opened and his affections transferred. Since that great revolution in his character, weak and tempted and often vacillating as he has been, he has resisted the invitations of the world to return to his old plan of life, because his desires are fastened on a new object, on the heavenly inheritance, which comprises all that is holy and truly blessed. III. Owing to these heavenly desires, to this spiritual mind of the Christian, GOD IS NOT ASHAMED TO BE CALLED HIS GOD. As his God and Protector, God takes care of his interests by preparing for him a city. The man of God dwells in a tent or tabernacle in this world, and not only wants no city here, but feels that he can find none. Still his nature longs for something abiding. Death, decay, change, uncertainty are alien from his nature, they run counter to the longing for immortality which is within him. Such an abiding-place God, his God, hath provided for him. It is a permanent home. Again it is a city which is prepared for the godly man, in distinction from a lonely tent among strangers. So that his feeling of being by himself away from his best friends will have an end. As the traveller in the East passes from the bazaars and thronged streets of some capital, to the border of the wilderness, where the Bedouin is encamped for a season, he finds a new sort of people, who have no turn for city life, who are retired from the haunts of men, and when nearest to cities feel wholly estranged from them. Something so do godly men feel amid all the ties and joys of this world. Its spirit is unlike theirs. They have no home-feeling in its neighbourhood; they have, while they live closest to it, an unsatisfied sense of absence from something most akin to them, a sense of emptiness for which hope alone furnishes a relief. The city which God, their God, hath prepared for them fills up this want. There they are to be among friends, in whom they can fully confide—with God, Christ, and the redeemed—there they will no more have that sense of loneliness which saddened them in their night-wanderings through this world. (*T. D. Woolsey.*) *The faith of the patriarchs*:—It is in the power of actions as well as of words to declare plainly; and the patriarchs of this chapter made it as plain by what they did as by what they said, whither it was that their desires and their affections were tending. Nothing could be more explicit of this than the practice of Abraham—who gave up the place of his nativity; and tore himself away from all its charms and endearments; and became a pilgrim in an unknown land. What is very well termed a man's general drift, stood most palpably out on the whole of his history. And, in the same way, every human being has a prevailing drift, that may in most instances be pretty accurately gathered from certain obvious indications, which are ever obtruding themselves on the notice of bystanders. But there is a distinction to be remarked here. It may sometimes not be so very plain what the particular interest is which a man is prosecuting with the main force of his ambitious desires—whether it be the love of money, or the love of power, or the love of acceptance in society, or the love of eminence above his fellows

by the lustre of a higher literary reputation. I may not be able to pronounce of the most bustling and ambitious member of our city corporation, whether his heart is most set on the acquirement of a princely fortune, or on a supreme ascendency over all his compeers in the political management of this great community. But whether it be the one or the other, I can say on the instant, that the great theatre of his favourite exertion is this, the place of our habitation—that is here—that it is among home society around him where he seeks to signalise himself, whether by wealth or by influence, or by popularity; and not in any remote or distant society with whom no sympathies are felt, and for whose homage either to his dignity or to his opulence, no anxiety whatever has been conceived. One would need to be profoundly intimate with the hidden mysteries of our nature to trace the numerous shadings and varieties of worldliness that obtain in our species. But it may be a matter of the most obvious recognition to the most simple of men, that worldliness, in some shape or other, is the great pervading element of all its generations. This much at least may be seen, without the piercing eye either of scholar or of satirist; and while the apostle said of the faithful whom he was enumerating, how they declared plainly that they were seeking a future and a distant country—we may say of nearly all whom we know, and of all whom we look upon in society, that they declare as plainly the world to be the only scene on which their hopes and their wishes do expatiate. It is not either that man is actually satisfied with present things. It is not that he has set him down in placid acquiescence among the creatures and the circumstances by which he is for the moment surrounded. We see nothing of the repose of full and finished attainment with any of our acquaintances. There is none of them, in fact, who is not plainly stretching himself forward to some one distant object or other; and, as the tokens of one who is evidently on a pursuit, do we behold him in a state of motion and activity and busy endeavour. But when we come to inquire into the nature of the object that so stimulates his desires and his faculties, do we find it to be a something which lies within the confines of mortality—a something suited only to such senses and such powers of enjoyment as death will extinguish—a something that he may perhaps hand down to posterity, but which a few rapid years will wrest away from himself, and that by an act of everlasting bereavement. Surely it is one of the strangest mysteries of our nature, and, at the same time, one of the strongest tokens of its derangement, that man should thus embark all his desires in a frail and crazy vessel so soon to be engulfed. But to alleviate this gross infatuation, it may be said, and with plausibility too, that the region of sense and the region of spirituality are so unlike the one to the other—that there is positively nothing in our experience of the former which can at all familiarise our minds to the anticipation of the latter. And then, as if to intercept the flight of our imaginations forward to eternity, there is such a dark and cloudy envelopment that hangs on the very entrance of it. Ere we can realise that distant world of souls, we must pierce our way beyond the curtain of the grave—we must make our escape from all the warm and besetting urgencies, which, in this land of human bodies, are ever plying us with powerful solicitation; and force our spirits across the boundaries of sense, to that mysterious place where cold and evanescent spectres dwell together in some incomprehensible mode of existence. We know not if there be another tribe of beings in the universe who have such a task to perform. Angels have no such transition of horror and mystery to undergo. There is no screen of darkness like this interposed between them and any portion of their futurity however distant; and it appears only of man, that it is for him to drive a breach across that barrier which looks so impenetrable, or so to surmount the power of vision as to carry his aspirings over the summit of all that vision has made known to them. Now if this be the work of faith, you will perceive that it is not just so light and easy an achievement as some would apprehend. Think for one moment of the apostolical definition of faith. It is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen—or, as it should have been rendered, it is the confident expectation of things hoped for, and the clear and assured conviction of things not seen. It is that which gives to an interest that is future all the urgency and deciding power upon the conduct which belong to an interest that is present. And should the future interest be greater than the present, and they come into competition, the one with the other, faith is that which resolves him who is under its influence to give up the immediate gratification for the sake of the distant advantage. Thus it is, essentially and by its very nature, a practical principle; and no sooner does it take possession of the heart of any individual, than it holds out the plain attestation of itself upon its history—and not by his dogmata, but by his

doings. Heaven is held out in the gospel not in bargain as a reward to our performance of God's precepts, but simply in anticipation as a fulfilment to our hope of God's promises; and what place, it may be asked, is there for seeking after this? How shall we seek that which is already gotten? or what conceivable thing is there to do in quest of a benefit that is offered to our hand; and on the honesty of which offer we have merely to lay an unfaltering reliance? We can understand how to go about it, when the matter is to seek that which we must work for. But if heaven be not of works but of grace, what remains but to delight ourselves in the secure anticipation of that which we should count upon as a certainty, instead of labouring for it as if it were a contingency that hung upon our labours? And yet they are promises, and nothing else, which put all the patriarchs into motion. It was just because they saw these promises afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth—it was just because of all this that they declared plainly, both by their desires and by their doings, that they sought a country. Eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord—a thing not purchased by us but purchased for us by another—a matter so gigantically beyond any price that man could render for it, that, if held up to him in this aspect, it would look to his despairing eye as if placed in the region of impossibility away from him. Grace has been charged with ministering to human indolence. But it is free grace, and nothing else, which unfastens this drag—which releases man from the imprisonment that formerly held him—which brings him out to a large and open space, and sets an object of hopefulness before him that he knows to be accessible—which breaks him loose from the grasp of that law, from whose condemnation and whose penalties he felt so inextricable. So that, instead of doing nothing for heaven, when the gulf of a pathless separation stood in the way of it, he can now embark on a career of approximation, where, by all his doings, and by all his seekings, he may declare plainly that heaven is indeed the country to which he is travelling. It is said of the patriarchs in this chapter that they were not only persuaded of the promises, but that they embraced them. To be persuaded of them was to believe in the truth of the promises; to embrace them was to make choice of the things promised. Abraham chose his prospects in a distant country, rather than his possessions in the country of his father; and, in the prosecution of this choice, did he abandon the latter, and plainly declare, by all his subsequent doings, that he was seeking and making progress towards the former. And a believer nowadays, is not only persuaded that he has heaven for the acceptance of it; but he actually accepts, and, in so doing, he, like the father of the faithful, makes a preference between two objects which stand in competition before him. The man who chooses heaven rather than earth, chooses what is essentially characteristic of heaven, rather than what is essentially characteristic of earth; or, in other words, he makes choice of the piety of heaven, and the purity of heaven, and the benevolence of heaven. It is not by these that he purchases a place for himself in paradise; but it is by these that he prepares himself both for the doings and for the delights of paradise. It is by these that he brings his taste and his temper into conformity with that which is celestial. It is by these that he becomes a fit recipient for all those sensations of blessedness which are current there. The point at which heaven is accepted as a gift, so far from marking that place in the history of a believer when he gives up his activity because he has now gotten all that he wants, marks the place of his breaking forth on a career of activity—at the entrance of which he was before bound by a spell that no exertion of his could dissipate. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Seeking heaven:*—One told Socrates that he would fain go to Olympus, but he distrusted his sufficiency to go the length of the journey. Socrates said, "Thou walkest every day little or much; continue this walk, forward thy way, and a few days shall bring thee to Olympus." Every day every man takes some pains. Let him bestow that measure of pains in travelling to heaven; and the further he goes the more heart he gets, till at last he enters through the gates into the city." (*T. Adams.*) *Interest in heaven:*—If you expected to make California your home in the next six months, would you not be interested in that country? I once knew an old man whose son went out to Oregon, where he became prosperous, purchased a great farm, and was getting it under magnificent cultivation. He often wrote home to his family about Oregon and his prosperity. By and by he sent for his brother to come out there and live with him; and then he sent for his sister and her husband. One by one, all the boys and their wives, and all the sisters and their husbands, were settled and prospering in Oregon. That old man was far more interested in Oregon than Indiana, where he was born and had lived all his

days. He had many books on Oregon; he studied Oregon, its climate and soil, its increasing population, its commerce and prospects. Presently the son wrote to the old man, "We are coming for you, father." After that the old man was more interested than ever. He talked about Oregon more and more, when he went to visit his neighbours or his neighbours came to visit him; he talked to his farm hands; up and down the streets he talked about Oregon, until some people thought he had well-nigh gone crazy. Do we not often forget that "our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ"? (Phil. iii. 20). Have we not sometimes forgotten that He said, "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 ye may be also"? (John xiv. 1–37). Oh, what interests we have there! (*G. F. Pentecost, D.D.*) *Heaven a country and a city*:—It is a country and it is a city. A country. That thought throws before us at once the great idea of breadth and vastness. As we are passing to the other world, we are not passing to a confined sphere, but to one where there will be wide places for the powers of every man and of every woman called to unite in the work of that land, wide places for all to exercise their power, and for all to dwell in it. It is a city. It is not a lonely place, but a place of society. It is a city: it is not an undefended place, but a place with its walls and bulwarks, and eternal fences. It is a city: it is not a place built by chance and without arrangement, but a place built upon a plan. It is a city that hath a builder and a maker; that is, as we should say in our modern language, both an architect and a builder. The word translated "builder" means the architect who builds the structure first within his soul before it is ever built outside. An oration, a sermon, a grand scheme, or a palace, is in the first place produced within the soul of a man, and there it stands, and grows, and shines, perhaps far nobler than it ever does in the outer world. And so that city has its Architect, the great God; for, in what He would delight in the midst of His own, in what He Himself would dwell, where His children should be housed, in what streets the princes of God should walk, in what abbey the multitudes of the happy should assemble, and with what defences and adornments the city of the Great King should shine upon the eyes of His own for ever, He formed this first, and then He made it. Both architect and constructor is God; and that city and that country are His country and His city. (*W. Arthur, M.A.*)

Vers. 15, 16. **If they had been mindful of that country.**—*The past and the future*:—I. THE FEELINGS OF A SAINT IN REFERENCE TO THE PAST. "And truly if they be mindful of that country, from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned." That is to say, the believing man has not forgotten the past; the past has not become a blank to him—his home, his country, his kindred, his honours, his comforts—all these are remembered. Moses remembered Egypt, Abraham remembered Chaldea; but though remembered, these things were not regretted—they were no longer coveted. It is not with us as with Lot's wife, casting a longing look behind. There is no looking back for the purpose of return; our face is steadfastly set to go up to Jerusalem. We are often tempted to think of returning, and to repent our departure, but we yield not for a moment. We rejoice in the separation, we would not have it otherwise. II. THE FEELINGS OF A SAINT IN REFERENCE TO THE FUTURE. "Now they desire a better kingdom, that is, an heavenly" (ver. 16). The believing man desires a better country; he says, I must have something better, higher, heavenlier, than anything which I have hitherto possessed. Nothing else can content me, or fill this soul of mine. His faith has taken hold of the promises—it is to him the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. And with his faith his heart has gone up, to fix itself upon the things above; he cannot stay below. It is not that there is a continued compulsion forcing upon him the consideration of things to come; it is the necessity of his new nature which thus brings him irresistibly into connection with the things of God. III. THE RECOMPENSE OF FAITH. "Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city." God might well have been ashamed of them, for what was there in them that deserved His notice, far less such a recompense as this? Little indeed, yet that little He delights in. The special thing, because of which He is not ashamed, is their walk of faith, for the connection of this statement with the previous verse manifestly is intended to bring out this. They trusted His bare promise just as Abraham did when he forsook Chaldea for an unknown inheritance. And this trusting the bare promise, without a sign or token given, so honours God that because of it He rejoices

to be called their God. Such is the reward of faith that throws itself entirely upon God, and takes His promise as its all. And now let us learn these three things in reference to what faith does. 1. It turns our back upon the world, and draws us out of Egypt, nor does it allow us to think of returning. Remember what that world is that you profess to have left, and remember that in leaving it you severed links between you and it never to be replaced. 2. Faith keeps our face towards the kingdom. Our desires go upward to the better, even the heavenly, country. 3. Faith realises the kind of recompense and lives upon it. It not merely receives the truth that there is a recompense, but it realises that recompense, and sees that it is just such a recompense as meets our case, and makes up for the very things that we were called upon to relinquish when we left Egypt. We are strangers here, dwelling in tents; faith realises a city, as our abode hereafter, and such a city as earth has not seen—the New Jerusalem, a city provided for us by God. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) **They desire a better country.**—*Longing for heaven:*—I. THE CONDITION OF THE CHRISTIAN IN THIS WORLD IS GOOD. Implied in the word "better." 1. His sufferings are good. (1) They make us resemble Christ. (2) They teach us to depend upon God. (3) They serve to develop character. The unweeded garden—no flowers. The unpruned tree—little fruit. 2. His privileges are good. (1) A good God. (2) A good book. (3) A good house. (4) Good companionship. (5) Good work. II. THE CONDITION OF THE CHRISTIAN IN THE NEXT WORLD WILL BE SUPERIOR TO THIS. 1. The Christian is to live in the future. (1) His nature is compound—body and spirit. Death is only a change in the mode of being. (2) Life here is incomplete. (3) The affections imply a future state. Love is of God, and God is eternal. (4) The resurrection of Jesus Christ. "The First-Begotten from the dead." The life of the Christian in the future will be glorious. (1) No sorrows. (2) Better privileges. (*a*) Fellowship with Christ without an intervening medium. (*b*) Uninterrupted companionship with the perfect good. (*c*) Engagement in perfect service. More strength. A pure soul in a perfect body. Boundless sphere of activity. III. THE SUPERIORITY OF THE FUTURE TO THE PRESENT CREATES IN THE CHRISTIAN A WISH TO ENTER UPON IT. 1. The nature of the desire. A wish for something not in possession. This feeling is quite consistent with consecration to work here, and yet so much stronger as ever to be rising above it and triumphing over it. No ordinary attainment. 2. The influence of the desire. (1) In relation to the world. (*a*) There should be no needless accumulation of temporal things. (*b*) There should be no complaint if we do not possess much of them. (*c*) Our chief enjoyment should not be found in using them. (*d*) We should be prepared to leave them. (2) In relation to afflictions. Christians expect trials—prepares for them—hopes for better times. (3) In relation to bereavement and death. Only a change. On Albert Durer's tombstone is engraved—"Emigrated: To be with Christ." When Christmas Evans was dying, he saw the chariot of God come to take him home, and cried out, "Drive on!". (*B. D. Johns.*) *The better country:*—I. THE STATE OF SOUL HERE SPECIFIED. "They desire." That word denotes an ardent longing for the possession of something which we have not now, but which we may come ultimately to call our own, and when used as here to designate the attitude of a believing soul toward heaven, it is to be noted that it is a positive thing. It is not to be confounded with that dislike of the evils of the present life which is frequently mistaken for it. It is something altogether different from the mere absence of the desire to live, which many foolishly take to be a virtue. One may be repelled from earth without being attracted to heaven, and, indeed, the feelings of many more than himself were described by Voltaire when he said: "I hate life, but I dread death"; yet in neither of these emotions have we anything of that element of positive longing in which desire consists. Similarly we must not suppose that we can use that term to designate that submission to the inevitable which makes a man say, that if he must leave this world, though he would greatly prefer to stay in it, he would rather go to heaven than hell. Even true Christian resignation is not desire. We may bow to the will of God out of reverence to Him, and in the faith that it will somehow be ultimately for the best, and yet there may be no desire that, irrespective of its issue, the thing submitted to should come upon us. Unlike Paul (Phil. i. 23), we have a desire to remain with our friends and our work, but if God so wills we are resigned to depart. Here, there is submission without desire. A feeling quite compatible with great enjoyment, and activity in the present life, and yet so much stronger than these as to be evermore rising above them and triumphing over them. II. THE OBJECT TOWARDS WHICH THIS STATE OF HEART IS DIRECTED. "The better land, that is, the heavenly." I waive altogether such curious ques-

tions as those which relate to the locality of heaven. The language of the apostle does not imply that this world is not a goodly land. True, it is sometimes likened to a wilderness, but then it is a wilderness in which God has made streams to flow for us from the rock, and manna to fall for us from the heavens, and through which He is guiding us by the pillar-cloud of His providence and His Spirit. The Christian is happy in this world. What then, to him, are the best things in this world? They are those in which he has the most of Christ, and they may be summed up under these three classes: Christian ordinances, Christian fellowship, and Christian work. In heaven we shall have all these in a higher degree than we have them here, and without the alloy with which they are here mingled, or the drawbacks to which they are here subjected. III. THE INFLUENCE OF THIS DESIRE ON THOSE WHO CHERISH IT. "They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." That confession has a threefold influence. 1. It keeps those who make it from regarding the things of this life as supreme. They do not build themselves into the world, or bound all their aims by the horizon of time. 2. It sustains the Christian under present afflictions. He is willing to put up with privation now, because he knows there is something better in store for him. 3. It gives consolation in bereavement, and joy in death. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *The desire for a better country*:—It may be said that all men have this desire for a better country. How is it, then, that it is the peculiar desire of those who are described to be heroic of faith? We shall find our answer by considering the nature of the true desire. 1. The true Christian's desire is for that which is sovereign in the better country, and that is character. This is the motto over the gate of that heavenly city: Within enters nothing "that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." It is the pure desire for a better country that should be the supreme motive in the Christian's heart. It is a desire to be like our God. The Buddhist has a desire for the extinction of his personal consciousness so that he may be for ever at rest in Nirvana. The Mahammedan desires to reach his ideal paradise. The business man desires success in his business enterprises. But the Christian's desire is for character; and he who desires that desires truly the better country. 2. Then this must be a strong desire, not a mean, lazy, languid wish. The intensity of our desire is measured by an earnest striving, by vigorous working. The Christian shows the true desire to be like God by a living faith in His Son, and by thorough consecration to His service; by fervent prayer to God and by confidence in Christian friends. By these means we are to fit ourselves for the better country. Do you desire to cross the ocean? You enter the steamship and commit yourself to the care of the captain. Do men desire wealth? How they work for it, giving the best years of their life to its accumulation! Or fame? How they strive to attain it! Now, are you willing to work to enter that better country where character is the supreme good? Have you a great and strong desire, a steady and energetic reaching forward of the soul for a character that is ever true and pure? 3. Again, this must be an unselfish desire; a desire which seeks to benefit others as well as self. If a man simply wishes to go himself to this better country, he has not the true desire. He must seek to help others there. Right here is the origin of all missionary work. It is in a desire that the world may enter the heavenly country and have a right to the tree of life. This is the desire for a better country that God approves. This is the desire that Christ had, who tried to lift men to the highest and best life. A desire for this true character will always be accompanied by a desire that all others may rejoice in the same noble character. This is the desire that discriminates character. It is first pure, then mighty, then unselfish. This is like the character of God, seeking to enrich and ennoble man. With this desire comes fortitude, whereby the Christian can stand strong against all foes. Nothing can trouble him then. Fear of death itself is swallowed up; for what is death to one who has this better country in view! It is this desire that builds up character. Show me a lad with a strong purpose ever before him, and I will show you a life that will be crowned with success. It is here that the world has its strongest power over us for evil, in holding us back from the supreme desire for holiness. Out of this desire springs that earnest entreaty that will not let the Spirit go except it bless us. God chooses many ways to keep this motive supreme in our hearts. How often the disappointments and trials of life are used to lead us up to this desire! So the world itself, with all its sadness, its heartbreakings, its open graves, may lead us upward toward the sky. (*R. S. Storrs, D.D.*) *On the hope of heaven*:—I. The desire of this better country TENDS TO ANIMATE US TO MAINTAIN A STRICT AND WATCHFUL ATTENTION TO OURSELVES, that we may not be

misled or ensnared by any of the temptations which surround us. II. The real desire of the better country in heaven TENDS TO INSPIRE US WITH UNAFFECTED LOVE AND MERCY TO THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE, and to dispose us to the habitual exercise of these good affections. III. The desire of future happiness TENDS TO COMPOSE OUR MINDS TO A GENEROUS INDIFFERENCE TOWARDS ALL THE DECEITFUL PLEASURES AND SATISFACTIONS OF THE PRESENT STATE. It disposes us to regard them in no higher a view than as the means of lightening the heaviness of our journey through this world. IV. The earnest desire of heaven WILL DISPOSE OUR MINDS TO A READY COMPLIANCE WITH THE WILL OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE, and to a becoming resignation under all the calamities of the present state. V. The hope of future happiness TENDS MOST EFFECTUALLY TO ARM OUR MINDS AGAINST THE APPROACH OF DEATH, and to extinguish all its terrors. (*John Drysdale, D.D.*) *The better country* :—I. THE CHRISTIAN IN THE EXERCISE OF LIVELY FAITH PRACTICALLY REGARDS HEAVEN AS A REALITY. As faith in man's testimony can make us act as if there was such a place as London, so faith in God's testimony can make us think, and feel, and act, as if there was such a place as heaven. The mind can bring itself under the same conviction that there is a God as that there are such beings as men; the same conviction that God has testified of the invisible realities of another world, as we have that men tell us of things we have never seen; and the same conviction that what God says is reality as we have that what men say is real. When we give up the mind to God's testimony, as we give it up to man's testimony, then we have faith in God—the faith that gives reality to what He testifies. Faith, then, brings heaven to view, opens its gates, and looks in upon its glories. It sees the order, the harmony, the purity, and the joys of blessed spirits made perfect; it sees the Redeemer of men in exaltation there, and God in that fulness of His glory which imparts to heaven its raptures. Earth with heaven thus realised to the mind retires into the background of contemplation, and sinks away into comparative obscurity. II. FAITH LEADS THE CHRISTIAN TO REGARD HEAVEN AS A SATISFYING PORTION. The man of the world looks not beyond this life for happiness. Exclusively devoted to schemes of earthly enjoyment, his cares and desires and efforts centre in their accomplishment. Not so with the Christian. By faith he is led to see by contrast with heaven how vain this world is, and to abandon it as his portion. True, he does not refuse—he gratefully receives—the blessings which Divine goodness provides for him. But then he does not regard them as essential to his happiness. He habitually looks beyond these, and regards his treasure as laid up in another world. The same principle leads him to form a just estimate of the trials of life. Shocks severe to nature may be received; and though not without emotion, yet not with despair, not with repining. He does not feel under the sorest bereavement that all is lost. His sufferings are but the chastisement of a paternal hand, and anything that promotes his fitness for the world of his hopes can be welcomed as a blessing. He seeks a better country. There will be no disappointment. Heaven will afford all the happiness his soul desires. "Already he kens its hills of salvation, where reigns eternal day, and where everlasting spring abides." Gird thyself, then, O my soul! and hold on thy course. Heaven will make ample amends for all the toils and sufferings of the way to it. III. FAITH LEADS TO ARDENT DESIRES AND CHEERFUL EXPECTATIONS OF HEAVENLY HAPPINESS. Amid all the hopes of heavenly happiness cherished in this world, there is but little just conception of the nature of that happiness. All hope to go to heaven when they die, and to be happy there. But few inquire what heaven is, in what its happiness consists, and what qualifies for its enjoyment. Their hope is a vague, undefined hope of deliverance from dreaded evil. It has no warrant but their own wishes—wishes fixed, to say the least, with equal strength on continuance in sin as on exemption from its punishment. Not so with the Christian. Between his taste and the nature of heavenly happiness there is a holy correspondence. Heaven is just such a heaven as he desires and loves to think of. His soul in its affections and tastes accords with the pure and holy joys of that world, and his meditations of them are sweet. The Christian desires heaven as a place of perfect freedom from sin and of perfection in holiness. He looks to it as the place where the rays of the Deity will be softened to his inspection, where, surrounded with His glory, every desire will expire in the bosom of his God, and where, in the triumphs of perfect holiness, God's own blessedness will become the portion of his soul. Inseparable from all this are the desires of the Christian for the society and the employments of heaven with its more particular sources of happiness. The society of that world will be made up of an innumerable company of angels, and of redeemed men from "all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." Of this

bright host of happy spirits he hopes to be one. There, too, he expects to meet all the pious, redeemed from among men—those with whom he has prayed, and suffered, and taken sweet counsel in this vale of tears. There he hopes to be re-united to those pious friends, if such he had—a husband, wife, parent, child—who have gone before or shall come after him; all those who, as labourers together with God, are accomplishing His designs of mercy in this guilty world—all these he hopes to meet as friends and companions for ever. Not less delightful to him is the anticipation of the employments of heaven. These consist in active beneficence and in the pure and perfect worship of God. Remarks: 1. What support under the trials of life has the Christian in the exercise of lively faith? What if the world deceives and disappoints his hopes, heaven is a reality. What if poverty with its evils afflicts and depresses, a rich and a heavenly inheritance is his portion. What if the world afflicts in any shape, how light must appear all its trials with the prospect of eternal glory ever dawning on the soul! 2. We may see why Christians derive so little present consolation from the prospect of future happiness which the Bible reveals. It is not that the reality of such a world is not sufficiently evinced to their understandings—it is not that there is not enough in it as an anticipated possession to gladden every step of their earthly pilgrimage. It is that their affections are still so strongly fixed on the world that their conceptions of happiness are in such a degree confined to the enjoyments which earth can give. With such a state of mind it is impossible that they should see heaven in that aspect of reality, and of course with those desires and expectations which elevate the soul above this world. 3. The Christian desires heaven as the world in which God's glory—His capacity to bless His moral creation—will be fully displayed. There all that is comprehensive in the wisdom of God shall be revealed, without a cloud to obscure it, in the view of the happy beings assembled to behold it. There the glory of His power is seen in removing every evil—in creating every good—in enlarging the capacity of creatures for purer and higher joys—in lavishing to bless, the wonders of Omnipotence upon them. There the glories of His justice shall shine as the pledge and security of the everlasting perfection of the holy. There the holiness of God in all its lustre will beam forth to illuminate every mind and transform it into His own image from glory to glory. There will be seen the glory of His goodness, telling all in the ecstasies of heaven that "God is love." In a word, there all the attributes of the Deity are fully expressed; the glory scattered throughout the universe will be collected as in a sun, making that world the scene of His glories. And there, with an emphasis which the reality only can give to the inspired thought, it will be seen and felt by all in heaven that "God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city." (*N. W. Taylor, D.D.*) *Heaven a better country*:—I. THE COUNTRY REFERRED TO. "A better country, that is an heavenly." Sometimes heaven is described as a city—a kingdom—a temple—an inheritance. In the text it is called a country, doubtless in allusion to the country of Canaan, which was a striking type of the heavenly rest. 1. It is a more exalted country. The most glorious part of the Creation. 2. It is a more holy country. No sin within its happy territories. 3. It is a more healthful country. No bodily, no mental, no spiritual afflictions there. 4. It is a more happy country. Sources of disquietude, grief, and pain, unfeared and unknown. 5. A more abiding country. Not to be pilgrims, but residents. 6. It is a better country, as it is the region of perfection and of consummate glory. Perfect capacities—perfect enjoyments—perfect security—perfect employments. Bliss unchanging and unchangeable. II. BELIEVERS DESIRE THIS BETTER COUNTRY. 1. They have secured a title to it. By faith in Christ Jesus they are accepted of God, are His children, and if children, then heirs, &c. 2. They are labouring for a meetness to enjoy it. 3. They labour and pray for it. 4. They converse of it, and live in the hope of its eternal enjoyment. Application: 1. Encourage believers to go forward, diligently, with cheerfulness, until an abundant entrance is administered unto them through the gates into the city. 2. Endeavour to persuade the thoughtless children of this vain world to become interested in matters relative to their immortal welfare, and to seek this better country. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *The better country*:—I. ITS NAME (Rev. ii. 7). II. ITS LOCALITY (Psa. cxl. 13). III. ITS CLIMATE (Isa. xxxiii. 24). IV. ITS PRODUCTIONS (Rev. xxii. 2). V. ITS EXTENT (Luke xiv. 27). VI. ITS SECURITY (Deut. xxxiii. 28). (*Homilist.*) *Heaven the country of the Christian's desire*:—I. THE REVELATION CONCERNING HEAVEN. 1. A heavenly place. Habitation of God. 2. A state. II. IN WHAT RESPECTS IS IT A BETTER COUNTRY THAN THIS? 1. It is a sinless country. 2. It is a healthful country. 3. It is a country inhabited by perfect

beings. 4. It is a country of better enjoyments. III. THE DESIRE WHICH ALL TRUE BELIEVERS HAVE FOR ITS POSSESSION. Others may wish, but the true Christian really desires it. This desire—1. Is formed in regeneration, Born for and from above. New nature tends upwards. 2. Is cultivated by sanctifying grace. Growing in grace is growing in meetness, &c. 3. Is heightened by spiritual visits to it. He ascends in prayer, in faith, in hope. 4. Is exhibited in holy diligence to obtain it. He labours to enter; he gives all diligence. Application: 1. This better country is offered to all who will set out on the heavenly pilgrimage. 2. How truly blest are all the children of the heavenly Zion. 3. There is a worse country, the world of woe, of darkness, of despair, of endless death. Flee from it now. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *The better country*:—I. A LAND OF LIFE. The glorious company of the redeemed who inhabit that country shall never be broken up. The fear of death shall never cast a shade upon their happiness to all eternity. The life that is the portion of all who dwell there is pure, perfect, unmingled with a single taint of evil. II. A LAND OF REST. What your fireside is to you after a long and busy day, when every bone is aching; what home is to a soldier, soiled, and worn out after a long campaign; or to a sailor, after a long, a perilous voyage—all this, and infinitely more, is "the rest that remaineth" to the child of God at the close of his pilgrimage. The better country, where this rest will be enjoyed, is not, however, a land of idleness. It will be, I believe, a land of manifold and ceaseless activity. Every power will find full scope and constant employment, but, without any hindrance, opposition, or drawback from within or without, without any weakness or imperfection, will find rest in activity. III. A LAND OF PLENTY. How much of our time and strength here is consumed in procuring the means to buy food and raiment! Most men need the stimulus of want to make them work; and this stimulus it is which swells the ceaseless tide of emigrants from our own to distant climes. Is it not a blessed thought, that in the better country we shall be freed from these earthly cares? IV. THE LAND OF EVERLASTING REUNIONS. (*John Kelly.*) *Heavenly-mindedness*:—1. I shall first desire you to consider the nature and the magnitude of that bliss which is reserved for good men in that better country towards which they are tending. It is to consist in seeing and knowing God, in being made better acquainted with His ways and works and the wonders of the Creation—in the highest intellectual and moral improvements—in better opportunities of being extensively useful—in living and reigning with Christ, and sharing in that glory to which He is raised as our Redeemer. But what most deserves our attention with respect to this happiness is, that it will be eternal in its duration. This makes the value of it properly infinite. Through boundless ages we are to be improving and rising under the eye and care of the Almighty. I must add that we have reason to depend on this happiness as certain to be enjoyed. God, who cannot lie, has promised it to us, and His Son came into the world to acquire the power of recovering us from death and of introducing us to it. Think now what a happiness this is. Need I ask you whether it does not invite or demand your warmest ambition and wishes? 2. In order to render ourselves more sensible of this, let us compare with it the happiness we enjoy in this world, and the circumstances of imperfection that attend the present state. It is an infant and probationary state. Our faculties being not yet fully opened, and our situation not admitting of our looking far into the Creation, we understand nothing fully. Difficulties obstruct us in our inquiries, and distressing doubts often perplex us. The present state is also a state in which we are subject to much trouble; and dangers surround us in it, against which we are obliged to be perpetually on our guard. But what is worst of all is, that the present world is a wicked world. It exhibits to us a sad scene of guilt and degeneracy. Again, this life is of short duration. Were our happiness in it ever so great, the time for enjoying it is short. Such is the present state. What then is it when viewed in competition with that which I have before described? Can we prefer darkness to light, tumult to quietness, and slavery to liberty? 3. I am led from hence to observe that an earthly-minded temper is low and sordid, but that the contrary temper confirms the highest dignity and honour. Not to aim at the perfection we are made for—to suffer ourselves to creep on the earth, though capable of aspiring to heaven—what can be more base? Heaven is your home, there let your affections be. Heaven is your country, there let your desires tend. Be not so cruel to yourselves as to suffer any temptation to turn off your attention from your best and highest good. Be not so ungrateful to God, as, notwithstanding His goodness in designing you for a glorious immortality, to declare by your actions that you care not for it. 4. I would point out to you the advantages, with respect to our

present interest, which will attend such a temper as I am recommending. The worst that can happen to us here will appear trifling to one who considers with a lively faith that our present afflictions, which are for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Heavenly-mindedness, therefore, will give the best support under afflictions. Amidst the storms of this world it places us in the situation of a person elevated to the upper regions of the air, who there sees the clouds spread at his feet, and hears the thunder roar below him. 5. In the next place it should be considered that heavenly-mindedness will be one of the best proofs of our fitness for heaven and title to it. If you would know where your treasure is, you must inquire where your hearts are. 6. Lastly, let me set before you the particular obligations we are under, as Christ's disciples, to cultivate heavenly-mindedness. The design of the gospel is to draw off our affections from things temporal. It teaches us that we are strangers and pilgrims, and therefore commands us to abstain from fleshly lusts. (*R. Price, D.D.*) *The better country* :—I. HEAVEN IS A PLACE OF FREEDOM FROM ALL EVIL. No sin, and therefore no suffering. What a "better" world this would be if both were at an end, and God's will done as it is done in heaven. Wars would cease; national and individual animosities; tyranny and anarchy; intemperance and every form of vice; heathenism and superstition, with their manifold horrors—all would disappear, and Divine love and peace would rule in every heart. II. HEAVEN IS THE CHRISTIAN'S HOME AND FATHERLAND. III. HEAVEN IS THE CHRISTIAN'S PROMISED INHERITANCE. God's people have an heritage (Psa. lxi. 5); they enjoy an earnest of it here, but wait for full possession till they enter on their majority. 1. Its nature, "Incorruptible." 2. Its splendour. It is a "mansion" —which indicates its stability as well as its grandeur. 3. Its extent may be inferred from many passages of Scripture. IV. HEAVEN WILL BE THE FULFILMENT OF MAN'S DESIRE FOR PERFECTED LIFE AND IMMORTALITY. (*John Douglas.*) *Heaven desirable* :—No one cries when children, long absent from their parents, go home. Vacation morning is a jubilee. But death is the Christian's vacation morning. School is out. It is time to go home. It is surprising that one should wish life here, who may have life in heaven. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Ready for death* :—The Christian, at his death, should not be like the child, who is forced by the rod to quit his play, but like one who is wearied of it, and willing to go to bed. Neither ought he to be like the mariner, whose vessel is drifted by the violence of the tempest from the shore, tossed to and fro upon the ocean, and at last suffers wreck and destruction; but like one who is ready for the voyage, and, the moment the wind is favourable, cheerfully weighs anchor, and, full of hope and joy, launches forth into the deep. (*Gotthold.*) *Detaching—attaching* :—Are you not very conscious of the detaching power of sorrow? Ah! but it is attaching too—only the attaching to things not seen. (*F. R. Havergal.*) *Desiring heaven* :—It is said of Tully, when he was banished from Italy, and of Demosthenes, when he was banished from Athens, that they wept every time they looked towards their own country; and is it strange that a poor deserted believer should mourn every time he looks heavenward? *The hope of heaven* :—What has been the great, and what is now one of the strongest and most influential powers or motives in the human heart? A desire to find some better place, some lovelier spot, than we now have. For what does the tradesman toil? For what does the physician practise? For what does man hope at the decline and the close of life? Some sheltered nook, some quiet spot, where, if he cannot have a rest that will never be moved, he may have, at least, a foretaste and foreshadow of it. What was it that carried Columbus across the western wave, amid insubordination within his ship, and the unexpectedly wild waves that roared and curled around and without? What sustained him on the unsound sea, amid the untraversed waste of waters? The hope of a better country. What was it that sustained the hearts of the Pilgrim Fathers, when, driven forth from this land by stern ecclesiastical persecution, they went to the far distance, and across the western wave, and feared not the iron-bound coast or the rugged and unknown territory on which they set foot? It was the hope and prospect of a better, even a free and peaceful country. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *Heaven better than earth* :—There is light without darkness, joy without grief, desire without punishment, love without sadness, satiety without loathing, safety without fear, health without disease, and life without death. (*J. Quarles.*) *Scripture better understood in heaven* :—Heaven is the more desirable, because there I shall better understand the Scriptures than here I can ever hope to do. To leave my Bible, and go to the God and heaven which the Bible reveals, will be no other-

wise my loss than to leave the picture for the presence of my friend. (*R. Baxter.*) *The joy of the better country*:—He (Rev. W. Marsh, D.D.) told us of Mr. Simeon's mode of describing a Christian's death. "Who are you?" (looking back). "Sorrow." "And who are you?" "Sighing." Then stretching his hands upward—"And who are you?" "Joy." "And who are you?" "Gladness." "Then, farewell, Sorrow, farewell, Sighing; Joy and Gladness, I will go with you!" (*Miss Marsh.*) *What is heaven?*—Four elements enter into the Christian conception of the blessed life. 1. That of rest from the anxiety and care, the strife and pain of our present existence; but, as Baxter says, not "the rest of a stone," or as a later theologian, Dr. Strong, writes, "A rest consistent with service, an activity without weariness, a service which is perfect freedom." This is one of the earliest and is also one of the most current modes of representing heaven. 2. Next comes the idea of fellowship with and conformity to Christ, and all that is Christly; the actualising of the ideal of life and character, involving a progress in knowledge, in goodness, in gentleness, in purity, and in love. Paul and Bernard, Luther and Wesley were gladdened and sustained in heroic and self-sacrificing service by the anticipation of such an eternal life. 3. Emerson tells the story of a woman coming from a midland town to the sea, and exclaiming, "Thank God, at last I have seen something of which there is enough." A similar gratitude seems to have been inspired by the visions of the endless life given to men. At its best our earthly life is partial, fragmentary, broken and splintered; but that is a perfect whole, a complete unity, a joy-giving harmony. The apostles John and Paul, and the Puritan, John Howe, represent hosts of yearning spirits that have felt the spell of the complete life of the heavenly world. 4. But no statement of Christian opinion concerning heaven would be true that left out the expectation of service, "His servants do Him service." Pascal did not hesitate to assert that the want of occupation for our moral energies in the future would turn heaven into hell. Maurice, on being told his lifework was ended, said, "If I may not preach here I may preach in other worlds." On Mr. Dobney's tombstone is the affirmation, "He hath obtained a better ministry." One phase of that manifold service is illustrated in the history of the doctrine of Christ's descent into Hades. Christian interpreters of the second and nineteenth centuries have clung to the idea that the activities of Christians in the eternal state will be directed to the revelation of Christ to those who have passed out of this life without enjoying the privilege of attaining to that highest knowledge. Peter, Irenæus, Martensen, Delitzsch, Luckock, and many others might be cited in support of this position. I only mention this as one item in the evidence, showing that the dominant conception of eternity amongst enlightened Christians is not that of "idleness and uselessness." (*J. Clifford, D.D.*) *A bright change*:—An aged Christian, living in the poor-house, while conversing with a minister, showed signs of much joy. As a reason for it, she said, "Oh, sir! I was just thinking what a change it will be from the poorhouse to heaven!" (*New Cyclopædia of Illustrations.*) *New senses may be developed in heaven*:—It does not seem unphilosophical to anticipate that with the new mode of existence, new organs of sense will be developed, in nature and numbers beyond conjecture, opening to our knowledge glorious phases and phenomena of the material universe, which we, now endowed with only five senses, are at present unable to perceive. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) *Enlarged abilities in heaven*:—Sir William Hamilton makes the following quotation from one of Voltaire's Philosophical Romances: "Tell me, says Micromegas, an inhabitant of one of the planets of the Dog Star, to the secretary of the Academy of Sciences, in the planet Saturn, at which he had recently arrived in a journey through the heavens, "Tell me how many senses have the men on your globe?" "We have seventy-two senses," answered the academician, "and we are every day complaining of the smallness of the number. Our imagination goes far beyond our wants. What are seventy-two senses? And how pitiful a boundary, even for beings of such limited perceptions, to be cooped up within our ring and our five moons. In spite of our curiosity, and in spite of as many passions as can result from six dozen senses, we find our hours hang very heavily on our hands, and can always find time enough for yawning." "I can very well believe it," says Micromegas, "for in our globe we have very near one thousand senses; and yet, with all these, we feel continually a sort of listless inquietude and vague desire, which are ever telling us that we are nothing, and that there are beings infinitely nearer perfection." (*Lectures on Metaphysics.*) *Heaven to be desired*:—In the reign of Queen Mary a man named Palmer was condemned to die. He was

earnestly persuaded to recant, and among other things, a friend said to him, "Take pity on thy golden years and pleasant flowers of youth before it is too late." His beautiful reply was, "Sir, I long for those springing flowers which shall never fade away." **Not ashamed to be called their God.**—*The law of righteousness in God governs His will*:—We perceive here a reference to these two ideas. First, that there belongs to God the perfection of moral character—the character which we denote when we say that He loves righteousness and hates wickedness. And secondly, that He exhibits this character, by acting in a public capacity, in the view of the moral universe, who will be constituted, if I may so speak, the judges of His acts. As thus lying open to the knowledge and the judgment of all moral beings, He is not ashamed to be called the Rewarder of the men of faith and of righteousness. I. THERE IS IN GOD THE BASIS OF A TRULY RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER. There belongs to Him the reality of righteousness in its highest perfection. In order to mean anything by this language, we must understand it to assert that He possesses in the highest measure the character which we denote by the word righteousness, when we apply it to men. There is in God the same rule of moral judgment which we find in ourselves. The law of righteousness in God is no more the creation of His will than the law of righteousness in man is the creation of man's will. The law of righteousness in God as much governs the acts of His will as the law of righteousness in man is required to govern the acts of man's will. We thus make the foundations of moral truth the great law of righteousness, independent of any will whatever. We lodge them in the eternal Divine nature; in the necessary being and perfection of God; that perfection which belongs to Him as the Possessor, independently of His will, of all moral ideas. This is the only way in which we can think of God with a becoming reverence. Thus alone can we give significance to the question of Abraham: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" II. LET US NEXT CONTEMPLATE GOD AS ACTING IN A PUBLIC CAPACITY, IN THE VIEW OF HIS CREATURES, AND EXHIBITING TO THEM HIS MORAL PERFECTION. In this way He constitutes His creatures, in some sort, the judges of His acts. Of course, I cannot mean that He renders Himself amenable to any partial and prejudiced judgments of His creatures, or that He encourages in any way a presumptuous and self-confident spirit on the part of men. But I mean, that in proportion as we and other mortal beings will judge broadly and wisely, according to the best light we can get, and the best opportunities which our growing experience and observation may supply, both we and they shall see the ever-accumulating proofs of His perfect moral character. We have, then, in the text a two-fold argument to show that God, in His public capacity as moral Governor and Judge, will deal righteously with all His creatures. The argument is drawn conjointly from the law of righteousness in God, and from the relation in which He has placed Himself to the moral universe. As a moral Governor, He stands pledged to all other moral beings to administer His government over each and all of them according to the rules of perfect wisdom and righteousness. In the word righteousness we include also every consistent manifestation of goodness. We will illustrate this double security for the perfection of the Divine administration, by referring to some of the ways in which God acts publicly, in the view of His creatures, and thus gives them an opportunity of judging His acts. Everything in His treatment of moral agents belongs here. But we will now confine ourselves to the view of Him, first, as rewarding the righteous, and secondly, as punishing the wicked; for we shall thus embrace somewhat of His previous conduct towards both classes. God, we are told, will render to every man according to His deeds. There is included in the idea of rewards and of punishments a reference to the particular character and conduct of each one, and a like reference to the means and opportunities enjoyed by each for ascertaining his duty and forming his character aright. Now, in relation to those whom He will accept as His children, and admit to His fellowship and favour, the language and spirit of our text justify us in saying that He will make an open exhibition of His perfect righteousness, mingled suitably with His goodness and mercy. We may be confident that He will reward nothing but virtue, and we can further tell in what the reward will consist. It will be no mere arbitrary exaltation, nothing which is not in due proportion and correspondence to the righteous character itself. All this we may conclude from the fact that the righteous Rewarder of men will make a public illustration of His own character in assigning the rewards. He will do nothing in the way of favouritism; everything will be determined by the rules of moral fitness. So also with the retributions which may overtake the

wicked. All these will be determined by the rules of moral fitness. There will be nothing in their nature and severity, and nothing in their duration, which the Scriptures speak of as eternal, to which the enlightened conscience of the moral universe will not respond. (*D. N. Sheldon, D.D.*) *God not ashamed to be called His people's God*:—Doctrine I. THAT HOWEVER MEAN AND LOW THOSE BE WHO HAVE FORSAKEN THIS WORLD FOR GOD, LOOKING FOR A BETTER, GOD IS NOT ASHAMED OF THEM, OR ON THEIR PART, TO BE CALLED THEIR GOD. 1. To explain the import of this their privilege. It imports—(1) That He is their God, how mean soever their lot be. Whatever they want they have Him for their God (Heb. viii. 10). But what can persons make of this in the want of earthly enjoyments? We answer, They may make all of it that is necessary to full contentment of heart (Hab. iii. 17, 18). Full protection, full provision, for time and eternity, there is nothing more can be needed (Psa. cxlii. 5). (2) That He takes such a pleasure in them, and puts such an honour on them, that though the world should cast out their name as evil, He surnames Himself by them, and brings their name into His (Matt. xvii. 32). (3) That He allows them to call Him their own God (John xx. 28). (4) That He allows them to depend on Him as their God, and to improve their relation to Him for all which they need; whoever casts them off, or refuses to help them, God will never put off His people with names, without the things signified by these names. If He is called their God, He will own His name in effect and reality; and indeed be a God to them, to all the intents and purposes of the covenant (Gen. xvii. 7). (5) That He will own Himself to be their God before the world, whoever disown them. (6) That He reckons it His honour to be their God, even though men should be ashamed to rub shoulders with them (Isa. xlvi. 13; 2 Cor. viii. 23). 2. To give the reasons of the point. Among other reasons, there are the following: (1) Because they have embraced Him in the covenant, for their all, in opposition to the world, and all that is therein; which shows a nobleness of spirit in them, the certain product of His own Spirit. (2) Because they quit the world's certainty for Divine hope, and trust Him for an unseen portion to themselves, as preferable to all that the world can afford, believing He will glorify His all-sufficiency and His faithfulness in the promise, laying all their weight upon them (Rom. iv. 20, 21). (3) Because they can take up with nothing less than a God for their portion, by which they discover a peculiar elevation of spirit, the effect of Divine grace (Phil. iii. 8). (4) Because, in their way and walk, they are of a character distinguished from the men of the world (Phil. iii. 18–21). They dare not take the way of the world, their souls hate it, as being opposite to the manners of the country to which they are going. 3. Improve this point. Hence, see—(1) That carnal worldlings are none of those whose God the Lord is (Matt. vi. 24). (2) That such as having weighed all things, have forsaken the world for God, and fixed their desires on Him and the better world, intent to be there whatever their lot in this world be; and to enjoy God in Christ as their God and portion, however small their portion be of this world's good things; they may be sure God is their God, and He will own it, though, by reason of the weakness of their faith, they have much ado to plead it. (3) That God is worthy to be chosen for our God in covenant; and therefore I exhort you to make choice of Him for your all, and give up with the world henceforth, that ye may be pilgrims and strangers in it. Doctrine II. THAT WHATEVER HARDSHIPS HIS PEOPLE MAY SUFFER FOR HIS SAKE, HE IS NOT ASHAMED ON HIS PART TO BE CALLED THEIR GOD, HAVING PREPARED FOR THEM THE HEAVENLY CITY, WHICH WILL MAKE UP ALL LOSSES. 1. To show in what respects the heavenly city is prepared for the pilgrims who have forsaken this world for God, looking for a better. (1) In respect of eternal destination in the decree of election before the world was made (Matt. xxv. 34). (2) In respect of purchase, by the sufferings and death of Christ. It is therefore called the purchased possession (Eph. i. 13). (3) In respect of possession taken of it already in their name, by our Lord Jesus entering into it, as a public person, at His ascension (Heb. vi. 20). (4) In respect of readiness to receive them in their own persons. 2. To give the reasons of the point—(1) Because the happiness of the city, if they were once come there, will more than balance all the hardships in their pilgrimage that they had to undergo for His sake. Why should He be ashamed to be called their God, be their lot in the world as bad as it can be? The glory of the city will more than balance all the contempt, reproach, &c. (2) Because they are not far from the city. They will soon be there (Psa. xc. 10). (3) Because in the meantime there is a communication betwixt them and this city, so that the whole of what they need may come from it. (4)

Because the very faith and hope, which they entertain as to this city, is sufficient to support them under all their hardships (2 Cor. iv. 17, 18). 3. To improve this point. It serves—(1) To pour shame on the wisdom and way of the world. And this—(*a*) In that they reckon it wisdom not to quit a seen advantage for an unseen one, certainty (as they call it) for hope (Psa. iv. 6). (*b*) In that they are ready to be ashamed of God's people, because of the hardships they are laid under in their pilgrimage through the world. This their way is their folly; for whatever their lot be God is not their God and portion. (2) Serves to instruct in several duties, those who profess to be pilgrims in the world, and to have taken God for their God, looking for a better world. Such as—(*a*) Be not ashamed of Him, to be called His people (Mark viii. 38). (*b*) Be not ye a shame and dishonour to Him, by your cleaving to the world, and the way of the world (Rom. ii. 24). (*c*) Do not decline the hardest piece of the doing-work of religion for Him. Engage in the whole without exception. Have respect to all His commandments (Psa. cxix. 6). (*d*) Shift not the Cross of Christ, but be ready to suffer for Him as He may call you (2 Tim. ii. 12). (*e*) Walk like the expectants of heaven, citizens of the city above prepared for you by your God. This city will far more than compensate for your sufferings, for all the difficult and hard steps ye may have in your way thither. (*f*) Spend the time of your sojourning in making ready, and preparing for that city which the Lord has prepared for His people. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *Man's true nobility*:—This stretching forth of the soul's hand after a heavenly country is man's patent of nobility. God might be ashamed of the poor grovelling thing which, having intellect, having reason, having a heart and a soul, can rest in things seen. God might be ashamed of the creature that is satisfied with the created, and finds in human honour and human love the fulfilment of capacities capable of the everlasting. But God is not, cannot be, ashamed of the creature that feels itself on earth an exile and a sojourner; feels that it hath here neither citizenship nor yet abiding-place; feels that nothing can satisfy but the Spring and Source of Being; feels that "with Him is the fountain of life, and that in His light alone it can ever see light." He is "not ashamed" of these, "to be surnamed"—to add to His other titles of glory and Deity, the appellation, self-chosen, "God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob." "Not ashamed," and He proved it—"for He prepared for them"—there is no "hath" in the Greek—"prepared" for them, that is, in the eternity that is behind—prepared for them when the "foundations" of the everlasting "city" were laid before the world was—"He prepared for them" in that invisible past a "city." Not a "country" alone, which they might recognise as their natal and ante-natal home; but a state and a polity too, which is more than a place, more than a dwelling—having laws also, and institutions, and citizens—even that "kingdom" of God Himself, which is the revelation of Christ in the gospel. (*Dean Vaughan.*) **He hath prepared for them a city.**—*Heaven prepared for the righteous*:—I. GOD HAS PREPARED FOR HIS PEOPLE A FUTURE AND HEAVENLY HABITATION. 1. Divine revelation brings immortality to light. 2. That the God of our salvation has prepared a city of habitation for the saints beyond the grave, appears evidently from the design of our Saviour's sufferings, and the infinite merit of His atoning sacrifice. His blood was the price paid for their heavenly inheritance, and by dying He obtained their eternal redemption. 3. As our Lord Jesus Christ, by the shedding of His own blood, has purchased the heavenly inheritance for His people, so His resurrection from the dead is a sure pledge of their eternal triumphs over death and the grave. 4. That there remains a city of habitation prepared for the righteous in Christ, may be proved from many plain promises of Scripture, given by Him who cannot lie, and yielding strong consolation to those who have fled to the Saviour. II. CONTEMPLATE THAT FUTURE ABODE OF THE SAINTS AS A BETTER AND AN HEAVENLY CITY. 1. This comparison of heaven to a city prepared for the righteous, includes rest from all the fatigues of their journey. 2. A city also implies society and fellowship, and leads forward our contemplations to the happy intercourse of the glorified above. 3. This comparison of heaven to a city implies safety and privilege. 4. Finally, heaven is styled a city, to distinguish it from the tents in which travellers lodge for a night, and to denote the perpetuity of future happiness. III. How important it is for all those who expect heaven, TO LIVE EVERY DAY UNDER THE LIVELY IMPRESSIONS AND PROSPECTS OF THE FUTURE AND BETTER WORLD. 1. The first advantage is increasing sanctification. They are excited to holiness by the powerful consideration, that without it no man can see the Lord. 2. The expectation of heaven promotes the Christian's patience and tranquillity of spirit. 3. The believing expectation of heaven promotes the

Christian's triumph and joy, amidst the depressing events of life. (*A. Bonar.*) *The city of God, the true object of faith always and everywhere:*—The first outline of that future city of God was suggested to Abraham's mind by the words of promise: "I will bless thee, . . . and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." The hope held out to him was a hope, in which not he only, nor his descendants only, but all the families of the earth, were interested. The prospect was vague, but large. Its largeness was its glory. Its power to elevate grew out of this. The city of God, you will readily see, is another name for the kingdom of God; or, more exactly, both are names for the same eternal reality. Only the two names present the same thing to us under two somewhat different aspects. The phrase, "The Kingdom of God," suggests at once the thought of the king and his royal rule, its righteousness, its wholesome severity, its abounding all-embracing love. The phrase, "The city of God," suggests not so much this, as the thought of organisation, that which is described in the twelfth chapter of the Epistle, as the "General assembly and Church of the first-born enrolled in heaven"; each citizen, and each group of citizens, having an appointed place in the vast organism, a work to do, a function to discharge. It is not difficult to see with what ennobling power this thought must have come to the soul of Abraham: I, then—even I—insignificant atom of humanity that I am; I, and my descendants have a place in this great city, whose Constructor is the great God Himself. We are links in the vast chain, which reaches from the hoar past to the boundless future. It is for us to receive and transmit the Divine blessing. But if I have estimated Abraham's vision of the city of God with any correctness whatever, we can hardly fail to confess how lamentably imperfect our own vision of that eternal city too often is: especially in that we think of our own relation to that city, as possible citizens of it, in the future after death; but do not think of it, as that to which we belong now, as truly as we shall belong to it hereafter; and as that, in which all men have the liveliest interest along with ourselves. Thus we are ever in danger of losing out of our field of view the very elements of life and power, which wrought so mightily for good upon the soul of Abraham. And, in so far as this is the case, we miss the regenerating influences which came to him through his faith in that city. It will be a blessed thing for our religion, when we learn to substitute for our own vague natural notions about heaven and about going to heaven when we die, the true Scriptural conceptions of the city and the kingdom of God. It is no easy matter to do this. The magnitude and grandeur of the Scriptural ideas overpower and awe us. We shrink from them into something slighter, nearer, more trivial and commonplace. But the Bible will never have justice done to it—will never exercise its full native power upon us to elevate and heal; until, instead of reading our own notions into it, as we are so apt to do, we learn to receive by steady, docile contemplation the thoughts which it was designed to impress upon us. Meanwhile, we can at least be sensible of our ignorance, and open our hearts humbly to further light. There is no reason why, from this moment forwards, we should not recognise and bow before the vastness and the mystery of that kingdom and city and heavenly country, to which by our spirits we even now belong, and in which we may, even now and here, become loyal and obedient citizens. Then will that city of God begin to exercise its natural attraction upon us. It will draw us upwards out of our selfish, sinful nature; just as it drew Abraham, and Jacob, and Joseph, and the long line of saints, and heroes, commemorated in this muster-roll of the great and good. It will be true of us, as of them: "God is not ashamed to be called their God." (*D. J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Heaven purchased:*—Like as if a man were assured that there were made for him a great purchase in Spain or Turkey, so that, if he would but come thither, he might enjoy it, he would adventure the dangers of the sea, and of enemies also, if need were, that he might come to his own; even so, seeing that Christ Jesus hath made a purchase for us in heaven, and there is nothing required of us but that we will come and enjoy it, we ought to refuse no pains or fear in the way, but carefully strive to get it. (*Cawdray.*) *Heaven, what it is:*—A scoffing infidel of considerable talents, being once in the company of a person of slender intellect, but of genuine piety, and supposing, no doubt, that he should obtain an easy triumph in the display of his ungodly wit, put the following question to him: "I understand, sir, that you expect to go to heaven when you die; can you tell me what sort of a place heaven is?" "Yes, sir," replied the Christian; "heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people; and if your soul is not prepared for it, with all your boasted wisdom, you will never enter there." (*Baxendale's Anecdotes.*) *For whom heaven is prepared:*—A man dreamed that

he stood beside the guarded gate of heaven, when the spirit of a rich man came and sought admittance on the ground of his wealth and local fame. He was reminded that those things belong to time only, and turned away in despair. Another sought entrance on the ground of his integrity, but was repulsed by the angel, saying, "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." A third pleaded his denominational zeal, fervent prayers, and deep feeling, but was refused with the remark, "There is no name given under heaven, or among men, whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus." At length, a spirit was seen winging its way through the air, all the while crying, "The blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin." To it the gates of heaven flew wide open; and the angel said, "An abundant entrance is ministered to you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (*New Cyclopædia of Illustrations.*) *The Christian's right to heaven:*—The late Rev. Robert Thomas, of Hanover, was once asked if he felt sure of going to heaven when he died. We heard him reply, "Where else can I go?" (*J. Idrisyn Jones.*) *The city of the saints:*—A city is a place of genial associations. In a lonely hamlet one has little company. In a city, especially where all the inhabitants shall be united in one glorious brotherhood, the true communism of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity may be realised in the purest sense and highest possible degree. In a city such as this there are plentiful occasions for intercourse, where mutual interests shall enhance mutual joy. "He hath prepared a city." It is a city too possessing immunities, and conferring dignity upon its residents. To be a burgess of the city of London is thought to be a great honour, and upon princes is it sometimes conferred; but, we shall have the highest honour that can be given, when we shall be citizens of the city which God has prepared. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 17–19. Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac.—*Abraham offering Isaac:*—I. ABRAHAM WHEN HE WAS TRIED. Some lives abound in tests, others are marvellously free from trial. Some are let off with few lessons, others destined for exalted service have hard tasks to master and difficult problems to solve. Observe how Abraham had been tried all along. When at the outset he left his country, and during his subsequent journeyings, the Divine command became more and more explicit. Meanwhile, as a providential antithesis, Abraham was gradually stripped of his earlier associates. His father died at Haran. Then came to him the repetition of the old command, with the significant addition to leave his "father's house." This involved his leaving his brother Nahor and family. Later on even Lot separated from him under conditions which must have made the separation doubly painful. When, therefore, the command came to offer up Isaac the trial reached its greatest depth and intensity. There are crucial tests in every true life, for which every preceding trial has prepared the way. Such was this supreme test in Abraham's life. The greatness of the test appears in the exceptional character of the demand. It appeared as a direct contradiction of God's promise. The detail was painful in the extreme. II. THE OBEDIENCE OF ABRAHAM WAS—1. Prompt. The command came in the night. Early in the morning Abraham "rose up," &c. Nothing was said to Sarah, to Isaac, or to the young men, that would have made Abraham's obedience to that command more difficult. The obedience was as spontaneous as the command startling. 2. Persistent. Abraham had the sustaining force which enabled him to maintain his purpose unwaveringly during the trying period of suspense between the command and the full obedience to it. 3. Perfect. When Abraham lifted up the knife the sacrifice was complete. Isaac had already been sacrificed upon the altar of a father's heart. Only the tragedy, and not the real sacrifice, was prevented. III. Further, GOD SUPPLEMENTED ABRAHAM'S OBEDIENCE, AND COMPLETED THE PROVISION FOR THE SATISFACTION OF HIS OWN COMMANDMENT, BY POINTING TO THE RAM IN THE THICKET. The great principle had already been enunciated by Abraham, "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." The question of Isaac which called forth this answer—"Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"—is the representative question of the world. Man in all ages has been seeking a lamb for a burnt offering. Abraham's answer is the reply of God in Jesus Christ. The history of sacrifices outside the Christian religion is the history of man offering sacrifices to God; the story of the Christian religion is that of God offering a perfect sacrifice for man. (*D. Davies.*) *Abraham's faith:*—I. THE SUPPORTS WHICH ABRAHAM'S FAITH DERIVED FROM PAST EXPERIENCE. 1. Consider the call and the promises given to him in Gen. xii. 1–7. These were satisfactory and convincing, when we consider them in detail, and likewise who made them. 2. Consider the circumstances of the promises made to him, and the

covenant entered into with him (Gen. xv.). 3. Abraham had the experience of a third call of gracious promises made to him, and a covenant-seal appended to both (Gen. xvii. 1–8). The seal of circumcision is appended in verse 10. Here is not only promising and entering into covenant, but giving proof and sensible experience. What could be more encouraging than the intercourse with God in these transactions? 4. What could be more experimentally satisfactory than the communion which Abraham had with the three angels? 5. Then follows the scene referred to in our text, and the trial of Abraham's faith, so much celebrated in Scripture. II. Considering all the foregoing circumstances, we may perceive THE WARRANT WHICH ABRAHAM HAD TO TRUST IN HIS COVENANT GOD IN ALL TIME TO COME. 1. He could not otherwise have been convinced of the benevolence of Him who condescended to eat and drink with him "under the tree." Such condescension and humility must have convinced him of the goodness of that God who had showed him such favour and friendship. 2. He must have been convinced of the tender regard of that God who had heard his prayer in behalf of Ishmael—had changed his wife's name from Sarai to Sarah—promised that she should have a son—and mentioned his name (Gen. xvii. 15-21). 3. He must have been convinced of the compassion of God to men, from the six different answers to his prayer for the inhabitants of Sodom. 4. He must have been convinced of the power and goodness of that Lord, who had, contrary to all human appearance, both made and fulfilled the promise of granting him Isaac. 5. Abraham was fully convinced "that God was able to raise Isaac up even from the dead"; and that, as He had given him, He had full right to take him away, as He might think best. Improvement: 1. Such as would imitate the faith of Abraham, should take notice of God's dealings with them in the course of His providence. 2. Such as notice not the dealings of God with them are in the dark as to the length which they have proceeded in the Divine life; and, if they continue in this state, must die in darkness at last. (*Jas. Kidd, D.D.*) *The excellency of Abraham's faith and obedience*:—I. THE FIRMNESS AND STEADFASTNESS OF HIS FAITH will appear, if we consider what objections there were in the case, enough to shake a very strong faith. There were three great objections against this command, and such as might in reason make a wise and good man doubtful whether this command were from God. 1. The horrid nature of the thing commanded. 2. The grievous scandal that might seem almost unavoidably to follow upon it. 3. And the horrible consequence of it, which seemed to make the former promise of God to Abraham void. II. We will consider THE CONSTANCY OF HIS RESOLUTION TO OBEY GOD, notwithstanding the harshness and difficulty of the thing. He was to offer up his son but once; but he sacrificed himself and his own will every moment for three days together. It must be a strong faith, and a mighty resolution, that could make him to hold out three days against the violent assaults of his own nature, and the charming presence of his son, enough to melt his heart as often as he cast his eyes upon him; and yet nothing of all this made him to stagger in his duty, but "being strong in faith, he gave glory to God," by one of the most miraculous acts of obedience that ever was exacted from any of the sons of men. III. I come to consider THE REASONABLENESS OF HIS FAITH, in that he was able to give satisfaction to himself in so intricate and perplexed a case. The constancy of Abraham's faith was not an obstinate persuasion but the result of the soberest consideration. As for the objections I have mentioned. 1. The horrid appearance of the thing, that a father should slay his innocent son. Why should Abraham scruple the doing this at the command of God, who, being the author of life, hath power over it, and may resume what He hath given, and take away the life of any of His creatures when He will, and make whom He pleaseth instruments in the execution of His command? 2. As to the scandal of it, that could be no great objection in those times, when the absolute power of parents over their children was in its full force, and they might put them to death without being accountable for it. 3. As to the objection from the horrible consequence of the thing commanded, that the slaying of Isaac seemed to overthrow the promise which God had made before to Abraham, that in Isaac his seed should be called; this seems to him to be the great difficulty, and here he makes use of reason to reconcile the seeming contradiction of this command of God to His former promise. So the text tells us that "he offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called; reasoning that God was able to raise him up from the dead." IV. SOME OBSERVATIONS AND INFERENCES. 1. Human nature is capable of clear and full satisfaction concerning a Divine revelation. For if Abraham had not been fully and past all doubt assured that this was a command from God he would certainly have spared his son. (1) God can work

in the mind of a man a firm persuasion of the truth of what He reveals, and that such a revelation is from Him. (2) God never offers anything to any man's belief, that plainly contradicts the natural and essential notions of his mind; because this would be for God to destroy His own workmanship, and to impose that upon the understanding of man which, whilst it remains what it is, it cannot possibly admit. 2. The great and necessary use of reason in matters of faith. For we see here that Abraham's reason was a mighty help to his faith. Here were two revelations made to Abraham, which seemed to clash with one another; and if Abraham's reason could not have reconciled the repugnancy of them, he could not possibly have believed them both to be from God; because this natural notion that "God cannot contradict Himself," every man does first and more firmly believe than any revelation whatsoever. I know there hath a very rude clamour been raised by some persons against the use of reason in matters of faith; but how very unreasonable this is will appear to any one that will but have patience to consider these following particulars: (1) The nature of Divine revelation; that it doth not endow men with new faculties, but propoundeth new objects to the faculties, which they had before. Reason is the faculty whereby revelation is to be discerned; for when God reveals anything to us, He reveals it to our understanding, and by that we are to judge of it. (2) This will farther appear if we consider the nature of faith. Faith is an assent of the mind to something as revealed by God; now all assent must be grounded upon evidence; that is, no man can believe anything unless he have or thinks he hath some reason to do so. (3) This will yet be more evident, if we consider the method that must of necessity be used to convince any man of the truth of religion. Suppose we had to deal with one that is a stranger and enemy to Christianity, what means are proper to be used to gain him over to it? The better way would be to satisfy this man's reason by proper arguments that the Scriptures are a Divine revelation, and that no other book in the world can with equal reason pretend to be so; and if this be a good way, then we do and must call in the assistance of reason for the proof of our religion. (4) Let it be considered farther that the highest commendations that are given in Scripture to any one's faith, are given upon account of the reasonableness of it. Abraham's faith is famous, and made a pattern to all generations, because he reasoned himself into it notwithstanding the objections to the contrary, and he did not blindly break through these objections, and wink hard at them; but he looked them in the face, and gave himself reasonable satisfaction concerning them. (5) None are reproved in Scripture for their unbelief, but where sufficient reason and evidence was offered to them. (6) To show this yet more plainly, let us consider the great absurdity of declining the use of reason in matters of religion. There can be no greater prejudice to religion than to decline this trial. To say we have no reason for our religion is to say it is unreasonable. 3. God obligeth no man to believe plain and evident contradictions as matters of faith. Abraham could not reasonably have believed this second revelation to have been from God, if he had not found some way to reconcile it with the first. 4. The great cause of the defect of men's obedience is the weakness of their faith. Did we believe the commands of God in the gospel, and His promises and threatenings, as firmly as Abraham believed God in this case; what should we not be ready to do, or suffer, in obedience to Him? 5. We have great reason to submit to the ordinary strokes of God's providence upon ourselves, or near relations, or anything that is dear to us. Most of these are easy compared with Abraham's case; it requires a prodigious strength of faith to perform so miraculous an act of obedience. 6. We are utterly inexcusable if we disobey the easy precepts of the gospel. (*Abp. Tillotson.*) *The supreme test of faith*:—I. THAT GOD ALONE KNOWS HOW TO ASCRIBE WORK AND DUTY PROPORTIONATE UNTO THE STRENGTH OF GRACE RECEIVED. He knew that Abraham's faith would carry him through this trial, and thereon He spared him not. As He will enjoin nothing absolutely above our strength, so He is not obliged to spare us in any duty, be it never so grievous, or of what difficult exercise soever it be, which He will give us strength to undergo; as He did here to Abraham. II. THAT OFTTIMES GOD RESERVES GREAT TRIALS FOR A WELL-EXERCISED FAITH. So this trial befel Abraham, when his faith had been victorious in sundry other instances. So He hath called many to lay down their lives by fire, blood, and torments, in their old age. III. THAT FAITH MUST BE TRIED; AND THAT OF ALL GRACES IT IS MOST SUITED UNTO TRIAL. IV. THAT GOD PROPORTIONS TRIALS FOR THE MOST PART UNTO THE STRENGTH OF FAITH. V. YEA, GREAT TRIALS IN BELIEVERS ARE AN EVIDENCE OF GREAT FAITH IN THEM, THOUGH NOT UNDERSTOOD EITHER BY THEMSELVES OR OTHERS BEFORE SUCH TRIALS. VI. TRIALS ARE THE ONLY TOUCH-

STONE OF FAITH, WITHOUT WHICH MEN MUST WANT THE BEST EVIDENCE OF ITS SINCERITY AND EFFICACY, AND THE BEST WAY OF TESTIFYING IT UNTO OTHERS. VII. WE OUGHT NOT TO BE AFRAID OF TRIALS BECAUSE OF THE ADMIRABLE ADVANTAGES OF FAITH IN AND BY THEM (see James i. 2–4; 1 Pet. i. 6, 7). VIII. LET THEM BE JEALOUS OVER THEMSELVES WHO HAVE HAD NO ESPECIAL INSTANCES OF THE TRIAL OF THEIR FAITH. IX. TRUE FAITH, BEING TRIED, WILL IN THE ISSUE BE VICTORIOUS. X. DIVINE REVELATIONS DID GIVE SUCH AN EVIDENCE OF THEIR BEING IMMEDIATELY FROM GOD TO THOSE WHO RECEIVE THEM, THAT THOUGH IN ALL THINGS THEY CONTRADICTED THEIR REASON AND INTEREST, YET THEY RECEIVED THEM WITHOUT ANY HESITATION. XI. The great glory and commendation of the faith of Abraham consisted in this, THAT WITHOUT ALL DISPUTE, HESITATION, OR RATIONAL CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS TO THE CONTRARY, BY A PURE ACT OF HIS WILL HE COMPLIED WITH THE AUTHORITY OF GOD, which in some sense may be called blind obedience wherein the soul resigns the whole conduct of itself to another. XII. IT IS A PRIVILEGE AND ADVANTAGE TO HAVE AN OFFERING OF PRICE TO OFFER TO GOD, IF HE CALL FOR IT. And such are our lives, our names, our reputations, our relations, estates, liberties, as Abraham had his Isaac. It is so, I say, if we have hearts to make use of it. XIII. OBEDIENCE BEGUN IN FAITH, WITHOUT ANY RESERVES, BUT WITH A SINCERE INTENTION TO FULFIL THE WHOLE WORK OF IT, IS ACCEPTED WITH GOD AS IF IT WERE ABSOLUTELY COMPLETE. So the confessors of old, delivered by Divine providence from death, when the sentence of it was denounced against them, were always reckoned in the next degree to martyrs. XIV. THE POWER OF FAITH IN ITS CONFLICT WITH, AND CONQUEST OVER NATURAL AFFECTIONS, WHEN THEIR UNAVOIDABLE BENT AND INCLINATIONS ARE CONTRARY TO THE WILL OF GOD, WHEREBY THEY ARE EXPOSED TO RECEIVE IMPRESSIONS FROM TEMPTATIONS, IS AN EMINENT PART OF ITS GLORY, AND A BLESSED EVIDENCE OF ITS SINCERITY. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *The sacrifice of Isaac*:—I. WE OFTEN TALK OF TRIALS. It may be questioned whether there ever was a trial of the kind at all equal to this. All ages, says Bishop Hall, have stood amazed at it; and still the mystery of the Divine mandate is not greater than the strength of Abraham's faith. 1. This command has reference to a son, an only son; and what is more, the son of Abraham's old age; and what is still more, for aught that appears, a dutiful, obedient son: one who must have been beloved for his unobtrusive excellences. 2. In addition to this you are to bear in mind that this son was the embodiment of a promise and covenant that Abraham held dearer than all earthly good, dearer than his own life. When you consider that that covenant had in it the germ of the covenant of grace, it is clear that he looked upon Isaac as, in some sort, an incarnate representation of salvation. His loss was enough to shake the very foundations of the father's faith. 3. We may remark that Abraham was commanded to perform this act with his own hand. It must not be entrusted to another. He must be the priest to immolate this innocent victim. 4. You are to observe further that it was a protracted trial. A three days' journey, with all its painful exercises of mind, must be interposed to try Abraham's faith and obedience. 5. You must notice the cruel nature of the sacrifice itself. There must be first the knife, and afterwards the fire. A father's hand carried them both. 6. Analyse the command itself, and you will see that it amplifies every circumstance calculated to harrow up the father's feelings. The very terms in which God makes known His will are expressly chosen to touch every fibre of his heart, and set his subsequent obedience in the strongest light. 7. Look at the scandal it would involve; scandal upon God, upon religion, and upon himself. Did none of these painful consequences suggest themselves to the patriarch's mind, and stagger his resolution? He may have thought of them, but they did not move him. He knows and believes that the Judge of all the earth will do right, and that it is his province only to obey. II. Let us turn to glance at THE CONDUCT OF ABRAHAM UNDER THIS FEARFUL DISPENSATION. 1. We read of no remonstrances, no expostulations, no questionings, no doubts, no evasions, no appeal by prayers. 2. Observe his promptitude and diligence in the duty. He rose up early in the morning to begin the most doleful journey he ever performed. Who would not have thought that to be a little leisurely would have been a pardonable delay? What a strange haste is this on such a terrible errand! 3. Observe further how steadfastly he keeps out of his way everything that might obstruct him in his purpose. We do not find that he informed Sarah whither he was going, or with what object. He would not expose his resolution to her natural tears and importunities. A little further on he is careful to dismiss even the young men that attended them, that he may be spared their entreaties, and perhaps reproaches, at least till it shall be too late to alter his resolution. What man but Abraham would have cleared his way so carefully of

all lawful excuses and impediments. Who does not see his determination to seek no deliverance, but that which comes distinctly and directly from God. 4. Again, notice the terms in which he dismisses these attendants: "Abide ye here; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again unto you." Take this in connection with what the apostle tells us, and you will see the secret of his fortitude; it was his faith. He accounted that God was able to raise him up even from the dead. Still he trusts in the covenant. 5. Let us proceed a little further; there is one yet more piercing trial for the heart of the patriarch. Unsuspecting Isaac, bearing his heavy burden, like our blessed Redeemer carrying His own Cross, as yet little dreaming that he must soon meet a disclosure enough to scorch the father's lips to utter, as the son's ears to hear; Isaac, I say, pondering upon the intended sacrifice, begins to wonder where the victim is to be found, "We have the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb?" Oh, cutting stroke! Can Abraham bear this and yet dissemble? Does not suppressed nature assert itself yet, in a burst of uncontrollable emotion? Did neither eye, nor cheek, nor manner, betray the horrid secret? No; calm, collected, determined, he still conceals, and where he meant evasion, prophesies, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." 6. How that disclosure was made at last, I know not; but it must have been made. How Abraham prevailed on his son to submit, I know not. No doubt, "Isaac helped to build the altar whereon he must be consumed." No doubt he considered that "the author was God; the actor, Abraham; the work, a sacrifice"; and "approved himself a son of Abraham" by a voluntary submission. Just when the stroke was about to descend, the voice was heard from heaven, "Abraham, Abraham, lay not thine hand upon the lad" &c. So easily, so quickly can the Lord turn sorrow into joy! "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." III. Let us now proceed to consider THE DESIGN OF THIS TRANSACTION, AND THE PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTION IT CONVEYS. 1. In the first place we may inquire whether it is not reasonable to suppose that God intended to give, by the sacrifice of Isaac, a shadow of the great redemption? To this question we reply by appealing, first, to the fulness of its signification considered in this view; secondly, to the general consent of Jewish expositors themselves; thirdly, and chiefly, to the strange and revolting nature of the command given to Abraham, which is hard to be vindicated, or even understood, on any other supposition. On these grounds we plead for a mystical interpretation of the subject. We invite you to contemplate in this shadow the sacrifice which God the Father made when He gave up His only beloved Son to death for your sakes; and the voluntary subjection of Christ, who was led as a lamb to the slaughter, that He might take away your sins. You may even behold in Isaac an image of your Saviour bearing His own Cross; and see him preparing to suffer almost upon that very hill which afterwards became the altar whence the greater victim sent up to heaven the virtue of His atonement, to plead for ever on behalf of a guilty world. 2. In this transaction a great example of faith and obedience is proposed for our consideration. Abraham exhibits a confidence in the Divine promises, which could not be shaken either by his reason or by his afflictions. There are such times of trial in the experience of every believer; and then it is seen who are the seed of Abraham. When God is trusted still amidst the wrecks of human hope; when His covenant is held fast, though Providence be wrapt in impenetrable mystery, and every earthly interest sacrificed on the altar of His service; I see revived the spirit of the patriarch, and recognise that filial resemblance which binds up in his family the whole Church of God, in both dispensations, from his own age to the end of time. 3. We may observe that this narrative exemplifies the essential connection between faith and works. 4. "When reason fighteth against faith, is wisdom to quit that reason which would make us quit the promises." Reason is limited and fallible; and, therefore, it is bound to pay homage to Divine authority. May not this darling idol be the very Isaac which you are called upon to sacrifice? If you withhold it, when God commands, you cannot be blessed with faithful Abraham. 5. And finally, let all Christians remember, in times of tribulation, that God often reserves delivering mercy till their greatest extremity. Wait, believe, obey; in these three words lies the whole scope of piety. May they be realised in our experience and practice, for Christ's sake. (*D. Katterns.*)

Character tested:—The surest way to know our gold is to look upon it and examine it in God's furnace, where He tries it for that end that we may see what it is. If we have a mind to know whether a building stands strong or no, we must look upon it when the wind blows. If we would know whether that which appears in

the form of wheat has the real substance of wheat, or be only chaff, we must observe it when it is winnowed. If we would know whether a staff be strong, or a rotten, broken reed, we must see it when it is leaned on, and weight is borne upon it. If we would weigh ourelves justly, we must weigh ourselves in God's scales, that He makes use of to weigh us. (*Jonathan Edwards.*) *Abraham's faith*:—He founded his faith upon God's fidelity and omnipotency. These are the Joachin and the Boaz, the two main pillars whereupon faith resteth. (*J. Trapp.*)

Ver. 20. **Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau.**—*The character and faith of Isaac*:—Isaac was a devout man. Mention is made in his history of positive acts of worship by which devotion is expressed; and in his walking out to meditate at eventide, we have a beautiful picture of an act by which devotion is sustained. The good man left his tents, and forsook his associates, and walked out, thoughtful and alone, to admire the affluence of Providence, and to look upon the works and the wonders of nature. His faith was sometimes overcome by the force of temptation, but it speedily acquired its wonted ascendancy; it was, at others, darkened by defects in his character; but upon the whole, the life of Isaac was marked by comparative simplicity and innocence; that at last he slept with his fathers in a good old age; that he died with confidence in the promise, amid the tears and the benedictions of his household. In the text the apostle specifies one particular act in which the faith of Jacob was shown, "He blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come." 1. The first thing to be noticed is the faith displayed by Isaac in his readiness and desire to bless his children at all, to bless them in the name, and according to the previous communications of Jehovah. This was a pious determination, resulting from continued confidence in God—from the practical persuasion of his truth—from reliance upon the consistency of His moral character; or, in one word, from faith, properly so called—that sentiment of the heart which leads a man to feel the absolute certainty of whatever he knows to be the sayings of God. In this, therefore, Isaac's faith was right though his feeling was wrong. He intended the chief blessing for the elder son, and he pronounced it with the thought that he was thus actually conveying it. But the time was now come for him to be corrected upon the point which he had either not known, or had neglected to keep sufficiently in view. 2. The second circumstance, therefore, which it becomes us to observe, is the obedience of faith which he manifested in respect to this point, when the Divine will was clearly and fully revealed in relation to it. In blessing Jacob, though he might be prompted to the act simply by the devout determination of principle, he felt himself, while performing the act, to be under the direction of a Divine impulse. When Esau afterwards approached and informed him of the actual state of the case, the whole truth seemed to flash at once upon his mind. What he had been led to do, though unconscious of it at the moment, revealed to him the purposes of God, and the direction of the promises with respect to his sons. "I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed"; as if he had said, "I have been the unconscious instrument of imparting to myself a knowledge of the will of Him whom I serve; to that will I bow with ready and voluntary obedience. 'I have blessed him,' and I cannot bless another to the same extent; I have been the medium through which the God of our fathers has now repeated and enlarged His promises, and these, I believe, will assuredly be fulfilled. He has declared the line in which they are to pass, and that line He had a right to select; I approve of what He has done, and I confide in what He has said, as I have often approved and confided before. The things which my lips have uttered are as certain and immutable as are all the intentions and purposes of God; I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed!" Let us now make a remark upon the last clause of the text; Jacob and Esau were blessed respecting "things to come." They were both blessed, for both of them, as men, were objects of pre-determined benediction in the Divine mind; though previous to their birth, that the purpose of God according to election might stand—it was declared that the younger should be the greater of the two. The expression "things to come," is intended to signify things which were so emphatically future that they related not so much to the individuals themselves as to the posterity to descend from them. Both were to be the founders of nations; these nations were to be remarkably distinguished from each other; and in them were to be realised the circumstances—the prosperity, and the vicissitudes—which had been so clearly and so copiously described in the language of Isaac. Looking at the two prophecies pronounced over Jacob and Esau respectively, they appear to include the following things. 1. In the first place, they may be said

either to presuppose, or to predict, the separate existence of the posterity of the two brothers as nations. Jacob is as a field which the Lord hath blessed; in him were to be fulfilled the promises given to Abraham. Esau is represented as living by his sword. The one expression describes a people organised and religious: the other a people of habits and manners rude and predatory; and such, in fact, was the case—the Jews descending from Jacob, and the Edomites from Esau. 2. The second circumstance is, that both nations were to possess very nearly the same local and physical advantages, which was at first also the fact. 3. The third thing is, the reduction, by the other branch, of the posterity of Esau to submission and servitude. This, after frequent advances towards it, was fully accomplished by David. 4. But the fourth and last particular to be observed is, that at length this yoke should be broken off from the neck of the degraded race, when they should obtain dominion, that is, when they should steadily range themselves under a leader, as a strong and united people. This, too, actually occurred; it took place in the reign of Jehoram. After making these observations explanatory of the text, we propose in the second place to deduce from them a few others of a practical character. 1. In looking at the comparatively calm and unruffled history of Isaac you may learn that the life most favoured of Providence is still required to be a life of faith. In prosperity, faith will render us grateful, moderate, and cautious, as under other circumstances it will inspire fortitude and prompt acquiescence: it will take the form of filial confidence in the continuance of good, so long as that good shall be seen to be consistent with higher purposes. Above all, since the most distinguished lot can never adequately meet the demands and capacities of our spiritual nature, faith in a future world must be ever felt by the devout man to be the only means by which he can endure, so to speak, even the highest happiness of this. 2. You learn from the history of Isaac the propriety of seasons of retirement for collected and serious thought. 3. From the history of Isaac you may learn the pernicious consequences of parents pursuing a system of favouritism with respect to their children. 4. By the nature and the circumstances of the fact to which the text refers—the blessing pronounced by Isaac upon Jacob and Esau—we are reminded of the variety of the proofs that may be adduced in support of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. There are two connected with the present subject. (1) The first is, the obvious and honest impartiality of the historian in describing the faults and vices of the most distinguished men whose lives he records. (2) The second, the fulfilment of prophecy. 5. In the last place, from a comparison of the portions of the two brothers let us learn to aspire after the best blessings which God can confer. It will be of no lasting advantage to us to have the portion of Esau, unless we have the portion of Jacob along with it. (*T. Binney.*) *The faith of Isaac:*—I suppose it was natural and right that Isaac should take his place next to Abraham in this record of men of faith; he stands next in the historical line of patriarchs who handed on the promise from one to another. And yet we cannot help feeling that in passing from Abraham to Isaac we are descending to a lower level. He seems to have possessed a timid, yielding disposition—a nature calculated to obey rather than to command—to follow rather than to lead. Wherever he comes before us in history we see a character just the opposite to that of Abraham—quiet, meditative, shrinking from everything like individual action, and timorously yielding to every pressure put upon him. Here was poor material, one might think, for faith to work with; such a man seems ill-calculated to sustain the tradition of faith so gloriously begun in Abraham, and to play a worthy part in handing on the covenant of Divine promise. And yet he is unhesitatingly placed in this glorious line of believers—he also was a man of faith, in his own measure loyal to God and to His covenant. The stream of faith flowed on through him to his successors unchecked and unpolluted. Just as a stream, when flowing through a mountainous and rocky country, is broken into swift-flowing rapids and dashing cataracts, harmonising in their picturesque grandeur with the surrounding features, but on reaching the plain below flows quietly along through green pastures where flocks are peacefully grazing, so the faith, which in Abraham's rugged character comes out in striking and impressive scenes, in the quiet life of Isaac assumes the form of an unobtrusive principle, giving an air of calm assurance and peace to his whole life. Faith now, as then, has to work through a variety of temperaments. The trees, the flowers, the corn, the grass, all are different manifestations of the same life; it assumes various forms, according to the nature of the organism through which it works; so the life of God takes hold of the constitution of a man, and develops results in harmony with the nature God has given him. Some of the most beautiful

effects of faith have often been wrought out in retiring characters like Isaac's. There are some delicate forms of spiritual beauty that require a reposeful spirit to blossom in, just as there are flowers growing in sheltered retreats that would perish on the rough mountain-top. We should learn to admire the grace of God in all its manifestations. To return to Isaac. We have no record in his case of any great feats of faith accomplished, any striking deeds done, as in the case of some of the other patriarchs. His faith never rose to that white heat of enthusiasm which leads a man to do immortal deeds. There was an even tenor about his life which was never broken by any special crisis of any stirring event. It is significant of the character of the man that he is celebrated in this chapter by an act of blessing. The most that could be said of him was that he held fast by the faith of his father, that he cherished the heavenly covenant as a precious heirloom which he had faithfully to preserve, and when his failing strength warned him that he would soon have to pass away, his chief thought was to transmit the promise to his posterity. And in many lives to-day faith manifests itself in the same fashion. The most that some men do is to cherish their faith as a source of strength and joy in their own hearts and their own homes, and seek to pass it on as a spiritual legacy to their children. There are many who have neither the opportunity nor the gifts to do great and bold things for God in the world; their efforts must be confined within a narrow circle; if their faith is to be useful at all, it must be in the influence it exerts in the home. And this is not the least fruitful kind of religious life. Some of the most blessed work that has ever been done for God and humanity has been done in the home circle, by those who have never made any great stir in the world or done any great thing in the Church. Quiet, unobtrusive lives have often been blessedly useful in fostering that choicest fruit of faith—family religion. Let every Christian man set this before him as a sacred ambition—to leaven his family with his own faith and leave it as a legacy to those who shall come after him. The blessing which Isaac pronounced upon his sons was something more than the ordinary form of blessing—something more than a pious wish or prayer that prosperity and peace and the favour of heaven might attend them. It was a blessing in which prophetic insight was blended with holy desire and intercession; the illumination of the Spirit enabled him to pronounce an effectual benediction which remained as a permanent good upon the head of him who received it. And every human life ought to end like Isaac's—with a blessing. Some lives end with a curse; they leave behind them a baneful influence which goes on blighting the lives of those that come after. A man's real legacy to posterity is the influence of his character. The bit of parchment which disposes of his material accumulations is not half so important as the distribution of that influence which has been silently accumulating through all the years of his life. In how many hearts there is a memory more cherished than the richest earthly possession—the memory of one who still lives to bless and influence them, to restrain from evil and incite to good! This is the kind of legacy we should strive to leave behind. And if we would do this we must begin to lay up the sacred treasure now. Such wealth is not accumulated in a day. It is the work of years; it is the product of "patient continuance in well doing." (*J. T. Hamly.*) *Faith supporting the saint in the frailties of ages*:—I. FAITH UNDIMINISHED BY ADVANCING YEARS. 1. The worth of a man's creed fully tested at the close of life. 2. The blessedness of that, our confidence in which increases with increased experience. 3. The continuance of spiritual energy when the physical powers fail. God's people die "full of life." II. FAITH HANDING ON THE BLESSING TO THOSE THAT COME AFTER. 1. The Divine word qualifies all God's people to be prophets of blessing. 2. It is only by faith in God that we can impart a blessing to others. 3. Thus we can leave blessings on those we love when we are dying. Faith's legacies are surer than any. III. FAITH TRIUMPHING OVER LIFE'S UNFULFILLED HOPES. 1. Promises so far unfulfilled. 2. The strongest possible assurance, even in death, of the things hoped for. 3. Thus faith enables the saint to enter with eager anticipation into the unseen world. 4. As we look back on the subsequent history of the descendants of the patriarchs we see how abundantly their faith was justified. We judge of God's faithfulness too soon. Time will prove Him true. (*C. New.*)

Ver. 21. **Jacob, when he was a dying.**—*The death-bed of Jacob*:—In this chapter St. Paul sets himself to the collecting, from the history of patriarchs and others, examples of the power of faith. Inspired as he was, we may not doubt that the instances which he selects are at least as strong as any which the histories present.

Yet they do not always seem so. In many cases, had the selection been left with ourselves, we should not have fixed on the same example as St. Paul; so that we have cases in which what men would account best is not so accounted by Him who readeth the heart. In regard, for instance, to our text: the life of the patriarch Jacob was a singularly eventful one; many and great were the occasions which it furnished for the exercise of faith. Would this, we ask, have been the fact on which an uninspired writer would have fastened when choosing out of the history of Jacob what might best illustrate the faith which the patriarch had in God? Hardly, I think; more especially as Jacob blessed his own sons as well as those of Joseph; so that, even if we fix on the dying scene as most demonstrative of faith, we should probably not have taken the benediction on Ephraim and Manasseh in preference to that on some one of the twelve tribes. Indeed, when you remember that in blessing his son Judah Jacob delivered the illustrious prediction, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh come," and thus displayed faith in the promised Messiah, it may not be easy to understand how his faith could be more conspicuous in blessing Joseph's sons, seeing that he seems to have predicted their temporal increase and greatness. This, however, it is which we must now endeavour to do. We may not, indeed, be able to prove to you that the selected instance is the strongest which the history furnishes, but we may at all events ascertain that it thoroughly establishes the power of the principle which it is quoted to illustrate. Now there is one very marked point on which we may fasten, to draw from it an illustration of the patriarch's faith; and this is, the adoption of Joseph's children for his own—an adoption, you observe, on which the dying man dwells with all possible earnestness; for, not content with having already said, "Thy two sons are mine," he makes it part of his final benediction, as though the "redeeming Angel" could do nothing more glorious for the lads: "Let my name be named on them, and the name of my father's Abraham and Isaac." And what shall we say of this eagerness of Jacob to engraft into his own family Manasseh and Ephraim? He seems to make it his object, and to represent it as a privilege, that he should take the lads out of the family of Joseph, though that family was then among the noblest in Egypt, and transplant them into his own, though it had no outward distinction but what it derived from its connection with the other. It seems to me, as I stand by the bedside of Jacob, as though two wholly different processions must have passed before his mind—the one a procession of human power and pomp, the other of poverty and shame, though with the favour of God and employment in His service. In the first procession, the procession of splendour and even sovereignty, the sons of Joseph seem born to take part. They had only to remain incorporated among the Egyptians, and theirs, in all human probability, would be the wealth and the majesty which passed with so stately a step before the dying man's vision. In the second procession, the procession of tribulation and hardship, the leading figures are those of Jacob's own children; the failing father discerns Judah and Simeon and Dan amongst the victims of oppression and the wrestlers for liberty. And it is for Jacob to determine whether he shall frame his parting blessing so as to leave Manasseh and Ephraim in the first procession, or so as to transfer them to the second. And was there no temptation to prefer the present to the future—the dignities of earth to the less palpable advantages of being numbered with a people set apart by God? There was but one principle which could have nerved the patriarch for doing as he did; nay, but one which could have justified him therein. Had he not been thoroughly confident in the Word of the Lord; had he not possessed an undoubting assurance that no amount of temporal advantages could compensate the want of spiritual blessing—that poverty and contempt endured in the service of God were incalculably preferable to opulence and glory enjoyed in the service of sin—he could hardly have been bold enough, and we could hardly have applauded him, in the desire that his own name and the name of his father Isaac might be named upon the lads. But whilst we admit this we equally admit the greatness of the exhibited faith when the expiring patriarch decided for the procession made up of the suffering people of God, and not for that which was composed of the great ones of the earth. You have but to contemplate Jacob as executing a deed by which Manasseh and Ephraim were transferred from a position of almost regal eminence to one of dependence and poverty, and you must all acknowledge that it was by faith—aye, and by faith so conspicuous and illustrious, as that it deserved to be singled out when an apostle was searching through past ages for examples—that it was "by faith" that "Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph." We should further observe the peculiarity of the language which he employs with regard

to his Preserver, and his decided preference of the younger brother to the elder, notwithstanding the remonstrance of Joseph. There was illustrious faith in both. He speaks of the "Angel which had delivered him from all evil"; and desires that this Angel might bless his grandsons. And whom did Jacob mean by this "Angel"? Certainly no finite, no created being. He speaks of this Angel as God; as having "redeemed him from all evil." There is music, there is gospel in this word "redeemed." It were hard to persuade me that it had no reference to the finished work of Christ. Redemption from all evil—this redemption attributed to an Angel or Messenger, whose appearance had been that of a man, but in whom the patriarch recognised God—what is this but the New Testament on the page of the Old? But whilst thankful for our own superior advantages, we ought greatly to admire that faith which could apprehend something of the mystery of redemption when there were but yet few and feeble notices of God's wondrous design; which could trace the movements of a Divine Being in the rare appearance of the Angel of the covenant; which could detect in strange and solemn actions parables of the world's deliverance from the consequence of the Fall. And thus was Jacob's faith displayed in his parting benediction. Though, as we have said, it was not only in the words that he uttered that Jacob showed faith. There was faith in the disposition of the hands, in the guiding them wittingly, so that the left was on the elder's head, the right on the younger. Not, we believe, without a typical design was it so often ordered of God that the younger son should be preferred to the elder. Such a preference was almost characteristic of the earlier dispensations. It occurred so frequently that we can hardly doubt that God designed to fix attention upon it as illustrating in some way His purposes towards the world. And if the preference of the younger to the elder were a type under the earlier dispensations of that great revolution which should follow the introduction of the gospel, does it not add vastly to the exhibition of faith in the patriarch Jacob, that when speaking of the redeeming Angel he should have "guided his hands wittingly," and have refused, though entreated, to follow the order of nature, and bless Manasseh and Ephraim according to the birthright? Coupling the words with the action—the mention of a Divine Being, which redeemed him from all evil, with the resolute preference of the younger to the elder—I could almost say that we have the gospel preached, and the effect of the preaching accurately predicted. And I take it as a proof of the faith of Jacob that he persisted in setting Ephraim before Manasseh. His own father, Isaac, had acted differently; for though aware that Jacob, the younger, was to be preferred before Esau, the elder, he still sought to gratify parental partiality, and would have given, had not his purpose been defeated, the blessing to the first-born; but Jacob betrayed no wavering on this occasion, though it could not have been other than painful to him to thwart the wishes of Joseph, and thus to make his last act on earth one of disappointment to the son whom he so tenderly loved. It was faith which upheld the dying man, and caused his parting word and deed to be so significant. Stand by the dying patriarch. What speaks he of? "The Angel which redeemed me from all evil." Nay, whom is he addressing if not the Lord Jesus Christ, though it required indeed a strong vision to "see Christ's day," then so remote? How guides he his hands, though Joseph would change the direction? He is transferring the birthright, preferring the younger to the elder, and thus predicting not merely what must pain Joseph, as showing Ephraim greater than Manasseh, but what must pain himself, as showing the Jews, his own descendants, giving place to the Gentiles. Ah! see and hear all this, and you will see, I think, that St. Paul, commemorating what was most illustrious in the faith of early days, should have given as one example—"By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph." But the apostle adds one more passage, which we have not taken into the account: whilst endeavouring to make you aware of the faith displayed by Jacob, he speaks of the patriarch as "worshipping, leaning upon the top of his staff." The fact, first of all, of Jacob's worshipping may be taken as proving his faith. For what has the dying man to do with worshipping unless he be a believer in another state of being; unless he believe that death is not annihilation, but that he is about to appear before God in judgment? In the act of dissolution a man can have nothing to ask of God if he suppose himself about to perish with the brute. Whilst living he would have to worship God, though he were not or might not know himself immortal; but when dying he must at least think it possible that the soul will survive the body, else there is no place whatsoever, no subject for prayer. But it is commemorated of Jacob, not only that he worshipped, but that he worshipped "leaning upon the top of his staff." This

leaning upon the staff is given as an additional evidence of Jacob's faith. But what made it such? Indeed, this is not easy to answer; but we may conjecture where we can make no pretention to certainty. Jacob had known much of poverty and trouble; as an exile from his home, he had wandered in strange lands, with only his staff for his companion; and he may have always preserved this staff as a memento of eventful pilgrimage. When appealing earnestly to God before his meeting with Esau, he says, "With my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands." He contrasts, you see, his former with his present condition. He had then nothing but his staff, whereas now his numerous family and flocks make up "two bands." The staff is appealed to as the emblem of his poverty. May it not, then, have been always such to Jacob? May it not have been kept in the days of his prosperity as a memento of the days of his adversity? (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Jacob's deathbed*:—I. SEE JACOB, WHEN A-DYING, LEANING UPON THE TOP OF HIS STAFF. What a picture of human frailty! What an illustration of the touching words of the ninetieth psalm, that the very "strength" of old men "is labour and sorrow!" "The glory of young men is their strength"; but they have need to consider that in extreme age "the keepers of the house tremble," and even "the grasshopper is a burden." But we have more here than the patriarch's bodily frailty. He was worshipping; and he had studiously put his body, though in his feebleness it required no small effort to do so—into the best posture for that solemn work. In worship bodily attitude profiteth little. But it is not, therefore, a matter of absolute indifference. God is to be glorified in our bodies as well as in our spirits. The seraphim are represented as covering their faces and their feet with their wings when they adore in His presence. II. SEE JACOB, WHEN A-DYING, WORSHIPPING. Men generally die as they live; and Jacob's death-bed exercise was in fine keeping with his life. He had his infirmities; but he was a man who, with all his infirmities, had led a devout life, a life of worship. He raised his altar to God wherever he went; he breathed much of the atmosphere of that "better country," the ceaseless employ of which is worship; and now that he was on the verge of it, we behold him worshipping. 1. It doubtless included confession—humble self-denying, self-abasing confession. Some persons talk much of looking back from a death-bed on a well-spent life. The good man, in so far as he has differed from others, knows who made him to differ. But in the review of the past, Oh, how little he sees that he can contemplate with satisfaction; and how much to lay him in the dust, and to strip him of all confidence in the flesh! 2. It doubtless included thanksgiving. What grateful emotions must have fired his bosom, as he thought of all the way in which the Lord had led him, so signally fulfilling the promises made to him. 3. It doubtless included prayer, properly so called, that is, petition, supplication. He had yet to take the solemn step into eternity. And we may be sure that, in view of it, he implored dying grace, with all the importunity of "a prince with God." III. SEE JACOB, WHEN A-DYING, BLESSING THE SONS OF JOSEPH. What is that to us? Much in many ways: in particular, it reads to us one great lesson. It says to us, Be ye useful to the last. Be ambitious to do good, be ambitious to bless, not only living, but dying. And what opportunities of good-doing does a death-bed like Jacob's furnish? If it shall be our lot to be laid on such a death-bed; if we shall have the possession of our reason; if we shall have freedom from agonising pain; if we shall have the requisite strength of body; if we shall be surrounded by dear friends eager to catch every syllable that shall fall from our lips:—Oh, will it not be well that our words be words of blessing? Will it not be well that they hear them rising to the throne for a blessing on them; and directing, entreating, and charging them to walk in the way in which the blessing runs? Parting words, words uttered in death's parting, how peculiarly impressive and memorable they are, and what a blessing has often been in them! IV. SEE JACOB, WHEN A-DYING, EXEMPLIFYING THE POWER OF FAITH. In all that we have now been looking at, we have been witnessing the working, the solace, the joy, the victory, of faith. And a great sight it is, to see faith not only enduring to the end, but supporting and cheering the heart when "the earthly house of this tabernacle" is falling, and triumphing in the last and solemn hour. (*W. Marshall, D.D.*) *Dying in faith*:—I. IT IS AN EMINENT MERCY WHEN FAITH NOT ONLY HOLDS OUT TO THE END, BUT WAXETH STRONG TOWARDS THE LAST CONFLICT WITH DEATH, as it was with Jacob. II. It is so also to be able by faith, in the close of our pilgrimage, TO RECAPITULATE ALL THE PASSAGES OF OUR LIVES, IN MERCIES, TRIALS, AFFLICTIONS, SO AS TO GIVE GLORY TO GOD WITH RESPECT TO THEM ALL, as Jacob did in this place. III. THAT WHICH ENLIVENS AND ENCOURAGETH FAITH AS TO ALL OTHER THINGS IS A PECULIAR

RESPECT TO THE ANGEL, THE REDEEMER BY WHOM ALL GRACE AND MERCY IS COMMUNICATED TO US. IV. IT IS OUR DUTY SO TO LIVE IN THE CONSTANT EXERCISE OF FAITH, AS THAT WE MAY BE READY AND STRONG IN IT WHEN WE ARE DYING. V. Though we should die daily, yet THERE IS A PECULIAR DYING SEASON, WHEN DEATH IS IN ITS NEAR APPROACH, WHICH REQUIRES PECULIAR ACTINGS OF FAITH. VI. In all acts of Divine worship, whether solemn or occasional, it is our duty TO DISPOSE OUR BODIES INTO SUCH A POSTURE OF REVERENCE AS MAY REPRESENT THE INWARD FRAME OF OUR MINDS. So did Jacob here, and it is reckoned as an act of duty and faith. VII. THERE IS AN ALLOWANCE FOR THE INFIRMITIES OF AGE AND SICKNESS, IN OUR OUTWARD DEPORTMENT IN DIVINE WORSHIP, SO THAT THERE BE AN INDULGENCE TO SLOTH OR CUSTOM, BUT THAT AN EVIDENCE OF A DUE REVERENCE OF GOD AND HOLY THINGS BE PRESERVED. These postures which are commended in Jacob would not, it may be, become others in their health and strength. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *Jacob worshipping on his staff*:—"When he was a dying." Death is a thorough test of faith. Beneath the touch of the skeleton finger shams dissolve into thin air, and only truth remains; unless indeed a strong delusion has been given, and then the spectacle of a presumptuous sinner passing away in his iniquities is one which might make angels weep. The text tells us that the patriarch's faith was firm while he was a-dying, so that he poured forth no murmurs, but plentiful benedictions, as he blessed both the sons of Joseph. May your faith and mine also be such that whenever we shall be a-dying our faith will perform some illustrious exploit that the grace of God may be admired in us. I. HIS BLESSING. 1. His blessing the sons of Joseph was an act of faith, because only by faith could he really give a blessing to any one. He believed God. He believed that God spoke by him; and he believed that God would justify every word that he was uttering. Faith is the backbone of the Christian's power to do good: we are weak as water till we enter into union with God by faith, and then we are omnipotent. We can do nothing for our fellow-men by way of promoting their spiritual interests if we walk according to the sight of our eyes; but when we get into the power of God, and grasp His promise by a daring confidence, then it is that we obtain the power to bless. 2. Not only the power to bless came to him by faith, but the blessings which he allotted to his grandsons were his upon the same tenure. His legacies were all blessings which he possessed by faith only. He had, as a matter of fact, neither house nor ground in Palestine, and yet he counts it all his own, since a faithful God had promised it to his fathers. Faith is wanted to enable us to point men to the invisible and eternal, and if we cannot do this how can we bless them. We must believe for those we love, and have hope for them; thus shall we have power with God for them, and shall bless them. Our legacies to our sons are the blessings of grace, and our dowries to our daughters are the promises of the Lord. 3. Jacob in his benediction particularly mentioned the covenant. His faith, like the faith of most of God's people, made the covenant its pavilion of delightful abode, its tower of defence, and its armoury for war. If you have no faith you cannot plead the covenant, and certainly if you cannot plead it for yourselves you cannot urge it with God for a blessing upon your sons and your grandsons. It was by faith in the covenant that the venerable Jacob blest the two sons of Joseph, and without it we can bless no one, for we are not blessed ourselves. Faith is the priest which proclaims the blessing without fear. 4. Jacob showed his faith by blessing Joseph's sons in God's order. Faith prefers grace to talent, and piety to cleverness; she lays her right hand where God lays it, and not where beauty of person or quickness of intellect would suggest. Our best child is that which God calls best; faith corrects reason and accepts the Divine verdict. 5. Notice that he manifested his faith by his distinct reference to redemption. He alone who has faith will pray for the redemption of his children, especially when they exhibit no signs of being in bondage, but are hopeful and amiable. 6. Jacob showed his faith by his assurance that God would be present with his seed. How cheering is the old man's dying expression, made not only to his boys, but concerning all his family. He said, "Now I die, but God will be with you." It is very different from the complaints of certain good old ministers when they are dying. They seem to say, "When I die the light of Israel will be quenched. I shall die, and the people will desert the truth. When I am gone the standard-bearer will have fallen, and the watchman on the walls will be dead." Many in dying are afraid for the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof; and, sometimes, we who are in good health talk very much in the same fashion as though we were wonderfully essential to the progress of God's cause. II. HE WORSHIPPED BY FAITH. 1. First, while he was dying he offered the worship of gratitude. How pleasing is the

incident recorded in the tenth and eleventh verses. Ah, yes, we shall often have to say, "O Lord, I had not thought that Thou wouldst do as much as this, but Thou hast gone far beyond what I asked or even thought." 2. He offered the worship of testimony when he acknowledged God's goodness to him all his life. 3. Notice, too, how reverently he worships the covenant messenger with the adoration of reverend love. We owe all things to the redeeming Angel of the covenant. The evils which He has warded off from us are terrible beyond conception, and the blessings He has brought us are rich beyond imagination. We must adore Him, and, though we see Him not, we must in life and in death by faith worship Him with lowly love. 4. If you read on through the dying scene of Jacob you will notice once more how he worshipped with the adoration of earnest longing, for just after he had pronounced a blessing on the tribe of Dan the old man seemed thoroughly exhausted, but instead of fainting, instead of uttering a cry of pain and weakness, he solemnly exclaims, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord." III. HIS ATTITUDE. He worshipped on the top of his staff—leaning on it, supporting himself upon it. In Genesis you read that he "bowed himself upon the bed's head." It is very easy to realise a position in which both descriptions would be equally true. He could sit upon the bed, and lean on the top of his staff at the same time. But why did he lean on his staff? I think besides the natural need which he had of it, because of his being old, he did it emblematically. That staff was his life companion, the witness with himself of the goodness of the Lord, even as some of us may have an old Bible, or a knife, or a chair which are connected with memorable events of our lives. But what did that staff indicate? Let us hear what Jacob said at another time. When he stood before Pharaoh he exclaimed, "Few and evil have been the days of my pilgrimage." What made him use that word "pilgrimage"? Why, because upon his mind there was always the idea of his being a pilgrim. He had been literally so during the early part of his life, wandering hither and thither; and now, though he has been seventeen years in Goshen, he keeps the old staff, and he leans on it to show that he had always been a pilgrim and a sojourner like his fathers, and that he was so still. While he leans on that staff he talks to Joseph, and he says, "Do not let my bones lie here. I have come hither in the providence of God, but I do not belong here. I am in Egypt, but I am not of it. Take my bones away. Do not let them lie here, for if they do, my sons and daughters will mingle with the Egyptians, and that must not be, for we are a distinct nation. God has chosen us for Himself, and we must keep separate. To make my children see this, lo, here I die with my pilgrim staff in my hand." The longer you live the more let this thought grow upon you: "Give me my staff. I must begone. Poor world, thou art no rest for me; I am not of thy children, I am an alien and a stranger. My citizenship is in heaven." Singular enough is it that each descendant of Jacob came to worship on the top of his staff at last, for on the paschal supper night, when the blood was sprinkled on the lintel and the side posts, they each one ate the lamb with their loins girt and with a staff in his hand. The supper was a festival of worship, and they ate it each one leaning on his staff, as those that were in haste to leave home for a pilgrimage through the wilderness. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Jacob worshipping*:—I. THE TIME HAD COME WHEN LIFE NEEDED A STAFF. How strange it seems, when we can walk, leap, run, when the agile limbs can obey the swift behest of the will, to think that the time will come when these limbs will refuse their easy and familiar work. A staff! how much it suggests to us! Leaning. In many senses a staff seems to hurt our pride, and it is very natural not to like to take to spectacles, or to a staff till we are quite obliged. Yet leaning is beautiful in many senses, as on the staff of Christian friendship, or the staff of God's precious promises. Yes! "Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." Say what we will, the Bible keeps its old place in this respect. You will lean on it, rest on it, and the staff will be all-sufficient for you as it has been for multitudes before you. II. THE WORSHIPPING SPIRIT KNOWS NO SEASON OF DECLINE. It is most vigorous in age. Well has Montgomery said, "We enter heaven with prayer." Worship is the highest occupation of which our natures are capable. How it chastens the mind, cools the passions, awakens the memories of mercies past and inspires confidence for the time to come. When other occupations lose not only their interest, but are impossible to us—when we can no more journey, study, toil; in the truest sense, we can worship still. I see the grey-headed old man making an end of commanding his sons, about to yield up the ghost, not to perish, but to yield up the spirit. There is one thing he still can do: no longer can he put the lamb or the bullock on the altar—no longer can he offer the burnt-offer-

ing, but he can lift up his heart to God; the incense of prayer can go up to the open gate of the heaven he is so soon about to enter. And "Jacob worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." III. THE PRINCIPLE WHICH IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN UNDERLYING HIS WORSHIP. "By faith!" Yes! the faith which is older than the law shone forth in him. He takes his place in the list of God's heroes. By faith! And this is the essence of worship. Worship is not mysterious fear before an unknown Power. Worship is not a matter of form, it is a matter of faith. Places may help us by their solitude or silence. Associations may help us by ridding us of worldly influences, but they can do no more. Prayer is a matter of personal faith, and in this as in all else, without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith brings before us a God who is, and who is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Faith rests in the revelation of God's Fatherhood, and draws near to Him, through the way of His appointment—in Jacob's day by the foreshadowing sacrifice, and in these last days by Him who once in the end of the world has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. But faith feels worship to be real, intensely real. IV. THE PERSONS HE IS SAID TO HAVE BLESSED. Not Joseph; but "both the sons of Joseph." It is exceedingly wonderful to see how tenderly grandchildren are treated. On a summer visit I felt very much touched by seeing hour after hour a grandfather leading a little blind grandchild about the garden lawn and through the fields. It seemed as though there was a wonderful confidence of love between the child and the old man. There is something marvellously wise in the ordination of family life. We cannot live in mere masses or organisations, we must take the God-way! It is a good thing for children to have incentives to courage, manliness, and success in this life as earnest citizens; but how much better it is to feel that they may be soldiers of the Cross, that the posts we have so poorly occupied they may fill, and that the blessing which has followed us all our days will be with them, making them rich indeed, and adding no sorrow. On our escutcheons men may read no connection with the Plantagenets, but they may read thereon: "Happy is the family that is in such a case. Yea, happy is that family whose God is the Lord." V. THE LIFE HE WAS LEAVING BEHIND HIM. It is all very well, I hear some say, to give us this touching close to Jacob's life; but what about the phases of his history, weak, wicked, and contemptible. Think, men say; do not gloss over this history! True all you say is true. But this is also true, that blessings won by sin are miseries even here, so exquisitely is the world governed by moral law. And then because these were the sins of his youth, are we to deny him the honour of a noble fatherhood, or a beautiful old age? God forbid! where should we be if the critics were as severe on us? We too have erred, we have turned every one to his own way, and as the altars of Jacob prophesied of the Great Redemption, so now in the end of days Christ has borne the iniquities of us all. VI. SOME QUESTIONS NATURALLY SUGGEST THEMSELVES. 1. What is worship to us? Is it duty or delight? If earthly fellowship has in it some of the highest joys of which our nature is capable, shall not the heavenly fellowship immeasurably transcend these? 2. What hinders worship? Not want of time. No! Love never pleads this. Love is as swift to seize its opportunities as it is apt in making them. 3. What fosters worship? Ah! Trials foster a spirit of prayer. Would it not be well if we cultivated more of the spirit of worship in life's day-time? (*W. M. Statham, M.A.*)

Ver. 22. **Joseph . . . gave commandment concerning his bones.**—*The faith of Joseph on his death-bed:*—It is a noble scene which is brought before us by the simple record of the historian; and I call upon you to behold it, that you may learn what faith can do against the promptings of nature, the suggestions of suspicion, and the dictates of pride. I know what would be likely to be the uppermost feelings in that expiring man, who, amid all the insignia of authority and wealth, is bidding farewell to brethren and children. I know what he might be expected to do and to say. His wasted features might be lit up with a smile of exultation, as he surveyed the tokens of almost regal state; and he might say to those around, "Behold the glory to which I have raised you, and which I bequeath to you and your posterity. It will be your own fault if this glory decay: the best of all Egypt is yours, if you do not, through indolence or love of change, suffer that it be wrested from your hold." But nothing of this kind proceeds from the dying man's lips. Interpret his last words, and they are as though he had said, "Children and brethren, be not deceived by your present prosperity; this is not your home; it is not here, notwithstanding the appearances, that God wills to separate you to Himself. Ye are the descendants of Abraham; and Egypt, with its idols, is no

resting-place for such. Ye must be ever on the alert, expecting the signal of departure from a land, whose treasures are but likely to detain you from the high calling designed for you by God. Settle not then yourselves, but be ye always as strangers; strangers where you seem firmly established, and where, by a marvellous concurrence of events, you have risen to dominion." Such, we say, are virtually the utterances of the expiring patriarch. And when you think that, by these utterances, he was taking the most effectual way of destroying the structure so surprisingly reared, and on which it were incredible that he did not himself gaze with amazement and delight; that he was detaching those whom he loved from all which, on human calculation, was most fitted to uphold them in glory and power, I assent, in all its breadth, to the statement of St. Paul, that it was "by faith" that "Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel." But we have not yet spoken of Joseph's giving "commandment concerning his bones"; and this is far too memorable a circumstance to be passed over without special comment. Why, think ye, did Joseph wish to lie unburied in the midst of his people, except that his bones might perpetually preach to them, that Egypt was not to be their home, but must be abandoned for Canaan? The lesson, that they were to be expecting to depart from the country which had received them, he longed to enforce after death, knowing that his brethren would be likely to forget it. But how shall he accomplish this? Let his bones lie unburied because they wait the being carried up to Canaan, and will there not be an abiding memento to the Israelites, that, sooner or later, the Lord will transplant them to the land which He promised to their fathers? It is in this way that we interpret the commandment of Joseph. You have heard of the preaching of a spectre: the spirit that passed before the face of Eliphaz, and caused the hair of his flesh to stand up, came from the invisible world to give emphasis, as well as utterance, to the question, "Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more just than his Maker?" And here you have, not the preaching of a spectre, but the preaching of a skeleton: the bones of Joseph are converted into an orator, and make "mention of the departing of the children of Israel." The patriarch could no longer warn and command his descendants with the voice of a living man: his tongue was mute in death: but there was eloquence in his sepulchred limbs. Wherefore had he not been gathered to his fathers? It was a dead thing, which nevertheless appeared reluctant to die: it seemed to haunt the earth in its lifelessness, as though it had not finished the office for which it had been born. And since it could not fail to be known for what purpose the body of one, so honoured, lay unburied year after year, did not Joseph's bones perpetually repeat his dying utterances? and could anything better have been devised to keep up the remembrance of what his last words had taught, than this his subsistence as a skeleton, when he had long ceased to be numbered with the living? But we ought not to fail to observe, before we quit the death-bed of Joseph, that, forasmuch as unquestionably the Spirit of God actuated the expiring patriarch, and perhaps dictated his words, the commandment as to his bones may have been designed to imitate, or illustrate, the truth of a resurrection. I cannot but infer, from this anxiety of Joseph in regard to his grave, that he did not consider the body as a thing to be thrown aside so soon as the vital principle were extinct. He who shows anxiety as to the treatment of his remains shows something of a belief, whether he confess it or not, that these remains are reserved for other purposes and scenes. I can hardly think that Joseph believed that his body would never live again: he would scarcely have provided it a sepulchre in Canaan, if persuaded that, in dying, it would be finally destroyed. His bones might as well have rested in Egypt, had he not imagined them appointed, to the being brought up from the dust and again sinewed with life. But on the supposition of a belief, or even the faintest conjecture, of a resurrection, we seem to understand why the dying patriarch longed to sleep in the promised land. "I will not leave," he seems to say, "this body to be disregarded, and trampled on, as though it were merely that of an animal whose existence wholly terminates at death. That which God takes care of, reserving it for another life, it becomes not man to despise, as though undeserving a thought. And though the eye of the Almighty would be on my dust in Egypt, as in Canaan, yet would I rather rest with the righteous than with the wicked in the grave, with my fathers and my kinsmen, than with the foreigner and the enemy. If I am to start from long and dark slumbers, let those who wake with me be those whom I have loved, and who are to share with me the unknown existence." (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The patriarch Joseph as a builder of the city of God*:—Why does our author fix upon the request of the dying patriarch concerning

the removal of his bones to the land of promise, as constituting his special claim to rank amongst the chief builders of the City of Faith? Not certainly because of the lack of other and appropriate material. For Joseph, like Barnabas, was a good man, full of faith, and of the spirit of holiness, and his life from boyhood to old age displayed a conspicuous strength of confidence in the living God as the Redeemer and Ruler of his life. Surely with a biography, every page of which recounts the power and blessedness of trust in the Lord, he must have had deep and strong reason for restricting his choice to the last page of the volume. Did he shrink from including in his list of world-builders any one on whom death had not set its seal of finality—in obedience to the maxim of Solon, "Call no man happy till he is dead"? That cannot be, for this list of world-builders is certainly no mere gathering of the "last sayings" of dying men. It throbs with the passion, and is luminous with the achievements of full and strong life. In the judgment of the compiler of this list, the patriarch Joseph reveals the unsubduable strength of a valorous soul; when approaching his end, he speaks of the exodus of Israel, and gives commandment concerning his bones. But it is not improbable that the memorable words of Joseph came into his mind as he recalled the vision of the dying patriarch Jacob, imparting his blessing to Ephraim and Manasseh, and adoring God for the manifold mercies of his long life. Making all allowance for the influence of this law of association, yet I feel sure a deeper reason governed his choice of this specific moment in Joseph's career as signally illustrative of Joseph's faith. He saw in these words the characteristic quality of the man's faith —the essential soul of him and of it—living as well as dying, guiding not less than crowning his life; a faith in God essentially patriotic, identifying him with the fortunes of his father's house and the future of his people, and constituting him one of the founders of the commonwealth of Israel, and thereby one of the builders of the eternal city of God. That such reasoning is valid will appear if we briefly examine the contents and characteristics of Joseph's faith. His end is nigh; but the soul of the deputy-king is absorbed in thoughts and hopes concerning the future of his brethren, and breathes out its deep yearnings in a solemn adjuration to them to pledge him in an unbroken faith in the living God, the God of Israel. No anxiety for self darkens his last moments; no consideration for his greatness and fame disturbs the serenity of his soul. The request of Joseph concerning his bones, wears, I daresay, to some of us, an aspect of concern for himself, but really it is only an additional witness to the patriotic quality of his faith, and the quenchlessness of his hope. The ruling passion, "love of his brethren," is strong in death. As the faith of Moses incarnated itself in uncomplaining endurance for forty years of the severest spiritual discipline, and that of Abraham in a splendid venture into a trackless desert at the bidding of the God who had chosen him, so the faith of the patriarch Joseph clad itself in the self-suppressing, pure, and far-seeing patriotism of his farewell appeals and aspirations. Thus, "by faith," Joseph built the city of God in a day of impending trial and prolonged and acute suffering. But his speech makes clear that his "faith" rested on the solid basis that human life is a Divine order; that his own life had been moulded by God, the Watcher and Ruler of mankind, who had given him his education, and his place in the administration of the affairs of Egypt and the world. Joseph saw that truth early, and rarely, if ever, lost sight of it. It shines like a brilliant star in the darkest night of his life. It is the thread of gold woven into the web of his character. But this "order" and that "faith" have for their goal, their "objective," the future of Israel; the deliverance, guardianship, development, and service of the people of God's special choice. "By faith," Joseph makes mention not of his "bones" first, but of the "departure" of the children of Israel from Egypt on their way to the new home and fatherland in Palestine. Real faith in God embraces a good future. Joseph had said of his life at each stage, "God did it"—God, first and last—God, and not men, and so his farewell word is a gospel of God and of the future, "God will surely visit you." For faith in God carries faith in man's advance, in his sure if slow, spiritual growth, in the perfection of society and the ascendency of righteousness, peace, and joy. And is not the same device, "God did it," traceable on the extended walls of our British history? Through all the chaos and disorder, recklessness and revolution of our ancestors, there is a Divine purpose and a Divine energy working out for us a future rich in promise for all the sons of men. The making of the nations is in the hands of its true and trusty souls who expel selfishness by the love of God, self-will by obedience to the Divine order, and despair by a living hope in the redeeming God. It is Joseph who is "crowned

amongst his brethren":—Joseph, not Reuben. The firstborn is deposed. Instability cannot rule, for it cannot guide. Reuben must give way to the stronger soul of the boy he loves. Cruelty pulls down and destroys. "Weapons of violence" may keep off a foe, but they do not guarantee primacy of political power. "By faith" Joseph gains his place, and "by faith" he holds it after his death, advancing his formative and inspiring influence in the life of the people, through that commandment concerning his bones. Patriotism is fed from three perennial fountains—God, the Home, and History. God is the supreme politician; He is the Maker of nations and peoples. He does not leave us solitary, but setteth us in families, cities, nations, and empires. No part of our life is strange to Him; He filleth all in all, and faith in His Divine administration helps each citizen to find his place in the plan of God, to see his duty, to cast out evil, and to build for righteousness and peace. "Christians are the soul of the world," said the writer of the Epistle to Diognetus. What our politics need is soul; therefore Christians ought to be the best patriots and the most devoted politicians. Fed by faith in God, nourished in homes radiant with His presence, and guided by the Divine flame that burns in the bush of history, it is theirs to make and mould the purest, gladdest, strongest civic life of the world. See to it, therefore, that you choose your legislators for their strong faith in the living God and in the future of humanity. Put your conscience into your choice. Be not deceived by brilliant gifts. Never surrender your power to the greed of place and pelf. But remember, too, that the safety and progress of states and the widening welfare of mankind depend upon the heroic service of individual citizens, on men and women who, through faith in God, are masters of themselves, patient with suffering and failure, but impatient at wrong, iniquity, and dishonour, and who give to the world the distinctive influence of a pure Christian character and the consecrated service of a noble Christian life. "Ye are the light of the world." "Ye are the salt of the earth." (*J. Clifford, D.D.*) *The wonderful story of Joseph's bones*:—1. It is not possible to read the life of Joseph without beholding here the portrait of a great man, not merely as a commanding and guiding intelligence, but that which is higher yet, a strong and noble, personal character. 2. He was what we should call a self-made man; he was as much so as any man can be a self-made man; his life was one long contest with difficulties, but he overcame them all. He was made by God. 3. The greatness of Joseph was what we call moral greatness. He was not a warrior; he had insight and foresight; and he had that which really makes life easy and character strong. He had principles: faith ruled and controlled his character. And thus he ascended to the place of power in the great land of the Nile. So in the country of the Pyramids he ruled and he died. Can you see him in death?—surrounded by the dusky magnificence of that strong and ancient monarchy, the barbaric pearl and gold there, the Pharoah of that day waiting there and endeavouring to detain awhile the wisdom of that mighty and far-seeing mind. But where is he? Where is Joseph? True to the law of our being, by which to die is to recollect the past existence—as Shakespeare makes even that wicked old Falstaff when dying to revisit innocent scenes and babbling of green fields; and some of you will probably remember the story De Quincey tells of his mother, in his "Confessions of an English Opium Eater," how, in one memorable moment and instant of her life, when very near to death, her whole life started before her, all its moments successive and yet instantaneous; which leads De Quincey himself to remark, that there is no such thing as "ultimate forgetting"—true to the Divine law, his memory is away in the fields of his youth, fields, perhaps, not seen since the day when he left his father's house to be a prisoner and an exile. He is among the fields of Hebron, he is a boy again. He sees the tender face of Rachel, his mother, his venerable father, long since gathered to the earlier patriarchs, Shechem, the Ishmaelites, the well—these all rise before his eyes, soon to be dismissed. But other associations will not go; more mysterious presences are about him; unseen fingers are drawing aside the curtains of the future history of his nation and his posterity; the enrapturing visions of death are thronging before him; he sees the persecution and the tyranny of the centuries as they rave and roll round his dust; he sees the march of the multitudes through the wilderness, the dividing sea, the tabernacle, the cloud, the pillar, Canaan, the temple; he sees the hurrying people, the rising thrones, the little mountain monarchy destined to throw a spell of power over the world when obscurity should fold the fame of Egypt and Assyria. Then there came a thought of his own dust. Shall I lie here alone amidst Egyptian sands, while they are there? My bones amidst idolatrous crowds while the people of the covenant have

crossed the river to their inheritance? No! I. See here THE NATIONALITY OF JOSEPH. His heart turns to Canaan. You see, here is an illustration, in the wearied statesman, of that which the apostle assigns to these patriarchs of faith. He, too, by this act, confessed himself a stranger and pilgrim. He who could give this commandment concerning his bones, "declared plainly that he sought a country"; that he, in fact, "was mindful of the country whence he came out, that he desired opportunity to return thither"; nay, that he descried "a better country, a heavenly." II. But underlying this there was a far deeper feeling, a far higher and a far mightier without which it would have been the mere boast of race-distinction —it was THE LESSON OF FAITH. He believed, "he counted Him faithful who had promised." Joseph was one of the children of the promise. His affections for his people, for his family, were founded in his affection for God, his father's God. "I die, but God shall surely visit you." It was clear to the mind of the patriarch—the affliction, the tyranny, the departure. The world would seek to enslave the Church, and then God would say, "Loose her, and let her go," and then the Church would arise and depart. He knew the promise made to Abraham by "two immutable things"; he knew the people that were to be "as the stars of the sky in multitude, as the sands on the sea-shore innumerable." It was Faith—"God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry my bones up from hence"; "he made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones." III. He died! Shall we then say here, How men speak when they are dead? May we not say, Read here, in this history, a lesson of THE SUSTAINING POWER THERE IS IN THE MEMORIES OF GREAT AND GOOD MEN. How long it seemed, the dreary night—long seemed the covenant lost; it was buried, not lost; those bones were a kind of witness, those dying words were a testimony to the faithfulness of God. Thus often truth is buried, or a noble character seems lost; but fear not for anything on which God has set His seal. At last the moment comes; they hurry out of the land, but they do not in their haste forget those bones, they are borne along with them on their mysterious march. In the long progress through the wilderness old men dropped and died, children were born, children became men and women—still there was the wonderful chest, the bones the same as when they came up from Egypt. In their progress through the desert, by those Sinaitic rocks, the awful dead seemed to add to their criminality, when they doubted; to their hopes, as they moved upon their way, like an enchantment and a terror to such a people. The spell of his words was upon them in which "he gave commandment concerning his bones." No; great good men do not pass away, as some suppose. We have a very legible illustration in the guardian care exercised over the relics; Joseph lived in the thoughts and affections and hopes of his descendants. The dust of the holy dead is precious, the words of the holy dead are watchwords—"Thy dead men shall live together, with My dead body shall they arise." IV. I cannot but think that there was here A HINT, A HOPE, AN ASPIRATION, "TOUCHING THE RESURRECTION." I cannot but think that the glorious dreamer anticipated, not only the departure of the tribes, but the final unsealing of all those tombs, and longed rather to be near the old cemetery of Machpelah than amidst the cold, dark, stony, stately rooms of Egyptian pyramids and their coffins. Yes, as in that hour when the tribes in their flight could not leave behind them those bones, but bore them to their appointed resting-place in the promised land, so shall it be in the resurrection of the dead. At the risk of seeming to say what, to fastidious ears, may seem the mere refining of spiritualism, I will say, God will suffer no dust to remain in Egypt that belongs to Canaan; nothing that belongs to Grace shall remain beneath the dominion of Nature; there is an eye that watches; there is a law by which it will resume its own empire. There is a "commandment concerning our bones." (*E. Paxton Hood.*) *Sanctity of the body*:—Not their historic deeds, but their faith was the point of selection for all the heroes of this great chapter; their forelooking and their belief of things not yet happened, so as to influence their daily life and conduct. Their faith; that is, the power of the sanctified imagination acting upon spiritual and temporal things. Yet, not what they did—their various achievement, but what they were internally, in regard to this one point, determined who should be admitted and who should not. Even the poor harlot of Jericho had a place in this national gallery, because she acted upon a sagacious foresight of faith, and did good to the spies that Israel had sent forth. And what more significant than the same account of Joseph! Egypt was the world's capital, advanced higher in civilisation than any or all others. Glory, on every side, had its symbols. Now, he requests of all this regnant glory nothing. In his dying hour it was to him as

a fable; as a thing like a summer's brook run dry. He asks for no history to be chiselled on obelisk or temple façade, or writing upon papyrus. "Swear to me that you will carry my bones to the sepulchre of my fathers, to the cave of Machpelah, where Abraham and Isaac and Jacob rest. Let me slumber among them." He had never forgotten his country. Egypt could not make him an Egyptian; exile could not make him a foreigner; all the gorgeous civilisation could not make him forget his shepherd-home. Palaces, sculptured temples, magnificent ceremonies of sepulture. He longed to leave the Nile and to sleep where the Jordan rolled, or near it. The faith of his youth and the love of his childhood and fidelity to his nation and his kindred remained uncorrupted by the whole prosperity of his imperial life, and is that nothing? Is this fidelity to brotherhood, native land, and ancestry to be counted as unworthy of a record? Ten thousands of men dwell among us and are cheered by a prosperity such as never came to their earlier years, yet old age will babble still of the circumscription of youth, and the dying fire will kindle a flame of love to the old home, and he were no worthy citizen of this empire who could in his prosperity forget the home of his childhood and the tongue of his people; for among the things that are sacred, none are more so than the remembrances of the paternal roof of childhood. "What!" says the hard Materialist, of this fancy. "Why should he want to take his bones from the sands of Egypt? What matter where the body sleeps? This concern for the perishable body is not scientific; it is a mirage of sentiment." Nevertheless, sentiment is more fruitful of joy and as fruitful of elevation as science itself. And as the solid earth on which we build is important, and the sky, with its rolling clouds and its translucent atmosphere, not less important, so in human life, while we do not disdain the facts, neither should we disdain the fancies. There is a shock given to a superior sentiment when the body is discarded and thrown out as something worn-out and worthless. All that is noblest in human consciousness, revolts at any indifference of this kind. How well has the body served us; our senses, as if they were so many ministers of God, bringing in treasures hour by hour, year after year, in their round—through the eye. Or who can count what the ear has done for us?—the highway along which have trooped such thoughts, such feelings have been enunciated, such loves have whispered, such sweet sounds ministered to us. Who can tell what that golden gate, the ear, is, through which God's messages of kindness to men have moved in multitude? What joy have we had in the voice! How well has this strangely delicate, yet wonderfully enduring body served us, with its various implements and organs, secret or open and visible—what a service has it rendered to every one in life! Even by the law of association one should come to honour it. So we do. The poor, helpless, withered, almost speechless old woman that sits in the corner is the mother of our mother. We do not see her palsied and dried like an untimely apple overkept—what we see is her service, her life-love—the atmosphere that springs from affection and fidelity—that is what we see as it hovers around about her—the exhalation of the heart, not the despoiling of the body. To this law of association it seems to me the whole world is indebted, I had almost said more than to knowledge itself. Is it no matter, after life is over, what becomes of the body—the fair form of your wife? She taught you the deepest lessons of love, and of the life of love. Could you bear to see her cast out, or to know that she lay on some barren field, or that the wild beasts had devoured her. Everything in a man revolts at that idea of the very form that has been to us as a temple of God, and is sacred to us. Is it nothing to you where your baby sleeps? Could you carry your child on a blustering March day, as I carried mine, amidst the snows, and not shiver yourself, as you laid the dear child into the ground? It is not a phantasy, but an intensely natural feeling that has led the mother to wrap her dead child in flannel that it might be warm in the winter's grave. And are these associations of the human body of no sanctity and of no value whatsoever? Regard for one's body should be and often is a moral influence, as certainly it is a refining influence when it is regard for duties owing. Self-respect is one of God's ministers of education in life. Respect for one's self is the consciousness that you are a king. If none others think so of you, think so of yourself in all that pertains to real royalty, and not alone in the realm of thought, or of association, or of affection, but in respect to the body. Hold it in honour in life, and for an honourable sepulture in death. He will be likely to respect another man's person who has a scrupulchre respect for his own. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Joseph's bones*:—It may seem surprising that the charge of Joseph concerning his body should be mentioned as a notable act of faith, and not the similar charge delivered by Jacob; for did not Jacob also

give commandment concerning his bones (Gen. xlix. 29–31)? Why was not that a case of faith in Jacob as much as in Joseph? We cannot always speak positively of these things, but we think that there is a very decided difference between the two. Jacob's wish to lie in Machpelah was by himself described as resting mainly on the grounds of natural affection. When his soul should be gathered to his people he would have his body lie side by side with his own relatives. This wish was probably as much an outgoing of nature as an expression of grace. Of course, natural affection would have led Joseph to desire the same thing, but he does not put it on that score. Moreover, you notice that Jacob commands his sons to do with his bones what they could readily do; they were to take him to Machpelah and bury him at once. He knew his son Joseph to be in power in Egypt; and therefore anything that was wanted for his funeral would be provided. Jacob therefore commanded nothing to be done but what could be done; there was no very remarkable exhibition of faith in commanding an immediate funeral which the filial love of Joseph would readily secure. Joseph not only wished to be buried in Machpelah, which was nature, but he would not be buried there till the land was taken possession of, which was an exhibition of the grace of faith. He wished his unburied body to share with the people of God in their captivity and their return. It was faith in Jacob, but it was remarkable faith in Joseph; and God who looks not simply at the act, but at the motive of the act, has been pleased not to put down Jacob as an instance of dying faith in this particular matter of his bones, but to award praise to Joseph as exhibiting in death a memorable degree of confidence in the promise. Probably Jacob's dying faith, when exercised upon other matters, outshone his faith in connection with his burial, while in his favourite son that matter was his leading proof of faith. I. THE POWER OF FAITH; the endurance of true faith under three remarkable modes of test. 1. First, the power of faith over worldly prosperity. It is hard to carry a full cup with a steady hand, some spilling will usually occur; but where grace makes rich men, and men in high position and authority to act becomingly, then grace is greatly glorified. You who are rich should see your danger; but let the case of Joseph be your encouragement. There is no need that you should be worldly, there is no need that you should sink the Israelite in the Egyptian. 2. Secondly, you see here the power of his faith exhibited in its triumph over death. He speaks of dying as though it were only a part of living, and comparatively a small matter to him. He gives no evidence of trepidation; but he bears his last witness concerning the faithfulness of God and the infallibility of his promise. Moreover, if I am to gather from the text that the Holy Spirit has singled out the brightest instance of faith in Joseph's whole life, it is beautiful to remark that the grand old man becomes most illustrious in his last hour. Death did not dim, but rather brightened the gold in his character. On his death-bed, beyond all the rest of his life, his faith, like the setting sun, gilds all around with glory; now that heart and flesh fail him, God becomes more than ever the strength of his life, as He was soon to be his portion for ever. 3. Once more, here is a proof of the power of faith in laughing at impossibilities. It seemed a very unlikely thing that the Israelites should go up out of Egypt. Why should they wish to go? II. THE WORKINGS OF FAITH. 1. The first fruit of faith in Joseph was this—he would not be an Egyptian. No doubt he would have had a sumptuous tomb enough in Egypt; but no, he will not be buried there, for he is not an Egyptian. In Sakhara, hard by the great pyramid of Pharaoh Apophis, stands at this day the tomb of a prince, whose name and titles are in hieroglyphic writing. The name is "Eitsuph," and from among his many titles we choose two—"Director of the king's granaries," and the other an Egyptian title, "Abrech." Now this last word is found in the Scriptures, and is that which is translated, "Bow the knee." It is more than probable that this monument was prepared for Joseph, but he declined the honour. Though his resting-place would have been side by side with the pyramid of one of Mizraim's greatest monarchs, yet he would not accept the dignity, he would not be an Egyptian. This is one of the sure workings of faith in a man of wealth and rank; when God places him in circumstances where he might be a worldling of the first order, if his faith be genuine, he says, "No; I will not even at this rate be numbered with the world." 2. Notice, next, that his faith constrained him to have fellowship with the people of God. Not only does he refuse to be a worldling, but he avows himself an Israelite. 3. His faith led to an open avowal of his confidence in God's promise. On his death-bed he said, "I die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land." He also said, "He will bring you to the land which He promised to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."

Faith cannot be dumb. I have known her tongue to be silent through diffidence, but at last it has been obliged to speak; and why should not your faith oftener speak, for her voice is sweet and her countenance is comely? 4. Moreover, notice, that having faith himself, he would encourage the faith of others. Every time an Israelite thought of the bones of Joseph, he thought, "We are to go out of this country one day." True faith seeks to propagate herself in the hearts of others. It is a good proof of your own faith when you lay yourself out to promote the faith of others. 5. Joseph's faith made him have an eye to the spiritualities of the covenant. Joseph had nothing earthly to gain in having his bones buried in Canaan rather than in Egypt; that can make small difference to a dying man. None of us would voluntarily desire to have his bones kept for some hundreds of years out of the ground in order that they might ultimately come into the family sepulchre. I believe he had no eye to the mere secularities of the covenant, but was looking to the spiritual blessings which are revealed in Jesus, the great seed of Abraham. 6. Joseph's faith in connection with his unburied bones showed itself in his willingness to wait God's time for the promised blessing. III. AN EXAMPLE FOR OUR FAITH TO ACT UPON WHEN WE ALSO COME TO THE TIME OF DEATH. What shall I derive any comfort from when I come to die? Come, let me prepare my last dying speech. Now think it over. 1. First, I would imitate Joseph, by deriving my comfort from the covenant. Jesus, who is Himself the covenant, soothes most blessedly the dying beds of His saints. A negro was asked when he had been sitting up to nurse his minister one night, "How is your master?" Said he, "He is dying full of life." It is a grand thing when one has the covenant to think on. You can then die full of life, you can pass away out of this lower life, being filled with the life eternal before the life temporal has quite gone out, so that you are never emptied out of life, but the life of grace melts into the life of glory, as the river into the ocean. 2. Joseph may be an example to us, in that he drew his consolation from the future of his people. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 23. **Moses . . . was hid . . . of his parents.**—*The faith of Moses' parents:*—I. WHAT IS COMMENDED. "Faith." Natural affections sanctified are subservient and useful to faith; grace doth not abolish nature, but perfect it. We are to obey God against our natural affections; as by faith Abraham offered his son Isaac; nature was against it. And we are to obey God with natural affection: by faith Moses was hid of his parents; there nature was for it. Many times God's interests and ours are twisted together, and then nature is allowed to work, but grace must bear sway; sometimes they are severed, and then we must leave nature to keep company with God. Use 1. It informeth us, that to strengthen faith we may and must take in the help of nature; it is God's allowance, that we may be carried out more cheerfully in the work of God (Philem. 16). 2. That their wickedness is very great that sin against nature. 3. In all these mixed actions look to your principles, what beareth sway and worketh most—faith or natural affection. But wherein lay the faith of this action? Chiefly in overcoming fear, in trusting God's protection for the preservation of the child; and possibly there might be something of a public regard and consideration, in believing the future deliverance of the Church and people of God out of Egypt. II. WHO ARE COMMENDED. "His parents." Husband and wife should go hand in hand to the throne of grace, and join together in every good thing; they should agree together in the worship of God, and promoting the good of their children. When the will of the wife and the will of the husband fall in, like the tenon and the mortise, the building goes on; but when one draws one way, and another the other way, like untamed heifers in the yoke, all cometh to ruin. III. THE COMMENDATION ITSELF. 1. The action, where—(1) The time—"When he was born." (2) The action itself—"He was hid." (3) The duration—"Three months." 2. I come now to the considerations on which it was done. (1) The external impulsive cause—"Because they saw he was a proper child," ἀστεῖον, comely, and fair (Acts vii. 20). Beauty is not always a sure sign of excellency—there is no trust to the brow; but they saw special lineaments of majesty, and of a heroical disposition in his countenance, which, being accompanied with some secret instinct, moved them to think that God had designed him to some eminent work, probably to the deliverance of his people. (2) The internal moving cause—"And they not afraid of the king's commandment," that bloody law of destroying their children. Here are three points—(*a*) Princes must not be obeyed in things contrary to the Word of God. (*b*) The commands of kings and princes have been a usual trial of God's children, as

Nebuchadnezzar's command was to fall down and worship the golden image. Use: This should draw us off from men. To this end consider—1. We are bound to God more than to men. 2. None can reward us as God can. 3. None can punish our disobedience as God can (Matt. x. 28). 4. We live longer with God than we do with men; therefore if a man would study to please, he should rather please God than men. God is eternal, man is but mortal (Isa. li. 12). 5. God can make others our friends (Prov. xvi. 7). 6. They that please men shall have enough of it (Hos. v. 12). (*c*) In such cases carnal fear doth betray us, and faith carries us through (Isa. viii. 12, 13). (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *The childhood of Moses*:—I. WHERE THERE IS AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE IN FAITH AND FEAR OF THE LORD, IT MAKES WAY UNTO A BLESSED SUCCESS IN ALL THEIR DUTIES: when it is otherwise, nothing succeeds unto their comfort. II. WHEN DIFFICULT DUTIES BEFAL PERSONS IN THAT RELATION, IT IS THEIR WISDOM EACH TO APPLY THEMSELVES UNTO THAT PART AND SHARE OF IT WHICH THEY ARE BEST SUITED FOR. So was it in this case; Amram, no doubt, was the principal in the advice and contrivance, as his wife was in its actual execution. III. THIS IS THE HEIGHT OF PERSECUTION, WHEN PRIVATE HOUSES ARE SEARCHED BY BLOODY OFFICERS, TO EXECUTE TYRANNICAL LAWS—when the last and utmost retreat of innocence, for that protection which is due unto it by the law of God and nature, with the common rules of human society, cannot be a shelter against wicked rage and fury. No doubt but during this season their diligence was accompanied with fervent cries unto God, and the exercise of trust in Him. The occasion was great on all hands, and they were not wanting unto any part of their duty. The outward act of hiding the child was but an indication of the internal working of their faith. IV. IT IS WELL WHEN ANYTHING OF EMINENCE IN OUR CHILDREN DOTH SO ENGAGE OUR AFFECTIONS UNTO THEM, AS TO MAKE THEM USEFUL AND SUBSERVIENT UNTO DILIGENCE IN DISPOSING OF THEM UNTO THE GLORY OF GOD. Otherwise a fondness in parents, arising from the natural endowments of children, is usually hurtful, and oftentimes ruinous unto the one and other. V. THE RAGE OF MEN AND THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH SHALL WORK OUT THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF GOD'S COUNSELS AND PROMISES, UNTO HIS GLORY, FROM UNDER ALL PERPLEXITIES AND DIFFICULTIES THAT MAY ARISE IN OPPOSITION UNTO IT. So they did in this instance in an eminent manner. (*J. Owen, D.D.*) *Faith the ground of parental courage*:—I. A BELOVED CHILD IN GREAT DANGER. Children are always in danger. 1. There are the perils connected with physical well-being. 2. Those which come from the hardening influence of resistance of Divine grace. What if the child should steadfastly persist in evil habits which already show themselves! 3. Those which come through the malice of Satan. Satan is on the track of the children. II. THE PARENTS' FEARLESS FAITH. "Parents." The strength of the faith may have been due to that; it was the joint faith of two. This faith showed itself—1. In a quiet confidence that God would protect their child. 2. In the adoption of all possible means to the right end. III. THIS FEARLESS FAITH RESTING ON SUFFICIENT GROUNDS. What are they? 1. The intrinsic worth of a child. Who can tell what any child may become? 2. The fact that the child is fair to God. (See margin of Acts vii. 20). 3. The distinct promises of God's Word. (*C. New.*) *The hiding of Moses by faith*:—IT IS A GREAT BLESSING WHEN IN A FAMILY BOTH THE PARENTS HAVE FAITH. "By faith he was hid three months of his parents." Moses himself (Exod. ii.) ascribes this to his mother—"When she saw that he was a goodly child she hid him three months." Stephen (Acts vii.) says, "In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months": thus mentioning rather his father than his mother. No doubt the apostle combined the two other inspired utterances. Do you wonder that Moses chiefly mentions his mother, Jochebed? I do not. What man is there among us but always delights to mention his godly mother, and though we would have no partialities about our parents, yet without controversy great is the mystery of a mother's love, and there are some points about it in which it makes a deeper impression upon the memory than a father's care. Prize fathers as you may, and should, yet there is a tender touch that comes home to every man's heart when he thinks of his mother. It seems natural that Moses should, when he wrote the account, mention most of all his mother; and indeed a mother has more to do with a babe than a father can have: in its tender infancy she is naturally its chief guardian. Perhaps, too, though we cannot be sure, Jochebed may have been the stronger believer of the two, and may have been the main instigator of the child's preservation. II. TRUE AND EVEN REMARKABLE FAITH MAY ACT IN A VERY COMMONPLACE WAY. What do we read? By faith they "subdued

kingdoms, wrought righteousness," and so on. Why these are great things, worthy of mention. Yes, but this also is great in its ways—"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents." It has no trumpet ring about it like stopping lions' mouths and quenching fires, and subduing kingdoms, but in God's point of view, the hiding of a little baby three months, may be as great an instance of acceptable faith as any of them: even turning to flight the armies of the alien may not be greater than defeating the malice of a king by saving a little child. But you say, "Was it not natural enough that a mother should try to preserve her child's life? Can a woman forget her suckling child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" Yes, I know all that; but still the Lord is not praising the natural affections but the supernatural faith. We should say, "Nature led them to conceal the babe," but God says, "Faith led them to do it," and, in their degree, both are true. Nature prompted, but faith constrained, and enabled them to do what else their timidity would not have ventured upon. III. FAITH WILL ACT WITH A VERY SLENDER ENCOURAGEMENT. "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child." Stephen says in his speech that the child was "exceeding fair"; and if you look at Stephen's speech you will see that the translators have put in the margin, "fair to God." So it may run, "when they saw that the child was fair to God." Now, I gather from that expression that the child was beautiful beyond the common run of children; that there was a charm about its features, and something superhuman, probably, since it was fair to God. In the babe's face there were prophecies of the man of God. Surely among them that have been born of woman there has not been born a greater than Moses; and about him as a child there was a something so marvellously beautiful, that his parents were fascinated by him. IV. FAITH HAS GREAT POWER IN OVERCOMING FEAR. There was, no doubt, appended to Pharaoh's statute a punishment for anybody who should not obey the law. Perhaps four lives were in danger for the sake of that one little life—her husband, herself, Aaron, and Miriam, her daughter. Yet through faith she will run all risks, and so will all her family, that this promising child whom they believe God has sent to them for a noble purpose may still live. Now, if you have faith in Christ manifest it by overcoming all fear of the consequences of doing right. It is right to obey God rather than man. V. FAITH IS OFTEN DRIVEN TO GREAT SHIFTS: The mother was put to great shifts to hide her child, and she used all her wits and common-sense. She did not put her child in the front room, or carry it into the street or sit at the open door and nurse it, but she was prudent, and acted as if all depended upon her concealing the babe. Some people suppose that if you have faith you may act like a fool. But faith makes a person wise. It is one of the notable points about faith that it is sanctified common-sense. It is not fanaticism, it is not absurdity; it is making God the grandest asset in our account, and then reckoning according to the soundest logic. VI. FAITH'S SIMPLE ACTS OFTEN LEAD ON TO THE GRANDEST RESULTS. Great wheels turn on little axles. There is a tiny part to each machine of unutterable importance. You never know the infinity of the influence of a word. To the wise man nothing is little; to the fool nothing is truly great. Make all things great by doing them by faith. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Potentialities in the life of a child*:—Who can say how vast are the potentialities involved in the life of a young child? More than nineteen hundred years ago, in the civil wars of Rome, the life of a beautiful child was again and again saved from the extremest peril. That child grew up to be a heavy curse to himself, a heavy curse to others; he grew up to be one of the worst men who ever lived; the Emperor Tiberius, in whose reign Christ was crucified. Again, some hundred and fifty years ago, a house in an English village was found to be in flames. The clergyman and his family—for it was the vicarage—were roused, and when they had escaped, it was found that one little boy was still in the burning house. A ladder was placed to the window, he was rescued, and handed unhurt into his father's arms. What would the world have lost had that little boy perished? For his name was John Wesley, and by his piety and zeal he fanned into flame once more the dead white embers of Christian faith. Now, who can tell what a little child may be! He may grow up, as has been said, like Beethoven, to lift the soul by the magic of Divine melody into the seventh heaven of ineffable vision and incommensurable hope; or like Newton, to weigh the far-off stars in the balance, and measure the heavings of the eternal flow; or like Luther, to scorch up what is cruel and false by a word, as by a flame; or like Milton and Burke, to awake men's hearts with the note of an organ trumpet; or

like the great saints of the Churches and the great sages of the Schools, to add to those acquisitions of spiritual beauty and intellectual mastery which have, one by one, and little by little, raised men from being no higher than the brute to be only a little lower than the angels. You never know but what the child, in rags and pitiful squalor, that meets you in the streets, may have in him the germ of gifts that might add new treasure to the storehouse of beautiful things or noble acts. In that great storm of terror which swept over France in 1793, a certain man who was every hour expecting to be led off to the guillotine uttered this memorable sentiment: "Even at this incomprehensible moment," he said, "when morality, enlightenment, love of country, all of them only make death at the prison door or on the scaffold more certain—yes, on the fatal tumbril itself, with nothing free but my voice, I could still cry 'Take care' to a child that should come too near the wheel. Perhaps I may save his life; perhaps he may one day save his country." (*Archdeacon Farrar.*)

Vers. 24–26. **Moses.**—*The power of a good life:*—At Rome there is a colossal statue of Moses by Michael Angelo—one of the greatest statues in the world. He is represented with long hair streaming over his robe, and as you gaze on the awful statue you are smitten with awe; love and admiration are lost in dread. There is nothing attractive in mere human greatness; it is beyond our reach; but when greatness is but the attribute of goodness it instantly becomes refreshing. For goodness is in the power of every one of us, and is greater than any greatness. We are in some sense bidden to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect, and every human character who has been great in goodness helps us to live and strive after this ideal. To make the rivers flow swiftly across the plain they must have their springs high up amid the immaculate snows of the everlasting hills, and to make a man his faith and hope must be among the heights of heaven. Now this is the very force which moved those good men who inspire us with fresh faith in God, humanity, and ourselves. The race must be worth working for which produces such specimens. And then it comes home as a revelation to us that we, too, can be great as they were in goodness, and if we be great in goodness it matters supremely little to God or man how small we are in all things else. Every servant in a house, every workman in a factory, every member of an ordinary profession in his counting house, may, and is, called upon almost every day of his life, in a high or a low measure, to make the very same choice which has influenced the greatest lives. You will see, then, why I think it may be profitable for us to look at one scene in the life of Moses. Now, what was it which at the ripe age of forty altered his career? If we look at the paintings on Egyptian tombs we may see what he saw. One of our great painters years ago drew a picture, in which thousands of Jews are dragging along images of an Egyptian king; they are tugging at the ropes under the burning sun, and youths and men in the prime of life are panting, sweating, straining every nerve while their wretched slave women are beating cymbals, and over their backs falls the torturing scourge of their taskmasters. Such sights Moses saw. He saw them, too, labouring in the brickfields as in a burning fiery furnace, or treading at the water-mills on the banks of the Nile as Fellaheen of Egypt do now, with their monotonous chant, "They starve us, they starve us, they beat us, they beat us; but there is One above." A sight of oppression, a sight of misery, a sight of manhood humiliated out of its natural dignity, and defrauded out of its indefeasible rights. And what was worse, this nation of slaves was contented in its misery. Moses pitied them all the more because they had, for the time being, sunk too low to pity themselves. The glory of the faith of Moses was that he still saw them to be men. The great sculptor looks upon the rough, shapeless block of marble and sees in it the angel whom he will hew out of it; the man of faith sees in the debased man the potentialities of a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people which should be to the glory of God, who had called them out of darkness to His marvellous light. That was the sight which Moses saw without. What did he see at home? He belonged to these slaves no longer; he was an Egyptian prince; his life was ranked among the lords of these labouring myriads. What should hinder him from enjoying pomp and pleasure, and becoming himself, perhaps, a conquering Pharaoh, and in due time having some vast, godlike statue reared to him, with some pompous inscription such as this: "My name is king of kings; look on my works, ye mighty, and despair"? Moses might have done this, and if he had he would have lived for a few years like other Pharaohs and passed away; and history, reclining half asleep upon a pyramid,

might have muttered some name, and we should not have known what it was. Happily for Israel, happily for mankind, Moses chose differently. He chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Moses became the first founder of that religion which was the cradle of Christianity. What was it but pity for human misery that made John Howard leave a comfortable home to breathe the sickening atmosphere of prisons? What was it but pity for human misery that sent David Livingstone straight from the splendours and triumphs of a London season to face the scorching wastes of Africa, and to die homeless, wifeless, childless, in a negro hut? It is the same spirit of self-sacrifice, which is the most potent engine for good in all the world ; it is this spirit alone which is adequate to uplift our lives from their vulgarity and sensualism, and to place us, each in our humble degree, by the side of those who preferred, "to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Whence came this spirit? Came it not from Christ? Did He not make for us men the most infinite sacrifice? Ah! let us follow His footsteps, bearing His cross as Moses did, and as all of His servants have ever done, trying to escape averages, trying to rise from the vulgar herd and the false, worldly, sensual pleasure into the high service of the saints of God. Remember that this choice did not come only to Moses, or to some great man now and then. It comes to all of us, it comes practically whenever we are called upon to choose between the paltry action from which we gain, and the right action from which we lose; whenever we are called upon to yield something to our neighbour and disappoint him not, though it were to our own hurt; whenever we seek for strength, even at the cost of bitter tears. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) *Moses the uncrowned king* :—I. WHAT DID THAT IMPORTANT CHOICE INVOLVE? HOW MUCH OF SACRIFICE AND OF SELF-RENUNCIATION? 1. Rank and royalty he thereby renounced—the highest honour and the greatest power that earth can give—the very prizes for which men toil most zealously and pay most largely. 2. This decision also involved the renunciation of temporal riches. Let any man measure, if he can, the influence which the desire for a competency of worldly good has upon himself, and he may better judge how strong was the power of Egypt's incalculable wealth, which failed to swerve Moses from his holy purpose. 3. And there, too, were the pleasures of a life amid courtly splendours, which he voluntarily renounced. Within his reach were all the sensual enjoyments that the mind could devise or the heart desire. He could have lived in an atmosphere of earthly pleasure, breathing the perfume of sweetest flowers of delight, feasting the eye with all forms of beauty, regaling the senses with every carnal joy. All honour to Moses, then, for his signal victory over this fair-visaged and subtle foe, who has taken captive so many of earth's fairest sons, and led them by the silken bonds of a willing captivity to the bitter wages of death! And all honour and certain reward to every youth who, like Moses, will spurn the sinful pleasure, and choose the higher though hidden good! But in that choice was involved more than the renunciation of all these forms of worldly good. 4. With him, to reject them was to accept their opposites; and not less lustre is shed upon that decision by what he accepted than by what he renounced. Think of that race of bondmen whom henceforth he was to call his brethren: taking his place by their side, and sharing the reproach which belonged to them. There, too, were the envy and ill-will of this very people he sought to benefit. They would not understand him. They were sure to misinterpret his good intentions. All this he must have foreseen. And not only was there the dishonour of becoming the companion of these degraded Hebrews; he accepted also the "reproach" which attached to the worship of their God and faith in their promised Messiah. His former associates among the lords and princes, the priests and the philosophers of Egypt would look upon him with contempt for adopting a religion so despised in their eyes. Think of this, O youth of this Christian land, where the true God is honoured and worshipped by the learned and the great, and the religion of Christ is admitted to be the one hope of humanity! And yet, you, perchance, hesitate to adopt this revered faith, to choose this infinite good, through cowardly fear of a few godless associates. Look on this princely reared son of fortune, turning away from rank and wealth, from honour and pleasure, from friends and genial pursuits, to humiliation and poverty, to dishonour and reproach, to uncongenial associates and the curses of those He would bless; and summon your fainting heart to a like worthy choice. Moses places on the scales of decision, on the one side the world's best, on the other religion's worst, and with deliberate judgment chooses the latter; "affliction with the people of God," "the reproach of Christ," outweighing

a throne with its dazzling honours, the wealth of a proud monarchy, and the pleasures of a royal palace. II. Turn we now to consider UPON WHAT PRINCIPLE AND BY WHAT INSPIRING MOTIVE SUCH A CHOICE WAS MADE. And here we are left in no doubt. The apostle solves the problem for us: "By faith," &c. Standing on that summit of observation he looked not alone with the eye of sense upon the inviting scene before him, but with the clear and penetrating eye of faith he surveyed the whole prospect. And when you look upon earth's most entrancing scenes with the eye of a clear-visioned faith, their beauty fades, their glory pales, their wealth vanishes, their pleasure dies. He saw thus that all this fair-promising good was more seeming than real—a tinseled glory that would not withstand the corroding atmosphere of adversity and death—pleasing to the sense but not satisfying to the heart. He saw by faith, also, that all this glitter and glamour of earthly treasures were but "for a season"—a flower of earth that blooms to-day and fades to-morrow; a summer's day that wanes and darkens into deepest night; a song of tremulous joy that ends in a wail of despair; a transitory pleasure that while it might make life agreeable would make a death-bed terrible. Moses' faith in God also gave him the assurance that the promises concerning His people Israel should be fulfilled; that however degraded they were then, they should be exalted, and a Delivering Hand should wrest them from the oppressor's grasp. Faith brought to his view far more than the natural eye could compass. It was to him "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Go forth, and look with naked eye over the limited field presented to your view, bounded by the sensible horizon, and the seemingly not-distant arch of heaven shutting down upon it. Now place the telescope to your eye, and lo! the field of vision is enlarged, and distant worlds appear. Faith is such a telescope, and through this Moses looked. And what did he see? Fields more fair and fruitful than the fertile valley of the Nile; the river of life surpassing far the sacred stream of Egypt; riches infinitely transcending Egypt's garnered treasures; a crown more effulgent than that of the Pharaohs; a palace whose splendour outdazzled that of the magnificent City of the Sun. There is but one way to conquer this world—and it must be conquered, or it will conquer you—and that way is to look from this, through the telescope of faith, to the other world. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." If you would be a winner in the life-race, you must do as Moses did—take in the whole and not a part of life, sacrifice the present for the future, pleasure for principle, gold for godliness, wealth for worth, reputation for character, the blossoms of immediate promise for the golden fruits of the eternal years. III. THE REWARD OF HIS ILLUSTRIOUS CHOICE. He was rewarded by being called to a mission of most distinguished service and resplendent honour. He became the leader and deliverer of God's chosen people—a lawgiver in comparison with whom the names of Solon and Lycurgus lose their brightness; an author of the most illustrious books the world has ever read; a prophet with a shining record of glory; a hero whose fame has filled the earth. The honour that he renounced was but "for a season"; the honour that he gained is lasting as the years of God. (*C. H. Payne, D.D.*) *The choice of Moses:*—This chapter is a kind of gazette extraordinary of the holy war, a muster roll of the heroes of faith. Among these worthies stands conspicuously, Moses. I. THE CHOICE. Egypt's gold had lost its power to charm, and the treasures of Rameses and Succoth were esteemed as trash. Not that there is any necessary opposition between the present and the future. Man is a being formed for both worlds; what we want is, as it were, to strike the balance between the claims of each. I do not ask you when trouble comes; but when fortune is with you, when friends smile upon you, when you feel the flutterings of dear life within you, can you then give all up for Christ? II. THE MOTIVE. "The recompense of the reward." The reward of grace is certain, complete, and eternal. Irrespective of the illumination of God's Word, the voice of conscience, the inequalities of providence, and the sanctions of law and human governments, all point to a state of future rewards and punishments; every promise breathes in balmier sweetness, and every warning rolls in deeper thunder by this thought, that you and I must give an account. Oh, it is a solemn thought! You and I have life upon our hands, and we cannot get rid of it. (*W. M. Punshon, D.D.*) *Moses' decision:*—I. THE DECIDED ACTION OF MOSES. 1. Who he was that did this. (1) A man of education. (2) A person of high rank. (3) A man of great ability. 2. What sort of society he felt compelled to leave. Jesus left the angels of heaven for your sake; can you not leave the best of company for His sake? 3. But I marvel most at Moses when I consider not only who he was and the company he

had to forego, but the persons with whom he must associate, for in truth the followers of the true God were not, in their own persons, a loveable people at that time. 4. Consider now what Moses left by siding with Israel. 5. Consider yet once more what Moses espoused when he left the court. He espoused abounding trial, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God." II. Now what WAS THE SOURCE OF MOSES' DECISION? Scripture says it was faith, otherwise some would insist that it was the force of blood. "He was by birth an Israelite, and therefore," say they, "the instincts of nature prevailed." Our text assigns a very different reason. We know right well that the sons of godly parents are not led to adore the true God by reason of their birth. Grace does not run in the blood; sin may, but righteousness does not. Neither was it eccentricity which led him to espouse the side which was oppressed. We have sometimes found a man of pedigree who has associated with persons of quite another rank and condition, simply because he never could act like anybody else, and must live after his own odd fashion. It was not so with Moses. All his life through you cannot discover a trace of eccentricity in him: he was sober, steady, law-abiding; what if I say he was a concentric man, for his centre was in the right place, and he moved according to the dictates of prudence. Neither was he hurried on by some sudden excitement when there burned within his soul fierce patriotic fires which made him more fervent than prudent. No, there may have been some haste in his slaying the Egyptian on the first occasion, but then he had forty more years to think it over, and yet he never repented his choice, but held on to the oppressed people of God, and still refused to think of himself as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. It was faith alone, that enabled the prophet of Sinai to arrive at his decision, and to carry it out. What faith had he? 1. He had faith in Jehovah. He knew in his own heart that there was one God, one only God, and he would have nothing to do with Amun, Pthah, or Maut. 2. The faith of Moses also rested in Christ. "Christ had not come," says one. He cast his eyes through the ages that were to intervene, and he saw before him the Shiloh of whom dying Jacob sang. 3. But then, in addition to this, Moses had faith in reference to God's people. He knew that the Israelites were God's chosen, that despite all their faults, God would not break His covenant with His own people, and he knew, therefore, that their cause was God's cause, and that it was the cause of right and truth. 4. Once again, Moses had faith in the "recompense of the reward." He said thus within himself, "I must renounce much, and reckon to lose rank, position, and treasure; but I expect to be a gainer notwithstanding, for there will be a day when God shall judge the sons of men; and I expect that those who serve God faithfully shall then turn out to have been the wise men, while those who truckled to gain a present ease, shall find that they missed eternity while they were snatching after time, and that they bartered heaven for a paltry mess of pottage." III. Thirdly, we are going to run over in our minds some of THE ARGUMENTS WHICH SUPPORTED MOSES in his decided course of following God. 1. The first argument would be, he saw clearly that God was God and therefore must keep His word, must bring His people up out of Egypt and give them a heritage. 2. Then, we have it in the text that he perceived the pleasures of sin to be but for a season. Oh that men would measure everything in the scales of eternity! 3. And, then, again, he thought within himself that even the pleasures, which did last for a season, while they lasted were not equal to the pleasure of being reproached for Christ's sake. This ought also to strengthen us, that the worst of Christ is better than the best of the world, that even now we have more joy as Christians, if we are sincere, than we could possibly derive from the sins of the wicked. I have only this to say—1. We ought all of us to be ready to part with everything for Christ, and if we are not we are not His disciples. 2. We ought to abhor the very thought of obtaining honour in this world by concealing our sentiments or by making compromises. 3. We ought to take our place with those who truly follow God and the Scriptures, even if they are not altogether what we should like them to be. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

The highest form of faith:—As no two men are alike, so it may be said no two lives are alike, though the lives of all men have many things in common. That life is the most interesting which embraces the largest amount of experience, and by the varieties and extraordinariness of its experiences differs most from other lives. But in estimating the interest of any individual life, we must ever bear in mind the fact that each life is double—it has its external and internal form. A life of mental struggle and soul triumphs like that of Plato, may have no external incidents of any importance, and yet be interesting in the highest degree. Other lives may

consist almost exclusively of external ups and downs. The most interesting life of all is one which embraces these two kinds of motion, and assumes a variety of phases in each department. Estimated according to this rule, few lives are so interesting as that of Moses. His external life was one of special variety. His internal life was one of hopes and fears; struggles, failures, and triumphs; passion and peace; discovery and perplexity; adversity and success; lamentations and songs; and work and leisure. He was a great and a good man in combination. I. THE GOOD WHICH MOSES REJECTED. Paul gives us a summary of the sacrifices which Moses was led to make at the shrine of principle in the words, "He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." This is mentioned as a real good which he abandoned. 1. This sacrifice involved the abandonment of wealth. It is a matter of importance to estimate aright the value of wealth. A man who has but little sense and less religion may desire to possess wealth for its own sake: but a man whose nature is refined and good finds no pleasure in gold or acres in themselves. He desires them simply as means—as instruments. To him they are of no value except as they help him to some higher good. Viewed in this light, wealth is a blessing, and like every other blessing it brings with it its own responsibilities, for in all things man is but a steward over God's property. Wealth is the real property of God who gives it, and not of the man who has it in his possession. The offer made to Moses involved wealth—"all the treasures of Egypt." In it itself he could care nothing for it, but as means to ends—as an additional talent to be used for man's good and God's glory—it was a blessing to be eagerly grasped. And then there was this further consideration, that if he refused the offer, it would be made to another and accepted, and this other might actually employ the wealth of Egypt to promote evil and clog the wheels of progress. Moses might say, "If this wealth becomes mine, I shall make good use of it. Money is a blessing though the love of it is a curse. If I reject it, another may take it and use it to do evil." Here lay the force of the temptation. 2. This sacrifice on the part of Moses involved the abandonment of influence. A man who has lost the good opinion of his fellows can never hope to do them good, for our words have power as men have confidence in our wisdom and integrity. By rejecting the honour which the Egyptians proposed to confer upon Moses, he would lose their good opinion because they could not comprehend principles so lofty as those which led him thus to act. Then the influence which arose from his position as king of Egypt was immense. As king he could have purified the morals of courtiers by setting them a good example. He might introduce regulations, with the consent of the people, which would have crippled the power, in after ages, of tyrannical kings. He might even abolish slavery, and thus restore the Jews to their former splendour. His influence might go far toward the abolition of idolatry and the instruction of the people in the knowledge of the true God. Then, as the king of the mightiest nation then existing, his influence would be great in foreign states; and by means of the power which he derived from inexhaustible riches, and the influence which arose from his official position, and the place which he held in public esteem, the good which he might have effected would have extended to all nations and for ever. It required no small resolution to reject those means and opportunities of doing good. II. THE EVILS WHICH MOSES SELECTED. 1. The mental anxiety which was inseparable from his position as the leader into liberty of a nation of slaves. 2. The many privations which must have been connected with the journey across Arabia. 3. The precarious prospects of his own family. What became of his children is not known, but their secular position proved very different from what it would have been had he accepted the crown of Egypt. III. THE REASON OF THIS CHOICE. The sinful pleasures referred to in the text are not allied to those which are so called now. The pleasures of sin, according to modern notions, are pleasures of a gross or animal nature, such pleasures as could have had no attraction for a man of Moses' refined culture and pure habits. Paul refers, it seems to me, to the things which Moses rejected. These were the pleasures of sin—wealth, honour, and influence, or what was involved in being called "the son of Pharaoh's daughter." But, it may be asked, is wealth, or honour, or influence a pleasure of sin? Is it sinful for a man to be rich, respected, and obeyed? Is it wrong for a man to occupy the throne of a powerful and civilised country? In certain cases it is sinful; in others, it is not. If riches are gotten by being screwed out of the flesh and blood of the poor, then are riches the pleasures of sin. If the applause of others is obtained by sacrificing truth, honour, and goodness, as they were sacrificed by Herod, Pilate, and Felix, then is reputation a pleasure of sin. If a man climbs

to a throne of state, as many have done, by trampling on the rights of others, by crushing men's lives and liberties, then does regal power become a pleasure of sin. Did any such obstacles stand in the way of Moses? Was he not offered the crown by those who had a right to bestow it? True; still must Moses have sinned had he become the monarch of Egypt. The kings of Egypt were both kings and priests. If the king did not belong to the sacerdotal class, he was adopted into that class at the time of his appointment, and instructed in the mysteries of the national religion. The king had to appear in the temple to offer sacrifices to the gods. He represented the national religion, promised to be faithful to the gods of his country, as well as administer justice to his subjects. It is evident, thus, that Moses in accepting the crown of Egypt, must have pretended that he was an idol worshipper. He was thus required to act, if not to utter, at least one falsehood. He was required to subscribe to what he did not believe—to promise to do, what, as a good man, he never could intend to perform. IV. THE MAINSPRING OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE. Moses acted nobly because he acted conscientiously. But the question suggests itself to us, What enabled Moses to act thus conscientiously when a sacrifice so great was required of him? What gave to his conscience such unconquerable power? 1. Moses seems to have had the most satisfactory view of heaven—"the recompense of the reward." The blessedness of the future will not only be a reward, but also a recompense. All present evils and sufferings will be recompensed. The joy of the future will be in proportion to the sorrow of the present. 2. Moses, moreover, realised the presence of the invisible world, for the Greek means no more than this, or rather, it means all this—"as seeing the invisible." It is a general form of speech which embraces not only the Divine presence, but the actual presence of all invisible things. Moses had other means of vision than the mere eye of the body, and that was the reason of his triumph over the trials of this life. (*E. Lewis, B.A.*) *The faith of Moses*:—I. The faith of Moses appears in "REFUSING TO BE CALLED THE SON OF PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER." 1. "Pharaoh's daughter" is your mother. No; my mother is of "the people of God." 2. "Pharaoh's daughter" saved your life. Yes; but my mother brought me into life. 3. "Pharaoh's daughter" gave you education. Yes; but my mother taught me the "things of God." 4. "Pharaoh's daughter" made you a prince. Yes; but my mother taught me to become "a child of God." 5. "Pharaoh's daughter" brought you to court. Yes; but my mother brought me to "the Church of God." II. The faith of Moses was TRIED BY AFFLICTION. You will be afflicted with poverty, with labour, with taxes, and with contempt and persecution as a Hebrew; but you shall be looked up to and respected as "the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Be it so; I prefer the favour of God to the approbation of men. III. The faith of Moses appears in "ESTEEMING THE REPROACH OF CHRIST GREATER RICHES THAN THE TREASURES OF EGYPT." 1. In Egypt you shall have a splendid palace—that in which Pharaoh lives, in all its beauty and grandeur. My parents taught me that the Lord would give me "a mansion" in glory; I prefer it. 2. In Egypt you shall wear a very costly and beautiful crown, all sparkling with diamonds. My parents taught me that the Lord will give me "a crown of righteousness" in glory; I prefer it. 3. In Egypt you shall sit on a throne of the most magnificent and costly splendour, with all your courtiers about you. My parents taught me that the Lord "will grant to me to sit with Him in His throne"; I prefer that. 4. In Egypt you shall reign over the most extended and wealthy kingdom on the earth. My parents taught me that the Lord will give me "a kingdom, prepared for me from the foundation of the world"; I prefer it. 5. In Egypt you shall have all the enjoyment which this world can afford. My parents taught me that the Lord will give me an "exceeding and eternal weight of glory"; I prefer that. IV. The faith of Moses appears IN HIS FLIGHT FROM EGYPT. V. IN "HIS KEEPING THE PASSOVER AND THE SPRINKLING OF BLOOD." (*Jas. Kidd, D.D.*) *The faith of Moses and the faith of Christ*:—As the son of Pharaoh's daughter Moses would have at his command all that is called pleasure; pleasures of intellect and taste, besides all the pleasures of sense, the pleasures of the man of the world, and of the man of fashion. There never was a great man whose temptations were not as great as his gifts. I do not mean to say that his pleasures, those open to him in the position he held, were sins. By no means. In themselves and apart from duties with which they might chance to be incompatible, these things were pleasures, and yet not in the smallest degree sins. It was what made them sins to Moses which shows us what sort of man he was, what nobleness of character there was in him by faith. There is an exquisite simplicity in the story in Exodus concerning the change in Moses from

youth to man, from Egyptian to Israelite, from courtier to patriot. The deed which he did was unpremeditated, the work of a moment. It was done not without alarm; but it marked the critical moment when his life passed into a higher and nobler phase. He went forth an Egyptian courtier; he came back a Hebrew patriot. After this, whatever they might be to others, the pleasures of Pharaoh's court were to him the pleasures of sin; the best and most refined and most innocent of these pleasures were sinful. To go on enjoying his old pleasures after this wakening up of his manhood, this recognition of the fact that there was an oppressed people in existence, and that that people was his people, was a crime of which he could not be guilty. There was in him that nobleness of nature which, besides tending to sympathy with the oppressed, revolts from all that is selfish and cruel; and this nobleness was stirred up in him, by seeing the state of his kindred, and comparing it with his own. This was his faith. Faith saved him from being content to be idle and useless, and gave him zeal and courage to play the part of a man and of a hero in the liberation of his people. Faith made him refuse idleness and luxury as sin, when he saw that there was work to be done and suffering to be endured in a good cause. Faith made him despise the honours of a court when, by identifying himself with the shame and sorrow of a race of slaves, he could help them out of bondage worse than death. In a word, faith, in the case of Moses, was another name for manliness or heroism. Every man who fights for his country, not from fear or by compulsion, but freely and bravely; every man who sacrifices time, or comfort, or health, or ease, for the good of his fellow-men; every man who makes a stand for truth, fair play, honesty, against lies and meanness and treachery and wrong; every man who thinks himself despicable if he is idle and useless, and respectable if he has duty to do and does it; every such man has in him something of the faith of Moses. It was a marvellous faith which Moses exhibited in his long and eventful life. With one or two mysterious lapses he played his heroic part in the most heroic fashion. It was not what he risked, or what he suffered in the execution of his great task at the hands of the Egyptians or other enemies of his race; it was what he had to endure from his countrymen; it was their murmurings and backslidings, their servile spirit, the bondage to sense which they carried with them out of the house of bondage—it was this which tried what manner of man he was, and of what stuff was his faith. As with all the greatest, as with Christ Himself, his conflict was not so much with force as with stupidity and baseness—those ancient and indomitable foes which never fail to rise up against the man whose purpose is to elevate his fellows. To make a nation, a chosen nation, a peculiar people, a commonwealth of righteousness, out of a horde of slaves, was a noble task. But it was a task in which he who undertook it had to suffer as much affliction, and refuse as much of what is called pleasure, as could well be suffered or refused. Herein Moses, as the language of this passage suggests, connects himself with Christ. His faith was the faith of Christ. The choice which the son of Pharaoh's daughter made in his time was the same choice which was made again when He who was rich for our sakes became poor. It is striking to notice the conjunction here of these two names, the greatest in the history of mankind. A superficial account can be and often is given of it, from which we get no lesson worth learning:—it is that, by a marvellous second-sight, Moses anticipated Christ's day, and by faith in Christ as the Saviour of the world was enabled to make his choice. There is a sense, no doubt, in which it is true that Moses, like Abraham, saw Christ's day and was glad. But it was not certainly in the way in which we see it, now that it has been or, rather, is. To fancy that the Old Testament worthies had substantially all the light we have concerning Christ is to fancy what, in the first place, is very incredible, and what, in the second, distorts and confuses the whole teaching of the Bible. Christ's life is the perfect life. As far as any one in times before He came approached to that life, he was a Christian—he saw Christ's day; he believed in Christ; he esteemed the reproach of Christ the greatest of treasures. Moses was not only a Christian before Christ; he came as near almost as a man can come to the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus, inasmuch as, like Christ Himself, he had to be good and do good, he had to be a man, and live a man's true life, at the expense of having to count life-long afflictions great gain, and to turn away as from sin from all that common men call pleasure. It is a great thing to remember how old Christianity is—to remember that it is as old as Moses, nay, as old as man. Every true and noble life that was ever lived in this world, no matter where, or when, or how, was Christian. Above all, every hour of suffering that was ever endured in the way of duty to God and

man was Christian. Nor does this make Christianity less or Christ less—it makes them greater. It is only an expression of the fact that Christianity is eternal truth and eternal life. There are two remarks which I think ought to be made in conclusion. (1) As to the relation of Judaism, of which Moses was the founder, and Christianity, which began with Christ. Moses, whose faith was that of Christ, did not found a system which was destined to put ages of no faith, or different faith, between himself and Christ. There is but one faith—that which Moses had, and which Judaism, in its own way, inculcated—that faith which is another name for love to God and man. (2) Lastly, remark this as to the enjoyment of the world and what are called its pleasures. Many Christian people are much perplexed in their minds on this point. Where to draw the line between lawful and unlawful pleasure is a difficulty which they find great or insuperable. But there is one rule as to the enjoyment and the renunciation of what are called pleasures, which is good for practice, and it is that which is suggested to us here: we may safely enjoy pleasures, as long as they do not interfere with our duty as Christians—to be good and to do good; and if there are pleasures, as there are many, which help us to do this duty, we ought to enjoy them. Give up your pleasures and call them sins when they hinder you from doing Christian work. Till then enjoy them with a good conscience, giving God thanks for them. (*J. Service, D.D.*) *The great refusal*:—It is not meant that he was base and unthankful as not acknowledging her tender compassion towards him when he was ready to perish, or her singular love to him, and special care of him, manifested in his education and advancement. No doubt he did account her as his best friend under heaven, and his greatest benefactrix under God, and he did give her all respect and honour due unto her as his mother. His own natural mother might have been willing, but was no ways able, to do so much for him. This refusal therefore was no unworthy incivility, disrespect, or base ingratitude, but a free and noble act of his sanctified soul, whereby he being illuminated from heaven did see the baseness, uncertainty, and danger of that great estate of honour, wealth, power, and rare contents of the world; and did judge the enjoyment of it, if not consistent with, yet prejudicial to. his spiritual and eternal happiness. And upon this account he was willing to part with them for a better end, and a great good. Whilst we are seeking the eternal bliss of heaven's kingdom, we must be willing to part with and forsake all things, even the most delicious and glorious, though we affect them much. Man devoid of grace and heavenly wisdom is strongly inclined to the glory, honour, wealth, and delights of this world; they seem so glorious, and taste so sweet, that they much take the soul; they promise some rare content and perfect happiness. Therefore men seek and pursue them eagerly, hoping and expecting much from them; and if they once are possessed of them, and enjoy them, oh, how unwilling are they to part with them! They prefer them before heaven and the eternal felicity thereof. Hence it doth appear how highly elevated, and how excellently qualified, the soul of Moses was, who could so fully and freely refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. This perhaps was not done without some great conflict, the issue whereof was a clear and glorious victory. (*G. Lawson.*) *The choice of Moses*:—I. IT EVINCED GREAT SELF-DENIAL. He despised the pleasures of a court for the still greater luxury of doing good; he relinquished the enjoyments of a fine mind, a cultivated taste, and a splendid imagination, cradled in affluence, for the still loftier rewards of morality and religion; he turned a deaf ear to the voice of ambition which promised him the crown. Nor can it be said of Moses, what has been sneeringly declared of Solomon by the disciples of Kant and the shallow imitators of Voltaire, that he renounced the pleasures of this world only when his infirmities unfitted him for enjoying them. He was now in the vigour of his youth, and in all the prime of his manhood. Have you the moral courage and the self-denial to do what Moses did? You cannot refuse, like him, to be called the son of a princess. But have you the self-denial and the moral fortitude of character to be perfectly satisfied with the humble station in which Providence has placed you? Is it your aim to use this world as not abusing it, and to devote to His glory those talents with which you are intrusted? II. THE CHOICE OF MOSES DISPLAYS SINGULAR RESOLUTION. III. THE CHOICE OF MOSES DISPLAYS CALM AND COOL DELIBERATION ON THE MOST PAINFUL CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH A CHOICE. He insulted the princess, he outraged the royal favour, and he poured contempt upon the whole courtiers of the land. And the wrath which would now run high against him would bear some proportion to the love which adopted him as a son. These were consequences which Moses could not overlook in coming to such a resolution, and they

were every way calculated to excite the deepest regret. Instead of his conduct being imputed to the true motives, he knew that it would be traced to principles to which he was an utter stranger. Nor could he vindicate himself; he was gone, and vile ingratitude was stamped upon his character. Nor were these the only difficulties which would present themselves to his generous mind. He was offering his services to men who scarcely knew the sacrifices which he was making—who could not appreciate his exertions on their behalf. These were the immediate consequences of his choice; they were far too palpable for such a man as Moses was, not to perceive; and they were far too important for him not to consider. Yet, notwithstanding all this, he deliberately "chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Such should be the principles by which you are actuated in making a profession of religion now. If your profession of religion is not founded on real principle, if it is not guided by solid information, and if it is not animated by love to the truth, then there is no stability in your character. IV. THE CHOICE OF MOSES DISPLAYS EARLY ATTENTION TO RELIGION. The apostle here tells us that, when Moses came to years, he made this choice, which fully warrants us in concluding that he had given very early attention to this matter. He considered the subject in all its bearings, and he traced out its consequences in time and eternity. And the result of this investigation was the choice which is here recorded. We enjoy far greater privileges than ever Moses knew. We are taught to look back to the incarnation, the life, and the sacrificial death of Christ, as a part of recorded history, instead of a part of those prophecies which were darkly unfolded, or of those ceremonies which were imperfectly understood. In conclusion—1. Notice the great folly of those men who prefer the pleasures of sin to the enjoyments of religion. 2. Those men are wise who make the same choice that Moses did. (*A. Gilmour.*) *Moses' choice:*—I. THE CHOICE OF MOSES. II. THE PRINCIPLE WHICH INFLUENCED THIS CHOICE. That principle was faith; a firm and cordial, not a cold and cursory, faith in the revelations of that truth which constituted the patriarchal religion. 1. He concluded that to be associated with the people of God, though in affliction, was better than to enjoy the pleasures of sin; and he judged right. But what are the advantages of union with the people, the Church, of God? (1) Instruction. The Church is the depositary of truth; and God perpetuates a people to confess it. He raises up ministers also to teach it. (2) Worship. The people of God worship Him in religious assemblies, in the use of pure forms, and in spirit and in truth. The advantages of such a service are unspeakable. A holy and cheering influence from God is vouchsafed to those who thus draw near to Him. (3) An interest in God's covenant. The people with whom Moses chose to suffer affliction were the people of God. He had been merciful to their unrighteousness, cancelled their guilt, renewed their nature, and received them as a peculiar treasure to himself. (4) The communion of saints. In Egypt Moses might have had communion with her princes, her philosophers, her artists; but they were "of the world"; and intercourse with them would have been very different in its effects from intercourse with the devout worshippers of God. One would have tended to produce hardness of heart, and a worldly spirit; the other, to elevate and purify the mind, and prepare it for God and heaven. 2. Faith enabled him to take a right estimate of the pleasures of sin. They "are but for a season." But what are sinful pleasures? (1) Every pleasure which arises from what God has forbidden. (2) Every pleasure which, if not expressly forbidden, cannot be reconciled to the general principles of the Word of God. (3) All such pleasures as weaken the tone of our piety, and dissipate our thoughts, so that we lose our taste and relish for Divine things. Such are the pleasures of gaiety, of unhallowed reading, and often those of imagination; and they are tacitly contrasted with those which spring from God, and which lead the mind to Him. They are but for a season, short-lived. They are so denominated because they are only occasional. Man must labour and suffer, and can only occasionally enjoy his pleasures. Besides, the appetite for them palls. Spiritual pleasures follow us everywhere, and are the perpetual sunshine of the breast. Sinful pleasures are said to be only for a season, because they are dissipated by reflection. This destroys them. Spiritual enjoyments are so far from appearing less desirable as we advance in life and knowledge, that the first prayer of the heart when God has been forsaken, and we are made sensible of our loss, is, "Return, we beseech Thee, O Lord of Hosts." Come back, and restore to me the joy of Thy salvation. 3. His faith regarded a future world. "He had respect unto the recompense of the reward." There is a two-fold reward mentioned in Scripture. One is a righteous reward to the sinner; the other is a

reward of mercy conferred upon the man who has renounced all for God. Faith respects both; for it is "the evidence of things not seen." III. THE INSTRUCTION WHICH THE SUBJECT CONVEYS TO US. 1. We are taught that true religion is a reasonable matter of choice. All carelessness and sin God has stamped with the name of folly. In recommending to you the renunciation of the world and sin, and the surrender of yourselves to God, we challenge your reason. 2. We are taught that no man serves God for nought. No man loses by Him. Moses refused to be king in Egypt; and he became king in Jeshurun. He turned his eye from the splendours of Egypt's seductive philosophy; and the Lord passed by, and showed him His own glory, and proclaimed His name. Moses learned in that sight, he heard in those few sentences, more than the study of years in the schools of Egyptian philosophy could have supplied. 3. We are taught that, if we are come to years, we ought to make our choice; and we are also taught what choice to make. (*R. Watson.*) *Lessons from the choice of Moses:*—1. A fine illustration of the power of faith in overcoming the world. Here is a victory infinitely more noble than the conquests of Alexander, won by Moses over his own spirit and an ungodly world. 2. True faith is an operative principle, manifesting itself in such victories as these. Try by this test what your faith is worth. Did it ever manifest itself in mortification of the flesh, in the casting away of sinful pleasures for the sake of Christ? 3. True religion is the result of deliberation. 4. Those sinful pleasures which the Christian is called to renounce are by him renounced the more easily, through the power of those glorious realities which faith opens up to his view; as, on the other hand, the trials which he is called to endure are by the same means more easily borne. 5. The worst of Christ's cause is preferable to the best of the world's—Christ's reproach to the world's riches. 6. It is a sight peculiarly grateful to witness a man exchanging the pleasures of sin for the service of God, while he might yet shine among the world's votaries were he so disposed. 7. Christians may and ought to have respect to "the recompense of the reward," to quicken them in duty, and strengthen them in the midst of difficulties and temptations. 8. Let us make use of the whole subject for encouragement in the good ways of the Lord. Are we called to suffer afflictions for Christ's sake? "Our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory." Reproach? "If we be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are we: for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon us. Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." (*C. J. Brown.*) *The choice of Moses:*—I. HIS RENUNCIATION. II. HIS CHOICE. 1. Of the people of God as his associates. (1) They are the wisest companions (Job xxviii. 12–19). (2) The most honourable companions. (3) The most safe companions (Prov. iii. 23). (4) The most useful companions. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise." Their conversation, their example, their influence, will prove beneficial to us. (5) They shall be our companions for ever. 2. Of the afflictions of God's people. 3. Of the reproach of Christ. III. THE PRINCIPLE BY WHICH HE WAS INFLUENCED. 1. "By faith" he learned rightly to estimate the things of this world. (1) Unsatisfying in their nature. (2) Uncertain in their possession. (3) Evanescent in their duration. (4) Evil in their influence. By faith, therefore, he esteemed them not. Then, his faith had particular reference —2. To the recompense of reward. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *Faith the means of overcoming the world:*—I. A MAN SORELY TEMPTED TO CHOOSE THE WORLD. 1. Consider the strong reasons which would urge him to this. 2. Consider the fact which would appeal to him against these. 3. Consider the battle which thus raged within him. II. THIS TEMPTATION VANQUISHED BY FAITH. 1. Faith in God, the God of his fathers. 2. Faith in the Deliverer from sin. 3. Faith in the glorious future of God's people. III. THIS FAITH ABUNDANTLY JUSTIFIED IN THE SEQUEL. Think of the blessings that come from choosing God before the world—1. A good conscience, and this opens the way for satisfying communion with God. 2. Moreover, the character of God is the pledge that none can lose by fidelity to righteousness. 3. And God has promised eternal reward to the conqueror. (*C. New.*) *Religious decision:*—I. RELIGION MAY INVOLVE GREAT SACRIFICE. 1. Rejection of the highest worldly alliance. This meant—(1) Forfeiture of the brightest prospects. (2) Apparent ingratitude to a kind benefactress. (3) Apparent contempt of Providence. His adoption was of Divine instigation. 2. Preference for a painful religious association. (1) A transition involving an extreme change. (2) Consciousness of the superiority of religious suffering to worldly enjoyment. (*a*) The worthlessness of worldly pleasure. It lacks solidity; it is immoral; it is perishing. (*b*) The value of religious suffering. It tests the genuineness, improves the quality, and reveals the helpfulness of

religion. (3) A display of personal freedom. (4) A wise use of the great crisis of life. (5) A deliberate estimation of religion at its worst being superior to the world at its best. II. RELIGION WILL INFINITELY COMPENSATE GREAT PERSONAL SACRIFICE. 1. It will be in another world. 2. It will be valuable. 3. It is spiritually visible. 4. It influences beneficially the present life. (*R. D. Johns.*) *The self-denial of Moses* :—I. THAT NOBILITY OF BIRTH, AND ALL HONOURS AND DELIGHTS WHATSOEVER, ARE TO BE DENIED FOR CHRIST. 1. For first, though there be something in it, yet there is not so much as any should think it too great a thing to lay down for God. 2. But suppose there were ten thousand times more honour in it than there is, yet the denying of all were not a sufficient testimony of that respect you owe to the great and glorious God. 3. As God is worthy in regard of His infinite excellency, so it is due to Him, because whatsoever excellency and honour there is in the nobility of your birth, it is He that made the difference between men. 4. There is no such way to add glory to your nobility, as to be willing to use it or deny it for God. 5. If we be godly God hath honoured us with a higher birth than what we have by blood from our ancestors. II. HOW EXTERNAL HONOUR AND NOBILITY IS TO BE DENIED. 1. By being willing to be employed in any, even the meanest, service that God calls to. We must think no work of God too mean for us, but willingly submit to it, though it darken our honours never so much in the eyes of the world. 2. They must deny themselves in being willing to join with those of lower degree. 3. We must deny ourselves by being willing to suffer the most disgraceful thing that can be put upon us for the cause of Christ. III. HOW HONOURS, RICHES, AND ALL DELIGHTS WHATSOEVER ARE TO BE DENIED FOR CHRIST. 1. By going on in the ways of godliness in the strictness and power of them, though all these be hazarded. 2. Appear for God and His cause, His truth and His people, though the issue may seem to be dangerous, when none else will. 3. Let all go rather than be brought to commit any sin. We had better have all the world cast shame in our faces, and upbraid us, than that our consciences should cast dirt in them. IV. WE MUST DENY ALL WORLDLY PLEASURES AND PREFERMENTS IN THE VERY PRIME OF OUR TIME, WHEN WE HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO ENJOY THEM TO THE FULL. Necessity takes away the honour of an action. To do a thing when we must needs, when we are forced to it, whether we will or no, though the thing be good we do, yet the honour of it is lost in great part. Augustus when he was to die could acknowledge all the pomp of the world to be but a fable, but David while he lived could acknowledge all but as a dream. "Commend him, and imitate him," says Seneca, "who is not unwilling to die when he may live delightfully." V. IT IS A SPECIAL ARGUMENT OF SINCERITY, THAT WHEN THE PROFESSION OF RELIGION PROVES COSTLY TO US, YET WE CONTINUE IN IT. 1. This argues great sincerity. Now the truth of grace appears indeed to be religious, when religion must cost us something. To profess the truth while we may live upon it, this argues no truth; but to profess it when it must live upon us, upon our honours, upon our profits and pleasures, and earthly contentments, this is a strong argument of truth: as to see the beauty of religion through troubles, through all outward disrespects, this is something: for to see the evil of sin through all outward glory, respect, and contentment in this world, when it may be enjoyed to the full, this is much; surely here is truth, here is a piercing eye, that is enlightened and quickened by the Spirit of God. 2. It argues the excellency of grace, that it raises and greatens men's spirits, it lifts them up above the highest of all these things, and so high above them as the things of the world, when at the highest, are looked on as under things, and appear small and contemptible in the eyes of such a raised soul. 3. It argues the power of grace. To resist powerful temptations is powerful grace. It is a strong stomach that can digest much fat, much honey, and sweet things, that usually clog weak stomachs; so it is a strong spirit that is not overcome with the sweet of much prosperity. 4. It is a testimony of dear love to the Lord, to deny oneself for His sake, when one is in the highest of enjoyment of all delights to the flesh. It is an argument, that God is indeed the proper place, the centre of the soul, when, although it hath never so much of the creature to give satisfaction unto it, yet it cannot rest, but works still to God through all and from all. As a stone, though it were in never so good a place, although it were in heaven, yet it would desire to descend, because the proper place of it is below; so let a gracious heart which hath God for the centre be put into any condition never so full of delight, yet it is not satisfied, it is willing to leave all that it may close with God. 5. This gives God the glory of all our prosperity, which shows we acknowledge it to be from Him and for Him, and that we have it not for ourselves, but for the setting forth His praise. 6. This gives testimony to the world, that surely there are

wonderful blessed things, that God acquaints the soul withal in the ways of godliness, that there is much sweet and contentment to be had in those ways. 7. Thus to deny oneself is honourable, because wheresoever this is, there surely will be a holding out to the end; no troubles of adversity can ever make such a one to forsake any ways of God, who can deny himself for God in the midst of the pleasures of prosperity. 8. This upbraids those who do greedily embrace the things of the world, and think that it is impossible for any to deny themselves in so great delights as they do enjoy. VI. COMFORT TO THOSE WHO IN THE MIDST OF EARTHLY CONTENTMENTS HAVE THEIR AFFECTIONS SET UPON HEAVEN. 1. This is a most evident argument, that all the good things they have in the world come from the spiritual favour and love of God to them, and this is no small matter; there is more sweetness in this knowledge of the principle from whence the good things we have do come, than in anything that they afford of themselves. 2. This is an evident sign that God intends to use you in excellent services, for the honour of His name. 3. This is the highest improvement of all outward mercies that may be. 4. This self-denial is highly acceptable to God. 5. If you in the fulness of all your earthly contentments shall acknowledge Jesus Christ, and be willing to lay down all for Him, when He shall come in the fulness of His glory He will acknowledge you, and will put glory upon you, when He shall come with His mighty angels, full of majesty, to be admired of His saints; then He shall own you, and make you partakers of His own glory. 6. If ever you should live to come to any adversity in this world, surely it will be much sweetened to you if you be willing to give God the honour of the sweet of prosperity; though adversity may come, yet God will keep the bitterness of it from you. 7. It is so much the more honourable, and may be so much the more comfortable to you, by how much the more rare it is: God hath but few self-denying spirits in the world. VII. REPROOF OF THOSE WHO GREEDILY PURSUE SENSUAL DELIGHTS. 1. Do you fear, are you jealous of yourselves, lest you should let out your hearts too far in them? Do you seriously consider that there is a snare in them? That there may be danger, yea, very great danger, if you take not heed? 2. Are your desires as strong in seeking God for grace, to use them for His honour, as your joys are in the use of them for satisfying yourselves? 3. Do you often examine your hearts and ways, for fear God should not have that honour from them that is infinitely due unto Him? 4. What does conscience say when you are in afflictions? when you apprehend God is calling you to an account for them, does it not tell you that your hearts have been let out too greedily after them? 5. Answer as in the presence of God, would you prize a less estate with more opportunity of service more than a great estate with less opportunity of service, and are you more troubled when you are crossed in opportunity of service, than when you are crossed in your desires and delights in the enjoyment of the creature? 6. Lastly, if you have a care to use that prosperous estate you have for God, either God hath much glory from you in it, or else you have much joy in it; surely where there are great estates, there are great opportunities of glorifying God; but hath God great glory from you? Hath He more than from others in mean estates? If not, is it the grief of your souls that you should enjoy so much from God, and God have so little honour from you? VIII. THE FULNESS OF CREATURES' COMFORTS TO BE LAID DOWN AT CHRIST'S FEET. Are there not arguments enough from all God's love and His merciful dealings with you to prevail with your hearts for such a thing as this? How hath God spared you in your greatest extremities? IX. FAITH IS THE PRINCIPLE THAT MUST CARRY THROUGH AND MAKE HONOURABLE ALL A CHRISTIAN'S SUFFERINGS. 1. It is the primary work of this grace, wherein the very being of it consists, for the soul to cast itself upon God in Christ for all the good and happiness it ever expects; to make an absolute resignation of all unto Him, so as to betrust Him with all, and to commit all unto Him for ever. Now this implies the taking off the heart from the things of the world, for faith takes off the heart from itself, therefore much more from anything in the world; and where this is, sufferings cannot be very grievous, because the whole good of the soul is now in God (Psa. xxxvii. 7). 2. By faith the soul comes to have a higher principle to enable it to see God in His glory and majesty, His greatness and infiniteness, His holiness, His justice, and goodness, than ever it had before. 3. Faith discovers the reality of the beauty and excellence of spiritual, supernatural, and eternal things revealed in the Word, which before were looked upon as notions, conceits, and imaginary things. 4. Faith gives the soul an interest in God, in Christ, in all those glorious things in the gospel, and in the things of eternal life. 5. Faith discharges the soul of the guilt of sin, and that dreadful evil that follows upon it; it gets a general acquittance from God, a pardon

of all sin. The soul being made just by faith, is able to live in the midst of many troubles. X. SIX MORE PARTICULARS WHEREIN THE POWER OF FAITH IS SEEN IN TAKING THE HEART OFF FROM THE WORLD AND CARRYING IT THROUGH ALL AFFLICTIONS. 1. Faith makes the future good of spiritual and eternal things to be as present to the soul and to work upon the soul as if they were present, and makes use likewise of things past as if they were present; and in these operations of faith there is much power to carry on the soul with comfort through sufferings, for present things are apprehended by the mind more fully, and work more strongly upon the will and affections, than things past or to come. 2. Faith is a raising grace, it carries the soul on high, above sense, above reason, above the world; when faith is working, oh, how is the soul raised above the fears and favours of men! 3. Faith is a purifying and healing grace (Acts xv. 9). Purifying their hearts by faith. It purges out base desires after the things of the world, and living at ease; base joys and delights in the creature, in satisfying the flesh; the fears of future evils that may come hereafter. "Faith fears not hunger," saith Tertullian. If the heart be sound it will be strong; this purging of it makes it sound (2 Tim. i. 7). 4. Faith is a quickening grace, it sets all other graces on work, it puts life and activity into them all. 5. Faith is a mighty prevailing grace with God and with Jesus Christ, as it is said of Jacob (Gen. xxxii. 28). 6. Hence from all these it follows that faith is an overcoming grace (1 John v. 4). In this victory there are three things. (1) There is a conquering of the assaults of the world, so as they can do us no hurt, but we are able to repel the force of them. (2) But this is not all, there is something further: namely, the making use of those things of the world for our good that would have undone us, that is a full victory, he is able to use the adversary to serve his own turn; so in this conquest of faith there is not only an overcoming of the temptations, of the pleasures, of the world, but ability to use them for God and the furtherance of our own good. (3) But yet further, there is a third thing in victory, which is triumph: a believer can triumph over the world, over all his allurements and threats. As Christ did not only prevail against His and our enemies, but triumphed over them (Col. ii. 15). XI. MOST MEN ARE STRANGERS TO THIS PRECIOUS FAITH; THE TRIAL THEREOF DISCOVERED. XII. NO WONDER THAT MEN OF GREAT PARTS (WANTING FAITH) DO FALL OFF FROM CHRIST AND BETRAY HIS CAUSE. XIII. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE HEAT OF MEN'S OWN RESOLUTIONS AND THE TRUE HEAT OF THE HEART BY FAITH IN SUFFERING FOR CHRIST. XIV. HOW TO KNOW THE ROOT OR PRINCIPLE FROM WHENCE ALL THAT WE DO OR SUFFER COMES. 1. Where self-denial is from natural principles it is but particular, not universal. In some eminent thing a natural spirit may deny itself; but upon examination it may appear that in other things it makes self its end, even in things where God requires self-denial as much as in the other; whereas if it came from faith it would not be partial, but appear in one thing as well as in another, so far as God calls thereunto. 2. Where suffering troubles come from a natural root the soul is not conscious to itself of its own weakness; it knows not the power of corruption in the heart, it understands not how self may be sought in denying oneself. 3. When it comes from natural principles there may be some appearance of self-denial in outward actions, and willingness to suffer, but there is little care of mortifying inward lusts; lusts within are suffered to swell, to rankle, and fester. 4. When bearing sufferings arise from natural stoutness and courage, such an one does neither begin nor strengthen himself afterwards upon Divine grounds and arguments, as the believer doth. 5. Where natural stoutness and courage is the principle, there the soul is not raised higher in its courage for God than when the cause only concerns itself; it discovers as much stoutness and courage in natural things as it does in spiritual. But this strength in sufferings, that comes from faith, is a strength far more raised in the cause of God and spiritual things than in any other. 6. The power of resisting sufferings, that comes from natural principles, is not a fruit of much humiliation, brokenness of heart, seeking of God aforehand. 7. If there be only natural strength to enable to a willingness to venture upon any way of suffering, there cannot be that confidence of a good issue that faith brings with it where that is the principle. 8. Natural principles cannot welcome afflictions with such joy and delight as faith can. 9. Where natural strength only enables, there the soul is not more humble after it hath gone through difficulties, but it is puffed up as having passed through hard things and done some great matter; but where faith is the principle, the soul knows that it was not from anything in itself. 10. If the principle be only natural courage, although such an one may be very ready at first in denying himself, yet if after he be crossed more than he expected, and finds worse success than he looked

for, if he does not see some natural good coming in, he is soon discouraged, the heart sinks, as not having sufficient to uphold it and carry it out in that it hath undertaken. Yet further, such is the deceit of a man's own heart as a man may suffer much out of the pride of his heart; as a man may serve himself in serving God, so he may seek himself in denying himself in that which is the cause of God. XV. COMFORT TO THOSE WHO HAVE TRUE FAITH. 1. If your faith be such as carries your souls to God as an universal good, so as you can satisfy yourselves in Him alone, then it is this precious faith that will do this that we speak of. 2. If your faith works a sanctified use of your prosperity, if your faith can carry you through the temptations of prosperity, it will certainly carry you through the trials of adversity; if faith can keep you from swelling in prosperity, it will keep you from breaking in adversity. 3. But especially, in the third place, if your faith can carry you through spiritual difficulties, it will be much more able to carry you through all outward troubles. XVI. THE MEANS TO MAINTAIN AND STRENGTHEN OUR FAITH. 1. The first is the principle and ground of all, namely, the assurance of your interest in the covenant of grace that you are received by God into that free, rich, glorious covenant of life in Christ. 2. In the assurance of God's fatherly love unto and care over you, in the sorest and hardest afflictions that can befall you. 3. In the assurance of the blessed issue of all, that all will be peace and comfort at the last. If faith be strong in these it will be able to encounter with all assaults whatsoever. (*J. Burroughes.*) *Worldly honours refused:*—Other and inferior men have acted on the same principle with this eminent servant of God. When Napoleon assumed the imperial purple, he resolved to surround himself with a train of nobles in room of the ancient *noblesse* of France, most of whom had either fallen in the Revolution, or had adhered to the family that had been dethroned. What could he do to give dignity to this creation of upstarts? He learned that a descendant of the ancient and illustrious house of Du Plessis Mornay, which long before had been driven into exile on account of its Protestant principles, was a settler in the Dutch colony of South Africa. To him, Bonaparte made the offer of reinstatement in all the ancient possessions and honours of the family of Du Mornay, if he would return to France and grace the conqueror's throne. The offer was refused; the good man was satisfied with his flocks and herds here, for he entertained the hope of a blessed hereafter. What could worldly rank or title do for him? He refused to be the first peer of France, as Moses refused to be accounted the son of Pharaoh's daughter, because he had respect to the recompense of reward. (*James Kirkwood, M.A.*) *The choice of Moses:*—I. HIS CHOICE. 1. Moses made this choice in opposition to all the propensities of our depraved nature, and even to many of those inclinations and aversions which belong to us as human beings. It was a choice which involved the crucifixion in him of the love of eminence, of power of fame, as well as of wealth and pleasure—a choice which necessitated him to subdue feelings that enter into our very constitution, and patiently to bear what an ingenuous mind can least of all bear—disgrace and calumny. 2. Moses made this choice against all the influence of education and habit. What a trial was this! To renounce the views which he had imbibed from men whom he had been taught to venerate. 3. Consider the great sacrifices which Moses made. 4. Moses made this choice with all the sentiments of a martyr. He knew from what he had seen of the king, that, in adjoining himself to the Hebrews, he would incur the royal resentment—deep and deadly. But even with death in his view he did not hesitate. 5. This choice was the result of mature deliberation. Under the influence of a capricious temper, or in some fit of enthusiasm, when their passions have been strongly roused, or from disgust and disappointment, some have done wondrous deeds of self-denial, deeds which, when the effervescence that produced them has subsided, they have deeply regretted. But such was not the manner of Moses' choice. II. THE INFLUENCE OF FAITH ON MOSES' CHOICE. 1. By this faith Moses was satisfied that true blessedness would be enjoyed only in possessing the favour of the God of Israel, and in serving Him. 2. By faith Moses was fully persuaded that to be related to God and to serve Him constitute true glory. 3. By faith Moses was convinced that reproach and suffering for Christ's sake are at once honourable and beneficial. 4. Through faith Moses "had respect to the recompense of the reward." Future blessedness is denominated "the reward" to teach us the gracious respect which God exercises to the obedience and sufferings of His people. It receives the name of the recompense of the reward, to convince believers that future glory will more than compensate them for all their present losses and sufferings in Christ's service. III. THE WISDOM OF MOSES' CHOICE. 1. Which yields the greatest present satisfaction? 2. Let us consider whether the

pleasures and advantages of true religion in the most unfavourable circumstances, or those of the world in its best state, be most independent of the vicissitudes of life, and most permanent. 3. Let us consider, lastly, which has the best issue—whether a life spent in the prosecution and enjoyment of the pleasures of sin, or in the service of God. Lessons: 1. This subject evinces the absolute necessity of faith. 2. Abide, Christians, by the wise choice you have made through faith. (*James Stark.*) *Moses suffering affliction*:—And your affliction must be like his affliction if you are led by his faith. 1. The contempt of your enemies, the scorn of the world. 2. Again, you will be often unkindly treated by God's own people: they will often suspect you. 3. You will have to live a life of hardships in some respects. 4. Again, you must, like Moses, give up many earthly comforts. 5. You will sometimes be unhappy; Christ will sometimes seem to hide His face; you will sometimes feel as if you had trusted a vain hope; Satan will tempt you, and you will be discouraged. This, then, is the example of Moses of the work of faith—(1) You must give up securing "good prospects" if they interfere with religion. (2) You must expect to bear affliction, you must endure the reproach of the enemies of God. But, thank God, it is but "for a season." (*E. Monro.*) *Happiness of the self-denying*:—Religious self-denial is no such hard and painful duty, as it is generally thought to be. The testimony of the Bible and the experience of Christians concur in refuting the idea. Both these authorities declare that the happiest men in the world are the self-denying, and that they are happy in proportion to their self-denial, and because of it. Look at facts: Moses was a happier man than Pharaoh. Does any one doubt this? Daniel was happier than the Chaldean king. Paul was happier than the emperor Nero. Howard was happier than Bonaparte. And the paradox to the selfish mind is, that these men found their happiness in self-denial. The purest, most unmingled happiness tasted on earth is by the men who most nearly approach the pattern of Him who, though He was rich, became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich. True blessedness is in self-denial, not in avoiding it. He who shuns an obvious call to deny himself for Christ's sake, shuns an opportunity of tasting the most exquisite joy permitted to man this side of heaven. Oh! the infinite number of turn-outs and by-paths from the path of self-denial, resorted to in the belief that they are pain-saving paths, when in truth they only turn the traveller off from the highway of joys unspeakable and full of glory. *Desiring and choosing*:—What, then, is it that a person does when he chooses? Why is it that he sifts the myriad influences that are exerted upon him, appropriating some and rejecting others? There are a thousand things that come in to-day, and there are a thousand things that come in to-morrow, to affect us. Each hour shifts the glass. The world, like a glass, is perpetually turning. We are all the time seeing different combinations. And we learn instinctively to choose from among the things that rise up before us. We have taken the line of our life, and we say, "All that I have must lie parallel with that line. I cannot take this or that at pleasure." And our life is a system of selecting and rejecting. In looking around we put our eye on this or on that, and choose it; and then we follow up that which we have chosen. A desire which is so much a desire that the reason, when it is true to its function approves it as rational, and that the will applies the means to the end, and that you prefer it, together with all the circumstances which are required for getting it—that is a choice. Choosing takes, not the thing alone, but the whole apparatus by which it is to be obtained. Choosing is not only desire, but the machinery by which desire becomes reality. Choosing always carries with it something more potential than mere susceptibility. So that when a man says, "I choose such a thing," it is as if he said, "I think that thing to be not only desirable, but more desirable than other things that are inconsistent with it; and so much more desirable that for its sake I will give them up, and will apply all the forces that are necessary to getting it." Such is choosing. 1. There are a great many young men and young women who desire very much to be cultivated and educated. They have some genuine tastes. They take pleasure in the finer æsthetic elements. They desire to have an education. And if you were to ask them, "Do you choose to be educated?" they would say, "Certainly, I do choose to be educated." But no, they do not. They desire to be educated, but it is one of those desires which everybody is subject to. Myriads of desires we have which never ripen. Have you ever noticed what a profusion of apple blossoms there are every spring, and how few apples there are that come from them? There are a million blossoms to a bushel of apples. Just so it is with desires and choices. Men have a million of desires to a bushel of choices. So that when you say, "I

choose to be educated," you are mistaken. You do not choose it; you desire it—that is all. You have sometimes thought to yourself, "How nice it would be if I could speak the modern languages!" but you did not choose to take the pains to learn the French and German and Spanish. You tried once or twice, and got stuck in the grammar the first thing, and gave up. When you saw what such a choice involved you did not venture upon it. Your choice was, "Give me present pleasure; give me good prospects in this world; give me something to eat and something to drink and something to wear; give me a place where I shall be praised and where I shall be honoured, and I will let intelligence go, and I will pick up what little information I need to get through life with." And so it turns out to be nothing more than a fair dream which so many young persons have in early life when they say, "I will be a knowing man." They desire knowledge, but they choose ignorance, or only partial knowledge. 2. There are men who desire to be rich, and make up their minds that they are going to be rich—that is, they say they are, until they begin to find out what it costs. This is the young man that came down to the city to be rich, but the moment he found that gaining wealth required self-denial, painstaking industry and integrity, the moment he found that it required that a man should rebuff the tempters on the right and on the left, and hold himself steadily to his purpose, he did not choose riches. He chose self-indulgence, he chose the wine-cup, he chose pleasures, he chose companionship, he chose the present and let the future take care of itself. And when he came down to that which he had chosen—pleasure and its outcome—he was bankrupt and destroyed. 3. There are a great many men among you who choose, as you suppose, to so grow up that they shall have an established reputation, and the things which properly belong to a good character. There are many men who come into life, and begin life, feeling that they desire to have an honourable name. They do desire it, but whether they choose it or not we can tell when we see how they act. If they are circumspect, vigilant, and self-denying, if they take a high standard, if they steadily press their way up, if they buffet every temptation, if they are really forming themselves on a high model, and are seeking for honour or glory, then we say that they have chosen such a name. Otherwise we say that they have merely desired it. 4. There are very many persons who desire the happiness which comes from well-doing, and they also desire clandestine enjoyment of evil-doing. There is nothing in this world which more men are mistaken about than the possibility of being wicked underhandedly and having good on the top of it. You cannot grind charcoal downstairs and keep clean upstairs. But many men are trying that which is just as impossible. "You cannot serve God and Mammon." You cannot obey Christ and Belial. You must choose between them, and take one or the other. And desiring is not choosing. When men are doing wrong, and they know it and regret it, as they often do; when wrong puts them into this or that misalliance; when they are filled with shame—which is God's quickener of the conscience; when they come very near the verge of destruction, and are filled with fear; when they come to a sense of their danger, so that they desire to be free from their wickedness, they only desire it. They do not choose it. If they did choose it they could break their bonds and rise up and be free. 5. Rising from the question of morality to that of spirituality, there are a great many persons who, all their life long, have the impression that they should be Christians, and mean to be Christians, and hope they shall be. I talk with these persons and say, "Do you not choose to be a good man?" "Yes; oh yes." "Do you not choose to repent?" "Yes." "And to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?" "Yes." "To rise up into the spirit of communion with Him?" "Yes." "And to live by faith of Christ and love to God and man?" "Yes." "And to purify your life with everything that is consistent with the Divine will?" "Yes, it is eminently desirable," you say. This, then, is precisely the ground on which you stand; you have the moral sensibility to see that it is desirable, but you have not moral stamina enough to choose it. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Modern instances of a right choice:*—The same principle which actuated Moses may be shown by the cabman when he gives back the sovereign that was given him by mistake for a shilling; by the orange-woman who shows you the bruised side of the orange; by the working man who comes home through a narrow street in order that he may avoid the temptations of the gin-palace; by the clerk who will not put anything in the gambling lottery in which all his fellows join; by the scholar who guides himself by his conscience; by the servant-girl who speaks the truth whether her mistress is present or not; by the tradesman who will not have unfair prices or adulterated goods; by the Member of

Parliament who will vote according to his conscience, though thereby he will lose his seat. (*F. W. Farrar, D.D.*) *A noble preference:*—Never fearing to openly address a Quaker's meeting, William Penn was soon on the road to Newgate. . . . "You are an ingenious gentleman," said the magistrate at the trial; "you have a plentiful estate; why should you render yourself unhappy by associating with such simple people?" "I prefer," said Penn, "the honestly simple to the ingeniously wicked." (*D. Bancroft.*) *Choosing:*—So did Origen choose rather to be a poor catechist in Alexandria than, denying the faith, to be with his fellow-pupil, Plotinus, in great authority and favour. (*J. Trapp.*) *Moses' choice:*—"When he was come to years," not only to years of discretion, but of experience. It was not the act of a child, that prefers counters to gold, but it proceeded from mature deliberation. It is an excellent thing for persons to be seriously religious when in the midst of worldly business and enjoyments, to despise the world when they are most capable of relishing and enjoying it. (*Matthew Henry.*) **The pleasures of sin.**—*The pleasures of sin:*—Let it be conceded, then, in the outset, that sin has pleasures. This must be true, otherwise men would not commit it. In every instance, at least in the outset of the sinner's career, he is drawn toward iniquity by the belief that in some way or other it will minister to his enjoyment. Now my question is, What are the characteristics of such pleasure? Take it at its best, and suppose you have the greatest joy that it is possible for sin to furnish, of what sort is it, and what is it worth? My answer is that its value is what mathematicians would call a negative quality—it has the minus sign before it; that is to say, "it costs more than it comes to"; in the equation of life it does not add to, but rather takes from, the sum total of your happiness, and leaves you less truly yourself than you were before you enjoyed it. I. THE PLEASURES OF SIN ARE SHORT-LIVED. In the expressive symbolism of Scripture, they are like water in a broken cistern which speedily runs out; or like the blaze of thorns which crackle and flame up for a little and then die down into a heap of ashes; and the experience of all who have indulged in them will corroborate this statement. There is in them, at best, only a temporary thrill which vibrates for a moment and needs to be reproduced again and again.

> "Pleasures are like poppies spread—
> You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;
> Or like the snow-fall in the river—
> A moment white, then melts for ever;
> Or like the Borealis race
> That flit ere you can point their place;
> Or like the rainbow's lovely form
> Evanishing amidst the storm."

I make my appeal to yourselves. Have you got that amount of pleasure out of sin which you expected from it when you began to yield to it? You know you have not. Think not to say within yourselves that though your little indulgence in it has brought you only disappointment a greater would give you satisfaction. Can you change the character of sin by adding to its enormity? Depend upon it, the greater the sin the greater will be the disappointment. It is only when we come to Christ and find pardon and peace in Him that enduring happiness can be obtained. And we receive it from Him because He works a change upon our inner nature. Sin sends us out of ourselves for joy. Jesus gives us enjoyment by coming into us and supping with us and we with Him. Hence the true Christian carries ever his pleasure within himself. It does not depend on external things; but, itself an internal thing, it sends itself out throughout all his life. It is not an experience separate from everything else in his consciousness so much as an element entering into and pervading all his actions and emotions. As the stop in the organ is not itself a separate note, but gives its own peculiarity to every note which the player sounds for the time, so Christ in the heart is not there dwelling apart in a secluded shrine, but entering into all the experiences of the soul, elevating and ennobling them all. Weigh well this contrast, and I think you will have no difficulty in deciding which you will choose. Pleasure in sin is external and evanescent. Christian happiness is internal and permanent. II. THE PLEASURES OF SIN LEAVE A STING BEHIND, AND WILL NOT BEAR AFTER-REFLECTION. There is guilt in them, and there never can be happiness in contemplating that. Yet when the brief hour of joy is fled the guilt is the entire residuum of the joy. Have you ever entered a

banqueting-hall the morning after some high festival had been held in it, and while yet everything remained precisely as the guests had left it at the midnight hour? The candles burned to the sockets, the floor covered with the evidences of the night's hilarity, the dishes piled confusedly upon the tables, and the decorations which looked so gay in the brilliant lamplight now all withered and dishevelled! You can scarcely believe it is the same place as that which a few hours before resounded with mirth and song, or re-echoed with the applause of some orator's address. It is deserted; nay, it is repulsive; and you turn away from it to moralise on the passing glory of all earthly things. But such an external contrast is nothing to that which is furnished by the history of the votary of pleasure when you compare what he is in the moment of indulgence with what he feels in the hour of reflection. There is no companion he more fears than himself, there is no sound to him half so painful as silence, and so he flees back to the society of his companions, and seeks in the noise of revelry renewed to drown "the still small voice" of conscience. But it will not be always hushed. Shakespeare has shown us how sin "doth murder sleep," and that the stain upon the conscience will not "out," though washed by all the waters of the ocean or sweetened by the perfumes of Arabia, but we must beware of supposing that his representation is true only of such unscrupulous ambition as leads to murder. What saith the wise king about the ruby cup? "Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright; at the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." At the last! at the last! Oh, that men would learn to forecast the future in this way, and to think of what must be "at the last!" In the powerful picture of Noel Paton, which he has styled the "Dance of Pleasure," you see a motley multitude of young and old, and rich and poor, and men and women, rushing madly after the queen. They care not for each other. In the fury of their selfishness they strike against each other and trample each other down; yet still they follow on, and she is decoying them to the brink of an awful abyss, over which each at length must fall. But the painter shows only its dark and rugged edge, leaving suggestion to preach the warning. So I would only lead you to the border of the unseen state, and leave conscience to testify to the dreadful perdition which is the end of sin. How different from all this is the experience of the Christianly good man! I do not know if there be on earth a more beautiful thing than the old age of a Christian who in youth dedicated himself to God, and has spent his life in keeping that holy resolution. His conscience is peaceful, his heart is happy, his future is glorious. The traveller in Switzerland sees few more lovely sights than that which is associated with the descent of the Great Scheideck through Rosenlaui to Meyringen. The pathway runs now through thickets, and now through green pasture-land, enclosed by forest and enlivened by châlets and herds of cattle. As you move downward you see little or no splendour, and are hemmed in on every side with perpendicular walls of rugged rock; yet, ever as you turn to look behind, you are transported with the scene that meets your view. In the forefront the pine forest, swayed by the breeze, seems bowing its head in lowly reverence to the great Monarch of all, while in the background rise the snowy peaks of the Wellhorn and the Wetterhorn, tinted with the blush of sunset, and forming a battlement of mountain grandeur scarcely surpassed by the range even of Mont Blanc. Such a valley, I think, is the life of the Christian on the earth. As he descends the way seems commonplace enough. The yodel of the herdsmen and the lowing of the cattle are in his ears, and he sees nothing that is remarkable; but when he looks behind the retrospect is full of grandeur, and the grandest thing about it is that its gilded summits point him to the higher glories of the heaven that is awaiting him. Which, then, will you choose? III. THE PLEASURES OF SIN ARE SUCH THAT THE OFTENER THEY ARE ENJOYED THERE IS THE LESS ENJOYMENT IN THEM. There is a wonderful harmony between God's moral law and the physical, intellectual, and moral nature of man; for every violation of its precepts does, in the end, evoke the protest of all our powers. Sinful indulgence either palls upon the taste, or, by its reaction on the system, destroys the very capacity for continuing in it, in which case the craving remains, while the ability to satisfy it is gone. But with the joys of holiness it is quite different. The oftener we enjoy them they are the higher. The longer and better a man knows Christ the more happiness does he derive from Him. IV. THE PLEASURES OF SIN ARE MOST EXPENSIVE. Here I refer not to money, though that is by no means unimportant; and when men are inclined to say that they cannot afford to be Christians, I would like them to sit down and calmly reckon up how much their sins cost them. But I

speak now of the expense of the man's own nature. The Word of God says, "Bloody men shall not live out half their days"; and notwithstanding the existence of a few exceptions, I am persuaded that, in regard to vicious men generally, this will be corroborated by observation and experience. The sinner is old before his time. His physical power is gone. His intellect has lost its freshness. His will has become powerless. His conscience has become seared. In a word, he is a wreck. Did you ever look upon that wild sea-piece of Stansfield's which he has called "The Abandoned"? The sky is dark and lowering, with a forked flash of lightning shooting athwart it; the ocean is angry, and all over it there lies a dreary loneliness that makes the spectator almost shudder. The one solitary thing in sight is a huge hull, without mast or man on board, lying helpless in the trough of the sea. The men who stood by her as long as it was safe have been picked up by some friendly vessel now entirely unseen, and there that battered, broken thing floats on at the mercy of the winds and waves. That is sad enough, but what is it after all in comparison with the condition of an abandoned man, drifting on the ocean of life all dismantled and rudderless, tossed hither and thither by every wind of appetite or impulse, and soon to disappear beneath the waters! And what then? I dare not trust myself to speak of that. Muse on it yourselves for a moment, and then say if you can calculate the cost of the pleasures of sin? Far otherwise is the experience of the Christian. His pleasure is not expensive. A little goes a great way with him, and the more of Christ he knows the more does he learn to use his body as a temple of the Holy Ghost, his intellect as an instrument of serving God, and his will in choosing to run in the way of the Divine commands. His faith brightens his mental powers, not at first, indeed, but through the stimulating influence of the truths which he believes. His love strengthens his will, and his steadfastness in well-doing softens the sensibility of his conscience, making it as quick to the presence of evil as the apple of the eye is to the least particle of dust. Christian faith, indeed, will not make a genius out of a dullard; but it will make the man nobler, physically and mentally as well as morally, than without it he would have been. So far from wasting his energies it economises them, and halos them all with the joy of its own happiness. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Sinful pleasures*:—I. I am first to discuss a matter of casuistry, I am to inquire WHAT PLEASURES ARE SINFUL; nor, in fact, can this topic be too carefully explained. For while all, especially among the young, profess to revere the gospel, it is marvellous to observe how almost all so contrive to interpret that gospel as to spare their darling passion. And it is curious to see, too, by what directly opposite courses people manage to arrive at the same conclusion. If you listen to one half of the world the gospel is a system so relaxed that it really requires no self-denial at all. "What harm can there be in such things? such indulgences surely cannot be wrong; a man certainly may be a good Christian and yet comply with these customs and enjoy these gratifications." That is to say, these people are resolved to "live in pleasure and be wanton," to pamper every appetite, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life"; and the gospel must be as pliant as their passions, as loose as their lives. The theology of the other half of the world is just the reverse of this. They magnify the severity of the gospel and exaggerate its demands. Now with regard to this latter class, I cannot but pause a moment to confess that they are not alone culpable when they describe religion as a dark and gloomy thing, frowning and scowling upon all cheerfulness and relaxation. Too many professed Christians thus represent it. But is this the religion of the Bible? And these same crabbed disciples, is it their religion which makes them sour and crabbed? Not at all, they would have been a great deal worse but for the little piety they have. The gospel has no sort of sympathy with such tempers as these. Jesus a hard man!—perish such impiety; nor was that libel uttered except by the servant who was hard and faithless himself. Besides its own peculiar joys, the religion of Jesus allows every pleasure which a rational being ought to desire. At present the danger is not from this, but from a very different quarter. Little fear lest people become anchorites and eremites, and not allow themselves innocent pleasures; the difficulty is to make them believe that any pleasures are not innocent. Hence the great importance of a correct casuistry as to the question, what pleasures are sinful? And the following maxims will, I think, be sufficient to guide us safely in the inquiry. 1. And first, any pleasure which is, in itself, a direct violation of one of the Ten Commandments, or which involves such a violation, is sinful, and, unless renounced, will be fatal to the soul. 2. Any pleasure which takes and keeps the heart from God is sinful, and, unless forsaken, will be

fatal to the soul. "My son, give Me thy heart"; this requirement is an epitome of all requirements. 3. Our third maxim regards the disorders of the passions; any pleasure which increases or nourishes these disorders is sinful, and, unless abandoned, will be fatal to the soul. Our passions were originally given us for noble purposes, but depraved as they now are, they render life a long and arduous battle to the holiest. If, then, instead of retrenching these disorders we inflame them, what must be the result? 4. Our devotions suggest a fourth maxim. Any pleasure which unfits us for communion with God is sinful, and, unless relinquished, will be fatal to the soul. And apply this maxim to certain company. "Good society," you say; very well, I highly value good society, but what is the influence of this society, which you call good, upon your soul? Do not its vanities dissipate your thoughts and estrange you from God? If Jesus was now upon earth would you find Him in this society? 5. A single maxim more. This points to our besetting sin. Any pleasure is criminal which confirms the empire of this sin. We every day hear people discussing the abstract nature of certain actions, but this is downright folly, since, whatever may be said about the general quality of such acts, these men know that to them they are perfectly disastrous. Fire is a very good thing, and gunpowder may be put to good uses. Very true. Nobody can question either of these propositions. But suppose a man should infer from these premises that he may safely sit upon a barrel of gunpowder and thrust a lighted torch into it. Not less foolish and fatal his reasoning who ventures upon indulgences because they are harmless to others, when he knows that they will inflame his blood and rouse within him passions defying all control. Certain friendships, you insist, a certain kind of reading and conversation—surely there is nothing wrong in these. Why argue this question when you know that—however others may not be injured by these compliances—to you they always proved most pernicious? "But it is a mere trifle, a little thing." As well might you say, It is only a little spark which is about to ignite a train and spring a deadly mine slumbering beneath your feet. II. Thus far I have been making a concession, and I desire to be very explicit as to this concession, FOR THE DECLAMATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT SOMETIMES UTTERED IN OUR PULPITS ARE REFUTED BY THE EXPERIENCE OF THE AUDIENCE, and, like all falsehoods, do much harm. Not that we ought to be surprised at such strong and sweeping assertions from the ministers of God. Sin can no more make its votary truly happy in this world than it can make him happy in hell, where its power will be complete and uninterrupted. Who can be surprised if, forgetting the few delirious moments, he regards the whole of his past life with unmitigated disgust, exclaiming, "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" However, sin has its pleasures. Though "it be the gall of asps within him," yet "wickedness is sweet in his mouth." If, then, you are bent upon a life of sin, vainly would I stand here arguing the case with you. But, before you adopt this resolution, ponder the two warnings in our text as to sinful pleasures. The text mentions two offsets, and what are these? The first is, that these pleasures are "the pleasures of sin." Revolve this truth in your mind, penetrate its fearful import, and then put the poisoned chalice to your lips if you can. Sin—that word ought to be written in a paragraph, a page, a book by itself, and written in blood. Men and brethren, what sin is I know not; I only know that when God would mark the heinousness of sin no adjective can be found sufficiently energetic but one borrowed from sin itself, and he describes it as "exceeding sinful." I only know that, if God has a government, sin is treason against that government; if God is holy, just, and true, sin defies and outrages these perfections. Nor does sin only attack and insult God and seek to be a deicide; it is a homicide, and in the most dreadful sense; it is the author of all the woes, burthened with which "the whole creation groaneth together." Wherever human forms pine with disease, or writhe with pain, the sickness and the agony are inflicted by sin. Wherever human hearts bleed and are torn with affliction and anguish the blow has been struck by sin. This is not the worst. Pestilence, suffering, death, are only cutaneous symptoms of the interior plague; they are really merciful, for they warn us of the blight within. Sin murders the soul. Enter now into these truths, unite them, think what sin is, what sin has done, what sin is doing, what sin will do in eternity—are you surprised that God pronounces them fools "who make a mock at sin," and that we are exhorted to "resist unto blood striving against sin"? What shall we then say of him who not only sins, but finds his highest pleasure in a life of sin? But the text not only warns us that these indulgences are the pleasures of sin; it sounds another alarm, and bids us reflect how transient these fatal pleasures

are. "They are only for a season." Of what does this language remind us? it is the void, the cruel chasm which the pleasures of sin leave, no matter how successful their votary may be. If the whole of life could be one voluptuous exhilaration, still how brief the pleasing degradation. But, alas, few and short the moments of excitement, long and dreary the intervals of lassitude and disgust. "The pleasures of sin for a season." Of what does this language admonish us? it is the sad interruptions which these sinful pleasures must know in such a world. Seasons will come when the sounds of revelry must give way to the sounds of weeping, when the house of mirth must become a house of mourning, when the prodigal will come to himself, when the daughters of music shall be brought low, when on the very spot where we had sat down and said, Come, let us deck ourselves with rosebuds, a grave opens, and one who we had thought could never die is laid there, and the shadow of this death is upon the heart and its bitterness fills the soul. And then, oh, then, how does a life of sinful pleasure appear? Earth, help thine own now. It is in these desolate moments that the promises and consolations of the gospel are ineffably precious; but where can the votary of sin turn in such an hour? "The pleasures of sin for a season." This expression suggests a third reflection. It is a dirge-like warning of those periods when conscience will awake, and ring an alarm in all the chambers of the soul. Let no one hope that he can free himself from conscience. You know better, my dear hearer. No, "sorrow dogs sinne." Vainly do the wicked ascend to a heaven of intoxicating voluptuousness, or make their bed in a hell of imbruting sensuality; vainly do they say, Surely the darkness shall cover us; or take the wings of the morning and flee to the uttermost parts of the earth, seeking to dissipate their gloomy thoughts. It is all in vain. Conscience is still with them, and will be ever with them. And this brings us to the last thought conveyed in the words "for a season," the thought which the Holy Spirit designed chiefly to impress upon our minds. I mean death, and the retributions after death. These are at hand, these are rushing on, these incessantly cry, "Prepare to meet thy God." Can it be that, with eternity rising in view, we will forget our souls, and waste our little span in a giddy round of sensual pleasure? (*R. Fuller.*) *Murderous though beautiful:*—Beautiful, innocent-looking creatures are sometimes deadly in their influence. The Lucilia hominivorax is rather more than the third of an inch in length; the head is large, downy, and of a golden yellow. The thorax is dark blue and very brilliant, with gay reflections of purple. The wings are transparent, yet prettily tinged; their margins as well as the feet are black. This innocent-looking insect is very beautiful, yet it is an assassin. M. Coquerel has informed us that it sometimes occasions the death of those wretched convicts who have been transported to the distant penitentiary of Cayenne. When this fly gets into the mouth or nostrils it lays its eggs there, and when they are changed into larvæ the death of the victim generally follows. The larvæ are lodged in the interior of the nasal orifices and the frontal sinuses, and their mouths are armed with two very sharp mandibles. They have been known to reach the ball of the eye, and to gangrene the eyelids. They enter the mouth, corrode and devour the gums and the entrance of the throat, so as to transform those parts into a mass of putrid flesh, a heap of corruption. What an emblem are these of the pleasures which, in an unsuspicious form, are apt to fasten themselves upon man—beautiful in appearance, yet ruinous in result. (*Scientific Illustrations and Symbols.*) *The poisonous lurking in the pleasurable:*—Bees sometimes collect their honey from poisonous plants, and instances are recorded of persons having died from partaking of this honey. Kirby and Spence quote some proofs of this, such as that given by Dr. Barton, an American physician, who records that in 1790 many persons died in Philadelphia from eating honey. Inquiries were instituted, and it was found that the honey was derived by the bees chiefly from the flowers of the Kalmia latifolia. Xenophon in his "Anabasis" mentions that some of his soldiers were singularly affected by honey which they took in Asia Minor. Some of them seemed as if intoxicated, others were much excited, and others lay on the ground as if about to die. The poisonous lurks in the pleasurable, not only in matter, but in morals also. How often when enjoying apparently harmless pleasures, men unexpectedly become the victims of moral evil! Wickedness seldom comes to us in its essential bitterness. If it did we should shun it. It generally insinuates itself in some form of attractive sweetness, and frequently by means of unconscious agents as innocent as the bees. (*Ibid.*) *True goodness:*—The good soul will not break the hedge of any commandment to avoid any piece of foul way. (*J. Trapp.*)

Worldly pleasures:—Fabulists relate that Pleasure went to bathe herself: having stripped off her clothes and laid them by the water, Sorrow came, put them on, and departed. Hence, say they, the pleasures of this world are only sorrows in pleasure's garb. It will ever be so, but if Christ be put on as the chief delight of the mind we shall find pleasure arrayed in the garments of joy. (*W. Mason.*) *For a season*:—Father Taylor preaching on Moses "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," dwelt largely on the last point first—the pleasures of sin. He said, "Sinners, you have your fine horses and farms and houses; but it is for a season. You delight in your ruffled bosoms and gay apparel and gilt ornaments; but it is—for a season. You indulge in your unholy appetites and passions, running riot in pleasurable sin; but it is—for a season—for a season!" Having rung these solemn changes for some time, until the audience was greatly affected, he turned to the Christian side of the parallel—suffering affliction with the people of God. "You are despised of your rich and sinful neighbours; but it is for a season. You are hated and persecuted for righteousness' sake; but it is—for a season. You are cast out as evil, and trodden under foot of men; it is only for a season—for a season!" (*Life of Father Taylor.*) *Faith's sight of sinful pleasures*:—Faith made Moses leap out of the pleasures of the Egyptian court into the fire of affliction, because he saw them "pleasures for a season." Should you see a man in a ship throw himself overboard into the sea, you might at first think him out of his wits, but if a little while after you should see him stand safe on the shore and the ship swallowed up of the waves, you would then think he took the wisest course. Faith sees the world and all the pleasures of sin sinking; there is a leak in them which the wit of man cannot stop. (*W. Gurnall.*) *Pleasure*:—Pleasure is the one thing for which millions live. They differ, perhaps, in their views of what makes up real pleasure, but all agree in seeking first and foremost to obtain it. Pleasure and enjoyment in the holidays is the grand object to which a schoolboy looks forward. Pleasure and satisfaction in making himself independent is the mark on which the young man in business fixes his eye. Pleasure and ease in retiring from business with a fortune is the aim which the merchant sets before him. Pleasure and bodily comfort at his own home is the sum of the poor man's wishes. Pleasure and fresh excitement in politics, in travelling, in amusements, in company, in books—this is the goal towards which the rich man is straining. Pleasure is the shadow which all alike are hunting—high and low, rich and poor, old and young, one with another—each, perhaps, pretending to despise his neighbour for seeking it—each in his own way seeking it for himself—each secretly wondering that he does not find it—each firmly persuaded that somewhere or other it is to be found. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *He had tried both*:—A careless man, a reckless sinner, was arrested in the midst of his wild career and brought to repentance. By the great mercy of God he was converted, and began to lead a new life. The great change of his habits excited the remarks of all his neighbours. Meeting with one of his old associates one day, the latter remarked, "I hear you have given up all your pleasures." "No," replied the other calmly, "I never knew what pleasure was until now. And as I have tried the pleasures of sin and religion both, and you only one, I ought to be the best judge."

Ver. 26. **Respect unto the recompense.**—*The recompense of the reward*:—I. DUTY, CONSIDERED BARELY AS DUTY, DOES NOT CARRY IN IT A SUFFICIENT MOTIVE TO ENGAGE THE WILL OF MAN IN THE CONSTANT PRACTICE OF IT. 1. If in the soul of man its averseness to duty be much stronger than its inclination to it, then duty, considered barely in itself, is not sufficient to determine the will of man to the constant performance of it; which, in my judgment, is an argument so clear, that one of greater force cannot well be desired. No; sooner may the fire be attracted by the centre of the earth, or the vine clasp about the bramble, than any faculty of the soul have its inclinations drawn forth by a contrary and distasteful object. And then for the ground of this argument, to wit, that the soul has originally such an averseness to duty; this, I suppose, is but too evident to need any further probation. 2. The second reason, for the proof of the same truth, is this, that those affections and appetites of the soul, which have the strongest influence upon it, to incline and bias it in all its choices, to wit, the appetites belonging properly to the sensitive part of man's nature, are not at all moved or gratified by anything in duty, considered barely as duty, and therefore, as so considered, it is not a sufficient motive to induce men to the practice of it. Now this reason also, I conceive, carries its own evidence with it. For the soul of man, as the present state of

nature is, generally moves as those forementioned appetites and affections shall incline it; and therefore, if that which thus inclines it be not some way or other first made sure of, all persuasions addressed immediately to the will itself, are like to find but a very cold reception. 3. The third and last reason that I shall allege is this: that if duty, considered barely in itself, ought to be the sole motive to duty, without any respect to a subsequent reward, then those two grand affections of hope and fear ought to have no influence upon men, so as to move or engage them to the acts of duty at all. The consequence is most clear; because the proper objects upon which these affections are to be employed are future rewards and future punishments; and therefore, if no regard ought to be had of these in matters of duty, it will follow, that neither must those affections, which are wholly conversant about rewards, have anything to do about duty, wherein no considerations of a reward ought, upon this principle, to take place. This, I say, would be the genuine, unavoidable consequence of this doctrine. But now, should any one venture to own such an odd and absurd paradox, in any of those sober, rational parts of Christendom, which have not depraved their judging and discerning faculties! For all the world acknowledges, that hope and fear are the two great handles by which the will of man is to be taken hold of, when we would either draw it to duty, or draw it off from sin. They are the strongest means to bring such things home to the will as are principally apt to move and work upon it. And the most renowned actions that were ever achieved upon the face of the earth, have first moved upon the spring of a projecting hope, carrying the mind above all present discouragements, by the prospect of some glorious and future good. II. THE PROPOSAL OF A REWARD ON GOD'S PART, AND A RESPECT HAD TO IT ON MAN'S ARE UNDOUBTEDLY NECESSARY TO ENGAGE MEN IN A COURSE OF DUTY AND OBEDIENCE. 1. And first for the necessity of them. (1) A thing may be said to be necessary when by the very essence or nature of it, it is such, that it implies in it a contradiction, and consequently an impossibility, even by the power of God Himself, that (the said nature continuing) it should be otherwise. And thus, I shall never presume to affirm (though some I know do) that God cannot induce a man (being a free agent) to a course of duty and obedience, without proposing a competent reward to such obedience. (2) A thing may be said to be necessary, not absolutely, but with respect to that particular state and condition in which it is. And thus, because God has actually so cast the present condition of man as to make his inclination to good but imperfect, and during this life to continue it so, and withal to place him among such objects as are mightily apt to draw him off from what is morally good, it was necessary (upon the supposal of such a condition) that, if God would have men effectually choose good and avoid evil, He should suggest to them some further motives to good, and arguments against evil, than what the bare consideration of the things themselves prohibited or commanded by Him can afford. For otherwise, that which was morally good, meeting with so feeble an inclination in the will towards it, will never be able to make any prevailing impression upon that leading faculty. From all which you see, in what sense we affirm it necessary for God to propose rewards to men, thereby to engage them to their duty; namely, because of that imperfect estate which God has been pleased to leave men under in this world. 2. And now, in the next place, for the proof of this necessity. (1) And first for Scripture. It has been more than sufficiently proved from thence already, how deplorably unable the heart of man is, not only to conquer, but even to contend with the difficulties of a spiritual course, without a steady view of such promises as may supply new life, spirit, and vigour to its obedience. To all which, let it suffice at present to add that full and notable declaration of St. Paul, in 1 Cor. xv. 19. (2) The other proof of the same assertion shall be taken from the practice of all the noted lawgivers of the world; who have still found it necessary to back and fortify their laws with rewards and punishments; these being the very strength and sinew of the law, as the law itself is of government. No wise ruler ever yet ventured the peace of society upon the goodness of men's nature, or the virtuous inclination of their temper. Nor was anything truly great and extraordinary ever almost achieved, but in the strength of some reward every whit as great and extraordinary as the action which it carried a man out to. Thus it was in the virtue of Saul's high promises that David encountered Goliath. If we look further into the politics of the Greeks and the Romans, and other nations of remark in history, we shall find, that whensoever the laws enjoined anything harsh, and to the doing of which men were naturally averse, they always thought it requisite to add allurement to obligation, by declaring a noble recompense (possibly some large pension, or gainful

office, or title of honour) to the meritorious doers of whatsoever should be commanded them. For in vain do we think to find any man virtuous enough to be a law to himself, or any law strong enough to enforce and drive home its own obligation; or lastly, the prerogative of any lawgiver high enough to assure to him the subject's obedience. For men generally affect to be caressed and encouraged, and, as it were, bought to their duty (as well as from it too sometimes). For which and the like causes, when God, by Moses, had set before His own people a large number of the most excellent, and, as one would think, self-recommending precepts on the one hand, and a black roll of the very worst and vilest of sins on the other, sins that seemed to carry their punishment in their very commission; yet nevertheless in the issue God found it needful to bring up the rear of all with those decretory words in Deut. xxx. 19. (*R. South, D.D.*) *The faith of Moses*:—I. CONSIDER THAT ONWARD LOOK, WHICH TURNS UPSIDE DOWN THE WORLD'S ESTIMATES OF GOOD AND EVIL. Christian faith should dwell in the future. True! that onward look is secondary, and not primary. We look forward simply because God has told us what that future is to be, and we are to trust Him. Our conceptions of the future must always be limited by, as well as founded exclusively on, the revelation which God has made. And that is the distinction between the wholesome and ennobling anticipation of the future which is proper to Christianity, and should be familiar to all professing Christians, and every other forecast of possibilities or probabilities to come beyond the grave. The one is mist, the other is solid earth. The one is a torturing, though it sometimes be an attractive peradventure; the other foots itself upon a "Verily! verily! I say unto thee." Then, further, note here how this onward look should reverse the world's estimate of good and evil. As long as the theatre is only lit by artificial light, the tawdry Dutch metal upon the cotton velvet robes, and the glass jewels upon the paltry crowns of the strutting pretenders to royalty and wealth look genuine, solid, and rich. Let the daylight in, and how shabby and seamy and poor they all look. If we want to know what the world's wealth is, let us only lift our eyes unto, and keep them fixed upon, that realm of light to which Christ invites us, and then these have no glory at all "by reason of the glory that excelleth." As a candle against the sun, so is the "abundance" that a man "possesses" as contrasted with the durable riches and righteousness to which the Christian soul hastens. Nothing that can be stripped from us is truly ours. Only that which is incorporated with the very substance of the soul belongs to me; and the only true wealth is the wealth of a Christ-love in my heart, and a Christ-truth in my understanding, and a Christ-spirit in my life, and a Christ the law of my will. He that hath these is rich, and he that looks for the perfecting of these things in the perfect world beyond has a charm which turns all the fairy-gold by which men are deceived in the dark into the bundle of rotting leaves which, according to the old legend, it truly is. And then there is the other side of the world's fascinations, which equally are stripped of their masquerading pomp by the eye that looks onwards to the recompense of reward. "The pleasures for a season" come to be known for the poor paltry things that they are when they are set by the side of the calm "pleasures for evermore" which await us if we will. We never realise the true transiency of the transient until we measure it against the eternity of the eternal. "For a season"; "for evermore." Who will compare these two? Then, further, let me remiud you how the analysis of our text shows us that this estimate made by faith, and reversing the world's judgment, ought to lead to a deliberate surrender. There are miserable multitudes of Christian men and women, good enough kind of people in their way, and with some reality of Christian faith towards that great Lord, who have no doubt whatever, if you come to put the question to them, that this world's goods are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. And yet there is a fatal schism between judgment and choice; and a paralysis, as it were, of the powers that would carry the estimate into action. How comes this to be? You and I are not called to surrender in the fashion of the heroic renunciation of our text, but we are called upon to use the lower in subordination to the higher. And unless our faith has in it an onward look that truly estimates the relative worth of the things seen and temporal and the things eternal, and that impels by that estimate to a deliberate choice which we carry out in action, we have little right to say that we are soldiers in this great army, the heroes of which are marshalled in the roll-call of this chapter. II. CONSIDER THE UPWARD LOOK, WHICH DELIVERS FROM FEAR, AND NERVES FOR SERVICE. I am prepared to maintain that the knowledge which a believing heart has of God is as valid, and more so, than the evidence of sense; and that the sight of faith is

better, truer, deeper, more to be relied upon as giving us verities than the sight of these senses that may be befooled and diseased and deceive us. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," and he that hath trusted hath seen God revealed in Christ. But, then, mark how this vision of the invisible, which is the bliss of the Christian life, and without which no faith worth calling by the name is possible, should have in it a power of steadying us for persistent endurance of difficulty and continuance in duty. When soldiers pass the saluting-point where the commander-in-chief sits, they dress up their ranks and pull themselves together. If we realised that we were ever in the presence of that great Lord, that He was ever there before us, how the world would change its aspect, and life and its difficulties would become easy! The great white throne dims everything else. And then, further, this upward look should bring glad courage. Soldiers tell us that the bravest man has a spasm of terror when he goes into the battle; and courage is but the rebound of the heart from fear. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee." "I will trust and not be afraid." Whoso has the recompense of reward, and Him that is invisible who is the "exceeding great reward," clear before him, is delivered from all other fear, and through fear is driven to God, whose presence drives it out. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The reward of Moses*:—I. WHAT WAS IMPLIED IN THAT REWARD TO WHICH MOSES HAD RESPECT. 1. The glory of God was implied in it. In bringing about this event, God would necessarily display His power, His sovereignty, His justice, His mercy, and His faithfulness. 2. The good of His nation was another thing implied in the reward to which Moses had respect. 3. He had reason to expect a distinguished mansion in heaven, to which he had a proper respect. His own future and eternal happiness was a truly important and desirable object. II. MOSES WAS TRULY DISINTERESTED IN SEEKING THE REWARD SET BEFORE HIM. 1. He does not appear to have been selfish by his conduct. This was such as plainly manifested pure, disinterested love to God and man. 2. If Moses had been selfish in having respect to the recompense of reward, his conduct would not have been virtuous and pleasing to God. 3. If Moses had not sought a recompense of reward from pure and holy motives, he would not have been admitted to heaven. 4. Holy love, or true benevolence, would naturally lead Moses to have respect to such a reward as God set before him. He must desire, in the exercise of pure, disinterested, and universal benevolence, that God should be glorified; that his nation should be happy; and that he himself should be blessed in the everlasting enjoyment of God. These were the things contained in the reward set before him; and these were the things which were set before all other sincere servants of God. Improvement: 1. If Moses was really disinterested in having respect to the recompense of reward, then real saints may be as disinterested in seeking their own good, as in seeking the good of others. 2. If Moses had respect, in the exercise of disinterested benevolence, to a future and eternal reward, then saints may and do regard their own eternal good more than sinners. 3. If those who act from disinterested benevolence deserve to be rewarded, then those who act from selfish and mercenary motives deserve to be punished. 4. If Moses acted virtuously and acceptably to God in the view of a future and eternal reward, then it is no just objection against the gospel that it proposes future rewards and punishments to men, to induce them to shun the broad road to destruction, and walk in the strait and narrow way to eternal life. 5. If Moses, in the exercise of disinterested love, obtained the recompense of reward to which he had respect, then all real saints have great encouragement to persevere in their religious course. 6. If Moses and other good men were governed by disinterested love in seeking and obtaining a future and eternal reward, then none have any reason to expect to obtain a crown of righteousness, without exercising true disinterested love. 7. This subject now asks of all, whether they are walking in the straight and narrow way to heaven. Have you that respect to recompense that Moses had? His life, his death, and his present state are recorded. He has arrived at heaven safe. Look at his character and conduct, and compare your own with his. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) *The future retribution*:—I. THE CERTAINTY THAT A FUTURE RECOMPENSE DOES EXIST. In referring to the testimony which we possess upon this momentous subject, we may be allowed to notice some sources of evidence which are frequently considered as existing apart from Divine revelation. We may notice, for instance, the general and simultaneous opinion of all mankind, that there is a period of future retribution. We may notice also the operations of the human conscience in the decisions it pronounces upon the principles and the actions of man, and in the feelings which it always inspires in the human bosom as the consequence of those decisions. We

may also notice the uniform structure of all human governments, whose laws are supported by the promises of reward, or the penalties of punishment, from which it is fair to conclude the existence of an Almighty Lawgiver, and the denial of which is equal to atheism. But the prime source of our assurance upon this momentous subject, and without which every other would be found to be inconclusive, will be found to exist in the records of Divine truth—the revelation which the Almighty has been pleased to make to the children of men respecting Himself, and respecting the highest interests of their being. It may be observed, that in the early portions of Divine truth there is a considerable obscurity resting upon the announcements of a future state, arising not from the weakness, but from the arrangements, of the Divine wisdom in the administration of the affairs of the world. Every promise—every doctrine—every precept is hallowed and enforced by this one inscription, that there is a recompense of reward. II. THE ATTRIBUTES BY WHICH IT IS DISTINGUISHED. 1. The good and evil which constitute this future recompense are in their nature incessant and perfect. 2. The good and the evil which constitute this future recompense are in their duration changeless and eternal. III. THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THIS FUTURE RECOMPENSE IS BESTOWED. 1. The recompense of good is bestowed upon a principle of grace. The notion which is contrary to this, namely, that the recompense of happiness in heaven arises from man's merit, and that it is granted to him by the justice of God in consequence of that merit, is one that must be exposed, as being at variance with all the conclusions of right reason, and all the declared arrangements of the Word of God. With regard to the former we are to speak of its absurdity. What greater absurdity is there than to speak of everlasting happiness being purchased by a temporary obedience—that obedience, as it is universally acknowledged, being, at the very best, but imperfect and partial? 2. The recompense of future evil is inflicted upon a principle of justice. Not more false, and not more pernicious, is the sentiment which ascribes the damnation of man to the sovereignty of God, than is the notion which ascribes the redemption of man to the justice of God. The lost spirits of the human race are only in the regions of despair because they do wilfully and voluntarily sin against the authority of the Almighty, and that the essential and eternal justice of the Almighty compelled and necessitated the punishment of these violations of His law. Grace is inscribed over the gates of heaven; justice is written over the portals of hell. IV. THE INFLUENCE WHICH THE KNOWLEDGE OF THIS FUTURE RECOMPENSE SHOULD EXCITE. 1. From the knowledge of this future state of recompense, we ought to be frequent in our contemplations of it. As you go amongst the material works of man, or the material works of God, consider this, which gives you a grandeur superior to them all. Yonder monuments and statues—yonder cathedrals and temples—yonder mansions and edifices shall crumble; yonder green fields and yonder verdant trees—yonder fruitful vales, and yonder lovely mountains shall perish; yonder rivers will soon no longer flow; yonder deep and dreary ocean will no longer heave its mighty rolling billows; yonder stars that adorn the firmament of heaven will soon cease to shine; yonder moon will be turned into blood; yonder sun is but a spark of fire—a transient meteor in the sky; while I, who stand upon this little spot of earth, am destined to outlive the universal wreck, and shall survive them all! I wear upon my brow the stamp of immortality! I am the heir of a recompense of reward! 2. The knowledge of this state of future recompense should make us constantly anxious to obtain the recompense of good, and to avoid the recompense of evil. You have heard of the atonement of Christ—you have heard of the justifying merit of His righteousness—you have heard that those who believe in Him shall not be condemned, but shall be saved with an everlasting salvation. He is the refuge, flee to Him—He is the foundation, build upon Him—and a voice from the judgment-seat will pronounce its own tidings of acceptation, "Enter into the joy of your Lord!" (*J. Parsons.*)

The remunerating power of God:—There is no attempt at denying, in the account here given of Moses, that there was much to be endured and much to be given up, in order to the serving the Lord. And Moses is not represented as at all blind to the facts of the case; he rested his choice of future good on its immeasurable superiority to the present. And in so doing he left us an example, not merely of right decision, but of right decision reached by right steps. It will not do, constituted as men are, to enlarge to them abstractedly on the duty of holiness, and on the satisfaction derived from a conscience at rest. They are not to be persuaded that virtue is in any such sense its own reward, that it would be better for them to be self-denying than self-indulgent. even if nothing be brought into the account but

the amount of actual enjoyment. They demand, with some show of justice, that we rigidly prove to them that they shall be gainers by doing that which we urge. I. And here, let us first remind you, THAT MAN IS SO CONSTITUTED, THAT HE MUST HAVE AN OBJECT, A SOMETHING TO DESIRE, A SOMETHING TO PURSUE. The object which at some particular season fixes his attention may be trivial; but it is not by any demonstration of its worthlessness that you may look to turn him from it. You must show him a worthier, one which shall more commend itself to his esteem, and then will the stronger cast out the strong, and the "treasures in Egypt" be dispossessed by yet brighter wealth. We summon the man of pleasure to come with us. We will tell him of joys which distance imagination, of happiness without alloy and without end; and we will show him how he may have a share in a blessedness which he cannot exhaust, and of which he cannot grow weary. We say to the man whose passion is for wealth, Come with us; we have to place before you treasures not to be computed, whose lustre makes the brightest gold dim, and of which nothing can deprive you. We say to the man of ambition, Behold the loftiest of honours, crowns and thrones and sceptres—a place amid the nobles of creation. Ay, if you would all indeed but fix your gaze on the inheritance revealed by the gospel of Christ, you would all, as a necessary consequence, cease from unduly pursuing what is earthly. You will not be left without an object; that were unnatural, that were impossible. It is not a process of extinction, but simply a process of exchange, which you are to attempt. This, however, only touches the case of the comparison of one good with another; whereas the case commonly submitted in urging men to religion, is that of a present evil and a prospective advantage. This was the case with Moses; and our business is to see whether the principles which regulated his decision cannot still be applied in the urging men to a similar. Take the case of the young, who, with life just opening before them, and the attractions of the world soliciting their pursuit, are urged to the duty of remembering their Creator, and setting their affections on things that are above. We say to them, It is true you must renounce cherished gratifications; and we do not suppose you can go along with us in decrying those gratifications. You seek your wealth in earthly treasures, and your honours in earthly fame, and you are not prepared to disregard the treasures and to despise the fame. But at whose call, and at whose command, are you summoned to the sacrifice? Is it for the service of one who has nothing to bestow that we ask you to exchange the sonship of Pharaoh? Is it to make friendship with a being who has nothing good and nothing great at his disposal? On the contrary, we address you in the name of the living God, "whose is the earth, and the fulness thereof." We invite you to be reconciled to your Creator, who can supply your every want out of His riches in Christ. We offer you the favour of a Being who can impart a "peace which passeth all understanding," a "hope full of immortality," and a joy with which no stranger intermeddles. We propose to you the placing yourself under the guardianship of Him who hath spread out the heavens. And are we, then, to hear of the extent of the sacrifice, and to hear nothing of the wealth and the happiness secured by the surrender? Oh! it is to your zeal for your own welfare, to your love for your own selves, to your wish for riches, to your appetite for honours, to your longing for pleasures, that we make our appeal. If we ask the surrender of the corruptible, we offer the incorruptible; of the transitory, we offer the enduring; of the visionary, we offer the substantial. And now we go on to observe, that it is the apparent conflict between interest and duty which causes us in a variety of cases to disobey God, and withstand the pleadings of conscience. We speak of apparent conflict, because we deny altogether that interest and duty can ever be really opposed. It is but vindicating the righteousness of the moral government of God, to maintain, that whatever He has made it our duty, He has made it also our interest to do. Indeed, the world would cease to be a scene of probation, and there would no longer be any trial of obedience, were it always manifestly for our advantage to follow the course which God's law prescribes. It is only by carrying onward our calculation, bringing the future, as well as the present, into the account, that we reach the conclusion, that what is duty, is in the long run also interest. There is, therefore, no passage of Scripture more deserving than is our text, to be carried by all of you into the scenes of ordinary occupations; for there is nothing which you have more need to keep in mind, than what we have called the remunerating power of God, seeing that the life of a Christian must, in a great measure, be a life of surrender and of sacrifice. We need scarcely add, that our text should be a preservative, not only to those who may be tempted to the so engrossing

themselves with business as to leave no time for religion, but to others who may be solicited to turn aside, be it ever so little, from rectitude and integrity. We would have you animate yourselves for the moral warfare, by considering what "recompense of reward" is promised to the faithful. Is the gold seducing you? are the precious stones dazzling you? Then think of that city whose streets are pure gold, and whose every gate is a costly pearl. Is earthly honour, the being Pharaoh's son, alluring you? Then think of that throne which the righteous are to ascend; of their being "heirs of God, yea, joint-heirs with Christ." Are "the pleasures of sin" themselves tempting you? Then think of pleasures so deep and overflowing, that they are spoken of as a "river of gladness," so unmeasured, that he who partakes thereof will be abundantly satisfied. It is now the appointment of God, as in early days, that through much tribulation you must enter into rest. Egypt is still to be forsaken, and the wilderness to be traversed, and the reproach to be endured. Oh! for the faith which ruled in the bosom of Moses! (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *A treasure worth great sacrifices*:—There is an interesting anecdote told of a French botanist, who many years ago was sent out to tropical regions to arrange for introducing the coffee-plant into the island of Mauritius. This, it was considered, would do much for the prosperity of the island. But the voyage was very long; contrary winds prevailed; almost all the plants he brought with him died; water was so scarce that the passengers were only allowed one glassful per day—one coffee-plant only was left! But to preserve this one plant alive, the self-denying botanist gave half of his small daily allowance of water, patiently enduring the torments of thirst. It just sufficed to keep the plant from dying, and the happy result in later years was the naturalisation of the coffee crop in the island. Such were the fruits of self-denial. Shall not we be prepared to sacrifice many earthly inducements, and the "pleasures of sin," to win the lasting and precious "treasure" of true religion in this life, and to secure the heavenly inheritance beyond, which, by God's mercy, has been placed within our reach? (*J. W. Hardman, LL.D.*) *Heaven only a little further on*:—Columbus, when his men were weary, and resolved to come back, besought them to go on but three days longer. They did so, and discovered America. Heaven is but a little before us. Hold out, faith and patience. (*J. Trapp.*) *The recompense of reward*:—True, all our lives long we shall be bound to refrain our soul and keep it low; but what then? For the books we now forbear to read, we shall one day be endued with wisdom and knowledge. For the music we will not listen to, we shall join in the song of the redeemed. For the pictures from which we turn, we shall gaze unabashed on the beatific vision. For the companionship we shun, we shall be welcomed into angelic society and the communion of triumphant saints. For the pleasures we miss, we shall abide, and evermore abide, in the rapture of heaven. It cannot be much of a hardship to dress modestly, and at small cost, rather than richly and fashionably, if, with a vivid conviction, we are awaiting the "white robes of the redeemed." And, indeed, this anticipation of pure and simple white robes for eternal wear may fairly shake belief in the genuine beauty of elaborate showiness, even for such clothes as befitted in the present distress. (*Christina G. Rossetti.*) *Heaven worthy of effort*:—Julius Cæsar coming towards Rome with his army, and hearing that the senate and people had fled from it, said, "They that will not fight for this city, what city will they fight for?" If we will not take pains for the kingdom of heaven, what kingdom will we take pains for?

Ver. 27. **He forsook Egypt.**—*Moses forsaking Egypt*:—I. HE FORSOOK EGYPT. Two several times. 1. When he fled into the land of Midian, where he was a stranger and a shepherd for many years. 2. When he brought Israel out of Egypt. Whether of these is here intended? Some think the former; some the latter; some both. Yet, whether it be one or both, it is certain both that he did leave Egypt and that he did leave it in this manner. In the former departure he fled to avoid danger; in the latter he marched out like a prince and general with a mighty host. II. THE REASON OF THIS BOLDNESS WAS HIS FAITH, WHEREBY HE ENDURED AS SEEING HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE, WHICH IS THE SECOND PROPOSITION. 1. He that was invisible was God, who is said to be the eternal, immortal, invisible God (1 Tim. i. 17), whom no man hath seen nor can see (1 Tim. vi. 16), and the invisible God (Col. i. 15). 2. The act of his faith was that whereby he, as it were, and in some manner, saw this invisible God, he saw Him, not by his senses, nor by the natural light of reason, but by a diviner and more excellent visive faculty, to which He did represent Himself in His wisdom, almighty power, promise, and fidelity,

with all which He was engaged in this act. This sight of Him made Pharaoh, though a king of mighty power, as contemptible in his eyes. So glorious did He appear that all the power and princes of the world were nothing to him. 3. The immediate effect was that he so seeing Him as though He were present, marching in the van, bringing up the rear, and guarding Israel on every side, did endure, not only with a patient but a constant and undaunted mind, the wrath of the king, whom he feared. He strengthened and hardened himself, and resolved to carry Israel out of Egypt, and rescue them from the Egyptian bondage and tyranny. This was an act of faith, of strong faith; and this instance doth teach to fortify and embolden our hearts by faith in God against all fears of the greatest, most cruel, and enraged enemies. (*G. Lawson.*) *An heroic frame of mind:*—I. In all duties, especially such as are attended with great difficulties and dangers, it is the wisdom of believers to take care, not only that the works of them be good in themselves, BUT THAT THEY HAVE A JUST AND DUE CALL TO THEIR PERFORMANCE. When they have so, and are satisfied therein, there is nothing that faith will not conflict withal and conquer. But if they are weak in this foundation of duty, they will find that faith will not be engaged to their assistance. II. EVEN THE WRATH OF THE GREATEST KINGS IS TO BE DISREGARDED IF IT LIE AGAINST OUR DUTY TOWARDS GOD (Dan. iii. 13–18). III. THERE IS AN HEROIC FRAME OF MIND AND SPIRITUAL FORTITUDE REQUIRED TO THE DUE DISCHARGE OF OUR CALLINGS IN TIMES OF DANGER, WHICH FAITH IN EXERCISE WILL PRODUCE (1 Cor. xvi. 13). IV. THERE IS NOTHING INSUPERABLE TO FAITH WHILE IT CAN KEEP A CLEAR VIEW OF THE POWER OF GOD AND HIS FAITHFULNESS IN HIS PROMISES. And unless we are constant in this exercise of faith we shall fail in great trials and difficult duties. From hence we may fetch revivings, renewals of strength, and consolations on all occasions, as the Scripture everywhere testifieth (Psa. lxxiii. 25, 26; Isa. xl. 28–30). (*John Owen, D.D.*) *Forsaking Egypt:*—I remember, when visiting the national museum at Naples, and standing in the corridor of marble sculptures, surrounded on every side by colossal forms of Zeno and Socrates, and Plato, and Sophocles, and Homer, and hundreds of the wise and great of other days, it seemed as though I were transported back to an earlier age; and I never read this eleventh chapter of the Hebrews without feeling as though I stood in a gallery of statuary, and were gazing on the sculptured figures of a distinguished group, long since passed into the heavens, of whom the world was not worthy. The first form that arrests my eye is that of a young man standing by a kind of rude altar, with an innocent lamb by his side, and I say, "That is Abel." Then a little to the right I notice a man with dignified and heavenly mien, apparently holding close communion with his Maker, and I say, "That is Enoch." A few steps further, and I see, carved in elaborate sculpture, a shipbuilder of no common ambition, his plans and his tools beside him, and timber for such a vessel as had never floated on the sea. "Noah!" I at once exclaim, and the whole story of the Deluge instantly flashes before my mind. And so I walk round the gallery, and quickly recognise such eminent figures as Abraham, and Jacob, and Gideon, and David, and Samuel, and many others; but, amongst them all, there is not one, perhaps, to compare in grandeur of character with him of whom my text tells us. I. YOU MUST FORSAKE EGYPT. There we have all been born. Just as Canaan represents the state of rest and liberty which we enter and enjoy when we become the people of God, so Egypt stands, in Scriptural symbolism, for carnality and spiritual bondage. This is the two-fold thought which "Egypt" expresses. 1. First, a mere fleshly or animal existence. Living for the gratification of our lower nature. Asking, "What shall we eat?" and "What shall we drink?" and "What clothes shall we wear?" and "What worldly delights shall we enjoy?" The food of Egypt was not only plentiful, but it was gross and stimulating. It pampered the body. It inflamed the passions. To young men, Egypt, in this sense, often presents special charms. The power of sin lies in its pleasure. But then, remember, the pleasures of the sensualist are the preludes of a misery that words cannot paint. There was a young medical student who went out to prosecute his studies in Paris. He caught the moral infection of its licentiousness and infidelity. There was an inward struggle between the conscience and the flesh. "Shall I forsake Egypt?" was the question. The flesh prevailed, and he said "No." Here are his very words: "I know that I can enjoy life in my own way about so many years. I shall parcel out my money to last so long a time, and no longer. When my time is up my revolver shall end all." His prediction was but too true; and when, within but a few years, his pale and breath-

less form was one day found lying in his own blood, one could almost have believed that a voice was whispering, "The way of transgressors is hard." The great thing which a young man needs in a crisis of temptation is instant decision for the right. If you tamper and hesitate the game is half lost. Leave no time for temptation to accumulate. "Forsake Egypt." You must surely have noticed that, in relation to all sins of this character—sins of the flesh—St. Paul's counsel is, "Flee!" It may seem like cowardice, but it is true heroism. "Flee youthful lusts." Like Joseph, hasten instantly out of the way of the tempter; saying, as Moses did to Pharaoh, "Thou shalt see my face no more!" 2. But, secondly, it is also a state of bondage. It is slavery of the worst kind. There are fetters of the soul, moral chains, forged of such material, and riveted with such strength, that he who wears them, though his comrades call him a free lance, and a dashing blade, is unspeakably more a bondman than the convict in his cell. There is no greater slavery than that of the man over whom his own passions and vile habits domineer. Can he be called his own master who is always at the bidding of some imperious lust, or ungovernable appetite? Do you call that man free, for example, who lately came to my door, and in desperation asked me what was to be done, because no power on earth could keep him back from drink? It is idle to talk of liberty whilst you are the servants of the devil. If you spare sin it will not spare you. II. YOU MUST DEFY THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS. There are thousands of young persons who are more than half-inclined to become Christians, but are kept back from a full decision by certain fears that stand in their way. How many, for example, are in mortal dread of being laughed at, ridiculed by their ungodly associates? Old John Trapp has a quaint remark somewhere, to the effect that if we can bear taunts and jeers for Christ's sake, it argues we mean to stick to Him; just as among the Jews, by Moses' law, the servant that was content to be "bored in the ear with an awl," signified that nothing would tempt him away from his master. Whenever you are chaffed or ridiculed for your religion, then, just think that if you can endure such "boring," it speaks well for your attachment to Christ. Then some are deterred from a decided Christian life by the dread of the inward conflict they will have, as they think, to undergo; the bitterness of true repentance; by the thought of the sinful pleasures they must forego, the giddy company they must abandon, and the responsibilities they must assume. Not a few are frightened away from personal religion by the idea that if they become Christians they must give up all kinds of social enjoyment. Others have frankly told me that the reason they keep aloof is that it is now impossible for them to shake themselves loose from certain habits that would be inconsistent with a life of piety. "I forsake Egypt! I become a devout believer, and live a holy life! The thing is impossible. My habits are too confirmed, my feelings too blunted; the enemy has got too strong a hold upon me for that." These are a few of the bugbears with which the devil seeks to frighten you! Oh, my friend! come away out of Egypt at once, and do not "fear the wrath of the king." Ninety-nine reasons out of every hundred that frighten people against religion are utterly false and baseless. Christ's is not a hard hand, nor a sour and gloomy face. To become a believer is to come into the land of gladsome sunshine and of glorious liberty. If you have served the devil for twenty years, don't serve him a day longer. God's grace is all-sufficient. III. YOU MUST FIX YOUR EYE ON THE UNSEEN GOD. You must "endure as seeing Him who is invisible." Your minds are entirely occupied with the visible and the concrete; with matters of the shop, the office, or the household; with your stock-in-trade; with buying and selling, lending and borrowing, bargaining and investing; with pounds, shillings, and pence; with bonds, and shares, and debentures; with pound weights and pint measures; with webs of cloth, and reams of paper, and bags of rice, and boxes of tea, and casks of sugar, and waggons of coal; with accounts and invoices; from day to day, from week to week, looking only to what is "seen and temporal," devoting the powers of an immortal soul to the interests of a dying world, with the almost certainty of continuing so to do till fever or paralysis throw you on your back, and you wake up, too late, to discover that your soul has never pierced through the veil of flesh, and gazed on "Him who is invisible"! Ah! you will never "endure" with a life like that! "Can thine heart endure, saith the Lord, or can thine hands be strong, in the day that I shall deal with thee?" Thank God, some of you have had your eyes opened to a new world altogether. Even the simplest mind is raised and expanded, by converse with eternity, and fellowship with God. But your contemplation of the invisible must not be a mere abstract dreamy devotion, a waiting afar

off on Heaven's eternal glorious King. There must be a personal surrender of yourselves to God, founded upon a living and intelligent faith. A man whose business affairs are all in a muddle will never be a successful man; and it is just as true, that if the interests of your soul are all in a muddle, there is little hope of your wearing the eternal crown. Oh, clear up the whole matter now; come and get salvation on God's terms. Turn your back on Egypt, and your face toward Canaan; and keep your eye fixed on Him who is invisible. So shall you endure to the end, and, enduring to the end, shall be saved. (*J. T. Davidson, D.D.*) *Fearlessness in fear through the vision of the invisible*:—The contradiction between these two passages is sufficiently apparent. No sooner do we bring them together than we detect it, and ask ourselves, How could the same man at the same moment, in the same act, both fear and not fear the anger of the incensed king? Must we, then, reject the one passage or the other as obviously inaccurate? Must we even pare down and modify the one till we can force it into some kind of agreement with the other? By no means. These apparent contradictions, which abound in Scripture, as they do in all books which treat the highest themes wisely, are of the utmost value. They strike and rouse the mind; they quicken thought and stimulate inquiry: they even confirm the truth of the Divine Record. For no two men give precisely the same account of any fact or transaction they have witnessed. If they are honest, if they use their own eyes and look on each from his own point of view, they are sure to disagree in detail, even when they agree in substance. It is only false witnesses, witnesses who have preconcerted, and perhaps rehearsed, their evidence, that are found to be in unbroken accord. There is no difficulty whatever in reconciling the apparently contradictory reports of the two passages before us, when once we remember the different points of view from which the men who wrote them regarded the flight of Moses, and the different objects which animated them as they wrote. Moses did fear the wrath of the king, or he would not have fled from it; but, as he fled, he was saved from all fear by a faith which taught him that the wrath of Pharaoh was impotent against the protecting shield of God. The Jewish historian, dealing only with overt facts and their historic causes, narrates the flight and the fear which prompted it; the Christian evangelist, concerning himself mainly about spiritual experience and the inward processes of thought and emotion, speaks of that vision of the invisible which was vouchsafed to Moses as he fled, and shows us faith evolving fearlessness out of fear. There is no real contradiction between them, but only such a discord as, first, makes us listen, and, then, while we listen, passes into a harmony all the more profound for the very discord which introduced it. And surely we cannot wonder to find some discrepancy in the record of a fact so suggestive of the strangest paradoxes. Most of us, I suppose, see but little heroism in running away; and yet it is precisely the flight of Moses which is selected as one of the most heroic events in his eventful career: and when, in addition, we read of a fearless fear, and learn that this fearless fear was caused by a vision of the invisible, we must confess, I think, that here are paradoxes enough to demand some pains of thought before we can hope to comprehend them. (*S. Cox, D.D.*) *A godly fearlessness*:—Mr. Samuel Wesley, the father of the celebrated Mr. John Wesley, being strongly importuned by the friends of James II., to support the measures of the court in favour of popery, with promises of preferment, absolutely refused even to read the king's declaration; and though surrounded with courtiers, soldiers, and informers, he preached a bold and pointed discourse against it from these words: "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." (*K. Arvine.*) *Prince of Condé and Charles IX.*:—The prince of Condé being taken prisoner by Charles IX., king of France, and put to his choice whether he would go to mass or be put to death, or suffer perpetual imprisonment, his noble answer was, that by God's help he would never do the first; and for either the second or the last, he left it to the king's pleasure and God's providence. (*Ibid.*) *A noble fearlessness*:—You have often heard of Martin Luther's speech when they warned him not to go to Worms, that he would go there if all the tiles on the roofs of the houses were devils. Yes, but he said a better thing than that, which is not often quoted, because people are not so much afraid of devils, especially in that quantity; they seem to be too many to be up to much. But they said, "You must not go, Martin Luther; for if you do Duke George will arrest you on the road." There are many persons who are much more afraid of Duke George than they are of the devil; but said Luther, "I tell you if it were to

rain Duke Georges for nine days as hard as it could, I would, and I will go, in God's name." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Fearlessness respected:*—Men reverence those who have got over fear, which is so general a weakness. (*Dr. Johnson.*) **Endured as seeing Him who is invisible.**—*Moses:*—He endured. I like those words in which Scripture sums up all the life of Moses. They offer a striking contrast to all that we see nowadays. This century surprises us by its recantations; discouragement is one of the dominant notes which is breathed from contemporaneous souls, and never were so many suicides seen than since man was taught that the present life embraced all his destiny. Well, feeble children of an enervated period, here is before us the example of a man of God who endured, of a man to whom it has been given, as if to show in his works the dominant trait of his character, to found here below the most resisting and most tenacious thing which the world has ever seen—I mean the Jewish people. Think of it! History offers nothing similar. Nothing has been able to weaken this prodigious vitality. Babylon and Nineveh, Alexandria and Athens, Rome and Constantinople have fallen. It has survived all the ruins of the past, as it will survive all those of the present. Always the same in its distinctive features, it bequeaths to each of its children an indelible type. Now, if we ask Moses what was the secret of his strength, he will tell us that with him it was not a fruit of nature, nor even a conquest of the will. Timid, and little formed for such an enterprise, he recoiled before his task and accepted it only with trembling. His strength did not come to him "from flesh and blood," it came to him from Divine grace, and he found it by faith. "He endured," the Scripture says, "as seeing Him who is invisible." Oh, you who have received from God the mission of directing men, leaders of people, magistrates, chiefs of industry, or pastors of souls, have you understood what such an example ought to teach you? What is the situation, however humble it be, where one does not feel weighing on himself the burden of some soul which must be guided, some life which must be saved? Fathers and mothers of families, teachers on whom rests the noble task of educating the young, you all who know what it costs to exercise with devotedness this thankless mission but so great, learn from Moses to endure, seeing Him who is invisible. Oh! how great the duty appears, and how dignified the most humble ministers, when, instead of seeing an entirely human obligation, a Divine investiture is recognised, a priesthood which comes from above. In this spirit we must strive here below, serving those to whom God sends us, but seeking from higher than they the approbation which upholds us and the rule for our conscience. Let us thoroughly understand our mission. We must prove to this positive century that it is the invisible alone which can save the world. This century boasts of believing only what it can see and touch. Proud of its progress and of its conquests, intoxicated with the triumphs of science, it sees reality only there; for it, all the rest is a chimerical and vain dreaming. To know the visible, that is its wisdom; to act on the visible, that is its work; to enjoy the visible, that is its happiness. Beyond that everything disappears from its eyes. Hear with what proud and mocking accents it speaks of supernatural doctrines which, according to it, have for a long time led humanity astray and paralysed its progress. If it supports religion it is entirely for a utilitarian end, with an eye to weak minds and disinherited classes who may find some consolation therein, and, moreover, it wishes to accept the practical side only; willingly would it reduce the Church to no more than a vast association of philanthropy. All that goes beyond that plane is, in its eyes, only reverie and sterile additions. It seems that, relieved of this heavy burden, humanity henceforth would walk more proudly to the conquest of the future. Well, we must say boldly, we must unfalteringly repeat, that if some eternal principle, some consolation, some strong hope is preserved on our poor earth, we owe it to those who, like Moses, have walked by faith and not by sight. (*E. Bersier, D.D.*) *The sense of the presence of God:*—I. CAN THE FINITE COMPREHEND THE INFINITE? Can the arm of man embrace the image of Divinity. Nay. But we know that if the arm of man cannot embrace the image of God, it can at least put its hand into His palm. We know that if the heart of God is larger and kinder than the heart of man, that the throbs of human emotion are, at least, suggestions of the great love which beats for man, as the crimson flushing of the dawn is a token of the meridian glory. "Where is the air?" might sing the bird to his mate. "Where is the water?" might ask the fish in his school. Where is God? "In Him we live and move and have our being." 1. This sense of the presence of God is made known to us in nature. 2. So, too, in the deep experiences of human life do we

become conscious of the presence of God. II. How easy it is to disturb and to destroy this sense of the near presence of God. The sense of the Divine presence as it is reflected in the soul of man, may by a single gust of passion, by a habit of self-indulgence, by a thought of impurity moving lightly over its surface, be either distorted into cruel ugliness or shivered into a useless ruin. III. We now pass to consider more definitely the results of the having of this sense of God. 1. This sense of God elevates life. The man having it lives a life higher and nobler. He gains a wider prospect. He rises nearer heaven. He breathes a purer and more bracing atmosphere. The Waldenses had as their watchword "In His name." It was their greeting and their farewell. They spoke it at the wedding altar, at the bier, and at the baptismal font. They thought it as they ploughed the fields and plucked the purple clusters in their vineyards. It ennobled and gave dignity to their life; it strengthened them to endure persecution for the truths which they loved, and to lay down their lives on the "Alpine mountains cold." Thus the sense of the near presence of God transforms and ennobles life. It hushes life's jarring, clashing notes into music. It puts the cipher of our individual existence on the right side of the figure of life and gives to life a tenfold value. 2. This sense of God is a shield from sin. It repels evil. Dannecker, the German sculptor, who died a generation ago, left statues of Ariadne and Sappho and a colossal figure of Christ. His early fame he won for works connected with Greek and Roman mythology. When he had laboured two years upon his statue of Christ, the marble was apparently finished. He called a little girl into his studio. Pointing to the form of the Christ he asked, "Who is that?" "A great man," was her reply. He was for a time hopeless. He had failed. Only a great man. Again he commenced labour. For six years he cut and carved the marble. Again he called a child and put her before the finished piece. "Who is that?" he asked. Her reply was, "Suffer little children to come unto Me." It was the belief of the sculptor that for the execution of his task he had seen a special vision of Christ. At one time he attracted the eye of Napoleon. "Come to Paris," said the Frenchman, "make me a statue of Venus for the Louvre." "No," he replied, "a man who has seen Christ would commit sacrilege if he should employ his art in the carving of a pagan goddess. My art is henceforth a consecrated thing." So for the man who feels the near presence of God to commit sin would be more than a sacrilege. He cannot commit sin. It is an armour which no arrow of temptation can pierce. 3. This sense of God is a spur to grand moral and spiritual endeavour. It is an inspiration to work for God and for man. Would that various movements for the reformation of humanity were more worthy of confidence. Free religious associations and ethical societies cherish a noble purpose. They write upon their flag, "Man." They fasten their colours to the staff of their conscience. But the canvas is so heavy their arms cannot raise it; their feet cannot bear it forward; their hands cannot unfurl it to the breeze. Only as God strengthens man for his work for man can man lift up and carry forward the symbols of that work. There is an old legend that "when the Empress Helena went to the Holy Land in search of the true cross, excavations and great researches were made, and at last three crosses were discovered; but how were they to decide which was the true cross? They approached a dead body and laid one cross after another on it, and when the cross of Jesus touched the cold, lifeless form, it at once sprang up in new life and vigour." Upon the dead body of modern society you may lay the cross of moral reform and it does not lift a finger; upon it lay the cross of human purity, and not an eyelash quivereth; upon it lay the cross of Christ, and it springeth to its feet, vigorous and strong. Thus fill man with the sense of the near presence of God, let him see Him who is invisible, and he becomes a crusader of the nineteenth century. So let any one of us, who holds a command of God for the deliverance of any soul from the pursuers of fiery and maddened passions, from its own blind and blinding sin, to the gateway of a perfect life, let each one of us so command, and each is so commissioned, possess a sense of God's presence as did he who saw Him who was invisible: thus we may lead that soul to the gateway of a perfect life. (*C. F. Thwing.*) *Seeing the invisible God*:—I. The invisibility of God. This is one of the attributes of the Divine Being; it is usually called, and properly, one of the negative attributes of God. The averment is that He is not something. Unchangeableness, unsearchableness, irresistibleness, invisibility, are all negative attributes of God. God is invisible. We have not many Scriptures which teach this expressly and formally, but those which teach it are so clear and strong, and there are so many others which imply and involve it, that there cannot be the doubt of a

moment what the doctrine of Scripture is (Job xxiii. 8, 9; Deut. iv. 12, 15; 1 Tim. vi. 16; John i. 18). The same truth is implied when our Saviour teaches that "God is a Spirit." He could not be a Spirit in the sense meant if He had dwelt from eternity in any material form, or if there were any material form necessary to His existence; and if God were not a Spirit, invisible, He would not be perfect. He is a portion so—He would not be a portion else! What I can see can never be a portion to my immortal soul; a spiritual substance requires a spiritual portion; the child-spirits need the Father of spirits. It is the grand discovery of the Scriptures, and the good message of salvation, that God only is enough for man. Spirit for spirit—Creator for creature—the Invisible for the invisible. We have never seen our own souls, we shall never see their portion. We feel, although we do not see ourselves, and in our best moments rejoice with great joy in our own existence! We feel in our spiritual sense—although we do not see—our God, and in our best moments we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, that He is our all-sufficient, unchanging, everlasting portion. II. THE SEEING OF THE INVISIBLE GOD. When it is said of Moses that "he endured as seeing," the meaning is, not that he acted as if he could see Him, well knowing all the while that he could not, for that would be a mental fiction. The meaning is that he really did see God by soul sight, or, as we say, by faith. He believed in His actual presence in the world, in human life, in human affairs. In particular, he believed that He would be with him, according to His express promise, to cheer his heart, to guide his way, and to confirm his work to the end. The meaning is not only that he believed in God's presence with him, but that he relied on His strength. God's presence was to him an actual power on which he could lean. Thus he endured to the end. By just such seeing of the invisible God are we to endure through our life, and to triumph at last. 1. We shall endure when all that is visible threatens. None of us, perhaps, is so important as to have to hope for the smiles, or "fear the wrath" of a king; but wrath may be out against us for all that, and it may take many forms. It may take the form of strong injustice, or of petty annoyance; of irritating persecution, or of ungenerous rivalry; of bitterness and evil-speaking, or it may spring from honest misjudgments. When life thus assumes a threatening aspect, it is well to be able to flee to the shadow of this great rock. 2. We shall endure when all that is visible allures. Moses defied the wrath of the king, but I do not know if that was his greatest trial and his greatest triumph. Egypt had its allurements as well as its terrors. Honour! Wealth! Pleasure! Those were the three chief sirens who wished to sing the man away from his best convictions; away from the high, although hard, path of duty. They sang, and he listened—and went away while he listened—from Egypt where they were singing, to the wilderness where he was safe, and where they could be heard no more. Those old sirens are singing still! Like Jezebel they paint their faces so as to seem young. They look out of the windows of palaces, and shops, and pleasure-houses, and sing to the guests, and travellers, and passers-by! Are you listening to the song? Are you running into the net? You will unless you can "endure as seeing Him who is invisible." That will change all! That will reveal something of the haggard misery which lies underneath the paint and glitter of the siren faces! That will make the lust of the flesh—pleasure, the lust of the eyes—wealth, and the pride of life—honour, seem as poor as they are. Then the allurement of evil things is strong sometimes just in proportion to the smallness of the evil that is in them. If the evil were more, the allurement would be less. As of old, the border line between different countries was the scene of frequent strife; the battle raging now here, now there, but never far from the border; so the border line between the right and wrong of actual life is the place where consciences are tested, where wills are put to the strain, where hearts long, and sigh, and tremble; where the battle of the good and evil powers is hottest, and where victory easily sways from side to side! But victory never passes from the soldier who endures and fights as seeing Him who is invisible; and, on the other hand, never sits on the plume of any one who does not see Him. 3. We shall endure when everything visible decays, changes, passes away. With Him if we live, with Him we shall die, and to Him in His fuller presence ascend; for "when flesh and heart fail, God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever." (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *The sight of the Invisible the true inspiration of human life*:—1. It furnishes the necessary antidote and correction of sense. Ten to one the beggar who was at your door last winter begging for bread will be there again this winter. And yet, between these two winters, there have been many possibilities within the reach of the humblest.

These possibilities came with the spring, with the May-flowers in these shapes: first, of reduced necessities; secondly, of opportunity for working. Why, then, will the beggar of last winter be the beggar of this winter? What causes this continuity of incapableness? The answer is, "These poor creatures live without forethought." Through the long summer months they lie in the sun as though there never was to be another winter. But we need not stay in this low region of illustration. Up above the truth is still the same. Nothing differentiates men so much as this power to see the invisible. Call it what you will, genius, long-headedness, foresight, there is such a quality in human nature; and there is its opposite, short-sightedness, and inability to pierce the future by a single shaft of thought or purpose. And men lose through this latter, and they win by the former. And as it is in the material, so is it in the moral realm. Here, also, the absorbing power of sense, the inability or the failure to take hold on the future, is man's greatest danger. Thousands all around us are living altogether forgetful, just as though there was no such thing as death or judgment or heaven or hell; and for no other reason than because these things are in the future. And this, which is the ruin of so many, is the danger of us all. The tendency of each one of us is to forget the great future in the little present, to live for this world alone. Hence it happens that we so often succumb to temptation. Such being our danger, from whence shall come our safety? With this dangerous tendency, whither shall we look for a corrective as strong and as constant as is our perilous inertia? The text says, To the Invisible. The record of those who have conquered says, To the Invisible. Reason says, To the Invisible. We must come to take hold of unseen reality. We must come to walk by faith, to steer our lives by the polestar of God's infinite throne. And this will save us. Thinking of coming death, we shall prepare to meet it. Living as before God, we shall live unto God. In a word, seeing Him who is invisible, we shall endure as Moses endured, and conquer as Moses conquered. But we need more than remembrance, more than forethought here. 2. We need besides knowledge, motive; besides light, we must have incentive. And this, again, comes from seeing the Invisible. The same paradox here is the law. I suppose the strongest of all cases. Proffered success as brilliant as may be, abundant wealth, the ambition of your manhood, honour so great that the sight of it dazzles, pleasure so sweet that it sets the blood on fire. And all this yours, if only you are willing to lay aside your integrity. What is your safety in such a crisis? It is a glance upward to the invisible God. It is to hear Him as He says unto you, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" This will save you. It will make you strong to endure. But the human life needs more than knowledge, more than motive even. 3. It also needs encouragement, that encouragement which brings peace and makes duty a joy. This also comes from seeing Him who is invisible. In the hour of its danger the human heart needs to hear a voice saying unto it, "Be of good cheer: victory waits for you, and the crown is ready." I know that men perish for lack of understanding. I remember that human lives perish for lack of motive. But even more perish for lack of sympathy in the hours which make up the crisis of their immortality. Over many a one who has thus gone down in this world might be written this epitaph, "I looked around me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul." But if, at such a time, the endangered ones could only have looked upon the Invisible. If they could have looked into a realm of purity. If they could have seen the invisible God, and by His side the Son who overcame through the Cross. This sight would have saved them. Sympathetic chords would have reached from the Eternal Throne to their failing faith and weakening hope, and along these would have flashed these words of encouragement and strength, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne." 4. I must also add, that this sight of the invisible One must be the true inspiration, because of the immortality of human life. It isn't here that we reap any more than the first-fruits of our harvest. No! Ours is the endowment of an endless life, and the stake with us is not time, but eternity. It must be, therefore, that we need, that we cannot do without, the inspiration which comes from the unseen realm—from the invisible God. We, who are going unto God, cannot safely guide our lives save by the sight of God. Inferential truths. (1) A warning to the life of sense. While God lives and rules no creature life can afford to ignore Him. While human life continues to be assaulted by the world, the flesh, and the devil, it is not possible to endure, save by a sight of Him who is invisible. While shoals and rocks threaten, no man can steer safely over the sea of life, unless he daily takes his observation in the light which falls from the throne of the

invisible God. (2) How reasonable is that life of which faith is the dominant principle! Is it not true that death is to confer upon us citizenship in the invisible world? What, then, more reasonable than that we should anticipate and prepare for this our sublime majority? Is there not a living and reigning God upon the infinite throne? And shall we not look upward? (*S. S. Mitchell, D.D.*) *The power of the invisible presence:*—What is the moral value of a biography? There is nothing more likely to make the narrative impressive to us than to close the book and spend some time in meditating on the means by which the subject of the life became great. Here, we say, is a man who has attained; how did he attain? what was the mental method by which he became strong and successful? what were the steps by which he reached that elevated seat of power? I am not going to review the life of Moses, but to point to the great principle of his actions, in the life, passed in the loving presence of the unseen God. I. And first, the word "INVISIBLE." Consider the power of invisible facts. Why should it be thought "a thing incredible" to any mind that the Invisible should exercise imperial dominion over us? The sceptic, who refuses his credence to the great realities of faith, is a most unreasonable man. Why, the Invisible rules us all. You cannot but have noticed how small a portion of the universe the eye of the senses sees. If we only believed in the world of the Materialist, how little we should behold! But there is a power by which I am able to live in or with the absent, the distant, and the dead; and even in the unknown. If the sceptic replies to me, that all this is the mere vividness of the cultured and informed fancy, I should still ask him again, what is fancy itself but the lowest form of moral sympathy, of which imagination and affection are the highest regions and noblest moods? But it is so in all things. The Invisible is our life. As Turgot said of Columbus, "He was not so great because he discovered America, as because he set sail in the faith that there was such a continent to discover." His faith made him great: "he went out, not knowing whither he went." Light, which makes all things clear, is to us invisible. And whether colour is a quality in bodies, or merely an appearance imparted to bodies, is, and must remain to me a matter of doubt. We breathe air; it is to us a life-giving existence; but who ever saw it? II. Thus, from the consideration of that which is invisible, we come to "HIM who is invisible"; and I remark now that this is the great foundation of moral character, and that God is the sustainer of all great minds; that all great minds are powerful to perform as they are absorbed by the idea of God. I say the idea of God; but I do not mean by that the mere cold abstraction of the metaphysical law, but that vast thought which is embodied in the text as a real apprehension of an infinite personality—"the enduring as seeing Him who is invisible." There is a world of invisible beings around me; the presence of such invisible beings has been recognised by illustrious and open souls in all ages, as a grand motive to action and to emulation. The invisible dead salute us and inspire us in all our selectest hours; they walk by us in the twilight, in solitude; they come to us in moods of that holy sorrow which calms and chastens, when the grief ceases to be a passion, and becomes a quiet power; they animate—they sustain. Invisible beings tempt us. It is awful when we are brought into their centre. But, ah! how the thought rises and intensifies when it is no longer merely the image of the invisible dead, but the invisible God! Ah! what a state of heart and mind is that in which God is beheld everywhere "stilling the noise of the waves, and the tumults of the people"; making "the outgoings of the morning and the evening to rejoice"; when the pomp and the majesty of the rolling clouds and the swell and deep organ-tone of the winds are something more than the mere phantasmal gleams and tones playing round some central law; when they all are beheld as what in truth they are—ideas of the infinite but invisible God; and when the spirit passes through them all, as through the curtain spread round His pavilion, it bows before the innermost glory of the Shekinah, not content to realise merely "the clouds which are the dust of His feet," without the burst of praise to our common Father—"the Lord, the Lord of Hosts is His name." III. Now I will ask you if you think it possible that this state of existence, in the presence of the Eternal Reality of the universe, can be WITHOUT IMPARTING TO THE WHOLE CHARACTER AND BEARING OF THE BELIEVERS AN ERECTNESS AND DIGNITY UNKNOWN TO THOSE TO WHOM SUCH POWER IS NOT PRESENT. Man is only great as he stands humbly but most believingly in the presence of God; and then he becomes great indeed. Oh! what grandeur invests human action—what royalty impels and crowns human passion—what sublimity wings the human conception—what a Divine fire burns through the human world, where, in everything, the acting, speaking man beholds "Him who is invisible"

standing in his path! And oh, how mean, too, is everything divorced from God! "There is nothing great," said the greatest preacher of France, "there is nothing great but God!" True; but relationship to Him imparts something of His greatness to the relationship, and hallows it with the grandeur and benignant beauty of His own character. And God, who knows so well the necessities of our human nature, and that even faith itself needs some help from sight to intensify and focalise its vision, has condescended to make Christ the voice and the shape of that which must have been, but for Him, an eternal silence. Hence, since Christ came to the world, there has been given a dignity, a freedom, an elasticity and spring to the attemptings and efforts of the human mind unknown before. It is my belief that all things languish as they are removed from the sensible presence of "Him who is invisible." This is greatness—residence beneath the conscious love and smile of the Invisible. This makes prayer a reality and a power. This it is that sheds a sanctity and a charm over the homeliness and commonplace o daily life. I walk with "Him who is invisible." He is with me in Cheapside and on the Exchange; He is with me in the field, and in the chamber; He is with me in the library and the garden. "Thou God seest me." "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" IV. "He ENDURED as seeing Him who is invisible!" That which I have set before you as the true crown of character—that life in the presence of an invisible God and Saviour—has been the life, and power, and lustre of the Church in all ages, and of all the men of the Church. Wonderful in all ages has been the missionary's intrepidity and zeal, the martyr's abandonment, and the hero's energy. But they "endured as seeing Him who is invisible." "He endured as seeing Him who is invisible!" Here is greatness! here is heroism! And yet this is the idea so ridiculed. "What do you believe?" a celebrated writer makes one of his heroes inquire; and the reply was, "I believe in that," stamping his foot on the solid earth. Oh, it is a sorry world if man can only believe in that, only in that which is beneath him; for then all must be dead—the whole world may go in mourning; no chivalry, no honour, no trust between man and man; and none between man and God. Nay, you will have no fact and no science if you attempt to blot the Invisible from life. Oh, take care of the Invisible! oh, cleave to the Invisible! it sits at either extreme of our character; both holy and unholy passions are far removed from the calm world of prudence. (*E. P. Hood.*)

As seeing God:—Take notice particularly that it is said, "He endured," not because he saw, but "as seeing Him who is invisible." No one sees God, no one ever has seen Him, in this life. God, to everybody, is but an idea—an idea which, with our ignorant minds, we fashion and project into some external form. The mode of forming this idea is that which makes the difference between savage and semi-civilised or civilised men. The stage of one's development is shown by the form of the idea which he works out. Some do it by one method, and some by another. Some do it with base materials, representing the passions of men, and some with higher materials, representing men's higher faculties—representing the true Christian notion of God and His magisterial and paternal character. Paternity is the highest conception that the human mind is capable of forming. Under the elements of Divine paternity, justice and power and wisdom rank themselves subordinate, love being the highest quality, and of that quality paternal love being the highest form. This idea is composite and constructive. In connection with it we have a sense of personality. If we are to have a God who is of use to us, He must be a person; for though there may be some imaginative men who can conceive of a pantheistic God, yet personality is indispensable to any practical use of that conception. The usefulness to us of the Divine attributes will depend upon what we have been accustomed to ascribe to the highest good. First, we form a notion of a person. Then we gather around that person certain attributes. We then give to these a function, or a scope of government. Then we add to all a disposition. And though these are based upon wise instruction, yet in the process of using them each man will colour and shape by his own nature and experience what that Being is who is made up of attributes, who has functions, and who bears a disposition. It was in the presence of such thoughts of God as these—thoughts of His vastness, of His power, of His endurance from age to age, of the smallness of the world, of its people, and of their forces in His sight, and of His tenderness, His love, and His sacrifice for them; it was in the presence of such thoughts as these that Moses dwelt; and the effect was, that by his daily companionship with such a Being, and by the legitimate influence of a constant contemplation of His character, he was clothed with a power such as has been seldom vouchsafed to

man, and never probably in administrative realms; and the effect upon his mind, doubtless, would be to create a wholesome fear of God as the supereminent Magistrate, so that he would maintain in himself caution as to the use of the power which was put into his hands. So, too, a strong trust was begotten in him. The sense of God present in His own world; the faith that things are not in the hands of chance, but are under an intelligent Providence that controls them, are essential elements of support in the affairs of kingdoms and of nations; and Moses, who had a people that would have vexed his nature to death if he had not had some such support, looked up to the Providence in which inheres the Divine nature; and day by day he felt that God was his counsel, his strength, his companion, his trust. Then there was a companionship of love, and of worship as well; but that which I wish more especially developed of the influences that made Moses what he was, is the measurement which was furnished to him by the nature, the government, the existence of God. Men look around and say, "If I were such a one it would not be difficult for me to be a saint; if I were relieved from the million grinding necessities of poverty, it would not be difficult for me to live in a spirit of benevolence; if I could put down my rivals, and triumph over my enemies, I would not be envious"; but a multitude of fortuitous elements come in and determine what men are, and what right they have to happiness; and there ought to be for every man such a standard that the world shall not have power over him, and that he can say, "Years, and days, and hours; the seasons—winter, spring, summer, and autumn—they are my servants. I extract that of good which they bring to me, and I reject the imperiousness by which they attempt to govern me." This is what every man should say in himself—"I am a son of God; I live as seeing Him who is invisible; and I take God as the standard by which to measure myself, my success, and my surroundings. Whatever life has for me of joy or sorrow, that I measure by this standard, and say, "I am adequate to every emergency. I am never surprised. I am not taken captive. I am cast down, but not destroyed." We live here for what there is in the other life. We are perpetually meeting the events in this life as though they were the only events that are to befall us, whereas they are merely auxiliary to the real purpose for which every man lives. We do not live here to rear families; we do not live here to enjoy riches simply, though we take these on the way to the realm beyond. We come to our home in heaven through the passage of death, every one of us; and we live for that which is invisible. In the other sphere, our manhood is being taken. We sit here, but the colours which make the portrait dispose themselves beyond—in the other land. There the true likeness and lineaments of every man's soul are projected. Who are the great men? They have as often sat on dungeon floors as upon the throne of dominion. Who are the persons of prosperity? They have as often been found in the homes of poverty as in the mansions of the rich. Who are the happy men? Not they who succeed in the things which men seek, but those who by unsuccesses succeed—those who by disappointment in outward things are forced upon that God, that manhood, and that sense of immortality in which all true manly success lies. Who are they that are blest? They that mourn. Who are they that have power? They who are empty, that the excellency of their power may be of God and not of men. Who are they that are instructed of God? Those that are weak—weak of the flesh; weak in the mere secular elements of power, but strong in the invisible elements of hope, and of faith, and of God-likeness. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Enduring as seeing the invisible One:*—I. WHAT IS THIS VIRTUAL SEEING OF HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE? Jesus says of him that loveth Him, "I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him." How? asks Thomas. "If a man love Me, he will keep My words," is the reply. So, while the world sees Me no more, ye see Me; the Holy Ghost teaching you all things, and bringing all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you; all My sayings which you lovingly keep. May not this conversation throw some light upon the inquiry—What is this seeing? Moses seeing, as it were, or feeling as if he saw, Him who is invisible? One thing, at all events, is very clear. The object of it is a real and living person. And it is a person who has entered into personal dealing with Moses: a person whom Moses personally knows; whose personal acquaintance Moses has made. Of course, it is but few of those who walk with God who have been thus favoured. They were necessarily few from the first. The general body of the Lord's people must be content to take what He says at second hand, from the reports of patriarchs and prophets; or by hereditary tradition; by psalms and songs; or ultimately by the surer method of trans-

mission in written documents and printed books. If that is my position, how am I to be as one seeing Him who is invisible? Nay, there is really no practical difference here. It is the same exercise of faith in both cases. In both cases alike and equally there is an "as if," or "as it were"; not literal seeing, but "as" seeing. But the "as if," or "as it were," is not pure fiction or fancy in either case. A real fact underlies and upholds it. The actual, present personality apprehended and identified through speech, is not ideal, but real. It is altogether matter of faith to both of us. It is faith coming by hearing, and growing into a sort of sight. The incarnation, issuing in the resurrection and ascension, facilitates this exercise of faith. It must have done so in the case of those who saw the Lord in the body. They might well feel, and live ever after, as if still seeing Him who had become invisible. But Paul had no such advantage, any more than Moses had. He saw the risen Lord; but only according to the ancient fashion, in the blaze of the Shechinah glory, and in visions by night. Even that amount of actual seeing you have not. There are, however, considerations which may counterbalance this disadvantage; such as these three—1. Was ever man portrayed so graphically as Jesus is in those wonderful biographies of the four Gospels; the joint productions of the Holy Ghost and the evangelists; Divinely inspired, and yet so intensely and livingly human? His frame and features, what He was like as to His outer man, His gait and carriage, you have no means of guessing. But otherwise you have Him all before you. 2. You have the full benefit of sharing with them in that better seeing of their Master which they obtained when His own promise was fulfilled, and on His departure the other Comforter came. They themselves impart to you all that they were then taught as to the high and deep meanings, and the manifold bearings on the character and government of God, of that human history, that human experience, which, while they were eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of it, was in many particulars so incomprehensible. 3. For it is not to be overlooked that the same Spirit who taught and moved them to realise the Lord's presence as if they still both heard and saw Him, is dwelling and working in you. To you, as to them, He testifies of Christ, taking of what is His and showing it to you. You gaze on His face, you lean on His bosom, you whisper in His ear, as John the beloved did at the supper. You rest and rejoice, as seeing Him who is invisible. II. THIS JOY OF THE LORD IS YOUR STRENGTH. Not only at the communion table do you rest, but in the field of toil or of battle you endure, as seeing Him who is invisible. So Christ Himself, the man Christ Jesus, endured. The secret of His endurance was, that with the eye of faith He always saw the Father. And now He says to you, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," and is therefore in the very same position in which I was when I endured as seeing the unseen Father. For when the Holy Spirit opens the eye of your faith, it is not I alone who will manifest Myself to you, but the Father also. What a source of strength! There is a triple rope to hold you fast and firm! The Holy Ghost shows you Christ; Christ shows you the Father! The Holy Ghost strengthens you to endure as seeing the unseen Saviour, even as He strengthened Him to endure as seeing the unseen Father! It is in the felt and realised presence of a Divine person, unseen in one sense, but in another virtually and vividly seen, that your strength to endure lies. And He is to be seen by you, not merely as an object of contemplation in a leisure hour, but as, in the time of danger, standing beside you; at your right hand; holding you up; speaking to you; conversing with you; calling you by name, and bidding you be strong and of a good courage. The Lord would have you to endure, as seeing Him thus by faith, faith coming to be all but sight, in every aspect of His relation to you. As your Surety, to answer for you, He would have you to see Him, though invisible, at your right hand. Thus only you can endure, when you have to stand either before God or before man. You have to stand before God. A sense of sin unnerves you. But endure as seeing Him who is invisible. See him near you, sprinkling you with His own blood; clothing you with His own righteousness; strengthening you by His own Spirit; and assuring you that He is here to answer for you in the judgment. Standing again before your fellow-men, to testify and plead; to defend yourself, to commend Christ, to persuade them; you are disconcerted. How weak are you, and how vacillating! How slow of speech and full of misgivings! If they knew all, how might they turn upon you with the taunt, "Physician, heal thyself!" You feel as if you could not confront or face them. But still endure, as seeing beside you Him who is invisible. He knows all. And knowing all, He will not be ashamed of you

before the angels, if you are not ashamed of Him before men. As your Lord and Master, your Guide and Example, He would have you to endure as seeing Him who is invisible. To endure—what? Whatever He may appoint; whatever trial of your faith or patience or love; whatever sacrifice of self for God or for man. To endure—how? As seeing Him who is invisible; for He tells you how He, in your circumstances, would have endured; and how He can and will make you endure, as He would have endured, in the like case, Himself. (*R. S. Candlish, D.D.*) *Faith the secret of endurance*:—I. THE GRACE OF SPIRITUAL ENDURANCE. 1. Endurance is strength. 2. Endurance contains the element of continuance. 3. Endurance implies the idea of passivity. II. ENDURANCE POSSIBLE THROUGH SEEING HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE. Naturally Moses was timid; there are Scripture hints of that. What made the change? A realisation of God. When God is real to us we shall endure. 1. Loneliness is endurable by a sight of God's sympathy. 2. Opposition is endurable by a sight of God's presence. 3. Temptation is endurable by a sight of God's majesty. 4. Hardship is endurable by the sight of God's love. III. HE WHO IS INVISIBLE SEEN BY FAITH. 1. Reverent contemplation of God creates faith. 2. Personal intercourse with God feeds faith. 3. A good conscience toward God keeps faith unveiled. (*C. New.*) *Seeing the Invisible*:—In speaking of the missionaries' reception by one of the African tribes, Dr. Livingstone once reported to this effect: "They listen with some attention to our discourse, but when we kneel down to pray, to what appears to them to be nothing, our posture and our praying appear to them to be so ridiculous that they burst out into laughter." *The face of God*:—Faber asks, with mingled beauty and force, "What is it that will make us real?" and answers, "The face of God will do it." (*J. Clifford, D.D.*) *General Gordon's sense of God's presence*:—I knew Gordon. More than in any one, you felt when you were with him that there was One always closer to him than any one with him, in whose immediate presence he always lived. This was the secret of his life. (*Florence Nightingale.*) *The thought of God ennobles life*:—"Why carve you so carefully the tresses at the back of this statue's head?" asked one of an ancient sculptor. "The statue will be placed high up on the temple wall, and with its back to the wall, and none will ever see it." "But God will see it," was the noble answer. It was the spirit of sacrifice. It was the spirit which in this (Westminster) Abbey made the Gothic sculptor carve so elaborately the feathers on the wings of the angels who swing the banderoles in the spandrels of the transept as he carved the sweet and calm faces which were to be on the level of the eye. (*F. W. Farrar, D.D.*) *Seeing God*:—He who, with the confiding disposition of an affectionate child, sets God always before him, goes on easily; not so easily he who regards Him only as a stern Lawgiver and Judge. A traveller over the Alps does not find it needful to be incessantly contemplating the precipices or perils he sees around him; he keeps his eye upon the track at his feet, and proceeds in safety. (*A. J. Bengel.*)

Ver. 28. **Kept the Passover.**—*Faith and Mystery*:—There is scarcely one revelation of God in the Bible which does not involve mystery—which does not try, therefore, severely try, the submissiveness of our faith. Notoriously is this the case with that revelation which was typified by the Passover. What connection, man asks, can be conceived of, between the Saviour's crucifixion and the absolution of the sinner? What link of intelligible union can exist between the shedding of the life-blood of the Holy and sinless One, and the remission of the long and deep debt of the world's, or of so much as one man's, transgressions? And a thousand suppositions have been hazarded by human speculation, of which the aim and object is to lighten the weight of this doctrine—to make it less of a submission to receive it, by taking out of it the unexpectedness and the peculiarity. Thus we seek to make fewer and to make easier the submissions of faith—not by assuring ourselves more thoroughly of the Divinity of Him who speaks with us—not by a more implicit reliance upon the wisdom, truth, and love of Him who thus, and not otherwise, sends us salvation—but, by offering modifications which may palliate and dilute the difficulty, and in the same degree take from the revelation itself its very salt and life and virtue. There is something of the same trial in every ordinance of worship. What real connection can be dreamed of, we might ask, between the kneeling, elsewhere or here, on a little spot of earth, to think a few thoughts, to speak a few words, alone by myself, or in the congregation—and the influx of grace, or the supply of strength, or the ministry of consolation—not to mention any special outward or bodily relief—which those thoughts have desired,

or which those words have asked, of an invisible God in a far-off heaven? The only answer is that which satisfied the man of faith here commemorated—faith, assured of the command, argues not, nor gainsays, "Hath He said, and shall He not do it?" is a self-answering question, when God is the subject. "By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood," and the destroyer "passed over" the houses upon which the sign of faith was. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Faith in observance of ordinances:*—By Moses' example we are encouraged—1. To obedience in the right use of God's signs. 2. To confidence that God's ends shall be obtained in the use of those instituted signs, and that the ordinances shall be effectual unto the ends for which God hath appointed them. Therefore waiving all other points, I shall insist upon this one alone. Doct.: That rightly to celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's supper, there is great need of the vigorous and lively work and exercise of faith. First, in general, whoever would have any commerce with God must have some faith. He must believe steadfastly those two primitive and supreme truths, God's being and bounty, His essence and His providence; that there is a God, and that it is not in vain to serve God. Secondly, as this faith is necessary to religion in general, and all that respect we show to God, so all the duties of worship must be gone about in faith and obedience, otherwise they are not acceptable to God, for God accepts of nothing but what He hath appointed and instituted. Thirdly, there are special reasons why the work and exercise of faith is required in the use of these sacramental signs. I have hitherto showed you the necessity and use of faith to all acts of religion in the general, now I shall show it more particularly as to sacraments. There is faith in prayer, and faith in the Word, but especially in the use of the sacraments; and here they have a fourfold use. 1. To interpret the signs according to the use and end for which they were appointed, and to discern the mysteries represented thereby, namely, that God doth as effectually give Christ to the soul as He doth give bread and wine to the body; or, to use the apostle's phrase, to help us "to discern the Lord's body," that the eye may affect the heart (1 Cor. xi. 25). It is such a discerning as stirs up suitable affections, a holy joy, and a delightful converse with Him. It is such a discerning as is not opposite to ignorance, but to irreverence and slightness; when a man doth not consider what he is about, he hath no true sight and sense of Christ in the duty. 2. Faith is necessary, that we may not be offended at the mean and despicable appearance in the sacraments. Here are excellent mysteries, veiled under the simplicity of a few outward rites that make no fair show in the flesh. 3. The nature of these signs is to excite and confirm faith. There are three uses of signs—to represent, to put in remembrance, and to confirm; and so signs are either significative, commemorative, or confirming and assuring. Now, since there are several sorts of signs, unto which of these shall we refer the sacraments? That must be determined by God's institution; for mark, the sacraments are not natural signs, as smoke is a sign of fire, but instituted signs; bread doth not naturally signify the body of Christ, or wine the blood of Christ, but only by institution. Now, in all instituted signs we must look to the author and the end. Instituted signs in religion can have no author but God, therefore no creature can institute a sacrament, because they cannot give the grace that is signified thereby, nor bind God to give that grace by a sign of their own devising. But now to what end hath God instituted these signs? whether to signify or to admonish, or to certify and assure? I answer, In some sense for all these ends, but chiefly the latter. 4. There is this peculiar to sacraments above other duties, that they imply a closer application. First, What to do before the supper. 1. Before we come to remember Christ, we must first consider ourselves, and reflect upon our own state. 2. For the manner in which you ought to come. (1) Come judging and condemning yourselves, and humbled under the sense of your own vileness and unworthiness, that Jesus Christ may be more sweet to you. (2) They must come with hunger and thirst after sacramental benefits, the comforts and saving graces of the Spirit. God invites such, whatever discouragements they have upon them (Isa. lv. 1). (3) They are to bewail their unbelief, and to make what application of Christ they can; when they cannot apply Christ to themselves, they must apply themselves to Christ. They must go to Christ with that faith they have, and say (Mark ix. 24). (4) Renew thy consecration, and consent to surrender and give up thyself to the tuition and service of Christ; for the more we mind our duty the more ready is God to prepare our comfort for us. Secondly, What we are to do in the supper of the Lord. Oh, look that you excite and stir up faith! It is not enough to have it, but it must be exercised; ay, and that in a lively and

vigorous manner (Cant. i. 12). There is a twofold faith to be exercised—a faith that respects the whole duty, and a faith that is more specially terminated on the person of Christ. Thirdly, What we are to do after the Lord's Supper. Examine what exercise and increase of faith there hath been. Have I acted faith in this duty? How shall I know it? If you have in the acting of faith been waiting upon God for the blessings of the institution, the effects will show it. The effects are these—1. It will stir up joy and thankfulness; you will find it will increase both (Acts viii. 39). 2. It will produce a longing to meet with God another time, that we may be thus kindly refreshed, and have another good meal from God, and be feasted in His house (Psa. lxiii. 2). 3. There will be resolution to serve the Lord the more faithfully, and walk with Him in all the ways of holiness. You have been with God, and you go aside and say (Psa. cxvi. 12–14). 4. For the present the heart should be more warm and serious, and all those things omitted, for a time at least, which rather savour of the flesh than of the spirit, which, though they do not directly belong to the flesh, yet they border on it. And those things will be omitted which do not well agree with the lively sense and fervour of godliness, which should be stirred up in us in an action so important. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Faith securing deliverance from the destroyer*:—I. THE HISTORICAL FACTS CONNECTED WITH THE PASSOVER. 1. The hopeless bondage of the people (Exod. x. 28). 2. The Divine method of deliverance. 3. This method a singular type of Christian redemption. II. THE FAITH BY WHICH MOSES KEPT THE PASSOVER. 1. Faith was manifested in believing that the judgment was about to come. 2. Faith was manifested in expecting deliverance through the simple means God appointed. 3. Faith was manifested in the assurance that this would be the means of their deliverance from Egypt. III. THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THIS FAITH AND THAT NECESSARY FOR SPIRITUAL REDEMPTION. 1. The requirements of faith in each case are similar. 2. The ground of faith in each case is the Word of God. 3. The difficulty of faith in each case is the mystery of the method. 4. The result of faith in each case is a new and blessed life. (*C. New.*) *The best security against the day of wrath*:—I. SHOW WHAT IS THAT BELIEVING MANAGEMENT OF THE SACRAMENT OF CHRIST'S BODY AND BLOOD, WHICH IS THE BEST SECURITY FOR A SINNER AGAINST THE DAY OF WRATH. We will be helped to a view of this by considering the ordinance pointed at in the text. 1. The Christian and communicant that would manage this ordinance so as he may be secured against the day of wrath, must have his bunch of hyssop ready; that is, he must have faith, by which alone that blood can be sprinkled on the soul. 2. He must believe his own desert of wrath, that he himself deserves to fall amongst them that fall. 3. He must, with an eye of faith, discern the sacrifice and the virtue of it, seeing that in the ordinance which a carnal eye cannot. And here faith will say two things—(1) Faith will look in through the ordinance, and seeing Christ in it, will say, "There is a hiding-place from wrath" (John i. 29). (2) Faith will look more narrowly yet, even through the hiding-place itself; and where the fearful unbeliever sees many faults the believer will see none, but say, "He is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii. 25). In a word, he will believe—(*a*) That Christ is the appointed Refuge against wrath; and—(*b*) That He is a safe Refuge, and that there is no other. 4. He must dip his bunch of hyssop in the bason where the blood of the Lamb is. Christ is our Paschal Lamb (1 Cor. v. 7); the covenant is the bason wherein the blood of the Lamb is poured (Heb. xiii. 20), and the cup the New Testament. The believing communicant will lay hold on the covenant made by sacrifice, that he may be safe in the day of wrath (Psa. l. 3–5). 5. He must sprinkle this blood, make an effusion of it; apply it by faith, and receive the atonement. 6. He must sprinkle it on the lintel and side-posts, only not on the threshold. Look with an eye of faith on it as precious blood, and sprinkle it over your whole man, above you, on every side; only not under your feet. Despise it not (Heb. x. 29). 7. He must not sprinkle it only on the back of the door, but on the outside, the lintel and side-posts, that the angel may see it. The Lord is coming to call the land to a sad account, and to examine every one. On with your mark this day, on your foreheads. 8. He must feed on the body and blood of Christ. (1) On a whole Christ—Christ in all His offices. (2) With the bitter herbs of repentance and sorrow for sin. (3) Ye must eat in a departing posture; turning your backs on the world and your lusts, and setting your face stedfastly to Immanuel's land. II. SHOW WHAT SECURITY THIS WILL BE AGAINST THE DAY OF WRATH. 1. Thus ye will be secured from eternal wrath. 2. In a day of wrath upon the land; though the storm blow

never so hard, ye shall have a manifold security. Though ye must not promise yourselves security from trouble, yet—(1) Ye shall be kept from mixing with the generation under God's wrath. Build ye the partition-wall, and God will build the protection-wall (Psa. xii. 7). (2) "It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger" (Zeph. ii. 3). (3) Ye shall not be straitened for provision, though it be a scarce time (Psa. cxlii. 5). (4) Though the weight of common calamity should bruise you, yea, and crush you, "there shall no evil touch you" (Job v. 19). (*a*) No evil that is an only evil; mercy shall always be predominant in thy cup. (*b*) The evil shall be taken out of the evils that come on thee. (*c*) The evils that may come on thee shall be turned to good (Rom. viii. 28). III. CONFIRM THE DOCTRINE. 1. He that thus manageth this ordinance, unites with Christ, the Peace-maker. Christ is his; his security is in Him, for Christ is in him (Gal. iv. 19), He cannot die. His blood is sprinkled on His people, and that marks them for the Lord. 2. He gets all this sealed under the broad seal of Heaven in this ordinance. Herein the covenant of peace between God and sinners is sealed in both hands; and all these, and much more, are promises and articles of the covenant. And what greater security can ye imagine in this world? IV. THE APPLICATION. Use 1. For information. (1) The slighters of this ordinance are great fools and despisers of their own mercy. 2. The mismanagers of this ordinance are great fools, who sit down at the Lord's table but communicate not believingly. They do the outward work, but it is not in faith; they bring no faith, no discerning, &c.; and so instead of securing themselves against the day of wrath, do mark themselves out for wrath. Use 2. Of exhortation. (1) Ye that are not communicants, ye are in hazard of the day of wrath as well as others, though ye sit not at the table. Will ye by faith embrace the sacrifice exhibited there; receive and sprinkle the blood, the covenant sealed there. (2) Communicants, manage this work so as ye may be secured against the day of wrath. All of you, flee into Christ Jesus as the city of refuge; and make sure work, and lay down your measures for time and for eternity. (*a*) Let not the thoughts of wrath prevail to darken your view of the love of Christ in the gospel and in this ordinance. Particularly assure yourselves if ye be willing to be the Lord's, and take Him for your God, the white side of the cloud is to you; and that though God were to destroy the whole land from off the face of the earth, if there were but one soul who would take shelter in the covenant of peace, he should be welcome. (*b*) As ye give yourselves to the Lord, so give your families too. Take all yours that way, and lay them over on Him, and leave them with Him for the evil day. (*c*) Let it be your main concern to get strength to be carried cleanly through; that ye be not led away with the sins and snares of the evil time, and so fall from your stedfastness. (*d*) Be not peremptory and particular as to what otherwise may be your portion of common calamity; but leave that on the Lord. (*T. Boston, D.D.*)

Ver. 29. **Passed through the Red Sea.**—*Israelites' passage through the Red Sea:*—I. HISTORICALLY, AS A NOTABLE PATTERN OF PROVIDENCE; and so it represents to us two things—1. Unspeakable comfort to all believers in the midst of their extremities. God can disentangle and help them out, for He is with them in all their dangers (Isa. xliii. 2). 2. It speaks terror to the wicked, and such as maliciously pursue the people of God, as the Egyptians did here. II. SACRAMENTALLY (1 Cor. x. 2). 1. They were baptized unto Moses in the sea; that is, Moses' ministry was confirmed by that miracle, and so they were bound to take Moses for their leader and lawgiver; as the miraculous dispensations by Christ assure us that He was sent by God as our Lawgiver, whom we should hear and obey. 2. It is called a baptism, because it signified the difference that God puts between His people and their enemies, or the deliverance of His people from the common destruction of mankind was sealed to them by this passing through the sea, for here God shows that He would put a difference between His people and others. 3. They were baptized in the cloud and sea, because by submitting to God's command they gave up themselves to God's direction and the conduct of His providence by this initiating act, that He should lead them through the wilderness unto Canaan, and the land of promise; as we pass through the waters of baptism, that we may give up ourselves to be led through this world, which answers to the wilderness, to heaven, to Canaan, the land of promise, to be commanded and governed by Him till He brings us to our rest. III. APPLICATIVELY, with respect to the use for which the apostle brings these instances; and it is to confirm believers in the faith of Christ, though they were sorely pushed at, and endured great sufferings for Christ's sake. 1. I shall

show what is the nature of faith, which we may learn from this instance. (1) Faith inclined them to obey God's command, and upon obedience to expect the mercy promised: Go through the Red Sea and you shall be saved. Now this is the common nature of all faith (Psa. cxix. 66). (2) For the command, faith gives courage to obey God in the most difficult cases. (3) For the promise, the Red Sea was as a grave to them in visible appearance, and for a considerable time they walked every moment in the valley of the shadow of death. But this is the nature of faith, it teaches us to depend upon God's promises in the greatest extremities. 2. This instance doth very much commend to us the excellency of this grace of faith, which was so necessary to believers in that age, when they were exposed to such great sufferings. Now, how it is manifested from this instance. (1) God's promise produces its miraculous effect through faith, and not otherwise. God could do it, whether the Israelites did believe, yea or nay; but their faith must concur. (2) Here is another circumstance which commends faith likewise: this faith was weak at first, and mingled with unbelief; for first they murmured (Exod. xiv. 11, 12). Now, when after such great faults God takes it so kindly, we will believe the promise, we should address ourselves to believe in Him. (3) There is yet another circumstance in this instance; all of them were not true believers, but the faith of some made others partakers of the benefits. The ungodly receive many temporal benefits by the faith of others (Acts xxvii. 24). (4) It is commended to us again by the distinction God makes between believers and unbelievers; the one pass through the sea as on dry land, and the other sink as lead, and are drowned. We see our privileges in their destruction. Having laid this foundation, the doctrine is this—that they who, upon the belief of God's promises, do resolve to run all hazards with Christ in the performance of their duty to Him, are only capable of salvation by Him. To evidence this, take these five considerations—First, that true faith receives the promise of God, with the terms and conditions which it requireth. Secondly, that the conditions which God requireth are, partly a belief of the promise, and partly obedience to the command annexed; as the Israelites were to believe that God would carry them safe and sound to the next shore through the Red Sea as upon firm land; and therefore, believing this, they were, upon the authority of God's Word, to resolve to go down into the great deep, and try what God would do for them. Thirdly, these being the conditions, the belief of the promise, and thorough obedience to submit to the appointed way; lest we deceive ourselves with a notion, God loves to try us, to see if we have received the promise sincerely, whether we thoroughly believe His word, and are fully obedient to His commands (James i. 12). Fourthly, because we are fickle creatures, God will have us, by the solemn profession of such a faith, visibly to enter into His covenant. Fifthly, having thus solemnly entered into covenant with God, certainly we are bound to make it good, if we would have benefit by it. For it is not enough to make covenant, but all the promises run to him that keepeth covenant. Salvation is promised not to the undertaker, but the conqueror (Rev. ii. 7). (*T. Manton, D.D.*)

God's care of His Church:—What a standing record is here of God's care of His Church! Does the flood come upon them? Then He will build an ark for them. Have they to go through a wilderness? He will make the wilderness a place of safety and comfort. Are they in want of bread? They shall have manna. Do they come to the Red Sea? He will smite the tongue of the Red Sea. Nothing shall hinder Him from watching over the people, who are dear to Him as the apple of His eye. I. GOD LEADS HIS PEOPLE FROM TIME TO TIME INTO STRAITS FROM WHICH NO POWER OF MAN CAN EXTRICATE THEM. The Word of God declares it, and there are but few of God's saints but have the testimony of it in their own hearts, and all sooner or later shall. Sometimes this is seen in providential difficulties: the Lord brings them into them. True it is that they are sometimes the means of bringing themselves into straits: but then still the Lord is with them. And we see this too, in spiritual things. He does bring His people to be tried in a way that they had no conception of. Thus the young convert frequently cometh, with his low looks, in great sorrow, wondering whether it is possible for one to be a child of God, and to be assaulted as I am by the powers of darkness. He thought all should be smooth before him: he thought all should be plain under his feet. Perhaps he saw so much in Jesus as made him begin his way happy in God; he thought his enemies were all dead upon the sea-shore. And instead he finds himself let and hindered in prayer. But all these things are of an indispensable necessity: I do not learn what worldliness is by seeing it in my brother, but I learn what it is by seeing it in my own soul; I must know an evil before I can loathe it. And therefore be assured,

you that are learning out some of these lessons, painful to your nature, humiliating to your pride, yet be assured of this, we never can know the worth of Jesus but as we try, and never can we know what there is in God but as the creature sinks, and is brought down to his right place before Him. This is God's mercy, this is God's wisdom, this is God's goodness, this is God's faithfulness, that He brings His people from time to time into such straits as no power on earth but Himself can extricate them from. II. BUT OBSERVE NOW THAT THE LORD DELIVERS THEM. And if you ask why He delivers them, it is because He loves them. But for whose sake is it that He loveth His covenant people? Is it for Abraham's sake? No; it is for His Son's sake: "even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you." It is for His own name's sake, and because He had compassion on them, and chose them, and redeemed them, that in time He preserves them; and as long as that blessed Intercessor standeth up at the right hand of God, with your names upon His heart, as long as His great work goeth up with its much incense moment by moment, be assured of this, it is as much impossible for God not to remember His covenant, as it is impossible for God to deny Himself. III. BUT OBSERVE, NOW, THE WAY AND THE MEANS BY WHICH THE LORD DELIVERED IN THIS CASE. It was a way through the Red Sea, typical of Jesus, the way through the Red Sea to Canaan, and that Red Sea typical of the vials of God's wrath, the trials and temptations of the way, the floods of evil by which we are surrounded in this poor dying world; and yet Jesus is the way to the land of Canaan, by which all the Israel of God shall pass, and not one shall perish. Is it not a wondrous way to see an incarnate God standing in the breach? Is it not a wondrous way to see Jesus by His own blood opening a way for His ransomed to pass over, yea, bringing life and immortality to light in His own death? See what it has cost: the blood of God's own Son. See what your sins deserved. See what God's love was. See what Jesus is. And remark, too, that these very waters, that seemed in themselves as if they must destroy, became a wall on the right hand and on the left, became, as it were, a supporter. Oh, is it not a truth to die upon, when a man turning upon his pillow is enabled to look up and rest in Jesus, the Spirit bearing witness with his spirit that he is a child of God, to see the debt completely paid? Do you think anything like this can bear up a dying bed? And now consider the means. It was by faith. Faith, resting upon the promise, went into the sea; presumption, without a promise, rushed into the sea; faith was safe; presumption was destroyed. Here was faith, with its meek look, resting upon the promise going forward. So it is with you, casting yourselves, in your feebleness, in your beggary, in your vileness, simply upon God's promise of life in Christ Jesus to every soul that believeth. Now, as faith enters into the mighty waters, it can see righteousness and peace all in glorious perfection. It can stand up, in the midst of providences, and say, not a drop of wrath is here. Mighty faith! O Lord, increase our faith. (*J. H. Evans, M.A.*) *The Hebrews and Egyptians at the Red Sea: a picture of modern men:*—I. THEY WERE ALL EMBARKED IN A COMMON ENTERPRISE. The pursuit of happiness is universal. Men seek it in different directions: some in sensual indulgence, some in worldly wealth, some in scenes of revelry and debauch, some in spheres of mental culture and religion. All are trying to cross some Red Sea in its pursuit. They will brave the greatest dangers, and venture their all if haply they may find it. II. SOME SUCCEEDED AND SOME FAILED. The vast majority get engulfed in the sea of worldly anxieties, spiritual conflicts, moral remorse, and dread forebodings. III. FAITH EXPLAINS THE SUCCESS OF SOME AND THE FAILURE OF OTHERS. "It is certain," says Southey, "that all the evils in society arise from want of faith in God, and of obedience to His laws; and it is no less certain that, by the prevalence of a lively and efficient belief, they would all be cured." (*Homilist.*) *Faith enabling us to do what seems impossible:*—I. THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH OPPOSED MOSES' FAITH. 1. The task itself to which he was called seemed impossible. 2. The committing so vast a multitude to the strange pathway was full of peril. 3. The unworthiness of the people seemed to forbid Divine help on their behalf. II. THE GROUNDS OF MOSES' FAITH. 1. God's revealed purpose. 2. God's past dealings. 3. God's glory over His enemies. III. THE TRIUMPH OF MOSES' FAITH. 1. Faith can do what is impossible without it. 2. This because it secures the aid of Omnipotence. 3. And this, by simply doing fearlessly what God bids. (*C. New.*) *Of sinners perishing by that which preserves saints:*—1. This comes to pass through man's abuse of the means which God affords for his good. 2. God being provoked by such men turns blessings into curses. This may afford us a good direction about the use of those means which we see to be successful to others. For this end—1. Be sure of thy warrant for the use of

such and such means. These Egyptians had no warrant so to rush into the sea as they did. When the Israelites presumed to go up against the Amalekites and Canaanites without God's warrant, they were discomfited (Numb. xiv. 44, 45). 2. Use warrantable means after a right manner: herein David failed (1 Chron. xv. 13). 3. Aim at a right end. The King of Assyria aimed at a wrong end in the successes that God gave him (Isa. x. 12, 13). 4. In all lawful things seek God's blessing, for it is not means, but God's blessing on means, whereby we come to prosper (Deut. viii. 3; Prov. x. 22). (*W. Gouge.*) *Fear and courage:*—While at war with each other a small company of Thebans under Pleopidas unexpectedly met their Lacedæmonian enemies on the road. One ran and told Pleopidas, "We are fallen into the enemies' hands." "And *why not they*," said he, "*into ours?*" (*Plutarch.*) *Folly of presumption:*—Presumption is a fire-work made up of pride and foolhardiness. It is indeed like a heavy house built upon slender crutches. Like dust, which men throw against the wind, it flies back in their face, and makes them blind. Wise men presume nothing, but hope the best: presumption is hope out of her wits. (*T. Adams.*) *Reckless presumption:*—A noble ship was bearing in to port. It was the evening hour, and too late to enter without a pilot. There were two passages into the harbour: one a dangerous narrow channel, the other a wide and safer one. The captain determined to pilot himself by the narrow passage. A storm was coming up; and the passengers, with fear and consternation, begged him to take the wider channel. He laughed at their cowardice, and swore he would do as he pleased. As the night advanced, the gale increased. Soon arose a cry, "Breakers ahead, breakers ahead!" The captain flew to the wheel; the sails were struck; the wind had the mastery; and the captain found a will that could defy his own. The vessel made a fearful plunge, struck the foreship deep into the sand, to be shattered by the wild waves' pleasure. Few survived the terrors of that fearful night; but among the dead thrown up by the rising tide was the body of the wilful and presumptuous captain. (*New Cyclopedia of Illustrations.*)

Ver. 30. **The walls of Jericho fell down.**—*Feeble means and great results:*—In the means employed by the children of Israel there was nothing adequate to so great and instant a catastrophe. There was surely no visible or real connection between compassing the city in procession and the falling of the walls which followed. We learn from the whole of this part of our subject, that whatever obstructs the march of the people of God, God not only is able, but is pledged and willing to remove. Rocks shall start from their places—rivers shall abjure their channels—the fire shall fail to burn—wild beasts, ravenous with hunger, shall refuse to devour—rather than one jot perish from the least promise that God has spoken, or one grace be exhausted from the least heart that God has sanctified by His Holy Spirit. When we see these great effects follow in answer to faith, it may be asked, Why use means at all, since the means were inadequate? By His prescribing means, He showed that He is and that He was present in the midst of them; by prescribing inadequate means, He showed that that presence was omnipotent, and that all the glory of the issue of the enterprise must shine and rest upon His name. In other words, He would show that, while might was used and power was wielded, the victory was not by might nor by power, but "by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Now let us look at this great lesson illustrated in the whole history of the Church of Christ—that magnificent and glorious results have ever followed in connection with the cause of Christ from weak and insignificant means. If I refer to a modern instance, there is no book in the English language that has given more tone to the English mind among the humbler religious classes than Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress"—a book so simple that a child can understand it, whose theology is so rich that all the tomes of a Calvin and a Luther do not excel it; and there is no book, let me say, that has left a finer and a more substantial impression on the mass of enlightened Christian minds than the "Pilgrim's Progress" of John Bunyan. At Leicester he was appointed to stand sentry. A comrade came to him, and offered freely and gratuitously to take his place. The exchange was made, and a bullet struck the head of the comrade in three minutes afterwards; and if John Bunyan had been there, "Pilgrim's Progress" had never been written, and its blessed effects would never have been heard of. Thus a very incidental, microscopic occurrence became the hinge of very precious effects. I might notice other evidences of the same truth. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries perhaps the greatest obstruction to the progress of real religion was the want of books and the means of circulating knowledge—I say, before the

era of the Reformation the greatest obstruction to the progress of real religion was want of books. A Dutchman, at Haarlem, was one day amusing himself by cutting out letters upon the bark of a tree, and after he had done so, the idea struck him that he might transfer impressions from the bark of the tree to paper. He did so; and in the course of a few weeks wooden types were carved, and printing was begun; and then literally the greatest obstruction to the progress of the truth, and the spread of living religion, was removed, when the walls of ignorance fell down before what the world would call an accidental thought, what the Christian would call the inspiration of his God, as unequivocal and as real as the command to blow the ram's horns, and to lay the walls of Jericho level in consequence. Another obstruction to the spread of religion was the fact of nations being so severed. Continents and islands were separated by broad and almost impassable oceans. The sailor never thought of going far from the coast, still less of navigating wide seas. Accidentally, the world would say—by an inspiration from on high, the Christian believes—a man discovers the polarity of a piece of loadstone; and that discovery, so insignificant in itself, led to that intercommunion between our own and the most distant isles of the ocean, which has made continents our next-door neighbours, oceans ferries, and consolidated the whole world into one community preparatory to the cement of the gospel, which will consolidate it into one happy and united brotherhood. We see in all these little means used and blessed of God to produce very great results. I must refer to another instance in the rise and progress of different missionary societies. For instance, the Moravian Missionary Society, one of the most useful of all the societies we have, was originated as follows: Two poor Greenlanders arrived in Copenhagen, where there was a Moravian congregation consisting of about six hundred persons. They looked upon these Greenlanders not as curious specimens of a savage race, but as having immortal souls that needed to be saved, and the grand resolution took possession of the Moravian heart that they should be brought to the knowledge of the gospel of Christ. These six hundred persons instantly conceived the project of preaching the gospel at Labrador, in America, at the East Indies, and even in Africa. They set about a work so disproportionately great, that the world laughed, but God smiled upon them, and at this moment these means are crowned with the most magnificent results. I do not know a society more honoured than the Moravian Missionary Society. After the storm and chaos of 1793, a poor cobbler in his stall, of the name of Carey, conceived the first idea, in this country at least, of sending the gospel to the heathen. Wilberforce, who introduced so much Christianity into the higher classes of society, had the magnanimity to say of this, "I know not a more striking instance of the sublime than that cobbler on his stool conceiving the idea of carrying the gospel to the distant parts of the heathen world." That idea was conceived by that poor man, and at first the whole annual income of the Baptist Missionary Society was £13 2s. 6d.; it is now increased to some £30,000, if not upwards. Then the London Missionary Society took its rise very much from the preaching of Dr. Bogue. The Church Missionary Society, the Bible and Tract Societies, are all the creation of the last century, and all arose from the most insignificant of means, which have been crowned with the most magnificent results. Now, what does this teach us for the future? That if God has used the most despised of means for the accomplishment of the greatest and most precious results, we are to thank God that He has so honoured the past, and to look for that God to come unto us in the opening and veiled future, and to trust for triumphs of His presence, and monuments of what grace can do, that shall eclipse all that has yet been accomplished. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *Why Jericho fell; or, faith the condition of success in Foreign Missions*:—A great many really good people laugh at the story of Jericho's fall, as something impossible, and count the whole transaction as one of those semi-mythical events that find their parallel in the siege of Troy which Homer sang. But whether history, or myth, or poetry, the conquest of Jericho emphasises a great principle. Considered as a piece of military tactics, the whole performance seems the height of the ridiculous. Considered as an act of faith, it stands sublime. A pious rationalism has tried to explain the so-called "miracle" by the vibration of the walls at the trumpet blasts. But this seems to my mind to increase rather than to diminish the marvel. The best explanation is, God foreknew that an earthquake was impending, and so ordered the marching and trumpeting that they should be finished at a moment coincident with the shock produced by the forces of Nature. But this is neither here nor there; His methods are none of our business. We have simply to look at man's part of the work, and the Bible does

not explain this upon the "vibration theory," nor upon any known laws of physics or aerostatics. On the contrary, it ascribes Jericho's overthrow not to a physical, but to a purely mental and spiritual cause. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down." Joshua and his soldiers did not stop to theorise nor rationalise, nor yet to discuss the relation between cause and effect. They just did what they were told, and left the rest to God. This is faith. Not the mere subscription to a creed, but such implicit and absolute trust in God, as leads men unquestionably to obey His commands and to believe His promises, without stopping to argue, or debate, or discuss. No ordinary battle was ever won, in which the private soldiers presumed to criticise the plans and tactics of the commander-in-chief. On the contrary, the prime condition of victory is absolute trust and confidence in the leader, and all the host acting as an unit. Jesus declares that "through faith His disciples may remove mountains"; and history is lustrous with thousands of apparently impossible feats wrought by men no different from the rest of the race, save in the greatness of their faith. As the topic of missions to the heathen occupies so large a space in our services and preaching, according to our Lord's command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," believers and unbelievers in Christianity sadly or sneeringly ask the question, "Why are not the heathen converted after all these hundreds of years? Why do not the walls of these pagan Jerichoes fall down?" Read your Bible, friends. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down," and just so soon as we Christians have somewhat of the same faith that possessed these Jews, just so soon will the strongholds of error be overcome. As a matter of fact, it is only during the last fifty years that any effort worth speaking of has been made by Protestant Christianity to convert the heathen. Men complain of the vast sums squandered to convert these pagans. Well, which is better, to send a million dollars to make men of our own flesh and blood moral, decent, respectable, as befits souls for whom Christ died, or to send a million dollars' worth of rum to debauch them and make their savage condition more densely savage still? And how vast are these sums, think you, sent to foreign lands to teach men of their Heavenly Father and loving Saviour? Ten million dollars is the largest amount ever given in a single year to Foreign Missions, and this distributed among one hundred million Protestants, averages about ten cents for each soul. Here is munificence! Here is faith! Here is love to God and to man for you! And yet, despite the indifference and hostility of the Church at home, what hath God wrought? Behold the walls of Jericho that have fallen in less than fifty years, and this with a Christianity merely playing at missions, and not playing very hard at that. A few royal sons of God have had the faith through which alone all this has been done. Grand old Doctor Livingstone had faith enough to dwell thirty-three years in Africa, where glorious Bishop Hannington has lately laid down his life. Bishop Selwyn had faith enough to spend the best of his days among the South Sea savages, and his successor, Bishop Pattison, had faith enough to find in that same field a foremost place in the noble army of martyrs. I tell you it all sifts right down to a matter of pure faith, this business of Foreign Missions. Why is this? Simply because that the more truly religious a man is, the more he grasps the supernatural idea of Christianity, the more real become all the prophecies of God, the more binding all His commands. The armies of the living God march round the pagan Jericho, and blow the gospel trumpets. This is man's part of the business. The throwing down of the walls, this is God's work. Not, "the Lord will give," but, "the Lord hath given you the city." The fall of Jericho was a mathematical certainty, just so soon as the conditions had been complied with. And so again, "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down." By the same faith, too, the walls of China, the walls of India, the walls of Africa shall fall, can fall as well as not in our lifetime as a hundred or a thousand years hence. Oh! it makes me sick to hear people praying for the world's conversion. Stop praying and convert it now! It is as easy as breathing, if you have faith in God. "Why criest thou unto Me?" methinks I hear God say. "Speak unto My people that they go forward." (*L. S. Osborne.*) *The walls of Jericho—perseverance in faith*:—One striking feature in Christian faith is that it is a most persevering faith. 1. No failures daunt it. 2. No difficulties alarm it. 3. No troubles quench it. 4. No taunts shame it. Now the particular property and work of faith we are called upon to examine and contemplate is this persevering nature of it. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days." Let us examine the full spiritual force of this. (1) The city of Jericho was strong. (2) The host which besieged and took the city of Jericho

was a large and strong host, well tried and disciplined by the trials of the wilderness, led on by their leader Joshua. So the power which must besiege the wicked heart of man, and the sinful inclinations harboured therein, must be the soul well tried by sorrow and well schooled in adversity, strengthened by the Spirit of God. (3) And the way they took the city was by encompassing it seven times, as God had appointed; so at length the walls fell down, and they entered. So also the enemies which our hearts contain must be subdued only in certain appointed ways —by prayer, the Sacraments, the Word of God, His public service, self-denial, and repentance. This, then, is the spiritual force and application of the text to ourselves. And before I proceed to the particular examination of the subject let me make some general remarks on it. 1. It reminds us that our hearts, like Jericho, do harbour the enemies of God. 2. We are reminded how we must drive them out, by the grace and the guidance of Christ. Men adopt many ways, but there is but one way. Some try to drive out bad passions by philosophy and learning. Another will try and overcome his bad heart by living away from the world. Another will try to overcome his sinful heart by works of charity, self-denial, and benevolence. Some people seem to think that natural kindness and morality makes up for, and so subdues the bad heart. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days." Nothing but the grace of God's Holy Spirit, applied to us through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, and gained by faith, can enable us permanently and really to subdue our hearts. But let us examine the more particular working and view of faith which this text suggests. Let us, then, see what this perseverance is—1. Perseverance requires a continual struggle, only to be ended with life itself. 2. But again, what is perseverance applied to? First, the repressing sin; secondly, the doing good. (*E. Monro.*) *The ruin of mystical Jericho*:—First of all, observe here that Jericho had mighty walls, and trusted in these walls; or else they would have come out and have made conditions of peace with Israel. And next you see here, that God overthrows their walls; and by what means? By poor and base means, by trumpets of rams' horns. From hence, by analogy and proportion, we may see, first of all, that carnal men they build up walls, and put their trust in them. The second is, that God confounds these courses. The third is, that God doth it by weak and silly means, believed by faith. The last point is, that faith in the use of these means overcomes all. 1. Natural men, since the fall, they must have somewhat to trust to. Since man lost his first confidence, and communion with God, he turns to the creature; and men leave God in what measure they trust that. Every one will have some castle and wall of Jericho to trust to. Riches are the rich man's stronghold (Prov. xi. 16). Ahithophel trusted to a shrewd head and policy that proved his ruin afterwards. The Jews had outward sanctity to trust to, opposing it to the righteousness of Christ (Rom. x. 6). Man will have a holiness, a wisdom, a strength, and power of himself in the things below here. Now the Spirit of God in the Scriptures takes notice of this proneness to false confidence (1 Tim. vi. 17). And man, when he sets his heart upon false confidence, the issues are more dangerous; he will come against God; he doth not only set up these holds that he hath in rebellion against God, but he proclaims, as it were, defiance to God, and His word, and His ordinances, till afterwards God destroy all his false confidence, and bring him to shame. There are three mighty things in every natural man. (1) This false reasoning and sophistry. There is no man will go to hell without reason. "God is merciful," "Christ is come," and "others are as bad as I," and "I hope in time to repent"; this vile reasoning must be turned out of a man before he can be saved. (2) Then there are proud thoughts. What, shall I yield to such a one as He? I am better than He; I understand these things as well as He. As that proud cardinal in Germany said, "I confess these things that Luther finds fault with are naught; but shall I yield to a base monk?" The proud rebellious heart of man is lift up in proud thoughts against God. (3) And then there be forecasts. If I do thus, this danger will come of it; I shall provoke such an enemy; I shall lose such a friend; I shall endanger myself. Now, when the truth of God comes, down goes all these sophistries and all these forecasts; they all lie flat when the Spirit of God comes in the power of the word. But naturally every man hath these; he builds up some castle against God; he builds up the walls of Jericho, and trusts in them too. 2. God first or last overturns all vain confidence in the creature. The walls of Jericho, down they must; and whatsoever exalts itself against God, either it shall end in conversion or confusion, because the time must come that God must have all the glory. Therefore let us make that use that Jeremiah doth (Jer. ix. 23). Let a man

joy in none of these; but if he will joy, let him joy in this, that he knows the Lord, that he is in covenant with God. 3. God doth this by base and weak means. And the reason is clear, that He may have all the glory. 4. It was by faith in the use of means that the walls of Jericho fell down. If they had not depended upon God in their going about seven days, the walls had stood still. But here were other graces likewise that sprang from faith, that helped them also. There was a great deal of patience to go about after that silly fashion with rams' horns seven days together. Here was patience, and perseverance, and hope. But, because faith doth enliven, and stirs up all, therefore that is named. In the whole chapter the exercise of other graces is attributed to faith, because they draw strength from that to quicken them all to their several offices. Strengthen faith, and strengthen all other graces whatsoever. 5. Now, let us by way of proportion raise them higher, and make use of them to other things. The walls of Jericho represent to us many things. (1) The kingdom of Satan in general, the power of the devil in himself and in his instruments, who hinders what he can, our coming out of Egypt to Canaan. He labours to come between us and heaven; to hinder us all he can by all means. He hath walls of many kinds; the strength of tyrants, the subtilty of heretics. But Christ came "to destroy the works of the devil," as it is said 1 John iii. 8; and He Himself overcame Satan and triumphed over him, as it is Col. ii. 15. He triumphed over Satan himself, and He will triumph over Satan in all His members (1 John iv. 4). (2) But besides Satan, there is in us much opposition that must be subdued before we come to Canaan. So it is with our own corruptions. There be these walls within us. Satan could not hurt us but that we betray ourselves. Now, by little and little all these walls shall fall; not all at once, as the walls of Jericho did. God by degrees will perfect the work of mortification and sanctification till He make us like His Son Christ, like our husband and head, that we may be fit for so glorious a head. (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) *Faith the weapon of the Church*:—I. SEE HERE THE DISCOURAGEMENTS OF FAITH. 1. The difficulty of the undertaking. 2. The inadequacy of the means. 3. The strangeness of the delay. II. SEE HERE THE MANIFESTATIONS OF FAITH. 1. In their joyous expectation. 2. In their undaunted perseverance. 3. In their utmost preparedness. III. SEE HERE THE FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH. 1. The fact of God's presence. 2. The fact of God's command. 3. The fact of God's promise. (*C. New.*) *The faith of man, and the energy of God*:—1. It is the prerogative of God to do whatever He pleases, and by whatever agency He chooses. 2. It is man's solemn duty to do whatsoever God commands. 3. Faith in God is indispensable to the fulfilment of God's command. I. THE FAITH OF MAN. 1. It was not faith in—(1) their benevolent sympathies; (2) moral institutions; (3) their notions of adaptations; (4) merely the Divinity of the command. 2. It was faith in God—in His wisdom, righteousness, and power. II. THE ENERGY OF GOD. 1. Whatever God commands, however it may seem to clash with our notions or intuitions, we should attempt. 2. Whatever Divine command we attempt to carry out, with faith in Him, we shall accomplish. 3. Whatever we accomplish, it will be through His energy, as the reward of our faith in Him. (*Homilist.*) *Impulse of nature counteracted by faith*:—The impulse of nature was to attack that city; to try upon its bulwarks the skill of military science, as then understood, as by them possessed. The power of faith was shown in curbing that impulse; in submitting to an unexplained, unintelligible, severely trying, edict of inactivity; nay, in consenting to play what must have seemed a ridiculous part in the face of a warlike and disciplined host waiting to see what this intrusive, this presumptuous horde of rovers had to say for itself. How often has the Church, as a body, failed to understand the duty of refraining! How often has she rushed headlong upon some dimly-descried or imaginary Jericho with weapons quite carnal! What shall we say of the religious press, of the religious platform, of the religious controversy, of the religious conversation, so called, of this present age and country? Is it not a matter of simple fact, of sorrowful notoriety, that the armour, whether of attack or of defence, worn in this warfare, is of precisely the same material, and the same make, and all but the same colour, with that of the world's quarrels and the world's antagonisms? Certainly if the giant Jericho of this world, with its lying vanities, its covert or open infidelities, its harmful lusts, its crying sins, is ever to be brought low before the revealed presence of Jesus Christ, it will not be by the use against it of weapons forged in its own workshops—weapons of sarcasm and invective, weapons of strife and debate, weapons of insinuation and repartee, weapons of rhetoric and oratory, weapons of man's wisdom or man's strength. It will be—and, in whatever degree that victory has been foreshadowed, it always has

been—by the quiet march, round the walls and towers of human pride and human luxury and human sin, of the ark of the holy covenant, of the Word and Sacraments of the New Testament, ministered and heralded by devout and devoted pastors, "showing out of a good conversation their works with meekness of wisdom." And if this be true on the large scale, and with reference to ages and nations and communities, how must it be with individuals? How large a part of the action of faith, viewed as an instrument, as an influence, as a power, for God, lies, in their case also, in refraining! Show me the Christian wife, the Christian sister, the Christian daughter, who knows how to refrain, and I will predict for her an eventual success in influencing the husband, the brother, the father, towards her gospel. Not to answer again—not to urge matters of discord—not to insist on externals—not to wear a look of offence—not to irritate by a disdainful composure—not to speak against faulty but loved ones as though exiled from sympathy—always to pray, never to faint—seeking refuge, when refuge is necessary, from the strife of tongues, not in isolation, not in moroseness, but in the sweet tabernacle of God's Presence—this sort of refraining, within the walls of homes, is worth all the "testifying" in the world for Christ against evil—nay, it is the noblest and the highest and the most ancient of testimonies—"by faith," thus refraining, the walls of Jericho fell, not undermined, and not assaulted, but just encompassed for seven days. (*Dean Vaughan.*)

Ver. 31. **Rahab.**—*Rahab*:—1. Think what a moral mixture the human heart may hold, what a mass of contradictions it is! Rahab, loyal lover to her kindred, traitor to her king, gifted with insight above her fellow-citizens, yet exposing herself to the scorn of man, possessed of a crude faith, yet selling her honour for gain! Surely the warp of heaven and the woof of hell were never woven together more strangely. Surely there never was such a peculiar character thrown off from the loom of life. But no, such contradictions are common, and that may be one of the reasons why her name is left on record. How many men do you know who are of perfectly simple moral character, who act from one motive, who are dominated by a single passion, whose conduct, under given circumstances, you can infallibly calculate? How many saints do you know who bear on them no traces of sin? How many sinners who show signs of nothing else? The best have their weak points: the worst retain some features of good. 2. Observe how independent religion may be of morality, how strong a hold faith in God may have in those on whom righteousness have a most imperfect grasp. Rahab's faith still held; while of her morals the less said the better. This is the perplexity of the present time, that so many men are honestly and ardently in love with goodness, and are yet able to do without God; and the converse, that a man may have faith in God and yet be wicked. Religion and righteousness are two different things, though ultimately one. They satisfy different needs of our nature. We may seek God for shelter. A man finds the world crumbling beneath his feet and he hides himself in the Eternal; or he is oppressed by the meagreness of his range of vision, and he flees to Him in whom there is no darkness at all; or he is crushed by pain, or he seeks help from Him who bears the cares of the world, and who can bring peace in the midst of sorrows. But morality! That is the soul's working day and loins must be girded. Rest here means idleness, apathy, death. Moral progress must be struggled for; advance in purity implies a hotly-contested race. Religion brings rest; morality means toil. The noble, impassive soul, strong in affection but weak of will, makes much of religious help and consolation. He is not dishonest, but the ideal has never dawned on him of religion and morality clothed in double raiment, offering at the altar, body, soul and spirit. 3. Notice the power of even a rudimentary faith. In Rahab's case, a little religion went a long way. As some one says, faith is the one before the ciphers on the cheque presented at the bank of heaven. It is the beginning of all virtues. It may be crude at first, but it cannot continue so; for it brings the Spirit of God into the heart. The harlot Rahab, by her crude faith, stepped forth from the ranks of heathendom; and so the most disgraced child of man can be rescued from his sin, through faith in God. (*A. Martin, M.A.*) *Rahab's faith*:—Some lessons of the story lie on its surface. How the publicans and the harlots may enter the kingdom of God before Sadducee and Pharisee—not in their sins, but washed from them, and inclined towards the possibilities of grace by the very fact that at least self-satisfaction is impossible—that at least boasting is excluded. Also we find here the recognition of a very imperfect knowledge and a very elementary faith, as having in it "the root of the

matter" if it will but work. What was Rahab's knowledge, what was Rahab's faith, when she received the two Hebrew spies, hid them from discovery, and "sent them out by another way"? What Rahab knew was only this—that the God of Israel had wrought a great deliverance for His people, first in the exodus from Egypt, then in the wars of the march, and that evidently no power could stand against Him—she and her nation were foredoomed to discomfiture before this mighty God and this favoured race. Upon this small and elementary foundation of dogmatic truth was reared the superstructure of a changed and transformed life. She "received with peace," with friendliness and hospitality, the emissaries of the invading people, protected them with ready inventiveness from the instant search and pursuit of her king—and was herself, in the terrible slaughter of her countrymen, incorporated, with all her house, into the conquering race, to become the ancestress, as St. Matthew teaches, of king David, and of the Messiah Himself. It would be a mistake, an anachronism, to apply to a dweller in one of the old Canaanite cities, amidst the worshippers of false and cruel deities, destitute of one ray either of law or gospel light, principles of conduct and character which we owe to the revelation of all truth and all duty by our Lord Jesus Christ. The Epistle is contented to say only this, Behold in the example of this woman the working of that faith which grasps the unseen. Behold the action of faith upon evidence presented and upon an alternative of conduct. Behold the inference of truth honestly drawn, and the preference, on the strength of it, of the future to the present. Behold, St. James adds, how faith differs from opinion, and evidences its existence by the sign of work. The hearts of other inhabitants of Jericho were melting, she tells us, with the terror of Israel—she alone acted upon the conviction and added another element to the "great cloud of witnesses." We all see why the apostle should have singled out for mention the faith of this woman of Canaan. She was an instance of faith lifting a life out of the prejudices and partialities of birth and companionship, and making it willing, at the call of duty, to seek a new kindred and a new citizenship, amongst strangers, amongst aliens—if need be, amongst enemies. Her example is like that of Abraham leaving his birthplace, of Moses forsaking his palace—like these, yet, in degree, rising above them. For Abraham pitched his tent not amongst foes—and Moses, in renouncing the land of his adoption, returned to the citizenship of his birth and of his ancestry. She cast herself upon a hostile race, and had to unlearn every association, every habit, every feeling of the past. Thus might it be, at no distant day, with these Christians of Palestine. They were to suffer the sword of Rome to fall upon apostate Jerusalem —they were to raise no arm in her defence—on the contrary, when they saw her compassed with armies, when they saw the abomination of desolation stand in her holy place, they were to recognise the predicted token, and themselves to flee to the mountains. Christ must be more than country to those who would be worthy of Him. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Rahab's faith*:—I. SAVING FAITH. II. A SINGULAR FAITH. III. A STABLE FAITH, which stood firm in the midst of trouble. IV. A SELF-DENYING FAITH. V. A SYMPATHISING FAITH. Desired mercy for her relations. VI. A SANCTIFYING FAITH. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Rahab*:—I. SHE POSSESSED SINGULAR FAITH. 1. She received no instruction from her parents. 2. She was not in a believing country. 3. Her means of knowledge were very slender; and therefore, the food of her faith was comparatively scant. 4. Perhaps the most wonderful thing about her faith was that she should be a woman of such a character. She was apparently the most unlikely person to become a believer in Jehovah. She was a harlot, a woman that was a sinner, and universally known to be such. 5. The subject of her faith was difficult. II. HER FAITH WAS ACTIVE. 1. It was active mentally. When she believed, she began to think. 2. Her faith was active in her own sphere. Home duties are one of the very best forms of the activity of faith, especially in Christian women. 3. She did all this to the best of her ability, and she used her common sense. 4. She was also active at great risk. III. RAHAB'S FAITH WAS MARRED WITH GROSS WEAKNESS. She lied unto the men who came to the door to seize the spies. There were, no doubt, in her conscience indistinct glimmerings of an idea that to lie was an evil thing, but, nevertheless, her surroundings prevented her clearly knowing it as we know it. To this very day among many orientals it is far more usual to lie than to speak the truth. You must judge individuals from their own standpoint, and consider their circumstances, or you may do them an injustice. I am not going to excuse Rahab's lie. A lie in Rahab, or in Abraham, is as bad as in any one else; but in this case there is this to be said, she had not been taught, as most of us have been, that a lie is a degrad-

ing sin. Her fault was by no means one which we can afford to throw stones at; avoid it carefully, but do not censure it self-complacently. IV. Rahab's was A FAITH THAT WAS NOT ABOVE THE USE OF OUTWARD SIGNS AND SEALS. There are persons in the world who altogether despise the outward ordinances; they may be good, but they are not wise. Rahab first of all required from these spies an oath that they would preserve her, and next they gave her a token, a scarlet line, which was to be hung up in her window. This was the blood red flag of Israel. Was it not hoisted on the Passover night, so that the angel might pass by and deliver the people? She felt great comfort when she had placed the token in her window. She was not superstitious; she did not believe that anything mystical was in the red cord, but she put it there, because she had been told to do so. Now, the highest faith in Christ is perfectly consistent with the obedient use of Christian ordinances. V. HER FAITH WAS SAVING FAITH. I have shown how it was grievously marred, but it was effectual notwithstanding. So, true faith in Christ, despite its weakness, will save us, separate us from the world, join us unto God's Israel, give us kinship with the Lord Jesus Christ; and what higher dignity is it possible to receive? VI. HER FAITH BECAME WITH GOD ACCEPTABLE, SO THAT SHE WAS THE MEANS OF THE SALVATION OF OTHERS. Oh, I like this in Rahab, that she did not bargain for her own safety alone. Her sin had not hardened her heart as sin does in many cases. She thought of her father, and her mother, and her brothers, and her sisters. Now, wherever there is a real child of God there will be anxiety for his family. If you do not want to have your children saved, you are not saved yourself. (*Ibid.*) *Sovereign grace*:—Observe here—1. The person spoke of, Rahab, a Gentile, an Amorite, an harlot, who kept a victualling house in Jericho, and so was both harlot and hostess, defiled both in body and mind with idolatry and adultery. 2. What is spoken of her: she believed. Behold here a blessed instance—(1) Of the sovereignty and freedom of God's grace. (2) Of the power and efficacy of Divine grace, in calling and converting a person given up by her own choice to the vilest of sins; but no sinner nor sin is to be despaired of, in whose cure sovereign grace is engaged. 3. The effect and fruit of her faith, she received the spies with peace; that is, entertained them safely. 4. The benefit and advantage she received by her faith, she perished not; that is, when the credulous and idolatrous people of Jericho were destroyed, she and her family were preserved. From the whole learn—1. That God is ready to show wonderful mercy to penitent sinners, if they return to Him and believe in Him, how great soever their sins have formerly been. 2. That true faith, wherever it is, will show itself by some eminent effect, and notable fruits of it. 3. That the rewards of faith are excellent and truly glorious; as she was preserved from the common ruin at Jericho, so shall all believers be saved from the wrath and destruction which shall come ere long upon the impenitent and unbelieving world. (*W. Burkitt, M.A.*) *Faith recognised and rewarded in the unworthy*:—I. AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE NATURE OF FAITH. 1. The character and circumstances of Rahab show that faith is not necessarily a Christian grace. 2. Her faith was but the reasonable acting of a thoughtful mind. 3. Its reality proved itself by works. II. AN ILLUSTRATION OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS. 1. God's ready response to true faith, though it be characterised by ignorance and unworthiness. 2. This is seen in the remarkable preservation of Rahab. 3. And in her abundant reward for all her faith had hazarded in His cause. III. AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE CONVERTING POWER OF FAITH IN GOD. 1. It separated her in character and doom from all her surroundings. 2. It made her the means of preserving all her kindred. 3. It allied her, an outcast Gentile, with the people of God. (*C. New.*)

Vers. 32–40. **And what shall I more say?**—*A bevy of heroes*:—I. HEROIC NAMES (ver. 32). The men of faith. Six names are given. Some of them are names that few would have selected to occupy such a position as is here assigned to them. Note in this list—(1) A disregard of chronological order. Gideon is put before Barak, and Samson before Jephthah. There will be a Divine re-arrangement of the order of all names soon, and "there are first which shall be last" (Luke xiii. 30). (2) The men of pious parentage. Samson's father and mother appear to have feared God (Judg. xiii.), Jesse, David's father, was, we may well believe, a godly man (1 Sam. xvi. 1–3), and the mother of Samuel was a woman of prayer (1 Sam. ii. 1). Samson's strength, David's piety, and Samuel's wisdom were doubtless begotten in answer to prayers of faith presented by their revered progenitors (*cf.* 2 Tim. i. 5). (3) Heroes from the ranks of the lowly. Gideon was an agricultural labourer (Judges vi. 11), David a shepherd lad (1 Sam. xvii. 34), and Samuel a

servitor in the Temple of God (1 Sam. iii. 1), but all were exalted to honour. Some of the grandest revelations of God have been made to the humblest of men (*cf.* Luke ii. 8, 9, and Matt. xi. 25). (4) The dignity of faith springing from the dust of shame. Jephthah was the son of a harlot, but he came to be a judge in Israel (Judg. xi. 1; Rom. v. 20). (5) Faith conspicuous in men of conspicuous failings. Gideon put an "if" against the solemn promise of God (Judges. vi. 36). Barak trusted too much to Deborah (Judges iv. 9). Samson was bound by the wiles of Delilah (Judges xvi. 16, 17). Jephthah sinned in making a rash vow, and added to his folly by observing it (Judges x. 30, 31, 39). David was guilty of murder and adultery (2 Sam. xii. 9), Samuel failed to correct his sons (1 Sam. iii. 13). They fell, but rose again, and "all died in faith." We should be patient with the erring, and though we have erred ourselves we should not despair. For illustrations of the faith of these men see Barak in pursuit (Judges iv. 16), Gideon giving glory to God (Judges vii. 15), Samson acknowledging the help of God (Judges xv. 18), Jephthah realising dependence upon God (Judges xi. 9), David expressing confidence in God (1 Sam. xvii. 37), and Samuel rehearsing the goodness of God (1 Sam. xii.). II. HEROIC DEEDS (vers. 33–35). Faith often finds utterance in words (2 Cor. iv. 13), but most frequently in acts. See here faith on the battle-field ("kingdoms"—*cf.* "world," 1 John v. 4; "flesh," Gal. ii. 20; "devil," 1 Pet. v. 9); in the workshop ("wrought"—*cf.* Mark xiv. 6); taking hold of God's word ("obtained," Greek, ἐπιτυγχάνω, to happen or come upon); in the lion's den (Daniel vi. 21, 22); in the furnace (Daniel iii. 25); eluding violence ("escaped," Greek, φεύγω, to flee. Faith is prudent enough to avoid danger, 1 Sam. xix. 18; Gen. xxxix. 12); recruiting strength (Samson was weak but was "made strong," Judges xvi. 28–30); routing foes (note the alliance of valour and victory), and raising the dead (2 Kings iv. 35). III. HEROIC ENDURANCE (vers. 35–38). See here—1. The world's estimate of its best friends (*cf.* 1 John iii. 13). 2. The believer's refusal of the world's help ("not accepting"). 3. The world's unworthiness of the believer's mission ("not worthy"). 4. The believer sustained by the hope of a future world ("better resurrection"). 5. The coming union of all believers in that world (vers. 39, 40). (*H. Thorne.*) *The moral meaning of human history*:—I. THE INHUMANITY OF MAN TO MAN. Man's cruelty argues—1. His unnaturalness. 2. His need of the gospel. II. THE FORCE OF FAITH IN HUMAN LIFE. 1. Power to conquer enemies. 2. Power to work out the right. 3. Power to realise the invisible. 4. Power to endure the overwhelming. III. THE CHARITY OF HEAVEN IN ITS TREATMENT OF CHARACTER. Not a man mentioned in this paragraph was perfect. Falsehood, adultery, greed, cruelty, profanity, attached to most of them; to some in a pre-eminent degree. Yet here is no mention of their sins; they are put among the saints, canonised in the roll of heaven's illustrious heroes. The Great Father is more charitable in His treatment of human character than men in treatment of each other. IV. THE UNWORTHINESS OF THE WORLD AS A SCENE FOR TRUE HEROES. 1. The world's ideas of true heroes. 2. God's idea of the worthiness of the world. (*Homilist.*) *Faith victorious by the prospect of future blessing*:—I. THE FAITH OF OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS, AND ITS IMPERFECT REWARDS. 1. This faith was the secret of most wonderful victories (vers. 32–38). 2. This was inspired by the promise of certain future blessings. "The promise." 3. They did not receive those blessings in this life. Their faith was rewarded here in the victories it secured, but its great reward was unbestowed when their earthly course ended. So with faith always; its best blessings are to come. II. THE FAITH OF NEW TESTAMENT SAINTS, AND ITS MORE PERFECT HELP. 1. A contrast. "God having provided some better thing for us." Then what should not our faith accomplish! 2. A resemblance. The object of our faith, like theirs, is still future. III. THE FAITH OF OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT SAINTS IN ITS PERFECT CONSUMMATION. 1. The present imperfection of the saints in heaven. 2. Their perfection and ours is to be simultaneous. 3. The present waiting of the redeemed in glory must then involve profound interest in the affairs of earth. (*C. New.*) *Illustrations of faith*:—1. Has your faith "subdued kingdoms"? Here is the subduing power of faith declared. If final judgment were to-night, is your heart subdued? I do not mean, is the inclination for sin no longer existing? but I mean, are you able to overcome it by God's grace? 2. Have you by faith "wrought righteousness"? Behold the man without faith working; he "works all uncleanness with greediness"; he works for self and despises the command of God. 3. Has your faith "obtained promises"? The Lord Jesus Christ, before He left this world, at the ascension, left us certain promises, which on certain conditions we should obtain. If we abide in Him that we should bring forth fruit. Do you do it? If

we pray that we should receive the gift of the Spirit. Do you receive it? If we love Him that we should have peace. Have you peace? If we serve Him that we should be hated by the world. Are you hated by it? 4. Have you "stopped the mouths of lions"? The devil is "the roaring lion, going about seeking whom he may devour," and when we stand before God to be judged, the devil will be there to accuse us, and to bring against us the charge of every sin we have committed at his instigation. 5. Have you "quenched the violence of fire"? There is a fire now preparing for the lost in which Satan and his angels are making ready an abode for their miserable victims. None shall be able to quench its violence and escape its fury save those who have lived by faith. Have you thought of that fire, feared it, shunned it? If not, you are not prepared to meet the Judge. 6. "Out of weakness were made strong." Have you been weak and are now strong? Faith gives strength to every feeling and principle in us. 7. Has your faith led you to bear the trial of "cruel mockings"? There are many mockings we meet with from the world if we live by faith. 1. There is the open opposition, an unbridled, undisguised hatred of the world, more exactly "cruel mockings," which led men in times of yore to drive families from their quiet homes. 2. There is the "cruel mocking," more difficult, perhaps, to bear, and which we are more called to bear—the silent and significant remarks made in a general way, yet intended personally; the mocking of sacred and holy subjects in our presence, when we know it is intended for and directed at ourselves; the laugh of open ridicule, or the smile of half-concealed contempt; the attacks on the faults and inconsistencies of religious characters, which we well know to be intended for our own. (*E. Monro.*) *The heroes of faith*:—Mark the characteristics of that faith, in virtue of which the writer brings together these honoured names, and by the power of which they were enabled to be God's instruments and deputies in carrying forward on the earth His great purposes of salvation. There are certain marks common to their faith, which will be found also to characterise those who have succeeded them in New Testament times. I. The first is, that THEIR FAITH IS IN A LIVING GOD—a true believing that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. That is no very distinguishing characteristic, you may think; most men believe in God. Most men *profess* to believe in Him, but in how many does their conduct show that the profession is worth much? They believe in forms of words, in current opinion, in worldly maxims, in the conventions of society, in the fashions of the church; but genuine faith in a living God, whose righteous laws ought to be obeyed, whose promises are true and ought to be acted on, whose loving care guards and guides their lives, so that they have only to do His will and fear no evil—that is a rare thing yet, and makes men more or less strange where it is seen. It was found in all these heroes of faith, so that they had strength and courage to do the will of God, when it seemed not only difficult, but utterly impossible. II. A second characteristic of the faith of these heroes is that ITS GOAL IS IN THE FUTURE, its eye is fixed on the invisible. They felt the evil of the present state, its disorder, its degradation, its wrong, its misery; but they knew by the vision of faith that this visible world is girt about with the invisible, that there is a higher order of things, a kingdom of truth, of righteousness, of peace, of purity above, and that its powers and laws shall yet penetrate and rule this earth, and the kingdom of God be established among men. And though the promises, whose fulfilment bounded the horizon of pre-Christian believers, have now been accomplished, and faith has now that fulfilment to rest upon, it still looks forward to the future, to promises yet to be fulfilled of a better day and a better kingdom. But still it confidently lays hold of the invisible, and works towards an end which seems a mere will-o'-the-wisp in the judgment of ordinary men. III. Again, the faith of these true heroes is marked by INSIGHT INTO PRESENT NEEDS AND DUTIES. Faith has a prophetic glance. Discerning God and God's holy order, it has an understanding of the times and the seasons, knows when to cast in the seed, and to put in the sickle, sees the fruit in the flower, and the great tree in the little germ. Hence the wonderful variety, for instance, in the work of these leaders of faith recorded in this chapter. They were not guided by custom, nor ruled merely by traditions of the past, but holding and living by the truth already given, they were led into fresh applications of it. The new time brought its new duties, and they obeyed God's call to face them; it disclosed fresh light, and they dared to open their eyes to let it in. (*W. Stevenson, M.A.*) *Faith's "Arc de Triomphe"*:—In the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the apostle Paul erects a triumphal arch to the honour of faith. It did not require much labour to make a selection of brave deeds to be engraven upon the monu-

ment; for faith's prowess has been shown in so many fields, and it has wrought such varied marvels, that when long lists of its deeds are mentioned far more are left. Time would fail to tell of the achievements of faith, but its record will never come to an end for lack of matter. It is somewhat striking that no such trophy has ever been raised to unbelief! None such could be raised, for it has done nothing worthy of remembrance. Subduing kingdoms, working righteousness, stopping the mouths of lions, and so forth, are quite out of its line, and it knows nothing of "a better resurrection." But it might have tried its hand at founding hospitals, erecting orphanages, and other ordinary fruits of a belief in Christianity. Why has it not done so? It is altogether negative, destructive, sterile; and is therefore by no means the principle upon which to build a life if a man designs to make it useful and honourable. Show us the value of your scepticism by its purifying influence upon the characters of sceptics, and the fruitfulness of atheism by the beneficence which has proceeded from its constraint, and we will consider the matter. But as yet we question whether any one of the human race was ever raised to anything noble, spiritual, or unselfish by the force of unbelief. The doubt which is nowadays cried up with as much noise as that of the craftsmen of Demetrius when they shouted for the space of two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," is a dead idol as far as any working out of good is concerned. Be it ours to be actuated by a principle tried and proved in all ages by the saintly and the heroic. Let those who prefer it choose to doubt; be it ours to believe. No man has ever had the hardihood to preach "Doubt and live"; but "Believe and live" is the essence of the message from heaven. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Importance of noble living:*—Life and not death is the all-important part of human history. We test the strength of the vessel not by the way in which she entered the sheltered harbour but by how she wrestled with the storm out in the defenceless ocean. We estimate the prowess of the warrior, not as he returns at the close of conflict, weak and weary, but as he bore himself up amid the fray, in the heat of battle. It is the opening and middle chapters of a man's biography that are the momentous ones, and which, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, determine the character of the closing scene. (*J. R. Macduff.*) *Troubles made beautiful:*—Most of the shells of the oyster are pearly in the interior; and as the true pearls are merely morbid growths, they may all produce pearls of various qualities. The formation of pearls is caused by the introduction of irritating substances, such as grain of sand, between the mantle and the shell. The irritation causes the animal to cover the obnoxious objects with layers of pearl, which generally attach the foreign body to the interior of the shell. The Chinese produce pearls artificially by placing substances in the position just described; and we have seen some shells, to the interior of which small metal images were attached in this manner by the pearly secretion. When we look at a pearl we look at an annoyance which has been ennobled. The oyster by itself is of merely nominal value. But the result of the oyster's own treatment of its irritations in this world—the pearl—is something "of great price." Apart from its pecuniary worth, this gem has a moral significance. It suggests that troubles may be made beautiful, and reminds us that amongst mankind some martyrs are more remembered by the glory with which they invested their sorrows than by any other portion of their lives. Biography has its moral pearls, which are treasured long after the creators of them have perished, just as material pearls are valued long years after the oysters have been discarded. (*J. Dallas.*) **Gideon.**—*Gideon's excellencies:*—The excellencies noted of Gideon in his history are these: 1. His providence in time of extremity (Judges vi. 11). The point of providence is commended in Joseph (Gen. xli. 48), and pressed by the wise man (Prov. vi. 8). 2. His valour (Judges vi. 12). It is of excellent use for the managing of weighty works. 3. His acknowledgment of God to be the disposer of all (Judges vi. 13). 4. His humble, lowly mind (Judges vi. 15). 5. His desire to have his faith strengthened in God's promise (Judges vi. 17). 6. His gratitude to him that brought him the glad tidings of his delivering Israel (Judges vi. 18). 7. His liberal hospitality (Judges vi. 19). 8. His fear and trembling at God's presence (Judges vi. 22). 9. His piety towards God, manifested both by building an altar to God (which was in those days a solemn rite of worshipping God thereby), and also by the name he gave to the altar. 10. His obedience to God's charge, and that both in the general substance, and particular circumstances thereof (Judges vi. 27, 28). 11. His prudence in making preparation for that work whereunto God had called him (Judges vi. 34, 35). This care of preparing means may well stand with true faith: yea, it is a fruit thereof. 12. His care to encourage others to that whereof himself

was confident (Judges vii. 15). 13. His care to raise up the hearts of his soldiers to God (Judges vii. 18). 14. His meek spirit, and soft answer, whereby he pacified the furious rage of the Ephraimites (Judges viii. 1–3). 15. His constancy in pursuing a victory well begun (Judges viii. 4, 11, 12). 16. His care to refresh his soldiers, weary with pursuing their enemies (Judges viii. 5, 8). Jonathan doth set out the benefit hereof (1 Sam. xiv. 27). 17. His just revenge on the inhuman, and scornful men of Succoth and Penuel (Judges viii. 15, &c.). 18. His modesty in refusing that honour which the people would have conferred upon him (Judges viii. 23). How few are of that mind? 19. His care to preserve peace after he had got full conquest upon his enemies; for it is noted, that after the conquest the country was in quietness all his days (Judges xviii. 28). This is the most proper end of war. 20. His contentedness with his own private means (Judges viii. 29). In which respect he is said to dwell in his own house. The principal observation concerning Gideon's faith is, that it made him with three hundred unarmed men, upon God's command, set upon an army of many thousands (Judges vii. 7). So as faith resteth on God with small means as confidently as with great (1 Sam. xiv. 6; 2 Chron. xiv. 11). (*W. Gouge.*) **Barak.**—*The faith of Barak:*—I. THERE WAS FAITH IN ONE OF SO OBSCURE POSITION UNDERTAKING THE LEADERSHIP OF THE HOST OF ISRAEL. We read nothing of him previously, and after his service was rendered he seemed to have retired into the obscurity out of which he had emerged. It was not self-confidence or ambition that brought him forward, it was faith in the summons of Jehovah. II. THERE WAS FAITH IN HIS OBEYING THE VOICE OF THE LORD'S PROPHETESS. Deborah, whether sitting under her palm-tree to administer justice, or standing upon the heights of Tabor, and giving the word of command to the warriors of the north, or singing praises to the Lord for the avenging of Israel, is a grand poetic figure. And it was Barak's faith that discerned in this woman's voice the voice of the Lord that led him to exclaim, "If thou wilt go with me, then I will go." III. THERE WAS FAITH IN HIS DISREGARD FOR HIS OWN FAME. Deborah warned him that, though the devotion, the daring, the danger were his, he should not have the honour of Sisera's death, which should be the work of a woman. It is the part of selfishness to toil, to fight, to suffer, for honour and applause. Faith rises above such motive, loses self in duty, in obedience to God. IV. THERE WAS FAITH IN HIS ATTACKING A FORMIDABLE FOE IN THE NAME AND WITH THE HELP OF THE LORD. Had Barak thought of the mighty army of the Canaanites, and their nine hundred chariots, his heart might well have failed him. But when he heard the appeal of Deborah: "Is not the Lord gone out before thee?" his courage rose, and he put to flight the armies of the aliens. V. THERE WAS FAITH IN HIS ASCRIPTION OF VICTORY TO THE GOD OF HOSTS. He "rehearsed the righteous acts of the Lord," who had "made him have dominion over the mighty." (*Family Churchman.*) *Barak's name, infirmities, and virtues:*—1. Barak's name signifies lightning (Ezek. i. 13). He was a terrible lightning to Sisera, and his host. He was chosen general against the army of Jabin, king of Canaan, who had oppressed Israel twenty years (Judges iv. 2, 3). 2. One infirmity is noted of him which was this, that being called of God he refused to go except Deborah went with him (Judges iv. 8). This showed both diffidence in God's power and truth, and also disobedience to God's charge. But it seemeth that these came rather from the weakness of his flesh than from the obstinancy of his disposition. For he quickly recovered himself. 3. His virtues were these: (1) Prudence, in preparing an army out of those among whom he dwelt, and whom he might best command, and in whom he might best confide. (2) Obedience, in ordering matters according to the charge given unto him. (3) Courage, in setting upon a huge host well prepared, with so few as he did. (4) Constancy, in pursuing the victory. (5) Piety, in returning the praise to God. 4. In Barak's example we have a proof that such as are weak in faith may become strong. (*W. Gouge.*) **Samson.**—*Samson's faith:*—Whether the faith attributed to Samson was a faith that purified and saved his soul, or only a faith that made him an efficient and conspicuous actor in the Church's external history, is a question not easy to solve. Faith is an element of power sometimes where it is not saving. Any strong persuasion, any earnest belief, nerves the heart and strengthens the arm; and thus a deep and firm conviction may make a mighty and effective actor of one on whose character it exerts no salutary influence. The Crusaders are a striking instance of the power of a belief to produce labour and self-denial in men for an end, while yet they remain full of worldly passion, and are carried by it into gross crimes and excesses. They were not holy men because they went to a holy war, and were actuated by a lively and energetic faith in the

object it contemplated, even though that faith was one which filled them with a certain sort of religious zeal and enthusiasm. Perhaps Samson's faith was of this sort. (*R. A. Hallam, D.D.*) *The nobility of Samson's character*:—I am astonished at those rationalistic critics who mock at the story of Samson, and ridicule it as base and ignoble. If it was such a poor and vulgar affair, how came it that he occupies a place among the saints and sages of the Old Testament, and that his story is preserved while so much else is thrown aside? And how was it that every Hebrew was proud of Samson, and that he was loved more than all the other judges? Ah! there must have been something grand and noble in the man, we feel his strange attractiveness. He was such a real man; his wit, humour, irony, his very sins and weaknesses bring him near to us. Remember how, when the Philistines demanded him, and the men of Judah made the cowardly proposition that he should give himself up to save their property from being plundered, the big-souled man replies, "Yes; make me your sacrifice." There is a touch of Samson's nobility. (*Prof. W. G. Elmslie.*) **Jephthae.**—*Jephthah's excellencies*:—1. His valour (Judges xi. 1). That phrase implieth that he was a man of a strong body and courageous mind. 2. His improvement of his valour against enemies (though he were disgracefully thrust out by his countrymen), as is implied in this phrase, "Went out" (Judges xi. 3). 3. His care of others like himself. "He went out with them that were gathered to him" (Judges xi. 3), so dealt David with his (1 Sam xxii. 1, 2). 4. His providence in securing himself and his country for the future, which was manifested by binding them to make him their head (Judges xi. 9–11), so long as he was head he had power to order matters; and he was privy to his own purpose and the integrity thereof. 5. His fear dealing with his enemies (Judges xi. 12, 13, &c.). He expostulates their wrongs; he adviseth them to desist; he manifesteth the equity and necessity of the engagements. (*W. Gouge.*)

Vers. 33, 34. **Through faith subdued kingdoms.**—*Doughty deeds*:—I. THEY SUBDUED KINGDOMS. Though this may agree to, and be affirmed of others; yet in this particular David seems to be most eminent, who subdued the Philistines, Edomites, Ammonites, and other of the Syrian kingdoms. 1. The cause of the conqueror was just. 2. He had warrant from God, and many times the warrant was extraordinary. 3. Sometimes he had directions from God, who was first consulted. 4. He depended not upon his own strength and policy but upon his God. 5. The victory was given by God upon the faith and prayer of the victorious party. 6. The Kingdoms subdued were not only enemies to God's people, but to God Himself and His laws; so that both the safety of the people, and also of religion, did much depend upon these victories, which were far more excellent because given upon the faith of such as trusted in their God. II. THEY WROUGHT RIGHTEOUSNESS. The subduing of kingdoms was the exercise of their military power, and this may seem to be the use of the sword of justice. The duty of a prince is to defend his people from foreign enemies, and to protect their loyal subjects, and punish the injurious. This righteousness therefore is judicial, and their doing of righteousness their constant administration of justice. III. BY FAITH THEY OBTAINED PROMISES. By promises understand things promised, and these not general but particular. To the patriarchs before Joshua the land of Canaan was promised; yet not given, not enjoyed; only their posterity under Joshua obtained that promise. Christ was promised to them all, yet they obtained not this promise; for He was not exhibited till many years after. These were more general promises. There were besides many eminent mercies, particular of victory, deliverance, peace, and other things, which by faith they obtained; yet so as that they used the means which God vouchsafed unto them, and these means without faith had been insufficient. IV. BY FAITH THEY STOPPED THE MOUTHS OF LIONS. This is understood principally of Daniel. Sampson slew a lion, and so did David; Daniel was saved from the hungry, fierce lions when he was cast into their den of purpose to be devoured. This he acknowledged as a great and special mercy from his God (Dan. vi. 22). This preservation was miraculous, and a mercy obtained by faith. For his cause was just, he would not intermit his devotion unto his God though he should suffer death, and resolved to observe the just command of God, and refused to obey the unjust command of man, and was persuaded that God was able to deliver him, and therefore he cast himself wholly upon His mercy. This he could never have done without faith. V. BY FAITH SOME OF THEM QUENCHED THE VIOLENCE OF FIRE. By this and the former we understand that divers of these particulars are not to be attributed to the faith of all and every one, but to some particular persons of them as severed from the rest. The

former worthy intended was one of the prophets, and these might be such also, yet not so eminent; for these words are not meant of a single person, but of Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego. By these two last examples we understand how easily God can, and how ready He is to deliver His believing servants out of greatest dangers. VI. BY FAITH THEY, THAT IS SOME OF THEM, ESCAPED THE SWORD. The sword may here be taken synecdochically for any kind of destroying instrument used in either war or peace. In war David and many of the judges escaped the edge of the sword, and were saved from the fury of the enemy. In peace Elijah, Elisha, Jeremy, and others, were delivered out of the hands of those who intended to murder them. They were in danger because they served God, did His work, and gave no just cause of offence. They were delivered because whilst they were obedient to their God, they trusted in Him. No dangers can hurt those whom God will save; they are safe in the midst of greatest evils. VII. BY FAITH OF WEAK SOME BECAME STRONG. This, by many, is understood of recovery from sickness and diseases; and the same sometimes mortal, and by man incurable; and some instance in Hezekiah, whom God upon his prayer of faith restored to perfect health; and because his disease was mortal therefore the cure was supernatural, and said to be obtained by faith. Others understand it of such as were weak in respect of warlike valour, and far inferior to their enemies for multitude, strength, prowess, policy; yet by faith in God few overcame many; the weak subdued the strong; the plain unskilful not only defended themselves, but terrified their enemies; and though at first they were fearful, yet by faith they strengthened themselves in God, and upon their prayers were encouraged against potent enemies. VIII. WAXED VALIANT IN FIGHT. Many of God's saints, and some of the forenamed, were soldiers and men of mighty valour, who through faith were so encouraged that they feared neither the number nor the strength of their enemies. Valour is proper unto a good soldier, and in war is necessary, as cowardice is the ruin of many a goodly army. War is very dangerous and full of hazard, and the event uncertain. The more the danger and the difficulty the greater measure of fortitude is requisite. The nature of valour is not wholly to contemn dangers, but to foresee and resist them, and no ways to adventure upon them. It is the strength of the mind without which the strength of the body is to little purpose. This is not a blind boldness, nor merely moral and grounded only upon reason, but it ic Divine. For when the cause was good, and they had a command with a promise, and sometimes with instructions from God, they had great reason to be valiant. These did not fight only for their estates, wives, children, and their country; but for their religion, the covenant, and the cities of their God. Their valour was grounded upon the goodness of their cause, and the promise of their God; which firmly supported their faith, as their faith did much increase their valour. IX. THEY TURNED TO FLIGHT THE ARMIES OF THE ALIENS. These aliens were heathens and idolaters, and so enemies not only to their country but to their religion and their God. This made their cause the better, and the enemies' cause the more unjust. The event of their wars against these was that they routed them, and made them turn their backs and fly. For as they fought for God out of faith, so God fought for them according to His promise, which was the ground of their belief and confidence. If, in a just war, we have the like cause and the like faith, we may expect the like success. But now many wars are made amongst Christians, and sometimes against the same nation; and the cause is not just, but the quarrel is begun and continued out of pride, malice, cruelty, ambition, and desire of revenge; and they fight not out of faith against God's enemies, but against God's people. (*G. Lawson.*) *The heroism of goodness*:—I. THE DAILY DOERS OF WHAT IS RIGHT ARE AMONG TRUE HEROES. 1. They meet the same difficulties. 2. They are inspired by the same motives. They exert the same influence—glorifying God, and blessing men. II. FAITH IS THE ONLY WAY TO THE DAILY DOING OF WHAT IS RIGHT. 1. Faith in the right. 2. Faith in God. 3. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the incarnation of right, the revealer of God, and the helper of souls. (*U. R. Thomas.*) **Obtained promises.**—*Promises obtained through faith*:—I. INQUIRE WHETHER THERE ARE NOT PROMISES MADE TO US WHICH WE DO NOT OBTAIN. 1. The great promise of justification by faith in Christ is made to you. This blessing is promised to every one that believeth. The inquiry then is, Have I Scriptural evidence to conclude that this has taken place as to me? Is the sense of guilt removed? Does the Spirit of adoption dwell in me crying, Abba, Father? Do I love Him, knowing that He hath loved me, and given Himself for me? And do all the fruits follow—"love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance"? 2. We have the promise of a constant supply of spiritual life. Christ came that we "might have life, and that

we might have it more abundantly." The effect of all this is spiritual vigour, and a relish in the application of our minds to Divine things. With this are also connected holy thoughts, lively affections, cheerful and persevering service. 3. A third class of promises relate to our deliverance from the worldly spirit. Do we so see the hand of God in the events of life, as to rest from anxiety? so enjoy inward and sweet communion with God, as to rest in Him with entire satisfaction? 4. A fourth class of promises relate to victory over temptation. The Lord is "able to keep you from falling"; He will "bruise Satan under your feet shortly"; and every regenerate man is said to "keep himself," so that "the wicked one toucheth him not." "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Now the question with every one of us ought to be, "Am I a conqueror; or am I a conquered man? Am I overcome by temptation, or do I preserve 'a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man?'" 5. There are promises of growth and progress in all religious habits and acts. All the commands on this subject, to "grow in grace," and to "go on unto perfection," have in them the nature of promises. I am directed to grow; and the command implies an engagement to supply the power. We are directed also to abide in Christ, the source of fruitfulness. All the apostolical prayers are promises, because they relate to God's gracious engagements. Every one of us ought, therefore, to inquire whether we "obtain" these promises. Do I grow in grace, so as to be completely delivered from the corruptions of my nature, and to love God with all my heart, and mind, and soul, and strength? II. INVESTIGATE THE CAUSE OF THIS SAD FAILURE. 1. Faith may be defective as wanting its Scriptural concomitants. We are justified, and obtain all the promises, by faith alone; but saving faith is not alone. One concomitant of true faith is a sense of danger. It credits the whole revelation of God, the threatenings as well as the promises. Here is the ground of the grand failure in many. They are not awakened. Another concomitant of true faith is a broken spirit. Many persons have fear and remorse; but they have not that godly sorrow which worketh repentance. A sense of unworthiness is another concomitant of true faith. We can claim nothing at the hands of God's justice. Mercy, from first to last, is our only plea. Another concomitant of true faith is strong desire after these blessings. Intense hungerings and thirstings after righteousness. Another concomitant is persevering prayer. This is the ordinance of God's appointing as the visible expression of faith; and He will honour it. Now, has our faith failed in these concomitants? 2. Faith may remain feeble and powerless because we nourish it not by its proper food, the Word of God. 3. We may fail in the actings of faith. In addition to this general confidence, there must be an act of special trust in God for the present communication to us of those blessings which we particularly need, and which the promises of His Word authorise us to expect. III. IF, THEN, YOU FAIL IN OBTAINING THE PROMISES WHICH IMMEDIATELY RELATE TO YOUR PERSONAL SALVATION, LET ME EXHORT YOU—1. That you cry mightily to God for a broken and contrite heart. 2. That you set before you all that God has promised as designed for you. 3. That, with your prayers, you stir up yourselves to the actings and exercise of faith. Lay hold upon the promises. (*R. Watson.*) *Obtaining promises*:—I. It is certain that holy men of old, and that good men now, do BY FAITH OBTAIN PROMISES. If we have had a little promise, and up till now have realised it, and made it the stay of our souls, surely God will give us a greater one, and so, from promise to promise speeding our way, we shall find the promises to be rounds of the ladder which Jacob saw, the top whereof shall reach to heaven. II. By faith these men obtained not merely the giving of the promise, but THE FULFILMENT OF IT. There are three ways of "obtaining the promise." Many of them only need the outstretched hand to grasp them; you may go with faith at once and take the promise, "Ask and ye shall receive." There are many of the promises so readily attainable that if you are in Christ you may this morning see them fulfilled by simply believing them. Believe them to be true, and you shall have what they promise you. Some of God's promises are like cheques, you present them at the counter and the cash is given; you have but to take the promise stamped by God's own hand, signed and sealed, believe it to be God's, and you shall have the mercy now. This is true of a very large number of the promises. Of some others you must not simply believe them, but exercise importunate prayer about them. "Knock and it shall be opened." You are certain to have the blessing if you know how to wrestle with the angel, and declare that you will not let him go unless he shall bestow it upon you A third kind of these promises are not even to be fulfilled by prayer or by

faith alone; you must obtain them by earnest seeking after them. "Seek and ye shall find." Where God has appended to the promise a something that is to be done, diligently do it, and you shall obtain the blessing. 1. Child of God, babe in grace, wouldst thou obtain the promises? Take this advice first—meditate much upon them. There are promises which are like grapes in the wine-press; if thou wilt tread them the juice will flow. 2. Secondly, young man in Christ Jesus, do not only meditate upon the promise, but seek in thy soul to realise it as being the very word of God. 3. Then be sure that thou doest, in the power of the Spirit of God, what the precept annexed to the promise asks of thee. 4. Some of the promises thou wilt not inherit even so, unless thou shalt imitate the men who by faith and patience inherit the promise.. 5. In the next place take care if you would get the promise that you select some one that is suitable to your own case. Again, young believer, would you obtain the promise? 6. Then be careful that you are thankful for promises you have already obtained. 7. And lastly, if you would have your faith stirred up, look at the examples of all who in olden times, and in our own times, by faith have obtained the promise. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The promises:*—The promises of God are to the believer an inexhaustible mine of wealth. Happy is it for him if he knows how to search out their secret veins and enrich himself with their hid treasures. They are to him an armoury containing all manner of offensive and defensive weapons. Blessed is he who has learned to enter into the sacred arsenal, to put on the breastplate and the helmet, and to lay his hand to the spear and to the sword. They are to the believer a surgery in which he will find all manner of restoratives and blessed elixirs; he shall find therein an ointment for every wound, a cordial for every faintness, a remedy for every disease. Blessed is he who is well skilled in heavenly pharmacy, and knoweth how to lay hold on the healing virtues of the promises of God. The promises are to the Christian a storehouse of food. They are as the granaries which Joseph built in Egypt, or as the golden pot wherein the unrotting manna was preserved. Blessed is he who can take the five barley loaves and fishes of promise and break them till his five thousand necessities shall all be supplied, and he is able to gather up baskets full of fragments. The promises are the Christian's Magna Charta of liberty, they are the title deeds of his heavenly estate. Happy is he who knoweth how to read them well and call them all his own. Yea, they are the jewel-room in which the Christian's crown-treasures are preserved—the regalia, secretly his to-day, but which he shall openly wear in paradise. He is already a king who hath the silver key with which to unlock the strong room; he may even now grasp the sceptre, wear the crown, and put upon his shoulders the imperial mantle. Oh, how unutterably rich are the promises of our faithful, covenant-keeping God! If we had here the tongue of the mightiest of human orators, and if that tongue could be touched with a live coal from off the altar, yet still it could not utter a tenth of the praises of the exceeding great and precious promises of God. Nay, they who have entered into rest, and have had their tongues attuned to the lofty and rapturous eloquence of cherubim and seraphim, even they can never tell the height and depth, the length and breadth of the unsearchable riches of Christ which are stored up in the treasure-house of God—the promises of the covenant of his grace. (*Ibid.*) **Out of weakness were made strong.**—*Strength out of weakness:*—1. See, first, how universal was the presence of this mark, in each of its two especial parts—of weakness growing into strength. Look back in thought on all. How surely did all begin in weakness! How was Samuel chosen in the weakness of childhood, and how was even that childhood strengthened till it bore all the burden of the prophet's office! How was Moses called amid great straits of external difficulty and internal self-distrust, and how was he made able to endure the burden of all the multitude, that gainsaying and stiff-necked generation which was committed to his guidance! Again, how did the weakness from which they were being rescued show its remaining presence in the partial unbelief of Abraham, and the deep fall of David, and in St. Peter's denial of his Master! Yet how evidently was there a process of strengthening going on in each one of these very saints, even until they were perfected! How firm was the faith of Abraham—how dear to David was the will of God! How strong was the courageous love of this same Peter, who once had trembled before a maid-servant. 2. And now mark next how, in all who bear the true mark, this marvellous change is accomplished. Clearly it is wrought by a power beyond themselves—for out of weakness they "were made strong." It was not of their own doing. A power out of themselves was moulding them; a higher Will was drawing up into its own blessed truth the

lower and capricious actings of their weakened, dishonoured, and distorted will. A mighty love was brooding over and transforming them. The acting of that Holy Spirit to which they yielded was renewing and sanctifying them. He strengthened them to resist temptation, and in their resisting it He purified them. And then observe, further, what there was in them which thus brought them under the working of His strengthening power. All this chapter speaks of it; but it is gathered up into the fewest possible words. All this mystery of strength is revealed in this one utterance, "Who through faith." With more or less of clearness, as God had revealed it to them, they saw that He had laid help for them upon One that was mighty; and they clave to Him, and in them the mystery was accomplished; they sought to cast themselves in their weakness upon Him; and His mighty presence stood beside them. He was in them, and they who without Him could do nothing found His strength "perfected in" their "weakness." In each one of the saints this is the pattern character. Every one passes from weakness into strength through cleaving for himself to Christ. And what they were that we are—weak, faltering, unworthy, tempted souls, far beneath His love, infinitely unworthy of His care; ever ready to sink before any enemy, to be over-mastered by every temptation; ever ready to fall away utterly, yet held up by His hand, and from the crumbling brink of perdition brought safely through to crowns and to His presence. Oh, unutterable wonders of the lovingkindness and faithfulness of God! Oh, mysterious deep of His counsels of redemption! Oh, blessed work of the life-giving Cross and bitter agony of Christ our Lord! Oh, glorious hope for every one who cleaveth closely to His righteous life for acceptance and for strength! But there is another application of this truth, which we may profitably make; for this which we have seen to be a special note of the separate spiritual life of every saint of God, is also the character of the corporate acts of the Church which is their common body. From her earliest planting this note has been especially stamped upon all which has concerned her spread and upgrowth. Thus, when our blessed Lord Himself, in His earthly ministry, gathered in the first fruits of His elect, He so veiled His glory in the likeness of our flesh that in Him there was for the common eye of men no "beauty that we should desire Him"; and so, plainly, He meant that it should be with those who bore His commission to their brethren. His chosen followers were fishermen of Galilee; and when He sent out the seventy, He sent them "two and two," with no outward accompaniment of power or presence to challenge the attention of the world. How could the note of an external weakness be more plainly stamped upon the infant Church? Yet what a manifest strength sprang out of all that weakness! And so it has been ever since. It would not be difficult to produce a multitude of instances in which it would be clear that whenever the Church has made any signal advance, it has been not by the strength of any arm of flesh, but through the power of God's grace working mightily through feeble instruments. So (to touch merely upon one example) it was manifestly when the goodness of our God towards this land enabled our fathers here to cast off that long accumulation of corruptions in doctrine, discipline, and conduct which had been heaped upon her truth, and well nigh choked her life. By what unlikely instruments, and with what an apparent feebleness of means, did the arm of God begin and carry through amongst us the blessed work of the Reformation. So that we may take this as an undoubted mark of His working in His Church, that the work may be seen to be wrought "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord"; and that we may even expect to find the chief instruments of her increase marked with this character, that "out of weakness they have been made strong." (*Bp. S. Wilberforce.*) *God's cure for man's weakness:*—I desire to speak to those who are weak—weak where they ought not to be—and who feel a growing tendency to rest content in that weakness; I would stir up those who are beginning to imagine that weakness is the normal and proper state of a Christian; that to be unbelieving, desponding, nervous, timid, cowardly, inactive, heartless, is at worst a very excusable thing. I. MENTION CASES OF CURE. I shall not now cite cases from the Old Testament of bodily cures which have been wrought by faith, though I might mention Hezekiah. In the apostolic times it was through faith that many sicknesses were made to fly before the healing touch of the apostles. That power of healing has probably become extinct, or is lying dormant in the Church; yet there are still indications that faith has some power in that direction. I cannot but think that when honest John Wickliffe, raising himself up in the bed of sickness, said to the monks who surrounded his couch expecting him to die and tempting him to recant, "I shall not die, but live to declare the wicked deeds of

the monks "—I cannot but think that his faith had much to do with his cure; had he been a man of a timorous, wavering frame of mind, his sick-bed might have been his death-bed, but the vital forces were all thrown into energetic action by the mental energy of his faith, and the crisis was safely passed. I do not know how far faith may still operate upon the bodily frame, for there is certainly an intimate connection between the soul and the body. That faith strengthens Christian men has been proved often in the history of the Church of God. The Church's weakness springs mainly and mostly from a want of faith in her God, and in the revelation which God has entrusted to her. When men believe intensely they act vigorously, and when their principles penetrate their very souls, and become precious to them as life itself, then no suffering is too severe, and no undertaking is too laborious, and no conflict too heroic. This seems to me to be the great work which Luther did in his day, under God the Holy Spirit's power. He brought back the Church to the strength of faith, and then her whole force returned. What has been proved upon the largest scale has been true in all other instances. For instance, the weakness of depraved human nature always gives way before the energy of that faith which the Spirit works in us. The same is true of subsequent spiritual debility. Christians who are alive unto God, and are endowed with some Divine strength, are attacked at times with a spiritual, universal decline. Just as we sometimes see a strong and healthy person growing pale, losing appetite, and falling into sickness, until he becomes a mere skeleton, so have I seen it with Christians; they do not lose life, but they do lose all their energy. Then they can scarce walk, much less run, and mounting with wings as eagles were quite out of the question. Such persons will bear witness that the only way of recruiting their strength is by faith. They must come again to the first principles, and trust their souls anew with Jesus, believing over again with a novelty of energy the old doctrines of the gospel. They must go to God as to a real God in believing prayer, and they will not long remain weak. II. ANALYSE THE MEDICINE. The subject is so very wide that I must confine myself to one instance, and shall speak of the medicine as it would be mixed for a man struggling at very dreadful odds against a gigantic system of evil. He was very weak, but through faith he becomes strong. One of the first ingredients of faith's medicine is a sense of right. Everybody admits that when a man is sure that right is on his side, he finds strength in that belief. Faith is a belief in the rightness of that which God reveals, a trusting in its truth, and who wonders that a man who believes, therefore becomes strong? A second ingredient is heavenly authority. Everybody knows that a man who is naturally weak will often act very bravely when he has authority to back him. Let the Christian combatant feel that he is armed with Divine authority, and you will not wonder if from a dwarf he rises to a giant. Mixed with this is a consciousness of heavenly companionship which makes the believer courageous. Many a man who would have been afraid to go to battle alone has marched along very cheerily because of the many thousands who are hurrying to the same attack. The Christian feels that he has the companionship of his God and Saviour. In addition to all this, faith has an expectation of supernatural help. Faith hears the wheels of Providence working on her behalf. I must not omit one powerful ingredient in faith's life-draught—the prospect of ultimate reward. III. ADMINISTER THIS MEDICINE. I cannot do it. You must go to Him who compounded it, namely, the blessed Spirit of the living God, and take with you this prayer, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief," and this other one, "Lord, increase our faith"; but I will just give you a few hints. Some of you are going through a present personal difficulty; you are embarrassed in money matters, or a child is sick, or the wife is dying, or some other providential trial is vexing you—you are saying, "I cannot bear it!" I will not pray with you that you may be comforted in that sinful weakness, but I do beseech you to ask for faith in that Father's hand which wields the rod, that you may get out of the weakness, and may now be made strong to suffer with holy patience what your loving Father's wisdom appoints for you. Others have a spiritual duty before you, but you are shirking it because of its difficulty. You do not like to "go through the ordeal"—that is what you call it. You are disobediently timid. Now, I shall not ask God to comfort you in that weakness; you know your Master's will, and you do it not; may you be beaten with many stripes, and may the stripes be blessed to you. I will ask that, knowing your duty, you may rise out of that weakness by believing that God will help you to obey, and so out of weakness you may be made strong. IV. PRAISE THE PHYSICIAN, and who is this? Who is it that has taught us to

believe? It is our Father who is in heaven, who has taught us and bidden us trust Him; blessed be His name. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Out of weakness made strong:*—"Weakness." How expressive, how suggestive, is that word to many. What memories it may awaken of anxious times in the history of souls and bodies! It may recall to some of us long days of dangerous sickness, their own or another's. To some it will speak of experiences, not less marked, of failing heart and discouraged resolution, in spiritual conflicts; times when, in the face of difficulties and trials to which they felt themselves unequal, they have had at the same moment no clear perception of any such power unseen as could turn the scale in favour of escape or victory. There is, indeed, no sense of the word, and no part of our being, in which the text has not again and again been verified—"By faith, out of weakness, they were made strong." 1. It has been exemplified, in every age, apart from all fancy and all fanaticism, in the body. There are cases on record in medical history, in which the perfect peace of a soul entirely prepared for either alternative has actually arrested the march of disease, and made the patient literally out of weakness strong. There are cases on record in which it has been said by the physician to the sufferer, desirous to depart and to be with Christ, "Sir, in this state of joyous anticipation you cannot die." But while we believe that there is a true sense of the words in reference to the restoration of bodily health, we read them with even more pleasure in other applications—still in the region of the body—of which none can challenge the certainty or the consolation. For example, there are persons marked from infancy to old age with this sign alone of disease or mortality, that they are "weak"—"without strength." There are those whose days and years are divided between the positive seclusion of the chamber and the comparative seclusion of the home. The life so truly described as that of an "invalid"—in other words, of one without strength—makes a very peculiar demand upon the faith and patience of the sufferer. Natural good sense, conscious or unconscious self-interest, the mere habit of suffering, may do something to check murmuring, to teach silence, even to induce resignation and self-control; but there is a grace beyond these, which is the gift of Christ alone—by virtue of which the negative passes into the positive, making the physical weakness spiritual strength, and the home of the invalid a very "house of God" to inmates and visitants taught (as St. Peter says) "without the word" by the mere "conversation," that is, the tone and spirit and demeanour, of the sufferer. 2. We pass, by no violent transition, to a weakness, not physical, but mental, and would say a word upon cases in which an intellectual inferiority has been strengthened by a Divine power into a robustness not natural to it. We can recall companions of our boyhood who have done nothing, as the phrase is, in the world. They were regarded with admiration in that young community, in which gift is everything and attainment nothing; in which facility is the idol, and toil a synonym for dulness. Side by side with this unfulfilled hope and this broken promise, we place a career opposite to it in each particular—alike in the poverty of the expectation and in the richness of the result. Diligence, earnestness, perseverance, have won the day, and the saying, "Out of weakness were made strong," has received its fulfilment even before we pass entirely out of the region of man and the world. How much more when we bring God in—when we think of a case in which a true turning of the heart, a resolute faith in Christ, and a humble looking in all things to the present help of the Holy Spirit, has changed the barrenness of nature and of the Fall into the blessed harvest of grace and the gospel. 3. But if in all these ways the text has had its fulfilment—in the body, in the mind, which God the Creator has fashioned in His wisdom, has endowed out of His fulness, yet could not—the one thing He cannot do—create into independence of Himself; how much more is it witnessed in the spirit; in that part of the man, which is capable of communion with God, of action for God, but which, above even the two other, bears the impress of the defectibility, of the weakness, of the corruption of the Fall. I cannot doubt that there are persons who feel that the word "weakness" is the true description of their present spiritual state. The sense of duty is in them—but how to perform that which is good they find not. The "weakness" which they deplore is a weakness of will; they would be Christians indeed, and they cannot; they would be servants of God, and they find themselves, on the contrary, the servants of sin. Is there yet hope for this despair—strength for this weakness? When St. Paul asks, "Who shall deliver me?" he is able to answer, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." And the text says, "Out of weakness were made strong." By the strong motive of the

Cross and Passion, drawing us to God "with cords of a man, with bands of love"—by the mighty power of His Holy Spirit, actually giving the strength which is obedience—thus is the work done. Thus St. Paul found himself emancipated, quickened, transformed. Thus all who in any age have given themselves, like him, to the seeking, have found, have attained, have conquered. The words are sweet, are attractive, are strong. But let us not rest in the words—let us press onward to the thing signified. "Out of weakness were made strong." Think with yourselves, each one, where and what is your weakness? Is it in some duty which flesh shrinks from? Is it in some affection, not lawful, or not moderate, or not compatible with the supreme Love? Is it in the difficulty of prayer—the heart flying back from the work of seeking and grasping and communing with the Invisible? Is it in some revelation which you cannot receive—something in the ways or in the works or in the will of God, which contradicts your present idea of the just, the wise, or the good? Bring that particular weakness to God in Christ for His strengthening. Delay not, dally not, try not again and again the miserable, the hopeless experiment of your own strength, your own will, your own endeavour. Come as weak, and be thou strong! (*Dean Vaughan.*) *The best strengthening medicine*:—1. As believers in the Lord Jesus, we are called to two things, namely, to do and to suffer for His name's sake. There are warriors on the field of conflict, and sentries in the box of patience. 2. Both in doing and in suffering, if we are earnest and observant, we soon discover our own weakness. 3. Our longing is to be able both to do and to suffer for our Lord, and to do this we must have strength from above, and that strength can only come to us through faith. I. FAITH MAKES MEN STRONG FOR HOLY DOING. 1. The first duty of a Christian man is to obey God. Who among us can do this, unless a power outside of himself shall come to his aid? Faith alone takes hold of the Divine strength; and only by that strength can we obey. Hence faith is the essential point of holiness. 2. Taking another view, we would remark that faith makes us strong to fulfil the relationships of life. We are not alone by ourselves, and we can neither live nor die apart, for God has linked us with others. We either curse or bless those around us. If we have faith in God, we shall bless our children, as Isaac and Jacob blessed their sons. If you have faith in God, you may bless your brothers while you live, as Joseph did: faith has housed many a family which else had starved. If you have faith in God, you can lead others out of the bondage of sin, and through the wilderness world, as Moses led the children of Israel; for faith is a great guide. 3. There is a high and blessed duty and privilege—I will call it both—which is to every Christian the necessity of his life, and that is to pray. 4. Faith is the great force which is needed by those whose principal work is to overcome sin. You will never be able to cut down this huge upas tree except with the axe of Christ's atoning sacrifice. Take that, and every blow will tell, but no other instrument will avail. God strengthening you, you shall out of weakness be made strong to overcome sin, though backed by the world, the flesh, and the devil. 5. Permit me to speak to some aspiring spirit here, and say—Dear friend, would you like to do something great for God? Have you heard the motto of our early missionaries: "Attempt great things for God"? Does that thought burn within your heart? Do you long to be of some use? "Oh, yes," says one, "I would attempt great things for God, but I am terribly weak." Make the attempt by faith in God; for it is written, "Out of weakness were made strong." If you feel incapable, throw yourself upon the infinite capacity of God. 6. I would make one more application of my text, which is capable of being used in a thousand directions. "Out of weakness were made strong"; this will be experienced in bearing witness for the truth of God. It is for us in our weakness to go forward as the Lord leads us; and the day of the resounding timbrels and the twinkling feet will come in due time, and Jehovah will be magnified when even humble maidens "sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously." II. FAITH MAKES MEN STRONG FOR PATIENT SUFFERING. The patience of hope is a very important part of Christian life, and faith is the essence of it. 1. Many are called to suffer much in daily life. Commend me to firm faith for power to bear the daily cross. He that believeth hath everlasting life, and the joys which come of it. Thy faith out of weakness shall make thee strong. 2. Certain saintly ones are called to bear great physical pain, and I commend to them, from practical experience, the power of faith in God under acute agony. Give thyself up to Him, and thou shalt yet sing of His lovingkindness and tender mercies. 3. But there are other forms of suffering than these. Possibly I speak to some who are suffering the evils of persecution. Do not attempt to escape

by yielding what is right and true; but ask the Lord to help you to stand fast for Him. If it be true that the Lord has His martyrs still, let it be seen that they are as brave as ever. 4. We have among us those who are not exposed to persecution, but have to stand against assaults of unbelief. Do not try to answer cavillers; but if you do, mind that faith is your weapon. 5. Again, it may be that I am speaking to sad ones who suffer under mental depression. Be assured, beyond all questioning, that he that believeth in the Lord Jesus is not condemned. Believe in Him, though you see no flashes of delight nor sparkles of joy. We are safe, because we are in the city of refuge, and not because we are, in ourselves, ill or well. 6. It may be that certain of you are called to suffer in your minds, not because of any wrong thing in yourselves, but for the sake of others. If you are chosen to be a leader and a helper, or a mother in Israel, be satisfied to endure hardness with the full belief that it is all right, and that God will not only bring you through, but will also bless somebody else by the means of your tribulations. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Strength in weakness:*—Moses, on his own showing, was "slow of speech and of a slow tongue"; but by his signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, God said to Pharaoh, "Let My people go." David was but a stripling when he smote the twelve-foot giant. Zaccheus was little of stature, but he also was a son of Abraham. Paul's bodily presence was weak; yet who was ever more of a man in Christ? Some say he had defective vision; yet in spiritual things he had the eagle's sight with the eagle's flight. Apollos "mightily convinced the Jews," though "knowing only the baptism of John." Delicate Timothy was "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." John Bunyan spent about fifteen years of his life in prison, yet his dungeon dreams have aroused many from the sleep of sin. Robert Hall suffered agonies from an affected spine, yet who had a better Christian backbone than he? Christmas Evans' eloquence was none the less brilliant because he had lost an eye. Blind John Milton saw and sang of the loss and recovery of Paradise. Pollock, sick and feeble as he was, has blest the world with an immortal poem, in "The Course of Time." "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." (*Thos. Spurgeon.*) *The strength of weakness:*—Many of the noblest specimens of our sermonic literature have come from men who were patient sufferers. Men who have had the most touching pathos, the deepest spirituality, the most marvellous insight into the deep things of God, have often known little of bodily health. Calvin laboured under many fierce disorders. Shall we ever see his like? Robert Hall was rarely free from pain. Who ever spoke more gloriously? And here I would mention one whom all of us love, Charles Stanford, who grows sweeter and sweeter as he grows weaker and weaker, and who sees all the more clearly now that his eyes grow dim. Physical force is not our strength, it may be our weakness. Health is to be desired, and carefully preserved where we have it; but if we lose it, we may count it all joy, and look forward to be able to exclaim with Paul, "When I am weak, then am I strong." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The power of weakness:*—Little do I care if you become fools for Christ's sake. When our weakness verges upon fanaticism it may have all the more power about it. Mr. Plimsoll did nobly when he stood up and pleaded against coffin-ships; but he was never so strong as when he lost himself, and broke the rules of the House in the ardour of his passion. It was very weak of him, but in that weakness lay his strength. Give us more of the speech which comes of a burning heart, as lava comes of a volcanic overflow. When the truth conquers us we shall conquer by the truth. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 35, 36. **Women received their dead.**—"*Women . . . and others*":—Here we find an appreciative and sympathetic reference to the unknown heroes of faith. The apostle recognises the fact that all that is great in history cannot be catalogued under great names. God does not care to label all His wonders. The great men and women who are brought into prominence are only specimens of what may be found in lowlier spheres of life, just as the rocky strata hurled up through the earth's surface do but reveal the kind of deposit which is to be found everywhere down deep in the earth's bosom. Yet men, as a rule, have ignored that wealth of resource which does not project itself in huge protrusions before their sight. It is comparatively recently that even historians have learnt that human history does not consist exclusively of the record, however faithfully given, of the lives of kings, great warriors, powerful ecclesiastics, and other recognised rulers of men. This glorious Book has been the one grand exception. It has ever taught men that there

is a mightier power than that of monarchs, which determines the destinies of nations, and works for righteousness, and which often works more powerfully out of sight than on the surface. Here, after the names of patriarchs, kings, noted women, and the great judges of Israel, come the prophets, but only as a whole and unnamed; and then the nameless "women . . . and others"—not a jot inferior to those who have passed before them, and whose names have been echoed throughout the ages. The transition from "the prophets" to "women" is sudden, but not incongruous. The list of the faithful is not complete without women, those in whom faith triumphed in true womanly fashion—in the power of patient endurance. Theirs was a faith mightier than the wrench of death. They were great in what is pre-eminently the grace of sanctified womanhood—the passive virtues. What a world of suffering and of heroic endurance is epitomised here! The writer has no time to tell more: the theme grows in its vastness; hence, under the pressure of a sublime necessity, he throws what has been left untold upon the shoulders of a few sentences until they stagger and are well-nigh crushed under their burden. Here the grandest summary of all types of patient endurance, which we can find within the covers of this book, is associated with the lives of obscure men and women. Heroism is shown to be no monopoly of position or of sex, of age or of nation. The favourite type of womanly devotion is presented not only in the words "received their dead to life again," but also in those which apply to the more general epithet "and others"—namely, "were tortured, not accepting deliverance." How often is this illustrated in other days than those of persecution by the devotedness of consecrated womanhood to husband, child, sufferer, and outcast, in toil, feebleness, suffering, and shame! How often have labours and hardships been gratefully accepted, and the suggestion of deliverance or exemption from such emphatically ignored! It is the summary of this indignant repudiation of deliverance from suffering, and even death, when they have stood in the path of duty, that occupies one of the finest chapters in the illustrious history of faith. Edwin Long gives a striking illustration of this type of heroism in one of his paintings, where he depicts a Christian maid who will not burn a single grain of incense upon Cæsar's altar to save her life, and that notwithstanding the eloquent appeal in the beseeching look of her lover, that for his sake she would do it. What significance there is in the words "and others"! They represent the forces which have not been tabulated in the ordinary records of triumphs, and yet they are the greatest of all. God in His record supplements every great name with "and others." Elijah in the hour of despondency thought himself alone as the centre and circumference of the true devotion of his age—"I, even I only, am left." God reminded him of the "and others," when He replied, "Yet I have left Me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" (1 Kings, xix. 18). Who won the battle of Waterloo? Wellington. Yes, "and others." Who have wrought Christian reformations of the past three centuries? Luther, Wycliffe, Knox, Wesley. Yes, "and others" in every instance. Now, it is of these "women and others" anonymously mentioned here that the writer adds, "Of whom the world was not worthy." Observe that this is not said of any of the great names mentioned previously. That went without the saying. But there was need of emphasising this regarding the unknown heroes of God. The world which extended such poor hospitality to its King has, throughout the ages, made no room for the royal, although unknown, men and women whom the King has sent. One of the hopeful signs of to-day is that the world gives room to the good and the faithful as it never did before. We, too, can belong, if we will, to the "and others." Our names will not be added to those of the world's great ones, nor yet to those of the more prominent heroes of faith, but we can belong to the nameless ones who yet have a glorious record to give. Are we unknown? So were these; yet the story of the triumphs of faith cannot be told without admitting their achievements into the record. So shall it be with us if only we are found faithful. They without us cannot be made perfect. This is God's reason for providing "some better thing for us" than was ever granted them. No age of faith is final or self-inclusive. The one becomes the counterpart of the other. Every generation of faithful heroes shall strike its own note, until all ages shall unitedly perfect the grand chord of music that shall ascend to the ear of God, and thrill heaven with its full and rich harmony. (*D. Davies.*) **Not accepting deliverance.**—*Faith refusing deliverance:*—We have here an exhibition of faith in one of its noblest forms. It is much for faith to commit itself to suffering, without casting about for a means of deliverance. But faith wins a victory that is greater

still, at such times as release is actually presented, and it waives the temptation away. For the deliverance that is spoken of here is a thing that lies shaped and ready; it is held ever before them as a near and inviting opportunity. And the struggle in such cases is not merely to refrain from attempting an escape, but to reject the outlets that are already open, there to tempt and importune by one's very side, with the short road they offer back into life and liberty. I. Let us take the truth before us AS A CHARACTERISTIC OF THE SAVIOUR'S CONSECRATION. As His people's Surety and His people's Example, at once the Foundation and the Pattern of all their obedience, it holds true in regard to Christ that "He accepted not deliverance." Is it not true that in our views of Christ and His Surety-work we are apt to limit ourselves to the initial condescension, and forget the life-long struggle? We are apt to fix our attention on the first grand compliance, when the covenant agreement was embraced. Then and thenceforward we regard His obedience as a matter of course—a matter, indeed, involving both continued surrender and continued suffering, but a matter whose cost He had counted, to whose endurance He was shut up, and from whose bitter experiences there was no opportunity of release. And most true it is that the endurance of a Saviour was a matter of course with Him, if what we mean is this, that all the faithfulness of all His mediatorial nature was pledged, and all the energies of His Divine will were directed to the prosecution and the final fulfilment of His task. But if we mean that He was committed to His work so securely as that there was no room for the temptation to recoil from it on His human side, and no battle with self in suppressing that temptation, then we are wrong. For the life-long temptation of Christ lay just here. Over and over again deliverance presented itself; its possibility was suggested by a power from without, its offer was responded to by the weak flesh within. And the victory was of faith—faith like our own—when the Saviour repelled it, and, having escape set before Him, accepted it not. He accepted not deliverance, that He might obtain the resurrection, and the resurrection was better than any deliverance. He laid down His life that He might take it again, and the life re-taken was more powerful and glorious—oh, how far!—than the life He originally laid down. II. WHAT WAS TRUE IN THE HISTORY OF THE MASTER IS TRUE IN THE HISTORY OF THE DISCIPLE; FAITH, ON OCCASION, MUST BE STRONG TO REFUSE, "ACCEPTING NOT DELIVERANCE." Doubtless the task given Christ to accomplish was different in many respects from the tasks given to us; and as His task was, so was His temptation to recoil from it—different in intensity, perhaps different, too, in kind. But, after all, the refusals have this great point in common, that in each case there is the rejection of relief, because relief is to be purchased at the expense of duty. Making all due allowance for distinctions, in the saint's case, as in Christ's, there is abundant opportunity for the exercise of faith in the aspect we speak of, its manifestation and triumph in declinature. And perhaps never is faith so signal as when it reveals itself just in this way; never is its nature so pure and exalted as when it toils and endures, "not accepting deliverance." For it is not merely that you make a grace of necessity, and settle yourself down in submission to suffer, because you recognise the suffering you endure to be inevitable; that is something, nay, it is much by itself, for there are various ways of enduring the inevitable, and there are many who meet and experience it amiss. But the victory of faith that we speak of lies here, that when the cup of relief is actually brought near, and the relief that it offers is urged by the tempter, commended by the world, and pled for by all the self-indulgence that lies deep in the human heart—I say the victory of faith lies here, that you bid the proposal away from you, rejecting the outlet for conscience' sake and for Christ's. Such is the principle; and on its special applications our daily experience sheds light. Perhaps the burden appointed you is the care of others. Interests may happen to be linked with your conduct, lives may happen to be left in your keeping, whose needs you are obliged to consult for, whose sufferings you are called to alleviate, whose very sins and infirmities you are bound to restrain. There by their side is your post, the opportunity which Providence has given you to use, the task which Providence has assigned you to pursue; and there are times when the work seems thankless, the success doubtful, and the tie depressing and irksome. Are there not those whose life, in the appointment of God, seems largely a sacrifice to such claims; and when the temptation comes to absolve themselves, as come it may, through the sense of a seeming failure, the attractions of a pleasanter lot, or the possibility of shifting the responsibility on others, are not theirs the triumph and reward brought before us in the text, as they cleave to the post of self-denial allotted them, "not accepting deliverance"? Or perhaps

the burden is more personal, and connects itself with circumstances in your own lot. Embarrassment in worldly affairs,—who knows not what possibilities of temptation lie here, in the retrieving of credit at the expense of truthfulness, and the purchase of relief by the sacrifice of honesty. Is not faith triumphant in declinature when it leads the sufferer at such seasons to resolve, "Let perplexities thicken, and circumstances hem, and disasters threaten as they may, I will abide by whatsoever things are pure, and refuse extrication till extrication is possible with honour, in the way which God discloses, on the terms of which conscience approves"; thus refusing deliverence? But why go farther? The instances are as various as the paths of obedience and suffering, which God in His providence appoints, and the victories possible are as manifold as the temptations to evade or deflect from them. (*W. A. Gray.*) *Anne Askew's martyrdom:*—Rich and another of the council came to her (Anne Askew) in the Tower, where she was then confined, and demanded that she should make the disclosures which they required concerning her party and her friends. She told them nothing. "Then they did put me on the rack," she relates, "because I confessed no ladies or gentlemen to be of my opinion; and thereupon they kept me a long time; and because I lay still and did not cry, my Lord Chancellor and Mr. Rich took pains to rack me with their own hands till I was nigh dead." Provoked by her saint-like endurance, these two ordered the lieutenant of the Tower to rack her again. He (Sir Anthony Knevett), "tendering the weakness of the woman," positively refused to do so. Then Wriothesly and Rich threw off their gowns, and threatening the lieutenant that they would complain of his disobedience to the king, "they worked the rack themselves, till her bones and joints were almost pinched asunder." When the lieutenant caused her to be loosed down from the rack, she immediately swooned. "Then," she writes, "they recovered me again." After that, "I sate two long hours reasoning with my Lord Chancellor on the bare floor, where he, with many flattering words, would have persuaded me to leave my opinion; but my Lord God (I thank His everlasting goodness) gave me grace to persevere, and I will do, I hope, to the very end." Unable to walk or stand from the tortures she had suffered, poor Anne Askew was carried in a chair to Smithfield, and when brought to the stake, was fastened to it by a chain which held up her body; and one who beheld her there describes her as "having an angel's countenance and a smiling face." The three Throckmortons, the near kinsmen of the queen, and members of her household, had drawn near to comfort Anne Askew and her three companions; but they were warned that they were marked men, and entreated to withdraw. At the very last, a written pardon from the king was offered to Anne Askew, upon condition that she would recant. The fearless lady turned away her eyes, and would not look upon it. She told them that she came not thither to deny her Lord and Master. The fire was ordered to be put under her, "and thus the good Anne Askew, with these blessed martyrs, having passed through so many torments, having now ended the long course of her agonies, being compassed in with flames of fire as a blessed sacrifice unto God, she slept in the Lord, A.D. 1546, leaving behind her a singular example of Christian constancy for all men to follow." Her crime was the denial of the mass. "So this," she wrote, "is the heresy that I hold, and for it must suffer death." She kept the faith to her God; she kept the faith to her friends, for she betrayed no one, enduring shame and agony with meek, unshaken constancy. (*H. Clissold, M.A.*) *The martyrs:*—As willing were many of the martyrs to die as to dine. (*J. Trapp.*) **A better resurrection.**—*The better resurrection:*—This inspired writer teaches us that these ancient saints were believers in a resurrection to eternal life. It is strange that this should ever be doubted. It seems clear they were, when we think of the very instinct of the spiritual life—of such expressions as those of David: "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness"—or of the language of Martha and Mary when they were still standing on Old Testament ground: "I know that He shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Their faith could not have the certainty and clearness which ours should have; but that they did look forward to a life to come there can be no question. They gave the best evidence of their faith, for they submitted to the most cruel tortures and to death, that they might obtain a better resurrection. But what are we to understand by a better resurrection? If we look to the first clause of the verse we shall see, "Women received their dead raised to life again." This was one kind of resurrection—a restoration to the life of this world—and to achieve it was a great triumph of faith. But there is another and superior resurrection—to the life of the eternal world—and the faith which carries men to this is of a nobler

kind, because it is more difficult. There are, then, two spheres of faith—that of those whose dead were brought back to a resurrection in this life, and that of those who pressed on for truth's sake to a better resurrection in the heavenly life. I. THE BETTER RESURRECTION. Imagine to yourselves an event you must in all likelihood meet, or which many of you may already have passed through, when some object of your dearest affection has been torn from you by death. There is the utter blank of desolation—the light of the eyes in which you could read tenderness and truth, quenched—no counsel or comfort, where you could always find it, however sore bestead. And if there came, in that day of darkness, One who gave you back your dead to be with you, to listen to your history of grief—of this very grief—to take your hand in His again, and make you feel He was yours as before—more than before—what could you ask, what could you think of, better than this? And yet if we could for a little rise above feeling, and appeal to reason—the reason which comes of faith—we might see that there is a better resurrection. 1. For think of the place of it. However quiet and happy the home might be to which the earthly life was brought back, it was part of a world which was smitten with the curse. Cares and fears and dangers and griefs were always ready to invade it. And, if we think of the body as the place to which the soul is brought back, it is a home that has also the curse resting on it, subject to pain and disease, which often make death to be chosen rather than life—to long torturing agonies, and to those strange depressions which cloud the soul, so that to those who look out at the windows everything is darkened. It is otherwise with the place of the better resurrection (see Rev. xxi. 27, xxii. 3–5.) And the body which here depresses the soul shall be framed to lift it up, to give it perception and vigour, insight and wing, made like unto Christ's glorious body. 2. Then think, by way of comparison, of the company in the place. In the case of all those who were raised again to life in this world, we find that they were restored to the family circle—the child of the Shunammite and the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow of Nain and the brother of Martha and Mary. There was an anxiety, if I may so speak, to surround them with their nearest friends when they opened their eyes again, that the first faces they looked on might be those of kindred—of father, mother, brother, sister. It was a merciful arrangement, to break the strange transition, to soothe the agitated, wondering spirit. But there was surely something more in it than this. It was, I think, also predictive. For if these resurrections, as a whole, were intended to help men to the faith of a power stronger than death, they were also intended to lead us to something of the manner of the life beyond. Do they not shadow out this truth, that God will begin our life again among those we have known and loved, and cause us to open our eyes in the bosom of what we shall feel to be a family and a home, with faces round us that are dear and familiar, and voices whose tones we know, ready to reassure us? God will "set the solitary in families," and in some way broken household ties will be re-knit "in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." Only there will be something better in it. The feeling of sad distrust which sometimes comes over us, as if the truest human friendship had an element of selfishness in it, shall pass away. What we gain here, at intervals, in some chosen crisis of our life—the meeting of souls in one, and profound, untroubled trust in the sense of it—shall then be a fixed condition. 3. Think, then, of the essence of this eternal life. Its essence consists in its entire freedom from sin. The presence of sin in our nature is at the root of every other evil, and deliverance from suffering in heaven is connected with perfect deliverance from sin. That must be a happy condition when all shall feel the blessedness of the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and the subject which often causes anxious thought, "Can I look to God as my Friend and Father?" shall be settled for perpetuity—no doubt, nor shadow of a doubt, upon it—but quietness and assurance for ever. And when there shall not only be no guilt on the conscience, but no sin in the heart, no lurking sympathy with it, but every fibre of the root of poison extracted, and the tree of life shall find its counterpart in the perfect fruit of every redeemed soul! 4. But we have to think also of the security of this state. These resurrections of earth were a return to a world of change and death. But the children of the heavenly resurrection "die no more; death hath no more dominion over them." The shadow is all behind, the light before, and the light shall no more go down. 5. There is one thing more, without which the thought of this better resurrection would be incomplete—the presence to which it introduces. The best of these other resurrections brought their subjects into the earthly presence of the Son of God; but this, into His heavenly fellowship. II. THE HIGHER FAITH

REQUIRED FOR THIS RESURRECTION. It needed very great confidence in the living God to believe that He could reanimate the dead frame which the soul had quitted for a few hours or days; but to face entire decay and mouldering dust, and to believe that those who sleep in it shall yet awake and sing—this requires a frame of soul still nobler. 1. It needs more of what I may call the patience of faith. We must endure the scorn of unbelievers, the talk of unchanging earthly laws rolled like the great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and must listen to the taunts of those who rejoice most when they think they hear the iron gates of a materialistic universe grate in upon the grave as an eternal prison. We have to struggle with the murmurs of our own hearts, that it is hard in God to put us to so long and so sore an encounter. 2. It needs also more of what we may call the sanctified imagination of faith. The circle of these earthly resurrections was very narrow and very simple compared with that which we expect. Their faith had only to bring back their dead to the old accustomed house, the well-known seat, the familiar haunts. Ours has to win out a footing for itself from the void and formless infinite, where the scenes and inhabitants and states of mind are so different that our friends seem to have passed away beyond our knowledge. There is an imagination of faith, not unbridled nor unscriptural, which has formed for itself a true and real world beyond death, which gives substance to things hoped for, and thereby helps to the evidence of things not seen. The Bible has encouraged it by its figures—"the tree of life," "the river of life," "the city of gold," "the Father's house of many mansions"—and imagination has no nobler work than to enter among these visions, and brood and muse till they become a palpable and real world: and till those who are not, because God has taken them, are seen walking there. 3. It needs more of the spiritual insight of faith. The faith of those who received their dead back to the present life had a visible Helper with wonder-working power standing before them. Our faith has not such aid. It has a harder, but a nobler work. It must seek to live as seeing Him who is invisible. It must rest for its ultimate foundation, not on any outward sign, not even on any uttered word as spoken to the ear, but on the nature of God Himself, and the life He infuses into the soul—on that basis which Christ has given it, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Christ Himself must be known to us in His ever-living, spiritual power. III. SOME OF THE WAYS IN WHICH WE MAY STRENGTHEN OURSELVES IN THIS HIGHER FAITH. 1. The first thought is one addressed to your reason. We read here of men who were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. They surrendered all that life holds dear, and life itself, from loyalty to the God of truth. Not only is the Bible full of this, but the course of history. The noble army of the martyrs is seen in every age, marching on, by scaffold and through fire, into the unseen. Can you imagine that their self-devotion was founded on delusion, and that God has made His world so that the noblest and divinest deeds in its history have a perpetual falsehood at their heart? 2. The next thought is one addressed to your heart. "Women received their dead raised to life again." Observe the expression, "Women—*their* dead." That side of human nature which has the deepest affection is clinging to *its* dead, claiming an abiding right of possession in them, and aiding faith to draw its lost treasure back to its arms. And it is a striking truth that in all the resurrections of which we read there was not only strong faith, but deep love—the love of woman. God intended that our deepest heart affections should be the helpers of our highest hopes, and the instinctive guarantees of a life to come. We have a right to reason that He would either have made our love less deep and lasting, or that there must be a final home in which its longings shall be realised. Every pure affection points us towards a city in the skies; every happy Christian home is a pledge of it; every bereaved heart is a Divine reason for it. A ground this why you should make your family ties so loyal and sacred that they shall keep your dead still yours, and bind you irrevocably to a life to come. 3. The last way we mention of confirming ourselves in this faith is addressed to the spirit. It is gained by the exercise of that spiritual insight to which we have already referred, leading the way to a spiritual life. The object of this sight, and the source of this life, is described by the sacred writer in words that follow—"Looking unto Jesus," &c. Reasoning about immortality may lead us so far, and the instinct of the heart may lead us further; but I know of no certainty save what grows from union with the dying and risen and living Son of God. There is a spring of immortality not only welling out from the throne of God, but ready to rise up in every heart that will admit Him who is the true God and eternal life. It is this faith entering into the soul as a vital principle

which formed those ancient martyrs, who counted it all joy to face suffering and shame, and to meet death, when the God of truth summoned them. (*J. Ker, D.D.*) *The better resurrection* :—I. REFLECT ON THE LESSON TAUGHT US BY THE CONDUCT OF THE ANCIENT SAINTS, THAT THIS EARTH IS NOT OUR HOME. II. INQUIRE WHAT THERE IS IN HEAVEN WHICH COULD ENCOURAGE THEM TO ENDURE SUCH EXTREME SUFFERINGS. In heaven a full and constant sense of God's favour, and uninterrupted communion with Him, are enjoyed. In heaven the most perfect love and gratitude are exercised towards God. Is it any wonder that the martyrs broke the fiercest terrors of death to reach such a heaven? The glorified saints possess the clearest apprehensions of the perfect and unchangeable happiness of God and of His kingdom. This is a source of the most pure and exalted delight. III. CONTEMPLATE THE GLORIES OF THE RESURRECTION WHICH THEY HAD IN VIEW. (*E. Griffin, D.D.*) *Maccabæan martyrs* :—There can be no doubt that the apostle has here travelled beyond the canonical books of Scripture into the records of Jewish history given in the Apocrypha. If you will read the sixth and seventh chapters of the Second Book of Maccabees, you will find a full elucidation of the very words here employed. You will find the history of a Jewish mother, who, in the persecutions under Antiochus, saw seven sons tortured and put to death on one day, and encouraged them by her words to witness a good confession, on the very ground here stated, that they might obtain a better than any earthly resurrection. You will read there, in express terms, that offer of "redemption" which they are here said to have refused. "Antiochus, while the youngest was yet alive, did not only exhort him by words, but also assured him with oaths, that he would make him both a rich and happy man if he would turn from the laws of his fathers." And you will read there likewise the answer. "The King of the universe," says one of these martyrs, "shall raise us up, who have died for His laws, unto eternal life." "It is good," says another, "being put to death by men, to look for hope from God to be raised up again by Him." "Fear not this tormentor," the mother said to the youngest, "but, being worthy of thy brethren, take thy death, that I may receive thee again in mercy with thy brethren." (*Dean Vaughan.*)

Ver. 36. **Cruel mockings and scourgings.**—*Cruelty* :—I. THE EVILS WERE—1. Mockings. The parties mocked were God's saints and prophets; the parties mocking were their enemies and persecutors, which proved to be sometimes their own brethren, of the same nation, language, kindred, religion—and amongst these sometimes the basest of the people, sometimes the priests and princes. These mockings issue out of contempt, and tend unto the disgrace of the party mocked, and makes it a sport to abuse them, so as to rejoice in their misery. These mockings are sometimes in words, sometimes in signs, sometimes in both. And because to a grave, serious person, of eminent worth, some of these mockings are very bitter, cutting, cruel, not only in respect of the matter, but also of the circumstances, this made the sufferings more glorious. 2. Scourgings. This is a punishment also of great disgrace and sometimes of cruel pain, when by whips, either of cords or wires, not only the skin is broken, but the very flesh torn. And this was the more grievous because it was an usual punishment of slaves, of vilest persons, and of such as were of worst behaviour; and by it they were not only put to pain, but to open shame. 3. Bonds and imprisonment. Both these were restraints of liberty, which is so precious and desirable. The end of them was the reservation of malefactors or suspected persons till the time of trial and judgment; and close imprisonment was so much the more grievous when they were deprived of all comfortable society, and no friends suffered to relieve them. II. THESE THEY SUFFERED. Some endured one of them, some more, some all; for they had trial or experience of these things, so some understand it, as though the sense were that they did not fear them threatened but feel them inflicted. Though their enemies did afflict and vex them unjustly and wickedly, yet they suffered them patiently, and resolved that though God should kill them, yet they would trust in Him. III. THEY THUS SUFFERED THESE THINGS BY FAITH. For they knew the way to heaven was rough and troublesome, and that these sufferings could not separate them from the love of God nor deprive them of the great reward, but prepare them for eternal glory. For they verily believed that there was eternal life, that God had promised it, and that constancy in the covenant and perseverance in the way of righteousness was the only means to obtain possession; and they knew that though their sufferings were grievous, yet the reward would infinitely recompense all. (*G. Lawson.*) *Man as a persecutor* :—Some creatures are unquestionably used as scourges; but perhaps the less we mortals say about such animated

pests the better. They act up to their own organisation, but never beyond; whilst it is far otherwise with mankind. The serpent employs its poisoned fangs to procure food or avert peril, real or fancied; the jaguar uses its terrible incisors in the destruction of its prey; and the shark avails itself of its dental apparatus to assuage its appetite. But man, says Hugh Miller, must surely have become an immensely worse animal than his teeth show him to have been designed for; his teeth give no evidence regarding his real character. Of our racks and thumbscrews, our inquisitions and oubliettes, our noyades at Nantes and our mitraillades at Lyons and Toulons, there is no prophetic intimation in our dentology. (*Scientific Illustrations and Symbols.*) *Cruelty of persecutors:*—As a specimen of the fierce cruelty of Queen Mary's officers, Mr. Froude writes: "The persecution degenerated into wholesale atrocity. On the 23rd of April six men were burnt at Smithfield; on the 28th, six more were burnt at Colchester; on the 15th of May an old lame man and a blind man were burnt at Stratford-le-Bow. In the same month three women suffered at Smithfield, and a blind boy was burnt at Gloucester. In Guernsey, a mother and two daughters were brought to the stake. One of the latter, a married woman with child, was delivered in the midst of her torments, and the infant just rescued was tossed back into the flames. Reason, humanity, even common prudence, were cast to the winds. Along the river bank stood rows of gibbets, with bodies of pirates swinging from them in the wind. Ferocity in the Government and lawlessness in the people went hand in hand." (*Tinling's Illustrations.*)

Vers. 37, 38. **They were stoned.**—*Martyrdom:*—The word "martyr" properly means "a witness," but is used to denote exclusively one who has suffered death for the Christian faith. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the chief and most glorious of Martyrs, as having "before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession" (1 Tim. vi. 13); but we do not call Him a martyr, as being much more than a martyr. He was not only a martyr; He was an atoning sacrifice. He is the supreme object of our love, gratitude, and reverence. Next to Him we honour the noble army of martyrs; not indeed comparing them with Him, "who is above all, God blessed for ever," or as if they in suffering had any part in the work of reconciliation, but because they have approached most closely to His pattern of all His servants. Now it may be said that many men suffer pain, as great as martyrdom, from disease, and in other ways: again, that it does not follow that those who happened to be martyred were always the most useful and active defenders of the faith; and therefore that in honouring the martyrs we are honouring with especial honour those to whom indeed we may be peculiarly indebted (as in the case of apostles), but nevertheless who may have been but ordinary men, who happened to stand in the most exposed place, in the way of persecution, and were slain as if by chance, because the sword met them first. But this, it is plain, would be a strange way of reasoning in any parallel case. We are grateful to those who have done us favours, rather than to those who might or would, if it had so happened. But in truth, if we could view the matter considerately, we shall find that (as far as human judgment can decide on such a point), the martyrs of the primitive times were, as such, men of a very elevated faith; not only our benefactors, but far our superiors. For let us consider what it was then to be a martyr. 1. It was to be a voluntary sufferer. Men, perhaps, suffer in various diseases more than the martyrs did, but they cannot help themselves. Again, it has frequently happened that men have been persecuted for their religion without having expected it, or being able to avert it. These in one sense indeed are martyrs; and we naturally think affectionately of those who have suffered in our cause, whether voluntarily or not. But this was not the case with the primitive martyrs. They knew beforehand clearly enough the consequences of preaching the gospel; they had frequent warnings brought home to them of the sufferings in store for them if they persevered in their labours of brotherly love. Death, their final suffering, was but the consummation of a life of anticipated death. Consider how distressing anxiety is; how irritating and wearing it is to be in constant excitement, with the duty of maintaining calmness and steadiness in the midst of it; and how especially inviting any prospect of tranquillity would appear in such circumstances; and then we shall have some notion of a Christian's condition under a persecuting heathen government. I put aside for the present the peculiar reproach and contempt which was the lot of the primitive Church, and their actual privations. Let us merely consider them as harassed, shaken as wheat in a sieve. Under such circumstances the stoutest hearts are in danger of failing. Thus the Church is sifted, the cowardly falling off, the faithful continuing firm, though in

dejection and perplexity. Among these latter are the martyrs; not accidental victims, taken at random, but the picked and choice ones, the elect remnant, a sacrifice well pleasing to God, because a costly gift, the finest wheat flour of the Church: men who have been warned what to expect from their profession, and have had many opportunities of relinquishing it, but have "borne and had patience, and for Christ's name sake have laboured and have not fainted." 2. But, in the next place, the suffering itself of martyrdom was in some respects peculiar. It was a death, cruel in itself, publicly inflicted, and heightened by the fierce exultation of a malevolent populace. The unseen God alone was their Comforter, and this invests the scene of their suffering with supernatural majesty, and awes us when we think of them. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me" (Psa. xxiii. 4). A martyrdom is a season of God's especial power in the eye of faith, as great as if a miracle were visibly wrought. It is a fellowship of Christ's sufferings, a commemoration of His death, a representation filling up in figure, "that which is behind of His afflictions, for His Body's sake, which is the Church" (Col. i. 24). And thus, being an august solemnity in itself, and a kind of sacrament, a baptism of blood, it worthily finishes that long searching trial which I have already described as being its usual forerunner in primitive times. To conclude. It is useful to reflect on subjects such as that I have now laid before you, in order to humble ourselves. What are our petty sufferings, which we make so much of, to their pains and sorrows, who lost their friends, and then their own lives for Christ's sake; who were assaulted by all kinds of temptations, the sophistry of Antichrist, the blandishments of the world, the terrors of the sword, the weariness of suspense, and yet fainted not? How far above ours are both their afflictions, and their consolations under them! (*J. H. Newman, D.D.*)

God's martyrs:—I. SEVERAL WAYS THEY WERE PUT TO DEATH. 1. Some were stoned. This was a punishment determined by God in the Judicial Laws of Moses, to be executed upon several transgressors. Yet no judge had warrant from God to condemn any innocent person to this kind of death; yet Zacharias, for charging the Jews with their sins, and denouncing God's judgments against them, was stoned to death. 2. Some were sawn asunder: thus some say Isaiah was slain by Manasses. This was a cruel kind of execution. 3. Some were tempted by some cruel kind of death to forsake their God, yet they did not. 4. Some were slain by the sword, which is used as well by the magistrate against offending subjects as by the soldier against enemies. Martyrs might be thus slain, either judicially or extrajudicially, without any formal process of judgment; for many times they laid heinous crimes to their charge. Sometimes they made justice injustice, obedience to God disobedience to man, and virtuous acts heinous crimes; and so-called good, evil; and light, darkness. The whole signifies that the lives of the saints and prophets were taken away cruelly and most unjustly by several kinds of tormenting deaths. II. Some were not slain, BUT LIVED A MISERABLE LIFE. For—1. They wandered. They might be wanderers, either by constraint or voluntarily: by constraint, as when they were banished, or forcibly dispossessed of their houses; voluntarily, as when for fear of death, or to enjoy the quiet of conscience, they fled out of their country, or from the places of their habitation, so that they have no certain safe place of rest—they were continually flitting and removing, as not having where to lay their heads. 2. In this wandering condition they were destitute of raiment and clothes, whereby they might cover their shame, and defend their bodies from the injuries of heaven. They wanted stuff, or, if they had stuff, they could not have made them; and in this case they used sheep-skins and goat-skins. Which expression implies that their clothing was very mean and coarse; yea, not so much as shapen, sewed up, and fitted for their bodies, but only wrapped about some principal parts, leaving others naked. These did not deserve the name of garments, but were nothing else but skin upon skin, the skin of beasts upon the skin of man. 3. They were destitute, that is, in great want of other necessaries, and, as the word doth signify, very poor and indigent; for they had left all their substance, or it was taken from them, or they could have no use of it in their necessity. And if they wandered amongst strangers, little was to be expected from them; for strangers are many times used strangely, and few are sensible of their miseries. Some think the word may be turned (*descerti*)—deserted and forsaken; for in such a case few dare own their own flesh and blood and nearest relations. Yet the former sense seems to be more genuine, for their very habit did signify that their penury was very great. 4. They were afflicted; for in such a case their straits must be many, and the pressures and perplexities of body and mind very great, and such as none, but some who have

been in their case, can truly apprehend. 5. They were tormented. The word may signify they were ill-handled, sorely vexed, oppressed, and brought very low. (*G. Lawson.*) **Sawn asunder.**—*Of sawing professors asunder:*—We do not read in sacred Scriptures of any that were sawn asunder. But the Jews, among their other traditions, have this, that the Prophet Isaiah was sawn asunder with a wooden saw, in the time of King Manasses. Epiphanius, in setting out Isaiah's life, noteth as much, so doth Hierom in the last close of the fifteenth book of his "Comment on Isaiah," p. 57. Whether that be true of Isaiah or not, most sure it is that some have after such a manner been martyred, either by sawing them asunder, or by pulling the members of their body asunder. This testimony of the apostle is sufficient to assure us of the truth thereof, and it giveth an instance of the cruelty of persecutors which showeth itself even in the death of martyrs. The ground of all was their extreme hatred of truth, and malice against maintainers thereof, which made them cast out all bowels of pity; yea, it made them take a devilish delight in cruelty. Herein lieth a difference betwixt cruelty that tends to death and that which is in death. The former may be to make men yield, but this is on malice and a mere devilish disposition. 1. This giveth instance of the depth of man's corruption, which makes him as a devil incarnate, worse than the most savage beasts. Some tyrants have so far exceeded in cruelty as they have hired men to invent instruments for cruel kinds of death. Phalaris among the heathen is famous, or rather infamous, for this. Perillus, at his motion, made a bull of brass, hollow within, which with fire might be heated red hot, and men put thereinto, their crying out for that torture seemed to be as the lowing of a bull, and thereupon no pity taken of them. Other like things are noted of Dionysius, Rouseris, and other tyrants. 2. These tortures do give demonstration of the inconceivable supportance and comfort of the Divine Spirit, whereby martyrs have been enabled with patience to endure what cruelties could be inflicted on them, and in the midst of torments meekly and sweetly to commend their spirits into God's hands, to the world's astonishment. 3. How should this stir us up patiently to bear smaller trials? Yea, not to be affrighted or discouraged with anything that man can do, but to rest upon this, that that God who hath enabled His servants in former times to endure such exquisite tortures unto death, will enable us to endure what He shall bring us unto. Pertinent to this purpose is the advice of Christ (Luke xiv. 4, 5). (*W. Gouge.*) **Tempted.**—"*They were tempted*":—I. THE UNIVERSAL TRUTH OF THE STATEMENT. It is not true that all the saints were scourged, nor all imprisoned, neither were all stoned, nor all slain with the sword, but it is true that they were all tempted. The word "tempted" bears two meanings; first of all, that of being tried or afflicted; and secondly, that of being enticed to sin. In the first aspect of it God did tempt Abraham, that is, He tried him; and this He does with all His people. God had one Son without sin, but He never had a son without trial. Count it not therefore a strange thing that you should have a cross to carry. As for the other sense of the word "tempt," the bad and hard one, in that sense also the statement is universally true. All the people of God have been tempted to sin. Satan no sooner perceives a child of God renewed in heart than he endeavours to mar the work of the Holy Spirit, to ruin the happiness of the believer, and to weaken his usefulness by leading him into sin. The world is always tempting God's people, and there is no position in life which is free from peril. Whether our path be rough or smooth we are liable to be tripped up unless a hand unseen shall hold us up. This is true of all who have gone before us—"they were tempted." At times Providence permits those who are in authority to exercise great power of temptation. So it was with the saints of old: those who were in power accounted them as sheep for the slaughter. But if there were no devil and no wicked world it would still be true that the saints were tempted, for every man is tempted when he is "drawn away of his own lust, and enticed"; and there is that within the best of men which might make them into the worst of men if the grace of God did not prevent. This fact that all the saints have been tempted should put an end to all murmuring upon that score. Somebody says, "Mine is a hard lot; I have to follow Christ under great disadvantages. My foes are those of my own household." Yes, your lot may be hard, but if you could just peep within the pearly gates and see that brilliant company, who are the peers of the realm of heaven, you would see none but those who once were tempted. Dare you demand a better lot than theirs? II. THE UNLIMITED BREADTH OF THE STATEMENT. "They were tempted": it does not say how. If one form of temptation had been mentioned, we should have surmised that they did not suffer in other ways, but when the statement is, "they were

tempted," we shall not be wrong in concluding that they were tried in any and every form. Whatever form temptation may take, in some or in all the saints, that temptation has been endured. We may say of Christ's mystical body as we may say of Christ's self—"tempted in all points like as we are." The saints who are in heaven were tempted in all ways. They were tempted by threats, but they were equally tempted by promises. They were equally deaf to either form of solicitation: they could not be driven, and they could not be drawn; however the net might be spread they could not be taken in it. They have been tempted in subtlest fashion: reason and rhetoric, threat and scorn, bribe and blandishment, have all been used, and used in vain. They were tempted both with trials peculiar to themselves, and with trials common to us all. III. THE SPECIAL POINT OF THE TRIAL. All these temptations, according to the connection of our text, were aimed at the faith of these holy men. Let us see to it that we become strong in faith, for that is true strength. Feed your faith well. Know the truth, and know it thoroughly. Read the Scriptures, and understand them. Make sure of the eternal verities. Live much upon the promises of future bliss. The sorrows of the way will grow light as the eternal weight of glory is revealed. IV. THE INTENSITY OF THIS TRIAL. That I gather from the position of our text, which is very strange. The more we think of it the more we shall see that being tempted is worthy to be put side by side with being sawn asunder, and being slain with the sword; for many of those who are daily tormented with temptations will tell you that it is as painful to bear as any form of death. I want to answer the question which naturally arises—Why then does God permit His people to encounter so much temptation? Why is the road to heaven so beset with foes? The Lord answers many designs at one and the same time. 1. Persecution and temptation are a sort of sieve, to sift the Church of God. There must be these fiery persecutions, that the drossy hypocrites may be purged out. 2. Trial and temptation also discover the reality of conversion. Now the fact that he can stand against temptation is one of the very best evidences that he is born again and made a new creature in Christ Jesus; and those who see such a change confess that this is the finger of God. 3. Again, it is by this that men are left without excuse, inasmuch as they refuse the light. I sometimes wonder why ungodly men cannot let Christian people alone. But no; the moment a Christian appears among working men they are all upon him as though they were so many dogs worrying a hare. What does this show but that they know the truth and hate it? They know the light, but would fain quench it, and therefore they put from them the candle which God sends to them. This leaves the ungodly altogether without excuse; it is God's purpose that it should do so. Meanwhile it does saints good; for painful as it is to them, it drives them to prayer. Many a man lives near to God in prayer who would not have done so if he had enjoyed an easier position. His prayerfulness strengthens him; trial makes him grow in faith and in every grace, and he becomes a better Christian. I believe that persecution is overruled by God for displaying the work of the Divine Spirit. Men see in Christian patience, in Christian courage, and in Christian zeal what the Holy Ghost can work even in such poor raw material as our human nature is. God is magnified by the successful struggling of His people out of love to His name. Moreover the life of the Church is the life of Christ extended and drawn out in His people. It seems to me the trials and the temptations of this life are all making us fit for the life to come—building up a character for eternity. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Wandered about.**—*Believers may be wanderers:*—The grounds hereof are these—1. The envy and hatred of the world against them, which will not suffer them to sit safely and securely on their own nests. The men of this world are to believers as fowlers to fowls, and hunters to beasts. So was Saul to David (1 Sam. xxiv. 11, 14, and xxvi. 20). Hereunto does the prophet allude (Jer. xvi. 16; Micah vii. 2; Lam. iv. 18). 2. Saints' high esteem of the truth of God, and of the peace and quiet of their own conscience, which they prefer before house and home, kindred and country. They had rather wander with a quiet conscience, holding the truth, than sit at ease in their own house under their own vines and fig-trees with a torturing conscience upon denying the truth. 3. God's wise providence, who opens a way for them to escape death; yet so as their faith is proved to be sound by this kind of trial, which is a great one, and in the consequence thereof may prove worse than a present death. Yea, further, God hereby keepeth the light of His truth from being put out, and causeth it to shine up and down in more places (Acts viii. 1, 5). This being the condition whereunto believers may be brought, they who have settled places of abode ought to succour such wanderers (chap. xiii. 2). This, then, must needs be a strong

motive to endure this trial, because it is no other than what is common to all saints. That we may the better observe this take notice of these rules—1. Be well instructed in the nature of this world and vanity of all things under heaven; how nothing is certain and sure. Why, then, should men seek a certain abiding in so uncertain a place? 2. Get assurance of that house, city, and country which is to come. Assurance thereof will make us more content to be without house, city, and country here in this world. 3. In thy best security and most settled estate be a pilgrim in thy mind and disposition, as Abraham and other patriarchs were (ver. 13). Herewith the apostle supports Christians (1 Cor. x. 13). (*W. Gouge.*) *Of the extreme want whereunto confessors may be brought:*—Saints may be brought to extreme exigencies. So was David (1 Sam. xxi. 3); and Elijah (1 Kings xvii. 6), had not a raven brought him provision, he might have starved; and so again, had not an angel provided for him (1 Kings xix. 7, 8). So Lazarus (Luke xvi. 21), and many others in all ages. 1. God suffers this that His children might be the rather moved to look up unto Him, and wholly and only to depend upon Him. External means are many times an occasion of drawing the hearts even of saints from God (Psa. xxx. 6). The wise man saith, that "the rich man's wealth is his strong city" (Prov. x. 15). 2. God suffers this that His succouring of them might be the more manifested and magnified. (*Ibid.*) **Of whom the world was not worthy.**—*An epic of failure:*—This chapter is the most audacious of all poems—it is the epic of failure. Other poets have recited the conquests of their legendary heroes; it was reserved for the poet of faith to recite an ode not less magnificent in honour of heroes all foiled and fallen. That is the way of the Bible. That is why the Bible is the comforter of the weary, the inspiration of all hope-blasted and heart-broken victims of life's illusions. No good man has wholly prospered in his aims; the best men mourn the failure of all that they best conceived. No true heart in this house of God is satisfied with itself. In proportion to its truth and nobleness it mourns the failure of its highest aims. All this, at least—in part. Enough to inspire thoughts of sadness. Let us listen to this voice which comes to us across the rolling waves of all the centuries, chanting the higher victories and the diviner gains of the heroes of faith. So shall we be comforted under every failure and re-inspired after every defeat. All these died in faith, not having received the promises—disappointed, cheated of the lower, the temporal, the material, yet receiving a spiritual, a higher and eternal fulfilment. An epic of failure! We have learned that the throne of highest glory is the cross of the world's rejection. At the feet of that colossal Failure who was gibbeted on Calvary we lose our carnal ideals and learn to read the divinest and most lasting triumphs in the defeats which seemed most shameful. Need I waste any word in explanation? The Failure I join with the poet of faith to celebrate is not that which springs from cowardice, from sloth, or from incapacity. Surely not! There are men who fail for no other reason than that they are invertebrate sluggards, or waste their energies on aims that are unworthy and perishable. These I sing not; they are better forgotten. The charity of God has ordained that they pass quickly out of human memory. Before you sneer at any man as a "failure" be sure you inquire whether the conditions of success were not then absent, or worse, whether the world, snarling at all noble enterprise, was not too strong for him. Fools sneer when wise men err! Before you scornfully label any man "failure," call to mind some of history's divinest defeats—Socrates, hemlock-cup in hand; Paul of Tarsus in Nero's dungeon; Jesus Christ on the Cross! Nothing is more tragic than the way society sometimes arrays its forces against daring and aspiring youth. It is an envious world. And not unseldom death overtakes a brave young soul before he has fought his way to victory. So it was with that Italian painter who, reduced to painting shop-signs for a livelihood, died by the roadside of starvation and a broken heart. After his death men woke up to find that an artist had been amongst them. That his soul was great can save no hero of faith from neglect and oblivion, if he have not built some brazen monument solid on the brute earth. That he left his generation richer in faith, in hope, in aspiration, is nothing. That he preserved it from brutishness, from moral stagnation, is nothing. How can these trifling divinities atone for his failure to run a successful church, or make a pile, or initiate a spirited foreign policy? These be thy gods, O Israel! But, Vivas to those noble failures! we exclaim. Vivas to the young men and maidens, over whose unfulfilled plans an early grave closed! Vivas to all thinkers who died with their theories undemonstrated! Vivas to all statesmen hustled from power by a recreant and godless people, to die amid the shattered fragments of a just and righteous policy! Vivas

to the merchant who, rather than riot in plundered thousands, died an honest bankrupt! Vivas to the incorruptible pauper, who might have exchanged the poorhouse for a palace, could he but have smiled and been a villain! Vivas to the shackled and branded criminal, doomed to perpetual prison and disgrace by the lie of perjured witnesses! Vivas to all true souls who have perished in just causes amid rabble execrations! Vivas to all who have attempted great things for humanity and God, and—failed! Spanning my native Tay, a strong and stately viaduct successfully defies all pressure of wind and wave, bearing mighty engines with living freights from shore to shore in all weathers. Yet it is built upon a past failure! a few years ago another structure stood in its place, it was at once a thing of beauty to the eye and of profit to the shareholder. The engineer was honest and capable, and was knighted for his pains. But it fell before the strong winds of a night, and with it fell, not only four-score human beings, but the reputation, and, alas! the reason, of its constructor. Shall we upbraid him? Say, rather, shall we not praise him who, first of the whole race of men, attempted a design so vast, and built the longest bridge in the world! Other engineers came after him. They improved upon his ideas. They learned from his mistakes. The result is a bridge which seems good for the service of many generations. Vivas to those who have failed! I say that the Tay Bridge was built not alone by the successful men who reaped the subsequent rewards, it is built also upon the souls of the nameless workmen who perished in its construction, and upon the soul and mind of poor, demented Sir Thomas Bouch. No need to pile up illustrations. It is plain that humanity might have prospered fairly well without its successes, but could have progressed no jot or tittle without its defeats. Having regard to the conditions of human life, it is plain that defeat is not less essential than victory; misdirection and error prepare the way for solid and enduring good. If I may choose, I will have for my portion the failures of mankind; he may have the successes who will. Vivas to those who have failed! Of whom the Mammon-worshipping world was not worthy. Failure? Let us not breathe the word in connection with any honest effort. Let us not so insult the memory of the baffled brave. No true ideal is finally dishonoured; no true effort is wasted; no true worker wholly perishes. From his loss humanity achieves a greater gain. Our future is built upon his past. He himself may perish, Moses-like, upon some lonely Nebo, but we pass over into the promised land! (*W. Walsh.*) *God's esteem of His people*:—I. LET THE WORLD THINK AS WELL, AS HIGHLY, AS PROUDLY OF ITSELF AS IT PLEASETH, WHEN IT PERSECUTES IT IS BASE AND UNWORTHY OF THE SOCIETY OF TRUE BELIEVERS, AND OF THE MERCIES WHEREWITH IT IS ACCOMPANIED. II. GOD'S ESTEEM OF HIS PEOPLE IS NEVER THE LESS FOR THEIR OUTWARD SUFFERINGS AND CALAMITIES, WHATEVER THE WORLD JUDGETH OF THEM. They cannot think otherwise of them in their sufferings, than they thought of Christ in His. They did "esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted" (Isa. liii. 4); as one rejected of God and man. Such is their judgment of all His suffering followers; nor will they entertain any other thought of them. But God is of another mind. III. OFTTIMES IT IS BETTER, AND MORE SAFE, FOR THE SAINTS OF GOD TO BE IN THE WILDERNESS AMONG THE BEASTS OF THE FIELD, THAN IN A SAVAGE WORLD, INFLAMED BY THE DEVIL INTO RAGE AND PERSECUTION. IV. Though the world may prevail to drive the Church into the wilderness, to the ruin of all public profession in their own apprehension, YET IT SHALL BE THERE PRESERVED UNTO THE APPOINTED SEASON OF ITS DELIVERANCE—the world shall never have the victory over it. V. IT BECOMES US TO BE FILLED WITH THOUGHTS OF, AND AFFECTIONS UNTO, SPIRITUAL THINGS, TO LABOUR FOR AN ANTICIPATION OF GLORY, THAT WE FAINT NOT IN THE CONSIDERATION OF THE EVILS THAT MAY BEFAL US ON THE ACCOUNT OF THE GOSPEL. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *The world's unworthiness a cause of saints wandering*:—The first thing expressed in this reason of confessors wandering is, the world's vileness. The world is not worthy of them. This consequence is confirmed by this direction which Christ giveth to His disciples (Matt. x. 11, 13). They who preferred the things of this world before communion with the great King were counted not worthy of that favour to sit at His table (Matt. xxii. 4, 5). This should dissuade confessors of the truth to take heed of complying too much with the men of this world. This had almost cost Jehosaphat his life (2 Chron. xviii. 31). He was sharply reproved for it by a prophet (2 Chron. xix. 2). Saints do herein undervalue themselves, and give occasion to be trampled under foot, yea, and torn to pieces. The world may take great advantage hereby, but saints may be sure to get no good. Should saints comply with them whom God thinks to be unworthy of them? This is the second thing expressed; for this phrase, "was not worthy," is here

set down as a judgment, which followed upon saints wandering from them. So as the world's unworthiness deprived them of the society of saints, and might be very beneficial unto them. On this ground Christ saith to the Jews, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you" (Matt. xxi. 43). And it is expressly noted that Christ returned back again from the unworthy Gadarenes, where they besought Him to depart from them (Luke viii. 37). This departing from the men of the world is sometimes done by the world's forcing them (Acts viii. 1; Matt. x. 23). Thus God in His wise providence maketh persecutors spoilers of themselves. Potiphar spoiled himself of a very faithful and profitable servant by casting Joseph into prison (Gen. xxxix. 20), so the Jews spoiled themselves of Christ (John vii. 33, 34). And of the apostles, who carried the light of the gospel from the Jews to the Gentiles (Acts xiii. 46, 47). 1. Here we have one special reason of saints suffering what they do by the world. It is not God's displeasure against them; for in love to them, and for their present and future glory are they here persecuted. It is for the punishment of the world to deprive it of those that would be their greatest honour, comfort, and profit, if they were well entertained among them. 2. Herein appeareth the world's sottishness in punishing themselves by their attempts to punish saints. They may spoil saints of earthly habitations and revenues, they may put them to bodily pains and deprive them of life, but they spoil themselves of the means of spiritual grace, of peace of conscience, and comfort of soul. Yea, and of eternal life, and implunge themselves into easeless torments. 3. This showeth whose case is the worst, whether their's that are persecuted, or their's who do persecute. Surely if all things be duly weighed, we shall easily discern that the persecutor's case is the worst. The persecuted therefore may say, "Weep not for us, but weep for yourselves" (Luke xxiii. 28). 4. This giveth occasion to such as are deprived of faithful ministers and godly neighbours to examine themselves, and consider whether their unworthiness hath not been the cause thereof. 5. This exhorteth us to esteem ministers, saints, Divine ordinances, and other holy things appertaining to the kingdom of God, so as God may account us worthy to enjoy them; and not take them away by reason of our unworthiness. (*W. Gouge.*) *The world's treatment of great men:*—The words occur parenthetically. Sufferings precede, and sufferings follow. It seems as if the writer, glowing with devout thankfulness over the worthy deeds of these martyrs of faith, was struck suddenly with scornful indignation at the thought that all their sufferings were inflicted upon them by a world that was all unworthy of them, a world for which they were far too good, a world which affected to despise and presumed to torture them, while in reality it was in comparison with this pure gold of humanity, thus tried in the furnace of persecution, mere contemptible dross. These heroes of all time, these the salt of the world, who saved it from utter corruption, and by the very blood which their persecutors poured out sowed the seed which was to renew the face of the earth; these representatives of what man can be when he allows God to work in him mightily, were men who in their lifetime were despised as unworthy of the world, and who loved the world which was indeed unworthy of them. There is something very awful, something which brings the blush of shame and indignation to our cheeks, in the thought that the world thus spills the blood, and tries to stifle the enthusiasm, of its best and noblest children; that their best acts are often misconstrued; that the finest and purest elements in their characters are often just those which during their lives are least appreciated. There seems to be an enormous waste of human goodness, while we have at the same time so little of it that we cannot afford, if we only knew our true interests, to lose a single lifeful. But the important point for each of us to consider, is to which of the two classes he himself practically belongs; whether in the sight of God, from whom no secrets are hid, he is one of those whom God calls "the world," or one of those of whom the world is "not worthy." I know no more simple or practical way of setting this question before ourselves, than by asking what is our own estimate of those whom we believe to be trying to serve God. When you see anything, any person, superior to yourselves, does the sight give you pleasure? Do you feel proud of him? Do you try to aid him? If you ever hear of some daring act being done, do you feel disposed to give it its right name; or do you prefer to single out any ludicrous incidents in it, to extract from it and deliberately disparage all its nobleness, and make it as unlikely as you can that there should be any repetition of such a manifestation of enthusiasm. So far as you can judge, does your personal influence tend to increase or to diminish the chance of any marked display of goodness or courage being exhibited in your own society? It was said of a great English statesman—the Earl of Chatham—that no man ever left his cabinet

without feeling himself a braver man than he was when he entered. . . . To know how to do justice to all persons; to admire what really deserves admiration in the characters of those with whom we have to do; to detect through the coverings of awkwardness, or shyness, or reserve, or even much more serious defects, the true solid metal which lies beneath—is a duty which is not learned in a day. But we have advanced far in the right direction when we have satisfied ourselves that it *is* a duty to do this; that we have no right to be blind to latent good in others; that God wishes us to find it out, and then to pay honour to it for His sake; and that for all hasty judgments, and for all blind judgments, and for all uncharitable judgments, and above all for all judgments which *wish* to find evil rather than to find good, we shall most certainly have to give account. . . . It would be well if you could commence life with an instinctive hatred of all persecution, and especially of all religious persecution. There always is and always will be a "world"—it may be a literary world, or a fashionable world, or a religious world—but there always will be some dominant body in every society which passes judgment without having the earnestness to care to know the merits of the case on which judgment is to be passed. This world always dislikes and is suspicious of everything new, everything which calls upon it to reconsider its principles, and, in short, to "examine itself whether it be in the faith"; whether its customs also, as well as its opinions, will bear testing. And the world finds means for making its dislike and suspicion felt, and it taxes to the uttermost the patience and courage of those who by honest and painful, if often misguided, efforts are striving to serve it. Among the chief benefactors, not of England only, but of the human race, stands William Tyndal, the man who almost alone gave us the substance of our wonderful translation of the Bible. He was a thorough student, not, so far as we know, a man of vehement action, like Luther. But he admired Luther, when to do so was dangerous. He expressed his opinion openly, and he fell into disgrace. He escaped into a foreign country. He translated part of the Bible. It was seized and destroyed by an English bishop. He continued his work. He was constantly under the shadow of martyrdom. But the student worked on; and his work was done. The Bible was given as a heritage to Englishmen; but scarcely was the long toil of life completed, when the workman was called into a higher Presence. By the treachery of an English spy he was placed in the hands of the English authorities, and as has been said, "passed away in smoke and flame to his rest." (*H. M. Butler, D.D.*) *The world's estimates:*—How different are the estimates of earth and heaven! How different is man's standard of judgment from that which Scripture calls "the shekel of the sanctuary"! The world drives its saints into deserts and caves of the earth. The world says of each, what it once said of one, "Away with such a fellow from the earth—it is not fit that he should live." God looks down from heaven upon the children of men, sees their rash judgments, hears their hard sentences, one upon another, and says, just of those whom the world counts wanting in every attribute of sociability and citizenship—"of whom, on the contrary, the world was not worthy." Let us try to estimate aright this parenthetical comment. "The world." This cosmos of sense and matter, with its pleasures and its ambitions, its lustings and strivings and warrings, its vanities, its falsehoods, and—its children. Yes, there are those who live for it and for it only, and who count any other life an enthusiasm, a fanaticism, or a hypocrisy. And the world is very real—who shall speak to the contrary? Very substantial, very powerful in its edicts, its threatenings, and its punishments. This is its day, and it makes the most of it. The world "knows that it has but a short time"—and there is a misgiving, too, under its vauntings, which make them more arrogant and imperious. Such reflections are necessary to the understanding of the text. And they enable us to go forward, and show why men of faith are so repulsive to the world; why, in days of violence, they are persecuted; why, in days of tranquillity, they are courteously, but effectually, ostracised. There is a natural hostility between faith and the world. The one lives for the future: the other lives for the present. The one sees the Invisible: the other places Him at an immeasurable distance. Nowhere is the world really stronger than in Christendom. To profess faith—to fight for the faith—is the world's masterpiece of self-tranquillising. Are we not all of one speech? Why be more scrupulous, more sensitive, more religious, than your neighbour? The world worshipping is twice the world. It has made its covenant with death—with hell it is at agreement. And that which might seem to be faith's remedy is forbidden her. "Wilt Thou that we go and gather them up?" Wilt Thou that we discern for ourselves between the false and

the true, between the nominal believer and the real believer, within the professing Church, and within the visible communion? Not so. "Lest, while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them." At all risks, the world and the Church must be mingled together in the present; if so be the influences of grace may yet touch the worldly, and bring them into the fold of the real and of the true. Thus we are taught to look more at principles than at persons. We must not, we cannot, go apart by ourselves, and leave the Church-world to its own ways and its own devices. If it excommunicates, if it drives into the desert, it must have its way: and it will set its mark, if not publicly yet in secret, upon all who refuse to speak its thought and to do its bidding. The man of faith, the consistent Christian, may be in the world, of it he cannot be—and the world knows it. The world of the home, the world of the school, the world of the shop and the counting-house, the world of fashion and of society, feels and resents the reproving speech, and yet more the reproving silence, of the man who quietly and consistently lives for the unseen, and turns all his thoughts and actions that way. And this is the closing lesson of the chapter of faith. We are reminded that there is a "world" present and active in the heart of Christian England, and that there is also, side by side with it, not only a visible professing community, which, for us, is almost coextensive with it, but also a secret society, knit together in a bond of spiritual sympathy, not only by the possession of common ordinances of worship and rules of living, but by the actual presence, within each member, of the Holy Spirit of God quickening, guiding, enabling, sanctifying—drawing their desires heavenward, and making "that world," the world of heaven and of God, more real and more present and more persuasive to them than all the pleasures and all the interests of things seen and temporal. We are reminded also that in this realisation of the invisible God lies a power, and a dignity, and a patent of nobility, altogether different, in kind as well as in degree, from all the greatness and all the honour which can be conferred by rank or wealth, by genius or intellect, by the admiration of senates or the favour of kings. "Of whom the world was not worthy" is God's description of the very men whom the world casts out as fools or madmen. Live now, at all costs, for "that world," whether "this world" shall curse or bless. In pureness, in meekness, in diligence, in love unfeigned—with the Holy Spirit within you—so pass the time of your sojourning, and look for your rest and your home in the one "city which hath the foundations," the city of the everlasting glory, whose light is the crucified and risen One, whose Architect and Artificer is God. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Great men*:—I. THE WORLD AND THE CHURCH FORM A VERY DIFFERENT ESTIMATE OF GREATNESS. Look at history. What names are those that fill its pages? Kings, counsellors, and chieftains—men who have lived only to subdue and govern their fellow-men. History is so occupied with their deeds, that it finds no place to record manifestations of moral principle, and works of true greatness. There is no record in it of those men, who through a strength and purity of soul obtained a sway over the minds of their fellow-men; who, rising above their times, assailed all forms of error, rescued great truths from the corruption of ages, and by their characters, deeds, sufferings, and writings, proved themselves the benefactors of their race. The world does not know them; but their names are repeated with veneration by thousands. These are our great men; and the day is coming when their greatness shall be acknowledged. The Church esteems moral greatness as the highest kind of greatness; and whatever qualities a man may have apart from this, she refuses to admit his pretensions, and casts out his name. There is too much of lowliness and simplicity in true moral greatness to charm and attract the world. Intellectual greatness is far inferior to moral greatness. A man may be intellectually great, and yet morally mean. He may be like Bacon, the greatest and the meanest of men. The philosopher and the poet are inferior to the Christian. The Church knows nothing of the greatness of men as kings, as warriors, or as statesmen. In her estimation "the Christian is the highest style of man." It is necessary to moral greatness, that there should be an acquaintance with the truth—with God's truth; that truth which illuminates and saves the soul; that truth which sustains a man amidst the scoffings and revilings of an age; that truth which teaches a man how to live and how to die. To be a great man, therefore, a man must recognise the superiority of his nature. He must act as a man, knowing and feeling that he has a soul. He must not be imposed upon by the pageants of the world; he must not be allured by the charms of the things that are passing away; he must confess himself to be a stranger and a sojourner here, as all his fathers were. A great man must be a bold man—one who will act out his convictions, defying all peril, and hearing in his own con-

science a voice louder than the threatenings of the world. He must be a man who will dare to be singular; who will hew out his own pathway; who will even look death in the face rather than give up his principles, and leave guilt upon his conscience. He must be an active man—a man making his existence necessary to the world, and who will not let the world do without him; yea, the world cannot, the world shall not do without him. It retains the impression of his deeds. His influence shall outlive himself, and shall never die. II. THERE HAVE BEEN GREAT MEN IN THIS WORLD OF OURS—men "of whom the world was not worthy." There have been some who were men above their age—men standing out from their fellows, men who have lived alone in their generation, and have been like stars in the expanse of heaven. Among the great men who have lived since the days of the apostles I may single out the monk of Germany. Among the most memorable scenes that have occurred in European history is, undoubtedly, that scene in which that great man stood before the world's authorities friendless and alone and when the question was proposed to him—"Will you recant?" he answered—"By God's grace, never." By that one act and deed of his he deserves to be enrolled among the list of those men "of whom the world was not worthy." III. GREAT MEN ARE MADE SO BY THE GRACE OF GOD. They were "born not of blood, nor of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Their lives were a copy of the holiness of truth, an illustration of the beauty of truth, and a manifestation of the power of truth. IV. GREAT MEN HAVE, GENERALLY SPEAKING, GIVEN AN IMPULSE TO THE AGE IN WHICH THEY LIVED. It was impossible for them to think and speak and act in such a world as this, without producing undying impressions; it was impossible for them to suffer and to die, without leaving memorials of their names, their deeds, and their sufferings, in the sympathies and in the hearts of men. They laid the foundation of that vast structure of civil and religious liberty in which we meet and bow down and worship to-day. V. THE WORLD HAS ALWAYS BEEN IGNORANT OF ITS GREAT MEN. There was One, of whom it becomes us to speak with the greatest reverence. He came into this world; and though He had made the world, yet it knew Him not, and cried out—"Away with Him! away with Him! crucify Him! crucify Him!" And if the world know not the Master, is it likely that it will recognise His disciples? The world has never known these great men. It has always treated them with contempt. They have been afflicted, forsaken, tormented; they have "wandered about in goatskins and in sheepskins"; and yet these very men have been among our true nobility and spiritual aristocracy; "of whom the world was not worthy." And yet, for them the world forged its fetters, opened the doors of its dungeons, and lit up its fires, that their spirits might ascend to liberty and to God." (*H. J. Bevis.*)

Vers. 39, 40. **These all . . . received not the promise.**—*What of the saintly dead prior to the coming of Christ?*—It is altogether probable that among the Jewish Christians there would be great anxiety to know what had been the condition, in the unseen world, of their saintly forefathers who had died before the coming of the Messiah. It is probable, too, that on this subject revelations may have been made by the apostles which were not recorded in Holy Scripture, because their chief interest and practical importance would cease before the true tradition of their teaching had been corrupted and passed away. An incidental sentence of this kind seems to imply a knowledge, in primitive times, of the state of good men who had died before Christ came, which has disappeared from the memory of the Church. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*) *The argument*:—Your fathers, the greatest of them, while they lived, and after they entered Paradise, were waiting and hoping for the coming of Christ. Neither on earth nor in heaven could they be "made perfect" until He came. Till His birth, till His death, till His ascension to glory, *their* life was a life of faith; and yet *you* are ready—though the Divine promise is already in part fulfilled—to surrender your confidence in God, because the complete fulfilment is still delayed. (*Ibid.*) *The promise of incompleteness*:—There was a plain mechanic in a little town in Scotland who feared God, and built houses for a livelihood. He never had more than three months of schooling in his life. Let us draw a circle round the seventy-five years of that life, and look at it merely by itself. Measured by the ordinary standards of the world, how cramped it is! how insignificant! But then *can* we look at that life in that way? It is plain that we cannot; for every life establishes connections and creates consequences. It is with a life as it is with a large estate. It cannot be closed up at once upon the death of the testator. Certain obligations have a given time to run.

Certain outstanding amounts of capital may not be paid in for years. Indeed, it is doubtful if the real sum total of any man's life can be stated until the end of all things. This humble mechanic, for instance, was the father of a son whose name is known and honoured wherever the English language is spoken. To James Carlyle's life must be added the sum of Thomas Carlyle's life and the influence of his writings, and the influence of the men whose thought has been stimulated or shaped by those writings. I have taken this familiar illustration as containing in itself the substance of my text to-day. The truth it gives us is that no man's life can be estimated by itself, but helps to complete the past, and is completed by the future. These people—Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and the rest—were the spiritual heroes of an earlier time, representing the nation's moral high-water mark. They were powers, and society acknowledged and bore witness to their power. Yet there was a good in store, which, though they contributed to it, did not come to them. There was a promise infolded in their life which was not fulfilled to them, but to those who came after them. If their life is to be estimated only in itself, if its record is to cover only the sum of its years, then this state of things seems unjust and cruel, and the life itself of little account. But you at once see that the writer is taking a far wider view than this. He is contemplating these early heroes, not only by themselves, but as links in a great succession of men of faith. He is viewing the results of their life as parts of the great development of humanity at large. Now, the recognition of this as a law of life has a vast influence upon any man's character. It shapes a man of a different type from one who regards his life as an end to itself; and it is here set down to the credit of these Old Testament heroes, as an element of their faith, that they apprehended this larger law and lived by it; that they put mere personal considerations out of sight—were content to be merely stages, and not finalities, in the great growth of human history. So far as this world is concerned their life goes to minister to other lives, and is simply a factor in the progress of mankind as a whole. This is a far wider conception of faith than we commonly form. We are disposed to make faith exclusively personal, to trust God mostly for what He will do for us, or for those most closely bound to us. We say to ourselves, "We must trust God for daily bread, for provision for old age or sickness, for a place in heaven"; and so we must. So Christ commands us to do; but, at the same time, He teaches us to give faith a much wider range. We are parts of a great Divine economy, of a great march of ideas and character; builders on a great building of God, each carving his stone, or laying his few courses of brick; husbandmen in God's vast domain, each tilling his few acres—one sowing, another reaping; one planting, another watering. No man's faith is perfect which regards merely his own salvation; no man's prayer is according to Christ's standard which leaves out "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Thus identifying ourselves with the interests of God's kingdom—the whole development of our race—we find ourselves identified with a process. The perfect man, the perfect society, are not created out of hand. They have not come yet, but they are slowly coming, and coming through much crudeness and imperfection by the way. Thus, then, the kingdom of God is no exception to the law which obtains in other kingdoms—that growth involves imperfection and destruction. Take the law as it holds in nature. Growth comes through death. The corn of wheat brings forth fruit only as it dies. In nature's processes we find much which serves merely as the step or the scaffolding to something better and greater and more beautiful, and which, when its purpose is accomplished, passes away. There is the worm. It crawls in the sun, and lies upon the leaf, and then wraps itself in the cocoon; and then springs forth the butterfly in all the glory of gold and purple: and the worm-life and the cocoon-life have done their work, and have given that beautiful creation to the air and the flowers, and they pass away. Go higher up, into the life of man. A perfect, healthy child, how beautiful it is! how winning! how innocent! how natural and graceful its attitudes! What parent has not found himself looking back to the years of infancy with a feeling that the years which have made his children men and women have robbed him of something ineffably sweet and precious? Childhood is only a stage: so is youth, with its flush of hope, its high aims, its fulness and vigour of life; and so manhood, with its strength and achievement. In a normally developed life each stage as it passes away hands over to its successor something better and stronger. Does the process end with old age? Is there not something better beyond the line which we call death? So of society. It passes through crude conditions, which give place to higher and better conditions.

One life is spent in evolving the powers of electricity: the man who comes after reaps the full benefit of the telegraph and telephone. A Columbus discovers America, we enjoy it. Go still higher, into the region of religion and worship. The same law holds. Religion is not given to man full-grown. The true faith works its way into shape and power out of a mesh of false faiths. One by one these fall off and die, leaving only what is essentially true to be taken up into the new and higher form. Not one of the men mentioned in this catalogue in the eleventh of Hebrews can be held up as a perfect model of character for the men of a Christian age. The New Testament morality is higher than that of the old. The humblest Christian believer has what Samuel and Elijah had not. And as to worship, we say, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." We come to God without priest or victim or symbol; but what a stretch between our standpoint and that of the Israelite! —a stretch strewn with broken types. Prophet, priest, king—one after another, God breaks these types in pieces as the fulness of time draws on, when Christ, the Teacher, the great High Priest, the Lord of lords, is to come into the world. II. We come, then, to the second truth of our text. Having seen the fact of imperfection, WE SEE THAT ALONG WITH THE IMPERFECTION GOES A PROMISE. You notice the peculiar word here, "received not the promise." It is noted as a mark of the faith of these good men that they saw a promise of something better in the imperfection of their own age. Christ bears witness to this in the words, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad." In like manner Moses saw a nation in the rabble which went out of Egypt. To him the desert meant Canaan. So in nature, the seed, even in its falling into the ground and dying, utters the promise of the corn: the blossom, as it is borne down by the wind, promises the fruit. Even the falling leaf, as it settles down to its new task, promises next spring's juices and leaves. So in the moral progress of our race. Paul tells us that "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural," that "The first man is of the earth, earthy"; but in these he sees the promise of something better. "Afterwards, that which is spiritual. As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption." Society in its best development to-day is imperfect: the ideal form of government is yet to be revealed; but as we turn over to the vision of John on Patmos, we see a perfect society, a holy city, a heavenly Jerusalem, a faultless administration. Now, the practical question for us is, What is our true attitude toward these two facts of imperfection and promise? Our text tells us, by the example of these men of old. There were imperfect men; they saw a possible good which was not for them: but through faith they accepted the imperfection and made the best of it, and cheerfully gave their energy, and endured their suffering, to make the coming man and the coming time better than themselves and their time. We are on the same line. We and our time are simply a stage toward something better. With all our boast of high civilisation, elaborated jurisprudence, rich spiritual acquirement, and vast knowledge, there is something better for the men of the coming time. They will know more, and enjoy more than we do. They will be better men than we are. They will have greater riches of spiritual culture. It is a high test of faith for a man to do his best under temporary conditions, as a mere faction of a great whole, as a mere means to the development of some better thing in a future which he is not to enjoy; and yet that is the lesson which God's administration teaches us. How much care and skill and beauty go into merely temporary things! Take a wheat-corn, that very thing which is to fall into the ground and die, and split it open, and put it under a microscope, and what a perfect and beautiful organism it is! Look at that apple-blossom, which in a few days will be blown away by the wind, and what perfection of form, what delicacy of texture and tint! Each one of those living motes which dances for an hour in the setting sunlight is finished with all the nicety of your own anatomy. Nature is prodigal in her apparent waste of beautiful and perfect things. So, when God gave a temporary system of worship to carry men over to Christ, how carefully selected were the types; how stringent the insistence on details which seem trivial to us! Cannot we read this lesson? Shall we refuse our best because our best is to be merged into something better? Or shall we not rather feel ourselves at once stimulated and honoured by being allowed to contribute our best to the great result which is by and by to gather up into itself the best of all the ages? You have read how, in the old border-wars of Scotland, the tidings of invasion and the

summons to arms were carried by the fiery cross. One runner took it and went at full speed to a certain point, telling the news as he went, and then gave it to another, who ran on in like manner. It was not for the messenger to whom that summons came to sit down and prepare for the defence of his own house and the protection of his flocks and herds. He must take the cross and run for the next stage. The message of Christ's Cross points us beyond ourselves and our own interest and our own time. It lays on us the charge of the coming time. It bids us do our best in our own time, as a means to making that Cross the central fact of the future time. Our stage of life contains a promise for the next stage that it shall be better and higher for our faithful toil. Our problem is to push that promise nearer to its fulfilment. Thus, then, let us take the promise of the better thing into the inferior, incomplete conditions of to-day. Let us accept the fact of incompleteness, not passively, nor idly: that were to exclude faith, and faith is the very keynote of this lesson; nor, on the other hand, despairingly nor angrily: that were presumptuous and useless as well. But let us recognise in it a promise of completeness, a stage towards it, and a call to promote it. No one of us can be more than a factor in the world's history. The power of each factor will appear only when the whole column shall be cast up. The sum total will be greater than any factor, but for the very reason that it will include all the factors. "We must be slow," as one remarks, "to judge unfinished architecture." Truthfully said the old Greek poet, "The days to come are the wisest witnesses." If there be truth in that theory of development, so widely accepted in this day; if we are living in an incomplete physical universe, no less than in partly developed moral and spiritual conditions, that fact goes to show that one law holds from the natural up to the spiritual. That holds out the hope that all the apparent waste in nature will one day be accounted for and shown to be no waste. That points again to the larger hope, that the imperfect work of true men, the imperfect teaching of half-taught men, the imperfect moral development of primitive men, and all the disappointed aspiration and seemingly fruitless toil, and rejected testimony of God's workmen in all times, will be found again, revealed in its true value and power. It was a profound remark of a modern essayist, that the continual failure of eminently endowed men to reach the highest standard has in it something more consoling than disheartening, and contains an "inspiring hint that it is mankind, and not special men, that are to be shaped at last into the image of God; and that the endless life of the generations may hope to come nearer that goal of which the short-breathed three-score years and ten fall too unhappily short." The present, for each of us, bears the sign of the Cross. The crown is in the future. (*M. Vincent, D.D.*) *An increasing purpose*:—I. THE BOND UNITING US WITH PAST GENERATIONS. 1. The question then agitating men's minds was, Is not this new faith in Christ Jesus the destruction of Judaism? And the writer of this Epistle answers the question by the broad assertion that Christianity is the real Judaism, and that the true line of succession runs through the Church, and not through the synagogue. Fancy a stiff Pharisee's face, at hearing a Christian teacher claim Abraham, Jacob and, most audaciously of all, Moses for his side! But why did he do so? Because the foundation of their lives was faith. The writer will not allow any difference, except that of development, between the call of prophet and psalmist, "Trust ye in the Lord for ever," and the preaching of apostles, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." There has never been but one way to heaven, and faith has always been one, however different in completeness its creed. 2. It is but applying the same principle in a slightly different direction to say that all in Christian ages who have the same spirit of faith are one. All who lay hold of the same Christ with the same confidence are knit together. But it must be the same Christ, the Divine-human Christ, the world's Redeemer; and the faith must be so far the same that it leans the whole weight of man's weakness on that Incarnate Strength, and hangs all its hopes on that one Lord. II. THE BETTER THINGS FORESEEN FOR US. There is no such advance within the limits of Christianity as separated it from the earlier revelation. The further "light" which each age has a right to expect is to "break forth from the Word" already given. "The Christ that is to be" is the Christ that was, and is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." He is "for ever," as being complete. As for truth, all treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Him, and may be drawn from the deepening understanding of the principles embodied in His life, death, resurrection and reign. All theology, morality, sociology, lie in Him as gold in ore, or diamonds in a matrix. As for powers, all that can be needed or done for the regeneration of the

world and of single souls has been done and supplied in the work of Christ. What remains is but the application of the power which has been lodged in humanity. But while objective revelation is complete, and God's treasures contain no "better thing" than the unspeakable gift once bestowed and ever possessed, there is meant to be an advancement in understanding of the truth, and in appropriation of the power. Jesus is inexhaustible. No one man can absorb Him all; no one age can. A thousand mirrors set round that central light will each receive its beam at its own angle, and flash it back in its own fashion. So true progress will consist in a fuller understanding and firmer grasp of Him as Son of God and Redeemer of the world, and in a more complete reception of His Spirit, manifested in more Christlike characters and more Christ-pleasing services. III. THE YET BETTER THINGS IN RESERVE FOR OUR SUCCESSORS. Naturally the progress is not to stop with us, but will go on as long as there is a Church on earth. We too have but partial light, and have partially appropriated the gifts, and discharged the duties given and enjoined in the partly understood gospel. The Church of the future will have broken down all sects. Religion will one day be harmonised with "science." Christian principles will be applied to social and national life with revolutionary effects. There will be a fuller baptism of the Spirit on the happier Church that is to be, resulting in more consecrated lives, in more missionary and evangelistic effort, and in a finer harmony of nature, and a more systematical and majestic development of capacities in the individual and the community. IV. THE FINAL PERFECTING IN WHICH ALL ARE UNITED. The saints of the old and the believers of the new covenant are not to be perfected apart. 1. There is to be a perfect union of all in the common joy of possession of the common gift. On the march the pilgrims were widely separated, but in the camp their tents will be near each other. Just as Dante saw Paradise under the symbol of a great rose, whose many petals were yet one flower, and just as astronomers tell us that the giant nebulæ, consisting of infinite numbers of suns, are yet each one whole, though we cannot imagine what forces bind together across such bewildering spaces, so all who, in solitude here, and amid misconceptions and diversities have yet loved the one Lord and followed the one Shepherd, shall couch round Him above, and in some mysterious, but most blessed manner, know that they "live together," and all "together with Him," as the bond of their unity, and perhaps the medium of their intercourse. There will be a united perfecting in the common possession of the whole Christ. 2. There will be united perfection in enjoying the consults of the long unfolding through the ages of the fulness of Christ. Here one generation originates and another completes. But the time comes when all the workers shall share in the gladness of the finished work; when all who, separated by long ages and thick walls of mutual misconception, and divergence in practice and opinions, have yet been unknowingly toiling towards the same end, shall clasp inseparable hands in the great result which contains all their work. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The greatness of faith* :—The point in these words on which we wish to fasten is, that it was through faith that the worthies, of whom St. Paul speaks, obtained "a good report." There is here a distinct assertion that faith, and nothing but faith, gained for the most distinguished saints their high pre-eminence; that if they enjoyed a larger than the ordinary share of the Divine favour, it was in consequence of their believing with a more than common steadfastness. Neither does our text stand alone in furnishing such a representation. Throughout Scripture faith is represented as most acceptable to God, and as securing to man the highest privileges and recompenses; and it is on this very account that the gospel is so distasteful to numbers, that numbers would reject it, and devise a better theology for themselves. I. Now it is very easy, but very unfair, to speak of faith as an act of the mind, which only follows where there is testimony enough, and over which, therefore, a man has little or no control, and which, consequently, ought not to be made the test or criterion of any moral qualities. We call this unfair because it takes no account of the influence which the affections exert over the understanding, in consequence of which a man will readily believe some things, and positively disbelieve others, though there shall be no difference in the two cases in the amount of furnished testimony. Just think for yourselves: if I bring you intelligence of a matter in which you have no personal concern, which you have no interest whatever in either proving or disproving, the mind is likely to be fairly impartial, and to give its decision on a just estimate of the evidence which I adduce. But suppose the intelligence to be of an obnoxious and troublesome character; suppose that if

proved true it will compel you to exertions or sacrifices which you shrink from being called upon to make. Here is a widely different case. The strongest feelings of a man will be at once up in arms, and we shall find it needful to make assurance doubly sure before we can gain credit for the unpalatable truth. Apply this to the matter of revealed religion. Let, then, the Bible, with all its credentials, be submitted for the first time to a man whose reason is in full vigour for investigating truth; is he likely to feel any pleasure in the doctrines of the Bible? Are they such as he can be supposed to feel any wish to find and prove true? No; these doctrines present him with a portrait of himself whose accuracy he must undoubtedly be unwilling to admit. And though, indeed, the Bible, not content with exposing to him his condition, offers him a remedy, nevertheless this remedy itself is offensive to his pride. Now tell me, is it fair to say of a man who receives as true a document, thus humbling to himself, thus imposing duties from which nature shrinks; is it fair to say of him that he merely yields to a certain amount of testimony, which left him no choice? Nay, this is altogether wrong: even the evidences of the Christian religion are not such as leave no option to the student; they are such as will be sure to prove convincing, where there is diligent and candid inquiry; where there is a wish to ascertain truth, and a determination to obey it when once ascertained; but it is not such a testimony as is sure to prevail, even in the absence of all such qualifications. It is not a testimony addressing itself to the senses, graven on the earth, or glaring from the firmament, and forcing conviction alike on the careless and the diligent. It is, on the contrary, a testimony which may be overlooked by indolence, and overcome by prejudice. It will not ordinarily commend itself to the man who sits down to its investigation with hostile feelings and bitter prepossessions, hoping to be able to reject it as defective. Therefore you cannot say of the man who yields to this evidence that he only submits to what could not be withstood. He might have resisted, he would have resisted, had he not brought to the inquiry a teachable spirit, a sincere wish to discover truth, and a fixed resolve to conform to its dictates. But go beyond the evidences, go to the truths which revelation unfolds, and you will see still more clearly that believing presupposes the possession, or requires the exercise of dispositions which are confessedly excellent. There must be humility in him who believes, for from the heart he confesses himself unclean and undone. There must be the submission of the understanding to God, for much has to be received which cannot be explained. There must be a willingness to suffer, for Christianity summons to tribulation; there must be a willingness to labour, for Christianity sets a man about the most arduous duties. We do not know any achievement so remarkable, so little to have been expected from a proud, prejudiced, and depraved creature, such as man naturally is, as the believing in a record so humiliating, so condemnatory of lust, so rigid in enjoining duties, as is the gospel of Jesus Christ. You might tell us of great exploits, of splendid deeds, which have earned for those who wrought them surpassing renown; but we should not fear that any of the heroes had done a nobler or a more admirable thing than is effected by any one who exercises the faith of which my text speaks. Yes, give place, ye great ones of the earth, who have drawn the homage of your fellow-men by penetrating the secrets of nature, improving the arts, advancing the commerce, strengthening the institutions, or subduing the enemies of your country. We would bow before a lowlier and, nevertheless, a more illustrious throng; we would find a higher title to respect, and we see that throng, and we acknowledge that title in those of whom an apostle could say, "These all obtained a good report through faith." II. Let us advance a step further; let us proceed from the preliminaries, as they may be called, to the consequences of faith, and we shall find fresh warrant for that "good report" of which our text speaks. For faith, you observe, cannot be a barren or an uninfluential principle. It is not so with regard to inferior truths, much less can it be so in regard to the truths of the Bible. Let us fasten on certain of the doctrines which God has revealed, and certain of the virtues which God demands, and let us see whether faith in the one will not be of necessity productive of the others. For example: it is a portion of the Scriptural revelation that God is omniscient and omnipresent; that nothing can be hid from His scrutiny, but that He is ever at hand, a vigilant inspector, to note human actions, and register them for judgment. Can this be really believed, and yet the believer fail to be intently earnest to approve himself in God's sight? Will he ever think himself in a solitude, ever act as alone and unobserved? Will not rather his faith produce a holy reverence, an awful fear of the Almighty? The Bible tells

him, moreover, of an amazing scheme of rescue, planned and executed by God, on behalf of himself and his fellow-men. Can this be believed, and yet the believer not glow with intense love towards a gracious and benevolent God, who has done such surprising things for his good? Yea, and toward his fellow-men, seeing that they are objects of the same mercy with himself, and therefore equally precious in the sight of his Creator? Oh! will not faith, genuine faith in the mighty truths of redemption, make a man feel as an affectionate son towards God, and as an affectionate brother towards all men? And yet further, along with the revelation of this amazing scheme of mercy, the Bible sets forth conditions, apart from which we can have no share in the blessings procured by Christ's death, imposing duties, on the performance of which our future portion is made to depend, and annexing promises and threatenings, just as though we were to be judged by our own works, irrespective of the work of the Redeemer. It tells us of a heaven, and it tells us of a hell, and dealing with us as accountable creatures. Faith in these things must animate to effort, to obedience, to self-denial; and he who is really a believer in the revealed truths as to man's everlasting state, and the indissoluble connection between conduct here and condition hereafter, will necessarily be one who struggles for mastery, and wages continual war with the world, the flesh, and the devil. There is no strangeness, then, at all. Faith is precisely that condition of the soul which such a Being as God might have been expected to approve; for having given the revelation contained in the Bible, to require faith in its disclosures is to require that the understanding submit itself, that pride be cast down, that the "flesh be crucified with its affections and lusts," and that every energy be consecrated to His service. Where, then, is the marvel if He have been pleased to ordain that it should be through faith that men "obtain a good report." III. Finally, to impress, if possible, the argument on every hearer, we will represent the nature and achievement of this principle of faith. We, you and I, live in the midst of allurements and temptations, what is without conspiring with what is within to bind us to earth, and make us cleave to it as our home and our all; and whilst we are thus entangled there comes a revelation from the invisible God, a revelation of amazing truths connected with His nature and with His purposes to ourselves, His guilty and depraved creatures; in this revelation you and I are bidden to believe—bidden on the express declaration that in return for our faith we shall be admitted into privileges which thought cannot measure. And is it an easy thing to believe? Easy! it is to lay aside prejudice, it is to become as little children, it is to submit implicitly to God's authority. Easy! it is to abandon what we love, to forego what we desire, to do what we dislike, to endure what we dread! Easy! it is to cut off the right hand, pluck out the right eye, wrestle with principalities and powers, to despise death, and anticipate futurity! Easy! do it, ye who count it so easy. Ye who make so light of believing—believe. Ye who represent faith as a mere nothing, have faith. You would invite us to some great and hard achievement, we invite you to a greater and harder; we match believing against all your doing; we match it in difficulty, we match it in results. There is nothing which you admire which we may not attempt in our own strength, but we must have the power of the Lord God Almighty ere we can believe in Him whom He hath sent. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Christ, the prime promise, not received by true believers*:—Of the believers before mentioned, and of others that lived before Christ, it is said they that received not the promise, that is, saints, under the Old Testament, had not an actual exhibition of Christ. This was one of the promises, concerning which it was said of the patriarchs, they received not the promises (ver. 13). In this respect it is said that many prophets and righteous men desired to see those things (Matt. xiii. 17), namely, Jesus Christ incarnate, living, preaching, working miracles, &c., and that the prophets inquired and searched diligently about those things (1 Pet. i. 10). Therefore they did not enjoy them. God was herein pleased to manifest His wisdom in reserving such a promise to a fulness of time (Gal. iv. 4). 1. That His goodness might by degrees increase, as the sun doth, and so be the better discerned. For by degrees it was more clearly revealed. 2. That so great a blessing might be the more expected, inquired after, and longed for. 3. That the patience and other graces of saints might be the better exercised. 4. That Christ Himself might be the more honoured, in that He was reserved to the latter age of the world, as being a blessing which surpassed all other blessings before it. (1) Hereby we have instruction in the nature of faith, which is to rest upon promises for things future, as if they were actually accomplished. (2) This doth much amplify the faith of

former believers, in that they did and endured so great things for Christ before they enjoyed Him. (3) It checks our backwardness and dulness in believing, who live in the times wherein the promise may be and is received. (4) This should stir us up to seek to excel them, in that we have received the promise which they received not. (*W. Gouge.*) **Some better thing for us.**—*Something better:*—Thus faith makes character. The Pyramids of Egypt are dead stone. The pyramids of Israel are holy men. Worldly fortune most of these heroes and heroines had none. Fame indeed came to them; but they did not march up to Fame and say, "Be thou my god." And what was that fame? Not that of eloquence; nor did they gain the laurels of war; they obtained a good report. Their virtues lived after them. Thus faith achieved the great result. And faith in what? A promise. Seeing, then, that faith in a promised Saviour is so good a thing, what can be better than such a promise? The apostle is speaking of the promise fulfilled. We live now not under the promise, but under the full revelation of the Christ. I. A GLORIOUS REVELATION OF THE CHARACTER OF GOD. "Something better." The works of man often show decrepitude, wasting genius, failing power. Witness Turner in art, and Sir Walter Scott in literature. But all God's works show development—onwardness. Creation in its physical aspect does. Look at the crustaceans and at the silurian fossils, &c. None can fail to see progress—something finer, nobler, better. Look at the moral world! Look at God's revelations of righteousness and truth! How wonderfully superior the light which David had to that which Abel had! Then, as the course of inspiration rolled along, the devout Jew heard descriptions through Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Micah, which filled in the sublimely prophetic history with the story of Messiah's sufferings. In the incarnation and redemption of our Saviour we still see something better. And then our Saviour tells us that there is still something better. He says, "It is expedient for you that I go away," then the Comforter shall come. Life is not to be a mere obedience even to Christ's words, but a spiritual potency within, God's Spirit in the inner man. The unprejudiced mind is bound to see in all this a revelation of God's character—of His interest in man, of His wisdom, His pity, and His grace! We ought to make history a ground of trust and hope in God, so that in looking back we may say, "I will trust, and not be afraid." II. A GLORIOUS INTERPRETATION OF CHRISTIAN LIFE. The path of the Christian is like that of the Church, from strength to strength, from glory to glory. 1. Learn to interpret life by the key of this principle. It is the only one that can solve the mysteries of pain and sorrow, or that can soothe the heart in agony and trouble. The motto, "It is better," cannot be ever on our lips, it is true. We should act a lie as if we were false enthusiasts. We cannot say, "I see or feel this to be good"; but we can say, "I believe it to be so." Faith trusts. Faith rests upon the Divine order! 2. This principle of interpretation is supported by human histories. Life only blossoms by slow degrees, and only when it is in full bud do we see how suitable the soil, how perfectly adapted the atmosphere. We would not have had Stephen stoned, but it was better that his dying testimony should aid in turning Saul the persecutor into Paul the apostle, and better for Stephen himself to enjoy so early the welcome where Christ Himself rose from His throne to receive him. It is when the fabric is woven that we see what colours were best to let pass through the loom. It is when the temple is complete that we understand why the crooked stone that puzzled us was placed in its appointed spot. It is when the haven is reached by a circuitous voyage, and a strange tacking to and fro in troubled waters, that the captain tells you all about the sand-banks and the sunken rocks. 3. This principle of interpretation explains the providence of earth. Pitiable are those conceptions of life which treat the universe as though we moved only in some meaningless cycle. There is progress in all that makes for the enrichment of thought, the amplification of life, the elevation of the common lot. It is better to live now than in the old times before us. Nations, as well as men, do rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things. Doubtless as the waves of the incoming sea seem sometimes to recede, so there appear to be periods of drawback and disheartening. But progress is made. The islands once in darkness do see great light. The gospel does spread. Law does become more equitable. Sanitary science does triumph. Intercommunication between great nations in travel and commerce does increase. Education does spread. 4. This principle of interpretation explains the Saviour's preparation of heaven. The very same word is used —"I go to prepare a place for you." He has "foreseen" all that, and made ready the home. We cannot see the occupations and delights of our departed ones, but

we know that they are blessed; we know that where they are there is "something better"; and we know that this prepared home will be soon ready for ourselves. There knowledge is freed from earthly limitation. There love is no more enfeebled by divided affection. And what mean these words? "That they without us should not be made perfect." The temple is incomplete. The table is not full. They are blessed, but our home-coming will add intensity and fulness to their joy. How transfigured would human life be if we studied this text in all its breadth and beauty—if we remembered, as students, that God disciplines human life, so that the golden corn of experience may afterwards be a harvest for others; that as servants the heroism of our faith is remembered in that which is least as well as in that which is greatest, so that "something better" is coming than any earthly reward; that as worshippers, when thrilled at times with the glories of spiritual song, we are nearing the fellowship of the great multitude which no man can number! (*W. M. Statham, M.A.*) *The believer's portion—something better*:—I. WHAT IS THIS PORTION? 1. Religion here in all that constitutes it. 2. Religion future in all its glorious prospects. II. BETTER THAN WHAT? 1. Certainly better than the world at its worst—in its degrading pleasures, selfish purposes, hatred, and strife. 2. Better than the world at its best. (1) In the achievements of science. (2) In art. (3) In literature. (4) In its friendship, sympathy, love. 3. Better than the best things of the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations. III. IN WHAT RESPECTS BETTER? 1. In that it includes God's care and attention, and our help cannot fail. 2. In that it forms His highest and most costly provision. 3. Now it—(1) Provides for every man. (2) Fills every holy desire. (3) Is spiritual in character. (4) Is certain amid a changing world. (5) Grows continually better. 4. In the future—(1) It ends in heaven. (2) Its blessings will be eternal. Learn: 1. To be sure you are the heirs of this portion. 2. To think of it often. 3. To walk worthy of your vocation. (*E. Jerman.*) *The disposal of the times and states of the Church*:—I. THE DISPOSAL OF THE STATES AND TIMES OF THE CHURCH, AS UNTO THE COMMUNICATION OF LIGHT, GRACE, AND PRIVILEGES, DEPENDS MERELY ON THE SOVEREIGN PLEASURES AND WILL OF GOD, AND NOT ON ANY MERIT OR PREPARATION IN MAN. The coming of Christ at that time when He came was as little deserved by the men of the age wherein He came as in any age from the foundation of the world. II. Though God gives more light and grace unto the Church in one season than in another, YET IN EVERY SEASON HE GIVES THAT WHICH IS SUFFICIENT TO GUIDE BELIEVERS IN THEIR FAITH AND OBEDIENCE UNTO ETERNAL LIFE. III. It is the duty of believers, in every state of the Church, to make use of and IMPROVE THE SPIRITUAL PROVISION THAT GOD HATH MADE FOR THEM, always remembering that unto whom much is given, of them much is required. IV. GOD MEASURES OUT UNTO ALL HIS PEOPLE THEIR PORTION IN SERVICE, SUFFERINGS, PRIVILEGES, AND REWARDS, ACCORDING TO HIS OWN GOOD PLEASURE. V. IT IS CHRIST ALONE WHO WAS TO GIVE, AND WHO ALONE COULD GIVE, PERFECTION OR CONSUMMATION UNTO THE CHURCH. VI. ALL THE OUTWARD GLORIOUS WORSHIP OF THE OLD TESTAMENT HAD NO PERFECTION IN IT; AND SO NO GLORY COMPARATIVELY UNTO THAT WHICH IS BROUGHT IN BY THE GOSPEL (2 Cor. iii. 10). VII. ALL PERFECTION, ALL CONSUMMATION, IS IN CHRIST ALONE. For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and we are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. (*John Owen, D.D.*) **That they without us should not be made perfect.**—*Man perfected through fellowship*:—I. THE FUNDAMENTAL GIFTS OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE CAN BE RECEIVED BY THE INDIVIDUAL IN HIS SEPARATION AND OBSCURITY. We may be ready to ask the question, Was it not hard that these early believers, who had so nobly satisfied God's demand upon their faith, should be shut out from their full and final blessedness for ages? For the present let it suffice to reply that they received, without a single exception, compensations that in the meantime more than filled up the measure of their desires. Each Old Testament saint was assured by some sign or other that he had become acceptable to God. Their comparative ignorance and detachment did not bar them from the possession of this precious rudimentary grace. These religious heroes, upon whom the seal of God's clear approval and acceptance was set, did not belong to great devotional and educating fellowships. They lived apart. In the brain of many a Bedouin sheik, who canters across the desert-sand to-day, you might find a more elaborate theology than in some of these patriarchs. If we, with our modern wealth of learning and abstract divinity and scientific illustration, could have conversed with Abraham or Isaac or Jacob, we should probably have been repelled by the crudeness of their views. Their expectation of the Deliverer had more in it that was akin to inspired instinct than reason. But they were

entirely loyal to its leading, and God sealed their faith. In the absence of the fully accomplished promise, a witness of some sort was vital to their sustained fidelity. The God who had called them to His service could not well leave them destitute of it. He could not prove Himself an Egyptian taskmaster, and command His servants to form characters fit to be built into the universal temple, without granting one of the first requisites for the strengthening and consolidation of character, the sense of His favour and acceptance. It was through this assurance that the first believers became capable of an ever-growing fidelity. And then God could not leave an unnecessary burden on the conscience of His people. No organ or faculty of a man's nature can compare with conscience in its sensitiveness. To deny conscience the rightful assaugement of its pain would be a barbarity akin to torture. Whatever disabilities and tribulations might be laid upon the fathers of the Jewish Church, they were brought at least into the light of God's unshadowed favour. They lived in that light, and the light was not quenched when they passed away. II. THE CROWNING GIFTS OF THE COVENANT ARE VOUCHSAFED TO MEN IN THEIR MUTUAL FELLOWSHIPS. "That they without us should not be made perfect." The world's gray fathers and the youngest child in the latest term of time must be glorified together. The firstborn cannot outrun or anticipate the last. The life of nature is social, and its different parts are perfected together. God does not fashion isolated orbs to shine in solitary splendour. He kindles systems and galaxies and constellations. In all parts of nature there is community of development, fellowship of life and ecstacy. The rapture of one type of life is timed to the ripeness of another. The skylark carols over the springing corn. The nightingale pours its liquid love-plaint into the red heart of the rose. There is a co-perfecting of all the kingdoms of life. God seems to delight in the magnificence of aggregate effects. And is it not so also in the spiritual world? Not till the golden chime is heard that proclaims the approach of God's ripe summer will the life of all the separate ages receive its highest glory and development. We are only in solitary training for the anthems that will usher in the coronation of our common humanity. True music will never be heard till the blended song of Moses and the Lamb awes the listening spheres. The higher you ascend in the scale of life, the more pronounced is this principle of interdependence. The whole of humanity is, after all, one organism. It is very significantly described as "one body." The description is almost as true if looked at from the commercial or political as if viewed from the religious standpoint. Humanity is being slowly bound into an economic whole. With the setting up of the new dispensation some new effusion of light and knowledge and spiritual victory has come to the Old Testament saints in the region of the unseen. The basis of faith must be laid in life; but faith can increase in ever-expanding progression after life has ceased. In respect to all these, of whom it is said they have received together with us the better things of the promise, the basis of faith was well laid in life. They through their faith had received, without exception, some sign of God's approval. And now, in ways unknown to us, they have entered into the fulness of the promises desired and waited for by kings and righteous men of old. In what way were the believing dead spiritually perfected, and made to enter into the fulness of the promise through Christ's manifestation amongst men? They were perfected in knowledge, in conscience, and in character. By that blood of sprinkling to which they came in common with their fellow-believers in the flesh, they learned that the forgiveness of sin was no piece of unthinking indulgence on the part of the Judge of all the earth; they came to recognise a higher significance in sanctity, and to feel their obligations of worship and service measured by a higher ideal of sacrificial love and unselfishness. Besides the richer effusion of joy that came to the first generation of God's servants through the work of God's incarnate Son, their joy is further perfected with the progressive perfecting of human history. The first promise to Abraham looked forward to the blessedness of all nations through his seed. The promise is not fully brought to pass, nor is the large hope of the father of the faithful fulfilled till that has been accomplished. The highest victories of the Church in heaven are only consummated by the victories of the Church on earth. We shall miss nothing by dying. The sunshine will come to us in the far-off land. We shall not be cut off from the supreme triumph. Just as the air of the polar and the equatorial regions is ever changing places and bringing about fresh and tempered atmospheres essential to all life, so between the different epochs of the human race there are grand and consolatory equalisations always going on. The perfecting will be common. Abraham and David and Daniel waited for us, and we in our turn shall wait for others. The perfecting is

common for the Church of all ages. Within certain limits we hold in our hands the blessedness of God's servants of olden times, and we work in trust for the dead. Others will one day work in trust for us. There will be no supreme perfecting till the saved whole is brought in. The text suggests that there is a larger fulfilment of the covenant in the last great day, for which the spirits of the old and the new dispensation must alike wait. Before the crowning touch can be put on our destinies we must needs tarry till the most distant heir of the promises and the latest born of all God's sons has come into the horizon. God treated the race as a unity in Adam, He treated it as a unity in Christ, and He will treat it yet again as a unity in the consummation of all things. It is said that sometimes swallows arrive on our eastern coasts before the winter has quite passed away, and the great tide of migration set in. These stray birds have been observed to gather together and fly south, probably to the coast of Spain, for a few days or weeks, till the spring temperature has come, and the carnival of vernal life has begun to quiver in the air. They have had to turn aside to balmier climbs for a little space and await the coming of the rest. So with the saints and prophets and martyrs of the earlier ages. They have passed into the unseen before God's summer sun has begun to shine upon the universe. In some sphere of temporary rest and blessedness, in a more genial land than this, their spirits are refreshed, and they await the completed number of the elect. The rearguard and the vanguard, the sowers and the reapers, the fathers and the children, the quick and the dead, will be gathered into one common circle to share the matchless manifestations of the great day of God. The splendour to which the latest ages have come will flow back into the earliest. The last perfecting benediction will not alight upon us in our isolation, but as members of a countless assembly. The lowliest believer of the coming ages will not be shut out from the consummated bliss and triumph. All parts of humanity, all races, all generations, possibly all hidden worlds of the unknown universe, will be closely and significantly interdependent in their final blessedness. The fact that God should have determined to perfect the men of all ages together shows how much He thinks of those great principles of mutual association and fellowship which we sometimes esteem so little. He shows honour to those lowly disciples and followers of His Son whom we do not sufficiently honour. He will not crown them apart. Their services have been obscure, their prayers secret, but their recompense shall be in presence of all worlds and all generations. Be prompt to recognise God's law of community. He will put supreme honour upon that law by blessing and glorifying at His appearing all members of the saved humanity together. God will not honour those who set aside that law. In helping our brethren we are helping ourselves. Their progress and perfecting is necessary to ours. God seems to be teaching us in this way the humility which can be best learned and exercised through fellowship. It is a check to our pride to be reminded that we can only be crowned in common with the rest. We cannot be crowned alone. The honour would be too high for us to safely sustain. It might imperil the balance of our moral life. And then by perfecting His servants together God seems to remind us of the graciousness and beauty of patience. Disembodied saints of the olden time are waiting for us, and we shall have to wait for them. They had their blessed compensations here, and receive yet better compensations in the presence of their redeeming Lord; but they still wait till the last convert from savagery has been won, the last backsliding disciple reclaimed, the last weak and inconsistent servant of God strengthened and sanctified. They are in the van of the pilgrimage, but they have learnt so much of the gentleness and patience of Christ, that they wait about the fountains of life for the fading of the world's last twilight and the coming up of the last straggler in the far-off rearguard. Do not let us think ourselves isolated pilgrims or travellers. We belong to the sacramental host. Let us watch against selfish hurry and impatience. We shall have to await the weakest for our final blessedness. Let us wait for them with more Christlike patience here, and help them along the pilgrim path. And then God has ordained that the perfecting of our destinies shall be in common, because He wishes to set forth His grace and power upon a scale of incomparable magnificence. How splendid the perfecting for which the holy spirits of so many epochs wait! How sublime the destiny into whose effulgence all elect souls shall be together gathered! (*T. G. Selby.*) *The interdependence of all saints:*—The apostle had been speaking of the saints of the Old Testament. He had been building the triumphal arch of Old Testament history. The names of the world's spiritual conquerors are written there. But at the close of this triumphal commemoration you cannot fail to notice

the unexpected turn of the text. The conclusion towards which this whole chapter of faith's heroism seems to move would be an ascription of our indebtedness to these valiant servants of the Lord who "have made it a world for us." Without them, the writer of this sacred history would naturally have said, Without them we are not made perfect. But instead he said, "That apart from us they should not be made perfect." We hardly transcend the text, we do but follow the inspired Word out to its larger revelation, when we say, Each Christian generation is necessary to all before; the last saint belongs in some measure to the first; the better thing of each age is for all who have lived and died; not only is it true that we inherit the lives of the saints, but they are to inherit ours; we are for them as well as they for us; neither they nor we are to be made perfect apart; the last century of human history shall crown all the centuries; the consummation of the world is the perfection together of all the saints. This is hardly our customary thought of the saints. We think of them as passed beyond all participation in this world's history, withdrawn from its trials and having no concern henceforth in its warfare and victories; made perfect in their own pure hearts, and their lives elsewhere no more bound up with this world's destiny. We remember with grateful love what they had been to us in the years gone by; we remind one another in our public places of our common inheritance in the lives of good men; we build monuments to the memory of the brave who died for their country; we draw inspiration for youth from the illumined historic page, and the spirit of the martyrs blends still with all sacrifice of love. But while we remember these worthy and sainted ones, we should not forget that we too are to be for them, as they have been for us. If you contemplate, for example, any sacred character from the Old Testament, you will observe that such character is never held apart either from the men of God who went before it, or from the servants of the Lord who are to follow after it. Each of these characters is put in the Bible into relation with all before and all after it—as a link in a chain; all personages that carry on God's gracious revelation, are as links in one continuous chain—and both ends of this unbroken chain of sacred history, running through the ages, with its many links of lives interlocked in one purpose of redemption, are bound to the throne of God, the beginning of it by the first Divine act of creation, and the final end of all in the glory of the Son of Man at the right hand of the majesty on high. The interdependence of all saints, the living and the dead, and those who are to be, appears in certain events in the life of Christ, and may be inferred also from certain inspired hints in the apostolic writings. It is clear from the narrative of the transfiguration, that Moses and Elias had not been cut off by death from personal interest and anticipation in the progress of God's kingdom on earth. What was done here upon a place called Golgotha, was to be done for them also there in that place called Paradise. And it is deeply significant and suggestive that the apostle Peter who was one of the two to witness this revealed intimacy of the saints of the old and the new, and to see upon the Holy Mount this close contiguity of two worlds, is the same apostle who has dropped in his epistle quite incidentally, and as a matter of course, that word concerning Christ's preaching to the spirits in prison, and again concerning the preaching to those that are dead. The Lord's life here, and the life of the dead there, were and are correlated: the history of the two spheres, the realm of the dead, and the kingdom of God on earth, were and are in some way connected and parallel histories; the two lands are contiguous, and one Lord passes back and forth across their boundary-line, to-day in the body, to-morrow in the spirit, and the third day risen again, and seen by the disciples; and He has the same administration of perfect justice and grace in both worlds. There is hardly anything more contrary to Scripture than is our common exaggeration of the importance of death. Do we not remember how Jesus seemed always to be putting death into the background as a very secondary and even incidental thing in the history of a soul which has attained the true, the eternal life? He minimized death when He called it a sleep. We magnify it when we call it destiny. The apostles, catching Jesus' diviner tone, called sin death, and love life. Death in the apostolic speech was turned into a metaphor; it served to illustrate something far greater and more important than itself. Conversion to them was the great change; to die may be the greatest event which can happen to a man; but to die is one of the least important things which a man does; to repent of sin, to surrender to God, to live unto Christ—this is the great thing for a man to do. We think of death as a vast gulf between friends; as a great barrier between hearts that would go on loving and being loved for ever; as a wall of adamant suddenly reared by a Divine decree

between mother and child, husband and wife; and with the years the great silence widens between men and women who were friends. But when one who had been taught of Jesus had occasion to refer to death, he thinks not of chasm or adamantine wall, but of the veil of the temple—the mere veil between the holy, and the holiest place. "And this hope," he said, "enters within the veil." Does it not revive us like a breath of the Spirit to know this truth of All Saints' day, that we all shall be made perfect together, and none apart; that in God's plan our lives and theirs, whom for a little while we do not see, have been interwoven, and still run on interweaving their threads and colours; that still we are living for them, and they for us in the one kingdom of our Lord; that they in their rest, or in their new activities, are resting, or are ministering, not apart from us, as we in our toils and in our dreams still are living and still are loving not without them; that whatever in higher spheres is transpiring in their lives has also its worth yet to be revealed for us, as our thought and love may have growing worth for them; that whether in some silence in Divine light round about them they are becoming holy and radiant with perfect love in their own pure hearts, or whether along some way of God they are now made strong to run with some glad tidings, or whether with the Lord Christ they be permitted with their dear hands to give some added grace and human, homelike touch to the places in His many mansions which He has gone to prepare for us—still, still, they think, they fly, they rest, they love, not apart from us, and in them and their large happiness the great God thinks also of us; that without us they may not be made perfect in that final unspeakable perfection of all the saints in the last day. And we too—herein is a comfort which we must not suffer any man to take from us—we also are living for them; as the early Church before its Latin corruption did not hesitate in its childlike faith to express in its prayers for the sainted dead this most Christian sense of the mutuality of the believers' lives both here and there. We also are living for our fathers, for our friends who have passed before us, for all the saints, if indeed we are living truly and unselfishly; if we are ripening for their companionships, and becoming strong and pure for celestial thoughts and deeds in the ages of ages. Another lesson from this truth of All Saints' day lies close at hand. I shall have spoken in vain if you do not perceive once more the truth that to be a Christian and to be saved is not merely to become perfect for one's self, and to carry off a crown of glory at the judgment day. It is rather to come to the end of self, and to begin to be a member of a blessed society of spirits. No man is to be saved apart from all the saints. God's law of salvation is a social law, the law of a redeemed society. The social life of the Church, therefore, the social unity of the Church, is not an adjunct or accessory of the Divine constitution of the Church; it is an element of the Divine idea of the Church; it belongs to its essential Christianity. And hence it follows that churches are not revived, and do not grow, if this Divine idea of the covenant of believers and the household of faith, is lost sight of, or practically ignored. Once more, let the lesson come home to us from what I have been trying to say, that individually we cannot grow in grace apart from all saints. There is a beautiful Scripture, the most important clause of which we are too apt to hurry over as we read it: "That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth." The condition of knowledge of the love of Christ is that we find it and share it with all saints. Yet this is just what many of us sometimes are not willing to do. We would know the love of Christ with our favourite saints. With all saints, said Paul. It was Paul, to whom were given personal revelation above measure, who felt the need of learning the love of Christ with all the saints, those unknown saints, those humble saints, those poor saints, untaught, unlearned, are to be your fellow-helpers to the truth. There are faces among them—I have seen some such—in whose light we may learn more of the secret of the Lord than from any books. Oh, when will we understand that our Christ is the universal Christ? (*Newman Smyth, D.D.*) *The one true Church*:—1. There appears to be little doubt, that the persons here spoken of are the Old Testament believers—all of them, not only those mentioned by name in this chapter, but those whose history is more comprehensively alluded to. "These all, having obtained a good report through faith." True religion was always the same, in every age of the world—that is to say, in the substance and vital saving truth of it—however the outward expressions of it may have varied. 2. But now consider, in the next place, what the apostle says concerning these men. He says that they "obtained a good report through faith"; they were well witnessed of, in consequence of the life they led, and that life was a consequence of their faith. The same vital principle which enabled them to rest implicitly on the

Word of God, and thereby to be justified in His sight, enabled them also to overcome the world. It rose superior to the attractions and solicitations of sense, to let their light shine before men, so that all could see their good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven. By faith they were enabled to refuse every inducement which would have driven them off from obedience to their God. By faith they held all personal interests and all natural feelings, the fear or the favour of men, subservient to the one great duty, obedience to the living God. Their works, then, were their credentials upon earth, and by them their profession was justified—the profession of sincerity in the service of God. What a proof was there of the power over them of real religion, that raises man above the fear of his fellow, and gives him holy communion with his God! This, and this alone, in any age, is religion. These men, then, received "a good report through faith." But how agrees this with the fact that they were persecuted, that they were stoned, that they were sawn asunder, that they were cast out as evil? The two things agree well. Their conduct, by contrast, condemned the world; this is expressly recorded of one of them—Noah. Men of the world, condemned by the contrast, resent the affront; and so they that are born of the flesh persecute them that are born after the Spirit. To be commended by the Church is only one-half of the "good report" of the saint; to be condemned by the world is the other half. The Old Testament saints "obtained a good report" both ways "by faith." And are there not in our own times, and in our own country, men who have thus "obtained a good report through faith"—men who have resisted the tide of the times, and what was manifestly the rising tide of advancement and advantage among men—men who have refused to dilute their testimony for God's truth, and have calmly and patiently, and with their eyes open, preferred honourable neglect, yea, contempt and scorn, to any crooked management, any disingenuousness, aye, or any concealment of their sentiments, for the purpose of conciliating compromisers in high places? 3. But now, returning to the Old Testament saints and to the language of the text, we inquire, for further explanation, what it is that the apostle denies them. He says they "received not the promise." And here we must distinguish between the words containing the promise, and the thing promised by the words. The apostle uses the expression in both senses, as you will see readily by a comparison of the thirteenth and seventeenth verses of this chapter. At the thirteenth verse he writes, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises." One of the persons referred to is Abraham. Then in the seventeenth verse the apostle writes thus: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son." Abraham was one of those who had not received the promises, and yet he had received the promises; that is, he had received the words in which the promises were conveyed, but he had not received the things promised. Now, what are we to understand here by the thing promised, which was not then received? Light will be thrown upon this by the language of the apostle, in some of the stirring acts of his true life of faith. See Acts xxiii. 6, xxiv. 14, xxvi. 6–8. Mark how the apostle's mind was fixed upon the great promise of the resurrection of the dead. No doubt "the promise" generally signified Messiah, but especially that blessing which remains to be enjoyed, previously to His second coming—the resurrection of the dead. It was the great hope of the Old Testament saints. Hear one of them. "I know," said he, "that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Nothing can be more distinct than this expression of his hope. And another of them said, "I shall be satisfied when I awake up in Thy likeness"; expressing his hope nearly in the same words with the apostle—"We wait for the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." Observe the one hope of the Church; that as there was "one Lord," as we have seen, in the Old and in the New Testament, and "one faith" in Him, and "one baptism" by the Holy Ghost for the remission of sins, so there was "one hope," and they were "called in one hope of their calling." This doctrine of the resurrection of the dead was indeed denied by some of the Jews. There is no truth, however plainly revealed, which will not be denied by some men. The Sadducees had learned a strange secret—to admit the Old Testament, and yet deny the resurrection of the dead. They came to Jesus, and gave Him opportunity to set the matter in its true light; for they came with what they conceived to be an unanswerable difficulty. If by saying that "all live to God" with reference to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our Lord had intended merely to say that their souls were alive in the presence of

God, it would have been no argument at all against the Sadducees. The question was the resurrection of the body. But if our Lord meant to say that the spirit of Abraham is not Abraham, but only part of him, God having made him of both matter and spirit, that when God called Himself "the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob," He called Himself the God of the men, and not of the spirits of the men merely, and then added, "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to Him," then it is to the point, for the bodies of those men shall yet live, as well as their spirits; and so it was an answer to the Sadducees. The resurrection was indeed the hope of the Old Testament if properly understood. But this promise was not received by the saints under the Old Testament. They "obtained a good report through faith," as we have seen, but they "received not the promise." They were kept waiting in abeyance. The whole scheme is imperfect as yet. 4. And then follows the reason: "God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." The preliminary and preparatory steps are given *seriatim*, to member after member; they are born into this world, they are born again, they are justified, they are in their measure sanctified, they are separated from the flesh; their souls, made perfect, are in felicity with their Lord; but there remains a step, which is not so given: "God having provided some better thing for all, that some without the rest should not be made perfect." Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, must wait for Moses and David; and they must wait for Isaiah and Jeremiah; and they must wait for Peter and James and John; and they must wait for Polycarp and Ignatius and Athanasius; and they must wait for Luther and Calvin and Crammer; and they must wait for us; and we must wait for others, till He has accomplished the number of His elect, and then all, in the twinkling of an eye, shall receive the promise at the second coming of the Lord Jesus. Here we see, then, the true communion of all the Church—the true oneness of the one true Church—the mystical body of the Lord Jesus, gathering from time to time, in all the preliminary, preparatory steps of it, and all ready at the appointed time to stand up in perfection, in the likeness of the Son of God. It is with this body that we now have communion by faith; not with those around us here upon earth only, but with them that have fallen asleep also, and with them in two divisions, if I may so speak. With some among them we hold communion through memory, as well as faith, for we knew them while they were here. They were faithful and true, and our hearts loved them. They have been taken from us, hidden for a little season from our sight, and are waiting for that better something which God hath prepared for all that love Him. With others we have communion only by faith; memory has nothing to do with it, for we never knew them; but by faith we know what their characters were. They, too, have fallen asleep, and they too are waiting for that better something which God hath prepared for us all. There is consolation, as well as instruction, in this. Every other association must be broken up; every other tie must be snapped asunder; all our business associations, all our social, domestic ties must give way; death is no respecter of any of us; they are all suddenly broken. Here is an association, from which nothing can separate us, the communion of the Church of God, the fellowship with those that have obtained a good report through faith, and are waiting for that something better. Must we, too, leave this sunny world, with all its enjoyments, with all that remains so attractive to the natural heart, in defiance of the disappointment, the mourning and lamentation and woe that prove it to be a fallen world? Must we be drawn from the little family circle, in which it is our delight now to dwell? Ah! remember, it is not to go among strangers; it is to join a larger circle of the same family—it is to be transferred from a small and a suffering circle to a large and a rejoicing circle of the same brotherhood, the First-born in the midst of them. (*H. McNeile, D.D.*) *The future perfecting*:—When all whom God has foreknown and predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, shall have fought the good fight of faith, then will come the perfecting—the day of the manifestation of the sons of God. At present all who have died in the Lord wait the fulfilment of the promise. Abel, Noah, and Abraham are not to be perfected in glory by the redemption of their bodies until the last soul has been converted to God, and the valley of the shadow of death has been traversed by the last pilgrim. When the top stone of the building has been brought in with shouts of "Grace, grace unto it," from all the redeemed and angelic hosts, then the glory of the Lord will descend upon His spiritual temple and transfigure it with everlasting light. Then, to change the figure, the saints in one glorious company, with no member of the Christ-named family absent, clothed upon with their spiritual

bodies, shall enter the gates of the New Jerusalem, and celebrate the marriage supper of the Lamb. There they shall recount their trials and victories, compare their experiences of redeeming love, and drink together of the river of God's pleasures. There is something very sublime in the spectacle presented to us of this ever-gathering host. Daily, nay hourly, the number which no man can number is being increased. If the saints waiting for the resurrection are permitted to hold fellowship with souls as they arrive from this world of sin and sorrow, how they must have lifted up their heads of late years as sinners from earth's remotest end have come bending at the feet of Him who has redeemed them with His blood. Surely His kingdom is increasing, they must think, when from India, China, and the islands of the Pacific saints of God are being gathered in, when the chariots of fire bring up martyrs from heathen lands. This plan of God, to confer redemption on all the saints together, none anticipating the rest, must give Abel, the oldest saint in heaven, an intense interest in the youngest born of the heavenly family, whose birth into the kingdom will herald the long-looked-for day of Christ's appearing. Christians on earth may feel that they have divided interests, but when waiting for the day of glory they must feel that their interests are one. Party names, earthly distinctions, how completely lost these must be in the expectation of this glorious hope. (*E. W. Shalders, B.A.*)

CHAPTER XII.

VERS. 1, 2. **Compassed about with so great a cloud.**—*Great men :*—The witnesses that God has set before the eyes of men are twofold, the witness of greatness and the witness of goodness, the witness of the hero and the witness of the saint. To name these two together is at once to put the one far above the other. Without any argument we feel at once that the hero and the saint belong to different spheres, the hero to nature, the saint to religion; the hero to the earth, the saint to heaven. If we examine what sort of a man we call great, we shall always find that it is one who leads his fellow-men. We do not call a man great simply for cleverness, nor for worldly success, the fruit of cleverness. Nor, again, do we call a man great for exceeding goodness, if he have nothing in him which makes that goodness a guide, and not merely a reverenced wonder to his fellows. A great man is he who stands out from others, not for some accidental difference, but for something which makes others follow his lead, acknowledge his power, accept his teachings, admire his course. Such a man will be sure to be marked with these characteristics; he will have a large mind, a strong conviction, and a firm will. 1. He must have a large mind to take in, and feel in full force the truths or the impulses which are dimly and dumbly moving in the minds of his fellow-men. This is the necessary condition of his being able to take the lead. In the great man all that is narrow and confined to himself is overpowered by what is large, what is shared and felt by thousands beside. He has room in his heart for many interests, for many impulses, for many aims; and he has that within him that shall comprehend and reconcile them all into one great purpose. 2. To this large soul he must add deep convictions. For he will be sure to meet with such obstacles as none but leaders ever meet. He will be aiming at that which is to last for centuries; but he will find straight in his path the passing passions of the day, roused to fiercer enmity by their own shallowness. Even when he is following the deep current, which none but himself is deep enough to feel, he will be stemming all the shallower currents which bear on their surface those that are living in his day. Hence it often happens that as long as he lives he sees no signs of success. He works his work; he sows his seed; but he never sees the harvest. What shall carry a man through all this? Nothing but faith. Be the great man a good man or a bad; be he like Elijah, a prophet and a faithful servant; or be he like Balaam, a prophet and a traitor, nothing can carry him through what he must often encounter but a deep conviction of the truth by which he lives; that truth, whatever it may be, of which he is the messenger. 3. The great man will need, besides a large heart and a deep conviction, a strong will. This is so indispensable a condition of greatness that we frequently fancy that strength of will is almost the whole of greatness, and are prone to admire that beyond all else that we see in a great man. And, indeed, if not the highest

element in a great man's nature, it is yet the one which saves the others from downright degradation. What spectacle is more contemptible than clear knowledge combined with weakness? What character is more universally despised than that of a coward? So absolutely necessary is courage to all true service that we have been made by God with a natural admiration even of wicked courage, in order, no doubt, that we should learn early to put on a piece of armour which we cannot do without, and that even nature should assist us in the first element of our spiritual lesson. What is the crown that must be added to all these qualities to make the great man true to his own greatness? It is loyalty to his true Master. (*Bp. Temple.*) *The cloud of witnesses*:—I. THE WITNESSES. And what are the truths they bear witness to? 1. They bear witness to the fact that their confidence in God was not misplaced. A man may fail, but God never. 2. They bear witness to the sufficiency of Divine grace. They had no more natural goodness than we; but they overcame it all, and it was in the strength of the Lord they did so. 3. They bear witness to the faithfulness of God to His promises. II. THE APOSTLE'S ADVICE. 1. We are to "lay aside every weight." I need scarce name particular things. In some it is vanity, in others worldliness, in others unlawful pleasure, in others a violent temper, others unholy attachments. It is, in fact, whatever deadens thy soul, and holds thee back when thou shouldest be pressing forward to the skies. 2. We are to renounce "the sin that doth so easily beset us." To "beset," means "to surround," and the sin that so easily besets us is that to which we are most liable. Very often, indeed mostly, it is that sin to which we were most given before our conversion: as when a breach is made in a wall, it is easier to effect another breach in that place, although it may be built up again, than where stone has never been dislodged. With different constitutions, and with different ages, there are different easily besetting sins. With youth it is often passion—evil desire. With age it is often fretfulness—peevishness. With the rich it is often pride and grasping of power; with the poor it is often repinings against providence. With the healthy it is often forgetfulness of God, and of their latter end; with the sick it is often rebellion against Him who lays on the rod. 3. We are also to "run with patience the race set before us." If a thing take us a long time in doing, we are inclined to be impatient about it. Or, if the word may be more properly translated, "perseverance." Then, if a journey is long, we are generally inclined to grow weary and loiter by the way. But if the road is long and dusty, we are to be patient. If the trial is severe, we are to be patient, and not allow our souls to be agitated. Sometimes the blessing we expect may be delayed, but we are to be patient in waiting for it. Sometimes our persecutions may be fierce indeed, but we are to be patient whilst we endure them. This grace is like the rivet that binds all the machinery together. III. WE HAVE A GLORIOUS EXAMPLE SET BEFORE US. "Looking unto Jesus." Christ endured the Cross, and He endured it patiently. (*W. G. Pascoe.*) *Good men in both worlds*:—I. THE GOOD THAT HAVE DEPARTED TO THE CELESTIAL WORLD. 1. They live. 2. They live in vast numbers. "Cloud." 3. They live as spectators of their surviving brethren on earth. "Witnesses." Though with the politics, commerce, and crafts of the world they have nothing to do, they are intensely alive to its spiritual interests and activities. II. THE GOOD THAT ARE STILL LIVING ON THE EARTH. 1. Their life is like a racecourse. They both have their limitation, rules, intense activity, speedy termination. 2. Their life, to realise its end, requires great attention. (1) There must be a divestment of all encumbrances. (2) There must be a freeing oneself from besetting sin. (3) There must be the exercise of great patience of soul in our efforts. 3. Their life should be salutarily influenced by the good who have departed. "Wherefore, seeing," &c. III. THE GLORIOUS REDEEMER OF THE GOOD IN BOTH WORLDS. "Looking unto Jesus," &c. Christ is the chief example of human goodness. 1. He was pre-eminent as an example in the spirit that inspired Him. Self-oblivion. 2. Pre-eminent in the grandeur of soul with which He met unparalleled sufferings. 3. Pre-eminent in the exaltation which He ultimately met. (*Homilist.*) *Immortality*:—I. To any thoughtful and aspiring person, sensitive to fine influences, desirous of mental and moral advancement, eager for opportunities for culture or for usefulness, THERE IS ALWAYS A SENSE OF EXHILARATION IN FEELING HIMSELF CONNECTED WITH A VARIOUS, SPLENDID, WIDELY-EXTENDED, SOCIAL SYSTEM. It impels naturally to larger effort, gives expansiveness to the whole plan of life, furnishes incentives to nobler personal aspiration and hope. It dignifies, instead of dwarfing, the individual personality. It widens the whole horizon of thought and expectation, and makes one more sensible of both the responsibility and the privilege of life. II. It is the privilege of the Christian to feel and know that he is associated NOT ONLY

WITH SUCH SOCIETIES ON EARTH, BUT WITH VAST AND GLORIOUS AND PURE REALMS OF LIFE WHICH EYE HATH NOT YET SEEN, and of which there comes no whisper to us through the silent blue, yet with which our relations are already intimate, into which we are to pass at death, and in which we are to dwell thenceforth immortally. It cannot be said that there is a prophecy of this in human nature; but there is an instinct in human nature which prepares us for the reception of it when announced to us in the gospel. We can conceive of ourselves in any relation to others, imaginable—in any place on earth, in any position — but we cannot conceive of ourselves as non-existent. III. THE MORE CLEARLY WE APPREHEND THESE HIGHER REALMS OF LIFE, THE MORE DEEPLY WE FEEL OUR PERSONAL AND VITAL RELATIONS TO THEM, THE MORE WILL THEY, BY THE INFLUENCE WHICH FALLS FROM THEM, ENRICH AND EXALT OUR DAILY LIFE. 1. For one thing they lessen the attraction of the world upon our minds and hearts. In our times this world seems to draw the spirit to itself, almost as the power of gravitation holds the body to the planet. Some months ago we had an ice storm. The gently descending rain froze as it fell, until it covered every tree and shrub with a raiment of brilliancy, as if it had been plaited in diamond and hung with diamond drops. It was superb to look upon, almost an apocalypse of natural beauty. Yet the very splendour broke the tree. The brilliant garniture overwhelmed that which was tender and vital in the shrub which it adorned. So it is with the great and splendid accumulations of wealth and the ornaments of pleasure that are so feverishly and anxiously sought. They destroy in us, often, by their very attainment, that which is finest and grandest in our spiritual nature. How shall we resist this encompassing influence? We cannot resist it by force of will; we might as well try to jump from the planet. We cannot extricate ourselves from the constant social influences which are around us, leading us to these results. We must somehow or other rise above it all. As long as we contemplate that into which we are to enter by and by, we are comparatively careless of that which is beneath. It ceases to make that masterful impression on our spirits which otherwise it had made, and which otherwise it must always make. 2. The contemplation of this superior life inspires, too, the noblest culture of character. As the sunshine of the morning lifts the mists, and reveals the landscape, and clothes it with a mantle of beauty, making the very rock burst into life and surround itself with verdure, so this influence from above, from the celestial realms which we have not reached, but toward which we are tending, and the gates of which Christ opens to us, disperses from the spirit what is malefic or obscure, and prints a new and vital beauty on it all. 3. This thought is also a vast incentive to the culture of power in us, of personal, moral, and intellectual power, for which there must be range in those circles of life which we are to join, if we are the disciples of the Divine Lord. IV. Here, then, you see at once THE MISCHIEVOUS TENDENCY OF SCEPTICAL THOUGHT, WHICH TENDS TO OBSCURE THIS VISION OF THE WORLD TO COME, and to make it signify a mere fancy, a mere dream of the world's youth, which, as the race goes on, will more and more be dissipated, as the tinted clouds of morning disappear when the sun rides higher and higher to the meridian. V. HERE IS THE GLORY OF THE GOSPEL. I do not find the most striking prophecies of the future life in any mere words of Scripture. I find them in the fact that He who had the power of miracle in His hands surrendered Himself to death, that afterward He might open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. There is the supreme glory of the celestial realms manifested to me by the agony of that death! The gospel is not simply a philosophy of religion, or a law of living. It is an apocalypse showing the heavens to us, and bringing thus its Divine benediction on every life. Here is the Divine mission of preaching; here is the beauty of every sacrament; here the glory of every Church. Here is the hidden meaning and blessedness which the thought of heaven brings in the events which seem most painful. So when our beloved friends pass from us; so when misfortunes come upon us; this thought of the higher life comes to cheer and comfort. (*R. S. Storrs, D.D.*) *The Christian runner in relation to his spectators*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN RUNNER IS AN OBJECT OF DEEP INTEREST TO HIS SPECTATORS. 1. The position of the spectators. They surround the Christian runner. 2. Their number. Vast. II. THE CHRISTIAN RUNNER SHOULD PUT FORTH GREAT EFFORTS BECAUSE OF HIS SPECTATORS. 1. He should divest himself of every encumbrance. Ceremonialism, religious errors, business perplexities, fear of man, inveterate prejudices, sinful propensities. 2. He should avoid the sin to which he is most peculiarly prone. Pride, covetousness, intemperance, evil-speaking, anger. 3. He should maintain great self-possession. "Run with patience." III. THE CHRISTIAN RUNNER HAS AN OBJECT BEFORE HIM, FROM WHICH HIS THOUGHTS

SHOULD NOT BE DIVERTED by his spectators. "Looking unto Jesus." 1. The work of Jesus. 2. The history of Jesus. 3. The exaltation of Jesus. (*Homilist.*) *The moral influence of departed saints*:—The North American Indians believed that when the flowers faded in the forest and prairie their beauty passed into the rainbow: thus our kindred and companions, the joy and pride of our homes and churches, fade away; but, lifting our eyes, we see our lost ones blossom forth again in the holier beauty of the rainbow about the throne. The text reminds us that these exalted ones exercise towards us a morally helpful influence. We are not to think of our exalted brethren as forming in the midst of heaven a brilliant cloud, admirable in the eye of imagination, yet exercising no real practical influence over the earth; but as a cloud full of mystic rain and dew, imparting life and beauty to those who dwell on the earth. Our beatified friends become our moral helpers. I. BY DIVERTING OUR ATTENTION FROM THIS TO THE ETERNAL WORLD. As the dove sent from the ark, returning no more, reminded Noah that a new world was blooming for him; so these departed ones who return no more, daily and powerfully remind us that another and brighter world is blooming for us beyond death's cold flood, and in earnest we prepare to leave this storm-tossed ark. The "cloud of witnesses" cause us to look above the dust; gazing after their departing forms we find ourselves standing face to face with eternity, and thus acquire the seriousness, spirituality, and strength of the Christian character. II. BY ENHANCING THE CHARM OF THE CELESTIAL WORLD. The departed saints humanise heaven, interpret it, render it more fascinating. It is true that the grand charm of the skies is the vision and fellowship of the glorious God, yet it is not less true that every saint who passes into paradise invests it with a fresh and powerful influence. Each crowned friend makes us understand heaven better, makes us prize it the more, makes us strive more ardently to reach its bright and wealthy plains. III. BY INCREASING OUR SENSE OF SELF-RESPECT. Our departed ones are no longer before us in weariness and humiliation, but crowned with inconceivable and unfading splendours; and as we gaze upon them a new conception of our spiritual capacity takes possession of us—we feel that we belong to a race of conquerors and kings. It is said that the Koh-i-noor diamond is only half its original size, the other half being in a distant country, where it was found in the possession of some one who used it as a common flint. Thus our churches, our families, are broken into two parts; one portion being exalted to the palace of the skies, the other fragment remaining in this lower realm, and used to ends apparently most commonplace and servile; yet we cannot contemplate the broken jewel, shining in the palace of the King, without thinking more highly of this other portion below, and watching it with intenser care lest its beauty should be dimmed, or its preciousness impaired, or its safety imperilled. Our celestial kinsmen minister to us, for they exalt our conception of the nature we possess, of the inheritance to which we are destined. IV. BY GIVING US THE SENSE OF AN ABIDING SACRED PRESENCE. The Jewish legend relates that Joseph was saved by the spirit of his mother, when he was tempted to sin in the land of Egypt. This legend is founded in the truth that the powerful and blessed memory of our dead is a preservative against sin, a strengthening to virtue. And this is the precise idea of Paul in our text. "We are surrounded," says he to his Hebrew brethren, "by a great cloud of heroes; let us, under the eyes of these pure, noble, valiant spirits, act a worthy part; let us labour to be as pure, noble, valiant as they were." Thus again are the glorified ones our helpers; these beatified spectators put upon us a sweet constraint to walk as they also walked, so that we may triumph as they also triumphed. V. BY THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THEIR SYMPATHY. Altered in many respects, the glorified saints have still the same hearts, and profoundly sympathise with us in all our upward struggles. The "cloud" about us is composed not of cold and curious spectators, but of warm and interested friends. Is not this fact a blessed help to us? The transfigured ones beckon us onward! upward! and the knowledge of this sympathy is to us in the day of tribulation a fountain of strength. VI. BY STIMULATING OUR HOPE AND COURAGE. Again and again Satan almost paralyses us with his lofty vaunts of the might and majesty of evil. Sin rises before us so strong, so subtle, so mysterious and awful, that we are almost ready to surrender at discretion. The evil of our nature, the evil of the universe, seems well-nigh omnipotent. How fatal is this idea to our spiritual life! Nothing shatters this destructive imagination more than the triumphant death and exaltation of the saints. To see our brother on the crystal walls! our sister crowned with amaranth! our friends with the palm and diadem! how this reassures us! We feel that Satan is not omnipotent, that sin

is not invincible, that suffering is not unconquerable. (*W. L. Watkinson.*) **Lay aside every weight.**—*Weights and sins:*—There is a regular series of thoughts in this clause, and in the one or two which follow it. If we would run well, we must run light; if we would run light, we must look to Christ. The central injunction is, "Let us run with patience"; the only way of doing that is the "laying aside all weights and sins"; and the only way of laying aside the weights and sins is, "looking unto Jesus." Of course, the apostle does not mean some one special kind of transgression when he says, "the sin which doth so easily beset us." He is speaking about sin generically—all manner of transgression. It is not, as we sometimes hear the words misquoted, "that sin which doth most easily beset us." All sin is according to this passage a besetting sin. I. THERE ARE HINDRANCES WHICH ARE NOT SINS. Sin is that which, by its very nature, in all circumstances, by whomsoever done, without regard to consequences, is a transgression of God's law. A "weight" is that which, allowable in itself, perhaps a blessing, the exercise of a power which God has given us—is, for some reason, a hindrance in our running the heavenly race. The one word describes the action or habit by its inmost essence, the other describes it by its accidental consequences. Then, what are these weights? The first step in the answer to that question is to be taken by remembering that, according to the image of this text, we carry them about with us, and we are to put them away from ourselves. It is fair to say, then, that the whole class of weights are not so much external circumstances which may be turned to evil, as the feelings and habits of mind by which we abuse God's great gifts and mercies, and turn that which was ordained to be for life into death. The renunciation that is spoken about is not so much the putting away from ourselves of certain things lying round about us that may become temptations, as the putting away of the dispositions within us which make these things temptations. It is an awful and mysterious power that which we all possess, of perverting the highest endowments, whether of soul or of circumstances, which God has given us, into the occasions for falling back in the Divine life. Just as men, by devilish ingenuity, can distil poison out of God's fairest flowers, so we can do with everything that we have. II. And now, if this be the explanation of what the apostle means by "weights"—legitimate things that hinder us in our course towards God—there comes this second consideration, IF WE WOULD RUN, WE MUST LAY THESE ASIDE. There are two ways by which this injunction of my text may be obeyed. The one is, by getting so strong that the thing shall not be a weight, though we carry it; and the other is, that feeling ourselves to be weak, we take the prudent course of putting it utterly aside. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Weights:*—I. THE "WEIGHTS"—what are they? 1. The "weight" of unforgiven sin. How that hinders many. You have offended a father or teacher or friend—you have been guilty of disobedience or untruthfulness or dishonesty. How heavy it is! What a weight it is! If it has not been found out it lies like lead on your heart. How it hinders you in everything you put your hands to! Or the fault has been discovered, and you are in disgrace. Your dearest friends are displeased. You feel as if there were a great gulf between you and them. You are unhappy. You cannot get on with anything. You are just like one weighed down under a heavy burden. Whether it is work or play, company or solitude, there is a weight dragging you down in all. Now if it is so with sin as committed against man, what shall we say of sin as committed against God! How different your life would be if your sin were all forgiven; how different your worship would be; how different your work would be! 2. The "weight" of unsubdued sin. I shall try to explain what I mean by this. I shall suppose we are setting out on a long voyage. We have storms and contrary winds to contend with, and sometimes icebergs and dangerous rocks and opposing currents. But we have what is even worse than these. Some of the ship's crew are mutinous. They will not obey orders. They try to set the other sailors up against the captain. They damage the ship's machinery. They reverse the engines. They put out the fires. They do everything they can to provoke and hinder. And the consequence is, the ship's progress is seriously interfered with. Sometimes she comes to a stand altogether. In any case the voyage is slow and uncomfortable, as compared with what it should have been. At times it seems as if all on board must go to the bottom. Now what is wanted is, that the mutineers should be subdued—changed into obedient and right-hearted seamen, or put in irons and kept from doing harm. So long as they are unsubdued they are a "weight" that seriously hinders. Now, is there no "weight," no hindrance of this kind with you? Is there no stubborn will that

disobeys, and must needs be broken if things are to get on at all? What of your temper that bursts into passion on the slightest provocation, and in words or looks or actions gets outlet to itself, in a way that may well alarm? What of your pride and vanity? What of your selfishness, that disregards others and is always seeking your own gratification and pleasure? What of secret sins which you try to conceal, but which are always growing stronger, and if unsubdued will go on as they are doing, burning like a fire within, and eating out your very heart and soul? So long as these have the power which they have now, every now and then getting the better of you, your life can neither be happy nor good. 3. The "weight" of evil habits. I do not refer so much here to single acts that are out and out bad and sinful. I refer more to things that may seem so far harmless at the beginning, but are apt to be repeated and to grow upon one, till they become habits, and rule him and hold him in chains. There is, for instance, the habit of procrastination—of putting off, instead of doing a thing at once. That grows terribly upon one, and becomes a hindrance of a very serious kind. There is the habit of drinking. There is the habit of idle and unprofitable reading, not to speak of what is positively bad. It consumes precious time, it takes away relish for prayer and for the Bible and all solid reading, it excites without doing any good, it takes away the heart from God. There is the habit of keeping company with unprofitable companions. 4. The last "weight" I shall mention is that of care. Perhaps this may seem not very much in your way, and more for your fathers and mothers. And yet I know even young hearts have their care—about lessons, and work otherwise, often not knowing what to do—with sorrows which are sometimes heavy and bitter enough. I am sure there are none of you who do not know something about these "weights," and could tell how they hinder you in what is good. They will have much to do in making you the men and women that you shall be. And hence the great importance of looking at the matter, and that at once. II. WHAT IS TO BE DONE WITH THE WEIGHTS? Our text says they are to be "laid aside" —put off—cast away. Now the question is, how is this to be done? and to this question I have various answers to give. 1. By coming to Christ. The first "weight" to be got quit of is that of unforgiven sin, and like "Christian's" burden, that can only be got rid of at the Cross. 2. By drawing power from Christ. It is just like a man with all the resources of the bank at his call. He can have no fear of wanting anything. Christ has all that any of us can need, and He has it for us. Faith is just leaning upon Christ—looking to Christ—drawing upon Christ for everything. 3. By prayer. When we feel our own weakness, what can we do but cry to the Strong for strength? 4. By effort. We have the battle to fight, not in our own strength, but in the strength which Jesus gives. Now I wish to call special attention before closing to this—that we are to lay aside every weight. There is to be no sparing. Everything that hinders must go. (*J. H. Wilson, D.D.*) *Spiritual weights*:—Spiritual weights are of many descriptions. They may originate in the very senses. Life in the world, in the enjoyment of good things, in the pursuit of wealth and position, may grow to such unwieldy proportions that the Christian conscience has enough to do to vitalise the mass, and cannot energise it to a race. Then the play of the ordinary human affections and social human instincts is allowed such preponderance, that the man becomes gregarious, has so absorbed the opinions and prejudices and criticisms of his circle, that swift, decisive, forward motion is impossible. He lies, like a great hulk in the wash of worldly opinion, without helm or sail. Big, human-hearted he may be, but power of initiative or incentive has he none. But some will add to their faith, tradition. They must keep on with usages which had been put away—aye, and add mere ordinances of men. And now, clogged in every organ of the soul, they are ready to give up in despair. The superinduced mass of ceremonial, imparting no strength, is closing round the vitals of living faith and hindering its every movement. But in addition to habits of mind and life hindering men from spiritual progress, there are weights imposed by men on themselves, which hinder advance and enfeeble the soul. They have their money in so many ventures, they are pursuing at one time so many schemes, or they are so engrossed in the one or two to which they have given themselves up, that they have little or no time for serious thought. Yea, they cannot shift their thoughts out of the worldly rut when they have time. They must have distraction, pleasure, society, travel, to relieve the jaded mind. And it is not merely in business that men put on weights. Some live in a whirl of social engagements, others to exalt their sense of self-importance, or from nobler motives heap on public engagements; yea, not a few in this our time

are crowding on the back of every day so many spiritual or religious engagements that the life of God in them is weighted in its advance. They are dwindling under the pressure, or, at all events, they are not growing in life and thought and will as they might grow. What are we to do? Throw all our engagements away? By no means. Steam would be a useless thing if it were not generated within an engine. It is by working on through the engine's means that it becomes a power. And so the life of grace needs an environment of work and service through which to reveal its power. It must be embodied in deeds, and there is no lawful sphere in which grace may not shine. What I say is, that you may overload your engine and that you may overweight your grace. What is holding you down and keeping you back? Are you doing futile and unnecessary things—that is, things which, though innocent, are merely for self, apart from Christ? You cannot be wrong in putting them away. Are you doing too many things, so that you are distracted, and thus retarded? Remember that you are running the race of perfection, seeking entire likeness to Christ, and your very work will come to suffer if this religious dissipation go on. Rearrange, economise, lay aside every weight. (*John Smith, M.A.*)

The sin which doth so easily beset us.—*The besetting sin:*—1. We have to strive against the whole body of sin, everything which is against the holy will of God, "every evil inclination, all iniquity and profaneness, neglect and haughtiness, strife and wrath, passion and corruption, indolence and fraud, every evil motion, every impure thought, every base desire, every unseemly thought." 2. We have all, probably, some one besetting fault, which is our own special hindrance. Both of these we must learn by looking into ourselves. They vary in all. No two persons have exactly the same temptations, as no two minds are exactly alike. And so we ought not to judge of others, nor can we judge of ourselves by them. We must look into ourselves. We have, then, these two searches into ourselves to make: one into every part of ourselves; the other into that part of ourselves which is the weakest, and through which we most often fall. Of these, holy men recommend that we should begin with our besetting fault. For this there are many reasons. It lies, most likely, at the root of many other faults. It burrows under ground, as it were, and comes up at a distance, where we look not for it. It branches out into other faults; it twines round and kills some grace; it hides itself behind other faults or virtues; it puts itself forth in the midst of them. It colours every other fault; it interferes with, or overshadows or overlays every grace. But the more this one fault spreads, the more, if you uproot it, you will clear of the field of your conscience, the more will your heart become the good ground, which, freed from thorns, shall bear fruit, thirty, sixty, a hundredfold, to life everlasting. Thou hast, then, great reason to be most watchful to uproot thy besetting sin, because—1. It is the root of other sins, gives occasion to them, makes them as bad as they are, makes acts which would have no sin to be sinful, because they have this sin in them. And so, while thy besetting sin reigns in thy soul, it is the parent of many other sins; when it is destroyed many others die with it. 2. It is the sin which has most hold of thy mind, and so it is the cause why thou most often offendest God. It comes to thee oftenest, tempts thee most strongly, and where thou art the weakest and yieldest the most readily. It is called the besetting sin, because it continually besets thee—that is, it is always about thee, always on the watch for thee. It entangles thee at every step. More of a man's sins are done through his besetting sin than through all besides. It becomes his companion. He becomes so inured to it that he does not think of it as sin, or justifies it, or, at least, pleads to himself that his nature is weak and that he cannot help it. Nature is weak; but grace is strong, yea, almighty. 3. Then, too, it is the occasion of a man's worst sins, because a man yields his mind most to it, goes along with it, does it with pleasure. All sin is, to choose something else rather than God. But to choose a thing eagerly, with zest, taking delight in it against the wise love of God, this is the deadliest form of sin. 4. Then it will most likely be that, when not tempted in act, a man will be tempted to the thought of his besetting sin, both before and after. And so he acts his sin over again in thought, when he cannot in deed. Thus he may multiply his sin beyond all power of thought. Such, then, are grounds from the nature of the besetting sin itself, why thou shouldest earnestly and specially strive against it. It is thy deadliest enemy; that which most keeps thee from God, if unhappily thou art separated from Him; if not, still it is that which most offends Him, which hinders His love from flowing to thee and filling thee, which hinders thee from loving Him with thy whole heart. But then for thyself, too, it is thus that thou wilt have most courage to fight. It has been, no

doubt, discouraging at some time to most of us that we could not become good all at once. Our garden, which we were to make clean, seemed full of weeds. They seemed to spring up fresh every day; how could we clean it? And so the weeds of our sins grew, as they would, left to themselves, with more luxuriant, foul rankness. It is said that one who thought thus, dreamed that He who had given him his garden to cleanse, came to him and asked him what he was doing. He said, "I lost all hope of cleaning my garden, so I laid down to sleep." His Good Father said to him, "Clean every day as much as thou coverest, where thou art lying, and all will be in time cleaned." So God speaks to us. "Set about some one thing for Me; set thyself to get rid of some one sin for love of Me, to become in one thing more pleasing to Me, and I will be with thee; I will give thee victory in this; I will lead thee on from victory to victory, from strength to strength; thou shalt 'run and not be weary; thou shalt walk, and not be faint.'" By the same strength by which thou prevailest over thy first enemy, thou shalt prevail over the rest. In human warfare, those who fight are tired even by their victory; in Divine warfare, they are strengthened. For they fight not in human weakness, but in Divine strength; and "My strength," He says, "is made perfect in weakness." There is another good in fighting against thy besetting sin. Thou art gathered upon one point. Thou art striving with thy whole heart to please God in that point; thou wilt be asking for and using God's grace for this. But therewith, secretly, thou wilt be transformed thyself. In learning to subdue one sin, thou wilt have been learning how, in time, to subdue all. Thou wilt have learnt the wiles of the enemy, the weakness of thy own heart, the force of outward temptations, the need to avoid, if thou canst, the outward occasion, but, in any case, the necessity of resisting in the first moment of assault. Thou wilt know, for thyself, the might which God gives thee when thou so resistest, the power of instant prayer. Thou wilt have felt the peril of tampering with sin, the value of watchfulness, the danger of security after thou hast conquered. Thou wilt have tasted the blessedness of gathering up thy whole mind to serve God, and giving thyself to Him, morning by morning, to please Him in this, and not to displease Him. Thou wilt have known, in thine own soul, the value of obeying at once any suggestions which, by His Holy Spirit or in thy conscience, He giveth thee to avoid this or do that. (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*)

Causes of propensity to peculiar vices:—I. THE PRINCIPAL CAUSES OF OUR BIAS OR PROPENSITY TO SOME PARTICULAR VICE. 1. A propensity to particular sins may be complexional, derived from constitutional frame and temperament. Men are born with different propensities to pleasure, avarice, ambition, resentment, malice, envy, or the like. They may, indeed, by various methods be cultivated, and acquire vigour; but the seeds of them seem to be natural to the soil, and, in proportion to our neglect of them become still more difficult to be extirpated. 2. Another occasion of propensity to particular vices is, the power of custom or habit; which is commonly reputed a second nature, a kind of new nature ingrafted upon the former; and is often, in its influence and effects, not much inferior to it. It is to this principle, *e.g.*, not to nature, that we may ascribe the vice of intemperance. Nature approves moderation; is disgusted and oppressed by excess. But custom leads men beyond the temperate limits marked out by nature into the extremes of intemperance; where, though nature denies them permanent pleasures, they form to themselves some that are fantastic, and subsist only in imagination. Another sin into which men are led by mere custom, and by nothing else, is the common practice of profaning the name of God. 3. Another occasion of a bias or inclination to some particular vice, may arise from our situation and condition of life. Every situation is exposed to some peculiar inconvenience; every condition of life to its own trials. Thus, affluence and poverty have each their respective inducements. And the same observation might be extended to the different periods of life, and to different professions and employments. II. THE OBLIGATION INCUMBENT ON US, OF ENDEAVOURING TO CORRECT OR LAY IT ASIDE. The greater the propensity we feel in ourselves towards any culpable passion or failing, with the more care should we guard against it. It is in our power to maintain the authority of reason, to oppose the corruptions of our nature and the dominion of evil habits; to resist seducements from objects without, and temptations from passions within us. This is the proper work and business of religion: this the duty which God requires at our hands; and has therefore, undoubtedly, given us ability to perform. One great obstacle, indeed, to the correcting or guarding against the sin that most easily besets us, is the difficulty we often find in discovering and detecting it. Such likewise is the prepossession in our own favour, so flattering the glass that self-love holds before

us, that this also prevents us from seeing our deformities, and marking the true features and complexion of the mind. Quick-sighted as we all are to the faults or foibles of others, we do not, or will not, with the same facility discern our own. Our passions are our apologists; they plead for our vices, and mislead our judgment. This may be a monition to us, to scrutinise with the strictest caution our own heart, to look well if there be any culpable inclination or passion lurking in it, that we may not be deceived by any flattering reports of our character made by self-partiality. To assist us in forming a right judgment of our conduct, and seeing it in a true light, the best method perhaps would be, to put ourselves as much as may be out of the question; to divest ourselves of all concern in it; and to suppose that we are passing judgment, not on ourselves, but on another person. (*G. Carr, B.A.*) *The besetting sin:*—I. THE BESETTING SIN IS A REALITY IN CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE. Every character has its weak points, just as every fort and every line of battle. II. THE BESETTING SIN HAS VARIOUS OUTWARD FORMS. Just as some diseases in the human system manifest themselves at one place in one person, and at another place in another person, so sinfulness in the moral system comes to the surface at different points in different people. To one person the besetting sin may be uncleanness of imagination; to another, irritability of temper. It not infrequently happens that several forms of the besetting sin afflict the same person. In some form or another we all have a besetting sin; and it greatly interferes with both our happiness and our usefulness. III. THE BESETTING SIN CAN BE OVERCOME. 1. Learn what our weak points are. 2. Pray every day for special help at the weak points. 3. Guard these points with special care. 4. Cultivate holiness in general. 5. There is great hope for those who are struggling for the mastery over besetting sins. (*The Preachers' Monthly.*) *A besetting sin dulls spiritual perception:*—David Rittenhouse, of Pennsylvania, was a great astronomer. He was skilful in measuring the sizes of planets and determining the position of the stars. But he found that, such was the distance of the stars, a silk thread stretched across the glass of his telescope would entirely cover a star; and thus a silk fibre appeared to be larger in diameter than a star. Our sun is said to be 886,000 miles in diameter, and yet, seen from a distant star, could be covered, hidden behind a thread when that thread was stretched across the telescope. Just so we have seen some who never could behold the heavenly world. They always complained of dulness of vision when they looked in the heavenly direction. You might direct their eyes to the Star of Bethlehem through the telescope of faith and holy confidence; but, alas! there is a secret thread, a silken fibre, which, holding them in subserviency to the world, in some way obscures the light; and Jesus, the Star of Hope, is eclipsed, and their hope darkened. A very small sin, a very little self-gratification, may hide the light. To some, Jesus, as Saviour, appears very far off. He shall be seen where the heart lets nothing intervene. *The danger of impediments:*—At Sidler Tchiflik three men sprang on to the train just as it was starting, and clung to the carriage-doors. The guard saw them, but dared not push them off for fear of killing them, yet could not venture to stop the train on account of the delay this would have caused. He therefore beckoned to the men to creep slowly along the side of the carriages after him. It was a terrible walk, and made my blood run cold to see it. The poor men were wet, benumbed, and awkward. Each had a bundle on his shoulder—one on a stick, one on a gun, one on a sword. As they crept slowly along, hanging on for their lives, first one bundle, then another, dropped off, till at last, after an agony of suspense, they were safely landed in a cattle-truck, having lost the very little all that they possessed. (*Lady Brassey.*) *The injury of a besetting sin:*—The old proverb hath it, "Here's talk of the Turk and the Pope, but 'tis my next neighbour that does me the most harm." It is neither popery nor infidelity that we have half so much cause to dread as our own besetting sins. We want more Protestants against sin, more Dissenters from carnal maxims, and more Nonconformists to the world. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Besetting sins:*—A man's besetting sin is the one that jumps with his inclinations. Does he love mirthfulness? Then he must be careful lest he runs into excessive levity and play the harlequin. He will be tempted to make jests of sacred things. A minister ought not to be a monk; but neither should he be a social comedian. Does a man love ease? Then he always interprets those providences in his own favour which allow him to shirk hard work and swing in his hammock. Does he love flattery and *éclat?* Then he is tempted to seek applause, and to imagine that he is serving God when he is only burning incense on the altar of self-worship. The worst enemy is the one which wears an honest disguise. Look out for selfishness. It is

the "old Adam" lurking behind every hedge. It will always keep place with you if you give it the upper hand. Keep no league with it; for Christ will never abide in the same heart with that subtle and greedy tyrant. A Christian is never safe, never strong, never true to Christ, unless he is constantly "collaring" ever sinful and selfish passion, and forcing it into unconditional surrender. (*T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*) *The deadly character of secret sin*:—Canon Wilberforce said that one day, while walking in the Isle of Skye, he saw a magnificent specimen of the golden eagle, soaring upward. He halted, and watched its flight. Soon he observed by its movements that something was wrong. Presently it began to fall, and soon lay dead at his feet. Eager to know the reason of its death, he hastily examined it, and found no trace of gunshot wound; but he found that it held in its talons a small weasel, which, in its flight, was drawn near its body, and had sucked the life blood from the eagle's breast. The same end befalls him who clings to some secret sin; sooner or later it will sap his life blood, and he falls. (*C. W. Bibb.*) *One sin the soul's ruin*:—There was but one crack in the lantern, and the wind has found it out and blown out the candle. How great a mischief one unguarded point of character may cause us! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **The race that is set before us.**—*The race to heaven*:—I. OUR COMMENCING THIS RACE. 1. It is not any race, but a particular one. "The race set before us." 2. The introduction to this race is by regeneration (John iii. 2, 7). 3. We must lay aside every hindrance that would impede our progress. II. OUR PROGRESS IN THIS RACE. I. We must keep the course. 2. We must keep on in the way. 3. We must go on patiently under all difficulties. 4. We must keep the prize in view. 5. We must persevere to the end. III. OUR FINISHING THIS RACE. 1. The certainty of having the prize. 2. The prize will be a glorious and enduring one. 3. The prize will be a just one. "Crown of righteousness." 4. The honour connected with the bestowment of this crown. (*The Evangelical Preacher.*) *The race*:—I. RELIGION IN ITS ENCOURAGEMENTS. 1. Those who have departed from us are existing. Death is not annihilation. 2. The dead are in a state of conscious activity. These men are not asleep, but observe. 3. They are not far from us, for we "are compassed about" by them. 4. They observe our line of life—are witnesses. II. RELIGION IN ITS ACTIVITIES. 1. Religion requires self-denial. 2. Religion requires the conquest of sin. 3. Religion required personal effort. 4. Religion requires patience. 5. Religion requires thought and attention. III. RELIGION IN ITS MODEL. 1. Our model is regarded as the inspirer of Christian life—"the author and finisher of our faith,"—the originator in us of the life of God, which life can never be brought into maturity unless He becomes, by His gracious presence in the heart, its finisher. 2. Paul then refers to the Saviour's object in His life of toil—the object of His model life, "who for the joy," &c. 3. Finally, the apostle refers to the many sufferings, mental and physical, connected with His model life. (*E. Lewis, B.A.*) *The Christian race*:—I. THE RACE is one of—1. Christian knowledge. 2. Christian experience. 3. Christian duties. 4. Christian sufferings. The phrase implies—(1) Exertion. (2) Progression. (3) Perseverance. II. THE DUTIES connected with it. Lay aside every weight—sin of every kind—but particularly—1. Attachment to the company with which formerly connected. 2. Love of the world, and inordinate attachment even to our lawful calling. 3. Improper fear of man; accommodation and compromise of the fear of God. And the besetting sin! III. THE ENCOURAGEMENT afforded. 1. The cloud of witnesses. These are testifiers as well as spectators. 2. Jesus Himself. And He as an example also, "who for the joy," &c. Can we be tempted or suffer as He did? And remember, we, too, shall sit down on His throne. (*J. Summerfield, M.A.*) *Stripping for the race*:—I. THE SPEED OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. "Let us run." We must not sit still to be carried by the stream. We must not loiter and linger as children returning from a summer's ramble. We must not even walk as men with measured step. The idea of a race is generally competition; here it is only concentration of purpose, singleness of aim, intensity. How earnest men are around us! Newton poring over his problems till the midnight wind sweeps over his pages the ashes of his long extinguished fire. Reynolds sitting, brush in hand, before his canvas for thirty-six hours together, summoning into life forms of beauty that seemed glad to come. Dryden composing in a single fortnight his ode for St. Cecilia's Day. Buffon dragged from his beloved slumbers to his more beloved studies. And the beloved biographer, who records these traits, himself rising with the dawn to prepare for the demands of his charge. In a world like this, and with a theme like ours, we ought not to be languid, but devoted, eager, consumed with a holy love to God, and with a passion for the souls of men. Then should we make progress in the knowledge of the Word of God, and enter

into the words of one of the greatest spiritual athletes that ever lived (Phil. iii. 14). II. WE MUST RUN FREE OF WEIGHTS. There would be little difficulty in maintaining an ardent spirit if we were more faithful in dealing with the habits and indulgencies which cling around us and impede our steps. Thousands of Christians are like water-logged vessels. They cannot sink, but they are so saturated with inconsistencies, and worldliness, and permitted evil, that they can only be towed with difficulty into the celestial port. There is an old Dutch picture of a little child dropping a cherished toy from its hands; and, at first sight, its action seems unintelligible, until, at the corner of the picture, the eye is attracted to a white dove winging its flight towards the emptied outstretched hands. Similarly we are prepared to forego a good deal, when once we catch sight of the spiritual acquisitions which beckon to us. And this is the true way to reach consecration and surrender. Do not ever dwell on the giving-up side, but on the receiving side. Keep in mind the meaning of the old Hebrew word for consecration, to fill the hand. There will not be much trouble in getting men to empty their hands of wood, hay, and stubble, if they see that there is a chance of filling them with the treasures, which gleam from the faces or lives of others, or which call to them from the page of Scripture. The world pities us, because it sees only what we give up; but it would hold its sympathy if it could also see how much we receive—"good measure, pressed down, and running over given into our bosoms." III. WE MUST LAY ASIDE BESETTING SIN. "Let us lay aside the sin which doth so closely cling to us" (R.V.). We often refer to these words; but do we not misquote them in divorcing them from their context? We should read them as part of the great argument running through the previous chapter. That argument has been devoted to the theme of faith. And surely it is most natural to hold that the sin which so closely clings to us is nothing else than the sin of unbelief, which is the opposite pole to the faith so highly eulogised. If that be a correct exegesis, it sheds new light on unbelief. It is no longer an infirmity; it is a sin. Men sometimes carry about their doubts, as beggars a deformed or sickly child, to excite the sympathy of the benevolent. But surely there is a kind of unbelief which should not meet with sympathy, but rebuke. It is sin which needs to be repented, to be resisted, and to receive as sin the cleansing of Christ. 1. Let us remember that the course is set before us by our heavenly Father, who therefore knows all its roughnesses and straitnesses, and will make all grace abound toward us, sufficient for our need. To do His will is rest and heaven. 2. Let us look off unto Jesus. Away from past failure and success; away from human applause and blame; away from the gold pieces scattered on the path, and the flowers that line either side. Do not look now and again, but acquire the habit of looking always; so that it shall become natural to look up from every piece of daily work, from every room, however small, from every street, however crowded, to His calm face; just as the sojourner on the northern shores of Geneva's lake is constantly prone to look up from any book or work on which the attention may have been engaged, to behold the splendour and glory of the noble range of snow-capped summits on the further shores. And if it seems hard to acquire this habitual attitude, trust the Holy Spirit to form it in your soul. Above all, remember that where you tread there your Lord trod once, combating your difficulties and sorrows, though without sin; and ere long you shall be where He is now. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *The race set before us*:—"Go ahead" was only half of David Crockett's motto—and not the most important half. "Be sure you are right" precedes. The faster the ship goes ahead, the greater the danger, if there is not a good watch on the bow and a strong hand on the wheel. To run well is of importance; to start right is of prime importance. "Let us run with patience *the race that is set before us*," says the sacred writer. A great many men lose the prize by dropping out of the text altogether the clause which we have put in italics. Every man must find his own race before he begins to run. God has a work for every man that no other man can do quite as well; and he succeeds best who quickest finds what that work is, and sets himself to do it. Many a good writer has been spoiled to make an insolvent merchant; not a few good housekeepers to make execrable poets; now and then an execrable mechanic to make a poor preacher. A race has been set before me; and it is my duty to find out what that race is, and run it, and not waste life in regrets that I cannot run a different one, or life's energies in unsuccessful attempts to do so. *Patient running*:—I remember once climbing a great Alpine peak. I was fagged and out of sorts, and the strain was considerable. I was not enjoying it, but I knew I should enjoy it at the top. I had not any spare energy to talk or look about, so I kept looking for a couple of

hours at the heels of the guide, who was in front and above me. That is going with patience. It is the holding out till the next glimpse of light comes from above. It is the determination of the runner, when the afternoon sun is blinding his eyes, and the afternoon languor weighing upon him, that he will run on. (*J. F. Ewing, M.A.*) **Looking unto Jesus.**—*Jesus the author and finisher of the Christian's faith*:—I. "The author and finisher of faith" must be looked to as THE ONLY TEACHER OF RELIGIOUS DOCTRINES. II. "The author and finisher of faith" must be looked to as THE PREACHER AND EXEMPLAR OF CHRISTIAN MORALITY. III. "The author and finisher of faith" must be looked to as THE ALONE PROCURER OF SALVATION. (*H. J. Stevenson, M.A.*) *Looking to Jesus, the secret of running well our Christian race*:—I. THE PERSON SET FORTH HERE IS JESUS; He, whose name is the light and glory of Scripture; whose coming and work formed the subject of ancient type, and symbol, and prophecy. 1. We are led to consider Him in His Divine nature and character. 2. The person set forth in the text is to be considered in His most gracious undertaking on behalf of men. II. THE HABIT COMMENDED—"Looking unto Jesus." This word expresses the mental posture, which the apostle would have all Christians maintain in relation to Jesus, their Saviour-God. It is not a single, unrepeated act that he wishes here to enforce, but a holy habit of soul. As the gaze of the mariner, steering his vessel through perilous seas, is perpetually fixed upon the compass, so we, voyaging to eternity through the treacherous waters of time, must have eye and heart centred on Christ, as the sole director of our progress. The word expresses a continuous and sustained action of the inner man. But it does more. It not only means "looking," as the translation gives it, but looking off, or away. We are taught to look away from all else to "Jesus only." Let the counter attraction be what it may, its power is to be resisted: its spell is to be broken, and the full gaze of the soul is to concentrate itself on Immanuel alone. Now, in the direction of the apostle, as thus expounded, I think we are called to note particularly three suggested thoughts. 1. The entire sufficiency of Christ to meet all human requirements. 2. It is the sad tendency of man, notwithstanding, to turn to other dependencies. 3. This tendency must be corrected, in order to Christ's becoming all that He would be to any. III. THE END CONTEMPLATED—that we may run well our Christian race; run it free from entanglement; run it with purity; run it with patience; run it with perseverance. Oh! is there anything that can compare with these objects in the estimation of a believer? We may well ask, then, how the "looking unto Jesus" will enable us to compass these objects; in other words, how it will secure that we shall run well our Christian race? And here the answer is threefold. 1. "Looking to Jesus" supplies the strongest motive to run well our Christian race; that is, love towards Himself. You know that fire and force are the effect of a supreme affection; how it makes light of difficulties, and changes leaden feet into feet of angel swiftness. Love lightens toil, and makes even waiting more than endurable. 2. "Looking to Jesus" furnishes all needful strength for running well our Christian race. This is the act on our part that appropriates it for our various occasions and exigencies; just as plants, by opening out their leaves, to them the organs of assimilation, imbibe the light and dew, and distribute sustenance through their entire structure, so we, by "looking to Jesus," receive those communications of a spiritual kind, upon which the life of our souls and the vigour of our Christian walk depend. 3. "Looking to Jesus" brings before us the highest example of a successful runner in the Christian race. When you are in doubt, ask, "What, in such a case, would my Master have done?" (*C. M. Merry, B.A.*) *Looking unto Jesus*:—I. WHY? 1. The best beings in the universe encourage it. (1) Angels. (2) Redeemed in heaven. (3) Holiest on earth. 2. Our own needs demand it. We want a Mediator, Example, Friend, such as He is. 3. The great God enjoins it. II. HOW? By the study of His biography. 2. By communion with Christly souls. 3. By friendship with Himself. III. WHEN? 1. At the beginning of the Christian life. 2. In all the encouragements and discouragements of life. 3. At death. (*U. R. Thomas.*) *The rule of the race*:—I. First, then, we are to look to Jesus as THE AUTHOR OF FAITH. The apostle would have us view the Lord Jesus as the starter of the race. When a foot-race began, the men were drawn up in a line, and they had to wait for a signal. Those who were in the race had to look to the starter; for the runner who should get first by a false start would not win, because he did not run according to the rules of the race. No man is crowned unless he strives lawfully. The starter was in his place, and the men stood all waiting and looking. Our word at starting in the Christian life is, "Look unto

Jesus." 1. We have to look to Jesus, first, by trusting in that which He has wrought for us. It is described in these words: "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame." 2. We also begin looking unto Jesus because of what He has wrought in us. II. But now we must look to Jesus as THE FINISHER OF FAITH. As Jesus is at the commencement of the course, starting the runners, so He is at the end of the course, the rewarder of those who endure to the end. Those who would win in the great race must keep their eyes upon Him all along the course, even till they reach the winning-post. 1. You will be helped to look to Him when you remember that He is the finisher of your faith by what He has wrought for you; for the text saith, "He endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." You also shall have heaven, for He has it; you shall sit upon the throne, for He sits there. 2. We are helped to run to the end, not only by what Jesus has done for us, but by what Jesus is doing in us. (1) You that are in the middle of the race, remember that Jesus sustains you. Every atom of your strength for running comes from your Lord. Look to Him for it. (2) We are not only sustained by looking unto Jesus, but we are inspirited thereby. A sight of the exalted Leader fires the zeal of each believer, and makes him run like a roe or a young hart. (3) Looking unto Jesus, you will get many a direction; for, as He sits at the winning-post, His very presence indicates the way. (4) Look to Jesus, for by that look He draws you. The great magnet up yonder is drawing us towards itself. Christ's cords of love give us speed. III. Let us next consider our Lord Jesus as THE PATTERN OF OUR FAITH. Run, as Jesus ran, and look to Him as you run, that you may run like Him. How did our Lord pursue His course? 1. You will see this if you first note His motive: "Who for the joy that was set before Him." The chief end of man is to glorify God; let it be my chief end, even as it was my Lord's. Oh, that I might glorify Thee, my Creator, my Preserver, my Redeemer! To this end was I born, and for this end would I live in every action of my life. We cannot run the race set before us unless we feel thus. 2. Wherein are we to imitate Jesus? (1) First, we are to copy His endurance. He "endured the Cross." Ours is a trifling cross compared with that which pressed Him down; but He endured it. He took it up willingly, and carried it patiently. (2) Imitate your Lord in His magnanimity. He endured the Cross, "despising the shame." Shame is a cruel thing to many hearts. Our Lord shows us how to treat it. See, He puts His shoulder under the Cross; but He sets His foot upon the shame. He endures the one, but He despises the other. (3) Our Saviour is to be imitated in His perseverance. For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross, despising the shame, and "is set down." He never stopped running till He could sit down at the right hand of the throne of God; and that is the only place where you may sit down. IV. Lastly, our text sets before us Jesus as THE GOAL OF FAITH. We are to run "looking unto Jesus" as the end that we should aim at. True faith neither goes away from Christ Jesus, nor takes a roundabout road to Jesus, nor so much as dreams of going beyond Jesus. Now, we are to run towards Him, looking unto Him. Looking to Jesus and running to Jesus will look well and run well together. The eyes outstrip the feet; but this also is well, for the feet will thus be made to move the faster. Look you that you may see more of Jesus. Let us run towards Jesus, that we may grow more like Him. It is one of the virtues of Jesus that He transforms into His own image those who look at Him. He photographs Himself upon all sensitive hearts. Run, that you may come nearer to Jesus. Seek after more near and dear fellowship with Him. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Looking unto Jesus:—The word denotes the unfixing of the eye from other objects, and the fixing it upon Him; the turning away of your vision from other attractions, either without or within, and turning them to Jesus only. This is the true position for the soul; and according as we occupy this position, will be the growth of our peace, of our holiness, of our strength and zeal. 1. The eye thus fixed upon Him must, however, be no divided eye, partly fixed on others, partly on Him. Nothing above or beneath must divide your eye, or withdraw Him from your gaze. 2. Again, it must be no wandering eye, as if it might roam over every object in the universe, provided only He were among the number. He must be the great central fascination, on which the eye fixes itself, and to which it ever reverts if for a moment it is withdrawn. There is no other object worthy of our gaze, no other fitted to fill our souls. 3. Again, it must be no careless or unwilling eye. A forced gaze there cannot be; a careless gaze on an object so Divinely glorious, so infinitely attractive, seems altogether incredible when you consider to

whom you are looking. On Him all heaven is gazing, and can you turn away? On Him the Father is looking and saying, "Let thine eye rest where Mine is resting," and can you turn away, as if not satisfied with that which satisfies the Infinite Father? I. IN LOOKING, WHAT DO WE SEE? We see one who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person, the everlasting Son of the Father, yet, at the same time, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh—our kinsman, our brother. We see in Him God—God over all, yet an infant of days: God, yet a sorrowing man: God, yet a crucified criminal: God, yet a dying, buried man. The perfection of Godhead is in Him, yet the reality of manhood too. The infinite heart of God, yet the finite heart of man. Divine love, yet also human love. Condescending love as God, sympathising love as man. Paternal love as God, fraternal love as man. All excellency, all glory, all beauty, all perfection to be found in Him—unsearchable riches—for in Him "it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell." But look a little deeper and what do you see? You see in this God-man, the Sin-bearer, "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." You see in Him one clothed and furnished thus, as I have described Him, but clothed and furnished for the very purpose of being a fitting and sufficient sacrifice; the propitiation for our sins. We see in Him one who can take our very place, one who can stand where we should have stood before God, one who can bear what we should have borne, one who can endure what we should have endured. II. IN LOOKING, HOW ARE WE AFFECTED? These things are not fitted merely to call up wonder; they go down into the very depths of our spiritual being, producing there the mightiest results, and effecting the most wondrous revelations and transformations. 1. In looking, the first thing that strikes us is the difference and contrast between our character and His. The first glimpse we get of Him makes us feel the extent of our sinfulness, our unlikeness to Him; and there is nothing so effectual for giving a sense of sin, or for deepening a sense of sin as this looking to the Holy One. 2. But then, in looking, a second thing that startles us is the full provision that is made in Him for meeting and for removing all these imperfections in us; so that the more that, in looking, we are troubled at the sight of our own hideous sinfulness, the more are our consciences pacified by the view which we get of His sin-bearing work as the "Lamb without blemish and without spot"—"the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." III. IN LOOKING, WHAT DO WE LEARN? We see in Jesus a model, and we begin to imitate Him. We see in Him the doer of the Father's will, and we learn to do that will as He did it. We see in Him a willing sufferer for others, and we learn willingly to suffer. We see in Him a man that pleased not Himself, and we learn not to please ourselves. We see in Him a pattern of all meekness, and submissiveness, and gentleness, and kindness, and we learn from Him to be meek, and lowly, and gentle, and submissive, and kind, and humble—and thus it is that in looking to Him we are changed into His image from "glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Thus it is that in looking away from other objects we are prevented from imbibing the evil influences to which they have too long subjected us; and in looking to Him we are brought under the efficacious power of higher, purer, nobler, diviner influences. But the great feature in which the apostle presents Christ to us is His faith. He showed us how to believe, and believe even on this earth where there is everything to tempt our faith and to cherish unbelief. He showed us how to live by faith upon the Father, even in a world like this, that has cast off the Father. Let us look to Him then and learn of Him, let us look to His footsteps and walk in them, following where He has led the way, and planting our feet where we find that His have been planted before us. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *Looking unto Jesus*:—Here is a young man carrying something through a crowded Eastern market-place, or bazaar. It is a vessel with water in it. Observe how earnest and intent his face is, and how he never allows his eye to wander for a moment to what is going on round him! His teacher has told him to carry the vessel full of water—full to the very brim, through the bazaar, and to bring it back without having spilled a drop. And now you see the young man returning, pleased and triumphant, because he has succeeded in obeying the command. Not a single drop has been lost. The old teacher praises him, and then asks him what he saw as he was passing through the bazaar. "Saw!" cries the young man, "why, I saw nothing." "How can that be?" replies the teacher, "for I know that the very time when you were in the bazaar the Sultan with some of his chief attendants went by." "Well, that may be," said the young man; "but how could I see anything, or anybody, when I had my eyes fixed upon the

water the whole time, and could think of nothing but how to carry it without spilling, as you told me to do?" "Ah!" said the teacher, "now you can understand how we may be so entirely occupied with some work that God has given us to do, as to be quite unconscious of the sinful pleasures of the world, which strive to attract our attention as we are passing through them." I. We regard the Lord Jesus AS OUR ONLY HOPE OF SALVATION. If we were standing on a wreck as it was settling down in the ocean, and a lifeboat were to come up alongside, what should we do? We should leave the wreck altogether—leave it behind us, "look away" from it, and jump into the lifeboat. Jesus Christ, then, is our only hope of salvation. II. HE IS OUR ONLY EXAMPLE TO IMITATE. I have read somewhere of a traveller, who with his guide was crossing a high mountain in Switzerland. After journeying many miles, they came at last to a very dangerous pass, where just a little shelf of rock, and that partly worn away in places by the rain, ran round the face of a precipitous cliff, and was the only pathway by which they could possibly ascend to the top. Try to imagine their situation! Above them rose a steep rock, up the face of which no human being could climb, and below them was a precipice which went down straight, without a break, for nearly a thousand feet. And the traveller's heart—though he was a courageous man—began to beat fast, and his head began to swim, until he was in danger of falling over and being killed. The guide seeing this, called out (I should tell you that the guide was walking in front), "Do not look up or down, or you are a lost man. Look away from everything at me. Keep your eyes fixed on me, and where I set my foot, there do you place yours." The traveller obeyed this command; the dizziness and the fear went away; and both the men crossed safely over the terrible pass. This story has always reminded me of "looking away" unto Jesus, and of His leaving us an example that we should follow His steps. III. HE IS THE ONLY BESTOWER OF ALL THE BLESSINGS WHICH WE ENJOY. Every good gift, and every perfect gift comes to us through Him. He is the channel which connects us with God. If we think a good thought, or do a good deed, it is owing to Christ. Shall we run negligently, as if we did not care much about it? No; we will run earnestly. Shall we give up when we have run part of the way? No; for it is "he that endureth to the end that shall be saved," and it were better never to have begun at all, than to begin and then leave off. Shall we say, "How hard, how tiresome it is to run this Christian race?" No; for the Lord Jesus Christ is with us all the time, strengthening, encouraging, upholding us. (*G. Calthrop, M.A.*) *Looking unto Jesus*:—I. THE SPIRITUAL POSTURE IN WHICH CHRISTIANS ARE REQUIRED TO PLACE THEMSELVES. 1. "Looking unto Jesus," in recognition of the relation of Jesus to us. As redeemed men this Jesus is all in all to us. He is called by various names: the last Adam, the Amen, the Alpha, the Omega, the Advocate, the Angel, our Apostle, Bread of Life, our Captain, our Chief Shepherd, the Chief Corner Stone, the Counsellor, the Day Spring, the Witness, the Great High Priest, the Head, the King, the Lamb, our Leader, our Life, our Light, the Star, the Morning Star, the Rock, the True Vine, the Way, the Word of God. 2. "Looking unto Jesus," for direction from Jesus. He is our Master, and He appoints our services. He is our Teacher, He gives us our lessons. He is our Lord, He confers upon us all true honour and all real reward. He is our elder Brother; and acting the part of a Father. He provides for us, and He has charge of us. 3. "Looking unto Jesus" for the varied and constant help which He affords. Every name by which He is called represents some service which He is prepared to render to us, or is actually rendering us, or some particular aspect of some service. In truth, Christ is to you what you require Him to be, if you will only let Him be what you need Him to be. 4. "Looking unto Jesus," in confident expectation of the fulfilment of all His promises. Looking, therefore, as an expectant of blessings. Well, this involves knowledge of His power and trust in it. Knowledge, too, of His veracity, and of His fidelity, and a corresponding confidence. 5. "Looking unto Jesus" for recognition and for sanction. Why is it that so many Christians are so miserable, so out of temper, so weak? You find the reason here: they are always looking for recognition and sanction from men, from the Church of God, from their fellow disciples, and sometimes where they never ought to look for it, from the men of this world. Do you see how this is forbidden by the text? You are not to live looking to the disciples, you are not to live looking to the Church for recognition and for sanction, but turning your eyes upwards you are to be in a position to say with Peter, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee." The mere professor does not think of thus "looking unto Jesus"; he keeps looking entirely at himself. The

hypocrite, too, dare not look unto Jesus—he dare not. He has impudence enough, but he dare not look unto Jesus. He keeps his eye away from the eye of the Master. The backslider, too, he temporarily has ceased to look upon Jesus. 6. "Looking unto Jesus," moreover, as an object of love. "Whom having not seen, ye love." II. THE REASON FOR IT. "Jesus is the author and finisher of faith." Every wise man has a reason for his conduct, and every good man a good reason. A Christian should be the most intelligent, and rational of his class. If he be "looking unto Jesus," he ought to know the reason why. Why look unto Jesus? Why not to himself? Why not to the cloud of witnesses? Why not to his fellows in the race? Why look unto Jesus? The apostle gives the answer. "Jesus is the author and finisher of faith." 1. In the first place Jesus occupies a singular position as it respects faith. He is "the author, or prince of faith," being Himself the highest example of faith. Does it occur to you that when Christ bids you believe, He bids you do what He did? He was a believer. His human nature had in it the strongest possible faith, and on this account you may call Jesus "the prince of faith." But He is "the prince of faith" in another sense. 2. We speak now of Christ as a man (not ignoring, however, His Divine nature), and we say of Him, that He is "the author or prince of faith," because He is the first man who on this earth has maintained faith. The first Adam lost faith in God; and no man could set Adam the first up as a prince; but the second Adam maintained faith even in the severest trials, and, therefore, you may call Jesus "the prince of faith." 3. Again, He is "the prince of faith" as leading us into faith. He goes before us in the path of faith, and as leading us into faith, and as guiding us into this path, He is "the author," or the "prince of faith." Then, as Himself continuing in faith to the end, He is "the finisher." And as maintaining and consummating our faith He is also "the finisher." Is our race faith? God commands that faith to Himself. He says, believe on Me. Is our race faith? God draws that faith more and more strongly to Himself. He can keep it, and He alone can maintain it. Therefore in running this race of faith, it is our manifest duty to run, "looking unto Jesus" "the prince," mark, in all these respects, "of faith." (*S. Martin.*) *Looking unto Jesus*:—I. WHY SHOULD WE LOOK TO JESUS? 1. Because He is the supremest object of human interest. When we remember everything that goes to make up what we may call "the things of Christ," the preparation for His coming, and all that centred in Him, the various movements of the preceding generations, the symptomatic changes alike in the political and religious condition of men; then His own history, when He went about living His life, speaking His words, doing His work; and then what He has since been, the place He has taken in human regard, the influence He has exercised upon human life—what a wondrous series of interesting objects we meet with! 2. Because we find in Him the answer to the deepest needs of our souls. 3. Because He is the dearest object of human love. II. WHERE SHALL WE SEE JESUS? 1. Look at Him in the scenes of His earthly career. 2. Look at Him in the place of His atoning death. 3. Look at Him on the throne of His triumphant mediation. III. WHEN SHALL WE LOOK TO JESUS? 1. In the time of your temptation. 2. In the moment of penitence. By thy side He stands with an arm extended, and will take thee back to His bosom and His love. 3. In the hour of need. That is *every* hour, for every hour am I needy, and always do I require that Saviour to be near. (*L. D. Bevan.*) *Looking unto Jesus*:—The expression before us is one of the pithy golden sayings which stand out here and there on the face of the New Testament, and demand special attention. It is like "to me to live is Christ," "Christ is all and in all," "Christ who is our life," "He is our peace," "I live by the faith of the Son of God." To each and all of these sayings one common remark applies. They contain far more than a careless eye can see on the surface. But the grand question which rises out of the text is this: What is that we are to look at in Jesus? I. First and foremost, if we would look rightly to Jesus, we must look daily at HIS DEATH, as the only source of inward peace. We all need peace. Now there is only one source of peace revealed in Scripture, and that is the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and the atonement which He has made for sin by that vicarious death on the Cross. To obtain a portion in that great peace, we have only to look by faith to Jesus, as our substitute and Redeemer. II. In the second place, if we would look rightly to Jesus, we must look daily to HIS LIFE OF INTERCESSION, in heaven, as our principal provision of strength and help. While we are fighting Amalek in the valley below, one greater than Moses is holding up His hands for us in heaven, and through His intercession we shall prevail. III. In the third place, if we would look rightly to

Jesus, we must look at His EXAMPLE as our chief standard of holy living. We must all feel, I suspect, and often feel, how hard it is to regulate our daily lives by mere rules and regulations. But surely it would cut many a knot and solve many a problem if we could cultivate the habit of studying the daily behaviour of our Lord as recorded in the four Gospels, and striving to shape our own behaviour by its pattern. We may well be humbled when we think how unlike the best of us are to our example, and what poor blurred copies of His character we show to mankind. Like careless children at school we are content to copy those around us with all their faults, and do not look constantly at the only faultless copy, the One perfect man in whom even Satan could find nothing. But one thing at any rate we must all admit. If Christians during the last eighteen centuries had been more like Christ, the Church would certainly have been far more beautiful, and probably have done far more good to the world. IV. Fourthly, and lastly, if we would look to Jesus rightly, we must look forward to His SECOND ADVENT, AS THE TRUEST FOUNTAIN OF HOPE AND CONSOLATION. That the early Christians were always looking forward to a second coming of their risen Master, is a fact beyond all controversy. In all their trials and persecutions, under Roman Emperors and heathen rulers, they cheered one another with the thougbt that tbeir own King would soon come again, and plead tbeir cause. It ought to be the consolation of Christians in these latter days as much as it was in primitive times. (*Bishop Ryle.*) *A life-motto*:—The great object on which we are to fix our gaze, all through life is—Jesus. It is with Him, above all else, that we must have to do. 1. "Looking unto Jesus," we are to trust Him as our Saviour. The first thing we want is a Saviour. I once saw a ship at sea, off the east coast of Scotland, in a storm. Her sails were torn to tatters, her masts were broken, her anchor was dragging. It needed no signal of distress, for it was within sight of the shore. We could hardly keep our feet out of doors. The wind blew a hurricane and the rain pelted. Those of us who could, got into the shelter of the pier, and, glass in hand, watched the movements of the hard-pressed sloop. The lifeboat was launched and pushed through the surf, and after being carried past the vessel once and again, at length got alongside of those who so much needed help. That lifeboat came to them as a saviour. And how were they saved? By trusting it. But perhaps some of you say, "What has all this to do with 'looking unto Jesus'? The text is about 'looking,' not trusting." Well, but "looking" means trusting. A poor but respectable widow once called on me in great distress. She had fallen behind with her rent, and her landlord had threatened to sell every article of furniture she had, and to turn her and her children to the street. I told her I would see to the matter, and that she might look to me for her rent. She went joyfully home, and I can suppose her children to have said to her, "Mother, how are you looking so happy? Have you got the money?" "No," she answers, "but it is all right. The minister said I might look to him for the rent, and I know it is as sure as if I had the money in my hand." That just means—she trusted me for it. The looking and the trusting were one and the same thing. Now, the Lord Jesus bids you look to Him—away from all else—away from your own doing or deserving—away from the godliest and best friends you have. He says, "None of them can save you." He says, "Look unto Me and be saved: for I am God." 2. "Looking unto Jesus"—we are to copy Him as our pattern. Now in the chapter before that from which our text is taken (chap. xi.), you have a wonderful list of worthies. It is just like a portrait-gallery, containing tbe likenesses of some of the best men the world ever saw. And as you read the descriptions you might ask, "May we take these as our pattern?" Well, so far, and yet only so far. They were not perfect patterns, and so are not safe to be followed in everything. And so the writer points away from them all, and as it were, says, "Do not stop at these. Do not be content to copy these. I can give you better than any of them all—a higher, safer, surer guide." You cannot keep too close to Him. You cannot copy Him too exactly. In the smallest things as in the greatest, seek to be what He was, to do what He did, to follow in His footsteps. 3. "Looking unto Jesus"—we are to lean upon Him as our strength. Perhaps you say, "It must be very difficult to be what Christ was—to do what Christ did. He was so good and I am so evil: He was so strong and I am so weak: He was so bold and I am so cowardly. Indeed, it seems impossible. I do not see how it could ever be." But if He were to give you His strength, it would not be so difficult, would it? Sometimes when I have been coming home late at night, after a long day's work, I have felt very tired, and the uphill parts of the road seemed very long and very steep. But a

friend came alongside, and when I put my arm into his, and had his support and his company, the tiredness left me, and I could have walked half a dozen of miles, and sometimes did walk backwards and forwards for a good half hour. His arm and his company were strength to me. That is what Jesus does. He says, "Lean on Me! Lean hard!" He, as it were, lets you put your arm into His. He lets you draw upon His strength. (*J. H. Wilson, D.D.*) *Looking to Jesus*:—I. UNDER WHAT ASPECTS ARE WE TO LOOK TO JESUS? 1. Saviour. 2. Master. 3. Example. II. IN WHAT SCENES ARE WE TO LOOK TO JESUS? 1. Common duty. 2. Times of temptation. 3. Difficulties. 4. Means of grace. III. WHAT SORT OF LOOKS THEY SHOULD BE? 1. Trustful. 2. Obedient. 3. Loving. (*The Weekly Pulpit.*) *Advantages obtained by looking unto Jesus*:—1. The first of these is peace; peace with God, and peace in the conscience. True peace comes from God the Father, through the blood of Jesus; and can only be enjoyed by looking unto Him. 2. Humiliation is another advantage derived from looking to Jesus. The heart of man is naturally proud; and will never be effectually humbled, but by a believing contemplation of the greatest example of humility that ever appeared in the world. That humiliation, especially, which becomes us as rebellious creatures, will be best promoted by looking at a suffering Saviour, bending under the load of our guilt in the garden and on the Cross. Who can make a mock at sin, that beholds the awful severity of God in punishing it in the person of His innocent Son, our Surety? Who can be proud, when he sees the Lord of all, destitute of a place where to lay His head, and enduring poverty and shame for our sakes? 3. This also affords the best lesson of patience; and for this purpose particularly, we are exhorted, in the text, to look to Jesus; for, it is added, He "endured the Cross, despising the shame." If we would be Christians indeed, we must "arm ourselves with the same mind" (1 Pet. iv. 1); and, according to His direction, deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him (Matt. xvi. 24). 4. Love is the fulfilling of the law, and the most powerful principle of gospel holiness. But how shall this be obtained? We answer, By looking unto Jesus. "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John iv. 19). The love of our brother is closely connected with the love of God; the former can never exist without the latter, and always accompanies it. Looking to Jesus, the Friend of sinners, who came to seek and to save the lost, who went about doing good, is the most effectual means of curing the selfishness of our hearts, of softening the asperity of our tempers, and of exciting compassion and benevolence in our souls, towards all our fellow-men. 5. Looking to Jesus is the best expedient to destroy our inordinate regard to this present world. Christ was dead to it, and separate from it; and He says to His followers, "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John xvii. 16). A glance of His glory, and a sense of interest in His favour, will make us indifferent alike to its smiles and its frowns; and all the glittering objects that men pursue with such avidity, will appear as unworthy of our affections as the painted toys of children. 6. There is one more advantage to be expected from looking to Jesus; an advantage of such magnitude, that we may challenge the universe to equal it, and that is, ability to meet death with calmness and joy. Here is a triumph peculiar to the gospel; a triumph far superior to those of kings and conquerors; a triumph over the king of terrors. Looking to Jesus, who has borne the whole of the punishment due to our sins, we are no longer to consider it as penal; this is the sting of death, which He has extracted (2 Tim. i. 10). (*G. Burder.*) *The necessity of looking to Christ*:—The reason why the men of the world think so little of Christ is, they do not look at Him. Their backs being turned to the sun, they can see only their own shadows, and are, therefore, wholly taken up with themselves. While the true disciple, looking only upward, sees nothing but his Saviour, and learns to forget himself. (*E. Payson.*) *The inspiration of a good leader*:—News had come from the left that Winter's Brigade near the river was giving way. Stonewall Jackson rode down to see what it meant. As he passed on the brink of the ravine his eye caught the scene, and reining up in a moment, he said, "Colonel, you seem to have trouble down there." Then he dashed on. He found that his old brigade had yielded slightly to overwhelming pressure. Galloping up, he was received with a cheer, and calling out at the top of his voice, "The Stonewall Brigade never retreats: follow me!" led them back to their original line. (*H. O. Mackey.*) *Jesus and faith*:—"Is your faith strong?" a Christian man was asked a few days before his death. "No, but my Jesus is," was his reply. *Deliverance by looking to Jesus*:—A lady had a dream, in which she fancied herself at the bottom of a deep pit. She looked round to see if there were any way of

getting out; but in vain. Presently, looking upward, she saw in that part of the heavens immediately above the mouth of the pit a beautiful bright star. Steadily gazing at it, she felt herself to be gradually lifted upward. She looked down to ascertain how it was, and immediately found herself at the bottom of the pit. Again her eye caught sight of the star, and again she felt herself ascending. She had reached a considerable height. Still desirous of an explanation of so strange a phenomenon, she turned her eye downward, and fell to the bottom with fearful violence. On recovering from the effect of the shock, she bethought herself as to the meaning of it all, and once again turned her eye to the star, still shining so brightly above, and yet once again felt herself borne upward. Steadily did she keep her eye upon its light, till, at length, she found herself out of the horrible pit, and her feet safely planted on the solid ground above. It taught her the lesson, that, in the hour of danger and trouble, deliverance is to be found, and found only, by looking unto Jesus. (*T. Guthrie.*) *Look to Christ rather than to experiences*:—"Have you got it?" is a question often asked now. I remember being asked this, and I could not help replying, "I have got Him, and with Him all the its." God does not give us Christ piecemeal, but wholly. We have a whole Christ, or no Christ. Now, while God does not give us a single blessing apart from Christ, yet in and with Him we have all spiritual blessings. As a matter of fact that is true to every believer, but as matter of experience it is not always so. "I have lost my peace," groaned a saint one day. We replied, "Have you lost your Saviour?" "Oh, no!" "Well, then, He is our peace." "I forgot that." Just so, lose sight of Christ, and away go your feelings; and the way not to get your feelings back is to look for them, the way to get them is not to look for them, but to look to Him. Remember there is in Christ for you a fulness of acceptance, therefore do not doubt Him; there is fulness of peace, therefore trust Him; there is fulness of life, therefore abide in Him; there is fulness of blessing, therefore delight in Him; there is fulness of power, therefore wait upon Him; there is fulness of grace, therefore receive from Him; there is fulness of love, therefore be taken up with Him; there is fulness of teaching, therefore learn of Him; there is fulness of joy, therefore rejoice in Him; there is fulness of fulness in Him, therefore be full in Him; there is fulness of riches, therefore count upon Him; there is fulness of strength, therefore lean upon Him; there is fulness of light, therefore walk with Him; and there is fulness of energy, therefore be subject to Him. (*T. E. Marsh.*) *Looking to Jesus*:—The painter who undertakes to copy some masterpiece of art, sits down before it, sketches the outline upon his own canvas, reproduces the colouring of the model, adds item by item to his picture, constantly looking upon the original, noting its qualities and the deficiencies of his work, till, by scrupulous care and untiring endeavour, he has produced a *facsimile* of the original. The Christian's work is kindred. He has a better model, even Christ; but a harder task, for his canvas is treacherous and his work is life long. *Looking unto Jesus*:—Two boys were playing in the snow one day, when one said to the other, "Let us see who can make the straightest path in the snow." His companion readily accepted the proposition, and they started. One boy fixed his eyes on a tree, and walked along without taking them off the object selected. The other boy set his eyes on the tree also, and, when he had gone a short distance, he turned, and looked back to see how true his course was. He went a little distance farther, and again turned to look over his steps. When they arrived at their stopping place, each halted and looked back. One path was true as an arrow, while the other ran in a zigzag course. "How did you get your path so true?" asked the boy who had made the crooked steps. "Why," said the other boy, "I just set my eyes on the tree, and kept them there until I got to the end; while you stopped and looked back, and wandered out of your course." Just so is the Christian life. If we fix the eyes of our hope, our trust, and our faith upon Jesus Christ, and keep them continually fastened thereon, we will at last land at the desired haven, with flowers of immortal victory at our feet. (*C. W. Bibb.*) *Jesus the only sight for the dying*:—The scene opens in a dark and silent chamber. Doctor Franklin is lying on his deathbed. For weeks and weeks he has been prostrate with disease. That active mind, which so long had been occupied with things of earth, was busied now with higher and nobler contemplations. He bids the nurse go down and bring a picture which he named, and fasten it on the wall opposite his bed, that he might look upon it when he pleased. And what think you that picture was? Some ancient historic heirloom, which he dearly prized? Some scene of stirring interest, in which he, the great philosopher of his age, had

borne a conspicuous part? No! It was a picture of our blessed Saviour on the Cross; and Doctor Franklin, whom many, in these evil days, have desired to make an infidel outright, died while gazing upon it with wistful eyes, his whole countenance lighted up with a sweet and placid smile. Poor and pitiable are the hopes of the moralist or the philosopher who does not look to Christ Jesus as his Redeemer. **The Author and Finisher of our faith.**—*The Commander of the faithful:*—Consider the remarkable aspects and relationships in reference to our faith in which Christ is here set forth. I. FIRST WE HAVE HIM AS LEADER AND COMMANDER OF THE GREAT ARMY OF THE FAITHFUL, JESUS, THE AUTHOR OF "OUR FAITH." Christ is here represented, not so much as one who begins faith in men's hearts, but as the Leader of all the long procession of those who live by faith. True, the heroes whose names are enrolled in the glorious catalogue of the preceding chapter were before Him in time. But the commander may march in the centre, as well as in the van, and even in order of time; He is the Beginner or Leader, inasmuch as He is the first who ever lived a perfect life of faith. We do not give sufficient prominence in our thoughts of Christ's earthly life, to this aspect of it—that it was one of faith. He is our pattern in this as in all that belongs to humanity. His life was a life of faith, whose breath was prayer. For faith is dependence upon God, and surely never did human being so utterly hang upon the Father, nor submit himself so absolutely to be moulded and determined by Him, nor yield his will up so completely to that will. Faith is communion, and surely never did a spirit dwell so unbrokenly, in such deep and constant realisation of a Divine presence and a Divine sustaining, as did that Christ who could say "the Father hath not left Me alone, for I do always the things that please Him." Faith is the vivid realisation of the unseen; and surely never was there a life lived amidst the shows and illusions of time which so manifestly and transparently was all passed in the vivid consciousness of that unseen world, as was the life of that Son of Man, who, in the midst of all earth's engagements, could call Himself "the Son of Man which is in heaven." Faith is a life of assured confidence of an unseen hope, and surely never was there a life which was so entirely dominated by that unseen hope as His life, who, "For the joy that was set," &c. II. THERE IS ADDED A VERY SIGNIFICANT EXPRESSION, WHICH LEADS US TO CONSIDER CHRIST NEXT AS BEING SET FORTH HERE AS THE "FINISHER," OR PERFECTER, "OF FAITH." It would be a very poor affair if all we had to say to men was: "There is a beautiful example; follow it!" Copybooks are all very well, but you want something more than copybooks. A so-called Christianity that has nothing more to say about Jesus Christ than that He is the perfect example of all human excellences, and of faith too, is not the one for a poor man that has found out the plague of his own heart, and the weakness of his own will. He wants something that will come a great deal closer to him than that. And so my text tells us that Jesus is not only "the Leader of faith," but the "Perfecter" of it too. He will set you the pattern, and then, if you will let Him, He will come into your hearts, and make you able to copy the pattern. He will perfect faith by the implanting in your hearts of His own spirit and His own life. He will lead our faith to sovereign power in our lives, if we will only let Him do it, by another way, too—by the path of discipline and of sorrow; drawing away our hearts from earthly things and fixing them upon Himself; making the world dark that the sky above may be brighter, and revealing Himself to our loneliness as the all-sufficient companion. So He perfects our faith. And He will do it in another way too, by the rewards and blessings which He will give to the imperfect and tentative exercise of our confidence, over-answering our petitions, and flooding us with more than we expected when we tremulously tried to trust on Him; and so inducing us to be bolder in our confidence, and to venture further afield. Thus, He draws us further out into the great sea of His love. And not only so, but in another aspect that dear Lord is the Perfecter of our faith, inasmuch as He gives to our faith at the last that which is its aim and end. A thing is perfected when it either reaches its highest degree, or when it attains its object. And so Christ is the Perfecter of our faith, not only in the sense that He raises and educates it up to its loftiest form, but also that He bestows upon it at the last that which is, as Peter says, its "end," or perfecting, even the salvation of our souls. And in this aspect we may almost take the word "Perfecter" here to be equivalent to that of the other idea of rewarder. Our faith is perfected when the unseen things are unveiled, when the communion with God is complete, when we shall see Christ as He is, and clasp Him in the close embrace of heaven, and when the crown of life is bestowed which He has promised to

them that love Him. III. THAT LEADS ME TO SAY ONE LAST WORD ABOUT THAT "LOOKING TO JESUS" WHICH IS THE INDISPENSABLE CONDITION OF "RUNNING THE RACE THAT IS SET BEFORE US." It must be a believing look. It must be a loving look. The occupation of heart and mind with Jesus Christ is the secret of practical Christianity. It is an education to love Him and live with Him. Transformation comes by beholding. The eye that looks upon the light has an image of the light formed upon its ball, and the man that looks to Christ gets like Christ, and "beauty born of" that gaze "shall pass into his face." Look to Him as the sustainer of your faith. In your feebleness, when life is low, when hope is almost dead, when temptations are tyrannous and strong, think of Him, and think in trust. Look to Him as your rewarder, and be of good cheer, and let the prospect of that great crown stimulate and sustain and lift you above the ills and the sorrows of life. And last of all, there is an untranslated preposition in one of the words of my text to which, perhaps, it is not straining too much to give emphasis. The full rendering of the expression "looking" is looking away. That points to the need of looking off from something else, that we may look up to Him. It always takes a resolute effort fixedly to contemplate, and to bring heart and mind really into contact with unseen things and unseen persons. And it takes a very strenuous effort to bring the unseen Christ before the mind habitually, and so as to produce effects in the life. You cannot see the stars when you are walking down a town street, and the gas-lamps are lit. All those violet depths and calm abysses and blazing worlds are concealed from you by the glare at your side—sulphurous and stinking. So, my brother, if you want to see into the depths and the heights, to see the great white throne and the Christ on it who helps you to fight, you have to go out unto Him beyond the camp, and leave all its dazzling lights behind you. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) **For the joy that was set before Him.**—*Christ's joy in living*:—I want to speak to you of the joyfulness of Christ Jesus, and of the genius of Christianity as resulting from this fact; and I speak, being conscious of the great misconception which has flowed, for at least a thousand years, down through the Church, and which has clouded the public sentiment of the Christian community to this hour—namely, that Christ was a sufferer through life, and that sorrow is the distinguishing characteristic of the Saviour's experience; and that although there are gleams of joy in the Christian life, all who enter upon it must enter upon it with a distinct understanding that its characteristic element is sorrowfulness, or cross-bearing. Now, I aver that it happens to no individual in his lifetime to experience so much joy as was compressed into the life of Jesus Christ; and a very slight examination of His history would make it incontrovertible. You will bear in mind that He was born a Hebrew peasant, but that He was of a lineage very noble. In His veins ran the best blood of the Jewish nation. He was a favourite from the beginning; for blood told then in the estimation of men as much as it has ever done. You will observe that Christ had the ordinary experience which men have, of being a child, and of being loved by His father and mother and His brothers and sisters. He went through all the experiences of babyhood, of early boyhood, of youth, and came into full-orbed manhood without any moral disturbance of which we are aware—without any convulsion that threw Him out of the ordinary experience of a pleasant household, and entered upon His public ministration when He was about twenty-seven years old, dying at about thirty. Now, you will observe that when Christ entered upon His ministry the first step He took in it was toward social joy; for after the temptation in the wilderness He went north and joined His parents, and in Cana of Galilee attended a wedding. The first miracle that He ever performed was to help carry on a three-days' social entertainment. That does not look much like His being a Man of Sorrows. John, His cousin, came neither eating nor drinking. He disdained amenities. He threw himself like a judgment-bolt into the face of rulers. He cut right and left, without mercy, saying "Peace to the perfect, and woe to the imperfect." That was his career. Christ began immediately after him. Instead of dwelling in the wilderness, He went into populous cities. Instead of going away from all social intercourse, He participated in the highest festivity known to the ordinary life of a Jew—namely, a wedding service; and afterwards He lived in such social habits that the charge against Him was that He made Himself common with common folks, and that He was a glutton and a wine-bibber, and a friend of publicans and sinners. No such allegation as that could be made against an ascetic. But setting aside all this, which lies upon the very surface of the text, look at the career of the Saviour in another point of view. So soon as He entered upon His course as a public minister, He showed great aptness in teaching. Con-

comitant with this experience was another—that which was connected with the performance of His miracles of mercy. Now, is there any joy greater than that which is experienced by one person when he helps another person? He was not a stone man; He was a living soul, as full of sensibility and fire as the heart of God. Consider that He did these things every morning, every noon, and every evening. Consider that there were so many such cases that they could not be registered by name. And do you tell me that in the blessed work of teaching and mercy which He was carrying on, Jesus was not a joyful man? Why, such an idea is false to nature, as it is false to grace. But we have a more decided case yet. We perceive that He was of a nature such that He drew to Him good-livers. He did not disdain luxury: He partook of it. He did not disdain high society: He went into it, just as readily and familiarly as to the peasant s cottage, or to the abode of the poor and sick. He was a man among men; and if He looked up His look was radiant, while if He looked down His look was light-bearing. He could not touch any side of human nature that His soul did not go out in sympathy with it. Now the attractiveness of the Saviour was such that these men wanted Him, and called for Him. But no man who spreads a good table, and invites folks to dine with him, goes hunting for misanthropes. But that the rich men of His day did want Christ there is irrefutable evidence to prove. This shows that His bearing was sweet and attractive. And wherever He went where people were, He shed joy and happiness upon them. You will now ask, "What about the passion? What about the forty days?" Those are the very days over which the text goes. I think the joy was an awful joy; but I believe that Jesus Christ was never so joyful as during the mighty mystery of those forty days. Let us come to it step by step through experiences such as we have ourselves. When a man does a heroic action at some cost to himself, he knows that though it costs it counts. The highest reaches that any man ever has of joy in this world are those which he has through the ministration of grief and of sorrow. When those persons who went to the stake for their faith, and sang and rejoiced as the fire blazed about them, and sent out from their pulpit of flame joyous songs of hope, do you suppose they were sufferers? There is an ecstasy in a man's soul at such a time which so affects his nervous system as to lift him above suffering. I do not doubt that there have been crowned hours when that martyr to the liberty of Hungary, Kossuth, though an exile, poor and alone, was not unhappy. I know that sometimes when men are misrepresented, and derided, and scoffed at, and kennels and sewers are opened upon them, there is a serene height into which they rise, where no one can any more touch them with sorrow than the fowler's shot can touch the eagle that soars just under the sun. And do you suppose the Saviour knew what He suffered when, "for the joy that was set before Him"—the redemption of the world; an eternity of blessedness for the myriads upon myriads that should find life in His outpouring life; and the glory of the Godhead—"He endured the Cross"? Do not you suppose that this joy that He saw in the future made Him a man of joy, and not of sorrow? He "is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." For what? To do what the morning does—pour light over darkness. To do what the dews do—cool the parched plants after a fervid day when they are well-nigh wilted. He sits there to bring sons and daughters home to glory. Where the father and mother have waited expectant for the dear children that have been long away to come home, does joy beat upon the instrument of the soul when they do come? and do you suppose that Christ, sitting on the eternal threshold, and seeing sons and daughters coming home to glory through His instrumentality, does not experience joy? He said in the hour of His deepest darkness, "Peace I give you—My peace." If in the very acme and midnight of His suffering He had so much peace that He could divide it and share it with His disciples, do you not suppose that now, a Prince of Peace, He is also a Prince of Joy? (*H. W. Beecher.*)

The witness to the sustaining principle:—I. Life is a journey; BUT LIFE IS SOMETHING MORE. Life is a work. It is the great opportunity for the artist who is toiling, by Divine assistance, at the world outside him; because, first, he is toiling at his own soul. The Man of Sorrows—it is a strange paradox, but it is a fact—the Man of Sorrows supplies us with the sustaining principle, anticipated joy. Joy has a depth and a stillness far beyond mere merriment. Joy has a moral force, because it rises out of and combines real and constituent spiritual elements, loftier, more enduring than pleasure; it draws its life and gathers its strength from the most vigorous and the most varied faculties of our nature. Joy! It co-ordinates and harmonises all rays of moral glory; it has the sweetness and freshness of the music of Mendelssohn; it touches with the chromatic tenderness of Spohr; it

unites the depth and splendour of the colouring of Titian, and the refinement and severity of Francia's Christ. Joy! and the crucifix! Yes, it has its roots, remember, in a rugged soil. Travellers in the Tyrol, so an able writer tells us, noticed in the distance the crest of the mountains cinctured with a girdle of vivid blue. Was it a mirage, a magic deception, worked up by the mist and the light and the winds? Would it pause at the approach of invading footsteps, or would it—as all beautiful things in this low world—would it fade and be gone? They drew on, and found it not fainter, but clearer, not vanished, not gone, no trick of the sunlight, no passing effect of the cloud; it was a belt of vivid gentians, drawing strength from the rugged rock and unsympathising stone, taking the light and outfacing the heavens with the intensity of its burning blue. Now such is the joy of the spirit. Beautiful; not vanishing, but vigorous; anticipating what it knows to be certain, the final victory of truth and righteousness, having, therefore, its roots in "eternal things." This, too, this is preached from the Cross; hence, my brothers, what looks like a streak of sunlight on the unrestful ocean becomes a stimulating and sustaining principle in the labour of life. II. This, then, may become the stimulating principle of a persevering life, and the question is, HOW CAN IT BE LEARNED? The answer is found in the twofold aspect of the Cross. 1. If we catalogue the various departments of the subject-matter of our Redeemer's joy, we find in the Cross a revelation. It reveals the mystery of the Atonement. But a mystery it is, beautiful, wonderful, bringing life out of death, as spring flowers are the children of the winter, and forming the subject-matter of our Redeemer's joy. 2. And the Cross is an example. Speaking morally, it springs directly out of the self-sacrificing temper, gains, in fact, its unselfish colouring there, teaches us what is the temper, the prevailing atmosphere needful for a useful life. We know of no self-denial so personal to ourselves, so complete and lasting, as the self-denial of the Cross; and we read in the joy of the Conqueror not only the principle which stimulates His endeavour, but also the evidence of His love. He had a delight, indeed, not, to use a modern phrase, "in influencing the masses," but in saving you and me. 3. And another subject-matter of that joy—we dare to say it, because His apostle taught us to do so—was the crowning in Himself of human perfection—the vindication of goodness. Goodness! the greatness of doing what you ought to do; goodness, the greatness of loyalty amid sorrow. This, the highest height of all human excellencies, is crowned on the throne of the Crucified, in the person of "Him who liveth and was dead." III. WHAT THEN, WE ASK, ARE THOSE OPPOSING FORCES WHICH THIS PRINCIPLE IS REQUIRED TO BREAK AND CONQUER? 1. There is a force, fierce as an unfettered animal, wild as the wind, strong as the storm; it springs from the fever and fret of a restless heart needing and finding no satisfaction. Call it *taedium vitae;* call it *ennui;* call it a lazy weariness of spirit in the overworked toiler for this world, or in the *blasé* idler—whatever you call it, it is that mortal sickness of the human spirit, worn out with a life of unsatisfied desire, with the knowledge that riches and pleasure cannot gain for it a salvation or win for it a rest—possessions only of those who hold the hope of a future, itself the first dawning of supernatural joy. 2. We have another force in the pressure of the present. It surely comes to all either in failure of health, or overwork, or bewildering anxiety, or heartbreaking bereavement, or change of circumstances, or fading of dreams, or parting from others; it is felt in bereavement that has broken you, sorrow that has subdued you, change of circumstances, loss of fortune, forgetfulness of friends, disbelief in you by those whom you believed in, and, what is infinitely worse, disbelief in them when you have found them wanting, and the sad remembrance that you expected too much, and have been accordingly the victim of disappointment not undeserved. It may produce despondency; it may eventuate in a life of miserable murmuring and habitual discontent; or it may be made to yield the "peaceable fruit of righteousness" to them who apply the stimulating and sustaining principle. 3. And there is personal and spiritual and accomplished sin. Have you not felt the fierceness of desire, and the difficulty of its domination? Oh, it is when you get to the Crucified you see in the Atonement the way to penitence, the possibility of pardon, the path of peace. 4. And religious perplexity. You are in an age when Christianity is attacked with pitiless severity; you need fear no argument against the truth shaking your faith, though it assail your intellect, if the spiritual conditions are fulfilled; but the strength of your stand on the side of the Crucified is not the strength of your degree at Oxford or Cambridge, it is not the power of your intellect; it rests and will rest on moral grounds. Are you trying to do your duty? Are you living in communion with your Creator? Then you are in the way to keep alive a

sustaining principle which will breast the religious difficulty of this great, and, I add it, of this bad time. If, yes, if we are to avoid the curse of Meroz, it is by the hope of a future, and the joy in God that we need to be stimulated, that we need to be sustained in coming "to the help of the Lord against the mighty." IV. YES, THE CONDITIONS OF PRESERVING SUCH A PRINCIPLE ARE NOT FAR TO FIND. On the Cross we have our example; in us it is a gift of the Holy Ghost sent by our ascended Master; and it is a fruit of the Spirit in its relation to God; it depends for its energy upon our faithfulness; it is not so much the quiet joy from an accomplished fact as the larger, bracing joy of anticipated victory; and it is preserved bright and sustaining in those who willingly make sacrifices for truth and duty. The sea sets onward through the Straits of Messina with a heaving swell, smooth, yet unflagging, even when the winds are silent and the skies are clear; the Tiber rushes onward, mad and swollen, century after century, by the Sylvan's Cave; now like the restful, now like the restless waters, human waves unnumbered of the rising and falling peoples have swept over the hills and plains of Italy, have passed and disappeared; civilisations many, dim or brilliant, across the histories of Greece, of Syria, of the twilight East, have danced into the sunlight and died into the shade; but, in storm or summer stillness Soracte has towered above the dim Campagna and the Sabine Mountains, calm and stately and crowned with snow; and amid all human agonies and the tragedies of the peoples, the giants of the Abarim, folding round them their draperies of purple, have watched the starlight, or wrapped in their robes of roseate brilliance, have reckoned with the dawn. So human passions, troubles, sins, may flow onward in wild current, but principles, supernatural principles, stand firm. (*Canon Knox Little.*) *Joy triumphing:*—I. THE JOY OF OBEDIENCE. Can we understand this—a joy in doing another's will, not our own? Yes—and no. As we naturally are we cannot take such a thing in—we want to do what we please—we fret at having any restraint put on us. And yet in proportion as we learn to love God through Jesus Christ, we learn to know what it is to be quite at God's bidding, and yet to be in perfect freedom. II. THE JOY OF LOVE. If it be asked, *whom* He so dearly loved that it was an intense joy to show His love to them, the answer is *sinners;* for them He came into the world: unlovely objects—lovers of their own will—sheep who had strayed out of a safe fold into a waste howling wilderness; yet in our unloveliness, and wandering, and wilfulness, though He grieved at it, He loved us. III. THE JOY OF HELP. He knew that His own would not receive Him, yet to feel that His help was open to "whosoever will"—that He was coming to bring pardon and deliverance and life even to the unthankful—was a joy that outwent the cold manger and the homeless wanderings and the spiteful conspiracies and the bitter Cross—the intense joy of helping the helpless. IV. THE JOY OF VICTORY. He knew how He should meet the unconquered foe, Death, and by yielding awhile before him, turn and rout him all the more gloriously. He knew that for those sinners whom He so dearly loved, there would henceforth be but a crippled foe to be bruised under their feet shortly; and the chains of bondage struck off, that henceforth we should not be slaves to sin. He foresaw all this, and He heard by anticipation the notes, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates," and the still more distant ones, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ," and He girded Himself for the struggle as already a conqueror. (*John Kempthorne, M.A.*) *The Commander's conflict and triumph:*—I. FIRST, THE COMMANDER'S CONFLICT: "Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame." Now, there are three points about our Lord's work set forth in these three clauses, all of them somewhat unlike the ordinary tone in which it is spoken of. We have the motive of His sufferings presented as being an unseen reward for Himself, which He brought vividly before Him by the exercise of His faith. We have His sufferings presented, not in reference to their saving power, but solely as being an illustration of His heroic patient endurance. And we have the contumely and shame of His death presented, not as showing to us His willing self-abasement and His loving lowliness, but as revealing to us the scorn with which He looked upon all hindrances that would bar His path and shake His resolute will. II. THE COMMANDER'S TRIUMPH, AND OUR SHARE IN IT. "Who is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." That "sitting" expresses rest, as from a finished and perfect work; a rest which is not inactivity; dominion extending over all the universe, and judgment. These three, rest, dominion, judgment, are the prerogatives of the Man Jesus. That is what He won by His bloody passion and sacrifice. And now what has that to do with us? We are to think of this triumph of the Commander as being, first of all, a revelation and a prophecy

for us. A revelation and a prophecy. Nobody knows anything about the future life except by means of Jesus Christ. In His exaltation to the throne a new hope dawns on humanity. If we believe that the Man Jesus sits on the throne of the universe, we have a new conception of what is possible for humanity. If a perfect human nature has entered into the participation of the Divine, our natures too may be perfect, and what He is and where He is, there, too, we may hope to come. And, still further, Christ's triumphal entrance into the heavens is not only prophecy of ours, but it is power to fulfil its own prophecy. He has gone up on high, sitting at the right hand of the throne of God to work for us. His work is not done. He works for us, with us, and in us, as Lord of providence and King of grace, sustaining and upholding us in all our weakness, and tending the smoky flame of our dim faith till it bursts into clear radiance. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The joy of Jesus* :—Everything exists for an end—has its place in God's wide world, and is intended to answer some purpose, to accomplish some end. Every rational being has an object "set before" it. The creatures that are not rational live and exist for an end, but the end is not "set before" them. The end is ever before their Creator, and Master, and Ruler; but the end is not set before them. They have not eyes to see it; they have no powers, or faculties with which to pursue it; but every rational being has an object "set before" it. And it is important for us very often to ask, for what end were we made? and for what end have we been redeemed? In a state of prior existence our Redeemer had, as it respects this world, an object before Him, and that object He came, as you know, into this world to pursue. In the words before us is one view of the goal to which our Saviour ran, or of the prize for which His course was pursued. It is called "the joy"—that is, the cause and the occasion of the joy, "who, for the joy that was set before Him." I. Let us ask, WHAT IS THIS JOY—the joy that was set before Jesus Christ? God speaks of this in the whispers of prophecy; and according to prophecy the joy set before Jesus was the joy of bruising the serpent's head; it was the joy of gathering together a scattered people; it was the joy of imparting knowledge to the ignorant upon the highest subjects; it was the joy of forming a perfect and everlasting kingdom out of lifeless and rebel souls. God exhibits it, too, in the pictures of the Levitical dispensation. It is the joy of pardoning the guilty, and of purifying the unclean; it is the joy of elevating those who have been cast down and downtrodden; it is the joy of educating those whose nature has been bruised and crushed. Jesus, too, Himself speaks of it. He speaks of it in parable. He likens it to the joy of a shepherd when having sought the lost sheep he has found it; and to the joy of a woman, who having missed treasure discovers it again; and to the joy of the father of a prodigal who is permitted to receive that prodigal in true penitence back again to his heart and to his home. 1. It was the blessedness of redeemed men. And what is their joy? It is the joy of coming out of darkness into light; it is the joy of passing from death, and from a death of which they are conscious, into life; it is the joy of coming out of wretched ignorance into sure and certain knowledge; it is the joy of rising from a state of distrust into a condition of confidence and faith; it is the joy of being converted from enmity, and alienation, and indifference towards God, into filial love. 2. The joy which redeemed men may diffuse, as well as the joy which they inherit. "Ye are the salt of the earth," said Christ, and "Ye are the light of the world." God alone can tell the blessedness which one redeemed man may be the means of communicating into others. How many tears may the hand of a true Christian wipe away? 3. The joy which the redemption of every sinner gives to the unfallen creation of God. 4. The joy of Jesus was the joy of God Himself in the salvation of the lost. 5. The joy set before Jesus was the joy which must be awakened in Jesus as the means of diffusing and spreading so much blessedness. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." His joy was the joy too of being recognised as the great Joy Giver to a number of men which no man can number; and the joy of working out, even to its consummation, the greatest and most glorious work of Jehovah. II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JOY OF JESUS. It is the joy of love—not the joy of the miser; not the joy of the spendthrift; not the joy of the lover of sinful pleasure; not the joy of the unlawfully ambitious—it is the joy of the benefactor, it is the joy of the mother; and while it is the joy of love, it is the joy of that extraordinary variety of love which inspired men call grace—the strongest form, the most beauteous form, the divinest form. It is the joy of holiness, too, and of perfect goodness. III. Let me remind you THAT SUCH BLESSEDNESS IS WON FOR YOU. The foundation of joy Jesus has laid; will you build upon it? or will you neglect the foundation? Will you

neglect to build upon the foundation which this Jesus has laid for you? If you thus neglect to build, see, you are reflecting upon Him. You are bringing clouds upon His wisdom, His love, on His power. Or you are reflecting upon the foundation? You treat the foundation as though it were either unnecessary, or as though it were not worthy of your building upon it. What blessedness may be enjoyed by you and what blessedness may be spread by you! You can spread Divine joy—will you? Will you make the joy of others your goal? Archbishop Leighton has said somewhere, "It is a strange folly in multitudes of us to set ourselves no mark, to propound no end in the hearing of the gospel. The merchant sails, not merely that he may sail, but for traffic; and he traffics, not simply for traffic, but that he may be rich. The husbandman ploughs, not merely to keep himself busy, and with no further end, but ploughs that he may sow; and he sows, not for sowing sake, but sows that he may reap, and reap with advantage. And shall we do the most excellent and fruitful work fruitlessly—hear only to hear, and look no further? This is indeed a great vanity and a great misery, to lose the labour and gain nothing by that which duly used would be of all others most advantageous and gainful; and yet," he says, "all meetings for religious purposes are full of this." Well, now, we have heard in a few brief words a little of the joy which Christ set before Himself—and I ask, have we all a mark? Have we an end? Is my life and yours a race with a goal, and a prize and a judge, and a cloud of witnesses? Is it so? Is there a joy set before us? If there be a joy set before us, who has set it before us? And what is it? If your joy be Christ's joy, and you make it your goal, and your prize, and if you run your race with patience, the day will soon come when you shall find yourselves not worn and weary on the course, but sweetly resting at the goal; and the day, too, will come when your feeble hands shall grasp the prize—your hands stretched out by the impulse of a heart filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. (*S. Martin.*) *Christ's prospective joy*:—Just as the sculptor, before he begins to chip the marble into shape, sees with his mind's eye the figure which is first conceived by his genius and then fashioned by his skill—so with our Divine Redeemer. He from eternity, before man was created, beheld him coming into being, placed on his own footing, falling, redeemed, saved. And, as the result of His atoning work, there rises up, through His Spirit, the fulfilment of His own ideal, a new creation, a living Church. (*C. Clemance. D.D.*) *Christ's joy varied as the relationship He sustains to men*:—May we not safely say that the joy will be as varied as the relationship which our Saviour bears to us? It will be the joy of the Sufferer whose agony is forgotten in the abundance of bliss—the joy of the Sower in reaping the abundance of the harvest—the joy of the Shepherd in seeing all the sheep as one flock, safe for ever in the heavenly fold—the joy of the Friend in seeing all His friends by His side in a union with Him and with each other that no misapprehension shall ever mar, and no sin shall ever stain—it will be the joy of the Warrior when the battle is over, when every enemy is still as a stone, and the summons to fight is exchanged for victorious rest—it will be the joy of the Leader, who has brought all His host into the promised land—it will be the joy of the Mediator, who has discharged His trust and surrendered it to the Father, saying "Of those whom Thou hast given Me I have lost none"—it will be the joy of the King who is to reign for ever over a kingdom in which revolt has been made impossible through the achievements of almighty grace—it will be the joy of the Redeemer when the redemption is complete, fulfilling His longings and His prayers—it will be the joy of the Firstborn Son at seeing every member of the new-born family safe in a happy home, which no sin can disturb and no death invade—it will be the joy of the Son of Man in witnessing the ideal of human perfection—it will be the joy of the Son of God, as to principalities and powers in heavenly places He reveals through a glorified Church the manifold wisdom of God, showing to worlds on worlds what infinite love devised and Infinite Power achieved! (*Ibid.*) **Endured the Cross.**—*The Cross carried, and the shame despised by Jesus*:—I. WHAT WAS THE CROSS WHICH JESUS CHRIST ENDURED? Was not the whole life of Jesus cross-bearing from the beginning to the end? But there were three things which may emphatically be called the Cross of Christ. 1. His being made sin for us. God did not make Jesus sinful; but God treated Jesus Christ as though He were a sinner. Herein was a Cross. 2. Jesus was wounded by God for transgression, and bruised for iniquity. 3. Jesus Christ's dying as a notorious malefactor, and thus dying for the ungodly was another part of His Cross. II. WHAT WAS THE SHAME WHICH HE DESPISED? This was disgrace, reproach, with the passions and emotions which they are supposed to awaken, and which in all purity and power they did

awaken in the human nature of your Saviour. III. BUT WHAT WAS THE MANNER AND SPIRIT OF HIS ENDURANCE AND OF HIS CONTEMPT? For this chiefly is the point. Observe, He endured the Cross. He felt the Cross to be a Cross. He felt it as a man. Do not overlook the complete humanity of your Redeemer. He felt His Cross more than we could have felt it could we have carried it. Sinfulness blunts the susceptibilities of our nature: purity and holiness keep the pores of the spirit open. This was the case with Christ. He endured the Cross in its full weight. He looked at the Cross as it was presented to Him, and He lifted it, and sustained on His own shoulder its full weight; and I would say to you if you want to get any good out of cross-bearing, always let the full weight of it come upon your shoulder. I do not say let the full weight of it come upon your shoulder, you being unstrengthened by the Almighty power; but I say, use no artifice to escape the pressure of any trouble that God sends you. When God sends a trouble to you, let it come down upon you as He sends it, and employ no artifices to reduce its pressure. Jesus endured the Cross in its full weight, and He endured the Cross to the very end. He took it up, and to the close of life He carried it; but He endured it courageously, patiently, cheerfully, and effectually. "Despising the shame." Jesus felt the shame. Did His check never redden, think you, or His lip never quiver when reviled? Was there no blush upon His cheek when men called Him a Sabbath-breaker, and a blasphemer, and said that He cast out devils by the prince of devils? Often, doubtless, did that cheek redden and that lip quiver. He felt the shame: and, mark, to despise being despised is about the hardest thing in life. Why do you find some sincere Christians continuing in certain ecclesiastical connections into which their convictions would never lead them, and in which their convictions do not keep them? Because they cannot despise being despised. You may account for the anomalous position of hundreds of Christ's disciples by this very circumstance—they have not learned, even from the Great Teacher of this hard lesson, to despise the shame; they have not learned to despise being despised. The shame was never seen to hinder Christ from saying a true word, or from doing a right thing. Now all this is the more remarkable because of three circumstances. First, Christ's clear foresight of the Cross and of the shame. He saw both before Him, yet He yielded Himself to endure them. Secondly, His full appreciation of the Cross and the shame. And, thirdly, His deep and quick sensitiveness towards all cross-bearing and towards all shame. Now, bearing these things in mind, Christ's enduring the Cross and despising the shame becomes exceedingly wonderful as they appear in our Saviour's life. Having expounded the text, let us use the truths it contains for practical purposes. Observe, then, that this text exhibits something done in which you may find rest and peace. Jesus has endured the Cross; Jesus has despised the shame. Your cross which you could not endure He has endured; the shame which you never could have borne, and which would have overwhelmed you, He so bore as to despise it. And He asks you to believe this, and to act accordingly. He would not have you go about carrying the cross, say, of your own guilt. You are not to carry that cross. You have your cross to carry, but this is not yours. But, further, the text suggests that there is something yet to be done—a very different thing from the something done; but still there is something to be done. Every man is called to carry a cross, but not every man the same cross; nor is every shoulder equally sensitive or equally strong. Troubles vary, and the pressure of the same troubles is different upon different individuals—and you know why. The reason is to be found in temperament, in disposition, in the state of the body, in the condition of the spirit, in the character, in the pursuits, and in the circumstances of a man. But we all have our cross and our shame; and I have now to ask you, do we endure the cross? Do we despise the shame? (*S. Martin.*) *The Saviour's endurance and joy*:—There are two ways in which the history of Bible saints ought to stimulate our faith and courage. This purpose they serve when presented to our minds as examples. They prove that the truths which the Bible teaches are not airy fancies or musty theories, which cannot be reduced into practice, and shrink from the fiery tests of every-day life. The force of example is a thought which long ago has been coined into a proverb. The ancient Romans were accustomed to place the busts of famous ancestors in the vestibules of their houses, in order to remind young people, as they passed to and fro, of the noble deeds of those ancestors, and fire them with the laudable ambition to excel in wisdom, goodness, and valour. The life of a hero has been known to colour the spirit of an age. The life of Napoleon Buonaparte has kindled the love of military glory in many a youthful heart; the touching story of Howard's labours

has moved many a man to deeds of charity and kindness. I. CONSIDER THE SEVERE ORDEAL THROUGH WHICH HE PASSED. The atoning sorrows of Christ came from several sources or directions. 1. Strange as it may appear, much of the pain and grief came from human malice and opposition. I say strange, for one would have concluded that all the sympathy and help of men would most certainly be enlisted on His side, as soon as they were told that to save their souls was His gracious object. 2. Another element in the sufferings of Jesus was the malicious opposition of the devil and his angels. As a Divine Being, of course these rebellious creatures were subject to His power and could do Him no harm. But in condescending to assume human nature, and undertaking to work out the plan of salvation, Christ voluntarily exposed Himself to the power of these malignant spirits. 3. But the chief source of the Redeemer's suffering was the wrath of His Father. As the fire which consumed the sacrifices laid upon Jewish altars came down from heaven, so the holy fire that consumed the sacrifice offered upon the altar of Calvary descended from God the Father. But although the Father's wrath was not vindictive in its nature, and rested not on personal but public grounds, it pressed with fearful weight upon the Saviour. With the smile of His Father shining into His soul, and lighting up therein an abiding summer, Christ could have braved any trial to which He might be summoned without a moan or murmur. But why those shrinkings in Gethsemane from the task that was assigned Him? "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." That cup contained ingredients so bitter that none but God could have compounded them. II. CONSIDER, AGAIN, THE SPIRIT HE DISPLAYED. It is true He did not covet suffering. He made no virtue of endurance. His courage was apparent through the whole course of His public life, but not with such a splendour of manifestation as in His dying hour. Some plants when pressed display more of their colours, and diffuse more of their fragrance. The diamond when broken into splinters glitters all the more; and despite the dishonours that gather so thickly around the Cross of Emmanuel, the lustre of His courage burst through the gloom, and shone with unwonted power. And if you seek the highest pattern of serene patience and fortitude, it is to the sufferer that hangs on the Cross of Calvary we point you. III. CONSIDER, AGAIN, THE MOTIVE WHICH SUSTAINED HIM. "Who for the joy that was set before Him." (*J. H. Morgan.*) **Despising the shame.**—*The shameful Sufferer:*—I. THE SHAMEFUL SUFFERER. The text speaks of shame, and therefore before entering upon suffering, I shall endeavour to say a word or two upon the shame. Perhaps there is nothing which men so much abhor as shame. We find that death itself has often been preferable in the minds of men to shame; and even the most wicked and callous-hearted have dreaded the shame and contempt of their fellow-creatures far more than any tortures to which they could have been exposed. It is well known that criminals and malefactors have often had a greater fear of public contempt than of aught else. In the Saviour's case, shame would be peculiarly shameful; the nobler a man's nature, the more readily does he perceive the slightest contempt, and the more acutely does he feel it. The eye that hath faced the sun cannot endure darkness without a tear. But Christ who was more than noble, matchlessly noble, something more than of a royal race, for Him to be shamed and mocked must have been dreadful indeed. Besides, some minds are of such a delicate and sensitive disposition that they feel things far more than others. He loved with all His soul; His strong passionate heart was fixed upon the welfare of the human race; and to be mocked by those for whom He died, to be spit upon by the creatures whom He came to save, to come unto His own, and to find that His own received Him not, but actually cast Him out, this was pain indeed. 1. And behold the Saviour's shame in His shameful accusation. He in whom was no sin, and who had done no ill, was charged with sin of the blackest kind. He was first arraigned before the Sanhedrim on no less a charge than that of blasphemy. Could He blaspheme? No. And it is just because it was so contrary to His character that He felt the accusation. Nor did this content them. Having charged Him with breaking the first table, they then charged Him with violating the second: they said He was guilty of sedition; they declared that He was a traitor to the government of Cæsar, that He stirred up the people, declaring that He Himself was a king. What would you think, good citizens and good Christians, if you were charged with such a crime as this? Ah! but your Master had to endure this as well as the other. He despised the shameful indictments, and was numbered with the transgressors. 2. Christ not only endured shameful accusation, but He endured shameful mocking. When Christ was taken away to Herod, Herod set Him at nought. The original word signifies "made nothing" of Him. It is an amazing

thing to find that man should make nothing of the Son of God, who is all in all. 3. He endured a shameful death. But this is the death of a villain, of a murderer, of an assassin—a death painfully protracted, one which cannot be equalled in all inventions of human cruelty for suffering and ignominy. Christ Himself endured this. Remember, too, that in the Saviour's case there were special aggravations of this shame. He had to carry His own Cross; He was crucified, too, at the common place of execution, Calvary, analogous to our ancient Tyburn, or our present Old Bailey. He was put to death, too, at a time when Jerusalem was full of people. It was at the feast of the passover, when the crowd had greatly increased, and when the representatives of all nations would be present to behold the spectacle. Was ever shame like this? II. HIS GLORIOUS MOTIVE. What was that which made Jesus speak like this?—"For the joy that was set before Him." III. I WILL TRY AND HOLD THE SAVIOUR UP FOR OUR IMITATION. Christian men! if Christ endured all this merely for the joy of saving you, will you be ashamed of bearing anything for Christ? Are there any of you who feel that if you follow Christ you must lose by it—lose your station, or lose your reputation? Will you be laughed at if you leave the world and follow Jesus? Oh! and will you turn aside because of these little things, when He would not turn aside, though all the world mocked Him, till He could say, "It is finished." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Despise the shame!*—Learn the practical wisdom of minimising the hindrances to your Christian career, pulling them down to their true smallness. Do not let them come to you and impose upon you with the notion that they are big and formidable. The most of them are only white sheets, and a rustic boor behiud them, like a vulgar ghost. You go up to them and they will be small immediately! "Despise the shame! and it disappears." And how is that to be done? In two ways. Go up the mountain, and the things in the plain will look very small; the higher you rise the more insignificant they will seem. Hold fellowship with God, and live up beside your Master, and the threatening foes here will seem very, very unformidable. Another way is —pull up the curtain, and gaze on what is behind it. The low foot-hills that lie at the base of some Alpine country may look high when seen from the plain, as long as the snowy summits are wrapped in mist, but when a little puff of wind comes and clears away the fog from the lofty peaks, nobody looks at the little green hills in front. So the world's hindrances, and the world's difficulties and cares, they look very lofty till the cloud lifts. And when we see the great white summits, everything lower does not seem so very high after all. Look to Jesus, and that will dwarf the difficulties. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) **Is set down on the right hand.**—*Jesus enthroned:*—I. Let us look at the fact here presented to us—or at THE POSITION ASSIGNED TO JESUS CHRIST. He is said to be seated "at the right hand of the throne of God." A place at the right hand of any person in authority and power is employed by the Sacred Writers to represent a position of high honour. It may be that you have a tendency to look chiefly to the Cross of Christ. You may be yourselves the children of sorrow, and often in affliction. Your own cross may be exceedingly heavy; it may tremendously oppress you; and your temperament and your natural disposition combining with your circumstances may lead you to look chiefly at the Cross of Christ. Believe that your Lord died and was buried; but do not keep your eyes fixed on the Cross and on the sepulchre, for He is not now on that Cross; He is not now in that sepulchre. And you in your thoughts of Christ, and in your feelings about Christ, are not to be merely crucified with Him, and dead with Him, but you must be risen with Christ, your affections being fixed on Christ as above. He dwells in the midst of the highest manifestations of Deity. He is worshipped in heaven with God—as God. His name is associated as no other name with that of Jehovah. He has Divine authority; and He has also Almighty power. Although distinct from Jehovah, He is and He appears to be one with Jehovah—one as an object of reverence, of fear, and of love—one in His administration of universal government. Thus is He seated "at the right hand of the throne of God." II. NOW SEE THE USE WHICH WE CHRISTIANS ARE TO MAKE OF THE KNOWLEDGE THAT JESUS IS IN THIS POSITION. 1. Here is a fountain of joy from which Christians may drink sacred pleasure. Jesus is set down at the right hand of the throne of God—then His work of atonement is finished; then His sacrifice is accepted; then His humiliation is terminated; then His sorrows are for ever fled away. We joy in this for His own sake. The Cross of Christ was a real cross to Him. When He is said to suffer, He did suffer. His soul was really troubled, and His spirit was exceedingly sorrowful. And now that He wears a crown, He feels to wear a crown. But we may joy in this also for the Church's sake—for just as

Jesus carried the Cross to bless the Church, so does He wear the crown to bless the Church. And we may joy in the coronation of Jesus for the sake of our individual well-being. We who trust our Saviour have a personal connection with His Cross; and we have a personal connection with His crown. And further, we may joy in this fact for the world's sake. He has ascended on high and received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God may dwell among them. 2. But here, too, is a motive to patience, and much help in cherishing patience. The course of the disciple is in some respects parallel with that of the Master. Like Christ's, it is a fixed and definite course. And it is a course in which there are many hindrances to be laid aside and sorrows to be borne. But it is a course to which there is an appointed goal, and a course in which the goal as a rule may be seen. It is a course, further, which makes large demands upon patience. Hence the injunction "to run with patience the race which is set before us." But now, just see how the position of Jesus bears upon the cultivation of patience. Jesus is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Once He was running His race on this earth: now He is "set down." Now He has no need of patience—He is sitting at the right hand of the throne of God. And if you run, if you wait, if you be patient, you will one day sit down with Him on His throne, even as He is seated on His Father's throne. 3. And there is just one other thought which we would suggest to you. No forerunners helped Jesus—not one. He had not a being to look to who had run in any respect a similar course, and reached His goal—not one. There was the Father above Him, but the Father had not become man. He had not been a man of sorrows. There we angels ministering to Him, but no angels in the skies had attempted to do what Jesus had come to do. (*S. Martin.*)

Ver. 3. **Consider Him that endured such contradiction.**—*Christ's afflictions a lesson for His people:*—All heaven considers or looks at Christ. The angels look at Him with reverence and adoring wonder, as their Lord and King. All hell considers or looks at Christ. The devils look at Him with terror and alarm, as their Judge and the Author of their punishment. But neither heaven nor hell can get such precious views of Christ as can those whom Christ came to redeem. They consider Him as the Lawgiver who shows the path of duty, as the Redeemer who shows the way of life. They consider Him as the Physician who heals their spiritual diseases, as the Pattern after which they are themselves to copy. They consider Him who endured the contradiction of sinners, in order that they may be not wearied, nor faint in their minds. The flowers that bloom upon a thousand hills, in more than royal stateliness, are rich in fragrant moisture; but it is not every gaudy insect that can extract the honey they yield. So, Christ, however rich and precious He be to those who know Him, is rich and precious to them alone. The ungodly get nothing by their contemplation of Him, except, indeed, a greater aversion ever to contemplate Him again. Believers are always benefited by this exercise. They are made better, wiser, holier, happier, by it. Looking unto Jesus is the attitude of spiritual health, the posture of spiritual activity, the habit of spiritual enjoyment: it is a blessed exercise—it strengthens the soul, it animates the heart, it enlivens the whole frame of the inner man. And while it is beneficial to all who engage heartily in it, be their circumstances what they may, it is peculiarly beneficial to all those who are in distress or perplexity. The contemplation of Him who suffered the contradiction of sinners hinders the mind from becoming weary and faint. I. LOOK AT THE PICTURE WHICH THE APOSTLE HERE EXHIBITS. It is the picture of Him who endured such contradiction of sinners. It is the picture of a mighty Being, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It represents Him, however, as man. It represents Him as suffering contradiction, that is, animosity, hatred, and persecution. It represents Him as suffering all this from sinners. It represents the suffering as being in every respect intense, aggravated, and indescribable. Let us seek to fill our minds with a sense of what He underwent. 1. The sufferings of Christ were Divinely appointed and tremendously severe. They were not the mere natural evils which are shed upon us, all in consequence of Adam's disobedience. They were singular, peculiar, and transcendental. They had no like, no parallel. They were infinite sufferings. 2. The subject of Christ's suffering is deserving of consideration because, had He chosen, He could have avoided them. But He did not so choose. He did not spare Himself. He gave Himself up to death for us all. 3. Again, in estimating the contradiction of sinners endured by Christ, let us remember that He was, throughout the whole of it, actuated by disinterested motives. 4. Once more, Jesus did

not deserve the punishment that was inflicted upon Him. 5. Lastly, the nature of Christ's endurance will be still more strikingly manifested when it is recollected that it was borne for the sake of those who inflicted it. II. Let us now speak of THE LESSONS CONVEYED BY THE PICTURE on which we have been meditating. 1. By looking to the afflictions of Christ we derive materials for encouragement, because we could not of ourselves do what Christ has done for us. We may endure contradiction of sinners, as Christ Himself did; but ours will never be such contradiction as His. 2. Again, by looking to the tribulations of Christ we derive materials of encouragement, because we should not expect to be treated better than He Himself was. 3. By looking to the tribulations of Christ we derive materials of encouragement, because, as our great Model and Exemplar, He has exhibited to us a specimen of patient endurance and submission under the most dreadful inflictions. 4. By looking to the tribulations of Christ we derive materials of encouragement, because we find that, as our great High Priest and Redeemer, He is able to sympathise with us in all our afflictions. 5. Lastly, by looking to the tribulations of Christ we derive materials of encouragement, because, as He triumphed over all His enemies, so shall we if we be partakers of His salvation. Christians are one with their Redeemer. (*Alex. Nisbet.*) *The endurance of Christ:*—The contemplation of Christ's sufferings may, or may not, be spiritually beneficial to us. It is possible to occupy our attention with the physical side of the Passion to the exclusion of the moral and spiritual, and to think almost exclusively of the sufferings and scarcely at all of the Sufferer. Such contemplation may work upon our feelings much in the same way as thrilling incidents in a powerful work of fiction, and create a spurious sympathy with the Sufferer which cannot produce the effect which the passion of our Lord ought to have upon our lives. The remedy is to be found mainly in "considering *Him* that endured"—in keeping before us the personality of the Sufferer. But we shall only rightly consider the Sufferer Himself when we keep in mind the purpose He had in His endurance. He suffers *for* sinners, as well as *from* sinners; and He suffers for the direct purpose of removing the contradiction which He endures—to *take away sins*. And all profitable contemplation of the sufferings of Christ ought to have in it the desire and willingness to have its purpose fulfilled in us. In considering Him we must keep in mind His faultlessness; the entire absence of any justification for the contradiction. He was not only faultless, but good. Although graced with the perfect qualities of human virtue, and rich in the beneficent works of goodness, He endured the contradiction of sinners. Remember, too, that within, and perfectly conjoined to, that holy humanity, was all the fulness of God. In every act of endurance there is the manhood which endures as human, and there is the deeper endurance of God underlying it all. The word "contradiction" is here used to include the whole of the opposition which our Lord experienced from sinners. The Cross was only the climax of a long and varied course of antagonism out of which it sprung, without which it would not have been reached, and by which alone it can be understood and duly estimated. The first contradiction Christ endured was in the unbelief which met Him. He was the True One and the Truth; but they affirmed Him either deceived or a deceiver—utterly untrustworthy. But this contradiction advanced to open condemnation. He was said to be "a gluttonous man," &c. They said His power over evil spirits was due to a league between Himself and the prince of the devils. They charged Him with being the enemy of God and man, a blasphemer and an evildoer. Remember who it was against whom all these false and bitter things were spoken. Consider Him, and see His brave endurance. And there was an element in all this contradiction which added to its painfulness. It was not the result, in general, of a mistake, which could be excused by the Sufferer. It had its root in personal hate (John xv. 24). And He knew the cause of that hate. It came out of a conscious moral antipathy. His pure, holy, humble, unselfish life made them conscious of the unreality and hollowness of their assumed excellence. And He endured this hate—He who combined in His own person all that is gracious in God and lovable in man. This antagonism and hate could not fail to proceed to acts of violence if occasion should arise. "They took up stones to stone Him"; and, think you, was it not as if He felt the blows of hardness of heart hurled at Him as He preserved Himself from this attempt upon His life? To Christ the spiritual was not less real than the physical; and in every infliction of suffering and wrong upon Him by the hands of wicked men He felt the spirit of the acts—the sin of the world—going right down deep into His soul. Yes, the painful pressure of the crown of thorns, the

piercing of nails and the anguish of the body, were means through which He bore in Himself the contradiction of sinners and of sin. One point more: This endurance of the contradiction of sinners was out of consideration to them. He might have saved Himself, and have made them to feel *His* contradiction against themselves. But He suffered Himself, instead of making them to suffer. His consideration for them was grounded in love—love to them and to us. In love He endured seeing them the opposite of that which He could love; endured receiving from them the reverse of what He had a right to expect, the opposite of that which His coming had made possible. If He could have hated and despised those who contradicted Him, it would have been less painful to His spirit to endure the contradiction. But the more He loved us, the more bitter became every experience, the more pointed and painful every act of wrong. "Consider Him who endured," &c., and consider Him, with this fact in mind, that in thus enduring He was exhibiting and putting forth His gracious power to save us from sinning against Him. The purpose of His Cross is to reconcile us and all things to Himself; to bring us to harmony of mind and life with Him; to destroy our contradiction by enduring it. (*R. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The great source of courage*:—"Consider Him." Learn to look up. It is an exercise in which we have to be trained and drilled until we have mastered it. Unbelief gives a man a crick in the neck so that he cannot look up. But faith, like the eagle, sets her eyes on the sun and soars away until earth is lost in the mists below, and she lights on the highest mount of God. If we would have a life of singing and triumphant courage, we must get into this habit—the heavenly habit of considering Jesus. "Consider Him." This is everything. In the Christian life Christ Himself is the Source and Strength of all. A man is a Christian exactly as he receives Christ into his thought, and heart, and life. And this is the order, through the thought into the heart and thence into the life. Therefore consider Christ—gather the thoughts in from other things, and set them upon Christ. In everything that we would get hold of thoroughly we must give our minds to it, as we say. And this means give your mind to Christ. Christ is to us what we will let Him be. If I will let Him into my life, He will fill it with light and blessedness, as the sun fills the heavens. "Consider Him"—not the truth about Him. Lectures on botany are poor things to put in place of flowers. Sermons and teachings about Christ are poor things indeed to put in place of Him. It is more than ever needful in times like these, when life is such a rush and whirl, that we make room and leisure in our lives to cultivate this art of considering Christ. Alas! what hurried and passing glimpses of our great Master do content us! There is a bit of the country—than which, I think, there is nothing more lovely in all England—that I have often passed through in the railway carriage; eagerly I have looked out of the window, over the deep valleys, woods overhanging woods, going down to misty depths, and away to the moorland, stretching up to the rugged heights; then suddenly a bank of earth has blotted it all out; a narrow cutting has hemmed us in—and then the tunnel darkness. Out again and across some viaduct; looking down on the clear stream amidst the boulders below, another glance of the hills, and then a new obstruction. And some people call that "seeing the country." How much can one consider it amid such vexatious glimpses? But some fine day I have left the railway station and stepped out on to the moor, and in a few moments have stood amidst its stillness, the great unbroken stretch of earth and sky, the music of some little brook and the plover's call not breaking the silence, only heightening it. Then I have gone up on to the granite height, and there under the blue heaven I have looked away, away on every side, over the miles of country, catching here and there the faint, silvery line of the sea. Then and then only I saw it—thus I could consider it. We must get away alone up into the mount of the Lord if we would consider Him. The busier you are the more you need it: this thinking about Him until He comes to reveal Himself. With many how would half an hour of such considering transform the life! He, my Lord and Captain, my Friend and Helper, my Deliverer and my God. (*M. G. Pearse.*) *Suffering and glory*:—No pain, no palm; no thorn, no throne; no gall, no glory; no cross, no crown. (*Wm. Penn.*) *Consider Him*:—Our troubles are but as the slivers and chips of His Cross. (*J. Trapp.*) *Christ with us in trial*:—One thing which contributed to make Cæsar's soldiers invincible was their seeing him always take his share in danger, and never desire any exemption from labour and fatigue. We have a far higher incentive in the war for truth and goodness when we consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Considering Christ in*

persecution:—Li Cha Mi, a Chinese preacher, was nearly killed by robbers during the excitement against foreigners, in 1872. At a subsequent conference, he said: "You have all heard of my sufferings during the past few months. I wish to say that these sufferings were very slight. It was easy to endure pain when I could feel that I bore it for Christ. It is wonderful—I cannot explain it. When attacked by the robbers, and beaten almost to death, I felt no pain. Their blows did not seem to hurt me at all. Everything was bright and glorious. Heaven seemed to open, and I thought I saw Jesus waiting to receive me. It was beautiful. I have no words to describe it. Since that time I seem to be a new man. I now know what it is to 'love not the world.' My affections are set on things above. Persecutions trouble me not. I forget all my sorrows when I think of Jesus. I call nothing on earth my own. I find that times of trial are best for me. When all is quiet and prosperous, I grow careless and yield to temptation, but when persecutions come, then I fly to Christ. The fiercer the trial, the better it is for my soul." (*The Christian.*) **Lest ye be wearied.**—*Spiritual weariness*:—I. THERE IS A CONFLICT WHICH STILL DEMANDS OUR FAITH AND PATIENCE. The great purpose of life should be to attain the highest excellence of which our nature is susceptible. This involves difficulties. II. WE ARE IN DANGER OF LOSING HEART, AND GROWING WEARY IN THIS CONFLICT. Perhaps we may hardly wonder at this, if we think of the nature of the conflict itself, its continuousness, its unintermittent character. This result ensues, too, from the providential trials under which we are sometimes called to carry on the conflict. This danger also arises from the perpetual vigilance and resistance which are required to be exercised against custom, against kindness, against the slumbrous atmosphere in which we live. III. THIS WEARINESS AND FAILURE OF SPIRITUAL DETERMINATION IS AN EVIL WHICH OUGHT TO BE STRENUOUSLY RESISTED. Weariness and exhaustion are fatal to real enjoyment. They are equally fatal to work. When worn down by fatigue, you have neither strength nor spirit for work. Moreover, there must be much danger in this state of weariness and exhaustion. IV. THE BEST MEANS OF AVOIDING THIS WEARINESS AND SPIRITUAL EXHAUSTION IS STEADILY TO CONTEMPLATE JESUS. Look upon Him in such a way as to call out comparison with yourselves, and it will encourage you, and enable you to rise above this exhaustion and fear. 1. The greatness and nobleness of the Sufferer! 2. Consider the poignancy and the severity of His suffering. 3. Consider the innocency of the Sufferer. 4. Consider the spirit in which Jesus suffered. (*J. C. Harrison.*) *Discouragements in the Christian life*:—I. MANY PERSONS ARE DISCOURAGED AT THE GREAT DIFFERENCE WHICH THEY EXPERIENCE IN THEIR FEELINGS, WHEN THEY RECEIVE INSTRUCTION FROM THE MINISTRATION OF OTHER PEOPLE'S MINDS, AND WHEN THEY ARE OBLIGED TO FURNISH THEMSELVES WITH THE TRUTH WHICH IS REQUIRED FOR THEIR DAILY CHRISTIAN LIFE. II. MANY ARE LIABLE TO BECOME WEARIED AND FAINT FROM POSITIVE REACTION, FROM DEPRESSION ARISING FROM EXHAUSTION. III. PERSONS OF A TIMID NATURE, WHOSE RELIGIOUS LIFE HAS, EITHER BY EDUCATION OR FROM SOMETHING IN THEMSELVES, TURNED UPON CONSCIENCE, OR IN WHOM THEIR RELIGIOUS LIFE IS OF THE TYPE OF CONSCIENCE RATHER THAN OF LOVE, OR TRUST, OR HOPE, ARE PECULIARLY LIABLE TO DISCOURAGEMENT AND WEARINESS. IV. GREAT DISCOURAGEMENT BEFALLS MEN WHO HAVE A RELIGION WITHOUT ANY SOCIAL ELEMENT TO CORROBORATE IT. V. MANY PERSONS ARE BROUGHT INTO GREAT DISCOURAGEMENT AND UNCERTAINTY AS TO WHAT THEY SHALL DO, BECAUSE THEY HAVE MISTAKEN THE FULL PURPORT OF RELIGION. VI. THE NEGLECT TO CONSOLIDATE RELIGIOUS FEELINGS INTO HABITS IS FREQUENTLY AN OCCASION OF DISCOURAGEMENT, BECAUSE IT LEAVES MEN SUBJECT TO ALL THE FLUCTUATIONS OF FEELING. VII. MANY ARE CONVICTED OF SIN LESS DEEPLY AT THE BEGINNING OF THEIR CHRISTIAN LIFE THAN LONG AFTER CONVERSION; AND THIS NOT ONLY ALARMS, BUT SERIOUSLY DISCOURAGES THEM. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Spiritual weariness and its antidote*:—I. THE LIABILITY OF CHRISTIANS TO SPIRITUAL WEARINESS. Arising from—1. The little advancement we seem to make in spiritual excellence. 2. The little good we seem to accomplish in all our efforts to serve our fellows. 3. The little difference which Providence in its dispensation makes between us and those who are the enemies of Christ. 4. The little influence which our best efforts seem to have in correcting the evils of our age. II. THE ANTIDOTE OF CHRISTIANS TO SPIRITUAL WEARINESS. Reflection on Christ will renew our energies, reinvigorate the soul. 1. Consider what He endured. "The contradiction of sinners." 2. Consider how He endured (1 Pet. ii. 23). 3. Consider why He endured. For His enemies. (*Homilist.*) *Liability of saints to faint-heartedness*:—It was stated some time ago, that a man had discovered an invention for

making a form of crystallised carbon, which to all intents and purposes was a diamond; but his invention was useless, because of the difficulty and expense in getting any vessel strong enough to bear the intense heat to which it must be subjected during the process. And so with some of God's saints, they faint beneath the trial, and the saintly virtue is not formed within their characters, because they have lost the power of endurance. (*Canon Newbolt.*)

Ver. 4. **Not yet resisted unto blood.**—*The law of Christ's service*:—I. THE LAW OF CHRIST'S SERVICE. Resistance unto blood. 1. This law is not an arbitrary enactment. It is because the strife is against sin, and sin is an evil so terrible and tremendous that we are to resist unto blood. 2. Christianity is distinguished by its estimate of sin: the character it gives to sin. The darkest death man can die is preferable to sin's power and penalty. II. THE MOTIVE TO OBEDIENCE. Christ's own example. The argument is, Others before you, and, specifically, Christ Himself, have obeyed this law, fulfilled it in their blood, "Ye have not yet." 1. The law of Christ's service is a law obeyed in lower spheres of action. Love of freedom, love of country, love of friends, have proved stronger often than love of life. The Roman soldier swore to keep his eagles to the last drop of his blood, and history shows how nobly the oath was kept. Almost every year our hearts are thrilled by the story of men of our own name who have held honour and duty more sacred and precious than life and home. 2. The law of Christ's service has been obeyed by the good and noble of all ages. 3. Chief of all, the law of Christ's service is a law obeyed by Christ Himself. (*W. Perkins.*) *Resisting unto blood*:—I. SIN IS IN THE WORLD AS THE GREAT ANTAGONIST OF MANKIND. It is opposed to intelligence, to freedom, to progress, to peace—personal, domestic, social, national, and universal. It is the inspiration of all our foes, the virus in all our sufferings, the fountain of all our sorrows, the burden of all our oppressions. II. THIS GREAT ANTAGONIST DEMANDS THE MOST STRENUOUS RESISTANCE OF MANKIND. 1. Because the overcoming of this is the overcoming of all enemies. 2. Because it is only by the most strenuous human effort that it can be overcome. 3. Because our great moral Commander thus strove against sin. How much more should we! (1) He had done nothing to contribute to the sin of the world: we have. (2) He could not have been injured by the sin of the world. (*Homilist.*) *Resisting unto blood*:—The Tabernacle was covered over with red, to note that we must defend the truth even to the effusion of blood. If we cannot endure martyrdom (if called thereunto) and sweat a bloody sweat for Christ's sake, we cannot be comfortably assured that we are of His body. John Leafe, a young man, burnt with Mr. Bradford, hearing his own confession, taken before the bishop, read to him, instead of a pen took a pin, and so pricking his hand, sprinkled the blood upon the said bill of his confession, willing the messenger to show the bishop that he had sealed the same bill with his blood already. (*John Trapp.*) *Good standard-bearers*:—God wants standard-bearers who are willing to make a shroud of their colours. (*J. Ker, D.D.*) *The worst not yet experienced*:—The figure is changed; the Christian is a wrestler, a pugilist, struggling, fighting against sin; and the Jewish believers are told that up till now no "blood" has been drawn; that is, the fierce severity of the conflict had yet to come. They had no right, therefore, to give way, and no excuse for exhaustion. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*) **Striving against sin.**—*Striving against sin*:—I. THE ENEMY AGAINST WHICH BELIEVERS STRIVE—Sin. The name of it is short and easily pronounced, but who shall fully declare its dreadful nature? 1. It is an old enemy. Hence in Scripture it is styled the Old Man. It is old, for it existed in us as soon as we began to exist. But it is much older than we are. It appeared in the world almost as soon as it was created—nearly six thousand years ago. Nay, sin is older even than this, for it appeared even in heaven, and ruined myriads of celestial intelligences. It is no new upstart power, then, that believers have to strive against, but a veteran foe long inured to the warfare, and possessing the accumulated experience of innumerable ages. 2. Sin is an enemy that is always near. When driven, as it is in the case of every believer, from the throne of the heart, it is not entirely dislodged from the soul. It still lives and lurks in the nature of believers. 3. Sin is a crafty and deceitful enemy. Its wiles and cunning devices to seduce men, and lead them to the commission of crimes, are innumerable. 4. Sin is an active enemy. It is unwearied in its exertions to extend its influence. It pollutes all we do, and mingles with all we are. As the heart never ceases from beating, nor the blood from circulating, so sin never ceases from operating. We may sleep, but it never sleeps. 5.

Sin is a powerful enemy. We read of "the body of sin," which implies its strength and vigour. Its "motions do work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." It often bursts through the strongest resolutions set up to restrain it, as a swollen river beats down its banks and sweeps away everything before it. You may see its strength by looking at the conduct of some of those in whom it reigns. Into what awful lengths in wickedness does it carry them! II. THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICT OR STRIFE AGAINST SIN. 1. It is universal. It is directed against all sin. It is against secret sins as well as against open—against sins of the temper as well as against those of the tongue—against sins of the heart as well as against those of the life—and chiefly against sins of the heart, because from them proceed those of the life. 2. It is often a painful conflict. In piercing sin, the believer often feels a sword pierce his own heart. Sin can never be slain in him without his experiencing to some extent its dying agonies. 3. It is a constant and persevering conflict. There is no discharge in this war. It is a war of extermination. 4. This conflict is carried on in the Saviour's strength. In their own strength believers could never carry the strife on. 5. This conflict is maintained by prayer. "When I cry unto Thee," said the Psalmist, "then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know, for God is with me." "In the day that I cried unto Thee, Thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul." 6. This conflict is to be carried on with constant watchfulness. Prayer without watchfulness is almost a mockery of God, since in it blessings are solicited, for the attainment of which no care is exercised. III. SOME OF THE MEANS BY WHICH BELIEVERS SHOULD STRIVE AGAINST SIN. 1. Let them seriously think how hateful and abominable sin is to God. Abominable and offensive as outward sins are to Him, indwelling corruption must be even still more so, for it is the source whence all these proceed. 2. They should check the first motions and workings of sin in their souls. They should give no quarter to criminal thoughts, or evil desires, or unholy inclinations, but endeavour, through the strength of grace, to banish and crush them. By such constant endeavours to strike at the root, indwelling sin will be weakened and its power and strength reduced and kept under. 3. They should carefully avoid temptations to sin. 4. They should do all in their power to preserve and promote sanctified frames of mind when these are experienced. 5. They should be often engaged in prayer. (1) This prayer must be believing prayer. "All things," says our Lord, "which ye shall ask in prayer, believe that ye shall receive them, and ye shall have them." (2) Further, it must be prayer offered in the name of Christ. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name," says Christ Jesus, "I will do it." (3) Again, it must be humble prayer. We must feel a deep sense of our own weakness and proneness to sin if left to ourselves, and the absolute necessity of grace and strength to hold us up and keep us from falling. (4) In a word, it must be fervent and importunate prayer. 6. They must, if they would be successful in striving against sin, strive against Satan. Sin is just the Old Serpent's poison. IV. SOME MOTIVES FOR STRIVING AGAINST SIN. 1. This is a strife or warfare which every Christian must maintain. The most shining saint has sin in him. He is only "fair as the moon," and will never find his principles of holiness brightened with a sunlight lustre, until he enters the kingdom of his heavenly Father. 2. In this strife and warfare the Saviour's honour is much concerned. Sin disgraces a religious profession. 3. You should strive against sin, for it offends God, and is the object of His infinite abhorrence. It cannot be otherwise, for it is enmity against Him, against His attributes, and against His government. It abuses His goodness, abhors His holiness, despises His love, vilifies His wisdom, denies His justice, defies His power, violates His law, and, if it could, would pluck Him from His throne, and deprive Him of His Being. 4. We should strive against sin, for it is seeking our own ruin. It is a foe, and not a friend. The man who cherishes sin cherishes a viper in his bosom, which will, unless timeously cast from him, turn and sting him to death. 5. Consider the reward they shall receive who truly, and believingly, and preservingly strive against sin. There is a reward for the righteous even now. Their striving against sin tends to their true comfort and enjoyment while here. V. IMPROVEMENT. 1. Examine yourselves by what you have heard that you may ascertain what is your true state and character. These will turn upon your bearing in relation to sin. 2. While you strive against sin yourselves you should also strive against it in others. 3. Beware of that strife which is sinful. There is such a thing as not only sinful striving, but a sinful striving against sin. O how much of the contention about religious matters, both in doctrine and practice, may be thus characterised! Let, then, all such striving be avoided. "The wrath of man worketh not the righteous-

ness of God." 4. Strive with God. There is a striving with God which is unlawful and destructive, but there is a striving with Him which is allowable and necessary. It is by prayer and supplication. 5. Strive to enter in at the strait gate; the gate, that is, of conversion, faith, and repentance. Without engaging in the strife there can be no admission into heaven. (*G. Brown.*) *Striving against sin*:—I. How we are to strive against sin. 1. By constantly opposing the power of sin in our own hearts. 2. By a steadfast and constant profession of the Christian faith. 3. By a humble and holy dependence on the atonement of Jesus Christ, and a growing acquaintance with Scripture. 4. By directly and openly condemning it, whenever and by whomsoever it is committed. II. WHY we should thus strive against sin. 1. Because of its destructive and fatal designs upon our best interests. 2. Because it is the greatest evil that can curse society. 3. Because it will cause us satisfaction in the review when we approach the world of spirits. There is no alternative between striving against and striving for it. Those who are at peace with sin now will find death at war with them. (*D. Jones.*) *How to strive against sin*:—1. By prayer. Let us pray against anger, pride, uncleanness, coveteousness, continually. 2. By Scripture. 3. By the subtracting of the nourishment of that sin. Let us strive against lust and uncleanness by a sober and temperate life. 4. By embracing the contrary virtue. Instead of pride let us embrace humility; instead of covetousness, liberality; of uncleanness, chastity, &c. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *Striving against sin*:—The Red Indian will stand to have his flesh cut away by the knives of his enemies, and will not utter a sigh or groan—will not sue for mercy. Such is the fortitude of that iron will. If the pride of his heart enables him to bear such tortures without murmuring, surely the power of Christian motive is sufficient to cause us to pluck out the right eye, and cut off the right-hand sin, and cast them away from us, that we may present ourselves a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. In Christ crucified we see the abhorrence with which God regards sin. And when He brings us into communion with Himself in the Cross we shun it, or resist it, as our most deadly foe. *Striving against fierce sin*:—Where are the heroes "who resist unto blood striving against sin"? Should we weep or laugh at the foolishness of mankind, childishly spending their indignation and force against petty evils, and maintaining a friendly peace with the fell and mighty principle of destruction. It is just as if men of professed courage, employed to go and find and destroy a tiger or a crocodile that has spread alarm or havoc, on being asked at their return, "Have you done the deed?" should reply, "We have not indeed destroyed the tiger or crocodile, but yet we have acted heroically; we have achieved something great—we have killed a wasp." Or, like men engaged to exterminate a den of murderers, who being asked at their return, "Have you accomplished the vengeance?" should say, "We have not destroyed any of the murderers; we did not deem it worth while to attempt it; but we have lamed one of their dogs." (*J. Foster.*) *Not to be discouraged by violent conflict*:—Whoever wishes to obtain the victory must not be discouraged by violent opposition. It is reported of Alexander, that when surrounded by his enemies, and sorely wounded, he still maintained his fortitude, and fought upon his knees. Sparticus did the same, covering himself with his buckler in one hand, and using his sword with the other. So the Christian, however wounded, must still persevere, fighting to the end the good fight of faith, that he may lay hold on eternal life.

Vers. 5, 6. **Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord.**—*How to bear afflictions*:—The proposition that ariseth from the words is this: It is the duty and best wisdom of afflicted Christians to preserve themselves from the vicious extremes of despising the chastenings of the Lord, or fainting under them. I. To "DESPISE THE CHASTENINGS OF THE LORD," imports the "making no account of them," as unworthy of serious regard, and includes inconsiderateness of mind, and an insensibleness of heart. 1. Inconsiderateness of mind with respect to the Author or end of chastenings. (1) With respect to the Author. When the afflicted looks only downwards, as if the rod of affliction sprang out of the dust (Job v. 6), and there were no superior cause that sent it. (2) Inconsiderateness of the end of the Divine discipline is a great degree of contempt. The evils that God inflicts are as real a part of His providence as the blessings He bestows; as in the course of nature the darkness of the night is by His order, as well as the light of the day; therefore they are always sent for some wise and holy design. Sometimes, though more rarely, they are only for trial, to exercise the faith, humility, patience of eminent saints; for otherwise God would lose in a great measure the honour, and His favourites the reward, of those

graces—afflictions being the sphere of their activity. But for the most part they are castigatory, to bring us to a sight and sense of our state, to render sin more evident and odious to us. 2. Insensibility of heart is an eminent degree of despising the Lord's chastenings. A pensive feeling of judgments is very congruous, whether we consider them "either materially as afflictive to nature, or as the signs of Divine displeasure": for the affections were planted in the human nature by the hand of God Himself, and are duly exercised in proportion to the quality of their objects; and when grace comes, it softens the breast, and gives a quick and tender sense of God's frown. II. THE CAUSES OF THIS DESPISING OF GOD'S CHASTENINGS. 1. A contracted stupidity of soul, proceeding from a course in sin. 2. Carnal diversions. The pleasures and cares of the world, as they render men inapprehensive of judgments to come, so regardless of those that are present (Luke xxi. 34). 3. An obstinate fierceness of spirit, a diabolical fortitude. Their hearts are of an anvil-temper, made harder by afflictions, and reverberate the blow; like that Roman emperor, who, instead of humbling and reforming at God's voice in thunder, thundered back again. III. I shall proceed to consider the other extreme, of FAINTING UNDER GOD'S REBUKES. 1. The original word signifies "the slackening and relaxing of things that were firmly joined together." 2. It may respect the sinking and falling away of the soul like water, being hopeless of overcoming troubles. When water is frozen into hard ice it will bear a great burden; but when it is melted, nothing is weaker: so the spirit of a man, confirmed by religious principles, is able to sustain all his infirmities (Prov. xviii. 14). 2. The causes of this despondency are usually—(1) Either the kind of affliction. When there is a singularity in the case, it increaseth the apprehension of God's displeasure, because it may signify an extraordinary guilt in the person that suffers; and upon that account the sorrow swells so high as to overwhelm him. (2) The number and degrees of afflictions. When, like those black clouds which in winter days join together, and quite intercept the beams of the sun, many troubles meet at once, and deprive us of all present comfort. (3) The continuance of afflictions. When the clouds return after rain, and the life is a constant scene of sorrows, we are apt to be utterly dejected and hopeless of good. (4) The comparing their great sufferings with the prosperity of those who are extremely vicious, inclines some to despair. IV. TO PROVE THAT IT IS THE DUTY AND WISDOM OF THE AFFLICTED NOT TO DESPISE THE CHASTENINGS OF THE LORD, NOR TO FAINT UNDER THEM. 1. It is their duty carefully to avoid those extremes, because they are very dishonourable to God. (1) The contempt of chastisements is a high profanation of God's honour, who is our Father and Sovereign, and in that quality afflicts us. (2) Fainting under chastenings reflects dishonourably upon God. 2. It is the best wisdom not to despise God's chastenings, nor faint under them. (1) The contempt of chastenings deprives us of all those benefits which were intended by them. (2) The neglect of chastenings doth not only render them unprofitable but exposes to greater evils. (*a*) It provokes God to withdraw His judgments for a time. This the sinner desired, and thinks himself happy that he is at ease. Miserable delusion! This respite is the presage of his final ruin. (*b*) The slighting of lighter strokes provokes God sometimes to bring more dreadful judgments in this life upon sinners. No man can endure that his love or anger should be despised. (3) Faintings under chastenings is pernicious to sufferers. (*a*) It renders them utterly indisposed for the performance of duty. He that is hopeless of a good issue out of troubles, will neither repent nor pray nor reform, but indulges barren tears instead of real duties. Besides, it often falls out, that the same affliction is sent from God's displeasure upon His people for their sins, and is the effect of the rage of men against them upon the account of their professing His name. (*b*) They are incapable of the comforts proper to an afflicted state. Those arise from the apprehension that God loves whom He chastens (Rev. iii. 19); for the least sin is a greater evil than the greatest trouble, and His design is to take that away; and from the expectation of a happy issue. Hope is the anchor within the veil, that in the midst of storms and the roughest seas preserves from shipwreck. USE. The use shall be to excite us to those duties that are directly contrary to the extremes forbidden; namely, to demean ourselves under the chastenings of the Lord with a deep reverence and humble fear of His displeasure, and with a firm hope and dependence upon Him for a blessed issue upon our complying with His holy will. USE I. With a humble reverence of His hand. This temper is absolutely necessary and most congruous with respect to God, upon the account of His sovereignty, justice, and goodness, declared in His chastenings; and with respect to our frailty,

our dependence upon Him, our obnoxiousness to His law, and our obligations to Him that He will please to afflict us for our good. USE II. Let us always preserve a humble dependence and firm hope on God for a blessed issue out of all our troubles. 1. The relation God sustains when He afflicts believers. He is a Judge invested with the quality of a Father. 2. It is a strong cordial against fainting to consider that, by virtue of the paternal relation, "He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." For no troubles are more afflictive and stinging than those that are unexpected. Now when we are assured that there is no son whom the Father doth not chasten, we are less surprised and less troubled when we meet with crosses. 3. The apostle represents the special prerogative of God as "the Father of spirits" (ver. 9). As a prudent physician consults the strength of the patient as well as the quality of the disease, and proportions his medicine; so all the bitter ingredients, their mixture and measure, are dispensed by the wise prescription of God, according to the degrees of strength that are in His people. 4. The apostle specifies the immediate end of God in His chastenings. God is pleased to fashion us according to His image by afflictions, as a statue is cut by the artificer, to bring it into a beautiful form. He is pleased to bring us into divers temptations to try our faith, to work in us patience, to inflame our prayers, to mortify our carnal desires, to break those voluntary bands whereby we are fettered to the earth, &c. (*Wm. Bates, D.D.*) *The Lord's chastening*:—I. DESPISE NOT THOU THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD. You are guilty of this—1. When you shut your eyes to the Author of your affliction. Everything that takes place in the whole universe comes to pass either by His direct appointment, or by His equally direct permission. 2. When you inquire not the cause of your affliction. God "does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." If therefore He sends chastisement upon you there must be some adequate cause, which you are bound to search out and discover. 3. When you resist the design of your affliction. You have long, perhaps, been convinced that you ought to forsake sin, and turn wholly to the Lord. But sin has still kept its hold on you; and you have resisted the conviction of your conscience. At length, then, God interrupts your comforts—pours contempt upon your idols; or He comes even closer—chastises you with bodily sickness, sorrow, and pain. II. FAINT NOT WHEN THOU ART REBUKED OF HIM. 1. Although God be the Author of your sorrows, it is as a Father that He sends them. All is not against you. Your heavenly Father is for you, and, if you trust Him, will make these "light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2. Although sin be the cause of your sorrows, yet those sorrows are not the special penalty of sin. They may distress and scorch you, but you are not "tormented in this flame." Earth is not hell! Your Father is correcting you rather than punishing you. 3. Although conversion be the design of your sorrows, yet it was never intended that these should be the only means used by the Lord; and that you should be left to do all the rest. The very expression, "when thou art rebuked," implies that other methods are also employed. He gives "grace for grace"—a Saviour to pardon—a Spirit to heal—promises to encourage and save your soul. (*J. Jowett, M.A.*) *Chastisement*:—There are two dangers against which a person under the chastising hand of God should always be very careful to keep a careful look out. The one is despising the rod, and the other is fainting under it. We will begin with the first; "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord." I. THIS MAY BE DONE IN FIVE WAYS; AND IN DISCUSSING THE SUBJECT I SHALL PROPOSE THE REMEDY FOR EACH OF THESE AS WE PASS ALONG. 1. A man may despise the chastening of the Lord when he murmurs at it. Ephraim is like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; when a son of God first feels the rod he is like a bullock—he kicks at it, he cannot bear it. A want of resignation shows that we despise God's chastening hand. A word with thee, O murmurer! Why shouldst thou murmur against the dispensations of thy heavenly Father? Hast thou not read that amongst the Roman emperors of old it was the custom when they would set a slave at liberty, to give him a blow upon the head and then say, "Go free"? This blow which thy Father gives thee is a token of thy liberty, and dost thou grumble because He smites thee rather hardly? After all, are not His strokes fewer than thy crimes, and lighter than thy guilt? 2. We despise the chastening of the Lord when we say there is no use in it. It is always a providence when it is a good thing. But why is it not a providence when it does not happen to be just as we please? Surely it is so; for if the one thing be ordered by God, so is the other. It is written, "I create light and I create darkness, I create good and I

make evil. I, the Lord, do all these things." But I question whether that is not despising the chastening of the Lord when we set a prosperous providence before an adverse one; for I do think that an adverse providence ought to be the cause of as much thankfulness as a prosperous one. 3. There is a third way in which men despise the chastening of the Lord, that is—we may think it dishonourable to be chastened by God. How many men have thought it dishonourable to be persecuted for righteousness sake! But, my son, thou dost not weigh the blessing rightly. I tell thee it is the glory of a man to be chastened for God's sake. Now you who faint under a little trouble, and despise the chastening of the Lord, let me encourage you in this way. My son, despise not the persecution. Remember how many men have borne it. What an honour it is to suffer for Christ's sake! because the crown of martyrdom has been worn by many heads better than thine. 4. Again, in the fourth place, we despise the chastening of the Lord when we do not earnestly seek to amend by it. Many a man has been corrected by God, and that correction has been in vain. Take heed if God is trying you, that you search and find out the reason. Are the consolations of God small with you? Then there is some reason for it. I have sometimes walked a mile or two, almost limping along, because there was a stone in my shoe, and I did not stop to look for it. And many a Christian goes limping for years because of the stones in his shoe, but if he would only stop to look at them, he would be relieved. What is the sin that is causing you pain? Get it out, and take away the sin, for if you do not, you have not regarded this admonition which speaketh unto you as unto sons—"My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord" 5. Once more: we despise the chastening of the Lord when we despise those that God chastens. II. The second evil is this: "NOR FAINT WHEN THOU ART REBUKED OF HIM." 1. The first way of fainting is when we give up all exertion under the rod. 2. Again, the man faints when he doubts whether he is a child of God under chastisement. Remember the passage: "If we be not partakers of chastisement then are we bastards, and not sons." Say not He has forgotten thee, but look upon thy trial as a proof of His love. Cecil once called on his friend Williams, and the servant said he could not see him because he was in great trouble, "Then I would rather see him," said Cecil; and Williams, hearing it was his old pastor, said, "Show him up." Up he went, and there stood poor Williams, his eyes suffused with tears, his heart almost broken, his dear child was dying. "Thank God," said Cecil; "I have been anxious about you for some time; you have been so prosperous and successful in everything that I was afraid my Father had forgotten you; but I know He recollects you now. I do not wish to see your child full of pain and dying; but I am glad to think my Father has not forgotten you." Three weeks after that Williams could see the truth of it, though it seemed a harsh saying at first. 3. Again, many persons faint by fancying that they shall never get out of their trouble. "Three long months," says one, "have I striven against this sad trouble which overwhelms me, and I have been unable to escape it." "For this year," says another, "I have wrestled with God in prayer that He would deliver me out of this whirlpool, but deliverance has never come, and I am almost inclined to give the matter up. I thought He kept His promises, and would deliver those who called upon Him, but He has not delivered me now, and He never will." What! child of God, talk thus of thy Father! say He will never leave off smiting because He has smitten thee so long? Rather say, "He must have smitten me long enough now, and I shall soon have deliverance." Say not thou canst escape. The fetters on thy hands may not be broken by thy feeble fingers, but the hammer of the Almighty can break them in a moment. Let them be laid on the anvil of Providence and be smitten by the hand of Omnipotence, and then they shall be scattered to the winds. Up, man! up. Like Samson, grasp the pillars of thy troubles and pull down the house of thine affliction about the heads of thy sins, and thou thyself shalt come out more than conqueror. Let me ask those who are afflicted and have no religion, where they get their comfort from. The Christian derives it from the fact that he is a son of God, and he knows that the affliction is for his good. But what does the worldling do when he loses his wife, when his children are taken away, when his health departs and he himself is nigh unto death? I leave him to answer. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The aim of Divine chastisement:*—Whom He loves, He loves so much that He will not let them abide in the lower parts of their nature. He will rout them out; He will drive them up. Whom He loves He means to make more of. He means to ennoble them. A king ennobles a man by putting a crown on his head: but God ennobles men by putting dispositions in their hearts. Whom

He loves He chastens and scourges. That is very severe. A man may be chastised with small whips, but no man is scourged except with cord, laid on with soldiers' hands. It is a horrible operation. God both chastens and scourges men, and all because He loves them. Wonderful love that is! and yet it is just your love. You have not a child whose body is worth more to you than his mind. No child of yours ever told a lie under circumstances of great baseness, that you did not feel rising against him an utter indignation, not because you hated the child, but because you loved him. All your identification with the child pleads for punishment. You said, "It is my child, and he is not worthy of me; and he shall be worthy of me." As I was reading, "For they"—that is, our parents—"verily, for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure." Great pleasure they had in it, if they felt as I did! I would rather be whipped any time than whip my children. And when my father used to say, "Henry, I do not want to do it," I used to say to myself, "What under heaven do you do it for then?" I did not want to be whipped; and if he did not want to whip me, it seemed to me a very unnecessary ceremony! But when I became a father, I felt that nothing in the world was more true. When I had children to bring up, they so far inherited my nature that they deserved to be whipped often, and they got their deserts! It was true that I would rather have taken five blows than to have given one; and yet I put it on to them. And I remembered the precept, "What your hand finds to do, do it with all your might." Do not you know what that is? Are you not familiar with both sides of the experience? Paul says, "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He"—God—"for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness. Here is the end that God is driving at continually, by such a grand sympathy, by such a tender personal connection with us, by such a constant interference and meddling with all that belongs to us, that we shall not be thralled in lusts and the lower parts of our nature, and depart from His will, and inherit the final remuneration; but that we shall escape, and go up and be made partakers of the Divine nature. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Faint not when rebuked:*—1. To "faint" when we are "rebuked" is to lose self-possession, or to be so overwrought, or overwhelmed with the trial, that we grow insensible to its nature, its extent, its punishment. 2. To "faint" when we are "rebuked" is under the pressure of the sorrow, to relax any duty—for praise or love—and especially to let go our holy confidences, and to take the eye off Jesus. 3. To "faint" when we are "rebuked" is to grow weary on account of its length, and not to let "patience have her perfect work." (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Submission under loss:*—When John Flavel lost his wife and child in one day—root and branch cut off together—he acknowledged the bitterness of the cup, but said there was not a drop of injustice in it. Under the severest losses the Marquis de Renty was wont to go to his chamber, and drop on his knees to thank God that not his own but the Lord's will was done. *Submission:*—Stonewall Jackson was once asked, "Suppose that these unprofitable eyes of yours, that give you so much trouble, should become suddenly blind, do you believe your serenity would remain unclouded?" He paused a moment, as if to weigh fully the exact measure of every word he uttered, and then said: "I am sure of it; even such a misfortune could not make me doubt the love of God." Still further to test him it was urged: "Conceive, then, that besides your hopeless blindness, you were condemned to be bedridden, and racked with pain for life; you would hardly call yourself happy then?" There was again the same deliberateness before he replied: "Yes, I think I could; my faith in the Almighty wisdom is absolute: and why should this accident change it?" Touching him upon a tender point—his impatience of anything bordering on every species of dependence—the test was pushed further. "But if in addition to blindness and incurable infirmity and pain you had to receive grudging charity from those on whom you had no claim, what then?" There was a strange reverence in his lifted eye, and an exalted expression over his whole face, as he replied with slow deliberateness: "If it was God's will, I think I could lie there content a hundred years!" (*H. O. Mackey.*) **Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.**—*Suffering, the gift and presence of God:*—This, then, is the first, most comprehensive, yet most special way, in which God is the consolation of the afflicted, that He has revealed, that sorrow is a token of His love. We have often thought perhaps, "If God did but tell me that He loves me!" If He has sent you sorrow or pain, He has told you that He loves you. Suffering is in the order

of our salvation; it is in order to our salvation. In the mercy of our God, it arrests the sinner; it deepens the loving sorrow of the penitent; it proves and advances the all-but-perfected. It exhibits us to ourselves; it enhances the love of our Redeemer; it is God's instrument to make us of one mind with Himself. This, then, is the great comprehensive comfort in every ache of mind or body, that we know infallibly from God's infallible Word that it is a token of His love. Be it disease or loss of bodily health or strength, or of clearness of intellect, the consequence of sin; be it the shame with which God "filleth the face that they may seek Thy Face, O God"; be it the first terror of hell, which, by God's grace, scares the yet unconverted sinner towards the wide-open arms of Jesus on the Cross, or the last sharp pang of death, which lets the imprisoned soul go free, to meet its God for whom it yearned and fainted, we know, by God's own Word, it is His love. Yet it is not only love, working through some fixed or some general rule of His Providence. It is something far nearer, more tender, more blessed. It is God's own personal act. It is our Redeemer's own medicinal hand. "I have afflicted thee." "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." "Happy is the man whom God correcteth." "Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of Thy law." This is the deep reassuring truth, that it is not man's caprice, nor a fixed iron law, nor a combination of events, but our own God. This is the deep inward peace in every trial, that He orders each particular blow or weight of sorrow, or fretting care, or harassing discomfort or unrest, in His all-wise love, fitting each trial to our own particular temperament. He gives to each of us just our own trial, what, by His grace, will most amend us, what will bring us most to Himself, what will most draw out the good which He has implanted in us, or burn out the evil which would most estrange or ruin us. This too is not all. It is not an all-wise God, unseen, unfelt, at a distance, guiding all things in perfect wisdom for the good of each individual creature which He had made. Great were this, yea, in one sense, all; for it is His individual, infinite, personal love. He who loves us infinitely loves us individually. But this too not afar off, not only in the heaven of heavens (Psa. xci. 15). Trouble is the special presence of God to the soul (Isa. xliii. 2). He who, present with them, soothed to the three youths the flames of fire, so that they fanned softly around them, and were to them an unharming robe of glory; He who, ever-present with His disciples, then appeared to them, when the storm was at its highest, and its waves were boisterous; He, still present to the soul, now soothes to His own the fire of affliction, that, while it burns out the dross, it should not touch the soul, but should yield it pure, transfigured and translucent with the fire of love. He who baptizes with a baptism of blood, holds His own, that, although immersed and sunk deep down, the waters should not come in to the very soul itself, but should only wash away its stains through His most precious blood. Can there be more yet than the presence of God with the soul? Yes, the end of the presence is more to the soul itself than that presence itself. For it is the earnest of His abiding presence, yea, of union with God. Suffering, the due reward of our deeds, becomes, by His mercy, the means of conforming us to the Son of His love. While we suffer for our own sins, and bear about us less than their deserved chastisements, God gives us yet an outward likeness to His Cross, in that it is suffering. For "on Him were laid the iniquities of us all." But we still hang, as it were, by His side; His healing compassionate look falls upon us; from His all-holy sufferings there goeth forth virtue to sanctify ours. Hence is deserved suffering by God's mercy such a token of predestination, that it brings us near to, makes us partakers of, the sufferings of Christ. (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*) *The mystery of suffering*:—This, after its sort, is a kind of philosophy, a phenomenon of human experience. Everything in nature, according to the measure of its power, is happier than man. Men have been studying how to create happiness that should be unbroken in this world. They have invented a great many things, found out a great many medicines, but happiness has eluded their search. A steady flow of happiness, a soul that knows how to keep time as that watch knows how to keep time, has never been born, and does not live. We flit between light and dark. Now, happiness is certainly, we may believe, the final end of creation. Whatsoever maketh a lie or causeth offence in the grand land of consummation will have been purged out, and happiness without alloy will yet be the end of every true life that by sorrow and suffering has been wrought out into the full possession of its birthright. The process or education of man in this world proceeds on the law of suffering—happiness the graduating point; suffering the academy, the seminary; and the best teachers are the teachers that inflict suffering on man. Clear down to the last

vision they are highest that have been most suffering in the great school of this life. It is the law of education. Why it was made so, if you know, please instruct me. Why did God make things thus and so? Why did He make the law of suffering the law of education, rather than the law of happiness? This why pours into the gulf of ignorance. We don't know. We are ignorant in proportion as we go back to the beginnings of things. These are secrets that no science will penetrate; at any rate, not for ages yet; these lie hidden in the bosom of God. But Christ is the type of the moral kingdom of God. It was necessary to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering, because He was leading the multitude, the whole world's population, towards elevation through suffering, and He entered Himself under that august law of the universe, suffering. It is a badge of discipleship—suffering is. Men do not come to the fulness of their relation to God except through it. Now, look at the scale of suffering. The first is physical pain, which is the lowest; it is cautionary. The remembrance of it prevents a man violating some natural law; that is, some law that has its seat in the physical structure of the man's own body. It teaches men patience; it teaches men to bear valiantly. Cheerfulness under physical suffering is a wonderful victory, repining is a defeat. If a man shirks down, if he sneaks into complaints and all forms of bewilderment, and dissipated faith, he is wretched indeed, and there is no moral end gained under such circumstances. Then, aside from the suffering which comes to us through our bodily organs, there is that suffering which comes to us through the law of evolution in ourselves. The law of conflict between the lower man and the higher man, or, as St. Paul phrases it, "between the flesh man and the spirit man." If, in unfolding ourselves from childhood to manhood, the process goes on by which we subdue the animal that is in us, and the passions that belong to it, by the ascendency of higher social, moral and intellectual inspirations, then suffering is more immediately and perceptibly a schoolmaster. Men are driven up higher and higher towards the citadel of God, by the sufferings which take place in the conflict between the lower and the higher man. Living largely in the West in my early life, I had the opportunity of beholding phenomena that are good illustrations. When the great western rivers were suddenly swollen, and booming freshets came tearing down, flooding the country on either side, I have seen the river Ohio, that was not a quarter of a mile wide, ten miles wide in the flood. Nothing is more familiar to the settlers than the fact that the animals are all driven from the lower places, and frequently it is the case that they mount to some round hill and the water following surrounds it, and they are imprisoned on that hill. But they still go higher up, and higher up, and higher up, until they get a place that is a refuge. Suffering that teaches an animal to go up ought to teach a man to go up. Then suffering is still on another level, where we suffer by our social relations, where we suffer with and for each other, and here is the beginning of the grandeur of the kingdom of suffering. Vicarious suffering then, I may say at last, is the law of the universe. Christ entered into the world to partake of those very things that the race have passed through, "Tempted in all points like as we are," tried into all points as we are; and as it is the law of social connection that one shall suffer for another, Christ suffered for men under the same great grand law of vicarious suffering. That is a wretched child, that is a wretched man, who has no one to suffer for him. Then, higher than this, or rather more extended in its relation, is the suffering which men have in civic relations. Men are not individuals. Man is a collective animal; every man stands on his own stem, but he also stands on the trunk which holds up a million stems, and if anything afflicts the root it afflicts everything at the top. Although blossom is not identical with blossom, nor fruit with fruit, human life is made up of individualisms; but collected and made into one great organisation. And so men must suffer when society suffers. Then, next and yet higher, men suffer on account of their moral relations that unite them to man and to God and to the universe. The progress of knowledge is through suffering. One man suffers, and leaves a glow of new truth behind him, which irradiates the whole of a generation. Thus far we can see and understand. But the world is the workshop of heaven. There we shall see the consummation of that which we see but feebly and understand but partially. Many there are on earth who see no outcome; they are underfoot, they are out of place; suffering seems not only to bring to them no relief and no inspiration, but it seems never to have declared its real nature to their surroundings or to their generations. Oh! there will be a land where these things will be known; there will be an interpretation to every pang and to every tear, and to every crushing sorrow; and as for those who suffer for a

noble cause, who suffer for children, who suffer for those who have no parents, who suffer for the community, though they are accounted unworthy, and are cast out by the community, though they be crushed out of life and hope, and go mourning all the days of their lives, there is a reckoning—that is to say, there is to be an unfolding of the reasons of their suffering, and the results of it which do not by any means all appear upon this mortal sphere and in this limited life—it is to be made known. You do not know what is going on, you do not know all the meaning of your sorrow; God does. Do you suppose that the wool on the sheep's back knows what it is coming to when it is sheared? When it was scoured, and washed, and spun, and twisted of its life almost; when it went into the hateful bath of colour; when it was put into the shuttle, and was thrust back and forth, back and forth, in the darkness, and out came the royal robe, it did not know what it started for; yet that is what it comes to—kings wear it. The flax in the field sighs to be made into the garment of the saints. All right. Pluck it up; rot it, put it under the brick, thread it, weave it, bleach it, purify it; and the saints may wear it now. It came to honour and glory through much suffering. Suffering is God's guardian guiding angel to those that will; it takes them up through the gate of trouble and trial to that land of perfectness and of everlasting peace. And you do not know what your suffering means? Yet you may rejoice in the general fact that somehow or other it is going to make you glorious if you are only worthy of it. Allow me still one more figure; for some may take one figure easily and some another. When this organ was built the lead and the zinc did not know what the men were about when they were melting them, and making them into pipes, and when the work was distributed through the different shops among different hands. Here you have the *sesquialtera* and the mixture—hideous stops unless they are masked or hidden under a great weight of sound. If you tried them in the factory you would run out with your fingers in your ears, and cry, "Lord deliver me from that sort of music!" Then there are the flute stops, and the diapasons in their grand under tones. With all the different parts of the organ separately made, unconnected, nobody can tell what is coming except an experienced workman; but by-and-by, little by little, the frame is erected, the stops are all arranged and in connection with the wind-chest, and now that it is an organic whole every part plays into every other part. As a whole it is magnificent; but the separate stops were poor and weak and unsatisfactory. God makes stops on earth, but He builds the organ in heaven; and many a man will never know till he comes there what was the reason of that providence by which he was trained and fitted to be of that great band of music in the heavenly home. Thus far illustrated and explained the subject will give rise to some applications. And, first, no man should hunt after suffering any more than a man should hunt after sickness. Do not regard suffering as if it were in and of itself a means of grace. If it makes you better it will come of itself. Secondly, lower animal suffering is penalty for sin; but, going up the scale, it is not punishment, but the other way. Men suffer because they are so good; they are the vicarious sufferers for those who are not good, through sympathy, through pity, through endeavour to help them, through self-repression for the development of those that are round about. I have but one more thought, and that is final—not alone in this sermon, but final in creation. No imagination can conceive the wonder, the ecstasy, of the great hour of finding out. When we have borne our body, borne our allotted suffering and pain, borne our obscurity and our persecution, borne all the troubles that go to the making of manhood in this life, unrecognised, not rated according to our moral value, rated according to the law of selfishness in human society, when at last emancipated the pauper from the poorhouse, the debtor from the prison, the broken-down man in business, who has been living on the crusts of his former prosperity, mothers, nurses, servants, whose souls were greater than their places, when at last they shall come and stand in the light of the eternal heavens—oh, what a surprise, and oh, what a dismay, when the last tumble from their heights of imagined greatness, when the first shall be last, and the last first! But oh! when the suffering is all gone, and we come to find ourselves, and come to find that the work of life, racking, filing, sawing in various violent ways upon us, has made us perfect, and we stand in the light of the other life, to see the meaning of all that has taken place in our obscure life—oh, what an hour of joy and of consolation! (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The ministry of sorrow:*—There is no fact in human life more certain than universality of suffering, and there is, perhaps, nothing for which man finds a greater difficulty to discover an adequate or satisfactory reason. The Bible does not solve the difficulty. The Bible deals with the subject practically, and only

practically. The Bible never satisfies your speculative inquiry. No question is solved by the Book so as to answer everything that you can ask. It is only solved so that you can live as faithful servants of the Eternal One. And the Bible shows us the relation of suffering to sin. But, finally, it bids us fall back upon God. He will do right, He will make all well, He is the great consoler of man. These are the three facts that lie in this text of ours: sorrow, discipline, love. I. THE ACCEPTANCE OF GOD'S MERCY DOES NOT ASSURE THE BELIEVER FROM THE LOT OF THE SUFFERER. It is perfectly true we may promise to him who accepts the gospel much joy and much pleasure. For a man to place himself in harmony with the Divine law; for him to say, "No longer my will but Thine be done"; for him to seek no more his ends but the Divine ends; he will find therein the peace, the calm, the quiet restfulness, enter his spirit, and will give him infinite delight. Now, this is true; but at the same time the believer will not be exempt from the conditions of distress. They will come. Natural griefs will be yours. The imperfections of his own character will distress him; the ideal that we sometimes set before us, and then the real that is ours; the picture that we would paint, and the unhappy daub that is often the result of our best endeavour; the beautiful garments that we would set upon ourselves—the garments of righteousness and glory—richer and brighter than the garments that the angels wear—and then the poor tattered rags of the righteousness that we have lost, and the smear and smirch of the secular wrong or the sensual vice into which we have fallen. Oh the disappointment through which life seems to pass until it shall reach the blessed consummation which you hope for! I promise you blessedness, infinite blessedness; but the sorrows will come. II. THE SUFFERINGS OF THE BELIEVER ARE INTENDED TO BE DISCIPLINES OF LIFE AND MINISTRIES OF CHARACTER. They direct the soul to its true home and life. Life eternal, remember, is a quality; it is not merely a state; and you may enter into eternal life now. Your sorrows and your pains do not belong to the eternal life; and they are given to you that you may lift your spirit out of the surroundings of the present, and that you may clothe them with the glory and the blessedness that belongs to the life that lies beyond. Yes; and these sufferings limit and destroy the evil that remains. And think of the scope it gives for the practice and perfection of the Christian's virtues. III. THESE SUFFERINGS, BEING DISCIPLINARY, ARE THE PROOFS AND THE RESULTS OF THE DIVINE LOVE. They are signs that God has not forgotten us. One of the most famous men of this city one day said to me: "I know not how it is, I sometimes tremble at the success of my life. I have wealth beyond the dreams of avarice; I have success in business phenomenal even in these days of success; I have a satisfaction and joy in my family life and in all the relations of my public life that I cannot describe; I sometimes tremble with fear and apprehension." Within six months that man was smitten—smitten in what was the dearest part of his own self-consciousness; charged with an unworthy action, charged with base behaviour, and held up to obloquy because of things done in his name over which he had no control, and for which he was not responsible, but for which he suffered. Ah! God had not forgotten him. What is God's will concerning you? It is not merely your joy; it is the bettering of your moral nature; it is the perfecting of all those virtuous characteristics that come out even in the midst of your sorrow. And it is always accompanied by some proof of peculiar favour. When sometimes your loved ones have entered into the place of sorrow, be silent; God is with them. "Far off, far off, ye profane ones!" was the cry of the ancient priestess. So, sometimes, should be the cry to your own souls when the presence of God is manifested in the sorrows of those you love. This is the spirit in which we should receive it, and this is the forecast of its complete removal. For the work of chastisement shall be perfected. All the dealings of God with us shall issue in the attainment of the highest conceptions of the Christian life. And when sorrow shall have done its work, we shall have entered into that infinite life where death itself shall die, and sin itself shall be forgotten, the life that issued even out of the sins and the sorrows and the death of this. (*L. D. Bevan, D.D.*) *Trouble for our good*:—The dealings of the Lord, which seem so mysterious to us, may be and often are, the answer to some forgotten petition for spiritual gifts or grace which we have desired. (*Anna Shipton.*) *Adversity the blessing of the New Testament*:—Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament; adversity is the blessing of the New, which carried the greater benediction and the clearer revelation of God's favour. (*Lord Bacon.*) *Love in pain*:—Years ago I went into the operating room of University College Hospital, and once saw one of the most skilled of our surgeons removing a limb. It was my first sight

of the movement of the surgeon's knife. I could not keep back a shudder. It made me ill to note the writhing of the sufferer as the cruel instrument penetrated the quivering flesh. I looked at the surgeon's face. Not a muscle betokened anxiety. His gaze was steady, his spirit calm. His larger vision of the issues, the beneficent issues of his work, filled him with strength, steadied his nerve, and delivered him from weakening fear. The sight of his countenance made me strong. I could look to the end in calm self-control. So have I often found an unspeakable consolation in the joy of God. If He, the Lord of this pain-filled, care-laden, sin-fettered life, where misery and sin and shame abound, and the struggle is so keen, and the strife so dinning; if He is glad and blessed amid all this, it is because He sees all and knows all. (*J. Clifford, D.D.*) *Afflictions precious:*—When Munster lay sick, and his friends asked him how he did, and how he felt himself, he pointed to his sores and ulcers (whereof he was full) and said, "These are God's gems and jewels wherewith He decketh His best friends, and to me they are more precious than all the gold and silver in the world." (*J. Trapp.*) *Afflictions—tokens of Divine regard:*—Lawns which we would keep in the best condition are very frequently mown; the grass has scarcely any respite from the scythe. Out in the meadows there is no such repeated cutting, they are mown but once or twice in the year. Even thus the nearer we are to God, and the more regard He has for us, the more frequent will be our adversities. To be very dear to God, involves no small degree of chastisement. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Divine discipline:*—In Southern Europe grow the larches. When they were first introduced into England, the gardeners took it for granted that they needed warmth to cause them to grow; so they were placed in the hothouses, and at once began to wither and droop. The gardeners became disgusted, and threw them out of doors. They at once began to grow, and became trees of great beauty. So it ofttimes becomes necessary for Christ to throw us out of doors into the cold of reverses, disappointments, sorrow, and pain, that our Christian characters may be developed. It becomes at times necessary that God bring upon us sore trials and bereavements that we may be brought back to Him and His service. God does not willingly afflict His people; but in order to bless us it is often necessary to put us in a position to receive and to appreciate His blessings, though it may be through severe trials and galling crosses. (*C. W. Bibb.*) *Divine discipline:*—Troubles are often the tools by which God fashions us for better things. Far up the mountain side lies a block of granite, and says to itself, "How happy am I in my serenity—above the winds, above the trees, almost above the flight of the birds! Here I rest, age after age, and nothing disturbs me." Yet what is it? It is only a bare block of granite, jutting out of the cliff, and its happiness is the happiness of death. By and by comes the miner, and with strong and repeated strokes he drills a hole in its top, and the rock says, "What does this mean?" Then the black powder is poured in, and with a blast that makes the mountain echo, the block is blown asunder, and goes crashing down into the valley. "Ah!" it exclaims as it falls, "why this rending?" Then come saws to cut and fashion it; and humbled now, and willing to be nothing, it is borne away from the mountain and conveyed to the city. Now it is chiselled and polished, till, at length, finished in beauty, by block and tackle it is raised, with mighty hoistings, high in air, to be the top-stone on some monument of the country's glory. So God Almighty casts a man down when He wants to chisel him, and the chiselling is always to make him something finer and better than he was before. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Vers. 7, 8. **If ye endure chastening.**—*Chastening: what is it?*—"It is for chastening that ye endure"—such is the reading and translation in the R.V. That is the purpose sought and prized; an end that sufficiently justifies God in such dealing with His sons, and that sustains His sons in experience of His dealing. 1. But what is "chastening"? Supposing we had a word that meant child-training, son-training, and this under the direction of a father who would spare no pains necessary for its perfect realisation, we should have exactly the corresponding term. But unfortunately we have not, and so we are driven to put up with the poor substitute "chastening." The father knows his child, his capacities, and, therefore, all the possibilities that are locked up in his being; his opportunities as they lie in the pathway of life, and therefore his obligations; his propensities and habits, and therefore his perils; his hindrances and helps, and therefore his chances. The father yearns over his boy; labours to secure the highest outcome of his life; guards and directs him; will do anything and bear anything for his advancement.

He wants him to be an ideal son; his pride and joy in every faculty and feature of excellence. He wants to "make a man" of him; so that the terms "father" and "son," "son" and "father," may never jar, as they dwell on each other's lips, but may be as choice music to the ear, as beauty to the eye. For that end, with that hope, all is planned, all is done. It is at once the father's care, he "trains"; and the son's ambition, he "endures for the training." The application is obvious. "It is for chastening that ye endure"; to be sons, not in name only, but in deed and in truth; to come up, to be urged up to the standard. Such an issue may well reconcile us to all the pains and humiliations of the "chastening." To have the mind enlarged, the heart purified, the life exalted, refined, transfigured! To lose all that is dross; to cast out all that is low and selfish! 2. Now for the word "endure." This is no tame word. It means something widely different from insensibility, or proud defiance. These Hebrews had joyfully taken the spoiling of their goods, not that they did not value them, not that their loss was no privation, but that they knew in themselves they had a better and an enduring substance in heaven. They had a boldness, a confidence, an exultation even. "Endurance" in them was the triumph of active faith in the recompense of reward. They were "exercised," much "exercised" in their afflictions, and the "exercise," like a Divine alchemy, was turning every constituent of distress into gold. I. WHO DOUBTS THE NEED OF CHASTENING? Sin in one or other of its myriad forms has aggravated all the imperfections of inexperience, so that we require far surer correction and direction than a childhood and youth of innocence had ever called for. II. WHO DOUBTS THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THIS CHASTENING IS INFLICTED? Dictated by love, directed by wisdom, aimed at the highest ends, it has every quality to keep us alike from despising it or fainting under it. III. WHO IS NOT DRIVEN TO RIGOROUS SELF-EXAMINATION? There is no talismanic power in afflictions, in pains and penalties, that of itself can correct and transform. Would we realise the "profit" our Father seeks, we must be "exercised" by our chastening. It calls for thought, for reflection, for faithful survey of our life, with its temper, aims, and spirit. IV. WHO DOES NOT REJOICE IN THE ADVANCE OF CORRECTION AND GROWTH? The mastery of our evil tendencies, the due regulation of our desires, the elevation of our motives and aims, the higher and completer discharge of the claims of life, the stricter integrity, purity, and spirituality of our characters, the closer our likeness to Christ and our fellowship with God, these and kindred issues may well reconcile us to the pain, and sacrifice, and cost of the chastening, and make us "kiss the rod" with all praise. (*G. B. Johnson.*) *God's medicine*:—If a man be visited with a providential reverse of circumstances, if he be under oppression, if he be attacked by disease, if the delight of his eyes be taken away, methinks I hear God saying, "Take this medicine; it is exactly suited to your case; weighed out by My own hand; take this medicine from Me." (*R. Cecil.*) **God dealeth with you as with sons.**—*Life an education*:—I. GOD EDUCATES US BY MEANS OF OUR PHYSICAL NEEDS. Man is born naked and defenceless; if he would live he must obtain shelter from torrid suns and piercing cold; he must provide himself with food and raiment; he must, by means of his wits, be able to defend himself against enemies infinitely more powerful than himself. How is it that man alone, of all God's creatures, is sent into the world unprovided with any of those things which are necessary to the support of physical life? It is because God dealeth with us as with sons. It is because life is meant to be to us, and to us alone, an education; and from the first we are pricked on by these goads of necessity. God has taken security that our work shall not be easy, that it shall not be mechanical; but that it shall tax our ingenuity and educe our mental powers to the uttermost. For man is born not only without instinct and without clothing, but without tools. Nature provides the lion with the claws and fangs which make it easy to seize its prey; the bee has in itself all the apparatus necessary for extracting honey, and carrying it, and building its cells, and acting out all its life-history; the spider has its wonderful film ready wound about its body, and the machinery for spinning many threads into one, and affixing it, and weaving its web; but man must first provide himself with external aid if he would hold his own, be it but a sharpened flint or a fishbone! Moreover, God has made man relatively one of the weakest of living things. His bodily powers are poor indeed compared with those of other creatures. What does it all mean? It means this, that God would educate us not chiefly in body, but in mind; it is by the brain that man has subdued the earth and become lord over all creation; it is the necessity of surmounting difficulties and guarding against dangers that has called forth all his resources and educated his faculties and perfected his powers. See, then,

how large a part of man's education is due to his bare bodily necessities! In the endeavour to meet these he has invented all the industrial arts and sciences. And it is not only mental gifts which labour educes. Patience, endurance, forethought, courage—these and many other moral qualities are the outcome of that necessity for work which God lays upon us all. II. GOD EDUCATES MEN BY MEANS OF THEIR MENTAL NEEDS. He has implanted in nature that which awakens curiosity in man, and He has implanted in man a hunger and thirst after knowledge and truth, and the result is education. Man's intellectual needs are not less imperative than his physical requirements; they must be satisfied at any cost. He must know all about the flowers at his feet; the science of botany is the result. He raises his eyes to the stars above; their mystery perplexes him; generation after generation he struggles with this mystery till little by little the secrets of the sky are discovered, and the great science of astronomy is pieced together. Curiosity awakened by shells and fossils has led to geology; curiosity about the antecedents of our race has led to history, and so forth. It is thus with all those departments of knowledge which are not purely utilitarian; they are all the result of the desire for knowledge implanted in us by God, acted upon by external nature. And there is in man another intellectual appetite nobler than any of these, which is most powerful in evolving his higher nature—I mean the love of the beautiful. God has clothed hill and vale, mountain and lake, sea and sky, with splendour of colour and form of which the eye never wearies. And further He has put something in the human heart to which these things appeal; there is a strange correspondence between the human soul and the beauties of nature; they were made for one another; there was meant to be action and re-action between them. When gazing on a sunset sky or a lovely scene we realise our immortality as at no other time; we feel that they have a message from God for us. III. GOD EDUCATES US BY THE SORROWS AND TRIALS OF LIFE. In this matter also man's position is unique. The lower animals are almost exempt from suffering. It is true that they are liable to physical pain, but there is abundant evidence to prove that this pain is much less acute than in human beings, and in their case there is neither anticipation nor retrospection. But man, to whom was given the dominion over the brutes, man, who was made but a little lower than the angels, how different is his lot! He is "born to sorrow as the sparks fly upward." He alone has to endure those mental and spiritual griefs compared with which bodily sufferings are as nothing. All his life is leavened with pain, with forebodings, with vain regrets, with unsatisfied longings. Why is this? Because life is an education; because God dealeth with us as with sons. Men ask why sorrows are permitted. As well might the flower ask why clouds and stormy days are permitted. As well might one expect blossoms and fruit without rain as expect that men can bring forth the fruits of righteousness without the discipline of sorrow. The saintliest of men have been always those who have suffered most; and it behoved even the great Captain of our salvation to be made perfect through suffering in order to teach us that only he who drinks the bitter cup and bears the cross of shame can hope to wear the crown of glory. IV. GOD EDUCATES US BY OUR SPIRITUAL NEEDS. The most imperative want of our nature is to know God. Everywhere there is a belief in a God or gods, the instinct of worship, conscience more or less developed. Everywhere is felt the necessity of propitiating and being reconciled to the Invisible Power whom transgression has offended. And the more a man advances in holiness and moral greatness, the more is he impelled to make the thought of the Psalmist his own: "Like as the hart desireth the water brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God"; "My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God." And while he is ever hungering after God with a hunger which nothing on earth can appease, conscience is ever urging him to a closer and closer walk with God, and yet he never feels that he has fully attained or is already perfect. What is the reason why these strange desires and instincts have been implanted in man? What but the truth our text teaches that God dealeth with us as with sons? Just as God has given in the book of Nature that which educes and partly satisfies man's intellectual needs, so He has given us in Holy Scripture that which educes and ministers to our spiritual needs. The correspondence between our craving for knowledge, and the revelation by which that craving is met, affords the clearest proof that both are from God, and that in sacred things as in secular the main purpose of our life is education. 1. It throws light upon the mystery of the present. This earth is but the lowest room in God's school; in other spheres and at other times the education which circumstances thwarted and hindered here will be carried on under happier circumstances. 2. And it throws light upon the mys-

tery of the future. It affords one of the strongest arguments for a future life. For, of course, the education which is commenced here can be at best but in its initial stage when death removes us. (*A. M. Mackay, B.A.*) *Correcting a son*:—Like as if two children should fight, and a man passing by should part them, and afterwards beat the one and let the other go free, every one that seeth this will say that the child which he beat is his own son: even so when God chastiseth us, if we submit. (*Cawdray.*) *Adversity a purifier*:—God often uses adversity as a purifier. The wintry snows that lie before my window here (at Saratoga) this morning will kill the vermin; so God sends wintry seasons upon His children to kill certain species of besetting sins. (*T. L. Cuyler.*) *Severe discipline*:—A child was taken ill with that dangerous disorder the croup. It was a child most ardently beloved, and, ordinarily, very obedient; but, in this state of uneasiness and pain, he refused to take the medicine which it was needful, without delay, to administer. The father, finding him resolute, immediately punished his sick and suffering son. Under these circumstances, and fearing that his son might soon die, it must have been a most severe trial to the father: but the consequence was, that the child was taught that sickness was no excuse for disobedience; and, while his sickness continued, he promptly took whatever medicine was prescribed, and was patient and submissive. Soon the child was well. Does any one say that this was cruel? It was one of the noblest acts of kindness which could have been performed. If the father had shrunk from duty here, it is by no means improbable that the life of the child would have been the forfeit. (*W. Abbott.*) *The stripes of love*:—Fear not: these stripes are the tokens of His love. He is no son that is not beaten; yea, till he smart, and cry; if not, till he bleed. No parent corrects another's child; and he is no good parent that corrects not his own. O rod, worthy to be kissed, that assures us of His love, of our adoption. (*Bp. Hall.*)

Vers. 9, 10. **Subjection unto the Father of spirits.**—*Divine correction*:—I. THE DUTY IS SUBJECTION. "Shall we not be in subjection?" This is not opposed to insensibility. There is no patience, no resignation, in bearing what we do not feel. If you do not prize what you give up at the call of God, there can be no value in your obedience. But it is the repression of everything rebellious—in our carriage—in our speech—and in the temper of our minds. II. Let us consider THE REASONS BY WHICH THIS DUTY IS ENFORCED. Here are four motives. 1. The first is derived from the relation in which God stands to us. He is our Father. But to what does this lead? The conclusion, says the apostle, is obvious. If He pre-eminently fills this relation, His claims to duty are proportionally great. You gave the fathers of your flesh reverence. And shall a man obtain more obedience than God? 2. This brings us to the second reason of submission. It is taken from the danger of resistance. "Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?" Clearly intimating that disobedience will end in death. There cannot be a more awful presage of future misery than to counteract the afflictive dispensations of Divine Providence, and "despise the chastening of the Almighty." It provokes the anger of God, and operates penally in one of these two ways. Either, first, it induces God to recall the rod, and give a man up to the way of his own heart, or, secondly, He turns the rod into a scorpion, and fulfils the threatening: "If ye will not be reformed by Me by these things, but will walk contrary unto Me, then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins." 3. The third motive is taken from the brevity of the discipline. They verily chastened us; but it was only "a few days." The child soon became a man, and the course of restriction and preparation resulted in a state of maturity. This is to be applied to our heavenly Father, and contains an encouraging intimation, that the whole season of trial, when opposed to our future being and blessedness, is but a short period. 4. The last motive is derived from the principle and design of affliction. Men are imperfect, and their actions are like themselves. Hence, when as their children they chastened us, it was frequently "for their pleasure." They would do it. It was to give ease to their passions; to vent their feelings. It was to show their authority, or maintain their consequence, regardless of our welfare. But this is not the case with God. "He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." He does it only "if needs be"—He does it "for our profit." What profit? A profit that infinitely weighs down every other advantage, and which, above all things, yea, and by "any means," you should be anxious to secure: spiritual profit; Divine profit—"that you might be partakers of His holiness." If God chastens us to make us holy, we learn—(1) The importance of

holiness, and the value of it in the eye of a Being who cannot be mistaken. (2) We learn how defective we all are in this attainment; seeing God deems such trying means necessary, in order to promote it. (3) We learn that if anything can promise a happy deliverance from trouble, it is the sanctification of it: when the end is answered, the rod is laid by. (4) We learn that whatever our afflictions may do for us, they have not fulfilled the Divine purpose unless they have made us more holy. (*W. Jay.*)

The purpose of Divine chastisements:—In nothing, perhaps, is it so hard to feel for ourselves and to help others to feel that God is good, as in life's great afflictions. We are so prone to look only at the present sorrow and forget the future joy. "Why is this so? Can it be that there is mercy in such seeming wrath?" God condescends to reason with us, from the analogy of parental affection, drawing both argument and illustration. We have often felt the beauty of the methods elsewhere used for presenting the same essential truth, as, for example, where God compares Himself to the refiner of silver, melting His people down in the crucible of affliction to "purge away their dross"; but in this comparison is couched the beauty of an unutterable tenderness. He addresses our parental instincts, and asks us whether we do not ourselves know that love and chastening are not contradictory or inconsistent. I need not say that this doctrine of love as the impulse and interpreter of affliction is peculiarly Biblical. When calamity befell a pagan he beheld in it a mark of Divine displeasure, and at once set himself at work to appease the wrath of Deity. Even the ancient people of God were very slow to accept the right view of God's chastisements. I. The first element of contrast suggested by the text is this. OUR HUMAN PARENTS PUNISH PASSIONATELY, AND NOT ALWAYS DELIBERATELY. Without meaning to, without, perhaps, being conscious of it, they are sometimes simply giving vent to impatient, excited, or even angry feeling, in chastising their offspring. The impatient impulse, the caprice of the moment, rules us and puts into the correction the severity, it may be violence, of an indignation by no means wholly righteous. God is not susceptible of anything like passion as we understand it—either in its impulsiveness, impetuosity, malice, or malignity. Even God's anger is the unchanging hatred of evil—the anger of principle, not of passion—calm even in its fury, slow even in its haste, cool even in its heat. Our anger is like the agitation of a shallow lake, rippled with every breeze. All this is our assurance in affliction that God cannot deal harshly, severely, or unjustly with us. With the calmness of eternal patience, the steadfastness of eternal love, He afflicts us solely for our good. II. Again, our earthly parents chastise us PUNITIVELY AND NOT CORRECTIVELY. They aim more to punish the offence than to correct the evil and reform the evildoer. Here is another way in which passion often inflicts chastisement. An earthly father is grieved and rightly angry because the son has offended against truth, virtue, honesty, integrity. This is a far nobler passion than the caprices of ill-temper, yet it is doubtful whether a parent can be sure of inflicting profitable correction under its influence. It hurries one into a method of punishment which hardens rather than softens—which is ill-adapted to the peculiar temperament of the child, which may restrain from similar offences, if at all, only from fear of the rod, and not at all from love of the right. It should ever be borne in mind that the highest purpose of all punishment is not the vindication of a principle, but the reformation of an offender, or at least the salvation of others from similar sins. To contend for a principle is noble, but oh, how insignificant all else in comparison with the welfare of a soul! Oh, let us not forget that true love of the parent may help to kindle that true love of the right which is stronger than any fear of correction. The word here rendered "chasten," means educate. All God's chastening is meant to educate His children; His dealings are designed as a discipline. He must punish our offences; but the grand end He proposes to Himself is to secure our sanctification and salvation. God teaches us that with Him fatherly pity prompts His chastisements. In all God's afflictions He consults the exact temperament of His children. He knoweth our frame. It is one of the most palpable facts of history that the men who have wielded the mightiest moral influence have been prepared for it by the severest Divine discipline. No less means would have subdued that great will and made its stubbornness an element of steadfastness and stability. A degree of heat that must melt down the harder metals is far more intense than that which melts the softest; yet when made into vessels, that which it took the hotter fire to fuse is far the stronger and more serviceable; while you can bend and twist the other, this is unaffected by hard usage. So does God use the chastening rod with tender consideration for our temperament and constitution, adapting His discipline to our need. If we desire the largest fitness for service, we must submit to His wise chastening.

III. Again, our earthly parents chastens us IMPERFECTLY, NOT INFALLIBLY; according to their own fallible judgment of right and wrong. This thought is suggested in the text by the phrase, "according to their own pleasure," literally according to what seemed good or right to them. Parental love is imperfect, and so is parental wisdom, so that with the best possible intentions grave mistakes may be committed in a child's discipline. Here appears perhaps the principal emphasis of the text: They, according to what seemed good: He, according to what is good for us. God reminds us that He cannot err. The chastening He inflicts is for our profit—and let us grasp the full meaning—not only for our profit is it designed, but adapted. Not what seems best, but what is best. Oh, let us remember the perfect fatherhood and fatherliness of God! This is the profit for which He chastens us, as He Himself defines it, "that we might be partakers of the Divine holiness." IV. Once more, our earthly parents chasten us TEMPORARILY, NOT PERMANENTLY, as the text says, "for a few days." This phrase means more than it seems to imply. It probably refers to the fact that much of our parental training looks to immediate results, not remote ones—it is with reference to a few days, or at most to our short earthly life. The effect is transient, not permanent. Now, God's chastening always looks to eternal results. That which is near at hand impresses us most vividly; we are therefore always emphasising present good and undervaluing the more precious things of the hereafter. How different must all this appear to God, whose omniscient eye sees the end from the beginning, and to whom the remotest future is as vivid as the present, the remotest result as real as the present process! (*A. T. Pierson, D.D.*) *Our virtues witnesses against us:*—There is a very interesting argument involved in this saying of the apostle—the argument from what we are as men to what we ought to be as Christians. A dutiful child submits meekly to a father's correction; why, then, do we not submit meekly to the correction of God? The mere fact of submission to the human goes far towards showing that it is not through any actual inability that we refuse submission to the Divine Parent. The reasoning, in short, is a reasoning from what men are as members of society to what they ought to be as creatures of God; and they may be brought under condemnation if they fail to act towards God, displaying Himself under certain characters, as they act towards their fellow-men, who bear those same characters, though only subordinately. And this reasoning is of very wide application—so that what we may term our social conduct will furnish overwhelming evidence against us at the last, if we are not found among those who have loved and served God. If God demand faith in His Word, are we not capable of believing? Are we not accustomed to believe, yea, and to allow our belief to influence our practice, whenever there is a sufficiency of testimony? And will not this, our capacity of believing, demonstrated as it is by facts of daily occurrence, justify our condemnation, if we fail to put faith in the declarations of Scripture? In like manner, if God demand from us gratitude and love, does He demand what we are unable to give? On the contrary, we are so constituted that we naturally feel thankful to a benefactor; and any one of us who could receive kindness, and yet show himself void of all affection towards the giver, would make himself an object of scorn and abhorrence, as wanting the common sensibilities which characterise our nature. If, then, God manifestly bring Himself into the position of a benefactor, it is very evident that He has right to ask from us in return gratitude and love; that in asking them He only asks what we continually prove ourselves able to give, and that, consequently, if we refuse what is asked of us, there will be needed nothing beyond our conduct in the several intercourses of life to prove us without excuse, if finally condemned for not giving God our hearts. And once more—if God asks obedience to His laws and submission to His authority, He asks only what we are in the daily habit of rendering to earthly superiors. He may surely appeal to our conduct in reference to earthly magistrates, as proving us without excuse if we wilfully violate His laws. Thus our text involves a principle of very general application; and we perhaps little think what material of condemnation we heap up against ourselves by the conscientious discharge of every relative duty, whilst we remain virtually strangers to the power of religion. Now, I have thus engaged you with the general argument, rather than with the particular case presented by the text. Now, however, we will confine ourselves to that case, the case being that of parents and children, and the implied argument, that the reverence which we show to our earthly father will be a swift witness against us, if we fail in the reverence which is due to our heavenly Father. There is no more beautiful and graceful affection of our nature than that which subsists between parents and children. We must admire this affection, even as exhibited amongst

inferior animals. There is no page in natural history more attractive than that which tells how tenderly the wild beasts of the forest will watch their young, or with what assiduousness the fowls of the air will tend their helpless brood. And in the human race the affection goes far beyond this; for if not more intense at the first, it is abiding and reciprocal. And this affection of a parent for a child is not merely a graceful and beautiful sentiment, shedding a charm over the privacies of domestic life; it is one of the chief mainsprings of human activity, and contributes perhaps more than anything else to the keeping together the elements ofsociety. It is quite extraordinary, if you come to think, how this single affection or instinct will tie down a man to unwearied occupation, so that he will toil night and day to gain subsistence for his family. He might betake himself to another scene, where, having only himself to provide for, he might live in comparative ease; but his young ones have nestled round his heart; he cannot be tempted by any prospect of relief to desert those who lean on him as a father, and therefore, with a heroism which would draw on itself intense admiration if it were not so common, will he employ all his energies, and wear down all his strength, in obtaining a sufficiency for those beneath his roof. Thus is society virtually knit together by and through the parental affection; and you have only to suppose this affection extinguished, so that fathers and mothers cared nothing, or only for a short time, for those to whom they gave life, and you destroy the fine play of a healthful activity, and slacken the bonds which make fast communities. And whilst parents are thus abidingly and profitably actuated by affection for their children, children maintain an affection towards their parents scarcely less graceful and scarcely less advantageous. This is not so much an instinct as a principle; and, accordingly, while the Bible contains no precept as to loving children, it contains a most express precept as to honouring parents, so that there is given to the latter the character of a high duty, to whose performance we are urged by a distinct and full promise. And the point to which I have to bring you is, that this duty is very generally and very faithfully performed. It is comparatively but seldom that children show want of affection towards a father and a mother, when that father and that mother have done their part as parents; whether it be in the highest or the lowest families of the land, there is generally a frank yielding to its heads of that respect and that gratitude which they have a right to look for from their offspring. There is no disputing the first statement of the text; for it is the general rule—"We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence." But how now as to the inference which St. Paul draws from this statement? How as to our subjection to another and a higher Father, "the Father of spirits"? If it be the common rule, the exceptions not being such as to bring the rule into question, that children give reverence to their fathers, surely, if God be a Father, He too will be reverenced. Once establish the relationship, and the reverence and submission will follow almost of course. Children! listen ye to this; parents! listen ye to this—children, who are never wanting in dutiful affection towards your parents; parents, who are never unmindful of what you have a right to look for from your children—children, who will do all in your power to soothe the declining years of a father or a mother, who feel it a privilege to pay back by labours of love the tenderness lavished on you from infancy upwards, who attach a sacredness to the every word and the every wish of persons so beloved and revered; parents, who feel cut to the heart by the ingratitude of a child, who are conscious of being robbed of your incontrovertible rights, whenever a son or a daughter is deficient in attachment and respect—yes, children and parents, listen ye alike to this; ye are self-condemned, ye are swift witnesses against yourselves, if as members of the universal family ye fail to be what ye are as members of particular households; and oh! ye must be speechless at the judgment, if the simple argument of our text should be worked out against you—if the Judge should say to you, "Ye had fathers of your flesh, and ye gave them reverence," and should follow this up by the thrilling and unanswerable question, "Why, then, were ye not in subjection to the Father of spirits, that ye might live?" I do not know whether you have been accustomed to follow for yourselves such trains of thought as the words of our text have thus led us to open; but we own that we regard the subject which has been under discussion as one of no common importance and interest, presenting, as it does, all that is amiable and admirable in domestic life as fraught with testimony to be delivered at the great day of assize. Is there the merchant amongst you of unimpeachable rectitude, who would sooner die than be guilty of a fraud? Why, that man's ledger is one of the books that shall be opened at the judgment; the hatred

of everything base which it displays will be a witness against him if he have robbed God of His due. Is there the tradesman who would abhor the overreaching a customer, whom nothing could persuade to use the false weight and balance? Why, that man's shop will be referred to hereafter; it will prove him rigidly conscientious towards his fellow-men, and therefore self-condemned if he have defrauded his God. Or is there a patriot, who, with a fine love of liberty, would do and dare nobly to uphold the free institutions of his country? That man's generous ardour will be quoted hereafter; could he be indignant against all lesser tyranny, and yet be excusable in making no struggle against the tyranny of sin? Is there the son or the daughter amongst you who has shown reverence to parents? That man or that woman will have nothing to plead when God shall affirm Himself to be a Father, but a Father neglected by His children. Or are there servants amongst you who answer the apostle's description—"Obedient to their own masters, not answering again, not purloining, but showing all good fidelity"? Their unblemished characters will rise against them at the judgment; so true to their employers, what shall be said for them if false to their Maker? Ah, it may sound strangely, but, nevertheless, we may confidently assert that virtues, the want of which must exclude us from heaven, may themselves doom us to a lower place in hell. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The Fatherhood of God in the sufferings of life*:—This chapter contains one of the clearest expositions in the Bible of the Divine philosophy of suffering. In this chapter we trace two great convictions which, when combined, form the apostle's explanation of suffering—the belief in a Father, and the belief in His purpose to make man divinely glad. He does not attempt to explain this by any assertion of laws and penalties; he says nothing about inherited sin or transmitted judgment; his one solution is this—the Father is educating His child. I. THE PURPOSE OF LIFE'S SUFFERINGS. II. GOD'S PURPOSE IN SUFFERING IS TO EDUCATE MAN THROUGH HOLINESS INTO JOY. For the attainment of this end two things are requisite—1. The vision of a higher world. It is manifest that unless we are delivered from the thraldom of the present world, we cannot resist its temptations or escape its snares. Until we realise the world of God and the angels, we can reach no true holiness. And for this the discipline of sorrow fits us. It isolates us from the turmoil of the present, and opens the spirit's eye. 2. Divine power is the second requisite for the full attainment of this joy. Until we are strong, we cannot be "partakers of His holiness." We become strong by self-surrender, for self-surrender is self-control. We must glance at the practical lesson which is here suggested, "Shall we not be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?" The question arises, How can this be realised? In three ways—(1) By accepting the fact—by believing that all life is a discipline, that its sorrows and its joys are intended to train you into holiness, and therefore into blessedness. (2) By endorsing it with your choice. Choose what God has chosen for you. Heartily accept His will as your will. Ask neither for joy or sorrow, success or failure, life or death. (3) And then, lastly, by acting under that choice. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *The proper view and improvement of affliction*:—I. THE LIGHT IN WHICH AFFLICTION OUGHT TO BE VIEWED BY CHRISTIANS. 1. As coming from God. 2. As merited by our sins. 3. As the effect of fatherly wisdom and love. 4. With a desire that His gracious design may be fulfilled in us. II. THE TENDENCY WHICH AFFLICTION HAS TO BENEFIT US. "That we may be partakers of His holiness." Now the way in which affliction tends to produce this great end is—1. By giving us a just idea, giving us a practical impression, of the evil of sin. 2. Affliction tends to convince us of the insufficiency of the present world. 3. Submission to the will of God. 4. Sympathy. 5. Affliction weans us from the world, and fixes our thoughts on another state. Lessons: 1. Let the afflicted derive comfort. 2. Let those who have been afflicted seriously consider what has been the effect of their trials upon themselves. If no effect has been produced, what can they expect but "sorrow upon sorrow"? (*R. Hall, M.A.*) *Afflictions salutary*:—I have read of a mariner who got tossed by the storm, lost his reckoning, and was driven he knew not whither by the raging winds and darkness and danger. But when all was calm and clear he found he was actually nearer home than he could possibly have been under ordinary circumstances. Shall not I be glad, when my night of storm and trial is past, to find (which I think I shall) that I am nearer God and heaven than I should otherwise have been? (*Geo. Brazier.*) *The profitableness of chastisements*:—Absalom sends once or twice to Joab to come and speak with him; but when he saw that he could not come, he commands his corn-field to be set on fire, and so he fetched him with a witness; so children of God, when they stand off

upon terms, and will not see His face, the fire of affliction will make them seek Him early and diligently. It is the custom of our gallants, when their horses be slow and dull, to spur them up. If iron grows rusty, we put it into the fire to purify it, and so doth God; in our backwardness to duties, He pricks us on, or, being in our filthiness, casts us into the hot embers of tribulation to purify us. (*John Barlow.*) *Suffering advantageous*:—There is a great want in those Christians that have not suffered. (*R. M. McCheyne.*) *Afflictions salutary*:—Bitter pills bring sweet health, and sharp winter kills worms and weeds, and mellows the earth for better bearing of fruits and flowers. The lily is sowed in its own tears, and God's vines bear the better for bleeding. The walnut-tree is most fruitful when most beaten; and camomile, the more you tread it the more you spread it. Aloes kill worms, and stained clothes are whitened by frosting. (*J. Trapp.*) *The Father of spirits*:—Men are not animals plus a soul, but spirits with an animal nature. (*F. D. Maurice, M.A.*) *Submission*:—John Newton said he would rather be able to pronounce these three sentences in his mother tongue from his heart than be master of all the languages of Europe: "What Thou wilt; when Thou wilt; how Thou wilt." *Gratitude for affliction*:—A lady, from injuries received in a railway accident, had to keep her bed in much pain and suffering for long weary months. Upon the anniversary of the accident she gathered some of her most intimate friends into her room, and there, still a prisoner to her bed, she held a meeting of praise, counting up all the mercies of her year of sickness. (*Mrs. Reaney.*) *Subjection to God*:—A lady one day, in her husband's absence from home, lost two children by cholera; but she laid them out with a mother's tenderness, and spread a sheet over them, and waited at the door for her husband's return. "A person lent me some jewels," she said, when she met him, "and he now wishes to receive them again; what shall I do?" "Return them, by all means," said her husband. Then she led the way, and silently uncovered to him the forms of his dear children. (*C. Leach.*) *The accepted will of God*:—When Dr. Bushnell was dying, his wife repeated to him, slightly transposing the words of the text, "The good and perfect and accepted will of God." He replied, "Yes, and accepted." (*Bushnell's Life.*) *Father teaches me*:—Passing through a narrow street in an old town, under the shadow of an equally old church, with its tall spire pointing heavenward, a woman hurries on her way to the station with a troubled heart and a load of care, none the less heavy that it is more worry than trouble. Two little mites of children, happy and merry-looking, are peering over their school-lessons. She catches the words of one as she passes, spoken with the ring of a child's loving pride, "Father teaches me"; and then comes the answer from the other child, "How nice to have a father to teach you!" with an emphasis on the name which showed that she knew something, small though she was, of what a father's love and teaching might and should mean. The woman's face brightened as she heard, and she turned with a grateful smile to the two little ones, pausing to look at them for a minute before she went hurrying on again. And as she went her face kept its brighter look, for she thought to herself, "Surely, many beside that little child can say, 'Father teaches me.'" **That we might be partakers of His holiness.**—*The benefit of afflictions*:—I. THE LIGHT IN WHICH AFFLICTIONS OUGHT TO BE VIEWED, AND THE DISPOSITION WITH WHICH THEY OUGHT TO BE RECEIVED. II. CONSIDER THEIR TENDENCY, WHEN THUS VIEWED AND RECEIVED, TO PROMOTE OUR SPIRITUAL INTEREST. "That we might be partakers of His holiness"; that is, of the holiness which He requires. Holiness consists in conformity to the will of God. Afflictions have a tendency to promote the great work. 1. They teach you the evil nature of sin, on account of which they are sent, and point you to the Saviour. Practical lessons are the best of all lessons. 2. The utter insufficiency of this world, as a portion for the soul. In days of prosperity you may not be thoroughly convinced of this. 3. Afflictions excite and increase some of the most amiable and pious dispositions of the human heart. Such as resignation and patience. 4. When viewed in their true light, and received with a proper spirit, they are most satisfactory proofs of the love of God. Remarks: 1. In the light of this subject we see the reason why so many instances of affliction fail to produce any good and lasting effect. The agency of God is not acknowledged in them. 2. This subject furnishes solemn reproof and warning to such as have experienced affliction, and yet have not repented. 3. This subject affords instruction and peculiar encouragement to Christians. Those who wear the white robes in heaven came out of great tribulation. (*John Matthews, D.D.*) *Sanctified affliction*:—The following is from a letter of John Frederic Oberlin, pastor of Waldbech, to a lady, who had suffered many bereavements: "I

have before me two stones, which are in imitation of precious stones. They are both perfectly alike in colour; they are of the same water—clear, pure, and clean; yet there is a marked difference between them as to their lustre and brilliancy. One has a dazzling brightness, while the other is dull, so that the eye passes over it, and derives no pleasure from the sight. What can be the reason of such a difference? It is this. The one is cut but in a few facets; the other has ten times as many. These facets are produced by a very violent operation. Nevertheless, the operations being over, it is done for ever: the difference between the two stones always remains strongly marked. That which has suffered but little is entirely eclipsed by the other, which alone is held in estimation, and attracts attention. *The profit of adversity:*—Surely we deceive ourselves to think on earth continued joys would please. It is a way that crosses that which Nature goes. Nothing would be more tedious than to be glutted with perpetual jollities. Were the body tied to one dish always (though of the most exquisite flavour that it could make choice of), yet, after a small time, it would complain of loathing and satiety; and so would the soul, if it did ever epicure itself in joy. Discontents are sometimes the better part of our life. I know not well which is the more useful: joy I may choose for pleasure, but adversities are the best for profit; and sometimes these do so far help me, as I should without them want much of the joy I have. (*O. Feltham.*) *Sanctified affliction for the future:*—It is not so much by the symmetry of what we attain in this life that we are to be made happy, as by the enlivening hope of what we shall reach in the world to come. While a man is stringing a harp, he tries the strings, not for music, but for construction. When it is finished it shall be played for melodies. God is fashioning the human heart for future joy. He only sounds a string here and there to see how far His work has progressed. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The father loved for correction:*—On one occasion a minister found it necessary to punish his little daughter. But Mary climbed into his lap, and throwing her arms around his neck, said, "Papa, I do love you." "Why do you love me?" the father asked. "Because you try to make me good, papa." It is in this spirit that God's people should accept the chastisements He sends, remembering that it is in love He rebukes and chastens; not for His pleasure, but for their profit, that they may be partakers of His holiness. *Truth seen in adversity:*—A diamond had slipped from its setting, and rolled away, none knew whither. Diligent search was made in every apartment where its owner might have been, but in vain. At length evening drew on, and, sitting in a careless mood, her eye caught the sparkle of a tiny ray, almost imperceptible, but bright as only a diamond's glance can be. Out of the darkness it gleamed, and one might stoop and take that which daylight had failed to reveal, though sought with tears. And thus it is in the Christian's experience. In the daylight of prosperity he seeks in vain for the precious presence of the Holy Spirit. Yet when the night of adversity draws nigh, suddenly there shines a light amidst the darkness of spiritual despondency which reveals to him "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Ver. 11. **Afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness.**—*Sweet fruit from a thorny tree:*—When our heavenly Father "puts His hand into the bitter box" and weighs out to us a portion of wormwood and gall in the form of bodily pain, we very naturally ask the reason why. Nature suggests the question at times in petulance, and gets no answer; faith only asks it with bated breath, and gains a gracious reply. I. PAIN TEACHES US OUR NOTHINGNESS. Health permits us to swell in self-esteem, and gather much which is unreal; sickness makes our feebleness conspicuous, and at the same time breaks up many of our shams. We need solid grace when we are thrown into the furnace of affliction; gilt and tinsel shrivel up in the fire. The patience in which we somewhat prided ourselves, where is it when sharp pangs succeed each other, like poisoned arrows setting the blood on flame? The joyful faith which could do all things, and bear all sufferings, is it always at hand when the time of trial has arrived? The peace which stood aloft on the mountain's summit and serenely smiled on storms beneath, does it hold its ground quite so easily as we thought it would when at our ease we prophesied our behaviour in the day of battle? When nought remains but the clinging of a weeping child, who grasps his father's hand; nothing but the smiting on the breast of the publican, who cries "God be merciful to me a sinner"; nought but the last resolve, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him"—no real loss has been sustained, say, rather, a great gain has come to the humbled heart. II. HEAVY SICKNESS AND CRUSHING PAIN SHUT OUT FROM US A THOUSAND MINOR CARES.

We cannot now be cumbered with much serving, for others must take our place, and play the Martha in our stead; and it is well if then we are enabled to take Mary's place as nearly as possible, and lie at Jesus' feet if we cannot sit there. The Lord must do all, or it must remain undone. The weary head could only exaggerate the need; the sinking spirits could not suggest a supply. All must be left; yes, must be left. The reins drop from the driver's hands, the ploughman forgets the furrow, the seed-basket hangs no longer on the sower's arm. Thus is the soul shut in with God as within a wall of fire, and all her thought must be of Him, and of His promise and His help; grateful if but such thoughts will come, and forced if they come not just to lie as one dead at the feet of the great Lord and look up and hope. This cutting loose from earthly shores, this rehearsal of what must soon be done once for all in the hour of departure, is a salutary exercise, tending to cut away the hampering besetments of this mortal life, and make us freer for the heavenly race. III. SICKNESS HAS CAUSED MANY WORKERS TO BECOME MORE INTENSE WHEN THEY HAVE AGAIN BEEN FAVOURED TO RETURN TO THEIR PLACE. We lie and bemoan our shortcomings, perceiving fault where it had in healthier hours escaped observation, resolving, in God's strength, to throw our energies more fully into the weightiest matters, and spend less of force on secondary things. How much of lasting good may come of this! The time, apparently wasted, may turn out to be a real economy of life if the worker for years to come shall be more earnest, more careful, more prayerful, more passionately set upon doing his Lord's business thoroughly. Oh that we could all thus improve our forced retirements! Then should we come forth like the sun from the chambers of the east, all the brighter for the night's chill darkness, while about us would be the dew of the Spirit, and the freshness of a new dawning. IV. PAIN, IF SANCTIFIED, CREATES TENDERNESS TOWARDS OTHERS. Alone it may harden and shut up the man within himself, a student of his own nerves and ailments, a hater of all who would pretend to rival him in suffering; but, mixed with grace, our aches and pains are an ointment supplying the heart, and causing the milk of human kindness to fill the breast. The poor are tender to the poor, and the sick feel for the sick when their afflictions have wrought after a healthful fashion. Grief has been full oft the mother of mercy, and the pangs of sickness have been the birth-throes of compassion. If our hearts learn sympathy, they have been in a good school, though the Master may have used the rod most heavily, and taught us by many a smart. V. PAIN HAS A TENDENCY TO MAKE US GRATEFUL WHEN HEALTH RETURNS. We value the powers of locomotion after tossing long upon a bed from which we cannot rise, the open air is sweet after the confinement of the chamber, food is relished when appetite returns, and in all respects the time of recovery is one of marked enjoyment. As birds sing most after their winter's silence, when the warm spring has newly returned, so should we be most praiseful when our gloomy hours are changed for cheerful restoration. Gratitude is a choice spice for heaven's altar. It burns well in the censer, and sends up a fragrant cloud, acceptable to the great High Priest. Perhaps God would have lost much praise if His servant had not much suffered. Sickness thus yields large tribute to the King's revenue; and if it be so, we may cheerfully endure it. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The effects of sorrow:* — It is of sorrow I would speak. None can escape it. A man unacquainted with suffering would be a monstrous exception. You have doubtless seen the famous painting of a modern artist, "The Call of the Condemned, during the Reign of Terror." The prisoners, already sentenced by the revolutionary tribunal, are there, huddled up together in the vast hall and beneath the low arches of the Conciergerie. In the background, the door stands open, and the jailer, behind whom the fatal chariot is visible, reads the names written upon the list of death. All listen; some have already risen and press the hands of their friends in a farewell grasp; others, whose countenance is ghastly and full of anguish, wait; others veil their feelings beneath stoical scorn; they seem to say, "To-day or to-morrow, what matters? It is but a question of time." Thus it is with each of us; we are doomed to suffer; none of us is forgotten on the roll of the elect of affliction. Well! here is a strange fact: this question of suffering, the most universal and individual, the most ancient and actual of all questions, remains one of those which natural reason is absolutely incompetent to elucidate. Interrogate the ancient world, the Greek or Roman societies with their most illustrious philosophers, and you will find that every one of them, in presence of suffering, has but one of two counsels to give man: dissipation with Epicurus, or indifference with the stoic Zeno. I cannot, however, forget that some few more

clear-sighted souls have seen in affliction a mysterious instrument of Providence, a means of education for man; but these were only stray gleams, like flashes of lightning illumining the darkness of ancient philosophy. This is what Seneca writes to a mother who had lost her son by death: "Prejudice, which causes us to mourn so long, leads us further than nature commands. See how vehement are the regrets of dumb animals, yet how short is their duration! Cows that have lost their offspring moan but two or three days; mares pursue their wild and wandering course no longer. When the savage beast has followed the traces of her young and scoured the forest in every direction, when she has returned time after time to the den ravaged by the hunter, her fierce grief is very soon appeased. The bird that whirls with startling cry round her empty nest is quieted in an instant, and resumes her wonted flight. No animal long regrets its young; man alone loves to nurse his sorrow, and grieves, not by reason of what he feels, but in proportion as he has determined to grieve" ("Consolation to Marcia," ch. vii.). Having read this page, open the gospel and, with adoration, acknowledge the debt of gratitude you owe to Jesus Christ. According to Holy Writ, suffering is neither a simply natural phenomenon nor an effect of the primordial will of the Creator. According to Scripture it is an anomaly. God did not ordain it; in the beginning God beheld His work, and lo, it was good. Suffering is the logical, inevitable consequence of the false relation in which man has placed himself with God (Hosea xiv. 2). But, if Scripture lays down this grand general principle that suffering is the consequence of sin, it affirms, none the less clearly, that in our earthly life sin and suffering are never fully equivalent; it forbids our drawing from exceptional affliction the inference of exceptional guilt; it interdicts our taking the Divine balance into our own hands and interpreting the judgments of God according to our imperfect knowledge of things. Such, in a few words, is the teaching of Scripture on what we might call the theoretical side of the problem of suffering. But if, looked at in this light, this teaching appears to us measured and limited; everything changes when we look at it from a practical point of view. Here light abounds: when we endeavour to demonstrate the providential action of suffering, its salutary effects upon souls, the various and often sublime ends to which God makes it serve, we feel that lessons gush forth from every detail, and that we are verily at the school of the Divine Educator. Let us, first of all, lay down a principle: Suffering in itself is not good. Suffering is what we make it. It can produce humiliation or revolt, it regenerates the heart or renders it a thousand times more vile; it is the pensive and gentle angel that brings us back to the true life, or the demon that beholds with a cynical sneer the nothingness of all hope; it causes the sacred source of repentant sorrow to gush forth, or, like a consuming fire, it parches and withers in the depth of the soul all the germs of the future. It is blessed or accursed, it raises to a new life or it kills. The two wretches agonising upon Calvary, one on Christ's right hand and one on His left, are both crucified, but the one believes whilst the other blasphemes; the one repents whilst the other hardens his heart. In consequence, the point to be solved is, not only if we suffer, but if we accept affliction as coming from God. For those who bear suffering in this spirit I would show what it may be and what are the fruits it may yield. In the first place, I say that affliction gives us a fuller understanding of religious truth. Not that it teaches us anything which is absolutely new, but it makes realities of those beliefs which are often in danger of being considered by us as pure abstractions. You will be convinced of this if, for a moment, you examine the notion which sorrow gives us of God, of others, and of ourselves. As regards the truth concerning God. For many God exists only as a cardinal notion, in truth, but as a mere notion nevertheless. What is required that He may reveal Himself to such, as a living and present Being, that truly religious faith may be joined, henceforth, to purely intellectual faith? A profound thinker (Schleiermacher) has told us, Man must feel that he is dependent upon Him. Religion comes into existence together with the sentiment of dependence. Now, what is most sure of producing this sentiment within us? Affliction. Just as the darkness of night unveils to our gaze the splendours of the starry heavens, even so it is in the gloom of trial, in that night of the soul, that the eye of faith most clearly discerns the glories of Divine love. As regards the truth concerning men. This demands no proof. At all times it has been said: We know men only when we have suffered. As regards the truth concerning ourselves. Does a man know himself when he has not suffered? Does he take a serious view of evil when he has not felt its pangs? Can he have a correct idea of his weakness when he has

not been vanquished? If death is the wages of sin, suffering is its humiliating earnest, and we may well discern in it the cruel effigy of the master to whom we have sold ourselves. Therefore affliction gives us a fuller understanding of the truths concerning ourselves, our fellow-men, and God. It does more, it acts upon conscience, it subdues the will. Would the idolatrous Canaanite ever have thought of coming to Christ if her heart had not been rent by the fearful spectacle of her demon-possessed daughter? Would Jairus, ruler of the synagogue, have called the Saviour if he had not seen his child in the agony of death? Count those who followed Jesus during His ministry upon earth, question the innumerable multitudes which compose His retinue throughout the ages, and you will see that most of His disciples went to Him because they suffered. And as suffering has begun the work of their salvation, it serves also to continue and perfect it. Without it, pride, self-will, guilty passion would spring up again like vivacious roots, but the hand of the Divine husbandman passes and cuts them off, and the sap of life, which would spread with so much vigour in wrong directions, is forced to rise and spread itself out in holy affections. Thirdly, I have indicated the action of suffering upon the heart. We must consider this side of our subject for a few moments. There is a fact which we may observe daily; it is this: when a man is for the first time smitten with disease, for the first time also he thinks that others suffer like himself; this is for him a sort of discovery; he knew the name of the disease which lays him low, but he did not really believe in its existence. We have heard of deaf and blind individuals, of persons who have suddenly become poor; we have felt for them a sincere sentiment of superficial commiseration, but if we are unexpectedly threatened with one or other of these terrible trials, then the image of those whom it has before smitten starts up before our eyes, we are surprised to find they are so many, we reproach ourselves with having too long ignored them. From this experience flows sympathy, that Divine sentiment which signifies that we suffer with others, and which has become the mightiest power of consolation the world has ever known. It is to the afflicted that God has entrusted the sublime mission of consolation; the terms widow and deaconess originally signified one and the same thing, and, in the order of joy, as in the order of mercy, it is the prerogative of the poor that they are called to enrich others. What is it, in reality, that has produced the Church and transformed the world? A unique, incomparable, inexpressible grief which has found its consummation in the sacrifice of the Cross. Finally, I have said that affliction is the means which God makes use of to awaken and entertain within us the sacred life of hope. Hope is that virtue of the soul by which we affirm that the future belongs to God. Christian hope lies not at the soul's surface, it dwells in its innermost depths, and appears, radiant and strong, in the hour when all things fail us. Now, is it not evident that hope is the daughter of affliction? It is not those that are satisfied who hope. Those that are satisfied find their reward here below, as Jesus Christ tells us (Matt. v. 5–16), and that is the manifest sign of their condemnation. See the Jewish nation under the old dispensation: two nations mingle in this one nation. Throughout the history of the Church I find these two nations; if the Church is still standing, if she has not died, dishonoured by the ostentation, pride, and pollution of her representatives on the earth, by so many crimes perpetrated in the name of Jesus Christ, we owe it to those of her children who from age to age have maintained the sacred tradition of voluntary suffering and of sacrifice, and who have never ceased to expect the reign of God in righteousness and in truth. There exists, in the Roman Catholic religion, an institution which has always impressed me strongly: it is what is called perpetual adoration: in certain monastic orders, nuns relieve one another day and night, so that there are continually some praying before the Holy Sacrament. (*E. Bersier, D.D.*) *Chastisement —now and afterwards*:—I. First, we have very clearly in the text SORE CHASTISEMENTS. 1. Keeping literally to the words of the text, we observe that all which carnal reason can see of our present chastisement is but seeming. "No chastisement for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous." All that flesh and blood can discover of the quality of affliction is but its outward superficial appearance. We are not able by the eye of reason to discover what is the real virtue of sanctified tribulation; this discernment is the privilege of faith. How very apt we are to be deceived by seemings! Understand that all that you can know about trial by mere carnal reason is no more reliable than what you can discover by your feelings concerning the motion of the earth. Nor are our seemings at all likely to be worth much when you recollect that our fear, when we are under trouble, always darken,

what little reason we have. I remember one so nervous that, when going up the Monument, he assured me that he felt it shake. It was his own shaking, not the shaking of the Monument; but he was timid at climbing to an unusual height. When you and I under trial get so afraid of this and afraid of that that we cannot trust the eyesight of the flesh, we may rest assured of this, that "things are not what they seem." Besides, we are very unbelieving, and you know how unbelief is apt always to exaggerate the black and to diminish the bright. Added to this, over and above our unbelief there is a vast amount of ignorance, and ignorance is always the mother of dismay and consternation. In the ignorant times in this country men were always trembling at their own superstitions. 2. The text shows us that carnal reason judgeth afflictions only "for the present." "No chastisement for the present seemeth to be joyous." It judges in the present light, which happens to be the very worst in which to form a correct estimate. Suppose that I am under a great tribulation to-day—let it be a bodily affliction—the head is aching, the mind is agitated, am I in a fit state then to judge the quality of affliction with a distracted brain? 3. This brings me to observe that since carnal reason only sees the seeming of the thing, and sees even that in the pale light of the present, therefore affliction never seemeth to be joyous. If affliction seemed to be joyous, would it be a chastisement at all? (1) It never seems to be joyous in the object of it. The Lord always takes care, when He does strike, to hit in a tender place. (2) Nor is it joyous in the force of it. (3) Nor as to the time of it. (4) Nor as to the instrument. 4. Nay, more, the text assures us that every affliction seemeth to be grievous. Perhaps to the true Christian, who is much grown in grace, the most grievous part of the affliction is this. "Now," saith he, "I cannot see the benefit of it; if I could I would rejoice. Instead of doing good, it really seems to do harm." "Such a brother has been taken away just in the midst of his usefulness," cries the bereaved friend. A wife says, "My dear husband was called away just when the children needed most his care." 5. But now let me add that all this is only seeming. Faith triumphs in trial. There is a subject for song even in the smarts of the rod. For, first, the trial is not as heavy as it might have been; next, the trouble is not so severe as it ought to have been, and certainly the affliction is not so terrible as the burden which others have to carry. II. We have spoken of sore afflictions; well, now, next we have BLESSED FRUIT-BEARING. 1. I want you to notice the word which goes before the fruit bearing part of the text. "No chastisement for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless." Now what does that mean? That this fruit-bearing is not natural—it is not the natural effect of affliction. Trials breed discontent, anger, envy, rebellion, enmity, murmuring, and a thousand other ills; but God overruleth and makes the very thing which would make Christians worse to minister unto their growth in holiness and spirituality. It is not the natural fruit of affliction, but the supernatural use to which God turns it in bringing good out of evil. 2. And then observe that this fruit is not instantaneous. "Nevertheless," what is the next word? "Afterwards." Many believers are deeply grieved because they do not at once feel that they have been profited by their afflictions. Well, you do not expect to see apples or plums on a tree which you have planted but a week. 3. Well, now, you will note in the text a sort of gradation with regard to what affliction does afterwards. "It brings forth fruit"; that is one step. That fruit is "the fruit of righteousness"; here is an advance. That righteous fruit is "peaceable"; this is the best of all. III. And now for the third point, and that is FAVOURED SONS. "Nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness in them which are exercised thereby." It is not every Christian who gets a blessing from affliction, at least, not from every affliction that he has. I conceive that the last words are inserted by way of distinction—"those that are exercised thereby." You know there are some of the Lord's children who, when they get a trouble, are not exercised by it, because they run away from it. There are others who, when under trouble, are callous and do not yield; they bear it as a stone would bear it; the Lord may give or take away, they are equally senseless; they look upon it as the work of blind fate, not as the fruit of that blessed predestination which is ruled by a Father's hand. They get no benefit from tribulation; it never enters into them, they are not exercised by it. Now, you know what the word "exercised" means. In the Greek gymnasium the training master would challenge the youths to meet him in combat. He knew how to strike, to guard, to wrestle. Many severe blows the young combatants received from him, but this was a part of their education, preparing them at some future time to appear publicly in the

games. He who shirked the trial and declined the encounter with the trainer received no good from him, even though he would probably be thoroughly well flogged for his cowardice. The youth whose athletic frame was prepared for future struggles was he who stepped forth boldly to be exercised by his master. If you see afflictions come, and sit down impatiently, and will not be exercised by your trials, then you do not get the peaceable fruit of righteousness; but if, like a man, you say, "Now is my time of trial, I will play the man; wake up my faith to meet the foe; take hold of God; stand with firm foot and slip not; let all my graces be aroused, for here is something to be exercised upon"; it is then that a man's bone and sinew and muscle all grow stronger. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The good fruits of afflictions:*—I. WHAT ARE THOSE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH THE DIVINE CHASTENINGS ARE SENT TO PRODUCE. 1. The mortification of our sinful lusts. 2. A more warm and active zeal and diligence in all the great duties of life and religion. 3. Another good fruit of affliction is manifest in the visible growth and improvement of those particular virtues and graces in which we have been too deficient. (1) One great design of affliction is to revive our regards to God; and to engage us to seek our happiness from and fix our dependence only upon Him. (2) Another Christian virtue which afflictions are very proper to cultivate is humility. (3) Patience is another grace that is often much improved by afflictions. For without them it could have no exercise or trial. (4) Another Christian grace which afflictions are sent to exercise and strengthen is faith. (5) Submission and resignation to the will of God is another Christian grace that is often much improved by affliction. (6) An increase of heavenly-mindedness is another good fruit that is often produced by afflictions. And to produce this indeed they have the directest tendency. For when the soul is well weary of this world it will naturally begin to look out, and long for a better. II. WHY THESE ARE CALLED THE PEACEABLE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1. Because they will help us to bear afflictions with the most quiet and peaceable temper of mind whilst we are under them. 2. Because they give it an habitual peace and serenity afterwards. III. WHO THEY ARE ON WHOM AFFLICTIONS HAVE THIS HAPPY EFFECT. 1. It is most certain that all who are under afflictions do not receive benefit by them. 2. It is not every good man that reaps all those advantages by his afflictions I before mentioned. 3. The meaning is that the Divine discipline has this design and tendency, that afflictions are in their own nature a powerful expedient to reform the mind and make the heart better, and to procure the greatest spiritual benefit to those who are exercised thereby. And 4. That they actually have this effect upon those who take a proper care to improve them. They take effect the same way that all other means do, that is, by being carefully used, attended to, and improved by us. IV. WHAT IS NECESSARY ON OUR PART TO PROCURE THESE HAPPY FRUITS OF AFFLICTION, or in what manner we are to behave that they may actually yield to us the peaceable fruits of righteousness whenever we are exercised thereby. 1. The first thing necessary on our part in order to improve affliction is serious thought or deep self-reflection. 2. A constant watchfulness under our afflictions is equally necessary to our receiving real good from them. 3. Another means to get good by afflictions is frequent and persevering prayer. Conclusion: 1. We hence learn that it is a great mistake to think, as some good Christians are ready to do, that all afflictions are sent in a way of anger, and are tokens of God's. 2. From what hath been said upon this subject we may distinctly see what it is to have afflictions sanctified. Afflictions are then sanctified, and then only, when they increase our love to God, our humility, our patience, our faith, resignation, and heavenly-mindedness. 3. What reason have we to adore the wisdom and goodness of our heavenly Father in laying His children under those afflicting dispensations which are necessary to their true interest? 4. What hath been said may tend to prepare us to meet the future sufferings of life and teach us how to bear them. 5. How little reason have we to be very fond of a world so subject to vicissitude, anxiety, and sorrow! (*John Mason, M.A.*) *Beating out the air bubbles:*—The first time I went to a potter's house was in a very remote part of the Southern States. I do not know that what I witnessed there was a fair sample of the ruder forms of pottery, but I judge it was. I had never seen a vessel shaped on the wheel before, and I asked the potter to let me see him make one. He took a little lump of clay, but instead of putting it immediately on the wheel, he took it in one hand and began to give it very heavy blows with his fist. I almost thought he was angry with the poor clay before him, and I said, "What are you doing with it? I thought you were

going to make a vessel." "So I am, when I get it ready. I am getting the air bubbles out of it. If I were to put it on the wheel as it is, it would be spoiled in a few moments. One of those little bubbles would mar all my work. So I beat it and beat it, and in this way get all the air out of it." Ah! I thought, so does God have to treat us. The great difficulty with us is those little bubbles of self-conceit, of our own self-will, and sometimes of our self-righteousness—something that, in the process of God's work, would wonderfully mar it. So He has to deal with us severely; but He is not angry with the poor clay before Him. He is not angry with us when He puts us through this process of adversity. He is only getting out of us all that would mar His blessed work. How wise it is, then, for us just to accept, with perfect simplicity, His will! *The use of a clouded sky*:—A sky never clouded would cause a barren earth. (*Good Words.*) *Experimental religion learned in sorrow*:—Dr. Bushnell lost a son. When, a year or two after, he went into the country to preach for an old friend, the latter noticed an increased fervour in his preaching, and, in intimate talk, perhaps, alluded to it, when he said, earnestly, "I have learned more of experimental religion since my little boy died than in all my life before." (*Dr. Bushnell's Life.*) *Now and afterwards*:—So it must ever be. Day out of night, spring out of winter, flowers out of frost, joy out of sorrow, fruitfulness out of pruning, Olivet out of Gethsemane, the ascension out of Calvary, life out of death, and the Christ that is to be out of the pangs of a travailing creation. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *Advantage of adversity*:—Of Anna, Lady Hacket, it was said that as a ball when forcibly struck down rebounds the higher, so what had beaten down her worldly hopes raised her faith to a more steadfast persuasion that God, who is the Comforter of those who are cast down, would still be her God and guide unto death. (*H. Clissold, M.A.*) *Afflictions winning the heart for God*:—I have been all my life like a child whose father wishes to fix his undivided attention. At first the child runs about the room, but his father ties up his feet; he then plays with his hands until they likewise are tied. Thus he continues to do, till he is completely tied up. Then, when he can do nothing else, he will attend to his father. Just so has God been dealing with me to induce me to place my happiness in Him alone. But I blindly continued to look for it here, and God has kept cutting off one source of enjoyment after another, till I find that I can do without them all, and yet enjoy more happiness than ever in my life before. (*E. Payson.*) *Affliction sanctified*:—Ulrich Zwingle was a convinced reformer, and a self-denying pastor, before the plague broke out in Zurich, but that visitation was to him as life from the dead. He had returned hastily, while still an invalid, from a watering-place where he was seeking health, to minister to the dying, till struck down by the scourge himself; but when he rose again, it was with such a sight of spiritual things, and such a power of ministry, as he had never had before, so that two thousand of his fellow-citizens were soon after converted by his preaching. (*J. F. B. Tinling, B.A.*) *Uses of pain*:—Robert Hall, although he had been admitted to membership in his father's church at fourteen years of age, after "a very distinct account of his being the subject of Divine grace," believed that his moral transformation was effected much later by means of the terrible discipline of pain which interrupted his ministry, and even for a time unhinged his reason. "There can be no question that from this period he seemed more to live under the prevailing recollection of his entire dependence upon God, that his habits were more devotional than they had ever before been, his spiritual exercises more frequent and more elevated." (*Ibid.*) *Divine harmony out of discord*:—As musicians sometimes go through perplexing mazes of discord in order to come to the inexpressible sweetness of after chords, so men's discords of trouble and chromatic jars, if God be their leader, are only preparing for a resolution into such harmonious strains as could never have been raised except upon such undertones. Most persons are more anxious to stop their sorrow than to carry it forward to its choral outburst. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Divine tuning*:—Men think God is destroying them because He is tuning them. The violinist screws up the key till the tense cord sounds the concert pitch; but it is not to break it, but to use it tunefully, that he stretches the string upon the musical rack. (*Ibid.*) *The afterward of trial*:—The Rev. James Hog, of Carnock, an eminent minister, was long under deep mental distress. When he had lived in Holland for a considerable time, it pleased God unexpectedly to impart a great measure of light to his mind. "Oh, how sweet," says he, "the light was to me, who had been shut up in a dark dungeon! for sometimes I could do nothing but cry, 'Send out Thy light and Thy truth.' After I had thus cried, not without some

experience of a gracious answer, and expectation of more, I quickly found my soul brought out of prison, and breathing in a free and heavenly air; altogether astonished at the amazing mercy and grace of God." *The schemes of Providence but partially seen*:—There is a striking passage in which a great philosopher, the famous Bishop Berkeley, describes the thought which occurred to him of the inscrutable schemes of Providence, as he saw in St. Paul's Cathedral a fly moving on one of the pillars. "It requires," he says, "some comprehension in the eye of an intelligent spectator to take in at one view the various parts of the building in order to observe their symmetry and design. But to the fly, whose prospect was confined to a little part of one of the stones of a single pillar, the joint beauty of the whole, or the distinct use of its parts, was inconspicuous. To that limited view the irregularities on the surface of the hewn stone seemed to be so many deformed rocks and precipices." That fly on the pillar, of which the philosopher spoke, is the likeness of each human being as he creeps along the vast pillars which support the universe. The sorrow which appears to us nothing but a yawning chasm or hideous precipice may turn out to be but the joining or cement which binds together the fragments of our existence into a solid whole! That dark and crooked path in which we have to grope our way in doubt and fear may be but the curve which, in the full daylight of a brighter world, will appear to be the necessary finish of some choice ornament, the inevitable span of some majestic arch! (*Dean Stanley.*) *After the tempest*:—Keen students of nature, and especially of marine life in all its forms, often welcome the tempest, because after it they frequently get their choicest specimens. In the journal of the late Dr. Coldstream it is thus written: "This morning, as the storm had subsided, I determined to go down to the sands of Leith, that I might revel in the riches that might have been cast up by the deep after the terrible storm." So it is with believers; their very richest experiences and the choicest tokens of Divine favour are often got in and after their stormiest trials.

Vers. 12, 13. **Lift up the hands which hang down.**—*Christian compassion*:—The words of the text are taken from Isa. xxxv. 3, 4, and are addressed to the believing Hebrews as an admonition to comfort and encourage one another. The disheartened among them are compared to such as had been running in a race, or sustaining a protracted conflict till their knees began to tremble, and their hands to hang down: and in this condition, those who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak. I. NOTICE THE RELIGIOUS STATE OF THOSE WHO ANSWER TO THE DESCRIPTION GIVEN IN THE TEXT. Were we to compare Christians in general of the present day with those of the first ages, it would appear that they are grown weak and faint. We have but little of the zeal and activity which characterised the primitive Church. The description, however, is more particularly applicable to certain individual cases and characters amongst us, who need the compassion of their brethren, under their various difficulties and discouragements. 1. Some are ready to faint under difficulties and troubles of a worldly nature. 2. Some are discouraged through distrust, and groundless fears of future ills. 3. Others are distressed not only with the difficulties of life, but from being under the chastening hand of God. 4. Some are disheartened by repeated opposition from the enemies of religion. 5. Some are greatly discouraged by inward conflicts, arising from the evil propensities of their own hearts. 6. A departure from evangelical truth has weakened the strength of some by the way, and left them shorn of their dignity and glory. 7. The despondency of some good people arises no doubt from a natural gloominess in their constitution, which disposes them to dwell on the dark side of every subject rather than on the other. II. THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS TOWARDS ONE ANOTHER UNDER THESE DISCOURAGEMENTS. "Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees." 1. In order to perform this duty aright, it is necessary to exercise much tenderness and forbearance towards those who are labouring under great discouragements. Let the strong bear the infirmities of the weak, remembering that they are a part of the mystical body of Christ (1 Cor. xii. 21, 25). The compassionate tenderness of the great Shepherd of the flock is left as a pattern for our imitation (Isa. xl. 11; Matt. xii. 20). 2. Another way in which our compassion may be exercised is to point out to one another the directions and consolations of the gospel, according as the case may require; and here the tongue of the learned is necessary to speak a word in season to him that is weary. 3. Let us be concerned to remove the stumbling-block out of the way, and so to "make straight paths for their feet." Let us learn from hence: 1. That all

our difficulties and discouragements in the ways of God arise from ourselves, and from the evil that is in the world. His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all His paths are peace. 2. How lovely and how interesting is Christian society, whose object it is to strengthen and encourage each other in the way to heaven; and how wretchedly defective must it be, if it has not this tendency! 3. How essential to the Christian character are brotherly kindness, charity, and a disinterested but affectionate concern for the spiritual and everlasting welfare of our fellow-Christians! (*Theological Sketch-Book.*) *Of conquering discouragements*:—Hands which hang down—that is the gesture of discouragement. Gesture addresses itself to the eye. Articulate speech addresses itself to the ear. Both tell the thoughts, feelings, purposes of the inner spirit. Consider—I. WHY DISCOURAGEMENT SOMETIMES IS. 1. Ill health is a very frequent reason for a discouraged mood. 2. Necessary reaction from a great strain is a frequent reason for discouragement. 3. The slighter disappointments of life in most real way shadow the spirits. There are days when the sky wears a steadily disappointing grey, and when an east wind of discouragement blows steadily through all its hours. 4. The haunting fear that in some great matter which vitally affects us we have made mistake is a frequent cause of discouragement. 5. Hostile circumstances are causes of discouragement. 6. A frequent cause of spiritual discouragement is allowed sin. We talk about the hiding of God's face from us. Oftener we have ourselves hidden ourselves from God by doing what we know He cannot smile on. II. SOME OF THE WAYS IN WHICH WE MAY TRIUMPH OVER THIS SO COMMON MOOD OF DISCOURAGEMENT. And we must triumph over discouragement. If we do not triumph over it, it will triumph over us. And no man can be well or do well who is in the perpetual gloom of a shadowed heart. "It is safe to say that no great enterprise was ever yet inaugurated, sustained, or completed in any other spirit than that of hope. The Suez Canal was not built, nor the ocean cable laid, nor the great war of a quarter of a century ago brought to a successful termination by men who were easily discouraged." All these undertakings, and all undertakings of any sort, must have their root in hope. There are two ways of conquering the discouragement. 1. By the law of opposites. For example, if one finds himself shadowed by ill health, he will increase both his ill health and the shadows which it casts by perpetual thought of it and constant attention to its symptoms. The way is, as far as possible, to front health, and in all right ways to determine to reach it. The man who persistently thinks toward sickness is the man who will gather about himself the gloom of sickness. The man who persistently thinks toward health is the man who will soonest get both into it and into its sunshine. I read once of a woman who said that she always went through at least two hours of worry and despondency about her trials, and when she had cried until she had a wet handkerchief spread out to dry on every chair in the room, she thought she might cheer up a little, but she never expected to be happy in this life. "Why," she said, "if I were happy I should think I had lost all my religion." Too often such is the Christian notion. But God wants us to be happy; and the way out of the gloom of petty disappointments is by thought of Him and our many blessings. For example again: Nobody need be discouraged by sin, if only one will repent of it. "There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared." 2. Also, we can overcome discouragement by the law of faith. One tells how, in his youth, he and a young companion became lost in the maze at Hampton Court; they wandered about tired and discouraged, but they felt sure that they would find their way out presently, and they thought it would seem foolish to ask direction, though they saw an old man working not far off. They utterly failed, however, in getting out, and at last came to ask the old man if he could possibly tell them the path out of the maze. "Why," he answered, "that is just what I am here for. Why did not you say you wanted to get out before?" And he put the young men at once on the right track. And that is what our Lord Jesus is for. The steady asking of Him and the following of His directions will deliver from many of life's mazes and from its gloom. (*W. Hoyt, D.D.*) *Encouraging others*:—At the battle of Five Forks, a soldier, wounded under his eyes, stumbled and was falling to the rear, when General Sheridan cried, "Never mind, my man; there's no harm done." And the soldier went on with a bullet in his brain until he dropped dead on the field. (*H. O. Mackey.*) *Stimulating the discouraged*:—Arago ascribes his success to words found on the paper cover of his book when greatly discouraged. They were, "Go on, sir; go on! The difficulties you meet will resolve themselves as you advance. Proceed, and light will dawn, and shine with increased clearness

on your path," written by D'Alembert. "That maxim," says Arago, "was my greatest master in mathematics." Following out these simple words, "Go on, sir; go on!" made him the first astronomical mathematician of his age. What Christians it would make of us! What heroes of faith, what sages in holy wisdom, should we become, by acting out that maxim, "Go on, sir; go on!" *The joy of sympathy*:—Happy is the man who has that in his soul which acts upon the dejected as April airs upon violet roots. Gifts from the hand are silver and gold, but the heart gives that which neither silver nor gold can buy. To be full of goodness, full of cheerfulness, full of sympathy, full of helpful hope, causes a man to carry blessings of which he is himself as unconscious as a lamp is of its own shining. Such a one moves on human life as stars move on dark seas to bewildered mariners; as the sun wheels, bringing all the seasons with him from the south. (*H. W. Beecher.*) **Make straight paths for your feet.**—*The Christian's footprints*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN'S CORRECT WALK. Beasts, birds, and fishes make different tracks, and in a museum you will find specimens of each in the rocks which have been strata of the earth, made probably before the creation of man. And we do not have to ask which were tracks of birds or quadrupeds—it is evident. And if, in the future, somebody should find your footprints, will they be tracks of a worldling or a Christian? "He left half a million when he died," it will be said of one. "He turned many to righteousness," it will be said of another. Ah! that is a Christian's track. "He toiled to destroy the works of the devil." "He gave his goods to feed the poor." There is one Example—Christ. He never swerved a single iota. Straight as the path of a sunbeam was His journey from the footstool to the throne. II. THE CHRISTIAN'S HELPFUL INFLUENCE. How tenderly the Lord cares for the lame! You are strong, and have no need to be afraid of rough places; but perchance there is a weak and crippled brother coming after you, who will stumble and fall where you tread firmly. Think of him, and act accordingly. A father, climbing up a steep and precipitous cliff at a summer watering-place, says that, to his astonishment, he heard his little boy calling out behind him, "Take a safe path, father, for I am coming after you." What was safe for the strong nerves and sturdy strength of the father, might be exceedingly perilous for the weak and unpractised step of the child. Therefore, the father must "make straight paths for his feet," &c. It is a lesson running through all life and conduct. (*A. J. Gordon, D.D.*) *Lame sheep*:—There are some believers of strong and vigorous faith. Fleet of foot, they can run and not be weary, or with steady progress they can walk, and not faint. But all are not so highly privileged. I suppose there is seldom a family which has no sickly member. I. IN GOD'S FLOCK THERE ARE ALWAYS SOME LAME SHEEP. There is a peril intimated here; "lest that which is lame be turned out of the way." This is only too likely to happen. Lame sheep will commonly be found even in the tiniest flock. It will be necessary, then, to be tender of their infirmity. Some of these people of God who are compared to lame sheep seem to have been so from their birth. It is in their constitution. Do you not know some friends of yours who naturally incline to despondency? For them the road is always rugged, the pastures unsavoury, and the waters turbid. You will find such unhappy souls in all our Churches; people who seem from their very conformation to be lame as to the matters of faith, and full of doubts and fears. Besides, have you never noticed a constitutional tendency in some professors to stumble and get lame? If there is a slough, they will fall into it; if there is a thicket, they will get entangled by it; if there is an error, they will run foul of it. Good people we trust they are, and they do believe in Jesus, but somehow or other they do not see things clearly. Can you not detect, too, some who are lame in point of character? They seem to have been so from their very birth. There is a something about their gait that is unsteady. With some it is a cross temper; with others it is a general moroseness, which it does not seem as if the grace of God itself would ever cure in them; or it may be a natural indolence oppresses them; or it is quite possible that habitual impatience harasses them. Now, the grace of God should eradicate these vices; it can and will, if you yield to its influence. Other sheep of Christ's flock are halt and lame because they have been ill-fed. Bad food is the cause of a thousand disorders. Many a sickly man, instead of being dosed with drugs, needs to be nourished with wholesome meat. Had he something better to feed upon, he might conquer his diseases. May God supply us constantly with strong meat, and sound health to digest it. Full many of the Lord's sheep are lame because they have been worried. Sheep often get worried

by a dog, and so they get lamed. It may be I am addressing some poor child of God who has been beset by Satan, the accuser of the brethren, and frightfully tormented. Oh, what trouble and what terror he can inflict upon us! Others, too, have been harassed by persecutors. Many a poor woman has lost her cheerful spirits through a harsh, ungodly husband, who has excited her fears or vexed her with sneers; and not a few dear young children have been broken down for life through the hard treatment they have had for conscience sake to endure at home. Some precious saints I have known have grown lame through a rough and weary way, just as sheep can be lamed if they are driven too fast, or too far, or over too strong a ground. To what an excess of trouble some children of God have been exposed! The Lord has graciously helped them through all their adversities. Still the trouble they have had to endure has told upon their hearts. Perhaps more still are lamed through the rough road of controversy. If you are a child of God, and you know your bearings, keep always as much as ever you can out of the jingle-jangle of controversy. Little good ever comes of your subtle disputations, but they do gender much strife. Full many of the Lord's sheep have become lame through negligence, faintness, and the gradual declension of spiritual health. They have backslidden; they have been remiss in prayer, and forsaken communion with God, so it is no marvel that their walk betrays their weakness. Beware of catching a chill in religion. Lameness is not unfrequently the result of a fall. Saddest, most sorrowful, of all the causes of lameness this which comes through a fall into any sin. Heaven spare us from turning aside to folly! II. DO YE ASK, THEN, WHAT HE SAYS WE ARE TO DO FOR THESE LAME ONES? Evidently, we ought to comfort them. Lift up the hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees. Cheer the hearts when the limbs are weak. Tell the doubting that God is faithful. Tell those that feel the burden of sin that it was for sinners Christ died. Tell the backsliders that God never does cast away His people. Tell the desponding that the Lord delighteth in mercy. Tell the distracted the Lord doth devise means to bring back His banished. But will you please give heed to the special instruction. We are to make straight paths because of lame people. You cannot heal the man's bad foot, but you can pick all the stones out of the path that he has to pass over. You cannot give him a new leg, but you can make the road as smooth as possible. Let there be no unnecessary stumbling-blocks to cause him pain. Do you ask me how you can observe this precept? If you have to preach the gospel, preach it plainly. Would you make straight paths, then take care that your teaching is always according to the Bible. And, in all our walk and conversation let us make straight paths to our feet as those who aim at holiness of life. Unholy Christians are the plague of the Church. The inconsistencies of professors spread dismay among weak, desponding believers. Once more let me admonish you. Do not be negligent when your Lord is so vigilant. The Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, evidently cares for the lame ones. The charge He gives is a proof of the concern He feels. He bids us to be considerate of them, because He Himself takes a warm interest in their welfare. III. WHAT NOW SHALL I SAY TO YOU WHO FEEL YOUR OWN WEAKNESS AND INFIRMITY? You lame ones who cannot walk without limping, I know how you complain. "Ah," say you, "I am no credit to Christianity. Though in all sincerity I do believe in Jesus, yet I fear that after all he will disown me." When Mr. Greatheart went with Muchafraid and Feeblemind on the road to the celestial city, he had his hands full. He says of poor Mr. Feeblemind, that when he came to the lions, he said, "Oh, the lions will have me." And he was afraid of the giants, and afraid of everything on the road. It caused Greatheart much trouble to get him on the road. It is so with you. Well, you must know that you are very troublesome and hard to manage. But then our good Lord is very patient; He does not mind taking trouble. In the Divine economy the more care you require the more care you shall have. Besides, you know somewhat of our blessed Redeemer's covenant engagements. Did our Lord Jesus Christ fail to bring His weak ones home, it would be much to His dishonour. In your weakness lies your great strength. Jesus Christ will be sure to cover you with His power, so that when you are utterly defenceless you shall be most efficiently defended. "Ah," says another, "I have had a weary life of it hitherto." Yes, but you have brighter days to come. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 14. **Follow peace . . . and holiness.**—*The winnowing fan:*—I. TWO THINGS TO BE FOLLOWED. We are to follow peace and holiness; the two are consistent with

each other and may be followed together. Peace is to be studied, but not such a peace as would lead us to violate holiness by conforming to the ways of unregenerate and impure men. We are only so far to yield for peace sake as never to yield a principle; we are to be so far peaceful as never to be at peace with sin: peaceful with men, but contending earnestly against evil principles. Courtesy is not inconsistent with faithfulness. It is not needful to be savage in order to be sanctified. Follow holiness, but do not needlessly endanger peace. Having thus hinted at the connection between the two, and how the two together make up a complete character, let us now take them one by one. I. Follow PEACE, "peace with all" says the text—an amplification of the expression. Follow peace with all the Church. Hold what you believe with firmness, for you are not to trifle with God's truth; but wherever you see anything of Christ, there confess relationship, and act as a brother towards your brother in Christ. Follow peace with all, especially with all your own relatives and friends at home. Call we that man a Christian who will not speak with his own brother? Follow peace with all your neighbours. A Christian man should not make himself hated by all around him, yet there are some who seem to fancy that they are true to their religion in proportion as they make themselves disagreeable. Win your neighbours by your willingness to oblige; disarm their opposition, if possible, by courtesy, by charitableness, by kindness. Follow peace with all—even with persecutors. The anvil after all breaks the hammer, because it bears every stroke and returns none; so be it with the Christian. The text says—II. "FOLLOW peace," and the word "follow" indicates a hunter in pursuit of his game. He tracks the footsteps of his prey, he follows it over hill and dale, by the edge of the precipice, over the dangerous ridge, across the brook and along the river, through the wood and down the glen. Follow peace in this way; that is, do not merely be peaceful if nobody irritates you, but go out of your way to be peaceful; give up many things that you have a right to enjoy; the respect that is due to you be willing to forego; in fine, yield all but truth for peace sake. "Charity suffereth long, and is kind." "Charity beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Often the Alpine hunter, when pursuing the chamois, will leap from crag to crag, will wear out the live-long day, will spend the night upon the mountains cold brow, and then descend to the valleys, and up again to the hills, as though he could never tire, and could never rest until he has found his prey. So perseveringly, with strong resolve to imitate your Lord and Master, follow peace with all. The next object of pursuit is a still higher attainment—would God we had reached it. III. "Follow peace with all men, and HOLINESS." The amplification of the term "holiness" is the solemn declaration, "without which no man shall see the Lord." I understand by this sentence, in the first place, that no person who is unholy can see or understand Christ the Lord, or God His Father; that is to say, he does not know who Christ is so as to have any real fellowship with Him. He may know His name and know His history, and have some theoretical ideas of what the Redeemer did and is, but he cannot discern the spiritual character and teaching of the Lord. But perhaps the great meaning lies in this—without holiness no man can see the Lord in heaven at last. He will see Him on the throne of judgment, but he cannot see Him as his Friend, he cannot see Him in that beatific vision which is appointed for the sanctified, he cannot see Him so as to find joy and delight in the sight of Him. Now, see, the text says, "Follow holiness"; follow it, that is to say, you will not gain it by standing still. Nobody ever grew holy without consenting, desiring, and agonising to be holy. Sin will grow without sowing, but holiness needs cultivation. You must pursue it with determination, with eagerness, with long-continued perseverance, as a hunter pursues his prey. II. TWO THINGS TO BE AVOIDED. "Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God." The first thing to be avoided is failure. There are some persons who for a time exhibit many outward evidences of being Christians, but at last the temptation comes most suitable to their depraved tastes, and they are carried away with it. They fail of the grace of God. Like a man in business who makes money for a time, but fails in the end. Some have maintained an admirable character to all appearance all their lives, and yet have failed of the grace of God because of some secret sin. It says, "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God." The word is "episcopountes," a word which signifies overseeing, being true bishops, looking diligently as a man on the watchtower watches for the coming foe. See the sentry pace the rampart, he looks in one direction and he sees the brushwood stirred, he half thinks it is the foe, and suspects an ambush there; he looks to the front, across the sea, does he not discern a sail in the distance? The attack may be

from the seaboard; he looks to the right, across the plain, and if even a little dust should move he watches lest the foe should be on foot. So in the Church of God each one should be on his watchtower for himself and for others, watching diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God. The second thing to be avoided is uprising evil: "Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." In the centre of my lawn horse-radish will sprout up; after the smallest shower of rain it rises above the grass and proclaims its vitality. There was a garden there once, and this root maintains its old position. When the gardener cuts it down, it resolves to rise again. Now, if the gardener cannot get it quite out of the ground, it is his business constantly to cut it down. We are but men, and even when associated in church-fellowship, each one brings his own particular poisonous root, and there are sure to be bad roots in the ground. We are to watch diligently lest any of these poisonous roots spring up, for if they do they will trouble us. Sin and error always bring sorrow and division, and thereby many are defiled. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The ideal life*:—How beautiful and solemn are these words, like the swelling cadence of heaven's own music. Evidently they do not emanate from this sorrow-stricken and warring world; they are one of the laws of the kingdom of heaven, intended to fashion our life on earth. I. THERE IS OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS GOD. "Follow after holiness." In R.V. this is rendered "sanctification." And this in turn is only a Latin equivalent for "setting apart," as Sinai among mountains, the Sabbath among the days of the week, the Levites among the Jews, and the Jews among the nations of the earth. But after all there is a deeper thought. Why were people, places, and things, set apart? Was it not because God was there. We can never be holy apart from God, but when God enters the spirit of man, He brings holiness with Him. Nay, the presence of God in man is holiness. He is the holy man in whom God dwells. He is the holier, in whom God dwells more fully. He is the holiest, who, however poor his intellect and mean his earthly lot, is most possessed and filled by the presence of God through the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. i. 2, vi. 19). Why then does the sacred writer bid us "follow after holiness," as though it were an acquisition? Because, though holiness is the in-filling of man's spirit by the Spirit of God, yet there are certain very important conditions to be observed by us, if we would secure and enjoy that blessed gift. 1. Give self no quarter. It is always asserting itself in one or other of its Protean shapes. It may show itself in religious pride, in the satisfaction with which we hear ourselves remarked for our humility. It will need incessant watchfulness, because where self is there God cannot come. He will not share His glory with another. 2. Yield to God. He is ever seeking the point of least resistance in our natures. Help Him to find it, and when found, be sure to let Him have His blessed way. 3. Take time to it. This is not natural, but it may become as second nature by habitual diligence. II. THERE IS OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS MEN. "Follow after peace." The effect of righteousness is always peace. If you are holy, you will be at peace. Peace is broken by temptation, but the holy soul has learnt to put Christ between itself and the first breath of the tempter. Peace is broken by care, dissatisfaction, and unrest, but the Lord stands round the holy soul, as do the mountains round Jerusalem, which shield off the cruel winds, and collect the rain which streams down their broad sides to make the dwellers in the valleys rejoice and sing. Others may be fretful and feverish, the subjects of wild alarms, but there is perfect peace to the soul which has God, and is satisfied. But there must be a definite following after peace. The temperaments of some are so trying. Hence the need of endeavour and patience and watchfulness, that we may exercise a wholesome influence as peacemakers. 1. Avoid becoming a party to a quarrel. It takes two to make a quarrel: never be one. 2. If opposed to the malice of men, do not avenge yourselves. Our cause is more God's than it is our own. It is for Him to vindicate us, and He will. 3. Do not give cause of offence. If you are aware of certain susceptibilities on the part of others, where they may be easily irritated, avoid touching them, if you can do so without being a traitor to God's holy truth. III. THERE IS OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS OUR FELLOW CHRISTIANS. "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God." It is a beautiful provision that love to a common Lord attracts us into the fellowship of His disciples, and as no individual life truly develops in solitariness, so no Christian is right or healthy who isolates himself from the communion of saints. But we go not there only for selfish gratification, but that we may look after one another, not leaving it to the officers of the host; but each doing our own share. There are three dangers. 1. **The laggards.** This is the meaning of "fail." The idea is borrowed from a party

of travellers, some of whom lag behind, as in the retreat from Moscow, to fall a prey to Cossacks, wolves, or the awful sleep. Let us who are in the front ranks, strong and healthy, go back to look after the weaklings, who loiter to their peril. 2. The root of bitterness. There may be some evil root lurking in some heart, hidden now, but which will bear a terrible harvest of misery to many. So was it in Israel once, when Achan conceived thoughts of covetousness, and brought evil on himself, and mourning on the host whose defeat he had brought about. If we can discover the presence of such roots of bitterness, let us, with much searching of our own souls, humility, and prayer, root them out, ere they can spring up to cause trouble. 3. The profane and earthly minded. Of these Esau is the type, "who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." Alas! are there not many such? For one momentary gratification of the flesh, they forfeit not their salvation perhaps (we are not told that even Esau forfeited that), but their power to lead, to teach, to receive and hand on blessing to the Church. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*)

Follow peace:—I. THE NATURE OF THE DUTY REQUIRED: "Follow peace." The word "follow" is full of meaning. It implies strong desire, and vigorous endeavour; both the inward and outward man are to be engaged in this necessary and delightful service. It is also implied that we shall meet with many obstacles and difficulties in the way, both from the corruptions of our own hearts, and the perverse disposition of others: so that we shall need invincible perseverance. 1. In following after peace, we must pray that our own hearts and the hearts of others may be inclined to peace; we to propose, and they to accept it, and both to maintain it when once it has been established. 2. It becomes us to avoid whatever might become an obstacle to peace. Pride must be mortified; the pride of riches, of talents, and of reputation. Let us also beware of covetousness; for the love of money has separated those who would otherwise have been happily united. In order to preserve peace it is necessary also to discountenance slander and reproach, and to guard against ill-grounded jealousies and evil surmisings. Nothing can prosper where these propensities are indulged; they are the bane of confidence, and the rottenness of friendship. 3. We must endeavour to exercise those graces which have a pacific and uniting tendency. Of this description are humility, meekness, and love. Of the exercise of such virtues it may be said, as Tertullus did of the actions of Felix, by them we enjoy much quietness. 4. As the desire of peace should excite to the exercise of grace, so also to the faithful discharge of duty. We should do unto others, as we would have others in like circumstances do unto us. It becomes us to be courteous in our deportment, neither envious of those in superior circumstances, nor haughty towards others whom providence has placed beneath us. Let us also forget ill services, and requite good ones. Above all, let us mark those who would sow the seeds of strife, and avoid them, as we would a rock or quicksand, or a house infected with the plague. 5. Let us remember that a mild and peaceable disposition is one of the greatest ornaments to the Christian character. In this we shall resemble the ever blessed God, who is emphatically styled the God of peace. Jesus is also called the Prince of Peace, and His gospel is the gospel of peace; His followers therefore ought to be men of peace. II. THE EXTENT OF THE DUTY: "Follow peace with all men." 1. We must follow after peace with men of all ranks and conditions in life. We should behave with reverence towards those above us, and with courtesy towards those below us; avoiding on the one hand a proud spirit, and on the other, whatever is mean and grovelling. 2. With men of various tempers and dispositions. If masters are froward, servants should be submissive. If neighbours are unkind, ye must be patient towards them, and towards all men. Virtue of every kind shines the brighter, when contrasted with its opposite, and gains a victory over it. 3. We must follow peace with men of every character and description, let their principles be what they may; with the righteous and the unrighteous, with both saints and sinners, in the Church and in the world. 4. Christians of other denominations, and of different religious sentiments, are entitled to our attention and benevolent regard. 5. We must follow peace, even with our enemies. We must do good, where nothing but evil is to be expected in return. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *The duty of following peace with all men*:—I. Attend to THE EXPLANATION OF THE TEXT, "Follow peace with all men." 1. Consider, in the first place, the object which you must follow—peace with all men. All believers in Christ are the children of peace, and therefore, as far as is possible, they must live peaceably with all men. What is it that constitutes the happiness of heaven? It is the perfect and everlasting reign of peace. 2. That peace which we ought to cultivate

sometimes flies away. That peace often departs from nations cannot be denied; that it often flies away from families is equally evident; and that it is not always found in the Church is a matter of deep and bitter lamentation. 3. When peace has departed it must be followed: "follow peace." Some imagine that if they had no hand in driving peace away, nothing is required from them to bring it back again. But though the driving away of peace from a congregation may have been the work of a few, it is the duty of all to endeavour to bring it back again. Others, again, say, We will not prevent the return of peace, we will sit still and wait for its return, and when it comes we will give it a most hearty welcome. This is well so far as it goes, but it is not enough. In the pursuit of peace there must be mutual forgiveness. Have you obtained forgiveness of God? then you will reckon it both your duty and your privilege to forgive others. And be it remarked farther, that this forgiveness must be frank, and hearty, and open. In the pursuit of peace you must sacrifice your feelings, your prejudices, your angry passions, and even your interests. Blessed are the peace-makers; and blessed especially are those who make the greatest sacrifices to maintain, or to restore peace. In the pursuit of peace everything must be avoided which has a tendency to prevent the return of peace. The grounds of difference should be buried in perpetual oblivion. Even angry, discontented, suspicious looks must be avoided. A man can fight with his eyes, as well as with his tongue, or with his hands; as, therefore, there must be hearts of love, and actions of love, there must be also looks of love. In the pursuit of peace you must abound in prayer. II. THE GREAT DUTY OF FOLLOWING PEACE MIGHT BE ENFORCED BY MANY CONSIDERATIONS. 1. The authority of God enjoins this duty. God hath called us to peace. The fruit of the Spirit is peace. If, therefore, you desire to enjoy the favour of God, which is life; or if you dread the anger of God, which is perdition, follow peace with all men. 2. Consider the Master whom you profess to serve. Is He not the Prince of Peace? Has He not made peace by the blood of His Cross? Is not His gospel, which you all profess to believe, the gospel of peace? 3. Consider the injury which you do to the Church by these unseemly contentions. 4. Consider that the hour of death is coming. You cannot die comfortably if you are not at peace with all mankind. Hasten, then, in pursuit of peace, and give yourself no rest until you have overtaken it and brought it back. (*W. Smart.*) *The peaceful temper:*—There are many particular duties in which Christianity and worldly wisdom meet, both recommending the same course. One of these is the duty mentioned in the text, viz., that of being at peace with others. A wise adviser of this world tells any one who consults him as to his conduct in life, to beware especially of getting into quarrels with people. He tells him not only to avoid actual quarrels, but to cultivate a peaceful temper. The gospel tells us to do the same. The reason which worldly prudence suggests is the quiet and happiness of life, which are interfered with by relations of enmity to others. The reason which religion gives is the duty of brotherly-love, of which the peaceful disposition is a part. But the frequency of the advice, under either aspect, is remarkable, and shows that there is some strong prevailing tendency in human nature to which it is opposed. When we examine, then, the tempers of men, to see what there is in them which is so strongly opposed to this precept of following peace, the first thing we observe is, that people rush into quarrels from simple violence and impetuosity of temper, which prevents them from waiting a single minute to examine the merits of the case, and the facts of the case, but carries them forward possessed with a blind partiality in their own favour, and seeing nothing but what favours their own side. Again, there is the malignant temper, which fastens vindictively upon particular persons, who have been either the real or supposed authors of some disadvantage. Men of this character pursue a grudge unceasingly, and never forget or forgive. But impetuosity and malignity are not the only tempers which are opposed to the law of peace, and to the peaceful disposition. There are some very common habits of mind, which, without being so conspicuous in their manifestations, lead to a great deal of enmity of a certain kind—sometimes open enmity, sometimes, when this is avoided, still to bad relations towards others. There are many persons who can never be neutral or support a middle state of mind. If they do not positively like others, they will see some reason for disliking them; they will be irritable if they are not pleased; they will be enemies if they are not friends. They cannot bear to be in an attitude of mind which does not give active employment to the feelings on one side or the other. On this principle many of their neighbours are eyesores to them and the very sight of them interrupts their repose, when there is no real occasion for any such feelings; inasmuch as, if they have furnished no

cause for pleasure, they have not furnished any cause for pain either. And now, what I want to observe is, how completely this rule is opposed to the law which the apostle lays down, of "following peace with all men." When we examine what the relation of peace is, we find that it is exactly that relation towards others which the temper I have described has such a difficulty in adopting, and which is so repugnant to its taste. It is not a state of active love and affection, for these we do not call being at peace, but something more: nor is it a state which admits of any ill-feeling; but it lies between the two, comprehending all kindly intentions, forbidding the least wish for another's injury, avoiding, as much as possible, dispute and occasion of offence; consulting order, quiet, and contentment, but not arriving at more than this. Peace implies the entire absence of positive ill-will. The apostle then says that this is our proper relation toward all men. More than this applies to some, but as much as this applies to all. He would have us embrace all men within our love, so far as to be in concord with them, not to be separated from them. Be in fellowship, he says, with all men, so far as to have nothing wrong in your relation to them, nothing to disunite: follow peace with all men. Is any other principle of conduct and kind of temper indeed fit for this world in which we live? The great mass of those even whom we know and meet with in the intercourse and business of life must be comparatively nothing to us. More than this, they must be often persons who are not made after a model that we like, persons who do not sympathise with us or elicit sympathy from us. True and genuine intercourse and communication between minds, if it could be obtained, might clear up a good deal of this cloud, and remove the barrier which separates one man from another; but this is not given, and if it were, there still remains dissimilarity of tempers, gifts, and tastes. The apostle then lays down a plain rule with respect to the whole of this large section—viz., to be at peace with them. I have shown that there is a kind of temper and disposition which, without impetuosity, and without malignity, is still in opposition to the law of peace, and does in fact produce a great deal of latent, if not open enmity, in the world. I will now mention one or two reasons which have a great deal to do in promoting this temper. In the first place, it is very irksome to keep watch over ourselves, and to repel the intrusion of hostile thoughts by the simple resistance of conscience, when we are not assisted by any strong current of natural feeling in doing so. This is a difficult duty. But those who say that they either like or dislike, avoid and evade this duty. Another reason which tends to keep up the disposition which I have been describing is, that the hostile class of relations are evidently accompanied by their own pleasures in many temperaments. They furnish an excitement to them; and, at the bottom, they prefer it to a state of peace on this account, because there is agitation and a flutter of spirits in this relation; whereas peace is repose, and does not offer this play to the mind and temper. They would rather a great deal be in a state of irritation with any person for any reason than feel at all dull. To be dull is the greatest trial to them. They will stir up the scene at any rate, even at the cost of renewing vexatious subjects. It breaks the level of life; it varies the flatness of it. It is a stimulant; it keeps the spirits in motion. So, too, is the justification of dislike; the explanation how it arose and was called for. All this is much more to the taste of many than being at peace. They are not conscious of any deep malignity, but they derive a pleasure still from the disturbance of the ground, the agitation of the elements of life, which they take care shall not subside into complete repose. It was with the entire knowledge of these weaknesses and frailties of human nature, and these elements of disturbance, even in minds of average goodness, that St. Paul said—"Follow peace with all men." You must not, he says, be at peace only with those to whom you are partial; that is easy enough; you must be at peace with those toward whom you entertain no partiality, who do not perhaps please you, or suit you. That is the rule of peace which the gospel lays down, and it must be fulfilled by standing guard at the entrance of our hearts, and keeping off intruding thoughts. And he says again that we must not seek excitement from the petty quarrels and discords of life, from prejudice and antipathies, and the commotion which is bred out of them. This is a poor and morbid pleasure which impoverishes and lowers every mind that indulges in it. Let us "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." It is not without design that these two were connected together by the apostle—following peace and holiness. A life of enmities is greatly in opposition to growth in holiness. All that commotion of petty animosity in which some people live, is very lowering, it dwarfs the spiritual growth of persons. In a state of peace the soul lives as in a watered garden, where, under

the watchful eye of the Divine Source, the plant grows and strengthens. All religious habits and duties—prayer, charity, and mercy, are formed and matured when the man is in a state of peace with others—with all men; when he is not agitated by small selfish excitements and interests which divert him from himself and his own path of duty, but can think of himself, what he ought to do, and where he is going. (*J. B. Mozley, D.D.*) *A pattern of peace:*—I. WHAT IS THIS PEACE? Peace is threefold. 1. Above us: namely, reconciliation with God. 2. Within us: namely, an inward conformity of sanctified faculties, of mind, will, and affections. 3. Without us: with the creatures, especially with man, which our text speaketh of. And this external peace of man with man is nothing else but an holy agreement and consent of minds, speeches, and carriage in all good things. II. WHAT IT IS TO FOLLOW PEACE. 1. Seek it out, and beat it out, as dogs at a loss: if we cannot find the track in one place, seek it in another. 2. Follow it with earnestness, as hunters follow their game earnestly, with strong intention, not as on a cold scent. 3. With desire to take it; for so do they. 4. With pleasure and delight in taking it. Our souls must delight in the purchase of peace. Thus Abraham hunted after peace with Lot, and obtained it. III. WITH WHOM MUST WE FOLLOW PEACE? With all men. To embrace peace with good men is not hard for a good man; for they will hardly be put out of the way, and are soon led in again; but to hold peace with evil men is praiseworthy. But with some men we must not have peace, and with many men we cannot have peace. For the former: Israel must never seek the peace of Moabites and Ammonites (Deut. xxiii. 6), and the same of the Canaanites (Ezra ix. 11). If it be so by special revelation, which is no rule for the common course. But peace cannot be had with all men; some will not be at peace: wicked men will have no peace with godly men. As soon shall you reconcile darkness to light, fire and water, heaven and hell, as Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jews and Samaritans. 1. Though we cannot have it with all men, we must follow it with all men. If thou seekest it though thou canst not find it, it is enough for thee. First, so far as is possible (Rom. xii. 18). If it be not possible to recover peace but upon bad conditions, let it go; we must prefer many things before peace, as—(1) We must prefer peace with God before peace with men. (2) We must prefer piety, and purity of religion before peace. (3) We must prefer grace before peace: so the apostles everywhere, grace and peace. I must walk in the way of grace whether I meet with peace or not. (4) We must prefer peace of conscience before peace with men. Secondly, there is another rule of limitation (Rom. xii. 18), so far as lieth in us. For it lieth not in us often to obtain peace. It may be our lot to deal with contentious, envious, proud, quarrelsome persons, that scorn to capitulate with us, and defy peace with us, as they do our persons. Or we may have to deal with devouring men that will have no peace, unless they may swallow our names, and estates, and carry all afore them with horrible lies and suggestions. What can we do, where is so little hope of peace? Only thus: thou must have peace so far as is in thee. Motives to be considered thereunto. Christ hath died to bequeath peace. Peace with holiness makes up a full harmony in heaven and in earth. Holiness joins us with God, peace with men. Take harmony and peace out of the world, it is dissolved, heaven and earth must fall asunder. Take harmony and consent out of the body, the members are at war, and the whole tends to dissolution. Take peace from men, it is all one as to take the breath from the body, the sun out of the world. Heaven is a place of peace, and the blessedness of it belongeth only to them that make peace, and keep peace (Matt. v. 9). (*T. Taylor, D.D.*) *A life of peace and kindness:*—Dean Stanley said to the crowd of children at Westminster Abbey, on Innocents' Day, December 28th: "I knew once a very famous man, who lived to be very old—who lived to be eighty-eight. He was always the delight of those about him. He always stood up for what was right. His eye was like an eagle's when it flashed fire at what was wrong. And how early do you think he began to do this? I have an old grammar which belonged to him, all tattered and torn, which he had when a little boy at school; and what do you think I found written, in his own hand, in the very first page? Why, these words: 'Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace, to silence vicious tongues—be just, and fear not.' That was his rule all through life, and he was loved and honoured down to the day when he was carried to his grave." *Peaceable holiness:*—It was a saying of the pious Richard Baxter, recorded by himself in the "History of his own Times": "While we wrangle here in the dark we are dying, and passing to that world which will decide all our controversies: and the safest passage thither is by peaceable holiness." *God's love of peace:*—Of all the birds the dove is the most easily alarmed and put

to flight at hearing a shot fired. Remember that the Holy Ghost is compared to a dove; and if you begin to shoot at each other, the Heavenly Dove will take wing and instantly leave you. The Holy Spirit is one of love and peace, not of tumult and confusion. He cannot live among the smoke and noise of fired shots: if you would grieve the Holy Spirit and compel Him to retire, you have only to commence firing at one another, and He will instantly depart. (*Williams of Wern.*) *The evil of disunion*:—When the troops of Monmouth were sweeping the bridge (at the battle of Bothwell Brig), and Claverhouse, with his dragoons, was swimming the Clyde, the Covenanters, instead of closing their ranks against their common foe, were wrangling about points of doctrine and differences of opinion. In consequence, they were scattered by enemies whom, if united, they might have withstood and conquered. (*T. Guthrie.*) *Christianity and war*:—Dr. Gutzlaff, who spent three years as a missionary in Siam, said: "The Siamese looked with great anxiety upon the part which the English would take in the war between Quedah and themselves. When the king first heard of their neutrality, he exclaimed: 'I beheld, finally, that there is some truth in Christianity, which formerly I considered very doubtful.' This favourable opinion influenced the people to become friendly with us. The consequence was that we gained access to persons of all ranks and of both sexes." (*Tinling's Illustrations.*) **Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.**—*The highest end of being, and the only way to reach it*:—I. THE HIGHEST END OF BEING. To "see the Lord" means to have loving fellowship with Him who is infinite Love. II. THE ONLY WAY TO REACH IT. "Holiness." 1. God cannot be so seen as to be admired through the medium of a corrupt heart. 2. God cannot be so seen as to be admired, through the medium of a guilty conscience. CONCLUSION: 1. This subject serves to expose some popular religious errors. (1) That the grand end of human existence is to get to heaven as a place. No; the true heaven of humanity is a loving vision of a loving God. (2) That future happiness is to be obtained by the adoption of certain creeds, attendance to certain rites and ceremonies, and a punctual observance of all the ordinances of religion. No; holiness is wanted, nothing else. 2. This subject serves to show the infinite value of the work of Christ. 3. This subject serves to reveal wherein true wisdom consists. (1) The choice of the highest end. (2) The employment of the best means to attain the end. (3) The application of the best time for the employment of the means. Now. (*Homilist.*) *Holiness*:—I. THE BLESSINGS OF HOLINESS. II. THE WAY TO HOLINESS. 1. Grace is the source of it. 2. Constant progress is necessary to it. 3. Diligence is a requisite in it. III. THE MOTIVES TO HOLINESS. 1. Troublers are destroyed by it. 2. Backsliding is prevented by it. 3. Influence for good is increased by it. 4. There is no heaven without it. (*Ibid.*) *Holiness demanded*:—I. First, then, YE ARE ANXIOUS TO KNOW WHETHER YE HAVE HOLINESS OR NOT. Now, if our text said that without perfection of holiness no man could have any communion with Christ, it would shut every one of us out, for no one, who knows his own heart, ever pretends to be perfectly conformed to God's will. It does not say, "Perfection of holiness," mark; but "holiness." This holiness is a thing of growth. As the Spirit of God waters it, it will grow till the mustard-seed shall become a tree. Well, now, let us note four sorts of people who try to get on without holiness. 1. First, there is the Pharisee. The Pharisee goes to work with outward ceremonies. 2. Then there is the moralist. He has never done anything wrong in his life. Ah, but this is not holiness before God. 3. Another individual who thinks to get on without holiness, and who does win a fair reputation in certain circles, is the experimentalist. You must be aware that there are some professed followers of Christ whose whole religious life is inward; to tell you the truth, there is no life at all; but their own profession is that it is all inward. You may say what you will about what you dream you have felt, you may write what you please about what you fancy you have experienced; but if your own outward life be unjust, unholy, ungenerous, and unloving, you shall find no credit among us as to your being in Christ. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." 4. There is another class of persons, happily fewer than they once were, but still there are some among us still—opinionists, who think they can do without holiness. They have learned a sound creed, or perhaps an unsound one; they think they have got hold of the truth, that they are the men, and that when they die the faithful will fail from among men. They understand theology very accurately. They are wiser than their teachers. Down with thy hopes! Heart-work, carried out afterwards into life-work, this is what the Lord wants. You may perish as well with true doctrines as with false, if you pervert the

true doctrine into licentiousness. 5. But to help you still further, brethren, that man is destitute of true holiness who can look back upon his own past sin without sorrow. 6. And I am quite sure that you know nothing of true holiness if you can look forward to any future indulgence of sensual appetites with a certain degree of delightful anticipation. 7. Again, methinks you have great cause for questioning, unless your holiness is uniform. Some farmers I know in the country maintain a creditable profession in the village where they live; they go to a place of worship, and very good people they are: but there is a farmers' dinner once a year; it is only once a year—we will not say anything about how they get home—the less that is said the better for their reputation. "It is only once a year," they tell us; but holiness does not allow of dissipation even "once a year." And we know some who, when they go on the Continent, for instance, say, "Well, we need not be quite so exact there"; and therefore the Sabbath is utterly disregarded, and the sanctities of daily life are neglected, so reckless are they in their recreations. Well, if your religion is not warranted to keep in any climate it is good for nothing. 8. Then, let me further remark, that those who can look with delight or any degree of pleasure upon the sins of others are not holy. II. Now, then, for the second point: "WITHOUT HOLINESS NO MAN SHALL SEE THE LORD"; that is to say, no man can have communion with God in this life, and no man can have enjoyment with God in the life to come without holiness. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" If thou goest with Belial dost thou think Christ will go with thee? III. I come to my last point, which is PLEADING WITH YOU. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." But I hear one say, "It is impossible; I have tried it and I have broken down: I did try to get better, but I did not succeed; it is of no use, it cannot be done." You are right, my dear friend, and you are wrong. You are right, it is of no use going about it as you did; if you went in your own strength, holiness is a thing you cannot get; it is beyond you. But you are wrong to despair, for Christ can do it; He can do it for you, and He can begin it now. Believe on Him and He will begin with you; in fact, that believing will be the fruit of His having begun with you. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Holiness alone fits for heaven:*—I. HOLINESS MAY BE CONSIDERED AS OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW OF GOD, OR AS CONFORMITY TO HIS MORAL CHARACTER. It is, however, quite immaterial which definition we adopt. As "love is the fulfilling of the law," and as "God is love," to obey the law, is to be like God in moral character. II. HOLINESS IN THIS WORLD IS INDISPENSABLE TO OUR HAPPINESS IN ANOTHER. 1. It is so by the unalterable appointment of God. 2. It appears from the character of God. 3. From the fact that none of the sources or means of happiness, which the wicked possess in this world, will exist in heaven. 4. From the fact that the character of man becomes unchangeable at death. 5. From the nature of the soul. 6. If we consider what heaven is. Every being there reflects the image of God. Everything we hear in that world is the voice of praise and thanksgiving—the universal burst of gratitude, and wonder, and love, in songs of joy and transport, filling all its arches, and making all its pillars tremble. Remarks: 1. Every impenitent sinner may be convinced, from his own experience, of the necessity of a new heart to fit him for heaven. 2. Christian brethren, "what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" (*N. W. Taylor, D.D.*) *Holiness:*—Valuable as peace is, we are not to sacrifice truth or righteousness in order to obtain it. I. EXPLAIN THE EXHORTATION: "Follow after holiness." Men in general make no pretension to holiness; and some who do, know not what it is. Many imagine that it consists merely in chastity, or putting a restraint upon the sensual appetite, which is only a particular branch of that purity to which we are here exhorted. Others suppose that it extends no farther than to outward decency of conduct, or general regularity of behaviour. Though these things do not constitute real holiness, but fall very far short of it; neither does it imply an absolute freedom from all imperfections as some have vainly imagined. Sorrow for sin, and a hatred of it, take place in every renewed heart, but not an entire exemption from its being. Holiness, however, though it is not in the present life what some make it to be, nor what the saints wish it to be, yet it is the beauty and ornament of the soul. All moral excellences are included in it; and all spiritual consolation, which is the most satisfying, is derived from it. It is our brightest resemblance to God; our principal glory in this world, and our highest happiness in the next. 1. Holiness is the fruit of sovereign and effectual grace (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26). 2. True holiness is seated in the heart. It is not an outward name, but

an inward nature; a Divine principle implanted. 3. Holiness is not a single grace, but an assemblage of all the graces, and extends to all the duties of the Christian life. It is not like a single luminary, but a constellation, where numerous planets intermingle their lustre and their beauty, and give additional brightness to the whole. It is not meekness, humility, faith, hope, or charity; but all these united. Thus the Church, the spouse of Christ, is described as coming up out of the wilderness, perfumed with myrrh, and frankincense, and all powders of the merchant. 4. All true holiness in man is through the mediation of Christ, and is derived from Him as the Head of His mystical body. In Him it is concentrated, like light in the sun; in us it is as light in the air, emanating from His fulness. We begin to be holy when we begin to know Christ; and we grow in holiness as we increase in the knowledge of Him. Real saints are a living image of the invisible Saviour. 5. True holiness is an abiding principle, consisting in the habitual rectitude of all the powers and faculties of the soul. It is a well of water springing up, amidst innumerable obstructions, to eternal life; a light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Those who seek after holiness, shall always find it; and those who love it shall never lose it. 6. We are to "follow" after holiness, so as to make it the object of intense and continual pursuit; to leave no duty unperformed, no means untried, in order to obtain it in a still higher degree. For this purpose let us search the Holy Scriptures, attend upon holy ordinances, keep company with holy men, and be daily conversant with holy things. Above all, let us earnestly implore the powerful influences of the Holy Spirit. II. CONSIDER THE MOTIVE by which the exhortation is enforced: "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." 1. Observe, "no man," no individual, not one of all the human race, whatever be his expectations or attainments, whatever opinion he may have of himself, or whatever opinion others may entertain concerning him. 2. He shall not "see the Lord." It is as it were written over the gate of heaven, Nothing enters here that defileth. The wicked shall indeed have a sight of God, in some respects; but it shall be to their everlasting sorrow and confusion. They shall behold Him as Balaam did, but not nigh; at an awful unapproachable distance they shall see Him, but not for themselves; as a Judge and Avenger, but not as a Friend or a Father. 3. "Without holiness" no man shall see the Lord. Not that holiness is the meritorious or procuring cause of salvation; for when we have done all that we can do, even through Divine assistance, we are unprofitable servants. Holiness accompanies salvation, and prepares for it, but not in a way of desert. Nevertheless, holiness is absolutely necessary to eternal life—(1) By a Divine and unalterable constitution. (2) Holiness is necessary as a preparative for heaven. It is both our evidence and meetness, not in form or shadow, but in substance and reality. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *Holiness essential to a sight of Christ*:—There are, unhappily, many who will talk of the everlasting covenant, and of the inscription of their own names on its pages, with as much assurance as though God had made them a special revelation; and it were at least to be expected, that with all this assumption of superior revelation there should keep pace a striving after superior holiness. It were, at least, to be hoped, that they who pronounce themselves sure of heaven, would put forth more than ordinary tokens of an increasing fitness for heaven; for it is indeed a strange anomaly if, knowing as we do, that there shall enter into the New Jerusalem nothing that defileth, and nothing that worketh abomination, men who have a title of admission, chartered and signed, may go on in recklessness and unrighteousness of living; and too commonly they who are fondest of solving all doubts by an appeal to God's covenant, are just those who could obtain no satisfactory verdict from their own life and conversation. Our business is not so much the depending on our election as the ascertaining our election; and it is, therefore, to use the mildest language, a beginning at the wrong end, when men assume that they are elected, and then go on to be confident. The safe and the direct course is to observe whether they are changed men, and renewed men, and God-fearing men, and then to infer, though with the very deepest humility, that they are elected men. We have no such text in the Bible as this—"Election, without which no man shall see the Lord"; but we have this—"Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." We go on to observe that there is a peculiarity in the expression, "no man shall see the Lord," which marks a reference to the present life yet more than to the future. "Every eye shall see Him," is St. John's declaration, when looking on to the Second Advent of Christ. We know that without a single exception the descendants of Adam shall stand face to face with the anointed Judge of human kind, so that the holy

and the unholy shall alike behold Him, though the one rejoicingly, while the other shall shrink from His presence; and therefore we cannot uphold it as literally true, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," if it be on the future that we mainly fix our contemplations. But a most extensive, and at the same time a most interesting field of inquiry will open before you, if we consider the words as applicable to the present life, though, of course, without excluding a reference to the next life. The passage would seem decidedly to announce, that holiness, in some degree or other, is indispensable to the obtaining any knowledge whatever of Christ. We admit, indeed, that a thorough historical acquaintance may be obtained, whilst there is a bold persisting in a course of iniquity. But our text shows, that to whatever extent this scholastic knowledge of the scheme and nature of Christianity can be ascribed, there can be gained no sight of Christ Jesus Himself until some inroads be made on the sinfulness of our nature. And when a man is converted, and therefore "renewed in the spirit of his mind"—that is, the organ is obtained through which the Lord is beheld—the strength and clearness of his looking upon Christ will ever after be exactly proportioned to the advance of sanctification. If the Christian fall into gross sin, or if he conform himself to the passions and prejudices of the world, or if he encumber himself unnecessarily with cares and anxieties, the retardation in holiness will tell on the strength of the newly-acquired vision, and the view of Christ will become so obscure, that fresh witness will be given to the fact of holiness being indispensable to seeing the Lord. And, on the other hand, let the Christian be prosecuting an uncompromising warfare with corruption—let him be proceeding daily with a dominant step towards higher attainments in practical piety, and you will find that his sight of the Redeemer is continually improving. The mysteries of Christ's person, the loveliness of His character, the might of His attributes, these open increasingly and shine out more vividly; and thus there is gathered an accession of proof that holiness is indissolubly connected with seeing the Lord. We would never give up that grand fundamental principle that faith is the gift of God, and that, consequently, no man can see the Lord, according to the definition we have sought to establish, unless a telescope, so to speak, be put into his hands by the Holy Ghost, and directed towards that illustrious Being in whom the natural eye discerns nothing of comeliness or form. But at the same time we are to the full as anxious to withstand the unwarranted opinion, that there can be no preparation made by the man himself; that because faith must be strictly the gift of God, all we have to do is to wait for its reception. We are assured from the Bible that it is very possible to resist the Holy Ghost, and to grieve the Holy Ghost, and that, consequently, the case is of common occurrence in which this Divine agent comes unto men, bringing with him the telescope, or the organ of vision, and then opposed by their passions and lusts, departs without bestowing the precious donation. And hence we set it forth as an indisputable position that it lies in man's power, and is manifestly man's business to remove impediments to the operations of God's Spirit, and that though he cannot give himself the Spirit, he may throw off very much that may withstand the approaches of that Spirit. Let us go on to endeavour to show you how holiness would affect the clearness of all future contemplations of Christ. There remains nothing to be added to the work of the Saviour, in order that it may be available to the complete justification of the sinner. But, then, does imputed righteousness at all interfere with personal holiness? Not one jot. There is to be wrought in us a righteousness which is quite independent of that perfect righteousness which has been wrought out for us by Christ. The righteousness of Christ is that meritorious righteousness which deserves for us heaven; the righteousness which is wrought in our spirits is that qualifying righteousness which prepares us for heaven. And if it be thus certain that holiness, personal, inwrought holiness, is essential to that sight of the Lord which shall constitute the great bliss of heaven, we may justly argue that it is essential to those contemplations of the Saviour which are our foretastes of that bliss whilst we sojourn upon earth. And this, in other words, is the proposition laid down in our text, though the proof of that proposition may be thrown into easier and yet more popular shape. How can the man who is falling back into sin have his eye upon Christ, who condemned sin in the flesh? How can the individual who, after professedly renouncing the world, suffers himself to be entangled in its follies and allured by its flatteries, be looking fixedly towards Christ—Christ who said, "Marvel not if the world hate you; ye know that it hated Me before it hated you"? How can that disciple have a comforting assurance of the sacrifice of Christ in his

own stead and in his own behalf, who by his lax and inconsistent conversation would falsify the account of Holy Writ, that "the grace of God which bringeth salvation teaches us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world"? Whenever you find that you have no clear evidence of an interest in Jesus—that there is a sensible interruption of the hope and assurance which have been wont to flow in and gladden the soul—then let a recurrence to the sentiment of our text bring to your notice the reason, which in all likelihood best accounts for the change. Christ cannot be seen without holiness. Therefore search ye and determine whether the luminary be not riding as high and as bright as before in the firmament, and whether the sole cause why the murkiness is around you, and deep gloom seems wrought into the overhead canopy, be not in the passions which have been gratified, the concessions made, and the resolutions relaxed, so that from the witherings of a once flourishing holiness have gone up vapour and mist, which have darkened the sun, and intercepted the rich light which fell around your path. It is not that Christ withdraws His lustre; it is only that men, through carelessness, or lukewarmness, or conformity to the world, destroy the keenness of the spiritual vision. We reject, therefore, as presumptuous and insulting to God, all pretensions to privileges and rights which are independent on holiness, in thought, word, and deed; we refuse to take our test from what men style their experience; but we go alone, without hesitancy, to their practice. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The connection between holiness and felicity*:—I. THE NATURE OF HOLINESS. The most intelligible description of holiness as it is inherent in us, may be this, "It is a conformity in heart and practice to the revealed will of God." Now His revealed will comprises both the law and the gospel: the law informs us of the duty which we as creatures owe to God; and the gospel of the duty which, as sinners, we owe to God as reconcilable through a Mediator. Our obedience to the former implies the whole of morality, and to the latter the whole of evangelical graces, as faith in a Mediator, repentance, &c. From this definition of holiness it appears that it is absolutely necessary to see the Lord; for unless our dispositions are conformed to Him, we cannot be happy in the enjoyment of Him. I shall expatiate upon the dispositions and practices in which holiness consists, or which naturally result from it; and they are such as follow: 1. A delight in God for His holiness. Self-love may prompt us to love Him for His goodness to us; and so many unregenerate men may have a selfish love to God on this account. But to love God because He is infinitely holy, is a disposition natural to a renewed soul only, and argues a conformity to His image. 2. Holiness consists in a hearty complacence in the law of God, because of its purity. The law is the transcript of the moral perfections of God; and if we love the original we shall love the copy. 3. Holiness consists in a hearty complacence in the gospel method of salvation, because it tends to illustrate the moral perfections of the Deity, and to discover the beauties of holiness. The gospel informs us of two grand pre-requisites to the salvation of the fallen sons of men, namely, the satisfaction of Divine justice by the obedience and passion of Christ, that God might be reconciled to them consistently with His perfections; and the sanctification of sinners by the efficacy of the Holy Ghost that they might be capable of enjoying God, and that He might maintain intimate communion with them without any stain to His holiness. 4. Holiness consists in an habitual delight in all the duties of holiness towards God and man, and an earnest desire for communion with God in them. This is the natural result of all the foregoing particulars. If we love God for His holiness, we shall delight in that service in which our conformity to Him consists; if we love His law, we shall delight in that obedience which it enjoins; and if we take complacence in the evangelical method of salvation, we shall take delight in that holiness without which we cannot enjoy it. 5. To constitute us saints indeed, there must be universal holiness in practice. This naturally follows from the last, for as the body obeys the stronger volitions of the will, so when the heart is prevailingly disposed to the service of God, the man will habitually practise it. II. THE ENDEAVOURS WE SHOULD USE TO OBTAIN THIS HOLINESS. 1. Endeavour to know whether you are holy or not by close examination. 2. Awake, arise, and betake yourselves in earnest to all the means of grace. III. THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF HOLINESS TO THE ENJOYMENT OF HEAVENLY HAPPINESS. 1. The unchangeable appointment of God excludes all the unholy from the kingdom of heaven; (see 1 Cor. ix. 6; Rev. xxi. 27; Psa. v. 4, 5; 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15). 2. The very nature of things excludes sinners from heaven; that is, it is impossible in the nature of things, that, while they are unholy, they could receive happiness

from the employments and entertainments of the heavenly world. (*Pres. Davies.*) *Follow holiness*:—This being the larger idea, explains and covers the lesser one of "peace with all." As when the tide recedes, the waters fret and raise angry surfs upon the sunken rocks, but when it has advanced in full flow these rocks are submerged, and there is deep stillness over them, so in the full tide of consecration unto God all causes of disquietude are swallowed up and covered. (*A. B. Davidson, LL.D.*) *Heaven—none admitted but those like Jesus*:—At heaven's gate there stands an angel with charge to admit none but those who in their countenances bear the same features as the Lord of the place. Here comes a monarch with a crown upon his head. The angel pays him no respect, but reminds him that the diadems of earth have no value in heaven. A company of eminent men advance dressed in robes of state, and others adorned with the gowns of learning, but to these no deference is rendered, for their faces are very unlike the Crucified. A maiden comes forward, fair and comely, but the celestial watcher sees not in that sparkling eye and ruddy cheek the beauty for which he is looking. A man of renown cometh up heralded by fame, and preceded by the admiring clamour of mankind; but the angel saith, "Such applause may please the sons of men, but thou hast no right to enter here." But free admittance is always given to those who in holiness are made like their Lord. Poor they may have been; illiterate they may have been; but the angel as he looks at them smiles a welcome as he says, "It is Christ again; a transcript of the holy child Jesus. Come in, come in; eternal glory thou shalt win. Thou shalt sit in heaven with Christ, for thou art like Him." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *No sin in heaven*:—"There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth." Heaven is not like Noah's ark, that received clean and unclean. A sinner is compared to swine (2 Pet. ii. 22), and shall a swinish creature tread upon the golden pavement of heaven? Indeed the frogs came into king Pharaoh's court, but in heaven there is no entertainment for such vermin. (*T. Watson.*) *Admittance to heaven*:—Governor Corwin says that some church members will have to make a great many explanations, before St. Peter, the reported keeper of the gate of heaven, will let them in. The character of others is so unequivocal that none will be required: the gate will fly wide open before them. *Holiness a generic disposition*:—When we speak of holiness in man, we speak of that positive character which reveals itself by the exercises or manifestations of a high moral character, which repeatedly shows itself in some men as the occasion may call forth. It is not a separate and distinct grace like humility, truth, temperance, or meekness, neither is it a union of all the graces in such a way as light is the union of the primary rays of the sun. It is not an amalgamation of all the graces, but they are the means by which it shows itself in different directions and situations. There is a decided distinction between it and justice and meekness. The possession of one or other of these virtues does not imply holiness, but where holiness is, each of these graces will duly appear. A man may be temperate or just without being holy; but if he be holy all the graces will display themselves in him as a matter of course. Each of the graces will appear in him in their own proper occasions. Holiness is not one good quality, but the hand that moves beneath and around all of them. It is not one good action, but the principle that inspires all good actions; I might almost say it is like some essence we can hardly get at. It is not itself so much as the goodness of everything good in us; it is the virtue of virtues; or, in the words of an American theologian, it is not a head or part, but a complete whole, and by that we are to understand not a collection of properties, but a generic disposition which regulates all the movement of a Christian's existence. Holiness, therefore, is the moral nature or character of God; and in man it is his moral nature, so that he who possesses it is a partaker of God's nature. Thus we come back to the definition from which we set out. Holiness is God's likeness, and when a man is disposed to think as God thinks, act as God acts, and seeks to live in unison with God and His character, then we have real and true holiness. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Sight of God*:—"I cannot love God," said a thoughtless man, "for I have never seen Him." "Canst thou not?" responded his companion; "then thou canst do less than the little blind child who sits under the shade of the chestnut tree on the village green. She can love her father and mother, though she has never seen them, and will never see them to the latest hour of her life." There is truth here. It requires a special faculty to see God. And it is a terrible fact that this sense, the power of God-consciousness, is often all but entirely destroyed by sin.

Vers. 15–17. **Lest any man fail of the grace of God.**—*Are you a failure?*—The wish to succeed is natural. It is seen in a little child, who will sometimes shed tears if he happen to lose the race which he runs with other children. The desire not only to do well, but to excel is the prevailing aspiration with all sane men and women. But the best men always feel as if they came short of the excellence they desire. One of the most eminent and beloved bishops of the Church of England had a book which he intended no one to see but himself, but he omitted to destroy it before he died; and in this book he had written under his name this sentence, "A man who has failed to accomplish his ideal." Yet he was, indeed, a good man. When John Knox was on his death-bed, his friends said of him in his presence, "How pleasing for him now to remember the great deeds he has done for the gospel of Christ!" He replied, "I bid you hush. Do not by such remarks add to the reproaches of my conscience, which upbraids me for the many things I have left undone, and the numberless things I ought not to have done; God be merciful to me a sinner!" When wise and good men do succeed, they feel that the result is scarcely due to their efforts, but to the working of the Spirit of God within them. A true artist forgets himself, thinking only of his work, and when he receives praise feels that he is merely the hand used by the spirit of art. In his finest strains the poet feels that it is not his own mind but the Divine muse, which possesses and inspires him to write glowing words. The sculptor, when he has chiselled the most beautiful specimen of his plastic art, feels how greatly distant he is from achieving his ideal of perfection. I have spoken thus to encourage those of you who I believe are truly great, and who feel that the work you do is imperfectly done. All divinely directed men of true genius feel as you do. Be cheered! Persevere in your work, and let not the consciousness of failure distress you too much; for that feeling is the evidence of genius—it is a blessed genius that can detect a flaw or an inferiority in your own work and stimulate you to continued effort. Let me now address those who are satisfied with their efforts, or who fail in them through some wilful fault of their own. "Looking diligently lest any man fail, or come short, of the grace of God." 1. It may be that some of us fail through our want of continued effort. In my garden there is a cherry tree. It bore no fruit the first year, but we took great pains with it, and the second year it brought forth one splendid cherry, and that was all. It made its effort and succeeded. Likewise, every tree, every flower, and even the common grass by the wayside makes strenuous efforts to put forth beauty and fruit after its kind. But unfortunately some of us men are not like trees and flowers; we do not make continued efforts. 2. Another reason your life is a failure is because you do not depend upon God, and you live more for yourself than for your fellow-men. What do I mean by "depending upon God"? Well, this. See that ship. The captain has put up the sails, and has done all he can. The ship is trimmed, the sails are set, and the captain waits upon the wind; he feels he is dependent upon it. In the same way we should be dependent upon God. We should wait for Him. We should do what we can to make ourselves ready for His coming, and then wait for Him to do the rest, and be willing to be guided by Him. There is too much self with many of us, that is why, comparatively speaking, our lives are failures. 3. The reason why others of us fail is because we take not advantage of God's grace. 4. Another reason for your failure may be that you delay doing your present duty. You do not do the thing that lies nearest you, but wait to do something great in the future. This habit of procrastination not only robs you of present good but of future blessing. In the same way, you are waiting for some great work to do instead of doing the thing at your right hand. Doing little things well is the best preparation for the achievement of great things. (*W. Birch.*) *Falling short of the grace of God*:—To prevent this danger they must look diligently. To this end —1. Every man must have a care of himself, and look to his own soul. 2. They must watch one over another, and if they see any inclining to apostasy, or beginning to doubt of, or decline his profession, they must, by good example, instruction, admonition, reproof, and exhortation, seek to reform him. 3. The minister of the gospel being trusted with man's soul, must be very watchful above all other; must exhort, reprove, and by his wholesome doctrine, inform the ignorant, strengthen the weak, reform the erroneous, encourage the faint, and suffer no such bitter root to spring up amongst his people. 4. They that have the power of discipline, upon information, must by admonition and lighter censures first seek to reclaim a sinning brother; and if so, they cannot rectify him, they must cast him out, lest others be infected. (*G. Lawson.*) *Anxiety for souls*:—Fleming mentions one

John Welsh, often, in the coldest winter nights, found weeping on the ground, and wrestling with the Lord, on account of his people, and saying to his wife when she pressed him for an explanation of his distress, "I have the souls of three thousand to answer for, while I know not how it is with many of them." *Piloting souls*:—As the pilot-boats cruise far out, watching for every whitening sail, and hover, through day and night, all about the harbour, vigilant to board every ship, that they may bring safely through the narrows all the wanderers of the ocean; so should we watch off the gate of salvation for all the souls, tempest-tossed, beating in from the sea of sin, and guide them through the perilous straits, that at last in still waters they may cast the anchor of their hope. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Grace should permeate the entire man*:—In the camphor-tree every part is impregnated with the precious perfume; from the highest twig to the lowest root the powerful gum will exude. Thus grace should permeate our whole nature, and be seen in every faculty, every word, every act, and even every desire. If it be "in us and abound," it will be so. An unsanctified part of our frame must surely be like a dead branch, deforming and injuring the tree. **Root of bitterness springing up.**—*Roots of bitterness*:—Sin, whether in men or among them—whether viewed as inherent in the individual, or spread through the community—sin may well be compared to a root. This analogy does much to point out the nature, and the origin, and the consequences, and the cure of that one evil which offends God and afflicts men. I. The analogy of a root serves to illustrate the NATURE of the evil. An accurate knowledge of the danger goes far to constitute a defence. The figure directs our thoughts at once to the heart as the seat of the affections. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts," and words, and actions. Our care must not be exclusively directed to the deeds—the fruit above ground—we must seek to reach that hidden root which grows in the soul unseen, generating actual transgression in the life of men. There are many points in which the analogy holds good between a root and the sinful disposition of soul which gives birth to unrighteous action. 1. The root is below ground—unseen. The surface of the field, when you pass by, may be naked, and clean, and smooth—not a green blade to be seen, far less an opening flower, or ripening fruit; yet there may be in that field a multitude of thriving, vigorous roots, that will soon cover and possess its surface with thorns and thistles. So in a church, or a family, or a single member of it, though for the time all that meets the eye be fair, there may be in the soul within a germ of evil already swelling, and ready to burst out into open wickedness. 2. The root not only is, but grows. It has a vital self-increasing principle. Unless you kill it, you cannot keep it down. So with the sinful disposition in the heart. It is not the existence of the thing merely that we have to dread, but its vitality. The Scripture (Eph. ii. 2, 3) speaks of men being dead in sins, and yet walking according to the course of this world. In like manner, though the guilty state of the soul be called death, yet it is a death that lives and grows. It not only bears fruit upward, but strikes root downward; and the more vigorously it shoots its fibres down into the soil, the heavier a harvest of wickedness it bears. 3. Though you may be able to destroy the fruit, and cut down the branches, the root may be beyond your reach. Though the branches be lopped off, and the stem cut down close by the ground, yet the root left in the soil will keep its hold, and send up another stem, and spread out other branches. So with this sin. Much may be done to check its outward exhibition. Many agencies may be brought to bear upon it, which will not only prevent the ripening of the fruit, but will blight the opening blossom, and maim the spreading branches. Many schemes may be tried, and tried successfully, to stop the committing of sins, while the disposition to sin lives as vigorous, and grows as rank as ever in the soul. II. In the text the root is significantly called A ROOT OF BITTERNESS. The analogy of a root suggests the existence, and the life, and the growth, and the power of a principle, without determining whether it be good or bad; but the distinguishing characteristic of the root spoken of is "bitterness." Everything depends on the nature of the root that is bedded in the soil. There is a plant called the nightshade, which is in some respects like a vine. Like the vine, its branches are slender, and unless supported, they trail upon the ground. Its bunches of fruit, too, are very similar, both in form and colour, to clusters of grapes. Its fruit is a poison. From its nature, it gets the name of the deadly nightshade. Now, this plant may grow beside a vine—may cling to the branches of a vine, and intermingle its clusters of fruit, so that you could scarcely distinguish the one from the other. Nay, more; in such a case the roots of the two plants will shoot down into the same soil—they will intertwine with each other in

the earth—they will drink up the same sap at the same place. It would require a very close examination to distinguish the fibres that belong to each; yet this root converts the sap into delicious food—that into deadly poison. The result does not depend on air and sun, and moisture and earth—these were all the same in this case. The fruit takes its character from the root. If it be a root of bitterness, it turns everything into poison. Such is the distinguishing characteristic of a sinful affection. Our living souls are the seat of many thoughts and emotions—they constitute the soil which nourishes many roots. Some roots grow there bearing sweet fruit to the glory of God and the good of men; but they are "the planting of the Lord." It is the root of bitterness that springs first, and spreads farthest. There are the shattered remnants of much good in the human soul. There are in it many materials which may be turned to good account, when a new heart has been given—a new spirit created. But in all at first, and in many still, a strong one has possession. A bitter root occupies and sucks the soil, wasting its strength in bringing forth death. Pride, envy, worldliness, ungodliness—these, and other roots, pervade the ground, and drain off all its fatness. The natural powers and emotions of the soul—the sap which these roots feed upon—would nourish trees of righteousness, if they were but planted there. There are many precious qualities of mind, efficient for good or for evil, just as they are employed. You have known a man possessed of many good qualities—such qualities as attract and bind to their possessor a wide circle of friends. He is, in the common sense of the term, a good-hearted man. He is generous, and kind, and honest. He will not maliciously resent an injury—he gives liberally of his goods to feed the poor—he renders to every man his due; but he is a drunkard. A bitter root has fastened in that generous soil, and drinks up all its riches. Oh! it is sad to see that strong one keeping possession of a wealthy place. It is sad to see so promising a field exhausted in bearing the filthiest fruit. Avarice is another root of equal bitterness. There is no more pitiable creature on earth than a man whose heart's warm affections have been sucked out by the lust of gold. The power of understanding and judging, of liking and disliking, of hoping and fearing—all these, as natural capabilities of the human soul, are wielded by the presiding will either on the side of righteousness or the side of sin. The same learning and ardour which Saul of Tarsus employed to waste the Church, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, plied as the instruments of extending and establishing it. Paul had met the Lord in the way, and received into his heart the seed of a new life. This is the one needful thing. These understandings and memories, and all these natural powers that are now wasted on sin, the same instruments will do for serving God, when the quickening Spirit has implanted the new life within (Deut. xxix. 14–18). The root that beareth gall and wormwood is a heart that turneth away from God; and to that spring of evil must the cure be applied. Although it be "a root out of a dry ground," all will be well, if it be not a "root of bitterness." If the root be holy, so also will the branches be. (*W. Arnot.*) *How bitterness grows:*—A young girl had but few social opportunities. She fell into habits of excessive self-inspection, and a morbid sensitiveness to criticism. With good gifts, and refined tastes, and careful culture, she began to grow conscious of a kind of superiority to most of those about her. But the absence of lively sympathies fostered reserve and taciturnity, so that few found out or appreciated her real attainments. While her own standard of character was rising, others ceased to care what so indifferent and haughty a spirit might know or be. Presently a sense of injustice began to spring up in her. Each new acquirement only seemed to separate her more and more from her neighbours. Even her equals failed to appreciate the hidden merit. Gradually, as years went on, a silent resentment was kindled. Temper was a little soured; speech grew sarcastic; judgment grew bitter. She revenged herself for neglect by withdrawing further and further from the world. Those of her own sex were alienated, and as to those of the other, they were a little frightened. Very few men value criticism enough to marry it. And so, every way, society loses in the person of this fine capable young woman an ornament and a strength. (*T. D. Huntingdon.*)

Vers. 16, 17. **Esau, who for one morsel.**—*The character of Esau:*—There are certain features of character which, if they do not exactly enlist our admiration, never fail to secure our goodwill, and an instinctive sympathy with those who possess them. The man who along with his virtues, which by reason of their very nature lift him above many of his fellows, combines a few of those failings which

bring him down again to their level, is by far the greatest favourite. Good men are glad to acknowledge his goodness, and for the sake of it are disposed to deal gently with his inconsistencies. The multitude find that they, too, have a share in him, and are pleased to recognise their own features in such respectable and perhaps unusual company. Now it is just such a character as this of which it is most difficult to form an impartial estimate. And it is all the more difficult if the good qualities in question are of that striking sort which almost disarm criticism. For there are qualities that act in such a way. It seems, for instance, almost impossible to resist the impression which energy makes upon our minds, especially the energy that throws itself out upon the broad arena of practical life, and produces visible and manifest results. The same thing holds true, though in a less degree, of all that class of actions which we distinguish by the word "impulsive." We pardon a man a great deal for the sake of this particular temperament. If he does what is wrong, it mitigates the wrong that it was done on the spur of the moment, and not by a cool, deliberating wickedness. If he does what is good, it makes the good still better, because goodness that acts spontaneously is more genuine than a habitual calculating virtue. Besides, we give more latitude to impulsive actions, because they break through the routine of things. Hence the popularity of what is vulgarly called dash, a quality we all naturally admire. It serves as a sort of flourish that relieves the monotony of life. And we watch any singular display of it as a man watches a game of chance, knowing there may be some brilliant successes, but just as likely some ruinous catastrophe. The character of Esau, as it is brought before us in Scripture, partakes largely of this element. He was if anything an impulsive man. He had none of those faults which attach themselves to timid and more thoughtful characters, the tendency to equivocate, and compass an end by somewhat doubtful means ,to bargain, and *finesse*, and sail close to the wind. A character like this shows, of course, all the more favourably when compared with such an one as that of Jacob. His faults spring, no doubt, from his peculiar temperament, but they are those which we regard with the greatest dislike. His virtues, on the other hand, had none of that spontaneity and freshness which makes an excellence doubly excellent, but were always unpleasantly prudential. They seem to have been developed only by infinite patience and a vast variety of discipline, and not to have come to very much after all. Yet Jacob was the man on whom God's blessing rested, whose nature was the most susceptible of Divine treatment, and most capable of receiving and transmitting the promise of the covenant. Esau, according to the Scripture, was a profane man, with little or no capacity for the spiritual and unseen, unable to understand it, whose strong earthly instincts and exuberance of life repelled everything of the sort, or hardly admitted of its approach. On what, then, is our sympathy with Esau grounded? He stands out as the representative of the warm-hearted, high-spirited man of the world, whose sins, because they scorn the grosser attributes of meanness, seem little more to us than acts of extravagance. The growths of a rich though wayward nature, they carry along with them a certain savour of its richness, that renders them somewhat less unpalatable. And the fact that now and then he can do most liberal things, be touched with poignancy of sorrow, or rise into an ardour of affection, seems to prove that he cannot be a bad man. It shows he has it in him to throw his sin aside, and rise above it, that there must be an inward fountain of goodness, that but for untoward and embarrassing conditions, would be certain to obtain the ascendency. So we are inclined to argue. But the argument may be a mistake. For what determines the nature of a man's life, and stamps his character as good or bad, is the course of it in the main. A few glimpses of sunshine, however bright, will not make a fine day, especially if it pours heavily throughout the intervals. The stream that lingers in its deep pools, and doubles on itself in doubtful windings through the plain, is none the less surely seeking for the sea. So we are not to imagine a man good or bad because the level of his life is broken up by occasional deeds of goodness or the reverse. We are to look at the tenor of the whole and discover, if we can, the sovereign motive that governs its drift. Now it is unfortunately true that much generosity and warmth of emotion may co-exist with serious moral weakness, that a man's nature may break out at times into admirable actions, while its habitual temper is rigidly selfish, nay, that these actions themselves may only be selfishness working in a somewhat unusual way. For what is impulsiveness but the tendency to act at the bidding of one's own feelings? And to indulge our feelings, irrespective of those of other people, what is that but selfishness? A man who habitually

lives for himself will, almost unconsciously, act upon the same principle of selfishness even in those very instances in which he seems to have most thoroughly broken away from it. His good deeds are, in all likelihood, so many acts of expiation by which he tries to make up for cases of neglect. Besides, even apart from such considerations, there is a subtle pleasure in being occasionally better than ourselves, in surprising people, and rising above their expectations, which is only another form of selfishness. It is as much as saying, "See how much more generous I am than you supposed. What an injustice you have done me in concluding I am hard-hearted and inconsiderate!" We must not be deceived, then, by the superficial attractiveness of the warm-hearted, impulsive type of character, nor forget that exceptional actions only prove their opposite to be the rule. Selfishness may disguise itself in a coat of many colours, and take its own way among a multitude of devices that seem to surround it with a contrary atmosphere, but which are all intended only to make room for it, and allow it to go on without interference. It is only when a man's life involves him in self-denial; when it recognises the claims of others and the claims of God, and submits to adjust itself faithfully to these; when it gives up its own waywardness, and curtails its freedom, to add to the happiness and well-being of those around him; only, in short, when he bows himself to the yoke of Christ, and begins to burden himself, as He did, with the sins and sorrows, the toils and struggles, of the world—that he learns the first lesson in the school of Christianity, and truly practises the fear of God. But it is not as a selfish but as a profane man Esau is held up as a beacon of warning; and by a profane man is meant one who has no perception of the sanctity of Divine things. But this profaneness simply describes the selfish man's character on that side of it which is turned towards God. He has no such respect for God as moves him to obedience. He removes religion out of his way as a serious hindrance, or shuts it up within so narrow a compass it never comes into collision with himself. What else can he do, if it only thwarts and annoys him? If it gives him no pleasure, and adds nothing to his resources, is it to be expected that it should be found anywhere except amid the lumber of his life? But there is another reason besides those I have mentioned which has much to do with our sympathy with Esau, and that is his misfortunes. We are apt to look at him as the victim of a fraud, and it seems to us almost a contravention of justice that the impostor should flourish in the favour of God and his victim be disowned and cast aside. But this is a one-sided view of the occurrence and falls short of the truth. No man can be cheated out of a Divine gift against his own will. God does not hold His benefits with so lax a hand, or dispense them with such indifference, as to allow them to be diverted from their destined possessor by the craft or subtilty of man or devil. Esau lost the birthright by his sin, sold it for a mess of pottage, and had himself and not his brother to blame for his calamity. But it was highly characteristic of Esau that he should not have seen this. It is the way of selfish, worldly men to resent exceedingly that their sin should find them out. And having his father on his side, who had the blessing to bestow, it seemed to him a settled thing that he should receive it. The old affair of the pottage was not so serious after all, and it would be absurd to suppose that so trifling a transaction would interfere with the stated rights of the eldest born. But though hand join in hand iniquity shall not go unpunished, and the conspiracy of sin was broken, and its purpose baffled, by an utterly unprecedented trick. It is a terrible illustration of the truth that as a man sows so shall he also reap; that every sin we commit, instead of passing into the past with the time that witnessed it, remains embedded among the forces of our life, that there it works and spreads, and dissipates its influence, till it brings us face to face with the measure of retribution. But even though it be granted that Esau suffered for his own fault, was not the suffering disproportioned to the sin? Was it not too trifling to be followed by so grievous a penalty? It might have been so if his sin had only consisted in the act that was the immediate occasion of his loss. But no sin stands by itself. And it is not the evil action that makes a man bad, it merely reveals the fact that he is bad. It is the outlet by which the inward wickedness issues into broad daylight, and publishes the fact of its existence. Esau was a profane man, not because he sold his birthright; but he sold his birthright because he was profane. And there was nothing for it but to transfer it to some one who should watch over it with becoming pains, and yield himself to be fashioned by the hope of its fulfilment. It happened according to that saying of our Lord, "Unto him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly, but from him that

hath not shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have." And so, let us beware of cherishing a spirit of self-indulgence and of indolent yielding to our desires. Your nature may grow so enfeebled by selfishness you will not be able to rouse yourself to the call of God. Some critical moment may arrive, some day of grace, when there shall be set before you with a freer and more abundant entrance than ever the open door of the kingdom of God, and you will be too easy-going to be disturbed, too enervated by indulgence to seize your opportunity. Or, to keep more closely to the tragic example of my text, some long gratified desire may insist on being satisfied at the expense of fidelity to Christ. You may find that in some hour when you have least expected it you are faced with the alternative of denying yourself, or parting for ever with an interest in Him; and if you have not been bearing the Cross and enduring hardness as a good soldier, if you have not been accustoming yourself to sacrifice your own will to the will of God, how terrible the risk that in that hour of everlasting issues you may fail to stand the test, and barter your birthright for a worldly lust! (*C. Moinet, M.A.*) *The relation of animal appetites to spiritual prerogatives*:—There are three classes of sentient life: first, those which have animal appetites, and no spiritual prerogatives—such are the beasts of the field, &c.; secondly, those which have spiritual prerogatives, and no animal appetites—such, probably, are angels; and thirdly, those that are compounded of both—such are men. In men, these two kinds of power occupy two very different relations; in some—the mass—the animal is the sovereign; in others—the few—the spiritual guides and governs all. I. ANIMAL APPETITES OFTEN COME INTO COLLISION WITH SPIRITUAL PREROGATIVES. 1. Spiritual independency. 2. Moral approbation. 3. Divine fellowship. II. ANIMAL APPETITES OFTEN LEAD TO THE SACRIFICE OF SPIRITUAL PREROGATIVES. 1. This is foolish. 2. This is criminal. III. ANIMAL APPETITES, WHEN THEY LEAD TO THE SACRIFICE OF SPIRITUAL PREROGATIVES, REDUCE MAN TO THE UTMOST DISTRESS. (*Homilist.*) *Esau*:—I. HIS PROFANENESS IN ITS COMMENCEMENT. Oh, it is a strange parable, that sale of the birthright; a parable fulfilled again and again in the irreligious man selling eternity for time; the man of faith giving all that he now has for a better hope in years to come. It is a parable having its own peculiar lesson for our own days. Now, when natural accomplishments are so highly valued, when intellect, science, energy, skill, win the admiration even of foes; and implicit belief is construed as superstition, a self-denying, meditative life viewed almost as treason to the interests of human fellowship. Now, when even religion is denuded, as much as possible, of everything supernatural; and whilst honour, and benevolence, and generosity are lauded, and a general providence recognised, prayer, meditation, sacramental grace, like the promise of old, are put aside; we call you back to Isaac's tent, and show you the types of our modern life in his twin sons, and bid you note how the man of religious faith, in spite of many faults, won the eternal love, whilst the man of this world, the free, frank hunter of the desert, brave yet without reverence, affectionate yet without faith, became an alien from the commonwealth of Israel; stamped, for a perpetual warning, as the profane person who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. II. HIS PROFANENESS IN ITS FINAL ISSUE. How do men live on year after year foregoing religious privileges, forgetting God, and scarcely remember it! The man who has been baptized, and whose conscience tells him that he dare not die as he is—what is he but one who has verily parted with his spiritual birthright? Once he was sure of heaven, now he is sure no longer; nay, if he reflects has little hope of heaven in his present state; where is his birthright? He means to alter before he dies. He intends to win back his inheritance. What is this but Esau, dimly conscious of a loss, yet continuing in the same career which ruined him at the outset, a cunning hunter, and nothing but a cunning hunter still? We must wait till the next world for the "exceeding bitter cry" from such men, for it is seldom here that the conviction of being lost for ever is experienced. The same carelessness lasts on to the end. There is, indeed, nothing more alarming than the fearlessness with which the majority meet death. Whenever there is manifested anxiety and dread, the minister of Christ knows what to do. But the difficult case to deal with is that which is the most common case; when the man who has never accustomed himself to make much of God and Christ in his health, appears in his sickness utterly without fear, unable to realise the bitter things that are written against him; unable to imagine that he has gone so far astray, and has so far to return. It is as if the habit of treating religion lightly, once contracted, dislocated the whole moral being, that we can never afterwards see, or

hear, or taste aright, the powers of the world to come. And so the thoughtful man, who feels what sin is, what God is, what heaven is, must often fear for those who fear not for themselves; and tremble lest the instant of the death pang should be the signal of a terrible awakening—lest, at the moment when this world hears the faint whisper of the dying no longer, the eternal world may be ringing with the loud, bitter cry of a soul just conscious of a birthright lost for ever. (*Bp. Woodford.*)

Esau's profanity:—It was the contemptuous treatment of that which should have been held sacred and invaluable. It was the selling of station, honour, influence, power, pre-eminence, for a dish of soup and a little bread. It was the parting with chieftainship at the bidding of an empty stomach. It was the allowing of the animal to swallow up the man. It was sinking the interest of a great future in the little pressing need of the present. I. THE ELEMENTS OF YOUR DANGER HERE. 1. The first element of danger which I mention is present stress—urgency of present need. The man who has just risen from a hearty meal and gone out into the street, is under no temptation to steal from the baker's wagon which stands by the sidewalk. But the case is vastly different when the street-boy, who slept last night in an ash-barrel, and whose lips for twenty-four hours have not tasted food, comes along by the bread-cart. Involuntarily his tired feet halt. His eyes, how wide they open upon those loaves! His mouth, how it waters! Now he looks to the right and the left; up the street, down the street; no one in sight, and his hands spring like a steel-trap upon the nearest loaf. Why? Because he is hungry. So oftentimes do children of a larger growth come unto their critical hour. By misfortune, by loss, by squandering, or by the increasing power of an evil appetite (growing by that it feeds upon), the man's desire for money has been made fierce, clamorous, raving. And now he is brought into the presence of his coveted boon. Money is before him, within his reach. It is not his own, but it is within sight. Oh, how he wants it! And so the man stands in the presence of his temptation, weak through the power of the craving within him. The next step is soon taken. The exposed man risks the penalty of the law; ventures honour, character, reputation; sells all these at the bidding of his hungry nature. And there is yet another and more vivid view of the working of this same mighty power. Man is born to a nobler birthright than honour or reputation even. In every sinful human being there vests the possible title to a blessed immortality. But the hour of present and pressing indigence bursts upon the man. He comes back from his long chase after satisfying good. He feels that he must have the desire of his heart—must have it now. And then the world offers it—offers it for a price. "Give me your birthright," she says, "swear it me, and you shall have what you want. Throw away principle, and wealth is yours. Renounce integrity, and here is honour. Sell me conscience, and I give you success." And the man reasons, Esau like, "Behold, I am at the point of death, and of what use is the birthright to a dead man? Heaven is far in the future, a dim, uncertain good. My title to it is not wealth or honour or success. Better have what I can get now." "Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up and went his way,"—without his birthright. So the world gives its victim. He eats, he drinks, he rises up and goes his way; goes his way to meditate upon the words, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" 2. The second element in the danger here is the almost omnipotent power of the present. Esau would not have felt his hunger so keenly if the broth had not been before him. Besides, he would have reasoned, "If I must wait until food is prepared by some one, I'll prepare it myself and keep my birthright." But the case was, that to Esau's pressing need Jacob could bring immediate relief, could offer food already prepared. And so he got the birthright; bought it at a low figure, because he was able to pay the price at once. And men always sell at a lower price for cash in hand; and this, whether their merchandise is houses, or lands, or conscience, or character. Take the holders of real estate in our city who wish to sell. They have all of them one price for the buyer who pays all cash, and another and higher price for the buyer who wishes to pay in the future. This is so because the possession of money has value; because there is always more or less uncertainty about promises for the future, whether to pay or to do anything else. And I think I can see this same principle reaching out from this narrow sphere and ramifying all through the conduct of men. A child would rather have one toy to-day than the promise of a dozen to-morrow. And men are but older children. Look at the man who is wrecking his business, his health, and his family with strong drink. He would never pay this fearful price for a distant

gratification. The men who are living in the enjoyment of dishonest wealth to-day —of wealth for which they have given their honour, their peace, and their souls— would not have paid this fearful price for riches which should come in a distant day. The uncertainty of the future, the dimness of the distant prize, their own valuation of moral character, would have prevented the foolish and profane transaction. So it is with all sin. It overcomes through the hope, the assurance, of immediate gratification. Heaven is in the future; so is death; so is judgment; and so is God. These all at uncertain distances, while right before them, ready to their hand, is the price of iniquity, the wages of sin. They sell so cheap because they sell for cash. II. SOME THOUGHTS WHICH SHOULD SAVE A MAN HERE. 1. To-day is not all. If the man who, in the midst of his ill-gotten wealth, is now lying upon the bed of death, had thought of this bed in the far-off day of his temptation, the thought would have saved him. Out of it would have been born such wisdom as this: "The opportunity is most tempting. But I see a long future reaching out beyond it, and I cannot afford to blacken all this." Oh, take into your hearts this preservative thought—to-day is not all. There is a future coming—a future with its days and its years and its ages. A future with its glory, honour, and immortality. A future with its endless heaven, and its blessed and blessing Father God. Mortgage not this future. Sell it not for a temporary gratification. Throw it not into the mouth of a single hungry hour. 2. There are things more important than the gratification of present desire. Principle is better than prosperity. Some sacrifices you cannot afford to make for any results. There are things which you ought not to sell at any price. They are these—usefulness in the world, peace of conscience, purity of heart, the favour of God; a good life, which shall not blanch or quiver in a single nerve, when Death shall lay his hand upon it. 3. The sale of the birthright is irrevocable. There are thousands of the world's successful ones longing for peace and for happiness, who would give all they have in the world for the approval of conscience and the blessing of God. But it is too late. These things which they desire are the fruits of character; and, having bartered this, these sorrowful ones cannot have its fruits. Neither can tears buy these fruits. No one ever has sold, no one ever can sell, duty for a price, and keep happiness. (*S. S. Mitchell, D.D.*) *The profane exchange*:—The history of the wicked, as well as of the righteous, is useful. By their crimes we are cautioned; and we are warned by their miseries. Anxious for our welfare, the Scripture addresses our fear as well as our hope, and holds forth instances of Divine vengeance, as well as proofs of Divine mercy. I. Let us view Esau in his original state—and COMPARE YOUR PRIVILEGES WITH HIS PRIVILEGES. To stand supreme in the house of the patriarch Isaac was no trifling prerogative: his house was "the house of God, and the gate of heaven." To the birthright belonged pre-eminence over the other branches of the family. Such were the prospects of Esau. And what are yours? It is true, you were not born in the house of Isaac; but you have been brought forth in a Christian country in a "land the Lord careth for," where "the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." You have the Bible; you have Sabbaths; you have sanctuaries; you have ordinances; you have ministers; you have the throne of grace; you have the promise of the Holy Ghost: and all things appertaining to your everlasting happiness are now ready. You possess much; but all your present advantages are not to be compared with those glorious hopes to which you are called by the gospel. You have the prospect of becoming a "kind of first-fruits of His creatures": a birthright which comprehends a "better country" than Canaan, even heaven. But this pearl is not for the swine, who, ignorant of its value, tramples it under foot; but for those who, conscious of its incomparable worth, prefer it to everything else, and, like the wise merchant, are willing to sell all to buy it. These high advantages may be sacrificed. II. Let us therefore view Esau in the surrender of his privileges, and COMPARE YOUR SIN WITH HIS SIN. "For one morsel of meat he sold his birthright." It is obvious that the loss was voluntary and base. 1. It was voluntary. No one forced it from him—he sold it. And who compels you to abandon your hopes of heaven? Who forces you into perdition? You say that you live in a world of enticing objects; that the dominion of sense is strong; that it is not very easy to resist the impulse of the moment. But is it impossible to resist? Have not many overcome, though placed in the same circumstances, and possessed of the same nature with you? What is goodness untried? Have you not reason as well as appetite? Is not grace attainable by you? Is it not sufficient for you? 2. It was equally base. For what is the price of the birthright? An empire? A crown? A crown sparkles in the eye of

ambition: a throne is the highest pinnacle of human pride: nothing like it—but a despicable trifle, "one morsel of meat"—"a mess of pottage"—the dearest dish, says Bishop Hall, that was ever purchased, except the forbidden fruit. But I feel ready to dispute this. Are not you more than like him? Do not you surpass him in folly? For what do you sell the treasures of the soul and eternity, but a thing of nought, a fleeting indulgence, a false point of honour, an imaginary interest? Here is your eternal infamy and disgrace! "Ye have sold yourselves," says the prophet, "for nought." III. LET US CONSIDER ESAU IN HIS MISERY, AND COMPARE YOUR DOOM WITH HIS DOOM. Nothing could be more affecting than his expostulations, and his bitter cries, but to no purpose does he urge his petition or press his father to retract: the benediction is pronounced, and Isaac acquiesces in the decision of heaven. Are you disposed to pity him? Yea, rather, weep for yourselves. Your loss is inestimably greater than his loss. After all his disappointments he had something left, and could entertain himself with the diversions of the field; but your condition will be destitute of all resources. Sin unavoidably brings a man sooner or later to lamentation and regret. Let us also remark, that there is a repentance which is unavailing. Paul tells us of a "sorrow of the world which worketh death." The eyes which sin closes, eternity will open. But then grief comes too late. The blessing once lost, cannot be recovered. (*W. Jay.*) *Esau's sensuality and profanity*:—Esau was, undoubtedly, sensual, or addicted to gross carnal pleasures. His wild, roving character prepares us to find in him imperious passions and an unscrupulous will. The steady tradition of the Jews is that he was an abandoned profligate; and this is sufficiently borne out by what we read (Gen. xxvi. 34, 35). Again, Esau was profane; as, in truth, all sensual persons are. Show me a rake, and though an oath may never be heard to escape his lips, I will pronounce that man profane; for his sins belong to that class which, more than any other, eat out all fear of God from the human heart, and harden and petrify it into the most reckless godlessness. Esau's profanity sufficiently appears in the brief account of it we have in Gen. xxv. 32–34, and in the flippant levity with which he sold his birthright, clinching the transaction with an oath which he never meant to keep—thus consistently blending blasphemy and fraud. And the chartered treasure he sold was no commonplace one. It was a birthright not only to Canaan, but to all the privileges and distinguished honours of the Messianic people. It was a birthright, therefore, in which the spiritual interests of Esau's children, and children's children, were most vitally implicated. Of this matchless and marvellous honour, Esau flippantly said, under a passing sensation of hunger, "Behold I am at the point to die (which, as we have already said, was not true), and what profit shall this birthright do to me?" Well might the inspired historian add, "Thus Esau despised his birthright." A passing sense of hunger, which any common soldier would scorn or forget in the pursuit of honour; which the pettiest trader can forget in the eager pursuit of gain; which Esau himself would often despise in the keen urgency of the chase, was now, in his spiritual balance, to make the proudest birthright the world ever saw to kick the beam! What mattered it to profane Esau whether the blood of the chosen holy seed, or of a heathen predatory tribe, was at the time flowing in his veins? Thus the inspired writer has only too good reasons for affirming that Esau was both sensual and profane; and that it was these bad qualities that led him to barter away his birthright, yea, and to pour the utmost contempt upon it by weighing against it a paltry mess of lentile pottage. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Sensual and profane*:—Every gospel rejecter, as such, is both sensual and profane. He is sensual, for he is "a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God." He is profane, for he trifles year after year, though death's darts are flying around him, with the tremendous realities of duty and destiny. So sensual is he that "the pleasures of sin for a season" bulk larger in his eyes than "the pleasures" that are "for evermore." So profane is he that "he worships and serves the creature more than the Creator," whom he dethrones from his conscience and banishes from his heart. Do not cavil at the terms; for if you are still a gospel rejecter, the terms fit you; they mean you. One unbeliever may indignantly say, I am not sensual; another may say, I am not profane; no matter, your place lies somewhere between them; and to flee from one is just to fall into the other, cross and recross each other as you will. You do not need to be an abandoned profligate in order to be sensual: you do not need to be a blasphemer in order to be profane. If there is anything you prefer to God, to Christ, to a present salvation, you are both. And oh remember, that as any object, though only an inch square, if kept over the eye, is large enough to keep the

whole world of vision, and all its enjoyments, out of the mind, so a very trifling indulgence, clung to in spite of conscience, is large enough to keep the boundless tide of salvation out of your soul. Lovers of pleasures, beware! Oh, remember that "the pleasures of sin" will, ere long, be a phrase of greatly altered meaning. It has some meaning now; but ere long the tie, such as it is, that binds pleasure and sin will be in a large degree finally ruptured. There will be pleasure and there will be sin, but the great gulf will roll between. In the preponderating point of view, all the pleasure will be in heaven, but there will be no sin there; all the sin will be in woe, but there will be no pleasure there. (*Ibid.*) *The unhallowed bargain:*—I. ESAU'S SALE. 1. An instance of the foolish behaviour of men. (1) They will exchange the greatest blessings for the most paltry considerations. (2) They will yield up home, friends, happiness, for a moment's passion. Eternity is lost, that time may delight. 2. An instance of thoughtless words bringing serious realities. The wise man never speaks at random. The prudent is not overtaken to betray himself by the feelings of the moment. 3. An instance of the little value often set upon the most precious blessings. 4. An instance of the sensual prevailing over the ideal. 5. An instance of the irretrievable character of wrong choice. II. JACOB'S PURCHASE. 1. What he lost. (1) The confidence of his father. (2) Peace of mind. (3) The comforts of home. (4) The same confidence he had taken from his father. 2. What he gained. The birthright—but with certain penalties attached. It was got by fraud, and the curse of the fraud clung to it. Learn: 1. The folly of rash and hasty impulses. 2. The folly of trifling with religious matters. 3. The folly of dishonesty. (*Homilist.*) *The price of birthrights:*—There is only one price that can be had for a birthright, and that is "one morsel of bread." There are no higher figures; there are no better bargains. If he had received ten thousand worlds they would have constituted but one morsel of meat, when in the other hand there was a birthright. The devil has no more in his counter; the enemy has no more at the bank; he pays you all he can pay you when you sell your birthright—one gulp, one morsel, one flash of pleasure, and then hell! Nothing more is possible. Then why haggle with the old serpent the devil? Why ask for threehalfpence more for your soul? The whole transaction totals up to one morsel of meat. That is all he gave to the mother of the world. She and he struck the first bargain about birthrights. So it comes and goes, age after age, the same temptation, the same bargain, the same price, the same perdition! See if these things be not true in experience, in every degree of the circle of life's tragedy. You will have pleasure, you will gratify a passion: do it; having done it, what have you got in your hand, in your mouth? In the very indulgence of the passion you consume the compensation; when all is over there is nothing left but fire, shame, reproach, the sting of hell. This is inevitable; this is the law of Providence, the law of experience, the law of justice. The highest rights can be parted with. A man can get rid of his birthright. A man can deplete his soul of itself. One would think it would be impossible to part with anything but that which is material, commercial, arithmetical; but history—and may we not add personal consciousness?—testifies to the fact that we sell our souls. Why do we not say so to ourselves plainly and frankly? Why not confess the crime of suicide? This is the intolerable agony of remorse. If we had sold a hand we could make it up again in some form, but when we have sold the brain, the heart, the soul, how can we recover such birthrights? "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." That word "die" has never been explained. It must be terrible beyond the power of language to express, for God hath no pleasure in it; and if He of the infinite heart cannot make room for death, who shall describe it in words or figure it in sufficient symbols? There are possessions without which we could not be men, without which we could not begin to live, and without which we could not receive the ministries of nature. Is a man deaf? then he cannot receive the ministry of music. Is a man blind? then he is excluded from the ministry of light and colour and form and all that peculiarity of distributed magnitude which constitute the very apocalypse and wizardry of form. And you cannot represent to blindness what a beam of light is like. So you may have got rid of your religious sensitiveness, and now you may say about the hymn-book out of which you used to sing that you can find nothing in it. The book is not dead, but your spiritual sensitiveness is extinct. So with the Divine revelation. You were once accustomed to delight in it, you meditated therein day and night, and now any last critic who is dealing in the expectorations of critics who are already ashamed of their folly can tempt you to leave the Church. Has the Church changed? Not at all. Is the

Bible so revised as to have ejected its own wisdom and made room for some man's folly? No. Then what is the explanation of it? The birthright is gone, the soul's power of vision, the soul's responsiveness to appealing heavens and all the nurturing ministries of nature. You can exhaust yourselves. You have sold your birthright. What things are there that may be called birthrights? There are some birthrights that are moral, others that are intellectual, and others that are social. Surely we come into something; surely there is some law of inheritance and some law and discipline of succession. We cannot get rid of instinct, much older than logic; we cannot get rid of aspirations that have no words, God's own songs in the soul. Let us one and all take care lest we part with our birthright on any terms; and let us especially remember that whatever the terms may be in figures they total up into one morsel of meat in reality. It is a morsel, and it is one morsel, and it never can be more under any circumstances. What is the relation of Christ to these Esaus? Has Christianity anything to say to such poor merchantmen? Christianity first begins with a revelation of their folly; Christianity shows them that if a man should gain the whole world and lose his birthright, he has gained nothing, he has profited nothing, he is a loser by all the transaction. What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his birthright? (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Wisdom of temptation*:—The devil doth not know the hearts of men; but he may feel their pulse, know their temper, and so, accordingly, can apply himself. As the husbandman knows what seed is proper to sow in such soil; so Satan, finding out the temper, knows what temptation is proper to sow in such a heart. That way the tide of a man's constitution runs, that way the wind of temptation blows. Satan tempts the ambitious man with a crown, the sanguine man with beauty, the covetous man with a wedge of gold. He provides savoury meat, such as the sinner loves. (*T. Watson.*) *Dislike to sensuality*:—His (Antisthenes') contempt of all sensual enjoyment was expressed in his saying, "I would rather be mad than sensual." (*G. H. Lewes.*) *Ruined men*:—Ruined castles are picturesque, they add charm to a landscape—alas! we cannot say the same of ruined men. *Sin causing degradation*:—When the followers of Ulysses degraded themselves by the misuse of pleasures, until they fell to the level of the brutes, it is said that Circe, touching them with her wand, turned them into swine. She brought to the surface the inner ugliness; revealed the animal that ruled within. (*H. O. Mackey.*) *The soul bartered*:—Esau sold his inheritance for pottage. Lysimachus, besieged by the Goths, suffered so severely from thirst that he finally offered his kingdom to his foes for a supply of water. Having slaked his thirst, he cried: "Oh, wretched man, who for a little joy has lost so great a kingdom!" (*Preacher's Cabinet.*) *A bad bargain*:—Said a thoughtless young man to his sister under deep concern for her soul: "I'll give you five dollars if you will quit this nonsense and be yourself again." She took the paltry gift, lived without religion and died without hope. (*Ibid.*) **No place of repentance.**—*No reversal*:—I. THAT DESPISED AT ONE TIME IS SOUGHT AT ANOTHER. II. THE VALUE OF SPIRITUAL BLESSING DISCOVERED WHEN UNATTAINABLE. The habit forms the character. Rejection becomes permanent, *e.g.*, an icicle a foot long is formed drop by drop. So repeated indifference forms the permanent state in which it becomes impossible to seek a blessing. 1. Warning here to the indifferent, rash, profane; *e.g.*, Saul offering sacrifice and losing a kingdom. 2. Warning to the hardened. An old man said, concerning religion, "There was a time, sir, when I might have turned, it is no use now. I am past even thinking about it." 3. A warning to procrastinators. There are those who believe, but who will not act. Fable of the angel and hermit who constantly saw an old man adding from the wood to his bundle of sticks, and who could not lift and carry it. 4. See your birthright and take the Bible as your possession. Make it, as Hedley Vicars did, by placing a Bible on his table in his quarters, the sign of allegiance to Christ. If this were the first time some heard, there might be hope of some influence being brought to bear. Many times heard, and hardening following, the last opportunity will come when the chance of repentance will be gone. That time is not come if a penitent spirit is now possessed. Christ will grant forgiveness to every penitent soul. (*H. De Lynne.*) *Things we never get over*:—There is an impression in almost every man's mind that somewhere in the future there will be a chance where he can correct all his mistakes. Live as we may, if we only repent in time, God will forgive us, and then all will be as well as though we had never committed sin. My discourse shall come in collision with that theory. I shall show you that there is such a thing as unsuccessful repentance; that there are things done wrong that always stay wrong, and for them you may seek some place of repentance,

but never find it. 1. Belonging to this class of irrevocable mistakes is the folly of a misspent youth. We may look back to our college days and think how we neglected chemistry, or geology, or botany, or mathematics. We may be sorry about it all our days. Can we ever get the discipline or the advantage that we would have had had we attended to those duties in early life? A man wakes up at forty years of age and finds that his youth has been wasted, and he strives to get back his early advantages. Does he get them back? "Oh!" he says, "if I could only get those times back again, how I would improve them!" You will never get them back. When you had a boy's arms, and a boy's eyes, and a boy's heart, you ought to have attended to those things. A man says at fifty years of age: "I do wish I could get over these habits of indolence." When did you get them? At twenty or twenty-five years of age. You cannot shake them off. They will hang to you to the very day of your death. I said to a minister of the gospel last Sabbath night at the close of the service: "Where are you preaching now?" "Oh!" he says, "I am not preaching. I am suffering from the physical effects of early sin. I can't preach now; I am sick." A consecrated man he now is, and he mourns bitterly over early sins; but that does not arrest their bodily effects. The simple fact is, that men and women often take twenty years of their life to build up influences that require all the rest of their life to break down. When you tell me that a man is just beginning life, I tell you that he is just closing it. The next fifty years will not be of as much importance to him as the first twenty. 2. In this same category of irrevocable mistakes I put all parental neglect. We begin the education of our children too late. By the time they get to be ten or fifteen we wake up to our mistakes and try to eradicate this bad habit of the child; but it is too late. That parent who omits in the first ten years of the child's life to make an eternal impression for Christ, never makes it. The child will probably go on with all the disadvantages which might have been avoided by parental faithfulness. When I was in Chamouni, Switzerland, I saw in the window of one of the shops a picture that impressed my mind very much. It was a picture of an accident that occurred on the side of one of the Swiss mountains. A company of travellers, with guides, went up some very steep places—places which but few travellers attempted to go up. They were, as all travellers are there, fastened together with cords at the waist, so that if one slipped the rope would hold him—the rope fastened to the others. Passing along the most dangerous point, one of the guides slipped, and they all slipped down the precipice; but after awhile one more muscular than the rest struck his heels into the ice and stopped; but the rope broke, and down, hundreds and thousands of feet, the rest went. And so I see whole families bound together by ties of affection, and in many cases walking on slippery places of worldliness and sin. The father knows it and the mother knows it, and they are bound all together. After awhile they begin to slide down, steeper and steeper, and the father becomes alarmed and he stops, planting his feet on the "Rock of Ages." He stops, but the rope breaks, and those who were tied fast to him by moral and spiritual influences once, go over the precipice. Oh! there is such a thing as coming to Christ soon enough to save ourselves, but not soon enough to save others. 3. In this category of irrevocable mistakes I place also the unkindness done to the departed. When I was a boy, my mother used to say to me sometimes: "De Witt, you will be sorry for that when I am gone." Oh, if we could only get back those unkind words; those unkind deeds. If we could only recall them; but you cannot get them back. You might bow down over the grave of that loved one, and cry, and cry. The white lips would make no answer. 4. There is another sin that I place in the class of irrevocable mistakes, and that is lost opportunities of getting good. Esau has sold his birthright, and there is not wealth enough in the treasure-houses of heaven to buy it back again. What does that mean? It means that if you are going to get any advantage out of this Sabbath-day, you will have to get it before the hand wheels around on the clock to twelve to-night. It means that though other chariots may break down or drag heavily, this one never drops the brake, and never ceases to run. It means that while at other feasts the cup may be passed to us, and we may reject it, and yet after awhile take it, the cup-bearers to this feast never give us but one chance at the chalice, and rejecting that, we shall "find no place for repentance, though we seek it carefully with tears." 5. There is one more class of sins that I put in this category of irrevocable offences, and that is lost opportunity of usefulness. There comes a time when you can do a good thing for Christ. It comes only once. Your business partner is a proud man. In ordinary circumstances say to him: "Believe in Christ," and he will say: "You

mind your business and I'll mind mine." But there has been affliction in the household. His heart is tender. He is looking around for sympathy and solace. Now is your time. Speak, or for ever hold your peace. There is a time in farm life when you plant the corn and when you sow the seed. Let that go by, and the farmer will wring his hands while other husbandmen are gathering in their sheaves. When an opportunity for personal repentance or of doing good passes away, you may hunt for it, you cannot find it. You may fish for it, it will not take the hook. You may dig for it, you cannot bring it up. I stand before those who have a glorious birthright. Esau's was not so rich as yours. Sell it once and you sell it for ever. The world wants to buy it. Satan wants to buy it. Listen for a moment to these brilliant offers, and it is gone. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *No remedy*:—In the action of every natural law there is a point up to which transgression is punished with a lenient hand that has in it provision for reparation upon repentance and reformation; but beyond that point you come to a line of facts where it makes no difference how sorry you feel, nor what you do, there is no remedy. There is a point beyond which violations of natural law involve suffering that is absolutely permanent. Our children understand this in respect to some things. A child, before it has attained any considerable age, knows that though he may fall down three or four stairs without serious injury, it cannot fall down a precipice three or four hundred feet and survive. If we go up a step higher we come to those silent, unwritten, unthought-of laws, that connect us one with another, in families, in societies, and in states, that are observed with benefit, and violated with regrets and penalties. A man may do many mean, wicked, and cruel things, and get over it. But there are some things which, if a man does once, and is found out, where social laws prevail, he will never recover from as long as he lives. Men may break down under trust and confidence in social connections, and never be able to build up again a state of things that will lead men to trust them. The same is true in economic laws, upon which business and property depend. Not a man lives that does not make mistakes in business. But some mistakes a man may make to-day, and correct to-morrow, and not seem to be a loser in consequence of them. If a man drives a heavily laden wain along the road, and a side-board cracks, he goes on, and the accident does not make much difference; but if an axletree breaks, it makes a great deal of difference. As when a ship is at sea without a forge with which to make a new crank—if the crank breaks, it is broken for the voyage; so in business there are some things that a man cannot do twice, for the reason that the first time kills him. The same is true of moral laws, or those that regulate influence, position, trust, among men. There are some violations of moral law that only limit and hinder men's comfort and usefulness. There are some violations of moral law that put a man out of joint with society, but not so but that the disaster in time may be remedied. And there are some violations of moral law that destroy a man hopelessly, so that there can be no place found for repentance, though it be sought carefully with tears. In each of these departments we come to a line on one side of which repentance will work change and benefit, and on the other side of which it will have no influence whatsoever. Consider, then, some of the things which repentance can but very little change, or change not at all. 1. First, there are bitter injuries that we inflict upon others, which no man can follow after, nor in any wise change. And yet, we are responsible for them. With your tongue you may hew down a man's reputation, and the things you have said will torment him to the very end of his days. You may afterwards see your error, you may go to the man and confess the wrong, and you may go to those to whom you have spoken ill of him, and say, "I have learned contrary things; I was false: and now I speak the truth to his credit"; but you cannot hunt slanderers. You might as well try to hunt all the flies that are abroad, or all the mosquitoes that covet your blood, in summer. The man that once lets loose these flying, stinging insects, may be as sorry as he pleases, but his repentance will not remedy the evil. 2. Parallel with these, although differing from them, are those things by which men wound the hearts of those whom they should shield. Your anger may sting venomously. Your cruel pride may do a whole age's work in a day. You cannot take back the injuries that you have done to those whose hearts lie throbbing next to yours. Ah! when winter has frozen my heliotropes, it makes no difference that the next morning thaws them out. There lie the heliotropes—a black, noisome heap; and it is possible for you to chill a tender nature so that no thawing can restore it. You may relent, but frost has been there, and you cannot bring back freshness and fragrance to the blossom. It is a terrible thing for a man to have the power of

poisoning the hearts of others, and yet carry that power carelessly. He cannot find place for repentance, though he seeks it carefully with tears. 4. You may have injured, defrauded, and even betrayed men in their worldly estate, and in some cases it will be in your power to make reparation; but in many cases it will not be in your power to make reparation. And here is one of those things that you do not know anything about. It is as if a man should amuse himself by sitting in a window of his house, and shooting arrows into the street, without troubling himself to see whom they smote. He could not tell whom he hit, or what mischief he wrought. Now thousands of men are dealing in life in such ways that they shoot arrows of misfortune at their fellow-men. Men practise what is called fraud; but they do not watch the results of their fraudulent deeds, and they do not know anything about them. I do not doubt that many of every man's troubles and misfortunes may be traced to his own conduct; but I am convinced that a large proportion of the misfortunes and troubles that afflict society may be traced to the heedless, dishonest, and wicked ways of worldly men. Now, when a man is brought to a condition in which he sees that he has done wrong, and says, "I have organised and carred on a business whose effects are pernicious, I am sorry I went into it, and I will quit it at once," he may quit it, but he cannot wipe out its effects. They are irreparable. It is a fearful thing for a man to stand on debatable ground, where the question of right and wrong is held in perpetual suspense. Under such circumstances a man may be spending his whole life in the production of mischiefs to be revealed to him hereafter, when he will have no power to recall them. 5. And this leads me still more particularly and solemnly to say that men stand connected with each other in methods that lead to the most awful destruction. As an apple, touched with rot, will, simply by lying its cheek alongside of the glowing, blushing cheek of a sound apple, cause that sound apple to decay; so it is in the power of a man, if his morals are tainted, to damage the morals of another man merely by being with him. He is your disciple till he is drawn into evil; but the moment he is fascinated by it he ceases to be your disciple. Suppose I should preach the gospel in some gambling saloon of New York, and suppose a man should come out convicted of his wickedness, and confess it before God, and pray that he might be forgiven. Forgiveness might be granted to him, so far as he was individually concerned. But suppose he should say, "O God, not only restore to me the joys of salvation, but give me back the mischief that I have done, that I may rule it out." Why, there was one man that shot himself: what are you going to do for him? A young man came to Indianapolis, when I was pastor there, on his way to settle in the West. He was young, and very self-confident. While there, he was robbed, in a gambling saloon, of fifteen hundred dollars—all that he had. He begged to be allowed to keep enough to take him home to his father's house, and he was kicked out into the street. It led to his suicide. I know the man that committed the foul deed. He used to walk up and down the street. Oh, how my soul felt thunder when I met him! If anything lifts me up to the top of Mount Sinai, it is to see one man wrong another. Now suppose this man should repent? Can he ever call back that suicide? Can he ever carry balm to the hearts of the father and mother and brothers and sisters of his unfortunate victim? Can he ever wipe off the taint and disgrace that he has brought on the escutcheon of that family? No repentance can spread over that. And yet how many men there are that are heaping up such transgressions! (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Lost blessings*:—Some blessings which, when lost, are lost for ever. 1. Opportunities for an education. 2. Purity. Sin may be forgiven, but the memory remains. We can have absolute purity only once. 3. Means of grace. We may improve the present, but the means unimproved in the past are for ever lost. 4. Opportunities for doing good. Present work will not make good past neglect. 5. The blessings of a Christian home in childhood. 6. A soul finally lost. There is a time beyond which there is no redemption. The time will come when you will seek these blessings with tears, but it will be too late—for ever too late. (*W. M. Hamma, D.D.*) *No going back*:—There is an old fairy tale about a knight who was riding along a dangerous road. It was dark and lonely, and there were many wild beasts and robbers along the way. So he thought he would turn back, and see if he could not find another road, which would be less dark and dangerous. But when he turned and looked behind, what did he see? All the road that he had ridden on had disappeared, and at his horse's heels there was a gulf, so deep that he could not see to the bottom. And so it is in our life. There is no possibility of going back in it. We can never undo what we have done. We use

each moment as it comes, either well or ill, and then it is gone, and we can never recall it. *Irretrievable loss*:—I once had for a brief companionship a sweet friend, a relative, on a visit where I was residing. We used to go out rowing together. She had a way of dallying with her hand in the water over the side of the boat. One time she lost all the rings off from her fingers in an instant. Out of sight of course hopelessly they fell to the bottom. But whenever we rowed across that place again she would gaze restlessly over the edge, trying to search the very lowest depths of the lake. I have even seen her suddenly bare her arm, as if she had caught a gleam of the jewels down in among the weeds, and was going to grasp after them yet! It is a great mockery, this clutching after youth and hope and joy and vanished ambition, when one had come to be an elderly and weather-beaten man. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *A bitter wail*:—How bitter is the wail of the mighty Mirabeau, "If I had but character, if I had but been a good man, if I had not degraded my life by sensuality, and my youth by evil passion, I could have saved France!" Many a man has felt the same; he has clipped his own wings, he has suffered to be shorn away the sunny locks of the Nazarite who once lay weeping upon his shoulders, and wherein would have lain his strength. *Lost opportunities*:—A famed German preacher tells that he began life as assistant to a careless old minister. Often he saw the grey-headed man pacing sadly up and down the garden, and overheard him saying, "Oh, that God would give me back my past years!" (*J. Wells, M.A.*) *Esau's tears*:—Those tears of Esau, the sensuous, wild, impulsive man, almost like the cry of some "trapped creature," are amongst the most pathetic in the Bible. (*A. B. Davidson, LL.D.*) *A life lost for eighteenpence!*—Some time ago a ship went down, having struck a hidden reef. Fortunately, unlike the sad case of the *Teuton* the other day, there was time enough to get the passengers and crew into the boats, which safely held off from the foundering vessel. Just before the last boat started, the captain and mate, having seen that all were safe, stood upon the gangway ready to leave the ship. She was fast sinking—no time to be lost. The mate said to the captain, "I have left my purse below; let me go and get it." "Man," replied the other, "you have no time for that; jump at once." "Just a moment, captain—I can easily get it"; and away the mate rushed below. But in that moment the ship went creeping down. I hear the gurgling flood! The captain has barely time to save himself, when, swirling in the awful vortex, the vessel disappears! By and by the body of the mate was found, and in his stiffened hand was tightly grasped the fatal purse. When the purse was opened, what do you think it contained? Eighteenpence! And for that paltry sum he risked and lost his life.

Vers. 18–24. **The mount that might be touched.**—*Sinai and Zion*:—I. CHRISTIANITY IS A SPIRITUAL, NOT A MATERIAL, DISPENSATION. "The mount that might be touched"—a palpable mountain: the words indicate that the religion thereon proclaimed was a mass of ritual, legal service, and physical endurance; and not that spiritual surrender, and inner life of holiness, essentially belonging to the gospel. The apostle having elaborated this idea, shows that Christians have left behind them the barren Arabian mount, and in approaching God have increased the spirituality of their religion. II. THOUGH CHRISTIANITY IS SPIRITUAL IN ITS NATURE, IT EMPLOYS MATERIAL FORMS AS ADJUNCTS. Sinai has given place to Zion. We have our material forms, but they are subordinate, not primary: bodies, not souls: servants, not lords. III. SINAI AND ZION ARE ONLY MARKS OF PROGRESS, NOT FINAL DESTINATIONS. The home is further onward. Our past victories are only earnests of a universal conquest. Lessons: 1. Privilege is the measure of responsibility. 2. There is no limit to progress in love and knowledge. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The sensuous and the spiritual*:—All things are capable of being intensified by contrast. There is no colour so bright but it may be made to look doubly so, by placing it by the side of its opposite. There is no beauty so exquisite but it may be made to appear more beautiful, by nearness to the unlovely and deformed. We should not know half the cheeriness of the day, if it were not for the gloom of night. There are some sculptured figures in St. Peter's, at Rome, which are reduced, to the eye of the beholder, to a third of their real size, by the vastness of everything around them. One half, and sometimes more, of the pleasure of the things that please us comes of the sorrows we have known. Whose are the eyes that greet the light of the morning with the greatest eagerness? Surely, the eyes of those who have watched all the darkness of the night. Whose rest is the sweetest, if not theirs who have toiled the hardest through the day? Who were they whose shout in

heaven was like the sound of many waters, as they said: "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb"? It was the voice of them which had come out of great tribulation. And who was the man who seemed best to understand, and most to revel in, the freedom and love of the gospel, as a system of salvation? Why, it was the man who had most heartily yielded himself up to the whole influence of the former dispensation, and most conscientiously kept his neck in its yoke. And what was the spirit of the first dispensation, as contained in these words? Is it not this?—It was sensuous; it was artificial; it was based on fear. Whilst the great and blessed character of the second is that it is spiritual, it is real, and it is based on love. I. FROM BEGINNING TO END, JUDAISM WAS AN APPEAL TO SENSE. It was God's most merciful accommodation of His revelation of Himself and of His will to the necessities of man's weakness and ignorance. Sinai was designed to be, and was, a splendid Divine answer to a few of the deepest questions of the whole human soul—"Is there a God? And have we anything to do with Him? And what? And will He dwell with us here, upon the earth?" The true answer, Divinely written, at the first, upon the heart and conscience and intelligence of man; ay, written, too, on every leaf of nature's living page, in golden letters of the sunlight, in silver gleamings from the moon and stars, sharp graven on the mountain edges, on azure page of heaven, had faded from man's heart and eye and ear. "Is there a God?" said the restless, troubled heart of man. And so, in His own time and way, God gave the answer Himself; and that answer was Sinai. Now look! Yon cloud! It is the robe of Deity. Doubt you? Then hark! And see! Those thunders and sharp lightning flashes are the tramping of His heralds, and the flashing of their spears. Only a storm, say you? Then hark again! What warrior blast is that? So piercing shrill, that, like a steeled sword, it darts through every heart—a blade of fear—and makes the stoutest tremble like a leaf. And then, more awful still, a voice, a voice of words—but not an earthly voice, of human words. The voice of very God. And so God answered these great questions of the human heart. There it was! A great, sensuous thing, that could not but make its own impression on those who saw and heard it, and, through them, might gain the ear and heart of posterity and all the world. And by as much as what we see impresses us more deeply than what we only hear, by so much was this people's heart more deeply touched than by any simpler revelation of the truth. But because it was sensuous, it was artificial, unreal. As an allegory wraps up a truth in beauteous, but concealing folds; as a picture reveals the countenance of your friend, and yet is not himself, and cannot be more than a miserable substitute for himself; so, all this was not God; it was not even the likeness of God, it was but the shadow of God. And so again, because it was sensuous and artificial, it was terrible. It is of no use to appeal to the reason of a child, or of a savage, or of a man utterly under the dominion of his senses; you appeal to what is not, or to what has lost its power to act. You must, then, appeal to some lower part of his nature; to his self-interest, if he is capable of perceiving it, if not, to his fear. Now what was it that made it necessary for God to reveal Himself and His will to the Jews in a sensuous and artificial way? It was because they were not susceptible of the higher way. They were children, and wanted to see in order to believe. Ay, they were children morally, subject to great temptation, and God wanted them for their own sake to obey Him, and to worship Him; and so, in the first instance, He laid the foundations for their obedience in terrors. He bound them to Himself by the bands of fear, and holding them thus He then, in the after history of the nation, began to draw them to Himself with the cords of love, the bands of a man. So they came "to the mount," &c; to the sensuous, the artificial, the terrible. II. Now, in the second place, let us view the contrast, in all its particulars, which marks THE DISPENSATION UNDER WHICH WE ARE PLACED. 1. All is spiritual. At the first, indeed, it pleased God so far to accommodate His ways to the wants of humanity in this respect, as to give us the truth in a sensible, bodily form. "When the fulness of time was come," &c. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," &c. And so there was enacted, down here on the earth, once for all, the splendid mystery of the incarnation and the crucifixion and the resurrection. Jesus Christ is the full and complete answer to all those questions that man ever had asked or ever could ask about himself, and God, and all other spiritual facts. But after he had looked for a little while at the new Temple, and the new Priest, and the new law, and the new sacrifice—long enough to feel and see the Divine splendour that was in it, without fully comprehending what it was—it was taken up boldly into the heavenly, that men might

know to the full what it was that had been amongst them. But mark you! When it was done, there was not a vestige of the sensuous left. The Holy of Holies was an empty shrine; the very temple was suffered to be thrown down so that not one stone was left upon another; ay, Jerusalem itself, the centre of the whole of the previous system, was desecrated, and has ever since been heathen ground; and the very Jews, the chosen people, the medium of the former revelation, ceased to be a nation, and were scattered among the nations of the earth. And what, then, have we in its place? We have a history, a record, a book, and nothing else. That is to say, we have the truth in its purest, simplest form. The world a temple, thrown open to all mankind; worship possible everywhere, at every time. Would you see God now? Look on the face of Christ, in the mirror of the book, and that is all that you can have. Would you go to God now? Kneel where you are, and He is there, to hear you and to bless. 2. All is real now. There is no exaggeration. Nothing artificial. Christ is the express image of the Father. I do not say that it is the whole truth about God, that we shall come to have some day, when this veil of flesh has been dissolved; but it is all that we can bear. 3. It is as loving and as winning as Sinai was terrible. It makes no appeal to our fears; only to our reason and our love. He is the tender Shepherd of the sheep, come to seek the lost. He is the Father's plaintive pleading with His rebellious child. He is the outstretched hand of God to every repenting sinner. He is the utterer of a grand amnesty to all the world who will receive it. He lays His Cross athwart the threatening law, and takes away its curse. He is the rebuke of all men's guilt-born fears about God, and all their hard thoughts of Him. In a word, He is the incarnate love of God pleading with sinful man. (*G. W. Conder.*) *Man's place is Christianity*:—I. MAN'S PLACE IN CHRISTIANITY IS RELATED MORE TO THE SPIRITUAL THAN THE MATERIAL. II. MAN'S PLACE IN CHRISTIANITY IS RELATED TO THE ATTRACTIVE RATHER THAN THE TERRIBLE. This subject presents a motive for—1. Gratitude. 2. Catholicity. Heaven is not a sect. 3. Self-inquiry. "Are we come" to this system? How do we "come" to it? Not by mere birth, not by profession, but by a new creation in Christ Jesus. (*Homilist.*) **Ye are come unto mount Sion.**—*The privileges and the duties of believers*:—I. What are the PECULIAR PRIVILEGES of the members of Christ's Church? 1. The first and greatest, because the foundation of all the rest is, union with Christ. 2. Association with the whole body of the faithful. 3. The right to the heavenly inheritance. II. If the PRIVILEGES of all who "are come unto Mount Zion" are thus precious and ennobling, their DUTIES are proportionate. 1. Correspondent to the first-named privilege there is the duty of loyalty to Christ. 2. Correspondent to the second privilege, there is the duty of love to the brethren. 3. It is the duty of the members of Christ's Church, as heirs of the celestial inheritance, to set their hearts and hopes on heaven. (*J. M. McCulloch, D.D.*) *The heavenly life*:—The whole chapter shows that this is the nature of a picture motive. It is an influence rather than a knowledge. And yet how shall one feel influence except through the reason, or through knowledge? But it is the way of the highest instruction to enter through the imagination, and come to the reason in that way. That is the genius, certainly, of the New Testament, in its description of the life above—the life that is to come. It never defines. It seeks not so much to impart knowledge to the reader, as we should call it in this life, as to produce in his mind certain states of feeling. Unskilled men writing, without inspiration, of the new city beyond, of the great after-life, would have fallen into the mistake of attempting to give in revealed distinctness and accuracy things which by the very terms of our existence we cannot comprehend accurately and distinctly. Not so the inspired teachers. They poetised heaven; they dramatised the future; they gave to man conceptions through his imagination—and not aimlessly, but because through the imagination the sympathies of our nature, hope, joy, trust, aspiration, and the rest, could all be reached. What men need is to be stirred up, and then to be quieted. Intensity and quietude are harmonious in the higher spiritual life. What we want is some motive that will propel us along the sphere of our present life. We do not so much need to know what is to be the daily bread, converse, and activities of the other life; but we do need to know that there is One who has promised us personal sensibility and personal identity there, and that we shall know and be known, love and be loved. We do need to know that heaven is more than a compensation for earth. We do need to know that our being here contributes to immortality, glory, all that belongs to the act of rising into a pure spiritual form and condition where that which is Divine remains and continues in activity. To this Revelation and all the

Pauline teachings tend. To this the writings of the unknown author of the Book of Hebrews tend. They give us an inside revelation which reveals nothing. "Well," say men, "what kind of a revelation is that?" When the poor wayfarer from old plantation life, hiding himself by day, and then beginning to live at night, pursued his weary way toward the north, he had but one guide and that was the polar star. That star said nothing to him. It shed no warmth on him. He did not know its contents. He knew nothing about it. But it was a star that, when he looked upon it, directed him to where liberty was. From that bright point in the far north he gathered zeal, so that in the darkness, through forest, through fen, across streams, over mountains, pressed by adversaries, with hounds baying on his track, he sped on his way. It was the inspiration of that star that supported him, though it revealed nothing to him but this: "You will be free." So there is no real description of the future life given to us in the New Testament except this: It is more grand than anything that you can conceive. It hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive it. Nor can man's capacity compass it and take it all in. Nevertheless, what there is in human notions that inspires us with a sense of grandeur we apply to it. Now, the imagination teaches men in such a way that if you accept the description of heaven simply as a picture or vision, it is full of inspiration and hope. When you say that it shall be glorious, it is a good deal; but the moment you attempt to tell what the glory is, it is nothing at all. To say "we shall reign," is a good deal; but to undertake to tell what reigning is spoils the whole thing. "I love you" fills the soul and makes it vibrate like a harp, but undertake to explain what the love is, and it is turned to ashes at once. Nevertheless, the emotion is real, and the highest and most potent of our feelings are those which do not suffer themselves to be touched. The most glorious things in us are silent, and will not submit to rude handling, dwelling as they do in the centre of the ineffable. How much greater, better, and more untranslatable by mortal knowledge than physical existence is the realm of love! It is all right if you do not want to know what it is and how it works; but the moment you undertake to philosophise about it, its character is changed. The realm of purity is glorious so long as you do not attempt to analyse it; but you may as well bid it good-bye if you commence to reason about it. There are, then, some lessons to be derived from this. Having thrown off the peril of misinterpretation, there are certain great truths that we may deduce from it without resorting to the curiosity-monger's process—without attempting to anatomise heaven and deal with it scientifically. There are certain elements that it was meant we should derive from the pictures of it, and that, if we consider them aright, may be of exceeding great comfort to us in our Christian life. If it be true that we are to live again; if it be true that we are living here that we may go forward and live in a higher state, then the grandeur of the life that now is out of sight. You cannot tell by the earlier condition of things what their later states are to be. You cannot tell by the bud what the inflorescence is to be. You cannot tell by the flower what the fruit is to be. We cannot understand human life by looking at what it has yet come to under the influence of physical economy. In this life many are discouraged; but let a man maintain integrity under all circumstances and in all conditions, let him always and everywhere act with simplicity and fidelity, let him ally himself to those great qualities which God has revealed to be the centre-current of the universe, and all will be well with him. Love works no ill to one's neighbour; God's law is love; "Thou shalt love" is the command; and let a man conform himself to that central law of the universe, and then let death plant him, and we will run the risk of his coming up in the other life. And that ought to be a consolation to a man who in this world is poor and inconspicuous, and, as helpless amid the sweep of human affairs as a last year's leaf on the current of the Amazon. There are multitudes of such men, to whom a view like that which I have been presenting should carry not only comfort, but a great deal of instruction. Consider another fact in this connection—namely, that in this life the things which make the most ado are not the things which are the most important. There is nothing on earth noisier than a storm beating on the shore, and yet what does it do? It is bred in the desert sea. It lashes itself into a useless rage. It thunders in the heavens, and shakes the earth, and comes pouring down, and is broken into a million globules on the immovable rocks. By-and-by its wrath ceases, it smooths its blow, and the sea is tranquil again. What has happened? Nothing. Not a single thing has been done. A man's life goes thundering on, and the things which are most in the eyes of men are often of the least

possible importance. The rage of nations, the march of armies, the rise of inconspicuous tribes to power, and their deliquescence and fading away again—these things seem great to men; but they come and go, and the earth is no whit changed, and men are no whit changed. So the things which are actually worth chronicling, and which are being chronicled, for ever and for ever, are the things which no man hears or sees. This great empty scroll above our heads is God's workshop, and He is writing there the history of time and the world. The scroll itself shall shrivel and depart; but the things that are written on that scroll shall never change. A man is not what he seems. This life is not what it appears to be. That which men call nothing—the great invisible realm—is the power which was declared by the apostle to be real. It is the things which are not that bring to naught the things that are. There is dominion in imagination, or in faith, to the man that knows how to avail himself of it. I remark, also, that if these views of the other life, of the invisible, uninterpreted, and uninterpretable life, of the life of joy and power and grandeur which is to come—but which we cannot define any more closely than this—if these views be true, then how beautiful are the conceptions which are in the nature of comfort to men in the decays that take place in this state of existence! I have always been very much struck by that illustration of Paul's which is contained in the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians. He is speaking about the act of dying. And that which is true of the mere act of death is just as true of every other relation that terminates, or of any other composition which is analysed and goes back to its elements again. He says there are two sides to this matter. You cannot stand in the time-world and see what you will see in the world to come. You only see corruption, you only see dishonour, you only see weakness in the natural body. But then there is another side. There is the way in which God sees things, and there is the way in which the heavenly host see them. But what is to be seen on that side? Why, incorruption, glory, power, a spiritual body. If you look up at the bottom of the coffin from the earth side it is all sad and solemn. If you look down upon the coffin from the Divine side it is all radiant, triumphant, joyful. Those that I have known, whose virtues I have dwelt upon, and whose nature has shed great beauty in life, I love to follow, step by step, as they go down toward death. My faith rejoices in their advance till their voices fail out of my ear, and till their faces are hidden from me, because they have gone to live in Zion and before God. Wherefore comfort one another with words: Strengthen each other by the way. Sing and rejoice, knowing that, bright as is any experience here, it is but a twilight experience till the day shall dawn and the sun shall arise upon your souls. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The Church likened to a mountain*:—1. For the height of it. A mountain is higher than the ordinary earth. The Church is high, it is above (Gal. iv. 26), and they that be of the Church must carry high and regal minds. We must leave earth, and mount up in our affections into heaven; we must seek the things that be above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. 2. The Church is compared to a mountain: for the security of it. 3. For the difficulty of ascending to it. A man may not go up a high hill, but it must cost him pains, sweat and labour; so it is a laborious thing to get to heaven. 4. For the immobility of it. The Church is as Mount Zion that standeth fast for ever, and cannot be removed. Happy are they that be of the Church. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *Within sight of it, but cannot see it*:—Crossing from Belfast to Greenock by the night-boat late one autumn, after several attempts to sleep, I came upon deck soon after the steamer had entered the Clyde, and stood for a time in conversation with the mate, a true son of Erin. A dense haze prevented us from seeing far beyond the vessel, and I was disappointed in not being able to get a view of the coast. Thinking we were still at sea, I remarked to the man at the helm: "I suppose we shall soon be in sight of land?" when, judge of my surprise, the following rejoinder was tendered in reply: "Sure, and we're within sight of it now, but ye can't see it!" More than a little amused with the paradox, I thanked my Hibernian friend, and waited till the hills, purple with heather and crowned with the first signs of winter, rewarded my anxious gaze. I knew that with the first beams which should penetrate the mist the land would be visible, so I kept looking, and had not long to wait. The landscape, aglow with a thousand blended charms as the sun chased away the gloom of night and the mist of the early dawn, soon stood revealed in all its beauty, and forms a memory to be fondly cherished. (*V. J. Charlesworth.*)

The heavenly Jerusalem.—*The heavenly Jerusalem*:—I. THE STATE OF HEAVEN AS A GLORIOUS CITY. "Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." This is that city—1. Where the most glorious display of Divine wisdom

appears, everything conducted with exquisite policy. 2. Where omnipotent goodness operates at large, and deals her favours with the richest profusion (Psa. xvi. 11). 3. Where the King of Glory Himself dwells, and everything declares His more immediate presence (Rev. vii. 15). 4. Where the laws, manners, and employments of the inhabitants most resemble and are most worthy of God. 5. In fine, this is that city which is the first production of the grand Architect of nature, and whither we are at last conveyed; but not till duly prepared for it (Rev. xxi. 27; xxii. 14). See a fine description of this city (Rev. xxi. 10-22). And of this city, all real Christians are represented as members, even while they are in this world. II. OUR ACCESSION OR RELATION TO IT. There is a certain figure made use of by our Saviour and His apostles, a figure that makes futurity present and realises the distant glories of immortality (Matt. v. 3; Eph. ii. 6). And the text says, "Ye are come";—"already come," &c. The Christian religion suggests particular grounds for this sublime representation, such as no other system can exhibit. For example, we have—1. The express promise of God to put every persevering Christian into the possession of Mount Zion above (Rev. xxii. 14; ii. 7, 10). 2. It is farther ascertained from the mediation of Christ, the grand end of which see Heb. ii. 10. 3. The supreme power of the Redeemer (Matt. xxviii. 18), which is equal to remove every difficulty, subdue every enemy, supply every necessity, and exalt to the highest dignity. III. OUR RELATION TO THE HEAD AND TO THE MEMBERS OF THIS CITY. 1. Ye are come to God, the Judge of all, angels and men; the knowledge of God, His nature, unity, perfections, providence (Eph. v. 8). The worship and service of God (1 Thess. i. 9). To His favour (Rom. v. 1). His family and household (Gal. iv. 6, 7). His presence; an event so certain that the apostle at once transports the Christian beyond the grave, to that Being who is the soul's portion, her centre and final happiness. 2. To Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant: in and through whom both parts of the covenant are reciprocally conveyed and transmitted. Blessings from God to man, through Christ; and duties from man to God, acceptable through Christ. Come to the Mediator, so as to be united to Him; participate a new nature through Him (2 Cor. v. 17), rely on His sacrifice, obey His commandments, and, according to the aforementioned figure, to be taken by Him at last to the city of God (Rev. iii. 21). 3. To an innumerable company of angels. Good men in this world have, indisputably, various connections with those superior beings; they are fellow-subjects and servants (Rev. xxii. 9). Protected by them (Psa. xxxiv. 7). Minister to them (Heb. i. 14). Conduct them to heaven (Luke xvi. 22). As public heralds, proclaim their Lord's approach (Matt. xxiv. 31). The apostle here anticipates our incorporation with those happy spirits in glory (Rev. vii. 9-12). 4. To the spirits of just men made perfect. We are one community, of the same spirit and disposition, loving the same God, enjoying the same felicity, differing only in degree. They are got home, we are going; they have got the prize, we are wrestling for it. 5. To the general assembly and Church of the firstborn (Rom. viii. 29; Col. i. 15-18). It may respect themselves; they are the chiefs the excellent ones, the firstborn. Written in heaven, alluding to the custom of ancient states, who enrolled their freemen; Christians enrolled in heaven (Luke x. 20), to signify that they have a right to all the high privileges of the city of God: and when all collected, compose the general assembly, &c. (Matt. xxiv. 31; Rev. vii. 9). Of this amazing corporation every Christian becomes a member at the moment of his conversion to God. Improvement: 1. Hence see the peculiar excellency of that religion which animates her proselytes with so glorious a hope. 2. Let our temper and conduct declare our kindred to those serene and happy intelligences. 3. Let the views of these glorious and animated prospects raise our souls to God in grateful adoration of His goodness and love (Psa. xxxi. 21; lxxii. 18, 19). (*J. Hannam.*) *I live there*:—Some one asked a Scotchman if he was on his way to heaven. "Why, man," he said, "I live there." He was only a pilgrim here. Heaven was his home. (*D. L. Moody.*) *Already in heaven*:—"Are you dreaming, father?" I said one day, when he (Father Taylor) was leaning back in his chair, with closed eyes and a happy smile playing about his mouth. "I am in heaven a little way," he answered, without moving. "And what is heaven, really?" I asked, climbing upon his knees. "It is loving God," he replied, still with the same soft dreamy tone. (*Mrs. Judge Russell.*) *Heaven should be much in the thoughts*:—A lady, unused to the rough travelling of a mountain land, went thither to make her home, and received from one of her new friends this bit of advice. She had been telling of her faintness when guiding her horse through a deep ford where the waters ran swiftly and the roar was incessant, and said she feared she should never be able to overcome the

abject physical terror which dominated her whenever she found herself in the strong current midway between the banks. "Oh, yes, you will," said her companion. "Just take a leaf in your mouth and chew it, and as you ride across keep your eyes on the other side." (*M. E. Sangster.*) *Heaven not far away:*—We measure distance by time. We are apt to say that a certain place is so many hours from us. If it is a hundred miles off, and there is no railroad, we think it a long way; if there is a railway, we think we can be there in no time. But how near must we say heaven is?—for it is just one sigh, and we get there. Why, our departed friends are only in the upper room, as it were, of the same house. They have not gone far off; they are upstairs, and we are down below. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The nobility of the Christian life:*—How noble the lowest life may become, like some poor, rough sea-shell with a gnarled and dimly-coloured exterior, tossed about in the surge of a stormy sea, or anchored to a rock, but when opened all iridescent with rainbow sheen within, and bearing a pearl of great price! So, to outward seeming, my life may be rough and solitary, and inconspicuous and sad, but, in inner reality, it may have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, and have angels for its guardians, and all the first-born for its brethren and companions. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

An innumerable company of angels. *The office of angels:*—I. Angels are, as far as we know from revelation, the only beings who take an interest with us in God and the spiritual world. Angels are fellow-citizens with us in the kingdom of Christ. It is certain, moreover, that angels are immortal, but not eternal; that they are very numerous, and have different ranks; that they are used by God as His special ministers, and that they have sympathy with man. But how far this sympathy extends is not so certain. Are they cognisant of human things generally, and of their own accord, or must they in each case be informed by God? In the course of three thousand six hundred years there are, I believe, recorded only twenty instances of angels' visits, which would allow on the average an interval of one hundred and eighty years between each appearance. Thus their visitations were, in the strict sense of the word, extraordinary, and will be found for the most part to accompany a great national crisis. Next, had angels in those days power to influence the souls of men? It is very questionable. That they led men by the hand, and spoke God's messages to them, is certain; but it is not so sure that they instilled into the soul a secret thought, or endued the tempted spirit with heavenly grace. Again, when angels are said to have interfered, were they not visible, no phantom or vivid imagination of the mind, but the impression of a visible substance upon the eye and brain? Thus much of the Old Testament. Let us now proceed to the New. Perhaps the first thing which strikes us here is the frequent mention of angels in contrast with their rare appearance under the old dispensation. It is as if the light of the presence of God on earth brought out more vividly the lesser lights of the spiritual world; just as it has been remarked that the evil spirit also is more apparent in the Gospels, and as the light of God's glory becomes more intense, so is Satan more evident (as witness the Book of the Revelation). Now some of these references belong to the office which angels hold in heaven, as do all the passages that occur in the Revelation. Of the rest, all but one are concerned with the Divine person of their and our Lord, or with momentous events in immediate connection with Him. The exception is the solitary instance of an angel stirring the waters of Bethesda. Thus there is no more evidence in the Gospels than in the Old Testament to justify us in believing that angels exercise their ministry on earth on ordinary occasions, or that they have any spiritual influence on man at all, or that they act in any way without making themselves visible to those whom they approach. Our next step, then, will be to examine what Holy Scripture says of angels after Pentecost. St. Peter is twice rescued by an angel; Cornelius is advised by an angel to send for Peter; Philip the deacon is sent by another to the eunuch; Herod is smitten by an angel; St. Paul had an angel standing by him in the ship. Thus it is clear that angels are not displaced by the Holy Ghost; and these passages are extremely important, as being those to which we should look, rather than to any which precede them, for an answer to the question, what place do angels hold in the Church of Christ on earth? The answer is very explicit on one point at least. The influence of angels in these instances is not spiritual, but external; their aid is in times of physical danger, not of inward temptation. Again the answer is explicit as to their visible presence—confirming the result to which former records in Scripture had led us, that when they interfere they are not only felt but seen. Finding this to be the case, it is natural to inquire how far this view of angels' ministries agrees with the whole spirit and character of the Christian dispensation.

Let me ask your close attention to this portion of the subject. What is the great change wrought in our condition by the holy incarnation of the Son and by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost? Words fail me when I try to answer; let me use the language of St. Paul:—"Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made both one. . . . Through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." And rising higher to St. John's divine words, so wondrously simple and profound, on the truth of the incarnation: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"; and of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit the words of Christ Himself: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." This is the change wrought by Christ in the relation of man to God. I will not say, "what room is there here for spiritual aid from angels?" because we know not the boundaries of God's scheme of mercy to man; but I will ask, is there not here in God's own presence all that the spirit of man can desire or imagine? Tell me any sorrow, or doubt, or temptation, or critical emergency of life, in which your heart need look elsewhere for aid but to the Holy Ghost? To look for angel's help against the enemy of souls, when God Himself has promised to abide in us, is worse than for the traveller to seek at his feet a glowworm's light to show the path when the moon has risen and called the stars about her overhead. Still, after all, much is doubtful. As with the saints departed, so with angels; it is well to think of them often, but safer to think of them as above, not amongst us, each in his happy sphere midway between ourselves and heaven. (*Canon Furse.*) *The connection between Christians and angels*:—I. WE ARE COME TO THEM AS FRIENDS, from whom we have been separated by the fall. Men and angels, in their original creation, formed but one family; and, though they differed in nature and in residence, they had one Father, and there would have been a free and pleasing intercourse between them. But sin destroyed the harmony of the world. Sin disunited heaven and earth. Sin separated not only between God and men, but between angels and men. When man revolted from his lawful Sovereign, they remained in their allegiance; and as sin rendered God our enemy, so it rendered angels our enemies too. Accordingly we read of their being the executioners of the Divine vengeance. But, in consequence of the mediation of our Lord and Saviour, the breach is healed. We are reconciled not only to God, but to the angels. Men and angels form again one family; they remained in their original state; we are restored to it; and such is the disposition of those celestial beings, that they do not repine, like the elder brother, at the return of the prodigal, but rejoice to welcome the younger branches of the family home. II. WE ARE COME TO THEM AS ATTENDANTS, whose care is to follow us through life. God's noblest creatures are His children's servants. "Such honour have all the saints." III. WE ARE COME TO THEM AS WITNESSES, whose observations we are to reverence. It would be well for us to remember that we are always in sight. The eyes of our fellow-creatures are often upon us; and if they were always upon us, they would restrain us from a thousand sins. But invisible beings always behold us. There are cases in which two guilty individuals are implicated. They accuse each other; and no human being was privy to their wickedness. But angels saw Abel and Cain when they were alone together in the field. They can decide, in an intrigue, who was the seducer, and who the seduced. What a world of private wickedness will they develop! IV. WE ARE COME TO THEM AS PATTERNS, whose example we are to imitate. To these models our Saviour Himself leads us in the form of devotion He gave to His disciples; in which He teaches us to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." And, even now, this prayer is accomplished. Between believers and angels there is a resemblance, though not an equality. Wherein does it appear? 1. It appears in the nature of their obedience. We are told that the angels, however great, find it their privilege to serve. Their obedience is ready, without delay; cheerful, without reluctance; constant, without intermission; and impartial, without choice. The reason is, they love God, and it is His will alone they regard. And whatever low idea you may form of a Christian, such is, and such must be, His leading desire, and His prevailing endeavour. 2. It appears in their union. These beings have various degrees among them. Yet these produce no contempt, no envy, no eagerness to dictate, no backwardness to co-operate. They perfectly

harmonise. They have but one spirit, one wish. Shall I say that Christians do resemble all this? Alas! there is too little of it in our churches and assemblies. 3. It appears in the subject of their study. The angels are proverbial for knowledge; we read of being "wise as an angel of God." Had we heard only of such exalted beings, we should be anxious to know what things they deemed most worthy of their attention. But we are informed. They are "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow—which things the angels desire to look into." Are you like-minded? Is this the most welcome subject to your hearts? The most important to your minds? 4. It appears in their worship. They adore the incarnate Redeemer. And is there a Christian upon earth that does not delight in the same praise? V. WE ARE COME TO THEM AS ASSOCIATES, with whom we are to blend our future being, and from whom we shall derive no inconsiderable part of our happiness. It is not good for man to be alone. He is formed for social enjoyment; and it is a great source of his present pleasure. The representation of heaven meets this propensity. And there are two classes of beings that will contribute much to our satisfaction and improvement. The one is endearing. It takes in those you loved in life, with whom you took sweet counsel together, and went to the house of God in company, your pious friends and relations, who now sleep in Jesus. The other is dignifying. It comprehends patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs—angels. You shall be introduced to company of the very first sort. Angels are the flower of the creation; and the poorest, meanest believer shall enjoy it; and be prepared for it. Let us conclude with two questions. 1. How can it be said that "we are come to" this blessed assembly? By the certainty of the event. By promise—and "the Scripture cannot be broken." By hope—and "hope maketh not ashamed." By anticipation, by earnests, by foretastes of this exalted felicity. 2. To whom are you come? (*W. Jay.*) *The nature of angels:*—I. THEY ARE THE HIGHEST OF ALL CREATED BEINGS, WHOSE HOME IS THE IMMEDIATE PRESENCE OF GOD. They were heaven's earliest inmates, when "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." They see God face to face continually; they worship Him, and rest not day and night from praising Him; their obedience is perfect and secure; where laws end, love begins. To borrow the image of South, like a cup of crystal thrown into a brimming river, which first is filled, then lost in the stream, so sinks their overflowing love in the love of God. Nor is their vision limited to heaven. Once they saw the eternal Son descend from thence to earth, and marked His life and death, and ministered to Him in His abasement and His glory. With sympathetic insight into the mystery of redemption, yet there remained things into which they "desired to look." And now that the Son has returned in glory to His eternal home, they look for the fulfilment of His joy; watching for the coming in of souls for whom He died; rejoicing when one by one are drawn into the circle those for whom He prayed, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me, where I am." And when through the contentions of a doubtful life grace has at last prevailed, who can tell the joy with which through the yielding air they spread their level wings, and bear in their hands the soul of the contrite, secure from sin, far off into Abraham's bosom? II. Lastly, as TO THEIR ADORATION OF GOD IN HEAVEN. Worship is angels' work; and in the contemplation of their office here no room is left for difference or doubt. The Old Testament and the New conspire in holy emulation to reveal the heavenly vision in the noblest terms. Worship is the sum of the life in heaven; and what is the noblest work of our life on earth? The same. As among our natural passions and affections towards our fellows love is the highest, and has mightiest influence, so towards God is worship. Worship is love sublimated by the majesty of God. Think what the example of angels teaches us in this great portion of the Christian life. 1. First, that worship is only possible in the presence of God. Their worship in the Church above is only more perfect than that of saints in the Church below, because they are more near to God. The sight of Him is their joy; and such will be yours, if yours be the promise, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Meanwhile what sight is now to angels, and will hereafter be to you, is at the present time your faith. 2. Next this apprehension of the Divine Presence fills them with awe and reverence. The cherubim with his wings covers his face and his feet; the angels before the throne fall on their faces. Such a thought may give us a rule of conduct in our acts of worship. In all our public devotions, above all at Holy Communion, let our commonest actions be ruled by a tender spirit of reverence. 3. Again their worship exercises not only their affections, but their intelligence. They under-

stand what they worship. The principle of all true worship is this—"I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." 4. Above all with their praises and their prayers goes on the sweet accompaniment of an obedient will, a heart attuned to the love of God, sympathy with all His doings in judgment and in mercy, sympathy with His holiness and His vengeance against sin. 5. Again we little know how much we are affected by the example of numbers. The numbers on one side or the other decide the choice of waverers. We cast our lot into the heaviest scale. The broad way, though it lead to death, has its contented wayfarers, chiefly because it is so broad; the narrow way discourages so many, because there are so few that walk in it. Then, like Elisha's servant, open your eyes and see the hosts of angels serving God, exceeding in number the generation of men, whom you see afraid to confess Him here. 6. Lastly to think of their happiness! happiness, so rare a gift, that among friends it is but seldom named, and then under their breath, and in a tone almost of despair of finding it; each heart knowing its own bitterness; the stranger not intermeddling with it, the friend unable to hear it, so he must let that alone for ever! And then to read of angels' happiness, so perfect, so secure! (*Canon Furse.*) **General assembly and Church of the firstborn.**—*The Church of the firstborn:*—I. THE SPIRIT OF THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION.—It is pre-eminently mild and gracious. This being so, it becomes those who are under it, and who have been made partakers of its blessings, to cultivate a spirit in accordance therewith. A spirit of slavish terror, however befitting the law, is altogether unsuitable to the gospel. It is related of Titus, the Roman emperor, when a certain petitioner presented his address to him with a trembling hand, that he was much displeased; and addressing the affrighted suppliant, he asked, "Dost thou present thy petition to thy prince as if thou wert giving meat to a lion?" While a spirit of reverence might have been proper on such an occasion, he regarded the extreme fear which this person displayed as altogether unbecoming. A spirit of trembling fear should be avoided by the Christian, being forbidden by the many gracious assurances which God has given to encourage us in our approaches to His throne; and also as being opposed to the distinctive features of the dispensation under which we dwell. II. THE NATURE AND PRIVILEGES OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. 1. Its unity. 2. Its glory. Judging by outward appearance, the Church of Christ may appear despicable; much that is ignoble and mean may be seen in its members. But is it so in reality? What! ignoble, when the city they belong to is the city of the great King; a city whose streets are of gold, whose gates are of pearls, and into which the glory and honour of the nations shall be brought! And then there is, not merely the city of the believer's habitation, but his associates and his friends. Talk of meanness, when myriads of angels, and the great multitude of the redeemed, are his companions! 3. Its spirituality. "But ye are come"—come to what? To things pre-eminently glorious; but they are at present invisible, being spiritual realities, objects of faith, and not of bodily vision. (1) Let the Christian seek to realise his true character and position. Where your treasure is, there let your heart be also. (2) That the only way in which we can become members of the heavenly commonwealth, is by a believing application to the Redeemer. Having an interest in Him, an interest in all the rest will follow. (*Expository Sermons.*) *The firstborn:*—Sweeter to our ear than the full chorus of bright skies and greenwood, are the first notes of the warbler that pipes away the winter, and breaks in on its long, drear silence! And more welcome to our eye than the flush of summer's gayest flowers, is the simple snow-drop that hangs its pure white bell above the dead bare ground. And why? These are the firstborn of the year, the forerunners of a crowd to follow. In that group of silver bells that ring in the spring with its joys, and loves, and singing birds, my fancy's eye sees the naked earth clothed in beauty, the streams, like children let loose, dancing and laughing, and rejoicing in their freedom, bleak winter gone, and Nature's annual resurrection. And in that solitary simple note, my fancy hears the carol of larks, wild moor, hillside, and woodlands full of song, and ringing all with music. And in Christ, the Firstborn, I see the grave giving up its dead; from the depths of the sea, from lonely wilderness and crowded churchyard they come, like the dews of the grass, an innumerable multitude. Risen Lord! we rejoice in Thy resurrection. We hail it as the harbinger and blessed pledge of our own. The first to come forth, Thou art the Elder Brother of a family, whose countless numbers the patriarch saw in the dust of the desert, whose holy beauty he saw shining in the bright stars of heaven. The firstborn! This spoils the grave of its horrors, changing the tomb into a capacious womb that death is daily filling with the germs of life. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The general*

convocation around Mount Zion:—I. First, I want to set out, A CONTRAST PRESENTED IN THE ENTIRE PASSAGE—a contrast between the economy of law and the economy of grace. Every good thing is enhanced in value by its opposite. The contrast between free grace and law makes grace appear the more precious to minds that have known the rigour of the commandment. The contrast presented here is sevenfold. First, as to place, "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched" (ver. 18); "But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (ver. 22). Behold Sinai with its rugged crags: scarce had a human foot ever trodden it: perhaps until that hour in which Jehovah descended upon it in splendour it had remained a virgin peak, which the foot of man had never polluted. It was sublime, but stern and tempest-beaten. God came upon Sinai with His law, and the dread mount became a type of what the law would be to us. It has given us a grand idea of holiness, but it has not offered us a pathway thereto, nor furnished a weary heart with a resting-place. The Jews under the law had that stern hill for their centre, and they compassed it about with pale countenances and trembling knees. We gather to quite another centre, even unto the palace-crowned steep of Zion. There David dwelt of old, and there David's Lord revealed Himself. This mount which might be touched, we are told, in the next place, "burned with fire." God's presence made the mountain melt and flow down. Jehovah revealed Himself in flaming fire. What, then, have believers come to instead of fire? Why, to another form of fire: to "an innumerable company of angels"—"He maketh His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire." God comes to us by them: "He rode upon a cherub, and did fly." Pursue the contrast, and you find on Mount Sinai that there was blackness, doubtless made the more intensely black as the vivid lightnings flashed out from it. "Ye are not come unto blackness," says Paul. What is the contrast to this? "But ye are come to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." Blackness is the symbol of sorrow, it is the garb of mourning. Everywhere we associate blackness with grief; but now Paul sets before us the grandest embodiment of joy. The word for general assembly in the original suggests a far-reaching festivity. "Ye are come to the *panēguris*: to a solemn festive assembly, comparable to the National Convocation of the Greeks, which was held around the foot of Mount Olympus, every four or five years, when all the Greeks of different states came together to keep up the national feeling by festivities and friendly competitions. Follow the next point of contrast, and you have darkness mentioned. "Nor unto blackness, and darkness." The cloud on Sinai was so dark as to obscure the day, except that every now and then the lightning-flash lit up the scene. What are we come to in contrast to that darkness? "To God the Judge of all." "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." What a contrast to the darkness of the law is a reconciled God! And what follows next? Why, tempest. It is said, "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest." All over the top of Sinai there swept fierce winds and terrible tornadoes, for the Lord was there. All heaven seemed convulsed when God did rend it, and descended in majesty upon the sacred mount. But what do you and I see? The very reverse of tempest—"The spirits of just men made perfect," serenely resting. They are perfect, they have fought the fight, they are full of ecstatic bliss, the glory of God is reflected from their faces; they have reached the fair haven, and are tossed with tempest no more. Follow the contrast further, and you come to the sound of a trumpet. This resounded from the top of Sinai. Clarion notes most clear and shrill rang out again and again the high commands of the thrice-holy God. You are not come to that. Instead of a trumpet, which signifies war and the stern summons of a king, ye are come unto "Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant," and the silver tones of "Come unto Me, all ye," &c. The seventh contrast lies in this—together with the trumpet there sounded out a voice, a voice that was so terrible that they asked that they might not hear it again. We have come to another voice, the voice of "the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." There is a voice from Zion, there is a voice that rolls over the heads of the innumerable company of angels, a voice of the Lord that is full of majesty, and exceedingly comfortable to the "general assembly and Church of the firstborn," who know the joyful sound. II. There is A COMPARISON in our more central text. "We are come to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." It is a comparison, not with anything Jewish, for that would not have been suitable, but with a Gentile festival, which more readily lent itself to the apostle's great thought. In Greece, in her happier times, in order to

preserve a national unity, the various states, kingdoms, or republics, which constituted Greece proper, held at the foot of Olympus a great gathering, to which none came as participators except citizens of the various Greek nationalities. The object of the gathering was that every part of the Greek nature might be educated and displayed, and the unity of the Greek race be remembered. How much I wish that we could look upon all the conflicts, sufferings, and troubles of this mortal life as occupations of the great festive gathering which is now being held in heaven and in earth around the city of our God. If we all understand that this period is not comparable to a battle, whereof the result hangs in the balance, but comparable to those deeds of prowess wherewith of old men celebrated a victory, then the face of things is altered, and our toils are transfigured. Angels come down, and poor men and women are lifted up, in patience triumphing, and giving pleasure to their Lord, and bringing honour to that favoured city which God has prepared for them. Oh, the bliss of feeling that even now heaven is begun below, and the sufferings of this present life are but a part of the glory of the Lord manifested in His people! III. The third point is—A COMING TO BE ENJOYED. This is the essence of it all—"We are come" unto this general assembly and Church of the firstborn. How then do we come? This festival is only for the firstborn, and you are not that by nature. You must first be born again, and become one of the firstborn. The Spirit of God must make you a new creature in Christ Jesus, and then the porter will open the wicket, and say, "Come in, and welcome." Which part are you going to take in this great gathering? Will you fight against sin? Will you wrestle against error? Will you run for the crown? Will you sing or speak? What will you do in this great congress of all the saints? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Anticipating holy society*:—Socrates was glad when his death approached, because he thought he should go to Hesoid, Homer, and other learned men deceased, whom he expected to meet in the other world. How much more do I rejoice, who am sure that I shall see my Saviour Christ, the saints, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and all holy men who have lived from the beginning of the world! Since I am sure to partake of their felicity, why should not I be willing to die, to enjoy their perpetual society in glory? (*Henry Bullinger.*) *Intercourse between heaven and earth*:—I was reading the other day that, on the shores of the Adriatic Sea, the wives of fishermen whose husbands have gone far out upon the deep are in the habit, at eventide, of going down to the seashore, and singing, as female voices only can, the first stanza of a beautiful hymn. After they have sung it, they listen till they hear, borne by the wind across the desert-sea, the second stanza, sung by their gallant husbands as they are tossed by the gale upon the waves; and both are happy. Perhaps, if we could listen, we, too, might hear on this desert-world of ours some sound, some whisper, borne from afar, to remind us that there is a heaven and a home; and, when we sing the hymn upon the shores of earth, perhaps we shall hear its sweet echo breaking in music upon the sands of time, and cheering the hearts of them that are pilgrims and strangers and look for a city that hath foundations. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *The general assembly written in heaven*:—We have in this whole passage a description of the Catholic Church as it is now revealed to us under the gospel. And this is put in contrast with the state of the Church under the law. The kingdom is now united, and the Church is catholic; and those who come into it are not only joined in mutual earthly fellowship, but they come into union, as real, although not so conscious and apparent, with the Church invisible and glorified. As we consider some aspects of this subject, let us try to think and feel ourselves into that higher fellowship. I. We come to that unseen and glorious company BY OUR KNOWLEDGE. We have far more actual knowledge of the invisible world than we vivify and use. We know, that when flitting like shadows here, from place to place, and ever nearer to the grave, there is a city which hath foundations, in the records of which our names may be enrolled. We know that when struggling and crowding here—striving for space and room, and particular standing—there is a house of many mansions, and a place prepared for each, large enough for the developments of the immortal life. Our knowledge is in some respects limited enough. We cannot see it; we cannot come to it in the flesh; flesh and blood shall not inherit it; no mortal hand can draw aside the veil, nor pierce it, although it sometimes seems so thin. Perhaps if we were better, purer, more saintly, we could safely be trusted with more light on the future, and it is certain that if we ask and look and wait we shall attain to more. We are like men gazing towards the land from the deck of a ship. A dim outline appears, like a cloud, at which they strain their sight; until by the movement of the vessel and the custom of the eye it becomes clearer and clearer still.

The mountains gradually reveal their peaks; then the valleys show; then the corn; then the smoke of the cottage; the group by the cottage door; the apples on the tree; and then—the vessel is in port. So, by looking, heaven becomes clearer; as we look, it comes more near. To us as individuals, this revelation will be much or little, according to our personal realisation of it. Our knowledge may be a lamp unlighted as well as burning. It may be a map of a country on which we seldom look, or on which we trace with careful finger every mountain ridge, every river and plain. Central Africa is now opened, and to the world it can never be a blank any more. Some individuals may know very little of it, yet that knowledge is a possession to the race for ever. And so, to the world has been given the unalienable possession of the knowledge of the "better country, the heavenly," which is on the other side of death, in which the Saviour is, into which He has already gathered myriads of His friends, to which so many of our own friends have gone, and to which we ourselves are travelling. II. We come to the invisible Church BY OUR FAITH. We come to it more by our faith than by our knowledge. Faith is knowledge glorified, and vitalised; it is, as the former chapter tells us, the "substance of things hoped for." It makes the objects of our cognition so real and vivid that we possess in our thought the very substance of them. We have such assured confidence in their existence that the removal of them from the realm of faith would be like taking away the solid world from our senses. "Faith is the evidence of things not seen." It proves them, and presents them so that the mind feels their presence; sees them; is solemnised by them; holds them fast! It redeems our humanity from its degradation to know that there are men, who, while living here, are also living yonder—who have a life hidden as well as visible "with Christ in God." We believe that He is. We believe that our friends are with Him; and if we can come to Him, and to them, in our daily faith—in the seekings, strivings, and settlings of our souls, then we are believers indeed. We may form what views we will on the time and nature of the resurrection—on the intermediate state, or on the physical characteristics of the life to come. If only we come to Him—our High Priest within the veil, and our forerunner there—we shall in due time stand rejoicing in His presence. III. "We are come" to that invisible triumphant Church, IN OUR LOVE, as truly as in our knowledge and our faith. All heaven-born souls love the place of their birth. Born again, or born from above, is to have enrolment and citizenship there—it is to have our treasure there and our heart also. IV. And all these comings, need we say? are presages of THE FINAL PERSONAL COMING BY DEATH into the "general assembly and Church of the firstborn in heaven." We speak often of death as a going away, and picture to ourselves the spirit passing into vast solitudes, friends and dear familiar scenes all left behind, as it looks out upon the first reaches and roundings of the everlasting journey. Some thoughtful writers have dwelt much on the loneliness of death, until one has felt intensely solitary in the prospect. They have fixed upon the fact that each of us must meet death alone, and, of course, that is true, at least as regards earthly companionships. But that even then we shall be absolutely alone is only conjecture; and if we must conjecture, I for one would rather take the other side, and believe that since God gives us company here from the moment of birth to the moment of death, He will have other company awaiting us there, so that we shall take no step in loneliness or dread, but enter at once and easily into the higher fellowships, and go forward with a cheerful confidence through the valley of transition. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) **God the Judge of all.**—*Faith's access to the Judge and His attendants:*—I. FAITH PLANTS US AT THE VERY BAR OF GOD. Here is a truth which it is the office of faith to realise continually in our daily lives. Your loving access to God, Christian men and women, has brought you right under the eye of the Judge, and, though there be no terror in our approach to that tribunal, there ought to be a wholesome awe as to the permanent attitude of our spirits, the awe which is the very opposite of the cowering dread which hath torment. Then, again, notice that this judgment of God is one which a Christian man should joyfully accept. "The Lord will judge His people," says one of the Psalms. "You only have I known of all the inhabitants of the earth; therefore will I punish you for your iniquities," says one of the prophets. Such sayings represent this present judgment as inevitable, just because of the close connection into which true faith brings a man with his Father in heaven. Inevitable, and likewise most blessed and desirable, for in the thought are included all the methods by which, in providence, and by ministration of His truth and of His Spirit, God reveals to us our meannesses; and delivers us sometimes, even by the consequences which accrue from them, from the burden and power of our sin. So,

then, the office of faith in regard of this continuous judgment which God is exercising upon us because He loves us is, first of all, to open our hearts to it by confession, by frank communion, by referring all our actions to Him to court that investigation. And then, further, remember that this judgment is one that demands our thankful acceptance of the discipline which it puts in force. If we knew ourselves we should bless God for our sorrows. These are His special means of drawing His children away from their evil. II. FAITH CARRIES US WHILE LIVING TO THE SOCIETY OF THE LIVING DEAD. "The Judge of all, and the spirits of just men made perfect." Immediately on the thought of God rising in the writer's mind there rises also the thought of the blessed company in the centre of whom He lives and reigns. "The spirits of . . . men made perfect." That is to say, they dwell freed from the incubus and limitations, and absolved from the activities, of a bodily organisation. Then, further, these spirits are "perfect." The writer has said, at the close of the preceding chapter, that the ancient saints "without us should not be made perfect." And here he employs the same word with distinct reference, as I suppose, to his previous declaration. From which I infer that Jesus Christ shot some rays of His victorious and all-reconciling power from His Cross into the regions of darkness, and brought thence those who were waiting for His coming through many a long age. A great painter has left on the walls of a little cell in his Florentine convent a picture of the victorious Christ, white-robed and banner-bearing, breaking down the iron gates that shut in the dark rocky cave; and flocking to Him, with outstretched hands of eager welcome, the whole long series from the first man downwards, hastening to rejoice in His light, and to participate in His redemption. So the ancient Church was "perfected" in Christ; but the words refer, not only to those Old Testament patriarchs and saints, but to all who, up to the time of the writer's composition of his letter, had "slept in Jesus." They have reached their goal in Him. But yet that "perfecting" does not exclude progress, continuous through all the ages; and especially it does not exclude one great step in advance which, as Scripture teaches us, will be taken when the resurrection of the body is granted. Corporeity is the perfecting of humanity. Body, soul, and spirit, these make the full-summed man in all his powers. And so the souls beneath the altar, clothed in white, and lapt in felicity, do yet wait for the adoption, even the redemption of the body. Mark, further, that these spirits perfected would not have been perfected there unless they had been made just here. That is the first step, without which nothing in death has any tendency to ennoble or exalt men. If we are ever to come to the perfecting of the heavens, we must begin with the justifying that takes place on earth. Let me point you to one other consideration bearing not so much on the condition as on the place of these perfected spirits. It is very significant that they should be closely associated in our text with "God the Judge of all." Is there any hint that men who have been redeemed, who, being unjust, have been made just, and have had experience of restoration and of the misery of departure, shall, in the ultimate order of things, stand nearer the throne than unfallen spirits, and teach angels? (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *God the Judge of all:*—I. I am to show THAT IT IS A VERY AWFUL, THOUGH A COMFORTABLE, THING TO CONVERSE WITH GOD THE JUDGE OF ALL. 1. The majesty and glory of the great God makes it awful conversing with Him. 2. God's omniscience is another thing which makes it solemn conversing with God as Judge of all (chap. iv. 13). 3. The purity and holiness of God make it a solemn thing for polluted sinners to have any converse with Him. 4. The strictness of God's law, which is the rule of judgment, makes it a solemn thing to converse with this great and glorious Judge. God judges of all my thoughts and actions by the same law now that sentence is to be passed by in the great day of accounts. Use: 1. Is it so solemn a thing for believers in Christ to come to God the Judge of all; how or "where then must the sinner and the ungodly appear"? 2. Is it so solemn a thing to converse with God the Judge of all? Then, believer, how seldom art thou in a right frame for duty. You know with what solemnity and preparation they of old attended on God when giving the law. The people were sanctified to-day and to-morrow, and washed their clothes to be in readiness against the third day (Exod. xix. 10). Is there less call for preparation and solemnity under the gospel? are trifling frames and a worldly spirit any part of that liberty we have in Christ? Dare we go to holy ordinances drowned in the cares of this life, reeking in the filth of some unsubdued lust? 3. Learn from what has been said, the only way to think of future judgment with pleasure and comfort. It is by coming to God the Judge of all, now. 4. What a blessed gospel is that which reveals the only righteousness

wherein a poor guilty sinner may appear before God with comfort! II. How IS IT THAT SUCH A CONVERSE IS BEGUN BETWEEN A HOLY GOD AND POOR SINNERS? 1. It is begun in the conviction or sensibleness a soul has that he is a guilty lost sinner. 2. In order to a poor sinner's comfortably conversing with God the Judge of all, there must be a free confession of all sin and a subscribing to the rights of His justice. This is called an accepting of the punishment of one's iniquity (Lev. xxvi. 41) and a clearing and justifying God when we are judged (Psa. li. 4). 3. In order to a poor sinner's comfortable converse with God the Judge of all, there must be an absolute renouncing all righteousness of his own. 4. The way to have comfortable converse with God the Judge of all is to come before Him in the Mediator's righteousness and to plead it with Him as thy justifying righteousness. Use: 1. If there be no coming to God as Judge of all with comfort but by confessing sin, their state must be sad who seek comfort by hiding or lessening sin. 2. Must a soul be brought to submit to the rights of God's justice in order to a comfortable converse with Him as Judge of all? then woe to all such as quarrel with God's judgment. 3. Must all self-righteousness be renounced in order to a comfortable converse with God the Judge of all? How contrary is that doctrine which sets up the creature's sincere obedience as a part of our gospel-righteousness! III. IN WHAT INSTANCES AND BY WHAT METHODS THIS CONVERSE WHICH BELIEVERS HAVE WITH GOD THE JUDGE OF ALL IS MAINTAINED AND CARRIED ON. 1. I am to give some instances wherein believers have comfortable converse with God the Judge of all, through the whole of their gospel profession and walk. The apostle speaks of it as a privilege attending their state, not a blessing peculiar to some extraordinary frames. It is a believer's settled mercy and daily duty to converse with God the Judge of all. (1) A great part of this comfortable converse with God lies in those high and honourable thoughts which believers have of His righteousness as Judge of all. (2) Another instance wherein believers have comfortable converse with God lies in their pleading justification before God upon the footing of righteousness. (3) Another instance wherein believers have comfortable converse with God the Judge of all lies in their referring themselves to His righteous judgment with respect to their state, their frames, and all their actions. (4) Another instance wherein believers have comfortably conversed with God the Judge of all lies in a hearty approval of all providential dispensations to themselves and others. (5) Another instance of this comfortable converse which believers have with God the Judge of all is in a way of anticipating, or antedating as it were, that sentence of absolution which shall be openly pronounced upon them at the last day. 2. How or by what special methods this comfortable converse with God is promoted and maintained. (1) By looking often to the everlasting settlements and grace of the covenant; what God does in time is by virtue of covenant-agreement with His Christ and our Surety in eternity (Psa. xcviii. 3). (2) This comfortable converse with God is promoted and maintained by the soul's daily faith on the person of Christ as God-man. (3) This comfortable converse with God is promoted and maintained by earnest endeavours after conformity to God in righteousness and true holiness (1 Pet. i. 16). (4) A believer's converse with God the Judge of all is promoted and maintained by his coming often to the blood of sprinkling. (5) This comfortable converse with God as Judge of all is promoted by the believer's application to God as a Father in Christ (Eph. ii. 18). (6) This comfortable converse with God as Judge of all is promoted and maintained by direct acts of faith on the promises of the covenant. (7) A daily application to the Spirit as the glorifier of the Father and of Christ. All the glory of the Father's provision for lost sinners in the person and blood of Christ, and in the grace of the covenant, depends upon the Spirit's revelation of it to and in the soul (Gal. i. 15, 16). It is His work as well to convince of sin as of righteousness (John xvi. 8). 3. By what means this comfortable converse with God as Judge of all is prevented and interrupted? (1) This comfortable converse with God is greatly obstructed when it is apprehended that only the benefits and effects of Christ's righteousness are communicated to believers, and not the very righteousness itself. (2) This comfortable converse is interrupted by supposing that the great God has put all His creatures, believers as well as others, into a state of probation or trial, and that a man cannot be fully persuaded of the safety of his state till the day of his death. (3) Believers' comfortable converse with God is further prevented or interrupted by a changing or shifting the foundation of our faith and hope. Some that have begun in the spirit think to be made perfect by the flesh (Gal. iii. 3). Use: 1. Surely a believer's converse with God must be very precious when Satan finds out so many ways to prevent and interrupt it. Were it

not a great privilege, it would be less envied, less obstructed. 2. How needful is a doctrinal clearness in the business of a sinner's justification in the sight of God! Confusion in the mind and judgment makes confusion in the soul's comfort. 3. To show what a blessed privilege such a comfortable converse is in the whole of believers' course heavenwards. Wherein the privilege of such a converse does consist. (1) This blessed converse makes all other comforts blessings. (2) This comfortable converse which believers have with God sweetens all their afflictions and crosses. No trial befals thee but it was put into the covenant. It comes from the hand of God as a reconciled Father for thy profit and purging; not from His hand as a sin-revenging Judge for thy punishment. (3) This comfortable converse with God makes duties and ordinances sweet; why should there be terror and fear where there is no enmity, no distance? (4) This comfortable converse with God makes all reproaches we receive from men sit easy upon us (Psa. xxxi. 14, 15). (5) This comfortable converse with God secures against the threats, the wiles, and hellish designs of Satan. (6) This comfortable converse with God makes death and judgment without terror. Doth the law acquit thee now? it will never condemn thee then. A serpent without a sting may affright, but it cannot injure. (*John Hill.*) *Christians have to do with God as Judge:*—When, a few years since, a Mahometan convert at Calcutta came to Lal Behouri Sing for baptism, the missionary asked him, "What was the vital point in which he found Mohammedanism most defective, and which he found that Christianity satisfactorily supplied?" His prompt reply was—"Mohammedanism is full of the mercy of God; and while I felt no real consciousness of guilt as the breaker of God's law, this satisfied me; but when I felt my guilt, I felt that it was not with God's mercy, but with His justice that I had first to do. Now to meet the claims of God's justice Mohammedanism had made no provision; but this is the very thing that I have found fully accomplished by the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, and therefore Christianity is now the only adequate religion for me, a guilty sinner." (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) **The spirits of just men made perfect.**—*The contemplation of departed saints:*—1. The contemplation of departed saints is calculated to reconcile us to our lot upon earth, however adverse and afflictive in its nature. What was the condition of these exalted and glorified spirits while they tabernacled upon earth? Did their station here in any way resemble the state in which they are now placed? Or, did their worldly circumstances foreshow what they have come to enjoy? No doubt some of them were men of rank and affluence; but still, it is well known that many of them were persons of low degree, who were subjected to want, who were pinched with poverty, and oppressed with both personal and relative affliction during the period of their mortal life. Amongst these there is a Job, there is a Lazarus, who was under the disagreeable necessity of begging his bread. We here learn that neither poverty nor affliction is any mark of the Divine displeasure; but that the troubles which afflict the just, on the contrary, may be great and many in number. Besides, we have here the most convincing evidence that God will reject none on account of his indigent circumstances or diseased body; but that the poor and afflicted may nevertheless be amongst the friends of heaven. 2. The contemplation of departed saints is calculated to preserve us from despondency under a consciousness of guilt and imperfection. As this may be occasioned by a deep sense of guilt and depravity, so a means of preventing it may be found in contemplating the spirits of just men made perfect. Though they were created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, and were studying to die unto sin and live unto righteousness; yet they had reason to complain of the little progress which they made in the way of holiness. Though they all delighted in the law of the Lord after the inward man, and in some measure accounted it as their meat and drink to do the will of God; yet they were at times neglectful of their duty, and, through inadvertence or the strength of temptation, were stepping aside from the path of rectitude. There was not one of them that always did good and never sinned. Why, then, should Christians despond while they recollect what these objects of their contemplation once were, and attend to what they now are. These once struggled against the corruption of nature, but they have obtained the victory. Instead of being excluded from the beatific presence of Jehovah, and falling under the condemnation of the Almighty, they are now reaping the honours and the felicity of the righteous. Yes, they are "the spirits of just men made perfect": their guilt is wholly cancelled, and their depravity is completely done away. 3. The contemplation of departed saints is calculated to support and comfort us under all our trials and afflictions. The saints in heaven have been

made perfect as in holiness, so also in blessedness: they have entered into glory; they have removed from a world of trial and suffering to the land of eternal rest, where there is no more sorrow nor sighing, no more sickness nor death. 4. The contemplation of departed saints is calculated to animate us in the discharge of duty, and to make us persevere in the practice of holiness. Methinks I now see them holding forth the ensigns of royalty, and hear them saying to us who profess to be the disciples of Jesus: "These are the rewards which God hath given. Be not weary, then, in well-doing, for you will at length reap if you faint not." 5. The contemplation of departed saints is calculated to console our minds while mourning on account of the death of our Christian friends. Though they are absent from the body, yet they are present with the Lord. Though the frail house of their earthly tabernacle is dissolved, yet they have obtained the building of God, "the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (*John Ralston, M.A.*) *Benefits of meditation on God's saints:*—1. First, let us think what an encouragement it is to us to go forward on our Christian course with zeal, perseverance, and steadiness, when we reflect on that perfect state of peace and holiness to which "the spirits of the just" shall be admitted in the eternal world. 2. Again, let us consider, that if we are indeed faithful servants of Christ Jesus, then we are members of that Communion of Saints, that mystical body, whereof He is the Head. Then we are entitled to a place among patriarchs, prophets, saints, and martyrs. Then the glory to which we shall be admitted at last is as much above the glory of the greatest prince or potentate on earth, as heaven itself is above this world. Such, and so great, is the dignity of the true Christian. 3. Another thing to be considered is, of the deep, sincere, and thorough humility which must be expected of those who think to be admitted into the blessed society of "the spirits of just men made perfect." Indeed, the true dignity of the Christian consists in his humility:—"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." How can we in reason expect to be "numbered with God's saints in glory everlasting," if it be not our constant study to follow them as they followed Christ, "in all lowliness and meekness, in long-suffering and loving forbearance"? And these considerations will be still further heightened in proportion as we remember, on the one side, our own worthlessness even at the best; and on the other, the vastness of that mercy, the boundlessness of those promises which are held out to us. For to a mind which is at all well disposed, nothing can be more touching, nothing more humbling, than to receive kindnesses from one whom we have injured. What, then, must be our feelings when we contemplate our behaviour to God, and how He has requited us! "What heart can think of these things worthily?" or how can we sufficiently bow ourselves down with humility? 4. Let me, in conclusion, call to your thoughts what comfort and encouragement there is in this heavenly doctrine of "the spirits of just men made perfect," to be received into the eternal joy of their Lord. Comfort and encouragement in respect of ourselves, in making us patient, cheerful, and thankful; and in our conduct towards others, in making us brotherly and kind, and still looking forward to a happier meeting in a world where neither sin nor sorrow can enter. (*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times."*) *The immediate blessedness of departed saints:*—What an announcement! For the manner in which this passage is introduced sufficiently shows that it is designed to impart encouragement and solace, to awaken spiritual-mindedness and hope. And yet there is something which seems to mock us, which may excite our consternation, depress our zeal. "Ye are come to the spirits of just men made perfect." Know we not otherwise? The link between ourselves and those whom we loved is broken. Does it not seem to trifle with us, when we are "bereaved indeed," to tell us that we are come to them from whom we are so hopelessly and irreparably torn? "Ye are come to the spirits of just men made perfect." Our natural apprehensiveness is thus excited by the appeal. Creatures of flesh and blood, nothing seems so strongly to fasten upon our instinctive fear as spiritual contact and communication. Who would wish to behold the dearest friend whom he had ever loved, returning a spirit from the region of spirits, with their manner and mystery? What nerve could encounter the interview? What fondest heart could endure the shadowy embrace? And do we not shrink when we are bidden to approach this ghostly band? "Ye are come to the spirits of just men made perfect." Our ardour is depressed. Our sympathy is checked. Our imitation is debarred. Little fellowship can we claim with their refined essences, their unalloyed purity and bliss: they subsist beyond the range of our ideas and susceptibilities. But the purpose of the Holy Ghost in these words must stand: that purpose can only be tender, conso-

latory, assuring. And is it not most kind and cheering to inform and certify us, that they, who are thus departed, are not lost? That, rescued from the burden of this flesh and delivered from the hazard of this world, they expatiate in the freedom of a nature ethereal and incorruptible? And is it not animating and triumphant for us to perceive, in their release, the pledge and model of our exaltation, when our spirits shall throw off their oppressions, and shall attain to yonder state of immaterial being? Come, then, to these spirits—endeavour to conceive of them, to catch their fervours, to reciprocate their joys, to respond their strains! I. "WHO ARE THEY? WHENCE CAME THEY?" They are not the natives of heaven. They have no proper birthright in it. They belong to a very different sphere. They are men. They have been prepared, while on the "earth which was given to them," for their present abode. They have been brought hither by an act utterly independent of their original constitution. It is a state altogether strange and new. They constitute the just. Only the just can be in a condition of safety and favour, only the just can be endued with a nature of sanctity and love. Theirs is a true sense of right, of duty, the firm habit of fidelity. II. THESE "JUST MEN" ARE NOT ANY LONGER IN OUR PRESENT SPHERE, OR KIND, OF EXISTENCE. We are summoned to meditate them in a new condition. The image of the earth is effaced. They are no more seen in a compound nature. They are "spirits." All beside is left in the grave. Nothing material cleaves to them. But it is the higher essence—the intellect—the consciousness—the self—which this disembodiment must suppose. How may this state of spiritualism be conceived? It is described as subsisting in intimate union with the Saviour. It is to "depart and to be with Christ." It is to "be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." He "receives" them. This is the great distinctiveness of their present condition. Their inward nature, drawn forth from the outward, is in a relationship, in an access to the Blessed Redeemer far different from any enjoyment of His presence, or communion with His person, known on earth. In addition to this immediate presence of the Redeemer-God, that light in which they see light, the light of the Lamb—the spirits of just men are "made perfect." This is a discovery of their state which greatly explains itself. This spirit is matured in its powers and consummated in its joys. According to its capacities it is complete. All its true aims are unfolded. It is wrought out into its fullest development. It is a condition of pure spiritualism. Certain facts suggest themselves as the necessary accompaniments of such a condition. 1. The consciousness must be very distinct. The self revolves upon its own centre, ever substantiating what it really is, ever enjoying its proper exercises of understanding and emotion. This "hidden man" lives in his own light. Nothing is attached to the spirit which can divert this concentrated impression. 2. The inward life must be very strong. The whole soul, all that is within it, is absorbed in that deep and holy sense. 3. The intellectual faculty must be very clear. It still "follows on to know the Lord," it still "follows hard after God." 4. The meditative abstraction must be very intent. 5. The adoring gratitude must be very earnest. 6. Its awaiting aspiration must be very glad. The disembodied saint ascertains the future stage to which it constantly approaches, which is the last of all, and which is only wanted to complete his entire being. He understands its nature. He is assured of its certainty. Oh, the transition, the passage of the spirit, escaped from earth, released from mortality, to this glorious state! Spirit!—which hast long walked in darkness, brooded in sorrow, pined in weariness—spirit! which wast long tossed with tempest, harassed by hostility, vexed with care—spirit! which didst long groan within thyself—spirit! long bound to sense and chained to infirmity—spirit! long lacerated and bruised with inward wounds—spirit! the shadow of whose guilt hitherto lay upon thee though forgiven, the effort of whose depravity until now struggled in thee though subdued—Christian soul depart! Go forth to rest and home! III. THESE SEPARATED SPIRITS ARE REPRESENTED TO US AS IN A STATE OF EXALTED ADVANCEMENT, DEPENDING UPON THEIR DISEMBODIMENT. This doctrine of immediate happiness was not entirely concealed from the ancient saints. Their language occasionally leads us to think that they had some conception of it (Psa. xvi. 10, lxxiii. 24, xlix. 15; Isa. lvii. 2). Christ was the Conqueror. "He spoiled principalities and powers." Of Him it was declared that He should "swallow up death in victory." He ascends! He is "received up into glory!" There are not only the angels and the chariots in their thousands of thousands—there is another train! All holy spirits follow Him who had appeared a spirit to them in their place of keeping. They now forsake that place for "things above." And, therefore, it is said in the text: "Ye are come to the spirits of just men made perfect."

But this is asserted as a privilege unknown before. It arises from the new covenant in contradistinction from the old. It is explained: "God having provided some better things for us" (than for those who died before the rising of Christ) "that they without us" (without living until our time and under our dispensation) "should not be made perfect." But they are now made perfect, in common with us. This "perfection" is bestowed upon all past, as well as for all future, time, and "ye are come to the spirits of just men made perfect!" 1. The spirits of just men will be made perfect in holiness. 2. Such spirits are raised to the perfection of wisdom. 3. These souls of the departed are perfectly secure. 4. A fulness of beatitude must be contained in their perfection. They can know no want: yet are they full of holy desires, ever waking only to be satisfied, ever longing only to be fulfilled. The vessel at each moment overflows: but at every moment it also is enlarged. There are pleasures for evermore. The source of all is in the Infinite Plenitude. The river of life proceedeth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. IV. THERE ARE RELATIONS WHICH UNITE THE JUST ON EARTH, AND THE SPIRITS OF THE JUST IN HEAVEN, NOTWITHSTANDING THE DISPARITY OF THEIR RESPECTIVE CONDITIONS. Certain affinities may be discovered between mind and mind in this world, which are not restricted to personal intercourse, which operate as in defiance of the laws of space. And the announcement of the text is but the enlargement of such mental affinities. It is not said that we *shall come* to the spirits of just men made perfect, but that we *are*. 1. There is unity. To impress this upon our minds the Church is shadowed by various figures, all of which have respect to its indivisibility. It is a city, a corporate community, but all, who are enrolled in it, partake of common immunities, and are "fellow-citizens with the saints." It is a household. It is a household of faith and of God. They of this household are all they who are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." Its distribution in these different abodes affects not its identity. It shall find even in heaven many mansions. It is a body. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." This, then, is no fiction nor ideal. It is based on our union with Christ. We are all one in Him. We are joined to the Lord, and are one spirit. It is, therefore, declared to have been the design of God in redemption, to bind, in communion and identification, all His people, however scattered abroad on earth, or however raised to the glories of a higher existence. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, He might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him." "And having made peace through the blood of his Cross, by Him to reconcile," or to unite, "all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." These are the links which separation cannot weaken, and which death cannot dissolve. 2. There is resemblance. Heaven is doubtless a place. But we must rather conceive of it as a state of mind. The heaven of perfect spirits must be chiefly this. This state of mind—far transcending all present attainment of knowledge, sanctity, and joy—consists not in estrangement and extreme. It is not alien from what is now experienced. There is no principle, no companionship, no employment, no rapture, of that region, but has in the Christian on earth its foretaste and counterpart. He "hath the Father and the Son." "The Spirit dwelleth in Him." "He hath eternal life." He is a "partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." The heaven which he enters and enjoys is but the expansion of principles and emotions he long has known. He has been changed already into the image of the Divine glory, "from glory to glory." He wanted but this consummation. The last of dying triumph, and the first of empyrean rapture, may thus easily and naturally blend: and in the yearnings of a kindred mind, we now come to the spirits of just men made perfect. Do we not know it? Have we not found it? Are now our affections set on things above? Does not the holy city come down from God out of heaven? Is not our conversation in heaven? 3. There is endearment. A holy affinity unites us to the spirits of just men made perfect. They are the Church of the first-born: they are our elder brethren. Our desire is to them. Are they weaned from us? Are we forgotten? Is all sympathy withdrawn? Hearts grow not selfish in heaven. Spirits made perfect can abandon no love which it was ever their right to form, their duty to maintain, their benefit to exercise: their perfection is the pledge that each holy attachment is raised to that perfection. 4. There is appropriation. We already have obtained a portion in heaven. "Joint-heirs with Christ Jesus," He has claimed it for us. He is our Forerunner. "He

has for us entered." He "now appears in the presence of God for us." We "come to the spirits of just men made perfect," for they inhabit our country, they dwell in our home. They have preceded us, but "things to come are ours," and their title is no surer than our own. (*R. W. Hamilton, D.D.*) *Disembodied saints:*—I. THEY CONSCIOUSLY LIVE IN A DISEMBODIED STATE. II. THEY CONSCIOUSLY LIVE IN A MORALLY PERFECT STATE. III. THEY CONSCIOUSLY LIVE IN A GLORIOUSLY SOCIAL STATE. IV. THEY CONSCIOUSLY LIVE IN A SPIRITUALLY ACCESSIBLE STATE. 1. We come to them in a loving memory of their histories. 2. We come to them by appropriating their principles of action. 3. We come to them by a participation of the sources of their joy. 4. We come to them in earnest hope. Lessons: 1. The worthlessness of all worldly and adventitious distinctions. 2. The paltriness of religious sectarianism. 3. The infinite value of Christ's office. 4. The blessedness of death to the good. (*Homilist.*) *Advent of the living to spirits departed:*—"Spirits"—because resurrection is future. The bodies still tenant the grave or the deep—only the spirits are free. This is that state of "deliverance from the bondage of the flesh," in which Jesus Himself, quickened with a new vitality, went and preached, between death and resurrection, to "spirits," themselves separate from the body. This is that state, "Paradise" Jesus called it, in which the dying penitent beside Him should that day be His companion, spirit with spirit. "Just men," or righteous: not in that self-righteousness "which is of the law"; not in that righteousness which Christ Himself, He said, came not so much as to "call" or to evangelise; on the contrary, "just" in the justice of the Just One—righteous in the merit of a full justification, and in the grace of a progressive and at last perfect sanctification. "Just men made perfect." Completed and consummated in that holiness which, begun below by the work of the Holy Spirit, is at last finished and accomplished for ever; to be sullied no more, nor grieved any more, by the contact or presence of evil: sealed now with the stamp of a blessed immortality, and waiting only the gift of a transformed body to make the whole man anew in the very image and likeness of God. "Ye are come to the spirits of just men made perfect." We read and speak often of Christ's coming—His coming in the flesh, His coming in the Spirit, His coming in glory. Here we read of an advent, not of Christ, but of the Christian; an advent, not in the future tense, but in the perfect—not anticipative or progressive, but finished and done. But this is not the world which the text opens. The text bids us see ourselves tenants and citizens of a world out of sight. Like the prophet's servant in Dothan, we are to open our eyes to a mountain full of chariots and horsemen of fire—and those "chariots" of God are "thousands of angels"; and those "horsemen" are God's saints, already gone from amongst the living, but present with us, for companionship and for sympathy and for communion still. You have had, you have made, an advent—an advent for abode, an advent for perpetuity. "Ye are come to the spirits of just men made perfect." 1. The first and least thing here said—itself great and glorious too—is the union of the Christian living with the Christian dead in their faith and in their example. It is a thought not without comfort, that, as Christians, we have an ancestry and a pedigree. The continuity is not broken. The Church of all time is one. Then disgrace not your family. Bring no blot upon your escutcheon. You are come to the spirits of the perfect. You join on to them in the genealogical tree. Be followers, be imitators of them, as they once, in their day and generation, were of Christ. 2. Ye are come to the spirits and souls of the righteous in their sympathy. There is a living as well as a memorial sympathy between the Church on earth and the Church in heaven. All the glimpses given us in Holy Scripture of the mind and life of Paradise seem to point this way. It was of no sleeping soul that Christ spoke on the Cross to the malefactor beside Him. It is no bathing in Lethe, for the obliteration of earth's memories and the annihilation of human affections, which the gospel opens to us as the prize of the race to him that overcometh. "Rest with us" is something different from this selfish, this isolated, this drowsy repose. Even nature demands something different. There is an instinct as well as a revelation of this advent of the living to the departed. We want it for comfort, we want it for admonition. God has knit together His elect in one communion and fellowship. There is a communion of saints as well as a Catholic Church; the militant and the perfected are not two societies, they are one. Have any of us a friend in the happy land—father or mother, sister or wife, friend closer than a brother? Remember then, remember for use as well as for consolation, that you "are come" to that other—come, by an advent such as there is none between the living. The stripping off of this carcase gives a sympathy, gives

a contact, gives an intuition of love such as cannot be had here. You are come to the dead, as you cannot come to the living. See then that you give joy, only joy, to the inhabitants of that world. 3. "Ye are come to the spirits of the righteous" in their single, their engrossing devotion to Christ their Lord. It is said, I scarcely care to ask whether in history or fiction, that there was one from whom had been taken away by the stroke of death "the desire of his eyes," the wife of his youth. He had laid her in the earth; yet night after night she visited him in his chamber, herself yet not herself, the same but a thousandfold more beautiful—and in that periodical converse, making night day for him and darkness light, he half forgot his bereavement and his desolation. One night she came, and he could not repress an exclamation upon her peculiar beauty. "I never saw you," he said, "so lovely." She said, "It is my last visit to you: to-morrow I am to see *Him*, and after that sight I shall have no eye for aught else." He saw her no more. Is not this, perhaps, the answer to those questions so often agitated by the mourner as to the future sight and recognition of friends? Be sure that nothing shall be denied thee in that world, which could give thee solace or satisfaction. If thou desirest there thy friend's face or voice or hand, be sure thou shalt have it. Nevertheless, when thou shalt have been there but a little while; when, if so it be, after a season of preparation, as it were of purifying and anointing for "the day of the espousals," thou shalt actually have seen the King in His beauty—I say not that thou shalt be debarred then from other sight or other converse; but this I say—the desire for aught else will have left thee; all other love, not destroyed, not diminished, rather ten thousandfold enhanced, will yet be absorbed and swallowed up in that; thy loved one, and thou, will be so wrapped up in another love and higher, that the selfish love will be gone, and only the Divine love will continue. (*Dean Vaughan.*)

Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.—*The messenger of the covenant and its seal*:—I. GOD'S REVELATION TO US IS IN THE FORM OF A COVENANT. Just as when a king gives forth a proclamation, he is bound by the fact that he gave it forth, so God, out of all the infinite possibilities of His action, condescends to tell us what His line is to be, and He will adhere to it. He lets us see the works of the clock, if I may so say, not wholly, but in so far as we are affected by His action. What, then, are the terms of this covenant? We have them drawn out, first, in the words of Jeremiah, who apprehended, when he was dwelling in the midst of that external system, that it could not be a final system; and next, by the writer of this letter quoting the prophet, who, in the midst of the vanishing of that which could be shaken, saw emerging, like the fairy form of the fabled goddess out of the sea-foam, the vast and permanent outlines of a nobler system. The promises of the covenant are, then, full forgiveness as the foundation of all, and built upon that knowledge of God inwardly illuminating and making a man independent of external helps, though he may sometimes be grateful for them; then a mutual possession, which is based upon these, whereby I, even I, can venture to say, God is mine, and, more wonderful still, I, even I, can venture to believe that He bends down from heaven, and says: "And thou, thou art Mine!" And then, as the result of all—named first, but coming last in the order of Nature—the law of His commandment will be so written upon the heart that delight and duty are spelt with the same letters, and His will is our will. If these, then, be the articles of the paction, think for a moment of the blessedness that lies hived in this ancient, and to some of us musty, thought of a covenant of God's. It gives a basis for knowledge. Unless He audibly and articulately and verifiably utters His mind and will, I know not where men are to go to get it. And then, again, let me remind you how here is the one foothold, if I may so say, for confidence. If God hath not spoken there is nothing to reckon upon. There are perhapses, probabilities, if you like, possibilities, but nothing beyond. And no man can build a faith on a peradventure. II. JESUS CHRIST IS THE EXECUTOR OF THIS COVENANT. The depth of the thought is only reached when we recognise His divinity and His humanity. He is the ladder with its foot on earth and its top in heaven. Because God dwells in Him, and the Word became flesh, He is able to lay His hand upon both, and to bring God to man, and man to God. He brings God to man by the declaration of His nature incarnate in humanity. And, on the other hand, He brings man to God; for He stands to each of us as our true Brother, and united to us by such close and real bonds as that all which He has been and done may be ours if we join ourselves to Him by faith. And He brings men to God, because in Him only do we find the drawings that incline wayward and wandering hearts to the Father. And He seals for us that great covenant in His own Person and work, in so far as what He in manhood has done has made it pos-

sible that such promises should be given to us. And, still further, He is the Mediator of the covenant, in so far as He Himself possesses in His humanity all the blessings which manhood is capable of deriving from the Father, and He has them all in order that He may give them all. There is the great Reservoir from which all men may fill their tiny cups. III. NOTE THE SPRINKLING OF THE BLOOD WHICH SEALS THE COVENANT. The blood shed establishes the covenant; and the blood sprinkled brings us into it. If Jesus had not died there would have been no promises for us, beginning with forgiveness and ending in wills delighting in God's law. It is "the new covenant in His blood." The death of Christ is ever present to the Divine mind and determines the Divine action. Further, that sprinkling, which introduced technically and formally these people into that covenant, represents for us the personal application to ourselves of the power of His death and of His life, by which we may make all God's promises our own, and be cleansed from all sin. It is "sprinkled." Then it is capable of division into indefinitely small portions, and of the closest contact with individuals. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Christ the Mediator of the covenant*:—I. Consider Christ, our Mediator, in His PERSON. His person is amiable; He is all made up of love and beauty. He is the effigies of His Father, "the express image of His person." Consider—1. Christ's person in two natures. 2. His two natures in one person. II. Consider Christ, our Mediator, in His GRACES: these are the sweet savour of His ointments that make the virgins love Him. Christ, our blessed Mediator, is said to be, "full of grace and truth." He had the anointing of the Spirit without measure. Grace in Christ is after a more eminent and glorious manner than it is in any of the saints. 1. Jesus Christ, our Mediator, hath perfection in every grace. He is a panoply, magazine, and storehouse of all heavenly treasure, all fulness. 2. There is a never-failing fulness of grace in Christ. 3. Grace in Christ is communicative, His grace is for us; the holy oil of the Spirit was poured on the head of this blessed Aaron that it might run down upon us. Use 1. Admire the glory of this Mediator; He is God-man, He is co-essentially glorious with the Father. 2. If Christ be God-man in one person, then look unto Jesus Christ alone for salvation. 3. Is Jesus Christ God and man in one person? This, as it shows the dignity of believers, that they are nearly related to one of the greatest persons that is, "in Him dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily," so it is of unspeakable comfort. Christ's two natures being married together, the Divine and human, all that Christ in either of His natures can do for believers, He will do. (*T. Watson.*) *The privileges and blessings of the new covenant*:—I. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THIS GRAND AND AMIABLE CHARACTER BY WHICH OUR BLESSED LORD IS HERE REPRESENTED TO US AS MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT? The Mediator betwixt God and man, acting in the Father's name, and by His authority, and acting in our behoof, and for our salvation. 1. But more particularly, in our serious attention to this subject, our urgent need of Him, in this great capacity, may first naturally occur to our thoughts. What man could not do, God hath effected. Our help is laid upon One who is mighty and able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God through Him. 2. For it is to be observed that Jesus Christ is constituted and appointed by the Father Himself to this great office, to be Mediator of the new covenant. 3. But further. The Mediator of the new covenant is fully qualified to discharge this great office, to sustain this high character. The Redeemer of man is the Son of God. Hence the infinite value and efficacy of His meritorious sufferings, and prevailing mediation. 4. But He is the Mediator of the new covenant, through whom, and in virtue of whose atonement for sin, and satisfaction to Divine justice, the covenant is established and ratified, and all its benefits purchased. In a word, the full pardon of sin; established peace with God; the adoption of children; the grace of His Spirit; victory over sin and death; and a state of eternal happiness in the world to come. 5. But further, as Mediator of this covenant, He acts with God for man, that we may be brought to a compliance with the terms of the covenant, be reconciled in our hearts unto God, and live as the ransomed of the Lord. This is evidently necessary, in order to our receiving the blessings of this covenant. This work of mediation is carried on by His Word, by His servants speaking in His name, by the ordinances of the gospel, and by the influences of His Spirit. 6. He is the Mediator of the new covenant, who carrieth on the blessed work of mediation for us, now in His exalted state, and will continue to do so, until all its purposes shall be finally accomplished. II. Consider WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THE EXPRESSION, "YE ARE COME TO HIM." Ye believe in Him as the Mediator of the new covenant. Ye see His excellency and all-sufficiency. Ye have received Him to be your Redeemer; ye have assented to the terms of His covenant

on your part, and have yielded yourselves unto the Lord through this Mediator. Ye are spiritually united to Him. Ye live in a state of union and friendship with Him. Ye abide in Him by faith and love, and ere long shall ye be for ever with Him. That communion is now begun, which shall be hereafter perfected; because He liveth ye shall live for ever also. (*J. Williamson.*) *What is required in the Mediator between God and men*:—He must have the natural power of God and the natural power of man. In an advocacy so original and peculiar as that which involves mediation between God and man, it is past our ability to conceive how it could be otherwise. The stairway of light seen in the splendid imageries of the patriarch's dream, touched both worlds, or it would not have been a medium of communication; a bridge flung across the river must touch both shores, or it could not be a medium of passage; and it seems but the language of fair analogy to say that a mediator between God and man must, in the mystery of his being, touch both natures, or he could not be the medium of intercourse. (*C. Stanford, D.D.*) **The blood of sprinkling.**—*The blood of Abel and the blood of Jesus*:—I. JESUS' BLOOD SPEAKS BETTER THINGS IN GENERAL. What did the blood of Abel say? Was it not the blood of testimony? When Abel fell to the ground beneath his brother's club, he bore witness to spiritual religion. He died a martyr for the truth that God accepteth men according to their faith. Our Lord Jesus Christ, being also a testifier and witness for the faith of God, spake better things than Abel, because He had more to speak, and spake from more intimate acquaintance with God. Moreover, the blood of Abel spake good things in that it was the proof of faithfulness. His blood as it fell to the ground spake this good thing—it said, "Great God, Abel is faithful to Thee." But the blood of Jesus Christ testifies to yet greater faithfulness still, for it was the sequel of a spotlessly perfect life, which no act of sin had ever defiled; whereas Abel's death furnished, it is true, a life of faith, but not a life of perfection. Moreover, we must never forget that all that Abel's blood could say as it fell to the ground was but the shadow of that more glorious substance of which Jesus' death assures us. Jesus did not typify atonement, but offered it. It is well to add that our Lord's person was infinitely more worthy and glorious than that of Abel, and consequently His death must yield to us a more golden-mouthed discourse than the death of a mere man like Abel. II. Now we will remember that THE BLOOD OF JESUS SPEAKS BETTER THINGS TO GOD than the blood of Abel did. The blood of Abel cried in the ears of the Lord, for thus He said to Cain, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground." That cry did not go round to seek a mediator, but went directly to the judgment-seat of God, and laid an accusation against the murderer. Can you stand at Calvary now and view the flowing of the Saviour's blood from hands, and feet, and side? What are your own reflections as to what that blood says to God? That blood crieth with a loud voice to God, and what doth it say? Does it not say this? "O God, this time it is not merely a creature which bleeds, but though the body that hangs upon the Cross is the creature of Thy Holy Spirit, it is Thine own Son who now pours out His soul unto death. O God, wilt Thou despise the cries and the tears, the blood of Thine own Son?" Then, moreover, the voice would plead, "It is not only Thy Son, but Thy perfectly innocent Son, in whom was no necessity for dying, because He had no original sin which would have brought corruption on Him, who had moreover no actual sin, who throughout life had done nothing worthy of death or of bonds. Canst Thou see it, Thou God of all, canst Thou see the infinitely holy and just Son of Thy heart led here to die, and not feel the force of the blood as it cries to Thee?" Was there not added to this fact that our Lord died to vindicate the honour of His Father? "For Thee, O God, for Thee He dies! If Thou wert content to stain Thine honour or to restrain Thy mercy, there were no need that He should give Himself." Is there not power in this voice? Yet over and above this the blood must have pleaded thus with God:—"O God, the blood which is now being shed, thus honourable and glorious in itself, is being poured out with a motive which is Divinely gracious. O God, it is a chain for God in heaven which binds the victim to the horns of the altar, a chain of everlasting love, of illimitable goodness." Now you and I could not see a man suffer out of pure benevolence without being moved by his sufferings, and shall God be unmoved? the perfectly holy and gracious God? III. Furthermore, JESUS' BLOOD SPEAKS BETTER THINGS TO US IN OUR OWN HEARTS than the blood of Abel. When the sinner looks to Jesus slain, he may well say, "If I did not know that all this blood was shed for me as well as by me, my fears would multiply a thousandfold; but when I think that that precious blood is shed instead of mine, when I think that that is the blood of God's own dear Son, whom He has smitten instead of smiting me, making Him bear the whole of His

wrath that I might not bear it, O my God, what comforts come streaming from this blessed fountain!" Just in proportion as thought of murder would make Cain wretched, in the same proportion ought faith to make you happy as you think upon Jesus Christ slain; for the blood of Christ must have a more powerful voice than that of Abel, and it cries therefore more powerfully for you than the blood of Abel cried against his brother Cain. IV. JESUS' BLOOD, EVEN IN MY TEXT, SPEAKS BETTER THINGS THAN THAT OF ABEL. It speaks the same things but in a better sense. Did you notice the first text? God said unto Cain, "What hast thou done?" Now that is what Christ's blood says to you: "What hast thou done?" Ah! Lord, done enough to make me weep for ever if it were not that Thou hast wept for me. What I want mainly to indicate is this. If you notice in the second text, this blood is called "the blood of sprinkling." Whether Abel's blood sprinkled Cain or not I cannot say, but if it did, it must have added to his horror to have had the blood actually upon him. But this adds to the joy in our case, for the blood of Jesus is of little value to us until it is sprinkled upon us. Faith dips the hyssop in the atoning blood and sprinkles it upon the soul, and the soul is clean. The application of the blood of Jesus is the true ground of joy, and the sure source of Christian comfort; the application of the blood of Abel must have been horror, but the application of the blood of Jesus is the root and ground of all delight. There is another matter in the text with which I conclude. The apostle says, "We are come to the blood of sprinkling." Now, from the blood of Abel every reasonable man would flee away. He that has murdered his fellow desires to put a wide distance between himself and the accusing corpse. But we come to the blood of Jesus. It is a topic in which we delight as our contemplations bring us nearer and nearer to it. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The blood of sprinkling*:—I. WHAT IS IT? What is this "blood of sprinkling"? In a few words, "the blood of sprinkling" represents the pains, the sufferings, the humiliation, and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, which He endured on the behalf of guilty man. He properly, but yet most generously and spontaneously, came and shed His precious blood in the stead of sinners, to bring the guilty near to God. But the text does not merely speak of the blood shed, which I have explained to you, but of "the blood of sprinkling." This is the atonement applied for Divine purposes, and specially applied to our own hearts and consciences by faith. 1. The blood of sprinkling is the centre of the Divine manifestation under the gospel. Observe its innermost place in the passage before us. 2. I next ask you to look at the text and observe that this sprinkling of the blood, as mentioned by the Holy Ghost in this passage, is absolutely identical with Jesus Himself. If you have done with the blood of sprinkling, you have done with Jesus altogether; He will never part with His mediatorial glory as our sacrifice, neither can we come to Him if we ignore that character. 3. Observe that this "blood of sprinkling" is put in close contact with "the new covenant." To us Jesus in His atonement is Alpha and Omega, in Him the covenant begins and ends. 4. But I want you to notice that according to the text the blood is the voice of the new dispensation. Observe that on Sinai there was "the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they heard that entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more." You look, therefore, under the new dispensation, for a voice, and you do not come to any till you reach the last object in the list, and there see "the blood of sprinkling that speaketh." Here, then, is the voice of the gospel; it is not the voice of a trumpet, nor the voice of words spoken in terrible majesty; but the blood speaks, and assuredly there is no sound more piercing, more potent, more prevailing. 5. Observe, that this voice is identical with the voice of the Lord Jesus. 6. This blood is always speaking. It always remains a plea with God, and a testimony to men. 7. This precious blood speaks "better things than that of Abel." It saith, "There is redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace." "He His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes we were healed." "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." The voice of the blood is this, "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." II. WHERE ARE WE? I have to explain what is meant by the expression which is found in the twenty-second verse of the chapter, "Ye are come." Link the twenty-second verse with this twenty-fourth, and read, "Ye are come to the blood of sprinkling." 1. Well, first, ye are come to the hearing of the gospel of the atoning sacrifice. You are come to hear, not of your sin and its doom, not of the last judg-

ment and the swift destruction of the enemies of God, but of love to the guilty, pity for the miserable, mercy for the wicked. 2. In a better sense, going a little further, we have not only come to the blood of sprinkling by hearing about it, but we have come to it because the great God now deals with us upon methods which are founded and grounded upon the atoning sacrifice of Christ. 3. Further, there is a far more effectual way of coming to the blood of sprinkling than this—when by faith that blood is sprinkled upon our souls. This is absolutely needed: the blood shed must become to each one of us the blood sprinkled. 4. Further, to come to this blood of sprinkling means thankfully to enjoy all that comes to us through the blood of sprinkling. 5. I think, once more, that this coming to the blood of sprinkling means also that we feel the full effect of it in our lives. The man who knows that Jesus shed His blood for him, and has had that blood applied to his conscience, becomes a sin-hating man, consecrated to Him who has cleansed him. III. WHAT THEN? 1. Do not refuse the voice of Jesus by cold indifference. 2. When you resolve to study the doctrine, do not approach it with prejudice through misapprehension. 3. Do not refuse the voice of the Lord Jesus by rejecting the principle of expiation. 4. Do not refuse this voice of mercy by preferring your own way of salvation. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 25-29. **Refuse not Him that speaketh.**—*The voice of God in the vicissitudes of humanity*:—I. THE VOICE OF GOD IS VARIOUSLY UTTERED IN DIFFERENT AGES OF THE WORLD. God speaks to rational beings on earth in two general ways—1. Natural. Everything around and within us is a book; all these are materials of knowledge—the soul alone is the reader, the student, the philosopher, the interpreter; a world is spread out by God, impressed with principles and laws for man, that he may look through them to Him. 2. Supernatural. (1) Communications before Christ (chap. i. 1). (2) Communications by Christ (chap. ii. i). II. THE VOICE OF GOD PRODUCES GREAT CHANGES IN THE INSTITUTIONS OF MEN. There are two classes of things, and but two—things that may be shaken, and things that may not be shaken. There is one Being who exists by necessity—the absolute, immutable God. The nearer things are to God, the more fixed they are; the farther from God, the more changeable. III. THE SHAKING OF THINGS MUTABLE IS DESIGNED TO LEAD MEN TO THE IMMUTABLE. The immutable things of Judaism are preserved in Christianity; its God, spirit of worship, law—these are retained. IV. GOD, BY ALL THESE THINGS, BRINGS MEN TO THE TRUE WORSHIP OF HIMSELF. (*Caleb Morris.*) *The doctrine of Christ not to be refused*:—I. TO REFUSE HIM THAT SPEAKETH, WHICH MEANS CONTEMPT OF GOD, WHO OUT OF GREATEST MERCY HAD RENDERED SALVATION UPON FAIREST TERMS. II. THE REASON IS TAKEN FROM THE HEINOUSNESS OF THE SIN, AND THE GRIEVOUSNESS OF THE PUNISHMENT, BOTH WHICH ARE SET FORTH BY A COMPARISON IN QUANTITY. Let us apply this unto ourselves, and consider—1. Who speaks unto us. 2. What He speaks. 3. From whence He speaks. (1) It's not man, but God; not Moses, but Christ: the law indeed was by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ. The majesty and power of Him who speaks is such as angels are bound to attend and obey with all humble submission; and shall we worms, nay, dust and ashes, refuse to hear this glorious Lord? (2) The matter that He speaks and we hear is the best, the most sweet, the most comfortable, and the most excellent; never better things seen, or heard, or understood by the heart of man. The gospel is a doctrine of profoundest wisdom, or greatest love and mercy, and of highest concernment, and most conducing to our everlasting good. And shall we reject it? Shall we sin against so great a majesty, so great a mercy? Sins against the mercies of God so freely tendered to us in Jesus Christ, are the most heinous of all others. Let us tremble to think of these sins, and those punishments which they must suffer that are guilty of them. (3) He speaks from heaven; for the gospel is a mystery hid from the beginning of the world, and was brought unto us from the bosom of the Father, by His only begotten Son, and by the Holy Ghost; it's the clearest manifestation of God's deepest counsels concerning man's eternal estate, and of His greatest love to sinful wretches, the brightest light that ever shined from heaven; yet we hear it, and most men regard it not, but reject it to their everlasting woe. (*G. Lawson.*) *Hear! hear!*—I. THERE IS NEED OF THIS EXHORTATION FROM MANY CONSIDERATIONS. 1. The excellence of the word. It claims obedient attention. 2. The readiness of Satan to prevent our receiving the Divine word. 3. Our own indisposition to receive the holy, heavenly message. 4. We have rejected too long already. It is to be feared that we may continue to do so; but our right course is to hearken at once. 5. The word comes in love to our souls; let us therefore heed

it, and render love for love. II. THERE ARE MANY WAYS OF REFUSING HIM THAT SPEAKETH. 1. Not hearing. Absence from public worship, neglect of Bible-reading. "Turn away from Him." 2. Hearing listlessly, as if half asleep, and unconcerned. 3 Refusing to believe. Intellectually believing, but not with the heart. 4. Raising quibbles. Hunting up difficulties, favouring unbelief. 5. Being offended. Angry with the gospel, indignant at plain speech, opposing honest personal rebuke. 6. Perverting His words. Twisting and wresting Scripture. 7. Bidding Him depart. Steeling the conscience, trifling with conviction, resorting to frivolous company for relief. 8. Reviling Him. Denying His deity, hating His gospel, and His holy way. 9. Persecuting Him. Turning upon His people as a whole, or assailing them as individuals. III. THERE ARE MANY CAUSES OF THIS REFUSING. 1. Stolid indifference, which causes a contempt of all good things. 2. Self-rightcousness, which makes self an idol, and therefore rejects the living Saviour. 3. Self-reliant wisdom, which is too proud to hear the voice of God. 4. Hatred of holiness, which prefers the wilful to the obedient, the lustful to the pure, the selfish to the Divine. 5. Fear of the world, which listens to threats, or bribes, or flatteries, and dares not act aright. 6. Procrastination, which cries "to-morrow," but means "never." 7. Despair and unbelief, which declare the gospel to be powerless to save, and unavailable as a consolation. IV. REFUSING TO HEAR CHRIST, THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY IS DESPISED. "Him that speaketh from heaven." 1. He is of heavenly nature, and reveals to us what He has known of God and heaven. 2. He came from heaven, armed with heavenly authority. 3. He speaks from heaven at this moment by His eternal Spirit in Holy Scripture, the ordinances and the preaching of the gospel. 4. He will speak from heaven at the judgment. He is Himself God, and therefore all that He saith hath divinity within it. V. THE DOOM TO BE FEARED IF WE REFUSE CHRIST. Those to whom Moses spake on earth, who refused him, escaped not. 1. Let us think of their doom, and learn that equally sure destruction will happen to all who refuse Christ. Pharaoh and the Egyptians. The murmurers dying in the wilderness. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. 2. Let us see how some have perished in the Church. Judas, Ananias, and Sapphira, &c. 3. Let us see how others perish who remain in the world, and refuse to quit it for the fold of Christ. They shall not escape by annihilation, nor by purgatory, nor by universal restitutions. They shall not escape by infidelity, hardness of heart, cunning or hypocrisy. They have refused the only way of escape, and therefore they must perish for ever. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The plea of the gospel:*—To "refuse" is a positive rejection of the word. But to "turn away" may be only neglect and disregard. To treat the message carelessly is to "turn away" from the speaker. And as the ancient people were condemned for refusing, so may we be far more terribly overwhelmed in destruction if we turn away from Christ. Christ in His preached Word, Christ in His perpetuated Church, Christ in the continued ordinances of His dispensation, is for ever speaking unto men. If you scorn, then, the feeblest presentation of the gospel, it is not the preacher that you despise, but the Lord Jesus Christ who speaks through the preacher. I. THE MANIFESTATION OF TRUTH IN THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST HAS RECEIVED THE HIGHEST SANCTION WHICH CAN BE AFFORDED FOR OBEDIENCE AND FAITH. Do you ask for dignity in the person who claims your allegiance and evokes your faith? Where shall you find a higher worth and glory of personal nature and character than were in Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you impressible by power, and will you allow your conscience and heart to follow, where first your senses and imagination have been aroused? What more Divine glory and power shall you anywhere find than in Him, who stills a tempest with a word, who calls the dead back to life, and is the master of the unseen world, whom the very demons hear and swiftly and abjectly obey? Perhaps you ask for wisdom and the light of an intelligence that shines with the lustre of the mind of God. Go and listen to Him who taught upon the mountains, or compelled the wondering multitudes to a reverent attention, as He unfolded the mysteries of the kingdom in the parables that linked the simplest facts and events of earthly life to the sublimest truths of the Divine nature and government. Does moral heroism arouse you? Will the signs of the spiritual and the Divine, found in the conflicts of a true and tried life, stir your heart and compel your admiration? Where in the world hath ever shone a light so signalised by truth and bravery, by virtue, and perfection, as the life of Jesus Christ? Perhaps you will yield to the claims of holiness and justice. Like the ancient statue which broke the awful silence in a deep sweet note of music, when the morning sunlight first fell upon it, your nature answers with an echo of fine melody, to the revelation of law, and to

the outshining of the claim of God. Behold, how it breaks in clearest light, from the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ! Or perchance to all these forces you only turn a hard, insensate nature. But surely you can melt beneath the influence of love. The traveller drew his cloak the tighter when the blustering north wind blew, but he cast off his covering when the sunshine came out. Wilt thou not, then, throw from thee thy coverings of self-righteousness, and rebellion, when the grace and pity of thy God stream upon thee from the offered sacrifice of the dying Lamb? II. THE NEGLECT OF THIS MESSAGE OF GRACE IS THE DEEPEST SIN WHICH CAN RENDER A MAN OBNOXIOUS TO THE JUST PUNISHMENT OF GOD. To wrong a stranger of his stranger's right, to rob even an enemy of what justly belongs to him—these are crimes which human law of the imperfect sort punishes. But what is the deeply dyed shame of love outraged? What of the wickedness which tears the hand that is extended to help? These are enormities at which human nature stands aghast. And this is the sin which you commit, when you "refuse Him that speaketh from heaven." III. ESCAPE FROM THE RESULT OF THIS UNBELIEF IS ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE. A company of shipwrecked sailors are on yonder raft. They drift helplessly upon the wide ocean. They are thousands of miles from land. That frail bundle of spars can never bring them to the shore. Storms may arise, and if the winds blow, and the waters beat in mountainous surges upon them, they must perish. But see, a vessel comes in sight. It is an ocean steamer. It bears down to them. It comes alongside, and offers to take them on board. Thereupon, they begin to speculate whether they may not still be saved, even if they refuse to accept the offer of succour, and remain upon the raft. Who would not pronounce them mad to the last degree of madness, if they hesitate to climb on board? The question would not even suggest itself. While we speak, every man of them has left the broken spars, and is safe on the deck of the ship. What then of you, of any of us, who wonder whether there may not be yet a chance, even if the salvation of Christ is not made your own? The voice from heaven is speaking. To reject it, is the deepest guilt. What hope can there be if this be not accepted? (*L. D. Bevan, D.D.*) *Refusing God:*—1. Doubt of His truth, dissatisfaction with His Word, is perhaps one of the most prominent features of such refusal. When a person begins to say, "This in the Bible is, perhaps, an hyperbolical and figurative phrase; it needs to be palliated in order that we may reach its truth; it needs to be subtracted from in order that we may attain the exact meaning of the Spirit of God"; he shows his tendency to depart from the living God. 2. A second evidence is, disagreement with God. How can two walk together except they be agreed? If two persons are in partnership, they can agree so long as they work together; but if one feels one course to be right and follows it, and the other, another, the two are at issue, and the one departs from the other. Departure begins at the smallest possible point of refusal. When a line starts from another, when a tangent starts from a circle, or one line diverges from another with which it ran parallel, it may be minutely, almost imperceptibly at the commencement, but, however, it will issue in an opposite and contrary direction. So your divergence from God may begin about a small matter; a very little which God demands but which you refuse; a little matter which you think ought to be in your way, but which God has said shall be in the opposite way; but that divergence which begins on that little fact in that little Bible may issue in results disastrous as imagination cannot conceive, and terrible as are pourtrayed in the condition of the lost by the Holy Spirit of God. 3. Another element is, dissatisfaction with what God is and what God does. God rules in providence. Some great blow falls upon your home, some disastrous loss occurs in your circumstances; you have light enough to see that God is in this, and grace enough to feel that it is God's hand that strikes the blow, and you murmur against God; you object to religion; you are dissatisfied with Him who is its author, and you begin a course of departure from the living God. The tenant leaves the house with which he is dissatisfied; the friend leaves the friend's company with whom he is offended; and you, dissatisfied with the providential government of God, believing that He has punished when He ought to have rewarded, arrested when He ought to have given impulse, retire from Him, forget His Word, forsake His sanctuary, and refuse Him. And such a course, I again remind you, may begin from very little indeed, but it must issue in terrible results. A person departing from God walks in the company of the ungodly. He stands in the way of sinners. Then, he sits in the seat of the scornful. Here you have, then, the course of one who refuses God. What are some of the signs or evidences that a Christian can take cognisance of? (1) The first trait of refusal of God is dissatisfaction, perhaps, with the people of

God. (2) Another trait is less delight in His Word. Whenever men begin to think the Bible and religion very dull, and to long for a romance as the only exciting book, there is something wrong. (3) Another strong mark, too, of refusing God is less delight in prayer. He that really has the grace of God in his heart will be always discovering deeper wants that need to be satisfied, infirmities that need to be removed, prejudices that require to be scattered, passions that require to be broken, and his heart will be ever rising quietly, but fervently, to God for strength to be made perfect in weakness, and grace to be made sufficient. 4. Another evidence is excessive love of the world. "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." I have submitted these as simple tests or criteria by which to ascertain either our growing acceptance of God, or refusing Him. It is a serious question, Am I a child of God? Is my heart set on heavenly things? (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *Refusing God's voice* :—I. THE SOLEMN POSSIBILITY OF REFUSAL. Now, to gain the whole solemnity of this exhortation, it is very needful to remember that it is addressed to professing Christians, who have in so far exercised real faith as that, by it, they "are come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God." Then, again, it is to be noted that the refusal here spoken about, and against which we professing Christians are thus solemnly warned, is not necessarily entire intellectual rejection of the gospel and its message. For the Israelites, who made the original "refusal," to which that which we are warned against is paralleled, recognised the voice that they would not listen to as being God's voice; and just because it was His voice wanted to hear no more of it. Then, remember, too, that this refusal, which at bottom is the rising up of the creature's will, tastes, inclinations, desires against the manifest and recognised will of God, may, and as a matter of fact often does, go along with a great deal of lip reverence and unconsciously hypocritical worship. The unconscious refusal is the formidable and fatal one. Will God's voice be heard in a heart that is all echoing with earthly wishes, loudly claimant for their gratification, with sensual desires passionately demanding their food to be flung to them? Will God's voice be heard in a heart where the janglings of contending wishes and earthly inclinations are perpetually loud in their brawling? Will it be heard in a heart which has turned itself into a sounding-board for all the noises of the world and the voices of men? The voice of God is heard in silence, and not amidst the noises of our own hearts. And they who, unconsciously perhaps, of what they are doing, open their ears wide to hear what they themselves, in the lower parts of their souls, prescribe, or bow themselves in obedience to the precepts and maxims of men round them, are really refusing to hear the voice of God. II. THE SLEEPLESS VIGILANCE NECESSARY TO COUNTERACT THE TENDENCY TO REFUSAL. "See that ye refuse not." A warning finger is, as it were, lifted. Take heed against the tendencies that lie in yourself and the temptations around you. The consciousness of the possibility of the danger is half the battle. If there is any need to dwell upon specific methods by which this vigilance and continual self-distrust may work out for us our security, one would say—by careful trying to reverse all these conditions which lead us surely to the refusal. Silence the passions, the wishes, the voices of your own wills and tastes and inclinations and purposes. Bring them all into close touch with Him. Let there be no voice in your hearts till you know God's will; and then with a leap let your hearts be eager to do it. Keep yourselves out of the babble of the world's voices; and be accustomed to go by yourselves and let God speak. Do promptly, precisely, perfectly, all that you know He has said. That is the way to sharpen your ears for the more delicate intonations of His voice, and the closer manifestations of His will. III. THE SOLEMN MOTIVES BY WHICH THIS SLEEPLESS VIGILANCE IS ENFORCED. "If they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth"—or, perhaps, "who on earth refused Him that spake"—"much more shall not we escape if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven." The clearness of the voice is the measure of the penalty of non-attention to it. The voice that spoke on earth had earthly penalties as the consequence of disobedience. The voice that speaks from heaven, by reason of its loftier majesty, and of the clearer utterances which are granted to us thereby, necessarily involves more severe and fatal issues from negligence to it. Mark how the words deepen and darken in their significance in the latter portion. The man that stops his ears will very soon turn his back and be in flight, so far as he can, from the voice. Do not tamper with God's utterances. If you do, you have begun a course that ends in alienation from Him. Then mark, again, the evils which fell upon these people who turned away from Him that speaketh on

earth where their long wandering in the wilderness, and their exclusion from the Land of Promise, and final deaths in the desert, where their bleaching bones lay white in the sunshine. And if you and I, by continuous and increasing deafness to our Father's voice, have turned away from Him, then all that assemblage of flashing glories and majestic persons, and of reconciling blood to which we come by faith, will melt away, "and leave not a wrack behind." We shall be like men who in a dream have thought themselves in a king's palace, surrounded by beauty and treasures, and have awakened with a start and a shiver to find themselves alone in the desert. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Unheeded warnings*:—As he (Cæsar) crossed the hall his statue fell, and shivered on the stones. Some servants, perhaps, had heard whispers, and wished to warn him. As he still passed on a stranger thrust a scroll into his hand, and begged him to read it on the spot. It contained a list of the conspirators, with a clear account of the plot. He supposed it to be a petition, and placed it carelessly among his other papers. The fate of the empire hung upon a thread, but the thread was not broken. (*A. S. Froude.*) *Fear due to authority*:—Julius Cæsar once said to one who appeared to treat his words with indifference: "Know, young man, he who *says* these things is able to *do* them." (*J. F. B. Tinling, B.A.*) *The word has not done with us*:—We seem to have done with the word as it has passed through our ears; but the word, be it remembered, will never have done with us, till it has judged us at the last day. (*Judge Hale.*) "*Where are his ears?*"—A nobleman, skilled in music, who had often observed the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Cadogan's inattention to his performance, said to him one day, "Come, I am determined to make you feel the force of music; pay particular attention to this piece." It was accordingly played. "Well, what do you say now?" "Why, just what I said before." "What! can you hear this and not be charmed? Well, I am quite surprised at your insensibility. Where are your ears?" "Bear with me, my lord," replied Mr. Cadogan, "since I, too, have had my surprise. I have often, from the pulpit, set before you the most striking and affecting truths; I have sounded notes that might have raised the dead; I have said, 'Surely he will feel now,' but you never seemed to be charmed with my music, though infinitely more interesting than yours. I, too, have been ready to say, with astonishment, 'Where are his ears?'" **Yet once more.**—*Yet once more*:—The expression implies an approaching change. Whenever we speak of doing a thing once more, of visiting a place once more, of seeing a person once more, we imply that there is about to be, after that one act, a cessation, removal, separation, the thought of which is already casting its shadow over it and us. It is an old remark, but none the less true, that even things which we have little prized may awaken in the mind a tender feeling when they are viewed as for the last time, as what we shall never see or never do again. A man may become so habituated to a desert island or to a prison-cell, as to shed tears in quitting the one for his country or the other for freedom. And certainly the dullest home, the most monotonous occupation, the most uncongenial and unattractive circle, may easily be invested with an interest not its own, an interest which never belonged to it while it was regarded as permanent, the moment we feel that our hold upon it is shaken, that we are going forth from it to another abode, or in quest of another abode, which is as yet to us but an unrealised idea. Whenever we use the term "once more," in the sense here intended, let us remember, that it signifies "the removing of the things that are shaken," of things that are capable and in the process of shaking, "as of things that are made." When God Himself said, in the passage quoted, "Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven," it was implied that the convulsion of nature, as it was the last, so also was the prelude to an actual removal and displacement of the framework of nature itself, in preparation for the introduction of that which should be absolutely indestructible. Every change, from the very greatest of all to the very least, from that which convulses empires to that which agitates a little world like ours, is the removing of something made, of some thing or some person that is temporal and transitory, with a view to the greater prominence, perhaps the restoration to notice, of things or of persons immutable and eternal. What, then, are some of these things which cannot be shaken? 1. I might bid you to think of this school which we all so much love, and to remember that through centuries of changes and fluctuations it has already stood its ground, and that it is now one of those institutions of our country which possess in themselves, by God's blessing, an element of vitality and of permanence. 2. I will bid you, in the second place, to contrast with those human agencies which are necessarily so transitory in a place like this, and even with the institution itself in which they are carried on, those

individual results of our work which we express by the comprehensive term of a human character; that mind, that heart, those habits, that life, which are the ultimate result, in each particular case, of education considered as a complete whole. 3. To speak of the formation of character, just and true though the words be, has a somewhat chilling sound. But when we go on to the verse following the text, and read there of "a kingdom which cannot be moved," and hear of our receiving it, and find ourselves charged to "have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably," as though that also were by His gift in our own power; when we are thus brought, as it were, into His living presence, and made to view all things as coming to us from Him, and being ours already in Him; then whose heart does not burn within him; who does not then feel that there is, in deed and in truth, a rock higher than he on which his feet may, if he will, be securely set, and that, if only we can reach that place of safety, no change can ever come amiss to us, no change can ever touch us, us ourselves, though it may make strange havoc of every earthly shelter which we had provided for ourselves or for a time rested under and trusted in? (*Dean Vaughan.*) **I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.**—*The gospel as a power:*—I. AS A REVOLUTIONARY POWER. Falsehood, evil, corruption—these, wherever they exist, in hearts, governments, commerce, literature, science, or art—Christianity has shaken and will shake. II. AS A REIGNING POWER. It is a "kingdom." 1. He that does not receive it as a reigning power, does not receive it at all. 2. He that does not receive it as a reigning power, is exposed to the fate of a rebel against heaven. III. AS A PERMANENT POWER. "A kingdom which cannot be moved." 1. Its elements are immutable. Love and truth. 2. Its fitness is eternal. Man through all the ages will never outgrow it, never cease to want it, never be able to get on without it. IV. AS A PRACTICAL POWER. 1. The mode of acceptable service. "Reverence and godly fear." 2. The qualification for acceptable service. "Let us have graces," *i.e.*, thankfully realise the high blessings conferred on us, and with devout gratitude engage in the work. 3. The motive of acceptable service. "Our God is a consuming fire" (Deut. iv. 24). The God who rolled thunder and flashed lightnings on Sinai has not changed, His antagonism to sin is as great as ever. (*Homilist.*) *The shaking and the kingdom:*—I. There are two shakings here referred to by the apostle; the first is that of Sinai, which is already past, the second is that at the Lord's coming, which is still future. Of this STILL FUTURE SHAKING he affirms three things. 1. It is a final shaking. It is but "once more," and then all creation is at rest for ever. It is but "once more" that the stormy vengeance of Jehovah is to be let loose upon the earth to work havoc there. That last tempest is even now drawing together its clouds of darkness from every region, and mustering its strength for the terrible outburst—an outburst terrible indeed, but yet the last! 2. It is a more extensive shaking than any heretofore. "I shake not the earth only but also heaven." The heaven here spoken of is not the "third heaven," which is the peculiar dwelling place of God and the shrine of His glory; but the visible heavens above us—the same as those of which we read, "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." This universal shaking is that which Jesus Himself predicted (Matt. xxiv. 29). It is also that of which the prophet Isaiah (chap. xxiv.), has given at length so dark a picture. Very fearful will these convulsions be. Above, beneath, around; earth, air, and sea shall be all one dark, wide circle of infinite desolation and terror. Careless sinner! What shall then become of thee? 3. It is a shaking followed by a glorious issue. It is not for the annihilation of this material fabric, nor is it for reducing all things to their primitive chaos. It is for a very different end. That end is twofold. There is first "the removing of those things which are shaken as of things which are made," that is, things of perishable workmanship. Then there is the consolidating of what resists and survives this shaking into an immovable creation. The foreground is dark, but the scene beyond it is all glad and bright. The commotions in immediate prospect of which we are already beginning to descry the forerunners, are apt to depress and sadden; but all beyond that is so stable, so unchanging, and spreads itself out before us in such refulgent, holy beauty, that we can overleap the dreary interval and stay our hearts as well as refresh our eyes with the glory to be revealed when the skirts of the last cloud shall be seen passing off in the distance, and the echo of the last thunder heard remotely upon the joyful hills. II. The apostle having thus foretold the convulsions of the last days, and alluded to the "times of the restitution of all things," proceeds to show THE EFFECT WHICH THESE THINGS SHOULD HAVE UPON BELIEVERS, and in what a solemn attitude it places them. This is the object of what follows, which, from the use of the word

"wherefore," is obviously an inference from his preceding statements. 1. The kingdom. It is "a kingdom which cannot be moved." All present things are to be shaken, and out of these is to come the kingdom that cannot be moved—a kingdom unchangeable and eternal. Sin, we know, has loosened everything, transforming a stable world into a decaying, crumbling ruin. In order that stability may be restored, all things must be shaken, and after these shakings comes this immovable kingdom. There is no kingdom like this among all that has ever been. Everything about it is incorruptible, as well as undefiled. Its territory, its subjects, its laws, its throne, its sceptre, its sovereign, are all everlasting! Nothing can shake it. No war, no enemy, can disturb its peace. No storm, no earthquake, can assail it. No internal weakness or decay can dismember or dissolve it. The day of its duration shall be the eternal Sabbath—the rest that remaineth for the people of God. 2. The kings. Who are they? "We," says the apostle—that is, not "we apostles," but "we saints." As believers, we have received a kingdom, being made kings and priests unto God; being made "heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ." Angels are but "ministering spirits": we are kings—partakers with Christ Himself of His crown and throne! Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us! What a holy life should then be ours! Surely we may be expected to keep in mind our coming glory, and to walk worthy of such a calling, and of such a kingdom! 3. Our present position and employment. "Let us serve God." Our whole life is to be one of service: not merely certain portions of our life, but our entire life from the moment that we believe. It is the life of men redeemed to God, and who have therefore become His property. Each saint is a priest unto God as well as a king. And as Jehovah's priesthood, we serve in the true sanctuary which the Lord pitched and not man. Ours is a consecrated life, and therefore a continual service, the service of priests. We are sprinkled with blood set apart for God, and our whole life is to be one of priestly service. With our holy garments upon us, our censers in our hands, and standing under the shadow of the glory, how can we give way to levity, or wickedness, or indolence in circumstances so unutterably solemn and overawing. Oh! what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness! 4. In what manner is this service to be performed? (1) Acceptably—that is so as to please God. In all our service this is to be distinctly kept in mind. In our prayers, praises, duties, we are not only to gratify ourselves but to please God. Let us observe, however, that to serve God acceptably, is not to serve for the purpose of making ourselves accepted. No; before our services can be accepted, we must be accepted ourselves. A saint is not one who serves God in order to be forgiven, but one who, having found forgiveness, serves God in love and liberty as a forgiven soul, and with an enlarged heart. (2) With reverence and godly fear. There is to be no irreverence, no rashness, no presumption in our service, as if God were one like ourselves, or nearly upon our level. There is to be fear and solemn awe when we consider whom we worship; who we are who are thus permitted to draw near; in what temple it is that we worship, and what blood it cost ere we could be permitted to enter. 5. How are we to maintain this service? By holding fast grace, says the apostle. When that free love of God entered our souls, it brought with it liberty and gladness and light. It dispelled all our darkness, it removed all our sorrow, it struck off every fetter, and blessed us with the liberty of God's beloved Son. And it is in this same love that we are to abide to the end. We are to beware of losing sight of it, or letting it go. 6. Our God is a consuming fire. This evidently comes in as an additional reason to the preceding. And a most weighty and solemn one it is. The fire, indeed, has not consumed us, but still it is consuming. The God with whom we have to do is a God who has saved us, yet still this very God whom we call ours is a consuming fire. Should we not, then, serve Him with reverence and godly fear? (*H. Bonar.*) *The shaking of Sinai and Calvary*:—That voice of Sinai was a shaking of earthly things. How were nations dispossessed, how were thrones tumbled into the dust, how was the course of human history and human life changed or directed by that shaking of Sinai! And so with the shaking voice of Calvary! Earthly things were moved, and are still moved, by the power of that voice Divine. Not a home to-day in all our land, not a single relationship in life, no duty of the ruler, no obligation of the subject or the citizen, but is bent and swayed and governed from Golgotha's hill. But heavenly things are shaken by the voice which cried on Calvary. Some have understood, by the term "heaven" as here used, those high states of human faith and worship, not only in the Jewish economy but in the idolatries of the world,

which were as "heaven" to the men who received them; and these, the "It is finished" of our Lord has utterly overthrown. Is it a mere play of imagination, if we suppose that the voice which shook the heavens, was indeed heard by the inhabitants of that celestial world, and arrested the very worship of the skies, and startled angels from their lofty stations, to look with absorbed gaze upon the wonders of that sacrifice? Furthermore, may we not reverently suggest that the voice of victory on the completion of redeeming work, wrought even upon the heart of the Infinite One Himself? At least, the issue was a Divine acceptance, the change of threatening judgment into saving mercy. There was shaking at Sinai—shaking of old temporal and earthly relations, of old human and profane habits, and in their place the appointment of things seen in the heavenly, commanded by God, "made" indeed by men, but made "after the fashion given on the Mount." But now, the voice from heaven hath shaken both earth and heaven. Once again, and far more surely and destructively, are the earthly things shaken, and there topple down all secularities and temporalities and mere passing phenomena of human thought and law of man's mere worldly duty and faith. But with these also pass the heavenly things that Sinai established. The rules of life, the precepts of morality, the very commandments received as mere external ordinances, the gorgeous ritual of priest and sacrifice of temples, offering of chant and incense, of blood and altar—all these "things made" are shaken, and being shaken, show their passing temporal character as they quickly vanish and disappear. But what remains to us? what are the things that not even the voice from heaven can shake, that not even does the voice desire to shake, but only to establish? 1. Law remains, grand, inviolable, Divine. A law may have vanished, the law may have grown effete and dead, but law is now personal and incarnate, and dwells for ever serene, benign, almighty in the Son of Man, who is raised into the glory of the Godhead, and who sways, with the power of the Father, alike the hosts of heaven and the inhabiters of the earth. 2. Love remains. Love is the form that dwells in heaven, love is dominion and the rule of God in Jesus Christ His Son. 3. And law and love combine, and in their union salvation remains. All the preparations and the promises, all the weary wanderings of human life, God-led or man-directed, all the times and dispensations, all the aims and hopes and despairs and sins of men, these have all ended now, and there is naught but salvation free and full and certain and eternal, for all who will believe—salvation for the worst—salvation that cannot fail, for it stands assured upon the foundation of the sovereign God, the suffering Son, the ever-gracious Spirit. And so abides for ever the kingdom of our God. Human weakness shall not sap its strength, and Satan's malice and the wildest assault of hell shall never overthrow its glory. (*L. D. Bevan, D.D.*) *The shakings of Jehovah*:—These Hebrew Christians were living in the midst of a great shaking. It was a time of almost universal trial. God was shaking not earth only, but also heaven. The Jewish tenure of Palestine was being shaken by the Romans, who claimed it as their conquest. The interpretation given to the Word of God by the Rabbis was being shaken by the fresh light introduced through the words and life and death of Jesus. The supremacy of the temple and its ritual was being shaken by those who taught that the true temple was the Christian Church, and that all the Levitical sacrifices had been realised in Christ. The observance of the Sabbath was being shaken by those who wished to substitute for it the first day of the week. In such a time we are living now. Everything is being shaken and tested. But there is a Divine purpose in it all, that His eternal truth may stand out more clearly, when all human traditions have fallen away, unable to resist the energy of the shock. I. THEOLOGICAL SYSTEMS ARE BEING SHAKEN. There was a time when men received their theological beliefs from their teachers, their parents, or their Church, without a word of question or controversy. It is not so now; the air is filled with questionings. Men are putting into the crucible every doctrine which our forefathers held dear. In these terrible shakings, not one jot or tittle of God's Word shall perish, not one grain of truth shall fall to the ground, not one stone in the fortress shall be dislodged. But they are permitted to come, partly to test the chaff and wheat as a winnowing fan, but chiefly that all which is transient may pass away, whilst the simple truth of God becomes more apparent, and shines forth unhidden by the scaffolding and rubbish with which the builders have obscured its symmetry and beauty. "The things which cannot be shaken shall remain." II. ECCLESIASTICAL SYSTEMS ARE BEING SHAKEN. Teachers of religion are challenged to show reason for their assuming their office, or of claiming special prerogatives.

Methods of work are being weighed in the balances, missionary plans trenchantly criticised, religious services metamorphosed. Change is threatening the most time-honoured customs, and all this is very distressing to those who have confused the essence with the form, the jewel with the casket, the spirit with the temple in which it dwells. But let us not fear. All this is being permitted for the wisest ends. There is a great deal of wood, hay, and stubble in all our structures which needs to be burnt up, but not an ounce of gold or silver will ever be destroyed. III. OUR CHARACTERS AND LIVES ARE CONSTANTLY BEING SHAKEN. What a shake that sermon gave us, which showed that all our righteousness, on which we counted so fondly, were but withered leaves! What a shake was that commercial disaster, which swept away in one blow the savings and credit of years, that were engrossing the heart, and left us only what we had of spiritual worth! What a shake was that temptation, which showed that our fancied sinlessness was an empty dream, and that we were as sensitive to temptation as those over whom we had been vaunting ourselves. What has been the net result of all these shakings? Has a hair of our heads perished? The old man has perished, but the inward man has been daily renewed. The more the marble has wasted, the more the statue has grown. As the wooden centres have been knocked down, the solid masonry has stood out with growing completeness. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *A lesson from the great panic*:— It is a most popular error that the world stands still, and is fixed and immovable. This has been scouted as an astronomical theory, but as a matter of practical principle it still reigns in men's minds. Galileo said, "No, the world is not a fixed body, it moves"; Peter had long before declared that all these things should be dissolved; at last men believed the astronomer, but they still doubt the apostle, or at least forget his doctrine. "This is the substance," cries the miser, as he clutches his bags of gold; "heaven and hell are myths to me." "This is the main chance," whispers the merchant, as he pushes vigorously his commercial speculations; "as for spiritual things they are for mere dreamers and sentimentalists. Cash is the true treasure." Ah, you base your statements upon a foundation of falsehood. This world is as certainly a mere revolving ball as to human life as it is astronomically; and hopes founded thereon will as surely come to nought as will card houses in a storm. Here we have no abiding city, and it is in vain to attempt to build one. Every now and then, in order to enforce this distasteful truth upon us, the God of providence gives the world, in some way or other, a warning shake. The Lord has only to lay one finger upon the world, and mountains are carried into the midst of the sea, while the waters of the ocean roar and are troubled until the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. I. The original draft of the statement refers to THE OLD JEWISH DISPENSATION. Why was it that it could be shaken? 1. One reason was that it had so much to do with materialism. It needed an altar of earth or stone, and such altars the hand of the spoiler can overturn; it required a bullock that hath horns and hoofs, and such sacrifices the plague may slay; it demanded a priest of the house of Aaron, and a race of men may be cut off from the families of the nations; it needed a tabernacle or a temple, and buildings made with hands are readily demolished; hence it could be shaken. These were but things which are made, and they have been shaken and removed; but the things which cannot be shaken still remain; our spiritual altar still endures, our great High Priest still lives, our house not made with hands is still eternal in the heavens. 2. The Jewish religion could be shaken because it could be combated by material forces. Antiochus could profane its altars, Titus could burn its temple, and cast down the walls of the sacred city; but no invader can pollute the heavenly altar of our spiritual faith by brute force, or destroy the celestial bulwarks of our hope by fire and sword. Material forces are not available in our warfare, for we wrestle not with flesh and blood. The tyrant may burn our martyrs and cast our confessors into prison, but the pure truth of Jesus is neither consumed by fire nor bound with chains; it hath within itself essential immortality and liberty. 3. Moreover, the Mosaic economy passed away because it could be affected by time. But see the doctrine of the Cross of Christ! No time affects it. The message of salvation by grace is as fresh to-day as when Peter preached it at Pentecost. The great command, "Believe and live," has as much life-giving power about it as when it was first applied by the Holy Ghost. II. ALL THAT IS TRUE IN OUR PROFESSED CREEDS AND STANDARDS WILL STAND WHEN MERE OPINIONS ARE SHAKEN. III. THE REAL IN OUTWARD PROFESSION STANDS, NOTWITHSTANDING TIMES OF SHAKING. I do not think times of storm to a Church are in the long run to be regretted; a calm is much more danger-

ous. The plague bearing miasma settles and festers in the vale till the atmosphere becomes deadly, even to the casual passenger; but the storm fiend, as men call him, leaps from the mountains into the sunny glades of the valley; with terrific vigour hurls down the habitations of men, and tears up the trees by the roots; but meanwhile all is superabundantly compensated by the effectual purging which the atmosphere receives. Men breathe more freely, and heaven smiles more serenely now that the heaviness of the death-damp is gone, and the poisonous vapour clings no longer to the river's bank and the valley's side. IV. We will further apply the principle to OUR OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. Let me mention a few methods of soul-shaking. 1. Affliction is one of them. The man thought that he had resigned everything to God—death came and took away his child; where was his resignation then? Tribulations, losses, crosses, sicknesses, and bereavements, are very stern trials, and the things within us which may be shaken will be shaken by them; but if we can bear them well and trustingly, and yet praise God for all, we have evidence of possessing gracious qualities which cannot be shaken, and therefore will remain. 2. What a shake temptation gives us! Why, we shall then know whether our grace is the grace of God or the grace of man; we shall now see whether we have the faith of God's elect or not. The faith of God's elect can write "*Invicta*" upon its escutcheon; it is unconquered and unconquerable. There is a time of shaking coming which none of us shall be able to avoid. 3. If we should live without affliction and without temptation, which I think will be impossible, yet we cannot enter into the promised land without passing through the river of death, unless the Lord shall come. What a testing-time will the death-hour be! V. I must now bring before you ALL THAT YOU HAVE IN POSSESSION. The things which can be shaken will be removed, but things that cannot be shaken will remain. We have many things in our possession at the present moment which can be shaken, and it ill-becomes a Christian man to set much store by them. Yet some of us have certain "things which cannot be shaken," and I invite you to read over the catalogue of them, that if the things which can be shaken should all be taken away, you may derive real comfort from the things that cannot be shaken, which will remain. 1. In the first place, whatever your losses may have been, you enjoy present salvation. 2. In the next place, you are a child of God to-day. God is your Father. No change of circumstances can ever rob you of that. 3. You have another permanent blessing, namely, the love of Jesus Christ. He who is God and man loves you with all the strength of His affectionate nature. Now, nothing can rob you of that. 4. You have another thing, namely this truth, that whatever may happen to you you have God's faithful promise which holds true that all things shall work for your good. Do you believe this? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Things passing and things permanent:—The giving of the law shook the earth, the giving of the gospel is to shake earth and heaven. The concussion begins when Christ comes; it is going on now; and it will continue till the world receives its last shock and falls asunder. This is not a very common view of the gospel history, but it has its side of truth. The gospel cannot build up and make strong without shaking down. The things that are shaken are "things that are made." They are created things, and therefore they can be and must be changed. But the things that are not made cannot be shaken. They are things that belong to God's own nature, His truth and righteousness and love, which are unassailable and eternal, and give eternal power and life wherever they enter and become part of a creature. It is a very great thing for us to feel assured of this in the midst of the perpetual breaking down of everything around us. I. IN ILLUSTRATING THE LAW, WE MAY BEGIN WITH THE MORE GENERAL AND COME TO THE PERSONAL. I. The Jewish dispensation was shaken, but the great realities enclosed in it remain. The New Testament Church emerges like a spirit clothed in a new and ethereal body fitted for a greater time. 2. The forms of human society are shaken, but the principles that regulate it remain. Every chaos has its harmonising voice, "Let there be light"; every flood its ark and its rainbow. Amid the tumults of nations and the guessing plans of politicians, a Christian man need never lose hope, for he has his foot on a kingdom that cannot be moved; and the communities of this world are being shaken and broken that they may be built up again, with more in them of that kingdom which is truth and righteousness, and which at last shall be peace. 3. Outward systems of religion are shaken, but the great truths of the Church of Christ remain. By outward systems of religion we mean the organisations that men form, with a particular human name and locality and administration; by the Church of Christ we mean the spiritual children of God, called together by His

grace out of every country, and built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone. The great wants of man's soul cannot be changed any more than the necessities of his physical nature, and the great truths of the Bible that satisfy them can no more be shaken than the ordinances of heaven that furnish man with bread and light and life. 4. The temporal circumstances of man are shaken, but the great possessions of the soul remain. There are few who pass through life without experiencing many changes in it. All our possessions are in things of earth, and we hold them by a clay-tenure. Perhaps the saddest change of all is that which takes place in our feelings. How different the dreams of the opening of life from the realisations of its close! What broken hopes, what frustrated aims, what a poor handful of ears for the rich sheaves we saw before us! So God shakes our lives till all seems gone, things of possession and things of promise. And yet, the while, the soul may have within its grasp things that cannot be touched, that youthful expectations once thought little of, but that now grow into bright and great realities. It may have faith rising to God and laying hold of the treasure that nothing can endanger or diminish. It may have hope going down like an anchor and keeping the heart stable in every storm. It may have love within and around, dwelling on the things of God and giving, in communion with Him, a peace in trouble that is above all earthly good. If these have become part of the soul they may be clouded, but they are never lost. When we lose hold of them Christ holds them fast for us, and brings them out like stars over drifting sky-rack, and brightens them as night deepens. 5. The material frame of man is shaken, but the immortal spirit remains. Where the Divine life enters, it brings with it not only the promise but the pledge and foretaste of the immortal life. The light of faith already spoken of, shining when all else that looks out at the windows is darkened, is one of its foretokens. Augustine said of his mother, Monica, that the crevices of the falling tabernacle only let the celestial light shine in more clearly.

> "The soul's dark cottage shattered and decayed
> Lets in new light through chinks that time has made."

And when death gives the last shock to the frame the work is completed. The soul is that light in Gideon's pitcher which shines out most clearly when the earthen vessel that held it is broken. 6. Last of all, we observe, as an illustration of this law, that the whole system of nature is shaken, but the new creation remains. That which we can trace in all past eras, rising still to a better and brighter, must reach its brightest and its best if there be truth in earth or heaven. The passing things in the universe must lead to something permanent, for time no more than space can have a sea without a shore. That new material creation shall be suited to the nature of man's glorified, material frame, as that frame is suited to his perfected spirit. It must be free from all the elements of disorder and decay that press upon us here—a soil that never opens for a grave, a sky that never darkens with a cloud; to describe which God's word fails, because it can only use figures drawn from things that are passing, and speak to finite minds enclosed within these limits. I do not know if there is anything that can give us a higher idea of that great end than this, that it is *the end*—the close to which all the events and processes around us are conducting—the one permanent, imperishable result of the history of the universe. II. WE NOW COME TO INDICATE SOME OF THE BENEFITS THAT RESULT FROM THIS LAW. Could not God, it may be asked, have made a permanent world at first, without requiring us to pass through this process of change deepening so often to ruin? After all, this may be asking why God has seen fit to make this world under the condition of time, for, wherever time enters, change, as far as we can see, must accompany it. It may be that finite minds can learn, or at least begin their learning, only under some such forms of change as we see around us—processes of birth and growth and death and revival, taking place under our eyes, arresting our attention, and stimulating our study. It is a book where God is turning the pages to every generation, and giving it something new, an advancing development that bids men look back and forward. The world as we here see it is a becoming—a process where constant change is imprinted on all. It has seemed fit to God's wisdom to put us through such a course of learning, where change should be so prominent, and yet the permanent never far off to those who will feel after it till they find it; and if we could understand all things we might see that the proportion in which the two are mingled is best suited to our present condition. We

come, however, to something more practical when we remark that this is a world into which moral disorder has entered, and that the painful changes that touch us are the consequence of it—the consequence of it, and yet an aid to the cure of it. Without sin there might still have been mutation, but it would have wanted the sting and the shadow. We have lost through our fall the true perception of spiritual and eternal realities, and we must be made to see them through painful contrasts. It is by this process, too, that we not only see the greatness of these permanent things, but learn to cleave to them as our portion. This at least is the purpose, and if God's Spirit stirs the heart when His providence shakes the outward life this will be the result. Still further, things that are shaken preserve those things that are to remain until their suitable time of manifestation. God gives us earthly comforts and hopes, till He gives something better in their stead. A young Christian could not be reconciled to many things which the more advanced cheerfully accept. In our present state we could not bear the view of another world, and the veil is kept between till our souls are attempered. Meanwhile, the seed of the incorruptable is here now—the seed of the everlasting inheritance in these frail hearts, of the glorious body in these dying frames, of the new creation in the world we look on. The things that perish encase them, as winter's snow covers the seed, as the husk the flower. When all is ready, the sun will come and the snow will melt, the husk will fall, the flower will blossom to the summer day, and we shall see that the things which perish have also their place in the plan of God. They are the veil between grace and glory, very needful, and only to be done away when that which is perfect shall have come, and we are ready to take possession of it. (*J. Ker, D.D.*) **A kingdom which cannot be moved.**—*The immovableness of the gospel dispensation:*—The gospel dispensation is the "kingdom which cannot be moved." It is described as a "kingdom which cannot be moved," because it is the complete development of God's design towards this earth, and not a mere herald of a fuller manifestation. And when St. Paul appeals to the reception of an immovable kingdom as furnishing a motive to earnestness in the service of God, he is to be considered as arguing from the fixedness of the present dispensation to the duty of a reverential and filial obedience. The object, therefore, of our discourse must be to display the fairness of such reasoning; in other words, to explain how the fact that the kingdom that cannot be moved furnishes a motive to the serving God "acceptably with reverence and with godly fear." I. First, then, upon general grounds. WHY SHOULD THE FIXEDNESS OF THE GOSPEL DISPENSATION URGE US TO DILIGENCE IN THE SERVICE OF GOD? Suppose we take the opposite supposition, and imagine that there had been none of this fixedness in the gospel of Christ. Let us conceive ourselves placed under an imperfect and temporal economy, and see what difference would be made in our moral position. If you could throw an air of doubtfulness around the completion of revelation—if rather you could prove that there was still a portion of God's will to be made known; that we are not in possession of all that knowledge in respect of redemption which shall be communicated to man on this side of eternity, then immediately there would be engendered a feeling of restlessness and uncertainty; our minds, in place of setting themselves earnestly to the study of what was given, would waste themselves in conjecturing what was withheld. It is evident that under the Jewish dispensation there was a vast deal of this moral dissatisfaction. An absolute sickness of heart appears to have been felt by the most upright and pious at the long delay of a fuller revelation. There is just the difference between our condition under an immovable kingdom, and the condition of those who were under the movable kingdom, that there would be between a man who should be bidden to do something in the dark, and that of another man who should be told to do the same thing in the daylight. We will not say that the darkness is an apology for remissness, but that the sunshine takes away a great show of excuse. Receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, there are not brought to bear on us the disturbing forces which acted within the moral orbit of the Jew. We look straightway to Christ as a sacrifice, and are not set to behold Him in bulls and goats led up to the brazen altar. We can mark the Mediator, entering by His own blood into the holy of holies, and are not left to search out His intercession in that of a priest who, compassed with infirmity, needed for himself what he presented for others. We can go at once to "the fountain open for sin and uncleanness," and are not required to learn the methods of spiritual purification from the multiplied processes of ceremonial. We have been made acquainted with the abolition of death, of life and immortality being brought vividly to light, and we are not reduced to a vague hope or dim conjecture of the

resurrection of matter and of its fresh inhabitation by spirit. But in these and numerous like points of distinction lies the difference between a kingdom which can be moved and a kingdom which cannot be moved. That which cannot be moved is the substance, whilst that which can be moved is only the shadow. He, therefore, who is under the immovable, has realities within his grasp, whilst he who is under the movable has only figure and parable; and just in proportion that the knowing with precision what is to be hoped and what feared will make a man more decisive in action than the being left in doubt and uncertainty—in that same proportion ought energy under the immovable dispensation to carry it over energy under the movable dispensation. The statutes of this kingdom are not written in hieroglyphics; the laws of its citizenship are not propounded in enigmas; everything wears the aspect of a final and complete revelation; the figurative has given place to the literal: prophecy has sunk into performance; who, therefore, will refuse to acknowledge that there is laid upon those who receive the immovable kingdom a mighty weight of responsibleness over and above that which rested on the recipients of the movable? And if the fixedness of the dispensation thus enhance the responsibleness of its subjects, we put beyond controversy that the fixedness should furnish motives to the serving God "acceptably with reverence and godly fear." II. Now we propose, in the second place, to make good the same truth on the particular ground which the apostle lays down. St. Paul argues the duty of obedience from the fixedness of the dispensation; BUT THEN HE SUBJOINS AS HIS CONCLUDING ARGUMENT—"For our God is a consuming fire." Let us see how the several arguments are associated. We cannot be wrong in arguing that until the gospel was published—until, that is, the spiritual kingdom was finally settled on an immovable basis, there were points on which God's will was not clearly ascertained, and men might easily have formed incorrect suppositions, forasmuch as they proceeded on an imperfect knowledge. Informed of God's gracious design of providing pardon for the guilty, but not informed of the details of the arrangement, it might well come to pass that they would indulge in expectations which a fuller intelligence would have caused them to reject. They knew that God was "a consuming fire"; but they derived this knowledge from that tremendous outbreak of thunder and flame which accompanied the delivery of the law. But you will, we think, allow that if the Israelites knew God as "a consuming fire," because so revealed on Mount Sinai, and if they did not as yet know thoroughly the character under which He would reveal Himself on Mount Zion, it might be a matter of question with them whether the mildness of the one revelation would not so temper the fierceness of the other, that "a consuming fire" might no longer be a just description of God. They lived under a movable dispensation; the immovable which was to follow, came charged with discoveries of God's purposes of lovingkindness; might there not consequently have been somewhat of hesitation on their minds as to whether the fire which blazed awfully before mercy was allowed to shine out in its brightness, would be equally devouring when the day of free pardon had dawned on the creation? But so soon as the kingdom became "a kingdom which cannot be moved"; the possible union of characters—the characters of the punishing God and the pardoning God—was established beyond the reach of a question or a doubt. We cannot, unless we hoodwink our understandings, and take pains to be the victims of a lie, flatter ourselves that judgment when brought out into action will be less fiery and less tremendous than when graven on the statute book. Ours is the immovable kingdom, and the very process by which this kingdom was set up and wrought into steadfastness witnesses with a testimony the most thrilling, that it was a law with God, the least swerving from which would be the shaking of His own throne, that sin must be punished before the sinner can be pardoned. It was on Zion ten thousandfold more than on Sinai, that the Almighty proved Himself "a consuming fire." When the eternal Son in the might of the coalition of Deity and humanity went up the mountain side and laid Himself down on the altar, the substitute of a lost world, and there blazed forth the fires of justice to consume the sacrifice. Oh! then, far beyond the demonstration of Sinai, wrapped in flame and smoke, was there given a proof to all intelligent creation, that the emblem of God, when He deals with the guilty, shall be ever that of "a consuming fire." Thus it was in giving fixedness to the dispensation that God manifested Himself as "a consuming fire." The fact that the kingdom cannot be moved is an irresistible proof that the fire cannot be extinguished. Thus there is a connection, the very closest between the fixedness of the gospel dispensation and that character of God which sets Him forth as the devourer of the impenitent; and hence we gather that the argument

to the "serving God acceptably," which is drawn from His being "a consuming fire," is but a particular case of the general argument derived from our "receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved." Therefore, all our former reasons on the general argument must be applicable to the particular. Futurity comes charged with no softenings away of God's wrath against sin; this is the fact that should nerve to obedience. We ought, perhaps, to say a word on the somewhat singular expression —"Let us have grace." It can only refer to our seeking grace, to our improving grace. Without grace is it impossible that we should serve God acceptably, for man himself is void of all capacity for performing the will of his Maker; hence the being admonished that we may have grace to serve God acceptably is the same thing as being admonished that we set not to the work in any strength of our own, but that we go to God for assistance in order that we may honour God by obedience. And we may further observe that the service here demanded at our hands is of a nature which marks the awfulness of God. There is to be nothing of familiarity, there is to be nothing of forgetfulness of the unmeasured distance which, even when brought nigh by the blood of His own Son, separates between God and ourselves. Therefore we are to serve "with reverence and godly fear"; and though undoubtedly the fear which a Christian entertains towards God will be filial fear rather than slavish, the fear of a son who loves rather than that of a servant who dreads, yet it is certain that in our text an apprehension of wrath is supposed to be an element of godly fear. "Such would have been my lot," will the Christian say, when musing on the fate of the impenitent, "had not free grace interposed, and God of His rich lovingkindness brought me up from destruction." Carry away with you, then, this truth—the truth that peculiar interest in God is no encouragement to the throwing aside the most awful fear of God. "Our God is a consuming fire." How rich the summit of privilege when you can say, "O God, Thou art my God!" And yet when the summit is reached you must still look to the blazing, burning Deity for "our God," my God, "is a consuming fire." "At first glance," says an old prelate, "these two expressions, 'our God,' and 'a consuming fire,' seem to look strangely at one another, but the Holy Ghost hath excellently tempered them." He is our God—this corrects that despairing fear which would otherwise seize on us from the consideration of God as "a consuming fire." But then, He is not only "our God"; He is also "a consuming fire"—this corrects that presumptuous irreverence to which else we might be emboldened by the consideration of our interest in God as "our God." (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The immovable kingdom, or Christianity contrasted with earthquakes*:—In the case of Palestine, there had been ages of experience in volcanic convulsions before Bible times. Probably the great Mediterranean Sea is a pre-Adamic volcanic crevasse, by which Europe and Africa were separated from each other. Its many volcanoes are still active vents in the vast fissure. The Red Sea is almost certainly a volcanic crevasse separating Africa from Asia. That crevasse runs up northward from Mount Sinai to Mount Hermon, through the whole length of Palestine. The river Jordan, with its two lakes and the Dead Sea, are in the bottom of that great volcanic crevasse, far below the surface of the Mediterranean. The oldest historical record of an earthquake tells how God knocked a little more of the bottom out of that crevasse, at the south end of the Dead Sea, and let it swallow up the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and the whole vale of Siddim. But "Bela," the old name of Zoar, meant "convulsions" before Lot fled thither. There are records of earthquakes, and allusions to them, all through the Old Testament, in the Psalms, Prophets, and historical books. The imagery of our text is all taken from that great earthquake with which God accompanied, and sublimely emphasised, His giving of the law on Mount Sinai. That shaking of the literal mountain lies at the base of the figurative and spiritual use which is made of it by the author of this Epistle to the Hebrews. They knew and gloried in the history, and could feel the force of its application when reminded of "a kingdom that could not be shaken." But for us, that we may understand it, let us consider—I. THE MEANING OF THIS IMMOVABLE KINGDOM: WHAT IS ITS SIGNIFICATION? To this question there are for us two answers. 1. Christianity in contrast with Judaism. A striking contrast here, from the eighteenth verse onward, between Judaism, as represented by Mount Sinai, where it was revealed; and Christianity, represented by Mount Zion, where it was revealed. The one is clad in material terrors, the other in spiritual glories. To approach the one is death, the other life. The one reveals the law against sin, the other salvation from sin. The one shakes the world with an earthquake of wrath against all unrighteousness, the other with the

Pentecostal earthquake of joy at the bringing in of everlasting righteousness. The one shakes a temporal mountain, but leaves the ceremonial law as a barrier between the Gentile world and salvation; the other shakes down the old dispensation of types and shadows, but leaves in its place the unshakable and final dispensation of grace, the pure and simple principles of justification, holiness, union with God, and eternal salvation, all through Christ. But this "immovable kingdom" also means—2. Christianity in its wider contrast between all earthly and perishing things, on the one hand, and the spiritual and unperishing things of the soul and salvation, on the other hand. What a stupendous symbol of the perishableness of all earthly interests is this which the apostle uses as a foil to set off the unperishing durability of the kingdom of Jesus Christ over the souls and destinies of men! Let earthquakes shatter all created things. Let all that earth has to offer, its loves, its hopes, its possessions and ambitions, perish together. The soul that has received by faith the unperishing kingdom of Christ has a possession which not only endures, but saves its possessor with it, and fills his inmost soul with consciousness of eternal riches, eternal strength, and joy. He who has Jesus in his soul knows that he has the last thing, the best thing, the eternal thing. The immovable kingdom is his. No changes of ritual, no translation of priesthood, no civil revolution, no providential catastrophe of earth or time can affect him. He is an heir of God for ever. And now it is in view of our noble heirship to this glorious and immovable kingdom that Paul adds, as a logical conclusion, introduced by the "wherefore." II. THE EXHORTATION TO FITNESS FOR THE HEIRSHIP OF SUCH A KINGDOM. "Let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing unto God, with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire." There are three points in this exhortation. 1. This heirship demands a corresponding service on our part. We must "offer service well-pleasing unto God." In the ages of the old feudal kingdoms of Europe, all the smaller or feudatory kingdoms, principalities, dukedoms, earldoms, &c., were held as the direct gift of the sovereign crown, and homage must be rendered and feudal service in arms pledged to the sovereign king by the heirs to the various feudatory principalities, &c., before they could be invested with their inheritances, however great. And so it is with the heirs of the glorious kingdom of Christ. 2. The rendering of such a service requires the abiding grace of God in our souls, as a qualification therefor. "Let us have grace," said the apostle, "that we may so serve God." Ah, he knew how much of the deep inward grace of God is necessary for such a service. It is not enough that we know the will of God and theoretically accept it. The Israelites did that in the desert, and yet, at the very foot of Mount Sinai, and then, after all the glorious manifestations of God's power in the flaming mountain and the quaking earth, they backslid into idolatry then and there, in the very presence of the glory of God. The reason for this was that they had not the grace of God in their hearts. Their reverence and obedience lasted while the earthquake lasted, but no longer. It was not the "grace," not even the holy "reverence and awe" of our text. We ought all to say for ourselves, "Let us have grace." It is for us, and for us all. We may have it if we will seek it. It is the work of the Holy Spirit in us; and what is there which God is so willing to give as the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him? 3. A solemn warning against negligence in this matter. "For our God is a consuming fire." It is not too much for us to serve God "with reverence and awe." God is the same now as He was at Mount Sinai. He was Jehovah, the Angel of the Covenant, the pre-incarnate Jesus then; who then spake on earth, but now speaks from heaven. All that He then showed of power and majesty is still at His command. In His incarnation storms, diseases, deaths, and devils obeyed Him, and voices from heaven attested His Deity. (*G. L. Taylor, D.D.*) *Service in the kingdom of God:*—I. THE DOCTRINE IS THIS: THESE HEBREWS RECEIVED A KINGDOM WHICH COULD NOT BE MOVED. And it is first to be explained, and the difficulty lies in this phrase of receiving a kingdom. For—1. There is a kingdom. 2. This kingdom cannot be moved. 3. They received it. (1) There are many temporal kingdoms, but this is spiritual and Divine. The King is God; the Administrator-General is Christ, who, in the administration of this kingdom, is so one with God, that He is King as He is; the subjects, believing saints; the rules of government are the doctrines of the gospel; the privileges and benefits of this kingdom are the blessings of grace and glory. (2) This kingdom cannot be moved, or is not moveable or alterable, because Prince, people, laws, and administration continue for ever. (3) They had received this kingdom. A kingdom may be received either by a prince to govern it, or by subjects to be governed; the former

is not, the latter is intended. For subjects to receive a kingdom, may be either a duty or a benefit. As a duty, it is to submit unto the power and laws of the sovereign; as a benefit, it is to be admitted as a subject to enjoy the privileges, peace, and happiness of the kingdom. Both may be here meant, and the benefit presupposing the duty fully and finally performed, may be, and shall be, that we shall be kings and priests, and reign with Christ for ever. II. THE EXHORTATION FOLLOWETH, WHERE THE DUTY IS TO HAVE GRACE TO SERVE GOD. 1. By grace may be meant the doctrine of grace, which is the gospel so called (Titus ii. 11). 2. Faith and belief. 3. The profession of this faith. 4. The sanctifying power of the Spirit, which all true believers and professors have; and this presupposeth all the former, or infolds them. To have this grace is to have this sanctifying power, and to hold it, keep it, exercise it more and more. The end why we must have and hold it is, that we may serve God. This implies that God is the Sovereign in this kingdom, and we are the subjects, and our duty is continually to serve our Lord and King. To serve Him, is not only with all humility to adore His excellent Majesty, but also sincerely, wholly, and absolutely to submit unto His power and obey His laws. This implies—(1) That in this kingdom we are not our own masters, or at liberty to do what we would. But God is our Master, and we are bound to obedience by His laws. (2) That without the grace of God continued and held fast we cannot serve our God constantly; without grace we cannot serve Him; without grace held fast we cannot serve Him to the end. The manner how we must serve God is to serve Him acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. In general, our service must be acceptable; in particular, it must be reverence and godly fear, which render it pleasing to God, and without which it cannot be accepted. Men may fear God—that is, perform some religious service to God—and yet it will not prove acceptable. For some serve God, and not with a pure and sanctified heart; some serve God in outward circumstantials and rituals, not in substantials; some serve God with a profane and wicked heart; some serve Him ignorantly or negligently, without fervency and due affection. Reverence in God's service looks at His excellency and glorious majesty, and at our own unworthiness, and the infinite distance between Him and us; and therefore we must adore God's excellent Majesty with deep humility, abasing ourselves very low, being afraid and ashamed, out of a sense of our own vileness, to come near Him, except in His great mercy and free grace He vouchsafe access. Signs of this reverence is our kneeling, bowing, covering our faces, prostration, and such like gestures. And if we were either apprehensive and sensible of our own vileness, or God's excellency, how could we possibly be so profane and unreverent in His worship? Godly fear may be the same with reverence or distinct from it. The word in the Greek signifies sometimes caution, sometimes devotion, sometimes fear, and that in the service of God, which is a religious fear, and care not to offend, but to please Him. Both reverence and fear, in this place, may farther be a more than ordinary care and diligence in the service of God, that we may please Him and be accepted of Him. For as the greatest honour with the greatest humility is due to God, that supreme Lord, whose Majesty is infinite and eternal, so the greatest caution must be used in His worship, for He will be sanctified in all them that draw near unto Him. (*G. Lawson.*) *The immovable kingdom*:—I. THE IMMUTABILITY OF THE GOSPEL DISPENSATION. 1. It is the complement and perfection of all prior dispensations of religion; that to which they were but introductory, and in which they were merged and consummated. 2. Its chief and blessed Administrator, our Lord Jesus, is declared as such to be eternal. He shall always stand in this relation to His people. He shall ever be "Head over all things to the Church." 3. Another proof that this kingdom cannot be moved is, that it perfectly answers the end of all religion. II. THE PRACTICAL INFERENCE. "Let us have grace," says the apostle, taking it for granted that all who earnestly desire and properly seek it, shall obtain. It is most liberally offered and most freely bestowed. 1. This grace is to be obtained in order that we may "serve God." We are to return to Him from our alienation; to relinquish our guilty rebellion; and to bind ourselves to Him in sincere and ceaseless allegiance. His laws are to be ever obeyed, His glory supremely sought. 2. To those who thus resolve to give up themselves to God, it must be further shown that we are to "serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear." (1) "Acceptably"—in conformity to the ordination of the Lord of this kingdom. Make mention only of the Lord Christ and of His righteousness. Let His love be all your plea; let His passion speak for you. Let all your service, prayer, love, praise, be offered through the ever-blessed Name! (2) We are also to serve with "reverence and godly fear."

It ought deeply to affect and impress our minds that the very system which is so full of mercy for us, is also distinguished by its solemn views of God, and its inculcation of the profoundest reverence for His name. He is ever gracious and abundant in goodness and truth; He is also "a consuming fire"! "There is forgiveness with Him"; not, however, that He will be trifled with, but "that He may be feared." God has set His King upon the holy hill of Zion—a King lowly and having salvation; we are therefore "to serve the Lord with fear, and to rejoice with trembling." (*John Hartley.*) *The immovable kingdom*:—It is obvious that anything which can be termed the "kingdom of God" must be immovable. But we propose to consider rather some of those elements which are not so readily, not so necessarily recognised, and the word "receiving" of our text suggests the direction in which we must seek. It is a word of much force. It is more than "receiving" simply as "taking." The preposition, which is compounded with the verb, suggests the idea of "by the side"; so that when we thus receive, we receive by the placing of ourselves by the side of, in a certain identification, in a certain intimate blending of ourselves with the thing received. We thus make it our own, it becomes part of our own peculiar property—part of ourselves, we might say. Perhaps the best interpretation of this text may be found in the words of the Lord addressed to Peter, when this disciple had made his famous confession. Christ's Church was to be built upon that foundation of life and faith which the confession of Peter indicated. Not the truth as an abstract proposition; not the individual as a personal historical item; but the truth apprehended, the truth felt, the truth obeyed in the living man. This is the foundation of the Church. And this is the acceptance of the kingdom. That this is the fact, needs only a review of history to determine. The essential elements of this kingdom were as truly existent before the coming of Jesus Christ as after. It was necessary that Christ should appear in historic time and form, and therefore He must have appeared at some time and under some form; and yet all that His work produced, and the dependence of the moral and spiritual life of man upon Him and His atonement were as real before as after His advent. "Christianity as old as the Creation," or at least "as old as the Fall," is a phrase that the Christian is quite prepared to accept, even though it came from a sceptical and destructive quarter. What changed, and passed, and disappeared, are not of the essence of religion. That remained, and the historical Christ, and the Christian Church, and the post-Christian era only illustrate and explain and illuminate the truths which are eternal. And this is the lesson of all the experiences through which the gospel has passed. It has known persecution, but persecution only strengthened the faith, and while it purged away the false and the weak, it but tempered and purified the true. No new element of truth introduced, no other means of acceptance with the Father, no other name given under heaven whereby men shall be saved, but the one, "Christ Jesus, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." And, as we have said, we shall find the source of this immovableness in the possession which the kingdom takes of our own inner life. We call attention now to these subjective, these human aspects of the gospel. Do men want a religion of humanity? Here is the religion of humanity. Our spirits crave for it, our hearts leap up to it when it comes; our consciences accept it and commend it; the entire nature closes with it as the faith of man; and even the baser being, as it sinks down into its condemnation and its death, echoes back, in the cry of hatred with which it receives it, the truth, the human, the Divine, the eternal, and changeless truth of the religion of Jesus Christ. The first element in what we may call this human aspect of the immovable kingdom that we receive, is the appeal which the gospel makes to man's moral nature, and the response which is made to it upon that side of its teaching concerning the lost and helpless condition of man. Man's nature is in revolt; there is strife, and sickness, and a certain death. And these the gospel recognises, and to these it addresses itself, and so remains for ever unchanged, whilst the heart of man is what it is. God builds its foundations, and He lays them in the very depths of the human soul. Another fact of human nature which is recognised in the gospel scheme, and makes for its unchangeableness, is the complete helplessness of man to extricate himself from the position in which he finds himself. Man is lost; man in his loss is helpless. These are the two profound facts of human nature. Christianity fully recognises both of these truths. They may be called the human axioms of the Christian scheme, the first principles of salvation through Jesus Christ. And these abide for ever in the nature of man. The kingdom of grace includes a further truth—viz., that of a Saviour who is Christ the Lord.

Man attains his glory in personality. It is the assertion of his personality which is the condition of the catastrophe that has overcome him. It is the sense of personality which reveals continuously and with horrid stings of upbraiding conscience and alarming sanctions of threatening law the miserable condition of helplessness in which he lies; and so man everywhere turns to the thought of a person, to any pretension of a person, to any supposed fact of a person, to the personal life, the personal work, the personal sympathy, for the salvation he requires. Hence the kingdom of salvation is the kingdom of Jesus Christ; the message of mercy is the life of Jesus; the comfort of man is the name of Jesus; the warrant of hope is the promise of Jesus. Jesus is the ceaseless, the changeless gospel of the human heart. And all this, according to the truth of the gospel, is made perpetual and abiding by a power which shall ever dwell in the hearts and lives of men. A Holy Spirit for ever dwells in the Church of God; that Spirit who was the energy of creative power; that Spirit who was the inspiration of the good, and the holy, and the true in every age; that Spirit who is the very life and communion of the Godhead itself. It is this that makes the kingdom immovable. What is genius arrayed against this power of God? What can wit with keenest arms effect against this force? What can the wear and ruin of all human life waste when there is ever this source of power and renewal to revivify and repair? The kingdom of God is immovable; and this you may receive through Jesus Christ our Lord. (*L. D. Bevan, D.D.*) *The kingdom that cannot be moved*:—One of the Red Republicans of 1793 was telling a good peasant of La Vendée, "We are going to pull down your churches and your steeples—all that recalls the superstitious of past ages, and all that brings to your mind the idea of God." "Citizen," replied the good Vendéean, "pull down the stars then." (*W. Baxendale.*) **Let us have grace.**—*Our need of Divine grace*:—1. We need it, not only for reformation and change of character, but also for the preservation of character when good and upright. It must be admitted that early discipline and long-established habit may do much to mould the heart and the mind; but that these things are enough to keep the character from harm, and to plant around it an invincible protection from sudden and unexpected contingencies of trial, is contradicted by experience and by the past and present history of man in every form and condition of his existence. But look at the case in a religious point of view. I say religious, because that involves the higher purposes of being, the exercise of the nobler powers, and the destinies which reach onward through an endless futurity. When referring to this subject, virtue, in all its various aspects of loveliness and usefulness, is not only to be regarded as virtue simply, but virtue produced, upheld, and protected by a power superhuman. Under a religious influence, any one of the virtues you might name is turned into new and heavenly channels; and while it retains all its natural elements, it becomes changed in the nobleness of its motives, in the grandeur of its purposes, and in the glory of its objects. What can bring about this change but Divine grace? 2. It is obtainable. It is freely given simply upon the condition of being asked for in sincerity and faith. As the weary traveller can freely partake of the stream of water by his side, though he be penniless, so the man burdened by guilt, without God and without hope in the world—an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, homeless, and without a guide on the broad and desert-wastes of the world—can partake freely of the grace of God, as a Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. 3. Consider, in the time of any sore trial, what a source of strength and comfort may be found in the Divine grace. At such times we sink under the weight of our own suffering. Overpowered by the affliction, we find no strength within us to bear us up against it. We try according to our means to counteract the suffering; but memory, ever busy, calls up to our minds, in defiance of our earthly resources, a thousand painful associations; and the deep mourning thoughts of the heart linger where the pain arises. In vain we look around us for help—help enough to break down the agony and to crush it. But the grace of God can bring to the wounded and crushed heart a remedy. It, and it only, can blend feeling with precept; bind up in one the soothing power of sympathy with the earnestness of hope; the assurance of faith with the anticipation of rest for evermore. (*W. D. Horwood.*) **Serve God acceptably.**—*Acceptable service*:—Many things are absolutely needful for the acceptance of any service rendered unto God: of these some are not stated in the text, but they are so important that I commence with mentioning them. The first is that the person who attempts to serve God should himself be accepted. The offerer must himself be accepted in the Beloved, or his offering will be tainted by his condition and be inevitably unacceptable. The next essential is that, the act being

performed by a person accepted, it should be distinctly done as unto God. Our text speaks of serving God. Alas, much is done which is in itself externally commendable, but it is not acceptable to God, because it is not rendered unto Him, and with a view to His glory. And we must take care that all this is done with faith in Christ Jesus; for it is a law of universal observation in the kingdom of heaven that "without faith it is impossible to please God." We must bring our offering to Jesus, our great High Priest, and He must present it for us, for it can only be acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. These things being mentioned, I now confine myself to the text itself, which has in it a world of solemn, heart-searching thought with regard to the acceptable service of God. I. If we are to serve God acceptably, it must be UNDER A SENSE OF OUR IMMEASURABLE OBLIGATION TO HIM. Look, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom" &c. See, whatever service we may render to God, we must begin by being receivers. "We receiving a kingdom." What a gift to receive! This is a Divine gift; we have received, not a pauper's pension, but a kingdom—"a kingdom which cannot be moved." "But," say you, "we have not received this kingdom yet." 1. I answer that we have received it in a certain sense; we have received it first in the promise. "I appoint unto you a kingdom as My Father hath appointed unto Me." "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." 2. More than this, we have received it in the principles of it. "The kingdom of God is within you." As the fairest flower lies packed away within the little shrivelled seed, and wants but time and sun to develop all its beauty, so perfection, glory, immortality and bliss unspeakable lie hidden away within the grace which God hath given unto all His people. "He that believeth in Him hath everlasting life." The life of heaven is begun within the believer. 3. Moreover, in a measure we have received this kingdom in the power of it. God hath endowed you with power from on high by giving you the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. 4. Moreover, you have received much of the provision and protection of that kingdom. II. Acceptable service must be rendered to God IN THE POWER OF DIVINE GRACE. "Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably." Note, then, that acceptable service to God is not offered in the power of nature, not even of nature at its best, when we call it good nature and philanthropy; but in the service of God everything must be the fruit of grace. You are to serve the Lord, not in the strength of your own wit or experience, or talent, but in the energy of the new life which God has given you, and in the power of the grace which is continually bestowed upon you moment by moment as you seek it of the Lord. III. To "serve God acceptably," WE MUST DO IT WITH REVERENCE. The word, according to Bishop Hopkins, signifies a holy shamefacedness. The angels veil their faces with their wings when they worship the Most High, and we must veil ours with humility. The angels feel their own littleness when they stand before the presence of the dread Supreme. You and I who are much less than angels, and have sinned, should, when we come before God, be covered with blushes. Our heart should be filled with wonder that we are called to this high privilege, though we are so unworthy of it. IV. The other word is, "with godly fear"; and this suggests that we should serve God IN THE SPIRIT OF HOLY CAREFULNESS. We ought to fear lest we should offend the Lord even while we are serving Him; fear lest the sacrifice should be a blemished one, and so be rejected at the altar; fear lest there should be something about our spirit and temper which would grieve the Lord. He is a jealous God, and must be served with holy carefulness. V. We must cultivate A PROFOUND SENSE OF THE DIVINE HOLINESS and of the wrath of God against sin, "For our God is a consuming fire." Observe, then, from this most solemn sentence that the God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament (Deut. iv. 24). While the Lord is merciful, infinitely so, and His name is Love; yet still our God is a consuming fire, and sin shall not live in His sight. If your offering and mine be evil, it will be an abomination unto Him. He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; if our worship and service are mingled with hypocrisy and pride, He will not endure them. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Acceptable service*:—I. OUR RELATION TO GOD, PRODUCED BY THE GOSPEL, NECESSARILY DEMANDS OUR SERVICE. God has given us salvation at a tremendous cost. He not only sent His Son, but He spared not that Son. God not only spake by prophets, and by holy men of old, but He was "in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." We serve, therefore, not merely an existent Deity, a splendid and majestic God, but we serve One who has wrought and suffered loss, and made valuable cost, and borne diminishing, and self-emptying, and death for us. The kingdom is not a mere natural growth, not a mere inheritance; it is a conquest gained after terrible conflict, assured only at the price

of the blood of Jesus Christ. Hence logic, and rhetoric, and poetry, and art—these are poor responses to such service for us as God has rendered. Even praise, though it should be in hymns themselves inspired, seems feeble as a return for such affluence of service as we have received. We, too, must serve; we, too, must render back in thankfulness all that we have, all that we are. II. THE SERVICE WHICH WE CAN RENDER UNTO GOD IS THE CONTINUAL SENSE OF GRATEFULNESS UNDER WHICH WE OUGHT TO LIVE TOWARDS HIM. The position of the believing recipient of the grace of God is a paradox. He must serve; and yet what service can he render? What does God need? How shall the Infinite and the Eternal be added to or made more great? Besides, what have we that we can render? All that is ours is already God's. From Him it came; by Him it consists; on Him it depends. To give Him aught, then, is only to give Him His own. Oh, wondrous paradox of a Divine necessity! We must serve, and we have no service; we must render, and we have and are nothing. See yonder snowflake dropping into the ocean. It has vanished in a moment, and is lost in the boundless fulness of that heaving deep. What can the snowflake add to the immensity of waters? Was it not itself exhaled from that ocean, and ascending as vapour, caught by the cold of the sky, and sent back again to its ocean source? See yonder mirror, flashing back the light towards the sun. What shall that reflected beam add to the glory and brightness of the centre of all light? It is only the return of the ray upon its own path, which had already come from the sun itself. And so what is our service, what is the best we can do, the richest we can give? It has only found the place whence it first came. Here, then, our text comes to our help. "Let us have gratefulness," it says, "and by this let us serve God acceptably." "Whoso offereth thanks glorifieth Me, and follows a path in which I will show him the salvation of Elohim." This spirit changes all life into a service. Every scene is a temple. Every word is worship. A work of bounty, of compassion, of self-denial, does not exhaust this grateful spirit. It does always its best, and then, when the best is done, cries with true self-knowledge, "We are but unprofitable servants." And may it not be here, that the quality of the service, as suggested by the word "acceptably" of our text, should rightly be considered? Acceptable service we are commanded to render, and the more we contemplate the service, and the power we have to pay it, the more clearly we find our inability, our utter bankruptcy even of gratitude. Then, we remember that the sacrifice, which redeemed our souls from death, the atonement by which our sins were expiated and our guilt removed, still remains all efficient, ceaseless in its power, infinite in its appealing force with God. "The things that were shaken" passed away, we learned, "that the things that could not be shaken" might remain. And the blended law and love which were found in the "blood that speaketh better things than that of Abel," in the Jesus, "Mediator of the new covenant," these passed not, but remain for ever. And so our failing gratitude, our empty return, our poor gift of service—these can all be filled to a Divine fulness at the Cross of Jesus. III. WE LEARN THE SPIRIT IN WHICH OUR SERVICE SHOULD BE FOR EVER RENDERED. "With reverent submission, and godly fear." Reverent submission is the becoming, and careful, and observant attitude of the soul, keenly alive to the holiness of God and its own unworthiness. Our words should be few and fitting and well chosen, our penitence deep and real, our feeling true and sweet, our desires pure and high; and thus should we worship and bow down with "reverence and godly fear." (*L. D. Bevan, D.D.*) *The true spirit of service*:—I once saw a beautiful device and motto painted on the walls of a Sabbath-school. It was an ox standing between an altar and a plough, with the words underneath, "Ready for either." The altar represented suffering, and the plough serving; and the ox stood ready to be laid on the altar or to be yoked into the plough, equally ready for suffering or serving, as the owner wished. We should ask God to make us ready for either. Your life will be a poor withered thing unless you try to serve Christ. An old man reading the Bible came to the words, "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." He stopped and said with a smile, "Yes, and ye are your own friends too." He is his own worst enemy who shuns the service of Christ. **With reverence and godly fear.**—*Reverence*:—Robert Hall once remarked, when criticising the habit of a lady addicted to easy, familiar talk of the Divine Being: "It is a great mistake to affect this kind of familiarity with the King of kings, and speak of Him as though He were a next door neighbour, from the pretence of love." *Godly fear*:—Love and fear are the positive and negative poles of the same electric bar, and are both forces convertible into aids to holiness. Love rules in the home, and its sunshine is the life of all who dwell therein; but fear of marring the

domestic peace, spoiling the domestic purity, or poisoning the domestic joy, is a temper that pervades and chastens, hallows and enlarges the household life. Our soldiers fight for the love of country, but how unspeakably they are goaded forward in the severity of battle by the dread of losing their country's flag! In the finest types of married life, it is not till years of perfect communion and of character-assimilating love have made husband and wife a complete unity, and blent soul with soul, and will with will, that all fear is gone—if indeed it ever is. Certainly in the earlier stages it is a spur to that continual and anxious attention to aid, and not to hinder, in developing the one life, which finally becomes the gracious habit and beautiful form of the domestic ministry. (*J. Clifford, D.D.*)

Ver. 29. **Our God is a consuming fire.**—*The fire of God*:—I. THE FACT. It is doubly certified. Science and revelation attest it with concordant voices. The testimony of Nature, as interpreted by science, affirms the working upon a prodigious scale of a law of destruction, ever since life first appeared upon the globe. The scientific formula of this law is in the familiar phrase, "the survival of the fittest." For countless ages there has been going on throughout the domain of physical life, a relentless extirpation of the weak by the strong, of the sickly by the healthy, of the ill-conditioned by the well-conditioned. The gradual development of improved forms of life has been secured by the constant destruction of inferior and deteriorated forms. There is no statement of the Bible to which science, in studying the development of nature, more thoroughly asserts than to this: "Our God is a consuming fire." But when we pass up from the lower forms of life in which we see this inexorable rooting up and weeding out of the less vigorous and healthy, we find in humanity a life which is capable of improvement by a different method. God introduces a higher method when He introduces a higher subject that is capable of it. The chief difference between man and the highest of the creatures below him is in the teachableness of man. Hence the difference of method in the improvement of the lower and the higher types of life. In the lower, improvement by elimination of the unfit; the unimprovable perish. But in the higher, education of the unfit; the improvable are saved. The method which, in the lower, results in the survival of the fittest, is superseded in the higher by a method of fitting to survive. But now we have to observe that, wherever this higher method is resisted, the lower method still holds sway. See how sins against the body are punished still by fiery inflammations, hectic consumptions, burning ulcers, fierce disorders of nerve and brain, in which the drunkard, the debauchee, the glutton, and other transgressors of the laws of physical health are, as it were, consumed from among the living. See, also, how national or social sins against humanity, righteousness, purity, or any of the laws of social health, are punished by social cancers, which burn out social patriotism, eat away the social conscience, consume the nerves of national life, devour the youth in the heats of vice, kindle the conflagrations of war, and shrivel up the glory of empire. The same thing is shown, and with special significance, by the familiar phenomena of remorse. II. OUR PERSONAL RELATION TO THE FACT. We shall best approach the truth by entering into sympathy with the sentiment apparent in the text. There is no tone of dismay in it. It is inexpressibly solemn, but with no sign of shrinking as from an object of dread. It is uttered with the profoundest awe, but without the slightest sign of alarm, and seems to speak as from under a safe shelter in the blazing throne itself. The whole thought is coloured by the dominating word of sympathy and affection—"our." So might the dear child of some strict guardian of the law say: "My father is terribly just." It is spoken out of a heart that is at one with God in the peace of a filial endeavour to think His thought and to live His truth—a heart for which the fire of God has no terror, because no evil which belongs to that fire is guiltily held back from it. It is spoken out of a heart in which is even now progressing that purifying work which was ascribed in prophecy to Jesus (Matt. iii. 11). Thus, when we have seen a little child put forth its hand to some forbidden object, we have seen that hand drop nerveless, and the whole frame recoil in confusion, as the mother's glance of mild reproof shot through the windows of the tempted soul—"a consuming fire" to the impulse of transgression. So is the thought of "our God" to a loving child of God. As his irregular desires and selfish impulses melt away in his awakened consciousness of the Father's presence, he finds there is grace and salvation in his wholesome experience that to his sin "our God is a consuming fire." (*J. M. Whiton, D.D.*) *The consuming fire*:—1. Fire is the most powerful agent in the world. It supplies heat, which is

the source of life and existence in all nature. It destroys all vegetable substances, and resolves them into their original elements. It purifies all corruption, and removes all impurities. 2 But fire cannot destroy or injure the valuables of the mineral kingdom. Gold and silver are purified by its influence, their impurities are destroyed, but they themselves are uninjured. The excrescences are removed, but the substance remains. 3. This image is introduced to represent the influence of God's Spirit. What does it consume? Not the precious gold or the valued stones, but the more worthless substances—hay, straw, stubble, &c. I. ALL MEN MUST PASS THROUGH THE FIRES. That is, they must be subject to the scrutiny of God's righteous judgment. This is as a refiner's furnace. II. THE RIGHTEOUS, BEING AS PURE GOLD, SHALL COME OUT OF THIS FIRE BEAUTIFUL AND UNINJURED. The dross of their characters shall be removed, their corruption shall be destroyed, and their hopes, confidence, and prospects enlarged. III. THE WICKED, BEING LIKE THE CHAFF, SHALL BE CONSUMED IN THE FURNACE. Their hopes—being as a spider's web—shall be carried away. IV. OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE. 1. To His people this is a welcome thought; for He shall consume all that is hateful and repulsive to them. 2. To the sinful it is a thought of terror; for He shall destroy all that upon which they trust, and leave them helpless, desolate, lost. (*Homilist.*)

The consuming fire :—The use of the element of fire as a symbol for the Supreme Being is familiar enough. Ancient marriage-rites involved the use of fire as a sign of that divinity in whose presence the marriage was performed, and who was invoked as a witness of the unbroken pledge taken by those entering into the sacred bond of wedlock. In India a fire is kindled of some sacred wood. The mango-tree is often used for this purpose. The fire is lighted in the middle of the room; the young people sit on stools. The Brahmin commences an incantation. Then they arise and walk round the fire three times. "Fire is the witness of their covenant, and, if they break it, fire will be their destruction." "Call your son," says the father of the bride according to an ancient story, "call your son, that I may give him to my daughter in the presence of the god of fire, that he may be the witness." Then "Usteyār gave his daughter Verunte in marriage, the fire being the witness." Who can fail in this to see a reflection of the story of the burning lamp and the smoking furnace in the vision of Abraham? It is not wonderful that the worship of fire should have been one of the forms of idolatry by which men corrupted the true idea of the ever-blessed God. The rising sun in his morning splendours, the strength of that luminary in noonday brightness, the glory of the setting sun, the moon in her beauty walking through the palaces of the heavens, the countless stars shining in the glories of the nightly firmament, what more striking images of God, if man must employ such! 1. In the first place, there is the idea of purity, which belongs as an essential quality to the element itself. It is not possible to conceive of a flame as impure. And such flame is incorruptible too. Water and air, both also symbols of purity, may be tainted and befouled. But the flame, when still flame, compels whatever it may touch, and changes it into itself, into its own purity and freedom from defilement. Fire is the final, the only perfect purgation, because it is itself the only absolutely pure element. Who can tell the purity of God whose symbol is a flame? No word of ours can add to that simple idea. 2. Fire is a defence, a means of protection, and to symbolise the strong refuges of God's people is thus often used. The fire descending and consuming the offering was a gracious and encouraging sign of acceptance and favour. The chariots and horsemen of fire proved to be the defence and guard of the man of God. The pillar of fire that the people saw rising above the encampment at night and towering into the heaven, was their cheer, their protection in the wandering of the wilderness. What comfort does the bivouacing party not take in the fire that is kindled among the tents; and as it throws its strange and fantastic illumination upon the scene around, how the forest darkness is illumined or the solitude of the plain cheered by a sort of companionship of light! when the travellers in lonely places, where only the stealthy footfall of the beast of prey upon the crisp leaves, or the crackling boughs and branches fallen from the overhanging trees, breaks the solemn silence, light up their fires and make a line of blazing points around their halting-place, they know that they can sleep securely, and their beasts of burden are safe from the sudden spring of the tiger, the cruel teeth of the hungry lion. So is our God the comfort and the defence of His people. In the lonely ways of life He lights their path, and casts a gleam of comfort upon their desolate spirits. The world were very cold and very dark without our God. The vast spaces of the universe would stretch around

us into illimitable distance, and nothing could issue thence to press upon our souls but the forces of death and destruction, ruin and despair. But let the soul feel that God is there, and then the whole is enlightened by a Father's presence, and every force in nature becomes a ministry of love. What a refuge and a defence is God with His people! Around us prowl the enemies of the soul. The roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, is near, but we are centred within the love of God, and he dares not rush upon that consuming fire within which we are safe. 3. But the energy of fire is not only repellent; it also is communicative. Air may wear down a substance presented to it and reduce it to dust, water may dissolve and change the form of that upon which it acts; but fire seizes an object, separates its particles, kindles them to burning, and then compels them to burn up in the flame of its own consuming. Fire kindles, fire sets on fire. These symbols of the Divine Being suggest this communicableness of the Divine nature and activity which is the very basis of our religious, our Divine life. That old legend of Prometheus, told by Apollodorus, how he made the first man and woman out of clay, and animated them by the fire which he stole from heaven, is only the grotesque and paganised version of the deep truth of the life of God within the soul of man that the Scriptures reveal and illustrate. It is fire that gives life. It is the burning rays of the sun that vitalise and inspire all the dead matter of the earth, and cover this world with the beauty and movement, the varied forms and colours and activities of plant and flower, bird and beast. Man's life is but fire, and we get it from the central fire of the universe. And so of the higher life, the life of faith, of love, of holy character. This is gained from God. He who finds Jesus Christ, there finds God; and God in Christ, and by the Holy Spirit, who comes through Christ, kindles the flame of a Divine life within his heart. 4. The passage from this thought to that of the purifying power of fire is not difficult or forced. Some have seen only this in the word. We think that would be too much. To limit the extent of the application so as not to see this, however, would be as completely to miss its significance. When the new life began, how much of earth mingled with its heavenly constituents! There was selfishness, and greed, and passion, and sloth. There was pride, and envy, and hard-heartedness, and love of the world. There was slackness and doubting, and infidelity and neglect. There was ingratitude and insensibility, blindness to the show of God's face, and deafness to the sound of God's voice. But slowly the burning flame of the Divine nature has purged the evil. "A consuming fire!" A deeper, darker mystery still lies behind it all. Did the exhortation suggest us grace and piety, it also, in language unmistakable, bids us entertain a becoming and a godly fear. We have no desire to hide, we dare not hide, the solemn and the awful truth. That Divine nature, a burning fire, is a refuge, a defence, a quickening, purifying force; but be not deceived, it is also a destroying element. Material fire is purging to one thing when it is destructive of another. The fine gold it refines; the dross, the baser substance, it consumes, it destroys. And that Divine life which cleanses and renews, and purifies the faithful, the penitent, the obedient, becomes a burning indignation, a ceaseless and consuming fire against the soul that renders not its due honour and makes not its life its own. (*L. D. Bevan, D.D.*)

The severity of God:—I. WE WILL ENDEAVOUR TO GIVE YOU DISTINCT NOTIONS OF THAT WHICH THE SCRIPTURE CALLS THE WRATH, THE ANGER, THE VENGEANCE OF GOD. Recollect that when the Scripture speaks of the perfections and operations of God it borroweth images from the affections and actions of men. Things that cannot be known to us by themselves can be understood only by analogy. Divine things are of this kind. From this remark follows a precaution—that is, that we must carefully lay aside every part of the emblem that agreeth only to men from whom it is borrowed, and apply only that part to the Deity which is compatible with the eminence of His perfections. II. Observe THAT THOSE EMBLEMS OF WRATH AND VENGEANCE UNDER WHICH GOD IS REPRESENTED TO US HAVE ONE PART THAT CANNOT BE ATTRIBUTED TO HIM, because it is not compatible with the eminence of His perfections, and another that must be applied to Him because it is. 1. It is a consequence of the frailty or of the depravity of men that their anger inclines them to hate those whom they ought to love, and in whose happiness they ought to interest themselves as far as they can without violating the laws of equity. Such a hatred cannot be attributed to God; He loves all His intelligent creatures. 2. It is a consequence of human frailty or depravity that men's wrath makes them taste a barbarous pleasure in tormenting those who are the objects of it, and in feasting, as it were, on their miseries. This is incompatible with the eminence of

the perfections of God. 3. It is a consequence of the frailty or of the depravity of men that their anger disorders their bodies and impairs their minds. See, the eyes sparkle, the mouth foams, the animal spirits are in a flame; these obscure the faculties of the mind, and prevent the weighing of those reasons that plead for the guilty offender; anger prejudgeth him, and, in spite of many powerful pleas in his favour, his ruin is resolved. All these are incompatible with the eminence of the perfections of God. God is a spirit; He is not subject to revolutions of sense; reasons of punishing a sinner never divert His attention from motives of pardoning the man or of moderating his pain. 4. It is a consequence of the frailty and depravity of men that their anger makes them usurp a right which belongs to God. God useth His own right when He punisheth sin. 5. It is a consequence of the frailty and depravity of men that time doth not abate their resentment, and that the only reason which prevents the rendering of evil for evil is a want of opportunity; as soon as an opportunity offers they eagerly embrace it. This is incompatible with the eminence of the perfections of God; He hath at all times the means of punishing the guilty. 6. It is a consequence of the frailty and depravity of men that their anger puts them upon considering and punishing a pardonable frailty as an atrocious crime. This is incompatible with the eminence of the Divine perfections. If we imagine that God acts so in any cases, it is because we have false notions of sins, and think that a pardonable frailty which is an atrocious crime. III. We are to conciliate WHAT THE SCRIPTURE SAITH OF THE GOODNESS OF GOD WITH WHAT IT SAITH OF HIS ANGER OR VENGEANCE; and as the two subjects never appear more irreconciliable than when, having used all our endeavours to terrify people who defer their conversion till a dying illness, we actually take pains to comfort those who have deferred it till that time, we will endeavour to harmonise the goodness and justice of God in that particular point of view. 1. First, let us endeavour, in a general view, to reconcile the goodness of God with His justice by laying down a few principles. (1) To speak properly, there are not several perfections in God; but there is one single excellence, inclusive of every other, that ariseth from all His perfections, but of which it is not possible that we can either form any complete ideas or easily express by any name: in general, it may be called order, or love of order. (2) Although God hath only a general excellence, yet it is necessary for us to divide it into several particular excellencies in order to the obtaining of some knowledge of an object, the immensity of which will not allow us to comprehend it at once. (3) The general excellence of God being thus divided into parts, each part becomes what we call a perfection, or an attribute, of God, as vengeance or justice and goodness; but each particular attribute will be still mistaken unless we subdivide it again into other and still more contracted spheres. Thus, when God sendeth rain and fruitful seasons, we call the blessing simply bounty. When He delivereth us out of our afflictions we call it compassion. When He pardoneth our sins we call it mercy. But as all these particular excellencies proceed from that general attribute which we call goodness, so that attribute itself proceedeth, as well as His justice, from an excellence more general still, which we have denominated order or love of order. (4) Perfections that proceed from the same perfection, or, rather, which are the same perfections applied to different subjects, cannot be contrary to each other. Strictly speaking, God is no more just than good, no more good than just. His goodness is restrained by His justice, His justice by His goodness. (5) God is as amiable and adorable when He exerciseth His justice as when He exerciseth His goodness. That which makes me adore God, believe His word, hope in His promises, and love Him above all things, is the eminence of His perfections. 2. Let us now apply this general harmony of the goodness and severity of God to the removing of a seeming inconsistency in the conduct of your preachers and casuists, who first use every effort to alarm and terrify your minds with the idea of a death-bed repentance, and afterward take equal pains to comfort you when ye have deferred your repentance to that time, and when your case appears desperate. Why do we not despair of a man who delays his conversion till the approach of death? Because that order, which constitutes the eminence of the Divine perfections, doth not allow that a sincere conversion, a conversion that reforms the sin and renews the sinner, should be rejected by God. Now we cannot absolutely deny the possibility of a sincere death-bed conversion for the following reasons. (1) Because it is not absolutely impossible that a violent fit of sickness or an apprehension of death should make deeper impressions on the mind than either sermons, or exhortations, or books of devotion could ever produce. (2) Because we are neither so fully acquainted with other people's hearts, nor indeed

with our own, as to determine whether sin have so entirely depraved all the faculties of the soul that it is past remedy; or whether it have arrived at that precise degree of corruption to which the eminence of the Divine perfections doth not allow a display of that efficacy which is promised to those who desire the grace of conversion. (3) Because we find in the Holy Scriptures that some have obtained mercy after they had committed the very crimes, the remembrance of which, we have said, ought not to drive any to despair. (4) Because we still see people who, having lived thirty, yea, fifty, years in sin, have been converted in a time of sickness, and who, being restored to health, give full proof of the reality of their conversion. (5) Because God worketh miracles in religion as well as in nature; and because no man hath a sufficient knowledge of the nature of God's perfections to enable him to affirm that a miracle cannot or ought not to be wrought in behalf of such a sinner. (6) Because we cannot find that your pastors have any authority from their Bibles to say to a penitent sinner at any time, There is no more hope for thee; thou hast exhausted the mercy of God. 3. It is true God's thoughts are not our thoughts; and it is possible that the approach of death may make deeper impressions on you than either sermons or pious books have made: but yet our God is a consuming fire. What a time is a dying illness for the receiving of such impressions! Ah! what obstacles! What a world of obstacles oppose such extravagant hopes and justify the efforts of those who endeavour to destroy them! Here is business that must be settled; a will which must be made; a number of articles that must be discussed; there are friends who must be embraced. There the illness increaseth, pains multiply, agonies convulse, the whole soul, full of intolerable sensations, loseth the power of seeing and hearing, thinking and reflecting. It is true God's thoughts are not our thoughts; and we have neither a sufficient knowledge of other people's hearts, nor of our own, to affirm with certainty when their faculties are entirely contaminated: but yet our God is a consuming fire. We know men to whom the truth is become unintelligible, in consequence of the disguise in which they have taken the pains to clothe it, and who have accustomed themselves to palliate vice till they are become incapable of perceiving its turpitude. God's thoughts are not our thoughts, it is true; and we have seen some examples of people who have proved, since their recovery, that they were truly converted in sickness, and on whose account we presume that others may possibly be converted by the same means: but yet our God is a consuming fire. How rare are these examples! Doth this require proof? Must we demonstrate it? Ye are our proofs; ye yourselves are our demonstrations. It is true God's thoughts are not our thoughts; and God worketh miracles in religion as well as in nature: but yet our God is a consuming fire. Who can assure himself that, having abused common grace, he shall obtain extraordinary assistances? It is true God's thoughts are not our thoughts: and there is nothing in the Holy Scriptures which impowers us to shut the gates of heaven against a dying penitent; we have no authority to tell you that there is no more hope for you, but that ye are lost without remedy: but yet our God is a consuming fire. There are hundreds of passages in our Bibles which authorise us—what am I saying? there are hundreds of passages that command us—not to conceal anything from the criminal; there are hundreds of passages which empower and enjoin us to warn you, you who are fifty years of age, you who are sixty, you who are fourscore, that still to put off the work of your conversion is a madness, an excess of inflexibility and indolence, which all the flames of hell can never expiate. (*J. Saurin.*) *Divine love is fire:*—I. Fire is UNIVERSAL, and God's love is everywhere—the life of all the living, the beauty of all the beautiful, the blessedness of all the blest. II. Fire INFLICTS PAIN. And a flash of Divine love on a guilty conscience enkindles a hell. III. Fire CREATES STORMS. And all the moral tempests in the universe have their origin in Divine love. IV. Fire is PERPETUALLY ACTIVE. So is Divine love—creating, sustaining, and directing all things. V. Fire has a DEVOURING CAPABILITY. Divine love burns up falsehoods, wrongs, and all the ten thousand forms of sins. VI. Fire has the POWER TO CHANGE ALL THINGS INTO ITS OWN NATURE. So Divine love will turn all human souls into love one day. Evil cannot remain evil for ever before it. (*Homilist.*) *God a consuming fire:*—Because God doth not always show Himself in the likeness of fire, a terrible God, pouring down the coals of His wrath upon us, because He beareth with us, and doth not by and by punish us for our sins, we think we may condemn Him, we may serve Him as we list, any service will content Him. Ay, but remember likewise that our God is a consuming fire. It is long, peradventure, before a fire breaks forth; it may lie lurking a great while and not be seen; but if

it begin to flame, to set upon a town, without great prevention it will burn up the whole town. So God is patient, His wrath is long a-kindling; but if we provoke Him too much, He will break forth as a fire and consume us all. He is a fearful God with whom we have to deal, therefore let us serve Him with fear and reverence, in holiness and righteousness all our days, that we may not only avoid this fire, but enjoy the light of the heavenly Jerusalem for ever. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *God a consuming fire*:—This is one of the shortest texts in the Bible. It takes rank with those other three brief sentences which declare the nature of God: God is Light, God is Love, God is Life. But to many it is one of the most awful sayings in the whole of Scripture. It rankles in the memory; recurs continually to the uneasy conscience; and rings its wild tocsin of alarm in the ear of the anxious inquirer. And yet there is an aspect in which it may be viewed which will make it one of the most comforting, precious passages in the whole range of inspiration. I. OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE; AND THERE IS TERROR IN THE SYMBOL. But the terror is reserved for those who unceasingly and persistently violate His laws and despise His love. Sin is no light matter. In this world even it is fearfully avenged. Walk through certain wards in our hospitals, and tell me if anything could exceed the horror, the agony, or the penalty which is being inflicted on those who have flagrantly violated the laws of nature. And so far as we can see the physical penalties which follow upon wrong-doing are not unto life and restoration, but unto death and destruction. It is necessary that these sufferings should be veiled from the eye of man, but surely they must be taken into account, when we estimate God's treatment of sin. And if such pain, keen as fire, consumes those who violate physical law, surely we must admit that there is a still more awful doom for those who violate the laws of God's love and grace and pleading mercy. II. OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE; AND THERE IS COMFORT AND BLESSING IN THE THOUGHT. When we yield to God's love, and open our hearts to Him, He enters into us, and becomes within us a consuming fire, not to ourselves, but to the evil within us. So that, in a very deep and blessed sense, we may be said to dwell with the devouring fire, and to walk amid the eternal burnings. 1. Fire is warmth. We talk of ardent desire, warm emotion, enthusiasm's glow and fire; and when we speak of God being within us as fire, we mean that He will produce in us a strong and constant affection to Himself. 2. Fire is light. We are dark enough in our natural state, but when God comes into the tabernacle of our being, the shekinah begins to glow in the most holy place; and pours its waves of glory throughout the whole being, so that the face is suffused with a holy glow, and there is an evident elasticity and buoyancy of spirits which no world-joy can produce or even imitate. 3. Fire is purity. "How long, think you, would it take a workman with hammer and chisel to get the ore from the rocks in which it lies so closely embedded? But if they are flung into the great cylinder, and the fires fanned to torrid heat, and the draught roars through the burning mass, at nightfall the glowing stream of pure and fluid metal, from which all dross and rubbish are parted, flows into the waiting mould." This is a parable of what God will do for us. Nay, more, He will burn up the wood, hay, and stubble, the grit and dross, the selfishness and evil of our nature, so that at last only the gold and silver and precious stones shall remain. The bonds that fetter us will be consumed, but not a hair of our heads shall fall to the ground. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *God as fire*:—As regards the use of fire as a symbol in Holy Scripture, while it is true that it often represent the punitive wrath of God, it is equally certain that it has not always this meaning. Quite as often it is the symbol of God's purifying energy and might. Fire was not the symbol of Jehovah's vengeance in the burning bush. When the Lord is represented as sitting "as a refiner and a purifier of silver," surely the thought is not of vengeance, but of purifying mercy. We should rather say that fire, in Scripture usage, is the symbol of the intense energy of the Divine nature, which continually acts upon every person and on everything, according to the nature of each person or thing; here conserving, there destroying; now cleansing, now consuming. The same fire which burns the wood, hay, and stubble purifies the gold and silver. (*S. H. Kellogg, D.D.*) *The beneficent becoming destruction*:—A glass inkstand was placed on the table so that the sun's rays fell upon it. Brightly and cheerily, no doubt, they played upon its facets and angles; but that inkstand affected these beautiful sunbeams in such a way as to extract from them heat in sufficient force to set the table upon which it stood on fire, reducing it, and all it came in contact with, into ashes. What is there more beautiful than the sunbeams? How they cheer, and cherish, and inspire nature all around! Yet there are some objects which can convert this thing of

beauty, and health, and life into a consuming fire. So there are moral characters which extract death out of life; transform the loving, life-giving gospel into an instrument of destruction; in short, cause the God of love to become to them a consuming fire. (*A. J. Parry.*) *Lightning as well as light*:—I am thankful that men do not now speak of the penalty of sin, as if, according to Foster, the Almighty "were a dreadful King of Furies, whose music is the cries of victims, and whose glory requires to be illustrated by the ruin of His creation." We cannot speak in terms that are strong enough, or in tones that are pathetic enough, of the love of God in Christ. But he is unfaithful who, by silence or by speech, diminishes the sense of the evil of sin, and of the certainty and awfulness of the penalty that follows it. A representation of Jehovah as a Being of infinite good nature, whose Fatherly love is reduced to grandfatherly weakness, who cannot inflict pain and suffering, and who will easily overlook sin, is a false representation; it is contrary to well-known facts, it is oblivious of the greatness of the sacrifice of Christ. When I was in Naples I thought nothing could be more beautiful than that fine bay, with its clear blue waters, and its picturesque surroundings; but eight miles away there was Vesuvius, with the column of smoke ever resting on its summit, with the elements of destruction within it, and with the effects of its destructive power seen in Herculaneum and Pompeii near its base. So behind all the beautiful and attractive aspects of the gospel of grace there is the mount of blackness and darkness and tempest, which cannot be blotted out. There is death as well as life in the world; there are cemeteries as well as gardens, gaols as well as schools. Christ has not thrown the winnowing fan from His hand; there was lightning as well as light in His speech; words of doom came from the lips of Him who looked upon Jerusalem through tears. He teaches us that sin is not to be trifled with, and we preach Him as the deliverer "from the wrath to come." (*Jas. Owen.*)

CHAPTER XIII.

VER. 1. **Let brotherly love continue.**—*Brotherly love*:—I. WHAT IS BROTHERLY LOVE? It is that feeling of mutual regard, subsisting among the members of the faithful, which is felt to be due from one brother to another, and without which, in the intercourse of domestic life, there could be neither peace in families nor comfort in society. If, though hatred should not exist among them, there were yet no cordial affection, nothing like a desire to promote each other's welfare, the members of that family would deprive themselves of the most fruitful source of enjoyment still permitted to fallen human nature. But brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus form but one family in the eyes of our common Parent; and He has commanded them to love as brethren. II. HOW IS BROTHERLY LOVE TO BE CULTIVATED AND ATTAINED? There may be differences of sentiment and practice in many particulars, which human infirmity will always occasion, even among those who are endeavouring to find the way to the same heavenly city. But there must be a reception of the Lord Jesus, in all His offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, and a desire to submit to the guidance of His Word, and to be led by the gracious direction of His Spirit, as a foundation for that brotherly love in which we are commanded to live. Common feelings imply common principles; and the peculiar love of Christians must have the peculiar faith of Christians for its basis and origin. III. HOW MAY BROTHERLY LOVE MOST SECURELY CONTINUE? 1. Of course the first object, with this view, should be to retain the feelings in which that pure affection for the Christian brotherhood originated; to recollect, from day to day, that "one is our Master, even Christ, and that all we are brethren"; and still more especially to look upon every trait of Christian character as a link of attachment, a feature in that family likeness which belongs to all the faithful, and gives them an instinctive interest in each other's well-being. But, after all, the chief preservative of this characteristic grace of Christianity is, the love of Christ Himself, which will always necessarily expand in love for the brethren. 2. But, further; if we desire this mutual regard for all the brethren to continue among us, and to grow, we must attend to two things. (1) We must be on the watch to do those actions which have a tendency to promote and to strengthen brotherly love. We must inquire into each other's wants, with a view

to relieve them, and thus exercise the affections which we wish to cultivate. (2) We must be careful to remove those impediments which thwart and retard its growth. Now, there are a number of little causes, which, by being suffered to grow up in the bosoms of Christians, tend to narrow their affections, and restrain that brotherly love which ought to be their delight. Differences of taste will sometimes, if not controlled, engender personal dislikes, against which a wise man can never be too much on his guard. It is surprising how often some slight, but frequently recurring, peculiarities of manner will produce a distaste for the society of a person who is yet a Christian. 3. Again; every man has his infirmities, his failings, his besetting sins. There is no habit more injurious to the exercise of brotherly love than that of dwelling unnecessarily on the defects of those whom we are bound to love as brethren. Whatever be your neighbour's faults, he is still your brother, for whom Christ died. I have not now spoken of the duty of forgiveness, because, among those who are Christians indeed, the occasions for the exercise of this virtue ought to be rare. But yet a forgiving disposition is so essential an attribute of Christianity that brotherly love cannot be cultivated without it. 4. But the grand instrument for the removal of all impediments to our charity, from within or from without, is intercessory prayer. (*E. G. Marsh, M.A.*) *Brotherly love*:—A brother is a hallowed name. Born of the same parents, nursed with the same untiring, tender care, dependent on the same protection, and sharing in the same blessings of the same common hearthstone, expectant heirs of a common inheritance, the tie that binds me to my brother is one most sacred in its nature, and nothing ought to be allowed to injure, much lest to destroy, this hallowed relationship. I. BROTHERLY LOVE MAY BE DISTURBED AND SOMETIMES SEVERED. Christianity does not deprive us of our individuality. With the same inspired truth before us we differ, honestly, in our opinions as to the meaning or extent of that truth. We still have our pride of opinion. Again, we are liable to have our preferences and prejudices as well as our opinions. Here is need for the exercise of that charity "that thinketh no evil"; that, in honour, prefers another to itself. Love is magnetic. It attracts pure hearts together and all to God. It throws its wondrous power over sinful opposition, and with more than the skill of Orpheus is a true tamer of wild beasts. Love is the great law of gravity in God's spiritual universe; it binds each orb and keeps it coherent, while it rolls all in harmony around the grand central sun. Love is the vitalising principle of truth and experience and duty. Love concentrates individual piety in intense beauty in the character of the Church, while it unifies and employs all the strength of the Church in its sacred mission on the earth. II. Again, THERE IS THE PURPOSE FORMED BY EACH LOVER OF THE SAVIOUR THAT BROTHERLY LOVE SHALL CONTINUE. The first approaches of the small foxes that injure the vines are carefully guarded against. Special care is taken to put out the least spark of "envy, or malice, or uncharitableness," that the enemy may throw into the soul. The little courtesies of Christian as well as polite society are tendered with suitable delicacy, and "little deeds of kindness" are kept busily at work receiving and reciprocating true brotherly love. III. BROTHERLY LOVE ACCORDS TO OTHERS WHAT WE CLAIM FOR OURSELVES, AND MORE—for, in true humility, in honour it "esteems others better than itself." It is deferential, forbearing, and forgiving. To rejoice in the success of a brother, more than in our own, is strong evidence that we "have been with Jesus," and breathed largely of His Spirit. "Let brotherly love continue." 1. This should be the theory and practice of the ministers and officers of the Church. 2. Among different denominations of Christians this should be observed. 3. Among members of the same Church this apostolic injunction is a vital necessity. It is utterly opposed to detraction of the gifts, ability, and usefulness either of ministers or of any member of the Church. 4. We should cultivate this principle of brotherly love, for through it we must show, by contrast with unsanctified human nature, that Christ's religion makes us gentle, kind, patient, and forgiving; and as Christ's history is the loveliest exhibition of Divine love, so we must reflect the highest honour on our once crucified but now risen Lord, by loving the brethren. 5. Nowhere is there a more attractive picture of genuine piety than in "the fellowship of the saints." (*W. H. Anderson, D.D.*) *Love one another*:—Love is one of the most important and distinctive of all Christian graces, and some of the churches seem to have been distinguished by a great abundance of it. Writing to the Thessalonians, the apostle says: "Concerning brotherly love, ye have no need that I write unto you." "I thank God for all the grace that has abounded in you; still let it continue." Let us now glance at the objects of brotherly love. In the first place, it must mean Christian brotherhood. Only as we love them for Christ's sake

have we any true brotherly love. But what is to be the rule of our brotherly love? It is to be after the measure and the pattern of our Lord's love to us. This is the revealed standard, and it has been set before us most plainly again and again. When the Saviour announced it to His disciples He said: "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you," and very soon after He refers to it again and says: "This is My commandment, that ye love one another." Then He refers to the strongest proof of love: "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend." The Apostle Paul said: "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us," and the Apostle John said: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Why, this laying down of His life is the mystery of redemption, the strongest revelation of the Divine compassion, the innermost sanctuary of the absolute goodness. How can we attain to this standard of love? It is a good rule—aim high, or you will never excel. Ay, and this, too, is needed—for brotherly love has a good deal to do, to endure, and to give—a heart divinely tender, a hand divinely strong, a soul divinely generous. And now consider some reasons why we should join the apostle in his desire: "Let brotherly love continue." First, it has a power of living and growing. Brotherly love is a living power. We may well and consistently say, "Let it continue." In the trials that will come of the furthering of the cause of Christ, let brotherly love ever continue. The want of it hinders more than almost anything else. Besides, the presence and power of it is mightily helpful. The Saviour prayed that His disciples might be all one—not in oneness of ceremonial and creed, but in character and life with the Father and with the Son. But that was only to secure another object—that the world might know, that the world might believe that the Father had sent the Son. This was the direct effect produced by the descent of the new Christian life on the Day of Pentecost. The primitive disciples were few and poor, unlearned and despised. Yet by moral force alone they emptied the temples and demolished the altars, vanquished Cæsar, the philosophers and priests, and changed the aspect of the world. By what? Supremely by the vision of the Crucified—that manifestation of matchless love, which at once showed what love for sinners was and could do. And next to that was the image of brotherly love, a Divine creation, sent amongst men. In a world where the few were tyrants and knew no mercy, and the many crushed and toiling slaves that found no pity—lo! they looked up, saw this new creation—men loving one another—and they said: "See how these Christians love one another!" and their hearts were eased, and a new life began in them, and a new life was conferred upon them. Was it so? There is no question. Then "let brotherly love continue." Further, brotherly love is for the edification and establishment of the cause of Christ. Paul says: "Knowledge puffeth up; charity edifieth." The great appointed force for all Christians, whereby each believing man may attain to a full salvation, is faith; but faith works by love. Christian fidelity consists not merely in speaking the truth—you only want a hot temper to do that sometimes—but in speaking the truth in love—a very rare and a very difficult thing. In the midst of all infirmities and sufferings to have a patience that never frets and an energy that never tires, forbearing one another in love—oh, there is the calm and glow of the divinest life that can possess the soul of a man! God grant that this grace of love may abide with you, because it edifies every way and everywhere. Let it continue in the midst of the infirmities and sufferings of life. One brother is rash, another sluggish; one vain, another proud; one rude, another sensitive; one shy, another forward. Amidst all imperfections there is nothing so good and nothing so helpful as brotherly love—meek, generous, thinking no evil, seeking not its own, believing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things. And in one way or another all have their sufferings. These sufferings are to us a great mystery; yet one feels that they furnish a grand field for the exercise of brotherly love in which to speak its kind words, do its best deeds, win its triumphs, and shine forth in all its glory. Brotherly love is also a sign of grace, and a good one. A sign of grace, I say, and a blessed sign of grace, a mark of the true Church if you try to get it and keep it. Finally, "let brotherly love continue" until it return unto glory; for by Divine appointment it shall live in heaven and be perfect there. (*John Aldis.*)

The duty of brotherly love:—1. There is the express command of God and of Christ in regard to it. It is a permanent obligation. 2. The relationship continues, and so should the affection; the bond of brotherhood abides, and the love of the brotherhood should abide also. 3. The fountain from which it flows continues, and so also should the stream that flows from it. 4. The necessity for its cultivation continues.

(1) You have need of it. (2) Your brethren have need of it; for oh, you know not how you grieve and wound them. (3) The glory of Christ and the triumphs of the gospel need it. (*Thos. Main, D.D.*) *The preservation of brotherly love* :—Brotherly love is very apt to be impaired if we do not endeavour continually to preserve it. It is a part of the wisdom of faith to consider aright the occasions of the decay of mutual love, and the means of its preservation. Without this we cannot comply with this caution and injunction in a due manner. I. THE CAUSES OF THE DECAY OF THIS LOVE, whence it doth not continue as it ought, are—1. Self-love. 2. Love of this present world. 3. Abounding of lusts in the hearts of men. 4. Ignorance of the true nature, both of the grace and the exercise of it, in its proper duties. 5. Principally, the loss of a concernment in the foundation of it, which is an interest in gratuitous adoption, and the participation of the same spirit, the same new nature and life. Where this is not, though conviction of truth and the profession of it may for a season make an appearance of this brotherly love, it will not long continue. II. THE OCCASIONS OF ITS DECAY AND LOSS ARE—1. Differences in opinion and practice about things in religion. 2. Unsuitableness of natural tempers and inclinations. 3. Readiness to receive a sense of appearing provocations. 4. Different, and sometimes inconsistent secular interests. 5. An abuse of spiritual gifts, by pride on the one hand, or envy on the other. 6. Attempts for domination, inconsistent in a fraternity; which are all to be watched against. III. THE MEANS OF ITS CONTINUANCE OR PRESERVATION ARE—1. An endeavour to grow and thrive in the principle of it, or the power of adopting grace. 2. A due sense of the weight or moment of this duty, from the especial institution and command of Christ. 3. Of the trial which is committed thereunto, of the sincerity of our grace, and the truth of our sanctification. For "by this we know that we are passed from death unto life." 4. A due consideration of the use, yea, necessity of this duty to the glory of God, and edification of the Church; and—5. Of that breach of union, loss of peace, disorder and confusion, which must and will ensue on the neglect of it. 6. Constant watchfulness against all those vicious habits of mind, in self-love, or love of the world, which are apt to impair it. 7. Diligent heed that it be not insensibly impaired in its vital acts; such as are patience, forbearance, readiness to forgive, unaptness to believe evil, without which no other duties of it will be long continued. 8. Fervent prayer for supplies of grace enabling us thereunto, with sundry others of a like nature. And if we judge not this duty of such importance as to be constant in the use of these means for the maintenance of it, it will not continue. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *Christian union* :—I. ITS NATURE. 1. Unity in sentiment. 2. Union of feeling. 3. Union of effort. II. THE DESIRABLENESS OR IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIAN UNION. 1. The teachings of Scripture. 2. The example of the early Christians. 3. The evils of division. 4. Christians are engaged in the same cause. 5. Union is strength. 6. Union is promotive of happiness. 7. It is only by the exercise of that love, which is the substratum of union, that one can resemble God, and become imbued with the spirit of heaven. (*W. C. Whitcomb.*) *Motives to brotherly love* :—1. Brotherly love is a grace absolutely necessary. It is the foundation whereon all duties that have relation to the brethren are erected. 2. Brotherly love is one of the fairest and most glorious flowers in the Christian garden. It makes men amiable before God and man. It sends forth a sweet fragrant savour wheresoever it is. 3. Such is the life and vigour of brotherly love, as it puts on them in whom it is unto all duties. A stronger incitation and enforcement thereunto cannot be given. 4. So violent and irresistible is the power of love, as it will pass through all difficulties, and overthrow all obstacles. It will not be hindered from doing the good it should do. 5. Love is as salt, which infuseth a savoury and wholesome taste into such things as would otherwise be fresh and flashy. It is therefore joined with sundry other duties for this very purpose, even to season them. The apostle so far commends love in this kind, as he maketh all things unsavoury and unprofitable without it (1 Cor. xiii. 1–3). He therefore giveth this general advice, "Let all your things be done in love" (1 Cor. xvi. 14). 6. Love hath a strong operation on others. It is a fire which heateth the things that are near it. As apprehension of God's love to us works love in us to God (1 John iv. 19), so others' apprehension of our love to them will make them love us. And as love puts us on to all kindness unto them, so their love of us will put them on to do all kindness unto us. David and Jonathan. 7. Love is one of the most comfortable graces that a man can have. It gives evidence to others, and brings assurance to a man's own soul of the love of God to him, of his right to Jesus Christ, of the Spirit's abode in him, and of his right to the heavenly inheritance. 8. Love is an

especial means of strengthening and establishing the kingdom of Christ. It unites the subjects and members of that kingdom in one, which is a means of great stability. 9. The nearest union that is betwixt any in this world is betwixt professors of the faith, and that in their mutual relation one to another, and in the joint relation that they all have to Christ. Resemblances of the nearest relation that be, are used to set this forth, as of a foundation and edifice (Eph. ii. 20, 21) of a vine and branches (John xv. 5), of a husband and wife (Eph. v. 32; 2 Cor. xi. 2), of a head and body (Eph. i. 22, 23). This near union should stir us up to brotherly love; for therein we love that body which is styled Christ (1 Cor. xii. 12). 10. This world's hatred of saints should the more stir us up to love them. Christ enforceth this duty upon this ground (John xv. 17–19). The world most hateth saints, and that, in this very respect, because they are saints. But brotherly love is a sovereign antidote against the poison of the world's hatred, and a precious cordial to revive and support the saint's spirits. (*W. Gouge.*) *Brotherly love*:—A truly pious man, of rank in society, was in the habit of entertaining persons of very humble circumstances of life, if they only gave evidence of true religion. A friend of his, who was accustomed to measure everything according to the standard of this world, pleasantly rallied him on the subject of his associates; intimating his surprise that he should admit to his hospitality and friendship persons of so obscure origin, and of so little estimation among men. He replied, in a tone of unaffected humility, that as he could scarcely hope to enjoy so elevated a rank as they, in a future world, he knew not why he should despise them in the present. The reproof came home to the feelings of the proud man, and he was silent; conscience whispering, meanwhile, how dim were his prospects of rising in the future world to an equality with the pious poor, if his Christian friend was in danger of falling below them. *Brotherly love among the early Christians*:—A striking instance of the brotherly love of the early Christians transpired in the great plague that raged round Alexandria, during the reign of Gallienus. At the first appearance of the symptoms, the heathen drove the infected man from their sight; they tore themselves from their dearest connections; they threw their friends half-dead into the streets, and left their dead unburied. But, in contrast with this cruel selfishness, "the Christians, in the abundance of their brotherly love," as their Bishop Dionysius says, "did not spare themselves, but mutually attending each other, they would visit the sick without fear, and ministering to each other for the sake of Christ, cheerfully gave up their lives with them. Many died after their care had restored others to health. Many, who took the bodies of their Christian brethren into their hands and bosoms, and closed their eyes, and buried them with every mark of attention, soon followed them in death."

Ver. 2. **Entertain strangers.**—*Entertaining strangers*:—The text derives much of its importance from the times in which it was written. They were perilous times for Christians. The disciples of Christ had often to flee to strange cities, and in entertaining some stranger, a man might find he had entertained a Christian, or had given shelter and food to a messenger or angel of the Church, and he would be more than repaid by the discourse and benediction of the wayfarer. I. SMALL DUTIES ARE OFTEN ENFORCED BY GREAT PROMISES. Small duties, like small mercies, are often overlooked. God has scattered His gifts over life's pathway,—we mistake them for wild flowers or mere weeds; but they yield fragrance when pressed by our worn and weary feet. Life is made up, to a great extent, of small things,—they give symmetry and beauty to character, and make up the proportions of life; they are necessary to the order of the family and the harmony of the home; their absence would soon be detected in the irregular movements of the simple machinery, or in the note of dissonance which would mar the music of life. There are numerous instances in the past, in which pity to the oppressed and the captive, kindness to the stranger, and charity to man, were enforced by great promises; by the promise oftentimes of "living long in the land which the Lord their God had given them." And so in the text men are to entertain strangers because some "have entertained angels unawares." II. OUR MINISTRATIONS MAY BE AS IMPORTANT FOR OUR SAKE AS FOR THE SAKE OF THOSE TO WHOM THEY ARE RENDERED. We get, in one sense, as much good by giving, as we confer on those who receive our gifts. We are to be merciful, that thus we may imitate God. Hospitality is of importance, because it involves a genial nature,—a large, loving heart, consideration and care for man. A man who is not a lover of hospitality is in danger of living to himself, shutting up life within

himself, being separate and divided from his fellows. Man is a social being, and he who would have friends "must show himself friendly." Apparently incidental circumstances often lead to great and unexpected results. An introduction to a stranger—an act of courtesy—a few passing words, have led to results which have influenced all the future. Men have only thought of entertaining a stranger, and they have entertained an angel. We are to do life's duties; we are to be generous and hospitable if no angel ever enters our tent; we are to entertain strangers, though they may never turn out to be angels. III. THE PRECEPT ENJOINS ON US BENEVOLENCE AND LARGENESS OF HEART. Men are too much accustomed to live with men of their own class, with men who read the same books, think the same thoughts, and live the same kind of life; they do not know men out of their circle, they do not receive the benefit which results from freshness of thought, and interchange of sentiment, and deeper and warmer feeling. (*H. J. Bevis.*) *Hospitality*:—In hospitality these things are required: 1. That we do it frequently. One swallow makes not a spring. The receiving of a stranger once makes not a hospitable man. We must make a daily use and occupation of it. It was the continual practice of Lot and Abraham, as may appear by their behaviour. 2. It must be willingly. We must not tarry till strangers offer themselves. We must pull them in, as Abraham and Lot did. We must constrain them, as Lydia did St. Paul and Silas. 3. Cheerfully without grudging (1 Pet. iv. 9), we must not repine at it, speak hardly of them when they be gone. 4. Meekly; not receive them after a stately and lord-like manner; but after a meek manner, as if we were rather beholden to them, than they to us. They be the brethren of Christ, the sons of God; we are not worthy of such guests. 5. Abundantly; according to that ability wherewith God hath blessed us. If we have but a little, let them have a little, as the widow of Sarepta dealt with Elias. If we have a great portion of God's blessings, let them taste of them. 6. We must do it perseveringly: be not weary of well doing. Hospitality is a good thing, be not weary of it. Let thy house be open to good men all the days of thy life. But alas, this is a hard doctrine, who can abide it; we are too much wedded to the world: yea, they that make a great show of Christianity, are ready to say with Nabal, "Shall I take my bread and my water, and my flesh, and give it unto men whom I know not whence they be?" Oh forget not this duty. Here he means such strangers especially as are compelled to forsake their country for the gospel's sake; but it is to be extended to all. It is an excellent duty, and we have many spurs to prick us to it. 1. God requires it (Isa. lviii. 7). 2. We have many ensamples for it. 3. We ourselves may be strangers, therefore do as ye would be done to. 4. The want of it hath been grievously punished, it was the overthrow of the whole tribe (Judges xx.). 5. In receiving men that are strangers, we may receive angels. Preachers which be God's angels, nay, Christ Himself (Matt. xxv. 6). 6. It is gainful for this life, and that which is to come. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *A gracious disposition unexpectedly rewarded*:—I. ESPECIAL SEASONS ARE DIRECTIONS, AND CONSTRAINING MOTIVES UNTO ESPECIAL DUTIES. And he who on such occasions will forget to receive strangers, will not long remember to retain anything of Christian religion. II. OUR HEARTS ARE NOT TO BE TRUSTED UNTO IN OCCASIONAL DUTIES, IF WE PRESERVE THEM NOT IN A CONTINUAL DISPOSITION TOWARDS THEM. If that be lost, no arguments will be prevalent to engage them unto present occasions. III. THAT THE MIND OUGHT CONTINUALLY TO BE ON ITS WATCH, AND IN A GRACIOUS DISPOSITION TOWARDS SUCH DUTIES AS ARE ATTENDED WITH DIFFICULTIES AND CHARGE. Such as that here commanded to us, without which, we shall fail in what is required of us. IV. EXAMPLES OF PRIVILEGES ANNEXED TO DUTIES, WHEREOF THE SCRIPTURE IS FULL, ARE GREAT MOTIVES AND INCENTIVES TO THE SAME, OR THE LIKE DUTIES. V. FAITH WILL MAKE USE OF THE HIGHEST PRIVILEGES THAT EVER WERE ENJOYED ON THE PERFORMANCE OF DUTIES, TO ENCOURAGE UNTO OBEDIENCE, THOUGH IT EXPECTS NOT ANYTHING OF THE SAME KIND ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE SAME DUTIES. VI. WHEN MEN DESIGNING THAT WHICH IS GOOD, DO MORE GOOD THAN THEY INTENDED, SHALL OR MAY REAP MORE BENEFIT THEREBY THAN THEY EXPECTED. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *Kindness to strangers*:—Even in later ages of the Church, there have been fine exemplifications, personal and public, of kindness to Christian strangers. Some of the most remarkable of these belong to the age of the Reformation. The heart warms towards Frankfort and Geneva, in the memory of the hospitable shelter which those venerable cities gave at that eventful epoch, to so many of our English and Scottish exiles. And not a few evangelical Protestants on the Continent of Europe now delight to extend their humble hospitality to British Christians whom an interest in "the common

faith," or even a less sacred motive, may have carried to their shores. (*A. S. Patterson.*) *A genius for kindness*:—"There is a man," said his neighbour, speaking of a village carpenter, "who has done more good, I really believe, in this community than any other person who ever lived in it. He cannot talk very well in prayer-meetings, and he doesn't very often try. He isn't worth two thousand dollars, and it's very little that he can put down on subscription papers for any good object. But a new family never moves into the village that he does not find them out, to give them a neighbourly welcome and offer any little service he can render. He is usually on the lookout to give strangers a seat in his pew at church. He is always ready to watch with a sick neighbour, and look after his affairs for him; and I've sometimes thought he and his wife keep house plants in winter just for the sake of being able to send little bouquets to invalids. He finds time for a pleasant word for every child he meets, and you'll always see them climbing into his one-horse waggon when he has no other load. He really seems to have a genius for helping folks in all sorts of common ways, and it does me good every day just to meet him on the streets." (*Baxendale's Anecdotes.*) **Entertained angels unawares.**—*Strangers may be angels*:—I. Strange PERSONS may often turn out to be "angels." 1. It may be so with the "stranger" who enters our household. 2. It may be so with the "stranger" in our neighbourhood. 3. It may be so with the "stranger" in our church. 4. It may be so with the "stranger" in our country. Treat all men with generousness and goodwill, and you may perhaps find angelic things within them. II. Strange THINGS may often turn out to be "angels." 1. A "strange" truth may turn out to be an "angel," solving difficulties, enfranchising the intellect, and making the horizon of the soul beam brightly with unearthly stars. 2. A "strange" trial may turn out to be an "angel." Adversity, disease, bereavement, may prove blessings in disguise. 3. A "strange" charity may turn out to be an "angel." "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (*Homilist.*) *Angel visits*:—There is no reason for thinking that under the Christian dispensation angelic beings ever assume a visible form, though we have nevertheless the comforting assurance that they are all "ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them that shall be the heirs of salvation." But the visit might be like that of an angel, inasmuch as the visitor might bring rich intelligence as to the glorious things of the invisible world. What is there to prevent God from enabling one of our fellow-men to discourse to us so exquisitely on the deep things of our faith and the beautiful and harmonious things of heaven, that the effect shall be literally the same as though He had commissioned a cherub or a seraph to take human form and speak in human speech? We will give you as nearly as we may the scene which was likely to occur in the early days of the Church, and which, with due allowance made for change in circumstances, might occur in our own. We suppose a Christian family gathered round their fireside in times when the profession of Christianity exposed to persecution. They are themselves almost dreading the coming of the inquisitor, and they are startled by that knock at their door, fancying that it may proceed from some minister of cruelty; but there is only an aged wanderer who solicits admission, and the storm pleads for him as eloquently as his grey hairs. Shall he be refused? "It is not unlikely that he is some poor victim whom the dogs of persecution are hunting down. If we admit him, he may be tracked to this house, and then, without being able to shield him, we shall be ruined ourselves." But the master of that house is too staunch a character to be deterred from duty by the fear of consequences. Simply reminding his family of the precept—"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers," he opens his door, and bids the old man welcome in the name of the Lord; and the stranger, whilst partaking the proffered hospitality, enters into conversation, and, finding that they are Christians who have so kindly received him, seeks to recompense the kindness by discoursing on Christianity, and he pours forth all the treasures of his experience, and enlarges on the mysteries of redemption. He is one who has thought deeply and felt deeply; and as he dilates on the love of God in sending His own dear Son, and explains the blessed and marvellous manner in which the provisions of the gospel meet the wants of fallen creatures, or speaks thrillingly of "the exceeding and eternal weight of glory," for which the trials of life are only a preparation, every eye is fast rivetted upon him, and his voice falls on every ear as some unearthly sound; but most sweet and most musical in its unearthliness. Is there any reason whatsoever why this might not occur, why it might not happen in any age of the Church, though more likely when persecution had caused the excellent of the earth, like the Master

whom they served, to have not where to lay the head? And when the old man, wearied by his own high stretchings into mysteries and glories, had sunk to repose, would not the amazed and delighted family say, one to another, as the disciples who had journeyed to Emmaus, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" Would not their feeling be as though they had received into their circle the inhabitant of a better world, known, not indeed by the wing of light and the eye of fire; but by wisdom drawn from gazing upon God; and would they not exclaim, "Oh! well hath the apostle followed up his precept, 'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers,' by saying, 'for thereby some have entertained angels unawares'"? (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Angels as strangers*:—We often mistake the dispensations of God's providence. They come to us as angels veiled in sadness, or in strange forms; we think they are enemies, and wrestle with them; in the darkness, the struggle goes on,—we want our way, it is not till they touch us and teach us their Divine character; it is not till the day begins to break, that we find we are in the presence of God's messengers. We learn that we have wrestled with an angel, and then we seek to detain him, and earnestly ask for a blessing. Sorrow comes unbidden, unwelcomed; it takes its place at our fireside, sits at our table; its presence casts a shadow on us; but when we allow it to commune with us, when it touches us, our life seems changed, our thoughts and affections are transfigured. Death comes over our threshold, into our home; and life is never more the same. It reads us some lesson out of the black-letter book of God's providence. The lesson we bear in tears, but we never more forget it. "We confess that we are strangers and sojourners here." We begin to think of leaving this tent. "We declare plainly that we seek a better country." Death, so dreaded by us, acts in his ministrations only as an angel, who takes our loved ones into the everlasting home of the heavens. (*H. J. Bevis.*) *Hospitality rewarded*:—Jupiter and Mercury once visited a village, and, disguised in human form, sought entertainment, but in vain, till they came to the thatched cottage of the aged Baucis and Philemon. Before the strangers was spread the best the place afforded, with careful attention. The unwasted wine revealed to them the gods to whom they would have sacrificed. "This inhospitable village shall pay the penalty of its impiety. You shall be free. Come with us to the top of yonder hill," said the gods. They obeyed, and beheld the country around sink into a lake, while their own house grew into a magnificent temple, in which they served as priests until transformed together. (*New Cyclopædia of Illustrations.*) *Entertaining a prince unawares*:—During the Prince of Wales's stay at Torquay he has walked or driven to many of the numerous points of beauty or interest with which the coast abounds. It is related that on Friday the Prince landed at Babbicombe Bay, and after exploring its charms, in company with Captain Stephenson and Lord Hastings, the trio betook themselves to an adjacent tea garden, and ordered refreshment. The establishment, however, is chiefly frequented by visitors who bring their own provisions, and was unprovided with any but very homely fare. A lady who was taking tea with friends in an adjoining arbour, overheard the colloquy to which the request gave rise, and courteously placed at the disposal of the gentlemen a portion of her provisions, including, of course, Devonshire cream, tea and cakes. The offer was accepted, and, the lady's creature comforts having been freely partaken of, the recipients, the Prince especially, were warm in their acknowledgments of this display of courtesy to strangers. It was not until after they had departed that the lady became aware that she had entertained a prince unawares. (*Western Times.*)

Ver. 3. **Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them**—*Sympathy*:—Reverence is the spirit of the Christian towards that which is above him, and sympathy is his spirit towards that which is about him. That which is above is summed up in God; that which is about us is summed up in man. We speak of sympathy as a feeling for others, where it is in the fullest sense of the phrase a feeling with others. Sympathy is not from without, not from above, as of one who looks afar off upon some object which moves his pity, but it is from within, and reaches to our whole being. He who really sympathises has in the true language of the heart entered into the feelings of another and made them his own. That which moves him belongs not to a stranger but to himself; he has mastered so far the secret of a true communion of life. And then, for the most part, and very naturally, we understand by sympathy a fellowship in suffering. We are most conscious of our need in moments of sorrow, and in such moments we can most recognise how much

we owe to those who help us. But sympathy does not find scope in suffering only or even chiefly. It is co-extensive with human emotion and human experience. No doubt the service of sympathy costs us something. We must bear and feel the burden which we remove. The wonders of Christ's infinite compassion were indeed triumphs of human love rather than of Divine authority, and as we study them we dimly discern with something of trembling awe what is meant by "the power of His resurrection" and "the fellowship of His sufferings"; how it is through pain and seeming loss and death that we gain, in Him, for others and for ourselves, the blessings of life. The service of sympathy does cost us something, but it brings abundant compensation. St. Paul has told us the secret of his unmatched influence: "I became all things to all men." His influence flowed, that is, from his sympathy, and the transformation wrought in him by sympathy was a reality and not a superficial imitation. It is always so. Just as the great poet lives in the characters which he creates, so the great teacher makes himself the true fellow of his scholars; he regards things with their eyes, he reflects on them with their thoughts; he offers his lessons to them in the form which answers to their condition; he wins to them a larger knowledge because he enables them to see how the new grows from the old, guards their peculiar treasures, and makes these also tributary to the interpretation of his messages. As it is with the great teacher, so it is with the great leader. He who sways men must be one with them, however far removed by his personal gifts. For sympathy is not the communion of like with like, but the power of uniting things different in the embrace of a greater life. Sympathy, therefore, preserves these small differences answering to our individuality, on which the beauty of the whole order of things depends. It does not only give; it receives. He who enters into the feelings of others becomes partaker of their energy. It does not only offer; it claims. He who is seen to sacrifice himself freely for the service of another, can justly demand in return a service corresponding to his own. And both aspects of its working must be observed carefully. Till we have called out the response of action we have not attained the object of our efforts; till we have sunk ourselves in those we wish to help, we have not measured the full extent of our power, for all experience tends to show that self-surrender is the gauge of power. It cannot be otherwise, for self-surrender is the gauge of faith. It is the soul's answer to the voice which calls us to become fellow-workers with God. That voice too often is unheard, and when we consider our worst failures and disappointments, we must confess that words which are constantly on our lips express most truly how they have been brought to pass. Even in our highest purposes "we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts," we have pursued our ends in our own manner, we have fashioned them according to our own fancies, we have placed our own things and not the things of others in the forefront, we have not used the way of sympathy. So we have gained no entrance to the hearts of those whom we sought, and we have been cast down by the conviction of our weakness. Perhaps during that conviction we have recognised what we needed and found encouragement. For sympathy, which is the source of influence, is also the source of strength. In isolation there can be no experience of the highest human forces. It is through contact with our fellows that we feel the majesty of truth and righteousness. As we move among men, we see that our own best thoughts are shared by others, and we are invigorated by their silent support. Thus common testimony tells us that God is on our side. He has not left us desolate. He Himself works among us by His gifts, and they who have them are said to be ministers of His loving wisdom, trusting not to their own power but to His, confident not in their own foresight but in His sovereign will. So it is that as soon as we see this social destination of our several endowments, sympathy enriches us with the manifold resources of all through whom God is working. We draw strength from the very burdens which we have to bear. (*Bp. Westcott.*) *Christian sympathy*:—There are, as we think, two very different, but both highly important principles here asserted: the principle of fellowship, and the principle of forethought. That of fellowship, for we are to feel as though bound with them in bonds: that of forethought, for we are to remember that we ourselves are also in the body, and therefore exposed to the adversities which claim our sympathy in others. Or to expound our text by the motive rather than the principle it puts forth, there are here two reasons or inducements suggested by the apostle, why Christians should be earnest in works of Christian love; the one is derived from their intimate connection with the suffering, the other from their own liability to similar visitations. I. St. Paul may here be said to go even beyond what he has laid down in Rom. xii. 15. He re-

quires something more than sympathy as commonly understood. One man is said to sympathise with another, who is pained when and because that other is pained: and sympathy, as thus understood, is little more than pity or commiseration. But to suffer with another, which is actually to sympathise, goes much beyond the weeping with another; it is making the griefs of that other mine own, so that the wound is in my heart as well as in his. The members of one family actually sympathise and suffer themselves, when death has come in and snatched away one from their circle; the loss is a common loss, affecting all equally, and the sorrow of each is literally the sorrow of every other. According to the Scriptural idea Christians constitute but one body, the mystical body of Christ; and if this be the application of the acknowledged principle, that "if one member suffer all the members suffer with it," it follows that every Christian, in the measure which he has attained towards perfection, would seem to bear in his own person the very sufferings, and to receive in his own person the very blessings allotted to those who have like precious faith with himself. And when we think how deficient we are even in such sympathy as is generally understood by the world, and which would result from universal brotherhood, we may well be staggered at finding, that the Christian standard is yet vastly higher, and that universal brotherhood would be but a stage towards universal membership. But what an image does it give us of the condition of the world, to suppose all men actuated by the consciousness of being members one of another. Beyond nature, we confess it, but not beyond grace; and the Christian is not to be content, until in relieving the distressed he can feel that he acts on the great principle of membership. He must see to it, that he has part in the bearing, as well as in the relieving the calamity. His relieving is to be the result of his bearing; he is to relieve, that is, as one who is relieving *himself*, with all that activity and all that perseverance which our own personal interests are sure to elicit. II. St. Paul descends to a lower and yet not wholly different ground: he descends from Christian membership, and takes his position on that of our own exposure to misfortunes. "As being yourselves also in the body!" What an amount of motive is gathered into these simple words! It has been one of the natural, and, we might almost say, necessary consequences on the combination of men into societies, presenting almost every possible variety of condition and circumstances, that there has been a comparative losing sight of the equal liability of all, to the several ills to which flesh is heir. It is very difficult not to fancy that the man of large ancestral revenues has an exemption from the contingencies and changes of want, which beset the poor peasant that tills one of its fields. It might sound to him as a threat, whether of ignorance or insult, that it should thus be implied, that notwithstanding all his state, and all his abundance, he might come to want the morsel which we ask him to bestow. And, of course, it does need a very thorough and practical recognition of the truth, that "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," to be able to put aside all the appearances of security and independence, which hoarded wealth furnishes, and to view in every man, whatsoever his circumstances, a pensioner on the bounty of that omnipotent Parent, who "openeth His hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing." I would rather have the security against want, which the meanest of our villagers enjoys, whose daily bread is the subject of daily prayer and daily toil, than that of the foremost of our capitalists, who in any way gives indulgence to the sentiment of the rich man in the parable; "Soul, thou hast goods laid up for many years." The one, indeed, has a security—the security of a prayerful dependence on God; whereas the other has no security whatever, but lies exposed to the peril of being punished for presumption. And it matters not to us, what may be the worldly circumstances of any, nor how far they may seem to remove him from liability to poverty. If he be a man, he may come to be a starving man; and that, too, without any of those explicable occurrences and reverses, which seem to mark God's special interference to bring round an unlooked-for catastrophe. There ought, therefore, to be to him as much cogency as to the man whose property seems jeopardised, in the motive of being himself in the body, when it is for the relief of the actually destitute that we appeal to his bounty. And this is, perhaps, the only case in which there is even the appearance of exemption from liability to the misfortunes with which we see others oppressed. It cannot be said that any one form of sorrow is appropriated to this class of men, and warded off from that; all are accessible through the same channels, and all are capable of the same ills. And is there not in consequence the greatest cogency, whosoever be the party addressed and whatsoever the affliction which asks to be remembered, in the motive of being in the body? It is the cu-

listing of selfishness on the side of the afflicted, and calling on us to be merciful if we would have mercy ourselves. Inexpressibly bitter would it be if living to be oppressed and deserted ourselves and to ask in vain for succour and for sympathy, we should have to remember how in our own sunshine we had cared nothing for those over whom darkness had gathered, and to feel that we were but reaping the harvest of which our own want of charity had sown all the seeds. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*)

The fellowship of suffering :—We feel our own burdens distinctly enough and our own limitations and sorrows. Now if we felt those of other people a tenth part as distinctly, we could do almost anything with them and for them. To Christ other people were real: just as real as He. God was interested in men because to Him they were lovable. "God so loved the world"; that was where redemption began. And it was not a general, diffusive kind of thing, His love was not. It was not like some great sea of translucent fog which sometimes inundates our city of a warm morning, which only has a kind of general reference to everything and no particular reference to anything. His love was rather like a sunbeam, which drops down ninety million miles upon one specific grass-blade, into one particular bird's eye. People, indeed, are interesting as soon as we get near enough to them to feel that they are people, not things, and as soon as we get far enough into the secret of their life to discover its workings, its difficulties, its disappointments, its ambitions, its defeats, its penitences, its remorses. I believe we would love everybody we came near to if we realised what a hard time they are having. No two people would ever quarrel if they could be each other for a little while. "If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we should find in each man's life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility." Then, besides that, if we could feel the sorrow and suffering that is in a man's life, no matter how wicked or degraded he might be, his degradation would be no barrier to kindly regard for him. If we came near enough to a bad man's history to understand it, to see how unfortunate influences tell upon him, what susceptibilities to evil were in him, entirely independent of any choice of his own in the matter, we should find that circumstances were what made a large part of the mischief, and that the poor fellow has had just as hard and sad a time in keeping from being worse than he is, as we have had in keeping from being worse than we are. We are sometimes surprised that Christ, who as we are told "knew what was in man," nevertheless was able to love man, to love all men. But that was exactly the reason why He was able. Tragedy is all about us—a good deal more tragedy than comedy; and any life becomes interesting as soon as, with a key wrought out of love, you unlock it and begin so to be yourself closeted on the inside of it as to feel yourself somehow involved in it, and all its difficulties to be your difficulties, and all its weaknesses and sins even to be so taken upon yourself that you commence to feel the burden of them as your burden. That is what Christ did. That is the meaning of His life; that is the distinctive quality in His redemptive work. He carried people. By becoming like them He helped them to become like Him. And as Christ can do this for each of us, because in His loving way He so perfectly understands all the ins and outs of each of us, so we, in order to make our own lives redemptive in another's behalf, have to make a distinct and affectionate problem of his life, get on to the interior side of it, discover the impulses that play in it, the history that lies back of it, the circumstances that encompass and dominate it. These things quicken in interest as we go on. If you have commenced to read a book, and some one says to you, "Do you like it?" you will very probably answer, "I can hardly say, for I have not yet got fairly into it." So the characters and lives of people only then begin to be interesting, when we have fairly got into them. They are then sure to be of interest, even when we treat them merely as problems to be mentally solved; how much more when we bring to them a heart fraught with personal regard and Christian sympathy. It is in this way, then, that people must be saved and lifted. I do not believe we are going to solve the problem of city and country evangelisation till we get over lumping people. When, at this season of the year, you look up into the sky of an evening, you discern a nebulous belt of light, an indiscriminate mass of stars, lying up and down the sky like a vast white cosmic rainbow. Now, telescopes, as they are directed to that great nebulæ, are showing themselves competent to crumble up that mass of stellar uncertainty into myriads of little diamond-like stellar individualities, and as, year by year, the penetrating powers of telescopes are increased, this crumbling, individualising process goes steadily on, so that now we do not any longer think of the Milky Way as a mass of star stuff, but as a host of brilliant worlds, each as distinct from the rest, and as complete in itself as our own

great sun, which is indeed thought to be one single flaming member of that superb host. Now, what lenses of enhanced power do for the human eye in the way of splitting up a world of filmy splendour into keen-edged points of individual light and lustre, the same thing love does for human discernment when exercised upon the mass of humanity by which, in a great city, we are environed. It crumbles the mass up into glittering individualities, each a little distinct personal world all in himself. When the sun melts the snow in the spring it tackles each little snow crystal by itself. Each sunbeam picks out its own crystal and turns it into a tear, and so is able to do a great deal in its little way and saves itself the embarrassment and weariness of thinking how many flakes there are that it can never reach; and the snow goes off. How much better that is than it would be for the sunbeams to spend all their time holding conventions in order to devise means for melting the masses of snow. The next thing, therefore, for you and me to do, is to go into the snow-bank, if we have not already done so, and pick out our particular snow crystal, and commence melting it. (*C. H. Parkhurst, D.D.*) *Sympathy not scared by suffering*:—Sympathy for each other in suffering is not confined to mankind. "There is one trait," says Mr. Jesse, "in the character of rooks, which is, I believe, peculiar to that sort of bird, and which does them no little credit. It is the distress which they exhibit when one of them has been killed or wounded by a gun while they have been feeding in a field or flying over it. Instead of being scared away by the report of the gun, leaving their wounded or dead companion to his fate, they show the greatest anxiety or sympathy for him, uttering cries of distress, and plainly proving that they wish to render him assistance, by hovering over him, or sometimes making a dart from the air close up to him, apparently to try and find out the reason why he did not follow them—

> 'While circling round and round,
> They call their lifeless comrade from the ground.'

If he is wounded, and can flutter along the ground, the rooks appear to animate him to make fresh exertions by incessant cries, flying a little distance before him, and calling to him to follow them." (*Scientific Illustrations and Symbols.*) *Remembering the needs of others*:—In one of Dickens's letters referring to a notice of Tom Hood's book which he had written for the *Examiner*, he says: "Rather poor, but I have not said so, because Hood is poor too, and ill besides." (*H. O. Mackey.*) *Value of sympathy*:—Every man rejoices twice when he has a partner of his joy; a friend shares my sorrow and makes it but a moiety; but he swells my joy and makes it double. For so two channels divide the river and lessen it into rivulets, and make it fordable and apt to be drunk up by the first revels of the Syrian Star; but two torches do not divide but increase the flame; and though my tears are the sooner dried up, when they run on my friend's cheeks in the furrows of compassion, yet when my flame hath killed his lamp, we unite the glories and make them radiant, like the golden candlesticks that burn before the throne of God, because they shine by numbers, by unions, and confederations of light and joy. (*Bp. Taylor.*) *Nature of sympathy*:—It is by sympathy we enter into the concerns of others, that we are moved as they are moved, and are never suffered to be indifferent spectators of almost anything which men can do or suffer. For sympathy may be considered as a sort of substitution, by which we are put into the place of another man, and affected in many respects as he is affected. (*E. Burke.*) *Practical sympathy*:—We must not make too much of sympathy, as mere feeling. . . . We praise 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." (*F. W. Robertson.*) *Helpful sympathy self-remunerative*:—It is said of the saintly George Herbert, the quaint old English church poet, that once in a walk to Salisbury, to join a musical party, he saw a poor man with a poorer horse that was fallen under his load. They were both in distress and needed present help, which Mr. Herbert perceiving, put off his canonical coat, and helped the poor man to unload, and afterwards load his horse. The poor man blessed him for it and he blessed the poor man, and was

so like the Good Samaritan, that he gave him money to refresh both himself and his horse. Thus he left the poor man; and at his coming to his musical friends at Salisbury, they began to wonder that Mr. Herbert, who used to be trim and clean, so soiled and discomposed. But he told them the occasion; and when one of the company told him "he had disparaged himself by so dirty an employment," his answer was, "that the thought of what he had done would prove music to him at midnight, and that the omission of it would have upbraided and made discord in his conscience whensoever he should pass by that place; for if I be bound to pray for all that be in distress, I am sure that I am bound, so far as it is in my power, to practise what I pray for; and let me tell you, I would not willingly pass one day of my life without comforting a sad soul, or showing mercy, and bless God for this occasion." Oh, how many might have anxious thoughts which often infest their midnight hours changed into sweet music, if they would only be more frequently seen with full hands and friendly words in the abodes of poverty and suffering! These are the places in which to attune one's conscience to midnight harmonies.

Ver. 4. **Marriage is honourable.**—*Marriage:*—It is not to be denied that marriage hath its proper inconveniences. There are peculiar cares and hindrances belonging to it. For the new relations that are acquired by it, as those of husband and wife, father and mother, master and mistress, are attended with peculiar crosses and troubles. But then it is to be considered that there is no condition of life whatsoever without inconveniences, and particularly celibacy is a great trouble of itself; it is comfortless and unarmed, exposed to hazards, and beset with dangerous temptations. But the state of wedlock, if it be wisely entered into, hath a natural tendency to a happy way of living, as it is conducing to order and government, to industry and diligence, to frugality, to stability, and to a care for futurity. It is best for the good of mankind, for the uses of human life, for the interest of the universe, and the welfare of Christian societies. But there have been always some in the world that have remonstrated against this state of life, and these are of two sorts—the religious and the witty; that is, those who would be thought to be such. Saturnius, a professed gnostic, held that marriage was of the devil, as Irenæus relates, and most of that sect cried it down as a cursed and diabolical thing. The Marcionites, the Montanists, and the Manicheans declared it to be unlawful. The Hierachites held that marriage excluded from heaven, and they admitted none but single persons into their communion. But here by the way we are to note, that the gnostics and some others, who were very fierce against marrying, practised promiscuous lust. It is an honour then to this state that it is doomed by such. Some make use of the Holy Scripture to patronise this cause; and the chief place which they allege is 1 Cor. vii. 1. We are to know, then, that when the apostle lived the times were perilous, and persecution was the allotment of the faithful Christians; and therefore that was an unfit season for embracing a conjugal life. We see then that the authority of the apostle is made use of to no purpose, because it is wholly misunderstood. Of which we cannot but be convinced, when we find in this very chapter a positive license given to the Christians to change their condition, if they saw occasion for it, and were willing to venture on the dangers which attended matrimony. "But if thou marry," saith he, "thou hast not sinned" (ver. 28). There is no absolute unlawfulness in doing so. And he condemned those heretics that taught otherwise, forbidding to marry (1 Tim. iv. 3). But the witty people are another sort of men, that affect to rally upon marriage; and that they may have a full shock at it, they except against the other sex itself. The Jewish Rabbins think themselves great wits in jeering the sex for their restless tongues and false tears, as we frequently find in their writings. Nay, they are so virulent as to publish to the world, that the honestest woman on earth is a witch, and given to enchantment and sorcery. The Arabians vote all married persons to be fools in that proverb of theirs, "If all men were wise" (that is, if they would abstain from marriage) "the world would soon be at an end." Even some men of gravity cannot abstain from inveighing against the sex, as such. Cato often said that "if the world was without women, the gods would come down and converse with men; but whilst those are here, these will never visit us." Yea, Chrysostom, the celebrated father of the Greek Church, the famous pulpit orator, made a sermon in the dispraise of all women, and tells us that matrimony in its own nature is a sin, only by Divine permission it is excusable. In brief, he is reckoned the wittiest man that is most dexterous in defaming of women, though at the same time he defames himself. Whatever prejudiced, fanciful men may suggest, we are sure the

apostle is in the right, and utters an incontestible truth, "Marriage is honourable in all." The married state is not only lawful, but noble, appointed by God, and of Divine institution. It was first ordained in Paradise, in the state of innocency (Gen. ii. 18). This gives repute and authority to wedlock, and renders it commendable. And it hath been always esteemed as such by those who have a reverence for God's ordinance. It is observable that our Saviour Himself honoured marriage with His first miracle, gracing the solemnity by turning water into wine. Here I may take notice of the high esteem some nations have had of a married life, and how concerned they were that men should not always be single. Among the Lacedemonians there were actions brought against men for not marrying, and for marrying late; and those that lived unmarried were infamous among that people by the law. There were penalties among the Romans inflicted on those that refused to marry after such a term of years, as Tacitus and the Code testify. Every one is bound to embrace matrimony at twenty-five years of age by the Alcoran. The Tartars think this so good and excellent a thing, that they believe their god Matagai hath a wife and children. And if their sons and daughters die before they are at age, they celebrate a marriage between parties thus deceased, that they may be man and wife in the other world. Though this is very gross indeed, and is a sign they are unacquainted with what our Saviour said, "In heaven they neither marry, nor are given in marriage"; yet it shows what respect and esteem these people have for the state of wedlock, and how congruous it is to the natural reason and sentiments of mankind. 1. Marriage must be with great deliberation. There is no undertaking of man's life that doth more require freedom of thought and choice than this doth. Plato would have no man marry before thirty, nor Aristotle before thirty-five years of age, designing thereby not peremptorily to confine persons to that computation, but to warn them against a precipitant changing of their state, and to put them in mind of acting very cautiously in this affair. Nor should they only weigh and consider the matter themselves, but apply to their friends, but especially their parents, for their advice and counsel. 2. Marry not merely for money or estate. This is the prevailing fault of men, as well as women, they court the estate rather than the person who hath it; they may be said to wed the lands and money, not the possessor. A wife is put to sale, and marriage is a mere bargain. 3. Let not the man marry the woman merely for beauty, or finery, for feature, for dress, which latter is the body's artificial beauty. 4. Marry not a woman merely on the account of her wit, learning, or parts. Arts and sciences are not the proper talent of that sex. 5. Though you are not to marry merely for money, beauty, or wit, yet never marry one that is poor, or deformed, or a fool. A single life with indigency may be endured, but that and wedlock together are a double misery. If you be not able with your own estate and way of living to maintain a wife, never take one that hath none. Again, choose not one whose deformity is very conspicuous and remarkable, unless some extraordinary qualities and perfections compound for it, lest you should be tempted afterwards to change the object of your sight, and look upon others as more acceptable. Wherefore make choice of one who hath competent comeliness, or who by modesty mends her countenance, and gives it a beauty by blushes. Mate such a one as we know is mistress of those accomplishments and graces which are not liable to be impaired by any accidents whatsoever, that so we may ever find that in her which deserves our love. Lastly, methinks that there should be no need of advising a man or woman not to marry one that is noted for folly and weakness, for this too plainly shows that they themselves are liable to the same imputation. 6. Above all things make choice of a virtuous person, one that fears God, one whose mind is endued with a deep sense of religion, and whose conversation is regular and upright. All the aforesaid qualifications must give place to this, and without this they are mean and inconsiderable, and of no real value. 7. Next to religion good nature is to be prized most. This contains in it a peaceable and quiet temper, a sweet disposition, an obliging and winning carriage, free from all extravagant passion, wrath, and bitterness. Else a man, in a worse sense than the Duke of Venice, marries the Adriatic, is espoused to waves and storms. 8. Be careful to marry one suitable to you; suitable in age, birth, and humour. Such a one will be truly a meet-help. 9. Be well satisfied of one another's love, chastity, and faithfulness, and increase and nourish them by all means. A wife, as Sir Thomas Overbury rightly saith, is an abbreviature of all the rest of the sex: to her husband she must be (as Eve was) all the world of womankind. 10. Let it never be known which of them is superior. Always divide and share your power. 11. Begin and proceed in the conjugal state

with prayer and great devotion, and all acts of religion and piety. (*J. Edwards, D.D.*) *Marriage honourable*:—I. DIVINE INSTITUTION IS SUFFICIENT TO RENDER ANY STATE OR CONDITION OF LIFE HONOURABLE. II. THE MORE USEFUL ANY STATE OF LIFE IS, THE MORE HONOURABLE IT IS. The honour of marriage arises much from its usefulness. III. THAT WHICH IS HONOURABLE BY DIVINE INSTITUTION, AND USEFUL IN ITS OWN NATURE, MAY BE ABUSED AND RENDERED VILE BY THE MISCARRIAGES OF MEN; as marriage may be. IV. IT IS A BOLD USURPATION OF AUTHORITY OVER THE CONSCIENCES OF MEN, AND A CONTEMPT OF THE AUTHORITY OF GOD, TO FORBID THAT STATE UNTO ANY, WHICH GOD HATH DECLARED HONOURABLE AMONG ALL. V. MEANS FOR PURITY AND CHASTITY, NOT ORDAINED, BLESSED, NOR SANCTIFIED UNTO THAT END, WILL PROVE FURTHERANCES OF IMPURITY AND UNCLEANNESS, OR OF WORSE EVILS. VI. The state of marriage being honourable in the sight of God Himself, IT IS THE DUTY OF THEM THAT ENTER THEREUNTO DULY TO CONSIDER HOW THEY MAY APPROVE THEIR CONSCIENCES UNTO GOD IN WHAT THEY DO. VII. IN THE STATE OF MARRIAGE THERE IS REQUIRED OF MEN A DUE CONSIDERATION OF THEIR CALL UNTO IT, OF THEIR ENDS IN IT, THAT THEY ARE THOSE OF GOD'S APPOINTMENT; prayer for, and expectation of His blessing on it; reverence of Him as the great witness of the marriage covenant; with wisdom to undergo the trials and temptations inseparable from this state of life. VIII. WHATEVER LIGHT THOUGHTS MEN MAY HAVE OF SIN, OF ANY SIN, THE JUDGMENT OF GOD CONCERNING ALL SIN, WHICH IS ACCORDING TO TRUTH, MUST STAND FOR EVER. To have slight thoughts of sin will prove no relief unto sinners. IX. FORNICATION AND ADULTERY ARE SINS IN THEIR OWN NATURE, DESERVING ETERNAL DAMNATION. If the due wages of all sin be death, much more is it so of so great abomination. X. ALL OCCASIONS OF, ALL TEMPTATIONS LEADING UNTO THESE SINS, ARE TO BE AVOIDED, AS WE TAKE CARE OF OUR SOULS. (*John Owen, D.D.*) **Whoremongers and adulterers.**—*Whoremongers and adulterers*:—I. WHO ARE COMPREHENDED UNDER THIS CHARACTER. Every person will at once perceive that all who live in common fornication, or who defile the marriage-bed, are evidently comprehended in this description. Let those then tremble, and know that this is their true state and name, who, though they disdain the open and more notorious commerce, yet secretly beguile the innocent and unwary, and become the agents of Satan in the ruin of others. Neither let those deceive themselves who, though they may not traverse the ranges of unbounded lust, yet keep up a cursed league with some particular person with whom they live in a state of fornication or adultery; let them not flatter themselves with an idea that this is a small matter, or shelter themselves under the fashion or the opinion of the times; God is not ruled by caprice or fashion, nor does His eternal standard of rectitude and good vary with human desires or modes of action. II. THE TESTIMONY OF THE WORD OF GOD AGAINST THIS SIN. 1. God has directly and expressly forbidden it in His Divine law. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" is the seventh of those commandments which stand in the sacred decalogue, as the injunctions of God to mankind. And that every avenue to this sin may be stopped, and His holy displeasure against it plainly testified, He has again enforced it by taking a part of it into the tenth commandment: "Thou shalt not so much as covet thy neighbour's wife." Nor is this law any matter of Jewish obligation only, but equally incumbent upon us; for our Lord Himself in Matt. v. enjoins this command in a very peculiar manner, and through the whole of the New Testament it is abundantly charged and enforced (1 Cor. vi. 9; 1 Thess. iv. 2–8; Eph. iv. 19, 20, v. 3–5). 2. We may learn God's hatred and displeasure against these sins from the odious and alarming description given of them in the Scriptures. The author of the Book of Proverbs is peculiarly diligent in endeavouring to lay before the thoughtless sinner the snares and delusive temptations which draw men into these evils, as well as the miserable and fatal consequences which attend them. The sixth and seventh chapters are almost entirely taken up with this subject, and part of the second and ninth is employed to the same purpose. Now we must remember that it is the intention of the sacred writers in setting these things thus before us to imprint the same odious image of them on our hearts, that we may know their nature, and flee their practice. Happy if it might but thus succeed! 3. I shall, in the next place, call your attention to the dreadful threatenings which the Word of God denounces against impure sinners. This sin is declared in the Scriptures as the cause of God's controversy with nations and with individuals (Hosea iv. 1–3). And Jeremiah (chap. v.) represents God as ready to give His people up, and to forbid His prophets to reprove them any more. His mercy and forgiveness seem to put, as it were, to a stand. And in 1 Cor. iii., when the apostle had represented this sin as a defilement of the body, which is the

Temple of God, he adds this awful word, "If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy, for the temple of God is (or ought to be) holy," and not made a nest of unclean lusts. St. John, in the Book of the Revelation, declares the doom of whoremongers to be with the rest of notorious sinners, in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. How impiously bold then are those sinners who dare all these terrors for the gratification of a base lust! To such as have been entangled with this sin, and have a real desire to be delivered from it (as well as to those who are anxious to secure their modesty and virtue), I would suggest a few considerations. (1) Seek for a spirit of true and hearty repentance for all the uncleanness of which you have been guilty before God; rest not in a mere wishing you had been more wise, or a dislike of your conduct from prudential maxims; but seek to God to give you true repentance by the grace of His Holy Spirit. (2) Be ever upon your guard against the first appearance of this evil. Keep at a distance from the tempter. If you would be kept from harm, keep out of harm's way. And this caution must be observed, not only respecting any particular person, but also the places and other occasions which may tempt you to sin. (3) Let sinners of this kind think much of death and hell. (4) Apply daily to the mercy-seat for the Divine aid. In the blood of Christ there is virtue to wash away the foulest guilt; in His grace there is sufficiency of power to subdue the most raging sins. (*J. King, B.A.*)

Ver. 5. **Let your conversation be without covetousness.**—*Covetousness*:—I. Covetousness in life SHOULD BE AVOIDED. 1. Unnatural. 2. Immoral. 3. Pernicious. II. Covetousness in life INTERFERES WITH CONTENTMENT. It is in the heart like the tide in the sea, allowing no rest. III. Covetousness in life is INCONSISTENT WITH CONFIDENCE IN GOD. (*Homilist.*) *The heinousness of covetousness*:—1. It is a deceiving sin. It blinds the understanding and corrupts the judgment in a main point of happiness; for the covetous man maketh "gold his hope, and fine gold his confidence" (Job xxxi. 24). 2. It is an insatiable sin (Eccles. v. 10). In this respect covetousness is like a dropsy which increaseth thirst by much drinking; and like a fire which by addition of fuel is the more fierce. The desire of a covetous man ariseth from abundance; and in that respect is unnatural; for nature is satisfied with sufficiency. Hunger and thirst cease when a man hath eaten and drunk that which is sufficient. 3. It is a galling sin. It works a continual vexation, and takes away all the comforts of this life (1 Tim. vi. 10). There is a threefold woe that accompanieth covetousness. (1) A woe of labour in getting wealth. (2) A woe of trouble in keeping it. (3) A woe of anguish in parting with it. Nothing makes death more unwelcome than a covetous desire of the things of this world. 4. It is an ensnaring sin (1 Tim. vi 9). Wealth as it is a bait to allure men to snap thereat, so it is a snare fast to hold them, and a hook to pull them down to perdition (Mark x. 23; Luke xiv. 18, 19). It keeps many from the Word, yea, it steals away the heart of those that come to the Word (Ezek. xxxiii. 31). 5. It is a mother sin (1 Tim. vi. 10). Fitly therefore doth the prophet thus style it evil covetousness (Hab. ii. 9). There is no evil which a covetous man will forbear. It is a root of impiety. It draws the heart from God: so as there can be no true love nor fear of God in a covetous heart. For gain he will profane the Sabbath. It makes inferiors purloin from their superiors, and superiors to neglect their inferiors. It is a cause of much rebellion, of many treasons, murders, thefts, deceit, lying, false witness, and what not! 6. It is a growing sin. The longer men live in the world the more covetous they use to be after the world. Old men are commonly the most covetous. Herein it differeth from other violent sins, which by age abate in their violence. 7. It is a devouring sin (Matt. xiii. 22). 8. It is a crying sin. The cries of them which are oppressed by covetous persons enter into the ears of the Lord. Hereupon an apostle bids them weep and howl (James v. 1). Covetousness causeth a curse from man and God. "He that withholdeth corn the people shall curse him." As for God's curse, "the wrath of God cometh upon men because of these things" (Eph. v. 5, 6). The apostle reckoneth covetous persons among those that shall not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. vi. 10). (*W. Gouge.*) *Remedies against covetousness*:—For preventing or redressing covetousness, these rules following are to be observed. 1. The judgment must rightly be informed in these two points. (1) In the nature of true happiness. (2) In the vanity and deceitfulness of riches. Many learned men want this point of understanding. It is the blindness of a man's mind that maketh him place a kind of happiness in the things of this world. If therefore we shall

be rightly instructed, that happiness consisteth in matters of another kind than this world affords; surely their immoderate desire of riches could not be but much modified. He that said, "There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us" (Psa. iv. 6), well discerned the difference betwixt earthly and heavenly blessings. So did he who said, "Riches profit not in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivereth from death" (Prov. xi. 4). 2. The will and heart of man must follow the judgment well informed, and raise themselves up to that sphere where true happiness resteth (Col. iii. 2). This will keep the heart from doting on things below. A beast which is feeding in fresh pasture will not stray into a barren heath; much less will an understanding man that finds the sweetness of heavenly blessings dote upon earthly trash (Phil. iii. 8). 3. A man's confidence must be placed on God and His providence. God's providence is an overflowing and everflowing fountain. The richest treasures of men may be exhausted; God's cannot be. Be therefore fully resolved of this, that "God will provide" (Gen. xxii. 8). This casting of our care on God's providence is much pressed in Scripture, as (Psa. lv. 22; 1 Pet. v. 7; Matt. vi. 25, 26), &c. By experience we see how children depend on their parents' providence; should not we much more on our heavenly Father? 4. Our appetite or desire of riches must be moderate (Prov. xxx. 8; Matt. vi. 11). Be content with that portion which God gives thee, and be persuaded it is best for thee (Phil. iv. 11). Contentedness and covetousness are directly opposite as light and darkness. 5. We must pray against covetousness (Psa. cix. 36). (*Ibid.*) *A vile weed and a fair flower:*—Is it not humiliating that the best of Christians should need to be cautioned against the worst of sins? May the consecrated become covetous? Is it possible that the regenerate may drivel into misers? Alas, what perils surround us, what tendencies are within us! It appears from our text that the children of God need also to be exhorted to cherish that most simple and natural of virtues—contentment. One would think that, at least in some instances, they would have this good thing as a matter of course. Among our villagers we have met with persons so well satisfied with their lowly lot that they would not cross the sea to gain an empire. Yet their contentment has sprung up wild as the daisies and buttercups of their own meadows, for they have not been acquainted with the blessed hope which makes trials light to bear. Do Christians, then, need to be admonished with precepts, and stimulated with promises, to make them yield the commonplace virtues of life? Do their fields refuse to grow "the herb called heartsease," which simple folk have gathered unsown from their little garden-plots?

I. I shall have to say a little about COVETOUSNESS. We are told that our conversation is to be "without covetousness." The term "conversation" includes, as you know, the whole of our lives. 1. Taking the first meaning of conversation, namely, talk, we ought not in our words to be on the side of those who grip for wealth or growl for wage, who grasp for power or grind the poor. We ought not in our talk to take part with the churl and the illiberal. 2. But our conversation has to do with our actions as well as our words. The sugar of words is sickening if it be not attended with the honey of deeds. Let our whole life in our dealings with our fellow-men be moved by liberal principles, and enriched with a generous spirit. 3. But this will not do unless the word "conversation" takes in our desires, our projects, our plans, our thoughts. We must be without covetousness within, for if that vice reigns in the soul it is sure to rule in the life. Our prayer should be that of David, "Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies, and not to covetousness." It is so very easy a thing to be covetous, that no class of society is free from it. A man may be very poor and covetous withal, and a man may be exceedingly rich and still may think that he is not half rich enough. It is not possible to satisfy the greedy. Covetousness has many ways of manifesting itself; and the text does not warn us against one of those ways, but against them all. (1) In some it is most seen in repining and complaining against their lot. This disease is born and bred in our very bones, and it needs the grace of God to get it out of us. God help us all to get rid of every particle of it, for it savours not of grace, but it is earthly, sensual, devilish. (2) In some others this covetous principle shows itself in envying others. Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous, but who is able to stand before envy? Now, if I envy a man, I am clearly guilty of covetousness, for I wish that something which he has were not his, but mine. And that may happen to you when you do not think about his property. You may be covetous of his gifts. This ill-natured vice shows itself generally in finding fault. Of course our brethren are not perfect; but why should we take a delight in pointing out their eccentricities, or

their shortcomings? (3) And covetousness may show itself by perpetually craving and desiring that which we have not. The old moralists used to say that the man who would be truly rich had better retrench his appetites than increase his fortune. Some men seem as if they never could fix their thoughts on what they have, but they are always thinking of what they could, would, or should have. They have swallowed the two daughters of Solomon's horseleech, and these continually cry, "Give, give." (4) In many—perhaps in the most numerous class—this anxiety for acquisition betrays itself in fretful fears about the future; and I must in all honesty grant that this form of the vice has sometimes the appearance of being the most excusable of the whole. Full many are not content with such things as they have because the dread of a distant season of trial is constantly harassing them. In vain for them their table is bountifully spread unless they have a store in hand against every contingency that may happen. Do you notice how precious is that promise which provides for all possible casualties that may befal you? "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." The censure, therefore, falls where this sacred pledge is unheeded; and he is accounted covetous who walks after the cravings of the flesh rather than after the counsel of the Spirit of God. If God would have thee live by the day, why dost thou want to gather enough for seven days at once? Covetous people, I have often observed, are classed in Scripture with the worst of criminals. How revolting to be included in such bad company! Here in this very chapter we read, "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. Let your conversation be without covetousness." Thus covetousness is classed with the very filthiest of vices of the flesh. In another place the apostle says "covetousness, which is idolatry"; and thus it is identified with a loathsome impurity of the spirit. Let the Christian dread it. Covetousness is a deadly poison, destructive of all virtue; it dries up the milk of human kindness in a man's breast, and makes him hard, indifferent towards the needs of his fellow creatures. How much infamy it fosters! The man whose heart is set on covetousness will do anything for gold; he will venture to stain his hands with blood itself if he may but gain it. II. As there is a vice to be shunned so there is a virtue to be sought. The theme is more pleasing now that we speak upon CONTENTMENT. "Be content with such things as ye have." It is, after all, no very great virtue if we should attain it: the more pity, therefore, if we should miss it. The old moralists constantly twit us with the fact that we may have the necessaries of life upon very easy terms, whereas we put ourselves to great pains for its luxuries. To be content with such things as we have should be specially easy to us, because we have so much to be thankful for, such constant communications from the great Benefactor, and so certain an assurance that He will withhold no good thing from those that walk uprightly. This world is ours, and worlds to come. Earth is our lodge, and heaven our home. I believe that contentment depends very much upon taking right views of things. 1. There is, to wit, a short view. To live by the day is the way to be cheerful. 2. Take also long views as well as short views. Take the view which says, "It will be all the same a hundred years hence." Take the view which says, "We shall soon laugh at this present little vexation." Take that distant view which says, "When I get to heaven this great trial will seem very small; when I look from the hill-tops of glory at my present dilemma, it will probably cause me many a smile, to think that I should have been so vexed and tormented by it." The secret of true contentment, and the way to get at it, is admirably expressed in these words, "Be content with such things as ye have, for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Some of the most easy-going people in the world are those who have a Government pension of so much a month. It is little, but it is sure. If all the banks break they will get it. They have no trouble as to how the markets fluctuate, or how different stocks rise and fall in value; or what dividends they might derive from investments. Now, then, that is exactly where the child of God stands; for ye know who hath said—"Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure." Between now and heaven I do not know who may starve; but I never shall, because the Lord is my Shepherd, and I shall not want. III. Our last point is the CONFIDENCE with which we may encourage ourselves, and bid defiance to a frowning world. "So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto me." This promise of the Lord is fitted to nerve us with courage, as well as to solace us with contentment. If we are oppressed, or if we have to encounter opposition, we may just go straight ahead in the strength of our text, and say, "What can man do unto me?" If God be our helper, why should we shrink or falter;

why should we droop or look dismayed; why should we hold our peace or speak with bated breath? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Covetousness—an insidious sin*:—I asked a question, some years ago, of a person whom I believed to be one of the most covetous individuals in my acquaintance, and I received from him a singular reply. I said, "How was it that St. Francis de Sales, who was an eminent confessor, found that persons confessed to him, in private, all sorts of horrible sins, such as adultery, drunkenness, and murder; but never had one person confessed the sin of covetousness?" I asked this friend whether he could tell me why it was, and he made me this answer, which certainly did take me rather aback. He said, "I suppose it is because the sin is so extremely rare." Blind soul! I told him that, on the other hand, I feared the sin was so very common that people did not know when they were covetous, and that the man who was most covetous of all was the last person to suspect himself of it. I feel persuaded that it is so. Covetousness breeds an insensibility in the heart, a mortification in the conscience, a blindness in the mind. It is as hard to convict a man of it as to make a deaf ear hear of its own deficiencies. You cannot make a horseleech see the impropriety of desiring to suck; to all your expostulations it renders the one answer, "Give, give." Covetousness goes about in disguise. In the "Holy War" we read that, when Diabolus sent traitors to lurk about the town of Mansoul, he sent among the rest a young fellow named Covetousuess; but when he entered into the town of Mansoul, he took the name of Mr. Prudent Thrifty, and he was engaged at once as a servant, I think it was in the house of Mr. Conscience, the Recorder. He seemed such a likely young man, this youth of the name of Prudent Thrifty. Now, mind you, when you are taking a servant, that you do not engage one of the name of Prudent Thrifty; for I have information that he comes of the family of the Greedies, and that his true name is "Covetousness," though it may be long before you find it out. His near relations are the Screws, the Skinflints, and the Graballs; but he will not own them, but always mentions his great-uncle, Squire Prudence, and his mother's brother, Professor Economy, of the University of Accumulation. You will have need to carry your eyes in your head if you mean to practise the precept, "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have." (*Ibid.*) *Covetousness destructive of religion*:—The Fabulist tells a story of the hedgehog that came to the coney-burrows in stormy weather, and desired harbour, promising that he would be a quiet guest; but when once he had gotten entertainment, he did set up his prickles, and did never leave till he had thrust the poor conies out of their burrows: so covetousness, though it hath many fair pleas to insinuate, and wind itself into the heart, yet as soon as you have let it in, this thorn will never cease pricking till it hath choked all good beginnings, and thrust all religion out of your hearts. (*T. Watson.*) *Covetousness a sign of death*:—As it is, therefore, a mark of life in an evergreen, when transplanted, to suffer its fading leaves to fall off easily when touched; and a sign of death when they retain their hold, so that to disengage them you must pull off part of the stem with them; so it is an evidence of spiritual life in the Christian, to sit loose to his possessions, instead of setting his heart upon them; while the covetous man parts with his money in charity as if he were parting with his life. **Be content with much things as ye have.**—*Christian contentment: its hindrance and its help*:—Contentment is the central word of the passage, and stands between words representing its greatest foe and greatest friend, like Joshua with the Angel of the Lord and Satan on either side. I. CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT—WHAT IS IT? To be contented is to be satisfied; it is the Amen of our spirit with regard to what is. 1. Christian contentment presupposes effort. We are not to be content with many things that we have, nor with anything short of our best. 2. Christian contentment implies a certain amount of failure. There is no room for its exercise where matters cannot be improved; you could not speak of the angels as contented. Joy is the word for heaven; contentment for earth. 3. Christian contentment delivers us from the power of circumstances. It is not a doing without things because we must—that is possible apart from Christian grace; it is repose, satisfaction, the heart saying "Thy will be done." To attain to that is to reign as a king over our circumstances. What a great thing is that religion which helps one to this! II. CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT HINDERED BY COVETOUSNESS. "Let your conversation [character, mode of life] be without covetousness." 1. Covetousness is a wrongly placed desire for what in itself may be good. The word in the text refers specially to money (R.V.), but it is not the object that makes covetousness. Covetousness may fasten on different things. What is it? (See Luke xii. 13–15,

&c.). It is a desire for anything (good or bad) not regulated by an appeal to God and God's requirements; our own spiritual needs. 2. Covetousness is regarded by God as one of the grossest sins. See the position in which it is mentioned as here coming after ver. 4, as though a similar sin; also (1 Cor. v. 10, 11; 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; Eph. v. 3–5; Col. iii. 5, 6; 2 Peter ii. 14; Mark vii. 21, 22). 3. Covetousness is the deadly enemy of contentment. They are opposites, and cannot coalesce. Admit covetousness to the heart and contentment takes its flight. Let contentment return, and she will scourge the traders from what she calls, and from what then she makes it, her Father's house. III. CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT CHERISHED BY THE ASSURANCE OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE. "Be content, for He hath said, I will never," &c. 1. This is a declaration of God's personal presence. Only God can say, "I will not leave thee"; not one of His gifts can say it. Loneliness destroys content. God satisfies. 2. This presence pervades the arrangements of our life. The words must mean that God will be in all our circumstances, and where He is He will not play a subsidiary part, and follow where chance or our waywardness may dictate. "I will not leave thee" must mean I will guide thee: choose thy lot, appoint thy changes, where thou comest thou shalt be brought by Me. Dread of the Unknown destroys content. God in all we have creates content by removing that dread. 3. This presence is the guarantee of protection and supply. No hurt can come to him with whom God is as his friend. Fear destroys content, but God with us enables us to say, "I will not fear." "He hath said." There are five negatives here to prevent our doubting it. (*C. New.*) *Contentment*:—Every one knows that contentment is another name for happiness. I. In the first place, let US INQUIRE INTO THE CHIEF CAUSES OF THE OPPOSITE TEMPER. We see, in too many instances, how men, misled by vain illusions, in the eagerness of their pursuit, miss the road even to earthly happiness. Now this unhappy propensity to become our own tormentors is to be traced, chiefly, to three bitter roots, growing within the mind itself—pride, selfishness, and envy; whence probably proceed a great part of the miseries of mankind. II. Consider HOW MUCH THE DIVINE BOUNTY EXCEEDS OUR DESERTS. Instead, therefore, of being the ingenious artificers of our own misery, let us make a better use of our reason. If Providence offer us the means of attaining a happier state, let us thankfully embrace them. But if the will of God appoint otherwise, before we admit a repining thought, let us first endeavour to recount, if we can, the numberless calls we have for gratitude. Though the present state is a state of trial and probation, it is by no means left destitute of comforts and gratifications. Let us resolve, for the time to come, to make a more careful improvement of the blessings of Providence. Gratefully acquiescing in our own condition, let us, instead of envying, be kind and helpful one to another; and sincerely rejoice with those who are placed above us. This is true benevolence. This is true wisdom. (*P. Houghton.*) *Christian contentment*:—I. EVERY MAN HAS HIS OWN INDIVIDUAL PORTION IN THIS LIFE, ASSIGNED HIM BY GOD. 1. The portion of every man consists of such things as he has: literally, present things. 2. That which each man has, is assigned him by God. Suppose he has a competency for all the comforts of life which he has acquired. In that case, who, but God, gave him capacity of mind, strength of body, business to do, and success in the doing it? II. WITH THAT PORTION WHICH GOD HAS ALLOTTED HIM, EVERY CHRISTIAN IS REQUIRED TO BE CONTENT. 1. Cautionary remarks. (1) This command does not forbid a proper regard to the future. (2) Industrious efforts to obtain more are not forbidden by this command. (3) The embracing a proper opportunity of improving one's condition is not forbidden by this command. 2. Contentment is—(1) The opposite of a complaining spirit. (2) The opposite of an envious temper. (3) Opposed to anxiety. (4) Opposed to covetousness. (5) Opposed to restless schemes and endeavours after more. 3. How it is to be cultivated. (1) By habitual self-abasement. (2) By thankfulness. Gratitude gives fitness to our raiment, relish to our food, and sweetness to all. (3) By the exercise of faith. He hath said, "He, who has all power; he who abideth faithful." He has said that He will never leave nor forsake thee, whosoever thou art, who puttest thy trust in Him; therefore, "be content with such things as ye have." (4) By "looking unto Jesus." Though the earth and the fulness thereof were His, He assumed the lowest state of poverty. (5) By habitual prayer and dependence on Christ. (*Essex Remembrancer.*) *A satisfied spirit*:—To be content is to be in good humour with our circumstances, not picking a quarrel with our obscurity, or our poverty, or our social position. There are four or five grand reasons why we should be content with such things as we have. 1. The first is the consideration

that the poorest of us have all that is indispensable in life. We make a great ado about our hardships, but how little we talk of our blessings. 2. Our happiness is not dependent on outward circumstances. I find Nero growling on a throne. I find Paul singing in a dungeon. I find King Ahab going to bed at noon through melancholy, while near by is Naboth contented in the possession of a vineyard. Haman, prime minister of Persia, frets himself almost to death because a poor Jew will not tip his hat; and Ahithophel, one of the great lawyers of Bible times, through fear of dying, hangs himself. The wealthiest man, forty years ago, in New York, when congratulated over his large estate, replied: "Ah! you don't know how much trouble I have in taking care of it." Byron declared in his last hours that he had never seen more than twelve happy days in all his life. The heart right toward God and man, we are happy. The heart wrong toward God and man, we are unhappy. 3. Another reason why we should come to this spirit inculcated in the text is the fact that all the differences of earthly condition are transitory. The houses you build, the land you culture, the places in which you barter, are soon to go into other hands. However hard you may have it now, if you are a Christian the scene will soon end. Pain, trial, persecution never knock at the door of the grave. 4. Another reason why we should culture this spirit of cheerfulness is the fact that God knows what is best for His creatures. Sometimes His children think that He is hard on them, and that He is not as liberal with them as He might be. But children do not know as much as a father. I can tell you why you are not largely affluent, and why you have not been grandly successful. It is because you cannot stand the temptation. If your path had been smooth, you would have depended upon your own surefootedness; but God roughened that path, so you have to take hold of His hand. 5. Another consideration leading us to the spirit of the text is the assurance that the Lord will provide somehow. Will He who holds the water in the hollow of His hand, allow His children to die of thirst? 6. Again, I remark that the religion of Jesus Christ is the grandest influence to make a man contented. Indemnity against all financial and spiritual harm! It calms the spirit, dwindles the earth into insignificance, and swallows up the soul with the thought of heaven. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *The Bible warning against discontent*:—I. We ought to mind it—FOR OUR OWN COMFORT. Now suppose that you have a long walk to take every day, but you have a thorn run into your foot, or a sharp stone in your shoe—could you have any comfort in taking that daily walk? Certainly not. But a feeling of discontent in our minds is just like that thorn in the foot or that stone in the shoe. It will take away from us all the comfort we might have, as we go on in the walk of our daily duties. A certain bishop had passed through many great trials; but he was never heard to complain in passing through them. He was always contented and cheerful. An intimate friend of his, who had often admired his calm, happy temper, and who felt as if he would like very much to imitate his example, asked him one day if he would tell him the secret of the quiet, contented spirit which he always had. "Yes," said the bishop, "I will gladly tell you my secret. It consists in nothing more than making a right use of my eyes." "Please tell me what you mean by this." "Certainly," said the bishop; "I mean just this. When I meet with any trial, I first of all look up to heaven, and remember that my chief business in life is to get there. Then I look down upon the earth, and think how small a space I shall need in it when I die, and come to be buried; and then I look round in the world, and think how many people there are who have more cause to be unhappy than I have. And in this way I learn the Bible lesson—"Be content with such things as ye have." II. FOR THE COMFORT OF OTHERS. We cannot all have really beautiful faces, but we can all have sweet, pleasant tempers; and a sweet temper gives a loveliness to the face, which is more pleasing than any amount of mere outward beauty. A contented spirit, or a sweet temper, is to a home what sunshine is to the trees of the field or to the flowers of the garden. John Wesley used to say, "I dare no more fret, than curse or swear." A friend of his, who was intimately connected with him, for a large portion of his life, in speaking of him after his death, said, "I never saw him fretful or discontented under any of his trials. And to be in the company of persons of this spirit always occasioned him great discomfort, and trouble. He said one day, 'To have persons around me murmuring and fretting at everything that happens is like tearing the flesh from my bones. I know that God sits upon His throne, ruling all things. With this thought in my mind, and the grace of God in my heart, I may well learn, "To be content with such things as I have."'" Good Mr. Wesley was minding the Bible

warning against discontent when he used these words, and was setting a good example for us all to follow. What a blessed thing it would be if all Christians would try to follow his example. III. To PLEASE GOD. No trials can ever come upon us in this world without God's knowledge and consent. He is so wise that He never makes a mistake about our trials, and He is so good that He never lets any trouble come upon us but what He knows will be for the best. And when we try to be patient and contented under our trials, because we know that God orders or permits them, this will be pleasing to Him. "I was going down town in a Fourth Avenue car one day," says a New York merchant, "when I heard somebody cry out, 'Holloa, Mr. Conductor, please stop your car a moment; I can't run very fast.' The car stopped, and presently there hobbled into it a little lame boy, about ten or twelve years old. I saw from the nice clothes he wore that he was the son of wealthy parents; but oh! his face told such a tale of silent suffering! and yet he was bright and cheerful. He put his little crutch behind him, and placing his poor withered limb in a more easy position, he began to look round at his fellow-passengers. A happy smile played over his pale face, and he seemed to take notice of everything. Presently I got a seat next to him, and as he looked around him I heard him humming in a low tone the words of the hymn, 'Hark, I hear an angel sing.' Then I had a little talk with him, and found that he knew and loved the Saviour, and it was this which made him so contented and cheerful. He told me he was born with this withered limb, and that the doctor said it never would be any better. 'Well, my dear boy,' I said, 'under these circumstances, how can you be so happy and cheerful?' His reply was, 'Jesus, my Saviour, has sent this trial for me to bear. Father tells me He would not have sent it unless He knew it would be best for me. And don't you think, sir, that I ought to be satisfied with the best?' This touched my heart, and brought tears to my eyes. I was just going to get out of the car then. So I shook hands with the little fellow, and thanked him for the lesson he had taught me, which I told him I should never forget as long as I lived." (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *The unreasonableness of discontent*:—I. Observe, in the first place, THAT DISCONTENT IS OFTEN OWING TO CAUSES WHICH THE DISCONTENTED MAY THEMSELVES REMOVE. How often do you see people grow sullen and dissatisfied in consequence of straits to which they have reduced themselves by sloth, by waste, or by expensive indulgences? How often do men become the victims of chagrin through the failure of expectations which they permitted themselves, without any good reason, to indulge. How often, in fine, does it happen that people, instead of endeavouring to make the best, make the worst of every inconvenience in their lot? II. Are there not in human life innumerable circumstances wholly independent of us, by which the lot of man is very much diversified, and WHAT SHALL WE SAY WHEN DISCONTENT ARISES, NOT FROM CAUSES WHICH WE CAN CONTROL, BUT FROM THE INEVITABLE CIRCUMSTANCES OF OUR LOT? Now, granting that, owing to circumstances which you cannot control, you do not possess all the temporal advantages which you might wish; yet what claim can you advance to more? Food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty, a shelter from cold and storms, the pleasing warmth and light of day, and calm silence of night, the alternate enjoyments of labour and rest, our social and domestic pleasures, these are blessings to be found in all the ordinary situations of human life; and these, so far as depend on mere outward things, are the chief blessings which Providence bestows. With respect to luxury and pomp, splendid raiment, magnificent habitations, honours, attendants, and all the dazzling train of circumstances which wait upon riches, they are but little connected with true happiness. III. The observations hitherto offered apply chiefly to the ordinary situations of human life. BUT ARE THERE NOT CASES OF WRETCHEDNESS THAT PLACE THE SUFFERER BELOW THE ORDINARY LOT? and in all situations does not affliction often await us amidst our most tranquil enjoyments? The duty required in such situations is resignation rather than contentment. It is religion, however, which in all situations possesses the most consoling influence, inspiring contentment amidst the ordinary inconveniences of the human lot, and resignation under the pressure of our heaviest afflictions, and we proceed to consider the arguments applicable to our present subject, that may be derived from this Divine source. One of the views is that suggested in the words immediately following our text. "The Lord is my helper, therefore I will not be afraid for what man can do unto me." The Scripture informs us farther how it is that these perfections are exercised towards us. Now we are informed that in consequence of that new dispensation, which God hath been carrying on ever since the fall of our first parents, this

world is only a state of temporary preparation for the next. To give a proper scope for the exercise of our talents, to afford us an opportunity of cultivating good dispositions by placing us in various relations to one another, to form us to habits of obedience and resignation, God hath in His infinite wisdom ordained a very great diversity of ranks and circumstances among men. But all this is only a temporary state of things, and when it has accomplished its purposes is abolished by death with respect to each individual, and will be abolished with respect to all mankind when the world is dissolved. (*Thos. S. Hardie, D.D.*) *Discontent*:—Discontent is doubtless, on the whole, a useful element in our nature, for it prompts to better things; and it is only when it goes beyond the bounds of moderation that it is seriously objectionable. The great error is that people do not pursue their course of advancement with calmness; they forget to enjoy the advantages which they now possess; and while they look at the future they neglect the present, forgetting that the present is the only real time. This error leads them into two follies; they believe that at some future period they will be happier than they are now, because they will then have at their command means which are at present denied; and secondly, they fancy that people who follow a different mode of life are more favourably circumstanced than themselves. They seem to want a change. I have heard men in business say, "Ah, if I could devote my life to study, instead of grubbing here to get money, I should then be all right." And, on the other hand, students are heard to say, "After all, it is the man of business who really enjoys reading, when in his hours of relaxation he goes to his books as a relief. But it is odious to make your study a workshop." Both parties are labouring under a kindred delusion. And thus people go on; their energies are devoted to the attainment of some object, and "if they can reach that they will find repose." The end is gained, but soon the object fails to satisfy; they miss the excitement which the chase afforded, and they must propose some new goal or be wretched. The men who place their hopes exclusively in the future confess, by the very act, that they are incapable of enjoying the present (and by enjoyment much more is meant than the mere taking of pleasure); but not wishing to make this humiliating admission, they flatter themselves that something else than what they possess is essential to peace and comfort. This is nothing less than an excuse for want of contentment; because, when the object of search is attained, they are as far from what they really need as ever. He who does not begin by placing contentment as the basis of external goods, heaps up in vain, and might as well try to fill a sieve with water as to construct a building of happiness upon a shadowy foundation. Besides, a constant restlessness is the greatest possible hindrance to sound education of the mind. The feverish gaze of the fortune-seeker cannot look aright upon the beautiful creation which is around him, if it ever looks upon it at all. There are many men surrounded by the comforts of life who, if you told them to divert their eyes awhile from future prospects, to cease envying their associates, to admire the wonders of nature and the beautiful world we live in, to be rejoiced at the remembrance of their daily blessings, and to be fully satisfied with their numerous advantages, would put you down for a madman or a fool. It is quite as easy to cultivate such a state of mind as to be constantly pining after what you have not got, or distressing yourself because you are not so well off as other people; and while every man of active mind must desire to go through his daily duties with energy and skill, and to fulfil his vocation with diligence, yet when he has done all this calm contentment is one great means to make him happy and keep him so. (*Scottish Pulpit.*) *The discontented character*:—There are people who are constitutionally discontented. Nothing gives them satisfaction. They are like the hermit-crabs, and may well be designated "crabbed." We see that the animal and the shell are mostly well suited to each other; but it is a remarkable fact that, however well the shell and the crab may be suited to each other, the crab always thinks that a shell belonging to another crab would make a better house. Consequently they will wage direful battles over a few empty shells, although neither of the shells would make so commodious a habitation as that which was already occupied. (*Scientific Illustrations and Symbols.*) *Contentment in vicissitudes*:—The other day I watched a little bird who had alighted on a branch almost too frail to bear his weight. The branch was swaying to and fro, but the little songster did not cease his song. He knew he had wings! Christian, learn the lesson that bird would teach thee, and, amid life's vicissitudes, sing on, for thou art immortal. (*The National Baptist.*) *Contented without contentment*:—What a beautiful example for all of us is the resolution of the old lady who, from a crabbed and anxious body, became quite the opposite!

When asked what had induced the change, she replied, "To tell you the truth, I have been all my life striving for a contented mind, and finally concluded to sit down contented without it." (*New Cyclopædia of Illustrations.*) *Contentment under loss* :—A friend of mine sat down to breakfast one morning, and an ugly-looking letter was handed him, it having just come by post. He opened it and found it was from a broker who transacted business for him. It ran something like this: "Dear sir, I am sorry to inform you that you have lost £50,000." Now, it is no joke to lose a sum of money like that. To this friend of mine it meant the loss of every penny he had. He had not been gambling, but speculating, as he thought, carefully and wisely. He quietly looked around the breakfast table, then without saying a word he rose and went to his room. He did not go and buy a pistol and blow his brains out. He simply fell on his knees before God, and said, "Dear Heavenly Father, help me! Thou hast given me plenty, and I have tried to use all to Thy glory; now Thou hast taken everything away. Now, Lord, Thou wilt have to feed me straight from heaven. I thank Thee for making me poor, that I may the more fully know Thee as my Father." He came downstairs again and finished his breakfast. His losses had not even power to spoil his appetite. He has ever since been as poor as a church mouse—and that is poor enough—but he has been rejoicing always, because he has the "joy of the Lord." I can testify to the truth of this as I know him well, and he was one who came to see me off when I left England. (*G. C. Grubb, M.A.*) *Never satisfied* :—My dear hearers, there is not a single soul of you all that are satisfied in your stations: is not the language of your hearts when apprentices, We think we shall do very well when journeymen; when journeymen, that we should do very well when masters; when single, that we shall do well when married; and to be sure you think you shall do well when you keep a carriage. I have heard of one who began low: he first wanted a house; then, says he, "I want two, then four, then six"; and when he had them, he said, "I think I want nothing else." "Yes," says his friend, "you will soon want another thing, that is, a hearse-and-six to carry you to your grave"; and that made him tremble. (*G. Whitfield.*) *Contentment* :—Contentment bears the hues of joy. (*Shakspere.*) *Content with little* :—On the eve of General Gordon's departure on his last journey, a friend is related to have said to him, "Have you got your kit ready, General?" "I have got what I always have. This hat is good enough, and so are these clothes. I shall start as I am, my boots are quite strong." "And how are you off for cash, &c.? You must have some ready money." "Ah, I had forgot that; I had to borrow five-and-twenty pounds from the King of the Belgians to get over here. Of course I must pay this, and I shall want a little more. A hundred pounds apiece for myself and Stewart will be enough. What on earth do we want more for?" *Contentment* :—Is that beast better that hath two or three mountains to graze on than a little bee that feeds on dew or manna, and lives upon what falls every morning from the storehouses of heaven, clouds, and providence? Can a man quench his thirst better out of a river than a full urn; or drink better from the fountain which is finely paved with marble, than when it wells over the green turf? (*Jeremy Taylor.*) *Contentment and duty* :—There is a fable told about a king's garden in which the trees and all the flowers began to make complaint. The oak was sad because it did not bear flowers; the rosebush was sad because it did not bear fruit; the vine was sad because it had to cling to the wall and could cast no shadow. "I am not the least use in the world," said the oak. "I might as well die, since I yield no fruit," said the rosebush. "What good can I do?" said the vine. Then the king saw a little pansy, which held up its glad, fresh face, while all the rest were sad. And the king said, "What makes you so glad when all the rest pine and are so sad?" "I thought," said the pansy, "that you wanted me here because you planted me, and so I made up my mind that I would try and be the best little pansy that could be." Let us all try to do our best in the little spot where God's hand has placed us. *True contentment* :—John Sinclair once alighted from his carriage near an abject-looking hovel, and entered into conversation with an old labourer who lived there alone. On leaving he asked if he could serve him in any way. "Sir," said the old man, with a look of honest contentment, "there is not in this world a thing that I want." Sir John often said that that poor abode was the only home in which he had found perfect happiness, and requested his daughter to draw him a picture of that one-windowed hut where lived a man who had not a wish ungratified. Contrast the happiness of this man in poor circumstances with the *ennui* of Napoleon on the day when he was crowned with unexampled splendour by the Pope in Notre Dame. He returned

home, and, flinging his splendid robes to different corners of the room, declared that he had never spent in his life such tedious hours. *Polish the dark side:*—A complaining grumbler was lamenting how things went wrong, when a friend, writing to console her, bade her "look upon the bright side." "Oh," she cried, "there seems to be no bright side." "Then polish up the dark side," was the reply. *Contentment not hostile to aspirations:*—We must not make the ideas of contentment and aspiration quarrel, for God made them fast friends. A man may aspire, and yet be quite content until it is time to rise. A bird that sits patiently while it broods its eggs flies bravely afterwards, leading up its timid young. And both flying and resting are but parts of one contentment. The very fruit of the gospel is aspiration. It is to the human heart what spring is to the earth; making every root and bud and bough desire to be more. **I will never leave thee.**—*Providence—God never leaves things or persons:*—You perceive at once, perhaps, that this promise has two distinctive peculiarities. In the first place, it is limited as to its aspect; and secondly, it is mixed as to its character. It is limited as to its aspect. Being not addressed to sinners generally as sinners, its sphere must at once be considered circumscribed and sacred. It is a promise, not to the world as such, but to the Church which has been redeemed out of the world. The design, evidently, of this glorious promise is to keep down the fears of believers in passing through this world to everlasting glory. And we see that there are two classes of evils which make them afraid, against which fears there is a provision in this promise. There are things that trouble you—their confusion, their irregularity, their aspects; and then you live amidst intelligent beings, like yourselves imperfect, and not only so but evil, and you fear from them—you fear things, you fear persons. But God has made a merciful provision against both these fears by saying, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." I. The remarks assume somewhat of a secular character in the first part of the subject. In speaking of these "THINGS," the passage refers to such subjects; therefore it is not improper for me to do so. By "things" I understand things of this life—food, raiment, habitation, health, comfort, all those things which are necessary for our existence, for our convenience, and for our comfort, according to our relative positions in society, and especially to the answering the end of our being, namely, doing good and glorifying God our heavenly Father. 1. Now these things, we say, are necessary for us. And when a thing is absolutely necessary, it is right to think of it. But then there is the danger of magnifying our wants, of supposing that we have wants that we have not, and that ten thousand things are necessary for us which would actually be, if given, injurious to us. But so little do we feel that we are in danger here, that it is only when we do feel it, and at no other time, that we in this respect rejoice in the truth and glory of the promise, "I will never leave thee," &c. And there is another danger to which we are exposed. The very fact that the things of this life have necessity imposed upon them very frequently tends to covetousness. Christian friends, when the world comes over you and consumes your heart and destroys your spirituality, go and weep before the Cross; go and plead this promise again and again in the name of the Saviour, that you may stand, and in the Lord be mighty and strong. 2. I refer to another thing impressed upon the things of this life: there is difficulty; that is to say, the universal law of our natural living in this world is this, "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread." Labour is man's necessity, and man's glory. A man says, "I know that without labour I cannot exist." The tradesman says it, the politician says it, the philosopher above any says it, the Christian ought to say it. He says, "I see that labour is essential to prosperity and elevation and usefulness"; and then he imagines that it is the cause of it, whereas it is only the condition of it—it is only the connection made by God to subsist; for labour itself, which is merely acting upon matter, trying to produce changes, is nothing without God. We repeat it again, man labours in vain, bodily and inwardly, unless God grants a blessing. And God says to the soul humbled and chastened, "I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee." 3. I might refer to the mutability that is impressed upon all these "things," as a frequent occasion of sorrow. The great political changes, the great commercial storms, the great commercial stagnations which very frequently follow; the death of a friend, a brother, a child, a failure, or what is called a common accident, may change the whole history of a man. And then come the trials of the soul, and then it is the heart goes forth to covetousness; it is then that man begins to fear; and it is then too comes, and then too is felt, the preciousness of the promise, "I will never leave thee." II. Let me just glance, in the second

place, at PERSONS. Paul, addressing himself to the Hebrews, says, quoting David, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." Will you not? Man may injure you; some men have injured you, and you are in danger of being injured still more in the dark future. What is your protection? "The Lord is my helper." I should be afraid of man; but He being my succour and my helper I shall not be afraid. Man in very many ways may injure us; taking society as it is constituted, and taking into consideration especially its evils. Man may injure our feelings, which is not a very trifling matter—may injure our reputation, civil, social, sacred—may injure our property—may injure our persons—may do what is still more painful, may injure our souls. The nearer and dearer persons are to us, the greater is the danger of being injured by them. They may injure us by the carelessness or even by the impurity of their conversation, they may injure us by false guiles or by base cruelties, they may injure us by their seductions, they may injure us by their frowns, and by their severities, and by their contempts, and by their persecutions. "But the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear," &c. These then are the external circumstances which render the promise before me peculiarly applicable, "Be content with such things as ye have," for He, "God," hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." I was going to say, whence evils spring up, and that is ourselves. Many of our fears rise and terminate in our own beings. Evil thoughts, evil imaginations, evil affections, malice, pride, unkindness, indifference to the misery of others, and a variety of other things; these in frightful numbers and in horrid forms present themselves to the conscience, and then the soul is afraid. He thinks of sins in life and sins in language, sins of the soul and sins of the senses, sins against God as a personality, against God as a governor; and, as the scene blackens before his eyes, he says within himself, "I could have trusted that that cloud would have passed away; but I am an offender against my God, I feel that I have increased His displeasure, therefore what shall I do?" Now again comes the promise; yes, and we need not hesitate, we need not tremble to go to God and say, "It is mine, it is mine." He has said, "I will never leave thee," &c. Now, I said that the evils were of two kinds—external, arising from circumstances, and personal, springing up from ourselves. Now God meets these two evils, the first by His Providence, and the second by His influences and His Spirit. First, God says, "I will take care of the things"; and secondly, He says, "I will take care of you." (*Caleb Morris.*) *An unwritten Word of God*:—Where has He said so? If the chapter-and-verse theory be insisted upon, there is no proof that these precise words were ever uttered by God. Yet if the doctrine be withdrawn from the Bible, the Bible will be impoverished by the withdrawal of its richest solaces. There are words, too, marvellously like the very words of the text (Gen. xxviii. 15; Deut. xxxi. 6, 8; Josh. i. 5). There are words spoken to the soul in secret. The heart remembers, attests, clings to them with tenacious love. There are paraphrased revelations; seed-revelations grown into blooming flowers of assurance. Let us take it, then, as the most assured fact in spiritual history that God never forsakes the man whom He has undertaken to guard and nourish—it is the unwritten and eternal law which comes out of the very nature of the Divine Being. I. This word is SUFFICIENT—because GOD HAS SPOKEN IT. We say of some men, "Their word is their bond." Shall we say less of the Living One, of whose eternity our life is but a spark? II. The word is INSPIRING—because IT PLEDGES THE PERSONAL FELLOWSHIP OF GOD. "I will never leave thee": not, Angels shall be sent to thee, &c. Enoch walked with God. To Moses God said, "Certainly I will be with thee." To the Church Jesus says, "I am with you alway," &c. III. This word is COMPLETE—because IT EMBRACES ALL TIME: "I will never leave thee." The child becomes free of the parent; the apprentice is liberated from his bonds; the hireling fulfils his day—but union with God is perpetual, and its joy is an ever-augmenting sum. IV. This word is CONDESCENDING—because IT IS PERSONAL IN ITS APPLICATION. It is not a pledge given to the universe as a whole; it is spoken to the individual heart, and is to be applied by each heart according to special circumstances. The whole exists for the part, as well as the part for the whole. "All things are yours." Every flower may claim the sun. V. This word is ASSURING—because IT IS REDUNDANT IN ITS EXPRESSION. "I will never leave thee," would have been enough for a merely technical bond; more is added; we have word upon word, so that the heart cannot escape the golden walls of protection and security. Love does not study terseness. It must be emphatic; it must be copious. Regarding this promise, what should be its practical effect? 1. We should inquire whether we

are entitled to apply it to ourselves. It is not for all men. The question is one of spiritual character. Are we the children of God? 2. Be entitled to it, we should live as if we truly realised it: not gloomily; not self-trustingly; not fretfully; but joyously, devoutly, thankfully. 3. Living as if we realised it, we should ask what we can do in return. "Glorify God in your body," &c. "Were the whole realm of nature mine," &c. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice," &c. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *A lesson and a fortune for Christian men of business*:—I. A WORD OF THE LORD IS OF GREAT WEIGHT TO A BELIEVER. See then the argument, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said." That "He hath said" is the hammer which drives the nail home, and clinches it, with every true child of God. II. THE WORD OF THE LORD MAY HAVE A THOUSAND FULFILMENTS. When man makes a promise, and he keeps it, that promise is done with. You cannot expect a banker to pay a cheque a second time. The merchant who duly meets his bill once has met it once for all, and the document is henceforth of no value. But when God makes a promise He fulfils it, again, and again, and again, to the same man, and to hundreds of other men. The Lord's promise once given is never recalled. He does as good as give forth each inspired promise every moment anew; He is for ever promising that which is once promised in His Word. Now I do not think this particular promise is recorded anywhere in the Old Testament in these exact words. He who is the God of grace, and of immutable love, has virtually said, by His very nature, to those that seek His face, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." All that we know about God says, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." All that we have ever experienced about God, all that our fathers have experienced, goes to show that Jehovah does not forsake His people. III. THE WORD OF THE LORD IS TO BE APPROPRIATED BY EACH CHILD OF GOD, AND ACTED ON. "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." I like this singularity of the person. You see Paul had been saying in general, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have"; and then he changes from the plural and writes, "for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." When the Lord speaks in this instance His promise is in the singular. He saith not "you" and "ye," but "thou" and "thee." He speaks to us with that—I do not know what to call it unless I use a French word—sweet *tu-toiage*, which is the language of endearment, the chosen speech of love. When one man speaks to another, and means him to know that his promise is assuredly and altogether for him, and that he is most lovingly his friend, he cannot do better than use the singular and personal pronoun. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." IV. EACH WORD OF GOD HAS ITS OWN USEFULNESS. This particular word, that we have before us, is an illustration of this fact. 1. This particular text is an extraordinarily useful one, for, first, if you notice, it covers all time. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Well, if God will never leave me, He will not leave me now. If He will never leave me, no time is excluded from the word "never." However dark or however bright, it says "never." 2. Our text covers all space, as well as all time. Suppose we emigrate. Suppose we are compelled to go to a backwoods settlement of America or Canada, or away to Australia or New Zealand, this promise will go with us all the way—"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Suppose we have to take to sea, and lead the risky life of a sailor: we will sail with this at the mast-head—"I will never leave thee." But suppose we should get into prison. Does not Jesus visit those who are prisoners for His name's sake? Hath He not said, "I will never leave thee"? 3. And then it covers all circumstances. "I will never leave thee." I may get to be a very childish old body. "I will never leave thee." But my dear children may all be dead, and I may be quite a solitary person. "I will never leave thee." But every friend may turn tail and desert me. "I will never leave thee." But I may be in such a state that nobody will own me. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Never, no never, no never*:—I. VIEW THE WORDS AS A QUOTATION. The Holy Spirit led Paul to quote from the Scriptures, though he could have spoken fresh words. Thus he put honour on the Old Testament, and taught that words spoken to ancient saints belong to us. Paul quotes the sense, not the exact words—teaching that the spirit of a text is the main thing. II. VIEW THEM AS A HOUSEHOLD WORD FROM GOD. 1. They are peculiarly a saying of God—"He hath said." This has been said, not so much by inspiration as by God Himself. 2. They are remarkably forcible from having five negatives in them in the Greek. 3. They relate to God Himself and His people. "I" . . . "thee." 4. They ensure His presence and His help. He would not be with us, and be inactive.

5. They guarantee the greatest good. God with us means all good. 6. They avert a dreadful evil which we deserve and might justly fear; namely, to be deserted of God. 7. They are such as He only could utter and make true. Nobody else can be with us effectually in agony, in death, in judgment. 8. They provide for all troubles, losses, desertions, weaknesses, difficulties, places, seasons, dangers, &c., in time and eternity. 9. They are substantiated by the Divine love, immutability, and faithfulness. 10. They are further confirmed by an observation of the Divine proceeding to others and to ourselves. III. VIEW THEM AS A MOTIVE FOR CONTENTMENT. Leading us to—1. Live above visible things when we have stores in hand. 2. Present satisfaction, however low our stores may be. 3. See provision for all future emergencies. 4. A security more satisfactory, sure, ennobling, and Divine, than all the wealth of the Indies could bestow. 5. Reckon discontent a kind of blasphemy of God. IV. VIEW THEM AS A REASON FOR COURAGE. 1. Our Helper is greater than our foes. 2. Our foes are entirely in His hand. 3. If permitted to afflict us, God will sustain us under their malice. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The saint never forsaken:*—I. IN WHAT RESPECTS GOD WILL NEVER LEAVE NOR FORSAKE HIS PEOPLE. 1. God will never leave His people, so as to cease from loving them. 2. He will never leave them nor forsake them, so as to take from them any of His new-covenant and special gifts; "for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. xi. 29). 3. He will never leave them so destitute of support and comfort, as that they shall plunge into the depths of despair. 4. The Lord will never leave nor forsake His people totally, nor finally. II. THE GRACIOUS PRESENCE OF GOD IS SUFFICIENT TO SATISFY HIS PEOPLE IN EVERY SITUATION. 1. If God is graciously present with His people, they have the greatest reason to be content, because He is the most bountiful of all providers. 2. If the Lord be graciously present, with Him he may be content, because he has the most powerful of all protectors. 3. Because, when their God is graciously present with them, they have the wisest of all leaders. 4. They may be content, because they have ever with them the most skilful physician. 5. Since their God will never leave them, nor forsake them, they may be satisfied; because they are always furnished with the most effectual and compassionate Comforter. 6. Since God will never leave His people, they have ever with them the nearest of all relations, and the most excellent of all companions. III. THE SECURITY GIVEN TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD, THAT HE WILL NEVER LEAVE THEM NOR FORSAKE THEM. 1. The inviolable faithfulness of the Promiser is good security for the accomplishment of the promise. 2. His relation and love to them is good security for the accomplishment of the promise. 3. The power of the Promiser affords them good security for the accomplishment of the promise. 4. The mediation of Christ may be considered by God's afflicted and poor people as noble security. 5. The believing consideration, that the glory of all the Divine persons is connected with God's being graciously present with His people, that He may complete their salvation. IV. SOME DIRECTIONS HOW TO OBTAIN THE GRACIOUS PRESENCE OF GOD, AND TO MAINTAIN A COMFORTABLE CORRESPONDENCE WITH HIM. 1. You must close with His Son, Jesus Christ, in the offers of the gospel. 2. You must not only begin your acquaintance and correspondence with God, by believing in our Lord Jesus Christ; but by believing in Him, and improving Him, you must maintain and carry on your correspondence with God. 3. That you may attain and carry on a loving correspondence with God, you must wait on Him, in all the ordinances of His grace. 4. Beware of doing anything that may provoke Him to "leave you, and forsake you." 5. Endeavour, through the Spirit, to cleave close to Christ, and plead importunately the promise of His perpetual presence. 6. Let unbelievers consider, that this God, who is the best of all friends, the mightiest of all protectors, and the best of all companions, is, to those who persevere in rejecting the overtures of His grace, the most dreadful of all enemies, the most inflexible of all judges, and most terrible of all executioners. Flee, flee, therefore, without delay to the Lord Jesus, as the only all-sufficient Saviour. (*John Jardine.*) *Never forsaken:*—I. AN AWFUL CONDITION. 1. Forsaking implies an utter loneliness. 2. Utter helplessness. 3. Utter friendlessness. 4. Hopelessness. 5. Unutterable agony. II. A GRACIOUS PROMISE. What is guaranteed in this promise? Herein doth God give to His people everything. "I will never leave thee." Then no attribute of God can cease to be engaged for us. Is He mighty? He will show Himself strong on the behalf of them that trust Him. Is He love? Then with everlasting lovingkindness will He have mercy upon us. Whatever attributes may compose the character of Deity every one of them to its fullest extent shall be engaged on our side. Moreover, whatsoever God

hath, whether it be in the lowest hades or in the highest heaven, whatever can be contained in infinity or can be held within the circumference of eternity, shall be with His people for ever, since "He hath said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you." III. THE SWEET CONFIRMATIONS of this most precious promise. 1. The Lord will not and cannot leave His people, because of His relationship to them. He is your Father—will your Father leave you? 2. Then, next, His honour binds Him never to forsake thee. When we see a house half-built and left in ruins, we say, "This man began to build and was not able to finish." Shall this be said of thy God, that He began to save thee and could not bring thee to perfection? Is it possible that He will break His word, and so stain His truth? 3. And if that be not enough, wilt thou remember besides this that the past all goes to prove that He will not forsake thee. Thou hast been in deep waters; hast thou been drowned? Thou hast walked through the fires; hast thou been burned? 4. And if that be not enough ask thy Father and the saints that have gone before. Did ever any perish trusting in Christ? 5. There is no reason why He should cast us off. Can you adduce any reason why He should cast you away? Is your poverty the danger of your life? In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that hath loved us. Do you say it is your sins? That would have been a cause why He never should have loved them, but having loved them when they were dead in trespasses and sins, their sin can never be a reason for leaving them. IV. And now the SUITABLE CONCLUSIONS to be drawn from this doctrine. 1. One of the first is contentment. 2. Courage is the next lesson. Let us boldly say, "God is my Helper, why should I fear what man can do unto me." 3. Then, next, we ought to cast off our despondency. 4. And then, here is an argument for the greatest possible delight. 5. Lastly, what ground there is here for faith. Let us lean upon our God with all our weight. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Never forsaken*:—It is not here said God will never afflict His people. Sorrow is the heirloom of royal halls as well as of lowly huts. It is well it should be so, for sorrow is useful; man cannot bear ceaseless sunshine, he needs the intercepting cloud. In the second place, it is not here said that God will never bereave His people. A vacant chair is in every home and by every fireside. It may seem a very severe lesson, but it is a very necessary one—if death never cast his cold, dark shadow upon your fireside, you would begin to worship that fireside; you would incline to make this earthly tabernacle your home. In the next place, it is not said here that men, or even Christians, will never die; that is not so. It does seem to us sometimes inexplicable, if Christ has destroyed death, that Christians should still die. The answer is, He has not destroyed death as a fact; but He has done better, He has left the fact, but out of the bosom of the cold fact He has evoked blessings that more than compensate for all its bitterness. God not having promised these things to us, has however said to us what is far better—He will never forsake His people. He will be with them in any one or in all of these together, their peace and support. His omniscience will always watch you with a sentinel eye that never closes, His omnipresence will always reach and help you—if you go to the ends of the earth. The Lord will not forsake His people. No palace walls, however thick, no guards, however brave, no breadth of sea, no number of miles, no impassable desert, shall intercept the visits or arrest the interposition of God. There is not a sting in the human heart, there is not a shadow, however blighting, on the human soul, which God sees not. When all God's billows, and afflictions, and troubles pass over you, a light brighter than the brightest star, even the morning star, will rise upon you, and a voice louder than the noise of the sea waves, and more musical by far, will bring comfort to your heart: "It is I; be not afraid." But in viewing this blessed promise, that God will not forsake His people, let me notice some of the circumstances in which He will not forsake, or, interpreted in the positive form, He will be specially present, for all God's negatives are most expressive; His promise, "I will not forsake you," is the strongest form of saying, "The Lord will always and everywhere be with His people." 1. Well, God will not forsake you in affliction, and trials, and difficulties, when all you loved is lost, when all you counted on has put forth unexpected wings and fled;—and need I say we live in a period when no man is certain that the honest possessions of to-day will be his property to-morrow; and perhaps the lesson that God is teaching us amid all the mutations of this age is not to set our hearts upon uncertain riches. 2. In the second place, God will not forsake you in the time and during the pain of bereavement. And if this be so, if it be God that interposes, if it be God that takes the pilgrim home, then what is our inference? There are no such things as

accidental deaths. 3. God will not forsake His people when entrusted with great responsibilities. When you are called upon to fulfil great duties, never forget to plead God's great promise. All that is in God is with us, and for us, so that the inexhaustible capital, on which a Christian can draw, is the omnipresence, the omniscience, the omnipotence, the love of God his Father in heaven. The reason why God does not forsake you and me is that He is the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness, so that it cannot be exhausted. Another reason is because He has been pleased to make us His people. God does not forsake us for His name's sake, because He has been pleased to make us His people. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) "*No, never!*"—This is a promise which bears no special address. We cannot fix a name to it, and for this we are grateful. There are some promises, which, like letters, have been addressed to certain persons, and which to the end of time will bear upon their envelope those particular names. There are other promises, and they are by far the most numerous, which either were never exclusively addressed to an individual or community, or were far too great for such to monopolise, or for any age to exhaust; and which have been redirected and repeated in varying phrase, but with identity of meaning and additional emphasis, as generations have passed by. Ah! these old promises, like Him who uttered them, are the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. They partake of His own infinitude. This assurance of our text meets the highest needs of our nature. Loneliness is one of the most trying experiences possible to man. It never has been from man's creation, and never will be to all eternity, "good for man to be alone." Is it not a mysterious law, that the higher the type of creature the more dependent he is, and the greater his needs? The higher the type, the more complex is the organism, and the greater and more varied the necessities, until we reach man, the greatest creature whom God has made on earth; then we touch the most needy. Thus, as you rise in the scale of being, you rise into need. It is only an Almighty, self-existent God that can be the complement of such a creation. Therefore does God speak to man as He does not to any other creature on earth, as if to say, "I have made thee only a little lower than the angels; hence thou hast immeasurable ambitions, and needs. Thy nobility consists in the greatness of thy dependence. The highest necessity of thy nature is that thou shouldest have great need. I, Myself, am thy supreme need. Thou art too great to be satisfied with less than thy God and thy Saviour. I will satisfy thee; I will not leave thee Godless: better that thou shouldest miss all than thy God. 'I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee.'" I. THE PROMISE OF DIVINE SUFFICIENCY. "I will in no wise fail thee." The emphasis which is placed upon the word "Himself" must not be overlooked—"For Himself hath said." I have pointed out that in proportion to the greatness of our nature is the measure of our need. I would now remind you that in proportion to the measure of our fall is our need multiplied. No creature in heaven will have made so great a demand upon God as redeemed man. It is to this creature, with needs intensified by his own sin, but who now realises his entire dependence upon God, that God Himself speaks—"I will in no wise fail thee." 1. God's promise projects itself into the unknown future. "I will never leave thee." Man cannot live in the present. He ever looks forward. His hopes and fears come from life's morrows. This accounts for the interest which promises and predictions ever awaken in the heart of man. 2. Again, the promise includes every change of circumstance and variety of experience. The words of God by the mouth of Isaiah grandly emphasise this (Isa. xlii. 2). In the face of the infinite variety of disappointment and trouble is the permanence of this Divine promise that God will be with us. None but the eternal and unchanging God, as revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord, can satisfy our yearnings and meet our needs. It is, however, enough if He be with us. II. THE PROMISE OF DIVINE FAITHFULNESS. There is nothing more beautiful in life than fidelity, nothing so abhorrent as infidelity. It would seem as if the consummation of the world's guilt will be its unfaithfulness (Luke xviii. 8)—unfaithfulness to man as well as to God. Sin will culminate in the prevalence of Cain-like infidelity brother-ward and God-ward. Now, over against that, the acme of God's excellence is His faithfulness. It is this which alone can triumph over human infidelity. It is this, too, which bears with us in our doubts and fears, and bids us trust (2 Tim. ii. 13, R.V.). Thus the Divine constancy contrasts with our inconstancy. It is this fact that has sustained the saints in all ages when persecuted, and even when "in perils among false brethren." This assurance may be ours. If we did but appropriate this twofold promise, what heroisms would

be ours, and what noble lives we should live! (*D. Davies.*) *God does not forsake His people:*—John Owen, in a letter dictated to his friend, Charles Heetwood, says, "Live and pray, hope and wait patiently, and do not despond; the promise stands invincible, that He will never leave nor forsake us." Forcibly are the negatives in this passage rendered by Kirkham, in his well-known hymn:

> "The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
> I will not, I will not desert to His foes;
> That soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,
> I'll never, no never, no never forsake."

How sad the confession of Cardinal Wolsey, when he was leaving the world: "Had I been but as careful to please God as I have been to serve my prince, He would not have forsaken me now in the time of my grey hairs!" How beautifully in contrast with his were the last moments of Mrs. Isabella Brown! A quarter of an hour before she died she was reading a list of Scripture promises: and, noticing particularly this tender declaration, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," she said, faintly: "Oh, they are sweet!" After her death the list was found on her breast with her hand upon it. *Dying testimony to God's faithfulness:*—Our friend, Dr. William Graham, of Bonn, has lately departed this life, and we are told that on his death-bed one said to him, "He hath said, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,'" to which the good man replied, with his dying breath, "Not a doubt of it! Not a doubt of it!" (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *God's presence enough:*—A heathen sage said to one of his friends, "Do not complain of thy misfortunes, as long as Cæsar is thy friend!" What shall we say to those whom the Prince of the kings of the earth calls His sons and His brethren? "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee!" Ought not these words to cast all fear and care for ever to the ground? He who possesses Him, to whom all things belong, possesseth all things. (*F. W. Krummacher.*) *No place where God cannot be found:*—I have read of a company of poor Christians who were banished into some remote part; and one standing by, seeing them pass along, said that it was a very sad condition these poor people were in, to be thus hurried from the society of men, and made companions with the beasts of the field. "True," said another, "it were a sad condition indeed if they were carried to a place where they should not find their God. But let them be of good cheer, God goes along with them, and will exhibit the comforts of His presence whithersoever they go." (*T. Brooks.*) *God's presence desirable:*—There are cases in which mere presence is something very bad. The presence of the desperately wicked is a grief and heart-sorrow to the righteous. The presence of a deceitful enemy is a terror to an upright and generous spirit. The presence of one of Job's comforters in the day of our sorrow is an intolerable nuisance. But the presence of a mother to a sick child, or the presence of a father to a child in bodily danger, or the presence of a medical practitioner to a sick person is as light in darkness, or as a copious dew upon withered grass. Simple presence is very good when presence has a good and sweet influence. But presence and action, presence and ministration, presence and service, is all we can desire—that is, if the individual present be such as we desire. (*S. Martin.*) *God's presence operative:*—If God be with us we shall never be alone, nor shall we feel lonely—that is, if we believe in God's presence. If God be with us, He will not be inactive on our behalf. He will provide for us so that we shall not be needy or destitute (Psa. xxiii. 1). He will guide us so that we shall not err or mistake our way (Psa. lxxiii. 24). He will protect us so that no real evil can befall us (Psa. cxxi. 7, 8). He will preserve us that we shall not perish or lose any good thing (John x. 28, 29; 2 Tim. iv. 18.) (*Ibid.*) *God's friendship all-sufficient:*—There is an old English proverb which says, "He cannot be poor who has the Lord Mayor for his uncle"; we may rather say, "He cannot be poor who has God for his friend."

Ver. 6. **The Lord is my helper.** *A cheerful confidence in God:*—I. THE CHEERFUL PROFESSION OF CONFIDENCE IN GOD AGAINST ALL OPPOSITION, AND IN THE MIDST OF ALL DISTRESSES, IS THAT WHICH BELIEVERS HAVE A WARRANT FOR IN THE PROMISES THAT ARE MADE UNTO THEM. II. AS THE USE OF THIS CONFIDENCE IS OUR DUTY, SO IT IS A DUTY HIGHLY HONOURABLE UNTO THE PROFESSION OF THE GOSPEL. III. BELIEVERS MAY USE THE SAME CONFIDENCE THAT DAVID USED, SEEING THEY HAVE THE SAME GROUNDS OF IT THAT DAVID HAD. For outward circumstances alter not tho

state of things as unto faith or duty. IV. THAT ALL BELIEVERS, IN THEIR SUFFERINGS, AND UNDER THEIR PERSECUTIONS, HAVE A REFRESHING SUPPORTING INTEREST IN DIVINE AID AND ASSISTANCE. For the promises hereof are made unto them all equally in their suffering state, even as they were unto the prophets and apostles of old. V. IT IS THEIR DUTY TO EXPRESS WITH CONFIDENCE AND BOLDNESS, AT ALL TIMES, THEIR ASSURANCE OF THE DIVINE ASSISTANCE DECLARED IN THE PROMISES, TO THEIR OWN ENCOURAGEMENT, THE EDIFICATION OF THE CHURCH, AND THE TERROR OF THEIR ADVERSARIES (Phil. i. 28). VI. FAITH DULY FIXED ON THE POWER OF GOD, AS ENGAGED FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF BELIEVERS IN THEIR SUFFERINGS, WILL GIVE THEM A CONTEMPT OF ALL THAT MEN CAN DO UNTO THEM. VII. THE MOST EFFECTUAL MEANS TO ENCOURAGE OUR SOULS IN ALL OUR SUFFERINGS, IS TO COMPARE THE POWER OF GOD WHO WILL ASSIST US, AND THAT OF MAN WHO DOTH OPPRESS US (Matt. x. 28). VIII. THAT WHICH IN OUR SUFFERINGS DELIVERETH US FROM THE FEAR OF MEN, TAKES OUT ALL THAT IS EVIL IN THEM, AND SECURES OUR SUCCESS. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *God's people protected from enemies*:—1. These have their enemies, signified by the word Man, "what man may do against me." 2. These men being enemies do much against them, or at least attempt to do much; for wicked men together with the devil are great enemies to Christ's kingdom and His subjects. The devil designs their spiritual, the wicked their temporal ruin; and the design of the one is subservient to the other. The devil makes use of temporal persecutions to shake their faith; both hate the Church and thrust sore at it. 3. Yet God is with them, stands for them, helps them, strengthens and protects them, and gives them safety in the midst of danger, joy in the midst of sorrow, bread in the midst of famine. 4. If God be with them, for them, and their help, they need not fear anything, no, not the worst that man can do unto them, but may be confident of safety and deliverance; they need not much desire the best things of the world, nor fear the worst. 5. They may think, believe, say, and be assured, that God is their help. And so much the rather, because God hath promised that He will not leave or forsake them at any time, and why should they be covetous or fearful, there is no cause of either. (*G. Lawson.*) *Man not to be feared*:—When Dr. Rowland Taylor was brought before Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, the bishop asked him how he durst look him in the face, and if he knew who he was. "Yes," replied the doctor, "I know who you are—Dr. Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, and Lord Chancellor, and yet but a mortal man, I trow. But if I should be afraid of your lordly looks, why fear you not God, the Lord of us all? How dare you look any Christian man in the face, since you have forsaken the truth, denied Christ, and done contrary to your oath and writing? With what face will you appear before Christ's judgment-seat and answer to your oath against popery in King Henry VIII.'s time and in the reign of King Edward VI., when you both spoke and wrote against it?" (*W. Whitecross.*) *A right to the promises of God cleared up*:—Let it be thy chief concern to have thy interest in and right to the promises cleared up. This is the hinge on which the great dispute between thee and Satan will move in the day of trouble. Oh, it is sad for a poor Christian to stand at the door of the promise, in the dark night of affliction, afraid to lift the latch, whereas he should then come as boldly for shelter as a child into his father's house. (*W. Gurnall.*)

Ver. 7. **Remember them which have the rule.** *The duty of imitating the primitive teachers and patterns of Christianity*:—I. THE DUTY ENJOINED. If we would preserve that purity of faith and manners, which our religion requires, we should have frequent recourse to the primitive teachers and patterns of Christianity, and endeavour to bring our belief and lives to as near a conformity with theirs as is possible. Who so likely to deliver the faith and doctrine of Christ pure, as the primitive teachers of it, who received it from our Lord Himself; and were, by an extraordinary assistance of the Holy Spirit, secured from error and mistake in the delivery of it? And who so likely to bring their lives and conversations to an exact conformity with His holy doctrine, as they, who were so thoroughly instructed in it by the best Master, and shown the practice of it in the most perfect example of holiness and virtue? II. WHEREIN WE SHOULD IMITATE THESE PATTERNS. 1. We are to imitate these primitive patterns, in the sincerity and purity of their faith; I mean, that the faith which we profess be the sincere doctrine of Christianity, and the pure word of God, free from all mixture of human additions and inventions. 2. We are to imitate them, in the stability and firmness of our faith, and not suffer ourselves to be shaken, and removed from it, by every wind of new doctrine; the faith of Christ being unchangeable as Christ Himself.

3. We are to imitate them, in the constancy and perseverance of their faith; and that, notwithstanding all the discountenance and opposition, persecution and suffering, which attend the profession of this faith. 4. We should imitate them in the efficacy and fruitfulness of their faith, in the practice and virtues of a good life; "whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation," that is, their perseverance in a holy course to the end. And these must never be separated; a sound faith and a good life. III. THE ENCOURAGEMENT TO THIS, from the consideration of the happy state of those persons, who are proposed to us for patterns, and the glorious reward which they are made partakers of in another world. "Considering the end of their conversation," *τὴν ἔκβασιν*, their egress or departure out of this life into a blessed and glorious state, where they have received the reward of their faith and patience, and pious conversation in this world; or else (which comes much to one) considering the conclusion of their lives, with what patience and comfort they left the world, and with what joyful assurance of the happy condition they were going to, and were to continue in for ever. (*Archbp. Tillotson.*) *The remembrance of past teachers*:—I. THIS IS OUR BEST, THIS IS OUR ONLY WAY OF REMEMBERING THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN OUR GUIDES, LEADERS, AND RULERS IN THE CHURCH, WHETHER THEY HAVE BEEN APOSTLES, OR EVANGELISTS, OR ORDINARY PASTORS; NAMELY, TO FOLLOW THEM IN THEIR FAITH AND CONVERSATION. II. THIS OUGHT TO BE THE CARE OF THE GUIDES OF THE CHURCH; NAMELY, TO LEAVE SUCH AN EXAMPLE OF FAITH AND HOLINESS, AS THAT IT MAY BE THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH TO REMEMBER THEM, AND FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLE. Alas! how many have we had, how many have we, who have left, or are likely to leave, nothing to be remembered by, but what it is the duty of the Church to abhor! how many, whose uselessness leads them into everlasting oblivion! III. THIS WORD OF GOD IS THE SOLE OBJECT OF THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH, THE ONLY OUTWARD MEANS OF COMMUNICATING THE MIND AND GRACE OF GOD UNTO IT. Wherefore upon it, the being, life, and blessedness of the Church doth depend. IV. A DUE CONSIDERATION OF THE TRUTH OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BEFORE US, ESPECIALLY OF SUCH WHO WERE CONSTANT IN SUFFERINGS; ABOVE ALL, OF THOSE WHO WERE CONSTANT UNTO DEATH, AS THE HOLY MARTYRS IN FORMER AND LATTER AGES, IS AN EFFECTUAL MEANS TO STIR US UP UNTO THE SAME EXERCISE OF FAITH WHEN WE ARE CALLED UNTO IT. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *The Church in relation to her past*:—The feeling which underlies these words of reverential admiration for the saintly dead, the founders and confessors of the Church gone to their rest, is one which at a later age wrought to Christianity much mischief. Yet it is in itself an eminently natural and proper sentiment. It was surely becoming in the early Church to keep green the names of her noble apostles; to guard with pious care the dust of her martyrs; to connect with each local congregation the memory of those missionaries who had planted, of those pastors who had nourished it. Customs in their origin so inoffensive and beautiful as these led speedily to serious abuse. Out of beginnings the most harmless there grew up all over Christendom, as pure religion degenerated, a mighty system of holy places, holy days, and holy relics; a system of saint-worship, sustained by lying miracles and discredited by acts of the grossest superstition; a system the vastness and persistency of which must still provoke the astonishment of a Christian historian. Yet our text reminds us that at the root of such abuses there really lay, after all, a valuable truth. It is this: The Church of Christ is the heir of her own past. That inheritance she ought never to disown. Her successive periods, like the stages of human existence, have a link of natural piety to bind them together. The present grows out of that which has been; and the generation which is now alive has lessons to learn from the dead generations that are gone before. God has written Himself and His truth upon the lives of our godly fathers, and on their triumphant witnessing deaths, in such wise that we their children shall lose much if we fling away the memory of it. Inspiration we shall lose; for what kindles imitation like the examples of the beloved and revered dead? Continuity we shall lose; for in the children there ought to live anew the spirit of their fathers. Experience we shall lose; of which the lessons are for our warning as well as guidance; experience that is the child of history and the parent of wisdom. Steadfastness we shall lose; when, lightly forsaking the devotion and the beliefs that made our forerunners strong, we suffer our religion to vary with the passing moods of every age, and are carried about with divers and strange doctrines. Let it be asked, first of all, why should it be worth our while to review with close attention the career of dead saints, and reflect in what their course of Christian living issued at the last? For this reason, that He who was the object of

their faith, and the source of their life, and the prize of their fidelity, He in whose truth and fellowship lay all the glory and hope of their career, is to us exactly what He was to them—the same unaltered, undiminished object of trust and source of power! "Christ Jesus is the same yesterday and to-day; for ever." But yesterday your eyes beheld your leaders. The names you venerate as you recall them were living names. He it was in whom their life was lived, and their words uttered, and their deeds of witness-bearing done. If the issue of their career was memorable for its fearless martyr-devotion or its unshaken trust in death, who but He was the Lord in whom and for whom they died? To-day we are in their place; and we miss them, and the times are evil, and timid hearts are quaking. But to-day, as yesterday, Jesus, for His part, abides the same; passed into the heavens, able to save to the uttermost, ruling a kingdom which cannot be moved. Thus the lives and deaths of departed believers become instinct with lessons of encouragement so soon as you perceive how they were but the temporary organs through whom an enduring Saviour discovered to the world His truth and grace. Christ is Himself the sum of His own faith, as well as the Head of His whole Church. In a sense in which no other founder of a religion ever was identified with the faith He founded, He is Christianity. Therefore in His unchangeableness there lies a permanent factor, an element of perennial life and youth, for Christian history. If the dead fathers spoke to us the Word of God, it was because they found it in the person of Christ. If the end of their conversation, the last exit scene of their earthly walk, was edifying and saintly, He who gave them steadfast endurance and grace for dying need has not bade us farewell, but is as able to hold us in His peace and keep us from falling and conduct us across the sullen river to the shining shores beyond! Courage, then, for the desponding Christian heart! Hope for every generation that mourns its vanished leaders! New times bring new perils and impose new labours; but no time can rob us of Him in whose strength all past saints grew strong, or quench or dim the deathless presence which burns on through all the ages. (*J. O. Dykes, D.D.*) *Duty to spiritual rulers:*—I. THE SPECIAL DUTY TO WHICH WE ARE SUMMONED. It is very instructive to observe, that when the apostle fastens our attention on those servants of God who have gone to their rest, he does not call up before our minds the gifts with which they were endowed, or the attainments by which they were distinguished; he says nothing of the learning of which they were possessed, or the eloquence with which they were adorned. Nay, it is not on that which was official or personal that he fastens; not on aught that was distinctive or peculiar to them, as the commissioned ambassadors of Christ, but on that which they professed in common with all saints. Now when the apostle here singles out *the faith* by which they were distinguished, and bids us be followers of that, it is not because that was the one solitary feature of Christian character by which they were distinguished. Nay, faith never stands alone; but it is singled out just because it is the one great fundamental principle which ministered to the vitality of all the other graces of the Christian character. It is faith that unites the soul to Christ; and so it is the spring of their spiritual life. It is faith that keeps the soul leaning upon Christ, and thereby secures their safety. It is faith that keeps the soul ever near to Christ, and so it promotes their holiness and conformity to Christ. It is faith that draws out of the fulness that is treasured up in Christ, and supplies the believer with the nourishment needed for the ripening of his Christian character, that he may reach "the measure of a perfect man." II. THE CONTEMPLATION THAT IS TO ANIMATE US TO THE IMITATION OF THEIR FAITH. 1. The word rendered "considering" signifies looking at, or beholding with attention. It is a metaphor from the art of painting. When a pupil is learning his art, he is set to copy a picture of his master—to imitate that picture, and reproduce it if he can; and in order to do this he must keep carefully looking to it, keeping it ever before him. In like manner, the apostle summons us, while engaged in this work of imitating the faith of departed believers, to keep steadfastly before us the end of their faith. 2. The word rendered "the end" signifies not only termination, but also exit. It means an end accompanied with, and consisting in, an escape or deliverance from the trials and temptations to which they were exposed. (1) It conveys the idea that they are not lost, but gone before; not dead, but living. Their place here is empty, but their place in heaven is filled. What to us was an end, to them was only a beginning—not the sunset, but the dawn—not the blotting out and extinguishing of their life, but the rising of new stars on yon glorious firmament. (2) There is more than mere survival; there is escape from all the toil and

weariness of this earthly scene. No note of sadness in their song; no drop of bitterness in their cup. (*Thos. Main, D.D.*) *The remembering of departed Christian ministers*:—When we have followed the remains of our departed pious friends to the house appointed for all living, we are apt to conclude that our connection with them has, for the present, entirely ceased. But it is not so. They are gone; but we have not done with them. We are to embalm their memory in our heart, to recollect the instructions which we have received from them—to consider their life, and especially how they died; that we may be taught, both how we are to live, and how to be prepared to die. I. THE NATURE OF THE PASTORAL OFFICE. 1. A Christian minister must be a guide to his flock. It is true that it is God alone who efficiently leads His people like a flock through this wilderness to the heavenly Canaan. But it is also true that Christian ministers are undershepherds of the great Bishop of souls. In the exercise of these important functions, however, they have no dominion over the faith of the flock; no authority to constrain the conscience, except by the presentation of the truth and the influence of love. 2. A Christian minister must preach the Word of God. He is to beware of preaching himself, or of teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. 3. Such being the nature of the pastoral office, and the duty of those who hold it, what ought to be their character? They should be like those described in the text. These were, in the first place, men who were strong in faith, giving glory to God; and, in this point of view, were worthy of the imitation of all believers. But, further, they were men whose conversation was worthy of their profession. They lived as Christians; they glorified that Saviour "who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." To promote His cause was the object of their existence. In Him they placed their confidence; in Him their affections centred. And they consecrated their time, their talents, their property, and life itself, to the promotion of his cause in the world; and their end was like their life. II. THE DUTY WHICH WE OWE TO FAITHFUL DEPARTED MINISTERS. 1. We ought to remember pious ministers. Remember what they were—the ministers of God to you—the messengers of the King of kings, invested with the high commission of proclaiming to you those glad tidings of great joy which bring glory to God and salvation to men. 2. We ought to follow their faith, that is, imitate them in their steadfastness in the profession of the faith which they preached, and, like them, be faithful unto the death. 3. We ought to consider the end of their conversation—we should attentively, and with a view to our own profit, consider their deportment its object, and its issue. (*G. Johnston.*) *How to honour the saintly dead*:—Men naturally desire to be remembered, though dead and gone, to have their names perpetuated to after ages; nor has there been wanting among the heathen such, who, though not inspired with the hopes of a future reward, yet have taken care to have their memories conveyed to posterity. Witness the Egyptian pyramids, as also certain statues among the Greeks, with the names of their founders inscribed on them. And indeed so it is; for otherwise God would never have assured it to righteous men that they should be had in everlasting remembrance, that their righteousness should remain for ever, and their memories never perish. Whereas God hath threatened the wicked with excision, even of their very names, that their memory should perish; or, if it did out-live them, it should rot. How very exact too were the primitive Christians in honouring the memories of their martyrs and deceased bishops? For this were the diptyehs read in the church, which were two leaves or tables, on the one whereof were written the names of those pious men and confessors who were yet alive; and on the other those who had died in the Lord and were at rest. For this were altars erected over their graves; for this were their pictures hung up in their private shops and houses; for this were churches, though dedicated to God, made to bear the names of saints to preserve their memories; for this were their feast days celebrated, panegyrics made on them, and their lives written. St. Basil wrote the life of Barlaam, who was but a poor shepherd; Nazianzen, of Basil and others, which, he saith, he left to posterity as a common table of virtue for all the world to look on. We do not read of any worship in those times addressed to them; we do not read of any prayers for them to be delivered out of purgatory; nor of adoring their relics; nor of making vows or oblations unto them. But the greatest honour which they did them was to follow or imitate them, which is the second duty inculcated in the text. The very remembrance of good men is an approach to holiness, otherwise St. Paul would not have required it. By virtue of this imitation it is that we become influenced, nay, ecstasied with the spirits of those who are gone before us;

that we become meek with Moses, patient with Job, chaste with Joseph, devout with David. Would they have unworthily betrayed their holy faith? With what courage, with what patience were they endowed! And indeed, as I intimated even now, this is the highest honour we can do them, to propound them to ourselves as our patterns, and to follow them in their constant love to God, to religion, and to all mankind, whatsoever we suffer for it. By this we raise them as it were from the dead to life again, we revive their memories, we personate them in this world, and act their parts. Our actions are the resultances of theirs, our praises the echoes of their songs, and our selves the living images of them. And those who do thus honour God's saints and friends, God Himself will honour everlastingly. Here are two graces expressed in the text in which especially we are obliged to follow them. 1. Their faith. 2. Their perseverance and constancy even unto the end of their conversation. As to faith, we here understand by it the grace rather than the rule of faith, and by it we mean a constant dependence upon God for the performance of His promises; a being convinced of the truth of those things of which we have no ocular or sensible demonstration. *Intuentes*, looking upon seriously, and diligently, again and again, their exit, their going out of the world. Revolve with yourselves how holily they adorned their faith, how constantly they persevered in the profession of it, how gloriously they attested and signed it with their blood! Faithful they were unto death, or, as Clemens Alexandrinus expresseth it, to the very last gasp, as they did run the race set before them, so they did it with patience and perseverance. (*Edward Lake, D.D.*) *Ministers to be remembered after they are dead*:—I. WHAT A TRUE MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST LEAVES TO BE REMEMBERED BY HIS PEOPLE AFTER HIS DECEASE. 1. And the first thing which offers itself to our observation herein, is, his doctrine—sound and true; perfectly agreeable to the oracles of God with which he is entrusted, and which he has taken in charge to deliver to the souls of men. 2. The next thing which a true minister of Christ leaves to be remembered is—his example as a true follower of Jesus Christ. 3. Another particular which a faithful minister leaves to be remembered, is his injunctions and admonitions. 4. The last thing which I shall mention, that a true minister of Jesus Christ lerves to be remembered by his people after his decease, is his love to their souls. II. THE DUTY WHICH IS INCUMBENT ON THE PEOPLE, TO FOLLOW THE SOUND FAITH OF SUCH A TRUE AND FAITHFUL MINISTER. "Whose faith follow." III. THE REASON WHY THE PEOPLE SHOULD THUS REMEMBER AND FOLLOW THE FAITH OF SUCH A MINISTER, FROM THE CONSIDERATION OF THE GOOD END WHICH HE HAD IN VIEW IN ALL HIS LABOURS, AND THE CHRISTIAN MANNER IN WHICH HE IS ENABLED TO FINISH HIS COURSE. "Considering the end of their conversion," I shall use these words in two senses. 1. "As respecting the end of their conversation in life, or that end which the ministers of Jesus Christ have in view, in the things which they preach and recommend." This end is—the good of your souls. 2. This expression may more particularly mean the end by which the Christian minister finishes his course. And this, I apprehend, is the sense in which it is more generally understood. Now, if here, in the finishing part, he be able to bear a good testimony to the truth of that which he has delivered, it is the fullest human confirmation which we can expect of its truth. For death is a trying hour. However any may be able, in the day of health and strength, firmly to hold to their deceits, yet, unless the mind be overwhelmed with ignorance, or the conscience seared, that hour will tear all such webs asunder; it will try every man's work of what sort it is. But now, the delusions of fancy or the pretensions of the hypocrite are detected by this awful test; if, on the other hand, in this hour of severe trial, the Christian minister's hope stands firm, and instead of retracting anything from the doctrines which he has delivered, he testifies of them as more precious than ever; surely such evidence recommends itself to our fullest attention, and carries with it the greatest force for the conviction of every candid mind. (*Jas. Stillingfleet, M.A.*) *Preachers speak after death*:—There are strange legends extant of churches which have been swallowed by earthquakes, or buried beneath fallen mountains. The rustics declare that they have heard the bells still ringing, far down in the bowels of the earth, just as they did when they hung aloft in the tower. Take the bells to be preachers and the legend is true, for being dead they yet speak, and from their graves they sound forth lessons not less powerful than those with which they made their pulpits resound while they were yet with us. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Honour God's ministers*:—Take heed of that; for then God is dishonoured, when anything is the more despised by how much it relates nearer unto God. No

religion ever did despise their chiefest ministers; and the Christian religion gives them the greatest honour. For honourable priesthood is like a shower from heaven, it causes blessings everywhere; but a pitiful, a disheartened, a discouraged clergy waters the ground like a waterpot—here and there a little good, and for a little while; but every evil man can destroy all that work whenever he pleases. Take heed; in the world there is not a greater misery can happen to any man than to be an enemy to God's Church. All histories of Christendom, and the whole Book of God, have sad records, and sad threatenings, and sad stories of Korah, and Doeg, and Balaam, and Jeroboam, and Uzzah, and Ananias, and Sapphira, and Julian, and of heretics and schismatics, and sacrilegious; and after all, these men could not prevail finally, but paid for the mischief they did, and ended their days in dishonour, and left nothing behind them but the memory of their sin, and the record of their curse. (*Bp. Taylor.*) **Jesus Christ the same.** *The immutability of Christ*:—The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has just been recalling memories of the first apostles of the gospel. Many of them were dead. Those who had seen Christ, and who had listened to Him, became day by day fewer in number. The flux of time, and the ravages of persecution, had done their work in thinning out the illustrious band. More than one soul had been dismayed and discouraged, and therefore it was necessary to recall to the minds of all that, though men may come and men may go, the cause of Christ is immortal. It is just this thought which the sacred writer expresses in glowing words of lofty exultation, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." To be immovable, unchangeable, immortal, is the greatest end men can think of. It is the supreme dream of earthly vanity. In this world nothing remains long. Man is carried to and fro by the sweeping and the swirling of the tide. The very molecules of which his body is composed are changed from time to time with a rapidity which defies the calculating powers of science. Generations come and generations go as rapidly and as transiently as the forest leaves swept by the autumn breeze, and it is precisely this mutability, this feebleness, which man most resents. Was there ever a man—an educated man, at any rate—who did not passionately desire to leave a name which would survive him? There is the dream of literary ambition. There is the dream of military glory for which men face, with cool composure, the cannon's mouth. Well-a-day! Of all those whom the thirst for glory has seized, how many ever attained it? Many were called. How many were chosen? How small, after all, is the number of those who leave behind them an undestroyable memory or fame that no man will dispute! To some it has been vouchsafed to serve with distinction their country on the field of battle, or in Parliament; others have opened up new tracts to civilisation, and have acquired a fame purer than that of arms, or they have guided the consciences, and have made themselves the teachers of humanity. Is it not certain that, in the treasure-house of history, there are reputations which are imperishable, against which time and the changes of this mortal life are powerless to corrode? Now is this an idea similar to that of the text, where we are told that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever? Is it merely a question of saying that, among the sons of men, nobody has left on earth a profounder trace or a more indestructible fame? That of itself would be an imperishable glory, but the text has more to say than this. It speaks to you of a truth believed under every sky by the Church's children, that Christ is living, and that He reigns for ever. Christ is in the midst of us by His Eternal Presence. Others have acquired immortality by their work, but it is an immortality limited by questions, whether their work is more durable, more true, more striking, more useful, than that of possible rivals. Jesus Christ is working to-day as He worked yesterday, and as He will work to-morrow. The better to understand this immutability, consider—I. THE IMMUTABILITY OF HIS TEACHING. He told us that it would be so. Standing one day in view of the Temple, He said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." It is remarkable that, when He pronounced these words, not one of them was written down. They were confided to the memory of a few poor, ignorant men, who hardly understood them. In the sanctuaries of Thebes, of Delphi, and of Nineveh, the religious thought of millions of worshippers have been engraved on marble and on metal, in the desire to hand down to coming generations the names and the exploits of their gods. What is there left of it all? The memorials of the proud religions of the masters of the world, and those remembrances which one might have expected to be imperishable, have vanished into the sombre depths of the great ocean of oblivion;

but, like the ark of old, the words of Christ preserved in four little books have become the heritage, and the treasure, not only of all the successive generations of all the superior races on the face of the earth, but also of the humblest and the poorest among the children of men. You will tell me, perhaps, that in this perpetual duration of the teaching of Jesus Christ, there is nothing very extraordinary and nothing peculiar to Himself. I may be told of many thinkers and poets since Homer and Plato whose works have become the property of humanity. But there is, in the teaching of Jesus Christ, another feature. It is unchanging, not only in its duration, but in the nature of the authority it possesses. Here is a gospel which, in every age and in every clime, subjugates and makes captive the human conscience. Hundreds of millions of souls live and die under the same spell which, in the days of our Lord, captivated disciples as they listened to Him for the first time. Ask yourself why this should be so. The object of true religion is to establish and strengthen the double tie existing between God and man, and between man and his fellow man. What is the root of all our knowledge of Jesus Christ if it is not just this? The tie which linked us to God has been broken by sin. It can be re-established by pardon from God and faith from man, and when it has been formed anew it should show itself in the justice and the charity of our lives. That is the substance of all Christ's teaching. Let us take another step. The teaching of Christ is remarkable, not only for what He said, but for what He did not say. His extraordinary sobriety of thought and of language is the best proof that His was not the supreme effort of the human soul aspiring towards the infinite. It is the revelation of God who tells man just as much as it is necessary for him to know and no more. This sobriety is the most striking proof of His immutability. Let us suppose that, like every other religious teacher, He had touched upon political and social questions, that He had pronounced some views on scientific questions, and we found in the pages of the Gospel a system of caste, as in Brahminism, or a code of legal enactments, as in Mahommedanism, or even a religious philosophy, such as that of the schoolmen. Is it not plain that on all sides He would have exposed Himself to unnecessary attacks from the progressive thought of the ages? He might have impressed men by His brilliancy, but in His teaching there would have been the seeds of decay. What do we find in them? Why, we find that marvellous, that indefinable, thing which we call life. Just in that way, life is always found in the words of Christ, immutable in its essence, infinitely diverse in its applications. They are words which can never grow old. They are as immutable as Justice, fruitful as Love, eternal as Truth. II. Look, again, at the immutability of Jesus Christ as exemplified in His PERSON. Jesus Christ is not only a Master, a Revealer, but He is also a Revelation. He did not merely say, "Listen to Me"; He said, too, "Look at Me." Not only did He say, "Believe My words," He said, "Believe in Me." In the person of Jesus Christ there are two Beings in unity, the Son of God and the Son of Man, the visible image of the invisible God, and the ideal type of humanity. I am not going to attempt to explain the Mystery. I simply place myself in the presence of Jesus Christ. There I see the Ideal Type of moral perfection. I say that this Type is immutable, and that the words of the text are true of that Type, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Just think of it for a moment—an immutable Ideal! Is there not something bold and even presumptuous in the very phrase? Nothing in the history of the human imagination is so difficult as to create an ideal of perfection which will last. The greatest geniuses have failed in the endeavour. Dante and Milton described with wonderful power the sufferings of hell; they failed, utterly, when they tried to paint the harmonies of heaven. Novelists who have depicted with bitter truth the anguish of remorse, and the consuming tortures of guilty passion, have never yet succeeded in creating an ideal hero. The ideal of one race is not the ideal of another. But in Christ's Person I behold a strange fact. Here is a Being who came forth from the East. Here is a Descendant of Shem who will bend the sons of Japhet. Here is a Representative of the House of Israel in whom representatives of all earth's races have found and adored the absolute Moral Ideal. He has bent before His Throne the art-loving children of Greece, who in His Cross of shame have discovered a creation of beauty which none of their most gifted artists could imitate. Before His sceptre have bowed low the chiefs and the soldiers of Imperial Rome, and when in the ruin of that Empire young and barbarous races streamed forth from the far-off lands of the East, like troubled waves of the ocean tossing and heaving beneath the anger of God, those restless

souls bowed down in the dust before a Majesty simpler and purer than any they had ever seen, in fact, or in dream. He restrained the brutality of men in the Middle Ages, when, in the Renaissance, the antiquity which men had rediscovered intoxicated their minds with subtle fancies, He took possession of the strong souls, like Luther and like Calvin, who, by their very faults, checked the shortcomings of their age. So it was in the seventeenth century, the century of positive science, the age which saw masters like Copernicus, like Euler, like Newton, like Pascal, great souls whose glory it was to devote themselves and all their genius to the service of their fellow men. And so it is to-day. After criticism the most pitiless, after scrutiny the most rigid, after all His acts, His works, His life have been dissected, that sublime Figure still remains as sublime and as holy as ever, towering above human ideas of grandeur, above human idols and human follies. III. Immutable, too, is He in His work. For three years He worked on earth. By the Spirit He works throughout the centuries, and in all time you will see in His work three great characteristics. 1. He saves. For that purpose He came here. He is nothing unless He is the Redeemer. 2. He sanctified. Through the ages He gives humanity new life, transforming man's hearts, changing men's wills and men's lives, working a work in man's souls analogous to that which here below He wrought in their bodies when He healed men's leprosies, delivered men possessed of devils, raised men who had passed into the grasp of death. I know well to what you are going to object. Where, you will ask me, was this sanctifying influence in the days of Constantine, and of Clovis, or, later on, in Christian Gaul when the Merovingian kings illustrated all the infamies of life? Where, we have often asked, has it been in many of our modern churches, which have become worldly and insipid like salt that has lost its flavour? It was there. It may have lain mysterious and hidden in the souls of the faithful, so that the world knew it not—in faithful souls who, mingling with sinners of the most flagrant type, yet preserved to their last breath the Treasure of the Faith and the Eternal Hope. It was there in the narrow cell of a convent, and in the caverns of the Cevennes, in those humble men, those little ones of earth's passing show, who would not bend the knee to Baal. And that is why the Church has lived. That is why she still lives, saved by her Divine Chief, who watches over her, and preserves her. 3. I have said, too, that Christ consoles. It is here that men may see, if they choose, the immutable nature of His work. It is attested beyond all doubt, not by the happiest of men, but by the most afflicted—Jesus Christ consoles. He has shown us an object in grief which makes it endurable. He lightens death with an eternal hope. He tells us of a sympathy profound, immense, infinite. And this is not an hypothesis. It is a reality we experience every hour, every minute. The blind only can deny that this consolation exists. That Christ is unchangeable—let us take, then, this thought as a great power in our faith, a great consolation for our hearts, a great encouragement for our active and militant Christianity. Christ is always the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He was here yesterday, He will be here to-morrow. His wealth of tenderness and of sympathy is always the same. He will be here in all possible troubles. He will be with us in the last moments of weakness, in the last sigh of agony. He will be with us to the very end. We are under the protection of an unchanging Power. When Charlemagne had reconstructed the political edifice of the Cæsars, when he had gathered together under his victorious sceptre Germany and Helvetia, Italy and Gaul, the astonished world gazed upon this empire, which extended from the banks of the Baltic to the Pyrenees, and from the Alps to the Ocean. It happened that one day the old Emperor, satiated with glory, sat at a window in his palace on the banks of the Seine, and suddenly his eyes filled with tears. Being asked why he was sad, he pointed to the fields and the vines which the Norman pirates had devastated as they went up the river, and he said: "If they will do this while I live, what will they do when I am dead?" Ah! what will they do after me? It is the last cry of the great ones of the earth, whether they be called Alexander or Cæsar, Charlemagne or Napoleon. It is the last cry of great thinkers like Plato and Spinoza, Leibnitz and Hegel: "What will they do when I am dead?" Imminent change, like a constant menace—heirs to succeed us who may destroy what we have gathered. But we serve an unchanging Master. It has pleased God, says the prophet, that Eternal Empire should rest on His shoulders. Those shoulders will not bend, and that empire will subsist for ever. In this hope, in this faith, in this rest, in this communion of the Universal Church, let us sing the *Te Deum* of the Christians of old, "Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ."

(*E. Bernier, D.D.*) *Sameness without monotony*:—When these words were written they meant: Jesus Christ of to-day (the Gospel day) is the same as Jehovah of yesterday (the Old Testament day). Does not this enlarge our views, ennobling not the Master Himself, but our conception of Him? Now we know who walked with Enoch, who wrestled with Jacob, who walked with Abraham, who revealed Himself to Moses, who led His people like a shepherd—Jesus, the same yesterday and to-day. Always the same. The only (real) difference is the atmosphere through which He is viewed. I used to stay in Cumberland, and right away in line with the street, twenty miles distant, was a grand and venerable mountain—Skiddaw—always there, always the same, and yet different every day, every hour. Some days, however, it could not be seen. Clouds rolled between, but it was there, all the same. Other days it seemed close at hand, seen through the atmosphere that precedes rain, when distant objects grow near—a peculiar sombre atmosphere; then the mountain almost overshadowed one with its solemn grandeur. And some days, when the earth was deluged with golden light, and as sunbeams fell athwart the mountain, it seemed further away and yet much nearer, its details startling in their far-away distinctness. Always there, always the same; and yet, how different! Thus we are reminded not only of the sameness of Christ, but the infinite variety—may I reverently say?—the infinite novelty in Him. In Him there is sameness without monotony. How different from ourselves! We weary one another with our sameness. We repeat the same commonplaces in our conversation; we write the same things in our letters; we utter the same platitudes in our religious exercises—and God has more patience with us than we have with each other. Yet now and then we meet with a man about whom there is continually something new; who is always the same, and yet never twice alike; who always seems to have a chapter in reserve; whose life, as we know it better, ever unfolds in a way that charms the senses, enlightens the understanding, and warms the heart. Think of such a man, superior to all you know, and for whose engaging friendship you sometimes think you would give all you have. Yet even he would weary many. And at best he is a cipher, when contrasted with Him in whom is all the fulness of the Godhead and all the perfection of humanity. Even His enemies never grow tired of Him. And that "for ever": who shall say what it will reveal to us? Yesterday and to-day are ample guarantee of what to-morrow will be. Yesterday — Old Testament day and imperfect dispensation — what variety! Many a dreary life would be charmed by a study of the Old Testament alone, with its infinite variety of light and shadow. To-day—Gospel day—who can read the books, who can see all the pictures, who can hear all the music; who can measure all the good inspired by Him, who maketh all things new? I. THE SAME COMPANION. What beautiful glimpses we have of the companionship of yesterday, almost tempting us to wish that we had lived then instead of to-day. But yesterday is so vividly pictured in the Gospels that we may know what to expect to-day. Yesterday Jesus began His mission at a homely gathering—a wedding party—changing water into wine and disappointment into gladness. And even when He did not speak or work, how eloquent and comforting would be that silent presence and companionship. Christ in the house, Christ in the home, the same to-day as yesterday. Think what he must have been in His mother's home for thirty years. And, lest we should be discouraged at the thought, we have the assurance that our association with Him may be real and close and beautiful (Matt. xii. 49, 50). Yesterday He took the little ones up in His arms, laid His hands upon them, and blessed them. And, no doubt, this is given as a sample of what He often did. Is He the same to-day? What means the band of 500,000 Sunday-school teachers (in our own country alone) every Sunday afternoon gathering around them some 5,000,000 scholars, and, without pay, telling those children the old, old story? What is meant by all the entrancing books and papers published for children to-day?—Jesus Christ, the same Friend of childhood to-day as yesterday; no longer embracing two or three children in the Temple cloister, but a great multitude that no man can number. II. THE SAME TEACHER. "Lo! I am with you alway." Is He not ascended up on high? Yet to an eminence where all can see Him. When on earth, He said, "The Son of man which is in heaven." If in heaven when on earth, surely on earth when in heaven. III. THE SAME SAVIOUR. Yesterday the blind received their sight, the deaf were made to hear, the lame to walk, the leper to rejoice as he escaped a living death. All this free, without money, without price, and never one case refused. Jesus—"Saviour"—is the same to-day, and none dare point to a case and say it is too desperate for

Him. Yesterday He recalled the maiden scarcely cold in death, the young man some time longer dead, and Lazarus far within the portals of death. Even concerning the body alone, when the Christian considers the marvels of surgery to-day, the progress of nursing, and matters pertaining to health and food, he is bound to ascribe them all to Him who went about doing good to body and soul alike. We feel that the miracles of to-day would not be experienced had not the Saviour come down to this poor, sin-stricken world—if He did not abide in it still. Philosophy and civilisation had their chance for ages to show what the world could do without a Divine Saviour. Last, but not least—in some way we cannot understand—Christ is the same to-day in His dying love. His sympathy is the same. When the heavens were opened to the seer of Patmos, he beheld that which made him think of a Lamb newly slain, yet slain from the foundation of the world. (*M. Eastwood.*) *The unchangeableness of Christ:*—I. HE MUST BE ESSENTIALLY DIVINE. 1. The history of all creature existences shows that they are essentially mutable. 2. The nature of things shows that the uncreated alone can be immutable. II. HIS GOSPEL MUST STAND FOR EVER AS THE LIVING EXPRESSION OF HIMSELF. III. HIS FRIENDS ARE ETERNALLY BLESSED. (*Homilist.*) *Instructions and consolations from the unchangeableness of Christ:*—I. CONSIDER THE OCCASION OF THESE WORDS. 1. The Hebrews had been blessed with public instructors, who had spoken to them the word of God, and who believed and lived what they taught. 2. They had spoken, but now they ceased to speak the word of God. Their exemplary edifying conversation was now at an end. 3. Ministers, who have thus spoken the word of God, should be remembered, their faith followed, and the end of their conversation considered. 4. From the caution after our text, "Be not carried about with diverse and strange doctrines," it would appear that there were some who endeavoured to turn the Hebrews aside from that purity and simplicity of the gospel which their deceased pastors had inculcated. Even in the primitive Church, tares were sown soon after the wheat, and sprung up in abundance. II. CONSIDER THE MEANING of my text, and the practical instructions it suggests. 1. The religion of Jesus is ever the same. The doctrines and laws, taught by Christ and His inspired apostles, have been, are, and ever shall be, the only rule of faith and manners. 2. The kind and benevolent affections of Jesus are the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Dispensations of Providence may wear a frowning aspect; clouds and darkness may be round about the Saviour, and hide from His ransomed ones the pleasant light of His countenance; still, however, the love of His heart never expires, never diminishes. 3. The power of Christ is the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. (*J. Erskine, D.D.*) *The uniformity of God in His government:*—St. Paul gives us a very beautiful idea of God, when he says, "The wisdom of God is manifold." The first great cause, the Supreme Being, hath designs infinitely diversified. This appears by the various beings which He hath created, and by the different ways in which He governs them. But, although there be a diversity in the conduct of God, it is always a diversity of wisdom. Whether He creates a material or an intelligent world; whether He forms celestial or terrestial bodies, men, angels, seraphims, or cherubims; whether He governs the universe by the same, or by different laws; in all cases, and at all times, He acts like a God: He hath only one principle, and that is order. There is a harmony in His perfections, which He never disconcerts. I. We see in THE ECONOMY OF TIME four remarkable varieties. 1. We see in God's government of His Church various degrees of light communicated. Compare the time of Moses with that of the prophets, and that of the prophets with that of the evangelists and apostles. In these various degrees of knowledge, communicated by God to men, I see that uniformity which is the distinguishing character of His actions, and the inviolable rule of His government. The same principle that inclined Him to grant a little light to the age of Moses, inclined Him to afford more to the time of the prophets, and the greatest of all to the age in which the evangelists and apostles lived. What is this principle? It is a principle of order, which requires that the object proposed to a faculty be proportioned to this faculty; that a truth proposed to an intelligence be proportioned to this intelligence. 2. What justifies the government of God on one of these articles, on the various degrees of light bestowed on His Church, will fully justify Him in regard to the worship required by Him. Conceive of the Jews, enveloped in matter, loving to see the objects of their worship before their eyes, and, as they said themselves, to have gods going before them. Imagine these gross creatures coming into our assemblies, how could they, being all sense and imagination (so to speak), exercise the better powers of their souls

without objects operating on fancy and sense? How could they have made reflection, meditation, and thought, supply the place of hands and eyes, they who hardly knew what it was to meditate? How could they, who had hardly any idea of spirituality, have studied the nature of God abstractly, which yet is the only way of conducting us to a clear knowledge of a spiritual being? 3. The same may be said of the evidences, on which God hath founded the faith of His Church. What a striking difference! Formerly the Church saw sensible miracles, level to the weakest capacities; at present our faith is founded on a chain of principles and consequences which find exercise for the most penetrating geniuses. How many times have infidels reproached us on account of this difference! Represent to yourselves the whole world let loose against Christians; imagine the primitive disciples required to believe the heavenly origin of a religion, which called them first to be baptized in water, then in blood. How necessary were miracles in these adverse times, and how hard, with all the encouragement given by them, must the practice of duty be then! Weigh these circumstances against yours, and the balance will appear more equal than ye have imagined. 4. In like manner we observe a similar uniformity in the various laws prescribed to the Church. At all times, and in all places, God required His Church to love Him with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the mind: but He did not inform His people at all times and in all places the manner in which He required love to express itself. Expressions of love must be regulated by ideas of Deity. Ideas of Deity are more or less pure as God reveals Himself more or less clearly. 5. Our fifth article is intended to justify the various conditions in which it hath pleased God to place His Church. At one time the Church enjoys temporal pomp and felicity, at another it is exposed to whatever the world can invent of misery and ignominy. Let us reason in regard to the Church in general, as we reason in regard to each private member of it. Do you think (I speak now to each individual) there is a dungeon so deep, a chain so heavy, a misery so great, a malady so desperate, that God cannot deliver you, were your deliverance suitable to the eminence of His perfections? Why, then, doth He at any time reduce us to these dismal extremities? Order requires God, who intends to save you, to employ those means, which are most likely to conduct you to salvation, or, if you refuse to profit by them, to harden you under them. He wills your salvation, and therefore He removes all your obstacles to salvation. Let us reason in regard to the Church in general, as we do in regard to the individuals who compose it. A change in the condition of the Church doth not argue any change in the attributes of God. The same eminence of perfections which engageth Him sometimes to make all concur to the prosperity of His Church, engageth Him at other times to unite all adversities against it. II. We have considered Jesus Christ in the economy of time, now let us consider Him in THE ECONOMY OF ETERNITY. We shall see in this, as in the former, that harmony of perfections, that uniformity of government, which made our apostle say, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." The same principle that formed His plan of human government in the economy of time, will form a plan altogether different in that of eternity. The same principle of proportion which inclines Him to confine our faculties within a narrow circle during this life, will incline Him infinitely to extend the sphere of them in a future state. The same principle which induces Him now to communicate Himself to us in a small degree, will then induce Him to communicate Himself to us in a far more eminent degree. The same principle that inclines Him now to assemble us in material buildings, to cherish our devotion by exercises savouring of the frailty of our state, by the singing of psalms, and by the participation of sacraments, will incline Him hereafter to cherish it by means more noble, more sublime, better suited to the dignity of our origin and to the price of our redemption. The same principle which inclines Him to involve us now in indigence, misery, contempt, sickness, and death, will then induce Him to free us from all these ills, and to introduce us into that happy state where there will be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, and where all tears shall be wiped away from our eyes. Proportion requires that intelligent creatures should be some time in a state of probation, and this is the nature of the present dispensation: but the same law of proportion requires also, that after intelligent creatures have been some time in a state of trial, and have answered the end of their being placed in such a state, there should be a state of retribution in an eternal economy. By this truth let us regulate our faith, our morality, and our ideas of our future destiny. 1. Our faith. Let us adore only one God, and let us acknowledge in Him only one perfection, that is to say, a harmony, which results

from all His perfections. If this idea be impressed on our minds, our faith will never be shaken, at least it will never be destroyed by the vicissitudes of the world, or by those of the Church. Why? Because we shall be fully convinced, that the vicissitudes of both proceed from the same cause, I mean the immutability of that God who saith by the mouth of one of His prophets, "I, the Lord, change not." 2. God hath only one principle of His actions, that is proportion, order, fitness of things. Let love of order be the principle of all your actions; it is the character of a Christian, and would to God it were the character of all my hearers. A Christian hath only one principle of action. In Scripture-style this disposition of mind is called "walking with God," "setting the Lord always before us." Glorious character of a Christian, always uniform and like himself! He does nothing, if I may be allowed to speak so, but arrange his actions differently, as his circumstances vary. 3. Finally, this idea of God is very proper to regulate that of your future destiny. Do we wish for a full assurance of a claim to eternal happiness? Let us then by our conduct form an inseparable relation between our eternal felicity and the invariable perfections of that God who changeth not; let us spare no pains to arrive at that happy state; let us address to God our most fervent prayers to engage Him to bless the efforts which we make to enjoy it; and, after we have seriously engaged in this great work, let us fear nothing. (*J. Saurin.*) *The unchanging Saviour*:—I. WHAT IS DENIED. It is denied that either time, or mood, or circumstances, or provocation, or death, can alter Jesus Christ our Lord. 1. Time changes us. Your portrait, taken years ago, when you were in your prime, hangs on the walls of your home. You sometimes sadly contrast it with your present self. Then the face was unseamed by care, unscarred by conflict; but now how weary and furrowed! The upright form is bent, the step has lost its spring. But there is a greater difference between two mental than physical portraitures. Opinions alter. And sometimes the question arises, Can time alter Him whose portrait hangs on the walls of our hearts, painted in undying colours by the hands of the four Evangelists? Of course, time takes no effect on God, who is the I AM, eternal and changeless. But Jesus is man as well as God. He has tenses in His being: the yesterday of the past, the to-day of the present, the to-morrow of the future. It is at least a question whether His human nature, keyed to the experiences of man, may not carry with it, even to influence His royal heart, that sensitiveness to the touch of time which is characteristic of our race. But the question tarries only for a second. Time is foiled in Jesus. He has passed out of its sphere, and is impervious to its spell. 2. Moods change us. We know people who are oranges one day, and lemons the next; now a summer's day, and, again, a nipping frost; rock and reed alternately. You have to suit yourself to their varying mood, asking to-day what you would not dare to mention to-morrow; and thus there is a continual unrest and scheming in the hearts of their friends. But it is not so with Jesus. Never tired, or put out, or variable. 3. Circumstances change us. Men who in poverty and obscurity have been accessible and genial, become haughty when idolised for their genius and fawned on for their wealth. New friends, new spheres, new surroundings alter men marvellously. What a change has passed over Jesus Christ, since mortal eyes beheld Him. Crowned with glory and honour; seated at the right hand of the Father. Can this be He who was despised, an outcast, and a sufferer? It is indeed He. But surely it were too much to expect that He should be quite the same? Nay, but He is. And one proof of it is that the graces which He shed on the first age of the Church were of exactly the same quality as those which we now enjoy. We know that the texture of light is unaltered, because the analysis of a ray, which has just reached us from some distant star, whence it started as Adam stepped across the threshold of Eden, is of precisely the same nature as the analysis of the ray of light now striking on this page. And we know that Jesus Christ is the same as He was, because the life which throbbed in the first believers, resulted in those very fruits which are evident in our hearts and lives, all having emanated from Himself. 4. Sin and provocation change us. Our souls close up to those who have deceived our confidence. But sin cannot change Christ's heart, though it may affect His behaviour. If it could do so, it must have changed His feelings to Peter. But the only apparent alteration made by that sad denial was an increased tenderness. II. WHAT IS AFFIRMED. 1. He is the same in His person (chap. i. 12). His vesture alters. He has exchanged the gaberdine of the peasant for the robes of which He stripped Himself on the eve of His incarnation; but beneath those robes beats the same heart as heaved with anguish at the grave where His friend lay dead. 2. He is also the same in His office (chap. vii. 24).

Unwearicdly He pursues His chosen work as the Mediator, Priest, and Intercessor of men. III. WHAT IT IMPLIES. It implies that He is God. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *Jesus Christ immutable:*—I. First, the personal names of our Lord here mentioned —"JESUS CHRIST." "Jesus" stands first. That is our Lord's Hebrew name, "Jesus," or, "Joshua." The word signifies, a Saviour, "for He shall save His people from their sins." It was given to Him in His cradle. Jesus in the manger deserves to be called the Saviour, for when it can be said that "the tabernacle of God is with men, and He doth dwell among them," there is hope that all good things will be given to the fallen race. He was called Jesus in His childhood— "The Holy Child Jesus." He was Jesus, too, and is commonly called so both by His foes and by His friends in His active life. It is as Jesus the Saviour that He heals the sick. But He comes out most clearly as Jesus when dying on the cross; named so in a writing, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." There pre-eminently was He the Saviour, being made a curse for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Still bearing the name of Jesus, our Lord rose from the dead. He is a Saviour for us since He vanquished the last enemy that shall be destroyed, that we, having been saved from sin by His death, should be saved from death through His resurrection. Jesus is the title under which He is called in glory, for "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." As Jesus He shall shortly come, and we are "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." There are two words in the name Jesus. The one is a contraction of the word "Jehovah," the other is the word which I have just now explained to you as ultimately coming to mean "salvation." Taken to pieces, the word Jesus means Jehovah-salvation. You have the glorious essence and nature of Christ revealed to you as Jehovah, "I am that I am," and then you have in the second part of His name His great work for you in setting you at large and delivering you from all distress. Now reverently consider the second title—Christ. That is a Greek name, a Gentile name— Anointed. So that you see you have the Hebrew Joshua, Jesus, then the Greek Christos, Christ; so that we may see that no longer is there either Jew or Gentile, but all are one in Jesus Christ. The word Christ, as you all know, signifies anointed, and as such our Lord is sometimes called "the Christ," "the very Christ"; at other times "the Lord's Christ," and sometimes "the Christ of God." He is the Lord's Anointed, our King, and our Shield. This word "Christ" teaches us three great truths. 1. It indicates His offices. He exercises offices in which anointing is necessary, and these are three: the office of the King, of the Priest, and of the Prophet. But it means more than that. 2. The name Christ declares His right to those offices. He is not King because He sets Himself up as such. God has set Him as King upon His holy hill of Zion, and anointed Him to rule. He is also Priest, but He has not taken the priesthood upon Himself, for He is the propitiation whom God has set forth for human sin. He comes not as a prophet who assumes office, but God hath anointed Him to preach glad tidings to the poor, and to come among His people with the welcome news of eternal love. 3. Moreover, this anointing signifies that as He has the office, and as it is His by right, so He has the qualifications for the work. II. HIS MEMORABLE ATTRIBUTES. Looking at the Greek, one notices that it might be read thus, "Jesus Christ *Himself* yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." The anointed Saviour is always Himself. He is always Jesus Christ; and the word "same" seems to me to bear the most intimate relation to the two titles of the text, and does as good as say that Jesus Christ is always Jesus Christ, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. If the goodly fellowship of the prophets could be here to-day, they would all testify to you that He was the same in every office in their times as He is in these our days. 1. Jesus Christ is the same now as He was in times gone by, for the text saith, "The same yesterday, and to-day." He is the same to-day as He was from old eternity. Before all worlds He planned our salvation; He entered into covenant with His Father to undertake it. Whatever was in the heart of Christ before the stars began to shine, that same infinite love is there to-day. Jesus is the same to-day as He was when He was here on earth. When He tabernacled among men, He was most willing to save. Blessed be His name, Jesus Christ is the same to-day as in apostolic days. Then, He gave the fulness of the Spirit. We have had great enjoyments of God's presence; we do remember the love of our espousals, and if we have not the same joys to-day, it is no fault of His. There is the same water in the well still, and if we have not drawn it, it is our fault. 2. Now, further,

Christ shall be to-morrow what He has been yesterday and is to-day. Our Lord Jesus Christ will be changed in no respect throughout the whole of our life. III. OUR LORD'S EVIDENT CLAIMS. 1. If our Lord be "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," then, according to the connection of our text, He is to be followed to the end. If the Lord is still the same, follow Him till you reach Him. Your exit out of this life shall bring you where He is, and you will find Him then what He always was. 2. The next evident claim of Christ upon us is that we should be steadfast in the faith. Notice the ninth verse: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines." 3. If Jesus Christ be thus immutable, He has an evident claim to our most solemn worship. Immutability can be the attribute of none but God. 4. He claims also of us next, that we should trust Him. If He be always the same, here is a rock that cannot be moved; build on it. 5. And, lastly, if He is always the same, rejoice in Him, and rejoice always. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The unchanging Saviour*:—Changing circumstances have great power to work changes in character. There are few things more admirable than the spectacle of a good man passing through many chequered experiences, and keeping himself unchanged, excepting that his piety shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. This, like all other moral beauty and glory, was found in the Son of man, as it has been found in none besides. I. HIS EARTHLY LIFE LEFT HIS LOVE UNCHANGED. His course was one long trial, from the manger to the cross. What His love was when it went into that furnace, that it was when it came out; not so much as "the smell of fire upon it." II. DEATH WROUGHT NO CHANGE IN HIS LOVE. His subjection to its power was real and complete. It would be easy to take up the history of "the great forty days," and show that in word and deed Christ proved that His character was in every respect what it had been before He passed through the mysteries of death. III. EXALTATION TO HEAVENLY POWER AND GLORY WROUGHT NO CHANGE IN THE LOVE OF CHRIST. Since He has been at the right hand of God, He has four times visibly revealed Himself to men on the earth, and each revelation has been for a merciful purpose. To Stephen, to Paul, to John, to the Seven Churches. (*C. Vince.*) *Jesus Christ ever the same*:—I. IN RESPECT OF THE TRUTH OF WHICH HE IS THE TEACHER. In this respect Divine truth differs materially from human science. Science is tentative and experimental. In the light of the nineteenth century the scientists and philosophers of bygone ages seem little better than jugglers. And though some of the axioms of scientific teaching maintain their hold, yet the most accomplished students of the phenomena of life are ever hesitant and reserved. Nothing more vividly illustrates the unchangeableness of Divine truth than the ever changing phases of unbelief, and the ever varying tactics of its opponents. Theological development does not involve new truths. A deeper experience, a profounder study, a growth of intelligence, may invest a well-worn truth with fresh significance and beauty, just as the practised hand of the lapidary can develop the latent brilliance of a gem—each fresh operation discovering new tints, new possibilities of lustre. Biblical criticism may illumine an obscure passage; single words here and there may be touched with new life; but the cardinal verities remain changeless and unalterable. The unchanging truth, while it is our safety, is our confidence. Whatever changes, the doctrines to which we have yielded our faith will never change. Whatever fails, the truth shall not fail. II. IN RESPECT OF THE METHODS OF HIS ADMINISTRATION. III. IN RESPECT OF THE RESOURCES AT HIS COMMAND (Matt. xxviii. 18–20). Anticipating this glorious investment, the Psalmist sang long before of "gifts for men," which were to be the prerogative of the ascended Lord. There is nothing to warrant the theory that these gifts were temporary, that they were limited to any particular age or crisis, or that they were distinctive of certain aspects only of the Messianic reign. It was of Himself, as thus endowed with "all power," that the Lord said, in charging His followers with their great commission: "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." It is impossible now to indicate the many-sided aspects of His mediatorial power. The word "all" defies exhaustion. He can shape the course of history and open doors which prejudice and enmity have closed. By the viewless ministrations of His Spirit He can prepare the minds of men for the reception of saving truth. He can endow the holy life with wealth, and inspire a generosity which will rise to every emergency. He can raise up and qualify men for every branch of Christian service: the heroes of the mission-field, the inventors and administrators of Church economy, the mighty preachers of all ages have been just what He made them. (*R. N. Young, D.D.*) *The immutable mercy of Jesus Christ*:—I. THE

CENTRE IS JESUS CHRIST. Jesus was His proper name, Christ His appellative. Jesus a name of His nature, Christ of His office and dignity. Jesus, a name of all sweetness. A Reconciler, a Redeemer, a Saviour. When the conscience wrestles with law, sin, death, there is nothing but horror and despair without Jesus. The Word of God, the Son of God, the Christ of God, are titles of glory; Jesus, a Saviour, is a title of grace, mercy, redemption. This Jesus Christ is the centre of this text; and not only of this, but of the whole Scripture. The sum of Divinity is the Scripture; the sum of the Scripture is the gospel; the sum of the gospel is Jesus Christ. II. THE REFERRING LINE, PROPER TO THIS CENTRE, IS "THE SAME." There is no mutability in Christ; "no variableness, nor shadow of turning" (Jam. i. 17). All lower lights have their inconstancy; but in the "Father of lights" there is no changeableness. 1. This dissuades our confidence in worldly things because they are inconstant. All vanities are but butterflies, which wanton children greedily catch for; and sometimes they fly beside them, sometimes before them, sometimes behind them, sometimes close by them; yea, through their fingers, and yet they miss them; and when they have them, they are but butterflies; they have painted wings, but are crude and squalid worms. 2. This persuades us to an imitation of Christ's constancy. Let the stableness of His mercy to us work a stableness of our love to Him. And howsoever, like the lower orbs, we have a natural motion of our own from good to evil, yet let us suffer the higher power to move us supernaturally from evil to good. III. THE CIRCUMFERENCE. 1. Objectively. Jesus Christ is the same in His word; and that (1) Yesterday in pre-ordination; (2) To-day in incarnation; (3) For ever in application. 2. Subjectively, in His power the same; and that (1) Yesterday, for He made the world; (2) To-day, for He governs the world; (3) For ever, for He shall judge the world. 3. Effectually in His grace and mercy. So He is the same, (1) Yesterday to our fathers; (2) To-day to ourselves; (3) For ever to our children. (*T. Adams.*)

The changelessness of Christ:—Sameness is not a quality of things much loved for its own sake. In common things we soon grow wearied of sameness, and the whole earthly system of things is founded on the principle of variety and change. In what department of this universe shall we find immobility? Take your stand on the quietest day in the stillest place you can find—change is going on around you with every moment of time, so restless is nature down to its very heart. The same law holds in providence. Indeed, there could be no providence without change; no providing and no rule would be possible if no new circumstances arose. The same constitution of things holds in the higher sphere of man's moral progress and religious life. We make progress only in change—we put off the old and put on the new—we learn and unlearn—we fall and rise again; and as nature and providence are never the same on two successive days, so our souls are never in exactly the same moral state on one day as they were on the day before. The prayer of every Christian heart is: "Oh! unchanging One, let *me* change from day to day, until I gain Thine image and reach Thy presence!" And may we not believe this to be the prayer of angels too? Are they not thirsting for change "from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord?" And yet many hearts thrill with a sacred joy on hearing the words, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." How comes it that when we are pleased and profited by variety everywhere else, we are conscious of a sublime satisfaction in finding fixedness here? Is it not because we are created to find rest and portion only in God? Behind all changes in nature we press to unchanging power and law, and feel that these can reside only in an unchanging God. The text is a declaration of the immutability of Jesus Christ, and so takes for granted His divinity. It can be said of no creature that he is the same yesterday and to-day. That language can only have reference to a Divine Being, and it can only be with regard to His Divine qualities that Jesus Christ can be said to be immutable. In fact, He is *not* the same yesterday and to-day in the forms and aspects of His existence. In these there has been great change. He was "with God," then with man, now with God again. In regard to these visible, sensible manifestations, Jesus Christ is different to-day from what He was yesterday, and (we speak with reverence), for anything said in the Scriptures, He may be different to-morrow from what He is to-day. Some such change may be suggested in 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28. But these mortal, formal changes, whatever they are, do not affect the substantial meaning of the text. Jesus Christ, in all that constitutes His personality and in all that pertains to His character, is the same, and cannot change. In His will, in His purposes, in His principles, in His affections, He is for ever the same. These things constitute being and character, and these in

Him are without change. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *The unchanging Christ*:—I. I apply these words as a New Year's motto, in two or three different directions, and ask you to consider, first, THE UNCHANGING CHRIST IN HIS RELATION TO OUR CHANGEFUL LIVES. The one thing of which anticipation may be sure is that nothing continues in one stay. Blessed are they who, in a world of passing phenomena, penetrate to the still centre of rest, and looking over all the vacillations of the things that can be shaken, can turn to the Christ and say, Thou who movest all things art Thyself unmoved; Thou who changest all things, Thyself changest not. Let the fleeting proclaim to you the permanent; let the world with its revolutions lead you up to the thought of Him that is the same for ever. For that is the only thought on which a man can build, and, building, be at rest. The yesterday of my text may either be applied to the generations that have passed, and then the "to-day" is our little life; or it may be applied to my own yesterday, and then the to-day is this narrow present. In either application the words of my text are full of hope and of joy. "Jesus Christ is the same to-day." We are always tempted to think that this moment is commonplace and insignificant. Yesterday lies consecrated in memory; to-morrow, radiant in hope; but to-day is poverty-stricken and prose. The sky is furthest away from us right over our heads; behind and in front it seems to touch the earth. But if we will only realise that all that sparkling lustre and all that more than mortal tenderness of pity and of love with which Jesus Christ has irradiated and sweetened any past is verily here with us amidst the commonplaces and insignificant duties of the dusty to-day, then we need look back to no purple distance, nor forward to any horizon where sky and earth kiss, but feel that here or nowhere, now or never, is Christ the all-sufficient and unchanging Friend. He is faithful. He cannot deny Himself. II. So, secondly, I apply these words in another direction. I ask you to think of THE RELATION BETWEEN THE UNCHANGING CHRIST AND THE DYING HELPERS. God's changeful providence comes into all our lives, and parts dear ones, making their places empty that Christ Himself may fill the empty places, and, striking away other props, though the tendrils that twine round them bleed with the wrench, in order that the plant may no longer trail along the ground, but twine itself round the Cross and climb to the Christ upon the throne. He lives, and in Him all loves and companionships live unchanged. III. So, further, we apply, in the third place, this thought to THE RELATION BETWEEN THE UNCHANGING CHRIST AND DECAYING INSTITUTIONS AND OPINIONS. Man's systems are the shadows on the hillside. Christ is the everlasting solemn mountain itself. Much in the popular conception of Christianity is in the act of passing. Let it go; Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. We need not fear change within the limits of His Church or of His world. For change there means progress, and the more the human embodiments of Christian truth disintegrate, the more distinctly does the solemn unique figure of Christ the same rise before us. His sameness is consistent with an infinite unfolding of new preciousness and new powers, as new generations with new questions arise, and the world seeks for fresh guidance. "I write no new commandment unto you"; I preach no new Christ unto you. "Again a new commandment I write unto you," and every generation will find new impulse, new teaching, new shaping energies, social and individual, ecclesiastical, theological, intellectual, in the old Christ who was crucified for our offences and raised again for our justification, and remains "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." IV. Lastly, look at these words in their application to THE RELATION BETWEEN THE UNCHANGING CHRIST AND THE ETERNAL LOVE OF HEAVEN. The "for ever" of my text is not to be limited to this present life, but it runs on into the remotest future and boundless prospect of an eternal unfolding and reception of new beauties in the old earthly Christ. For Him the change between the "to-day" of His earthly life and the "for ever" of His ascended glory made no change in the tenderness of His heart, the sweetness of His smile, the nearness of His helping hand. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Yesterday and to-day*:—Employing the word "yesterday" to represent past time in general, we ask, who beside Jesus Christ is the same to-day as yesterday? Yesterday our fathers and our mothers were young, and hale, and strong—to-day they lean towards the earth like half-felled trees, or they lie prostrate as trees wholly cut down. Yesterday the hair of the husband was black as a raven—to-day it is white as wool. Yesterday the children were like olive plants round about the table—to-day one is not, another withers in the place that still knows him, and others are transplanted to a foreign soil. Yesterday kindred and friends were a wide social circle—to-day but a poor segment of that circle is left. And these changes will continue—not

absolutely, and for ever, but to-morrow, and for days in succession, until the last man, and the last day. And with the changes to which men are subject is associated mutation, which, like waves flowing over sand, affects the condition and appearance of all things. Yet here, where nothing is abiding but change—here where we should imagine that we should get accustomed to change—we are always sighing for that which is the same to-day as yesterday, and which will be the same for ever. The Divine in Jesus Christ is ever the same, His power in heaven, in earth, and in hell—His knowledge—all that hath been, all that is, and all that will be—His wisdom for device and design, for ruling and over-ruling, for ordering all beings and things—His presence in all places—His spotless purity, and undeviating righteousness—His unbounded love—are all "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." The humanity of Jesus Christ is in all its essential features the same. Eighteen centuries ago it was said of Him that "He manifested forth His glory." This glory—the fulness of grace and truth—is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." And is He the same in His devotedness to the work of redemption? Yesterday that work was His. He gave Himself to it in the beginning; undertook it when man fell; made ready for His advent during four thousand years; came in the fulness of time. He came to live as a man—He did live as a man. He came to suffer as a substitute. He came here, not to stay, but to return. Yesterday Jesus Christ did all this—and what of to-day? To-day! This is the favourable time—this is the day of Jesus Christ's salvation. And for ever will Jesus Christ be our Redeemer. "Of His kingdom there shall be no end." "He continueth ever." "He hath an unchangeable priesthood." "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." "He shall reign for ever and ever." He has made great promises to His disciples. He has said that they shall never hunger and shall never thirst, they shall never die, they shall do great works, they shall not abide in darkness, they shall have peace, they shall join Christ in His glory. *Will* He fulfil these words? *Can* He? In disposition to fulfil them, and in power, Jesus Christ "is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." He is the revealer of what the apostle Paul calls present truth—and in His exhibition of that which it is essential for us to know, and essential for us to believe, He changeth not. Still, too, He assures His disciples, "I will come again." He said this yesterday. And to-day many of you are found among those who wait for His appearing, and who love His appearing—and as the vision seems to tarry, and as the time appears to be delayed, often do you hear Him say, "I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." Jesus Christ is the same in His influence upon those who believe in Him. Yesterday it was testified, "The love of Christ constraineth us"—it carries us out of the course of the world. To-day, moved by His love, multitudes are acting and suffering as those only can work and endure who live, not unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again. And what say you of His love? His eye is the same—bright as a flame of fire, and strong enough to view all things, whether great or small. His ear is the same—quick and sensitive; embracing the harmonies of creation, and receiving at the same time the whisper of a little one's prayer. His hand is the same—strong even to almightiness. And His heart is the same—sympathetic, patient, generous, tender as a woman's, strong in its personal attachment, and filled with a love which surpasseth knowledge. In all respects, and in all aspects, Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." To-day, brethren, Jesus Christ is the same as when Peter and John rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name"—not counted worthy to wear some crown for His name, unless the crown be a crown of thorns, but "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." Then to-day let us boldly confess Him. To-day Jesus Christ is the same as when Paul said, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him until that day." Then let us with all our heart confide in Him to-day. Let us renew our confidence. Let us give everything up to Him, ourselves and our all. To-day Jesus Christ is the same as when He said, "I am the vine; ye are the branches." Then let us abide in Him to-day. To-day Jesus Christ is the same as when it was said, "We are all one in Christ Jesus." Then let us to-day promote the manifestation of the true unity of all believers. (*S. Martin.*) *The unchanging Christ:*—I. Follow for a moment THE SUGGESTIONS OF THE CONTEXT; remember those who exercised a blessed, loving, wise "rule" over you, who "spake to you the Word of God," pastors, parents, friends; those who first interpreted to you your soul's yearning and restlessness, and pointed you to Christ for rest; the true and trusty ones who warned you against your dangers, and

helped you in your temptations, and solaced you in your griefs; who seemed to read your life, and could speak the very words you needed. Death, or separation, or mutual alienation and distrust put an end to their guidance. Alas that association so blessed should have had an end. II. The longing for rest, the desire for what is stable and unchanging—THIS IS OUR DEEPEST WANT; IT STRENGTHENS IN US AS WE GROW OLDER, WISER, BETTER MEN. When our impatience has been tamed, and our impetuosity has become subdued; when we have learned to distrust ourselves, and wish for an immutable goodness on which to stay; when we have learned to distrust the world, to look away from things and circumstances; after we have felt weariness and disappointment, we grow to value quiet. Youth will wander and explore; but manhood asks a home wherein to dwell. But a coming rest is not all we ask; is life all to be weary and changing? must we ever be restless? Our text speaks of One who is even now unchanging. All is not fleeting, Christ is the same. What changes need we now fear? We may be troubled, but we cannot be daunted; surprised, but not unmanned. The deep reality of life abides the same; Jesus Christ the same to-day as yesterday. III. THE WORDS "FOR EVER" FALL STRANGELY ON OUR EARS; THE SOLEMN FUTURE IS UNKNOWN AND UNIMAGINABLE. Here I can work, here I can feel, here I am somewhat at home; but that world will be so unutterably strange. Again the thought of the immutable One bears up out of the confusion of changing things. There will be more familiarity than strangeness there, for "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." He will not be unknown; He will be recognised who quickened, and guided, and sustained us, who was the steadfastness and identity of our passing earthly life. To those Christians who would read the words translated "for ever" in their original form, "unto the ages," they would have a further suggestion. They were accustomed to look on God's purpose in the universe as unfolding itself in a series of æons or dispensations. It had been so in the history of this world; they themselves were living in the end of one dispensation, the old world passing away; a new world, another age, was immediately commencing. Words had come to them from the heavens of old, obscurely referring to at least one other dispensation that had accomplished itself before man was created. Paul speaks of worlds and epochs, of which we now know nothing, that are all to be gathered together, and seen fulfilled in Christ. In the world to come there may be further dispensations, each fulfilling a thought, and all illustrating the mighty being, of God. Here are changes, grand, stupendous, unimaginable. But in the midst of all is seen one unchanging Christ. Let dispensation succeed dispensation, and age follow age, Jesus Christ is "the same unto the ages." New they will be, but they will not be strange; the changes will but illustrate the unchangeable. IV. You will observe that it is not of a thing that is the same, nor even of a truth conceived to be the same, that our text speaks, BUT OF A PERSON WHO IS THE SAME. It is in our personal relations that we feel the identity or the changes of life. Our life continues the same in many vicissitudes, so long as the persons we have to do with are unchanged. Amidst the flux of things, the flow of events, the heart rests on one unchanging friend. We may stand solitary, where once we stood circled with affection, alone but not alone, for He is with us. Truest companion, trustiest guide; He who "laid down His life for His friends"; Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." V. LET ME SPEAK TO YOU PERSONALLY OF THE UNCHANGING SAVIOUR. Well is it for you who trust in Christ. Sorrow cannot long dim your eyes, for He is the unchanging Comforter. Disappointment cannot quench your hopefulness, for He is the unchanging Hope. Difficulties will not daunt you, for He is the unchanging Helper. You will not sink in weakness, for He is the unchanging Strength. You need not fear temptation, for His is an unchanging succour. Sin will not overmaster you, nor guilt drive you to despair; for He whose blood first cleansed you will cleanse you still, and the ear into which you breathed your first penitence is listening still for your repentant prayer. Death has no terror for you, and the endless ages will not see you shaken; for He is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." And you to whom all your life long He has "stretched out His hands"; you who have still rejected Him, you to whom a Christian life has long seemed only a dream in memory, a possibility left far behind; to you too He is still the same. Your conscience may be sluggish, His voice is powerful to arrest; your heart may have grown hard, His love is strong to melt; your will may have become obdurate, His grace is mighty to subdue. (*A. Mackennal, D.D.*)

The immutability of God:—The unchangeableness of God was taught originally as contrasted with the ever changing views entertained when poets, and mythists, and

theologists of antiquity were accustomed to weave just such fancies as they pleased, and twine them about an imaginary God, changing to-day the imaginings of yesterday, as one twines every day fresh flowers about some statue. Without revelation, without even the fixed data which science affords, men formed ideal images and called them God. There was perpetual change. As opposed to such a view of God, a creature of fancy, that changed with all the moods of the imagination, God was declared to be unchangeable. His unchangeableness was also taught as opposed to any change of dynasties. The gods of heathen nations made war with each other, maintaining themselves by the exertion of force against other gods, so that there were revulsions in high and heavenly places, and reigning dynasties were overthrown. As opposed to such a conception as this, the Bible teaches God to be one, from eternity to eternity, sovereign and immutable. God's unchangeableness was taught, also, as opposed to the caprice of heathen divinities. The gods of antiquity were shameful, subject to fits of wrath, and to the most fitful changes of the most desperate feelings. The Bible revealed Jehovah, the unchangeable; who, being once known, was for ever to be obeyed, because His commands were equitable and right, and from whom such as learned His will, and followed the path of obedience, had nothing to fear, but everything to hope. What then, are the respects in which God is to be supposed to be immutable? 1. In the first place, no change is to be imputed to Him such as comes to us by reason of age and the wearing of the body. He is not, as men are, changed by time. It is blessed to think of being eternally young; but the thought that, while men are wrinkled, and bent, and scarred by disease, and toil, and suffering, and are subject to all manner of infirmities, there is One that is unchanged by time, and is for ever in the bloom of youth—this thought comes home with sweetness and comfort to every heart. 2. Nor is there any such change possible to God as belongs to men by reason of their external circumstances. 3. Nor is there any change in the great moral attributes which form the basis of the Divine character—justice, and truth, and love. That which was love in the beginning, is love now, and will be love for evermore. Truth and justice are the same now that they were in the beginning, and that they ever will be. The applications of them vary, but the essential moral qualities themselves never change. God is immutable in the fundamental elements of His being. 4. Nor is there any change in the essential purposes of God's moral government. God saw the end from the beginning; He follows a plan eternally ordained, and the whole vast administration of creation is carried on in pursuance of certain great fixed ideas. In view of these statements, I remark, first, that it is such a view of God as this that inspires confidence and trust in Him. We want to feel that though there are endless variations in goodness and justice, and endless degrees of these things in the Divine mind, yet there is nothing there that traverses justice or good, or that changes these qualities, making that which is evil and unjust in this age just and good in the next age. It has been supposed that the doctrine of God's decrees would repel men, and drive them into infidelity. On the contrary, it draws men. God's decrees may be taught so as to make men feel that they are oppressive; but the thought that the decrees of God run through time and eternity, and that He is true to them, so far from being repulsive, is exceedingly attractive. You might as well say that the laws of nature are repulsive, as to say that God's decrees are so. It is constancy that is the foundation of hope, and civilisation, and everything that is blessed in the world. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Jesus always the same:*—Ah! the time comes when the actor must leave the public stage; when the reins drop from the leader's grasp; and the orator's tongue falters; and the workman's stout arm grows feeble; and the fire of wit is quenched; and the man of genius turns into a drivelling idiot; and men of understanding, without any second birth, pass into a second childhood. But the time shall never come when it can be said of Jesus, His hand is shortened that it cannot save. No; "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," there is nothing He ever did, in saving, blessing, sanctifying, that He cannot do again. This gives undying value to all the offers, invitations, and promises of the gospel. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Christ does not change:*—Earthly friends are apt to change, and if they do not change they die. When a visitor comes from a foreign land where you once sojourned, you ask eagerly about the different acquaintances you once had there. "And did you see such a one?" "Yes; but you would not know him, he is so greatly altered." "Did he remember me?" "Well, I rather think he was asking for you, but I cannot be very sure. He has got other things to occupy his thoughts since you and he were wont to meet." "And what of such another?" "Ah, times are sadly changed with him. You would be sorry to see him now. I

believe he has the same kind heart as ever; but he has not in his power to show it as he was used to do." "And our old neighbour, who lived next door?" "Your old neighbour? dear good man, he is safe in Abraham's bosom. I found his house shut up, and all his family gone away." And it is very seldom, after years of absence, that you hear of one whose outward circumstances are nowise different from what they were, and rarer still to hear of one whose dispositions are quite unchanged. However, One there is who wears our nature, but is not liable to the variations of mortality. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. (*J. Hamilton, D.D.*) *Experiences may change, but not Christ*:—It is a beautiful moonlight night. The moon is at full, and shining in more than ordinary silver brightness. A man is gazing intently down a deep, still well, where he sees the moon reflected, and thus remarks to a friendly bystander: "How beautifully fair and round she is to-night! how quietly and majestically she rides along!" He has just finished speaking, when suddenly his friend drops a small pebble into the well, and he now exclaims, "Why the moon is all broken to shivers, and the fragments are shaking together in the greatest disorder!" "What gross absurdity!" is the astonished rejoinder of his companion. "Look up man! the moon hasn't changed one jot or tittle. It is the condition of the well that reflects her that has changed." Now, believer, apply the simple figure. Your heart is the well. When there is no allowance of evil the blessed Spirit of God takes of the glories and preciousness of Christ, and reveals them to you for your comfort and joy. But the moment a wrong motive is cherished in the heart, or an idle word escapes the lips unjudged, your happy experiences are smashed to pieces, and you are all restless and disturbed within, until in brokenness of spirit before God you confess your sin (the disturbing thing), and thus get restored once more to the calm, sweet joy of communion. But when your heart is thus all unrest, need I ask, Has Christ's work changed? No, no. (*G. Cutting.*)

Ver. 9. **Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.**—*Evils of a state of scepticism*:—It would seem hardly to be expected, where ample means of religious knowledge are enjoyed, that such a state of mind should be a common thing. Of those who are educated under religious light, and who are led in early life to accept Christianity, a very considerable number sooner or later reach a state in which they are disposed to question almost anything pertaining to religion. More commonly this crisis arrives in advanced youth, or on the verge of manhood. Up to that time the mind has been content to take as truth, on the authority of others, and with but little question, whatever may have been taught it. It has acquiesced, without serious difficulty, in the statements of parents and teachers as to what were the claims of duty. But now there comes a change. Of the views and impressions which childhood entertained on a variety of subjects, advancing years and knowledge have shown many to be erroneous. In this state of mind the inquirer is inclined to question everything, as he once was to believe everything. He has found a few things, or, if you please, many things, to be false, and so he is afraid to believe that anything is true. He passes, by a not unnatural process, from the extreme of credulity to the extreme of scepticism. At this point one of three things must happen: either the mind must become utterly lost to truth, and settle itself on the ultimately fatal grounds of false opinion; or it must drift on unfixed, full of uncertainty, or, it must lay hold of the strong cable of sound evidence, and deliberately cast anchor on the sure foundations of the truth. There are doubtless some who do succeed in confirming themselves in falsehood beyond the chance of recovery. We are sure, also, that there are those who gain a hold on truth which nothing can relax, and which permanently sets their hearts at rest. But how large a number fall into the intermediate class, the class of perpetual doubters!—and are carried about by diverse and strange doctrines, always catching at a new absurdity to relieve the weariness of dwelling on the last. What can be more deplorable than this unnatural, this morbid bewilderment of the soul? Such a state is, of all things, to be dreaded. 1. For, in the first place, it must needs be an exceedingly unhappy state. To all minds that have received even a moderate degree of cultivation, it is a source of positive pleasure to have, on all important subjects, clear views and well-defined opinions. So, on the contrary, it is painful to the sound mind to grope about in the "everlasting fog"—to be threading backward and forward the mazy labyrinths of vague inquiry, which chases shadows and catches at emptiness, finding nothing solid on which it can rely. This, we say, is the constitutional law of the mind, let the subject about which it inquires be what it may. But if the matter in

question be one on the right understanding of which great consequences are depending, there must be, in addition to the doubtfulness, the pain of anxious apprehension. The fear of what calamities may soon or late, result from failure to ascertain the truth, will often haunt the mind and mingle more or less with all its thoughts. Religion, it is clearly seen, if it be anything, is of the highest imaginable interest; and to miss the truth in such an affair, may, it cannot but be felt, involve irreparable loss, disaster that nothing can retrieve. Here is a most effectual cause of disquiet to the soul. 2. It is also evident, still further, that a state of chronic scepticism tends greatly to enfeeble both the character and the mind. A strong mind presses on to a decision. It is content only when getting at results. A sceptical habit—observe I do not say a season of temporary questioning, but a chronic habit of doubting—most generally indicates a want of mental energy to lay hold of evidence and to appreciate its force; a lack of the strength of mind required in order to rise above the prejudices that tend to warp the judgment. It betrays an intellectual feebleness already existing and likely to perpetuate itself. For when the mind has been allowed, and rather encouraged, to wander among the mists of doubt; to look rather after difficulties, than after proofs; it seems to become incapable of logical deduction and unsusceptible to the effect of evidence. It will also be true that in proportion to this loss of force and intellect, there will be likewise a loss of general force of character. He who is unable to decide with promptness, will not be able to execute with vigour. The habitual vacillation of the mind will be sure to exhibit itself in a feeble, time-serving, irresolute course of action. There is yet another evil result of the habit of mind in question. 3. It is very liable to impair the love of truth, and to lower the estimate set on it by the judgment. Truth has been well defined to be "the reality of things." To know truth is to know things as they are. On having a right understanding especially of those things that directly relate to us, our highest welfare essentially depends. Nothing therefore, in fact, is so precious to us as truth. God has, accordingly, given the mind an instinctive love of truth, a natural desire to know things as they are. It is an important end of education to strengthen this desire, and give it a right direction: and observation and experience show that, in respect to many subjects at least, it is, on the other hand, capable of being weakened, and almost or quite destroyed. It is found, for example, especially easy to repress the instinctive desire to know, when there is occasion to apprehend that the knowledge of the truth might be for any reason painful; and this is the case invariably in respect to sinful man when he inquires about religion. While on this, as on other subjects, he feels the natural desire for knowledge, there are conscious reasons growing out of his own character which prompt him to resist this desire, and rather to shrink from full and certain knowledge, than to seek it. He is inclined to indulge himself in something. The question, Is it right? suggests itself. If he presses the inquiry, he may find himself obliged to deny his inclination; and he will be very likely for this reason not to press it. The appetite for truth may yield to the stronger appetite for self-indulgence which now has possession of the mind. In every such case, of course, the love of truth must necessarily be weakened. There will be less appreciation of its value than before; and if the oftener the love of truth is repressed for such a reason, the feebler it becomes, it must finally be destroyed. But this is what is happening all the while in the unsettled, wavering, and doubtful mind. 4. It remains only to say finally, that a state of sceptical uncertainty is attended with great danger as regards its last result. To doubt about anything is, of course, to admit the possibility that it is true. To doubt about the claims and obligations of religion is to allow that we are not sure that these are not founded in reality. But while those who are floating on the sea of doubt, confess, by their very uncertainty, that the teachings of religion may quite possibly be true, they are sure to act, in the main, as though certain they were false. It needs no words to show that if you live as though the truths of religion were mere dreams, and it shall finally turn out that they are great realities, you are undone inevitably, and that for ever. This, then, is the amazing peril of resting in a dubious, unestablished frame. Even those who do this cannot but perceive that they run the unspeakably awful hazard of a wretched, lost eternity. Religion and godliness, according to their view of things, hang trembling in equal balance. How much to be deprecated and dreaded is a position that involves continually the danger of a fall from which there is no recovery! Here, then, are weighty reasons for regarding it as a very serious evil to be in habitual doubt in regard to the truths and duties of religion—reasons which make it appear in the highest degree desirable that the heart should be established,

Of course it follows that nothing should be done by any thoughtful person to favour such a state, but that, on the contrary, diligent and resolute effort should be made to avoid or escape it. Do any of you find the impressions of your childhood giving way, in some degree, so that you feel disposed to question them and to demand on what foundation they are based? You see with what seriousness you should regard the crisis. Never, in all your life, has there been a time when you so greatly needed the counsel of your kindest, most faithful, and judicious friends. Yes! Believe it, my intelligent young friend—the poor wayfaring man, who wanders homeless and friendless over the wide world, finding never a voice of greeting nor a resting-place in which he may take up his abode, is far less an object of compassion than he whose soul is driven about perpetually in the chaos of confused and dubious thought, where all is dim and shadowy, and can find nothing that is stable; who as to the highest and most vital questions of his being, has established nothing, and positively believes nothing! Rather than suffer yourselves to slide into such a state, it were wisdom to suspend all other business, to shut yourselves up in the chamber of meditation and research, and to bend the undivided energies of your minds on this one work of reaching conclusions which will satisfy; and this with humble, earnest prayer to the Father of lights for that Divine illumination without which spiritual things are never clearly seen by any of mankind. You can have satisfaction on all really vital questions if you will. You may plant yourselves, if you will do it, where, though floods come, and the tempests beat, and the refuges of error are all swept away, you can stand calmly and in serenity of soul, and feel your foundations firm. Believe it—nay rather, make the experiment for yourselves, and know it with a happiness that cannot be described. There is light—and you were made to see it. There is reality—and you were made to find it. There is religious truth—and you, you may grasp the inestimable treasure, and make it your own blessed and permanent possession. (*R. Palmer, D.D.*) *The true doctrinal foundation:*—I. THERE IS A REVELATION OF TRUTH GIVEN TO THE CHURCH IN THE WORD OF GOD, WHICH IS ITS ONLY DOCTRINAL FOUNDATION AND RULE OF FAITH. II. THIS DOCTRINE IS COGNATE, AND EVERY WAY SUITED TO THE PROMOTION OF THE GRACE OF GOD IN BELIEVERS, AND THE ATTAINMENT OF THEIR OWN SALVATION. III. DOCTRINES UNSUITED TO THIS FIRST REVELATION BY CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES, AS RECORDED IN THE SCRIPTURE, ALIEN AND FOREIGN FROM THEM, DID SOON SPRING UP UNTO THE TROUBLE OF THE CHURCH; they had done so in those days, and continued to do so in all ensuing ages. IV. USUALLY SUCH DOCTRINES ARE AS EMPTY OF TRUTH AND SUBSTANCE, USELESS AND FOREIGN TO THE NATURE AND GENIUS OF EVANGELICAL GRACE AND TRUTH, ARE IMPOSED BY THEIR AUTHORS AND ABETTORS, WITH A GREAT NOISE AND VEHEMENCE ON THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED IN THE TRUTH. V. WHERE SUCH DOCTRINES ARE ENTERTAINED, THEY MAKE MEN DOUBLE-MINDED, UNSTABLE, TURNING THEM FROM THE TRUTH, AND DRAWING THEM AT LENGTH INTO PERDITION. VI. THE RUIN OF THE CHURCH IN AFTER AGES AROSE FROM THE NEGLECT OF THIS APOSTOLICAL CAUTION, IN GIVING HEED UNTO VARIOUS AND STRANGE DOCTRINES, which at length overthrew and excluded the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. VII. HEREIN LIES THE SAFETY OF ALL BELIEVERS, AND OF ALL CHURCHES; NAMELY, TO KEEP THEMSELVES PRECISELY UNTO THE FIRST COMPLETE REVELATION OF DIVINE TRUTH IN THE WORD OF GOD. Let men pretend what they will, and bluster as they please, in an adherence to this principle we are safe; and if we depart from it, we shall be hurried and carried about through innumerable uncertainties unto ruin. VIII. That those who decline in anything from grace, as the only means to establish their hearts in peace with God, SHALL LABOUR AND EXERCISE THEMSELVES IN OTHER THINGS AND WAYS TO THE SAME END, WHEREBY THEY SHALL RECEIVE NO ADVANTAGE. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *Evils of inconstancy:*—An inconstant and wavering mind, as it makes a man unfit for society (for that there can be no assurance of his words or purposes, neither can we build on them without deceit), so, besides that, it makes a man ridiculous, it hinders him from ever attaining any perfection in himself (for a rolling stone gathers no moss, and the mind, while it would be everything, proves nothing. Oft changes cannot be without loss); yea, it keeps him from enjoying that which he hath attained. For it keeps him ever in work, building, pulling down, selling, changing, buying, commanding, forbidding. So, whilst he can be no other man's friend, he is the least his own. It is the safest course for a man's profit, credit, and ease, to deliberate long, to resolve surely; hardly to alter, not to enter upon that whose end he foresees not answerable; and when he is once entered, not to surcease till he have attained the end he foresaw. (*Bp. Hall.*) *Fixed religious convictions helpful to growth:*—"Stand fast in the faith." There are some men who, because they want

to grow, are continually being transplanted; and they think that because they keep moving from place to place, they are gaining; but they gain nothing at all. Trees that grow fastest stand stillest. Running after every new thing that presents itself does not increase the growth of Christian graces, or anything else that is good. If a man would grow spiritually, he must have a standpoint, a fixed root-place, for his religious convictions. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *True doctrine:*—The question is not whether a doctrine is beautiful, but whether it is true. When we want to go to a place, we don't ask whether the road leads through a pretty country, but whether it is the right road, the road pointed out by authority, the turnpike-road. (*J. C. Hare.*) **The heart be established with grace.**—*Confirmation in the doctrines of the gospel an effect of Divine grace:*—I. WHO ARE THE SUBJECTS OF GRACE? All men are naturally destitute of grace, and under the entire dominion of a depraved heart. In this state they remain until they are awakened, convinced, and converted, by the special influences of the Divine Spirit. They now become conformed to the moral image of God, reconciled to His character, to His laws, and to the terms of salvation proposed in the gospel. II. WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL? III. Having specified the essential doctrines of the gospel, it remains to show THAT REAL CHRISTIANS, WHO ARE THE SUBJECTS OF GRACE, ARE ACTUALLY ESTABLISHED IN THEM. The apostle represents them so established, as not to be carried about by divers and strange doctrines; and this we find verified by the conduct of real saints under both the Old and New Testament. And it is well-known that since their day, multitudes have sacrificed their lives in testimony of the truth and importance of the essential doctrines of the gospel. And this leads me to say that they not only may be, but must be so established; for several reasons: 1. Because they know that the essential doctrines of the gospel are true. 2. Because they love them. 3. Because they feel the infinite importance of them. Conclusion: 1. If the subjects of grace are established in the essential doctrines of the gospel, then it is easy to distinguish religious orthodoxy from religious heterodoxy. 2. If the subjects of grace are established in the essential doctrines of the gospel, then real Christians see the propriety and importance of forming and subscribing creeds, or confessions of faith. 3. If the subjects of grace are established in the doctrines of the gospel; then they are constrained to consider men's religious sentiments as a test of their religious character. 4. If ministers of the gospel are established in the great and fundamental doctrines of it; they will not fail to preach those doctrines to the people. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) *An established heart:*—I. How GOOD IT IS. What else is it that communicates to the Saviour such nobility but this immovable firmness of a spirit resting in God, from which words and deeds proceed, pure, calm, and self-consistent, like rays which the sun emits? The establishment of heart of which we speak is the union of Divine freedom and Divine power. We call him free who is not dependent on anything outside himself. Are you free in this sense? Where there is this freedom, there is also Divine power. Power is the capability of executing what we have set our minds on doing. Let me determine, moved by nothing without me, and all my action is subordinate to a single aim, and this aim stands unmoved before my eyes. But that is just what gives emphasis to all action. For such power we long, we should like to reign over nature, over our body, over everything outside us. Now it is the unity of such Divine power and freedom that makes establishment of heart so precious. Do you long after it? I know you do: you who see before you a life in which are seducers and tempters on the right hand and on the left, bent on bringing about your fall, oh, I know you long for it. II. How SUCH FIRMNESS IS BROUGHT ABOUT—"with grace," says the apostle. He adds:—"Not with meats," intending to say, not through dependence on any outward work. When he says, "with grace," it is as if he said, "through faith in the grace which is offered in Christ." "Therefore, being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have also access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand"; if there is not this, then establishment of heart is impossible. (*J. Tholuck.*) *The established heart:*—It is a good thing to have an established heart. With too many of us the inner life is variable and fickle. Sometimes we have days of deep religious earnestness, when it seems impossible for us to spend too long a time in prayer and fellowship with God. The air is so clear that we can see across the waters of the dividing sea, to the very outlines of the heavenly coasts. But a very little will mar our peace, and bring a veil of mist over our souls, to enwrap us perhaps for long weeks. Oh, for an established heart! Now there is one thing which will not bring about this blessed state of establishment. And this is indicated by

the expression, "meats"; which stands for the ritualism of the Jewish law. Another obstruction to an established heart arises from the curiosity which is ever running after divers and strange doctrines. A condition which is the very antipodes to the established heart. There is only one foundation which never rocks, one condition which never alters. "It is good that the heart be established with grace." Primarily, of course, the established heart is the gift of God. (2 Cor. i. 21; 1 Pet. v. 10,; Deut. xxviii. 9). But there are certain conditions also indicated in this context with which we do well to comply. I. WE MUST FEED ON CHRIST. Eating consists of three processes: apprehension, mastication, and assimilation; and each of these has its spiritual counterpart in that feeding upon Christ which is the very life of our life. We, too, must apprehend Him, by the careful reading of the Word of God. We, too, must fulfil the second part of the process of eating by meditating long and thoughtfully on all that is revealed to us in the word of the person and work of the Lord Jesus. We, too, must assimilate Christ, until He becomes part of our very being, and we begin to live, yet not we, because Christ lives in us, and has become our very life. II. IF WE WOULD FEED ON CHRIST, WE MUST GO WITHOUT THE CAMP. There are plenty who argue that the wisest policy is to stop within the camp, seeking to elevate its morals. They do not realise that, if we adopt their advice, we must remain there alone, for our Lord has already gone. It is surely unbefitting that we should find a home where He is expelled. What is there in us which makes us so welcome, when our Master was cast out to the fate of the lowest criminals? Besides, it will not be long before we discover that, instead of our influencing the camp for good, the atmosphere of the camp will infect us with its evil. Instead of our levelling it up, it will level us down. The only principle of moving the world is to imitate Archimedes in getting a point without it. All the men who have left a mark in the elevation of their times have been compelled to join the pilgrim host which is constantly passing through the city gates, and taking up its stand by the Cross on which Jesus died. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*)

An established heart:—Turned into modern English the writer's meaning is that the merely intellectual religion, which is always occupied with propositions instead of with Jesus Christ, "Who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," is worthless, and the merely ceremonial religion, which is always occupied with casuistries about questions of meats, or external observance of any sort, is as valueless. There is no fixity; there is no rest of soul, no steadfastness of character to be found in either of these two directions. The only thing that ballasts and fills and calms the heart is what the writer here calls "grace," that is to say, the living personal experience of the love of God bestowed upon me and dwelling in my heart. So, then, the main theme of these words is the possible stability of a fluctuating human life, the means of securing it, and the glory and beauty of the character which has secured it. I. First, then, mark WHAT THIS WRITER CONCEIVES TO BE THE ONE SOURCE OF HUMAN STABILITY. What the New Testament means by this familiar and frequently reiterated word "grace," which, I suspect, is oftener pronounced than it is understood by a great many people. To begin with, then, the root meaning of that word, which runs all through the New Testament, is simply favour, benignity, kindness, or, to put all into a better and simpler form, the active love of God. Now, if we look at the various uses of the expression we find, for instance, that it is contrasted with a number of other things. Sometimes it is set in opposition to sin—sin reigns to righteousness, grace reigns to life. Sometimes it is contrasted with "debt," and put sometimes in opposition to "works," as, for instance, by Paul when he says, "If it be of works then is it no more grace." Sometimes it is opposed to law, as in the same apostle's words, "Ye are not under law, but under grace." Now, if we keep these various uses and contrasts in view we just come to this thought, that that active love of God is conditioned, not by any merit on our part—bubbles up from the depths of His own infinite heart, not because of what we are, but because of what He is, transcends all the rigid retributions of law, is not turned away by any sin, but continues to flood the world, simply because it wells up from the infinite and changeless fountain of love in the heart of God. And then, from this central, deepest meaning of active love manifesting itself irrespective of what we deserve, there comes a second great aspect of the word. The name of the cause is extended to all the lustrous variety of its effects. So the complex whole of the blessings and gifts which Jesus Christ brings to us, and which are sometimes designated in view of what they do for us, as salvation or eternal life, are also designated in view of that in God from which they come, as being collectively His "grace." And then

there is a final application of the expression which is deduced from that second one—viz., the specific excellences of character which result from the communication to men of the blessings that flow to him from the love of God. So these three: first, the fountain, the love undisturbed and unalterable; second, the stream, the manifold gifts and blessings that flow to us through Christ; and, third, the little cupfuls that each of us have, the various excellences of character which are developed under the fertilizing influences of the sunshine of that love—these three are all included in this great Christian word. There are other phases of its employment in the New Testament which I do not need to trouble you with now. But thus far we just come to this, that the one ground on which all steadfastness of nature and character can be reared is that we shall be in touch with God, shall be conscious of His love, and shall be receiving into our hearts the strength that He bestows. Man is a dependent creature; his make and his relationships to things round him render it impossible that the strength by which he is strong, and the calmness by which he is established, can be self-originated. II. And so I come, in the second place, to LOOK AT SOME OF THE VARIOUS WAYS IN WHICH THIS ESTABLISHING GRACE CALMS AND STILLS THE LIFE. We men are like some of the islands in the Eastern Tropics, fertile and luxuriant, but subject to be swept by typhoons, to be shaken by earthquakes, to be devastated by volcanoes. Around us there gather external foes assailing our steadfastness, and within us there lie even more formidable enemies to an established and settled peace. How are such creatures ever to be established? My text tells us by drawing into themselves the love, the giving love of God. I would note, as one of the aspects of the tranquillity and establishment that comes from this conscious possession of the giving love of God, how it delivers men from all the dangers of being "carried away by divers strange doctrines." I do not give much for any orthodoxy which is not vitalised by personal experiences of the indwelling love of God. I do not care much what a man believes, or what he denies, or how he may occupy himself intellectually with the philosophical and doctrinal aspect of Christian revelation. The question is, how much of it has filtered from his brain into his heart, and has become part of himself, and verified to himself by his own experience? So much as you have lived out, so much you are sure of because you have not only thought it but felt it, and cannot for a moment doubt, because your hearts have risen up and witnessed to its truth. About these parts of your belief there will be no fluctuation. Still further, this conscious possession of the grace of God will keep a man very quiet amidst all the occasions for agitation which changing circumstances bring. Such there are in every life. Nothing continues in one stay. Is it possible that amidst this continuous fluctuation, in which nothing is changeless but the fact of change, we can stand fixed and firm? Yes! There is shelter only in one spot, and that is when we have God between us and the angry blast. An empty heart is an easily agitated heart. A full heart, like a full sack, stands upright, and it is not so easy for the wind to whirl it about as if it were empty. They who are rooted in God will have a firm bole, which will be immovable, howsoever branches may sway and creak, and leaves may flutter and dance, or even fall, before the power of the storm. Further, another field of the stability communicated by that possessed love of God is in regard of the internal occasions for agitation. Passion, lust, hot desires, bitter regrets, eager clutching after uncertain and insufficient and perishable good, all these will be damped down if the love of God lives in our hearts. III. Lastly, my text suggests HOW BEAUTIFUL A THING IS THE CHARACTER OF THE MAN THAT IS ESTABLISHED IN GRACE. The word translated "good" in my text would be better rendered "fair," or "lovely," or "beautiful." Is there anything fairer than the strong, steadfast, calm, equable character, unshaken by the storms of passion, unaffected by the blasts of calamity, undevastated by the lava from the hellish, subterranean fires that are in every soul; and yet not stolidly insensible, nor obstinately conservative, but open to the inspiration of each successive moment, and gathering the blessed fruit of all mutability in a more profound and unchanging possession of the unchanging good? So do you see to it that you rectify your notions of what makes the beauty of character. Then, my brother, if we keep ourselves near Jesus Christ, and let His grace flow into our hearts, then we, too, shall be able to say, "Because I set Him at my right hand I shall not be moved." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Established in grace*:—The vendors of flowers in the streets of London are wont to commend them to customers by crying, "All a blowing and a growing." It would be no small praise to Christians if we could say as much for them, but, alas! of too many

professors the cry would truthfully be, "All a stunting and a withering." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 10.—**We have an altar.**—*Our altar*:—I. OUR CHRISTIAN ALTAR. The very living heart of the gospel is an altar and a sacrifice. That idea saturates the whole New Testament, from the page where John the Forerunner's proclamation is, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," to the last triumphant visions in which the Apocalyptic seer "beheld a Lamb as it had been slain," the eternal Co-Regnant of the universe, and the Mediator through whom the whole surrounding Church for ever worships the Father. Jesus Christ is all which temple, priest, altar, sacrifice proclaimed should one day be. And just as the relation between Christ's work and the Judaic system of external ritual sacrifices is that of shadow and substance, prophecy and fulfilment, so, in analogous manner, the relation between the altar and sacrifice of the New Testament and all the systems of heathenism, with their smoking altars, is that these declare a want, and this affords its supply; that these are the confession of humanity that it is conscious of sin, separation, alienation, and the need of a sacrifice, and that Christ is what heathenism in all lands has wailed that it needs, and has desperately hoped that it might find. Christ in His representative relation, in His true affinity to every man upon earth, has in His life and death taken upon Himself the consequences of human transgression, not merely by sympathy, nor only by reason of the uniqueness of His representative relation, but by willing submission to that awful separation from the Father, of which the cry out of the thick darkness of the Cross, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" is the unfathomable witness. Thus, bearing our sin, He bears it away, and "we have an altar." II. OUR FEAST ON THE SACRIFICE. The Christ who died for my sins is not only my means of reconciliation with God, but His sacrifice and death are the sustenance of my spiritual life. The life of the Christian is the indwelling Christ. But how is that feeding on the sacrifice accomplished? "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." He that believeth, eateth. He that with humble faith makes Christ his very own, and appropriates as the nourishment and basis of his own better life the facts of that life and death of sacrifice, he truly lives thereby. To eat is to believe; to believe is to live. I need not remind you how, though there be no reference in the words of my text, as I have tried to show, to the external rite of the communion of the Lord's body and blood, and though "altar" here has no reference whatever to that table, yet there is a connection between the two representations, inasmuch as the one declares in words what the other sets forth in symbol, and the meaning of the feast on the sacrifice is expressed by this great word. "This is My body, broken for you." "This is the new covenant in My blood." "Drink ye all of it." III. OUR CHRISTIAN OFFERINGS ON THE ALTAR. What are these offerings? Christ's death stands alone, incapable of repetition, needing no repetition, the eternal, sole, "sufficient obligation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." But there be other kinds of sacrifice. There are sacrifices of thanksgiving as well as for propitiation. And we, on the footing of that great sacrifice to which we can add nothing, and on which alone we must rest, may bring the offerings of our thankful hearts. These offerings are of a twofold sort, says the writer. There are words of praise, there are works of beneficence. The service of man is sacrifice to God. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The Jewish and the Christian altar*:—I. ATTEND TO A FEW PARTICULARS RESPECTING THE JEWISH ALTAR. 1. It had its origin in Divine appointment. 2. The altar being built, it was afterwards dedicated, and in a solemn manner set apart for God. 3. When the altar was consecrated, it was ever afterwards reputed holy. II. TRACE THE RESEMBLANCE, IN SOME INSTANCES, BETWEEN THE JEWISH AND THE CHRISTIAN ALTAR. 1. The altar was principally designed for sacrifice, and was, therefore, called the altar of burnt-offering (Exod. xl. 10). Now Christ is both the Sacrifice, the Altar, and the Priest. 2. The altar was designed for worship, and its most solemn acts were there performed. "I will wash my hands in innocency," &c. "I will go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy" (Psa. xxvi. 6; xliii. 4). And what the altar was to the Jews, that is Jesus to us; all our services are to be performed in His name, all our prayers and praises offered up through His mediation. 3. The altar was a place of refuge. Christ is in the truest sense the refuge of all who flee from the wrath to come, and who lay hold on the hope that is set before them in the gospel. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *The altar of the Christian dispensation*:—I. THE LORD CHRIST, IN THE ONE SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF, IS THE ONLY ALTAR OF THE CHURCH OF THE NEW

TESTAMENT. II. THIS ALTAR IS EVERY WAY SUFFICIENT IN ITSELF FOR THE ENDS OF AN ALTAR; NAMELY, THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE PEOPLE, as verse 12. III. THE ERECTION OF ANY OTHER ALTAR IN THE CHURCH, OR THE INTRODUCTION OF ANY OTHER SACRIFICE REQUIRING A MATERIAL ALTAR, IS DEROGATORY TO THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST, AND EXCLUSIVE OF HIM FROM BEING OUR ALTAR. IV. Whereas the design of the apostle in the whole of his discourse is to declare the glory of the gospel and its worship above that of the law, of our priest above theirs, of our sacrifice above theirs, of our altar above theirs, IT IS FOND TO THINK THAT BY "OUR ALTAR," HE INTENDS SUCH A MATERIAL FABRIC AS IS EVERY WAY INFERIOR UNTO THAT OF OLD. V. When God appointed a material altar for His service, HE HIMSELF ENJOINED THE MAKING OF IT, PRESCRIBED ITS FORM AND USE, WITH ALL ITS UTENSILS, SERVICES, AND CEREMONIES, ALLOWING OF NOTHING IN IT OR ABOUT IT BUT WHAT WAS BY HIMSELF APPOINTED. It is not, therefore, probable that under the New Testament there should be a material altar of equal necessity with that under the Old, accompanied in its administrations with various utensils, ceremonies, and services; while neither this altar itself, nor any of its services, were of Divine appointment. VI. SINNERS, UNDER A SENSE OF GUILT, HAVE IN THE GOSPEL AN ALTAR OF ATONEMENT, WHEREUNTO THEY MAY HAVE CONTINUAL ACCESS FOR THE EXPIATION OF THEIR SINS. He is the propitiation. VII. ALL PRIVILEGES, OF WHAT NATURE SOEVER, WITHOUT A PARTICIPATION OF CHRIST AS THE ALTAR AND SACRIFICE OF THE CHURCH, ARE OF NO ADVANTAGE UNTO THEM THAT ENJOY THEM. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *An altar in the Christian economy*:—1. The very name, institution, and existence of an altar implies that man is a sinner—that there is a quarrel between us and God. If no sin, there is needed no sacrifice; if an altar, there must be sin to necessitate the institution of that altar. 2. It teaches also another grand lesson, namely, that the wages of sin is death. 3. An altar suggests to us a disruption between God and man. It is one of the instinctive suggestions of the heart of man that there is a quarrel between him and God; and until he can see it in the light of revelation, he knows not the origin of that quarrel, he knows not how that quarrel may be made up. The existence of an altar in the Christian economy teaches that there is forgiveness with God, that He may be feared. 4. An altar suggests to us the important thought, that there being one altar, it is the only way of acceptance. If this be infinite in its sufficiency why seek anything else? 5. Another idea suggested by the name "altar" is protection. We read occasionally in the Bible of "fleeing to the horns of the altar," "laying hold upon the horns of the altar"; thus, too, the Christian has in his altar perfect protection. Protection from what? Not from illness, from poverty, from losses, from crosses? These are sanctifying and may not therefore be prevented. But you will have protection from all that is penal; for the inscription most luminous upon the very face of that altar is "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." 6. This altar suggests to us the very important truth that through it and by it we always have acceptance with God; that not only is it the only way of acceptance, but it is the standing evidence of access to God. 7. This altar and the idea of an altar teaches us this great lesson, that "without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." A great crime cleaves to humanity; a stain deep as hell has fallen upon the human heart. All the tears of penitence cannot wipe it out, all the blood of martyrs cannot cancel it, no length of time will waste it, no ingenuity of man can mitigate it. There is only one element that can wash it away. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." 8. We learn another lesson from the name "altar": it is the altar that sanctifies the gift. The way to have all the sorrows of your life sanctified, to have your great things made greater, and your little things made precious, and the way to receive them again a thousandfold, is to bring and offer them all upon Christ, the glorious altar that sanctifies the gift. What a magnificent idea does this give us of a Christian! The least act that a Christian does is thus a sacerdotal act. All Christians are priests. 9. This use of the word "altar" implies that there is a priest who offers the sacrifice; who is this priest? We have but one altar, we have therefore but one priest, and we do not need any other. Wherever the winds blow, wherever the waves of the ocean roll, wherever man's heart beats, and man's lungs breathe, and man's soul longs for a sense of the presence of God, the great High Priest is accessible, able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him. 10. But this name, "altar," having suggested to us so many truths, where, you ask, is the altar situated on which the great propitiation has been made, by which that everlasting High Priest continually

stands and ministers for ever? Our altar is in the heaven, on the earth: wheresoever two or three meet in the name of Christ, there the altar stands, and there the altar is approached; for "I am present in the midst of them." (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *The Christian altar*:—I. First, we have an altar—THAT IS TO SAY, CHRISTIANITY RESTS FOR ITS BASIS ON THE INSTITUTION OF SACRIFICE. Though men have been divided from each other by oceans and continents, united neither by commerce nor by any mode of communication, though they have differed in their views of polity and government and religion, they seem to have been as one in this matter of sacrifice. They have all equally thought that the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth must die to propitiate God. And we would have you further observe, as a proof of the Divine origin of this custom, that it was not an idea which would naturally originate with man. If it had been at all likely, according to the teaching of unassisted reason, that God would have been pleased with this mode of worship, then we might imagine that man had himself devised this mode of approaching his Creator. But let Reason sit in judgment on this custom of animal sacrifices, and what will be her verdict? To kill the unoffending —can that be pleasing to God? When I am conscious of guilt, and anxious for pardon, am I likely to appease God's wrath by putting to death an innocent victim? We must surely admit that the practice of sacrificing animals, unless Divinely commanded, was an act of wanton cruelty, which, so far from disposing God to mercy, must have stirred Him to greater indignation; and that a custom so manifestly not suggested by reason, should yet have spread itself over the whole earth, seems to us the strongest possible proof of the divinity of its origin. Throughout the whole of the Jewish system there was a continual offering of the blood of animals upon the altars where God was worshipped; and however blind the Jews were, however hard their hearts were, however many truths they missed which the Almighty had meant them to learn, they did lay hold of this truth—that there is no acceptable worship without sacrifice. And when the new religion appeared we can well imagine that this was one of the difficulties to a Jewish mind—that the votaries of the new system abandoned the altars of their fathers, and set up new altars of their own. We can conceive a Jewish objector approaching the apostles, and saying, "How is this? From the time when men first began to call upon the name of the Lord, they have always worshipped at altars. Those altars have always reeked with blood. It is thus that our fathers have worshipped ever since the giving of the law, and even before the days of Moses. It is thus that Abraham worshipped on Mount Moriah. It was thus that Noah worshipped under the arch of the covenant bow. It was thus that Abel worshipped when men sought earliest to win back their way to Paradise. If you are worshippers of the true God, the God of our fathers, where are your altars? what are your sacrifices?" Now, the words of our text seem to reply to such an objector, "We have an altar"; as though the writer said, "We recognise the great principle which has been revealed to men all through the days of the law, which has been known even by heathen men among their grossest superstitions—the truth that without the shedding of blood there is no remission, and we, too, have an altar." We need not tell you that the altar here referred to is the Cross, and that the sacrifice offered upon it was the only begotten Son of God. Thus the text affirms that Christianity rests upon basis of sacrifice. II. The text further affirms THAT THE CHRISTIAN SACRIFICE IS AN OFFERING FOR SIN. Through the whole of the Jewish system men were taught that as it is the life which man forfeited by sin, so it is the life which must atone for sin. There is a passage in Leviticus which distinctly affirms it: "The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." The passage occurs in connection with the command not to eat flesh in which the blood remained. The teaching seems to be this: "You must not eat of blood because that is appointed as the symbol of atonement, and the blood is the symbol of atonement because it represents the life of the animal from which it is taken." It is not the matter of the blood that atones, but the life it bears and represents. "The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it you upon the altar to atone for your lives, for the blood atones through the life." Hence you will find in the Jewish system that before the victim died the offerer was commanded to lay his hands upon its head. Now, in Scripture the laying on of hands was a symbolical action. It represented the transfer of something from the person imposing his hands to the person or thing upon which hands were laid. What had the offerer to transfer to the victim?

Evidently his sin. He came to God as a sinner. His anxious desire was to obtain the forgiveness of his sin. His prayer was that the guilt of his sin might pass from him to the victim that he offered. And the Jews believed that where there was a frank confession and true renouncement of sin there was an actual transfer of sin from the man to the animal. Now, in this text before us the writer identifies the death of Jesus with those particular sacrifices. "We have an altar," he says, "of which they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." They might eat the free-will offerings and the thank-offerings, but they must not eat that particular sin-offering; for he goes on to say: "The bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary for sin are burned without the camp." They had been so burned in the days of Moses when the camp was pitched in the wilderness. They were so burned still in the days of the apostles, outside the walls of Jerusalem. "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." You see that this text clearly connects the death of Jesus with the Jewish sin-offering, not with thank-offerings or with free-will-offerings, but with the sin-offering, and with the most sacred and impressive of all the sin-offerings—the offering whose blood was taken to the holiest place by the high priest for sin. We need not enlarge on the correspondence between the death of Jesus and the transactions on that day of atonement. We are taught that by the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, graciously offered as a sacrifice for us, a way has been opened to the holiest as through a veil, that veil no longer excluding and concealing from the presence of God, but rent on purpose to receive every penitent transgressor. We are taught that by the blood of Jesus shed for our sins we are permitted to come, not only with safety, but with boldness into the region of God's manifested presence. We are taught that the offering, being infinitely precious, is attended by none of the imperfections which mark the Jewish sacrifices, but is adequate to meet all the requirements of a guilty conscience, and to present a sinner, soul and body, with perfect acceptance before the holy God. III. But this text teaches us, further, THAT THE CHRISTIAN ALTAR WILL HAVE NO RIVAL, NO COMPETITOR. You observe that the apostle has been telling us in this text that the Christian sacrifice corresponds with the Jewish sin-offering. A little further study will show that he tells us that the Christian sacrifice avails for none who put their trust in the old temple sacrifices. He describes the Jewish system as a camp pitched in the wilderness. It was not a continuing city. He tells us that Jesus went out of the camp, and he exhorts us to follow Him. For himself, he had long since resolved to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and Him crucified; to worship at no altar but the altar of the Cross; and he here exhorts all his fellow Christians to copy his example, and, at whatever cost and suffering and reproach, to go forth to Him who, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. There is no need for us to emphasize this exhortation not to trust in Jewish sacrifices. Within seven or eight years after this letter was written Jerusalem was destroyed—the temple was abolished. From that day to this no Jewish sacrifices have been offered, so far was that from being a continuing city. But is there nothing that we may learn from this solemn admonition not to trust in the Jewish sacrifices? The underlying principle is this—that Christ will be the Saviour of none who mingle any other confidence with their simple rest upon His merit. You have to come to Jesus and to Jesus only; and if some of you have been looking for salvation long, do you not see here the reason that has kept you back from it? There has not been the renouncement of all other confidences which there must be. We have an altar all-sufficient to save us to the uttermost; but they have no right to eat of it, they have no saving share in the merit of it, who trust in the sacrifices of the temple. But that is not all that this text teaches us. Not only are we here taught that it is utterly destructive of Christian faith to follow the Jewish ceremonies as a ground of merit; we are further taught that it was dangerous to the simplicity of faith to follow them at all. Now, why were the apostles so anxious to have the Jewish ceremonies abolished? With a ritual that was the most gorgeous the world has ever known, if mankind could learn the truth from ceremonies and symbols, no ceremonies could be imagined more impressive than those which God Himself appointed in the temple at Jerusalem. Why not continue the types to help Christians to understand the Antitype? Why not have an order of priests on earth to remind us of the one Priest in heaven? Why not have sacrifices offered on Christian altars to remind us of the one Sacrifice by which our sins are taken away? Alas, the apostles knew too well how prone men are to rest in shadows and forget the substance. In all ages elaborate ceremonial

has been destructive of the simplicity of faith. What, then, does this teach us as to our practical duty? It shows that there is a city out of which we have all to come. We all love it; we all cling to it—the city sometimes of gorgeous ritualistic pomp, the city sometimes of orderly Nonconformist worship; the city of mere outward morality and formal attendance upon the means of grace; the city of personal self-righteousness. Out of it we have to come if we mean to be saved by Christ—away from all that as a ground of trust. Out of it? Whither? To the ignominious place where criminals suffered. To the scene where the bodies of the beasts whose blood had been taken into the sanctuary for atonement were burnt with fire. To Golgotha, the place of a skull. There is our altar. IV. But, lastly, THE ALTAR DEMANDS SACRIFICE. We are not to escape and think that it is all accomplished because the sacrifice has once been offered. Read on to the fifteenth verse. By Him let us offer the sacrifice of praise, the Jewish free-will offering, the thank-offering. Let us do this continually; not simply, as the Jews did, on great festivals and stated occasions, but always. And let this sacrifice of praise be the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. Mark it, the fruit of our lips—not simply the words of our lips. A great many words pass our lips that are not the fruit. Fruit has a root. The fruit of the lip grows out of the heart; and only when what the lip says is what the heart feels is that the fruit of our lips. There must be the fruit of our lips—the thanks to God that spring out of a truly renewed and grateful nature: "the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name." The margin says, "confessing His name," and that is the best thanks we can give to God—not to talk about ourselves, but about Him, to confess what He is and what He has done for us. "The fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name." But that is not all. Forget not that there is something beyond even that. The sixteenth verse tells you: "To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Though the Jewish ritual has been abolished, though the nursing mother no longer brings her pair of turtle doves and her two young pigeons for an offering, though the man recovered from sickness no longer drives his bullock or his flock of sheep to the temple door, the heart of a Christian will be as grateful as the heart of a Jew. If we do not bring the victims we may bring the worth of them. (*F. Greeves, D.D.*)

Vers. 11–13. **Jesus also . . . suffered without the gate.**—*Jesus suffering without the gate*:—I. A CUSTOM that prevailed among the Israelites in the wilderness; "The bodies of those beasts," &c. The apostle writes as though the camp and this custom still existed. The camp, however, was gone, but the custom remained with this difference only, that the temple was now substituted for the tabernacle and the city for the camp. It was a custom of Divine appointment. The Lord, in framing a law for the Jews, regarded the whole nation as sinners. Besides, therefore, the offerings to be made by individuals for their own sins, various sacrifices were ordained for the sins of the nation, and among these, one of unusual solemnity. It was to be offered once in every year, and on a certain day of the year, called from this circumstance the day of atonement. II. AN EVENT which took place at Jerusalem, closely resembling it; "Wherefore Jesus also," &c. Notice three points of resemblance between our Lord and the animals burnt on the day of atonement. 1. They did not die a natural death; their blood was shed before they were carried forth. And our Lord also "suffered"; His precious blood, too, was poured forth. 2. He suffered in the same place in which these animals were destroyed. They were slain, indeed, in the camp, but they were burned outside of it. So our Lord "suffered without the gate." "They led Him out to crucify Him," out of their city, to the very spot probably where, after the people were settled in Jerusalem, the bodies of those beasts which had so long prefigured Him were consumed. 3. He suffered for the same end. The blood of these animals was shed that it might be taken "into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin," as a propitiation for sin; their bodies were burned as a testimony of the Divine indignation against sin. When these two ceremonies had been gone through God is said to have been reconciled to His people, the whole camp was considered as purged from its transgressions. And what was the end for which our Lord suffered? It was that His people, His spiritual Israel, might have sin removed from them. III. AN EXHORTATION grounded on the event mentioned. "Let us go forth," &c. We must again imagine ourselves in the desert. Around us are spread the tents of Israel. The men dwelling in them are all worshipping the Lord in one way—as their fathers worshipped Him, looking for His mercy through rites and

ceremonies and bleeding victims. The Lord Jesus appears amongst them; tells them He is sent of God to abolish these rites and ceremonies, to become Himself once for all a victim for them, and calls upon them in consequence to turn from their shadowy rites and long accustomed sacrifices to Him. Instead of this, they cast Him forth out of their camp and crucify Him. We are to conceive of Him, therefore, as even now hanging in shame and suffering on a Cross beyond the gate, and then comes this apostle saying to us among our tents, "Let us not linger here. Let us go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." 1. It is clear, then, that He calls on us, first, to forsake the religion of our fellow-men, a religion, it may be, that either is or once was our own. The Jew in the desert could not go forth to a bleeding Jesus without turning his back on the Jewish worship, and giving up all his long-cherished Jewish hopes. He must abandon the sanctuary and ordinances with which all his religious feelings have been long associated, and around which he beholds his countrymen still gathering. A painful sacrifice. And it is the same now. Many of us have a religion that the gospel calls on us to renounce. It is made up of opinions and feelings and hopes which are as much opposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ as the religion of any Jew ever was. We may have cherished it long, even from our childhood. The world around us may respect and commend it; it is natural it should do so—it is the world's own religion; the world taught it us. But no matter who commends it or how highly we may have valued it, we must let it go; or rather we must turn our backs on it, we must cast it away, before we and the Cross of Christ can ever meet. 2. And with the religion of the world, we must forsake also to a considerable extent the men of the world. 3. Then, connected with this forsaking of the world, there must be an actual coming, the apostle says, to Christ our Lord. Observe, he does not simply bid the Israelites leave the camp, as though his only object was to get them away from their old religion and companions, he directs them all to one spot; he bids them leave the camp for one purpose, that they may go to Him who is suffering for them without the gate. So we are not to go forth only, we are to go forth unto Christ. It will profit us nothing to give us the empty religion of the world, if when we let that go, we get no other. Superstition for scepticism is a poor exchange. And it will profit us as little to forsake the world, if we stand still when we have forsaken it. The going forth, the apostle enjoins, is not going into cells and hermitages, nor is it roaming this desert world in a proud, dreary solitariness. It is a going forth unto Jesus. It is exchanging the religion of the world for the religion of His Cross; it is giving up that which cannot elevate, comfort, or save us, for that which can. And then it is leaving the world for the world's Master; it is suffering the loss of all things that we may win Christ; it is the forsaking of a world which is not worthy even of us, that we may be—what? outcasts? No; but "fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God"; sharers now of higher riches and pleasures than the earth can give, and heirs of a world that is worthy, if any world can be, of the God who made it. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) **Let us go forth therefore unto Him.**—*Exhortation to decision and earnestness in religion:*—I. A GENERAL VIEW OF THE ADMONITION IN THE TEXT. 1. The conduct which he intended to prescribe to the Christian converts to whom he wrote was evidently this—namely, that they should openly profess their faith in Jesus, who had been cast out as accursed, notwithstanding the reproach to which such a profession would expose them; and should publicly adhere to His worship and service in the sight of their unbelieving and reviling countrymen. 2. What does the apostle here exhort us to do? He doubtless exhorts us to make Christ crucified our only hope; to confess Him before men, and by our open and consistent attachment to His cause, His people and His ordinances, to show that we indeed belong to Him. II. SOME PARTICULARS WHICH A COMPLIANCE WITH THIS ADMONITION INVOLVES. 1. That we renounce all other grounds of satisfaction for sin, and of acceptance with God, but those which the Cross of Jesus Christ provides. 2. That we separate ourselves from the world. Especially (1) From its corrupt practices and principles; and (2) From its religion—the resemblance of godliness without the power thereof. 3. That we are prepared to take up the cross and encounter reproach for Christ's sake. III. THE MOTIVES BY WHICH THE ADMONITION IS ENFORCED. 1. Our situation in this world is one of extreme uncertainty. "Here we have no continuing city." 2. Besides "we seek one to come." This is our profession as Christians. We profess that we are seeking "a city which hath foundations"; a "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." But unless we go forth unto Christ, all such profession is vain. (*E. Cooper, M.A.*) *Let us go forth:*—

I. We have, first of all, THE BELIEVER'S PATH. "Let us go forth without the camp." The Divine command is not, "Let us stop in the camp and try to reform it—things are not anywhere quite perfect, let us therefore stop and make matters right"; but the Christian's watch cry is, "Let us go forth." To this day the Christian's place is not to tarry in the camp of worldly conformity, hoping, "Perhaps I may aid the movement for reform": it is not the believer's duty to conform to the world and to the world's ways, and say, "Perhaps by so doing I may gain a foothold, and men's hearts may be the more ready to receive the truth." No, from the first to the last day of the Church of God, the place of witness is not inside, but outside the camp; and the true position of the Christian is to go forth without the camp, bearing Christ's reproach. What is meant by this "going forth without the camp"? 1. I understand it to mean that every Christian is to go forth by an open profession of his faith. You that love the Lord are to say so. You must come out and avow yourselves on His side. You may be Christians and make no profession, but I cannot be sure of that, nor can any other man. 2. This done, the Christian is to be separate from the world as to his company. He must buy, and sell, and trade, like other men in the world, but yet he is not to find his bosom friends in it. 3. The follower of Jesus goes without the camp as to his pleasures. He is not without his joys nor his recreations either; but he does not seek them where the wicked find them. If thou hast no separation from the world, as to thy pleasures, since thy heart is generally in thy pleasures, thy heart therefore is with the wicked, and with them shall thy doom be when God comes to judge mankind. 4. Furthermore, the true follower of Christ is divided from the world as to his maxims; he does not subscribe to the laws which rule most men in their families and their business. Men generally say, "Every one for himself, and God for us all." "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others," is the Christian's rule. 5. Once more—and here is a very difficult part of the Christian's course—the Christian is to come out not only from the world's pleasures, and sins, and irreligion, but there are times when the true followers of Christ must come out from the world's religion as well as irreligion. II. But now, secondly, we have in the text, THE CHRISTIAN'S LEADER. It does not say, "Let us go forth without the camp" merely, but, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him." 1. It means, let us have fellowship with Him. He was despised; He had no credit for charity; He was mocked in the streets; He was hissed at; He was hounded from among society. Expect not to wear the crown where Christ carried the Cross; but, for fellowship's sake, follow Him. 2. Again, if I am to follow Him, I am to follow His example. What Christ did, that I am to do. 3. I am to go forth unto Him: that is, I am to go forth to His truth. Wherever I see His truth, I am to espouse it: wherever I see error, I am to denounce it without hesitation. 4. And then I am to go forth to Christ's witness-bearing. The present age does not believe in witness-bearing, but the whole Bible is full of it. The duty of every Christian is to bear witness for the truth. III. Now, in the third place, we have THE CHRISTIAN'S BURDEN. He is to bear the Lord's reproach. I know you may live without it if you will fawn and cringe, and keep back part of the price; but do not this, it is unworthy of your manhood, much more is it unworthy of your Christianity. For God and for Christ be so holy and so truthful that you compel the world to give its best acknowledgment of your goodness by railing at you—it can do no more, it will do no less. Be content to take this shame, for there is no heaven for you if you will not—no crown without the cross, no jewels without the mire. You must stand in the pillory if you would sit in glory; and if you reject the one you reject the other. IV. THE CHRISTIAN'S REASON FOR BEARING HIS REPROACH, AND GOING WITHOUT THE CAMP. It is in the text, "Let us go forth therefore"—there is the reason. Why then? 1. First, because Jesus did. Jesus Christ came into the world pure and holy, and His life and His testimony were a witness against sin. Jesus Christ would not conform. He stands out like a lone mount of light, separate from the chain of dark mountains; and so must the Christian. Christ was separate; and so must you be. Christ was pure, holy, truthful; so must you be. I pray you either renounce your profession, or else seek grace to carry it out. 2. Moreover, the connection of the text tells us that Christ set apart His people by going without the camp. That He might sanctify His people, He suffered without the camp. The Head is not of the world, and shall the members be of it? 3. Again, Christ would have His people separate for their own sanctification. You cannot grow in grace to any high degree while you are conformed to the world. The path of separation may be a path of sorrow, but it is the path of safety. The martyrs tell us in their

diaries that they were never so happy as when they were in the dungeon alone with Christ for company; nay, their best days were often their days of burning: they called them their wedding-days, and went to heaven singing and chanting the triumphal pæan, as they mounted in their chariots of fire. 4. Thus we shall hope to win the crown if we are enabled by Divine grace faithfully to follow Christ in all respects. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Going forth to Christ*:—1. Let us go forth unto Christ without the camp, that we may testify to Him as the Messiah, the only Saviour. This is manifestly the first leading idea which our text is designed to convey. On this fundamental doctrine of our holy faith hinges the essential difference between Christianity and Judaism. It constitutes also one vital point of difference between the gospel and the various systems of heathenism and infidelity. All the sections of the unbelieving world agree in this, that they do not acknowledge Christ as the promised Messiah. "Unto you who believe He is precious." Attachment to the person of Christ can only spring from a Divine principle. "No man can truly call Him Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." I beg of you, therefore, distinctly to understand, that I do not expect you will be prepared to lift up a consistent testimony to His Messiahship, unless you are the subjects of a saving change. "The carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to His law, neither indeed can be." 2. Let us go forth unto Jesus without the camp, that we may specially bear testimony to Him as King of Zion. This is what may be emphatically called our present duty. We might justly regard it as treason against the Lord of Glory, were we to overlook this view of our subject. We dare not hold our peace regarding the sovereign authority of the Redeemer, although some prejudiced souls should be offended. 3. We must go forth unto our Lord without the camp if we would enjoy fellowship and communion with Him. This idea is naturally suggested by the preceding context, "We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." The importance of this consideration should ever be borne in mind. It argues a very diseased state of things on the part of any professing Christian, when the question with him is—How far he may go in the path of error and corruption, and still enjoy communion with the "author and finisher of our faith." And it certainly is a sign of daring impiety when individuals, be they ministers or hearers, are exercising their ingenuity in devising reasons for palliating soul-destroying errors, and when they have the effrontery to tax us with want of charity when we endeavour to vindicate the doctrine of spiritual fellowship, and call upon the Christian people to abandon the communion of a Church that has practically renounced the King of saints. 4. In obeying this command we must lay our account with contempt, reproach, and persecution. It is the dictate of experience, as well as of Scripture, that "all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." The mere circumstance of coming out from the world lying in wickedness, and of faithfully serving the Captain of our salvation, has never failed to bring upon them the scorn and hatred of the ungodly. The votaries of superstition cannot bear to see the truth as it is in Jesus openly proclaimed and honoured. Men of despotic principles will not tolerate, if they can help it, a spiritual authority which stands in the way of their usurpations. And false professors of the gospel, whose interests are linked with corruption and tyranny, will be among the foremost to vilify such as for conscience' sake withdraw from their communion. Where do we find, among men, a brighter example of piety, and holiness, and philanthropy, than that of the apostle of the Gentiles? and who ever experienced greater reproach or more bitter persecution than he? When we look higher we see that our Lord Himself "was despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Why should we dream of exemption from trials? The offence of the Cross has not ceased. But we must not be deterred from following Christ by the dread of obloquy, or the loss of all things. (*John Thomson.*) *The renouncing spirit of Christianity*:—I. ALL PRIVILEGES AND ADVANTAGES WHATEVER ARE TO BE FOREGONE, PARTED WITHAL, AND RENOUNCED WHICH ARE INCONSISTENT WITH AN INTEREST IN CHRIST, and a participation of Him; as our apostle shows at large (Phil. iii. 4–10). II. That if it were the duty of the Hebrews to forsake these ways of worship, which were originally of Divine institution, that they might wholly give up themselves unto Christ in all things pertaining unto God, MUCH MORE IS IT OURS TO FOREGO ALL SUCH PRETENCES UNTO RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AS ARE OF HUMAN INVENTION. III. Whereas the camp contained not only ecclesiastical but also political privileges, WE OUGHT TO BE READY TO FOREGO ALL CIVIL ACCOMMODATIONS ALSO IN HOUSES, LANDS, POSSESSIONS, CONVERSE WITH MEN OF THE SAME NATION, WHEN WE

ARE CALLED THERE UNTO ON THE ACCOUNT OF CHRIST AND THE GOSPEL. IV. If we will go forth unto Christ as without the camp, or separated from all the concern of this world, WE SHALL ASSUREDLY MEET WITH ALL SORTS OF REPROACHES. V. THAT BELIEVERS ARE NOT LIKE TO MEET WITH ANY SUCH ENCOURAGING ENTERTAINMENT IN THIS WORLD AS TO MAKE THEM UNREADY OR UNWILLING TO DESERT IT, and to go forth after Christ bearing His reproach. For it is a motive in the apostle's reasoning to a readiness for that duty, "we have here no continuing city." VI. THIS WORLD NEVER DID, NOR EVER WILL, GIVE A STATE OF REST AND SATISFACTION TO BELIEVERS. It will not afford them a city. It is Jerusalem above that is the "vision of peace." Arise and depart, this is not your rest. VII. IN THE DESTITUTION OF A PRESENT SATISFACTORY REST, GOD HATH NOT LEFT BELIEVERS WITHOUT A PROSPECT OF THAT WHICH SHALL AFFORD THEM REST AND SATISFACTION TO ETERNITY. We have not, but we seek. VIII. As God hath prepared a city of rest for us, so IT IS OUR DUTY CONTINUALLY TO ENDEAVOUR THE ATTAINMENT OF IT IN THE WAYS OF HIS APPOINTMENT. IX. THE MAIN BUSINESS OF BELIEVERS IN THIS WORLD IS DILIGENTLY TO SEEK AFTER THE CITY OF GOD, or the attainment of eternal rest with Him; and this is the character whereby they may be known. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *Coming forth to Christ:*—I. WE MUST COME FORTH OF THE CAMP OR CITY TO HIM. 1. The camp or city is Judaism, and all erroneous sects, and also the world, and men of the world; we must separate from all things inconsistent with the truth and Christ. 2. Out of this camp or city we must come forth, and that we do when we renounce all errors in religion and all earthly affections. We have something in our hearts which keeps us from our God till we be truly converted. 3. To come forth to Christ, therefore, is to be rightly informed, and to believe the saving truth of Christ; and upon this right information, to love Him above all, as far more necessary, excellent, and beneficial than anything, than all things else. To come forth to Him is not to change the place but our hearts; it is a motion not of the body, but the soul, and if we once knew the beauty of Christ, and had tasted of His sweetness, we should be ravished with Him, and all the world could not keep us from Him. In Him alone true happiness is to be found. II. The second part of the duty is TO BEAR HIS REPROACH. Here is reproach, His reproach, the bearing of His reproach. In this the author alludes unto the bearing of the cross, which was the greatest shame any man could be put unto. To endure disgrace, and suffer in our reputation, credit, honour, and good name, is a very grievous evil, and few can endure it, and some can better suffer death than ignominy. The Cross was not only a matter of reproach, but of grievous pain, and was the epitome of all possible evils; and, therefore, by reproach is signified all kinds of afflictions which we may suffer from men, or may be obnoxious unto in this life. Yet this reproach and this cross here meant must be His reproach, His Cross. If we suffer punishment for our own crimes, and through our own folly, then it is not Christ's cross. This is a reproach and cross laid upon us for His sake, because we profess His truth, obey His laws, oppose sin and His enemies, refuse to comply with the world in any sin, renounce all errors, idolatry, superstition, and wicked customs of the world, and all this out of love to Christ. To bear this cross is not merely to suffer any ways, but to suffer the worst man can do unto us with patience, with constancy, with joy, and to think ourselves happy and much honoured that we are counted worthy to suffer for so great a Saviour, and in so noble a cause. This requires a Divine faith well grounded upon the word and promises of God, and a special assistance of the Divine Spirit; for these will strengthen our hearts, and make us willing to suffer anything before we offend our God and lose our Saviour. (*G. Lawson.*) **Bearing His reproach.**—*Christ's reproach:*—It is called Christ's reproach in sundry respects: as—1. The union that is betwixt Him and His Church. So as the reproach of the body or of any member thereof is the reproach of Christ Himself. 2. The sympathy which is betwixt Christ and every of His members. He is sensible of that reproach which is cast upon any of them (Acts ix. 4). 3. The account which Christ hath of the reproaches of His saints; He doth account them as reproaches cast upon Himself. 4. His undertaking to revenge such reproaches and wrongs as are done to His members (Rom. xii. 19). 5. The cause of the reproach which is here meant, and that is Christ Himself, a profession of His name, a maintaining of His gospel, and holding close to His righteousness. In this sense an apostle calleth sufferings in such cases Christ's sufferings (1 Pet. iv. 14; Acts v. 41). 6. That resemblance that is betwixt the reproaches of saints and Christ. This reference of reproach to Christ in this phrase, "His reproach" is for limitation, direction, consolation, and incitation. 1. It affordeth a limitation, in that it restraineth it to a different kind of reproach,

which is Christ's reproach. It is not every kind of reproach that can be counted a matter of glory, wherein a man may rejoice; but Christ's reproach. I may in this case say of reproach, as the apostle doth of buffeting: "What glory is it, if when ye be reproached for your faults, ye shall take it patiently?" (1 Pet. ii. 20). 2. It affordeth a direction in showing how we ought to bear reproach, even as Christ did; for we are in this case to look unto Jesus, who despised the shame (chap. xii. 2). 3. It ministereth much comfort, in that no other thing is done to us than what is done to our Head before us. Herewith doth Christ comfort His disciples (Matt. x. 25; John xv. 20). 4. What greater motive can we have to incite us willingly and contentedly to bear reproach than this, that it is Christ's reproach? If honour, if profit may be motives to incite us to a duty, these motives are not wanting in this case. What can be more honourable than to be as Christ was? and if we be reproached with Him here, we shall enjoy with Him hereafter a crown of glory; what more honourable? what more profitable? (*W. Gouge.*) *Reproach incurred by Christians:*—The following are the chief grounds on which the first Christians were called to bear reproach, and on which we also may be called to bear the same. 1. They suffered reproach, as being followers of a crucified Saviour. 2. A second ground of the reproach suffered by the first Christians was that they forsook the ways of an evil world. 3. Christians are reproached by many on account of their general seriousness and spirituality of character. 4. Lastly: those who adopt any peculiar mode of religious observance have been at times exposed to ridicule on that account. (*R. Hall, M.A.*) *Bearing Christ's reproach:*—Sheriff —— was the child of a Christian mother. He had lived to be over sixty years of age without openly confessing Christ. Some time ago he became interested in his spiritual welfare, and after attending some meetings in the city where he lived, he arose and openly acknowledged his intention to be a Christian. The positiveness of his expression, and his prominence in the community, caused a reporter to insert an item in the next morning's paper that the sheriff had been converted. When he went into the court-house in the performance of his duties, he was saluted by one of a throng of godless men with the remark, "Well, sheriff, we hear you are going to leave us." "Leave you?" said he. "What do you mean?" "Why, we heard," said the man, "that you were going to leave the world, the flesh, and the devil." The sheriff hesitated only an instant, and said, with great emphasis, "That's just what I'm going to do." One of the men then said, "How do you like its being printed in the paper that you have been converted?" He said, "Was that in the paper? I think that is grand. I wish that they'd print placards about it and put them up all over the city, so that people might know about it at once, that I mean henceforth to be a Christian man." It is needless to say that from that time he was a devoted and faithful follower of Christ. *Prizing the Cross:*—Tacitus reports that though the amber ring among the Romans was of no value, yet, after the emperor began to wear it, it began to be in great esteem: it was the only fashion amongst them. So our Saviour has borne the Cross, and was borne upon it. Once a disgrace, even, it comes to be a boast to the true believer. We should esteem it more highly than many of us do, and bear it daily in remembrance of Him. (*E. P. Thwing.*)

Ver. 14. **Here have we no continuing city.**—*An ever-changing scene:*—These words sum up what was certainly the apostolic mind as to the position of Christians in the world. They were members, as we are, of a vast and complex association which we call human society; but, with all its great attributes, it wants permanence. The world passes away as we work and speak. "Here we have no continuing city." We have, indeed, a city; we have a wonderful and beneficent citizenship; we could not live without it; we owe it debts beyond repayment, duties of the most sacred kind; but society is with us and about us to-day, and to-morrow we and it are to be so much farther on in our round of successive changes, by which it becomes something quite different from what it is now, something, perhaps, which now we cannot imagine, and we disappear from life and from the visible world. But though "here we have no continuing city," we do "seek one to come." Born amid change, knowing nothing by experience but change, the human heart yet obstinately clings to its longing for the unchangeable and eternal. Christian souls not only long for it, but look for it. We seek that which is to come—seek it, believing that we shall one day reach it. We do not need Scripture to teach us that "we have no continuing city," that "the fashion of this world passeth away," that "nothing continueth in one stay." But only

Scripture can teach us to seek with hope for that which is to come. I need not remind you how, throughout the Psalms, we meet the impressive recognition of this aspect of life and of the world. They are full of the presence, of the greatness, of the eventfulness of change—change going on for good and evil, for joy and sorrow, in outward circumstances, in the inward life—changes visible, material, political, moral, and vicissitudes in the fortunes of men and nations; and there are recorded the most rapid alternations and successions of feeling in the soul within, in its outlook towards God and things outside it. The idea of the sovereignty of God is the counterpart throughout the Psalms set over against all that is unsatisfying, disastrous, transitory, untrustworthy, not only in man's condition, but in the best that he can do. The psalmists realised that they had "no continuing city" in a way that is far beyond our experience. They knew a state of society which could rely on nothing settled. It was liable at any moment to be tormented by insolent and lawless wickedness, to be shaken to its foundations by the fever and passion of false religions, to be crushed down into utter ruin by some alien conqueror. They believed that they were the people of God; they believed that they had His promises; and yet what they saw was these promises still unfulfilled, recalled, apparently passing away to nothingness; they, the people of God's holiness, saw in the midst of them, trampling on all light and purity, the blood-thirsty and deceitful man; they, the elect of the Lord of Hosts, saw the enemy master among the ruins of God's holy place, and for generation after generation felt themselves the slaves and spoil of the heathen. What wonder, then, that the voice of grief and humiliation sounds with such tragic repetition in the Book of Psalms? "Hath God indeed forgotten to be gracious, and will He shut up His loving-kindness in displeasure?" But what is the other side of all this? It is that perhaps with one, and that only an apparent exception, the voice of unalloyed and uncomforted despair is never heard there. At the very moment that the heart is rent with shame and agony comes the remembrance of the Eternal King of Mercy and Righteousness, whose kingdom endured from end to end, while empires rose and fell, and whose ear heard with equal certainty the cry of the poor, and the blasphemer, and the cruel. In spite of the daily evidence of experience, the wicked "flourishing like a green bay-tree," the power of the oppressor, the mocking tongue of the blasphemer—in spite of all, the foundations stand sure and unshaken by any accidents of mortal condition. "Thou art set in the throne that judgest right." "The Lord shall endure for ever; He hath also prepared His seat for judgment." "The Lord also will be a defence for the oppressed," &c. And so with the transitoriness of the lives and generations of men. Nowhere is a keener sense shown of it than in the Psalms. "For man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain." "As soon as Thou scatterest them they are even as a sleep, and fade away suddenly like the grass." "For, when Thou art angry, all our days are gone; we bring our years to an end as a tale that is told." What is there to comfort and compensate for this dreary prospect? Nothing but unlimited trust in God's power and goodness and ever-watchful care. "My days have gone like a shadow, and I am withered like grass." There is the consciousness which must come to all men sooner or later—a consciousness in the Psalmist's case that these great changes in his lot were not undeserved by a sinner. "And that because of Thy indignation and wrath; for Thou hast taken me up, and cast me down." The great revelation of forgiveness and immortality was yet to come, but the Psalmist's faith in the Eternal King of the world never wavered. "The days of man are but as grass, for he flourisheth as a flower of the field. For as soon," &c. "But the merciful goodness," &c. "When the breath of man goeth forth," &c. The waste, the throwing away of human souls, of human affection—is there anything more strangely perplexing in the ruin of death? But the answer is at hand: "Blessed is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help," &c. Men died and were buried, and their children after them; they knew that they must die and be as though they had never been. They walked like shadows in the midst of shadows. They felt to the full the shortness of life, how soon it was over, how awful its inevitable changes; yet they did not faint. They knew that over them was the ever-continuous rule of Him who made heaven and earth and all things. They doubted not that He "keepeth His promise for ever"; and so, with change and mortality in them and around them, written on the solid earth and on the distant heaven, they broke into the exulting song (Psa. cii. 25-28): "Here we have no continuing city"; but we know, with a distinctness which all men have not, of the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. But where is that passionate, delighted,

triumphant faith of those men of old? What have we got of their joy and gladness at the very thought of God? (*Dean Church.*) *Mutability of man's present condition*:—I. HERE WE HAVE NO CONTINUING CITY. 1. We may be said to have here no continuing city, by reason of the changes to which our circumstances are liable. 2. The same truth will appear evident if we consider the dissatisfaction with which every condition in life is attended. 3. The truth of the apostle's declaration will appear still more manifest when we consider the change to which we ourselves are liable. Every step that we take, while it may bring us nearer to some object of pursuit, at the same time brings us nearer to that misty ocean upon which we must all embark, and bid adieu to all upon its shore. II. BUT WE SEEK ONE TO COME. 1. This presupposes, on the part of Christians, an idea of the existence of another city yet to be discovered. 2. The language of the apostle implies not only a conviction of the existence of heaven, but of its excellence, its decided superiority to the place of man's present habitation. 3. The language here employed implies a belief that this city may be gained. 4. It implies, more particularly, that Christians have abandoned the world. 5. It implies an actual entrance upon the way to heaven by an engagement in Christian duty. (*Jas. Clason.*) *The final home of the Christian not on earth, but in heaven*:—I. MAN HAS NO PERMANENT HOME ON EARTH. 1. The inconstancy of human life. 2. The inevitable event of death. 3. The doom which awaits the earth. II. THE PERMANENT HOME OF THE CHRISTIAN IS IN HEAVEN. 1. Heaven is a place. 2. Heaven is a permanent place. 3. Heaven is sure to the faithful believer. III. TO ATTAIN HEAVEN IS THE CHRISTIAN'S SUPREME CONCERN. 1. Heaven is secured to the believer conditionally. 2. That condition must be fulfilled on earth. 3. Its fulfilment requires the vigorous application of the whole mind. 4. The hope of heaven inspires Christian courage. (*Homilist.*) *Men sojourners upon earth*:—I. No sooner are we capable of looking round us, and considering the frame of our nature, and the condition of our being, than we may observe THAT, DERIVED FROM DUST, WE NATURALLY HASTEN TO DUST AGAIN; that none can claim the privilege of an exemption from the common necessity; that the human, like the vegetable race, have their periods of growth and declension, and are either cut down by the hand of violence, or soon fade and drop of themselves. Strangers and sojourners here, as were all our fathers, we soon pass away, and are gone. II. I proceed to deduce SOME REFLECTIONS AND INFERENCES FROM THE SHORT DURATION AND TRANSITORY CONDITION OF HUMAN LIFE. 1. Melancholy indeed would be the reflection that we pass away as a shadow if this life were the whole of our existence, and we had no hope beyond it, But, setting aside other considerations, the short term of our existence here may give us grounds to hope that it will be renewed and prolonged hereafter. For can we think that man was not designed by his Maker to attain that perfection in wisdom, and virtue, and happiness of which his nature is susceptive? 2. Meditation on our short and uncertain state in this world may wean us from an over-fondness for anything in it. 3. The consideration of the shortness of life may assist us in supporting us under its afflictions. 4. If the time of our sojourning in this world be but short, let the great and habitual object of our attention be that state which may soon begin but can never end. If "we have here no continuing city, let us seek one to come." (*G. Carr, B.A.*) *Present change and future continuance*:—Changeableness is one characteristic of all that is earthly. What is history? Largely the record of a succession of vapours which have appeared for a little time, and then have vanished away. What is philosophy but knowledge of the rise and progress, the extent and duration of shadows? What is poetry but the expression of the deep emotions awakened by earthly vicissitudes? And what is this world as we now all see it but a system of globes having a double revolution? Nothing abides in the same place, or exhibits two days together the same aspect. Changeableness is one feature of all that is earthly; human nature being no exception. Personally, relatively, in body, in spirit, within, without, there is no continuance. Some of the changes to which men are subject are manifestly good in themselves, good in all respects, and in the case of those who love God, and who are the called according to His purpose, all things work together for good. "Here have we no continuing city." In what position are we left? Are we never to have continuance? Yes, we are to look upon things abiding, for while "here we have no continuing city, we," Christians, "seek one to come." I. Look at THIS CHANGEABLENESS HERE FELT AND ACKNOWLEDGED. "Here have we no continuing city." This seems discordant with the closing verse of the former chapter, where it is said—"We receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably

with reverence and godly fear." But you remember, that kingdom is within us; and that kingdom is continued. The apostle is speaking in the text rather of that which is outside of us. Here, too, have we no fixed temporal condition. The rich often become poor; the elevated are brought low; and the men of many friends are made desolate. Here, too, have we no ultimate stage of existence. We begin with babyhood, rise into childhood, and oh, how soon do we get through manhood! And here have we no permanent visible Church. The persons constituting the Churches of Christ die; the members of particular congregations change; they pass from one community to another; and our Church forms and modes alter. Here, too, have we no fixed and unalterable demand upon our resources and powers. Duties and responsibilities, they all vary. Here, too, have we no fixed state of the emotions. To-day we are in joy; to-morrow in sorrow. Here, too, have we not the consummation of redemption. There are some things in our salvation now complete. Our pardon is complete; our justification is complete; but the inner salvation is being wrought out. There is no continuance in the experience of a true Christian. Here, too, have we not the everlasting Jerusalem. So that we may say, looking at all these facts, "Here have we no continuing city." II. WE CHRISTIANS SEEK ONE TO COME. We desire that which is unchangeable, and we seek it. "One to come"—a higher and a settled dwelling-place—a final home. It is love that makes a home. To love, and to be loved, though it be in the peasant's cot, is to be at home; and often you find homes in the rudest dwellings, and none in the most splendid palaces. But where love is likely to be disturbed—where some rude hand can take the threads that love is ever spinning and tying and fastening, and cut them and sever them, the home feeling must of course be partial. And we long for a place and a state where we shall abide eternally in the presence of those who love us. "We seek one to come." A higher and a settled dwelling-place, a final home, a permanent state of being—not a stereotyped state of being, but still a permanent state of being, as distinguished from a mere probational state. And we long for, we seek a permanent state of being, and an undisturbed condition. Society, for example, just to take two or three illustrations—society without interruption or separation. Now, as soon as we know one another, we are taken away from each other. Occupation pursued for ever. The man who looks at this world as he should look at it almost trembles to undertake anything great or anything grand. But think of immortality as the day of your work. What broad foundations of enterprises may you lay, when you shall feel that you have the "for-ever" before you in which to execute those enterprises! "One to come"—not only occupations to be pursued for ever, but pleasure to be enjoyed for ever, and honours to be worn for ever, and worship to be continued for ever, and communion to be unbroken for ever, and the Church to be glorious and perfect for ever. Now, we Christians desire this for comfort's sake, for progress' sake, and above all for righteousness' sake. Acknowledge, then, that "here have we no continuing city"; acknowledge it. Acknowledge it by expecting change. Do not busy yourself in trying to fix permanently all the arrangements of your households, and to say, as I sometimes hear some of you say, and hear you say occasionally with trembling, "Now we are settled." Settled? Settled this side of the grave? Settled—where change is the very law of life? Settled? Oh, never say with the spirit that we are now condemning, "Now we are settled." When God requires you to make changes, make them, and be ready for them, and then they will not hurt you. "Here have we no continuing city." Acknowledge this fully and cordially. Then "seek one to come"—by union with Jesus Christ, and by spiritual preparedness. There is a city to come—a collection of the saved children of Adam in one place—a holy place, a city. It is beautiful for situation, like Jerusalem of old, but built upon everlasting hills which shall never bow, and upon mountains which shall never be moved. It is a holy city, into which shall not enter anything that defileth or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie. (*S. Martin.*) *No continuing city here*:—I. THE AFFECTING VIEW WHICH THE TEXT PRESENTS OF THE PRESENT WORLD. 1. Our earthly possessions do not continue. (1) Our life—the chief of them—is not permanent. "We know not what a day may bring forth." (2) Our connections are not permanent. We may flatter ourselves in the hope that they will remain, and avail us, all along the journey of life; that we shall never want a relative to feel an identity of interests with us; but, probably, amidst all these self-gratulations, events may arise to dissolve our pleasing reverie, and to compel us to mourn over lost relations, never to be regained. (3) Our health, property, respectability, do not always continue. What reverses of this kind does the page of

history record! We read of constitutions broken, estates lost, fortunes ruined—of thrones subverted. 2. Our opportunities do not continue. There is a tide in our affairs, both temporal and spiritual. 3. Our religious peace and joy do not continue. There are disturbing forces in the kingdom of grace, as well as in that of nature: there are alternations in the affections of the soul, as well as in the seasons and the elements; and it would be strange if our minds were liable to no fluctuations, since there are different states in the health of our bodies. II. THE CONDUCT WHICH THE APOSTLE DESCRIBES IN REFERENCE TO ANOTHER WORLD—"but we seek one to come." 1. Observe the figure under which the place of the future abode of godly persons is represented—it is a city. A city means a place of concourse, in which is intelligent and agreeable society; a place of protection, a place of entertainment, where there is much to delight the eye, the ear, the taste—a place of refinement, where the minds and manners of the inhabitants are removed from what is coarse—a place of wealth and comfort, affording a confluence of the supplies and enjoyments of life. 2. This peerless place is yet to come. That is, it is yet to appear, to be enjoyed—it is future. Hannibal's soldiers had no adequate idea of the Italian plains, before they descried them from the Alpine heights. The Israelites must have had a very imperfect notion of the Land of Promise, before they had crossed the Jordan, and traversed its mountains and valleys, entered its cities, walked amongst its vineyards, and partook of its milk and honey. And our highest attainments of grace upon earth leave us painfully ignorant of the perfect realisations of glory which await us in heaven. 3. Real Christians are now seeking this city which is to come. Seeking it implies earnest desire, assiduous diligence, and progressive advancement. (*J. Davies.*) *No continuing city*:—In Chili, where the ground is subject to frequent shocks of earthquake, the houses are built of lowly height and of unenduring structure; it is of little use to dig deep foundations, and pile up high walls, when the very earth is unstable; it would be foolish to build as for ages when the whole edifice may be in ruins in a week. Herein we read a lesson as to our worldly schemes and possessions; this poor fleeting world deserves not that we should build our hopes and joys upon it as though they could last us long. We must treat it as a treacherous soil, and build but lightly on it, and we shall be wise. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *A frail habitation*:—Mr. Ruskin speaks in his "Love's Meinie" of the "Little Crake, a bird which lays her eggs on an inartificially constructed platform of decayed leaves or stalks of marsh plants, slightly elevated above the water. How elevated I cannot find proper account, that is to say, whether it is hung to the stems of growing reeds, or built on hillocks of soil, but the bird is always liable to have its nest overflown by floods" (*H. O. Mackey.*) **We seek one to come.**—*The abiding city of God's people*:—I. I shall trace in these words THE OBJECT YEARNED AFTER BY EVERY MAN'S HEART, VIZ., A SETTLED AND SECURE CONDITION. Fully to enter into the beauty and force of this expression, it is necessary to imagine ourselves transported to a country exposed to the frequent devastation of war. Imagine yourselves in a land where the broken framework of the law cannot restrain each castle and town from pouring forth its band of marauding ruffians; or, suppose an enemy's host landed and spreading fire and ruin far and wide—you will then partly estimate the desirableness of dwelling in "a continuing city." II. Therefore, secondly, GOD CONDESCENDS TO GIVE MAN A WARNING RESPECTING IT, drawing at one stroke a picture of this world, by saying that no such permanent security is to be found here—"here we have no continuing city." Are riches secure? Your city has no bolts and bars to confine them. Friends, the nearest and dearest—what risk of their becoming estranged and chilled by misunderstanding. Earthquake, and hurricane, and plague, and war, are not necessary to brand instability on our comforts of this life. In the form of a slight cold Death lays its imperceptible touch upon the frame, and ere long comes to claim his own. Yet men will seek for these things, as if they were to endure, and will confide in their continuance to the last hour. It is necessary, then, that ye be warned by no less than the voice of God Himself, that "here ye have no continuing city." III. But, thirdly, GOD ASSURES US THAT THERE IS SUCH A STATE TO BE ATTAINED UNTO ELSEWHERE—there is "one to come." The original is more explicit, for the existence of such a state is expressly affirmed. It is spoken of not as a hope, an imagination, like those which man sets before his own eyes, but as a reality. The true force of the expressions, "the one to come," is, "the city that is to come." Yes, revelation sets before us a place of security beyond the utmost dream of human hope—"a continuing city," more complete than it hath entered into the heart of man to conceive, hath God prepared for them that love Him. It

is figured forth as a city (chap. xi. 16): "God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a city." It hath walls and gates: "Thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise." It is set forth specially under the figure of the "holy city," the New Jerusalem: "the city had no need of the sun, nor of the moon." The majesty of God is security for the peace and safety of that place. IV. But, fourthly, THE APOSTLE LETS FALL BY THE WAY A SHORT CHARACTERISTIC DESCRIPTION OF EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN, VIZ., THAT HE IS A "SEEKER" OF THAT HEAVENLY CONDITION: "We seek one to come." Recognise in this description that earnestness is an implied characteristic of the people of God. As an exile seeks his father's land, or his native city, where the great majority of his kindred dwell, so the Christian soul feels towards heaven. He need not affect stoic indifference to the stations and duties on earth. St. Paul said, "I am of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city." But let earthly things clash with heavenly, and you will see where his heart is, that he is earnestly seeking his native city, into whose privileges he was new born, though at a distance, precisely as Paul was born into the privileges of Rome, though his native place was in Cilicia. The earnestness of a Christian will show itself in all he does; and in proportion as he is earnest, is the development of his Christianity. Another remark to which this characteristic description of a Christian gives rise, is an encouraging one to those Christians who, though earnest, are cast down. A Christian's character is evidently that of an expectant, not a possessor. Ye are not yet come into the place which the Lord hath said He will give unto you. Be not therefore discouraged at being only an expectant of coming blessings. I would now fain bind this subject yet closer upon your individual hearts, by addressing three classes of persons. First, those that have suffered much from the mutability of earthly things; secondly, those that have been prosperous hitherto; and, thirdly, those that are entering on the trials of life. (*C. Hebert, M.A.*) *Only one Paradise for man:*—It is said that Mahomet approached Damascus, and when he stood to view the dazzling spectacle of that royal city, amid the beautiful plain, he turned aside and left the prospect, saying, "It is given to man to enjoy Paradise but once. If I possess Damascus I lose heaven."

Ver. 15. **Offer the sacrifice of praise.**—*A life-long occupation:*—It is instructive to notice where this verse stands. The connection is a golden setting to the gem of the text. Here we have a description of the believer's position before God. He has done with all carnal ordinances, and has no interest in the ceremonies of the Mosaic law. What then? Are we to offer no sacrifice? Very far from it. We are called upon to offer to God a continual sacrifice. Having done with the outward, we now give ourselves entirely to the inward and to the spiritual. Moreover, the believer is now, if he is where he ought to be, like his Master, "without the camp." What then? If we are without the camp, have we nothing to do? On the contrary, let us the more ardently pursue higher objects, and yield up our disentangled spirits to the praise and glory of God. Do we come under contempt, as the Master did? Is it so, that we are "bearing His reproach"? Shall we sit down in despair? Nay, verily; while we lose honour ourselves, we will ascribe honour to our God. We will count it all joy that we are counted worthy to be reproached for Christ's sake. Moreover, the apostle says that "Here we have no continuing city." Well, then, we will transfer the continuance from the city to the praise—"Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually." If everything here is going, let it go; but we will not cease to sing. If the end of all things is at hand, let them end; but our praises of the living God shall abide world without end. I. First, then, concerning a believer, let me DESCRIBE HIS SACRIFICE. "By Him therefore." 1. See, at the very threshold of all offering of sacrifice to God, we begin with Christ. We cannot go a step without Jesus. Without a Mediator we can make no advance to God. He is that altar which sanctifies both gift and giver; by Him, therefore, let our sacrifices both of praise and of almsgiving be presented unto God. 2. Next, observe that this sacrifice is to be presented continually. Not only in this place or that place, but in every place, we are to praise the Lord our God. Not only when we are in a happy frame of mind, but when we are cast down and troubled. The perfumed smoke from the altar of incense is to rise towards heaven both day and night, from the beginning of the year to the year's end. 3. The apostle goes on to tell us what the sacrifice is—the sacrifice of praise. Praise, that is, heart-worship, or adoration. Adoration is the grandest form of earthly service. We ascribe unto Jehovah, the one living and true God, all honour and glory. Praise is heart-trust

and heart-content with God. Trust is adoration applied to practical purposes. Praise is heart-enjoyment; the indulgence of gratitude and wonder. The Lord has done so much for me that I must praise Him, or feel as if I had a fire shut up within me. 4. The text evidently deals with spoken praise—"Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name"; or, as the Revised Version has it, "the fruit of lips which make confession to His name." So, then, we are to utter the praises of God, and it is not sufficient to feel adoring emotions. "Well," saith one, "I cannot force myself to praise." I do not want you to force yourself to it: this praise is to be natural. It is called the fruit of the lips. Fruit is a natural product: it grows without force, the free outcome of the plant. So let praise grow out of your lips at its own sweet will. Let it be as natural to you, as regenerated men, to praise God as it seems to be natural to profane men to blaspheme the sacred name. This praise is to be sincere and real. The next verse tells us we are to do good and communicate, and joins this with praise to God. Many will give God a cataract of words, but scarce a drop of true gratitude in the form of substance consecrated. This practical praising of the Lord is the life-office of every true believer. See ye to it. II. We will, secondly, EXAMINE THE SUBSTANCE OF THIS SACRIFICE. "Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually." 1. To praise God continually will need a childlike faith in Him. You must believe His word, or you will not praise His name. Doubt snaps the harp-strings. Question mars all melody. Unbelief is the deadly enemy of praise. 2. Faith must lead you into personal communion with the Lord. It is to Him that the praise is offered, and not to our fellow-men. 3. You must have also an overflowing content, a real joy in Him. Be sure that you do not lose your joy. Rejoice in the Lord, that you may praise Him. 4. There must also be a holy earnestness about this. Praise is called a sacrifice because it is a very sacred thing. When life is real, life is earnest: and it must be both real and earnest when it is spent to the praise of the great and ever-blessed God. 5. To praise God continually, you need to cultivate perpetual gratitude, and surely it cannot be hard to do that! Remember, every misery averted is a mercy bestowed; every sin forgiven is a favour granted; every duty performed is also a grace received. Let the stream leap up to heaven in bursts of enthusiasm; let it fall to earth again in showers of beneficence; let it fill the basin of your daily life, and run over into the lives of others, and thence again in a cataract of glittering joy let it still descend. 6. In order to this praise you will need a deep and ardent admiration of the Lord God. Admire the Father—think much of His love; acquaint yourself with His perfections. Admire the Son of God, the altogether lovely One; and as you mark His gentleness, self-denial, love, and grace, suffer your heart to be wholly enamoured of Him. Admire the patience and condescension of the Holy Ghost, that He should visit you, and dwell in you, and bear with you. III. I want, in the third place, to COMMEND THIS BLESSED EXERCISE. 1. "Offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually," because in so doing you will answer the end of your being. Every creature is happiest when it is doing what it is made for. Christians are made to glorify God; and we are never in our element till we are praising Him. Do not degrade yourself by a less Divine employ. 2. Praise God again, because it is His due. Should Jehovah be left unpraised? Praise is the quit-rent which He asks of us for the enjoyment of all things; shall we be slow to pay? 3. Praise Him continually, for it will help you in everything else. A man full of praise is ready for all other holy exercises. The praises of God put wings upon pilgrims' heels, so that they not only run, but fly. 4. This will preserve us from many evils. When the heart is full of the praise of God, it has not time to find fault and grow proudly angry with its fellows. We cannot fear while we can praise. Neither can we be bribed by the world's favour, nor cowed by its frown. Praise makes men, yea, angels of us: let us abound in it. 5. Let us praise God because it will be a means of usefulness. I believe that a life spent in God's praise would in itself be a missionary life. A praiseful heart is eloquent for God. 6. Praise God, because this is what God loves. Notice how the next verse puts it: "With such sacrifices God is well pleased." 7. To close this commendation, remember that this will fit you for heaven. You can begin the music here—begin the hallelujahs of glory by praising God here below. IV. LET US COMMENCE AT ONCE. What does the text say? It says, "Let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually." The apostle does not say, "By and by get to this work, when you are able to give up business, and have retired to the country, or when you are near to die"; but now, at once, he says, "Let us offer the sacrifice of praise." Let us

stir one another up to praise. Let us spend to-day, and to-morrow, and all the rest of our days in praising God. If we catch one another a little grumbling, or coldly silent, let us, in kindness to each other, give the needful rebuke. It will not do; we must praise the Lord. Just as the leader of an orchestra taps his baton to call all to attention, and then to begin singing, so I bestir you to offer the sacrifice of praise unto the Lord. The apostle has put us rather in a fix: he compels us to offer sacrifice. Did you notice what he said in the tenth verse? He says, "We have an altar." Can we imagine that this altar is given us of the Lord to be never used? Is no sacrifice to be presented on the best of altars? If we have an altar, do not allow it to be neglected, deserted, unused. It is not for spiders to spin their webs upon; it is not meet that it should be smothered with the dust of neglect. "We have an altar." What then? "Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually." Do you not see the force of the argument? Practically obey it. Beside the altar we have a High Priest. Shall He stand there, and have nothing to do? What would you think of our great High Priest waiting at the altar, with nothing to present which His redeemed had brought to God? No, "by Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually." Bring hither abundantly, ye people of God, your praises, your prayers, your thank-offerings, and present them to the Ever-blessed! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Public worship a sacrifice*:—It is commonly supposed that the immediate object and end of public worship is edification, and that we assemble ourselves together in God's house of prayer, mainly, if not solely, for our own benefit and improvement. Persons who are better informed will, indeed, admit that the honour of God is also intended in public worship; but it is evident that most people are far from realising this truth. The devout Christian will readily understand that such a view of public worship as this, which has respect rather to our own profit than to God's honour, is most erroneous; and the words of the text, rightly understood, are well calculated to set forth and correct the falseness of this notion. Now, in considering the apostle's expression, "sacrifice of praise," with a view to ascertain the full meaning of the phrase, let us inquire whether there was anything in the ancient sacrifices which does not apply to the solemn services of the Christian Church. 1. And the first prejudice which we may mention against applying the term sacrifice to our own acts of worship is the erroneous persuasion that blood was always shed in the sacrifices of old. But this is altogether a mistake, and betrays an ignorance of the Scriptures, as well as of the writings of heathen antiquity; for nothing is more certain than that the sacrifices both of Jews and Gentiles consisted, many of them, of the oblation not of slain animals, but of flour, cakes, wine, fruits, and other vegetable substances. 2. Having, then, shown that there were other sacrifices among the Jews than those of slain animals, I will notice a second objection that might be ignorantly urged against the term "sacrifice" being applied to Christian oblation, viz., that the sacrifices of old were always burnt upon the altar, whereas all burnt-offerings have ceased among Christians. But it is not true that all the Jewish sacrifices were burnt; for it is certain that the wave-loaves were not thus offered with fire: and again, it was distinctly enjoined that the scape-goat was to be presented alive before the Lord to make an atonement. 3. But perhaps a still more serious objection to our use of the word "sacrifice" is the fear entertained by many well-meaning persons lest this term should suggest the idea that our religious performances are intrinsically meritorious and propitiatory, and so detract from the all-sufficient merits of the great sacrifice which was once offered for the sins of the whole world. But this apprehension is also founded upon the mistaken notion that the sacrifices before the coming of Christ were really propitiatory; whereas, in truth, they had no real virtue apart from the merits of that prevailing sacrifice which they prefigured. Not one of the Jewish ceremonies and sacrificial rites could, in the least, avail to cleanse from sin, but as they were accepted by God for the sake of the offering of the body of Christ once for all. It does not, therefore, appear how the application of the term sacrifice to Christian oblations, and particularly to the Holy Eucharist, can encourage the supposition that they are intrinsically meritorious. But while it is freely admitted that none of these ceremonies, either before or after Christ, are in their own nature and by their own virtue meritorious, it may be safely maintained that, if they be done in and "by Him," our "Priest for ever," then they are, through the atonement of the Cross, availing to the quieting of our consciences, the reconciling to God, the imparting of grace, and the forgiveness of sin. And this surely is especially true of that sacrifice of praise which has been

ordained by Christ Himself as the perpetual memorial of the sacrifice of His death, and of the benefits which we receive thereby. Observe: St. Paul, writing to the Hebrew converts, who of all people were most familiar with the import of the word "sacrifice," instead of avoiding the use of this term, as if all notion of the solemn offerings of the Mosaic law was to be carefully banished from their christianised minds as irreconcilable with the spirituality of the gospel, selects this very word to convey to them his idea of the character of Christian praise. Now, to the Jewish mind sacrifice was a solemn act surrounded with a ceremonial prescribed by God Himself. There was the trouble and expense of providing the oblation; then it was to be brought to the priest, who alone could present it with prayer to God and make it an acceptable sacrifice. We will conclude the subject with a few practical remarks suggested by the word "continually." The worship of the Church is a sacrifice. But not only this, it is a continual sacrifice. There was the daily, morning, and evening sacrifice among the Jews. There has ever been the same daily services in the Catholic Church of Christ; and our own Anglican branch of it asserts this duty, and claims this privilege. Has our gracious Lord taught the Church to cry continually, "Give us this day our daily bread"; and does this petition suggest individual and domestic wants only, and not those of the people and nation also? Is it lawful for man to pray daily for common blessings, and must it not be a duty and a privilege to unite in prayer, in God's own house of prayer, under the direction of His ministers? But besides this continual sacrifice, I would remind you of those more solemn days of fast and festival, upon which every devoted member of the Church Catholic (or at least some representative of his family) should present himself before the Lord, if he desires to be like, or fears to be very unlike, all Christians of bygone days. These levees of the King of kings will often be held on days inconvenient to the world. But we are not of the world, but subjects of another kingdom. But to realise this blessedness you must come to offer sacrifice. You must come in God's way, and in compliance with the laws of His Church. Do not think too much, or immediately of the benefit, spiritual or temporal, which you hope to receive; but think first and chiefly of rendering to God that homage which is His due. Nor make much of the trouble or inconvenience which such duties may occasion you; rather to the "fruit of your lips," add cheerfully the sacrifice of your time, your bodily strength, your worldly substance. (*C. Wray, M.A.*) *Thanksgiving*:—We must thank God for the mercies we have, or else we shall not have others. In the early days when the Puritans settled in New England they were always having fast days. They had a fast day because their bread was getting short; another fast day because the Red Indians invaded them; another fast day because a ship had not arrived that they expected; and they had so many fast days that they began to get exceedingly weak. At length, one very wise brother said, "Did they not think it would be as well, now and then, to vary the thing, and to have a feast day occasionally? Would it not be quite as acceptable to God if instead of mourning over mercies they wanted, they were to thank Him for mercies enjoyed?" So they instituted what is called the thanksgiving day, which became a perpetual ordinance afterwards—the thanksgiving for mercies received. There is reason and wisdom in such a course. How dare you go and ask for anything else till you have been thankful for what you have? What do you with poor people who depend upon you? You gave the man some relief yesterday, and he walked away with an ungrateful face, shrugging shoulders, as much as to say, "That's all!" Sometimes when you have given charity to a very greedy person, have you not seen him stand and look at it? What has been your rule when he comes next time? You have sent him away empty, and very properly is he punished. But how is it the Lord does not serve you the same? You ask Him for a mercy and you get it, and you either look at it as though it were not worth having, or else you enjoy it for a time and then forget you have ever had it, and never think of thanking Him; and then you knock at His door again, and expect that He will wait upon your lusts when you will not wait upon His throne with thanksgiving. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Thanksgiving in the heart*:—As flowers carry dewdrops, trembling on the edges of the petals, and ready to fall at the first waft of wind or brush of bird, so the heart should carry its beaded words of thanksgiving; and at the first breath of heavenly flavour, let down the shower, perfumed with the heart's gratitude. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Praising God*:—In praising a fellow creature we may easily surpass the truth; but in praising God we have only to go on acknowledging and confessing what He really is to us. Here it is impossible to exceed the truth; and here is genuine

praise. (*J. A. Bengel.*) *Praise*:—Gurnall spoke of "the double action of the lungs"—the air sucked in by prayer and breathed forth again in praise. *Little rent*:—The Lord has many fine farms from which He receives but little rent. Thanksgiving is a good thing: thanksliving is better. (*P. Henry.*) *A line of praise*:—A line of praises is worth a leaf of prayer; and an hour of praises is worth a day of fasting and mourning. (*J. Livingston.*) *Thankless people*:—Pliny says in his Natural History there is a certain people in India, upon the river Ganges, called Aótomy, who have no mouth, but feed upon the smell of herbs and flowers. We have some of the same kind of people in England: when, under the afflicting hand of God, they have no lips to praise God, nor tongues to justify Him. (*J. W. Kirton.*) *Praise*:—Hard by the table of shewbread commemorating His bounty should stand the altar of incense denoting our praise. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Gratitude an aid to enjoyment*:—Many favours which God giveth us ravel out for want of hemming, through our own unthankfulness; for though prayer purchases blessings, giving praise doth keep the quiet possession of them. "*Have we thanked Him?*"—A lady, hearing of a poor gipsy boy lying very ill in a tent, was anxious to visit him. In her endeavours to do so she met with much abuse and a refusal from the boy's father. At last, however, the father consented to her visiting his dying son. Entering the tent, she found the poor lad lying on a heap of straw and in great suffering. She spoke to him of Jesus, and His love for sinners; of His cruel death and resurrection; and was astonished to see the boy's frame shaken with sobs. To her inquiry about his distress, he gasped, "Oh, miss, and I've never so much as thanked Him!" Have we thanked Him?

Ver. 16. **But to do good, and to communicate, forget not.**—*Christian beneficence*:—I. WHAT THE EXPRESSIONS TO "DO GOOD" AND TO "COMMUNICATE" DENOTE. 1. To "do good" is to do whatever may tend to promote the good and happiness of our neighbour; to prevent any peril or misfortune he may be exposed to, or to deliver him out of any circumstances of adversity which he may be in. The goods or evils we are capable of in this world either respect our spiritual or our temporal state. If he requires our advice we ought to give it in the best manner we can; if our assistances we ought to discover a readiness to gratify him in any reasonable request. 2. To communicate, or distribute, is to set apart some proportion of those good things the providence of God has blessed us with to the benefit and relief of others. II. WHY DOING GOOD AND COMMUNICATING ARE SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE AND WELL-PLEASING TO GOD. 1. By beneficence and charitable actions we imitate God in one of the glorious and moral perfections of His nature. That perfection which He seems Himself to exalt above all His other attributes, and without which they would render Him rather an object of terror than love to us. 2. Hereby we do honour to the providence of God. For probably this, among other reasons, may be one why God has put so great a number of men under circumstances of want, that those who are in a better capacity may have constant occasions of exerting themselves in all the good offices of humanity and love, which are the brightest ornaments of human nature; and that others, seeing these their good works, may be more effectually excited to glorify God. 3. By acts of beneficence we discover the power which religion has over us, and the sincerity of our love to God. This is the most sensible argument that we can give to ourselves or others, that our hearts are right with God, and that religion has in truth some power over us. But in truth, though acts of charity may in many respects interfere with the maxims of self-love, and seem to cross the designs of avarice and worldly-mindedness; yet it will appear under my next and last particular. 4. That they are agreeable to one of the prime and essential inclinations of human nature. God has implanted in our very frame a compassionate sense of the sufferings of other people, which disposes us to contribute to their relief; so that when we see any of our fellow creatures in circumstances of distress we are naturally, I had almost said, mechanically, inclined to be helpful to them. One reason why God has given us these natural sentiments of compassion may be that man, of all other beings upon earth, stands in the greatest need of the help of his fellow creatures; for whereas Nature, when she brings other creatures in the world, puts them in a readier way of making some provision for themselves. Man is born more exposed, and even in his full strength he would at the best but pass his time very ill were it not for the many comforts and conveniences which he reaps from society. As God has made man a sociable creature, it was a very wise design of His providence to train him up in such a manner for society as might give him the strongest im-

pressions of all the duties of humanity and respect, which he owes to it, and wherein the peace and happiness of it principally consist. (*R. Fiddes, D.D.*) *Doing good:*—There is no good for man but to do good. To do good is in accordance with our highest reason, and commands universal approval; for, whatever may be the practice of the selfish and the churlish, even they are constrained, though in stinted phrase, to commend the generous. Whether we appeal to our personal consciousness, or the general judgment of mankind, the man who lives for others, and labours, even at a sacrifice, to assist and elevate them, receives the homage of the common heart. A parent, self-indulgent, neglectful, or failing to provide for the wants of those dependent upon him, or seeking to render the lives of his children subservient to his indolence or personal indulgence, is an object of contempt and reprobation. A prince who should squander the revenues of his kingdom on plans of personal aggrandisement, or schemes of wild ambition, is universally condemned, and men rise up in rebellion against him. A scholar who merely acquires knowledge for the delight it affords him, without seeking to apply it to the common good, is regarded with indifference or pity; even an angel would be neither the object of approval nor envy, who only lived to breathe in celestial joys, and was ready neither to wait nor to serve. God Himself is adored as the good, because He is the Giver of every good; nor can we conceive of Him as either indifferent to the happines of His creatures, or regardless of their fate, without feeling that He would cease to command our reverence or call forth our love, and would be like the fancied gods of the heathen, whose only vocation is to quaff their bowls of nectar and feast on ambrosia. The honoured dead, whose memories are cherished, and whose names are treasured as heirlooms of the race, are not those who, immured in palaces, have spent their lives in extravagant pleasures, but those who have endured hardship, and sacrificed ease, and even life, in conferring great boons on their generation. Not the rulers of the race, but its benefactors, are revered; not the high potentates, but the wise statesmen; not the ambitious warrior, but the devoted patriot, are held in loving remembrance; not he who has waded through the blood of others to the throne of a kingdom, but he who has shed his own blood to obtain or defend the liberties of a nation, will find a perennial monument in the grateful heart of posterity. To do good is not only in accordance with our highest reason, and the prompting of our best instincts, but it is the very genius of our common Christianity. If we are brought near to God by a true faith, we must become like Him in the exercise of a pure love. And how shall we do good? We live in a time of great opportunities and manifold facilities, of multiplied means of usefulness. Our capability is our only limit. But we should specially seek to do good by faithfully discharging all the duties of our vocation and sphere, by cheerfully responding to all the obligations which arise out of our relations to the home, the church, and the world; by honest work, true words, and daring deeds; and by using our influence directly and indirectly for the furtherance of any good work. We should do good by heartily sustaining, extending, and transmitting the gospel, and all its ordinances; in the erection of churches, the planting of missions, and the establishment of schools; by relieving the distressed, succouring the needy, and comforting the sorrow-stricken, both personally and through the agency of others, in connection with charitable societies and humane institutions; and by daily deeds of love and frequent gifts of affection and gratitude. To do good is the dictate of humanity, the demand of duty, the claim of justice, and the plea of interest; and each loving, feeling heart may readily find its appropriate work. (*Christian World Pulpit.*) *Doing good and being good:*—The man who fails to fulfil his mission to others, fails to find the end and meaning of his own life; cease to do good and you will soon cease to be good, and will make shipwreck of your personal hope. The Jews were God's witnesses of this. Instead of making all nations love them and seek to walk in the light of their life as a people, they managed to make all nations hate and persecute them—with a hatred, moreover, that deepened with the ages, and at length wrought their utter ruin. You may say that this was the inevitable result of the position of a godly people in the midst of a heathen world. At first it might be so, but not permanently. Christianity has won its way, first to toleration, then to honour—Judaism never did; and yet the peoples around were far from indisposed to receive its impressions. Joseph won his way at once at Memphis, Daniel at Babylon. And Joseph and Daniel had nothing but what Judaism had. They were Jews to the heart's core, and the history of their missionary work stands in everlasting record to shame their countrymen, and to justify the ways of God, when "the wind bound up the self-

centred and exclusive people in her wings," and bore them into a far captivity, where, unless they were prepared to renounce their nationality, they must bear witness for God, whether they would or no. (*J. Baldwin Brown.*) *The useful life missed*:—When an oak, or any noble and useful tree, is uprooted, his removal creates a blank. For years after, when you look to the place which once knew him, you see that something is missing. The branches of adjacent trees have not yet supplied the void. They still hesitate to supply the place formerly filled by their powerful neighbour; and there is still a deep chasm in the ground—a rugged pit—which shows how far his giant roots once spread. But when a leafless pole, a wooden pin, is plucked up, it comes easy and clean away. There is no rending of the turf, no marring of the landscape, no vacuity created, no regret. It leaves no memento, and is never missed. Which are you? Are you cedars planted in the house of the Lord, casting a cool and grateful shadow on those around you? Are you palm-trees, fat and flourishing, yielding bounteous fruit, and making all who know you bless you? Are you so useful, that were you once away it would not be easy to fill your place again, but people, as they pointed to the void in the plantation, the pit in the ground, would say, "It was here that that old palm-tree diffused his familiar shadow, and showed his mellow clusters"? Or, are you a peg, a pin, a rootless, branchless, fruitless thing, that may be pulled up any day, and no one ever care to ask what has become of it? What are you doing? What are you contributing to the world's happiness, or the Church's glory? What is your business? (*J. Hamilton, D.D.*) "*What can I do?*"—The Rev. Spencer Compton, an evangelical minister at Boulogne, relates the following incident: "During a voyage to India, I sat one dark evening in my cabin feeling thoroughly unwell, as the sea was rising fast and I was but a poor sailor. Suddenly the cry of 'Man overboard!' made me spring to my feet. I heard a trampling overhead, but resolved not to go on deck lest I should interfere with the crew in their efforts to save the poor man. 'What can I do?' I asked myself, and instantly unhooking my lamp, I held it near the top of my cabin and close to my bull's-eye window, that its light might shine on the sea, and as near the ship as possible. In half-a-minute's time I heard the joyful cry, 'It's all right, he's safe,' upon which I put my lamp in its place. The next day, however, I was told that my little lamp was the sole means of saving the man's life; it was only by the timely light which shone upon him that the knotted rope could be thrown so as to reach him." *We should do good in our own sphere*:—Keep in the way of your place and calling, and take not other men's works upon you, without a call, under any pretence of doing good. Magistrates must do good, in the place and work of magistrates; and ministers, in the place and work of ministers; and private men, in their private place and work; and not one man step into another's place, and take his work out of his hand, and say, "I can do it better"; for, if you should do it better, the disorder will do more harm than you did good by bettering his work. One judge must not step into another's court and seat, and say, "I will pass more righteous judgment." You must not go into another man's school, and say, "I can teach your scholars better"; nor into another's charge or pulpit, and say, "I can preach better." The servant may not rule the master because he can do it best, no more than you may take another man's wife, or house, or lands, or goods, because you can use them better than he. Do the good you are called to do. (*R. Baxter.*) *Exert your talents*:—"Exert your talents," said Dr. Samuel Johnson, "and distinguish yourself. Do not think of retiring from the world until the world will be sorry that you retire. I hate a man whom pride, or cowardice, or laziness drives into a corner, and who does nothing while there but sit and growl." Activity is the key to a useful Christian life. The key to activity is opening the doors of our hearts, and letting the river of Christ's love constantly flow through. Our realisation of Christ's love prompts us to love our fellow-man, and strive to lighten his burden. Then, too, the best way to be active in God's service is to embrace every opportunity to do our fellow-man all the good we can, knowing that he that is faithful unto death shall be given a crown of life. *The most beautiful thing in the world is a good deed*:—How can this be otherwise, when everything else that is beautiful is only a symbol of a deed? What are beautiful words but more or less imperfect signs for recording and perpetuating the actions which inspired them? No poem, no work of art, is beautiful unless it expresses some phase of action. The calmest landscape represents the play of light and shade, and perpetuates some instantaneous phase of motion; the marble statue represents the body in some form of actions; music is always the soul in motion; the deed gets expressed by symbols; but it is

the deed which possesses the intrinsic beauty, and not the symbol. Therefore we should not think that we are incapable of apprehending and rendering the beautiful in life because we cannot write poems, or paint pictures, or carve statues. So long as we are capable of doing good and beautiful deeds, are we capable of rising to that intrinsic beauty of life which the mere art-form does nothing more than express. What if a woman cannot paint a Raphael's Madonna, when she can be herself a Madonna, a holy mother? What though a man cannot write a grand and beautiful poem, so be it he lives a grand and beautiful life? This was the spirit that was in Christ. He was the greatest of all artists because He lived the greatest and most beautiful of lives. What He did was even more beautiful than what He said. And in the essential beauty of the deed we are all capable of being like Him. *Is his purse converted?*—A Methodist labourer in Wesley's time, Captain Webb, when any one informed him of the conversion of a rich man, was in the habit of asking, "Is his purse converted?" He agreed with Dr. Adam Clarke, who used to say, he did not believe in the religion that cost a man nothing. *Giving, a sign of perfectness:*—When wheat is growing it holds all its kernels tight in its own ear. But when it is ripe the kernels are scattered every whither, and it is only the straw that is left. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Practical gratitude:*—Rohese, the mother of Thomas à Becket, was a very devout woman in her day. It was her custom to weigh her boy every year on his birthday against money, clothes and provisions, which she gave to the poor. (*H. O. Mackey.*) *The rhubarb pie plan:*—During a discussion in a certain church, on the question of the duty of giving, a brother well known for his generous benefactions, was asked what part of his income he was in the habit of contributing to the Lord's treasury. "I do not know," said the brother; "I do very much as the woman did who was famous for the excellence of her rhubarb pies. She put in as much sugar as her conscience would allow, and then shut her eyes and put in a handful more. I give all my conscience approves, and then add a handful without counting it." We commend this plan to those who believe that "he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully," and who wish to err upon the safe side. Many men seem afraid of giving too much; but among all the failures in business of which we have heard, we have never known an instance where a man has ruined himself by giving to the poor or to the cause of God. *"Munificent bequests":*—We often read in the papers of "munificent bequests." To my mind it is a phrase that has no meaning at all. I see no munificence in bequeathing your property to charitable purposes when you are gone out of the world and have not the possibility of longer enjoying it. What I like are munificent donations. (*Lord Shaftesbury.*) *True measure of charity:*—It has been frequently wished by Christians that there were some rule laid down in the Bible fixing the proportion of their property which they ought to contribute to religious uses. This is as if a child should say, "Father, how many times in the day must I come to you with some testimonial of my love? how often will it be necessary to show my affection for you?" The father would of course reply, "Just as often as your feeling prompts you, my child, and no oftener." Just so Christ says to His people, "Look on Me, and see what I have done and suffered for you, and then give Me just what you think I deserve. I do not wish anything forced." (*H. G. Salter.*) **With such sacrifices God is well pleased.**—*Sacrifice—true and false:*—Thousands think that if they are outwardly decent, if they veneer their lives with a decorous respectability, they are very good Christians; and that, though they neither love God nor their neighbour, but are simply walking after their own heart's lusts. But it is not all men who are able thus to scarify the surface of their spiritual being. Deeper natures, tortured by the scourge of conscience, seeing how useless it must be to give to God that which costs them nothing, feel impelled, since they will not give Him the pure life and the loving heart, to give Him something else of a costly kind. It is this feeling which led to the awful horror of human sacrifices. But all this externality of affliction, of suffering, is vain. God is no Moloch; He delights in innocent happiness, and not in self-chosen suffering. Bodily suffering has ever proved itself vain to expel spiritual sin, and God would fain deliver us from sin, which cannot be done by vain attempts to anticipate the penalty. With such sacrifices God is not well pleased. We can in the fullest sense offer no sacrifice to God that will save us. It cost more to redeem our souls, so that we must let that alone for ever. That has been done for us. But in a lower sense the word sacrifice is applied in this verse to that which we can offer to God. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not

despise." "But to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." The type of all such passages is that magnificent question and answer in the prophet Micah (vi. 6–8). Do not let any of us pretend that we do not know what God requires of us. To communicate: What does it mean? It means unselfishness as regards what we possess, not to keep to ourselves what we have, to use our gifts in whatever way seems best for the good of the world, to remember that we are the stewards of what God gives us, and not the owners; to be cheerful givers; to learn the exquisite happiness of living for the good of all others, to have the heart at leisure from itself to soothe and sympathise: with such sacrifices God is well pleased. And to do good: it is not only to give; indeed, the indiscriminate, careless charity which gives to silence greedy demands or satisfy a conventional conscience; the reckless, foolish giving which only fosters the plague-spots of pauperism and imposture is worse than useless, it is a curse. Almsgiving, to be any use at all, must be thoughtful and discriminating. To do good: there you have the summary of a true life. We are on earth to give, and not to receive. We are not our own. Am I in this life of mine doing any real, unselfish good? Millions do positive harm. Like barren trees, they not only bring forth no fruit, but curse the ground with the blight of their bitter foliage and their unprofitable shadow. Millions, if they do no direct or positive harm, yet do absolutely no good. They sleep and feed and go through some sort of mechanical routine in their profession for themselves—no more. Their life is no true life; they die, but they have never lived. But among the millions who do deep harm, and the millions who do no real good, how many are there who can really be counted among the lovers of their fellow-men? These do see how often from efforts apparently infinitesimal and insignificant, lonely, inefficient, and as it seemed obscure, vast blessings come, and even when good men see no great positive result of their self-denial they feel within them the peace of a calm conscience and a blessed sense that their humble endeavours are accepted of their God. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) *With such sacrifices God is well pleased*:—1. He is so, first, because He is pleased with the spirit of faith. Such charity arises out of that faith which the apostle describes as "the evidence of things not seen"; for you observe that when our Lord counsels His disciples not to lay up treasure on earth, but in heaven, He makes an appeal to their faith. When He says—"If thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind, for they cannot recompense thee, for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just," He requires us to believe that we shall appear before the judgment-seat of God, to receive according to the things done in the body. When, then, in expectation of these things—these things not seen but believed, not possessed but hoped for—we expend what we do possess and see; when we resign the means of present gratification; when we part with what might please the natural inclination—satisfy "the lust of the flesh, or the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life"—we give a proof of faith of the same sort as that of Abraham, when at the call of God he gave up what is dear to every man—his country, and his kindred. 2. God approves the man who distributes and does good, because He sees in him a spirit of obedience. It is part of the arrangement by which the world is governed, that there should be a connection between the several classes of mankind—such mutual dependence as of servants on their employers, of children on their parents, of a people on their spiritual pastor, of the poor on those who are better endowed; and it is only while the links of the chain, constructed by God Himself, are sound and uninterrupted, that the balance of the whole is preserved, and the machine proceeds in conformity with its Maker's design. "The end of the commandment is charity." This is the purpose of God's revelation of Himself by His beloved Son—that when, through unfeigned faith in the atonement made for sin, the conscience is set at ease, and the heart sincerely converted to God, the result should be charity—love of man towards his fellow-men, springing from the love of God towards himself, and nourished by a constant sense of His mercy. When, therefore, His Spirit has established this principle in the heart, then, and not before, the gospel has dominion there. (*Abp. Sumner.*) *The sacrifice of Christian beneficence*:—We are not to offer on the altar of Christian charity the halt, blind, lame, the mere offal of our comforts, which we deem below our notice; nor are we to be content with yielding up the surplus of our possessions, which we do not want and cannot use. We must be prepared to make "*sacrifices*." Did the Son of God exhibit a species of compassion which cost Him nothing? Did He, without effort and without humiliation, merely give us, if I

may so speak, the surplus of His riches, the redundance of His glory? Altogether the opposite: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we, through His poverty, might become rich." (*J. A. James.*)

VER. 17. **Obey them that have the rule.**—*Rulership in the Church:*—I. THAT THE DUE OBEDIENCE OF THE CHURCH, IN ALL ITS MEMBERS, UNTO THE RULERS OF IT, IN THE DISCHARGE OF THEIR OFFICE AND DUTY, IS THE BEST MEANS OF ITS EDIFICATION, AND THE CHIEF CAUSE OF ORDER AND PEACE IN THE WHOLE BODY. Therefore is it here placed by the apostle, as comprehensive of all ecclesiastical duties. II. AN ASSUMPTION OF RIGHT AND POWER BY ANY TO RULE OVER THE CHURCH, WITHOUT EVIDENCING THEIR DESIGN AND WORK TO BE A WATCHING FOR THE GOOD OF THEIR SOULS, IS PERNICIOUS UNTO THEMSELVES, AND RUINOUS UNTO THE CHURCH ITSELF. III. Those who do attend with conscience and diligence unto the discharge of the work of the ministry towards their flocks, committed in an especial manner unto their charge, HAVE NO GREATER JOY OR SORROW IN THIS WORLD THAN WHAT ACCOMPANIES THE DAILY ACCOUNT WHICH THEY GIVE UNTO CHRIST OF THE DISCHARGE OF THEIR DUTY AMONGST THEM, AS THEIR SUCCESS FALLS OUT TO BE. IV. Much of the life of the ministry and benefit of the Church DEPENDS ON THE CONTINUAL GIVING AN ACCOUNT UNTO CHRIST, BY PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING, OF THE STATE OF THE CHURCH, AND SUCCESS OF THE WORD THEREIN. Those guides who esteem themselves obliged thereunto, and do live in the practice of it, will find their minds engaged thereby unto constant diligence and earnest labouring in the discharge of their duty. And the dealings of Christ with the Church itself are regulated according unto this account, as the last words do manifest. (*John Owen, D.D.*) *The reciprocal duties of ministers and people:*—The relation which is formed between a minister of the gospel and the people committed to his charge is highly important. It is a relation most sacred in itself, and most awful in its consequences; and the duties which spring from it are such as ought to be well understood by both parties. I. THE DUTY OF MINISTERS TO THEIR PEOPLE IS THUS DESCRIBED. They "have the rule over them," or, as the word may properly mean, have the "guidance" of them; and "watch for their souls." This expression denotes that no small degree of diligence, perseverance, and anxiety is necessary for the discharge of the ministerial office. At least it implies that a minister in the faithful exercise of his calling is required to perform two things. 1. Solemnly to admonish the people of their danger. 2. To look out for every convenient opportunity of doing good to their souls. Now observe the obligation which they are under to a faithful performance of their duty. "They watch for your souls as they that must give account" (see Ezek. iii. 17–19, xxxiv. 4, 7–10). II. It must be plain THAT DUTY BEGETS DUTY. If ministers be required to have the rule over their people and to watch for their souls, what must be required of their people in return but obedience and submission? 1. It is the duty of the people to attend on their minister with a disposition to receive and follow his instructions. 2. It is the duty of the people to bear with the importunity and solicitude of their minister in watching for their souls. They are not to take offence at his plain speaking, nor be impatient under his friendly admonitions. 3. It is the duty of the people to join with their minister in such plans and attempts as may best promote the object of his ministry. Does he, for example, point out any particular means by which immorality and ungodliness may be checked, or the cause of true religion may be encouraged and strengthened? In these cases his people are justly required to attend to his proposals; and by their support to forward his endeavours. From this view of the people's duty towards their minister let us turn to the obligations which they are under to discharge it. (1) In the first place, the very office of the minister imposes it on them. The same authority which prescribes to him his duty prescribes also to them their duty. And the same reasons in both cases enforce the performance of it. (2) But, in the second place, the object which the minister has in view strongly obliges the people to discharge their duty towards him. For whose souls does he watch but for theirs? (3) But let it be considered, thirdly, that in this, as well as in every other instance, duty and interest are closely joined together. It is the people's interest to obey them that have the rule over them, and to submit to those who watch for their souls. (*E. Cooper, M.A.*) *Ministerial duty, responsibility, and reward:*—I. MINISTERIAL DUTY. 1. The objects of ministerial solicitude. "Your souls." (1) The origin of souls. God's offspring. Immaterial, intellectual, immortal. (2) The price at which they were redeemed. "Precious blood of

Christ." (3) Their destiny. Eternal life or death. 2. The expression of ministerial solicitude. "They watch." This includes love for immortal souls, manifested in a constant attention to their interests, and a devotedness to their welfare. II. MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY. 1. This responsibility refers to their commission. Christ will employ in His work a friend that loves Him; not a stranger, much less an enemy. It has been well remarked that the Church had formerly wooden vessels, but golden priests; since that she has had golden vessels and wooden priests. 2. This responsibility refers to the fidelity which is required on their part. 3. It refers to the account which they must finally render. III. MINISTERIAL REWARD. 1. What they deprecate. That they may not give their account with grief. 2. What they desire. "That they may give account with joy." How animating to the labourer is success! 3. The interest of the people in both. Both in what ministers deprecate and in what they desire. Our disappointment may have an influence on us. It may weaken us in the way; it may bring us down broken-hearted to the grave. But our disappointment is your ruin! It may grieve us, but it will destroy you. Our satisfaction is your conversion. Your increase is delightful to us, but it is your salvation. (*John Davis.*) *Duties owing to ministers:*—1. Reverence in regard of their office. Alexander reverenced Jaddus. Herod, John the Baptist. Obadiah called Elias Lord. "My father," said Josiah to Elisha. If we reverence them not the word will not have so free a passage among us. They that use their pastors unreverently sin against God. 2. Love. Have them in exceeding love for their work's sake. It is the best work in the world, the saving of your souls; therefore love them for it. You love the fathers of your bodies that brought you into the world, and will ye not love them that beget you with the word of truth and bring you to a kingdom? 3. Obedience to their doctrine, exhortations, and admonitions. You will obey the prescript of the physician for the health of your bodies; though it be a bitter potion, you take it well at his hands; and will you not obey them that give you counsel for your souls, though their reproofs be bitter, their rebukes sharp (Tit. i. 13)? 4. Maintenance. All rulers must be maintained. The king hath maintenance due from the people, and so must the minister. In the fear of God, if ye be good and religious people, discharge the duties that God requireth to them that have the spiritual government of you. Why? There be two reasons to excite us to it; the one taken from the matter of their work, the other from the manner of their working. They are your watchmen; therefore submit yourselves to them, love them, regard them. Not over your goods and bodies, as the magistrate is, but over your souls, which are more precious; not as the fowler watcheth for the bird to catch it and kill it, but they watch for the preservation and eternal salvation of your souls; therefore submit yourselves to them. The second reason is taken from the manner of their working; they would gladly do their work with joy; they would watch over you with joy, which they cannot do if you be peevish, perverse, and froward. Therefore submit yourselves to them. What though we grieve them? What care we? Will such a thing grieve him? He shall be sure to have it then; we will do it for the nonce. Some are at this pass. But you shall have no benefit by that; you hurt yourselves more than them. (*W. Jones, D.D.*) *Ministers as generals:*—The ancient knight was a cleaver of skulls, a fighting man rather than a leader; his great force lay in muscle, not brain. But who ever thought of estimating the value of Napoleon upon a battle-field by the blows he gave? He wielded an army, not a sword. Ministers should covet earnestly the general's gift. The man who has the faculty of getting others to work, keeping them at their work and wisely directing their work, will get more done than any solitary labourer can do, though he be strong as Samson and diligent as Paul. (*S. Coley.*) **They watch for your souls.**—*Ministers are watchmen:*—I. THE OFFICE OF WATCHMAN IS ONE OF APPOINTMENT. II. THE OFFICE OF WATCHMAN IS ONE OF TRUST. III. THE OFFICE OF WATCHMAN IS ONE OF RESPONSIBILITY. 1. For his time. 2. For his diligence. 3. For his vigilance. 4. For his fidelity. Application: We learn—1. The solemn character of the ministerial calling. A calling which demands great personal piety, as well as high spiritual gifts. 2. The arduous duties of the ministerial office. So arduous as to claim all the faculties of the mind and all the energies of the body. 3. The great necessity that they should receive Christian sympathy and comfort. 4. The personal responsibility of those over whom they watch. 5. Jesus, the great and blessed keeper of Zion, is the model every Christian minister should study and imitate. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *Solicitude for souls:*—In one of McCheyne's manuscripts there occurs this sentence—"As I was walking in

the fields, the thought came over me with almost overwhelming power that every one of my flock must soon be in heaven or hell. Oh, how I wished that I had a tongue like thunder that I might make all hear; or that I had a frame like iron that I might visit every one and say, 'Escape for thy life!' Ah, sinners! you little know how I fear that you will lay the blame of your damnation at my door." (*Life of R. M. McCheyne.*) *The solemnity of the minister's work:*—"I continually hear the surges of eternity beating against my study door," said an eminent minister of the gospel. *Responsibility recognised:*—A captain whose ship was nearing a reef gave orders to keep off. To a remark of approval the captain replied, "It is necessary that I should be very careful, because I have souls on board. I think of my responsibility, and remember that souls are very valuable." *Ministerial responsibility:*—I verily believe that had I been adequately affected by the whole matter, even as I might have apprehended it then, I should never have gone to Stepney (the college) after all. It strikes me with awe at this hour that I should have undertaken what I have found to be so veritably the burden of the Lord. A vision of my Norwich life, had I seen it at Fen Court, would have led me to withdraw my application to the committee on the spot. A vision of my Bloomsbury Chapel life, had I seen it as I passed that evening into my college chamber, would have sent me back to my bench at Mr. Field's and to my occasional services to the rustics at Collier's End. However, no such visions did appear to me; and perhaps in mercy the weightier ultimate responsibilities which were involved were hidden from my eyes. (*W. Brock, D.D.*) *Care for souls:*—Dr. Bushnell greatly interested himself in providing a park for the town in which he lived. Writing to Dr. Bartol, he said, "One thing I have learned by this undertaking—namely, to wonder why it is that as a Christian teacher and pastor I am so feebly exercised, so little burdened by my work. It fills me with doubt and shame and grief; and the result has been to make me fully resolved that I will either be a more responsible, more efficient minister of Jesus Christ or none. I cannot shake off those words of Paul—they are ringing continually in my ears—'I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.' This park matter has been a kind of revelation to me, which I pray God I may neverf orget. Why should I carry a park to bed with me, and work it over in my dreams during the night, and wake with it in the morning, and yet be so little exercised in the magnificent work of the gospel and the care of souls? It makes me doubt whether doing a thing professionally we do not sometimes do it idly and, perfunctorily, as if we did it not. Do we really believe that Jesus is a Saviour, and that in any significant sense of the words He brings salvation? Thoughts of this kind have been working in me of late with such power that I have become wholly dissatisfied with myself. I thought I meant something when I preached Christ to men; but I see that I must do more, that I must have the men upon my spirit, that I must bear them as a burden and hold myself responsible for them. God help me!" (*Life of Dr. Bushnell.*) *Ministerial faithfulness:*—Gladstone once said to an audience, "I don't come here to tell you what you want to hear; but what I think is true and just." (*J. Clifford, D.D.*) *The gospel the best message:*—He (the late Rev. W. O. Simpson) never reasoned with the gospel; he reasoned with sinners: the gospel was his message. (*E. E. Jenkins, D.D.*)

Ver. 18. **Pray for us.**—*Prayer for ministers:*—I. SOME CONSIDERATIONS TO ILLUSTRATE AND CONFIRM THE NECESSITY OF SUCH PRAYER. 1. The awful responsibility of the ministerial office. 2. We are men of like passions with yourselves, with bodies requiring to be kept under, and with souls to save. II. SOME SUITABLE HEADS OF PRAYER. 1. First of all, pray that "utterance may be given unto us, that we may open our mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel." The full and free declaration of "the gospel of the grace of God" is the crowning part of the Christian minister's office. 2. Again, "pray" for your minister, that in dispensing among you the Word of God, he may be enabled rightly to divide it. Much spiritual wisdom is required here. 3. But, again, "pray for us," that the truths which we preach to you may be so deeply impressed upon our own souls by the Spirit of God that they may always exert a commanding influence over our life, conversation, and whole deportment, and thus become the springs of a holy and consistent walk. 4. Again, "pray for us," that we may be made conquerors over our peculiar temptations as ministers—that we may never speak to you "smooth things" merely for the sake of pleasing you. 5. Yet, again, "pray for us," that God would encourage us in our work by permitting us to see—so far as may be good for us—some fruit of our labours. 6. Once more, "pray for us," that while

we are bold and faithful witnesses for Christ, God would keep us lowly and humble in ourselves, and enable us to ascribe all that we are, and have, and may become, to His free favour. III. The truth is simply this: a minister cannot be blessed without his flock being made to experience a correspondent share of blessing. YOUR PRAYERS FOR ME WILL BE CROWNED WITH INTEREST TO YOURSELVES. You will find your own souls growing in grace "and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." You will find yourselves daily becoming more ripe for "the inheritance of the saints in light." Thus it is that God graciously orders that our labours of love for one another should be reflected upon ourselves. (*H. Cadell, M.A.*) **We trust we have a good conscience.**—*Balm from Gilead to recover conscience*:—I. WHAT CONSCIENCE IS. 1. It is an inbred faculty of the soul, "a noble and Divine power, planted of God in the soul, working upon itself by reflection": or thus, "the soul of a man recoiling upon itself." A faculty, I call it, because it produceth acts, and is not got and lost as habits are, but is inseparable from the soul, immovable from the subject, as neither acts nor habits are. In the understanding part it is a judge, determining and prescribing, absolving and condemning *de jure*. In the memory it is a register, a recorder, and witness, testifying *de facto*. In the will and affections, a jailor and executioner, punishing and rewarding. Say we not in common use of speech, which is the emperor of words, My conscience tells me I did or did not such a thing, which is an action of the memory? My conscience bids me do, or forbids me to do this or this, which is but an action of the will. It smites me, it checks me, it comforts or it torments me: what are these but actions of the affections recoiling upon the soul? 2. God hath given it more force and power to work upon men than all other agents whatsoever. It, being internal and domestical, hath the advantage of all foreign and outward. 3. It being individual and inseparable, there is no putting of it to flight or flying from it. It was bred and born with us; it will live and die with us. Agues a man may shake off, tyrants and ill masters a man may fly from; but this saith (as Ruth to Naomi), "I will go with thee whithersoever thou goest." It hath more immediate deputation and authority from God (of whom all principalities and powers receive theirs) than angels, kings, magistrates, father, mother, or any other superior. It is only inferior to God. II. WHAT A GOOD CONSCIENCE IS. 1. The goodness of it is the peace of it; for stirring, accusing, and galling consciences are consequents of sin, and presuppose some evil. 2. They, secondly, prove good unto us only by accident, and God's goodness, which maketh them as afflictions, gather grapes of thorns; yea, all things work to the best of His beloved, as physicians do poison in their confections 3. And thirdly, they do not always produce this effect. Sometimes as sicknesses and purgations, they are in order to health, as in the Jews (Acts ii). Oftentimes as in Cain, Judas, Ahithophel, they destroy their owners. Good consciences, therefore, properly to speak, are only quiet ones, excusing and comforting; but here take heed the devil, the great impostor of our souls, put not upon our folly and simplicity, three sorts of quiet ones, as he doth to most: the blind, the secure, and the seared. What, then, is a good conscience? That which speaks peace with God's allowance, which is a messenger of good things between God and us, that upon good grounds is in good terms with God. It lies in the lawful peace of it, and not in integrity and freedom from sin. (*T. Adams.*) *Take care of your conscience*:—We remember the old story of the mariners who, because they followed the direction of their compass, thought they were infallibly right, until they arrived at an enemy's port, and found themselves suddenly seized and made slaves. They did not take into consideration the possibility that any agency had tampered with the needle. Yet the wicked captain had, on purpose to betray the ship to enemies, so carefully concealed a large loadstone near the needle as to make it untrue to itself, and thus be the means of their ruin. Something not very unlike this is often true of conscience. Conscience may be perverted as truly as any other faculty of the soul—so perverted as even to mislead and destroy, while it is relied upon to direct in the path of safety. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." We are warned, then, to take care of the conscience. See that there is no prejudice, no passion, no evil influence that is perverting it, and gradually making it untrue to itself, and therefore unsafe. We must examine the basis of our conscientiousness. Is there a concealed loadstone which is attracting the needle from its true polarity heavenward, toward spiritual foes and spiritual bondage? This is a vital question for every man. *The comfort of a good conscience*:—There is no friend so good as a good conscience. There is no foe so ill as a bad conscience. It makes

us either kings or slaves. A man that hath a good conscience, it raiseth his heart in a princely manner above all things in the world. A man that hath a bad conscience, though he be a monarch, it makes him a slave. A bad conscience embitters all things in the world to him, though they be never so comfortable in themselves. What is so comfortable as the presence of God? What is so comfortable as the light? Yet a bad conscience, that will not be ruled, it hates the light, and hates the presence of God, as we see Adam, when he had sinned, he fled from God (Gen. iii. 8). A bad conscience cannot joy in the midst of joy. It is like a gouty foot, or a gouty toe, covered with a velvet shoe. Alas! what doth ease it? What doth glorious apparel ease the diseased body? Nothing at all. The ill is within. There the arrow sticks. (*R. Sibbes.*) *A good conscience:*—A good conscience is to the soul what health is to the body; it preserves a constant ease and serenity within us, and more than countervails all the calamities and afflictions which can possibly befall us. (*T. Addison.*) *Conscience aided by right sympathies:*—It will be found that men are sensitive to right and wrong, not so much by reason of the direct impact of intellectual decision as by reason of intellectual decision transmitted through another faculty or emotion. Take an illustration out of my own experience—for it is always allowable, I believe, for a man to dissect his own sins. When I came to Brooklyn, feeling a certain independence, I refused to return marriage certificates to the authorities. There was no law which compelled me to do it, and I was not going to return them for mere form's sake. By and by a law was passed that all clergymen should return marriage certificates to the Board of Health, but I did not do it then; I did not see any reason for it, and I was not going to trouble myself about it. But after the first year of the war, on two or three occasions it happened some woman would come to me and say, "My husband was killed on the battlefield; the Government owed him for bounty and back pay; but I cannot get the money unless I can prove that I was married to him: will you not give me a certificate?" I had none. I had made no return of their marriage. It did not take more than one argument like that to convince me that I ought to make returns of certificates of marriage. I said to myself, "If the bread of the poor is often to be determined by the fact of a marriage; if the fact of a marriage is a question of humanity, and can settle what is right and what is wrong, then my duty in the matter is clear"; and I believe I have not failed to return the certificate of a marriage since that day. The mere abstract law would not affect any conscience; but since my conscience was approached through sympathy, through benevolent feeling, you could not bribe me to neglect my duty in that regard. My conscience has strength on that side. (*H. W. Beecher.*) **Willing to live honestly.**—*Honesty:*—I. IN ORDER TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXCELLENCY AND IMPORTANCE OF THIS VIRTUE OF HONESTY, WE SHALL POINT OUT SOME OF THE FOUNTAINS FROM WHENCE THE OPPOSITE VICE FLOWS, OR SOME OF THE CHIEF CAUSES OF DISHONESTY. Opposites frequently illustrate each other to great advantage. The beauty and charms of Christian virtue gain strength by arousing in us an abhorrence of immoral practices. Honesty will appear more honourable by awakening a proper hatred of the odious deformity of dishonesty. With regard to the chief springs of dishonesty, they may be contemplated. Under a general consideration, dishonesty arises from the same common source with all other kinds of iniquities. It arises from the awful depravity of the human heart. But the more particular causes of dishonesty are such things as these—1. Slothfulness, idleness, and an aversion to labour and the business of our calling. 2. Avarice or covetousness. 3. Luxury and extravagance. 4. Pride and selfishness. II. SOME CONSIDERATIONS AND MOTIVES TO INDUCE US TO BE CONSCIENTIOUSLY HONEST IN ALL OUR EMPLOYMENTS, BUSINESS, AND CONVERSATION WITH OUR FELLOW-MEN. Can we now think a dishonest thought, contrive a dishonest scheme, or be guilty of a dishonest action? Consider the right every man has to enjoy his own, by the laws of nature, reason, religion and society, in respect to his person, property, and character. These blessings are the benefactions of heaven to all. Their right to the undisturbed possesssion of them is founded upon the grant of the God of nature and of grace. 1. Will the Almighty Sovereign see His creatures and His children rifled of their immunities and blessings, which His goodness and bounty hath conferred upon them, and not conceive resentment? Will He not whet His glittering sword, and His hand lay hold on vengeance? 2. Further consider, sincerity and honesty are the very bonds which hold society together. The religious observation of these virtues are the great means to advance its real interests. A dishonest person is a public nuisance, and may be viewed as a

common enemy to mankind. 3. Consider the practice of dishonesty is prohibited in a thousand instances in the Word of God. The Divine wrath is revealed against it, both in His declarations, and in many examples recorded in the sacred history. (*A. Maclwhorter, D.D.*) *Honesty spiritually rewarded*:—The religious tradesman complains that his honesty is a hindrance to his success; that the tide of custom pours into the doors of his less scrupulous neighbours in the same street, while he himself waits for hours idle. My brother, do you think that God is going to reward honour, integrity, highmindedness, with this world's coin? Do you fancy that He will pay spiritual excellence with plenty of custom? Now, consider the price that man has paid for his success. Perhaps mental degradation and inward dishonour. His advertisements are all deceptive: his treatment of his workmen tyrannical; his cheap prices made possible by inferior articles. Sow that man's seed and you will reap that man's harvest. Cheat, lie, advertise, be unscrupulous in your assertions, custom will come to you. But if the price is too dear, let him have his harvest, and take yours. Yours is a clear conscience, a pure mind, rectitude within and without. Will you part with that for his? Then why do you complain? He has paid his price; you do not choose to pay it. (*F. W. Robertson.*) *Conscientiousness*:—Of the Rev. S. F. Bridge, independent minister, his son says: His integrity was unbending. One circumstance in connection with domestic life demonstrated this sterling feature. A kind friend used sometimes to send a parcel of clothing, and on this occasion, in a coat pocket, a five-pound note was discovered. Many, even of the Lord's people, might have appropriated the money, and thought it "quite a providence." But father did not so. There are timely provisions and there are baits which test God's family. He knew the donor's habits, and would not take for granted that the note was intentionally submitted in a delicate manner, so he promptly sent it back with an explanation. I well remember how dear mother—her name was Martha—urged with tears that he should write first, and ascertain whether it had not been enclosed as a gift; but, although the value of five pounds was multiplied by the many mouths to be fed, she soon endorsed father's way as the right one. I believe this matter was never known save to the Lord, the family, and the gentleman himself. That five pounds did not reach us again. (*Sword and Trowel.*) *Honest under all circumstances*:—Some years before England abolished slavery in the West Indies, a negro, who was a slave, but who had learned to become a Christian, was put up for sale. A kind master, who pitied his condition, and did not want him to fall into the hands of a cruel owner, went up to him, and said, "Sambo, if I buy you will you be honest?" "With a look that I have no power to describe," says the gentleman, the black man replied, "Massa, I will be honest whether you buy me or not."

Vers. 20, 21. **The God of peace.**—*The God of peace and our sanctification*:—I. I call your attention to THE PECULIAR TITLE UNDER WHICH GOD IS ADDRESSED IN THIS PRAYER: "Now, the God of peace." The names of God employed in prayer in holy Scripture are always significant. Why, then, did the apostle here call God "the God of peace"? He had a reason; what was it? It is a Pauline expression. You find that title only in the writings of Paul. It is a name of Paul's own coinage by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. There were reasons in Paul's experience which led him to dwell upon this peculiar trait of the Divine character. Just as in our text he prays, "Perfect you in every good work to do His will," so in Thessalonians he says, "And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is evident, not only that the apostle delighted in the expression peculiar to himself, but that he saw a close connection between the peace of God and the sanctifying of believers, and for this reason, both in the Thessalonians and in the Hebrews, his prayer for their sanctification is addressed to the God of peace. The title is a gospel one. God is not spoken of as the God of peace in the Old Testament; but there He is "a man of war, the Lord is His name"; "He shall cut off the spirit of princes; He is terrible to the kings of the earth." 1. The appropriateness of the title to the particular prayer will readily strike you, for holiness is peace. "May the God of peace make you holy," for He Himself is peace and holiness. 2. The God of peace has also graciously restored peace and reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, but it has been by the putting away of sin, for while sin remained peace was impossible. He died for our sins, but He rose again for our justification, which is none other than the replacing of us in a condition of reconciliation with God. He went into heaven to take possession of our inheritance; and what better evidence could there be that

we are reconciled to God? 3. If you pursue the subject you will see more and more clearly the significance of the title, "the God of peace"; for, to make us perfect in every good work to do His will is to give us peace. Sin is our enemy, and the new life within us is heartily at enmity with evil, and therefore peace can never be proclaimed in the triple kingdom of our nature until we always do that which is well pleasing in the sight of the Lord, through Jesus Christ. Nor is this all. 4. When the apostle, praying for our sanctification, prays to the God of peace, it is as much as to say to us that we must view God as the God of peace if we are to be led to do His will. O man, is God your enemy? Then you will never serve Him, nor do that which is well pleasing in His sight. You must first of all know that there is peace between you and your God, and then you can please Him. This knowledge can only come to you through Christ Jesus, for peace is made only by "the blood of the everlasting covenant." 5. I will call to your notice the fact that the title, "the God of peace," sheds a light over the whole passage, and is beautifully in harmony with every word of the prayer. Let us read it line by line. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus." War brings down to death; but the God of peace brings back from the dead. The restoration of the Lord Jesus from the grave was a peaceful act, and was meant to be the guarantee of peace accomplished for ever. "Through the blood of the everlasting covenant." The very word "covenant" is also full of peace: and especially is it so when we remember that it is a covenant of peace which eternal love has established between God and man. The apostle goes on to pray, "Make you perfect in every good work to do His will." If God's will is done by us, then there must be peace, for no ground of difference can exist. "Working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight." When all in us is well pleasing to God, then, indeed, is He the God of peace to us. The final doxology is also very significant, for in effect it proclaims the universal and eternal reign of peace: "To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." What can there be to disturb the universe when the Lord God omnipotent shall reign, and all nations shall glorify the Ever Blessed, world without end? Not without reason, therefore, did our apostle select the title, "The God of peace." II. We have now to consider THE SPECIAL ACT DWELT UPON IN THIS PRAYER. "That brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." The bringing back of the Lord Jesus from the dead was the seal of His perfected work, and consequently of our peace and ultimate perfection in holiness. Because He had wrought all righteousness, therefore did He stand amongst living men; and because He had merited a crown of glory, therefore did He rise even to the throne of Jehovah, to sit there till His enemies are made His footstool. We go further yet. The bringing again of Christ from the dead was in effect the leading back of all His people. Not without the sheep did the Shepherd come, for that were to return defeated. The text speaks of "Our Lord Jesus." Did you notice that? Ours in His offices of Shepherd and Saviour, altogether ours as brought again from the dead. What He did was for us. He is the great Shepherd of the sheep, and therefore what He did was for the sheep. "Because I live," saith He, "ye shall live also"; and because He lives to intercede, therefore His people are preserved from evil. Satan desires to have us, that he may sift us as wheat; but the great Shepherd, who was brought again from the dead, is daily watching over us, and the power of His life, and of His kingdom, and of His plea, are manifested in us, so that we conquer temptation, and advance from strength to strength in our pilgrimage to heaven. III. Thirdly, let us notice THE VERY REMARKABLE MANNER IN WHICH THE HOLINESS PRAYED FOR IS DESCRIBED in the text: "Make you perfect in every good work to do His will." That is the first clause, but the translation is not strictly accurate. The passage would be better rendered, "make you fit in every good work to do His will," and the original Greek word properly means to reset a bone that is dislocated. The meaning of the text is this: by the fall all our bones are out of joint for the doing of the Lord's will, and the desire of the apostle is that the Lord will set the bones in their places, and thus make us able with every faculty and in every good work to do His will. The first part of the prayer, then, is for fitness for holiness. The next is for actual service: "Working in us that which is well pleasing in His sight." And here I ask you to notice how all things are of God. Even he who is best adapted for the performance of virtue and holiness, yet does not perform these things till the Lord worketh in him to will and to do of His own good pleasure. Over and above this mode of securing all the glory to God notice the next clause—"through Jesus Christ." That which we do even when the Lord

works in us we only do through Jesus Christ. We are nothing without our Lord, and though we do what is acceptable in the Lord's sight, yet it is only acceptable through Jesus Christ. IV. Our fourth point drops into its place very naturally, for we have already seen that THE WHOLE OF IT COMES TO A MOST APPROPRIATE CONCLUSION OF PRAISE: "To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." To glorify God is the object of it all. Praise is the flower for which the stalk of prayer exists. It would be a very difficult question to decide to whom the last clause alludes, whether to "the God of peace," or to "Our Lord Jesus," and, therefore, I think, the safer way is to take them both together, for they are one. "To whom," that is to God; "To whom," that is to the Lord Jesus, "be glory for ever and ever. Amen." Let it be so; it ought to be so, it must be so, it shall be so. Amen. Amen. Tarry just a minute while we give glory unto the Three-One-God. He is the God of peace; approach Him with holy delight; adore Him; glorify His name evermore. Then magnify Him next, because He found for us a Shepherd. Glorify Him next for the covenant. And then adore Him because the power which He exerted upon Christ He is now exerting upon you. Bless Him for every grace received, for faith however little, for love, even though it burn not as you would desire; bless Him for every conquered sin, bless Him for every implanted grace, bless Him evermore. Bless Him that He deals with you through Jesus Christ. Through the Mediator all good has come to us, and through the Mediator it will still come, until that day when He shall deliver up the throne to God, even the Father, and God shall be all in all. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The work of God:*—I. LOOK AT THE ASPECT IN WHICH GOD IS HERE PRESENTED. 1. A God of peace. Were we hastily to form our opinion of the character of God from the aspects and condition of this world, we might come to a different conclusion. "God of peace"! Where is peace? Read the world's past history, or survey its present condition! Has not every age been filled with wars? and what soil, from the sands of Africa to Polar snows, has not been drenched with human blood? Unconverted man is at peace—neither with himself, nor with others, nor with God. Shall we therefore conclude from this view of the world that He who is at once its Maker and Monarch is not a God of peace? Assuredly not. He had nothing to do with this miserable condition of affairs; and is neither to be judged by it, nor blamed for it. In a fatal hour, sin was admitted into our world; and the ship that takes a Jonah aboard parts with peace. She has nothing to look for but thunders and lightnings, and storms and tempests. But let God have His way, only let His will be done in earth as it is done in heaven, and such a change were wrought on this world, as would recall the change that night saw on Galilee, when Jesus woke, and, rising in the boat, looked out on the tumbling sea, to say, "Peace, be still"—and in a moment there was a great calm. 2. God has made peace. "Fury is not in Me, saith the Lord." He has turned from the fierceness of His anger, and made peace between Himself and man by the blood of the Cross; but not "peace at any price"—at the expense of His honour, holiness, justice, law, or truth. No. God has not overlooked the guilt of sin; He pardons, but does not palliate it. Peace, as has often been done between man and man, may be established on a false basis. Take for example the States of America. Before they were actually rent asunder, they might have established a peace on the foundations of iniquity. Had they given ear to preachers who perverted the Word of God, and, regarding slavery as the white man's right, and not the black man's wrong, had they joined hand to hand to sacrifice the interests of humanity to those of commerce, they might have had peace instead of war. They might have cemented their union with the blood of slaves. But such a peace as that would have offered a complete contrast to the peace of the gospel. This preserves God's honour. Not "peace at any price," it is peace at such a price as satisfied the utmost demands of His law, and fully vindicated His holiness in the sight of the universe. II. HE BROUGHT CHRIST FROM THE DEAD. 1. In one sense the glory of His resurrection belongs to Christ Himself. The only thing else I have now to give, Jesus might say, is My life; and there it is. Of My own will, by My own, free, spontaneous act, I lay it down. All your wretched tools and cruel tortures, your crown of thorns and bloody Cross, cannot deprive Me of life. It is not you that take away My life; nor is it God. It is not taken away—but *given*; for I have power to lay it down, as I have power to take it up again. Hence our Lord's claim on our love and gratitude. But He who said, "I have power to lay down My life," also said, "I have power to take it up again"—as He had before intimated, when, the Jews having asked a sign of Him, He said, referring to His body, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise

it up." 2. Here our Lord's resurrection is attributed to God. Here unquestionably; but not here only. Paul says, "He hath raised up Jesus again." In conclusion—1. Look at this aspect of Christ as the Great Shepherd of the sheep. How many are the elements of His greatness! He is a Divine Shepherd. And unlike other shepherds, who in the East dwell in tents, and here in the lowly cottages, His home is a palace, and His servants are the angels of heaven. How many are the shepherds He has under Him. Indeed, those who bear the greatest names in His Church are, though leaders, but part of the flock; He Himself being the only Shepherd, Bishop, and Overseer of souls. Nor here, as sometimes happens among men, is greatness separated from that goodness which is the best property of the two. But both properties, infinite in measure, meet in Christ. Paul calls Him the Great, but He calls Himself the Good Shepherd. 2. Glance at Paul's prayer. "Make you perfect." Could I express for you a better wish, or could you aim at a better object? I know that we are not perfect yet; far from it! In our imitation of Christ, how unlike is the fairest copy to the great original! Still there is no ground for despair. Perfect freedom from the power of sin, perfect obedience to the precepts and spirit of the law, perfect harmony to the mind and perfect conformity to the image of God, are within the bond, sealed with blood; and also in the prayer, "I will that those whom thou has given Me be with Me where I am." (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The great pleas of a great prayer:*—I. THE NAME OF GOD IS THE WARRANT FOR OUR LARGEST HOPE. God is the God of peace, and, therefore, He will, if we will let Him, make us perfect unto every good work. That, of course, must imply that the peace which is here ascribed to Him, as its source and foutal possessor, is that deep and changeless calm of an infinite and perfectly harmonious being which is broken by no work, perturbed by no agitations, and yet is no more stagnant than the calm depths of the ocean, being penetrated for ever by warmth and majestic motion in which there is rest. "The God of peace" wills to give to men something not altogether unlike the tranquillity which He Himself possesses. The hope seems altogether beyond the conditions of creatural life, which is tossed to and fro amidst change and agitations. How can the finite whose very law of life is change, whose nature is open to the disturbances of external solicitations, and the agitations of inward emotions—how can he ever, in this respect, approximate to the repose of God? And yet, analogous, if not similar, tranquillity may fill our hearts. When our wills are made pliable and flexible, no longer stiff and obstinate, like a bar of iron, to His touch, but bendable like a piece of dressed leather; when our hankering desires no longer go after forbidden dainties, but keep themselves within the limits of the Divine will; when we are ready for all that He commands or appoints, meeting the one with unmurmuring resignation, and the other with unquestioning obedience—then nothing that is at enmity with joy can utterly abolish or destroy the peace that we have in God. II. THE RAISING OF THE SHEPHERD IS THE PROPHECY FOR THE SHEEP. I ask myself, Is it possible that I shall be delivered from this burden of corruption; that I shall ever, in any state, be able, with unhesitating and total surrender of myself, to make the will of God the very life of my spirit and the bread on which I live? And all the unbelieving and cowardly suggestions of my own heart as to the folly of trying after an unreachable perfection, and the wisdom of acquiescence in the partial condition to which I have already attained, are swept out of view by this one thing—the sight of a man throned by the side of God, perfect in holiness and serene in untroubled beauty. That is a prophecy for us all. We look out upon the world, or into this cage of evils in our own hearts, and are tempted to fold our hands and acquiesce in the inevitable. Alas! it is too true that "we see not yet all things put under man." Courage! Nothing less than the likeness of Jesus Christ corresponds to God's will concerning us. In Him there is power to make each of us as pure, as sinless, as the Lord Himself in whom we trust. III. THE EVERLASTING COVENANT IS THE TEACHER AND THE PLEDGE OF OUR LARGEST DESIRES. Is it not a grand thought, and a profoundly true one, that God, like some great monarch who deigns to grant a constitution to his people, has condescended to lay down conditions by which He will be bound, and on which we may reckon? Out of the illimitable possibilities of action, limited only by His own nature, and all incapable of being foretold by us, He has marked a track on which he will go. If I may so say, across the great ocean of possible action He has buoyed out His course, and we may prick it down upon our charts, and be quite sure that we shall find Him there. Be sure of this, that within the four corners of God's articulate and unmistakable assurance lies all that heart can wish or spirit receive from Him.

You cannot expect or ask more from Him than He has bound Himself to impart. You desires can never be outstretched as to go beyond the efficacy of the blood of Jesus Christ; and through the ages of time or eternity the everlasting Covenant remains, to which it shall be our wisdom and our blessedness to widen our hopes, expand our desires, conform our wishes, and adapt our work. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Peace from God through Christ*:—I. THE AUTHOR OF PEACE. From all eternity God purposed in Himself the counsel of peace; and when by reason of sin, discord and misery came into the world, the Lord always comforted His people by the promise of redemption. In the fulness of time came Jesus, the Peace-maker; and when the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, the Father made peace through the blood of His Cross. Jesus Himself is our peace; but it is the God of peace who gave Jesus, and who by His atonement made peace, and reconciled all things to Himself. Peace means not merely calmness and rest of conscience and heart, based on the righteousness of God, but it means also restoration to health and well-being; or rather, since in Christ God makes all things new, not a restoration to Adam's state of innocence, but the creating us anew after His image. II. JESUS THE CHANNEL OF PEACE. Our Lord Jesus was the Paschal Lamb on Calvary. From that moment our peace was purchased, and we were identified with the substitute. Now the Lamb that was slain is also the good Shepherd, that laid down His life for the sheep; He is not merely the good, true, genuine Shepherd; He is also the great Shepherd, the mighty, sublime, the only one, who leads the flock out of the grave to the heavenly glory. III. GOD WORKS IN US. Have we thus risen to the thought of the God of peace, the Redeemer, the Restorer, who through the sufferings of Jesus, and by His blood, delivered us from all evil, and has raised us together with Christ, unto a new, spiritual, and endless life, then we can understand the benediction, that God should work in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. We are humbled by the sense of our transgressions, and above all of the sinfulness of our old nature. Let us be exalted by the grace of God. True, we groan in this tabernacle, being burdened, but we rejoice in God. The Lord works in us. He gives good desires, true petitions, living words and works. He prepares us for the work in time, as He prepared the work for us in eternity. He works in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, for what is born of the Spirit is Spirit. And all is wrought through Jesus Christ. For He is our life and strength. Only abiding in Him can the branches live and bear fruit. The Spirit in us is not a substitute for Christ, but the connecting-link between the Lord and us. Thus the Divine energy within us acts simply through our faith in Jesus. Lean then on Jesus, and you will conquer sin. (*A. Saphir.*) **Our Lord Jesus.** *The names of the Saviour*:—To most of us, I suppose, the various names by which our Saviour is designated in Scripture are just like so many aliases, indiscriminately used, and all conveying the same impression. But, in truth, they each suggest some distinctive aspect of His nature or relations to us, and in Scripture are never used without at least a sidelong glance to their special significance. The writer's thought is always tinted, as it were, even if it is not deeply coloured, by the name which he selects. I have chosen the words which I have read as our starting-point, because they very strikingly bring together the extreme names; that which expresses lowly manhood and that which expresses sovereign authority, "Jesus our Lord," in the union whereof lie the mystery of His being, and the foundation of our hopes, and by which union He becomes "that great Shepherd of the sheep." I. So, then, in the pursuit of this design, I have to ask you to notice, first, THE SIMPLE, HUMAN NAME JESUS. 1. Let us ever keep distinctly before us that suffering and dying manhood as the only ground for acceptable sacrifice and of full access and approach to God. Then, further, let us ever keep before our minds clear and plain that true manhood of Jesus as being the type and pattern of the devout life, 3. Then, again, let us set clearly before us that exalted manhood as the pattern and pledge of the glory of the race. II. Then we have THE NAME OF OFFICE—JESUS IS CHRIST. Is your Jesus merely the man who by the meek gentleness of His nature, the winning attractiveness of His persuasive speech, draws and conquers, and stands manifested as the perfect example of the highest form of manhood, or is He the Christ, in whom the hopes of a thousand generations are realised; and the promises of God fulfilled, and the smoking altars and the sacrificing priests of that ancient system, and of heathenism everywhere, find their answer, their meaning, their satisfaction, their abrogation? Is Jesus to you the Christ of God? III. We have THE NAME OF DIVINITY—JESUS THE CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD. Now that designation, either in its briefer form, "the Son," or in its fuller form, "the Son of

God," is, we may say, a characteristic of this letter. The keynote is struck in the very first words. And then the writer goes on in a glorious flow of profound truth and lofty eloquence to set forth the majesty of this Son's nature, and the wonderfulness of His relations to the whole world. Jesus is this Son. Once, and once only, in the letter does the writer buckle together these two ideas which might seem to be antithetic, and at the utmost possible poles of opposition from each other: the lowly manhood and the wondrous Divinity. But they are united in Him who, by the union of them both, becomes the High Priest of our profession—Jesus, the Son of God. Further, the name is employed in its contracted form to enhance the mystery and the mercy of His sharp sufferings and of His lowly endurance. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." The fuller form is employed to enhance the depth of the guilt and the dreadfulness of the consequences of apostasy, as in the solemn words about "crucifying the Son of God afresh," and in the awful appeal to our own judgments to estimate of how sore punishment they are "worthy who trample under foot the Son of God." In like manner once or twice our letter speaks of Jesus as "Lord," declaring thereby His Sovereignty, and setting forth our relation of dependence and submission. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Christ brought from the dead*:—Which words carry with them the form and purpose of a devout prayer. And prayer is the usual conclusion of St. Paul's Epistles. This prayer of Paul is a mutual prayer. In the two former verses he craves their prayers for himself, "Brethren, pray for us" (ver. 18). He desires the assistance of their prayers. And see how he requites that fruit of their love. What he requires of them he performs for them; he prays for them again. Such strong combinations of mutual prayers are prevailing means to bring down blessings. The prayer he makes is most seasonable and pertinent. This prayer is a full and sweet comprehension of his former doctrine, and a great confirmation of the piety and holiness of it. It is a good character of truth when we can pray that which we preach. The text, then, you see, is St. Paul's charitable and devout prayer, his apostolical and fatherly benediction, and blessing of the Hebrews. I. The first thing observable is THE PERSON AND AUTHOR FROM WHOM HE SEEKS AND CRAVES THIS BLESSING OF GRACE AND HOLINESS FOR THEM. It is from the God of peace. Why doth he insist in that attribute of God, above all others, when he prays to Him for grace for his people? Many other excellencies God hath ascribed to him in Scripture, and the interposing of them in our prayers would seem very useful for the obtaining this great blessing of grace and sanctity. 1. The Scripture terms Him the God of power; and the blessing He sues for is a work of great power, to sanctify, and fit such sinful creatures as we are, to every good work (2 Pet. i. 3). 2. The Scripture terms Him the God of grace; and this work is a gracious work. This prayer is a petition for grace, and so St. Peter frames it accordingly (1 Pet. v. 10). 3. The Scripture terms Him the God of glory; and this work we are about, the work of sanctification, is a glorious work. St. Peter calls it the spirit of glory (1 Pet. iv. 14). Yet we see the apostle passes by these attributes, and insists upon this, the God of peace, as most proper to what he aims at. In general—(1) The aim and drift of the apostle in this epistle is to compose all jarrs and differences of opinion in the Church of the Hebrews. (2) He prays for grace from the God of peace, because, in truth, all grace flows from this, that God is become a God of peace to us. While He is an offended God there is no hope to receive from Him any gift of grace. Sue for pardon and peace first, and then His grace and Spirit, all that belongs to life and godliness, shall be made good unto thee. (3) This title of the God of peace carries with it a third intimation, and that is of a necessary qualification, that is requisite in us for the receiving of this grace St. Paul prays for. He is the God of peace, and bestows His grace where He finds His peace. Such as follow peace the grace of God follows them and enters into them. If there be a Son of peace the blessing of grace shall rest upon him. A peaceable spirit invites the Holy Ghost to enter into us and to abide with us. It makes our hearts a fit soil for the seed of grace. But besides these more general considerations—2. This title of the God of peace hath a more close reference to the text, to the purpose of it, and to all the parts of it. (1) It hath a reference to the blood here mentioned, and to the great Shepherd's death. And it refers to that as to the main ground, and foundation, and purchase of this peace. (2) A second reference to this title of the God of peace is to another passage in the text. It refers to the bringing of Christ back from the dead again as the proper effect and fruit of this peace. God, being now at peace with us, He brings Christ back from the dead. When Christ was brought under the dominion of death, that was the

bitter fruit of God's fierce anger, but the restoring back again to life, that is the sweet and blessed truth of His peace. (3) There is a third reference of this title of God, the God of peace, and that is to the Shepherd of the sheep. It refers to that as to a great evidence and token that now He is indeed at peace with us. For He hath not only restored Christ to life, but restored Him to his office too, committed to Him the care of His flock again. (4) There is yet a fourth reference of this title of the God of peace, and that is to the everlasting covenant that the text speaks of. God is now become a God of peace to us, because He is become a God in covenant with us. Nay, it is not only a lasting, but an everlasting peace. He hath bound Himself to maintain this peace by an everlasting covenant. He hath established a peace that shall never be broken. Nay, it is not only the peace of a covenant, though that be strong, but the peace of a Testament. We read of the quarrel of God's covenant (Lev. xxvi. 25), that may meet with jars; but when peace becomes a legacy, a firm deed, and bequeathment that is unalterable, we shall inherit peace. Peace and safety is the heritage of the Lord's servants (Isa. liv. 17). And for our greater assurance He hath erected a public office in His Church, where we may view and exemplify this covenant, take out a true and perfect copy of His last will and testament; and that is in the institution of the sacrament. We have done with the first particular, the Person, of whom he craves the blessing; that is the God of peace. Now—II. follows the MOTIVE THAT HE USES, AND BY WHICH HE STRENGTHENS AND ENFORCES HIS PRAYER. And that is the consideration of our Saviour's resurrection. And it is the Divine art and holy rhetoric of prayer, not only to present our suits, but to press them by the interposition of such prevailing arguments. The motive, I say, which he uses is our Saviour's resurrection. And of it take a double view. See the description of it; and that consists of three particulars. 1. Here is the Person raised. And He made known—(1) By His personal title, the Lord Jesus. And this title is very pertinent to His resurrection. For, however this glorious title was due to Him, even from His birth, yet it is observable it is never completely given to Him till after His resurrection. By His resurrection He was declared to be the Son of God; then made known to be Lord and Christ. (2) The title of His office. The former, indeed, is more honourable for Him; but this other, that great Shepherd of the sheep, is more comfortable to us, as implying thus much, that whatsoever betided Him in the whole carriage of this business befell Him not as a private person for His own cause, but in the behalf of those that were committed to His charge. Whatsoever He did or suffered, it was all for His sheep. 1. His first mission and coming into the world was for His sheep (Matt. xv. 24). 2. His death and passion was not in His own behalf, but for His sheep (John x. 15). 3. His resurrection, that was for His sheep to resume that office, to take care over His flock (Acts iii. 26). All for us men, and for our salvation. For better understanding of this title let us take it asunder into these three particulars. First, We see the Church, the body of Christians, they are called sheep. And this resemblance is exceeding frequent in Scripture. The Church of God is called a flock of sheep (Luke xii. 32; 1 Pet. v. 5; Ezek. xxxvi. 38). It is fitly so termed in these resemblances. 1. Sheep are such kind of creatures as naturally gather themselves together, unite into a flock. Such are Christians; such is the Church, combined in a holy society and communion. If we belong not to the flock we belong not to the Shepherd, we make ourselves a prey to the wolf. 2. Sheep are of a very harmless and inoffensive nature. And such must Christians be, endued with dove-like simplicity, with lamb-like innocency. The most cruel dispositions shall be tamed and sweetened when they come once to be of this flock of Christ. 3. Sheep are creatures exceedingly subject to stray, if not tended and kept in the better; unable to keep out of error; and, having erred, unable to return. Such are Christians, the best of them, if left to themselves. How soon out of the right way are we if God takes off His guidance and leaves us unto ourselves? Into what mazes and thickets of errors do we run ourselves (Psa. cxix. 176). 4. Sheep are weak and shiftless creatures, unable to make resistance. And such is the Church, if considered in itself, and from under Christ's protection. The enemies of God's Church are like the fat bulls of Bashan, whereas God's people are like a few helpless sheep. 5. Sheep are not, as many other creatures, wild and of no man's owning, creatures at large, but they are the property and possession of an owner. So God's Church is not a loose, scattered people; they are His proper possession, His chosen people, the sheep of His pasture, His peculiar people, the people of His purchase, His choice inheritance. Secondly, Here is His office. Christ is a Shepherd. He vouchsafes to be

called and known by that name (Psa. lxxx. 1). Our Saviour assumes this name to Himself (John x. 11). All that is requisite in a Shepherd is fully in Christ. 1. A Shepherd is an employment of much diligence and attention. It requires a constant, continual inspection over the flock. Such is the watchful care that Christ hath over His Church (Matt. xxviii. 20). 2. A shepherd is an employment of tenderness, and mildness, and of much compassion. If the sheep stray he seeks them carefully, brings them home gently, lays them on his shoulders. And such a Shepherd is Christ, not like a lion over His flock, but meek and merciful (Isa. xl. 11). 3. A shepherd's is an employment of skill; he must be able to know the state of his flock (Prov. xxvii. 23). What diseases they are subject to, and how to prevent or cure them; what food is wholesome for them, and how to supply them. Sure, in this also, Christ is a perfect Shepherd. He hath not the instruments of a foolish shepherd, as Zechariah speaks (Zech. xi. 15), but is completely furnished with all abilities for the good of His flock. He knows their diseases, and can cure them; their dangers, and can prevent them; their necessities, and can supply them; their enemies, and can disappoint them (Psa. xxiii. 1). 4. A shepherd's is an employment that requires stoutness and courage. He that will keep his flock from mischief must not fear the wolf or flee from him, but withstand and resist him. 5. As shepherd's is an employment of much patience and hardship. He must bear many a storm, and blast, heat, and cold, undergo all weathers. He must endure much tediousness in seeking and reducing his poor stray sheep. It was Jacob's lot, and much more our Saviour's. He served a hard service; storms and tempests fell upon Him in tending His flock. He was a man of afflictions, patiently undergoing all the toil of His laborious employment. Thirdly, Take notice of the dignity and eminency of this office. He is called "that great Shepherd." Great Shepherd! Surely in the world's account there is scarce good congruity between these two words. If a Shepherd, then we conclude Him to be a mean man. Kings and priests joined together in the Scripture. Nay, peasants and priests, that is the world's heraldry; so they rank them, set them with the dogs of the flock, as Job speaks (Job xxx. 1), that place is good enough for them. Shepherd, Priest, Minister, all words of contempt, not to be found amongst the titles of honour; nay, what saith Moses (Gen. xlvi. 34)? Every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians. So is a Church shepherd to profane worldlings. Well, let the ministry be the scorn of the world; let them stumble at it in their folly, or spurn at it in their pride, yet it is the wisdom of God and the power of God. A shepherd's is the office of our Saviour and the glory of Christ. So then, with or without their leaves, Christ is the great Shepherd. Every way great. 1. Great in His person. If the Son of God become a Shepherd, surely then a great Shepherd. How wonderful is it to see the Lord Jesus Christ, with His shepherd's crook, tending His flock! This humiliation of His Person in a great exaltation of the office makes Him a great Shepherd. 2. Christ is the great Shepherd, because He is the supreme Shepherd, the Prince of Shepherds. All other pastors, of what title soever, are inferior to Him. All hold their employment in dependence from Him. 3. He is a great Shepherd, for His flock is great; great, I mean, in the value. His flock is a flock of souls, and that is a precious flock. 4. He is great in prerogatives. All the flock of Christians is under His inspection. He is the only true Œcumenical pastor. All other shepherds are but petty shepherds, of a portion only of His flock. But to be the universal Shepherd of the whole Church is Christ's prerogative. 5. He is great in possession. The flock is His own, He is the rightful Owner and Possessor of it. We, the best of us, are but servants to Him, to tend His flock. He sets us on work, to Him we owe our accounts. He will pay us our wages, or reckon with them that shall any ways defraud us. 6. He is great in His abilities to tend His flock. 1. A great Shepherd in knowing His flock. He hath a special knowledge of every poor sheep. He hath all their names engraven on His breast (John x. 3). 2. Great He is in His love and affection to His flock. He lays down His life for them. 3. He is of great power to save and preserve them (Isa. lxiii. 1). (*Bp. Brownrigg.*) **That great Shepherd.**—*The great Shepherd of the sheep:*— I. WHY GOD'S BELIEVING PEOPLE ARE COMPARED TO SHEEP. 1. Sheep are harmless creatures (Phil. ii. 15). 2. Meek and patient (1 Pet. iii. 4). 3. Clean (Psa. lxxiii. 1). 4. Simple and guileless (Psa. xxxii. 2). 5. Tractable (John x. 27). 6. God made them His sheep by free grace (Psa. c. 3). II. JESUS CHRIST IS THE GREAT SHEPHERD OF HIS SHEEP. 1. He carefully feeds His flock (Isa. xl. 11). 2. He feeds them in providing ordinances for them (Psa. xxiii. 2). 3. In providing shepherds to dispense ordinances (Eph. iv. 11, 12). 4. He spiritually blesses the feeding of His

flock (Ezek. xxxiv. 14). 5. Christ knows all His sheep (Jer. xxxiii. 13). 6. He knows them as given to Him by His Father (John xvii. 6). 7. He knows them as bearing His image (Rom. viii. 29). 8. He knows them by the sprinkling of His blood (Rev. vii. 14). 9. He preserves them from danger (John x. 28). He preserves them—(1) By His death. (2) His intercession. (3) His presence. (4) His union to them. (5) His promise. (6) And His Holy Spirit. III. WHY CHRIST IS CALLED THE "GREAT SHEPHERD." 1. In regard to the dignity of His character (Zech. xiii. 7). 2. In regard to His great ability to save (John iii. 34, 35). 3. In regard to His property in the sheep (John x. 11; compared with 1 Pet. i. 18, 19). 4. Other shepherds are sheep as well as shepherds (Acts xiv. 15). 5. In regard to His dominion over the shepherds (Eccles. xii. 11). 6. In regard to the success that He can give to His pastoral care (1 Cor. iii. 7). 7. In regard to the jurisdiction He has over them (1 Cor. vi. 20). 8. In regard to the extent of His jurisdiction (Psa. lxxii. 8). Improvement. To ministers: 1. To teach ministers to act for Christ. 2. To feed their hearers with gospel truths. 3. To show believers their daily mercies. 4. To remind them of their security in Christ. 5. And their final salvation and glory. Instruction. To believers: 1. Be ruled and governed by Jesus Christ. 2. Submit to the shepherds that He has appointed. 3. Pray to love the goodly pastures of Christ's providing. 4. Bring forth fruits unto the glory of His grace. 5 And expect to live with Him hereafter, where all sorrow and sin will be for ever done away, and the whole Church will rejoice in God eternally. (*T. B. Baker.*) **The blood of the everlasting covenant.**—*The blood of the everlasting covenant:*—All God's dealings with men have had a covenant character. It hath so pleased Him to arrange it, that He will not deal with us except through a covenant, nor can we deal with Him except in the same manner. It is important, then, since the covenant is the only ladder which reaches from earth to heaven, that we should know how to discriminate between covenant and covenant; and should not be in any darkness or error with regard to what is the covenant of grace, and what is not. I. First of all, then, I have to speak of THE COVENANT mentioned in the text; and I observe that we can readily discover at first sight what the covenant is not. We see at once that this is not the covenant of works, for the simple reason that this is an everlasting covenant. Again, I may remark that the covenant here meant is not the covenant of gratitude which is made between the loving child of God and his Saviour. Such a covenant is very right and proper. But that covenant is not the one in the text, for the simple reason that the covenant in our text is an everlasting one. Now ours was only written out some few years ago. It would have been despised by us in the earlier parts of our life, and cannot at the very utmost be so old as ourselves. Having thus readily shown what this covenant is not, I may observe what this covenant is. 1. Now, in this covenant of grace, we must first of all observe the high contracting parties between whom it was made. The covenant of grace was made before the foundation of the world between God the Father, and God the Son; or to put it in a yet more Scriptural light, it was made mutually between the three Divine persons of the adorable Trinity. This covenant was not made directly between God and man. 2. And now, what were the stipulations of this covenant? They were somewhat in this wise. God had foreseen that man after creation would break the covenant of works; that however gentle the tenure upon which Adam had possession of Paradise, yet that tenure would be too severe for him, and he would be sure to kick against it, and ruin himself. God had also foreseen that His elect ones, whom He had chosen out of the rest of mankind, would fall by the sin of Adam, since they, as well as the rest of mankind, were represented in Adam. The covenant therefore had for its end the restoration of the chosen people. 3. And now having seen who were the high contracting parties, and what were the terms of the covenant made between them, let us see what were the objects of this covenant. Was this covenant made for every man of the race of Adam? Assuredly not; we discover the secret by the visible. As many as shall believe, as many as shall persevere unto the end, so many and no more are interested in the covenant of Divine grace. 4. Furthermore, we have to consider what were the motives of this covenant. Why was the covenant made at all? There was no compulsion or constraint on God. As yet there was no creature. Even could the creature have an influence on the Creator, there was none existing in the period when the covenant was made. We can look nowhere for God's motive in the covenant except it be in Himself, for of God it could be said literally in that day, "I am, and there is none beside Me." Why then did He make the covenant? I answer, absolute

sovereignty dictated it. But why were certain men the objects of it and why not others? I answer, sovereign grace guided the pen. II. But now, in the second place, we come to notice ITS EVERLASTING CHARACTER. It is called an everlasting covenant. 1. And here you observe at once its antiquity. The covenant of grace is the oldest of all things. 2. Then, again, it is an everlasting covenant from its sureness. Nothing is everlasting which is not secure. 3. Furthermore, it is not only sure, but it is immutable. If it were not immutable, it could not be everlasting. That which changes passes away. But in the covenant everything is immutable. Whatever God has established must come to pass, and not word, or line, or letter, can be altered. 5. The covenant is everlasting, because it will never run itself out. It will be fulfilled, but it will stand firm. III. Having thus noticed the everlasting character of the covenant, I conclude by the most precious portion of the doctrine—the relation which the blood bears to it—THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT. The blood of Christ stands in a fourfold relationship to the covenant. 1. With regard to Christ, His precious blood shed in Gethsemane, in Gabbatha and Galgotha, is the fulfilment of the covenant. 2. With regard to the blood in another respect, it is to God the Father the bond of the covenant. 3. Then, again, the blood of the covenant has relation to us as the objects of the covenant, and that is its third light; it is not only a fulfilment as regards Christ, and a bond as regards His Father, but it is an evidence as regards ourselves. Are you relying wholly upon the blood? 4. The blood stands in a relationship to all three, and here I may add that the blood is the glory of all. To the Son it is the fulfilment, to the Father the bond, to the sinner the evidence, and to all—to Father, Son, and sinner—it is the common glory and the common boast. In this the Father is well pleased; in this the Son also, with joy, looks down and sees the purchase of His agonies; and in this must the sinner ever find his comfort and his everlasting song, "Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness are my glory, my song, for ever and ever." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

The blood of the everlasting covenant:—This everlasting covenant is the covenant of grace, or the gospel, made with Christ, as the Head and Representative of all His believing people. It is called "everlasting," in contradistinction to some transient outward forms of it that had already vanished or were vanishing away. God had made legal, ceremonial, national covenants, which were temporary—which had not the elements of permanency. But this covenant touches, embraces everything: reaches up to God's highest attributes, and down to man's deepest needs—over all the breadth of law, and along all the line of existence. Nothing can happen to shake it. Nothing can alter the disposition of Him who makes it. He foresees all changes. He overrules all events. He provides for all circumstances. We read of "everlasting love"; of "the eternal purpose"; of "predestination unto the adoption of children"; of being "chosen before the foundation of the world"; of "the mercy of God unto eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began"; and here we have "the everlasting covenant." Everlasting! I cannot fix a beginning, any more than an end. I can only think there never was a beginning. Oh! it is a wonderful thought that God never began to love the world, that He never began to love you. And He will never cease to love. We go on now to the other term, "the blood of the everlasting covenant." That is the virtue of the death of Christ. It is that grand act of atonement and self-sacrifice by which He bore the penalty of sin for us, and secured the gospel as God's method in this world for ever. I. GOD IS THE "GOD OF PEACE," WHO MAKES PEACE WHERE IT HAS BEEN BROKEN, AND GIVES IT WHERE IT IS LOST. The God who makes peace between heaven and earth, between law and conscience, between Himself and sinful men. How does He make it? Through "the blood of the everlasting covenant." If there is a way between heaven and earth, an open way for hopes and prayers, for departing souls and descending angels; if troubled consciences are pacified and cleansed; if thunders of broken law are hushed into silence, it is because this blood was shed, because Christ died, "the just for the unjust." II. HE BROUGHT AGAIN FROM THE DEAD OUR LORD JESUS. He wrought that mightiest work that has ever been wrought in this world, the resurrection of Christ. How? Again, "through the blood of the everlasting covenant." The power of the death sprang into resurrection. The corn of wheat fell into the ground and died, and then, with a mighty vegetative force, produced this harvest of resurrection—this splendid flower-fact, which towers and shines above all others. III. It is through the same act of self-sacrifice in death that He becomes "THE GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP." What kind of shepherd is needed by this wandering widespread flock of men, scattered over all the hills of earth and time? Is it one who will come

and pipe to them while they pasture? Is it one who will speak to them, and call them all by name? Is it one who will lead them out and drive them home? Nay, the first and foremost requisite in the good Shepherd is, that He shall die for the sheep. IV. Now, passing over the ridge of the passage, we come down upon the human side of it, AND WE HAVE THIS BLOOD OF THE COVENANT FULL OF EFFICIENCIES ON THIS SIDE ALSO. Here the first term that meets us is the term "perfect"; given us at once this high idea, the idea of perfection as a thing attainable now, by means of the blood and death of the Son of God. And this perfection is not merely a thing ideal and distant, not only a thing to be hoped for beyond earth and time, in heaven and glory. It is a thing to be striven for and realised in measure in daily life and service, as here—"The God of peace make you perfect in every good work." V. Finally; in this illustration of the power of the Cross, we have the inworking of the Spirit of God in the heart of the man who is thus seeking perfection, "WORKING IN YOU THAT WHICH IS WELL PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT." This secures simplicity and spirituality—God working within by the Spirit—then all is right and good. The water is cleansed at the fountain, thought is touched as it springs, feeling purified as it begins to flow, affection lifted to its object, will bent to the will of God. Lessons: 1. Let us come to this blood of the covenant, or to the death, or to the Cross of Christ for cleansing. This alone cleanseth us from all sin. Here, on Calvary, is the open fountain. 2. Let us come to this blood for motive. Nothing will stir us so purely, nothing will stir us so much. Here is nobleness without a shadow, unselfishness without reserve, self-sacrifice without regret. Here is the love of God all in motion! The purpose of God in and for man, beginning to shine! Here is the everlasting model and example for new obedience! 3. Let us come to this blood for speech. The blood of sprinkling speaketh; and if we hear the utterances, we shall speak too, and tell out what we hear. (*J. Raleigh, D.D.*) *The blood of the covenant*:—I. The subject is the covenant of grace, as it is here spoken of, and I shall begin by noticing, first, THE COVENANT NAMES which the apostle uses. He calls the ever-blessed Father "the God of peace"; and to the Redeemer who has taken the other side of the covenant, he gives the title, "Our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep." As many of us as have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ are in Christ, and He is our Head and Representative, our Shepherd and Sponsor. Jesus has, according to His promise, shed His blood, and now the covenant stands only to be fulfilled on the side of the eternal Father, and under that aspect of the covenant the apostle calls the Father, "the God of peace." He is not the God of a hollow truce, not the God of a patched-up forgetfulness of unforgiven injuries, but the God of peace in the very deepest sense; He is Himself at peace, for there is a peace of God that passeth all understanding; and, moreover, by reason of His mercy His people are made to enjoy peace of conscience within themselves, for you feel that God is reconciled to you, your hearts rest in Him, your sins which separated you have been removed, and perfect love has cast out the fear which hath torment. While the Lord is at peace with Himself, and you are made to enjoy inward peace through Him, He is also at peace with you, for He loves you with a love unsearchable; He sees nothing in you but that which He delights in, for in the covenant He does not look at you as you are in yourself, but in your Head, Christ Jesus, and to the eye of God there is no sight in the universe so lovely as His own dear Son, and His people in His Son. Henceforth be it ours in every troubled hour to look to the Lord under this cheering name, "the God of peace," for as such the covenant reveals Him. The apostle had a view of the other great party to the covenant, and he names Him "Our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep." We must view our Redeemer in the covenant first as Jesus the Saviour who leads us into the Canaan which has been given to us by a covenant of salt, even the rest which remaineth to the people of God; He is also the Lord Jesus, in all the dignity of His nature, exalted far above all principalities and powers, to be obeyed and worshipped by us, and our Lord Jesus—ours because He has given Himself to us, and we have accepted and received Him with holy delight to be the Lord whom we cheerfully serve. Further, our Lord is called "the great Shepherd of the sheep." In the covenant we are the sheep, the Lord Jesus in the Shepherd. You cannot make a covenant with sheep, they have not the ability to covenant; but you can make a covenant with the Shepherd for them, and so, glory be to God, though we had gone astray like lost sheep, we belonged to Jesus, and He made a covenant on our behalf, and stood for us before the living God. This is a great subject, and I can only hint at it. Let us rejoice that our Shepherd is great, because He with His great flock will be able

to preserve them all from the great dangers into which they are brought, and to perform for them the great transactions with the great God which are demanded of a Shepherd of such a flock as that which Jesus calls His own. While we rest in the covenant of grace we should view our Lord as our Shepherd, and find solace in the fact that sheep have nothing to do with their own feeding, guidance, or protection; they have only to follow their Shepherd unto the pastures which He prepares, and all will be well with them. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters." II. Secondly, the apostle mentions THE COVENANT SEAL. "The God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." The seal of the covenant is the blood of Jesus. Think how impossible it is that the Lord should ever break that covenant of grace, which He spontaneously made with His own Son, and with us in Him, now that it has been sprinkled with blood from the veins of His own well-beloved Son. Remember, too, that in our case that blood not only confirmed the covenant; but actually fulfilled it; because the covenant stipulation was on this wise: Christ must suffer for our sins and honour the Divine law. It is not only ratified with that bloody signature, but by that blood it is actually carried out on Christ's part, and it cannot be that the eternal Father should start back from His side of the compact since our side of it has been carried out to the letter by that great Shepherd of the sheep who laid down His life for us. By the shedding of the blood the covenant is turned into a testament. Dwell with pleasure upon that word "everlasting covenant." The covenant of works is gone; it was based on human strength, and it dissolved as a dream; in the nature of things it could not be everlasting. Man could not keep the condition of it, and it fell to the ground. But the covenant of grace depended only upon the power and love and faithfulness of Christ, who has kept His part of the covenant, and therefore the covenant now rests only upon God, the faithful and true, whose word cannot fail. III. We have now to notice THE COVENANT FULFILMENT, for the Lord has commenced to fulfil it. "The God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that good Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." See, then, Jesus Christ has been brought back again from the dead through the blood of the covenant. See how He climbs aloft, and sits upon the Father's throne, for God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. Now note by what means our Lord returned from the dead to all this glory. It was because He had presented the blood of the everlasting covenant. When the Father saw that Jesus had kept all His part of the covenant even to death, that He began to fulfil His portion of the contract by bringing back His Son from the grave to life, from shame to honour, from humiliation to glory, from death to immortality. See where He now sits expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. Now, what has been done to Jesus has been virtually done to all His people, because, you observe, the Lord "brought again from the dead," not the Lord Jesus as a private person only, but "our Lord Jesus," as "that great Shepherd of the sheep." The sheep are with the Shepherd. IV. Fourthly, we will view THE COVENANT BLESSING. What is one of the greatest of all the covenant blessings? The writer of this Epistle here pleads for it. "Now," saith he, "the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight." Notice that one of the chief blessings of the covenant is power and will to serve God. 1. Taking the text word by word, I perceive that the first blessing asked for by the apostle is meetness for the Divine service, for the Greek word is not "Make you perfect," but "meet," "fit," "prepared," "able for." 2. But the apostle asked for an inward work of grace, not merely meetness for service, but an operation felt—"Working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight." Do not be satisfied with a little, weak, almost inperceptible, pulse of religion, of which you can hardly judge whether it is there or not; but ask to feel the Divine energies working within you, the eternal omnipotence of God, struggling and striving mightily in your spirit until sin shall be conquered, and grace shall gloriously triumph. This is a covenant blessing. Seek ye for it. 3. But we need outward as well as inward work. Working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight—no small matter when you remember that nothing but perfect holiness can please God. We must know the power of our Lord's resurrection, and exhibit it in every action of our lives. 4. Observe, once more, the completeness of this covenant blessing. Just as Jesus is fully restored to

the place from which He came, and has lost no dignity nor power by having shed His blood; but rather is exalted higher than ever, so God's design is to make us pure and holy as Adam was at the first, and to add to our characters a force of love which never would have been there if we had not sinned and been forgiven, an energy of intense devotion, an enthusiasm of perfect self-sacrifice, which we never could have learned if it had not been for Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. God means to make us the princes of the blood royal of the universe, or, if you will, the body guards of the Lord of Hosts. IV. We conclude with THE COVENANT DOXOLOGY, "To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." If anything in the world can make a man praise his God it is the covenant, and the knowledge that He is in it. 1. Our God deserves exclusive glory. Covenant theology glorifies God alone. 2. He also has endless glory. "To whom be glory for ever and ever." Have you glorified God a little, because of His covenant mercy? Go on glorifying Him. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Make you perfect.**—*Apostolic prayer for the Hebrews:*—I. He prays that the God of peace would MAKE THEM PERFECT IN EVERY GOOD WORK TO DO HIS WILL. The word here translated "perfect" occurs in various other texts, and properly signifies to adjust, to dispose or prepare with great wisdom and propriety. The apostle obviously means that God would fit and dispose the minds of His brethren for every good work to do His will. "The doing of the will of God," whether this relate to active obedience, or to suffering, forms the grand end of the gospel, considered in its practical design on the heart and life. II. He also prays, in connection with this, that God would WORK IN THEM THAT WHICH IS WELL-PLEASING IN HIS SIGHT, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. That which is well-pleasing in the sight of the all-perfect Jehovah, must be supremely excellent in itself, and adapted to promote the true, the eternal happiness of His people. It consists of the various dispositions and desires and practices which are comprehended in His "good and perfect and acceptable will." A very great and unspeakably important part of the great salvation, consists in being delivered from the dominion of the old man—in being renewed in the spirit of our minds, and having infused into the heart those gracious dispositions which are the fruit of the Spirit, and the produce of faith in that Saviour of whom He testifies. Lessons: 1. Let us be exhorted to contemplate the blessed character of our God as the God of peace, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and who is the author of that holy tranquillity and sweet serenity of soul which is the happy portion of those who know and love His name. It is this which calms the troubles of the breast, and fills us with that peace which, in the language of our Lord, the world can neither give nor take away. 2. We are reminded of the inseparable connection between our enjoyment of the blessings of the everlasting covenant, and of the God of peace as our God, and our being fitted for every good work to do His will. 3. Let us imitate the example of the apostle Paul, in commending one another to the God of peace. 4. Let us ascribe the glory of all to Him who is the author of our salvation. (*Andrew Arthur.*) *The closing prayer:*—I. THE BURDEN OF THE PRAYER is that these Hebrew Christians may be made perfect to do God's will. There is no higher aim in life than to do the will of God. It was the supreme object for which our Saviour lived. This brought Him from heaven. This determined His every action. And human lives climb up from the lowlands to the upland heights just in proportion as they do the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven. God is love; to do His will is to scatter love in handfuls of blessing on a weary world. God is light; to do His will is to tread a path that shines more and more to the perfect day. God is life; to do His will is to eat of the Tree of Life, and live for ever, and to drink deep draughts of the more abundant life, which Jesus gives. God is the God of hope; to do His will is to be full of all joy and peace, and to abound in hope. II. MARK THE GUARANTEES THAT THIS PRAYER SHALL BE REALISED. 1. The appeal is made to "the God of peace." He, whose nature is never swept by the storms of desire or unrest; whose one aim is to introduce peace into the heart and life; whose love to us will not brook disappointment in achieving our highest blessedness—He must undertake this office; He will do it most tenderly and delicately; nor will He rest until the obstruction to the inflow of His nature is removed, and there is perfect harmony between the promptings of His will and our immediate and joyous response. 2. "He brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep." To have given us a Shepherd was much; but to have given us so great a Shepherd is marvellous. He is the great Shepherd who died, just as He is the good Shepherd who knows His flock, and the chief Shepherd who is coming again. He is great, because of the intrinsic dignity

of His nature, because of His personal qualifications to save and bless us, because of the greatness of His unknown sufferings, and because of the height of glory to which the Father hath exalted Him. And, surely, if our God has given us such a Shepherd, and raised Him to such a glory, that He may help us the more efficiently, there is every reason why we should confidently count on His aid. III. THE DIVINE METHOD will be to work in us. 1. It is necessary first that we should be adjusted so that there may be no waste or diversion of the Divine energy. 2. When that is done, then it will begin to pass into and through us in mighty tides of power. "God working in you." It is a marvellous expression! We know how steam works mightily within the cylinder, forcing up and down the ponderous piston. We know how sap works mightly within the branches, forcing itself out in bud, and leaf, and blossom. We read of a time when men and women were so possessed of devils that they spoke and acted as the inward promptings led them. These are approximations to the conception of the text, which towers infinitely beyond. On His doing all that may be needed in us, as He has done all that was needed for us. 3. He will certainly respect the everlasting covenant, which has been sealed with blood. IV. THE RESULT will be that we shall be well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ. (*F. B. Meyer, B.A.*) *The great prayer based on great pleas* :—This prayer is the parting highest wish of the writer for his friends. Do our desires for ourselves, and for those whom we would seek to bless, run in the same mould? I. CONSIDER THE PRAYER WHICH THE NAME EXCITES. "Make you perfect in every good work." Now, I need only observe here, in regard to the language of the petition, that the word translated "make perfect" is not the ordinary one employed for that idea; but a somewhat remarkable one, with a very rich and pregnant variety of significance. The general idea of the word, is to make sound, or fit, or complete, by restoring, by mending, by filling up what is lacking, and by adapting all together in harmonious co-operation. And so this is what Christians ought to look for, and to desire as being the will of God concerning them. The writer goes on to still further deepen the idea when he says, "make you perfect in every good work"; where the word "work" is a supplement, and unnecessarily limits the idea of the text. For that applies much rather to character than to work, and the "make you perfect in every good" refers rather to an inward process than to any outward manifestation. And this character, thus harmonised, corrected, restored, filled up where it is lacking, and that in regard of all manner of good—"whatsoever things are fair, and lovely, and of good report"—that character is "well-pleasing to God." So you see the width of the hopes—ay! of the confidence—that you and I ought to cherish. We should expect that all the discord of our nature shall be changed into a harmonious co-operation of all its parts towards one great end. It is possible that our hearts may be united to fear His name; and that one unbroken temper of whole-spirited submission may be ours. Again, we shall expect, and desire, and strive towards the correction of all that is wrong, the mending of the nets, the restoring of the havoc wrought in legitimate occupations and by any other cause. Again, we may strive with hope and confidence towards the supply of all that is lacking. "In every good"—and all-round completeness of excellence ought to be the hope, and the aim, as well as the prayer of every Christian. II. NOTE THE DIVINE WORK WHICH FULFILS THE PRAYER. "Working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ." Creation, Providence, and all God's works in the world are also through Jesus Christ. But the work which is spoken of here is yet greater and more wonderful than the general operations of the creating and preserving God, which also are produced and ministered through that eternal Word by whom the heavens were of old, and by whom the heavens are still sustained and administered. There is, says my text, an actual Divine operation in the inmost spirit of every believing man. Expect that operation! You Christian men and women, do you believe that God will work in your hearts? Some of you do not live as if you did. Do you want Him to come and clear out that stable of filth that you carry about with you? Do you wish Him to come and sift and search, and bring the candle of the Lord into the dusty corners? Do you want to get rid of what is not pleasing in His sight? Expect it! desire it! pray for it! And when you have got it, see that you profit by it! God does not work by magic. The Spirit of God which cleanses men's hearts cleanses them on condition, first, of their faith; second, of their submission; and third, of their use of His gift. III. NOTICE THE VISIBLE MANIFESTATION OF THIS INWARD WORK. Now the writer of our text employs the same word in the two clauses, in order to bring

out the idea of a correspondence between the human and the Divine Worker. "To work His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight." God works in order that you and I may work. Our action is to follow His. Practical obedience is the issue, and it is the test, of our having the Divine operation in our hearts. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Importance of service*:—The soul into which privilege is ever running without any outflow of service will become a stagnant and acrid Dead Sea in which no spiritual thing lives. (*J. Alison, D.D.*) *Perfect in every good work through the Holy Spirit*:—As we ascend from stage to stage in the animal world we find the structures becoming ever more complex, consisting of innumerable parts, articulated or adjusted to each other. That word "articulated" comes from the same root as the word here translated perfect. It means every organ, faculty, feeling in the fulness of its appropriate energy, discharging its proper work; every power disciplined to the height of its capacity and in ceaseless performance of its functions, in due relation and harmony with all the other powers, thus working with them to a common end, so that we are fit not merely for one kind of service, nor two kinds, nor ten, but for every good work. The juice of earth and the carbonic acid of the air passing into the tree, minister to every part of its structure, carrying on all the operations involved in its common life. The stream of chyle or digested food, drawn up into the blood, serves a thousand distinct ends, restores the energy of nerve and muscle, renews every tissue in the frame, freshens every power of nature, keeps the whole machine at work. And so the Divine Spirit, passing into the consecrated soul, works there not merely to the development of one kind of energy. He aims to breathe the mind of Christ through and through the man, so that Christ being present more and more in the man, may recover to His service, dominate, impregnate, and use every power of the nature, intellect, imagination, emotion, memory, will, with all specific talents, aptitudes, qualities. (*John Smith.*) *Conscientious discharge of duty*:—"I notice," said the stream to the mill, "that you grind beans as well and as cheerfully as fine wheat." "Certainly," clacked the mill; "what am I for but to grind? And so long as I work, what does it signify to me what the work is? My business is to serve my master, and I am not a whit more useful when I turn out fine flour than when I make the coarsest meal. My honour is not in doing fine work, but in performing any that comes as well as I can." (*Baxendale's Anecdotes.*) *God the originator of good work*:—In a mill where the machinery is all driven by water, the working of the whole machinery depends upon the supply of water. Cut off that supply, and the machinery becomes useless; let on the water, and life and activity is given to all. The whole dependence is placed upon the outward supply of water; still, it is obvious that we do not throw away the machinery through which the power of the water is brought to bear upon the work. Just so it is with the Christian's labour for God. All is naught without the Divine blessing. The living stream must be poured out from on high, or the machinery, however beautiful to the eye, and however carefully constructed, will be useless. For the will to work; for the power to work; for success to work, man is altogether and always dependent upon the Spirit of God. (*Christian Armour.*) *Only a chisel*:—I'm only a chisel which cuts the wood, while the Great Carpenter directs it. (*General Gordon.*) *God working in His people*:—Human nature is sordid and mean and base; and human nature is grand and heroic and sublime. And the history of the mean men of the world shows how bad you and I can be, without trying very hard either. And the history of the great, and the heroic, and the Divine men shows what you and I might become if we would let God have His way with us. Put a violin in the hands of a poor player, and you will put your fingers in your ears to keep out the dissonance. Put the same instrument in the hands of a skilful player, and you will feel the soul breathing through the instrument. It is the player that makes the difference. Look all along the line of human history, and you may see what kind of figures God can make out of clay like yours; you may hear what kind of music He can play on instruments such as you are. The great and good men of the world are witnesses to the power, not ourselves and yet that is in ourselves, to the power that makes men great. (*Lyman Abbott, D.D.*) *Man Divinely equipped*:—Just as a machine which has got out of order must be set right before it can work easily and well; just as a ship must be equipped and fitted up before it can safely commence its voyage; so it was necessary that these Jewish Christians should have their whole nature re-organised before their Christian life could be vigorous or happy. The prayer is, that the re-organisation should be such as would make them ready for "every good work"—for the courageous confession of Christ, for the

patient endurance of suffering, for worship, for all moral excellence, for brotherly love, for submission to their church rulers, for whatever duty the law of Christ, and the perilous times in which they lived, might impose on them. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*) *Workers needed:*—"You sit here and sing yourselves away to everlasting bliss," said a certain true witness, "but I tell you that you are wanted a great deal more out in Illinois than you are in heaven." (*Proctor's Gems of Thought.*) **Grace be with you all.**—*Grace:*—This is the most comprehensive, the best, the sweetest wish. Grace bringeth salvation. Grace contains all things pertaining to life and godliness. By grace we have been saved; by grace we stand; in grace we rejoice, and grace will end in glory. May the free, unmerited, boundless, all-sufficient love of the Father in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the blood of the everlasting covenant, shed for the redemption of guilty and helpless sinners, be with us through the power of the Holy Ghost. By Jesus, and in Jesus, we say Amen. For He is the Amen, in whom all the promises of God are sealed. (*A. Saphir.*) **Amen.**—I had been talking to a little ignorant, neglected boy about the good God and His love for children. "I should like to live along o' Him!" said the poor little man with a wistful sigh. It was all such a new revelation in his harried, loveless existence. "Shall I pray to God to make you a good boy, clean and good, fit to live with Him?" I asked. "Yes, do, missus." "But you must pray too," I urged. "I dunno' how." "Then you must listen to me and say 'Amen' at the end of my prayer. That will mean 'Yes, I want all that,' and God will understand you. The child nodded, and I began a very simple, short prayer for the Holy Spirit's help to make my little friend pure and true and obedient, for Jesus Christ's sake,—— I paused for the "Amen." A soft, hushed "Yes" fluttered up to heaven from the young lips. "I couldn't remember the other word," the child whispered, "but won't God know about it?" And he went away quite satisfied. He had made the prayer his own in his own way. If all Amens could have the force of that gentle "Yes," I thought, as I watched the last flutter of the poor little man's rags, surely prayer would meet with a fuller and quicker answer. But we are too apt to think that the prayer is everything, the Amen nothing, and so we listeners do not do our part; we remain mere listeners, no prayers.

The works of the late Rev. C. H. Spurgeon have been used in the preparation of this volume by permission of Messrs. Passmore and Alabaster.

The Gresham Press,
UNWIN BROTHERS,
CHILWORTH AND LONDON.

CHEAP SUBSCRIPTION.

Now Ready, price 7/6 for separate volumes, or **a selection of four different volumes for 4/6 each.** *This subscription for four volumes must be* **prepaid,** *and is available at all booksellers; if sent by post or rail carriage will be charged extra. Subscribers may pay in advance for the forthcoming volumes.*

THE BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR;

Or Anecdotes, Similes, Emblems, Illustrations, and Sermon Outlines on the Verses of the Bible, gathered from the entire range of Home and Foreign Literature of the past and present

GENESIS. 2 vols.
EXODUS.
ST. JOHN. 3 vols.
ST. LUKE. 3 vols.
EPHESIANS.
PHILIPPIANS and COLOSSIANS.
ST. MATTHEW.
ST. MARK.
GALATIANS.
I. & II. THESSALONIANS and I. TIMOTHY.
II. TIMOTHY, TITUS, and PHILEMON.
HEBREWS. 2 vols.

Press Notices of the Biblical Illustrator.

ST. MATTHEW, ST. MARK, ST. LUKE (3 vols.)

"Mr. Exell never irritates by trivial and goody reflections, but supplies just what the earnest teacher and preacher wants, and will know how to use to advantage."—*Christian World.*

"It is the most valuable book in its own line that we have read."—*Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Magazine.*

ST. JOHN (3 vols.)

"The work will be found a storehouse of the most valuable material for teachers of Divine truth."—*Aberdeen Journal.*

"The Biblical Illustrator is *all* homiletical, a great storehouse, in very truth one of the marvels of the day."—*Expository Times.*

"They are as good as a library to preachers; indeed they constitute a library of themselves."—*The Literary Churchman.*

"The best books on the fourth Gospel have been literally ransacked, and the results are here brought together in a compact and effective way."—*Glasgow Herald.*

"The anecdotes are very well chosen, while the comments from various writers explaining the texts are particularly well selected. The work is worthy of high praise."—*The English Churchman.*

PHILIPPIANS and COLOSSIANS.

I. & II. THESSALONIANS and I. TIMOTHY.

GENESIS (2 vols.)

"A whole library has been boiled down to make this one volume, but the work has been exceedingly well done. Every page is bursting with the riches of criticism, research, illustration, or exposition, with the result that it forms one of the most valuable aids to pulpit preparation hitherto published. Busy preachers will be thankful for its condensation of many large and important works, while those with scant libraries will hail it as a perfect God-send."—*The Literary World.*

"The illustrations throw much and varied light on the sacred text, giving the opinions and best thoughts of many minds, and while the great theologians of all ages have been laid under contribution, humble magazines and journals have been used as gleaning grounds. Mr. Exell has, apparently, left nothing undone to render his compilation invaluable to the preacher and the teacher."—*The Liverpool Courier.*

J. NISBET & CO., 21, BERNERS STREET, LONDON. W.

Now Ready. Price 2s. 6d. each.

The Men of the Bible.

ABRAHAM: His Life and Times. By Rev. W. J. Deane, M.A. Fifth Thousand.

"As the first volume of a series entitled 'Men of the Bible,' we have an interesting and carefully-written account of 'Abraham; his Life and Times' (James Nisbet and Co.), by the Rev. W. J. Deane, M.A., Rector of Ashen, Essex. The Biblical record of the career of the patriarch is faithfully followed, but is elucidated by Mr. Deane from the results of modern scientific research and archæological discovery, and the book embodies a great amount of instructive information in an acceptable form."—*The Scotsman.*

MOSES: His Life and Times. By Rev. Canon G. Rawlinson, M.A. Fifth Thousand.

"As easy to read as a story-book. Its information is wonderful. Our author makes Moses live before your eyes. Such is the writer's acquaintance with Eastern history, manners, and scenery, that he becomes the Macaulay of Moses, only without the inaccuracy of our English historian. This is grand change for half-a-crown. If the other 'Men of the Bible' find such biographers, the publishers will have to enlarge their premises. Friend, *buy this book.* We believe you will thank us for the advice when you find yourself fairly fascinated by it."—*Sword and Trowel.*

SOLOMON: His Life and Times. By Ven. Archdeacon F. W. Farrar, D.D Fifth Thousand.

An excellent history, and very readable, conveying a proper estimate of this magnificent, though criminal, prince."—*The Clergyman's Magazine.*

"Yet, with every discount, Farrar's 'Solomon' is well worth reading, and it constitutes such a magnificent word-picture of the great king that one rises from it with a more vivid idea of the royal preacher than one is likely to obtain by any other means. The cost is only half-a-crown: the literary taste, and skill, and learning are worth a thousand crowns at the least."—*Sword and Trowel*

ELIJAH: His Life and Times. By Rev. Prof. W. Milligan, D.D. Fourth Thousand.

ISAIAH: His Life and Times. By Rev. Canon Driver, M.A. Fifth Thousand.

SAMUEL and SAUL. By Rev. W. J. Deane, M.A.

JEREMIAH: His Life and Times. By Rev. Canon T. K. Cheyne, D.D. Third Thousand.

JESUS CHRIST THE DIVINE MAN. By Rev. J. F. Vallings, M.A.

THE KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH. By Rev. Canon Rawlinson.

DANIEL: His Life and Times. By Rev. H. Deane, B.D.

DAVID: His Life and Times. By Rev. W. J. Deane, M.A.

JOSHUA: His Life and Times. By Rev. W. J. Deane, M.A.

THE MINOR PROPHETS. By Ven. Archdeacon Farrar, D.D.

ISAAC AND JACOB: Their Lives and Times. By Rev. Canon Rawlinson.

ST. PAUL: His Life and Times. By Rev. Prof. Iverach, D.D.

GIDEON AND THE JUDGES: Their Lives and Times. By Rev. J. M. Lang, D.D.

EZRA AND NEHEMIAH. By Rev. Canon Rawlinson.

London: JAMES NISBET & CO., 21, Berners Street, W.