A Brief Outline of the Books of the Bible

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The Old Testament

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy
Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 Samuel
2 Samuel
1 Kings
2 Kings
1 Chronicles
2 Chronicles
Ezra
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Esther
Job
Psalms
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Canticles
Isaiah
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Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel
Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
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Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

The New Testament

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Mark
Luke
John
Acts
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2 John
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Preface.

The notes, from which this little book is printed, were completed and corrected by him from whose discourses they were taken at Birmingham.

Asked for by several, they are now published, in the consciousness of worthlessness as to all that is merely of man; but in the full assurance, through faith, of the power to bless of Him who has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness," 2 Cor. 12:9.

GENESIS.

In this book we have all the great principles of God's relationship with man, without bringing in redemption which makes a people for God and a dwelling-place for God in man. You never, save in chapter 2:3, get the word "holiness" in Genesis; and you never have God dwelling with men.

Creation is first treated of; then innocence, lordship, and marriage, the figure of union with Christ. Next we have the fall, man's sin against God, and then in Cain man's sin against his brother. There is, at the same time, a witness of certain righteous persons, Abel in sacrifice, Enoch in life, and Noah in testimony of approaching judgment. You then get the complete corruption of the whole system, and the deluge.

Having had in Enoch a figure of the church, we get in Noah deliverance through judgment, and then the new world begins, God entering into covenant with it, and government introduced to prevent violence; but the governor fails, and God's plans as to the races of men are brought out. We find God making nations, in consequence of man's attempt to remain united so as to be independent. In the midst of these nations we have, in Nimrod, imperial power, individual and despotic, connected with Babel, the place of man's wickedness. In point of fact, the division of mankind into nations comes by judgment.

Shem's family having been owned on the earth - the Lord God of Shem, national existence is recognized as the principle of the constitution of the earth, God's arrangement. He now begins an entirely new thing. He calls out from that which He has constituted an individual to be the head of a blest race, whether fleshly or spiritual. Whatever individual saints there had thus far been, there had been no counterpart of Adam as the head of a race. This Abraham was. Election, calling, and promise are connected with this; consequently you have Abraham, a stranger and pilgrim, with nothing but his tent and his altar. He fails, like everybody, but God judges the world - Pharaoh's house - for him. We then get the distinction between a heavenly-minded and an earthly-minded man; the world having power over the earthly-minded (Lot), and the heavenly one (Abraham) having power over the world. In connection with this we have in Melchizedek the future priest upon his throne, and that as linked with God's supremacy over heaven and earth. Abraham's separation from the world having been evinced, Jehovah presents Himself to Abraham as his shield and reward. We then first get the earthly inheritance and people, that is, in promise. Abraham looks for the promise in a fleshly way, and that is all rejected. We have then the promise to Abraham of being the father of many nations, God revealing Himself as God Almighty. We have also His covenant, as thus revealed, with Abraham, and the principle of separation to God by circumcision. Chapter 18 gives the promise of the heir, and the judgment of the world (Sodom), and the connection with God, about it, of the heavenly people (Abraham) by intercession; while in chapter 19 we have the connection with the judgment of the earthly people (Lot), saved as by fire through the tribulation. What follows this, chapter 20, is the absolute appropriation of the wife, whether Jerusalem or the heavenly bride, as the spouse of the Lord. The old covenant (Hagar) is cast out, and, the heir (Isaac) being come, he takes the land (chap. 21). Chapter 22 begins another series of things. The promised heir being offered up, and the promise confirmed to the seed, Sarah dies (chap. 23). This is the passing away of the old association with God on the earth; and in chapter 24 Eliezer (in figure the Holy Ghost, or His work on earth) is *sent* to take a wife for Isaac (Christ), who is Heir of all things, and Isaac can in nowise return to Mesopotamia. Christ, in taking the church, cannot come down to earth; whereas, the moment we get Jacob, we get the head of the twelve tribes, who goes to Mesopotamia for Rachel and Leah, typical of Israel and the Gentiles. Jacob is the elect, but not the heavenly people; he goes back to Canaan, gets the promises, with all sorts of exercises, as Israel will, but, if he does, he must give up old Israel (Rachel) to get Benjamin, the son of his right hand.

3 In the brief notice of Esau's offspring we find the world in vigour and energy before God's people are; and then commences another history, that of Joseph, affording a distinct development of Christ connected with Israel, rejected by Israel, and sold to the Gentiles. He comes thus to be the head, having the throne, and governing all Egypt. He has done with Israel, receives a Gentile wife, and calls his children by names typical of Christ's rejection and blessing outside Israel when rejected; but he receives back his brethren in the glory. This part closes with two distinct testimonies, the will of Joseph about his bones, and Jacob's prophecy that they will all be back in the land and the promises to Israel be fulfilled.

EXODUS.

In this book we find God visiting His people; redemption, and the establishment of relationships with His people, whether it be by the testing of law, or the arrangements of grace, by which He could bear with them, with the distinct purpose of dwelling in them, and, moreover, of making them dwell in a place He had prepared for them. All is connected with four immense principles - redemption, bringing to God, God's dwelling among them, and consequently holiness. Priesthood is established to maintain the relationship with God when the people cannot be in immediate relation. Connected with all this you have, besides the judgment of the world, and the final deliverance of the earthly people. With Moses, the man of grace, you have Zipporah, who represents the church, but the children are witnesses of Christ's abiding connection with Israel.

From the Red Sea to Sinai we find the whole picture of God's dealings in grace in Christ by the Spirit on to the millennium, and the millennium itself.

In chapter 19 the people put themselves under law, and get law instead of worship founded on deliverance and grace.

LEVITICUS

Gives us God in the tabernacle, as in the midst of His people, ordering all things that suit their relationship to Him. The feasts represent Him as in the midst of the people, a circle round Himself.

4 NUMBERS

Treats of the journey through the wilderness, with insight into the inheritance (for us heavenly), and a full prospect of all God's ways in bringing them in, and of Christ Himself as the One who is to reign. Reference is made in this last remark to Pisgah, and to Balaam's prophecy.

DEUTERONOMY.

A recapitulation of all God's ways and dealings with Israel, as motives to insist on obedience, and to put the people on moral grounds in direct relationship with Himself. The three great feasts (chap. 16) have this character. The testing character of the law is stated, and at the same time the purpose of God in blessing, spite of failure under the law, is revealed; closing with the prophetic blessing of Israel, in respect to their then present condition.

JOSHUA.

The establishment of the people in the land by divine leading and power, according to promise, but through conflict, in which the faithfulness of the people's walk with God is tested.

The career of Joshua begins with crossing the Jordan in the power of resurrection, and has its place of power for conflict in Gilgal - circumcision - death to the flesh.

They eat of the corn of the land before they have any conflict.

JUDGES.

While Joshua is a book of victorious power, judges is the book of failure in faithfulness, so that power is lost: only that God intervenes in mercy, from time to time, to deliver and revive. Gilgal is exchanged for Bochim. Gilgal, the denial of the flesh, though seemingly of little importance, was the place of power; Bochim was the place of tears, but the angel of God was there.

RUTH.

The intervention of the Lord in grace to bring in the promised seed, and the restoration of Israel, but in the way of grace, on a new footing. On a famine in the land, Naomi, who represents Israel, goes away, and loses everything. Ruth comes back with her, and Boaz (strength) raises up the inheritance. It was old Israel, in some sense: the child was born to Naomi, but on the principle of grace, for Ruth had no title to promise.

5 1 SAMUEL.

The judicial priesthood connection is here broken. Both judge and priest go in Eli. The ark is taken - a total breach. Power, and the link of connection, are lost. Then God comes in, in His own sovereign way, by a prophet, as He had before brought them out of Egypt. (All on the ground of man's responsibility was gone; but sending a prophet was sovereign mercy.) Before He brings in *strength* (the king), He brings in *prophecy* - a notable thing this. Before Christ returns in *power,* it is the testimony of the Spirit and word, by which a connection is maintained between God and His people. From Eli to David on the throne this is a general principle

- *faith* and *power,* not succession.

But flesh required governmental order,* and gets what it wants; but it breaks down before the power of the enemy. Then even believers who cling to it fall with it (Jonathan). If governmental order be established without Christ, they cannot like Christ to come and set it aside. The one in whom hope is must be content to be as a partridge on the mountains.

{*It is quite true that there was a want through the misrule of Samuel's sons. If the spiritual energy failed, there was a want in consequence. The church can only stand in power, so that when it turned to succession all was lost.}

Saul was raised up to put down the Philistines; Jonathan did subdue them, but never Saul who was destroyed by them. Jonathan was a believer associated with the outward order. The place of faith was with David. It is the place of the power of faith without the king.

2 SAMUEL.

Saul falls on the mountains of Gilboa. Then we get the royalty of David, in active power, not in the reign of peace, with the promise of maintaining his house in whatever way they conducted themselves. God would chasten them if disobedient, but not take His mercy from them. Then we get David's personal failure when he is king. There is another element - the ark and the temple come in question; the relationship with God is re-established first by faith, not according to order, but by spiritual power according to grace, all being - by that spiritual power according to grace. The ark was on Mount Zion, and there they were singing, "His mercy endureth for ever": while at Gibeon was the high place, where Solomon went. There the tabernacle was, but not the ark. Solomon is not seen at Mount Zion till his return from Gibeon, where God answered him. Consequent on God's interfering in deliverance and redemption, the place of ordered worship is set up, connected with earth - the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. It was after judgment, slaying the people and sacrifice. God loves Jerusalem, and so stays His hand in judgment, and shews by prophecy the path of reconciliation by sacrifice.

6 1 AND 2 KINGS.

Here we have the reign of Solomon, the establishment of Israel in peace, and the building of the temple, the figure of the great Son of David. This fails, looked at historically, in Rehoboam; and then the book of Kings is the history, not of Judah, but of Israel, with sufficient notices of Judah to carry on the history. You get the intervention of God by prophets in Elijah and Elisha, in mercy, in the midst of Israel, who had left the temple, one being a testimony to Israel on the ground of their responsibility, the other in resurrection-power.

First and Second Kings continue the history in Judah till the captivity, and then Lo-ammi was written on the nation. There are, of course, many details - various characters of faith, etc., as Hezekiah of faith, Josiah of obedience, Jehoshaphat of piety, but never, through association with the world, for success.

1 AND 2 CHRONICLES

Gives us the history of the family of David - ending, of course, like the former, with the Babylonish captivity.

1 Chronicles is David himself. At the close, David has the pattern of everything by the Spirit, and leaves it to Solomon to execute.

2 Chronicles is David's posterity.

Chronicles are more connected with the establishment of the kingdom on earth, Kings more figurative of what is heavenly. In the temple in Chronicles there is a veil (2 Chron. 3:14), in Kings not. The veil will not be rent for Israel in the millennium.

7 EZRA.

The re-establishment of the temple and divine service according to the law, while waiting for the Messiah. But then there is no ark, no Urim, etc. It was an empty temple.

NEHEMIAH.

The re-establishment of the civil society and state under the Gentiles.

ESTHER.

The providential care of Israel when God is hidden from them, while Lo-ammi is written on them. He takes care of them while He is hidden from them and does not own them. God's name is never mentioned. The Gentile queen fails to shew her beauty, and the Jewish bride supersedes her.

JOB.

The possibility of the relationship of a man with God, in the great conflict referring to good and evil between God and the power of darkness; and that connected with the discipline of saints, in contrast with the alleged present righteous government of the world by God; the necessity of a Mediator being intimated, not unfolded; the power of Satan over the world made known, and his character as accuser of the brethren pointed out. God is seen as the originator of all (not of the accusations themselves, I need hardly say, but of the whole process) for the purpose of blessing His people; the whole being without any dispensational reference, while the conscience is thoroughly searched in those He blesses. You get in Elihu the wisdom of God in His word (Christ really), and then you have the power of God (also Christ) in God answering out of the whirlwind. The book *may be* regarded as typical of Israel, inasmuch as it is in Israel that these ways of God are shewn.

PSALMS.

The Spirit of Christ working and developing itself in the remnant of Israel in the latter day; only therewith shewing the personal part He has taken, whether to lay the ground for them, or to exercise sympathy with them; continuing on up to the border of the millennium, but not entering into it except prophetically. They are divided into five books.

8 PROVERBS.

The wisdom of God shewing its path *to* man, in contrast with the corruption and violence *in* man. The first eight chapters give us the principle, shewing Christ as wisdom; the remainder enter into details. It is *to man* in a remarkable way. A man of the world escapes by knowing the crookedness of the world: this book enables a man to escape without knowing it - wise in that which is good, simple concerning evil.

ECCLESIASTES

Is the result of the research after happiness under the sun adding, that man's wisdom, as man, is God's law.

CANTICLES.

The relationship of the affections of the heart of the spouse with Christ. This, on the ground of the special form of the relationship, is to be realized properly in Israel, though capable of an application, abstractedly, to the church and to the individual. (What Canticles treats of is not relationship, but desires, faith, getting the joy of the relationship with occasional glimpses, but not established known relationship. The place of the church, though the marriage is not come, is that of being in the relationship. Israel will not have this.)

There is a kind of progress observable. (1) "My beloved is mine" - this is the lowest point. (2) "I am my beloved's" - the consciousness of belonging to Him. (3) "I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me."

We have had thus, subsequent to the history, the moral development of the heart of man, and of the Spirit of God working in various ways in his heart: specially in Ecclesiastes, the heart of man making itself a centre, and trying to feed itself; in Canticles, the heart getting out of itself into the heart of Christ.

9 THE PROPHETS.

In these (except Jonah, and, in a certain sense, Daniel) we find the action of the Spirit of God in the midst of His people, to maintain the authority and character of their original calling, testify against their departure from it, and reveal Messiah as establishing them in blessing on a new footing - sustaining thus the faith of the godly during the departure of the mass, and denouncing judgment on those who persevere in unfaithfulness.

ISAIAH.

Here you have the whole framework of God's dealings with Judah, Israel coming in, by the bye, with the judgment of surrounding nations, and especially of Babylon, looking at Israel as the centre, bringing out the Assyrian as the great latter-day enemy, Immanuel as the hope of Israel, and the securer of the land, although rejected when coming as a testimony, being Himself Jehovah - a sanctuary - but a stone of stumbling to the disobedient. We get, in addition, the details of the inroads of the Assyrian, and his judgment in the last days; and, included in the development of all this, we have the blessedness of Israel as re-established. This is the first part - chapters 1-35.

In the historical chapters (36-39) we get two great principles - resurrection, and deliverance from the Assyrians. It is a risen Christ who effects deliverance, which makes it so important. The captivity in Babylon is here intimated. This latter lays The ground for what follows.

In the last part you have God's controversy with Israel, first on the footing of idolatry, and, secondly, because of the rejection of Christ. In this Israel is first looked at as a *servant;* and in chapter 49 the place of *servant* is transferred to Christ, and, He being rejected, the remnant in the last days take the place of servant. All through this, though Israel be the object of favour, you get a definite contrast between the wicked and the righteous, and hence the separation of the remnant, and judgment of the wicked - the declaration that there can be no peace to the wicked, whether Israel or others (end of chaps. 48, 57).

In the part that refers specially to the rejection of Christ we get the revelation of the call of the Gentiles, the judgment of the people, the coming of Jehovah, and the full blessing of the remnant of Israel at Jerusalem.

10 JEREMIAH.

We have here the present dealing of God with rebellious Judah, making them Lo-ammi by the captivity in Babylon; next, from chapter 30, the revelation of the infallible love of Jehovah to Israel (Judah and Ephraim), and the certainty of their establishment under David, according to the order of God, in Jerusalem, Jehovah being their righteousness; then, after the history of Zedekiah, and the details of what brought in the captivity, and what passed in Palestine after it, we have the judgment of all the nations and Babylon itself.

LAMENTATIONS.

In Lamentations we get the sympathy and entering in of the Spirit of Christ into the sorrows of Israel, specially of the remnant; hence the hope of restoration.

EZEKIEL

Gives the judgment of Jerusalem - God coming from without, but all Israel looked at, and not specially Judah; the judgment of the nations around, of the ungodly oppressors in and over Israel; the dealing henceforth with individual souls as regards judgment; the setting up of David, and the new birth, as the means of Israel's blessing; the union of Judah and Israel in one stick; and, on their restoration to their land, the destruction of the Assyrian, or Gog, by divine power, in fact, by the presence of Christ; and, in the end, a vision of the restoration of the temple and of the order of the land.

DANIEL

Has two parts - the history of the Gentile empires, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar, the head of gold; and, secondly, special visions of Daniel (beginning with chap. 7), marking out the condition and circumstances of the saints in connection with the history of these empires more fully revealed, and the coming of judgment to set them all aside in favour of Israel. But he only comes to the door of the millennium without unfolding it.

HOSEA.

We have here the rejection of the house of Israel and the house of Judah distinctively, as Lo-ruhamah and Lo-ammi; the door secretly opened to the Gentiles by it; Israel's long - enduring deprivation of everything; and then the restoration of the whole under Jehovah and David in the latter days. Paul quotes chapter 1:10, and 2:23; Peter only the latter. From chapter 4 we get the most earnest dealing with the conscience of Israel, but closing with their return in repentance to the sure blessings of Jehovah. It is the testimony of the ways of the Lord.

11 JOEL.

Under the figure of the desolation left by a plague of insects we have announced the inroad of the northern armies in the last days, and the coming in of the whole power of man against God's people, and the consequent coming in of Jehovah to judge the whole power of man in the day of the Lord, and in the valley of decision. Meanwhile, the pouring out of the Holy Ghost upon all manner of people, and the promise of certain deliverance to whoever called on the name of the Lord. You may add, the summons to repentance of all who have ears to hear.

AMOS.

Gives the patience of God's dealings and ways, which he rehearses in connection with the precise pointing out of the iniquity of Israel's ways; but marking out the punishment of bordering nations on the same ground of definite moral evil. He notices the rejection of a testimony against the evil, and declares the sure, infallible, unescapable judgment of Jehovah on the whole people, the righteous remnant being as certainly saved; closing with the promise of building up the tabernacle of David, as head of the nation, and blessing the people.

OBADIAH

Is the judgment of Edom for their hatred of Israel, warning them that the day of the Lord is upon all the heathen, while deliverance should be in Mount Zion, and thence holiness and blessing, and the kingdom be the Lord's.

JONAH

Is the witness that, though God has chosen Israel, He has not given up His right as a faithful Creator in mercy over all the earth, while those that are connected with Himself must be subject to His power and bow to His grace: otherwise the sense of favour is unfaithfulness and self-exaltation. At the same time we get a type of death and resurrection as the way of blessing.

12 MICAH.

In Micah we have the general judgment of the people, Samaria and Jerusalem, for their transgressions, iniquities, and idolatry, and their rejection of the testimony of (God. Hence the whole land is treated as polluted, and no longer the rest of His people, who must arise and depart. He judges the princes and their prophets, brings in the power of the Spirit to judge even the chosen city of the Lord, but announces its re-establishment by Jehovah in grace in the last days; bringing in the siege of Jerusalem by the heathen, in fulfilment of God's counsels, though in consequence of the rejection of Christ, on account of which they were given up; and shews that the same Christ stands as their peace and defence, when the Assyrian comes in, in the last days. The remnant of Israel becomes the people of blessing *to,* and power *over,* others, while all evil *in it* is judged and destroyed, as well as the heathen who have come up against it. Having thus spoken of the restoration in the last days he returns and insists on the righteousness of God's ways, contrasts the attempt at ceremonially pleasing Him with the practising of iniquity which He hates, closing with the looking to Him to restore and feed His people as the God who passes by iniquity.

NAHUM.

The power of the world, or man as such, put down for ever; but with the testimony of the faithfulness of the Lord in the midst of His vengeances, and hence blessing to those that trust in Him and wait for Him. It is still the Assyrian Babylon is another thing altogether.

HABAKKUK

Is the soul exercised by the iniquity of God's people - first, with indignation thereat, and then with distress at their being destroyed by those who are God's rod to chasten them. He then gets the answer of God, shewing that He knows the pride of the wicked, and will judge it, and that the righteous man must live by trusting in Him. Lastly, he rises above all to the glorious power of God, exercised in the salvation of His people, so that he trusts in Him, come what will.

13 ZEPHANIAH.

In Zephaniah we get the utter judgment of the land for iniquity, hypocrisy, and idolatry, at the great day of the Lord, and of all the neighbouring nations around - everything of man's natural power, Jerusalem among them, because of her iniquity, though distinctly brought out as the special object of displeasure, as connected with the Lord. The prophecy then singles out the remnant in a very distinct and definite way, calling on them to wait on the Lord, who leaves them as an afflicted and poor people but delivered by the judgments which He executes, and rests in His love over Jerusalem, making it a name and praise among all people.

HAGGAI

Is occupied with the house, and declares that its latter glory will be greater than its first, at the time when He shakes all nations, and therewith encourages them to build, declaring that His Spirit went with them' as from Egypt, and that He will overthrow the throne of all kingdoms, but establish Christ under the name of Zerubbabel, as the elect man, as the signet on His right hand.

ZECHARIAH

Is particularly occupied with Jerusalem, and so shews the Lord dealing with all nations, having Jerusalem as a centre, using one nation to cast out another, till His purposes are accomplished; and then, when the glory has come, establishing Himself at Jerusalem. In the person of Joshua, the high priest, He justifies her against the adversary; He declares He will come, and puts all wisdom, the omniscience of His government, in Jerusalem. He prophesies of the perfection of the administrative order in the kingdom and priesthood, and the judgment of all corrupt pretension to it, which is shewn to be Babylonish, and builds the temple of the land by means of the Branch; judging the hostile power of the world, and using all this to encourage them at that time in building the temple. Thus far is one prophecy (chaps. 1-6).

In the next He takes occasion, by those who inquire whether they are yet to fast for the ruin of Jerusalem, to promise her restoration (only now, for the present, on the ground of responsibility); declares He will protect His house against all surrounding enemies; brings in Christ in humiliation, but carries it on to the time of glory, and of executing judgment by Judah upon Greece (Javan), gathering all the scattered ones. In chapters 11-14 we have the details of Christ's rejection, and the foolish and idolatrous shepherd, when He judges all the nations as meddling with Jerusalem, defends Jerusalem, brings them to repentance, and opens the fountain for their cleansing; and we then get, in contrast with the false spirit of prophecy, Christ's humiliation, the sparing of a remnant, when the body of the people are cut off from Judea at the end, with the final deliverance and the sanctifying of Jerusalem by the presence of the Lord, making her the centre of all worship upon earth.

14 In chapter 13:5 we see Christ, the servant of man, the rejected one of the Jews, and the smitten of Jehovah. Read "for man possessed me from my youth." It then appears that it was among His friends He had been wounded in His hands; and the great secret of all comes out, that He is Jehovah's fellow, and smitten of Him. Note, where Christ is owned as God, He calls the saints His fellows; and where, as here, He is in deepest humiliation, God calls Him His fellow.

In these books, Haggai and Zechariah, the Jews are never called God's people, except in prospect of the future.

MALACHI.

We have here the testimony of the Jews' total failure when restored, according to what has gone before, in spite of God's electing love, which He still maintains; and then the Lord comes, sending a messenger before His face, but comes in thoroughly sifting and purifying judgment, owns the remnant who spake one to another in the fear of the Lord, in the midst of the wickedness, lifts them up, and sets them over the power of the wicked, the Sun of Righteousness rising upon them for healing. But at the same time He calls them back to the law of Moses, with the promise of sending them Elijah the prophet to turn their hearts.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The four Gospels give us Christ upon earth; the Acts the establishing the church in connection with Peter and with Paul, either in connection with the Jews, or lifting it up above them; the Epistles, partly addressed to particular churches in apostolic care, partly unfoldings of doctrine for the edification of saints, with the notice of the decay and departure from the truth of the church as formed on earth; and then the connection, through this decay and corruption, of the earthly church system, with the government and kingdom which were coming in. This last is the Apocalypse.

15 MATTHEW.

In Matthew we have Christ as Messiah, son of Abraham and son of David, according to the promise - Jehovah Emmanuel - bringing in the testimony of the kingdom and its healing power, laying down the principles on which men could enter into it (that is, the character of the remnant); and then displaying the various power which characterized and verified His coming. Passing on, though with enduring patience - patience which endures till He comes again - to His rejection by the nation, and the setting up of the kingdom in a mysterious way in the absence of the King, He still continues for the present His ministrations till His hour was come, but reveals the substitution of the church, and the kingdom in glory, for its present setting up by His presence. He then goes up to Jerusalem, arraigns the nation as a whole and in its various classes, and then subjects Himself to the whole distress and power of evil and of Satan which reigned in Israel, and to the smiting of the Lord of Hosts in the cup which He had to drink. He is raised from the dead, meets His disciples on the old prophetic ground of the remnant in Galilee, and commands them to disciple all nations in the new name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; but we have no ascension to heaven.

Some special things are, that in chapter 10 He gives a testimony exclusively to Israel, which embraces all the time from His presence there to His coming as Son of man, provided the Jews are in the land. In chapter 23, in speaking to His disciples, He recognizes as subsisting Moses' seat. In chapter 21 He presents Himself as King, riding on an ass, according to Zechariah; then, having, as above, recognized Moses' seat, He declares the utter judgment of that generation as guilty of the blood of all the righteous, puts His disciples in the place of persecuted testimony, the house being left empty till they own Him as coming in the name of Jehovah; passing over all time until the abomination of desolation is set up, and thereupon, after the great tribulation, He appears in glory, and gathers all Israel. We have also parenthetically the various forms of the judgment of those who profess His name in His absence, and then the judgment of the nations on His return.

16 MARK.

In Mark we get the Lord's service (and therefore nothing of His birth) and specially His service as prophet. Matthew brings out the order of the facts, with a view to the development of principles, while Mark gives them chronologically. Luke has the same chronology as Mark, where he has any at all.

In Mark, as he reveals Christ's present service, we have in the parable of the sowing Christ's activity in the field at the beginning, and its cessation till the end, when He is again active in the harvest. All the intermediate particulars given by Matthew are omitted here.

In the prophecy on the Mount of Olives we have more references than in Matthew to the disciples' service. The commission in Mark is to preach the gospel to every creature.

LUKE.

In Luke you get, first of all, a beautiful exhibition of the state of the pious remnant in Israel, at the time of our Lord's first appearing, and the working of the Spirit of God among them, and at the same time the public state of the nation in connection with the Gentiles (chap. 1). You get the whole political world set in motion to bring a carpenter to Bethlehem (chap. 2). In connection with this remnant John the Baptist comes, announcing Him who is to baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire (chap. 3). You now get the genealogy from Adam (having had Israel), and Luke gives us Christ as the Son of man in perfect moral display upon earth, and the grace of God which was displayed in His coming, although still serving in the midst of Israel. This service is unfolded in the various forms of grace, with particular reference to its moral elements, and shewing its extension to Gentiles, and the breaking up of covenant relations with the Jews, distinguishing not merely the character of the remnant, but the disciples as the remnant, "Blessed are ye poor," etc. (4-7). We get (in the demoniac of Gadara) a special picture, consequently, of the healing of the remnant in Israel, of the ruin of the people, and the mission of the delivered remnant, left as a witness instead of going with Him (chap. 8). In the transfiguration we find special reference to His intercourse with Moses and Elias as to His decease, insistence on the Son of man's being delivered up, and the judgment of self in all its forms, the declaration that the unbelief of the whole generation, including His disciples, will close His whole connection with Israel, and the claim of absolute devotedness to Himself (chap. 9). Then we see the patient service of Christ to Israel in sending out the seventy, but warning them it was final, and bringing in judgment, and intimating that whatever power He gave them in connection with the kingdom, their delight should be rather that they belonged to heaven. We then get, further, the principle of grace in dealing *as* a neighbour, instead of the claim of God *towards* a neighbour; the word and prayer with the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him, and the hearing of prayer (this is all transition); the judgment of scribes and Pharisees for the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, by which He had proved that the kingdom of God was come among them, and bound the power of the enemy, so that He could deliver all who were under it; but that now, in the state in which the nation was, He was the test of deliverance and of going right, and they would be left to the power of Satan, of which they spoke. The hearing of the word was of more consequence than association with Israel according to the flesh - of more consequence than any fleshly tie. Thus the men of Nineveh and the queen of Sheba should rise up in judgment against that generation, and the blood of all the prophets should be found in them. They should be tested by apostles and prophets being sent to them; but these they would slay (chaps. 10, 11).

17 He then teaches the disciples to trust in God for everything, and to confess Him, the Lord Jesus, in the presence of all this opposition; and that the Holy Ghost should be given them; so that they who resisted and blasphemed the Holy Ghost in them should be judged as they who did it in Him. He taught them (the disciples) that all things should be made manifest. They were to be careful for nothing, but to seek the kingdom which it was the Father's good pleasure to give them. They were to have their treasure in heaven, and wait for the Lord. He then gives the character of the faithful and unfaithful servant in His absence - shews that His testimony will bring in division among men, even into families - warns the people to take notice of the signs of the times, and that even of themselves they ought to judge what was right; Jehovah being as one going with them to judgment, and they must agree with Him by the way (chap. 12).

18 We have then, in chapters 13 and 14, both in a parabolical way and in direct instructions, the setting aside of Israel, and the letting in of the Gentiles, with a declaration that, in order to follow Him, men must take up their cross, and be the salt of the earth.

In chapters 15 and 16, the ways of God in grace we have with sinners, still connected with the setting aside of Judaism. Thus we have, first, grace seeking and receiving sinners; secondly, future hopes substituted for present enjoyments; and, lastly, the veil drawn aside; so that what is heavenly is contrasted with all that had in Judaism been promised to such as were outwardly faithful.

You then get warnings against being an occasion of stumbling to little ones; and, on the other side, if there be an offence, exhortations to forgive it - the power of faith in the disciples; but that whatever is done, it is no more than duty. Liberty from Israel is then shewn to be the privilege when the Lord is owned in Christ's person. The kingdom was among them in His person; but He would come unexpectedly in His glory, and execute judgment, but know how to discern the righteous from the wicked. In the distress of that day, and at all times, men were to persevere in calling on God, and reckoning on His answer. Lowliness of mind is urged, both in respect to our faults and in regard to the spirit of meekness. The danger of riches, as a hindrance to entering the kingdom, is pointed out, and the sure blessing of giving up all for Christ (chaps. 17, 18).

He now goes up to Jerusalem by Jericho. This in all three Gospels is a distinct chronological point when He begins to deal again, and finally, with the Jews. Even here Luke brings out grace in Zacchaeus; and though a publicans the Lord owns him as a son of Abraham, He is owned as Son of David, yet brings in grace; "for the Son of *man* is come to seek and save that which was lost." Next the parable of the servants to whom money is entrusted differs in Luke, in that the responsibility of man is more brought out. Each gets the same sum, and a different reward according to what he has gained; whereas in Matthew He gives to each according to his wisdom and the capacity of each; and they all get the same reward. In His riding into Jerusalem we have to notice the expression, "Peace in heaven," which is peculiar to Luke, and indicates that Christ destroys Satan's power in heaven, and settles peace there, in order to introduce the kingdom. It is here He weeps over Jerusalem - the historical place for the incident (chap. 19).

19 In His answer to the Sadducees, when the different classes are arraigned (chap. 20), we have the introduction of the power of the first resurrection, as the proof of being the children of God. Here, as in Matthew, we get His exaltation to the right hand of God, as that which confounds the Pharisees as to all their expectations of the kingdom. He judges the scribes, and owns the poor widow who puts in her mite as better than all the rich.

Then in the prophecy (chap. 21) He does take notice, which Matthew does not, of the immediately coming destruction of Jerusalem, and does not speak of the abomination of desolation, but of Jerusalem being compassed with armies; referring, consequently on that first destruction, to the times of the Gentiles being fulfilled. He enters a great deal more into the spirit in which His disciples are to give their testimony, and meet the difficulties attending it.

We find here, at the passover, the extreme evil of man's heart, strife among them which should be the greatest. There is sifting by Satan, with special reference to Simon, for whom Christ had prayed; with distinct notice of the change of circumstances now from those of the time in which He exercised power, so as to secure them on the earth.

In the scene at Gethsemane and on the cross we have the Lord Jesus presented much more fully as man, and His own perfectness, faithfulness, and grace in them. It is not here Jehovah smiting His fellow, as in Matthew, but we see Him sweating as it were great drops of blood. It is the man suffering, and the perfection of faith and grace in the man so suffering (chaps. 22, 23).

This characterizes Luke all through, You oftener find Him praying, of which I may mention two instances, His baptism and His transfiguration. Another circumstance may be remarked, as regards Luke's gospel, as characteristic - the bringing together a quantity of circumstances in a single general expression, and dilating on some particular one which brings out some great moral beauty and truth, such as the journey to Emmaus, and others. If we have the case of Herod in Luke, and Pilate and Herod becoming friends through their enmity to Christ, we have here also the thief on the cross, His opening paradise to him immediately in contrast with the kingdom, and His intercession for the Jews. I may add, the uselessness of natural feeling for Christ where He is not followed.

20 You may remark the power of Christ in unspent unexhausted life when commending His spirit to the Father. The centurion owns Him here as the righteous man, and the effect also on the spectators and on Joseph the counsellor is stated.

Besides the detail of the two going to Emmaus, we may remark that He unfolds the scriptures, in chapter 24, to them, and makes Himself known to them in that which was the sign of death. He presents Himself very fully as the same man, Jesus' and eats in the presence of His disciples. He again insists on the scriptures as to be fulfilled, and that, as the book which we have in the Old Testament (law, prophets, and psalms) to this day. He opens their understanding to understand the scriptures, insisting upon this, that thus it is written. The mission given is that of repentance and remission of sins in His name among all Gentiles, beginning at Jerusalem. They were to be His witnesses, but were to wait for the promise of the Father, the Holy Ghost from heaven; and, in the act of blessing them, He ascends.

We have nothing here of Galilee, which we have in Matthew and John, where we have the Jewish thing. That was the connection with the remnant of Israel, while this is His connection with heaven.

JOHN.

In John we have the divine person of the Lord, specially as life and light, and, supplementary to that, the sending of the Comforter down here in His place, and then a brief view of the whole course of dispensations until the millennial kingdom.

The first eighteen verses present the person of the Lord Jesus: in verses 1-5, abstractedly, as to His nature, and the effect of His appearing; verses 6-11, John's testimony to this, and the effect of his coming; verses 12, 13, the effect and way of grace; verses 14-18, the Word made flesh; verses 19-34, John's testimony to what He would be as to His work and effectual power for man - Lamb of God, Baptizer with the Holy Ghost, owned here Son of God by the Holy Ghost descending on Him. In verses 35-42, John's testimony historically gathers to Him (this is the first day of active gathering); verse 43 to end, the Lord gathers. This, therefore, embraces all the dealing with the remnant during Christ's life, and hereafter, till He is owned by the remnant at the end, represented by Nathanael. Hence He is owned as Son of God, King of Israel, but takes a wider title too, that of Son of man, on whom the angels wait. Read "henceforth," for hereafter.

21 Note here particularly (v. 38-42), Christ is the centre, hence divine (else turning us away from God), God manifest in the flesh; and secondly, the path through the world - follow me. The world condemned, Christ separates out of it to Himself, as God anew revealed; and is the only path through it as man. In verse 51 He has a third character - heaven opened on Him as man, and the angels waiting upon man. He is the object of an opened heaven as man. Note, our part is as Stephen's - heaven opened to us, and He, Son of man, there. Note too, Christ has not an object to look at, but every man has one - He is the object.

Chapter 2:1-22 is the double character of the third-day (millennial action) in Israel; the marriage; and purifying judgment.

The Lord (v. 23-25) does not accept a present reception according to the intelligence of flesh; but, chapter 3, a man must be born again. This is true even for the earthly promises made to Israel. But the thoughts of God for man go on to heaven, from whence the Son of man came down, where, in His divine person, He is, and whereof He speaks. God loves the world, and gives Him for individual faith not to perish. This introduces the cross, the Son of man lifted up like the serpent - the Son of God given. Condemnation hangs on believing or not in the Son of God, and it is because light is come into the world, and men love darkness. This is a great moral truth altogether outside Israel. He has fully revealed heaven as He knows it, and made man, by believing in Him, fit for it. John then bears witness to Christ, in contrast with himself and to his testimony, as divine and heavenly, as the One to whom His Father has given all; believing in whom a man has life; not believing, will not see life, wrath abides on him. All this ministry was previous to His entering on His public ministry, which took place after John's casting into prison.

22 Chapter 4. The jealousy of the Jews drives Him from Judea. In the woman of Samaria the new thing from outside and independent of Judaism is, in principle, brought in: God present to give, but in humiliation, which blessedly inspires confidence to ask, and He gives the desire, and spiritual spring rising to eternal life within man. But nature cannot receive spiritual things. God reaches the conscience by the word. This is recognized as of Him, and then Christ is known and owned as Saviour of *the world*. And though salvation be of the Jews, God, who is a Spirit, must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. And the Father (the name now revealed in grace) seeks such to worship Him, meeting a needy soul. This is Jesus' joy in grace.

Chapter 5. Law, with all its ordinances, can do nothing through the weakness of the flesh; but the truth now is, that the Father and the Son are working, not man. They cannot have their sabbath in sin and misery. Such a sabbath is not owned; but as the Father has life in Himself, so He has given to Jesus the Son to have life in Himself, and He quickens whom He will; and committed all judgment to Him,* that all should honour Him as they honour the Father. There is no confusion in these ways of honouring Him. He who hears His word, and believes on the Father who sent Him, has everlasting life, does not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life. There is then a resurrection to life, and another to judgment (v. 30-47). He is presented as life to the responsibility of man, witnessed by John Baptist, His works, the Father, the scriptures; but they would not come to have it. The Jews would not receive Him: when the false one comes in his own name, they will, as they rejected Moses' writings, which spoke of Christ and His words now.

{*Though largely shown to be God, the Lord is, from chapter 1:14, always looked at in John as a man living on earth, only manifesting the Father.}

Chapter 6 is a picture of the order of God's ways in Christ. Prophet already, He would not be King, but goes on high alone to pray. During this time the disciples are toiling without Him against the wind; He rejoins them, and they are at land. This is in connection with the passover, and Christ's proving Himself the Jehovah of Psalm 132. Instead of that now, He is the bread come down from heaven to give life to the world, and must be received inwardly as incarnate, but also as dying, as there is no life in any man; but it is spiritually. Also He was going up, Son of man where He was before.

23 Chapter 7. The Jews (His brethren) do not believe on Him, and He cannot shew Himself to the world. This is the feast of tabernacles; but He promises the Spirit to those that believe, instead of His visible presence, as rivers of living water (before as springing up unto eternal life). Jews (of Judea) and people (Galilee, etc.) are distinguished.

Chapter 8 gives the word rejected; chapter 9 the works.

In chapter 8 Christ is the light of the world, dealing with conscience in contrast with the difference between gross sins and sinfulness, and is the Light to lead. His word is the absolute expression of Himself. He is from above; unbelieving man is from beneath, of the devil, who is a liar and a murderer, and abode not in the truth. He is God. The Jews reject Him.

In chapter 9 He gives eyes to see. This is by incarnation, which in itself gives no sight, but when by the Spirit and word, He is thereupon known as the sent One, it does. He is confessed as Prophet, and then believed as Son, through the word received. The sheep are thus put out, but He goes before.

Chapter 10 gives us His care of them. He comes in by the appointed way; then He is the appointed way, giving salvation, liberty, and pasture; He lays down His life for the sheep, yet knows them, and they Him still - as His Father knew Him, and He His Father; laying down His life, He becomes the especial object and motive for His Father's love. He has other sheep (Gentiles), and there is to be one flock (not fold), one Shepherd. He goes from His obedient lowliness to being one with His Father. Father and Son are the names of grace.

In chapter 11 He is declared Son of God by resurrection-power. He is the Resurrection and Life. This answers to the character of His presence. When present, the dead live - the living do not die. But while shewing divine power, He is the dependent Son as man - feels for and with us, but is always heard.

In chapter 12 He is Son of David, and the time of His glory as *Son of man* is come; but then He must die. But before this He is received at Bethany, where the taught remnant enter into His death, laying the ground for the new thing, while thereon the enmity ripens. His death, as rejected by the hopeless and judicially blinded hostility of Israel, now comes fully before us.

24 Chapter 13. His departure does not close His service to His disciples. He fits them to be *with Him* when He cannot stay with them; and this is essentially necessary according to His true nature and glory. He came from God, and went to God, and the Father had given all things into His hand. Perfect original, and now in human nature continued divine purity and perfectness, and glorious position, with man traitorously hostile, He loved *His own* in this world absolutely and through all to the end. And having regenerated them by the word, He washes their feet as their servant, gives them like service as their example, shews His personal love to them, the advantage of habitual nearness to Him to be able to know His mind. On Judas going out He shews that the foundation *of* the new, but essential and everlasting, relationship with God is laid in the cross, under the title of Son of man. The Son of man is glorified in it, for what so glorious to man as to glorify and make good all the essential attributes of God? God is glorified in Him, and then does not wait for the kingdom or conferred glory of inheritance, but glorifies Him in Himself, and does it immediately. He then puts them, on His leaving them, on love to one another, and warns Peter he could not follow Him now. The path was through death, destruction, and wrath for man, as having only natural life. Note, in the washing, the first is *washed all over,* bathed. This cannot be repeated. It is the feet which pick up dirt in the walk; but the believer therewith is clean every whit, once for all.

In chapter 14 first, the Lord shews that, absent, He is an object of faith as God was. He did not go to be at ease, and they left in distress. If that had been the end, He would have told them. He went to prepare a place for them in His Father's house, and would come again and receive them. Then we learn what they had in His presence, and what they would have after His departure. They knew where He went, for He was going to the Father, and they had seen the Father in Him. They knew the way, for in coming to Him they found the Father. But on His going He would ask, and the Father would send, another Comforter to stay, as Christ could not, and to dwell in them. He had as yet been only among them. Through this last fact they would know Him, If a man kept His words, His Father would love him, and He, Jesus, would manifest Himself to Him; and if he kept His word, His Father and He would come and make their abode with him. He left peace with them, giving them *His own* peace. Next, he expected in His disciples such love that they should be glad He went, that is, be interested in His happiness - immense witness of nearness.

25 In chapter 15 Christ replaces Israel, the old but not true vine on the earth, and the disciples are branches, clean through the word. The Father purified the fruit-bearing - cut off the unfruitful branches. They were to abide in Him, and He in them. If a man (not they) did not, he would be cast out and burnt. If they abode in Him, and *His words* abode in them, they would dispose of power. Dependence, confidence first, Christ's words - the forming desires and thoughts next. In bearing fruit they would resemble Him.

Next, they were to abide in His love, This by obedience; and all this that their joy might be full. They were to love one another, as He had loved them. He laid down His life for His friends: they were such (not He their friend - that He is to sinners; but they His) - this that they might love one another. The world would hate them, as it had Him. Next, the Comforter would come, and testify of Him. *He* would as glorified send Him; and they would testify of Him as having been with Him.

Note in chapter 14 the Father sends the Comforter, He brings all to their remembrance that He had said to them. Thus their witness was made good. But He would also reveal His heavenly glory. Here He sends Him from the Father.

Chapter 16 is the Comforter, as present down here and His work in the world and in the church, in contrast with their own state in a hostile world and blinded Judaism. The disciples, absorbed with their loss, did not look to what God was bringing about; yet the Comforter's presence was worth His leaving. He would demonstrate to the world sin, righteousness, and judgment - sin in rejecting Christ; for His presence proved the rejected one, gone to the Father - righteousness, as He, having deserved it, was there (God's righteousness), and the world (disciples and all), who had rejected Him, would never see Him again. The breach was absolute. The world was convinced of judgment, because its prince was judged who had led it against Christ, in that the proof that Christ's power over him and his wickedness was there. Judgment was proved, for Satan's position was a judged one already. The Comforter would guide the disciples into all truth - shew them things to come - shew them Christ's things, that is, all the Father had. However in a little He would see them again (that is, after His resurrection), and they would enter into the consciousness of their relationship with the Father. As yet they would be scattered, and leave Him alone; but He had the Father with Him, and they might be of good cheer, He had overcome the world.

26 In chapter 17 Christ addresses the Father ere He departs.

Verses 1-5. He lays the ground of all He has to ask. He is to be glorified as Son, and as having finished the work - the kind of glory in relationship, and our title also to enter. He has power over all flesh, to give eternal life to those given to Him, a double headship over man, and in life to saints given to Him. The knowledge of the Father and of Him as sent is eternal life.

Verses 6-8 put the disciples in their position. He manifested the Father's name to them: so the relationship was founded. They knew Him as having all things from the Father, not Messiah's Jewish glory from Jehovah. All the Father's communications to Him in His position He had given to them, so that they might enjoy it fully as well as have it.

In verses 9-13 He prays for them, not for the world, but for those given Him of the Father, the disciples. His grounds are, they are the Father's *(all* is mutually possessed), and He, Christ, is glorified *in* them; the object, that they might have His joy complete in them.

In verses 14-19 they are put in the place of His testimony, the word (not words) that was in connection with place of relationship; not of the world, as Christ was not, but not to be taken out of it, but kept from evil. They were to be morally set apart to the Father by the truth - the Father's word. They are sent by Christ into the world as He by the Father. And He set Himself apart to the Father as heavenly man, that the Holy Ghost, taking what He was, might set these apart. It was Christ as well as truth, but still truth.

27 In verses 20, 21, He prays that those that believe through their word should be one in the Father and Son, that the world may *believe*.

In verses 22, 23, He has given them the glory, that they may be one in the *display* of glory that the world may know.

In verses 24-26 He would have them where He is who was loved before the world was. They are loved as He was, and He had and would declare the Father's name, that they might enjoy it, He being in them.

Chapter 18. We have to remark the character both of Gethsemane and the cross. It is still the Son of God above the temptation, seen out of the suffering; no "if it be possible let the cup pass"; no "why hast thou forsaken me?" but they go backward and fall to the ground, and He puts Himself forward that they [disciples] may escape untouched. And on the cross - knowing that one scripture has yet to be fulfilled, and recommending His mother to the beloved disciple, and charging him to be to her as a son - He gives up His own spirit. So He heals in the garden. Peter denies Him. So He answers the chief priests and Pilate, in calm superiority, leaving the former to settle it, to the latter witnessing to Himself as truth, yet submitting to him as to power given from above. The Jews deny all king but Caesar. The Jews are treated with slight, as everywhere in this Gospel. Of Him not a bone is broken, but He is with the rich in His death.

Chapter 20. We have a picture of the whole time, from the remnant then through the church period on to the remnant converted when they see the Lord. Mary Magdalene, who represents the remnant, called as a sheep by her name, is attached personally to Him; then the disciples become brethren, in the same relationship to God and the Father as Himself, are gathered and peace theirs, when they receive the Holy Ghost, and are sent by Christ for remission of sins; lastly the remnant (Thomas), who did not believe without, do on seeing; but they are specially blessed who have believed without seeing. Thus twice He had shewn Himself.

Chapter 21. Next comes the great gathering of the millennial time, when the net does not break at all: Christ had some already on shore; these are brought in from the great waters. Peter, restored, has to care for Christ's sheep, specially the Jewish flock; John is left to watch in his ministry over the church saints and witness of God till Christ comes: this carries us on to the Apocalypse. Thus we have the Peter ministry of the Jewish church with John's epistles and Apocalypse (these refer to Christ's *appearing).* The Paul ministry comes in between, and speaks of the hidden mystery, the church and the rapture, before the appearing.

28 ACTS.

This book, at its beginning, links directly on to the close of Luke, and we find the disciples acting in the intelligence of the scriptures without the power of the Holy Ghost yet given. Then, the Acts of the Apostles embraces the revelation of the gift of the Holy Ghost and His workings: first, at Jerusalem, where He is rejected by Israel; next, in His free operation outside Israel; and, lastly, in Paul, connected with the revelation of the church among the Gentiles at large, closing with his being delivered by the Jews to the Gentiles and his being sent a prisoner to Rome.

The coming of the Holy Ghost, while not undoing the result of Babel, overleaps it in grace by the gift of tongues, the first sign of His presence. We see the moral effects of His presence in devotedness and unity, and, forming the assembly, the remnant in Israel are added to it. "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." But He still proposes to Israel the return of Christ (founded on Christ's intercession on the cross) upon their repentance; while declaring that the heavens must receive Him till the times when all that the prophets had said should be established; but Israel rejects His testimony. The Holy Ghost thus come down is received of Christ for this, consequent on His exaltation. They pursue their testimony in patience in spite of Israel's opposition, and are confirmed in the power of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit is manifested in power, as God's presence in the assembly on earth, searching the hearts of men. He ministers to unity and order even in temporal things, and acts now in liberty according to faith and faithfulness in instruments of His own choice. This free action of the Holy Ghost calls out the final judgment of Israel, on every principle of relationship of God with man (but their conduct is characterized throughout by resistance to the Holy Ghost); but this is accompanied by the opening of heaven to him who, on the other hand, was filled with the Holy Ghost and gave the testimony they now resisted. His thorough likeness to Christ, through seeing Him in glory, is beautifully brought out; his death on the earth, and his being received into heaven. The making good church blessings in connection with Israel plainly becomes impossible. Here it is that Saul, the enemy, first comes in.

29 And now, before turning to any more positive facts, you get the free action of the Holy Ghost extending the gospel outside Jerusalem, consequent on persecution. Next, we find Saul, the apostle of enmity against Christ, broken and brought down by Christ, revealed in supreme heavenly glory, but identifying all Christians with Himself, as being Himself, "why persecutest thou me?"

Peter's testimony to Christ has been that the Messiah, the Prince of life, whom they had rejected, God had exalted; Paul's immediately is that He is the Son of God. Peter never *preaches* Him as Son of God. Paul's preaching consequently embraces the two points of the heavenly glory and the unity of the saints with Christ, and his preaching Christ as the Son of God. But Saul, while owned of the disciples, is for the time laid aside. Then the Peter - ministry continues; and the first Gentile is added to the church as existing among the Jews by his means, to maintain its constituted unity. The previous free action of the Holy Ghost outside Jerusalem at Samaria had been connected with it by Peter and John going down, and the disciples' receiving the Holy Ghost by the laying on of their hands. We now find the same free action of the Holy Ghost going to mere Gentiles in the great Grecian capital, Antioch. The connection is still kept up by the apostles sending Barnabas there, who goes and fetches Saul. We have then the testimony through prophets (another sign of the Holy Ghost), this same connection being maintained in another way, The prophets come from Jerusalem, and in result they of Antioch send help to those in Judea. We have then the proof of the service of angels to the church. This closes this part of the Acts.

The Holy Ghost now calls, through prophets, for the separation of Barnabas and Saul for the work to which He had called them, and they are sent forth by the Holy Ghost. It is a new kind of apostle. The first thing we find is a figure of the total blinding of the Jews who resist the Holy Ghost, and the eyes of Gentiles opened to believe. Notwithstanding this, Paul (for he is now called Paul) according to the Lord's mind goes always first to the Jews, and afterwards to the Greeks. John Mark leaves them. After having preached round, they choose elders for the churches, of whom we here read first among Gentiles. He then returns to Antioch, and there we find what the laying on of hands had been: that is, they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they had now fulfilled. "And there they abode long time with the disciples."

30 The church having now been freely established on heavenly principles outside Jerusalem, Satan seeks to introduce confusion by bringing in the law upon them; and God, to maintain unity, causes the matter to be referred to Jerusalem, so that the apostles there, and the church, should themselves declare the Gentiles free. The points to which they were subjected were not introduced by the law, but expressed the title of God in Himself and to all life, and the maintenance of the original purity in which God had originally constituted man upon earth. I see authority here within the church in the apostles. "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost *and to us*," with perfect liberty of ministry. They dismiss Judas and Silas; and then we get another thing, Paul gathering fellow-labourers round himself: first Silas, then Timothy, whom he circumcises. This was completely illegal. He never rose more above the law than here. Now, we get the direct guidance of the Holy Ghost in the carrying out of his ministry; but that direct guidance as not excluding his drawing conclusions from divine intimations sent to him. Then we have Paul pursuing his ministry - kept of God everywhere - the very demons forced to own him - and as competent as the other apostles to confer the Holy Ghost: free ministry, under the guidance of God's Spirit, still going on.

And now Paul, returning to Jerusalem, intimates the close of his ministry in those parts to the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, predicting the efforts of Satan, and calling upon them to watch and labour with the same earnestness and energy as had marked his own labours amongst them. The elders, moreover, he expects to maintain themselves. He now returns to Jerusalem, the Holy Ghost warning him, and the disciples telling him by the Spirit, not to go up. On the suggestion of the elders at Jerusalem, he accommodates himself to Jewish ceremonies, the believers at Jerusalem being all zealous of the law. This brings him into captivity; but the effect of the captivity is to bring him into the place of testimony before the Jews, who refuse grace to the Gentiles, before Lysias, Felix, Festus, Agrippa, and Nero. But he is a prisoner all the time, and as such he works at Rome. (Paul's gospel was a prisoner at Rome from the first day.) This closes the testimony to the Jews; and thus closes the history we have of the dissemination of the gospel in apostolic times.

31 ROMANS.

This epistle unfolds the gospel *of God* as the testimony of the righteousness of God, and connected with the testimony of His wrath from heaven: but in doing so it begins with the depravity of the Gentiles, the hypocrisy of moralisers, and the guilt of the Jews, concluding thus all under sin, and meeting all this guilt by the blood of Christ through faith; proving at the same time thereby the righteousness of God in bearing with the sins of the saints during the past time, and laying the present foundation of divine righteousness for the time to come. From chapter 4 the apostle connects faith with the resurrection after Christ's deliverance for our offences. In chapter 5 he applies this to justification and peace in the assurance of God's love, and traces all up to Adam on one side, and to Christ on the other, as head, the law only coming in by the bye. In chapter 6 he applies it to a godly life, and in chapter 7 to the law; unfolding in chapter 8 the full liberty the Christian himself obtains by it, connected with the life and presence of the Spirit, God securing all by what He is for us, and how all this is made good to us through Christ, across all possible danger of separation from it. There are three parts in chapter 8: first, the Spirit as life, going on to the resurrection of the body (v. 1-11); then the Holy Ghost as a separate person, dwelling in us for joy, and sympathy with us in infirmities (v. 12-27); the third part (v. 28 to the end) being God for us - life, God in us, and God for us.

Note another thing. Except just for bringing in Christ's intercession, you never get His ascension in Romans, hence, not the unity of the body, which is only alluded to in its practical effects (chap. 12), but the relationship of the individual with God on the ground of grace reigning through righteousness - God's righteousness being very definitely brought out in contrast with man's, which has the law for its rule (this being useful to convict of transgression, lust, and powerlessness when we have a good will).

32 From chapter 9 to 11 inclusive, Paul reconciles special promises to the Jews with the no-difference doctrine of divine righteousness. In chapter 9, while professing his own love to the Jews, he uses (while recognising all their privileges) the absolute sovereignty of God proved in their own history by the exclusion of Ishmael and Esau though sons of Abraham and Isaac; confirming this by the witness that it was only the sovereign mercy of God which had spared them at Sinai: he uses, I say, this sovereign mercy to prove God's call of Gentiles as well as Jews, confirming this by quotations from Hosea. He then shews that the rejection of the Jews was foretold by prophets - that it is founded on a pretension to human righteousness. He contrasts, in chapter 10, the righteousness of the law with that of faith; shews the title of the Gentiles to the latter - the call involving preaching to them; and confirms this, as well as the rebellion of the Jews to the call, by their own scriptures.

In chapter 11 he raises the question, Is then Israel, finally and definitely, as a people, rejected? No. He gives three proofs - first, in his own person; second, that where there is the declaration that the Gentiles will be called, it is to provoke them (Israel) to jealousy, and therefore not finally to reject them; third, the positive declaration of scripture that the Redeemer would come to Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob. In connection with this, he puts the Gentiles, introduced on the principle of faith, upon their responsibility; shewing them that if they did not continue in God's goodness, they would be cut off from the tree of promise on the earth, as so many of the Jews then were, and that God could graft the Jews in again; this being the testimony to the wisdom of God, His having concluded all alike in unbelief, that all might be objects of mere mercy.

In the subsequent part we get exhortations. Only that in chapter 15 he resumes this doctrine, that Jesus Christ was "a minister of the circumcision for the *truth* of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his *mercy*."

In chapter 16:26 substitute "prophetic scriptures" for "scriptures of the prophets."

33 1 CORINTHIANS

Is the internal ordering of the church by the guidance and power of the Spirit of God in the apostle, putting the assembly on its responsibility, and acting with it, but asserting his authority in case of need. He begins by owning the power of the Spirit amongst them in gift, and recognising the grace that would keep them to the end; but he presses the power of that Spirit in contrast with the wisdom of the flesh, asserting that we, believers, have the Spirit to search what the eye has not seen nor the ear heard - that these things are *revealed by* the Spirit to whomsoever God pleases, *communicated* by the Spirit, and *received* through the Spirit. We have thus revelation, inspired communication, and reception. (In chapter 2:13, translate thus, "communicating spiritual things by spiritual words.") Another important thing is - we have the mind of Christ (chaps. 1, 2).

Then the apostle, having shewn that he had rightly laid the foundation, puts the building of God's building on the responsibility of those who carry it on, chapter 3. He defends his own ministry and authority (chap. 4), and then enters on details of conduct as to purity insisting on their exercising discipline on the wicked, as to going to law, marriage, and eating things offered to idols (chaps. 5-8). He again defends his own ministry, calls their attention to the fact that they may be partakers of sacraments and be lost after all, but in connection with the Lord's supper presses the point of not mixing themselves up with idolatry (chaps. 9, 10). Then, in chapter 11, he treats of comeliness in any spiritual ministration, praying or prophesying, founding it upon Christ being the Head of all men, and the subordinate headship of the man. He then treats, from verse 17, of order in the assembly, and especially at the supper of the Lord, giving at the same time a lesson of God's discipline in contrast with condemnation.

The subject of spiritual manifestation follows - the place gifts hold, the unity of the body, and individual membership of it (chap. 12). (Gifts are of *the Spirit;* administration by them is under *the Lord;* the operations are divine - *of God.)* He shews love to be better than the best gifts, the more excellent way (chap. 13); and returning, in chapter 14, to gifts, shews that those in which the understanding is in exercise are the most excellent, and that this exercise is subject to those who have them, with a view to the edification of all. He then treats (chap. 15) of the resurrection, of Christ's glory, and of ours in it. Lastly, he refers to the collection for the saints; and we get at the close, in the diverse salutations, the abiding liberty of individual ministry - the principle of some giving themselves up to the Lord's service among the saints, and that all such are to be respected and submitted to (chap. 16).

34 2 CORINTHIANS

Is written consequent on the apostle's getting by Titus the news that the first epistle had taken its effect. He had just been in danger of his life, and, speaking now freely to the Corinthians, opens his heart at large about it, and explains why he did not come to them on his way to Macedonia. In the first five chapters, however, he explains the power of life in Christ, connecting it with the work of Christ, so as to bring in the righteousness of God. He contrasts it with law in chapter 3, shews its supremacy over death in every way in chapter 5, and deliverance from judgment as an occasion of fear, while it urges by the love of Christ to deal with men's souls. In chapter 4 he shews the earthen vessel in which the power of this life is, that the power may be practically of God, the vessel being held to be dead under the cross, and the Lord helping this by His dealings. Hence only eternal things are looked at; and he knows no man after the flesh, but speaks of the ministry of reconciliation, and of himself and others as ambassadors for Christ, praying men, in Christ's stead, "Be ye reconciled to God."

This ministry is then proved real in every possible way (chap. 6). He urges entire separation from the world in order to relationship with the Father, presses their perfecting holiness in the fear of God, and recognises the integrity in them of the repentance he had called for, the news of which had comforted his spirit (chap. 7). He next enlarges upon the collection for the saints (chaps. 8, 9), and is then, against his will, forced to legitimate his ministry by speaking of himself (chaps. 10, 11), closing that part by reference to his being caught up to the third heaven, while his strength flowed not directly from that, but from the power of Christ working in his weakness, shewing still a little uneasiness lest all should not be right, and he should be forced to be what they might not like (chap. 12). He, lastly, appeals to their own certainty that they were Christians as proof of Christ's speaking by him (chap. 13).

35 GALATIANS

Specially contrasts law with promises, grace, and the Spirit, not so much with righteousness, though it be spoken of, shewing that it (law) came between the promise and Christ, and that it could not annul the promise - that it went only to Christ, or faith. Connected with this, he shews the independence of his ministry; briefly states that he was dead to the law which brought the curse - dead by the law, but as crucified with Christ; so that, as living, Christ lived in him, and he lived by the faith of the Son of God (chaps. 1, 2).

In chapter 3:20 the point is, that the fulfilment of an absolute promise depends only on the faithfulness of one; but that the law having a mediator, Moses, two parties were implied, but God is only one. Hence, blessing under the law depends on the faithfulness of another as well as of God, and hence all fails. The promise was confirmed before God *to* Christ. Christ came after the failure, and we rest on the work of the Mediator, and not on the work of the second party. The law was added to produce transgression, not sin.

Another point: those who were under the law were delivered by Christ's taking its curse; so that the blessing flows freely, and that they may receive the promise of the Spirit.

In Galatians you find death applied to the law, the flesh, and the world, In chapter 6 we find a notice of the fact that there is a government of God which applies to all men, and brings its consequences with it as a general rule.

EPHESIANS.

In Ephesians we have the relationships of the saints with God the Father, and with Christ as ascended on high; first with God and the Father, which is our calling; then acquaintance with all the plans of God, as heading up all things in Christ, and thus the knowledge of the inheritance, and the place of heirs, and the Holy Ghost given as earnest till the redemption of the inheritance. He then prays the God of our Lord Jesus Christ (Christ being looked at as man) that the saints may know what God's calling and inheritance is, and the power that works in us, as shewn in Christ when God raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand, so as to set Him over all things, and make the church His body and completeness.

36 Thereupon he unfolds the quickening, raising, and sitting in heavenly places in Christ of the saints by sovereign grace, so as to shew the exceeding riches of it by His kindness to us. He then shews Gentiles afar off, and Jews dispensationally nigh, brought out of their respective places to form one new man in Christ, and thus become the dwelling-place of God on earth by the Spirit. Thus we have the assembly connected with Christ on high as His body, and on earth the dwelling-place of God by His Spirit.

He then develops somewhat the mystery, as now for the first time introduced, as a witness of the various wisdom of God in heavenly places. The apostle then prays the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ that the full blessedness of this may be realised by Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith; so that, being rooted and grounded in love, they may be able to comprehend the infinitely wide extent of what constitutes God's glory in this character, and the love of Christ, so as to be at the centre of it all according to the fulness of God Himself. With this he desires glory to God in the church in all ages, implying the distinct, continuous existence of the assembly. (In chapter 3:15 read "every family," instead of "the whole family." *Note,* in verse 18, the breadth, and depth, and length, and height is not "of the love." The whole of chapter 3 is parenthetic, and the first words of chapter 4 connect themselves with the beginning of chapter 3.)

In the first sixteen verses of chapter 4 the apostle unfolds, in connection with the headship of Christ, the unities into which we are brought, and the instruments of building and edification, as gifts, whether without or within. There are three unities: a real one, one of profession, and a universal one in God. First, one body, one Spirit, one hope. Secondly, one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Thirdly, one God and Father of all, who is above all, through all, and in you all. We are to walk in lowliness, so as to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The gifts are from the ascended man, who has overcome Satan and led him captive, so as to make those who had been Satan's captives the instruments of His own warfare in power, to gather and perfect the saints. At the same time He who ascended is the One who first descended into the lower parts of the earth, so as to fill all things. The measure to which the saints are to be brought up is that of the stature of the fulness of Christ Himself; the body being compacted, and supplying by every joint in order to its own edification. The first object all through this, however, is individual. We then get the exhortations connected with the new man being created of God in righteousness and true holiness. It is only the new man which has to do with righteousness and holiness.

37 Hence they are to be imitators of God, and act as Christ Himself has acted in love - the perfect expression of God - the new man. Further, in this new man they are light in the Lord: and the measure of their walk and works is the light itself, of which Christ, if they are awake, is to them the perfect outshining. Hence they are to be wise in the midst of this world. In going through relative duties, he enters on the relationship of the church to Christ, founded on the working of His love in this order. He first gives Himself for it; next, sanctifies and cleanses it by the word; and, thirdly, presents it to Himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Two things are to be remarked here: (1) That, in the analogy with Adam and Eve, Christ stands in the place both of Adam and of God. (2) The intimate connection between Christ's present operation and the glory. He sanctifies and cleanses the church, that He may present it to Himself. Then, besides the church being His wife, it is presented according to the analogy of Eve as His body, and Christ is looked at as nourishing and cherishing it, as a man would his own flesh (chap. 5).

Finally, Christians are exhorted to put on the whole armour of God, and in His might to combat, in entire dependence upon Him (chap. 6).

PHILIPPIANS

Is Christian experience, in which sin and the flesh are never mentioned, except to reject righteousness in flesh. It is a man superior to everything with which he has to say in this world. But chapter 2 speaks specially of a gracious and obedient character by reference to Christ coming down, and being obedient to death, in contrast with the first man. In chapter 3 we have the energy of divine life, looking to Christ glorified as an object to whose state he is to attain. In every respect he is superior to circumstances: his bonds have only furthered the gospel; when Christ is preached of contention, he rejoices in it, and it will all turn to his salvation. Salvation, all through this epistle, is the attainment of the ultimate result in glory, and this is the force of the word "Saviour" in chapter 3:20. Life and death are both so blessed that self disappears, because he can have no wish, though in itself dying is far better. He decides his own trial for his life by the perception of what is for the good of the church. To him to live is Christ. Everything is dross or dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ; and he never does but one thing - pressing on to the glory. Though four years chained to a soldier, he knows what it is always to rejoice in the Lord; to be careful for nothing (chap. 4). God's peace keeps his heart, so as to be instructed in all things, to be full or hungry, to abound or suffer want - he is able to do all things through Him who strengthened him. Hence he counts upon *his* God for a blessing on the Philippians.

38 COLOSSIANS.

In the Epistle to the Colossians, who seem not to have held the Head very fast, the personal glory of the Head is largely brought out; but the hope is in heaven, and the saints are not seen sitting there. The life of the new man is specially brought out, where the Spirit would be in Ephesians, while He is not mentioned in Colossians, except in one single passage, "your love in the Spirit."

In the first place, after the apostle's prayer for them, in which a walk worthy of the Lord Himself and according to His power is desired, and they are viewed as meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, we get the double headship of Christ over creation and the body, along with His divine glory, in three particulars: He is the image of the invisible God; all things consist by Him; and all the fulness is pleased to dwell in Him. You then get the double reconciliation of the creation yet to come, and of the saints already accomplished; the double ministry also of Paul, of the gospel to every creature under heaven, and of the church, the hitherto hidden mystery made good among the Gentiles by Christ dwelling in them the hope of glory.

In chapter 2 the Colossians are warned against philosophy and the spirit of ordinances, separating them from the Head, in whom all fulness dwells, and in whom they are complete. Hostile powers being overcome by Him, they (believers) are dead and risen, so as not to be subject to ordinances in flesh. As this liberty is founded on their being dead in Christ, so the whole of Christian life is founded on their being risen with Christ, who is their life, and with whose condition they are entirely associated, so that Christ is all, and in all (chap. 3); and whatever they do, they are to do it in the name of the Lord Jesus.

39 1 THESSALONIANS.

In 1 Thessalonians, as a general rule, we get the Lord's coming for the blessing of saints; and, in the second epistle, for the judgment of unbelievers. In the first, the saints are associated with the Father, the one true God, in contrast with the false gods they were used to. They are converted, and, through their faith, are a witness in all the world that they are converted to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. The former people of the true God are looked at as in hostility to the gospel, which reveals the Father, and grace to the Gentiles. In the second chapter, the coming of the Lord Jesus is connected with the apostle's joy and crown in the saints to whom he had been blest; in chapter 3, with holiness before the Father, at the coming of the Lord Jesus with all His saints; and in chapter 4, with the full explanation of the rapture of the church to meet Christ at His coming. Verses 15-18 are to be taken as a parenthesis, verse 14 being carried on to chapter 5:1, where the character of Christ's coming to the saints is contrasted with His coming to the world. Then, with divers short exhortations, God is looked to to keep them till Christ comes.

2 THESSALONIANS.

In 2 Thessalonians we have, first, the saints set right from the confusion into which they had got, as if the dreadful persecutions they were in were the day of the Lord, whereas in that *they* would be at rest, and *the wicked* troubled. la chapter 2, the apostle appeals to Christ's coming, and their gathering together to Him, as the evidence that the day could not be there; and then shews what the development of wickedness on the earth would be before that day came, and contrasts their state. In the last chapter he asks their prayers, and gives them divers exhortations.

Their state was very lively in the first epistle; and you may get in 1 Thessalonians 1:3 the full character of Christian state and service.

40 1 TIMOTHY

Gives us the right ordering of the church in its normal condition; 2 Timothy, the path of faith when it is in an abnormal condition - when it is in disorder. You have in 1 Timothy 3:15 the principle of Timothy's conduct. These epistles, and that to Titus, are not addressed to churches, nor were they to be communicated to the churches as such (the church of God has them, which is another thing), although that which guided the conduct of individual Christians in them is of unceasing obligation.

2 TIMOTHY.

In 2 Timothy Paul saw himself at the close of his career, and though the church had all got into disorder, and he was looking at his course as closed, there is no epistle in which he so much insists on the unfailing courage and energy of the saints, calling upon them to endure the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; but we see his mind got off the connection of the outward church with the body of Christ, and recognising piety and devotedness where he could find it. You may take chapter 2:18-22 as indicative of the tone of the instruction. As regards the state of the church, the faith of some being overthrown, he refers first to the sure foundation of God, the Lord knowing them that are His; next, to individual responsibility, whoever names the name of the Lord is to depart from iniquity. Then, as regards the assembly, he takes the great house as the analogy of it, and shews that in such there are vessels to dishonour, and that a man is to purge himself from these to be a vessel to honour, and to follow righteousness, etc., with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart, as distinguishing those who are really saints, and associating himself with them. In the next place he warns of perilous times in the last days - a form of godliness denying the power, and insists, besides his personal authority, upon the known scriptures as a child might read them, and asserts that they are sufficient to make us wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus; and, further, that whatever has a title to this name is given by inspiration of God, adequate to make the man of God perfect, throughly furnished to all good works.

41 TITUS.

Timothy had been left to watch over doctrine, but is directed as to the order of the church. Titus had been left to set in order the things which were wanting, and ordain elders, and the body of the directions here are about sound doctrine. We get a full statement of what may be called the Christian scheme in chapter 2:11-14; and in chapter 3 exhortations to patience with all through the sense of grace bestowed on ourselves.

In all these three epistles God has specially the character of God the Saviour, with a reference of this title to all men.

PHILEMON

Is just the way the apostolic spirit of grace enters into details of comeliness of conduct, and does not merely rest on great principles of doctrine. Leaving the world in all its own recognised authorities where they are, it leads the individual Christian to act as the light of grace in respect of the relationships into which he had been brought by the world.

THE HEBREWS,

Founding itself on the person of Christ in His divine and human natures, gives to the word the personal authority of divine communication and all human sympathies to the exercise of the priesthood on high, and thus connects the saints walking upon earth with heaven, without constituting them the body of Christ in union with Christ; thus setting aside all ancient Judaism, and giving a present heavenly call, but laying the ground for the after introduction of Israel by the new covenant. With this view, it puts all in Christianity in contrast, though in comparison and analogy, and a certain connection with what had gone before. The connection, however, only applies to the first part, the communicated word, because it looks on Christ, as to that, as still on earth.

In chapter 1 we get the groundwork of the authority of the communicated word in the divinity of Christ. This is continued in chapter 3, adding to it Christ's authority as Son over His own house, in contrast with Moses, down to chapter 4:13, with the promise of rest to the people of God. Chapter 2 lays the foundation of future dominion and present priesthood in the human nature of Christ. This is continued from chapter 4:14; the glory of it is expounded in chapter 5, as to the person and office of Christ; the impossibility of returning to Jewish elements is thereupon insisted upon, on the ground that if heavenly Christian things were departed from, there was no bringing back by some other power; and that from elements they were to go on to that, God having encouraged them by declaring the immutability of His counsel to the heirs of promise by word and oath, strengthening us thus who look within the veil, where Christ is entered for us as forerunner, a high priest after the order of Melchisedec (chap. 6).

42 This character of Melchisedec involves the necessary setting aside of the whole system of the law, the priesthood itself being changed from dying men to the living Son, the priesthood suiting us, being that of One holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens (chap 7).

In chapter 8, having the high priest set on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, offerings are needed: but, before touching on the offerings, the change of covenant is declared on which this ministry is founded, inasmuch as He is the mediator of it. Now, for the better and heavenly tabernacle, we must have better sacrifices.

But in the tabernacle itself there was a difference. The veil was unrent in the Jewish tabernacle, as set up of old; but now the veil is rent, the Holy Ghost thereby signifying, that as long as that first tabernacle had any place, the way into the holiest was not yet opened. Remark here, that in verses 16 and 17 of chap. 9 alone the Greek word bears the sense of *testament;* in all the rest of the passage it should be *covenant*. The blood of Christ purges the conscience, not merely sins, and cleanses the whole scene of the creature's relationship with God. The next contrast is, that He had not to offer Himself often to enter into the heavenly tabernacle, for then He must have suffered often; but at the close of all the ways of God to test the world, He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The apostle then contrasts the lot of man, subject to death and judgment, and Christ, as once offered to bear the sins of many, and coming, without any further question of sin, for salvation to those who look for Him (chap. 9).

He then discusses the whole bearing of this sacrifice, alleging that a person once cleansed by it has no more conscience of sins; whereas in the repeated sacrifices, there was a remembrance of sins. He then unfolds the origin of this sacrifice in the will of God, who prepared a body for Christ, who offers Himself to accomplish it in the same willingness; does accomplish it, and sits down for ever at the right hand of God, instead of standing, like the old high priests, offering often; because by the one offering He has perfected for ever those who are sanctified thereby. The Holy Ghost bears divine testimony to this, declaring, "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Thus we have the good will of God, the work of Christ, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost, to give us a divine security of unalterable peace. Thereon he exhorts them to enter into the holiest through the new living way of the rent veil, in full assurance of faith; warning them, that for the same reason, if the one sacrifice be abandoned there remains no other; shewing them that they have need of patience, but that Christ would soon come, and that meanwhile they must live by faith (chap. 10).

43 To this purpose, he shews that all the saints highly esteemed amongst them obtained their good report by faith. In this list he first lays down the great principles - creation, known by faith; sacrifice, offered to obtain righteousness by faith; walking with God by faith in the power of life; and acting on the prophecy of coming events by faith. We then get two great classes of faith - trust in God, and patient expectancy of faith, and the active energy of faith. All the detailed cases are taken when they were not in the land. He then goes through various sufferings endured of the saints by faith, proving that the world was not worthy of them, and that they died, not having received the effect of the promise, God having reserved some better thing for us, before they could be made perfect (chap. 11).

He then introduces Christ as the last great witness, who has overcome, and is set down at the right hand of God, and has there obtained the glory. He then shews that suffering has the additional character of parental discipline, but that withal they are come to grace, and not law and terror; but, in doing this, he gives the whole millennial result in heaven and earth, as that to which they are come in faith. He then shews that everything made will be shaken, and insists on their leaving the Jewish camp, that is, the principle of connection between religion and the world; but to go out to Jesus on the ground of His being a sin-offering; because, upon the principle of an effectual sin-offering, they must either be in heaven where the blood is, or outside the camp, or gate, where the sin-offering was burnt. He closes with a few exhortations (chaps. 12, 13).

44 JAMES.

In James you get the perfect law of liberty applied to the Christian's path; looking for patience, so that the will should not act, and confidence in God, so that wisdom and strength should be acquired. If there is evil, it comes from man - if good, from the unchangeable God, who of His own will begat us by the word of truth (chap. 1). He then, as he does afterwards, introduces sweeping denunciations against the spirit of the world and of riches. He speaks of three laws - the law of God, as to which, if we offend in one point, we are guilty of all; the royal law, "love your neighbour as yourself"; and the law of liberty, by which our conduct is to be judged, and where the will of God and the nature we have got run in one channel together. Mere faith of the head is treated as worthless, and its producing works is the test *for man* of its being living faith. But the works are only viewed as *works of faith.* Those he refers to would have been bad works, except upon that principle (chap. 2).

Redemption is not adverted to in James; but self-subjection is insisted on, specially as regards the tongue. Hence warning against being many teachers, and the true character of heavenly wisdom. The fruits of righteousness are sown in peace.

The epistle closes with a strong exhibition of the power of the prayer of faith. It is addressed to the twelve tribes; but faith in Christ, and the existence of the assembly, are distinctly recognised, although the synagogue be also recognised as still in existence.

1 PETER.

The Epistles of Peter, while stating redemption, refer especially to the government of God - the first to His government in favour of the saints, and the second in judgment of the wicked. The saints are not seen risen with Christ, but begotten again to a lively hope by His resurrection, and pursuing their pilgrimage, as strangers, towards an incorruptible inheritance, reserved in heaven for them, they being kept by the power of God through faith, but waiting for the appearing of Christ for full deliverances They are spoken of, however, as receiving the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls. He marks out the progress of the revelation of this: first, the prophets testifying beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glories following; then, the same things reported in the gospel preached by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; then, patience till the revelation of Jesus Christ brought these things to them: "Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." On this ground they are called on to walk in sobriety, obedience, and holiness, on the double ground, that He who called them is holy, and that they call on the Father, who judges without respect of persons every man's work. But this is founded on redemption by the blood of Christ, and being born again of the incorruptible seed of the word, while they believe in God through Christ, whom He had raised from the dead, and to whom He had given glory, all flesh being as grass, but the word of the Lord enduring for ever.

45 The persons addressed are the scattered believing remnant of Israel in various countries of Asia Minor. Hence he distinguishes them as living stones, come to be built on the living Stone, owned of God and of them as precious, but a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to disobedient Israel. He then applies Exodus 19 and Hosea 2:23, and hence exhorts them to walk blameless in the midst of the Gentiles who spake against them, which would force them to glorify God in the day of their visitation. He then exhorts them to suffer patiently, seeing that, like Christ, it was the Christian's place to do good, suffer for it, and take it patiently. This leads him to refer again to Christ bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, referring to Isaiah 53.

46 Then, with various exhortations on details of conduct, he refers to the government of God securing us in peacefulness but if they suffered for righteousness' sake they were happy beautifully adding that Christ had suffered once for sins, and that this ought to suffice. They ought to suffer for righteousness, if they suffered at all. He then refers to His being put to death in the flesh as the ground of their arming themselves with the same mind, inasmuch as in death there was found the having done with sin. He then presses the doing everything on the ground of ability from God, and as of God, whether it be spiritual, or in reference to common things. He then encourages in suffering reproaches for Christ's sake, which is an advance on suffering for righteousness' sake. (This is the only place where we are called Christians.) They are to rejoice in it as partakers of Christ's sufferings; but also with the consciousness that the time had come for judgment to begin at the house of God.

We then get exhortations to elders and to the younger, and to humbleness under God's hand, sobriety and diligence, and resistance to Satan, the apostle finally commending them to the God of all grace.

2 PETER.

In this second Epistle, which he writes to the same persons who have received (not the Messiah in glory, but) precious faith as the apostle had through God's righteousness, he shews that in the midst of incoming evil God's divine power had given everything necessary to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who had called them by glory and virtue. He then urges them to all diligence in everything that would give them an abundant entrance into the kingdom, and without which they would be purblind as Christians. He shews them that he must shortly put off this tabernacle; and writes that they might have the testimony after he was gone. He shews them that the transfiguration had confirmed prophetic testimony of the kingdom they were waiting for, and asserts that all scripture tends to one common purpose, being the fruit of one Spirit, and not of the will of man.

He then warns them of false teachers, denying the authority of Christ, whom many would follow, insisting on their wickedness, but shewing that God could deliver the righteous, and reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished. He gives their character, specially in the working of the will of man in lasciviousness and insubordination; adding to this another characteristic - their scoffing at the doctrine of the Lord's return. He thereupon refers to the deluge as a judgment already once executed, and the day of the Lord, in which the judgment by fire would come, and all that nature trusted in disappear, pressing this as a motive of holiness upon the saints.

1 JOHN

Exhibits to us specially divine life in the person of Christ, but communicated to us, and the traits which serve as a proof that the life is there. He first speaks of this life as he had known it in Christ on earth; shewing it as the means of communion with the Father and the Son, so that our joy may be full. But He who was and is this life has given, yea, has been, the absolute revelation of God as light, so that we are placed here to walk in the light as God is in it, the blood of Christ cleansing us that we may do so; and in this we have fellowship together. But it shews us all sin in ourselves (chap. 1). Further, the intercession or advocacy of Christ with the Father, founded on His being the righteous one, and the propitiation for our sin, is introduced as the means of restoring us to communion in the light when we have failed in our walk down here through weakness (chap. 2:1-2).

47 Obedience to Christ's commandments, or practical righteousness and love to the brethren, are next presented as proofs of the possession of this life. Before unfolding this, he gives the ground of writing to the saints: that all are forgiven, and that babes in Christ have the Spirit of adoption. He divides Christians into three classes - fathers, young men, and babes. This classification he repeats twice. The fathers have but one mark; they know Him who is from the beginning. The young men are strong, are in conflict, have overcome the wicked one, the word of God abiding in them. They are warned not to love the world. The little children, while knowing the Father, are the second time carefully warned as to deceivers; but their own competency as having the Holy Ghost, and their responsibility to judge, are pressed upon them (chap. 2).

He then shews them, as already sons, that is, as having the same name as Christ, knowing that they will be like Him when He appears, and hence purifying themselves as He is pure. The contradiction of the new nature to sin is then brought out distinctly, sin being lawlessness (not the transgression of the law). This new nature is shewn in practical righteousness and love of the brethren. The obedient person, moreover, dwells in God, and God in him. The proof of God dwelling in us is, that He has given us the Holy Ghost (chap. 3).

He then gives directions to distinguish Him from evil spirits, by referring to owning Christ come in the flesh; but having introduced the Holy Ghost in connection with the new nature, he shews that this new nature is a partaking of the divine nature, which is love; and hence, he that loves is born of God and knows God, for God is love. This love is displayed in three ways. First, *towards* us, by God sending His only-begotten Son, that we might live through Him, and to make propitiation for our sins. Secondly, as dwelling in love, we dwell in God, and God in us, He having given us of His Spirit, and thus His love is perfected in us. This is true of every one who really confesses that Jesus is the Son of God. Thirdly, that the love of God is perfected with us, so as to give boldness in the day of judgment; because, Christ being our life, and the Spirit of God dwelling in us, as Christ is so are we in this world. We love God because He first loved us; and if this be true, we love the brethren as God has commanded us (chap. 4).

48 This term brethren includes all that are born of God but the truth of this love to the brethren is tested by love to God, which is proved by keeping His commandments. To this end faith overcomes the world.

We have then eternal life declared to be given us, and this life to be in the Son, so that he that has the Son has life, and he who has not the Son has not life. The witnesses for this, that is, that it is in Christ, and not in the first Adam or as his children, are three - the Spirit, the water, and the blood: the water and the blood coming out of Christ's side in death, and the Holy Ghost given consequent on His ascension. This gives us confidence for asking everything according to God's will; and so for a brother who has failed, provided it is not a sin to death. The new nature we have received is incapable of sin; and he who has it keeps himself, and the wicked one touches him not. Finally, an absolute distinction is made between Christians and the world. "We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lieth in wickedness." Further, we know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, that is, in His Son Jesus Christ, who is the true God and eternal life.

2 JOHN

Insists upon love being governed by the truth; that whoever does not abide in the doctrine of Christ has not God; and that one who brought a doctrine which denied Him was not to be let into the house or wished God speed. A lady was competent for this.

49 3 JOHN,

On the contrary, urges the reception of those who went about preaching the truth; resists the hindrance of local authority, and commends Gaius, and as a fellow-helper of the truth itself. The doctrine of reward to the workman, through the perseverance of those who are the fruit of His work, is brought forward in verse 4 of this epistle, as in chapter 2:28 of the first epistle.

Notice that 3 John 7 throws light on the word "ours" in 1 John 2:2.

JUDE.

Having a great analogy to 2 Peter 2, refers, however, to a very different principle. Peter speaks of wickedness; Jude, of leaving the first estate, or apostasy. He traces this in the Christian system, from the creeping in of false brethren, to the judgment executed by Christ when He comes again; and he declares the objects of that judgment to be the same persons. He notices at the same time distinct characters of evil in Cain, Balaam, and Korah: natural departure from God; ecclesiastical corruption, or teaching error for reward; and, lastly, open rebellion. Lasciviousness and insubordination are again pointed out as their great principles. The saints are exhorted to edify themselves in their most holy faith, praying in the power of the Holy Ghost, and to keep themselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. They are to make a difference between persons dragged in, and spotted ones whom they are to save with fear. He looks to the saints, in spite of all the evil, being kept from falling, and presented faultless before the presence of God's glory with exceeding joy, for God is able to do it.

THE REVELATION.

The Book of Revelation is the return of the Spirit's witness to God's relationship with the earth, the church, as an earthly witness, being first contemplated and passed in review in its various phases, and then the saints of the heavenly calling being seen only in heaven; the preparation made for the introduction of the first-begotten into the world; the judgments of God caused to pass in prophetic vision before our eyes; and then the King of kings and Lord of lords Himself introduced, accompanied by the heavenly saints, to execute judgment, and to set up the kingdom which shall never be removed. At the beginning and close we have the thoughts and feelings of the saints, to whom the communication of the revelation is made: the first, in looking back at their *own* part in that which laid the foundation of Christ's title; and the latter, at their own portion with Christ Himself, in looking forward to the glory and what they have meanwhile - what the glory gives them the conscience of. The first refers to the cross, and its bearing on them (which brought in judgment on the world); and the second, to the glory of Christ and its present fruit.

50 The first chapter presents God as supreme and eternal, the Holy Spirit in His attributes of divine administration, and Christ in the glory in which He is connected with the earth. He is coming. Then He is seen as One having called John's attention to it on earth, not in service but in judgment, in the midst of the candlesticks, the place of light in the world, judging their state. We find a divine person, but the Son of man, having subordinate representative authority in His hand - (stars, angels of churches).

These things were seen - "the things that are" next. We get the history of the church: first, in its ecclesiastical state - the four first churches; next, in a state free from the gross corruptions come in, put upon the question of its personal fidelity to Christ. In the first four, are departure from first love, persecution, the world its dwelling-place, and false teachers seducing the saints; their corruption settled there, and the saints thus to wait for Christ's coming, who is given to them in His own heavenly unseen associations, and the visible kingdom too. In these characters, the character of Christ as walking amidst the candlesticks, is given, on which to base the warnings and promises. In the three last, they are new characteristics, save the stars, which are not said to be in His hand; and all refer to the coming of the Lord - more or less - which is spoken of as warning or promise in the two first. In the last it is not judged as Thyatira, but spued out of His mouth (chaps. 2, 3).

The vision then changes to heaven, and the world's judgment is entered upon as flowing thence. The saints are viewed as enthroned and crowned there. God's throne of judgment is set up there, and ministers of His government proclaim His glory, and the saints worship (chap. 4).

51 There the Lamb appears, and His title to open the book of God's ways is owned, and His glory is celebrated. The angels are seen for the first time, and standing around the inner circle who are connected with the throne. The elders, note, all through give their reasons for worship. The Lamb now opens the book (chap. 5).

The providential history of God's dealings in the Western Roman earth is given. Then the martyrs are seen, and cry for judgment; and there is a universal subversion of the subsisting powers, so that men are alarmed as if the day of the Lord were come (chap. 6).

The remnant of Israel is marked out for preservation the multitude of the Gentiles to be spared, owned (chap. 7).

The trumpets are the first four specific judgments on the Western Roman earth, on all earthly prosperity and power (chap. 8). The next two are the judgments on men, whose portion is on the earth, but in the east (chap, 9). Then a parenthesis shews the connection of the great Western beast or empire with the cast, and the testimony given there, which comes to a close before the end of the period of the second woe - trumpet; and last follows the seventh trumpet, which closes the whole scene (chaps. 10, 11.

A new vision of special dealings is now opened, and more connected with the religious condition of men; but the Jews, hence, are at once in the scene.

The Jewish people are seen, as heaven sees them, in the counsels and purposes of God. So there a Son is to be born, who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron - Christ; and, I doubt not, the whole church united to Him. But this is taken out of the way of the dragon to heaven and God's throne; and the woman - the Jewish people in the latter day in distress - flees from the persecution three years and a half into the wilderness. Thus the great elements of the whole scene are brought before us. Next it is presented historically. There is war in heaven. Satan is cast down, having then great rage; his time, he knows, is short; his career in heaven is ended; the accusation of the saints on the earth over; but he persecutes the Jews, who, as we have seen, flee; but he turns to persecute the witnesses amongst them (chap. 12).

Next, the earthly agents are seen: the beast, with seven heads and ten horns absorbing the other, receives his power from Satan for 1260 days, blasphemes what is heavenly, and persecutes the saints; a second beast, in the prophetic and royal characters of Messiah, ministers to and exercises his power, and makes the world worship him, doing miracles, giving breath to the image which he has caused to be made to him (chap. 13).

52 Then we have the remnant who suffer like Christ - the testimony, and judgments, and warnings of God; and, finally, the judgment of the earth, and the destruction of the wicked by the Son of man. This closes this vision (chap. 14).

Another great sign, not synchronical, or consecutive, follows. It reaches down to the third thing noticed in the previous chapter. Here the saints are viewed in rest, who pass through the time of tribulation. The sea of glass is mingled with fire (chap. 15). Then the vials are poured out. They are on the earth, and strike the beast's kingdom particularly, and those who dwell in it. Then all the kings of the earth are gathered; for the smiting galls their pride, and does not correct them; and the last judgment of God is executed even on Babylon (chap. 16), the beast remaining for the Lamb's (chap. 17:14).

This gives occasion to give a description of what she is, how she rides the beast, and corrupts all nations: but then more fully of the beast himself and his horns, for whom judgment is yet reserved. The Lamb shall overcome them. Babylon is Rome (chaps. 17, 18).

When Babylon is judged, the marriage of the Lamb takes place, for He is now coming forth out of His heavenly withdrawal to be revealed in the earth (the rapture of the church belongs to church revelation - could not come into the Book of Revelation, though we may see the saints in heaven). Then He comes forth as King of kings and Lord of lords, as the word of God in judgment: the saints, witnessed in righteousness, in the fruit of their works, accompany Him. The beast is taken and the false prophet, and are cast into their final doom (the false prophet is the second beast now, being with the beast; his royal character has disappeared): the rest are slain. This is the judgment of power and war (chap. 19).

Therewith Satan is bound, and shut up in the abyss for a thousand years. Then follows sessional judgment, which will last. They are on thrones, for this is royal judgment, and judgment is given to them, all the heavenly saints. This is the first resurrection; then the second, in which the dead are brought up to be judged, not to life and to judge (chap. 20).

53 Then heaven and earth flee away, death and hades give up all, and God is all in all in a new heavens and new earth (chap. 21:1-8).

Then the Spirit returns to give a description of the heavenly Jerusalem (as He had of Babylon and its relationship to the earth) during the millennium (chaps. 21:9 to 22:5).

After warnings to those who are in the time of the book, and to all, Christ comes forward Himself as the One who had given the revelation. This draws out in the bride, with whom is the Spirit, the desire of His coming; and her whole position - towards Christ, towards those who hear the word, towards sinners - is vividly expressed. John seals with his own desires those of the church, that Jesus should even come (chap. 22:6-21).

The re-introduction of God's government into this world in Christ, in this book, and the discovery of the relative position of the church, is full of interest. It closes, in this sense, the canon and scriptural subjects (complete in this entirely), with the doctrine of the church. But as this was to come in meanwhile and was heavenly, the judgment already revealed, and the course of worldly dealings (on God's part that led to it), are confided to the church to close the book historically, as the church closed it doctrinally, as [herself] above the world.