THE

PARABLES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

EXPLAINED

BY THE

REV. EDWARD CRAIG MITCHELL

Pastor of the New-Jerusalem (or Swedenborgian) Church, St. Paul, Minn.

AUTHOR OF

"THE PARABLES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT SPIRITUALLY UNFOLDED"

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WILLIAM H. ALDEN

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PREFACE.

THE Sacred Scriptures are the Word of God, written in a Divine way, and for a Divine purpose.

The Divine Word contains messages from God, as a Spiritual Being, to men as spiritual beings. But, in order to bring down the truth to the apprehension of natural-minded men, spiritual truths must be presented in corresponding natural ideas, in natural imagery.

"I, Jehovah, thy God, . . . have also spoken by the prophets, and have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets." (Hosea xii. 9, 10.)

Hence the Bible has a spirit and a body, between which there is the relation of correspondence, as inward and outward counterparts.

The word "parable" is used in three senses,—1, as an enigma, or obscure saying; 2, as any figurative discourse; and 3, as a fictitious, but possible, narrative, invented to convey and illustrate a truth. The parables of the New Testament are strictly within the third class. But, on the same exact basis, there are very few parables in the Old Testament. And so, for the treatment of the parables of the Old Testament, the second definition is adopted, which includes, also, fables and visions.

Every parable has at least three senses,—1, its narrative sense; 2, its figurative meaning, as applied to other natural persons and things; and 3, its spiritual meaning, illustrating principles operating in the mind.

The system of interpretation here employed is that known as "The Science of Correspondences," made known to the Church through Emanuel Swedenborg.

As it seemed best to have each explanation of a parable complete in itself, some repetition was unavoidable.

E. C. M.

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA, February 21, 1903.

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The Parables of the Old Testament Explained.

I.

THE TREES CHOOSING A KING.

The trees went forth to anoint a king over them: and they said unto the olive-tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive-tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith, by me, they honor God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

And the trees said to the fig-tree, Come thou, reign over us. But the fig-tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?

Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If, in truth, ye anoint me king over you, come, put your trust in my shadow; and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.—JUDGES ix. 8–15.

THE LOVE OF DOMINION.

THE love of dominion seeks to rule or to ruin. The higher principles of the human mind are satisfied to perform their own uses, in their proper way; but the lower, meaner propensities desire to rule over the others.

THE HISTORY.

Gideon had been a successful military leader of the Israelites. And the people said to him, "Rule thou over us, both thou and thy son, and thy son's son: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian." (Judges viii. 22.) But Gideon replied, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: Jehovah shall rule over you." And, during Gideon's life, and under his wise counsel, as a judge, the Israelites had peace and prosperity. But, after his death, they soon relapsed into idolatry and other evils. And Abimelech, Gideon's son by a slave and concubine, cunningly plotted to gain the throne: and, to secure himself in the position, he slew all the seventy legitimate sons of his father, except Jotham, who escaped. And the Lord employed Jotham, to rebuke Abimelech and the Israelites, as he did in the parable of our text, which is supposed to be the oldest formal parable of which we have any knowledge.

Jotham showed the men of Shechem that they had taken, as king, a man who, on one side, was of low descent, and who was bloody and cruel, using cunning and wholesale murder to secure the throne, which properly belonged to some legitimate son of Gideon. Jotham also showed the men of Shechem that Abimelech, like the bramble, had displayed an evil spirit, ready to rule or to ruin; and that his reign would be disastrous to Israel.

THE REPRESENTATIVE MEANING.

Historically, the trees represented the Israelites. The olive was Gideon; the fig-tree was Gideon's son; and the vine was his son's son; for all of whom Gideon had declined the throne. The bramble was Abimelech; and the cedars of Lebanon were the men of Shechem.

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING.

But the parable has its spiritual application. As the Israelites, in their evils and idolatry, always brought upon themselves a defeat by some powerful enemy, so every man, as he departs from the ways of the Lord's commandments, sinks into evils, and worships himself and the world; and always he brings upon himself a serious defeat, at the hands of some great spiritual enemy, some foe of his own mental household.

In every condition of evil, the Israelites were attacked by some nation, or people, who represented the particular evil or falsity into which the Israelites then had fallen.

Sometimes they were carried away, as captives; and always by nations representing the evil principles which had inwardly carried them away, as spiritual captives to the lusts of the flesh, and had kept them away from the joy and home of regenerate life.

And when men see and acknowledge their bondage in sin, and when they turn to the Lord for deliverance, they can be saved from evil, by repenting, and by shunning evils as sins. But, often, when the trouble is past, men forget their Divine Helper, and relapse into selfish idolatry. Instead of keeping some grand Divine Truth as their mental king, they adopt some perversion of truth, some outbirth of a slavish principle; and they set it up as their mental king.

ABIMELECH.

Abimelech represents the low-born, selfish, cruel love of dominion over others, born from the love of self; a mere bramble, ready to rule or to ruin; to send forth its fires of lust, to consume all the better principles, which will not submit themselves to its rule.

TREES.

The olive, the vine, and the fig-tree are frequently mentioned together, in the Scriptures. They represent the three discrete degrees of human life, the celestial, the spiritual, and the natural; the love of the Lord, the love of the neighbor, and the love of obedience to the law. Trees represent mental states, in men, the inward principles of men's minds and lives. Good principles, in good men, are called "trees of the Lord." Evil men are called trees that bear no fruit, barren trees, and cumberers of the ground. "I am like a green olive-tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God forever." (Psalm lii. 8.) "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." (Psalm xcii. 12.)

THE OLIVE.

The olive represents the celestial principle of love to the Lord, which, like the oil, is warm and smooth. "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness." (Psalm xlv. 7.) This oil of love is the "fatness" of the olive, mentioned in the text. When such love rules in the mind, governing all the affections, thoughts and conduct, the man is in a celestial regenerate state.

That the olive-tree declined to rule over the trees, does not mean that celestial love cannot, or will not, rule the regenerate mind; but it means that such heavenly love cannot rule in such a condition of mind as then existed in the men of Shechem.

They did not desire to be ruled in a heavenly way, but in their own way, and for selfish purposes, as is shown by their making the cunning and murderous Abimelech their king. Celestial love of the Lord cannot

rule in a selfish and worldly mind. If it should unite itself with selfish principles, it would lose its good characteristic quality, and would become adulterated by evils. And so the olive, in declining to rule, replied, "Should I leave my fatness, wherewith, by me, they honor God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?" The mental ground of its refusal was that a heavenly love of goodness could not mingle with selfish and worldly principles, without losing its own virtues.

Literally, the olive honors God and man, because the olive oil was used in the temple service, in the worship of God, and because the priests and kings were anointed with olive oil. Spiritually, it honors God and man, because the principle of love to the Lord, looks to the Lord, acknowledges Him, and gives all honor to Him, and brings man into a state of union with the Lord, in which man is honored.

THE FIG.

The fig-tree, also, declined to be king. The fig represents natural goodness, the love of obedience to the revealed law. It is right to cultivate a natural love of obedience to the Divine commandments; but, to make this virtue a means of feeding a spirit of ambition to rule over others, would be to destroy its good quality, and to corrupt it into a vice. The fig-tree would thus forsake its "sweetness" and its "good fruit." When a man intelligently knows the truth, and obediently follows it, then, spiritually, "the fig-tree and the vine do yield their strength." (Joel ii. 22.) The "sweetness" of the fig-tree is its inward good principle, and its "good fruits" are its practical good works.

THE VINE.

The vine, also, refused to be king. It said, "Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man?" The

vine represents spiritual truth; and the fruit of the vine represents the good which springs from a love of truth; that is, the love of the neighbor, as distinguished from the love of the Lord. Literally, the wine cheered, or gladdened, "God and man," because the offerings of wine formed a part of the sacrifices, or offerings to the Lord; and because the effect of the right use of pure wine is to gladden and encourage the exhausted and saddened man.

Spiritually, wine represents Divine Truth, the spiritual "blood of the Lord," which the Lord loves to give to men, and which good men love to receive from Him. Such spiritual "blood of the grape," the Divine Truth, opens men's spiritual eyes, warms their hearts, and enriches their lives. The Lord, as the Divine Truth, calls Himself the Vine; "I am the vine; ye are the branches." (John xv. 5.) At the "Last Supper," the Lord mentioned to His disciples, concerning the wine, "that day when I drink it new with you, in My Father's kingdom." This new wine is the new spiritual truth which comes to us from the inward, spiritual sense of the Scriptures, and which we drink spiritually, with the Lord, when it unites us with Him, in love, faith and obedience. This spiritual wine "cheereth God and man," because, more and more, it carries the Divine blessings to men, and thus expands the operation of the Divine Love.

THE TREES IN GENERAL.

The other trees appeared to desire the good trees to rule over them. But, to do so, the good trees would have had to leave their own high and holy character, and to go down to the general condition of the trees. The trees did not offer to go to the olive, the fig-tree, and the vine, to be governed by them, in their own

places. But they said, "Come thou, and rule over us." They did not propose to abandon their selfish conditions, that they might be lifted up to a better condition and character. They sought to bring down the higher things, to agreement with their own lower condition. And the mental good trees could not do this, without losing their own distinctive qualities and character.

DISTINCTIONS.

The olive and the fig represent states of the will, or heart, as to inward and outward good, or love; and the vine represents a state of the understanding, and its life of truth. And these cannot afford to leave their goodness and their truth, to join themselves with any selfish form of the love of ruling over others.

THE BRAMBLE.

But, as the good trees declined to be made king, the trees applied to the bramble. Personally, this bramble represents those dangerous members of society, who love to rule, or to ruin.

Abstractly, the bramble represents the selfish form of the love of ruling over others, which is worldly, haughty and dangerous. All natural things, when perverted to evil uses, become mere brambles, and dangerous and inflammable, quick to burn in the infernal fires of selfish lusts. Even the letter of the Lord's Word, when separated from its inward spirit, and corrupted to evil uses, becomes a bramble, in the mind so abusing it, for pretended and spurious goodness. It is said of Zion, in her sinful condition, "thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be a habitation of dragons, and a court for owls." (Isaiah xxxiv. 13.)

The bramble was ready to rule over the trees. Self-

love will feed a man's love of rule, until he will be willing to rule over anything and everything. And the more an evil man knows, the more evil he can do. Though he knows truths as doctrines, yet the fires of his own sensuous lusts will burn out all truth from his mind, even the tall cedars of Lebanon, the far-reaching truths of the Lord's Word, rationally seen.

The love of rule is ever ready to use its knowledge for selfish purposes. It will be patronizing towards the church, and towards all good influences, if they can be made to serve its desire to rule; if they will leave their goodness, and come down to it. But, if they attempt to oppose it, it will send out its infernal fires, and burn them out of the mind. The history of society is full of such brambles, in the priest-craft of the churches, in the party-craft of politicians, and in the abuses of social life, uniting in the common endeavor to rule, or to ruin. The unregenerate natural man regards self-love as his real God; but, while he expects it to give him life, it is destroying him in infernal fires.

Abimelech, like the bramble, was the least entitled to rule, because he was the most unworthy. But the people wanted such a king; and he was ready to rule them, for his own benefit.

The trees inclined to the bramble, and it was ready to be king, on its own terms, which were, to rule or to ruin.

ARROGANCE.

The insolence of Abimelech, in seeking to rule over Israel, and the boldness of the natural man, in seeking to rule over the spiritual man, are shown in the arrogance of the low, mean bramble demanding that all the trees, even the grand, old towering cedars of Lebanon, should come under the shadow of the miserable bramble.

And, spiritually, the same monstrous insolence is

shown by the lust of rule in our natural mind, when it attempts to bring down the higher principles of the mind, and to make them subservient to its evil purposes; utterly to overshadow them, or to destroy them in the unholy fires of evil lusts.

THE CEDARS.

The cedars of Lebanon represent the grand rational truths of regenerate life; noble trees, reaching far above the earth, evergreen in their foliage, teaching man of his spiritual and immortal character. "Praise ye Jehovah, . . . fruitful trees and all cedars." (Psalm clxviii. 7, 9.) How can these lofty, glorious truths stoop low enough to put themselves under the shadow of the low, earthy bramble? How can we be willing to prostitute the knowledge of spiritual and Divine things to the low lusts of a selfish love of ruling over others? But, if we do this folly, the fires of the hells in our own hearts will surely arise, and destroy our mental cedars of Lebanon.

INDIVIDUAL USES.

There is an order in creation, ordained by the Creator, and fixed in the organism of every creature. According to this order, each man has his place and his use; and each finds happiness in the loving performance of the use for which he is adapted. And each part of man has its place and its use. The eye is organized for seeing, and it is adapted to that use; and the ear is organized for hearing, and is adapted to that use. The eye takes no cognizance of sounds, nor the ear of light.

The eye does not wish to leave its seeing, nor the ear to leave its hearing, to go away to do other things. Each is happy in the performance of its own use, according to its organism. It has no selfish ambition to rule over other things. So, in the regenerate mind, each principle

of life has its place and its work; and it is happy in performing its own use. And if it should have a selfish lust for going out of its way, to rule over other things, it would lose its own good quality.

THE LUST OF RULING.

But our bramble, our selfish ambition to rule, will seek to rule over all other things, or to ruin their quality, by subjecting them to the infernal fires of evil lusts. Heaven is full of the spirit of humility; but hell is full of self-assertion.

If any heavenly principle has begun to grow in our minds, it must not be brought under the control of any worldly or selfish purpose. If we abuse a good principle, it will lose its oil of love, and its wine of spirituality, and the sweetness of its good fruit. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." (Matthew iii. 10.)

The love of rule shows itself in many ways; in the lust of having one's own way; in hard pride of opinion; in conceit of one's own mental abilities, which is impatient, even under proper criticism; and, especially in the vile vice of contempt of others. All these are but forms of the love of ruling over others, mentally or physically.

Without humility, the oil of love loses its heavenly warmth; the wine of truth loses its spirituality; and the fig of obedience loses its practical sweetness.

In our minds, the bramble is ruling over the trees, whenever we exalt ourselves above others, in our own estimation; and whenever we harbor contempt of others; and whenever and wherever the holy truths of Divine Revelation are dragged down, to cater to the selfish pleasures of our senses.

SPIRITUAL TRUTH.

The Bible is of little use to men, spiritually, while they quarrel over it, as a mere record of literal facts, or a treatise on the history, science and geography of a small portion of the earth. When the prophecies of the Lord's Word are supposed to relate to nothing more than the things of the natural senses, then spiritually, the celestial olive yields but little of its oil; the fig-tree bears little of its sweet good fruit; and the vine gives but little of its spiritual wine. Only as the Divine Word is regarded as a mirror to the human soul, in the spiritual light of revealed truth, and as its truths are seen in their spiritual aspect, can these truths be seen as heavenly truths, opening our minds to a new world, and displaying the history of the spirit of man, from his birth to eternity.

In His spiritual coming, the Lord comes to give men life "more abundantly," and of higher quality; to enable every man, if he will, to be "a green olive-tree in the house of God." "In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbor, under the vine and under the fig-tree." (Zechariah iii. 10.)

II.

SAMSON'S RIDDLE.

Then went Samson down . . . to Timnath, . . . and behold, a young lion roared against him. And the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him, and he rent him [the lion] as he would have rent a kid. . . . And after a time he returned . . . and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion: and, behold, a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion. . . .

And Samson said, . . . I will now put forth a riddle unto you: . . . Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.—JUDGES xiv. 5, 6, 8, 12, 14.

RESISTING TEMPTATION.

RESISTING temptation, with the Divine help, we overcome the power of evil, and attain the strength and sweetness of regeneration.

SAMSON.

As a Nazarite, Samson represented the natural humanity of the Lord, Jesus Christ, which, armed with the Divine Truth, battled with the hells, and overcame them. Samson's power is said to have been in his long hair. The hair, growing from the skin, and on the outside of the body, represents the ultimates, the externals, the things of the natural mind, and of the natural life. And, in a special sense, the hair represents the letter of the Divine Word, which is its outward sense.

Truth is strong and effective when it is brought out, and applied directly to the doings of our outward life, as is done by the commandments of the Decalogue. For instance, when we think on the subject of honesty, we may have many theories as to what may be allowable;

but, when we consult the Ten Commandments, the truth confronts us in the plain practical form of self-denial: "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not bear false witness," etc., etc. And no ingenious argument can break the practical force of these laws of conduct, which embody our intentions.

The power of literal truth is represented by the hair. And hence some of the prophets and representative men were particularly mentioned as "hairy men," as Esau, and Elijah, and John the Baptist, and Samson.

The natural humanity of Jesus, represented by Samson, inherited from his mother all the natural tendencies to evil which then existed in the Jewish race. And that natural humanity needed to be purified, glorified, and united with the indwelling Divinity, so that the Father could dwell in the Son; by which is meant that the Divine Love could enter into the Divine Truth, in the mind of Jesus, and could fill that truth with all the life and power of the Divine Love; and thus could fill the humanity of Jesus with all the Divine qualities, and all the Divine Power; and thus that the Divinity could dwell in the Divine Humanity, in fulness. This was the process of glorifying the humanity, and of making it to be the Divine Humanity, the external of God, in whom God dwelt in fulness, so that Father and the Son were one, in a trinity of attributes of the Divine Character, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, meaning the Divine Love, the Divine Wisdom, and the Divine Power, all present in the Divine Humanity of the one God, in one person, the Lord, Jesus Christ.

THE LION.

Part of the work of glorification, by which the humanity became one with the Divinity, was represented by Samson tearing the lion.

Representatives are used sometimes in a good sense, and sometimes in a perverted sense, when things are in disorder. In a good sense, a lion, as the "king of beasts," and as a beast of great power, represents power, especially the power of truth, fighting against falsity and evil; and most especially the power of the letter of the Divine Word, because the lion is especially a hairy animal. In this good sense, our Lord was called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." But, when the lion is used in a bad sense, it represents the power of truth perverted, and thus turned into the power of falsity, which, in the unregenerate mind, wages war against the spirit of the Divine Truth, and against goodness in the practical life.

As a natural man, Jesus was born into a natural tendency to falsify the Divine Truth which he had learned. And when the interior and Divine part of his nature sought to bring his whole manhood into good order, this merely natural tendency to falsify truth opposed such a change in his natural mind, and resisted the process of glorification. This natural tendency to falsify truth is the lion in our text. This lion, roaring at Samson, thus represented a mental lion, in the natural mind of Jesus.

Such lions are often mentioned in the Scriptures, as, for instance, in Psalm xxii. 13, "They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion;" and in Psalm lvii. 4, "My soul is among lions." But when, in Jesus, the Divine nature overcame the hereditary tendency to falsify truth, because the humanity exerted itself to resist such a tendency, and to do the Divine will, then this action was represented by Samson tearing the lion. And the Divine promise to the assumed humanity, and also to each of us, in our humanity, is represented in the words in Psalm xci. 13, "Thou

shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet."

THE LION'S ATTACK.

The great power of evil and of falsity was not merely in the natural tendencies of the Jewish race, in the assumed humanity of Jesus, but also because these tendencies to evils and falsities formed a standing-ground, in his natural mind, on which all the hells could stand, to wage war against the Divine nature in Jesus, which was seeking to possess his whole manhood, and to glorify his humanity. And, as the glorification would be for goodness, and against all evils, therefore the evil spirits in all the hells sought to prevent this glorification. And hence they combined all their power to induce the humanity of Jesus to fall into sin. And their attack is represented by the attack of the lion. And, on the other hand, the great power of Samson against the lion was not merely because of his unusual muscular strength, but because of the help of the Lord, by the ministrations of angels. As our text declares, "And the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him."

A large part of the work of Jesus Christ, as a Redeemer, was in conquering the hells, which had been holding men down, in evil, falsity and sin. But, in order to do this work for men in general, Jesus had to do the same kind of work, in his own natural mind. He met the devils on the ground of his own natural tendencies to evil; and, by defeating them there, He rescued men from their infernal power. And Samson's doings often represented this work of Jesus Christ. As the Divine Father dwelt within the assumed humanity of Jesus Christ, and directed and strengthened the natural manhood of Jesus, in his contest against the hells, so Jesus Christ, now as the one God of heaven and earth,

dwells within us; and, if we are willing, He teaches, directs, and sustains us, in our fight with the hells.

You remember that, when Jesus sent out the seventy disciples, to preach the gospel, "the seventy returned again, with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us, through Thy name. And He said unto them, I beheld Satan, as lightning, fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." (Luke x. 17-19.)

THE RIDDLE.

"Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness."

The eater, or devourer, or destroyer, was the lion; and the lion here represented the power of false principles, working in man's natural mind, and seeking to destroy all goodness, and all spirituality, in the man. Personally, such lions represent evil and false spirits, in the spiritual world, who are always mentally associated with men's evil tendencies, and always working upon these tendencies, to arouse and increase them, and thus to destroy men, spiritually. But Samson had killed the lion, thus representing the Lord, in His humanity, operating against evil and false spirits, and opposing their influence, not only in His assumed natural humanity, but also in the minds of all men who are willing to be regenerated, and who are ready to resist their own evil inclinations, and to do good, in the name of the Lord; *i.e.,* in accordance with His principles.

Men's natural tendencies to evil and falsity are full of terrible power for evil, because men fell into evil, ages ago, and they have gone on in evil, constantly increasing their tendencies to evil. And so, man's external nature is now born into sympathy with the evil influences of the

hells. But the work of Jesus Christ, as a Redeemer, broke the force of such evil power, as is represented in our text by Samson killing the lion. The dead lion had lost his terrible power; *i.e.,* in each regenerate man, the evil and false nature had been overcome by the Divine influence, made efficient, in each case, by the man's co-operation. When a man remains unregenerate, all his natural mental powers are working on the side of evil. And then they possess a terrible power for evil.

But, in the regeneration, those powers are changed in their quality, their spiritual character; and then they are no longer working for evil, but the ravenous lion in them is dead. Regeneration separates men's hearts from the hells, and unites them with the Lord, in spiritual sweetness of character. Thus, "out of the eater came forth meat," because the quality of man's mental strength was changed, and the new quality is not destructive, spiritually; but, on the contrary, it affords spiritual meat, which is food for man's soul. And "out of the strong came forth sweetness," because the power of the mind was regenerated, and its strength turned to spiritual sweetness, which is goodness, from the heart and in the life. This mental sweetness, meaning good natural affections, operating in good outward conduct, is represented by the honey, which is characterized by great sweetness.

THE PERSONAL APPLICATION.

This riddle of Samson holds before each of us a mirror of symbols, in which we can read our own conditions and possibilities. We are all born with tendencies to evil, falsity and sin. And these things in our external nature, are as a roaring lion, ready to devour everything in us that is good or true. And if this process of spiritual devouring continues, without resistance, we shall

be formed into evil characters, devils at heart and in life. But no one is left in this condition, helpless to contend against evil influences. But our Lord, in His infinite providence, provides that each man shall hear the truth taught, and that the truth shall be kept before him, from the time he is old enough to begin to comprehend its meaning. And even before that time, the Lord provides that the truth, as a rule of action, shall be brought to the attention of every man, so that he may know what things should be done, and what other things should not be done, and why it should be so, in each case. And thus, light is given to every one, so that he may not be left helpless. And then power comes to every one, from the Lord, in and by the truth. And every one may use the truth, and may gain power in a practical way, so that he can live by the truth. And when we exert our power, as if it were our own strength, and yet with the acknowledgment that it is the Lord's power, working in us, and through us, to conquer our evil tendencies, we kill the lions of our disorderly nature. And then their terrible power for evil is destroyed; *i.e.,* the evil is then destroyed.

AFFECTION NOT LOST, BUT CHANGED.

For regeneration does not kill a man's natural mind, nor does it take away from him anything that belongs to his life. But it takes away the evil, by changing the quality of the man's affections, from evil to good. The affections remain, but their quality, or character, changes. Observe that, when the Lord calls upon men to become regenerate, He does not ask them to give up their affections, but to place their affections upon good and true objects. "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well." (Isaiah i. 16, 17.)

During temptation, while the prospect seems dark, we often feel that, if we give up our natural desires, we shall lose all things which make life worth living. And yet, after we have put down our evil tendencies, we find that we have not lost anything, and that our affections remain, but that they have been purified, regenerated, sweetened, by the reception into them of the spirit of heavenly love. Here, then, "out of the eater came forth meat," food for our spiritual life; and those natural affections, which seemed to be strong against our salvation, now, when cleansed and purified, afford us the sweetness of regenerate life, when we are allowed full freedom, because we have no desire for evil. And thus, "out of the strong came forth sweetness," spiritually.

A GREAT TRUTH.

This is a great truth, which it is very hard to teach to the natural-minded man; *i.e.,* that the real sweetness, and the sustaining spiritual food of human life, practically begin only when we have conquered our natural tendencies to evil; only when, in us, Samson has slain the lion. We are placed in this world to learn how to live, by learning what true life is, and whence and how it comes to us, and how it is to be sustained in its power, and in its sweetness. Our life must continue to be a struggle, until we have learned to slay our ravenous lion, with the great strength with which our Lord will fill all our sincere and earnest efforts for regeneration.

Every known truth is a mental way, or path, on which we are called upon to walk, in daily life. And, in the beginning, on every such pathway a roaring lion will confront us. But, in every case, our Lord is ready, beside us, and within us, like Samson, to rend our lion. And in due progress, the spiritual bees of our mind will make their honey. And then we shall hear the Word of

our Lord, speaking of the path of our daily life: "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast go up thereon; it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of Jehovah shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isaiah xxxv. 9, 10.)

III.

NATHAN'S PARABLE OF THE EWE-LAMB.

And Jehovah sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing save one little ewe-lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup; and lay in his bosom; and was unto him as a daughter.

And there came a traveller unto the rich man; and he spared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but he took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come unto him.—II. SAMUEL xii. 1–4.

UNRECOGNIZED EVILS.

OUR first efforts to do good are largely adulterated with selfish motives. We indulge many evils, and commit sins, without recognizing such evils and sins as our own. We see evils in the abstract, and doctrinally, but they do not appear to us as our own, until we make further progress in the practical understanding of truth and good. Our minds are in mixed conditions, holding in our memory some true doctrines, and many false ideas. Our evils are not subdued, even though we have some idea of the ugliness of evils in other persons. Theoretically, we adopt a certain system of religious doctrine; and yet, in the practical application of that doctrine to our daily life, we often falsify its spirit, by mixing it with the false notions that spring from our evil desires.

THE MENTAL CITY.

Thus there are "two men in one city;" *i.e.,* in our minds both truth and falsity exist in connection with the same doctrine.

A city, built up of houses, for the uses of human life, represents a system of doctrine, built up in the human mind, erected in our intellect, and planned for the use of our affections and thoughts.

And, in our unregenerate conditions, and in our mixed conditions, when we have received some truth, and yet have many false ideas, we are, as to our intellectual doctrine, like a large city, in which there dwell men of different characters, some good, some evil; some rich in the knowledge of truth, and some poor in their ignorance of spiritual things.

But it does not follow that the rich are the good, nor that the poor are the evil. It is often the opposite.

SPIRITUAL RICHES AND POVERTY.

"There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor." Literally, the application was to David and Uriah. But the inward, spiritual sense of the parable applies to all. When a man learns the truths of the Lord's Word and of the church, he is intellectually rich; he has great possessions, truths which may change his whole character, if he will allow them to do so, by obeying them. In a general sense, the rich are those who are in the church, where the Lord is known, and His Word is read.

THE GENTILES.

And the poor are the Gentiles, and all who are in a Gentile state, not well instructed in spiritual truths, and yet, perhaps, well disposed, in their natural affections.

Thus, David and Uriah, in one sense, represented,

respectively, the Church and the Gentiles. Uriah was a Hittite. The Hittites were among the best of the Canaanites. Bathsheba, as a Hittite, represented the beginning of the church among the Gentiles; for a church was raised up among the well-disposed Gentiles, who were in better conditions of spirit than were the Israelites. Bathsheba's first and disorderly relations with David represented the quality of life in the first conditions of the church, among the Gentiles.

The Gentiles were well disposed towards the truth, but they had no just idea of the distinctions between good and evil, in practical life. With such a state of men, the Lord could not form, at once, a true and heavenly church, but only some approach towards a church, in which many evils would adulterate the good principles.

BATHSHEBA'S CHILDREN.

And so the first child of David and Bathsheba died, representing the fact that when the truth begins to operate upon us, our first states of life are not pure and good, but so adulterated with our natural evils that they do not spiritually and permanently live in a regenerate character.

But Bathsheba as the wife of David, and the mother of Solomon, represents the Gentile Church advanced to higher and spiritual conditions, after trials and temptations. When the good that is in the Gentiles becomes united with Christian truth, through the purifications of temptation, it becomes Christian good. Solomon, noted for his great wisdom, represented the child of the new birth, born of spiritual marriage.

THE SCRIPTURE NARRATIVE IS REPRESENTATIVE.

In considering the narratives of the Scriptures, we should always keep in mind the fact that the Bible is

not merely a record of literal facts, but that it is, more especially, a representative record of the development and regeneration of the human soul, in all its conditions, from ignorance and evil, up to wisdom and goodness.

The fact of the symbolic and representative character of the Bible, is the great, central point, by which all things of the Scriptures are to be interpreted. Jesus said, " My words are spirit, and are life." And, in both the Old and the New Testaments, all the words of the Lord apply primarily to the spiritual life of man.

SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE.

The degree of regeneration, in every man, is according to the degree in which the spiritual marriage of goodness and truth, or love and wisdom, has been effected in him. And, to illustrate this spiritual marriage by representatives, the parable in our text pictures the conditions of a natural marriage, and of its perversions.

URIAH AND DAVID.

Uriah, the Hittite, as a Gentile, represented a well-disposed state of the natural mind. David, as a rich Israelite, represented the interior natural mind, instructed in truth, rich in possession of spiritual flocks and herds of good and true principles.

But the poor Gentile had one possession, only, a little ewe-lamb, a state of innocence in the natural mind, the innocence of ignorance, such as there is in children; innocence which may be developed by instruction and discipline, until it becomes the innocence of wisdom.

MORAL GOOD.

Such innocence may, for instance, be in moral goodness, an orderly life in externals, accompanied by a good moral disposition.

The Gentile state of mind regards this moral good as the one great good; for it is not instructed as to spiritual good. A man in such a state mentally buys, or procures, this moral good, by giving up disorderly states of affection, for the sake of being moral. He nourishes such moral good; and it grows up in his mind, as one of his mental family. It lies in his bosom; *i.e.,* in his heart, in his affection. Such moral good eats and drinks with him; that is, it partakes of the same quality as his general affections and thoughts.

THE TWO MEN IN ONE MIND.

Thus, the parable pictures the states of life of one man, for David and Uriah here represent the different principles in the same mind. They live in the same city; there is a common doctrine in the memory and thought.

But, after the beginning of regeneration, there are two men, and very different men, in every man's mind. One man is especially intellectual, and full of knowledge of the truths of the Word and the church. And yet, in the same mind, there may be a Gentile state of well-disposed moral life. But the intellectual side may be joined with the hereditary tendencies to evil. And these tendencies may employ the intellect to advance their desires. Intellectually, the mind may be full of knowledge of good and true principles, and yet the mind does not use such knowledge in the daily life.

THE TRAVELLER.

A traveller, in a good sense, is one who is progressing in living, mentally journeying in the truth. The truth journeys through our minds, from our outward memory, through our thought, into our affections; and then into our daily life. But, in the opposite sense, a traveller is a false principle, drawn out of the memory, and

journeying through our thought, seeking to enter into our affection, and to come out in our conduct.

The spirit of the parable shows that, in our text, the traveller is used in a bad sense, as a false principle, wandering through the mind of David, and of every man actuated by similar principles.

COMPLETE THE PICTURE.

The intellectual man is rich in abundance of knowledge. The moral goodness in the mind is not instructed, but possesses simple innocence, a little ewe-lamb. In this condition, a false principle comes travelling through the mind, seeking entertainment. It is set in motion by some evil lust. What should the mind do, in such a case? The intellectual side of the mind should draw upon its riches of knowledge, and should apply to that travelling falsity, the true and good principles known in the memory. But, being urged by an evil lust, it does not do this; it does not instruct, or rebuke, the false principle; but it goes out and kills the little ewe-lamb of Uriah, the simple principle of moral good. It seizes upon this and kills it. It mixes up the idea of moral good with the false principle, till the former has ceased to retain its vitality.

ILLUSTRATION.

As an illustration, see the moral good of marriage, seized upon, and destroyed, by the spirit of Mormonism, urged on by the lusts of the sensuous mind, to entertain the travelling falsity of polygamy.

A man's interior idea of marriage is the test of his spirituality.

David, unlawfully looking upon Bathsheba, and planning to kill her husband, to obtain her, is a representative picture of the natural mind, urged on by some evil

passion, and seeking to make selfish use of some natural state of innocence, but divorcing it from its proper truth, on its own plane, in its own degree.

So, as men descend into sin, against their knowledge of good and evil, they begin to covet the state of moral good; to justify their evils and sins, and to separate the idea of moral good from its lawful husband, its accompanying literal truth. They admit that moral good, like Bathsheba, is a beautiful woman. And they desire her for themselves. But they would profess moral good, for some selfish purpose. They would violate the purity of innocent good, by perverting it to evil ends. What the libertine does, literally, in perverting innocent good, so does every evil principle, in the mind, perverting and adulterating every good and innocent tendency, by employing it for evil purposes.

MURDER.

And this sin includes murder, the killing of every true principle that stands in the way of the natural man's purpose.

For instance; a man has been in the habit of attending church. He feels that it is good and right for him to worship the Lord, and to receive instruction from His Holy Word. This external state of worship, well disposed towards God and man, is a form of moral good, a state of outward innocence. It may be ignorant, not knowing that genuine worship is in the heart, and in the daily life. Now, suppose this man's unholy personal ambition should come travelling through his mind, to satisfy its desires. He should feed it with rebuke and instruction. But suppose, instead of doing so, he lets it seize upon his outward affection for worship. Suppose he adulterates his innocent moral good of worship with his false principle of self-exaltation. Then, figuratively,

he seizes upon Bathsheba; and he kills Uriah, her husband, who stands in his way; *i.e.*, he rejects every literal truth which arises to rebuke his false principle.

Spiritually, we kill a man, when we destroy his faith and love towards the Lord, in which is his spiritual life. Murder is the spirit of hell, destroying everything that looks towards heaven. You kill a truth, in your own mind, or in another's, when you pervert and falsify it, to make it justify evils and sins. And, as all malice, anger and ill-will are but forms of the spirit of murder, so all falsity tends to destroy the life of truth. As adultery and murder are the most serious crimes against civil society, so spiritual adultery and murder are the most destructive crimes against spiritual life.

MARRIAGE AS IN THE LORD.

The principle of marriage is in the Lord, Himself, in the union of His Love and Wisdom. The principle of marriage pervades all creation, being most perfect in the highest forms of created life. And in the heavens, the highest angels are in the most perfect marriage. And, on earth, sincere marriage is a protection against evil influences, as all persons know, by experience, who have been in that state of life. But confirmed adultery is a surrender to the hells, followed by the perversion and murder of all good and truth in the mind.

HOW DAVID REPRESENTS THE LORD.

It has often been asked how it can be that David represented the Lord, Jesus Christ, and yet committed such crimes as those narrated in the context. Here we must recognize a principle of representation. The actions of a representative man (representing the assumed humanity of the Lord) do not represent the acts of the Lord, but the inherited tendencies of the assumed humanity

of Jesus, born from the natural mother, but never indulged in conduct. By means of these inherited tendencies to evil, in the assumed humanity, "He was tempted in all points, like as we are, yet without sin," because He always resisted these tendencies, and overcame them. David's crimes of adultery and murder represented the profoundest mental temptations of the assumed humanity; but the Lord never committed any sin.

DAVID'S CRIMES.

In considering David's crimes, we must remember that, in David's time, and among polygamists, though his sins were forbidden by the Decalogue, men had not then any spiritual discernment of the real quality of such evils. Men were often killed, on very small provocation, or even without any excuse. Of course, David understood something of the foulness of his sins. We can learn something of his feeling from the 51st Psalm, written just after these crimes. David was both king and judge; and so his decision against the supposed criminal was a legal judgment. His anger was strong, against the evil-doer.

THE MORAL.

The moral of this parable is a warning against theoretical virtue, expressed in indignation against the evils of other persons. When men will not see their own evils, being too conceited, or too over-sensitive to criticism, to receive direct warning, they are often taught indirectly, until they see themselves as others see them. When we are in a calm, judicial state of mind, sitting in judgment upon others, it is easy to see right and wrong in the abstract. And, as the apostle says, "He that judgeth another, judgeth himself, when he doeth

these things." It is one thing to see a sin to be a sin, abstractly; and it is another thing to see it to be our sin. In our own case, we are apt to lay the censure upon circumstances, or upon the conduct and influence of others, or upon inherited tendencies, or upon mere impulse, without serious intention.

But we are not generally so anxious to find excuses for the doings of others, especially if their evils annoy us.

THEORETICAL GOODNESS.

You notice that David was very indignant against the sinner in the parable. But it did not occur to him that he was the sinner. And only when the practical application was made to his own case, did he open his eyes to the real state of the case. And here we may see the important fact, that truth is of no practical importance to us, as long as it is only an abstract case. It becomes of use to us, in the degree in which it plainly says to us, "Thou art the man."

DAVID'S REPENTANCE.

As soon as David saw the application of the parable to himself, he admitted his evil, and acknowledged the sin as his own. And, bad as he was, he would have been worse, if he had resisted the truth when applied to himself. When a man is fond of discussing truth theoretically, and is in the habit of criticising others with it, but is impatient when he is criticised, he is not sincere in his regard for the truth. A sincerely good man hates evils, especially in himself; and he is glad to have his evil tendencies pointed out.

CRITICISM.

Many a noble lover of his fellow-men feels called upon to criticise, and to condemn, the evils of others,

as well as his own evils; but he does not enjoy such criticism of others; and he does not do it with any malignant motive.

Suppose a minister, in preaching, had to be very careful not to say anything which any one in the audience could apply to himself; of what use would such preaching be? A minister preaches best, when he recognizes his own evil tendencies, and applies the Divine Truth to them. Men are much alike in their natural tendencies.

Sin is evil; it is not merely chance, or circumstances, or fate, or misfortune; it is our own evil tendency, allowed to come out into our conduct. Therefore let us be able to say, "I have kept myself from mine iniquity." (Psalm xviii. 23.)

IV.

THE REVENGERS OF BLOOD.

I am, indeed, a widow woman, and my husband is dead. And thy handmaid had two sons; and they strove together in the field; and there was none to part them; but the one smote the other, and slew him.

And behold, the whole family is risen against thy handmaid: and they said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his brother, whom he slew: and we will destroy the heir, also: and so they shall quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband name or remainder upon the earth. . . . I pray thee, let the king remember Jehovah, thy God, that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son.—II. SAMUEL xiv. 5–7, 11.

RETALIATION.

THE spirit of retaliation is natural to the unregenerate mind. It belongs to the animal part of our nature. It creeps into our earliest feelings as little children. And it is one of the most difficult of evils to overcome.

Retaliation is the natural response of self-love to the attack of a supposed enemy. And, as long as a man is governed by self-love, he is swayed by the spirit of retaliation, expressing itself in some form of revenge. In fact, the natural man, when he speaks candidly, justifies the spirit of revenge. He feels no obligation to be good to those who have been unkind to him. He acknowledges, of course, as men have always acknowledged, in all ages, and in all countries, that it is evil to be unkind to those who have been kind to us; that ingratitude to a benefactor is among the meanest of sins; and yet he

claims a right to hate those who have done evil to him. "Blood for blood" is the cry of the unregenerate natural mind, at all times, and in all places. And the recognition of this feeling has been expressed in the common saying, "Revenge is sweet." A malignant man will follow another for years, and at great expense, to retaliate upon him, for some real or imagined injury; to "get even with him."

HATRED.

Thus, we find the unregenerate man candidly saying, "I love those who love me, and I hate those who injure me, or who stand in the way of my desires, and interfere with my plans." And, if we trace this feeling further, we shall see that it leads to hatred of all persons whom we envy, or whom we have injured. Singular as it may seem, and unreasonable as it is, it is, nevertheless, true, that, although we may hate those who have injured us, yet the strongest hatred is that which we bear towards those whom we have injured, and who have not injured us; and especially if we have secretly injured them; and most especially if we have, at the same time, pretended to be friendly.

REVENGE NATURAL TO FALLEN MEN.

These things show their infernal origin; and they seem to be very unlovely, when we see them in others. But, it must be candidly acknowledged that the tendency to revenge exists in the natural mind of every person, until it is driven out, through repentance and reformation on the part of the person, and his regeneration by the Lord. We all have such evil tendencies, in some degree; but we differ very much as to our indulgence, or resistance, to such tendencies. Every merely natural-minded man feels that it is enough for him to

do, to love his friends, and that he cannot avoid hating his enemies.

THE REVENGER OF BLOOD.

So strong was the spirit of revenge, in olden time, that there arose a custom of permitting the relatives of a murdered man to revenge his death by killing his murderer; and, if the murderer, himself, could not be reached, then his nearest relative might be killed, by the nearest relative of the murdered man.

It was regarded as the duty of the nearest male relation, or "next of kin," to avenge the death of his relative. And the next of kin was called "the revenger of blood" or the "avenger of blood." And, in time, the custom became worse and worse, until any relative of the murderer, however distant, and however innocent, might be slain by the revenger of blood, to retaliate for the first murder. A little innocent babe might be dragged from his mother's arms, and murdered before her eyes, to revenge the murder of some person unknown to him, committed by his most distant relative. And, to the extent to which we, to-day, harbor any ill-will, malice, or revenge towards any other person, we are indulging the very same spirit which drove the ancient Israelite to thirst for the blood of innocent persons, who happened to be relatives of murderers.

SPIRITUAL MURDER.

And if we do not resolutely resist the spirit of malignant anger, in all its forms, we shall often aim destructive blows at the life of the spiritual children, the growing affections and thoughts of a new and regenerate life, in ourselves, and in others. Malignant anger, in all its forms, whether open or secret, arises from the hells.

The spirit of Christianity is totally opposed to every form of malice and revenge. Jesus said to the multitudes, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For, if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" (Matthew v. 43-46.)

THE LITERAL IDEA.

In the literal sense, the text seems to have been a shrewd and successful parable, to secure David's pardon of Absalom for the murder of his half-brother, Amnon, who, himself, had committed an atrocious and unmanly crime against his half-sister, who was Absalom's full sister.

THE REPRESENTATIVE IDEA.

But the Israelitish dispensation was representative; and all the particulars of the Israelitish life and customs, as recorded in the Sacred Scriptures, are representative of the conditions and activities of the human mind, in its unregenerate states, and in its spiritual journey out of evil into good.

Many things were permitted to the Israelites, because they could not be led except by means of representatives and symbols.

RETALIATION.

For instance, to a cruel and blood-thirsty people, the law of retaliation seemed very just; and no higher form of law could have held them in any better order of life.

They were in such states of mind and life that fear could govern them, when love could not. And the law of retaliation, blood for blood, was the most external form of a certain spiritual law; that is, that our evils always bring upon ourselves the same evil that we intend and do to others. And the outward law, as it reaches the outward body of the man, is a representative of the inward law which exists in the mind's life.

EVIL REACTS.

Evil, of any kind, mentally indulged towards others, injures ourselves, because we make it a part of our own character. For instance, while we are hating another person, and secretly plotting against him, and doing all we can to injure him, in any way, we are even more surely plotting against our own spiritual life, and planning our own spiritual destruction; especially if we are seeking to injure one who has done good to us. And the same truths apply to the struggles of one principle against another, in our own minds. If our minds are divided, our natural tendencies to evil warring against the higher life of regeneration, which is beginning in our spiritual minds, every natural disposition to resist regeneration brings down upon its own head the penalty of its efforts to undo the Lord's work in our spirit.

THE MENTAL STRUGGLE.

The parable of our text presents a representative picture of the struggle between our natural mind and our spiritual mind.

For no man is regenerated without a struggle. The spirit of revenge, as a natural tendency, is born in every one of us. "Howbeit, this kind goeth not out, but by prayer and fasting." And it is our duty to learn the teachings of the Lord's Word, and the doctrines of the

church, from the Word, concerning these things; and then resolutely to bring these truths to bear upon our own evil tendencies, until the voice of the truth shall come before every evil tendency, as Nathan before David, not only preaching true theories, but also practically applying the truth to our actual feelings, thoughts, deeds, and words, and thus confronting each of them with the convincing argument, "Thou art the man!"

THE WIDOW.

In the parable, the widow, deprived of her husband, represents the mind in a state of natural affection, deprived of its protecting and guiding truth. There is, in this state of the natural mind, a disposition towards truth, but now separated from the truth. This is the state of the mind, in many persons, at the beginning of regeneration. But there are other states in the mind. When the husband, the truth, was alive in the mind, there were certain conditions developed, as outbirths of natural affection and thought.

THE TWO SONS.

There were two sons. The first son was the natural thought, which was the result of early states of life, when genuine truth was not known. But, as the mind opened to better things, a new birth was reached; *i.e.*, truth was born in the spiritual mind.

Thus, in one sense, the two sons represent the natural thought and the spiritual thought, or the natural mind and the spiritual mind, or the truth as seen in these two minds, or two parts of the mind. Our first states of thought are natural, and somewhat selfish, even if we know something of the truth. We may have the form of truth, without the spirit and life of truth. And then, states of mind arise, in which we seem to

lose sight of the truth; that is, the truth seems to leave us in a widowed condition of mind. But, at the same time, there are crude and false ideas in our natural thought, and some truth stored up in our spiritual thought. And when these come into contact, in the field of practical life, strife will follow, because they are opposed to each other. And, if we are seeking regeneration, the truth in our spiritual mind will smite and slay the false ideas in our natural thought; *i.e.,* will condemn and destroy them.

THE FAMILY.

But, when the new truth thus opposes the old false ideas, the "whole family," all the natural lusts and falsities of the natural mind, arise, and seek to destroy the new truth; to retaliate upon it, for its destruction of some false idea in the natural thought. But the mother, all that is good in the natural affection, appeals to the king, the ruling principle of the mind, to save her son.

For instance, in our unregenerate states, we look to the world and to self, and do not care for spiritual life. But, when regeneration has begun, by a marriage in our mind, of such truth and good as we have, our natural thought will still have many crude ideas, largely selfish and worldly; but our inward, spiritual mind will have some glimpses of genuine truth. And, when we come to act, in daily life, there will be a strife between the self-interest and worldly policy of our natural thought, and the clear principles of our spiritual thought.

If both our natural and spiritual thought were in good order, there would be no occasion for any strife between them, nor for the death of either of them. Each could do its own work, on its own plane of life. But, when there are false ideas in our natural thought, these must

be cast out by the spiritual truth. But, as soon as we determine that our selfish natural thoughts should be cast out, as false, the whole family of our natural tendencies to evil cry out for blood, and demand the destruction of the truth, which comes to destroy false ideas. Thus, the false ideas and the evil tendencies are banded together, as one family, for mutual offence and defence, and to prevent the regeneration of the mind.

ILLUSTRATION.

As an illustration, take the feeling and thought of revenge. The natural thought believes in revenge. And the natural will desires revenge. But the spiritual thought sees that revenge is infernal in its character. Then there will be a strife in the mind, as soon as any practical action is needed in the case. This practical action is the field, in which the two sons strive against each other. Suppose some one has done us an injury, and returned evil for the good we have done him. What shall we do? Shall we hate him, and seek to retaliate upon him? Our natural mind argues that we shall revenge ourselves. But our spiritual mind, seeing in the light of spiritual truth, exposes the infernal character of all revenge, and, in fact, of all malignant anger, in every form, including envy, which is a form of malice.

In the light of this spiritual truth, we see that all our angry, envious, and revengeful feelings and thoughts are evil, and are infernal in their character. The grand truth of Christian love, love even to those who hate us and persecute us, arises, in its might, and strikes down the natural falsity of retaliation. And now, perhaps, we think we have secured ourselves in goodness, and have expelled all our envious and angry feelings and thoughts.

THE STRIFE.

But no! there is more work to do, before we shall be secure. In our thought, the truth has stricken down the falsity; and we see what is good and what is evil. But, behind that apparently dead falsity, there is a "whole family" of evil affections and false thoughts, which are at once aroused to activity. For, all our evils and falsities have a common origin and character, and they are all banded together as one family; and, if we smite one of them, we strike a blow at them all. And they all arise, and take the part of the falsity that we have put down. They come trooping up, out of our unregenerate nature, and cry for the death of the spiritual truth, which dares to molest one of their family. For they know that the moment the spiritual truth gains a foothold in the practical conduct of life, it will increase in power, until all evils and falsities are cast out. And so these evils and falsities fight for their own life, when they take the part of any member of their family.

FALSE ARGUMENT.

And, of course, they argue their right to destroy that truth, because it has destroyed one of their relatives, one of the great family of falsities.

For instance; though we have reasoned ourselves out of the idea of direct revenge for injuries done to us, or supposed to have been done, yet all our natural cunning, our worldly policy, our self-conceit, our over-sensitiveness, our pride, our envy, and every other tendency to evil, will join with every false thought in our natural mind, to attempt to kill the practical influence of the spiritual truth, and to prevent it from controlling our actual conduct. Many pretended reasons will arise in the natural thought, to show that, at least in our present instance, it is our duty to punish the one who has injured

us, or who is trying to injure us; that the public good demands it; or that we must put the person in such a position that he cannot do any more evil. By means of such arguments, the family of our natural evils and falsities, as revengers of blood, attempt to destroy the actual use of the spiritual truth which we have theoretically adopted. And the cunning of these evils and falsities is shown in the fact that, in a proper sense, some of their arguments are true. But our evils are using them for a bad purpose.

INDIFFERENCE IN INJURY.

And it is necessary to remember, also, that, to be indifferent as to whether our words or doings injure others, is as bad, in spirit, as to intend to injure them; for indifference shows an entire absence of Christian love. We always carefully guard the interests of those whom we love; and the spirit of Christianity requires us to love, and carefully to guard, the spiritual interests of all men.

CHRISTIAN LOVE.

Christian love requires us to act for the spiritual good of those who do evil to us, and to work in such manner as will be most likely to reach them. It is necessary to remember that it is just as evil, in us, to be revengeful in return for an injury, as it was for the evil-doer to do the injury to us.

Putting down all revengeful feelings and thoughts, and entering into the glorious experience of Christian love, we can ascend the mountain of human character, far above the dust and smoke and clouds that hover about the lower planes of sensuous life; we can rise to grander heights of spiritual life, into whose sacred precincts the infernal spirit of anger never can intrude.

RE-UNITING THE TWO SONS.

Enlightened rational thought can finally unite the two sons, the natural thought and the spiritual thought, and make them co-operate in harmony, until, both in our inward and our outward thoughts, we are guided by "the self-evidencing reason of love." And, in this high state, we look upon those who injure us as persons in misery, needing our help.

THE EVIL-DOER THE REAL SUFFERER.

For the real sufferer is not the one to whom the injury is done, but the one who intends and does the injury; for, upon the doer the injury recoils with double power. He injures his own spiritual life. He joins with the infernal spirits, in making himself very miserable at heart. And, if he succeeds in making us angry and revengeful, in return, he drags us down with him. But, as we rise above the spirit of retaliation, and return love for hatred, and good for evil, we rise far beyond any real injury; and then, the intended injury becomes a means of our higher development; a temptation, permitted for our spiritual good. "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew v. 10.)

V.

THE ESCAPED PRISONER.

Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle; and behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver. And, as thy servant was busy, here and there, he was gone.—I. KINGS xx. 39, 40.

INDULGING FALSITY.

No falsity should ever be allowed its freedom in our mind. For no false principle can ever produce genuine good. When the truth is admitted into our mind, its coming should involve the expulsion of every idea seen to be false. Every falsity should be taken prisoner by our rational faculty, and held in bondage, until disposed of, and rendered incapable of doing further injury. And, knowing a principle to be false, our further indulgence of it is at the peril of our spiritual life.

THE REPRESENTATIVE SENSE.

Israel represented the Lord's church. And the enemies of Israel represented the evil and false principles, which are the enemies of the church, and of every man of the church. In a representative age, Israel was commanded to subdue and exterminate certain enemies, to represent the necessary subjugation and extermination of evils and falsities, in the mind of every man of the church. The Divine command to Israel, to destroy

their enemies, seems very hard. But, in all these things, we need to remember the representative character of Israel, and of the Scripture record.

Truly, these things were hard; but they were the Lord's dealings with very hard men, who could not otherwise have been prevented from becoming even worse than they were. To-day, even in the most advanced Christian countries, we recognize the necessity of dealing differently with different kinds of men. Good men have their freedom, but criminals are imprisoned, and even put to death. And proper prison-discipline is good for the bad men, themselves, as well as for the community.

The laws given to Israel were in a form best adapted to such a people. We cannot read the whole case, as the Lord saw it. But we have abundant evidence that "The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." Whatever could have been done, to save such men from worse evils, the Lord did. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

ADAPTATION.

The Lord's mercy, in reaching each man, must take form according to the man's conditions of character. Let us illustrate.

What is the Lord's mercy to a sound and healthy eye? Surely, it is a full supply of light. But what is the Lord's mercy to an injured, or diseased, eye? Surely, it is a tempering of the light to the conditions of the eye that is to use the light. What is mercy to the mangled arm? If it cannot be saved, mercy would cut it off, that the rest of the body may not die, also. The science and art of surgery are not butchery, but mercy. And what is mercy to a bad child? Not indulgence, but discipline. So is it, in regard to all the adaptations of

the Lord's mercies to the character and conditions of men. What cannot be restored to order, must be cut off, to preserve the general life. This was the Lord's direction, when He said, "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. . . . And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."

THE INTERPRETATION.

The parable of our text relates to our conflicts against our evil and false principles, during temptations. In its supreme inward meaning, it refers to these struggles in the assumed humanity of our Lord, during the process of glorification, which united the Humanity with the Divinity. In the text, the battle is the temptation. The "man" who brought the prisoner, and said "Keep this man," etc., is the Lord. During the temptation, the Lord opens our rational faculty, our ability to see truth as truth; and He shows us the real character of some false principle that has been fighting against our spiritual life. He says, to our rational faculty, "Keep this man," as a prisoner; *i.e.,* hold this false principle in subjection, and do not allow it to influence your thoughts and feelings, or it will destroy your spiritual life. If you give it freedom to do its work against your mind, it will undermine your spiritual life. It is false and infernal. And you must either destroy it, or be destroyed by it. It is a question of its life or your life. If you grow careless about it, and forget to keep strict watch over it, it will escape from your rational control; and it will go on, within your mind, doing its infernal work fighting against your spiritual life. Thus our Lord ever cautions us to beware of both the secret and open influence of a false principle, which is in our natural thought.

THE TALENT OF SILVER.

"Keep this man; if by any means he be missing (*i.e.*, gains his freedom), then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver." The talent was the largest weight in use in Israel. A talent of silver was a large amount, worth, probably, more than two thousand dollars of our money. By the payment of a talent of silver, the man condemned to death for allowing the prisoner to escape, could redeem his life. In a good sense, silver represents spiritual truth; but, in a bad sense, silver would be truth falsified, or falsity. For all good things, when abused, or employed for evil purposes, change their representative signification to the opposite. Thus, in the text, as the man is condemned, and must pay, or give up, the silver, the silver must represent falsity. And a weight represents something of the affections as distinguished from a measure, which represents the thoughts, or the intellectual part of the mind. The literal Hebrew of the text is, "thou shalt weigh a talent of silver." To weigh, or pay, a talent of silver, to redeem the man's life, is, then, to give up his love of the false principle which threatens his spiritual life.

SEEING A FALSITY.

Thus, if the Lord, by means of His revealed truth, opens our eyes to see the infernal character of a false principle, our spiritual life depends upon our holding this false principle in subjection, and destroying its practical influence in our life. And, to save our spiritual life, we must either know the character of a false principle, and hold it under subjection to enlightened rationality, or we must give up any affection for such a false principle. For an external false thought will do no permanent injury to our spirit, if it is not allowed to influence our will, or our actual conduct.

Almost all the modern systems of religious doctrine contain many false ideas, about the character of God, and the spiritual life of man; and yet the Lord leads men to heaven by means of these systems of doctrine, because men can hold the false ideas in their memory only, and not in their hearts, or in their lives. There are many false ideas in men's minds, held practically harmless, because not used to justify evils. The literal sense of the Scriptures is full of ideas which are not true, spiritually, but true only symbolically and representatively. But no man will lose his spiritual life by believing, literally, all symbolic statements of the Scriptures, provided he does not use such ideas to justify his evils.

ILLUSTRATION.

For instance, it is not really true that God is angry, or partial, or vindictive, as He is sometimes represented to be. These statements are appearances of truth, to the natural-minded, unenlightened man. But the spiritually enlightened man knows that God is love, and that He has no unlovely qualities. But the man who cannot be led by love, must be held by fear. And he must believe in the kind of a God who can hold him under control. Thus, even if a false notion remains in our memory, we can redeem our life by paying a talent of silver; that is, by giving up any love of false principles.

For, then, though we may have false ideas as to facts, yet we shall not feel and act from any false principle of life. He who obeys the Lord's law as intelligently as he knows how to do so; and who obeys the law because it is the Lord's law, is doing all he can now do, to live according to the Lord's will. And, though he may hold in his memory, and in his outward thought, many false notions as to facts, yet he will act from a true principle of love and obedience to the Lord.

THE RULING LOVE.

His ruling love will be good; and finally it will be fully enlightened. For the ruling love is an absolute monarch in the mind, keeping all things of its mental empire under its control.

The more a man obeys the Lord's will, as he understands it, the more clearly he will come to understand it. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." But the law converts those who obey it.

THE LORD'S PRISONER.

The Lord commanded Israel to destroy certain enemies. And when the king of Israel had captured one of these enemies, he should have held that enemy as the Lord's prisoner, subject to the Lord's commandment. So, in the work of regeneration, we are to do our Lord's will. Whenever we see the falsity of any principle, we are to hold it under subjection, as the Lord's prisoner, to be dealt with according to the Lord's commandments. We are to show no apparent mercy to any false principle. For either our life or its life must be destroyed. Once captured, as a prisoner, no falsity is to be allowed to escape, and regain its freedom, to fight against our spiritual life.

Consider the immense importance of this practical point. In our more open states, we are given some perception of the quality, or character, of the false principles which exist in our natural thought. Like Moses, we are led up into the mountain, that we may see the pattern of what our life should be; and then we are to go down, again, to the plain of practical daily life, there to build our temple according to the pattern that was shown us in the mount.

It was the folly of Ahab to allow his haughty, insulting, and blaspheming enemy to escape, to do more harm to Israel.

SPIRITUAL FOLLY.

And how much more foolish it is, in us, to allow any false principle to remain free to attack us, after we have once seen its infernal character. For instance, our natural pride has taken us into very much trouble. Perhaps a temptation arises, during which we see that an utterly false principle underlies our natural pride. Why, then, should we ever allow that pride to influence us, any more? If the Lord has revealed to us its real character, He has, in the midst of the battle of temptation, delivered this pride, as a prisoner, into the keeping of our rationality. And He will require it, at our hand.

THE POINT OF DANGER.

The real danger does not exist so much in our inward thought, as in the practical doings of our outward daily life. While our attention is fixed upon the character of the falsity, we hold it fast, as a prisoner. But the real danger comes when we are "busy, here and there," in the details of daily life. In such times, even a known falsity is apt to slip away, beyond our rational control, to use its evil influence, again, in the battle of life. Our mental Benhadad acknowledges that the God of Israel is a God of the hills, the high-places of the mind; but the king still expects to conquer us, by fighting against us in the level plain of common life.

We have need, then, to guard our prisoner, while we are "busy, here and there," lest the actual influence of an acknowledged falsity be allowed to creep into our feelings, thoughts, and conduct; lest we theoretically denounce a falsity, and yet allow it practically to influence us. There is a vast difference between theoretical and practical virtue. "And let not him who

girdeth on his armor," in the beginning of the war, "boast himself as he that putteth it off," after an actual destruction of his enemy.

FALSE PRINCIPLES.

It is a false principle that the good things of this life are more to be desired than spiritual blessings. It is a falsity that money is the one thing needed for happiness. It is a false idea that reputation is more important than character. Now, if we once clearly see that these notions are false, the Lord has handed them over to us, as prisoners, to be kept subject to His commands. If, to-day, we see that they are foes, why should we, to-morrow, allow them their freedom in our minds?

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER.

Spiritual strength of character is in willingness to do what is good and to resist what is evil. Sometimes, weakness of purpose, and lack of strength of character, are mistaken for mercy and generosity. Strength is not in the soft-heartedness which cannot do what seems hard, even when necessary; which cannot cut off an arm to save a life; which cannot rebuke sin, to save the soul of the sinner. Why are social and business life so full of frauds? Simply because there are so many weak men and women, who have not the determined purpose to resist temptations; who accustom themselves to indulgence, until they are not willing to put away a principle which they know to be false and evil.

GENUINE NEW-CHURCH MEN.

If the New-Jerusalem Church is ever to show the practical fruits of new truths, it must be by developing a race of men with more spiritual courage; men who

will be faithful in all the walks of life; men who will live in a high and pure atmosphere of integrity, personal and official; men who can promptly say no to every false and seductive influence that cunningly besets them; high, broad, full men, who, seeing the falsity of any principle, will hold it a prisoner with a grasp that it cannot escape. Give us such men, who scorn all fraud and meanness; men who stand ready to meet any crisis; men who can stand as beacon-lights in the dangerous ocean of weaklings; give us such men, or the meanness, the sensuousness, and the thousand forms of modern fraud, will sap the foundation of our country, and of our race. And where should we expect to find such noble men, but in the Church of the New Jerusalem, where the truths of spiritual life are known. We are living in dangerous times, in the breaking up of old ideas, and the seed-time of new principles. But crises are the means of developing strong character. A crisis brings not only a warning, but also an opportunity. These are times which try men's principles. Weak men follow the current of popular customs; but men of spiritual strength test every influence which seeks to control their feelings, thoughts, and actions. And when they clearly see the false character of any popular principle, they hold it down, as the Lord's prisoner, subject to His commandments.

They know that every false principle leads to spiritual death. And they are not willing to lose an advantage, once gained, over a false principle. Once seen, and driven from their deliberate plans, it must also be driven from their outward thought, and from their actual conduct.

OPENNESS TO TRUTH.

Truth is abundant; but every man must earnestly endeavor to keep his heart, and his intellect, and his

conduct, in a state receptive of truth, and ready to adopt it, when it comes to him.

Many a truth shines upon a mind that is not open to receive it. We all recognize the fact that, at some times, we are much more open to receive spiritual truth than at others. It is so in a congregation. The Lord's Word is read, for spiritual instruction; the singing appeals to our affections; and the sermon addresses our rational thought. But, on any Sunday, there will be some persons who are especially interested in the services, and some who are comparatively indifferent. And those who were indifferent, last Sunday, may be especially open, to-day. And the one who is open-minded, to-day, is the one who will receive something, to-day. "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." (Matthew v. 6.)

Woe to the man whose spiritual earnestness has been exhausted. He is as a mass of ashes, after the fire has burned out. Especially in these days, do we need earnestness of purpose, to keep down the cunning false principles, which meet us at every turn, in social, political, and commercial life.

"I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies. . . . The proud have forged a lie against me, but I will keep Thy precepts with my whole heart." (Psalm cxix. 59, 69.)

VI.

THE AMBITIOUS THISTLE.

The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son, to wife. And there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trod down the thistle.—II. KINGS xiv. 9.

THE SELF-ASSURANCE OF THE NATURAL MIND.

THE thought of the natural senses cannot comprehend spiritual truth. And yet, throughout the history of man, the natural mind, seeing in the light of the natural senses, has attempted to penetrate the mysteries of man's spiritual life. But no such effort has been successful; and it never can be; for spiritual things are visible in their own light, only.

THE LITERAL STORY.

In the days when Judah and Israel were separated, Amaziah, king of Judah, having conquered the Edomites, and thirsting for greater military glory, sent a message to Jehoash, king of Israel, challenging Israel to combat. But Jehoash declined the challenge, and advised Amaziah to tarry at home, and not to meddle with others, to his own injury. And, to express his contempt for the army of Judah, Jehoash introduced into his reply the parable of our text, contrasting the mean and worthless thistle, which any large beast could tread down, with the grand, towering cedar of Lebanon, deeply and firmly rooted in the earth, and withstanding the storms of centuries.

Amaziah, not heeding the advice of Jehoash, insisted on making war; but, in the battle that followed, he and his army were utterly routed.

The lessons of the literal sense of the context are plain and useful. In the first place, it is never safe to provoke a quarrel. In principle, it is not right to quarrel. But, even if ambitious and quarrelsome persons seek quarrels from policy, they often meet unexpected results. Therefore, both good principle and prudent policy would induce men to be peaceable. Secondly, it is never safe to under-estimate the power of an enemy; for our mistake gives the enemy a great advantage over us, and leaves us unprepared for what we have to meet. One of the best proofs of ability, in a leader, or in a man's management of his own affairs, is his habit of carefully and accurately estimating his own resources, and also the difficulties of the work before him. The most successful managers are those who always make an allowance for contingencies, and who never permit anything to take them by surprise, or to catch them unprepared.

In all the practical affairs of life, weak men and careless men are taken by surprise, and found unprepared. They take things for granted; they suppose that, somehow, things will come out all right; they guess that their ways will do. But they do not carefully see that things shall be brought out all right.

Thirdly, another lesson of the text is the danger of over-estimating our own abilities. Many a young man, unduly exalted by a little local fame as an athlete, sets out upon a journey through the continent, expecting to excel in the wide world, as he excelled in his own village. And generally such a man soon returns to his home, humbled by defeat. "Let not him who girdeth on his harness, boast himself as he that putteth it off." (I. Kings xx. 11.) Many a man who can do something fairly well, ruins himself by attempting too much.

"Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs xvi. 18.) Those who have been prosperous, should be grateful and modest. If they become proud by success, they turn a blessing into a curse.

Of course, a man must make an effort, or he will never succeed. But every man should seek to know what his own capacities are, and not fail by attempting too much, or by under-estimating the difficulties of the work. Over-confidence in himself has induced many a man to be careless, when by proper care and work he could have succeeded; as, in the old fable of the race between the hare and the tortoise, the plodding industry of the slowly-moving tortoise outstripped the careless ability of the speedy hare.

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING.

All these things are suggestive; for the spiritual sense of the text treats of similar principles, applied to our spiritual life.

"The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son, to wife. And there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trod down the thistle." Mount Lebanon, with its grand forest of gigantic cedar-trees, represented the spiritual man, or the spiritual mind of man, with its far-reaching rational knowledges of spiritual truth. Cedars, which are evergreen trees, denote rational thoughts. The cedars of Lebanon represented the knowledges of spiritual truth, rationally seen and understood. Thistles, from their noxious character, and their dangerous prickly points, represent the false principles which spring from evils. As the thistle, once allowed a foot-hold in a field, is very difficult to exterminate, so the false principles which spring from evil

affections, cling to our minds, with great tenacity. The son of a thistle is a false thought, springing from a false principle. The daughter of a cedar of Lebanon is the affection for spiritual truth.

THE MARRIAGE.

To give the daughter of the cedar to be the wife of the son of the thistle, is to join our affection for truth to some false thought of the natural mind. And the attempt to effect such a union is constantly made by the natural mind. Affection needs the light of truth. It longs for the truth. Our Lord is cultivating, in us, an affection for spiritual truth; and He seeks to unite this affection with our knowledge of truth, in our understanding, and thus to lead us into the heavenly marriage of goodness and truth. But the evil spirits, who associate with our unregenerate tendencies, seek to prevent this heavenly marriage. They try to induce our growing affection to fix itself upon the falsities of the senses, and to love them as truths. They seek to make us expect to be wise in spiritual things from our natural senses.

The idea of marriage is introduced into the literal parable, in order to illustrate the subject of equality; for, by Oriental custom, he who asked another for his daughter, must be at least his equal in social rank. And, in the spiritual sense, we see the arrogance of the natural mind, filled with false notions of the senses, imagining itself fully equal, in spiritual degree, to the inward affection for spiritual truth. There is a continued effort of the sensuous mind to drag down the spiritual part of the mind, to the low level of the senses, as represented by the low and miserable thistle, seeking to wed the lofty cedar of Lebanon.

Our senses suggest that we should live for this world,

and that we should be free to feel, to think, and to do as we are naturally inclined. Such anarchistic thoughts are the sons of the prolific thistle. But our Lord guards and protects our affection for spiritual truth, our daughter of the cedar of Lebanon, from any wretched marriage-union with the thistle-falsities of our senses. But, in such protection, He needs our co-operation, in learning His truth, and in keeping His commandments.

The history of the church is full of painful examples of the falsities of the senses forming mis-union with men's love of truth. Witness the number of persecutions of conscientious heretics. How many loving men have done most unlovely deeds, because convinced of their virtue and necessity, under the cunning arguments of false notions as to the character and plans of God. And similar misalliances occur in our individual mental life, in which our sensuous falsities, springing up from our evil tendencies, drag down to their low level, whatever we have of love for spiritual truth. That young maiden-love, which should be given to a noble husband, her spiritual equal, a grand truth of spiritual life, is drawn into misery in an unholy union with some false notion of our natural senses. We lose sight of the real truth, and wed our affection to some cunning falsity.

EXAMPLES.

Perhaps, for instance, we have some love for truth, but we join it with the dreadful falsity of self-intelligence, under whose direction we imagine that we are fully capable of understanding the truths of human life, without any revelation from the Lord. Perhaps we imagine that natural science has all necessary truth, and that there is no spiritual life, or spiritual world. Or, perhaps, with still more subtle power, a false principle has led us to acknowledge a God, and a spiritual world,

and to have some love of the truths which we know, and yet to glory in our own intelligence; and to forget that there is not, in ourselves, and of ourselves, any ability to distinguish between truth and falsity, and goodness and evil, except when led and taught by our Lord, in the revelation of His laws.

Many times, although we have some love of truth, yet some miserable falsity of the senses holds our affection for truth in an unholy union, and renders it practically unfruitful of good. Perhaps in actual life, we continually under-estimate the power of evil, acting upon our wrong inclinations and tendencies. Perhaps we over-estimate our strength, and forget our entire dependence upon our Lord. Our Lord teaches us that all good is in Him and from Him. And if we keep this truth always in mind, we shall accept the good, and use it as the Lord's gift, without imagining that we are good, apart from the Lord. And, on the other hand, if we remember that all evil is from the hells, we can see and acknowledge our own tendencies to evil, and then ascribe these to the hells, and reject them from our feelings, thoughts, and conduct. In this way, we shall not appropriate evils as our own. But, if we love evils, as our own, we make ourselves responsible for them. And if we claim good as our own, we separate it from its source in the Lord, and thus deprive it of its heavenly quality.

You notice many young men who have acquired bad habits. If you warn one of them of these habits, he may reply, "I am not a slave to my habits. I can stop these things, whenever I please. Do you suppose I have no strength of mind?" And what is the usual result? The young man over-estimates his own spiritual strength, and he under-estimates the subtle power of evil.

And some of us have lived long enough to see a great

many such men go down into premature graves, wrecked physically, mentally, and morally, and probably spiritually, also, and leaving behind them bad names, bad examples, and bad influence. While such men flatter themselves that they can cease their bad habits, at any time, they forget that they are daily growing weaker, morally, by indulgence, while their evils are growing stronger by the same indulgence.

PROMPT RESISTANCE.

The only safe time to throw off an evil, is as soon as we see it to be an evil. Every indulgence of a known evil is but a new rivet in the chain that binds our manhood in slavery to the hells. Forewarned, we are forearmed. A great point is gained, when we know the practical differences between good and evil. Our evil tendencies are like fires: before they gather headway, a little of the water of truth may quench them, but, later, they grow beyond control, and destroy our mental house. Evil influences are always urging us to quarrel with the higher life that the Lord is developing within us. But, if we could lift the veil which hides the objective spiritual world; and if we could see the origin of our bad impulses; we would acknowledge our folly, in heeding the malicious and insane suggestions of evil spirits.

Picture to yourselves a man under the influence of evil passions. He is acted upon by evil spirits. He stands near the open door of some hell; and the foul influences rush out, and push him on, to do their bidding. Above him there is an open door to heaven; and the angels are beckoning him to the celestial beatitudes. But he has turned his back to the heavens, and his face to the hells. Why can he not recognize his own wretched condition? Because some false principle has possession of his understanding, and has encouraged

his tendencies to evil. If he has any love of truth, that daughter of the cedar of Lebanon has been wedded by the son of the miserable thistle, and she is wofully misdirected.

The universe is full of good; but a man must be in condition to appreciate, and to adopt it, before he can be fully blessed by it. The earth is full of food for the body, but the body must be in condition to digest and assimilate its food.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

The Lord always supplies, to every man, all the good and the truth which the man is ready to use, without abusing. "No good will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." Men live on different planes of life. Each man is open to a certain degree of life, on a certain plane. And each is satisfied when his open faculties are filled. He does not feel the lack of those things to which he is not open. It never occurs to a worm to cry out "Oh that I had wings like a dove." The mole loves to travel under ground; this is his life. But it would be death to almost any other beast. Thus, the Lord, in His infinite love, "opens His hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing," each according to its form of life.

And it is so with the principles of our mental life: the Lord develops every spiritual faculty that we are willing to have opened in us, with our co-operation. And in many ways, seen and unseen, He protects us from false principles and false notions, as far as we are willing to be thus protected. He guards and guides our affections, so that they may not be imposed upon by the falsities of our natural and sensuous thought.

And, among all the safeguards that protect us, the most important is our daily life of obedience to His

commandments. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." (John vii. 17.) "He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."

TREADING DOWN THE THISTLE.

In the text, although the thistle proposed marriage with the cedar, yet it is said, "And there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trod down the thistle." Beasts, as forms of life, represent affections. For every consciously living thing is a form of some affection. These affections may be either good or bad. A wild beast is mentioned, as wild, in the sense of free, and not in the sense of bad. A wild deer, for instance, is the representative of good natural affection. The merely natural man is like the beast, in his passions, etc. A man is distinguished by his spirituality, his inward ability to see and know truth and good.

A good wild beast trod down the thistle; *i.e.,* a good natural affection prevented the falsity from uniting with the affection for spiritual truth. When the love of spiritual truth is developing within us, and the falsities of the natural senses seek to attract us, and to deceive us, as a bad man to wed an innocent virgin, then the Lord protects us through our love of good, in our natural mind, our practical desire to keep the commandments of the Lord.

The beast was in Lebanon; *i.e.,* the natural love of good was united with the knowledge of spiritual truth. The natural mind is willing to keep the commandments, for the sake of a higher life. And this love of good, on the natural plane, determined to keep the Lord's commandments, is our great protection against the subtle influences of falsities. It leads us to test every suggestion by its agreement with our Lord's practical commandments. The natural man tries to understand spir-

itual truth, from the standpoint of the senses. This is the camel trying to pass through the needle's eye; natural science, expecting to penetrate the fine mysteries of spiritual life. As the Jews contemptuously asked concerning Jesus, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" so the merely natural-minded man is always doubting the existence of anything beyond the natural senses, and refusing to believe that there is anything that he does not comprehend by his senses.

Now, practically, who is always prepared for the emergencies of life? Surely, he who understands the two worlds in which men live; who lives upon known spiritual principles; who co-operates with the Divine Providence; who "prays as if everything depended upon the Lord, and works as if everything depended on himself;" who, in all things, marries his love of truth to a competent knowledge and rational understanding of truth; and who, in a useful life of keeping the Lord's commandments, finds not only protection from the subtle falsities of the senses, but also a fulness of spiritual life, in "the measure of a man, that is, of an angel." "Great peace have they who love Thy law, and nothing shall cause them to offend." (Psalm cxix. 165.)

VII.

THE WASTED VINEYARD.

My well-beloved hath a vineyard, in a horn, the son of oil. And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof; and planted it with the choicest vine; and built a tower in the midst of it; and also made a wine-press therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt Me and My vineyard. What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now, go to: I will tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: and I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant: and He looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.—ISAIAH v. 1–7.

THE CORRUPTED CHURCH.

THE church, planted by the Lord, is corrupted by men. The Divine Love created men with capacity to receive, and to enjoy, spiritual life. The Divine Wisdom supplied to men all necessary truth, that they might know and understand their own origin, organization, and destiny. And the Divine Power communicated to men all necessary ability to walk in the way of spiritual life. All that Divine Love, Wisdom, and Power could

do for men, they have done, and are still doing. And yet men have perverted and corrupted the life which the Lord gave them. And such perversion and corruption have resulted in human misery.

The parable of the text is a representative picture of the Lord's dealings with His church, and of the corruption of the church, in the lives of its people. In the literal sense of the text, the reference is to the perverseness of the Israelitish dispensation. But, in the inward spiritual meaning, the reference is to the fallen state of the human mind, itself. And the particular reference is to the declining states of the First Christian Church.

THE VINEYARD.

The " Beloved," or the " Well-beloved," who had the vineyard, is the Lord, Jesus Christ, in His Divine Humanity. As relating to the Lord, the text represents the conjunction of the celestial and the spiritual heavens, by the Lord; and the conjunction, in the Divine Humanity, of the good of faith, which is spiritual, with the good of love, which is celestial. For whatever stages of progress are passed through, in the mind of a man, or in the human race as a whole, were also experienced in the Humanity of the Lord, between the birth and the glorification of Jesus Christ. He passed through all forms and phases of human good; and by means of the hereditary tendencies to evil in the natural, assumed humanity, He met and overcame all forms of human evil.

The vineyard of the Lord is the Spiritual Church, in which love to the neighbor is the ruling principle. Grapes represent the goods of charity, that is, the practical good works which are done in the spirit of charity, or love to the neighbor; for our works are the outworking of our actual principles of life.

" My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill," or, literally, " in a horn, the son of oil." A horn was a common Oriental term to express a high, pointed piece of land, a knoll projecting upward, like a horn. Such a piece of land, catching a large amount of sunlight and heat, was very productive. Oil, from its warmth and smoothness, represents the principle of love. A son of love is something derived from love, as an outbirth of love. In the Spiritual Church, represented by Israel, a son represented the intellectual side of the mind, devoted to truth, as distinguished from daughters, or affections. A " son of oil" is a truth derived from love, such truth as we comprehend and adopt because we love what is good and true. That the Lord had " a vineyard in a horn, the son of oil," representatively means that the Lord planted His Spiritual Church in the human mind, in the understanding, or intellect, where it can be comprehended by every man who will love what is good and true, and who will live by the truth.

The Lord established a church, full of good and true principles, communicated to men by means of the holy Word.

WHAT THE LORD DID.

And, in establishing such a church, the Lord, in His Divine Providence, did all that could be done, to bring the church, as a vineyard, into a prosperous and fruitful condition. " He fenced" it, with the plain truths of the Decalogue, commandments for daily life, which, as a fence, or wall, can protect the church from evil influences. The letter of the Divine Word, speaking to man's natural senses, is a fence, or wall, of protection to the spiritual truths of the inward sense. As the shell of the nut protects the kernel; as the walls of the human chest protect the heart and lungs; as the walls of the skull protect the brain; so the letter of the Scriptures

is a wall of protection to the higher and spiritual truths of the internal sense.

And, in the same way, the teachings of the literal sense of the Bible, and especially the Ten Commandments, stand as a fence, or wall, to protect man's spirit from the assaults of evil. No matter how simple-minded a man may be, or how uneducated as to books, if he keeps the Lord's commandments, as he understands them, he will find practical protection against the harmful fallacies of the senses, and against the subtle sophistries of infidels and of evil spirits.

In establishing His church, the Lord has fenced it about with the Ten Commandments. (Or, if the word here used is rendered "digged," instead of "fenced," as in the Revised Version of the Bible, the digging into the earth means opening up the natural mind, and examining and investigating its conditions.)

STONES.

And He has gathered out the stones that would interfere with the grape-vines; *i.e.*, the false principles of the senses, which would stand in the way of spiritual growth. In a good sense, a stone represents a natural truth. But, when a natural truth lies in the mind, like a stone in the vineyard, in such way as to interfere with the growth of the vine of spiritual truth, that truth must be in a perverted form, and practically turned into a falsity.

THE VINE.

The Lord planted in His vineyard "a noble vine," a principle of pure spiritual truth, the principle of love to the neighbor, as a ruling motive. Such a principle, growing in the thought, is represented by a grape-vine, growing in the vineyard. And its practical fruits, when carried into the affections, and into the daily life, are

the good grapes, the good works of practical love to the neighbor, which is spiritual charity.

THE TOWER.

In the midst of the church, as a vineyard, the Lord built a tower. A tower, reaching above the surface of the earth, and affording a higher standpoint, and a more extended view, represents interior truth, seen from a higher or more inward standpoint. This tower was in the midst, or centre, that is, in the inward thought. Thus the Lord gives to men an inward capacity to see truth in its higher and more interior forms and aspects. He gives men rationality, the capacity to see truth in its own spiritual light, and to comprehend it.

THE WINE-PRESS.

And the Lord made, or dug, a "wine-press," or wine-vat, in the vineyard. A wine-press, by which the grapes are pressed, and the juice is extracted for making wine, represents the rational faculty, by and in which, during temptation, the spiritual wine of truth is drawn from the good works of practical life. The vine, itself, represents the truth, operating in man's mind, and producing good fruits. But those good fruits, or good works, may be made to yield a still higher form of truth, represented by wine. For instance; the Lord plants a vine in your mind, when, through His Word, He teaches you that you should act towards others from the principle of love to your neighbor. You hold that truth as a doctrine, at first. If you hold it as a living vine, a growing principle, you will act from it. Then, the good works which you do, from that principle, are spiritual grapes. But you may go further. You may get the very spirit and life of that true principle, in a more confirmed form. Temptations arise, and try your faith in the principle.

The pressure of rational thought reveals the spirit of the truth, the natural juice of the grape. But that juice must go through trials, before it can become pure wine. There are some things in it which cannot endure forever. These impurities must be cast down, and put away, in the fermentation. So, in your mind, though you have acted from love to the neighbor, yet in that action, there will be some impurities, something of self, to put away. Temptations will come; and your fidelity to the principle will be tried. If you endure the trial, and stand steadfast, the natural juice of the mental grape will be purified; and the impurities, like dregs, being cast down, the truth, in you, will be the pure wine of spiritual truth, confirmed in the life, through mental fermentations.

In establishing His church, the Lord gave to men the faculty of rationality, the capacity to see truth as truth. By means of this faculty, a man may progress from natural truth to spiritual truth. In the mind of such a man the Lord turns water into wine.

Now, when the Lord had done all these things for men; when He had endowed men with all the necessary mental capacities, and had supplied them with all necessary spiritual food and help; He looked for them to bring forth the proper fruits of what He had done for them: He looked for grapes, the good works of charity.

WILD GRAPES.

But, alas, men brought forth wild grapes, sour, unpalatable grapes, the mere forms of good works, without their sweet and heavenly spirit. There might be the forms of charity, in outward civility and pretended kindness, yet resulting from policy and self-love. But why should such miserable wild grapes grow in the Lord's church? "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt Me and

My vineyard. What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" The "inhabitants of Jerusalem" are the good principles that are in truths; and the "men of Judah" are the truths that are in every good. These are what should be in the minds of the men of the church. But the Lord declares that the men of the church have not been good and true men, but perverters and corrupters of good and true principles. And yet the Lord had done all that even the Divine Love could do, to lead and teach men in the way to spirituality, and to goodness. The evils of men are not due to any failure in the Lord's provision for men.

PROVIDENCE.

From the creation, down through the ages, in the different churches succeeding each other on the earth, the Lord has always done all that could have been done for men. And His coming upon the earth, in the Divine Humanity, was the grand climax of His beneficent work for men. What could have been done for men, that the Lord did not do? And now, in these later days, we have the Second Coming of the Lord, a spiritual coming, in a fuller outpouring of life and light to the sons of men. Surely, we have all the necessary means of becoming regenerated. "No good will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." Very often, our Lord does not do, for us, that which, in our folly, we would like to have Him do; but He has put us in the way of receiving all that is spiritually best for us now to have. He has always been ready to give us all that we ought to desire. But men have not been willing to receive the spiritual blessings which the Lord has sought to give to them.

RESULTS.

The text declares that the Lord will let His vineyard go to destruction, and that He will not save it. This literal sense is not intended to state facts of practical life, but figures of speech, as a prophecy of what the First Christian Church would become by its false teachings, and the evil lives of its members.

To the thought of the senses, it seems that the Lord brings about these changes in the churches, as punishments to the people. But the Lord, as life itself, is always seeking to give life to men. "Evil shall slay the wicked": the Lord does not destroy men; "He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."

But the hedge of the Lord's vineyard is removed, and its walls broken down, and it is devoured and trodden down by enemies, when men no longer keep the truths of the Divine Word as a protection to their daily lives; and when, as a consequence, all sorts of evils and falsities rush in, and destroy the goodness and truth that are in the mind. The Lord's vineyard is not pruned or digged, when men do not rationally examine their thoughts and feelings, to put away what is evil and false. And then the thorns and briars of evil and falsity are left in freedom to spring up in abundance. No rain comes from the clouds, upon the vineyard, when no refreshing truth comes to the mind, out of the letter of the Scriptures. Then there is no longer any reception of truth from heaven, through the Word of the Lord. Men then shut their interior minds, which should be open to spiritual truths.

The Lord "looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry;" *i.e.,* the Lord provided for men, intelligence and goodness, but they rejected these, and preferred the darkness of falsity and the coldness of evil, crying out against the Lord.

THE LORD'S WAYS.

Yet the Lord's ways are equal and just, and full of love and mercy. Do you say that a man does not make himself? And that he comes into the world with the disadvantage of hereditary inclinations to evil? Yes; but a man is not responsible for his hereditary inclinations, but for his life, only. And he can change his inclinations, if he wills to do so. Goodness is a matter of willing to do good, and to resist evil. And even our beliefs are within our control, because every man believes according to his character; meaning, of course, his actual principles, and not merely his doctrinal notions.

Every man can finally become that which he really desires to be, as to spiritual character. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." They can change the quality of their character, with the Lord's help. All the heavens are open to us, because all heavenly states of character are open to us. We may become as good as we are willing to be. Nothing keeps us out of heaven, but our own evils. And the measure of our goodness is the measure in which we shun evils. A man is judged by the standard of his opportunities, *i.e.,* of what he might have been, if he would. The servant who knew his master's will, and disobeyed it, was beaten with many stripes, while the ignorant servant was given much lighter punishment. In the judgment, every man receives that into which he has lived himself. "Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty: just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. (Revelation xv. 3.)

CARE OF THE VINEYARD.

A grape-vine, after planting, needs constant care. The earth is to be kept dug up; stones are to be taken

away; weeds are to be removed; branches are to be lifted up, to be aired and sunned; good branches are to be pruned, and dead ones cut off. So the human mind needs constant care, in its spiritual culture. It needs to be trained, pruned, and kept free from stones, weeds, etc. Hereditary tendencies, like the seeds of vile weeds in the ground, are always seeking to come up among the vines. "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (~~Matthew~~ John xv. 2.)

POSSIBILITIES.

Imagine what any vineyard would become, if every weed that sprouts were allowed to grow, and to bear seed. And then think of all your inherited tendencies to evil, and imagine what you would become, if every one of your wrong feelings and thoughts were allowed to come out into actual deeds of life; and then you will see what the Lord does for you, in teaching you, and in leading you, in the way of taking care of your mental vineyard. What more could He do? And if you bring forth wild grapes, why is it so? The same God of love does as much for you as He does for the highest angel. You have the same human nature, the same Divine Word, and the same loving Savior. You admire the character of an angel. Well, that character is open to you. You can go forward, and take it, and keep it as your own. At all times, the Lord gives "His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways," as far as thou art willing to be led.

We have the precious revelations concerning the New Jerusalem. The Lord has done all that can be done, for us. But, have we done all that we could have done, for the growth of our mental vineyard? And are we

now doing all that we can do? "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." And we must begin, as the owner of the vineyard begins, by clearing the ground of all useless and injurious things. The Lord's vines cannot flourish amid the weeds and stones of our sensuous life. Therefore, it is for us to see that we do not allow our minds to be occupied by things that do not belong in the Lord's vineyard. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not?" "Wash you; make you clean: put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes: cease to do evil; learn to do well. . . . If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land." (Isaiah i. 16, 17, 19.)

VIII.

THE ALMOND ROD AND THE SEETHING POT.

The Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond-tree. Then said Jehovah unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten My Word to perform it.

And the Word of Jehovah came unto me the second time, saying, What seest thou? And I said, I see a seething pot: and the face thereof is toward the North. Then Jehovah said unto me, Out of the North an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.—JEREMIAH i. 11–14.

VASTATION.

THE subject is vastation, or the laying waste of the land, by powerful enemies. And the spiritual topic is the laying waste of the mind by indulgence of evil.

VISIONS.

There are two visions, forming an enacted parable. Jeremiah was a prophet and a seer, one whose inward spiritual eyes were opened, so that he saw things that were going on in the inward world of the spirit. These visions were formed of the spiritual substances of the spiritual world, to represent conditions of the human mind. Many such cases are recorded in the Scriptures.

THE ROD.

A rod represents power, authority, ability, as in the sceptre of the ruler. And, as the ruler's work is to keep things in order, and, for that purpose, to correct and discipline those who are in disorder, so the rod represents correction and discipline, including the punishment which it can inflict.

THE ALMOND-TREE.

In this case, the rod was from an almond-tree. Trees, growing and bearing fruit, represent the principles which are growing in men's minds, and bearing fruit in the practical life. The different kinds of trees represent different principles, different states of mind, in men, individually, and in the church collectively. Hence much is said of trees, in the Scriptures.

The almond was the first tree to awake, in the new season. It bloomed in January, and it bore fruit in March. And so it was the herald of spring. In the Hebrew, the name for the almond means hasty; and the almond was called "the hasty tree," and "the awakener." And you will observe the application of this name, in the Lord's reply to Jeremiah, "Thou hast well seen, for I will hasten My Word, to perform it;" as if Jeremiah, had said, "I have seen a rod of a hasty-tree." And so the almond-tree became a representative of things which come quickly, and which are near at hand, or of the quick fulfilment of a promise or a prophecy.

Spiritually, the almond-tree, catching the first coming of the new season, represents the perception of interior truth, as it applies to our inward life; and which is derived from such goodness of heart as exists in the natural mind, when regenerating. And the fruit of the almond represents the practical goodness, in the work and uses of daily life. And when a branch of the almond-tree is used for a rod, it represents that our perceptions of interior truth should be used to correct and discipline the desires and notions of our natural senses. And, for this purpose, the letter of the Scrip-

tures, and especially the Ten Commandments, constitute the most external form of that rod. For the letter of the Divine Word is the means by which truth comes to our perception. And so, in all our practical life, in feeling, in thought, and in act, the letter of the Divine Word should be our rod of correction and discipline. As, in a school, the teacher uses the rod to call attention, and to warn, and to discipline, so the Divine Teacher holds before us, at all times, the rod of His Word, affectionately calling our attention to good and true principles, and to good actions; gently warning us of any deviation from the laws of life; and, for our permanent good, disciplining us in our wrong-doing.

And he who is thus led to resist his own evil inclinations, and to do good, exclaims, O Lord, "Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me." It is necessary for our Lord, in His loving providence, to "Rule all nations with a rod of iron;" *i.e.,* to discipline all things which dwell in our minds, by the exacting laws of natural truth, truth applied to our natural life of conduct. Thus, the first vision, that of an "almond-tree," indicated that something was impending, which would come speedily. And the fact that a rod of almond was seen, foretold correction and discipline. And the second vision, that of the "seething pot," indicated in what form the discipline would come, and whence it would come.

THE SEETHING POT.

In the second vision, Jeremiah saw a "seething pot," or a boiling caldron, a flesh-pot, on the fire, the contents boiling up, puffing up above the edges, running over, wasting and spoiling, and damaging the things they were falling upon.

In the literal representation, this boiling flesh-pot represented the City of Jerusalem, in great commotion,

because of the army of Nebuchadnezzar, which was soon to come down upon it from the North. The boiling over of the contents of the pot, fitly represented the conditions of confusion, distress, and destruction of the Jews, surrounded by their fiery enemies.

Spiritually, a pot, as a hollow vessel, represents a doctrine, a statement of truth, which is a hollow vessel in the mind, holding such things as our will and our understanding place in it. Many different men may hold similar doctrines, as doctrines, and yet very different things are in those mental vessels. In any case, the vessel in use takes its character from its contents. The contents may be good, wholesome food, or very bad food, deadly in its character. In a bad sense, the flesh-pots represent the pleasures of the senses, because their contents are the lusts of the flesh. We remember that, during the journey from Egypt to Canaan, Israel "lusted after the flesh-pots of Egypt," and spoke contemptuously of the manna, which the Lord provided, as "light food," not heavy enough to satisfy their gross tastes and appetites.

A man may hold a true doctrine, as a doctrine, and yet he may fill it with the lusts of the flesh, and the sensuous thoughts of his natural mind. For instance, a man may believe in a God; and he may believe that he should thank God for the blessings of human life; and, in sitting down to his dinner, he may ask a blessing upon the food before him; and yet he may eat like a glutton; and he may even live to eat, rather than eat to live. And, in this case, although, figuratively, he uses a good pot, or doctrine, he fills it with the lusts of the flesh, for his food; and he uses the fallacies of the senses, for water, and self-love for fire. And his mental pot boils over, and spoils everything. In the general history of a church, these conditions exist at the end of that church, or dispensation, when evil passions rule men, even with

those who have the doctrines of the church. And this evil spirit of self-love keeps everything in a condition of boiling over, going beyond bounds, until it produces its own spiritual destruction.

THE NORTH.

And, in this condition of disorder and weakness, an enemy from the North comes down upon the mind, and destroys the remainder of its life.

It is said that the pot had its face to the North; *i.e.,* its opening was towards the North.

In ancient Israel, in a rocky land, thickly inhabited, dry wood for fire purposes was scarce. And, for economy, the ordinary Israelite dug a pit, in the centre of his earthen floor, in his dwelling; and in this hole he made a fire of dry sticks, or other fuel, and set on the pot, to boil his food. To save heat, he piled stones around the pot, leaving an opening, through which he could supply fuel.

In the vision seen by Jeremiah, probably this boiling-place was present, as well as the pot. And probably the opening for fuel was facing the North, as would be meant by the face of the pot being toward the North; for, through this opening for fuel, the face, or open mouth, of the pot, could be seen.

THE POINTS OF THE COMPASS.

The points of the compass represent different mental standpoints. The East, where the sun appears to rise, represents the higher and more interior states of mind, which first recognize the Lord; *i.e.,* the love-principle, which looks to the Lord. The South, where the sun is at noon, and when there is the greatest light, represents the intelligence of truth. The West, which the sun appears to reach last, in its daily progress, and

which is opposite to the East, represents a more obscure state of mind, as to love and goodness; *i.e.,* a more external state, more natural than spiritual. And the North, which is opposite to the South, represents a more obscure state of mind as to the truth, or intelligence, a natural state, rather than a spiritual intelligence.

Thus, the North indicates a natural-minded state. And, in the unregenerate man, this natural state is a state of false ideas rather than truths. In this obscure condition, there are no spiritual truths known to the mind; and hence there is no protection by truths against the evils of self-love. And then the lusts of the flesh rush into action, and fill even the pots of doctrine with ideas which are false and feelings which are evil. And then the mental pots boil over, while their faces are towards the North, receiving whatever may come to the mind from the cold-hearted and obscure things of the unregenerate man.

And there is also a more profound meaning in the facing of the pot, when we consider the nature of the face. In the human body, the face is the index of the mind; for whatever is active in the mind expresses itself in the face. And when the man stands upright, his head, including the face, stands above the other parts. Hence the face represents the inward life, the interiors of the man. Hence, to see a man's actual state of feeling and thought, you look into his face. And when you wish to come into contact with anything, you turn your face towards it. But, if you wish to show your aversion, you avert your face, or turn your back towards the person or thing which you dislike. In this sense, the face of the pot being turned towards the North, means that the mind thus represented, was turned towards the spiritual North, and open to the influences flowing thence. This representative meaning is the same as the other, in general principles, but from a different standpoint.

BOILING OVER.

The representative picture is strong. The boiling, seething caldron, with its contents puffing up, boiling over, running to waste, and being burned and destroyed, and injuring whatever they fell upon, well represents a man's state of mind, when the obscure and deadly influences of his own sensuous lusts of self-love are firing his whole mind, and drawing upon himself all the evil influences of the hells, which come rushing upon him like the army of Nebuchadnezzar, to push him to destruction. Necessarily, evil and falsity must work the destruction of every mind which is open to their influence, and closed towards the heavens.

JEREMIAH.

These visions were the first which came to the youthful prophet, Jeremiah, in the beginning of his career. And they enabled him to understand something of the nature of his mission and work. The first vision, of the almond-rod, taught him that his errand was to use the rod upon the Israelites, to correct, admonish and discipline them, in a very degenerate age, when even the leaders in the church were given up to selfish and sensuous life. And, in the midst of such conditions, in a declining state of the church, the prophet was to lift up his voice, in outspoken correction.

And he had a sad story to tell, the story of the destruction of the church and of the nation. And so Jeremiah is called "the weeping prophet," the author of the "Lamentations." All about him, the conditions of the people were degenerating, ripening in evil, and hastening to destruction. And, in the circumstances, the Lord put upon Jeremiah his great mission; "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy and to throw

down, to build and to plant." For, even in such times, and amid such conditions, some men would heed the prophet's warning, and would turn to him for help: and to them he was to carry the Word of God, and thus to build a new life, by planting in their hearts new affections, and in their understanding new thoughts, and thus training them into a new practical life.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

We wonder at the dreadful conditions existing in Israel, in the days of Jeremiah, even amid a people who then had the learning of the earth, and who boasted of themselves as the chosen people of God.

But, to-day, similar conditions may be developed in our minds, if we allow evil influences to operate within us. Our Lord's plain truth, as an impersonal prophet, walks through our minds, to-day, with serious warning and correction. The almond-rod is as necessary for us as for ancient Israel. It is not spiritually safe for any one of us to live through one day without passing under the rod of the Divine Word all things that we feel, think, and do. In our mental furnishing, we have the most approved pots of doctrine. But what are we boiling in these pots? And whence are the fires which supply the heat? And what is the kind of spiritual water, in which we are boiling the daily food of our inward life? It is time for us to do the work of Jeremiah, in our own minds, "to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant." "Therefore, gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee."

IX.

THE MARRED GIRDLE.

Thus said Jehovah unto me, Go, and buy thee a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water. So I bought a girdle, according to the Word of Jehovah, and put it upon my loins. And the Word of Jehovah came unto me the second time, saying, Take the girdle that thou hast bought, which is upon thy loins, and arise, go to the Euphrates, and hide it there, in a cleft of the rock.

So I went, and hid it by the Euphrates, as Jehovah commanded me. And it came to pass, after many days, that Jehovah said unto me, Arise, go to the Euphrates, and take the girdle from thence, which I commanded thee to hide there. Then I went to the Euphrates, and digged, and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it: and behold, the girdle was marred; it was profitable for nothing.—JEREMIAH xiii. 1–7.

TRUTH PERVERTED.

EVEN the Lord's truth, when buried in our sensuous nature, loses all its heavenly quality, and serves no particular use.

THE GIRDLE.

The girdle was a conspicuous article of Oriental dress. The common girdle was made of leather, or of dyed muslin. Finer girdles were made of linen, and were often embroidered with silk, or with silver or gold thread. Sometimes, girdles were studded with precious stones, or pearls. In this way, the girdle was a good indication of the wealth and social position of its wearer. A fine and rich girdle gave evidence of the

importance of its owner. Its use was to gather together the loose garments, at the wearer's waist, or loins, especially when moving about: otherwise, the long garments would be in the way of the feet. And so the girdle became a symbol of a bond, by which things are held together, and in good order. Spiritually, that which holds together the good and true principles of the church, and joins them in a man's mind, is the truth taught in the Word of God.

The binding effect of the girdle is indicated in the context: "As the girdle cleaveth to the loins of man, so have I caused to cleave unto Me the whole house of Israel, and the whole house of Judah, saith Jehovah." And the means by which the Lord sought to hold the Jews, was the letter of the Divine Word, which was given to them for a guide, and for a binding force, to keep them in connection with the Lord. The girdle acted also as a brace to the body.

LINEN.

In our text, the girdle was of linen. Linen is the representative of righteousness, *i.e.*, of a clean, pure, orderly life, according to the Lord's commandments. We remember that, in John's vision, in the Apocalypse, it is said "the fine linen is the righteousness of saints;" meaning that linen represented righteousness. And a girdle made of linen represents the truth which is drawn from the Lord's Word, in the doctrine of the church, especially the practical application of the Ten Commandments to the daily life.

When a man arises, to walk, in the uses of life, and binds a girdle about his loins, his action represents the proper action of our minds, when we set out to do something; and when we use the truth of the Divine Word to regulate, and to keep in place, the good which is in our hearts, and for which we are acting. And this bind-

ing and uniting work of the girdle represents the conjoining effect of our Lord's truth, which, when used to brace us for our duty, binds us to our Lord, in love and in intelligence.

The prophet, through whom the Word of God was given, represented that Word. And the prophet binding up his clothing upon his loins, with the linen girdle, represented the Lord's coming to us, in His Word, and drawing us together with Him, that He might conjoin us with Him, and give us life more abundantly.

The seven angels who came out of the temple of God, as seen by John, in the Apocalyptic vision, were "clothed in linen, clean and shining, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles." In the angelic state, which is the regenerate condition, men's minds are kept in order by the truths of the Divine Word, loved in a heavenly way. As we read in Isaiah xi. 5, "Justice shall be the girdle of thy loins, and truth the girdle of thy thighs."

BUYING.

The prophet was to buy the girdle, for that is the meaning of the word used in the text, although the common version of the Bible uses the word "get." To "buy" implies more effort than merely to "get." Spiritually, we buy certain conditions and qualities of character, by effort, and by giving something else for what we want. We buy a linen girdle, representatively, when we learn the truth of the Divine Word, by making a strong effort to acquire the truth, and by exchanging for it such notions as we had in our own natural thoughts.

In the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, they had to buy oil, to keep their lamps in use; *i.e.,* we have to procure love for goodness and truth, in order that we may maintain intelligence in the light of truth.

HIDING THE GIRDLE.

Having bought the girdle, and using it a while, the prophet hid it in the cleft of a rock. The Orientals had a representative custom, by which, when they felt aggrieved at the action of a certain person, they buried some perishable article, on a river bank, or other damp place, until it was marred and spoiled by the dampness; thus expressing their opinion, and probably their wish, as to the final destiny of the man represented. Probably some malignant persons believed that such action would operate as a "spell" of sorcery, upon the intended victim, to drag him into bad luck. And so the peculiar action of the prophet Jeremiah, was easily understood by the men of his day and nation.

But spiritually, a man hiding his girdle in a cleft of a rock, represents hiding the Divine Truth, in his own mind, by dropping it down into the obscure notions of his own natural senses, instead of keeping it in the higher places of his mind, to bind up and to keep in order, all things of his mind, in the walk of life. And when Divine truths are thus hidden in the fallacies of the senses, they soon lose their vitality, and amount to nothing, in our practical life; for they are abused and turned into falsities, by our sensuous reasonings. Remember that those who feared the judgment of the Lord, hid themselves in the holes of the rocks. And those who dwell in such places represent a condition of mind which dwells in false ideas, hidden from the light of spiritual truth.

EUPHRATES.

Jeremiah was to hide the girdle on the banks of the Euphrates river. The Euphrates was the border, or boundary, between Canaan and Assyria. Assyria is the representative of the reasoning ability, the rational faculty.

In a good sense, it is the regenerate rational faculty, seeing spiritual truth in its own kind of light. But, in the unregenerate man, the rational faculty is merely a reasoning ability, by which the man reasons in the light of his natural senses, and in the falsities of the natural mind. And the fact that the girdle was to be hidden in a cleft of the rock, in a damp place, without sunlight, indicates that, in this case, the Euphrates is mentioned in a bad sense, *i.e.,* in its external, unregenerate, and disorderly form. For, when a man trusts to his unenlightened reason, he sees everything in a wrong way; because he sees everything from the standpoint of self, rather than from its relation to the Lord. And "if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness."

The natural man does not perceive spiritual or rational truths, until the Lord flows into the man's mind, and gives him illumination. And this the Lord does through the spiritual mind of the man, in the degree in which the man exerts himself to open his mind, to see spiritual truth. But when the man's spiritual mind is closed, he lives in his sensuous mind, in which truth becomes obscure.

It was quite a long distance for Jeremiah to travel from Jerusalem to the Euphrates. And this long journey represents the long-continued retrogression of the mind, in which the clear truth of the Lord's Word is gradually darkened and obscured, until it is entirely hidden in the fallacies and falsities of the natural senses. And the long journey of the prophet would naturally have made a strong impression upon the Jews, who would see how important must be the message which would require so much work to carry it out. And this journey had to be repeated when the prophet was sent again to get the girdle.

THE MARRED GIRDLE.

And when found, the girdle was marred, and so completely spoiled that it was "profitable for nothing;" *i.e.,* it was not now of any use.

And the Jews could get something of the representative meaning of this enacted parable; for they could see that Jehovah had given them the church, with its clean and clear truths, and that the people had perverted all things of the church. At least, they could see that they had not continued to follow the Lord's ways, but had backslidden into disorderly ways of their own. And the marred girdle, once clean and beautiful, but now mouldy and utterly useless, stood before the Jews as a representative of their own degenerate conditon, and a prophecy of the miserable destiny awaiting them. As the clean girdle represented the property of a respected and worthy person, so the filthy and marred girdle stood for all that belongs to a degraded and degenerate man. And, looking at the expressive symbol, the thoughtful Jew might well consider that the girdle, hidden in the damp cleft of the rock, pre-figured the dispersion of the Jews, in captivity, in a foreign land, where, out of place, and in misery, their national pride would be humbled, their power lost, and their happiness destroyed.

Churches and individuals have sometimes begun a religious career, with some knowledge and love of the Lord's truth, as given in His holy Word, especially in the practical commandments of life. And what this condition is, is represented by the clean linen girdle, on the man's loins, holding his clothing in place, and giving him freedom of motion. But the marred girdle represents the condition of a man, or of a church, when the heart has lost interest in the Divine Truth, and when clear rational insight and intelligence have been closed, because the truths of the Lord have been immersed in the selfish

reasoning of the senses, which favor the love of self and the love of the world, until even the Divine law has become marred and useless, in the degenerate mind, and there is no longer any spiritual binding and union of the man's heart and life with the Lord. And then of such a man it is written, "God is not in all his thoughts." And to such a man the Lord says, "Without Me, ye can do nothing." "If thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away and worship other gods, and serve them, I denounce unto you, this day, that ye shall surely perish; and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it." (Deuteronomy xxx. 17-18.)

PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

After showing the Jews the marred girdle, the prophet forcibly applied the lesson: "Thus saith Jehovah, After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem. This evil people, which refuse to hear My words, which walk in the imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods, to serve them and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing."

But the message and the parable speak to each of us, to-day, and with equal force. But, with us, the spiritual application is more easily seen, and more far-reaching in its results. Every man needs to secure the truth of the Lord's Word, and to keep that truth, as a spiritual girdle upon his mental loins; and to keep it clean and useful, for every-day service. No man, at any stage of his mental and spiritual progress, can afford to hide his spiritual girdle in the cleft of a rock, amid the sensuous reasonings of his natural mind. But, keeping always in mind the distinction between natural things and spiritual things, and maintaining, always, an orderly natural life

of conduct, according to the Lord's commandments, we can meet every occasion with the truths of the Lord's Word, which will carry us into higher and higher conditions, in clear spiritual light, to "the measure of a man, that is, of an angel." "And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins."

X.

THE POTTER'S VESSEL MARRED.

Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear My words. Then I went down to the potter's house; and behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel which he made of clay was marred in the hands of the potter: so he made it again, another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the Word of Jehovah came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith Jehovah. Behold, as the clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in My hand, O house of Israel.—JEREMIAH xviii. 2–6.

PROVIDENCE.

HUMAN evil, falsity and sin mar God's work with men. But, after every human failure, as long as is possible, God begins, again, with the man, or the nation, and seeks to bring out good results in some other form.

THE POTTER.

When the potter takes up the clay, he has, in his mind, an ideal form, towards which he works with the clay. But, if his work fails, he tries again. And if he fails again, he tries some other form of vessel, such as the quality of the clay will bear. And so our Lord, as the Divine Potter, has an ideal form, towards which He seeks to shape every nation, and every individual, each as the quality of his mental clay will bear.

The fall of man was a general marring of the human vessel. But the Divine Providence has ever since been

exerted to uplift fallen men. And when one dispensation has become corrupted, another has been provided, with changed circumstances, and with new adjustments to the necessities of human conditions. And, even when men seemed determined to destroy themselves in evil, their loving God came down to them, as a Savior, in Jesus Christ. "In His love, and in His pity, He redeemed them."

THE DIVINE THOUGHT.

It is a grand idea that every good human life is a thought of God, a plan formed in the Divine mind, an ideal form in which God shows His Divine glory, by showing His glorious qualities of goodness and truth, reflected in the activities of His human creature.

All the men and women of the great company of the redeemed, that is, of regenerated persons, set forth the goodness of their Maker. When we read that "the heavens declare the glory of God," let us understand, in the highest sense, the inward and spiritual heavens, existing in the re-formed minds of regenerated men, in which the glory of God is declared, when it is reproduced in the good works of His human children.

Every man is a vessel of God, formed for the Lord's purposes, and to carry out the Lord's plans for the happiness of His creatures, in the various uses of life. And, as our Lord has an ideal form for every human life, towards which He is forming the man, spiritually, we can see clearly that the greatest wisdom on the part of any man, is to co-operate with the Lord, in forming the character to the Divine ideal; and how fatally foolish it is for any man to oppose the formative work which God is doing in the man; and thus to mar the ideal form which God intended, the image of God, in which man was created.

SPIRITUAL ECONOMY.

As the potter does not waste the clay, even when the vessel is marred, but remolds it into another vessel, so our Lord lovingly works with every man, in spite of the man's own bad work, in marring God's work. After every human failure, the Lord seeks to re-form the man, to such form of spiritual vessel as he is capable of becoming. And our constant effort should be in the same spirit, to make the best of our own manhood and life, in spite of our failures and mistakes. Keeping our attention upon the Divine ideal of a human mind and life, we can always use our efforts to shape ourselves towards that ideal. As a careful housekeeper does not waste, or destroy anything, even if marred, if it can be put to some other good use; so we can daily find some good use for all the leadings of our Lord, and all the circumstances of our experience, compelling everything to yield to us some good. At every point, we can re-model even the marred forms of our life, as long as we are in a formative condition, and not fixed and hardened in evil and sin. But, for right results, it is of no use for any man to work towards any other pattern than that which the Lord provides for us.

THE IDEAL FORM.

But some may ask, How can we know what the Divine ideal for man was, and is? We have this ideal form revealed to us, in the Divine Word, given in many ways, and throughout human history. It came to men in every dispensation of the church, in each according to the intelligence of the people. Even in low human conditions, it came in the Ten Commandments, which every man could practically follow, at least in form. And, in later days, it came to us, especially, in the daily life of Christ upon the earth, and in all His teachings in the Gospel.

Everywhere, God reveals Himself, His own character and works; and He commands men to do their part, in forming their character by the Divine standard. For there is one great standard, only, that is, love, with its wisdom and its power; love, which, in God, is Divine and infinite, and, in man, is finite, and made in the image of God. This is the original ideal form of man; for God is the Divine Man. This is the ideal man revealed in Eden, and reiterated through all the ages; but, in each age, adapted to that age, and to that genius and quality of men. Natural-minded men have recognized nothing more than a natural ideal of human life. But, in Christianity, God restored to men a higher ideal, in the simplicity of a loving faith in the Lord. But, in His "Second Coming," God reveals Himself in His spiritual aspect, and thus enables men to understand their own manhood in its spiritual aspects.

RESISTING EVIL.

And, after every fall of men into lower conditions, God has remolded the conditions to re-form men. And we may always observe the practical method of the Lord, in leading men back to better conditions, in that men are never required to have a clear spiritual understanding of truth, prior to their reformation, but that the beginning of every return to the Lord, is in men resisting their own evil desires, whose evil is shown to them by the Word of God. At every step, the man was to cease doing evil, and to keep the Lord's commandments. And every man could do these things, each in the degree of his knowledge and his intelligence.

And thus, the Divine ideal form towards which every man was and is to work, has always been within reach of every man, each in his degree, and on his mental level. And his following the Lord, on that level, was always the way to all progress in re-forming his spiritual manhood.

No matter what you may be, now, in the level of your life, if you will cease to do evil, as you see and know evil, and obey the Lord's commandments, the Divine Potter will form of you, some kind of useful vessel, able to hold the things of heaven, in some degree.

CHARACTER.

The practical bearing of all these things is that a man's life and his destiny are matters of character, and not of circumstances. Our Lord is not a hard taskmaster, seeking to punish men for their shortcomings and their failures, but He is a loving Father, helping us through our failures, and encouraging us to try again, under His guidance. Every effort of God is to save men, not to condemn them; to give them life, and not to let them fall into spiritual death.

XI.

THE POTTER'S VESSEL BROKEN.

Thus saith Jehovah, Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests; and go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the East gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee. . . . Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee; and shalt say unto them, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again.—JEREMIAH xix. 1, 2, 10, 11.

THE VESSEL BROKEN.

IF men are determined to love evil and falsity, and to live in sin, and to neglect the Divine warnings, and to resist the Divine leadings and teachings, and to prefer evil, rather than goodness; then such men fix and confirm their hearts in evil character; and they reach a condition in which they are no longer plastic to the hand of the Divine Potter; but they have baked themselves hard and set, in the fires of self-love; and their elasticity has gone. And when they break, they cannot be made whole again.

And then it will be no longer possible for the Divine Potter to form any useful vessel from such men, because they have permanently rejected and resisted any Divine leadings. Henceforth, such men, spiritually speaking, are good for nothing; for not even the Divine skill can induce them to be remodeled into anything good. They have formed a hell in their own hearts and lives, and in which they prefer to live.

ISRAEL.

In the text and context, the literal reference is to Israel, living in confirmed evil. As long as any capacity for goodness remained uncorrupted in the Israelites, they were, to the Lord, as clay in the hands of the potter; and it was still possible for them to be re-formed, remodeled, into better conditions of character. By various means, as great trials, droughts, wars, pestilences, and even severe captivity abroad, the Lord sought to re-form this stiff-necked people. But the inward and spiritual sense of our text applies to all men, at all times, who are in similar conditions of character. For Israel represented the church in men; not merely the external organizations of the church, but more especially the inward church, in the minds of men, the principles which form human character and life.

THE CURSES.

You will observe that, in the context, certain punishments were pronounced upon the rebellious Israelites, somewhat resembling the curses pronounced by Moses, ages before. These curses are representative; and they apply to the evil and false principles which dwell in the minds of unregenerate men, and which curse the men who cherish such things. God does not curse any man, however evil, but He seeks to save the man, by reformation and regeneration. "Evil shall slay the wicked," because it is the nature of evil to destroy spiritual life. We have need to fix our minds upon the fact that it is absolutely necessary for every man to be re-formed and regenerated, before he can be saved from the hell which evil makes in those who love it.

VESSELS OF THE LORD.

"Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of Jehovah." "The vessels of Jehovah," spiritually, are the human heart and

intellect, which were formed to be useful vessels, holding the heavenly love and the spiritual intelligence which belong to angelic men. And to this purpose we should devote our abilities. Spiritually, our hearts and intellects are not our own, but they are our Lord's; and we have no spiritual right to fill them with the things of evil and falsity, which mar the vessels of the Lord, and destroy His image in our manhood. "The steps of a good man are ordered by Jehovah, and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for Jehovah upholdeth his hand."

XII.

THE TWO BASKETS OF FIGS.

Jehovah showed me, and behold, two baskets of figs were set before the temple of Jehovah. . . . One basket had very good figs, like the figs that are first ripe; and the other basket had very bad figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad.—JEREMIAH xxiv. 1, 2.

DESTINY.

THOSE who are inwardly good, meet and bear the trials of natural life, and the temptations of the spirit, and are thereby reformed, regenerated, and developed in heavenly character, and in happiness; while those who avoid and resist the Lord's training, die in their evils, and fix themselves in conditions of sorrow, which they supposed they had escaped.

THE LITERAL STORY.

About six hundred years before the Christian era, the great king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, besieged Jerusalem.

Zedekiah, the king of Judah, sent messages to the prophet Jeremiah, to inquire whether Jehovah would save the holy city from the enemy. But Jeremiah prophesied, "Unto this people thou shalt say, thus saith Jehovah: Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death. He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live."

Thus the people of Jerusalem were divided into two classes, those who accepted the Lord's Word, and surrendered to the Chaldeans, and those who rejected the prophecy, and remained in Jerusalem. And Jeremiah, the prophet, saw that the better class of the people would be carried away, as captives, while the worst class would remain, for a worse destiny. Those who escaped captivity naturally supposed that they were more fortunate than those who were made captives. But Jeremiah showed them, by the Divine Word of prophecy, that, on the contrary, the captives should finally return to Jerusalem, and to prosperity; while those who persisted in remaining at the present time, would be scattered abroad, and lose their homes permanently, besides having to meet further and greater trials, by war, famine, and pestilence.

THE PARABLE.

And these things were represented in the parable of our text and its context: "Jehovah showed me, and behold, two baskets of figs were set before the temple of Jehovah. . . . One basket had very good figs, like the figs that are first ripe; and the other basket had very bad figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad. . . . Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel: Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place, into the land of the Chaldeans, for their good. For I will set Mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pull them up. And I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am Jehovah: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto Me, with their whole heart. And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil, surely thus saith Jehovah, So will

I give Zedekiah, the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt; and I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them. And I will send the sword, the famine and the pestilence among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers."

THE FIGS.

In the literal sense, there does not seem to be any special connection between the figs in the parable, and the conditions of the two classes of the Jews. But the connection appears in the spiritual meaning. Figs represent natural goodness, goodness in the conduct, in obedience to the Divine law. A good man will live a good practical life, from inward love of good principles.

The fig is often mentioned in the Scriptures, and always as representing the quality of the conduct, which is good with a good man, and bad with a bad man. The more spiritual intelligence in truth is represented by the grape; and the more celestial love of God is represented by the olive. Figs, thus relating to conduct, that is, to natural goodness in the life, refer to the state of the man's will, or the heart. "A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things." Therefore it is with men as with trees, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

In the parable, the two baskets of figs represented the two opposite kinds of men, the good and the evil, when developed in character. It is said that the good figs were very good, like the figs that are first ripe. The figs of the first crop, or early figs, were regarded as great dainties, because of their very fine flavor.

THE TEMPLE.

On account of their excellence, as well as their early ripening, these first-ripe figs were used in making offerings to the Lord, upon the altar, in the temple. And thus we can understand why these figs were set before the door of the temple. By Divine direction, in Israel, the first-fruits of the corn, the oil, the wine, and of the fruits, were offered to the Lord, in worship, in the temple-service. And hence these things were regarded as holy. And when the first-fruits were gathered, there was also a great feast, to enjoy, and to acknowledge, these blessings from the Lord. Hence, the first-fruits of the figs, being especially devoted to the Lord, represented a state of goodness in the daily life, in which the man acts from love to the Lord, and in devotion of his life to the Lord's principles. And, in the parable in our text, the good figs were like such first-ripe figs, that is, of the same good quality. Representatively, we all set the practical doings of our daily life before the temple of the Lord; because the real character, or quality, of our life, is within our actions; and so by our actions we show the quality of our love, and of our worship.

In one sense, the temple of our Lord is His Divine Humanity, in which He dwells with us, and in which we understand Him and worship Him.

The good figs represent those who love the Lord, and who approach Him in the temple of His Humanity. And of such, heaven is formed. Like the Jews in captivity, they may have much to go through, in discipline; but, finally, they are led into heaven, that is, into full regeneration. Their hearts and lives have the spiritual flavor of the first-ripe figs. But the bad figs are those who are evil, and who fix themselves in the love and practice of evil, and who will not follow the teachings and leadings of the Lord. Spiritually and representatively, they can-

not be eaten; that is, they are without any goodness, being corrupt, and having nothing in their character which can be appropriated, or assimilated, by a regenerate mind.

THE JUDGMENT.

The separation of the two classes of the Jews, represents the separation of the evil and the good, in the judgment. Such a separation occurs among men, collectively; and also in each human mind, individually, when its good is separated from its natural evil tendencies, and protected and developed.

In this mental separation, the good principles, which, to the natural thought, seem to be persecuted, are finally brought to excellence in the heavenly condition, which is the spiritual birthplace and home of the regenerate man. But the natural tendencies to evil, which would not follow the Lord's teachings, and which sought to remain in the mind, in spite of the Lord's prophecies, are finally scattered from the regenerating mind, permanently and fully. And when the mind grows strong in its regenerate character, these tendencies to evil become, to such a mind, "a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse." And, spiritually, they meet with the sword, and the famine, and the pestilence, until they are consumed from off the land; *i.e.,* they are utterly destroyed by their own false doctrine and their evil, in which there is no life; and by the infesting of evil influences, in their practical ways of life. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" with heavenly life. But "Evil shall slay the wicked," in spiritual death.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

As Jehovah sent the Jews into the land of the Chaldeans, for their good, so our Lord, in His wise and loving

providence over us, allows us to fall into many experiences which seem very hard for us to bear, but which are for our good, in the end. Therefore, it is always wise for us to accept the leadings and permissions of the Divine Providence, and to secure from them the good which they are intended to afford us.

Those who are most experienced in obedient trust in the Lord, most clearly recognize that "It is not in man that walketh, to direct his steps," but that "The steps of a good man are ordered by Jehovah," and that "though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down, for Jehovah upholdeth his hand." Knowing this, the good man, looking back upon his experience, exclaims "Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept Thy Word. . . . It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes."

In each of us there are two men, or two women, one good and one bad, represented by the two baskets of figs in our text. And, between these two men in us, there is an irrepressible conflict, until we decide, permanently, which shall rule. They cannot remain together permanently, and they cannot co-operate: one must gain the mastery. And each of us must decide this question, for himself. And when we make the choice, we decide our character and our destiny. Our regeneration makes a great commotion in our mental Israel, a great crisis in our life. It frees the things of the spirit which had been in captivity to our sensuous life; and, at the same time, it scatters and drives out our evil tendencies. Regeneration is the greatest question of our life.

Naturally, we ask ourselves, What shall we eat? and what shall we drink? and wherewith shall we be clothed? What shall we do, to make a worldly living? Where shall we live? And what can we afford to have? But, high above all these, rise the greater questions,

What am I? Why am I here? What are the possibilities of my manhood? Hold before your mental eyes the vision in the parable, of the two baskets of figs. And ask yourself, which of these practically represents your real life, the quality of your manhood, and the trend of your destiny. "One basket had very good figs; . . . and the other basket had very bad figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad."

XIII.

JEREMIAH'S BONDS AND YOKES.

Thus saith Jehovah unto me, Make thee bonds and yokes, and put them upon thy neck: and send them to the kings. . . . Now have I given all these into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. . . . And all nations shall serve him. . . . And Hananiah, . . . the prophet, . . . spake unto me, . . . saying, Thus speaketh Jehovah, . . . I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. . . . Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and brake it. . . . Then the Word of Jehovah came unto Jeremiah, . . . saying, Go and tell Hananiah, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, Thou hast broken the yokes of wood; but thou shalt make for them yokes of iron.—JEREMIAH xxvii. 2, 3, 6; xxviii. 1, 2, 10, 12, 13.

PROTECTIVE PROVIDENCE.

IT is better for degenerating men to fall into ignorance, than to plunge further into evil, while in the perception and acknowledgment of truth, and thus to sin against light.

THE LITERAL STORY.

Our text and the context refer to very troubled times in the history of Israel. They were days of degeneracy, when the people, including priests and rulers, had sunk into very sensuous conditions; and when Divine things, although professed, were only superficially regarded. The spirit of selfish worldliness swayed almost all, in all classes. A portion of the people had previously been carried away to Babylon, as captives. And, now, again, the hordes of the Chaldeans were besieging the holy

city, Jerusalem. Fear, doubt, distrust, and even despair, were on every side. Food was scarce. And there was no confidence in the army, because of its former inability to oppose the same enemy. The city was full of excitement. And, worse than all, the people were divided into two parties, one counselling surrender to the Chaldeans, and the other party advocating continued resistance, and an effort to induce Egypt to join in opposing the Chaldeans. In these troubled conditions, Jeremiah, as the prophet of Jehovah, raised his voice in the name of Jehovah, informing the people that it would be far better for them to surrender to the Chaldeans, and to go peaceably to Babylon, to join their fellow country-men, already there, than to suffer a terrible war, and finally be defeated and treated far more harshly, besides involving the destruction of the holy city, and of the temple of Jehovah.

HANANIAH.

Hananiah, one of the sons of the prophets, was active in the party opposing surrender, and favoring war. Jeremiah, at the command of Jehovah, repeated his prophecies, and emphasized the Divine counsel with the enacted parable narrated in our text. He made bonds and yokes, and put them on his own neck; and afterward he sent them to the surrounding Gentile kings, counselling submission to Nebuchadnezzar, the Chaldean king of Babylon.

And thus Jeremiah exerted considerable influence upon many of the Jews, especially upon the weak and vacillating king of Judah, Zedekiah.

But Hananiah set himself to overcome the influence of Jeremiah, especially with Zedekiah. Hananiah boldly asserted that he had been called to prophesy in the Lord's temple, that the Jews should resist, and overcome the Chaldeans; and that even the Jews now in captivity

in Babylon should soon return to Jerusalem; bringing with them the precious and holy vessels of the temple of Jehovah, which had been taken away by the Chaldeans. And, to corroborate his lying prophecy, Hananiah boldly took from the neck of Jeremiah, and forcibly broke, the yoke which Jeremiah had worn in prophecy, at the command of Jehovah.

Hananiah's action was sacrilegious, because it was done in defiance of the acknowledged prophet of Jehovah, and thus against the Word of Jehovah. But the Word of Jehovah came again to Jeremiah, the true prophet, repudiating Hananiah's claim to prophecy, and rebuking his attempt to deceive and injure the people; and prophesying his speedy death.

The literal story brings into sharp contrast the two prophecies and their meaning.

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING.

In these days, we are especially interested in the spiritual meaning of these things, as they apply to our own personal life. And, now, remembering that the spiritual meaning of our Lord's words always applies to the things of our inward life, let us transfer all these scenes to the inward world of our mind, that we may see what they mean to us, and within us.

CAPTIVITY.

The central point in the case is captivity. The bonds and yokes were the familiar evidence and representatives of captivity. The normal condition of a good man, is freedom, in which he can carry out his own purposes and plans. Hence, captivity is a restriction of liberty, which limits the action, and cramps the affections and thoughts.

Natural bonds are of two kinds, voluntary bonds,

which the man willingly takes upon himself, in carrying out his purposes, in social, business, and political associations; and involuntary bonds, which are forced upon him, when he breaks the laws of the community. And there is a similar distinction in spiritual bonds. The regenerate man is bound to the Lord and to the neighbor, in the ties of mutual love, which are voluntary and delightful, and which afford the greatest fulness and freedom to the affections, thoughts, and conduct.

But unregenerate men are bound by laws which are obnoxious to them, and which restrain their desires, plans, and action; and which govern them by fears of future loss and restraint. And this bondage of the unregenerate man is spiritual captivity, under restraint.

When men are not willing to be bound by love of goodness, they must be bound by fear of penalties. Every mind which rejects Divine truths, thereby falls into captivity to false principles, which shut up the mind, in spiritual darkness.

And there are human conditions in which it is better for the mind to be held in ignorance, than to be in the clear perception of spiritual truth, while, at heart, hating such truth, and profaning it in the daily life. In the administration of a prison, it is far better, not only for the general outside community, but also for the criminals, themselves, that the prisoners should be kept in restraint, and in order, under strict laws, with penalties for disobedience. For, in such case, the criminal is protected, to some extent, from his own evil tendencies, which, if allowed freedom, would sink him more and more deeply into evil, and into crime. And the case is parallel in spiritual things. It is for the good of the criminal, to be kept under the bond of fear. And this bondage is the central point in the representative parable of our text.

For a free man, or nation, to go into captivity, would

represent a mind falling into lower states of affection and of thought, and adopting a lower standard of life. But, at the time of our text, the Jews were in very bad conditions. And it was better for them to fall into captivity, where they would be under some restraint, and where their infernal pride would be broken, than to go on, as they were then going on, further into all kinds of evils and sins, while yet filled with selfish natural pride, as the supposed chosen people of God.

BABYLON.

Babylon was a great centre of power, pride and learning. But the life and learning were those of the natural senses, and of the natural mind. There was no knowledge of spiritual things. The power, pomp and glory were of the flesh, and of this world. And, hence, Babylon represents the external and sensuous side of man's nature, especially in the will, or heart, in which even the worship is external and formal, and not of the spirit.

Thus, the Jews who went out and surrendered to the army of Babylon, represent the man of the church who has had knowledge of spiritual truths, but who has begun a degenerate course; and who is now permitted to fall into ignorance, and into natural-minded feelings and ideas, so that he will not go on sinning against spiritual light. But those who remained in Jerusalem, represented the man who remains in the knowledge and acknowledgment of spiritual things, and yet sinks deeper into a life of evil.

OPPORTUNITIES.

Of course, if a man will arouse himself, and break off his evil habits, and restrain his evil inclinations, it will be better for him to remain in spiritual freedom, in the light of spiritual truth, and in the warmth of spiritual

worship. But, if he will not do so, the Lord allows him to fall into ignorance, for his protection. The loving and protective providence of the Lord always regards the best condition at present attainable by the man. And thus the Lord preserves whatever there may be, in the man, of spiritual life, even if it be very little; even if it be to save the man in the lowest heaven, rather than to let him fall into any form of hell. But, if the man will not be saved in any form of heaven, but persistently makes a hell of his own heart, then the Lord allows the man to go into the mildest form of hell which he can be led to accept. And, from the Divine methods, modern human professed reformers might learn far greater wisdom than many of them practise. Too often, they fix their minds upon the highest possible condition of men, according to their views; and then they demand that every man needing reform shall come up to their measure, and by their plan, or else they leave him, to sink into the worst evil. In this way, they often hinder the partial reformation of many whom the Lord is seeking to help to climb part way up the ladder, at least. Our Lord, in His grander and broader providence, does not compel every man to attain the same highest standard, or nothing; but He leads each individual as far, and in such a way, as that individual is then willing and able to go. And our Lord's infinite love finally saves many men whom many modern reformers would abandon to destruction.

DISCIPLINE.

But our Lord always gives, to every man, such spiritual discipline as will then be useful to him. And all discipline which our Lord permits, whether spiritual or natural, is always for our good, in the final outcome. "All the paths of Jehovah are mercy and truth, unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies." And

the more fully and freely we accept such discipline, and receive the good intended by it, the more good we can receive, and the more our Lord can do for us, in character and in happiness. But, when we refuse to accept the discipline which comes to us, but resist it, we make it necessary for our Lord to permit still harder discipline to reach us.

This was the case with the Jews who remained in Jerusalem, as narrated in our text and the context. And Jehovah, through the prophet Jeremiah, informed them that, in refusing to submit to yokes of wood, they would bring upon themselves yokes of iron, which would be colder, heavier and harder.

WOOD AND IRON.

Wood represents natural good; or, in the perverted sense, natural evil; and iron denotes natural and literal truth; or, if falsified, natural falsity. To wear a yoke of wood, mentally, as in our text, means to be under the influence of natural evils, which our unregenerate affections love. But to wear a yoke of iron, is to be confronted with literal truths, which oppose our evils; as, for instance, the Ten Commandments, which restrain evils. And this iron bondage is harder to bear, because, in it, our understanding sees the literal truth, while our heart does not consent to it.

THE TWO PROPHETS.

The competition between the true prophet, Jeremiah, and the false prophet, Hananiah, to influence the Jews, represents the competition in our minds, between the Lord's truth and our self-derived notions, which we try to establish as truths. And it is interesting to know that this name, Hananiah, in the Hebrew of the Old Testament, is the same as Ananias, in the Greek of the New

Testament. And there was a parallel between them: Hananiah was **a f**alse prophet, lying in the name of Jehovah, and in the holy temple. And he brought himself to a speedy death, at the prophetic word of Jeremiah. And Ananias was the typical liar of his day, also lying against the Lord, and in the Lord's temple, and falling dead at the word of the Apostle, Peter. Both men were guilty of profanation, in tempting the Spirit of God. And they both represent the lying spirit of self-love, which constantly obstructs regeneration. Our only safe way is to follow the Divine leadings, wherever they are indicated, knowing that He who leads us will develop the best results, by the means which He provides and permits. "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

XIV.

JEREMIAH HIDING THE STONES IN THE MORTAR.

Then came the Word of Jehovah unto Jeremiah, in Tahpanhes, saying, Take great stones in thy hand, and hide them in the mortar in the brickwork, which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house, in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah; and say unto them, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, My servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid; and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them.—JEREMIAH xliii. 8–10.

THE fallacies and falsities of the natural senses cannot protect the unregenerate mind against the evils of the selfish heart.

THE LITERAL STORY.

When the king of Babylon took Jerusalem, and carried away most of the people, he left some of the poor to till the land, and to gather the fruits, etc. And he set Gedaliah over these, as a deputy-governor, under the king of Babylon. But, after a time, Ishmael, a Jew, and his followers, killed Gedaliah; and then, for safety, took away a number of the Jews, to the country of the Ammonites, lest the king of Babylon should seek revenge for the killing of Gedaliah. But Johanan pursued Ishmael's party, and re-took the Jews, and scattered Ishmael's forces. But Johanan and his men feared to return to Jerusalem. And they planned to go to Egypt, for safety. But, from policy, they consulted Jeremiah,

the prophet of Jehovah, as to what they should do. And Jeremiah warned them not to go to Egypt, but to return to Jerusalem; and that, in case they should go to Egypt, the same enemy whom they feared to meet at Jerusalem, would reach them in Egypt; and that they would die in Egypt. But these men, having set their hearts upon going to Egypt, turned against Jeremiah, and accused him of being a false prophet. And they went to Egypt, and compelled Jeremiah to go with them.

In these circumstances our text was spoken, at Tahpanhes. Tahpanhes was a great city in Egypt, on the southern boundary of Palestine, on the southern limit of Goshen. It was the city called at different times, Beth-Shemesh, or On, or Heliopolis; and it was a centre of Egyptian learning and worship. It contained a great temple, or house of the sun.

THE TEXT.

The text, as quoted above, is from the American Revised Version of the Bible, because the translation of this text is generally asknowledged to be much better than that given in the common version of the King James Bible, which reads thus, " Take great stones in thy hand, and hide them in the clay, in the brickkiln." Besides being symbolic and also prophetic, our text records actual historical facts. It is supposed that, in front of the palace, or residence of the local Pharaoh, or Governor, men were laying a pavement of bricks, and that Jeremiah hid the great stones in the mortar, beneath the brick pavement. And, in that warm climate, a governor would be very likely to spread his pavilion out of doors, on the brick pavement, over the stones hidden by Jeremiah. And, if the king of Babylon should come and conquer the city of Tahpanhes, he would be equally likely to occupy the same pavement.

SUGGESTIONS.

These doings of Jeremiah might well have suggested to the Jews, many thoughts as to their past and their future. This scene of the text was in Egypt, where, long before, for centuries, their nation had been held in bondage. The bricks might have suggested the chief labor of their long Egyptian bondage, where they had to make, every day, a large number of bricks, and, at times, without the straw necessary to good work. And the great fact of their former deliverance might have made them hope for another deliverance, by Jehovah, in the future.

But the same past history might well have made them hesitate to take up their abode in Egypt; for, in the days of Jacob and Joseph, they went to Egypt voluntarily, but they had to remain there, in cruel bondage, for centuries, before they finally escaped, at the Exodus, under Moses, led by Jehovah. And now, by this prophecy of Jeremiah, their dreaded enemy, the king of Babylon, was to erect his throne even on the boundary between Egypt and Palestine.

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING.

Palestine, or the land of Canaan, where the church was planted for Israel, represents the spiritual man, or the spiritual mind in man. And Egypt represents the natural man, or the natural mind in man. The unregenerate natural mind is in the darkness of the natural senses, and without the light of spiritual truth. And to go down into Egypt, spiritually, is to think on the plane of the natural senses, separated from spiritual truth. And this condition is not a home for the regenerating man, but only a sojourning-place, in the earlier stages of his mental progress in the journey of life. But, when a man regards the laws of the Lord as too exact-

ing, and too hard to follow, he begins to think according to the appearances of things before his natural senses; and he increases his inclination to disregard the Divine teachings. This was the condition in the fall of man, figuratively represented by heeding the voice of the serpent, which represents the life of man's natural senses, the low, crawling life, which will not heed the voice of God. And so, naturally, in Egypt, the serpent was highly esteemed, and even worshipped.

We have all been placed in the spiritual position of the ancient Jew, when we have weighed and compared the evidence of our natural senses, against the revealed Word of our Lord.

Those who would not accept Jeremiah's prophecy are called "proud men," that is, men who trusted in themselves, and not in the Lord. And the same pride of self-derived intelligence would work similar spiritual results, to-day, in any of us. For, if the laws of God seem too hard for us, and if we retreat to the evidence of our senses, to avoid the Lord's rules, we shall find that we shall not escape such evils as we feared, but that those evils will reach us, and take possession of us, wherever we may go; because we carry within us the inclination to those evils. And, in fact, spiritually, they are never far from us.

BABYLON.

These things are meant by the king of Babylon taking the Jews, even in Egypt. Babylon represents the natural mind, as to the will, or heart. In this case, Babylon represents the evil natural heart, which destroys the church. The king of Babylon is the ruling false principle, which dominates the unregenerate natural will. And Egypt represents the natural mind, especially as to the understanding, or intellect, which thinks in the fallacies of the natural senses. Thus, Babylon taking

possession of Egypt, represents a condition of man's mind, when his natural love of evil takes possession of the mind, by means of the fallacies and falsities of the senses, because these agree with evil desires; and they oppose the good and true principles of the Lord. And if, in these conditions, the spiritual mind is held closed by the falsities of the senses, then, representatively, Israel is in captivity in Egypt; and then Babylon, in conquering Egypt, will conquer, also, Israel in Egypt.

For there cannot be any growth of the spiritual mind, or any freedom for it, as long as the unregenerate natural will is dominating the whole mind.

At times, there seems to be war between Egypt and Babylon, although they represent mental conditions which inwardly co-operate in the human character.

THEORY AND PRACTICE.

But there is often an apparent warfare between the things which practically work towards the same final outcome; but such opposition is merely superficial and ignorant, at least on one side. For instance, a man sees the things of life from the standpoint of his natural senses, and in ignorance of spiritual truth; and, theoretically, he opposes the evil feelings which come up in his heart, because, from common opinion, such things are regarded as wrong. And we are all quite prompt to condemn these things in the conduct of other persons, especially if exercised towards ourselves. And yet, when we think we have provocation, we are inclined to feel, and to act, as the other person acted, when we condemned his action as wrong, and as against right principles, which we theoretically adopted. And, if we have not, in our hearts, any fixed spiritual principles of life, which are heartily opposed to evil, our su-

perficial theories will soon be scattered by our own evil desires.

Again, suppose a man to have been brought up to attend church, as a duty, and to have acquired a superficial piety, which he regards as proper and genuine. Now, he may be very pious, externally, and very zealous in the church, and yet, secretly, he may be relying upon "Salvation by faith alone," and without regard to goodness or evil in the practical life. And it may be that he does not carry his Sunday religion into his week-day work. And when a wrong feeling comes up in his mind, he may oppose it, at first, and superficially. But, if he has not, in his heart, a fixed purpose to give up all things which the Lord calls evil, his natural and selfish desire will finally conquer all his superficial ideas, and will control his practical conduct. And even if, mentally, he goes down into Egypt, and thinks over the matter in the light of his natural senses, his evil inclinations will reach him even there, and will dominate his mind.

And so you find some pious men, prominent in the churches, and apparently good men, who cannot bear the strain of a sudden or great temptation, because they have no inward basis of fixed love for the Lord, and for His Divine principles, and for integrity and honor in men. As long as good policy seemed to deter them from doing wrong, they hid their real character. But when the strain reached their breaking-point, there was nothing within them which could protect them. They were like the Jews in Egypt, finally reached by the king of Babylon.

And we are all in similar danger, as long as we trust to anything else than the goodness and truth of our Lord, built into our own daily life. The fallacies of the natural senses, and the falsities of natural thought, and of self-derived intelligence, all fail, at the critical point, when the strain of our self-will bends us.

THE STONES AND THE BRICK.

"Take great stones in thy hand, and hide them in the mortar in the brickwork, which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house."

In a general way, the three kingdoms of nature, the animal, the vegetable, and the mineral, which are three different degrees of life, different in kind, or quality, represent the three discrete, or different, degrees of life, in man; the celestial degree, which is characterized by inmost love to the Lord, which is the love of goodness; and the spiritual degree, dominated by a love of the neighbor, which is the love of truth; and the natural degree, known by the love of law, and of obedience to the law.

Common stones, belonging to the mineral kingdom, represent natural truths, not merely truths about natural things, but all truths, about all things, as seen by a mind open to the natural degree, only. And so the ancient men often set up stones, or stone pillars, or piles of stones, to commemorate important events; or to witness agreements between parties; or as landmarks to land-property. But, when a stone is used for a bad purpose, or to represent a bad thing, it changes its representative meaning, and represents a falsity, a truth when perverted into falsity, by wrong application. The form of the statement may remain the same, but a changed purpose and a changed application, change the practical effect of the statement, and pervert a truth into a falsity, in the mind and life of the person so abusing it. A great truth, buried in man's natural senses, loses its spiritual quality.

Jeremiah took great stones, which, in their natural place, would have represented natural truths. But, when he hid them in the mortar, under the pavement, for the use of a heathen king, they represented natural truths, such as the literal truths of the Scriptures, hidden

and buried in the hot lusts of the natural mind; and perverted to the bad use of our self-love and our self-derived intelligence. The mortar, not a natural material, but a man-made product, is hot from the lime in it, and damp from the water in it. And so it represents, here, the fire of self-love, joined with the water of falsity.

Brick, as an artificial stone, here represents false ideas, built into the mind, as substitutes for the Lord's truths. And the king of Babylon, setting his throne on the brick pavement, and over the hidden stones, represents the dominant false principle which is joined with evil loves, ruling in the mind, by means of all the false notions which may be made to appear to be founded on the letter of the Scriptures, interpreted by the thoughts of the senses. It is a common saying that a man can prove anything from the Bible; *i. e.,* he can so pervert the literal sense of the Bible, as to make it seem to uphold almost any false notion.

EGYPT.

All the things which it is said that Nebuchadnezzar would do to the Egyptians, represent the bad mental conditions into which the natural mind is brought, when, in its Egyptian darkness, the sensuous love of evil takes possession of the mind, and destroys all that exists in the mind, even of natural goodness and truth, which might have been used in the work of regeneration. "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek Jehovah. . . . The Egyptians are men, and not God: and their horses are flesh, and not spirit: and when Jehovah shall stretch out His hand, both he that helpeth shall stumble, and he that is helped shall fall, and they shall all be consumed together." (Isaiah xxxi. 1, 3.)

XV.

THE INFOLDING FIRE, THE LIVING CREATURES, AND THEIR WHEELS, ETC.

And I looked, and behold, a whirlwind came out of the North, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness about it; and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire.

And out of the midst thereof, the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the color of burnished brass.

And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides: and they four had their faces and their wings. Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side: they four also had the face of an eagle. Thus were their faces; and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies.

And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went: and they turned not when they went.

As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright; and out of the fire went forth lightning.

Now, as I beheld the living creatures, behold, one wheel upon the earth, by the living creatures, with their four faces.

The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl: and they four had one likeness; and their appearance and their work was, as it were, a wheel in the midst of a wheel.—EZEKIEL i. 4–16.

THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD.

THE general theme is the presence of the Lord, which is constant with all men, and with each man; and always accommodated to each man's individual needs.

The Lord is present in His Divine Word, in which He reveals Himself in many different aspects, so that each man, at each stage of his spiritual progress, may have such mental light as he is then able to use, in his practical life.

THE STORM.

A storm is a disturbance of the usual conditions of the atmosphere. And a spiritual storm is a disturbance of mental conditions. Such a storm may occur, for instance, when the Lord manifests His presence in His Divine truth, among those who do not love Him, and who live in evil and in falsity. To such men, the Lord seems to come as a disturbing and destroying power, to interfere with their conditions.

THE NORTH.

The whirlwind is said to come out of the North. The points of the compass represent the different conditions of men's minds. The North is the darkest quarter, opposite to the South, where the light is greatest at noon-time. And, as the light in the South represents the spiritual light of intelligence, so the North, as opposite, represents the least degree of spiritual intelligence, the natural-minded state, ignorant of spiritual truths.

And the approach of the Lord, in His Divine Truth, makes a great disturbance in man's natural mind, and tends to break up the usual conditions.

THE CLOUD.

With the storm there is a great cloud. The spiritual meaning of the Divine Word is a bright light, warm and brilliant before the spiritual mind. But, in accommodating itself to natural-minded men, the Divine Word must come in the cloud of the literal meaning, which obscures spiritual truth to those who are not prepared to see it.

THE INFOLDING FIRE.

And yet, to those who are prepared to see, there is, within the cloud, a glowing fire of the Divine Love, giving life to all things. In our text this fire is said to be "infolding itself," or receiving itself. The idea is that the fire streamed forth, in brilliant flashes of flame, which then folded themselves back into the central fire, or doubled in upon themselves; and again streamed forth, and returned. The effect would be an alternation of very brilliant light, and of light less brilliant, somewhat like the twinkling of a star. Thus, this fire constantly rekindled and sustained itself, as a source, as well as affording a perpetual supply. And, in these facts, is represented the Lord's love, as the source of all things, whence there flows a perpetual supply of love and wisdom for men, that they may return to the Lord, in a loving acknowledgment.

And, around this great fire, there was a general brightness, a luminous halo of light, representing the Divine Truth manifested in the presence of the Lord, and flowing from His Love. And out of the midst of the brightness came the color of amber. Amber has been said to be of the color of gold and silver combined, having the warmth of the gold, and the brightness of the silver. This color of amber represents the presence and influence of the Divine Truth, in the letter of the Divine Word, shining warmly from the inward, spiritual meaning.

And the three appearances, the fire, and the brightness, and the color of amber, represent the three aspects

in which the Lord appears, in His Word, to men in the three discrete degrees, the celestial, the spiritual, and the natural; *i.e.*, as seen from the different mental standpoints, the inmost love of goodness, the intelligence in spiritual truth, and the obedience to the rules of life.

THE LIVING CREATURES.

And out of the fire, etc., came the likeness of four living creatures. These different creatures represent the different aspects in which the Lord, in His Divine Word, impresses men in different degrees of intelligence, and on different planes, or levels, of human life. To one man, the Divine Word is full of the goodness of God's love, for all the uses of human life. To another man, the Word is the repository of clear truths. To another, the Word is full of obscure truths, for men to study, and to apply to life. To another, the Word is a guide-book for rules of conduct.

These living creatures, or cherubim, externally represent the Word in its letter, which is a spiritual guard, surrounding the inward, spiritual Word of God, to protect it from profanation, in the mind of the natural man. For thus the providence of the Lord supplies every man with all that he can use; and also protects him from abusing that which he does not know how to use. Thus, in the profoundest sense, these living creatures represent the Lord, as Life, itself, flowing out to men, as receptacles of life.

The Lord is often represented, in the Scriptures, by living creatures, which, in each case, represent some particular phase of the Divine character, some aspect in which God is seen and known to men. To represent His power, He is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah. To express His gentleness, He is called a Lamb. And so, in the Scriptures, men are often represented by animals,

both good and evil, according to the characters of the men represented. The composite animals, such as mentioned in our text, and such as could not exist in the natural world, seem, to our minds, very grotesque. But they were familiar to Oriental minds, whose literature abounded in such symbolic representatives.

FOUR.

There were four of these living creatures. Two represents union, or conjunction, as with the co-operating of the heart and the lungs, or the spirit and the body, or the will and the understanding. And four represents a double union, as between both the natural will and understanding and the spiritual will and understanding. For there is this double and perfect union in all things which are from the Lord. And this union is reciprocal, as in the regenerate man, who understands what he loves, and also loves what he understands.

FACES.

In general, these living creatures had the likeness of a man, because they represented the Lord, as the Divine Man, in His manifesting Himself to finite men. The face expresses the feelings and thoughts which are active in the mind. And so you look into a man's face, to understand his real meaning. Each of these living creatures had four faces, of different kinds. These different faces represented the different aspects of spiritual truth in the Lord's Word, as it affects the minds of men, in the internal will, and in the external will, and in the internal understanding, and in the external understanding. Thus, with its four faces, one turned in each direction, the Word of the Lord, like the four sides of the holy city, looks in every way, to all classes of men, spiritual and natural.

WINGS.

And each of these living creatures had four wings. Wings, like arms, are the means of exerting power; and so they represent power. The characteristic action of wings is to lift up the body, and to make rapid progress. So, mentally, the understanding, or intellect, has the power to elevate the thought, and to progress to different conditions of feeling. Wings operate in pairs, thus representing the co-operation of the heart and the intellect. The four wings, being two pairs, represent the power of thought, when both natural and spiritual. Natural thought and spiritual thought, when united in man, protect him from abusing the Word of the Lord. And, as these living creatures represent the Lord, as the Divine Man, they display the co-operation of the Divine Power, in the truth of the Divine Word, in both its letter and its spirit; for the truth is one, and united, although it has different aspects, in its letter and in its spirit.

FEET.

The feet, as the lowest part of the body, represent the natural mind, as the lowest part of the mind. The sole of the foot represents the life of the senses, the corporeal plane of life, which is the lowest part of the natural mind. In these living creatures, the soles of the feet were like the sole of a calf's foot.

Domestic cattle represent our natural affections. A calf, being young and harmless, represents the innocent state of the natural mind, in its affection for knowing the truths which sustain mental life. The passage in Malachi (iv. 2), "Ye shall go forth and grow up, as calves of the stall," means that the regenerating natural man shall develop in knowledge of the Lord's Word, and thus in the love of goodness. The fact that each of the living creatures had straight feet, like the feet of a calf, indicates that the Word of the Lord arouses and develops, in the natural man, a love of a good life, in simple obedience to the Divine laws of life.

These feet "sparkled like the color of burnished brass." Brass, as a base metal, represents the natural man, or the natural affections of man, as distinguished from gold, which represents celestial love, with the inmost affections of the spirit. When the natural affections are good and orderly, they sparkle, or shine, like polished brass; *i.e.*, they reflect the images of the higher things of the mind, as a good natural affection represents a good interior and heavenly affection.

It is characteristic of the Lord's Word, even in its outward letter, its feet, that it teaches a good and pure natural life.

The hands of a man, under the wings of these living creatures, represent the higher power of spiritual truth, often concealed under, or within, the power of the letter of the Divine Word.

THE FACES.

The four faces of these living creatures were those of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle. The face of a man represents the Divine Truth, in its interior wisdom, as it is seen by the angelic man, to whom it gives power to become wise. The Lion represents strength. And the creature with the face of a lion represents the strength of the letter of the Divine Word, and thus, the strength of the Lord's Love, as displayed in forming the letter of His Word, for the salvation of men.

The ox represents the natural affection, to which truth is comparatively obscure. The eagle, as a bird, represents the intellectual side of man's mind, as distinguished from the beasts, which represent the affectional side. The eagle is a bird of very great powers of

flight, and of sight; representing the soaring intelligence, and the extended thought, of the rational mind.

The living creatures, having faces of man, lion, ox, and eagle, thus represent the different aspects of the Divine Word, as the Lord's methods of reaching men of different genius.

That the movements of these creatures was like lightning, in its flashes of light, represents that they revealed the Lord, in and by His truth, in His Word.

WHEELS.

Each of the living creatures had a wheel, which went with the creature. Wheels are means of going, or progressing. They represent an intelligent knowledge of doctrine, by which a man's mind can travel and progress. Intelligent knowledge of natural things (as, for instance, a good knowledge of the letter of the Divine Word), is an excellent means of carrying the mind to further progress.

But, in our text, it is said that there was, in each case, a wheel in the midst of a wheel. This represents a spiritual intelligence within the natural intelligence; as, in the knowledge of the Word of God, there may be an interior knowledge of spiritual principles, within the outward knowledge of the letter of the Word. Such intelligence makes a man a double scholar, learned in the facts and rules of the Divine Word, for natural life, and spiritually intelligent in the truths which relate to spiritual life.

All these living creatures are much like those seen by John, and mentioned in the Apocalypse.

All such scenes and visions are representative and correspondential of all the many forms in which our Lord of infinite Love reaches His human children, in all grades of their intelligence. And such representatives

should teach us to look to our Lord, for light and life, and to cultivate, in ourselves, and to help others to develop and cultivate, the mental capacity to see, and to understand, all the various manifestations of His love, wisdom, and power, which our Lord displays before us, especially in His Word.

Only by drawing near to Him, in love, can we develop the highest human intelligence, the intuitive insight of the open spirit, "the self-evidencing reason of love."

O Lord, "with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light." (Psalm xxxvi. 9.)

XVI.

EZEKIEL EATING THE ROLL OF A BOOK.

Son of man, hear what I say unto thee: Be not thou rebellious, like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee.

And when I looked, behold, a hand was sent unto me; and lo, a roll of a book therein. And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without; and there were written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.

Moreover, he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy stomach to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then I did eat: and it was in my mouth as honey, for sweetness. And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with My words unto them. . . . So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit: but the hand of Jehovah was strong upon me.—EZEKIEL ii. 8–10; iii. 1–4, 14.

THE unregenerate natural man may delight in the letter of the Divine Word, because he can interpret it to favor his own evils; but, at the same time, he despises the inward and spiritual meaning of the same Divine Word, because it is clear truth, which exposes his evil character.

THE LITERAL FACTS.

Our text narrates the experiences of the prophet, just after he had seen the wonderful symbolic vision of the

whirlwind, the infolding fire, and the wheels within wheels.

The Lord was sending Ezekiel to warn and to teach the Israelites, who, as stated in the context, were then a rebellious, hard-hearted and stiff-necked people.

The special message to Ezekiel instructed him to eat that which the Lord would send to him. And then a hand appeared to him, holding the roll of a book, written upon, within and without, and containing lamentations and mourning and woe. And he was commanded to eat the book, and then to go to the people of Israel, and to speak to them the words of Jehovah.

IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD.

This scene was in the spiritual world; and the prophet engaged in its experiences with his spiritual senses; *i.e.*, the senses of his spiritual body. These facts are clear, not only from the nature of the case, but also from the language of the context. At the beginning, it is said that, while Ezekiel was by the river, "the hand of Jehovah was upon him," which means that he was in unusual conditions, brought about by the Lord. As Ezekiel expresses it, "The heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God." And again he says, "The spirit lifted me up, and took me away, . . . and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit: but the hand of Jehovah was strong upon me;" *i.e.*, he was moved and guided by the Lord.

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING.

The spiritual meaning of the vision is not only general, referring to the nation, but also particular, and regarding each man's individual mind.

Spiritually, the rebellious house of Israel is the unregenerate natural mind of man, with all its selfish and

sensuous feelings and thoughts, and all the man's bad habits. And these conditions were general in Israel, at the time of our text.

Every man is born in a spiritual body, which is within his material body, but whose spiritual senses may be opened, at any time, by the Lord, so that the man can then see, and act, etc., in the spiritual world. This was the case with all the seers, and others named in the Scriptures who were, at times, intromitted into the spiritual world.

THE HAND.

The hand, by which, especially, we express our power, represents power. We speak in agreement with this symbolism, when, for instance, we say that we have a matter "in hand," or that "we have our hands on it," when we mean that it is within our power.

In this case, as the hand was in the spiritual world, it represented, especially, the power of the spirit, and particularly the power of the Spirit of God, operating in and from His Divine Word.

THE ROLL.

For "the roll of a book" which the hand held, represented the Divine Book, the Word of the Lord. It is called the "roll" of a book, because, in ancient days, books were manuscripts, written on long pieces of parchment, or of papyrus, or paper, which were rolled on two rollers; and, as they were read, they were unrolled at one end, to read, and rolled again, at the other end, as used. The book, held in the hand, represented the Word of the Lord, which the prophet was to carry to Israel. For the salvation of Israel, as of other nations, was to come by means of the Divine Word, revealing to the people the love and wisdom of the Lord, and His laws for human life, which men must

follow, in order to be saved from the inward hell which their own evils would naturally form in their hearts and lives.

The hand "spread" the book before the prophet; *i.e.,* the Lord revealed His truth to His prophet.

The book was written, within and without; *i.e.,* it had an inward and spiritual meaning, and an external and literal sense. And there were written therein, "lamentations and mourning and woe;" *i.e.,* the spiritual truth reveals the evils and falsities and sins in the inward motives and thoughts of evil men, as well as in their outward conduct. Men lament over the good which they lose. And so, lamentation represents the sorrow which is inseparable from all evil, and in which good is lost. Evil vastates, or lays waste, all the good in the man's heart, especially when he abuses the letter of the Divine Word, to favor his own evil loves. Then, spiritually, "evil shall slay the wicked."

Thus lamentation is the loss of goodness, in the heart. But mourning represents the loss of truth, in the intellect, when falsities control the thought. And woe represents the loss of joy in the practical life and conduct of the evil man.

EATING THE BOOK.

The prophet, at the Divine command, ate the book. In bodily eating, there are several processes. The mouth receives the food, and masticates it. It then passes into the stomach, as the common receptacle, whence the food is to be distributed. Spiritually, taking food into the mouth, represents receiving any good or truth, any new feeling or thought. But food must go through the process of digestion, in the stomach, which process represents the examination by rational thought, which we give to the new conditions of feeling and of thought. And, further, the passing of the digested food to its

next receptacle, represents the more interior and spiritual thought given to our new experiences, to test them by our interior will. For, comparatively, the work of the stomach represents the work of the understanding; while the work of the bowels represents the action of the will, or heart, when new conditions are received and accepted, appropriated and assimilated by our mind.

SWEET AND BITTER.

As the prophet was eating the book, its taste was very sweet in his mouth. But we observe that, later, he felt a state of bitterness, in the spirit.

These conditions of sweet and bitter are the key-notes of this parable. Similar things are narrated by John, in the Revelation: "And the voice which I heard from heaven spoke unto me again, and said, Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

And I went to the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy bowels bitter; but it shall be, in thy mouth, sweet as honey.

And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up: and it was, in my mouth, sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my bowels were bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again, before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." (Revelation x. 8-11.)

And John declared that these things happened while he was "in the spirit;" *i.e.*, in the spiritual world, and in his spiritual senses.

Now, between these two narratives you will notice several points of close resemblance. In both, the prophet was in the spiritual world; and he saw a book, which was open, and in the hand of an angel; and he ate the

book, and it was as sweet as honey, in his mouth; but when he came to digest it, it was bitter; and, in each case, the circumstances immediately preceded a call to prophesy to the people. Thus, in each case, the vision was to prepare the prophet for his work.

Sweetness represents the delight which comes to the mind in receiving pleasant things, which agree with our desires and thoughts. Honey represents this delight of the mind, especially of the natural mind, dealing with the external side of things.

EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL.

In an orderly state of mind and of life, the things which delight our natural mind are in correspondence with the things which delight our enlightened spiritual mind. But, in an unregenerate state of mind, many things delight the natural feeling and thought, which do not correspond with the things of spiritual good. And also, in this state, many things, in their external forms, delight the natural mind, while, in their internal aspects, they are very distasteful to the same mind. For instance, the literal sense of the Divine Word, the Scriptures, may delight a man's natural mind, because he can interpret the literal sense in many ways, and according to his own ways of thinking and feeling. And he can make the literal sense of the Bible appear to justify his evil affections, and his false notions, and even his sinful acts.

For instance, the ancient Jew interpreted the letter of the Old Testament to prove that the Jews were more holy than other nations, and were especially chosen to be the Lord's people. And this view was delightful to the ancient Jew's personal and national pride. But the Jews did not understand the inward and spiritual meaning of the Divine Word, or they would have seen that

they were not chosen to *be* a spiritual church, but merely to *represent* a spiritual church, in an external way, by symbolic actions.

Again, the ancient Jews were delighted with the literal sense of the Scriptures, which foretold the coming of a Messiah. And their delight was in their supposition that the Messiah was to exalt them, as a nation, and to give them wealth, glory, and power, in this world, and in worldly things. But, when Jesus came, as the promised Messiah, His personality, His ways of life, and His teachings, were very distasteful to the Jews, because He proclaimed that His kingdom was not of this world, but that He came to lead men into a spiritual kingdom, by regeneration. And thus, representatively, while the Divine Word was sweet in the mouth of these Jews, it was bitter in their bowels.

MODERN INSTANCES.

And similar conditions exist among men, to-day. For instance, take the prevailing theory of "Salvation by Faith, alone," as taught in many of the churches, from the letter of the Scriptures misunderstood. By this doctrine, men are taught to expect salvation by a "Vicarious Atonement," without any regard to the actual character of a man, in the quality of his heart and of his life. And many men enter the churches, and become very pious, because they expect to gain heaven thereby, without the long and hard labors of practical regeneration, by the change of character, from evil to good, in the leadings of the Lord. They delight in their belief that, in spite of their evil life, God will impute to them Christ's righteousness.

But, when such men are taught the spiritual truth, from the inward and spiritual sense of the Scriptures, confirmed by the literal sense when properly understood; and when they find that salvation is not by faith alone, but by love in the heart, and faith in the intellect, and righteousness in the life, they find such truth to be very bitter to them, because it takes away their theory of easy salvation; and it demands of them the continued and severe labor of living themselves out of evil, and into goodness, in obedience to the Divine commandments. They do not relish the clear truths that God does not *impute* to them the righteousness of Christ, but that our Lord, Jesus Christ, Who is, Himself, the one God of Heaven and earth, *imparts* to them His righteousness, in the measure in which they cease to be unrighteous in their practical daily life, and in which they live according to the Divine laws.

These things are inwardly bitter to the man who hopes to secure an entrance into heaven, without the trouble of actual regeneration. But the literal sense of the Bible was sweet to him, because he understood it to promise him an easy way to heaven.

These conditions were portrayed in Jesus's explanation of His parable of the sower: "He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the Word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth, because of the Word, by and by he is offended."

The Word was, to him, externally sweet, but internally bitter.

THE STATE OF THE WORLD.

Look over the world, to-day, in politics, in business, in the professions, and in the workings of labor, and even in the churches, and in the so-called reforms and charities, and you can easily see how often the spirit of selfishness and of worldliness seeks to intrench itself behind the literal sense of the Bible, and thus to live a

practical daily life which is utterly opposed to the spirit of the Divine Word.

The spirit of selfish worldliness is so clearly demonstrated in the dealings of the nations with each other, that, in the light of the spirit, we must exclaim with the Psalmist of Israel, "The gods of the nations are idols." (Psalm xcvi. 5.)

Nations and individuals are gambling and juggling with the letter of the Scriptures, in their efforts to avoid the clear teachings of the spiritual sense, which cannot be twisted into agreement with human selfishness. Christianity has been taught to the world nearly two thousand years. And, to-day, Christianity is the professed religion of the leading nations of the world; and yet, nowhere in this world, is a certificate of church-membership a guarantee of actual good character, or a passport to the confidence of our fellow-men. And it is so, because the churches have been satisfied and delighted with a theory of salvation which bears no practical relation to the spirit and life of Christ. In this world, to-day, comparatively few understand and believe in, the Lord, Jesus Christ, as the one and only God, the Giver of life, the Leader and Savior of men, whose teachings, understood in our rational and spiritual minds, are to be to us the breath of life, the bread of life, and the way to heaven, here, in order that we may abide in heaven, hereafter.

HEAVEN.

He is in heaven in whose heart the principles of heaven are his motives and purposes, and in whose daily life the Divine commandments are his rules of conduct; in whose mouth, spiritually, the letter of the Word is sweet, and in whose inward parts the spirit of the Word is equally sweet. Of such the Lord said, "I will put My

law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts," the great law of love, the mover of the universe.

It is necessary that the letter of the Word should be sweet to the natural-minded man, in order to attract his notice, and to engage his attention, before he has any vital interest in the truth. And then, little by little, he can be led towards, and finally into, the spiritual meaning. But this spiritual meaning will not be sweet to his mental taste, until he has allowed the letter of the Word to work a reform in his conduct and in his motives.

Speaking to the tempter, Jesus exclaimed, "Man shall not live by bread, alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matthew iv. 4.)

The Divine Word will be life to us, inwardly and outwardly, in spirit and in letter, if our whole life shall daily say, O Lord, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy Word was, unto me, the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." (Jeremiah xv. 16.)

XVII.

SYMBOLIC PROPHECY OF THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM.

Son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee; and portray upon it a city, even Jerusalem: and lay siege against it, and build forts against it, and cast up a mound against it; set camps also against it, and set battering-rams against it, round about.

And take thou unto thee an iron pan, and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city: and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This shall be a sign to the house of Israel.

And lie thou upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of days that thou shalt lie upon it, thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of their days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah, forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year. Therefore thou shalt set thy face toward the siege of Jerusalem, and thine arm shall be uncovered, and thou shalt prophesy against it. And behold, I will lay my hands upon thee, and thou shalt not turn thee from one side to another, till thou hast ended the days of thy siege.

Take thou, also, unto thee, wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentils, and millet, and fitches, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof, according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon thy side, three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof. And thy food which thou shalt eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day: from time to time shalt thou eat thereof. Thou shalt drink also water by measure, the sixth part of a hin: from time to time shalt thou drink. And thou shalt eat it as barley cakes; and thou shalt bake it, in

their sight, with manure. . . . And Jehovah said, Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them.—EZEKIEL iv. 1–13.

THE LITERAL STORY.

IN the literal sense of this enacted parable, the prophet carried on a mimic siege, doing, in miniature, some of the things which an attacking army would do, in besieging a city. And this mimic siege is declared to be a sign unto the house of Israel. And the other actions of the prophet, such as lying on his side, and the manner of his eating and drinking, literally represented the distress of the inhabitants of the city, during the siege, when food would be of ordinary kinds, without luxury, and both food and water would be so scarce as to be used by measure, doled out in small rations, day by day. The long duration of the siege prophesied was represented, in general, by the long-continued lying on one side, and then on the other.

But we observe that the prophet was to lie on his left side, three hundred and ninety days, and on his right side forty days. And those two numbers, added, make four hundred and thirty, which was the number of years during which Israel was held in bondage, in Egypt, before the Exodus. And the days for lying on the right side, for Judah, were forty, which was the number of years during which Israel wandered in the wilderness, immediately following the Exodus from Egypt. And thus these were representative numbers, familiar to Israel.

The degenerate condition of the Israelites, after the siege and surrender of Jerusalem, was represented by the use of dried manure for fuel, in baking the bread for the prophet. This was a common practice, among the common people of Israel, who were poor, and with whom wood for fuel was expensive. But bread baked

thus was regarded as "unclean," in a religious and ceremonial sense; and its use was typical of poverty and distress. A prophet was always a representative man, through whom the Lord communicated with the people. And, hence, the prophet was always closely observed by the people. And everything done by him was more or less representative. His personal life was merged in his representative character.

THE SPIRITUAL SENSE.

The historical spiritual sense of our text displays the degeneration of the Jewish nation and Church, with whom there was not left remaining any good which was not adulterated with the evil lusts of self-love, or any truth which was not falsified by the sensuous notions of self-derived intelligence.

In the personal spiritual sense, the general theme is the degeneration of the human mind, which adulterates the good of life with selfish evils, and falsifies the truths of the Lord's Word, until it comes under the dominion of the hells, which subjugate the mind, and subject it to all the sufferings which are inseparable from evil conditions.

All the things which the prophet did, as narrated in the text, in mimicking the doings of an attacking army, represent the particulars in the assaults of evil influences upon the mind of a man, both within his own natural mind, and from the outside evil spirits.

THE TILE.

The tile, on which the prophet portrayed the city of Jerusalem, was, probably, a large fresh clay brick, not yet dried hard in the sun, and on which he could scratch a picture of the city: or, if it was a dried brick, he could draw the city upon it, with a reed pen. In either case,

the portrait represented the mental conditions of the people of Jerusalem; and the siege to which the tile was subjected, represented the conditions into which the people were precipitating themselves by their course of life.

LYING ON ONE SIDE, ETC.

The restricted method of lying on one side, only, for a long time, represents the mental condition in which a man remains, when under the influence of one form of mental activity, which narrows and constrains the mind, and restricts the practical life. There is no full spiritual freedom, except in the goodness and truth of regeneration. The unregenerate life is, necessarily, one of restraint and limitation.

Of the unregenerate life it is said, representatively, "The bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it." (Isaiah xxviii. 20.)

The two sides of the body represent the two sides of the mind. The right side represents the will-principle, the heart, the affectional nature, with its loves and its feelings. And the left side represents the intellectual nature, the understanding, with its knowledge, its wisdom, its truth, and its thoughts. Ezekiel was to lie on his left side for Israel, and on his right side for Judah, because, in man, Israel represents the intellectual side, and Judah the affectional side.

As the prophet represented the Divine Truth which he taught to men, from the Lord, so the constrained action of the prophet, in lying on one side, for a very long time, also represented, in another sense, the constrained action of the Divine Truth, in the mind of the man who had been taught the truth, but who regarded that truth merely in an external and formal way, as relating to merely ceremonial worship.

DAYS.

Times represent states of mind, conditions of affection and of thought, by which the progress of the mind is computed. In distinction, days represent more especially the minor conditions, and frequent changes of mental states, in the practical daily life; and years represent the greater, more extended conditions, which include the minor states. In our text, literally, days were given, instead of the years represented, probably because of convenience of application. The representative lesson was more pointed, and more direct, than if it had been spread over several centuries, so that no one generation of men could have seen its whole course and plan. And, mentally, the quality of the larger periods of mental growth, is seen and represented in the quality of the smaller periods and conditions, of which the larger states are made up.

Three signifies fulness, completeness, especially as regards truth, in the mind and life; as where a man loves, understands, and practises the Lord's truth. In this case, he receives truth in fulness, because it is in all his life, in his heart, his understanding, and his conduct. Hundreds, thousands, etc., add emphasis to the meaning, and make it more general and more extended. The period of three hundred days represents a general fulness, as to the truth. Ninety, another multiple of three, represents fulness, especially in relation to "remains," *i.e.,* to the early states of our life, remaining in our minds; because ninety is nine times ten, and ten especially represents such "remains." As relating to the state of mind represented by the prophet lying three hundred and ninety days on his left side, the extent of time represents a full "vastation" of truth, in the mind; *i.e.,* a full laying waste, or destroying of truth, by means of the false ideas of self-love.

FORTY.

And forty represents temptation, especially in regard to the will, or heart. The flood lasted forty days; the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness forty years; the spies of Israel searched the land of Canaan forty days; and Jesus fasted, in the wilderness, forty days. In all these cases, and many others, forty represents temptation. In our text, the forty days for Judah represented a full temptation to the heart of the unregenerate man, and his degeneration by yielding to evil. The fact that the prophet was said to bear the iniquity of Israel and of Judah, does not express any vicarious bearing, but merely a representative bearing, for the purpose of prophetic teaching. The three hundred and ninety days, and the forty days, together, represented a full vastation of goodness and truth among the people of Israel and Judah, a full rejection of good from the heart, and of truth from the understanding, so that their minds were about to sink into captivity to the hells.

In a more profound sense, the same things represent the temptations to the assumed humanity in Jesus Christ, considered as separate from the Divine inward life.

The words of our text do not seem to require us to understand that the prophet had to lie on one side three hundred and ninety days, and forty days, consecutively and continuously, without arising. The meaning seems to be that, during a long period, when the prophet did lie down, he had to lie on one side, only. He was instructed to make his own bread, and to get water for himself, during all the time. And it would be impossible to do these things while lying down. And it is not probable that either water or bread would remain fit for use, for over fourteen months, if he had provided enough to last, before lying down. And if he was to remain inactive so long, it seems probable that some one would have

been instructed to wait upon him: but nothing of this kind is mentioned.

The amount of food and water allowed the prophet was very limited, ten ounces of bread, and one and one-half pints of water, daily, only enough for the necessities of life. These things represent the straightened condition of the unregenerate man, in whose mind there is a shortness of spiritual sustenance.

UNCLEAN BREAD.

Literally, the unclean method of baking the bread, represented that, during the siege, the people would be reduced to severe straits for fuel, and compelled to use what they could secure; and also that, after the siege, and in the succeeding captivity, they would be compelled to eat the polluted bread of the Gentiles. But, spiritually, the baking of the cakes, or bread, with the dried manure for fuel, represented that, in the mind of the unregenerate man, who has fallen into evil, falsity, and sin, there is no goodness, and no truth, that is not heated by the unclean lusts of self-love, the things which are rejected from every regenerating mind. In such a mind, even the ceremonies of worship are polluted with the impurities of self-love.

IMPURITIES.

Natural-minded men, who have more fastidious taste of the senses than intelligent knowledge of spiritual things, sometimes complain that there are, in the Bible, many things which are repulsive to any one of refined tastes. Undoubtedly, this is so, as to the letter of the Scriptures. But how could it well be otherwise? The Bible was made to reach fallen men, just as they were, and are, in low conditions of character. And the Word must come down to the plane of life on which

such men live, or it cannot reach them, and influence them. It must deal with such phases of life as low-minded men can comprehend. And it must talk of things in which such men are interested.

If the Bible had been made for angels, only, it would have come in a very different literal sense. But it was made for both angels and sinners. And if sinners will use the Bible, for practical regeneration, their objection to its language will pass away, for they will see the necessity for such language, because the things named in the literal sense are the symbols, representatives, and correspondences of the things meant in the spiritual sense. And earnest men will not be chiefly interested in criticising the external elegance of the language, but in rejoicing in the plain truths which warn them of their own natural tendencies to evil, often hidden under an elegant sensuous taste. Remember that the language of the Bible, in its originals, and measurably so in its translations, is the reaching-down of infinite love and wisdom and purity, to the conditions and necessities of human impurities, in order to save every man who is willing to be saved.

THE DIVINE PHYSICIAN.

As the true physician does not desert his patient, even when in the repulsive filth of small-pox, but works for the life of his patient, and his restoration to health, so the infinite Divine Love never hesitates to follow a fallen man even into the depths of evil, to save the man, if possible; and, if not possible to elevate him into heaven, then to save him from sinking into still lower hells. O Lord, "If I ascend up to heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there." (Psalm cxxxix. 8.)

The Bible is not intended to be merely an elegant

literary production, to cater to the refined natural tastes of cultured persons. It is the Book of God, who, from His heaven of love, uses the language of the Scriptures to reach down into the reeking horrors of the hells, to seek and to save that which is lost. The Bible is the Great Physician's medical hand-book for all His human patients, describing and explaining all human diseases, some of which are very filthy. But you do not need to dwell upon the most disagreeable parts of the Book, if you are not in danger of such diseases. But a close study of the language will help you to diagnose your own spiritual diseases, and to apply the proper remedy. Not one of us can recognize how far down he would sink, in character, if the Lord's infinitely tender love did not withhold us, by various seen and unseen methods of His constant Providence.

And, as we grow more earnest, in seeking higher spiritual conditions, and in resisting our own natural tendencies to evil, we shall cease to criticise the Divine methods of doing the great works of infinite love and mercy. As we learn more of the spirit of the Divine Word, by inward experience, we shall have less disposition to criticise its external form. When we say from our hearts, O Lord, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path," we shall recognize the fact that, when human paths are in the mud and filth of sensuous life, it is necessary for the Divine Word to shine upon these filthy things, to reveal their nature, and to warn us of the danger; "to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death; to guide our feet into the way of peace."

XVIII.

EZEKIEL CUTTING OFF HIS HAIR, ETC.

And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp sword: as a barber's razor shalt thou take it unto thee, and shalt cause it to pass upon thy head and upon thy beard: then take thee balances to weigh, and divide the hair. A third part shalt thou burn in the fire, in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled; and thou shalt take a third part, and smite with the sword round about it; and a third part shalt thou scatter to the wind, and I will draw out a sword after them. And thou shalt take thereof a few in number, and bind them in thy skirts. And of these again shalt thou take, and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire; therefrom shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, This is Jerusalem.—EZEKIEL v. 1-5.

WHEN lusts and falsities have gained control of a human mind, they destroy all goodness and truth in that mind, until there is not even any natural truth left in it, either in the interior of the natural mind, or in its exterior.

THE PROPHET.

The prophet was called "son of man." The prophets of the Old Testament, through whom the letter of the Divine Word was given to men, represented the Lord, as to His Word, and as to the doctrine of the church drawn from the Word. The prophet was merely a human means, "a son of man," in the hands of the Lord. But, being called to act for the Lord, the prophet represented the Word of the Lord. In the highest sense, the Son of Man is the Lord, Himself, as the Divine Truth, which He exemplified and fulfilled in His

external manhood, which came through man. As the prophet represented the Divine Word, which he was a means of revealing to men, so the things which the prophet suffered, at the hands of the Jews, represented the violence offered by the Jews to the letter of the Divine Word; and thus to the Divine Truth; and to the Lord, in His truth; and to His Humanity, which was the Word made flesh, for the salvation of men. And the same things were represented by the acts which the prophet did, in a representative way, at the command of the Lord.

SWORD AND CUTTING.

In such representative action, the prophet was commanded to take a sharp sword, and to use it as a razor, to cut off his hair and his beard. All cutting instruments, including knives, swords, etc., when spoken of in a good sense, represent the truth, as a weapon, to cut against all things which are false, evil, and sinful; or, in another sense, to cut into, to examine, to divide and separate, or to destroy, various thoughts which enter the mind. Or, in a bad sense, these cutting implements and weapons represent truths falsified, perverted into falsities, by being used for bad purposes, and employed to cut against the things which are good, true and useful. A sharp sword is one which cuts keenly and with exactness. And so, sharpness represents accuracy, as when sharp truth cuts into, and penetrates, false notions, and exposes the nature of evil feelings and of sinful acts; separating facts from false inferences, and destroying the influence of false ideas.

HAIR.

The hair, growing on the surface of the body, represents the ultimates, the outside things, which relate to

the natural plane of life. In regard to the Divine Word, the hair on the human body represents the letter of the Word, as distinguished from the vital organs, which represent the internal and spiritual sense of the Divine Word.

To cut off all the hair, here means, representatively, to take away the ultimates, or externals, of goodness and truth; *i.e.,* to deprive the mind of the practical use of its principles, in the daily life, by depriving it of the means of doing good, and of knowing truth.

BALDNESS.

Thus, baldness represents a condition of mind in which the man is deprived of knowledge of truth, and thus of the means of doing good; as is the case when a man is deprived of the letter of the Divine Word, by which he learns to distinguish between good and evil, and truth and falsity. For, when a man on earth is deprived of the letter of the Divine Word, he is deprived of all spiritual truth, because he is without the means of learning and understanding both natural and spiritual truth. And a man is deprived of the right use of the letter of the Lord's Word, when that literal sense is corrupted, or falsified, or perverted to evil purposes.

Hair, cut off, falls, and finally dies. And so the externals of truth, the rules, and the forms of worship, etc., when separated from the inward spirit and life of love to God, fall into nothing but empty forms, in which there is contained no inward, spiritual life, to the man who observes them in a merely formal way.

REPRESENTATION.

In making himself bald, the prophet represented the mental state of the people of Jerusalem, in their degenerate conditions of life. And he also represented the

mental state of every man who is in an unregenerate condition, while yet professing to worship the Lord.

In one aspect, the Divine Word in its letter, is a sharp sword, which, when turned against the evils of unregenerate men, will penetrate, examine, and expose, the evils and falsities of their minds. And, at the same time, the prophet shaving off his hair also represented what the Jews were doing, spiritually, to the Divine Word, in their own minds, by allowing their false notions to destroy all the force of the letter of the Word, and to change its precepts and commandments of life into mere formalities of ceremony.

All celestial and spiritual truths rest upon the letter of the Word, as the spirit of a man on earth rests upon, and acts through, his natural body. And so, to corrupt, falsify and throw away, the letter of the Divine Word, is, practically, to corrupt and throw away all of the Divine Word.

The letter of the Word is not always literally true about natural things, but it is always true representatively, figuratively, by correspondence between natural and spiritual things. And, therefore, the representative and correspondential letter of the Word is always a resting-place, and a containing-vessel, for the spiritual truth in the inward sense of the Word; as the expression of your face, and the tone of your voice, are resting-places and containing-vessels, in which you hold and express the inward feelings of your heart, and the thoughts of your understanding.

BALDNESS, IN THE ORIENT.

Because of the representative meaning of baldness, it was, in Oriental lands, looked upon as a great misfortune, and, in some cases, as a great disgrace, especially when inflicted upon a man as a punishment for

crime. Sometimes, persons made themselves bald, to express their great sorrow and extreme mourning, on the death of near relatives.

And so, in the case of our text, it may be said that the prophet made himself bald in mourning over the spiritual baldness of his people. Baldness was also an Oriental term of reproach, and a scurrilous epithet, applied to others, even when they showed no signs of physical baldness. This was the case, when the young men of Bethel jeered the prophet, Elisha, and called to him, "Go up, thou bald-head," in contemptuous reference to Elisha's assertion that his predecessor, Elijah, had gone up to heaven with a whirlwind, in a chariot of fire. And forty-two of those young men were killed by two bears, which are animals especially characterized by abundant long hair. The jeering of the prophet, by the lads, represents the contemptuous denial of the Divine character of the letter of the Word. And the destruction of the lads by bears represents the self-destruction of deniers of the Bible, by the force of the very letter which they reject and hate.

And Samson's great strength was said to be in his long hair; and he lost that unusual strength when his long hair was cut off. And here, again is represented the failure of the power of the Divine Word, in the mind of a man who makes the Word bald, by denying and rejecting its literal sense, as the proper representative body of its inward spirit. In its literal sense, the Divine Word is in its fulness, and in its power, because the literal sense is directly applicable to the conduct of life, as in the Ten Commandments, and in "The Golden Rule," and in other precepts. And so, notwithstanding the merely representative character of some parts of the letter of the Bible, we can always find many things in the letter which express, and make practical, every spiritual principle that is in the inward meaning of the Bible.

WEIGHING.

Weighing determines the quantity of goods: but spiritual weighing is to determine the quality, or spiritual character, of a feeling or a thought. In distinction, weighing means estimating the good which is in the matter, and measuring means determining the truth which is in it. And when a thing is weighed, spiritually, and its character is known, for good or for evil, its future career is foreseen. The mental balance to weigh mental things, is the rational faculty, the thinking capacity of the mind, enlightened by spiritual truth, on one side, and by natural truth, properly understood, on the other side. And when the enlightened rational faculty clearly sees the spiritual character of certain affections and thoughts, it assigns to each its career and place in the mind's life. This is represented by the prophet dividing the hair which he had cut off, and devoting each portion to its destiny.

THREE PARTS.

Three, as a number, represents fulness, completeness, especially as to truths; as, for instance, when truth is known, loved and practised; for then its power is complete, over all parts of the man's life, his will, which loves, his intellect, or understanding, which thinks, and his conduct, which practises.

To divide the hair into three parts, spiritually, is to apply the truth to such conditions to a full extent, completely, so as to reach all things.

To burn one part in the fire, is to represent that one cause of the destruction of the letter of the Divine Word, in the degenerate mind, is in the hot fires of self-love, and of all its lusts of evil. And to burn the hair in the midst of the city, is to represent that such evil conditions are produced by the corruption of the central doctrines of the church; *i.e.,* the doctrines concerning God.

To smite around another part, with the sword, or to cut up the hair into small pieces, is to represent the entire destruction of the power of the letter of the Word, in the unregenerate mind, by false reasonings from self-love, and from the fallacies of the senses. To scatter one part to all the winds, is to represent that all the active falsities of the natural mind sweep away, and scatter, even the letter of the Word, in the unregenerate mind, as the wind carries off the chaff, in the winnowing of grain.

And the text declares that those hairs, which were scattered by the wind, were not left to lodge and lie at rest, but that the Lord said, "And I will draw out a sword after them," or send a sword against them; which means that the literal truth is not merely carried out of the present thought, by some wind of doctrine, but that the more serious falsities of the mind will follow up, and destroy, such truth.

BINDING IN THE SKIRTS.

Of the last one-third, the prophet was to take a very few of the hairs, and to bind them in his skirts, *i.e.,* in the lower edges of his robe. Clothing represents the truth, which clothes the affections, by giving form and expression to the love, and planning for its exercise. The outer edges of the clothing represent the truth as applied to the external things of conduct. And when the prophet bound a few hairs in his skirts, he represented the mind seeking to apply some few of the precepts of the Word to practical conduct. But, in the unregenerate mind, even these practical precepts of conduct finally go into the great consuming fire of self-love. And when this occurs, the last hold which the truth has upon the man will be lost, and the fires of his evils will consume all things of the church, in his mind

and life. These things are represented by the direction to the prophet, to throw into the fire even the few hairs from his skirts; and that, from these, a fire should "come forth into all the house of Israel." And then, to confirm the whole representation, the text declares, "This is Jerusalem;" *i.e.,* this is a representative description of the spiritual conditions of the people of Jerusalem.

But the same things represent our conditions, to-day, to the extent in which we are living in similar unregenerate states, rejecting the life and power of the Divine Word, by stripping it of all its practical application to our actual daily life.

JERUSALEM.

After our text, there follows a statement of what our Lord had done for Jerusalem; and what Jerusalem had done, in ungrateful return for the Divine favors; and what must be the final result of Jerusalem's evil doings. Jerusalem had been set conspicuously, in the midst of other nations, and yet her people, in spite of Divine favors, had rebelled against the Lord, to a greater extent than the other nations; and, therefore, they were worse criminals. They abandoned the Divine laws and principles, and disregarded the Divine rules, even while proudly claiming to be the chosen people of God. They even defiled the Lord's sanctuary with their detestable and abominable things. They made the Lord's house "a den of thieves," as Jesus declared in later times. This was Jerusalem, with her shorn head, degraded, degenerated, self-destroyed.

And may not these graphic representative pictures be full of timely warning to us, who call our Church by the name of the New Jerusalem? Our Lord, Jesus Christ, has done, for the New Jerusalem, more than for

the old Jerusalem. Our Church, also, which is our spiritual holy city, is set down amidst other religious communities, who, with less spiritual light, do not clearly understand the nature and quality of the Divine character, nor the relation of God to His people, nor the practical methods of regeneration. With the far greater spiritual light of the inward and spiritual meaning of the Divine Word; and with a clear knowledge of the correspondential relation between the outward letter of the Bible and its inward spirit; and thus with a full view of the Divine Word, as Jacob's ladder, set up on the earth, in its literal sense, and reaching up to heaven in its spiritual meaning; and with a clear perception of the relation of spiritual principles to the practical conduct of daily life; we have very great favors for which to be thankful.

OUR POSSIBILITIES.

And, having the light and the opportunity, we should rise to greater heights of actual good character, than average men and women can do, with less spiritual light. To us much has been given, and of us much will be required. Every opportunity involves not only a possibility, but also a duty. The New Jerusalem, which our Lord of love is daily seeking to build up in our hearts, may be, to each of us, a glorious spiritual home, if we will do our part to make it so, by putting away from our hearts and lives all those evil, false, and sinful things which corrupt, in men, both the spirit and the letter of God's holy Word, and which shut out the kingdom of heaven from all unregenerate hearts. "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of Jehovah. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem." "Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem! for Jehovah hath comforted His people. He hath redeemed Jerusalem."

XIX.

EZEKIEL'S VISION OF JERUSALEM'S IDOLATRY.

As I sat in my house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, the hand of the Lord Jehovih fell there upon me.

Then I beheld, and lo, a likeness as the appearance of fire; from the appearance of his loins and downward, fire; and from his loins and upward, as the appearance of brightness, as it were glowing metal.

And he put forth the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my head; and the spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me, in the visions of God, to Jerusalem, to the door of the gate of the inner court, that looketh toward the North; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, according to the appearance that I saw in the plain.

Then said He unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes, now, the way toward the North. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the North, and behold, northward of the gate of the altar, this image of jealousy in the entry. And He said unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Israel do commit here, that I should go far off from My sanctuary? But thou shalt again see yet other great abominations.

And He brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold, a hole in the wall. Then said He unto me, Son of man, dig, now, in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold, a door. And He said unto me, Go in, and see the wicked abominations that they do here. So I went in, and saw; and behold, every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall, round about.

And there stood before them seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel: and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah, the son of Shaphan, every man with his censer in his hand: and the odor of the cloud of incense went up. Then said He unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in his chambers of imagery? for they say, Jehovah seeth us not; Jehovah hath forsaken the land. He said also unto me, Thou shalt again see yet other great abominations which they do. Then He brought me to the door of the gate of Jehovah's house, which was toward the North; and behold, there sat the women, weeping for Tammuz.

Then said He unto me, Hast thou seen, O son of man? thou shalt again see yet greater abominations than these.

And He brought me into the inner court of Jehovah's house: and behold at the door of the temple of Jehovah, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of Jehovah, and their faces toward the East.—EZEKIEL viii. 1–16.

EVIL men profane the holiness of the Divine Word. Even in their worship, their evil lusts pervert the literal sense of the Lord's Word. And, interiorly, they adulterate every good principle; and they worship self-love, instead of the Lord. And, in doing so, they close, in themselves, every avenue by which the Divine Love and Mercy are seeking to enter into them.

THE LITERAL STORY.

At the time of our text, Ezekiel, the prophet, was among the captive Jews in Babylon. And, although he had made great efforts to arouse these Jews, they were fast sinking into evil ways; and they were generally indifferent to his pleadings. They would not listen to him in public; and so he remained in his house, and there received such persons as would visit him. And to them he spoke the Word of Jehovah, at various times, as in the case of our text.

In this case, his spiritual senses were opened into the spiritual world, and he uttered a representative prophecy.

The fire, in which was a man, was a representation of the Lord, as the Divine Man, who lifted up the prophet, and revealed to him, in symbolic imagery, the degenerate mental conditions of the Jews.

THE SPIRITUAL SENSE.

The hair, by which the prophet was lifted up, being on the surface of the body, represents the external, or outward things. And, as the prophet, through whom the Divine Word was given, represents that Word, so the hair here represents the letter of the Word, the literal Scriptures, by means of which our minds are spiritually elevated, to see the things which are revealed in the spiritual sense of the Word, and to the open spiritual mind.

The hand which took hold of the prophet represents the power of the Lord, as exerted by means of the letter of the Word. We remember that Swedenborg declares that he was taught the spiritual truths of the Divine Word, by the elevation and enlightening of his mind, while he was reading the letter of the Word.

THE IMAGE OF JEALOUSY.

The prophet was mentally carried to the place of "the image of jealousy." Manasseh, the thirteenth king of Judah, who reigned about seven hundred years before Christ, was an evil and idolatrous king, who adopted some of the abominations of the heathen. He reared altars to Baal, the principal god of the Phœnicians and Canaanites.

And he made, and set up, a hewn statue of Ashterah, or Ashtoreth, the principal goddess of the same nations, and probably identical with Astarte of the Greeks and Romans. This hewn image of Ashterah was "the image of jealousy," referred to in our text. It was placed in

the outer court of the temple of Jehovah, in Jerusalem, and beside the great altar, directly in front of the "holy place," where it stood in direct defiance of Jehovah, who was known as the jealous God, who would not suffer the Jews to worship any rival god. And this accounts for the expression that this image "provoketh to jealousy."

But, in Jehovah, "jealous" means "zealous." In fact, the words are from the same Hebrew word. Divine jealousy, or zeal, is ardent love for the spiritual welfare of men. It is significant that the Hebrew name of Manasseh, who erected these idols, means "forgetting."

And, certainly, especially in his position as king, he forgot the most important of all things of human remembrance, when he abandoned the living God, and turned to dead idols.

But, even amid abominations of degenerate men, the open eyes of the prophet could see, there, the glory of the God of Israel, an outward brilliance, representing love and wisdom, which are spiritual glory.

The prophet looked toward the North, the coldest quarter, representing the natural-minded condition of men, furthest removed from the Lord, as the spiritual sun, and receiving most obscurely the warmth of His love.

ABOMINATIONS.

The "abominations" represented the profanations of goodness; and the unclean things represented the profanations of the Divine Truth, by the corruption of the Divine Word, in the church, even in worship. Thus, the evil lusts of unregenerate men connect them with the hells, even when outwardly engaged in formal ceremonial worship.

In the text, it is said that these abominations were done, in order that Jehovah should "go far off" from

His sanctuary. For the Jews were worshipping the heathen goddess, Ashterah, even in the court of Jehovah's temple. And, spiritually, when a man has descended into a life of self-love, and love of the world, he makes gods of these evil loves. And then he does not longer look to Jehovah, although he may pretend to worship in the temple of Jehovah. But, even then, Jehovah does not leave His sanctuary, nor does He desert the man; but the evil man drives Jehovah out of the inward temple of the man's mind.

THE WALL, ETC.

The prophet came to a hole in the wall. A wall is a protection for the things which are behind it, or within its enclosure. But, if there is a serious hole in a wall, the protection is diminished, or destroyed. The wall here represents the letter of the Word, which protects the inward spirit of the Word. But, when a man's knowledge of the letter, or his reverence for it, or his obedience to it, fails, he is without proper protection against his own natural tendencies to evil, which are always ready to corrupt the truth.

When there is a hole in the wall, the things within are revealed to view, as well as exposed to attack. And so, as to our minds, the light which can penetrate our natural minds and motives, will thus expose and reveal what is going on in the secret chambers of our minds.

To dig through the wall, is to investigate the external conditions of the natural mind, and to look through them, and thus to discover the inward conditions. No matter how much unregenerate men may seek to shield themselves behind the wall of external piety, the searching light of the Lord's truth will penetrate that wall, and will reveal and expose the worldly policy, and the self-love, which are worshipping their unclean idols, behind the outward walls.

THE SECRET CHAMBER.

The prophet discovered a hidden chamber, with "every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall, round about." Probably this place, seen in the vision, was like the subterranean caverns, in the sides of mountains and other places in Chaldea, Egypt, and Persia, where the sun-worshippers congregated; and where the inside-walls were covered with symbolic pictographs and hieroglyphs, representing all kinds of beasts, including the vile creeping things, repulsive and even venomous; as was also the case in the temples of Isis and Osiris. The idols were probably represented as composite beings, part human and part beast, such as were worshipped in Egypt, Assyria, and elsewhere.

BEASTS.

Beasts represent men, as to their affections. For every beast is a form of life representing some principle in man's mind. In nature, all things below man are representative, pointing to man, as the highest being in the order of creation, in whom are combined all the qualities individually represented by the different animals. And so, in the Scriptures, beasts are named as the representatives, symbols and correspondences of human qualities. For instance, Jesus called Herod a fox, because Herod displayed the sensuous cunning which characterizes the fox.

Men are forms of both natural and spiritual affections, but beasts are forms of natural affection, only, which they have in common with men. We recognize this fact, when we call a man a beast, because he displays selfish and natural feelings, only, and lacks the better feelings which should belong to human life. Good animals were used in religious sacrifices, to represent that men devote

to God their best qualities, which came from God. Good and useful beasts represent good affections, but ferocious and bad beasts represent evil qualities. Creeping things represent the lowest qualities, which relate to the natural senses.

All the beasts pictured on the wall of the secret chamber, mentioned in our text, represented all the sensuous lusts and falsities which were dominant in the minds of the people of Jerusalem, who, outwardly, engaged in ceremonial worship of God, but who, inwardly, in their secret hearts, reveled in the love of all kinds of selfishness and uncleanness.

ENTERING.

The prophet going into this hidden chamber, represents the truth penetrating the outward forms which seek to hide evil purposes. The house represents the man's mind. And when the man thinks falsity and loves evil, in the secret, inner chambers of his mind, he supposes that his real conditions are not seen and known by the Lord; and that he will receive credit for his external worship. The unclean things of evil and falsity reside in the interior of the natural mind of the unregenerate man. And these things give evil character to the man, in spite of all his outward piety and professions. And when the genuine truth of the Divine Word is turned upon an unregenerate man, and let into his mind, it will expose and reveal all the beastly things, all the low, cold-blooded, creeping things, and all the idols of self-love, which dwell in his interior natural mind, and which there, in spiritual darkness, hold their brutal revels.

But all these horrid pictures on the walls, not only represent the low passions of the ancient Jews, but also, even in these days, they find their similitudes in the

lower and grovelling passions of anger, malice, revenge, hatred, etc., which still swarm and creep in the low and secret chambers of every unregenerate human mind, every heart and intellect in which the love and wisdom of our Lord have not yet been able to clear the dark places, and to let in the light of heaven, to begin the practical work of regeneration.

THE ELDERS.

The elders of Judah and Israel were the wise men of the nation. And they represented wisdom in the human mind. But, when even the wise men degenerated into idolatry, their condition represented the corruption of wisdom, when the rational mind, which should receive its light from spiritual things, has closed itself against spiritual light, and has taken its views from the low things of the natural senses. In this state of things, the mind must sink into conditions represented in the words of Jesus, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which, indeed, appear beautiful, outwardly, but are, within, full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so, ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within, ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." (Matthew xxiii. 27, 28.)

The fact that there were seventy elders represents the profanation of holy things; for seven and seventy represent that which is holy; and the abuse of what is holy constitutes profanation.

TAMMUZ.

One of the abominations exposed was that of "the women weeping for Tammuz." Tammuz was the Syrian god of the sun, supposed to be identical with the Greek Adonis. According to the ancient myth, Tammuz

represented external nature, in its glory, fresh in the spring, but destroyed by the storms of autumn and winter. Tammuz was pictured as a beautiful youth, who was killed in the autumn, by a wild boar, on the mountain. And, every autumn, the women assembled, and wept over his death. The same things were represented by the apparent removal of the sun further from the earth, in autumn and winter; and, hence, this season was taken for the weeping over Tammuz. And thus was represented the evanescent character of earthly things.

Spiritually, these women represented the natural affections of unregenerate persons, lamenting over the loss of the pleasures of the senses, and failing to see the delights of spiritual and regenerate life. And to do this, in the presence of the Lord's temple, is to neglect Divine things, and to fix the heart upon the lusts of self-love and the love of the world.

And, naturally, the next step further into evil, was the rejection and denial of Divine things, and setting the idols of self-love in the place of the Lord; which are represented by the twenty-five men turning their backs upon the Lord's temple, while worshipping the sun, in the East. Presumably, these twenty-five men were made up of one man to represent the high priests, in the worship, and twenty-four men to represent the twenty-four priestly courses, or bands of priests, who officiated in turn, in the temple-worship.

These men were worshipping the sun of nature, in the holy place of the Lord's sanctuary, and with their backs turned to the Lord's temple, and their faces to the sun, thus indicating their entire rejection of the Divine things of Jehovah, and their complete apostasy, as well as their allegiance to the sun, as an idol. And thus, those who should have been nearest to the Lord, and who should have led in worship of Jehovah, had

turned against Him. For the sun which the evil man worships is merely of dead nature, thus representing the dead things of self-love, put in the place of the living God, in the unregenerate human heart. And when the fire of the Lord's love seeks to enter such hearts, they regard it as intending to destroy their cherished life of self-love.

And yet, to every degenerating man, the voice of our Lord comes, in warning love, saying, "Turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

XX.

EZEKIEL'S VISION OF SLAUGHTER IN JERUSALEM.

He cried also in mine ears, with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city, to draw near, even every man with his destroying-weapon in his hand.

And behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the North, and every man a slaughter-weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's ink-horn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brazen altar.

And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon He was, to the threshold of the house. And He called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's ink-horn by his side.

And Jehovah said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry, for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

And to the others He said, in mine hearing, Go ye after him, through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly, old and young, both maids and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house. . . . And behold, the man clothed with linen, which had the ink-horn by his side, reported the matter, saying, I have done as Thou hast commanded me.

Then I looked, and behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubim, there appeared over them, as it were a sapphire-stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne. And He spake unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubim, and scatter them over the city. . . .

And he went in, in my sight. . . . And one cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubim, unto the fire that was between the cherubim, and took thereof, and put into the hands of him that was clothed with linen; who took it, and went out.—EZEKIEL ix. 1–6; x. 1, 2, 7.

THE truths of the Divine Word examine into the spiritual character of those who are in the church, and who possess the holy Word in its letter. And this searching reveals the quality of a man's reception of the Divine Word; and it brings a spiritual judgment, in which the evil man is seen to destroy himself, spiritually, by and in his own fixed quality of character; because there is nothing of goodness, or of truth, left in him, which is not profaned and destroyed by his own evils. But a church is formed in the hearts of those who sincerely receive the Divine Truth, in and through the holy Word of God, in its letter and in its spirit.

JUDGMENT.

We must remember that our text does not report literal history, but that it is a symbolic and representative vision of a spiritual judgment, a judgment such as is continually going on, in the minds of men.

THE CITY.

The instructions were given to those who had charge over the city. A city, as a systematic collection of houses, etc., for men, represents a system of doctrine, for the use of the mind.

And, as Jerusalem represented the church, so, as a city, it represented the doctrine of the church. And, in this case, it represented the doctrine of the church as it had become in the minds of unregenerate men, sinking further into evils.

THE MEN.

Spiritually, those who had charge of the city, were the Divine truths of the Word, which dwell in the doctrine of the church, and by which the states of men's minds, as to truth, were to be examined and judged, by means of keen applications of truth to the heart's life, as well as to the outward conduct.

There were six men, because, in this sense, six represents a state of combat, in which the truth strikes against falsity and evil. There were six days of creation, to represent the successive states of combat, in the mind, between good and evil, on one side, and truth and falsity, on the other side, which combat must be passed through, in the regenerating mind, before the holy seventh day, or regenerate condition, can be reached. And so a Hebrew servant served six years, and was set free in the seventh year. And so the Israelites sowed their land for six successive years, but allowed it to lie fallow, unused, in the seventh year.

These six men came from the North gate of the city, to represent that the combatting phase of the Divine Truth is in the letter of the holy Word. For the North, as the coldest quarter, represents the external, or natural side of things.

THE LEADER.

One of these men, who was the leader in the slaughter, is especially described as being "clothed with linen," and having "a writer's ink-horn by his side." Linen, white and clean, represents a pure and clean life, a state of righteousness, which means being right in our life, according to the Lord's rules of life. And so, in the Apocalypse, it is said of the church, "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness

of saints." (Revelation xix. 8.) And here, the man clothed with linen was the leader in the judgment, because, in the judgment upon the man of the church, the leading test of character is the quality of his practical life, as to righteousness.

THE RECORDER.

That he had a writer's ink-horn by his side, as a scribe, or recorder, represents that practical righteousness is what forms the actual record of a man's life, and writes and records his character, in the doings of his daily life. "By their fruits ye shall know them." "Behold, I come quickly: and My reward is with Me; to give to every man according as his work shall be." "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

That "the glory of God," which was a halo representing the Divine presence, went up from the cherubim, and went to the threshold of the house, represents that, in the judgment, the Lord, in His bright truth, is especially present in the externals of the church; *i.e.,* in the practical conduct of the members of the church, to demonstrate the quality of men's characters by the good or evil of their daily life.

THE MARK.

In the judgment, the distinction is made between good men and evil men. For, spiritually, a judgment is not a vindictive punishment of evil men, and a reward of good men; but it is a separation of the good from the evil, by the full development of the character of each man, in which each person comes into the results of his own quality of character.

It is said that a mark was set upon those who sighed and cried over the abominations that were going on in Jerusalem. These were such as did not agree with such

abominations, but grieved over them, as evil things, contrary to spiritual life. We sigh over the things which are contrary to our thoughts; and we cry over, or cry out against, the things which offend our affections.

The forehead signifies our interior love, which is the highest part of our character, as the forehead is the highest part of the face. To mark anything is to distinguish it from others. And the mark set on the forehead of these better men, represented the fact that the Divine Truth, in judging men, *i.e.,* in separating the good and the evil, judges by the inward character, the real quality of the man; thus, by his motives, and not merely by his acts. The Hebrew word (*tav*) used in the text, to mean a mark, means, especially, a mark of a cross. And, as a cross represents the trials of temptation, so the men who were marked with a cross, were those who had passed through the struggles of temptation, and who had been regenerated.

We remember that, preceding the judgment in Egypt, at the time of the Exodus of Israel, when Jehovah was about to destroy the first-born children of the Egyptians, He commanded the Israelites to set blood-marks on their doors, to distinguish them from the Egyptians, so that Jehovah would "pass over" such houses, and not slay any one therein.

This was the great event which was afterward celebrated in the "pass-over" festival.

SMITING.

That those who smote the people of Jerusalem should smite all, including men, women, and children, means that, in the judgment, evil men bring themselves to a self-destruction of all parts of their mind and character, their intelligence, their affection, and their innocence; because their ruling loves, which are evil, give character

to all things of their mind and life. An evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, brings forth that which is evil.

The destroyers were told to have no pity, to represent that nothing remained in the evil man which could be saved and regenerated, but that a general vastation, or laying waste of character, must come to the evil man.

And the destroyers were told to begin at the Lord's sanctuary, the holy place; *i.e.,* with the elders, who were busy in the sanctuary, worshipping idols in the holy place of Jehovah. These leading men represented the ruling loves in the minds of men, which, being the cause of the evil, were the first to feel its penalty. Leaders in evil, and leading principles of evil, in men, inevitably deceive themselves, while seeking to deceive others. And their evils return upon themselves, in the destruction of their own character. These things are represented by the leader in the judgment reporting to the Lord that he had done as commanded.

THE SAPPHIRE THRONE.

After this, a throne, like a sapphire-stone, appeared over the cherubim. The sapphire-stone, being blue, represents the truth; in this case the Divine Truth, bringing the presence of the Lord, in His Truth, in His holy Word, which also reveals Him in His Divine Love. As the beautiful sapphire-stone, seen in the light of the sun, is lucid and luminous, so the letter of the Lord's Word, when seen in the spiritual light which comes to the mind that loves the Lord, displays the Divine Love, in all its tender mercy, in the interior of man's life, and also in all the externals of man's life on earth. The throne of the Lord represents heaven, where the Lord is. And, in an interior sense, heaven is in the regenerate mind of a good man, where the Lord dwells.

THE FIRE.

The man clothed with linen was thus commanded, "Go in between the wheels, under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubim; and scatter them over the city."

Fire signifies love, either good or bad love, according to the circumstances. The cherubim represented the providence of the Lord, guarding the spiritual things of faith from profanation by the natural-minded man; as, for instance, the letter of the Divine Word protects the spiritual meaning, which otherwise would be violated by the falsities of evil, and by the fallacies of the senses.

In its origin, all love comes to men from heaven; and it is good in quality; but evil men, in receiving love, immerse it in their own evil affections and false thoughts; and thus they pervert its quality; and, in their own hearts, they change the Divine good into human evil.

In the providence of the Lord, when men are in evil, it is better that they should not have a clear and spiritual understanding of the mysteries of faith; *i.e.,* of the interior things of regenerate life. For, with such knowledge, they would sink further into evil, by hating and profaning spiritual truths, and living in opposition to such truths. It is not the desire of the Lord to condemn evil men to the greatest possible extent, and thus to execute vengeance against sinners; but, on the contrary, it is the effort of the Divine Love to give to every man all the good which he is willing to receive, and all the truth which he will use for good. And when an evil man cannot be saved from his chosen evil, the Lord seeks to save him from further and worse evils. For this purpose, an evil man is permitted to remain in external conditions of mind, with little knowledge of spiritual things, because thus he will remain in milder conditions of infernal life.

COALS.

In our text, the coals between the cherubim represent the love which is in spiritual minds. But, when those coals are taken away from their place, and scattered upon a city of evil men, such action represents the descent of love to its lower forms, in the natural mind. And, as the city represents a system of doctrine, and, in this case, a perverted and false doctrine, held by evil men, so the scattering of the coals over the city signified the Lord's permission to such evil men to contaminate and pervert their natural affections, and to live in their wild lusts of the senses, rather than to allow them to see, and to profane, the higher things of spiritual love; because, being in the love of perverting the truth, and in the belief of false doctrines, they would surely make their own conditions more deplorable, if they could pervert the higher life.

Thus, in the judgment, after men are judged by the truth, and each is allowed to be that which he is determined to be, in character, the completion of the judgment comes in allowing such evil men to live in their chosen lusts of evil.

And then the glory of the Lord returned to the cherubim; *i.e.,* the goodness and truth of the Lord were seen in the high and spiritual light, by those who were in condition of character to understand such truth. For the Divine Love and Wisdom are clear to him who "has eyes to see." O Lord, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."

XXI.

EZEKIEL REMOVING HIS GOODS.

The Word of Jehovah also came unto me, saying, Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of the rebellious house, who have eyes to see and see not, who have ears to hear and hear not; for they are a rebellious house. Therefore, thou son of man, prepare thee stuff for removing, and remove by day, in their sight; and thou shalt remove from thy place to another place, in their sight: it may be they will consider, though they are a rebellious house.

And thou shalt bring forth thy stuff by day, in their sight, as stuff for removing; and thou shalt go forth thyself, at evening, in their sight, as when men go forth into exile.

Dig thou through the wall, in their sight, and carry out thereby. In their sight shalt thou bear it upon thy shoulder, and carry it forth in the dark; thou shalt cover thy face, that thou see not the land: for I have set thee for a sign unto the house of Israel. And I did so as I was commanded.—EZEKIEL xii. 1–7.

THE degenerate mind opposes the Lord, and falsifies His Divine Word, even in its literal sense; and thus the church of the Lord departs from the degenerate man, because he is no longer an individual church, in which the Lord can dwell, as the acknowledged Father and Ruler.

THE LITERAL MEANING.

The prophets had repeatedly warned the people of Jerusalem of their impending captivity. But the people became more and more careless and heedless, saying that the prophecies referred to a time very far in the future, and not alarming to persons then living. And so they went on in their evils, forgetting that these evils must necessarily produce evil results.

The captive exiles among whom Ezekiel lived, expected soon to return to their beloved Jerusalem. But Ezekiel constantly prophesied to them that their hopes of return were vain, because the people of Jerusalem, themselves, would soon be carried into exile. And Ezekiel illustrated his prophecy by the enacted parable of our text, in which he removed his household goods, after the manner of those who go into captivity and exile.

When about to make a long journey, the ancient Jews, who travelled by caravan, were in the habit of getting ready most of their goods, in the early daytime, and carrying them to the general place of rendezvous for the caravan, so that the beasts of burden could be laden, in good time, and all could be ready to start together, in the twilight. For, in that hot climate, such travel was done in the cool night. But, after each traveller had sent his goods to the general rendezvous, he remained in his house until about time for the caravan to start; and then he took upon his shoulders his few personal belongings, and joined the caravan. These facts account, literally, for the two occasions of Ezekiel putting out his goods.

And the prophet's manner of leaving his house literally represented the stealthy way in which a captive would seek to evade his captors, and to carry away his immediate belongings, in haste, for his escape, after having set out his bulkiest goods, in daylight, as if preparing for the journey. And Ezekiel prophesied that the princes and people of Jerusalem would thus seek to escape. And Jeremiah recorded a somewhat similar attempt of the king, Zedekiah, to escape the Chaldeans: "Then they fled, and went forth out of the city, by night, by the way of the king's garden, by the gate between

the two walls. And he went out the way of the plain. But the Chaldeans' army pursued after them, and overtook Zedekiah, in the plains of Jericho." (Jeremiah xxxix. 4, 5.)

One who silently digs through the wall, seeks to escape the observation of the enemy. Covering the face was a sign of grief, sorrow, and humiliation.

EYES TO SEE, ETC.

The people of Israel are called a rebellious house, because they would not obey the commandments of the Lord. It is said that they had eyes to see, but saw not, and ears to hear, but heard not. For evil men have the mental capacity to see the truth, and to know it to be true, if they are willing to do so. But they are not willing to see the truth, because they hate the truth, and they love evil and falsity; and so they turn their minds against all spiritual light, in which truth is seen and known.

The trouble with evil men is not mere ignorance, but wilful ignorance, which is intentional. If such men see a true principle, they regard it as their personal enemy. They have no desire for it, and no use for it. And so they first persuade themselves that it is not important: and, from this view, they soon persuade themselves that it is not true. And thus, as an old saying runs:

> "He that complies against his will,
> Is of his own opinion still."

And, as another old adage says, "None so blind as those who will not see." "This is a rebellious people, lying children, children who will not hear the law of Jehovah: who say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things; speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits. Get you out of the way; turn aside out of the path; cause the holy

One of Israel to cease from before us." (Isaiah xxx. 9-11.) Such men separate faith from daily life. They build their mental houses on the shifting sand of worldly policy, and not on the firm rock of truth.

HEARING.

Jesus often said, after His parables, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." For, spiritually, no one is willing and ready to hear the spiritual truth, until he opens his spiritual ears, intentionally. Genuine spiritual intelligence is from truth inwardly seen, acknowledged, and loved. And it is the same with spiritual hearing. Spiritually, we hear the truth, when we receive into our hearts, and love, the truth which we see and understand. And then the truth is joined with good, and it becomes wisdom. Thus, to see the truth, is to have faith in our intellect; but to hear the truth, is to have faith in our will, our heart.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;" not as an object of external sight, but as the indwelling life of all things, whose good and true principles permeate and vivify everything.

But evil men will not open their spiritual eyes and ears; *i.e.,* they will not use their inherent capacity to see and understand good and true principles. When men are mentally blind, they must be taught that they are blind, or they cannot have any opportunity to repent, and to reform. Spiritual blindness is a state of mental insensibility, which must first be overcome, before the mind can be restored to a right condition.

THE STUFF.

The stuff, the household goods, are such things as are necessary for house-keeping. And, as the house represents the mind, so the goods in the house represent the

necessary things which furnish a man's mind, the good and true principles of life, on which he lives, spiritually. To remove one's residence represents the passing of the mind into different conditions. But, in such a change, the mind would carry with it everything essential to its furnishing, for the work of life.

But, in the case of our text, the prophet was representatively portraying the conditions of the Jews, in their rebellious evils. As the prophet officially represented the Divine Word, so the things in his house represented the good and true principles in the Divine Word. And to carry these out of the house, represented that such was the state of mind with the Jews, that they rejected, and drove out of their minds, all the goodness and the truth from the Lord's Word, and kept nothing more than the mere formalities and ceremonials of the letter of the Scriptures. When the letter of the Word was falsified in men's minds, by corrupting its meaning, the Lord's goodness and truth took up their belongings and departed from such evil minds.

And that this was done "in the sight" of these men, means that such men could, if they would, see their evil ways, from the laws of life revealed in the letter of the Word.

And that this removal was made in the evening, means that such men were in states of falsity, and without the spiritual light which the reception of truth would have given to them. But their attention was called to their own mental conditions, by the constant warning of the letter of the Word, which they possessed, but despised, as far as any practical good principles were concerned.

CAPTIVITY, ETC.

The prophet removed his goods as one going into captivity and exile, to show that the removal was not

merely temporary, or unimportant, but for a long time, and in hard circumstances. Spiritually, a man is free, when he is in the love of goodness, and in the understanding of truth, and in obedience to the Divine laws for human life. But, to the extent in which he is in the love of evil, and in the belief of falsity, and in the life of sin, he is in spiritual captivity, held in bondage by evil; and he is in all the spiritual suffering which must accompany such spiritual captivity: for, always, "the sinner is a slave to his sin."

And thus, every man who departs from the good and true principles which the Lord teaches him, leaves his home and his freedom, and falls into spiritual captivity, and into miserable exile, in a foreign land; a condition of evil, of falsity, of sin, of sorrow, and of slavery, which can never produce a spiritual home for a human soul.

DIGGING.

The digging out of the house represents examining, investigating, to see what is in the things. And when the Divine principles of goodness and truth can no longer dwell in the perverted doctrine of a church, (either in the church as an aggregate of men, or the individual church of each man's mind,) then such principles dig their way out of such uncongenial surroundings; *i.e.,* the intelligent mind which observes these things, can clearly see, by examination, that the Lord's principles cannot dwell in human impurities and evils. And any man who will candidly compare men's perverted ideas and corrupt ways with the law of the Lord, can easily see, from the letter of the Word, that such things are opposites, and that, spiritually, they cannot dwell together.

Covering the face of the prophet, as he passed out of his house, so that he might "not see the ground," rep-

resents that, in the Jewish Church, there was not left any perception of goodness, even in the laws of life, in the letter of the Divine Word.

That the prophet should carry out his goods in the dark, represents the general condition of mental darkness, or falsity, in the people.

A SIGN.

It is declared that the prophet was thus a sign to the people, because he represented their mental doings. And so the removal of all his goods from the house, was a prophetic declaration that there was nothing left remaining in the Jewish Church which was capable of retaining any truth or goodness, because, spiritually, everything was destroyed by falsities and evils.

And it is to be feared that the conditions in some minds, even in the Christian churches, in these days, are drawing perilously near to similar states, when the character and life of our Lord are entirely misrepresented; and men depend, for spiritual salvation, not upon a radical change in their own actual character, from evil to good, but merely upon the physical blood of Christ, and a "justification by faith, alone;" and this, in spite of our Lord's own positive statements, "Because I live, ye shall live, also," and "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

REGENERATION.

Salvation does not come to men by having Christ's righteousness imputed to evil men, but by having the righteousness of our Lord imparted to men, so that they are regenerated, born again, into a new character; and sustained in that new character, by our Lord, Jesus Christ, who is, Himself, the one only God of heaven and of earth.

A prophet, said to "bear the iniquities of the people," did not, thereby, take away such iniquities; nor did he render such iniquities harmless; but he merely represented the spiritual conditions of the people.

And, to regard him in any sacrificial relation to the people, is to misunderstand the nature and use of his representative office.

And so, when it is said of Jesus, that God laid on Him the iniquity of men, it does not mean that the physical suffering of Christ took away the iniquities of evil men, or that it rendered them harmless, by appeasing the wrath of an angry God; but it means that the human nature of Christ bore the evils of men representatively, as one incident in the preparation of the assumed humanity to become the Divine Humanity, in which God, the God of love, was in Christ, reconciling an angry world unto a good God.

In His assumed humanity Jesus bore the combined assaults of all the hells; and thus He met the hells, and conquered them, and redeemed men from their infernal power. This redemption was made for all men; but it did not render harmless the evils of men, individually; but every man needed to be regenerated, by means of instruction, repentance, and reformation, in order to be saved from his own evil conditions of character.

When we see that God is one, in essence and in person, and that the one and only God is the Lord, Jesus Christ, we can comprehend the nature and mission of Jesus Christ, as "God manifest" to men, to save them by actual regeneration, a birth into new character, in which you are brought into heaven, when "the kingdom of God is within you." Jesus, Himself, declared, "He who hath seen Me, hath seen the Father."

XXII.

EZEKIEL EATING BREAD WITH QUAKING, AND DRINKING WATER WITH TREMBLING.

Son of man, eat thy bread with quaking, and drink thy water with trembling and with carefulness; and say unto the people of the land, Thus saith the Lord Jehovih, of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and of the land of Israel, They shall eat their bread with carefulness, and drink their water with astonishment, that her land may be desolate from all that is therein, because of the violence of all them that dwell therein. And the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall be desolate; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah.—EZEKIEL xii. 18–20.

BY indulgence of falsity and evil, degenerate men lose the ability to distinguish between goodness and evil, and between truth and falsity; and thus they destroy, in themselves, the capacity for happiness.

BREAD AND WATER.

As a sign to the people, the prophet was to eat his bread with quaking, and to drink water with trembling and with carefulness. Bread, meaning food in general, represents the goodness which we receive from our Lord, into our will, our heart. And water represents the truth, which we receive into our understanding, our intellect. As distinguished from wine, water represents natural truth, *i.e.,* truth as applied to our natural life; and truth as seen from the standpoint of the natural mind, which is the natural degree of human life; but wine represents spiritual truth. To eat bread, and to drink water, spiritually, are to receive goodness and truth into our minds.

QUAKING AND TREMBLING.

Quaking, or shaking, comes from fear of danger, and from uncertainty, causing mental commotion. Spiritually, a man eats bread with quaking, when, although he secures that which he regards as good, he is not happy, or at peace, but he is alarmed, uncertain as to things, and in great fear of danger, because, in his own mind, he has adulterated all goodness by mixing it with his own evils.

To drink water with trembling and with carefulness, is to receive that which the man regards as truth, while in a state of doubt and of fear, and of anxiety and of trouble, because the man has falsified all truths, by confusing them with his own false notions.

CARE.

In the Scriptures, care means anxiety, which involves trouble. For instance, in the parable of the sower, it is said that, in the mind of the worldly man, "the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the Word, and he becometh unfruitful." But, in this case, "the care of this world" does not mean the proper and necessary care, or attention and work, which must be given to all worldly affairs, but it means the strain of worldliness, the wearing anxiety of selfish care, which trusts in its own prudence, and not in the Divine Providence.

And thus, the expression used in our text, "they shall eat their bread with carefulness," means that they shall be full of anxious cares and troubles, arising from their fears and uncertainties. And they shall "drink water with astonishment," means that degenerate men never understand the Divine Providence, but their minds are confused, and full of apprehension of possible consequences, even from supposed Divine anger.

To indicate that the anxiety pervades the whole mind of the evil man, both Jerusalem and Israel are addressed, in our text; for Judah and Jerusalem represent the life of the will, or heart, with its affections, and Israel represents the life of the understanding, or intellect, with its thoughts.

DESOLATION.

That the land shall be "desolate," as to all things therein, means that all the goodness in the church, in the hearts of men, should become dead, "because of the violence of all them that dwell therein;" *i.e.,* because of the total rejection of all goodness, and the violent opposition to all Divine principles.

"And the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste," means that all the doctrines of the church, in which living truths reside, shall be utterly destroyed, in the degenerate man's mind, because he corrupts and falsifies all such doctrines, by interpreting them according to his own evil motives and false notions.

"And ye shall know that I am Jehovah." For, when the evil are separated from the good, in judgment, it can be seen that this action is from the Lord. For this fact can be seen in clear spiritual light, by spiritual men, who understand spiritual truth; and it can be seen naturally, by natural-minded men, also, because it is taught in the letter of the Scriptures. But, spiritually, the evil man, in corrupting the life which the Lord sends to him, thereby judges himself, and spiritually kills himself. Spiritually he drives himself out of Eden, *i.e.,* out of everything that is good and plentiful; and he goes out into a hard mental world, where he has to labor hard, mentally, to procure a spiritual living.

Similar conditions are represented in the Book of Lamentations (v. 4), "We have drunk our water for money, and our bread is sold unto us. Our necks are under persecution: we labor, and have no rest."

REGENERATION NECESSARY.

All evidence points to the great fact that human life is satisfactory only in a state of regeneration. All unregenerate states involve severe penalties, because, in them, the conditions are necessarily unhappy; not merely from outward circumstances, but also because the man is not in the reception of those qualities of character which make human happiness.

For the whole matter of human happiness is one of character, *i.e.,* of regeneration, which is a new and spiritual birth, in loving all good and true principles, and living by such principles, in all the daily life.

And, therefore, our Lord of love extends to all men His most gracious invitation to life and to happiness; "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto Me; hear, and your soul shall live." (Isaiah lv. 1-3.)

XXIII.

THE FALSE PROPHETESSES.

Son of man, set thy face against the daughters of thy people, who prophesy out of their own heart; and prophesy thou against them.

And say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovih; Woe to the women who sew pillows to all arm-holes, and make kerchiefs upon the head of persons of every stature, to hunt souls.

Will ye hunt the souls of My people; and will ye save alive the souls that come unto you?

And will ye pollute Me, among My people, for handfuls of barley, and for pieces of bread, to slay the souls which should not die, and to save alive the souls which should not live, by your lying to My people who hear your lies?

Wherefore thus saith the Lord Jehovih; Behold, I am against your pillows, wherewith ye there hunt the souls, to make them fly, and I will tear them from your arms, and will let the souls go, the souls that ye hunt, to make them fly. Your kerchiefs also will I tear, and deliver My people out of your hand, and they shall be no more in your hand, to be hunted; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah.

Because, with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and [ye have] strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked ways, by promising him life: therefore ye shall see no more vanity nor divine divinations: for I will deliver My people out of your hand.—EZEKIEL xiii. 17–23.

THE love of falsifying the Divine Truth induces false persuasions, which mislead the mind, until, spiritually, it perishes in evils. And those who are in this mental condition seek to mislead others, to their spiritual destruction. But every mind which resists such misleading, is protected by the Divine Providence.

THE LITERAL FACTS.

"The daughters of thy people, who prophesy out of their own heart," were the false prophetesses of ancient Israel, who, at the time of our text, were a class of corrupt women, who pretended to prophesy from the Lord, but who actually spoke from their own hearts, *i.e.*, from their own purposes, hypocritically, cunningly, and to deceive and victimize those who came to inquire of the Lord. They were women of loose character, but keen and cunning in their ways, who hid their corrupt occupation behind the cloak of the church. Such hypocrites could flourish in such times, because those were times in which the rulers, and almost all others, were equally corrupt, and yet were professing very rigid adherence to the rules of the church. And such general conditions well exemplified the statement in the twelfth Psalm, "The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted."

SEW PILLOWS, ETC.

The Orientals were naturally a very sensuous people, loving physical ease, and delighting in all the pleasures of the senses. The rich persons especially lived at ease, and in great luxury, and studied the science of physical comfort. Especially at the time of our text, they exerted themselves as little as possible; and, as far as possible, they left all labor to their slaves. The women had no intellectual education; and their chief duty was to please their husbands, or their fathers. The rich women spent most of their time reclining on couches, supported by pillows.

When an inquirer came to the prophetess, to inquire of the Lord, concerning his luck, or his fate, she first gained influence over him, by placing him in sensuous ease, among soft pillows, or cushions; and she sewed

small pillows under his arms, from the arm-holes of his tunic down to his wrists, that even his arms might lie in luxurious ease. And these things served, also, another purpose; for after she pretended to inquire for him, as to his future, she pointed out these things of ease and luxury, as symbols of the good fortune awaiting him.

KERCHIEFS.

And she placed upon his head a kerchief, or head covering, which was regarded as a fine adornment, and as a symbol of freedom, and of plenty, such as are enjoyed by rich persons.

In the case of the Jews when under captivity to Babylon, this liberty-cap would symbolize their approaching delivery from such captivity.

As the text reads, in the common version of the Bible, it is somewhat obscure at this point, when it says that these women "make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature, to hunt souls." But the sense is made clear by adding two words, "persons of," and reading it thus, "upon the head of persons of every stature;" *i.e.,* all ages of men, down to lads scarcely full-grown, who are thus drawn into the evil influence of these bad women.

HUNTING SOULS.

In the figurative literal sense, to hunt souls is to seek men, in order to gain something by deceiving them and corrupting them. And it is easy to see how these women, by subtle flattery, and by favorable prophecies, could gain great influence in the community; for it was a community in which there was no spiritual perception of truth, and no rational judgment. Old men, middle-aged men, and youths were thus beguiled into an easy security, and the indulgence of every natural wish. And

the false prophetess then reaped a large reward in gifts, and in personal influence, and in every indulgence.

And, in such circumstances, it is not wonderful that the true prophet of the Lord went unheeded, because he prophesied disasters, of which the people did not wish to hear. And thus the name of the Lord was polluted, in the minds of the people, because the words of the Lord were drowned in the fallacies of men's senses. Even those who pretended to be prophetesses of the Lord, covered the people with lies, to make them evil, also. And this was often done for merely trifling rewards, from such men as inquired. These trifling rewards are indicated by the words, "And will ye pollute Me, among My people, for handfuls of barley and pieces of bread?"

"To slay the souls which should not die," is to corrupt those who were trying to do well. And "to save alive the souls which should not live," is to encourage the evil in their iniquity, by promising them continued life and prosperity, and thus "strengthening the hands of the wicked," and preventing them from repenting and amending their life.

As the serpent in Eden persuaded Eve that it would not be dangerous for her, but profitable, to eat the forbidden fruit, so these evil prophetesses lured men to destruction by false persuasions; and thus saddened the hearts and lives of many men, whom the Lord was seeking to make glad; because such women were holding out promises of greater life, even while dragging their victims into a sure death.

DIVINE OPPOSITION TO EVIL.

But it is said that the Lord is opposed to all such doings, and that He would overcome them and destroy their influence, by a general judgment upon that evil

church; and that He would deliver from such evils all who would remain His people, following His laws of life. And, in pursuance of this work of the Lord, the prophet is commanded to expose all such evils, and to proclaim the Lord's truth.

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING.

But all these things belong to the literal sense of the text. Turning, now, to the spiritual meaning, we shall find the scene laid not merely in ancient Israel, but also in our own hearts and lives. And the warnings of the Lord's prophet, four thousand years ago, are equally needed warnings to us, in these, our days. For the prophet of the Lord, spiritually speaking, is the Divine Truth, itself, walking through the streets of our minds, and calling us to repentance, reformation and regeneration. The voice of our Lord, Himself, speaks in His truths, as they meet us, in the letter of His holy Word, and speak to our natural minds, with warnings against sinful conduct; while, at the same time, they speak to our open spiritual minds, of the holy principles of heaven, which will form in us "the measure of a man, that is, of an angel."

THE WOMEN.

And, in our text, the Divine Truth, as the Lord's prophet, warns us against the deadly wiles of our own unregenerate natural affections. In Israel, which figuratively represented the Spiritual Church, in which Truth is the dominant element, women represented affection for truth, and men represented rational understanding of truth; and their true union represented the spiritual marriage of regeneration. But, in the case of our text, the women were evil; and hence, they represented natural affection, when corrupted into self-love. Thus, the corrupt false prophetess represents our natural

affection, when thoroughly evil and selfish, and setting up itself instead of the Lord; and speaking from its own evil lusts, and in opposition to the revealed will of the Lord.

And when a man's natural affections thus pretend to be good, when they are intentionally evil, they exert themselves to beguile, and to mislead, the man's rational judgment; and to drag the whole mind down into their own low condition. And their cunning practices are exposed in the spiritual meaning of our text.

HUNTING SOULS.

Here, hunting souls, as men hunt game, for its destruction, spiritually means influencing men, in order to destroy their spiritual character. And this may be done by us, towards other persons, or in our own hearts and lives. In the Scriptures, the term "soul" has many different meanings, as the equivalent of several different Hebrew and Greek words. Soul may mean any living creature, or a human being, or the life of the natural body, or the life of the spirit of man, or the characteristic life of man's understanding, or the Divine Truth.

In our text, spiritually, the soul means the spiritual life of a man. And the spiritual life is in the soul, the spirit. A false prophetess in a man's mind hunts his soul, when his evil natural affections mislead his rational judgment, by perverting his knowledges of truth, and explaining them in favor of his natural lusts; and by persuading him that the truth is not true, but false; and that sin is not evil, but allowable. In this way, the man is flattered into the indulgence of his evil inclinations, while imagining himself to be seeking real life.

Many persons do not know what spiritual goodness and truth are; but they are in natural-minded states immersed in the life of their natural senses. Being

without spiritual perception, they do not clearly recognize the character of the doctrines and arguments set before them. And sometimes they are misled by plausible arguments, which are urged by an external and persuasive faith, which is without charity, or regenerate love. But, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." (Isaiah v. 20.)

To kill a man, spiritually, is to destroy his spiritual life; *i.e.,* to destroy the spirituality of his life. In this way, the church in man is destroyed. Spiritually, to bear false witness against the neighbor, is intentionally to try to deceive him, and to prevent his regeneration, by persuading him to confuse good and evil, and truth and falsity, and righteousness and sin. In this way, "Evil shall hunt the violent man, to overthrow him." (Psalm cxl. 11.) For the spiritual violence which we do to others inevitably returns upon ourselves.

And this false witnessing may occur in our own minds, when our natural affections intentionally deceive our judgment. Our natural affections, when unregenerate, are false prophetesses, who supply us with the pillows of ease, and the indulgence of our natural desires, and lull us into a false sense of security, in a selfish and sensuous life. And they cover our heads, our rational thought, with their own kerchiefs, their plausible arguments in favor of self-indulgence, with promises of prosperity.

That they put such kerchiefs upon the heads of persons of all statures, means that they persuade persons in all stages of mental growth, deceiving them as to their own conditions, and their spiritual needs. And, in our individual minds, our unregenerate natural affections cunningly seek to cover our heads, *i.e.,* to obscure our highest principles, at every step in our spiritual growth, by subtle appeals to our self-love.

POLLUTING THE LORD.

And thus the Lord is polluted, in our minds, when His Divine principles, which should be the head of all our thoughts, are covered over with sensuous notions.

To slay souls which should not die, is to deprive the mind of the life of truth, which should never die in any human mind. And to save alive the souls which should not live, is to maintain the power and influence of false principles, which should not be allowed to live in any human mind.

And these wrong things are done by accepting evil and falsity for goodness and truth, and rejecting these Divine principles. In this way, evil is encouraged, and its hands, its power, strengthened, while goodness and truth are discouraged, and rendered powerless in the unregenerate mind. For, while the corrupt natural affections promise life and prosperity in indulgence, yet they cannot give any life to the spirit, because they are spiritually dead.

And yet these evils are brought about by the unregenerate natural affections, for a merely trifling reward, "handfuls of barley, and for pieces of bread;" *i.e.,* for a small amount of indulgence in the things which feed the sensuous life. But the Lord is against all these evil things; and He will overcome their influence, in every mind which remains steadfast to the Divine principles.

SETTING THE FACE.

No one may expect to be regenerated without meeting severe temptation; but that temptation will be used for our good, and for the destruction of evil in us, if we bravely stand by the Lord's commandments, in spite of the wiles of the false prophetesses in our own natural affections, or in the efforts of other persons to mislead us.

In our minds, the prophet, which is the Lord's truth, will set its face against these evil prophetesses; *i.e.*, the Divine Truth will reveal to us its inward and spiritual form, and will thus protect us against the sensuous allurements of our own disorderly natural affections. And thus our interior minds, our spiritual minds, will be opened to spiritual life, which is clearly opposed to disorderly natural life. And the clear spiritual truth, as a prophet of the Lord, will proclaim the things of spiritual life, in all the streets of our minds.

OUR INFLUENCE.

It should be one of the most effective warnings against evil, that, in sinking into evil, we tend to drag down others with us, by our influence, and by our example. When there is so much of sorrow and suffering in this world, it is amazing how any one can be willing deliberately to add to the enormous sum of human trouble. As we walk along the path of life, we may, if we will, often lend a helping-hand to our fellow-travellers. We may distribute love and kindness along our path, instead of sorrow and distress. The way of life is a common road, for the use of all. And we have no right to demand the whole road, and all its privileges, for ourselves; or to jostle others, whom we may imagine to stand in our way. There is room enough for all, if all will be reasonable and fair.

It is in the nature of regenerate love, and of all other good and true things, that they increase for us, in the measure in which we share them with others. But all selfishness narrows and dwarfs the man whom it controls; and it shuts out from his evil heart all the kingdom of heaven. "See, I have set before thee, this day, life and good, and death and evil. . . . Therefore, choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." (Deuteronomy xxx. 15, 19.)

XXIV.

THE VINE OF JERUSALEM.

What is the vine-tree, more than any tree, the vine-branch which is among the trees of the forest?

Shall wood be taken thereof to make any work? Or will men take a pin of it, to hang any vessel thereon? Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire hath devoured both ends of it, and the middle of it is burned: is it profitable for any work? Behold, when it was whole, it was meet for no work: how much less, when the fire hath devoured it, and it is burned, shall it yet be meet for any work!

Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovih; As the vine-tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And I will set My face against them; they shall go forth from the fire, but the fire shall devour them; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I set My face against them. And I will make the land desolate, because they have committed a trespass, saith the Lord Jehovih.—EZEKIEL xv. 2–8.

IN the mind which is fixed in evils, there is no longer any good whatever, nor any spiritual church, because these have been destroyed by evil loves.

THE LITERAL SENSE.

Among the trees, the grape-vine is not of much use for its timber, because it is too small, and too crooked. And it is not of use for ordinary lumber, for the various purposes to which wood is put. And it is not even used to make wooden pegs, on which to hang different vessels, because it bends too easily; and it is too brittle when dry. In the Oriental lands, in ancient times, the common

people lived in extreme simplicity. For instance, when building a stone house, many stout, hard-wood pegs, or pins, or nails, were set in between the courses of stones, and so as to stand out into the room. These pegs, or nails, were used for hanging up different household vessels, kitchen utensils, etc. And, as these pegs were built into the walls, they were firmly set, and secure, and could be relied upon. And they were made of reliable wood, and not of the unreliable grape-vine wood.

And the grape-vine was not even good for general use as common fire wood; for it burned up rapidly, and was very soon consumed. And thus, it was good for kindlings, only. And, often, when a grape-vine was dead, it was thrown upon the fire, merely to dispose of it. When the fire burned the ends of the pieces, these pieces curled up, and caught fire all over, and soon burned out. And if this vine-wood was not useful, as wood, when in its strength, certainly it was not good, after the fire had burned it to ashes.

THE PARABLE.

These things were set forth in the text, as a parable, for the people of Jerusalem. What were the Jews, more than other nations? They were not especially good, or great. Other nations were more numerous, and more powerful, and more advanced in military and naval matters. And the Egyptians, Assyrians and others, were more advanced in the arts and sciences.

The Jews, even when good, were no more than the other nations; and, surely, they were not more than others, after they had greatly degenerated in character.

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE.

They boasted greatly that they were "the chosen people of Jehovah," a holy people, favored of God, more

than any other people. And yet they turned their hearts, and their thoughts, and their conduct, against the Lord. And this is what is meant, when it is said that the Lord set His face against them. For, when they refused all the good and true things which the Lord gave to them, and preferred evil and falsity and sin, it seemed, to them, that God had turned against them, because He did not prosper them, in their chosen evils.

But, as a fact, the Lord did not choose the Jews to be a holy church, but He chose them to *represent* the church, symbolically and figuratively. And, in order to have them carry out this representation, the Lord led them through many experiences; and gave them many wonderful proofs of His providential care over them, as a people. And the Lord did everything possible, to help the Jews to become a good and true and noble people. They were as a vine, which He planted in good soil, and of which He took great care. But the vine was a bad one, in itself. It was an unprofitable vine, good for nothing.

Jesus said, "I am the Vine; ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing." But Israel and Judah departed from the Lord, and sank into evil, and into spiritual death. And their land became desolate, because they did not maintain it, in good order. And they thought the Lord had set His face against them, as a people, because He had set His face against their evils and their sins.

THE SPIRITUAL SENSE.

But now turn to the spiritual meaning of these circumstances and conditions. "The face is the index of the mind." And so the expression of the face represents the feelings and thoughts of the mind, which ex-

press themselves in the face. The face of the Lord is the expression of His Divine character, His love and His wisdom. And these, by their nature and quality, must be always set against all forms of evil, falsity and sin; because all these things have set their faces against the Lord, *i.e.*, against the qualities of the Lord's character.

JERUSALEM.

Jerusalem represented the church, because that city was the headquarters of the church; and there were the temple, the altar, etc.; and there worship was celebrated by all the people. And there were the annual religious feasts, which every able-bodied adult male in the whole country had to attend. And the conditions of the Jews, in Jerusalem, represented the conditions of the church, in the minds of men. But the people of Jerusalem greatly degenerated in character, until they became completely corrupt.

The Hebrews, in their quiet life as farmers and shepherds, could have set an excellent example to the other nations. But the Jews were not living in this world for the good they could do, for others, but rather for what they could get from others. And so, finally, the Divine Providence appeared to leave them, like a dead vine, in the fires of their own evil lusts, which they could not be induced to give up.

DIVINE INFLUX.

The inflow of the Lord's goodness and truth into the mind of a regenerate man, is into his spiritual interiors, which are thus filled with heavenly love, intelligence and peace. But the same Divine love, flowing into the mind of the evil man, whose spiritual interiors are closed, must meet him in the interiors of his natural mind; and, as these are full of evil and falsity, which are opposed

to goodness and truth, the inflow of such good principles would carry a life which would be directly opposed to the whole form and quality of the evil man's own life. And such an inflow would produce terrible torture, if brought directly in contact with the man's own qualities of character.

And thus, the influx of the Divine life, which the good man would describe as full of life and joy, the evil man would describe as a consuming fire. It would be like compelling the owl and the bat to stand in the glare of the sunshine. And, therefore, evil men are permitted to reject the Divine principles, and to live in their chosen evils, when they will not listen to the Divine teaching; as the owls and bats are permitted to avoid the sunlight, and to dwell in the shade. And, in the Scriptures, when the Lord's influence is mentioned as a consuming fire, that expression is given in accordance with the appearance before the mind of the evil man, and to the natural-minded man, to whom the letter of the Scriptures is especially addressed.

BEARING FRUIT.

Every human mind, like the grape-vine, has a capacity to bear good fruit. And the Lord gives to every man every opportunity to bear good fruit. But this bearing involves turning to the Lord as the Divine Sun, in whose spiritual warmth and light the human vine can prosper. But the evil man will not turn to the Lord, for spiritual life. "Israel is an empty vine; he bringeth forth fruit to himself." (Hosea x. 1.) And as, without the Lord, a man can do nothing of good, so the unregenerate natural man remains unfruitful as to goodness.

Those who bear good fruit, spiritually, prosper, not because the Lord rewards them arbitrarily for their faithfulness, but because they are rewarded in their

faithfulness, in their use of good principles. As the purpose for which a grape-vine is kept, is to bear good fruit, if a vine does not bear good fruit, it is of no value; and it cumbers the ground, and occupies the place which might support something useful. "Therefore, every tree which beareth not good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire." And this fire is the fire of evil lusts, in the evil man's own mind.

And this is the fate of every truth planted in our minds by our Lord, when we allow it to become unfruitful in us, and to be consumed by the fires of our own evils. And when this is our mental condition, it may be said of us, in representative language, that our vines are destroyed, and our land is desolate; *i.e.,* in us, the truth is turned to falsity, and good is turned to evil.

THE NAILS AND VESSELS.

When we are in unregenerate states of mind, there is nothing in our mind that is reliable. If we have knowledge of a doctrine, we have no place to put it, in our mind, where it can be secure, and ready for use.

The vessels used in the Oriental house, being hollow forms, for holding things, represent doctrines, forms of statement, in which truths could be held in the memory, for practical use by the affection and the thought, when needed in preparing the mental food of daily life.

The stout hard-wood nail, or peg, or pin, built into the wall of the house, and standing out into the room, was used for holding the vessels, where they could be secure, and ready for use. This nail, or peg of wood, represented practical goodness in the daily conduct, which will always serve as a reliable peg, on which to hang such mental vessels, all the doctrines of truth, which we need for our every-day use.

As the wooden nail, or pin, was the means by which

the vessels were kept in contact with the house, so the peg represents the conjunction, or mental union, between the doctrines of truth, and the profounder principles of our minds; which conjunction is to be found in practical goodness of conduct, which will always securely hold every doctrine of truth in contact with our inward character, and always ready for active use. And there is nothing else than such goodness, which is reliable.

This representative meaning of a wooden nail was generally recognized among the Jews, as is seen by some of their common sayings. When one of the Jews had secured a position which seemed to be permanent, his friends declared that he was "fastened, like a nail." And so we find similar expressions in the letter of the Scriptures, as in Isaiah (xxii. 23, 24), where the Lord said of Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, "I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; . . . and they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even unto the vessels of flagons."

GOODNESS AND TRUTH.

There is, here, a very interesting and important point, in explaining why, representatively and correspondentially, the wood of the grape-vine does not make good wooden nails. The explanation involves the distinctive difference between the two principles, goodness and truth. A man receives the doctrines of the church, and sees them to be true; and he wills to form his character by the truth taught in the doctrines. But his character has not been formed by such truth. And he will need to pass through many struggles, before he can put down his natural tendencies to evil, whose bad character he now sees in the light of truth. During the process of

bringing the truth against his own evil tendencies, the truth is operating within his mind. He sees the truth, and he recognizes its revelation of his own evils. And he fights for the truth, because it is the truth, and because he knows that he should do what the truth teaches him. And so he works in the love of truth, as his guiding principle. And he has a constant contest, to keep himself up to the requirements of the truth, because he has not yet reached the higher position, of doing good because it is good, and in the love of good. And when he reaches this higher condition, he will be regenerate.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

For instance, we know what the truth requires of us, in certain things; and we do what is right, bravely and resolutely. And we conquer a selfish desire to do what is not good. And we think that we have followed the truth. But, secretly we desire to be recognized, to be praised for the good we have done. We would not do the good merely for the praise. And we would not neglect to do it, even if we were misunderstood, and unfairly censured. But, after we have done the good, we are actually not satisfied until we receive the praise. In this, we are not yet actuated by the love of good, but by the love of truth. We are in the process of regeneration, but in its early stages.

Now, we can see how the kind of good which is the outcome of a love of truth, must vary, in quality, according to the quality of the truth which influences us. Different men differ very greatly, as to what they think the truth teaches them to do. When the truth is not clear, in the man's mind, his mind will be obscure, also, as to what is good.

Now, this kind of goodness, the good of truth, the good which is the outworking of a love of truth, is represented by Israel. And it is also represented by the grape-vine.

GOOD NAILS.

And we can see why this kind of good, this wood of the grape-vine, does not make a good nail, on which to hang the vessels of doctrine. It bends too easily, in accommodating itself to various changes of thought. It is not firm enough to give stability and security, on which to hang all the vessels of doctrine, in our mind. The household pegs, in our minds, should be made of good hard wood, the love of goodness because it is good; and built into the wall, so that we can have confidence that our practical doctrines will be ready for use, at any moment.

In the clear doctrines of the New Jerusalem, we have most excellent vessels for spiritual use. And, in the practical doings of a daily life by the Ten Commandments, we have strong and reliable nails on which to hang the doctrines for daily use.

"Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle which shall not be taken down: not one of the pins thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams."

XXV.

THE EAGLES AND THE VINE.

Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel; and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovih: A great eagle, with great wings, long-winged, full of feathers, which had divers colors, came unto Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar. He cropped off the top of his young twigs, and carried it into a land of traffic: he set it in a city of merchants. He took also of the seed of the land, and planted it in a fruitful field: he placed it by great waters, and set it as a willow-tree.

And it grew, and became a spreading vine, of low stature, whose branches turned toward him, and the roots thereof were under him: so it became a vine, and brought forth branches, and shot forth sprigs.

There was also another great eagle, with great wings, and many feathers: and behold, this vine did bend her roots toward him, and shot forth her branches toward him, that he might water it by the furrows of her plantation. It was planted in a good soil, by great waters, that it might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine. . . . Thus saith the Lord Jehovih, Shall it prosper? Shall He not pull up the roots thereof, and cut off the fruit thereof, that it wither? It shall wither in all the leaves of her spring, even without great power, or many people, to pluck it up by the roots thereof. Yea, behold, being planted, shall it prosper? Shall it not utterly wither when the East wind toucheth it? It shall wither in the furrows where it grew.—EZEKIEL xvii. 2–10.

THE SPIRITUAL CHURCH.

THE text describes, representatively, the establishment and growth of the Spiritual Church, and its subsequent perversion and decline. The Spiritual Church was established by the Lord, by means of the truths of His holy Word. Through these truths, men were regenerated, externally and internally; *i.e.,* as to the natural mind, and as to the spiritual mind. "Now ye are clean, through the Word which I have spoken unto you." The church became spiritual by means of truths rationally seen and practised. But, by the neglect and abuse of truths, men falsified them, and relapsed into evils of life: and thus the church was corrupted in quality, and finally destroyed.

THE LITERAL SENSE.

The parable of our text is generally supposed to have been spoken in order to prophesy the Lord's judgment upon Zedekiah, for breaking his oath with Nebuchadnezzar, which oath he had made in the name of Jehovah.

The first eagle is supposed to have been Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and the second eagle, Pharaoh-hophrah, king of Egypt.

But the Lord always seeks to give spiritual life to men. In the judgment, men suffer by their own evils, not by any Divine wrath. An oath, which binds a man to a certain course of conduct, and in which God is called upon to witness the man's sincerity and faithfulness, represents the inward principle which binds a good man to his duty, and which forms the real obligation. For a spiritual man obeys principles, as principles, and not merely as outward rules of conduct. The text thus prophesies what men will become by the neglect of spiritual principles.

THE REPRESENTATIVE MEANING.

All created forms of life represent the things of man's mental life. Beasts represent human affections; and birds represent our thoughts. The wings, or arms, of

birds, represent power, as power is mainly exerted by means of arms, or wings. The use of the wings, in flying, represents the use of the power of thought, or thinking. Thus, flying represents using our thought, to think, to perceive, or to instruct. The feathers are the clothing of the bird, representing literal truths, which clothe our minds in suitable condition.

THE EAGLE.

The eagle, as a bird, represents thought. The eagle is called the "king of birds," from its power, courage, keen sight, and great swiftness and endurance in flight. In this sense, the eagle represents intelligence in thought, rational thought, which soars high, and has keen and far-sighted vision. Sometimes, the eagle is used to represent spiritual thought, which soars above natural things, and sees things that are beyond the vision of the merely natural mind. The spiritual thought, like the eagle, makes its home in high places. "They that wait upon Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings, as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." (Isaiah xl. 31.)

In the text, the first eagle represents the thought, or intelligence, of the external spiritual church; *i.e.,* of the spiritual church as it is in the natural mind of man; and the second eagle represents the thought, or intelligence, of the internal spiritual church; *i.e.,* such as it is in the spiritual mind.

The wings of the eagles are the external thoughts, from the letter of the Lord's Word. Great wings, with many feathers, etc., represent the abundance of knowledges of truth, scientifics, or things known as information and doctrine. From these things the natural mind derives its intelligence. The first great eagle, with its

wide-spreading wings, and many feathers, flying swiftly through the air, represents the thought of the natural mind, when well instructed in the truths of the Lord's Word, and thinking rationally, upon these things.

The contrast between this majestic eagle and an ordinary domestic fowl, is very marked; and, to the observing mind, the contrast is equally great between the far-reaching rational thought about spiritual principles, and the common-place thought about the ordinary outward things of daily life.

LEBANON.

The eagle went to Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the tall cedar. Trees, growing in the earth, represent perceptions of truth, growing in the mind, first as sentiments implanted in the thought, and then as growing shoots, and trees, bearing leaves and fruit. Mount Lebanon, as a high place, represents a high or exalted state of mind. Lebanon represents the spiritual man, or the spiritual good that is in man; *i.e.,* the love of the neighbor, which is the ruling, characteristic quality of the spiritual man. "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." (Psalm xcii. 12.)

A cedar represents spiritual perception of truth. And so a cedar of Lebanon represents the spiritual perception of truth, based on the love of good; *i.e.,* such perception of our duty to our neighbor as we have when we love our neighbor, and when we desire to know all the principles which apply to our relations with our neighbors. "The highest branch of the cedar" is the perception of the most elevated principle of the rational thought; as, for instance, our perception of our duty to our neighbor because he is a child of our Lord. Representatively, things are called high, when they are worthy, and of an

exalted character. The Lord is called "the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity." Representatively, the eagle takes the highest branch of the cedar of Lebanon, when we rationally take the knowledges of truth from the Lord's Word, and apply them in thinking upon our relations to our neighbors, as children of our Lord.

The eagle carried the twig to a land of traffic, and set it in a city of merchants; *i.e.,* the mind, in thinking of spiritual truths, carries them down to the plane of natural science, to confirm them in outward things. The "land of traffic" is the natural mind, with its trading, its buying and selling, or its exchange of knowledges, from the memory. The natural mind, taking things from the natural memory, and reasoning about them, is a land of traffic, where there is a city of merchants; *i.e.,* doctrine that is full of knowledges, things known. A city, built for the uses of men, represents a system of doctrine, constructed as a receptacle for living truths, and a means by which truths may be put to use. For without doctrine we cannot understand truths. To plant trees means to plant truths, to instruct the mind in the knowledge of truth.

The eagle "took also of the seed of the land, and planted it in a fruitful field;" that is, the thought took the doctrine of the church, and set it in the affections, where it would have good ground for growth, *i.e.,* in the love of the neighbor, where the truth should take root and grow.

GREAT WATERS.

The eagle placed the cedar-twig "by great waters," *i.e.,* in the abundance of literal truths, from the Lord's Word. Waters, which cleanse, represent natural truths, literal truths, which cleanse the conduct. And the letter of the Word is the great reservoir, the great waters, whence all truths flow. And the eagle set the cedar-twig

as a willow-tree, a water-willow, which grows on the banks of streams, and which represents natural perceptions of truth, from the letter of the Word of God.

The cedar, so planted, is said to have grown, and to have become "a spreading vine, of low stature." Of course, this cannot be literal history: a cedar-tree cannot turn into a vine. But that which the cedar represents can turn into that which the vine, or grape-vine, represents; *i.e.,* in the life, the spiritual perceptions of truth can become actual spiritual principles, or grape-vines. At first, these are but the beginnings of spiritual principels; *i.e.,* the vine is of low stature, not reaching very high, and yet spreading widely, or applying to all things of the common daily life. Gradually, as the mind is able to see the principles of spiritual life, these principles take their proper places, in the mind; and they are arranged in the order of heavenly life, and in their application to the uses of daily life.

THE EAGLES.

Thus far, and as to the first eagle, the text refers to the regeneration of the natural mind of the spiritual man. If the mind is rational, and has knowledges of truth, from the Lord's Word, and if the mind delights in the teachings of the Word, as rationally seen, the understanding will grow. The cedar will change into a grape-vine: the perception of a principle will become an actual living principle, bearing its fruit in the daily life. From rational, the man will become spiritual, according to his life. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; and in His law doth he meditate, day and night. And he shall be like a tree, planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth

his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Psalm i. 1-3.)

The second eagle represents the thought of the spiritual mind, the interior mind of the spiritual man. Both eagles represent the thought of the spiritual man, that is, the man of the spiritual church, or spiritual degree of life, during his regeneration. But the first eagle represents the thought during the regeneration of the natural mind of the spiritual man, the external mind, which is first taught and trained. And the second eagle represents the thought during the regeneration of the inward, or spiritual part of the mind, which is afterwards opened and trained. Both eagles had great wings and many feathers; *i.e.,* in both the outward and inward parts of the spiritual man's mind, he has abundance of knowledges, facts known, and principles known, by which he exercises his thought, with power and swiftness.

"And behold, this vine did bend her roots towards him, and shot forth her branches towards him, that he might water it," etc. Thus, as the inward, or spiritual mind, opens, and a new degree of thought is developed, all the roots and branches, the beginnings and growths of our knowledges and perceptions, turn themselves towards this new degree of thought, to come into connection with it; or, in other words, when the new and spiritual degree of thought is opened in us, we find that all the things that we have previously known and understood, bend themselves towards our new way of thinking, that they may be filled with the new and higher kind of life. The same knowledges of facts and principles, which, in our natural way of thinking, contributed the means of thinking naturally, now, in our spiritual way of thinking, become helps and means for spiritual thought. Our spiritual thought takes up all these things, and applies them to the new view of life.

Thus, the same outward knowledges, which, to the

natural thought, afford wisdom in natural things, enable the open spiritual mind to procure wisdom in spiritual things. Thus, the central-principle of the mind will give tone and quality to all things else in the thought. This vine, under the care of the second eagle, could grow, and bear fruit; *i.e.,* the perception of truth could expand, and could be applied to actual uses of life. It could, indeed, be "a goodly vine," by keeping its obligations to the Lord and the neighbor.

PROSPERITY.

But the text asks, "Shall it prosper?" This is a prophecy of the fall and destruction of the spiritual church, or Ancient Church, and of the perversion of the spiritual degree of life, in individuals, who will not keep their obligations to the Lord and the neighbor; *i.e.,* who like Zedekiah, break their oath, made before the Lord. Some persons, when they attain to some small degree of spiritual thought, do not bring the truth to bear against their own tendencies to evil; but, instead, they fall in love with their own intelligence, and become confirmed in self-intelligence. Thus, practically, they forget the Lord, and worship themselves. They pervert their intelligence; and they cannot prosper. Spiritually, they wither and die. They bring forth, not good grapes, but wild grapes.

The East represents the Lord, because the sun rises in the East, bringing life and light. In a good sense, the East-wind is an influx of life from the Lord. But, when the Lord's life flows into those who are opposed to it, it seems to destroy them, as the bright sunlight seems to distress the diseased eye. The Lord's truth comes to men, executing a judgment. Those who love the truth, welcome it; but those who do not love it nor live by it, flee from its presence. It withers them, as the sun withers the lifeless plant.

GOOD AND BAD EAGLES.

In considering the signification of the eagle, we must remember the character of representatives, which may be viewed from different standpoints, and in different aspects. For instance, the eagle, as to its good qualities and capacities, represents good things. As to its keen sight, its lofty and swift and sustained flight, its courage, and its power, it represents rational and spiritual thought, which are far-seeing, clear-seeing, and capable of mounting into the highest realms of truth, and of sustaining themselves there, with power and courage.

But the eagle is a proud, solitary, warlike bird, and a bird of prey. In these unlovely qualities, the eagle represents self-intelligence in men, which is proud and warlike, ready to attack all who stand in the way of its ambition. Such intelligence, while professedly thinking of the living truth, is, as to the actual motives of its life, fixed upon the dead things of falsities and evils. "Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." (Matthew xxiv. 28.) Such self-intelligence will be busied about the things of self-love, which are dead to all that is heavenly and happy.

A man may be highly intellectual, capable of soaring high into the realms of thought, and able to sustain a prolonged flight of intelligence as to doctrine; and yet he may be intellectual, only. He may be evil at heart, proud, selfish, arrogant and mean, presuming upon his intelligence, and holding himself aloof from practical spiritual sympathy with human beings. Such a man cannot spiritually prosper. He will wither, in the furrow where he dwells in his self-intelligence, in the pride of his own intellect, perverted to selfish ends.

A GOOD TREE PROMISED.

But the Lord promises to plant a cedar-tree which shall grow and flourish through eternity. "In the

mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing."

The Lord will establish a spiritual church, through the spiritual truths of the New Jerusalem, now made known, in His Second Coming; a spiritual coming, in a new out-pouring of life and light, by means of the opening of the spiritual sense of His holy Word. And these spiritual truths shall come out into all the particulars of daily life, illuminating the life on earth with the rays of the sun of heaven; enabling men to bring forth the fruits of righeousness, in all the common truths of social and business life.

The Lord is now establishing this spiritual church, among those who are prepared to enter into it. Knowledge of doctrine, and intelligence in the understanding of truth, will both be necessary to the genuine New-Churchman. But, beyond these, the most essential requisite will be a meek and lowly spirit, which regards the Lord, in all things, and which shuns self-intelligence as it shuns the hells.

The humble New-Churchman will be ever under the care of the Divine Providence, learning, growing and rejoicing. "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so Jehovah alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields." (Deuteronomy xxxii. 11-13.)

XXVI.

EATING SOUR GRAPES, ETC.

The word of Jehovah came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?—EZEKIEL xviii. 1, 2.

SALVATION does not depend upon hereditary conditions, but upon present personal character, fixed in the actual life.

THE LITERAL SENSE.

The ancient Hebrews had been excusing themselves for their evil character, and their consequent misfortunes, on the ground that they were not responsible, because they had inherited their natural character from their degenerate ancestors, who had given to the minds of the Jewish race, a set predisposition, a fixed condition of character, which amounted to a fatality, because it could not be overcome.

This idea was expressed in the proverb, or parable, of our text, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge."

This idea falls naturally into the thought of the senses. Even in these days, we find natural-minded men excusing their wrong feelings by saying "I cannot help it; I was born so; it is my nature; and I did not make it so."

EXODUS XX. 5.

This tradition among the Jews was founded upon a misunderstanding of the words of the Decalogue, as to

the sins of the parents being visited upon their children: "I, Jehovah, thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me." (Exodus xx. 5.)

The ancient Jew was natural minded and sensuous, and without any idea of the distinctive difference between natural and spiritual things. And, in regarding the supposed wrath of God against evil-doers, he looked for the punishment of evil men in this natural world. And, to the natural thought, it often does seem that the children suffer for the sins of their parents. If the parents are wise, prudent and industrious, they generally procure a fair living, and means of giving their children a good education, and a proper training for some useful occupation. But, if the parents are vicious, indolent and careless, their children often have to go without such advantages, and, sometimes, without the necessities of life. And the parents who do not restrain their own evil tendencies, transmit to their descendents increased tendencies in the same direction. And parents who abuse their physical bodies, transmit to their children impaired physical conditions; and this, often, to several generations. In all phases of human life, temperaments, tendencies and inclinations are hereditary.

HEREDITARIES.

But it does not follow that hereditary influences are penalties imposed by the Lord, against the sins of ancestors. On the contrary, these hereditary conditions are inherent in the form of life which is transmitted to descendents. In the nature of things, everything must "bring forth after its kind," because the parent can beget in the organism of the off-spring, such conditions, only, as he has in himself. And the life of the

Lord, which flows into the parent, and which seeks to give the best to every child, must, however, give through the parent. And thus the Divine gifts are modified by the present conditions of the parent's organism.

These facts are plainly seen in the natural minds, and in the physical conditions, of all nations, families and individuals. As to his physical life, no man has his choice as to the original endowment of mind and body with which he comes into this world. In each case, he must accept such conditions as were transmitted to him. He can only start where he has been placed, and do his best to work into better conditions. And here the power of the hereditary bias ends, because every sane man is given power and freedom to work himself into better conditions.

THE DIVINE LAW.

And, in order to correct the mistakes of natural-minded men, as to the fatality of hereditary influences, the Lord has plainly and positively stated the law of human life, even for this world. In Deuteronomy xxiv. 16, it is said, "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin." And, in II. Kings xiv. 6, speaking of Amaziah, king of Judah, it is said, "And it came to pass, as soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand, that he slew his servants, who had slain the king, his father. But the children of the murderers he slew not, according to that which is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, wherein Jehovah commanded, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin." And in Jeremiah xxxi. 29, 30, speaking of the restoration of Israel, it is said, "In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have

eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge."

Thus, there is no doubt as to what the Lord teaches, in the matter of hereditary influences. And, to make this still clearer, the Lord says, in the context, "All souls are Mine: as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son, is Mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. . . . The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all My statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. . . . Have I any pleasure at all, that the wicked should die, and not that he should turn from his ways, and live?" (Ezekiel xviii. 4, 20, 21, 23.)

Every human soul is a vessel, an organism, formed for the reception of life from the Lord. And nothing can thwart his destiny, except the man's own individual resistance to the life which seeks to flow into him, from the Lord.

SPIRITUAL DEATH.

The evil man loses his spiritual life, because he persists in loving and doing the things which close him against spiritual life, and which induce in him a condition which is spiritual death. Hell is a condition, which was not made by the Lord, but by men who rebelled against the Lord, and who formed a hell, first in their own hearts, and thence in their surroundings. It is not the Lord who destroys evil men, but "Evil shall slay the wicked," by closing their souls against the Lord's life.

Thus, the spiritual death of the evil man is not by a vindictive penalty; and it is not by an arbitrary Divine rule; but it is by the necessary principle of cause and effect. A man is not punished for his sin, but he destroys himself in and by his evils.

TENDENCIES.

In this whole matter, the fundamental point is that we do not inherit fixed character, but only tendencies, inclinations, which we can discover, and resist, and reject, so that they shall not become the fixed principles of our character. And, even if a man has done wrong, he can see it to be wrong; and he can acknowledge his evil, and repent, and reform; and then he will be regenerated by the Lord, who will give him the new character for which he works. Thus, spiritual life is not a question of hereditaries, nor of our own past actions; but it is a matter of our present character.

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING.

We can better illustrate this general subject, by looking into the spiritual meaning of our text and the context. "Sour grapes" were wild grapes, having a very sharp acid taste, which excited the nerves, and disturbed the feeling.

In a good sense, grapes represent the practical good doings of our life, our good fruits, when we are actuated by charity; *i.e.*, by love to our neighbor. These things of regenerate life are sweet with love, and finely-flavored with truth; and their taste is delightful. But sour grapes are the bad fruits, the evil doings of unregenerate life, full of the sharp acids of selfishness, which rasp the nerves of the spirit, and which give no satisfaction.

SPIRITUAL EATING.

To eat, spiritually, is to receive into the mind, to make our own, to appropriate for our use. The teeth, which take hold of the food, and prepare it for the reception and use of our bodies, represent our natural senses, by which we take hold of things, mentally, and investigate them, to prepare them for reception into our minds.

But, when we take hold of some principle, some affection, or some thought, which is intensely disagreeable to us, it draws up our mind, and excites us to opposition, as the sharp acid of the sour grape draws up our nerves, and sets our teeth on edge. A regenerate man will be brought into this condition, by coming in contact with the sharp and rasping falsities which accompany all evils.

Physically, if any one should be kept long in this disagreeable condition, with his teeth on edge, he would acquire a habit of nervousness. And a tendency to this habit, might be inherited by his children.

THE SPIRITUAL FATHER AND SON.

But, for the spiritual meaning of our text, we must transfer the whole scene to our own minds. Spiritually, the father is the principle which is active in our mind, and which begets other states of mind. Of course, if we follow our natural tendencies, without thoughtful supervision of our feelings and thoughts, we shall fix upon ourselves such habits of feeling and of thought. But, by proper attention to the Divine laws, and measuring our life by the Lord's standard, we learn to control, and to change, our ways of thinking and of feeling.

In the mind, the father is the old feeling, from which the new feeling was derived. And the new feeling is a son, another mental generation. But, if we improve our principles, each new mental generation will be better

than the preceding one. And then, if there was selfishness in the old feeling, but a freedom from selfishness in the new feeling, then that new affection, that mental son, will not die, spiritually, for the evils of his father, because he will be of a different character: *i.e.,* we shall have taken warning from our former conditions, and we shall have resisted the wrong hereditary tendency, and built up a better fixed character.

In our mental experience, it happens, sometimes, that we start with a selfish feeling, but gradually change to a better feeling, and finally come out in a right feeling. Now, the good feeling does not have to be condemned, because its father-feeling, or its grandfather-feeling, was selfish and wrong. "The son shall not die for the father."

SPIRITUAL GENERATIONS.

A green, unripe grape is very sour and pungent. But a sour green grape is the beginning of every good grape; for the ripe and luscious grape could not be formed otherwise, at its beginning. But the sun and the air, and the rain and the earth, gradually change the quality of the juices of the grape, until it outgrows its sourness and becomes ripe and sweet. But, in the grape, each condition is the father of the next succeeding condition.

And so, in our minds, there is a spiritual evolution going on, from one state to another. And each new state of affection and thought is a new mental generation, begotten by our preceding states; and, by the mercy of our Lord, led into improved conditions.

Often, if we trace up the mental ancestry of our feelings and thoughts, we shall find that they began in something of selfishness, but that, in the tender leadings of the Divine Providence, a sweeter spirit was gradually introduced into our subsequent feelings, in their new generations, in the measure in which we acknowledged our selfishness, and sought to rise above it.

ILLUSTRATION.

Take, for instance, the progress of marriage, in the mind. We think and speak of the sweet young maidens, who are very lovely and attractive in their maidenhood. But their spiritual sweetness is not nearly as great as it will be, from twenty to forty years hence, when, as wives, mothers and grandmothers, or as neighbors and friends, they will have lived for the good they could do for others; and when they shall have brought down from heaven to earth the blessings of devoted love.

The affection of the honeymoon, entrancing as it is, is a mere beginning, towards that which love shall become, when regeneration shall have progressed to higher stages of spiritual growth; and when the first young love shall be seen to be merely the casket, in which, later, was placed the jewel of spiritual marriage, which shall be eternal in the heavens.

We recognize the principle of spiritual parentage, in the old saying, "The wish is father to the thought;" *i.e.,* our desires dominate our minds, and propagate our thoughts.

"THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION."

And now, reading the words of the Decalogue, that the iniquity of the fathers shall be visited upon the children, to the third and fourth generation of those who hate the Lord, while the ancient Jew and the modern literalist would live in fear of the Divine wrath, on account of the sins of Adam, and of our nearer ancestors, we are protected from such fear by our knowledge of the character of God, who is the Lord, Jesus Christ, the one God of heaven and of earth, the God of love.

And we recognize that, in the spiritual meaning of the Decalogue, both the fathers and the children therein named, are in our own minds: they represent our own

earlier and later mental conditions. And hence we are not dealing with a question of external parental hereditaries, beyond our control, but with the present growth and conditions of our own individual mental family, our ruling principles of heart and of thought. And these we can control, with the Divine help.

It is true that, in those who hate the Lord, *i.e.,* in those affections, in us, which hate goodness and love evil, and live in evil, the iniquities descend to the third and fourth mental generations, because their quality remains similar. And, as long as any affection is like its evil ancestor, in quality, its own character will bring it under the same condemnation.

Representatively, three is a number relating to truth, and to those things which are founded on truth; or, in a bad sense, which are based on falsity, or truth falsified. And four represents goodness; or, in the opposite sense, evil, which is good corrupted. Thus, spiritually, that iniquities descend to the third and four generation, means that evils remain in all evil things which are born from false principles, and in all false things, which are derived from evil. Both of these classes of unregenerate things must die with their evil and false ancestors, because, like their fathers, they are without spiritual life. God does not destroy them, but they destroy, in themselves, all that is spiritually living. Therefore, "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart, and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

XXVII.

THE LIONESS AND HER WHELPS.

Moreover, take thou up a lamentation for the princes of Israel, and say, What was thy mother? A lioness: she lay down among lions; she nourished her whelps among young lions. And she brought up one of her whelps: it became a young lion, and it learned to catch the prey; it devoured men. The nations heard of him; he was taken in their pit, and they brought him with chains unto the land of Egypt.

Now, when she saw that she had waited, and her hope was lost, then she took another of her whelps, and made him a young lion.

And he went up and down among the lions: he became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey, and devoured men. And he knew their desolate palaces; and he laid waste their cities; and the land was desolate, and the fulness thereof, by the noise of his roaring.

Then the nations set against him on every side from the provinces, and spread their net over him: he was taken in their pit. And they put him in ward, in chains, and brought him to the king of Babylon: they brought him into strongholds, that his voice should no more be heard upon the mountains of Israel.—EZEKIEL xix. 1–9.

IN the text are described the successive profanations of truth, by the enticements of false principles, derived from evil affections.

THE LITERAL MEANING.

Literally, the princes of Israel were the kings and princes of the Israelitish nation. The mother of the Israelitish Church was the Ancient Church, which, in

her better states, was powerful. And so, in Oriental imagery, that Church in her vigor, was here represented as a lioness.

Beasts, often displaying the characteristic qualities of men, very naturally represent men. And, knowing the character of the beast, we can readily see the kind of man it represents, according as it is used in a good sense, or in a perverted sense.

The Jews often called the Romans "beasts." And when Paul escaped from the representatives of Nero, he expressed himself as having been delivered from the mouth of a lion. And when Paul refers to his contest with the mob, at Ephesus, he speaks of "fighting with the beasts, at Ephesus." And when Marsyas informed King Agrippa of the death of the Emperor, Tiberias, he expressed himself thus, "The lion is dead." Nero was often called a "beast." And Xerxes was called "the lion." And we remember how often beasts are named in the Scriptures, to represent human qualities, especially in the books of Ezekiel and Daniel, and the Apocalypse.

THE LION.

There are many scriptural references to the lion, the lioness, etc., in representing powerful persons; and spiritually, in denoting powerful principles. "Behold, the people riseth up as a lioness, and as a lion doth he lift himself up: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain." (Numbers xxiii. 24.) "He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a lioness; who shall rouse him up?" (Numbers xxiv. 9.)

The two whelps mentioned in the text, are supposed to refer, historically and figuratively, to the two kings of Judah, Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim, both of whom were evil men, ambitious, covetous, revengeful and idolatrous. Jehoahaz was captured by Pharaoh, and carried to Egypt, and his career ended. Jehoiakim, another son of Josiah, was afterwards made king. But he was captured by Nebuchadnezzar, and carried away to Babylon.

And these facts are referred to in the literal sense of our text, which is called a lamentation for the princes, and for the nation in general. For the nation had become very corrupt, and thus enfeebled, and brought to great sorrow and humiliation.

THE REPRESENTATIVE PICTURE.

In better days, Judah, as the royal tribe, was represented by the lion, as the king of beasts. But the glory of Judah had departed forever; and her kings were captives in exile. Thus passes before us, to-day, the moving panorama of a noted ancient nation, planted by Jehovah, and nursed by His loving providence; but completely destroyed by the dreadful corruption of its people. Its literal history sets before modern men, individually and collectively, a long series of vivid warnings against evil, falsity and sin. And the Scripture references to such history, often couched in figurative language, vigorously enforce the intended lessons of that history.

But, to him "who hath ears to hear," there lies within all this figurative reference, a still more profound and spiritual history of human life, in the dealings of the Divine Love and Wisdom with human hearts and lives, not only in the distant ages of the past, but also in the practical doings of our lives, to-day.

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING.

In our inward minds, the church is our system of principles, which we love and believe, and which we carry out in our practical life. Among these principles, the

mother is the primary, or leading truth, from which other truths and good principles are derived. In the days of our innocence, the mother-principle, the leading truth in our mind, is from our Lord. But, if we degenerate in character, the spiritual children of that mother, and their children, will become perverted, gradually, until they shall have lost the quality of their ancestress.

The life of the leaders, in Israel, became more and more corrupt, and opposed to the principles of the Lord's church, until that church was destroyed, in the minds of men, and as an institution. Even the leaders of the nominal church became merely natural-minded men, perverted in character, especially by means of sensuous reasonings.

And these things and conditions are reproduced, to-day, in the minds of all who pervert the principles of the church, and destroy its life, by preferring the corrupt life of the senses to the pure life of the spirit.

The powerful truth of the Lord's Word, which, in its vigor in men's minds, has been represented by a lioness in freedom, became weakened, stripped of its power, like a chained and caged lion, in the minds of degenerate men.

THE LION.

In general, the lion, the most powerful beast with which the Israelites had to contend, represented power, especially the power of truth, in ultimates, that is, in its outward forms, as, for instance, in the letter of the Divine Word. In the supreme sense, the lion represented the Lord, as the Divine Truth, as to the power of His truth. In this sense, the Lord was called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah."

The lioness, or female lion, represented especially the power of the truth united with goodness. But, in the

text, as the degenerated church is represented, the lioness is used in the opposite sense, of falsity springing from evil. For the degenerating mind changes its good into evil, and its truth into falsity. Hence in our text, the lioness is the power of falsity linked with evil. And, in the mind of the unregenerate man, this power is exerted against the principles of the Lord's church; and it seeks to destroy those principles, in the man's mind, and, by his influence, in the minds of others.

A young lion is one in the vigor of his youth. And he represents the evils and falsities of the unregenerate mind, in their full power. He catches the prey; *i.e.,* he destroys truths. He devours men; *i.e.,* he destroys goodness, by destroying the intelligent understanding of truth.

THE PIT AND SNARES.

The text declares concerning the young lion, "The nations heard of him; he was taken in their pit, and they brought him with chains, into the land of Egypt." In representatives, the antagonism between this lion and the nations does not indicate antagonism of character, or any goodness in the nations; for they were heathen nations, representing unregenerate conditions of life. But the dealings of the nations with the two young lions, in the text, represent the action of one class of evils and falsities upon another class of corrupt principles.

Pits, snares, nets, traps, gins, etc., which take animals by deceit, and by enticing, represent the enticement and deception practised by the lusts of the external natural mind, and the corporeal senses, to drag down all the feelings and thoughts, and thus to fix them in the lusts of the senses. In the life of the senses, a man's natural tendencies to evil draw him along, towards his desires, as the current of a river draws every floating object towards the ocean, and to destruction. Hence, to

snare, or to trap, means to deceive, to entice, to lure to destruction, by enticing the delights of self-love and the love of the world, especially by reasonings from the fallacies of the natural senses, which always favor the delights of self-love.

Evil spirits, who see a man's natural and selfish loves, seek to arouse these evil loves, and to delight them, by cunning suggestions, until the mind is so ensnared that it reasons from falses, instead of truths, and from evils, instead of good. But, while such snares and enticements catch those who love themselves and the world above all things else, they do not entrap the sincere mind, which is seeking regeneration. "Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey? Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing? Can a bird fall in a snare, upon the earth, where no gin is for him?" (Amos iii. 4, 5.)

The secret is, that things which are snares to some men, are not snares to others, who are protected by their knowledge of truth, and by their good life.

CHAINS.

The young lion was taken to Egypt, by means of chains, or hooks. A wild beast was often managed, in captivity, by means of a ring, or hook, set in the beast's lip, or nose, and a chain attached to the ring, as is done in these days, with a dangerous bull. And, in ancient times, when cruelty was common, human prisoners of war were thus treated by their captors, especially when it was intended to humiliate a famous captive.

The lip and nose are so sensitive to pain, that an animal, or a man, so chained, readily yields to the drawing of the chain. And, in this, he represents the mind which readily yields to the drawing of its sensuous delights; for, in such case, although the mind knows

that such indulgences are forbidden, it feels that it cannot bear the pain of opposing its natural inclinations.

The land of Egypt, to which the lion was taken in chains, represents the learning of the natural senses, the vast accumulation, in the memory, of thoughts and persuasions, which the natural senses regard as established truths, and which are the feeding-ground for false ideas. But the mind which is ensnared and chained by the fallacies of the natural senses, is like the young lion of the forest, captured and chained; or like the captured king of Judah, dragged painfully to the dungeon.

THE SECOND WHELP.

The lioness was disappointed when her first whelp did not return to her. And, in the unregenerate mind, the mental lions, the powerful falsities which range through the natural mind, do not bring the expected happiness; for the first one is ensnared by the fallacies of the senses on the corporeal plane of thought, the external natural mind. And the natural sciences, even when corrupted, set bounds to the liberty of the false principle.

But the lioness sends out another young lion; *i.e.,* the ruling falsity from evil, lifts itself to a higher plane of thought, and exerts itself against the life of the church, as to the principles of the interior natural mind. Here, again, an attempt is made to catch the prey, and to devour men; *i.e.,* to destroy truths and good principles, but on a higher plane of thought and feeling. Here, too, the young lion knew men's desolate palaces, or "desolate widows," as it is sometimes translated: *i.e.,* the leading false principle recognizes the desolation of the natural mind, deprived of its men, its spiritual principles. It also lays waste the cities; *i.e.,* it destroys the doctrines of the church, in the mind; doctrines which

are, to the mind, what cities are to men, dwellings for good and true principles. And the land is desolated, spiritually, when the good principles of the mind are destroyed by falsity.

It is said that "the land was desolate, and the fulness thereof, by the noise of his (the lion's) roaring." The fulness of the land, in the mind, is the fulness of life afforded to the mind by an abundance of truths, from the Divine Word. But the evil delights of self-love attack and destroy all the truths of the Lord, in the unregenerate mind, so that love to the Lord, and love to the neighbor, and the love of usefulness, are first confused, and then destroyed.

ROARING.

The roaring of a lion is one of the most dreadful of all the sounds in nature. It is great in volume, and very prolonged, seeming to shake the earth, rolling over the ground, and reverberating among the hills; carrying with it a sphere of deadly influence, which often momentarily paralyzes the nerves of the hearer, and renders him helpless; carrying terror and dismay to men and beasts.

We can easily imagine the terror in which the inhabitants of a village are kept, when they know that a vigorous lion is prowling around their vicinity, ready to spring upon any one who may be going in or out of the village. And the roaring of the lion, when it has taken some man or beast, keeps the villagers always reminded of the dreadful terror under which they live. One of the sorrows prophesied of degenerate Israel, is this; "A leopard shall watch over their cities." (Jeremiah v. 6.)

And there is a parallel between these distressing things and the corresponding conditions in the human

mind, when a powerful mental lion, a deadly falsity, is ranging through the mind, imperilling the spiritual life of everything good and true; seizing upon every truth of the Lord's Word, and tearing out its life, by falsifying it; by perverting it to evil purposes; and using it to confirm evil principles. In this condition, the whole mind is kept in the terror of peril and uncertainty. Take, for instance, the false thought that man's natural reason is sufficient for the understanding of all truth, without any aid from Divine revelation. This terrible falsity, will do, in our minds, spiritually, the things which correspond to the destruction among men caused by prowling lions. Spiritually, the roaring of the lion is the falsity constantly proclaimed, with great vehemence, and lusting to destroy all truth and goodness.

THE SECOND WHELP CAPTURED.

But the second lion of the unregenerate mind is also enticed into the net, and taken to Babylon. Babylon, the great cultured heathen community, represents those who acknowledge a church, and those who have the Word of the Lord in its literal sense, but who use the church, and the Divine Word, as a means of ruling over men; who seek to exercise dominion over the souls of men; and who claim that the Lord has given them such power. But, in doing these things, they pervert the good, and falsify the truth, in the church.

Impersonally, Babylon represents the evil principle of love of dominion over others, from self-love. And to be led away to Babylon, in chains, is to allow this infernal spirit of love of dominion, for selfish purposes, to profane the Divine Truth, in our minds, and to corrupt our life, so that we are held in bondage to that spirit of self-love, in the strongholds of our own selfish lusts.

To spread the net over the lion, is to allow our self-love to entice us by the delights of worldly ambition, and by reasonings from our lusts, wrought, like a net, into a system, which will keep us in helplessness. And then our "voice" shall "no more be heard upon the mountains of Israel;" *i. e.,* dragged down into the lower things of self and the world; we shall think no more of the higher planes of human life, because all that we know of good, will then have been corrupted, and truth falsified. And, in our degenerate minds, the church will have been destroyed. It is for us to exterminate the heathen of our own minds, because they would be a snare to us. O Lord, "The wicked have laid a snare for me; yet I erred not from Thy precepts. Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage forever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart." (Psalm cxix. 110, 111.)

XXVIII.

ISRAEL'S MOTHER AS A VINE.

Thy mother is like a vine in thy blood, planted by the waters: she was fruitful and full of branches, by reason of many waters.

And she had strong rods for the sceptres of them that bear rule; and she exalted her stature among the thick branches; and she appeared in her height with the multitude of her branches.

But she was plucked up in fury; she was cut down to the ground; and the East wind dried up her fruit: her strong rods were broken and withered; the fire consumed them. And now she is planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty ground. And fire is gone out of a rod of her branches, which hath devoured her fruit, so that she hath no strong rod for a sceptre to rule. This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation.—EZEKIEL xix. 10–14.

THE spiritual man is in the life of Divine truths; but, in the sensuous man, all Divine truths are perverted and rejected.

THE MOTHER.

Literally and historically, the mother of the Israelitish and Jewish Church was the Ancient Church, which was a spiritual church, principled in a good life, in the light of rational and spiritual truths.

The Ancient Church was represented by a good and flourishing grape-vine; for the grape-vine represents the spiritual degree of human life, in which truth is the fundamental element. In the Scriptures the church is often represented by a vine, or a vineyard, and sometimes by other trees, or by a garden. In Isaiah v. 7, it

is said, "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant."

"Thy mother is (or was) like a vine in thy blood," refers, literally, to the time of birth, as in Chapter xvi., verses 4 and 6; "And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born, . . . when I passed by thee, . . . I said unto thee, in thy blood, Live." But, spiritually, blood represents the Divine Truth, which is the circulating life of the soul, as blood is the circulating life of the body. The love of the Divine Truth was in the Spiritual Church; and it should have been inherited by Israel, as an inclination and predisposition, developed in the Israelitish Church.

THE WATERS.

The mother, the Spiritual Church, was planted by many waters; *i.e.,* established in the abundance of truths. For water represents the truths in which we are instructed, and as they are received by our natural mind. Having an abundance of truths, the Spiritual Church could have lived according to these truths, in a good and righteous life. Then the church would have been "fruitful," in practical goodness, "and full of branches," in the growth and extension of thought, "by reason of many waters;" *i.e.,* because the abundance of knowledges of truth would afford great opportunities for excellent growth. For truth is the means by which good knows what to do, and how to do it; and thus how to grow, and to bear fruit.

THE RODS.

"And she had many rods, for the sceptres of them that bear rule;" *i.e.,* literally, the vine was strong and large, and it furnished many strong pieces, suitable to make rods, or staves, or sceptres. Originally, the king's sceptre, or symbol of office, was simply his staff, or walking stick, on which he leaned for support.

In ancient Greece, the judge carried such a staff, or rod, as a sceptre, which was known as a representative of his office. Gradually, the rulers changed the form of the sceptre, to a mere symbol of office; and they ornamented their sceptres, with precious metals and precious stones, as a display of splendor. And, even in these days, among prominent men, in savage nations, and even among civilized peoples, there is a habit of carving and otherwise ornamenting, their walking sticks; and of using symbolic and representative forms, in such carving.

All these facts display the great attention which is often paid to the staff, and especially to the sceptre of the ruler. The staff, because it supports the man, in his journey, represents power, on which men must depend for support and strength. And because it is a part of a tree, which represents the truth, growing in the mind, so the wooden staff, or sceptre, represents the power of truth, on which the mind leans for support. And, in the case of the sceptre of the ruler, it is the symbol of his power and authority. And when, as in a theocracy, the ruler is chosen by the Lord, his sceptre represents the Divine power, in whose name and strength the human ruler holds his position.

And thus, the fact that the vine had many such rods, represents that the spiritual church was endowed with abundant power, in her knowledge of the Divine Truth, applicable to both the inward principles of the church, and the outward rules for conduct. In this sense, the letter of the Scripture is man's great staff for daily support, in the practical walk of life.

THE THICK BRANCHES.

But this vine exalted her stature; *i.e.,* the Spiritual Church grew, intellectually; but she exalted herself;

i.e., her members grew into the love of their own intelligence, until they forgot that the Lord's truth is the source of all human intelligence. And then they regarded intelligence as their own, and as originating in themselves, and from themselves. They lifted up themselves in the pride of their self-intelligence.

"The thick branches" mentioned in the text, are the twisted and interlaced branches, in which things become entangled. And this was the case with this vine, that "she appeared in her height, with the multitude of her branches."

These thick, interlacing branches, forming a net-work, represent the multitude of extended ideas, in the natural mind, which form such a twisted mass of notions, that the mind becomes entangled in them, and thus confused, until it loses its clear intelligence; as is the case, for instance, with the self-exalting infidel, who regards his own intelligence as supreme, and as fully competent to settle any spiritual question, without the help of any Divine Word; and who finally becomes entangled, and spiritually strangled, in the multitude of his own false notions.

The spiritual man has a conscience, formed in his mind, gradually, from infancy, by the teachings of his parents and others, and by the doctrines of the church. But, being without a clear perception of the principles of truth, he needs to confirm the doctrines he knows, by knowledge of things obtained through his senses. But, if he has received natural ideas which are not true, and which are falsities, or fallacies of the senses, these branching and intertwining notions will form such a thick net-work, that they will entangle his mind, and destroy the truth within it. When he imagines that he is greatly exalting his mind, in intelligence, he will be entangled in the things which will destroy his intelligence.

This is the case with the degenerated Spiritual Church, and with the degenerate mind of any man, to-day, who is in similar mental conditions. Men whose minds are in good spiritual conditions, receive the Divine Truth, and apply it to their daily life. But the self-exalting man perverts and rejects the Divine Truth, because his self-derived notions do not agree with the Lord's teachings. And then his further conditions are represented by the things which happened to the vine, in the text.

PLUCKED UP, ETC.

"But she was plucked up in fury; she was cast down to the ground; and the East wind dried up her fruit." In the degenerated mind, the truth which has been planted there, is uprooted and cast down, in fury, *i.e.,* in anger, by the opposition of the man's self-love.

"And the East wind dried up her fruit." In a good sense, the blowing of the wind represents the active influence, or operation, of the truth. But, in a bad sense, the wind is the activity of false principles in the mind. In a good sense, the East, where the sun appears to rise, represents the Lord: but in the opposite sense, the East is the self-love, which takes the place of the Lord, in the unregenerate mind.

Thus, in a bad sense, the East wind is the falsity from evil, which scatters and destroys all that is good and true in the mind, and encourages all the lusts of evil. And, in this condition, all the strong rods of the mental vine are broken, and left to wither, because they are without life; *i.e.,* the truths of the church are destroyed, so that the mind is deprived of the power to resist the hells. And then the infernal "fire" consumes them, in the evils of self-love. Thus the Israelitish Church was destroyed, by and in its perversion and rejection of Divine truths.

THE HISTORICAL SENSE.

Literally, the destruction of Israel and Judah came through their conquest by Nebuchadnezzar, and the removal of the people to Babylon. Historically, the Ancient Church was like a goodly vine, flourishing and fruitful, and filled with knowledge. The strong rods for sceptres were her many wise men, learned in the Divine law, who could rule wisely, in the Church and in the State. But, in the degenerate days of Israel and Judah, Nebuchadnezzar came upon them, like a whirlwind, and carried them away. Their career of glory was ended; and it has remained closed, even up to the present day, when the Jews are no longer a nation, but are scattered among the peoples of the earth; and their glorious Jerusalem is known chiefly for its ruins.

THE WILDERNESS.

"And now she is planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty ground." A wilderness is where there is no life. And this condition represents the mind in which there are no living principles, no goodness and truth from the Lord. And the church, or the mind, which degenerates into evil and falsity, thereby plants itself in a spiritual wilderness, where there is nothing to give it life.

And the fire of evil self-love will spread from its branches, its tangled mass of falsities, and will devour all the good fruit, all the regenerate love, wisdom, and usefulness which were in the mind, as beginnings of a new life, as matters of knowledge; and which might have been developed into heavenly life.

And then this mental vine, in her degeneration, will have no more strong rods, to be sceptres for those who rule; *i.e.*, there will be no more knowledge of the practical power of the Divine truths, on which men can lean, spiritually and naturally, in principle and in conduct,

in the walk of life, and in the power of self-control, in the intelligence of the enlightened spirit, exercising a regenerate control over all the lower degrees of the human life.

And thus there will be nothing left in the mind, by which the Lord could rule the man, in "the self-evidencing reason of love," which is clear to the man who is open to perceive its quality, and who loves to adopt it; but which loses its power, in the unregenerate mind, which has no recognition of the quality of love and of wisdom. The same Divine Truth, which, in its spirit and in its literal form, is a trusted staff to the good man, seems, to the evil man, to be of no practical use.

DESOLATION.

The text representatively pictures a mind which has ceased to cherish the Divine Truth; which has driven out of its domains all the spiritual good and the truth which flow from the Lord; and which mind thereby becomes utterly powerless, either to receive the things of the spiritual life, or to resist the things of spiritual death; a wretched nihilist, and irrational anarchist, a spiritually-insane destructionist, in the realm of mind; using what little it has of external influence, to undo all that the loving God of infinite goodness is seeking to pour into the hearts and lives of His human children.

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." And he is exerting his puny efforts to live in a universe in which there is no God; to drive God out of his universe; and to make human life, henceforth, a desolate sorrow, in the dead wilderness of an inward hell and an outward desert.

LAMENTATION.

And it is not singular that the picture of such a wilderness is called a "lamentation," a funeral-wail over

the lost heaven which is possible to men, but which evil men deliberately and determinedly reject.

"The princes of Israel" have passed into obscurity. The royal line of David, established by Jehovah, with wonderful happenings, long ago came to an untimely end, through personal corruption, idolatry, and persistent sin. The downfall of the Kingdom of Judah was the downfall of the entire dynasty, never to be restored, literally; but to be finally restored representatively and spiritually, in the coming of Jesus Christ, the true King of Israel, of the lineage of David.

Thus does the inexhaustible and infinite love of our Lord come to men again and again, seeking always to give to them, collectively and individually, the blessings of spiritual and heavenly life.

And as we reflect upon the history of the ages of the past, let us carefully remember that all these things are narrated in the Sacred Scriptures, in order that, in them, we may have a mirror held before us, in which we can see the possible conditions of our own life clearly reflected. The spirit of ancient Israel, sensuous and proud, still walks the earth, in the hereditary tendencies of our own natural minds. Our troubles, our sorrows, our struggles, our sufferings, in all phases of our natural life on this earth, are but the inevitable results of our own natural tendencies, as the inducing causes. To-day, our Lord says to us, with as much force, and with as much love, as He said to Israel, ages ago, "The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, neither is His ear heavy, that it cannot hear, but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you. (Isaiah lix. 1, 2.)

But, O Lord, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."

XXIX.

JERUSALEM, AS A BOILING FLESH-POT.

Utter a parable unto the rebellious house, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovih: Set on a pot, set it on, and also pour water into it: gather the pieces thereof into it, every good piece, the thigh and the shoulder; fill it with the choice bones. Take the choice of the flock, and burn also the bones under it; and make it boil well, and let them seethe the bones of it therein.

Wherefore thus saith the Lord Jehovih: Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it! Bring it out, piece by piece; let no lot fall upon it.

For her blood is in the midst of her; she set it upon the top of a rock; she poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust. That it may cause fury to come up to take vengeance, I have set her blood upon the top of a rock, that it should not be covered.

Therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovih: Woe to the bloody city! I will even make the pile for the fire great. Heap on wood, kindle the fire, consume the flesh, and spice it well, and let the bones be burned. Then set it, empty, upon the coals thereof, that the brass of it may be hot, and may burn, and that the filthiness of it may be molten in it, that the scum of it may be consumed.

She hath wearied herself with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her: her scum shall be in the fire.—EZEKIEL xxiv. 3–12.

THE Lord makes every effort to regenerate all men; but those who confirm themselves in evil and falsity, cannot be regenerated, because they are not willing to give up evil.

THE LITERAL SENSE.

In the text, the city of Jerusalem and its people are compared to a brazen pot, or caldron, or kettle, in which meat was boiling. And we may remember that the Jews, themselves, invited this comparison, by their own saying, as given in Ezekiel xi. 3. When the prophet foretold trouble, some of the leading men remarked, "It is not near: let us build houses. This city is the caldron, and we be the flesh." And, in our text, our Lord, through the prophet, carried out the comparison.

At this time, the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem. The pieces of flesh in a caldron, are apparently safe from the fire under the pot, and yet they are confined in the pot, and they cannot escape. And so the Jews imagined themselves to be safe from the enemy, who were outside of the walls of Jerusalem. And yet these walls were barriers to the Jews, which they could not escape, and which made it easier for an enemy to invest the city.

Generally, the scum rises to the top of the contents of a boiling pot; and then it can be skimmed off, or allowed to boil over. But, when the contents are not thus cared for, the whole mass will boil down; and, finally, it will burn out. And then, even the empty kettle will melt, and be destroyed.

THE FIGURATIVE SENSE.

Figuratively, the text pictured the entire destruction of Jerusalem: nothing was to escape. The prophet was directed to boil the flesh, and also the bones; and finally, to allow the contents to boil down, until nothing was left in the caldron but the dried scum. And then the brass pot, itself, was to be burned, and thus destroyed. And this condition became true, for Nebuchadnezzar soon took Jerusalem, and "burned the

house of Jehovah, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire. And all the army of the Chaldees that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem, round about." (II. Kings xxv. 9, 10.)

REVELATION.

We may notice that the presence of the king of Babylon, at Jerusalem, was revealed to Ezekiel, by the Lord. In the first two verses of the chapter it is said, "Again, in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, the Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, write the name of the day, even of this same day: the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem, this same day."

Now, at this time, Ezekiel was in captivity in Babylon, more than five hundred miles from Jerusalem, across the Great Arabian Desert. And there were not, then, any telegraphs or telephones, or any other physical means of carrying news instantly. And the date revealed is fully confirmed, as to year, month, and day, in the records, as in II. Kings xxv. 1, where it is said, "And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came, he and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it."

PROPHECY.

Jehovah, through Ezekiel, prophesied that the rebellious house of Israel should soon become a ruined house. And this prophecy was thus given, in a representative form, in the familiar image of a boiling flesh-pot, for two purposes; first, to make a strong impression upon the minds of the Jews; and second, to reveal spiritual

truths and warnings to those who can read the inward and spiritual meaning of the prophecy.

We remember that a somewhat similar representative prophecy came through Jeremiah, in the early days of his mission as a prophet. It is recorded in Jeremiah i. 13, 14: "And the Word of Jehovah came unto me the second time, saying, What seest thou? And I said, I see a seething pot; and the face thereof is toward the North. Then Jehovah said unto me, Out of the North an evil shall break forth, upon all the inhabitants of the land."

The Jews boasted that they were the chosen people of Jehovah; and that His holy temple was with them; and that they possessed His holy Word, and all His laws and statutes. But all these things did not protect and preserve a people whose character degenerated, and who refused to live according to the laws of God, either in principle, or in form. The mere presence of the Lord's truth does not save an evil man, as the mere presence of the sun does not give sight to blind eyes.

THE SCUM.

The lowest of the people in a city are often called "the scum," because they are debased, vicious, and of criminal tendencies and habits; and they are a constant menace and injury to the community, coming to the surface, and to evil conspicuousness, whenever there is a general disturbance in the city. But, when a city has fallen so low that all of its people are scum, destruction soon follows, morally, spiritually, and even physically.

The great cities of ancient history, once centres of great military power, but, later, conquered and destroyed, were generally conquered after their people had degenerated, and had fallen into weakening vices, borrowed from conquered nations, and which broke their

former power. And, even now, archæology is revealing the remains of many ancient cities, some of which have never been known within historic times, and their inhabitants are unrecognized among the peoples of the earth.

Thus, in every age, history is repeating itself, in the lives of men on earth. Regenerate character is the one and only permanent element for human progress and happiness. Times come and go; nations rise and fall; races progress and retrograde. But, within all these changes, we mark the rise and fall of character, on which all changes depend.

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING.

The ancient Jew could possibly be reached by the imagery of representative prophecy. And, we, to-day, are in need of similar warnings, and similar instruction. But, if we "have ears to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," we may see, within the literal imagery of the Scriptures, a profounder and spiritual truth, teaching us not merely facts, but also Divine principles, which are spiritually applicable to all men.

Each of us has his Jerusalem, his holy city, in his own mind; *i.e.*, the system of truths built up in his mind, and in which he dwells, as to his affection, thought, and life. In that spiritual Jerusalem, the Lord of love is seeking to build up every Divine Truth, and to establish every good principle in our hearts, and in our conduct. And if we live in the mental Jerusalem which our Lord builds within us, then "Thine eye shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Jehovah will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams." (Isaiah xxxiii. 20, 21.)

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, prosperity within thy palaces." (Psalm cxxii. 6, 7.)

But, if we are unregenerate, our mental Jerusalem will be a rebellious house, living in opposition to the Divine principles, in heart and in practice. And then our condition will be represented by the circumstances of our text and the context.

THE FLESH-POT.

Every hollow vessel, made to contain food, and liquids for drinking, or in which such things are prepared for food, represents a doctrine, which performs a similar service to the human mind. Every true doctrine is a mental vessel, containing goodness and truth. Water has no form of its own, but it assumes the form of the vessel which holds it. And it must be held in a vessel for practical use. And so truth must take form in a doctrine, which states the truth, in form, and which sets bounds, and gives shape to the truth.

Thus, the pot, or kettle, or caldron, in which food is cooked, represents a doctrine. The water represents natural truth, truth such as is seen and applied by the natural mind. And the solid food represents practical goodness, which is to be prepared for mental use, when the water of truth is set in motion by the fire of love.

The flesh-pot mentioned in the text was made of brass. Brass represents natural good, good as seen by the natural mind, good in outward form. But, in the unregenerate mind, this natural idea of goodness will be very different from the heavenly form of goodness, which is represented by gold. Brass may be made to look very much like gold, but their qualities are very different. And it is equally so with natural goodness and heavenly goodness.

To "set on" the pot, is to set it upon the fire, in order to boil its contents. And we do this, mentally, when we apply our affections to the matter in hand, and operate from love, so as to bring the goodness and the truth into practical form for actual use, in our daily life. All the "good pieces" which are to be put into the pot, represent all the different kinds of good, goodness of different degrees, for our mental use. "The thigh, the shoulder, and the choice bones," are these different kinds of goodness, applicable to the different departments of our mental life, celestial, spiritual, and natural. The thigh represents the good of celestial love, especially as exemplified in pure conjugial love.

The shoulder, with which a man pushes, represents power. And, as mental power is mainly exerted by means of known truths, applied to life, so, here, the shoulder represents the spiritual degree, in which truth is the fundamental element, and whose goodness is the goodness of truth; *i.e.*, goodness which comes in the love and practice of truth. But the bones, being less alive than the soft parts of the body, represent the natural degree, the external good of conduct, which forms a framework, by which the man can stand and move. And all of these, the good of love, and the good of truth, and the good of action, should be placed in the mental caldron, for our daily food.

PERVERSION AND CORRUPTION.

But the flesh-pot mentioned in the text, was used by the wicked Israelites. And, in their abuse of all good and true things, they perverted and corrupted truth and goodness and righteousness into evil and falsity and sin. And hence they were addressed as "the bloody city," meaning literally, those who were evil, cruel, and murderous.

In a good sense, blood represents the Divine Truth, which is the inward circulating spiritual life of the regenerate mind, as the physical blood is the circulating life of the healthy physical body. But, when a man perverts the Divine Truth, and rejects its spirit, his inward life is not sustained by the Divine Truth, but by the selfish falsities of evil. And, then, spiritually, his mental caldron is covered with scum. Mental scum is formed of the filthy loves of selfishness and evil. And, as a scum on the kettle, if not skimmed off or boiled over, remains to corrupt the contents of the kettle, so the mental scum of filthy selfish loves, unless recognized and removed, will pollute and defile all the goodness and the truth, in the human mind.

It is intended that we shall recognize the character of the mental scum which rises to the surface of our minds, during the boiling process, when our hearts are busy in preparing our affections and thoughts for actual use, in our daily life. And it is intended that we shall see and know that the scum is unclean, and that it should be removed.

Our experiences in practical life afford us the necessary opportunities to observe our natural hereditary tendencies, and to see that all impure tendencies must be worked out of our minds, or they will fix themselves in our character. And when they do this, they make our whole character impure and evil. Mentally, as well as physically, rejecting and removing the impure scum, is a very important part of the boiling operation.

The trials and hardships of our earthly life serve to help us to separate the evil from the good, in our mental life. And so, if these occasions are used in the right way, they are serviceable to us, in carrying off the scum of our mental life, which is constantly working out upon the surface, where, if we will, we can constantly skim it off, and throw it away. But, in the evil mind,

the scum remains, because the man loves his own impurities, and he feels that they are an essential part of his life: and he will not give them up. And then his mental scum boils into the substance of his character, and he remains evil.

Where the text makes a distinction between filthiness and scum, the filthiness represents evil, and the scum represents falsity.

THE BLOOD.

Among the Israelites, the laws regarding blood were very exacting. For, physically, the blood is the life of the body; and so it represents the life of the mind. In Israel, men were not permitted to be careless in handling blood. They were commanded to pour blood on the earth, and to cover it with earth, or dust, to absorb it; and not to allow it to lie exposed, where the atmosphere would soon cause it to corrupt.

In our text, it is said of Jerusalem that she did not carefully cover blood with dust, but even poured it on the top of a rock, to make it doubly conspicuous, while the sun and air corrupted it. And to do this, was an abomination before the Lord. For it represented the bold and insolent action of the evil man, in displaying his own evils in the face of heaven, boasting and glorying in his evils and falsities, by seeking to base them upon the Divine Truth, in the letter of the Lord's Word, which is represented by the rock. And evil is shameless, when it makes itself conspicuous, even in holy places; and when it pretends to justify itself by the Divine laws.

BURNING THE CALDRON.

And we can see how such desecration is followed by the total spiritual destruction of all true doctrine, in the mind which perverts that doctrine to an evil purpose.

This condition is represented by the fact that the prophet, speaking in the parable, spoke not only of burning out the contents of the flesh-pot, and also of burning the scum into the substance of the food, but also that he spoke of setting the empty brass caldron upon a raging fire, until the substance of the caldron, itself, should be melted, and destroyed, mixed with the remains of its contents, adhering to its sides, and the filthy scum, which had worked its way into the mixed mass. Evil and falsity bring their own total spiritual destruction, the destruction of all things in them which could have any spiritual life. "She wearied herself with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her: her scum shall be in the fire." This is the sad destiny of every human heart which will not give up its falsities and its evils, and which sinks into spiritual death, in which the infernal fire of its terrible self-love, is always mixed with the filthy scum of its falsities. Therefore, "turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

XXX.

THE ASSYRIAN A CEDAR IN LEBANON.

Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon, with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of a high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs. The waters made him great; the deep set him up on high, with her rivers running round about his plants; and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field. Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long, because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth.

All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs; and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young: and under his shadow dwelt all great nations. Thus was he fair in his greatness, in the length of his branches: for his root was by great waters. The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him. The fir-trees were not like his boughs, and the chestnut-trees were not like his branches: not any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty. I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches; so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him.

Therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovih: because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height: I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen: he shall surely deal with him: I have driven him out, for his wickedness. And strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off, and have left him: upon the mountains, and in all the valleys, his branches are fallen; and his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him.—EZEKIEL xxxi. 3–12.

INTELLECTUAL PRIDE.

INTELLIGENCE, without spirituality, induces pride of intellect, and ends in evil. A man who knows much, and who learns easily, is not necessarily made better by his learning. Goodness results from the humble practice of known truths, in the daily life. Truth known, but not loved and lived, is truth alone, without good, and, therefore, without spiritual life.

THE LITERAL SENSE.

Literally, the text refers to the downfall of Assyria, which is cited as a warning to Egypt, enforcing a prophecy of her downfall.

The Assyrians were a fierce, warlike people, intelligent, but treacherous, proud, and lawless, and regarding other nations as inferior.

THE REPRESENTATIVE MEANING.

As a representative, Ashur, or Assyria, denotes the rational faculty, the reasoning power, the thinking principle, by which men become intelligent. And the representative holds good in regard to churches, as well as individuals. For, in regarding spiritual things, we look to principles, rather than to persons. And principles are the same, whether in an individual or in a mass of men. Every individual member of the church, is a church in the least form; and the general church is but the aggregate of the individual persons, as churches.

The text is not merely historical and prophetical, as to past churches, but it applies to all men, in all times, and in all places, who are in the states of mind and life described in the text. The same evils of heart and of life, which induced the spiritual downfall of the ancient Assyrians, threaten our destruction, to-day, both nationally and individually. The same kind of intelligence is open to us; and the same peril of pride of intelligence confronts us. And especially is this the case in the nominal New Church, in which there is abundance of true doctrine, and great opportunity for knowledge. But, with that knowledge, comes increased responsibility, lest we forget the one Source of all truth.

THE SPIRITUAL SENSE—TREES.

"The Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon." Mount Lebanon, with its forests of noble cedar-trees, represents the spiritual man, or the spiritual mind of man, with its grand knowledges of spiritual truth. Trees represent man's perceptions of truth, growing in his mind, and bearing fruit in his life. Cedar-trees represent rational perceptions. Cedars of Lebanon represent the perceptions of spiritual truth, and the knowledges of truth, branching out, and growing with the growth of the mind.

The text declares that the Assyrian, as a cedar of Lebanon, was made great by growing beside the water; *i.e.,* by being well supplied with natural truths, truths from the letter of the Lord's Word, which contribute to intelligence. Knowledges from the letter of the Word develop our spiritual intelligence. And thus, spiritual intelligence is high and far-reaching, "above all the trees of the field;" *i. e.,* beyond the knowledges of natural truth. "The fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs;" *i.e.,* thoughts of all kinds grow in the intelligent mind, and multiply there, bringing forth new thoughts. For the rational faculty of the mind is the medium between the natural and the spiritual parts of the mind. And, by means of the rational faculty, or thinking ability, natural thoughts bring forth after their kind, in abundance, and furnish the material for spir-

itual thoughts. For spiritual thought is not merely thought about spiritual things, but it is thinking about all things in a spiritual way, from a spiritual standpoint, and in spiritual light. The natural man thinks about spiritual things, but he regards them from a natural standpoint; and, hence, he does not think spiritually, but naturally.

Under the cedar the beasts, also, brought forth their young; *i.e.,* the affections increased and multiplied, by means of the perceptions of spiritual truth. Thus the cedar was fair, or beautiful in his greatness; *i.e.,* the mind becomes beautiful by rational intelligence. The other trees could not hide the tall Assyrian cedar; *i.e.,* spiritual intelligence reaches far beyond natural intelligence. The other trees envied, or, rather, emulated him; tried to follow his far-reaching example. So, in our minds, if we are spiritually intelligent, that intelligence elevates and dignifies our intelligence of other kinds. All kinds of intelligence aspire to be like spiritual intelligence, to know good and evil.

SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE.

Thus the text displays the beauty and spirituality of the intelligence of the spiritual man, the man whose mind is open in the spiritual degree of thought. His mind is like a noble cedar of Lebanon, lofty, ever green with life, reaching high up into the sunlight of heaven. The truths of the Lord's Word, even in its literal sense, supply him spiritual nourishment, as the waters nourish the roots of the noble cedar. For, in the letter of the Word, he sees the indwelling spiritual meaning, and applies its teachings to spiritual things. "He shall be like a tree, planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf, also, shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The

ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff, which the wind driveth away." (Psalm i. 3, 4.)

But the Assyrian changed his character, and thus fell from his high condition. Spiritually, conditions always depend upon character. Progress in goodness of character makes spiritual growth, and degeneration in character produces decay. However intelligent a man may become, his intelligence, being given for the purpose of growth in character, can remain with him only while he uses it for spiritual growth. "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of Jehovah shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age."

But this condition can remain so long, only, as the man acknowledges his intelligence to be the continued gift of the Lord. The moment the man begins to regard his intelligence as his own, he separates it from its source, and destroys its spiritual quality. For intelligence, like life, continuously and momentarily flows into a man, from the Lord, as heat and light flow in continuously into a plant, from the sun. As the sun gives and the plant receives, so the Lord gives and man receives.

The Lord does not create men in such a manner that they can take intelligence, and use it, and retain it, apart from the Lord. A man has only the capacity to receive intelligence, as it flows into him, from the Lord. Intelligence is a condition; and that condition is maintained, not by the man, but by the Lord, according to the man's willingness to open himself to the Lord. Therefore, by degeneration in character, a man degenerates in spiritual intelligence, because he diminishes his capacity to receive intelligence from the Lord. He closes himself against the Lord. And there is nothing in the man, of himself, to sustain intelligence. Although a man understands a truth as a fact, or as

a doctrine, it may have no immediate connection with his actual life. It may not make him any better as a man. If he regards the truth as the Lord's truth, revealed to men, he sees it in connection with the Lord, and he obeys it as the Lord's truth; and he is then made better by it. He keeps himself open to the stream of the Divine life, which flows into his mind.

INTELLECTUAL PRIDE.

But, if the man, intellectually receiving a truth, regards it as his own truth, discovered by his own intelligence, he falls into the pride of his own intelligence. He claims intelligence as his own, and forgets that both the truth and the intelligence are gifts from the Lord, momentarily given to men. By the pride of his own intellect, the man exalts himself, and despises others, whom he regards as less intelligent. And, in doing this, he closes his interior mind against the Lord, and destroys the spirituality of his intelligence. He keeps the outward form of knowledge, but loses its inward spirit. And then, instead of being made better by his knowledge and intelligence, he is made worse by them, because he refers them to himself, and cultivates the infernal pride of intellect; a form of evil into which many very intellectual men have fallen. But, all through the Scriptures, the Lord warns men against intellectual pride.

Moses, in reciting the goodness of God, warned men against taking to themselves the credit of their prosperity. "Thou shalt remember Jehovah thy God; for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth." (Deuteronomy viii. 18.) And, in the New Testament, Jesus has recorded His warnings against self-exaltation and intellectual pride. And, in our text and the context, the self-exaltation and intellectual pride of Assyria are described, and their evil results demonstrated.

The constant tendency of the natural mind is to feel its own importance, and to exaggerate that importance. And, as a man develops the pride of his own intelligence, he diminishes his regard for the Divine intelligence. As he imagines himself greater, he feels less and less need of any intelligence beyond his own. He glories in his own supposed intelligence: and such glorying develops the spirit of self-love. And it brings the man into closer association with the evil spirits and devils in the hells; for they all exalt themselves, and proclaim their own importance. They have the greatest confidence in their own intelligence, even when, in the light of heaven, they are seen to be utterly insane in spiritual things.

THE SPIRITUAL FALL.

Thus, as a man falls into the pride of his own intelligence, he departs from the spiritual company of angels; and, in character, in motives, and in plans, he associates with evil spirits. He turns away from the Lord of life, and loves himself above all others. He gives himself up to evil feelings and false thoughts, which soon confirm themselves in evils of life. Although, in his former intelligence, he was like a noble cedar of Lebanon, now he resembles that tree, broken down and destroyed, lying in ruins, and serving as a resting-place for the birds of night, and the ravenous beasts of prey, the falses and evils of his own unregenerate nature. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! . . . For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: . . . I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." (Isaiah, xiv. 12-15.)

Such is the fate of him who falls into the pride of his own intellect, and who glories in self-intelligence. Intellectually, he may mount to the stars, while his heart is still in evil, and his life in sin. In his mind, all the truths that he knows are defiled by the lust of pride. However spiritual he may have been, if he has suffered the pride of his own intelligence to govern his mind, he has been reduced to a low and sensuous state, as to his actual life.

As the context says, "This is Pharaoh and all his multitude:" this is the natural man, given up to the sensuous life of selfishness, even amid all his learning, his science, and his supposed intelligence. This is Egypt, trusting in its horses and chariots, instead of trusting in the providence of the Lord; it is the natural man, trusting in his own understanding, and his knowledge of doctrine, instead of looking to the Lord for guidance, and to the Lord's Word for true doctrine. Truly, "The pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away." (Zechariah x. 11.)

Those who are in self-derived intelligence, mix the truths that they know with their own pride of intelligence and their lust of ambition; and, in these, all truths are defiled. Jesus warned His disciples, "Take heed how ye hear." It makes a great difference how a man understands and regards a truth, and from what principle he acknowledges it to be true. The humble man, however intelligent, regards his intelligence as a gift from the Lord, and a means of being useful, in serving the Lord and his fellow-men. He is in an affirmative principle: he loves the truth, and loves to believe it, as the Lord's truth. And the truth makes him wise, useful, and happy.

But the man who is in the pride of his own intelligence, regards his intelligence as his own, and as a

means of exalting himself, and of cultivating his self-love. He separates faith from charity, and does not use his knowledge for doing good to others. Inwardly, he reasons from his natural mind, and confirms himself in actual false principles of daily life. Even while meditating and talking about the truth, he falsifies and perverts the spirit of truth, and destroys its life, in his own mind. Figuratively, in his heart, Cain kills Abel; a false faith murders charity.

INTELLECTUAL DANGER—PROVIDENCE.

It would naturally seem that men of strongly marked intellectuality would be peculiarly liable to the evil of intellectual pride. Men who are unusually intelligent are generally aware of that fact, and their natural hereditary inclinations to evil would incline them to feel a sense of superiority above others. They can scarcely avoid seeing their intellectual superiority. But the same grasp of intellect which enables a man to see his apparent superiority, enables him, at the same time, to see that every man is, of himself, only evil and false; and that all good, truth, and life are of and from the Lord, alone; and that all men are intelligent from the Lord, and in the degree, and of the quality, of their character.

Thus, the more intelligent the man is, the more clearly he ought to see that no man has anything to boast about, from himself. Thus, the more intelligent a man is, the more humble-minded he should be. If we imagine that the intellectual man is in more danger than ordinary men, we forget the operations of the Divine Providence. The Lord, in His merciful providence, so nicely adjusts every man's spiritual and natural surroundings to his spiritual needs, that, at all times, he is left in spiritual freedom. Evil inclinations tend in one direction, and evil spirits arouse these inclinations to activity.

But, on the other side, the angels act with equal power, to protect and to warn men, so that no man shall be forced into evil. The greater the man's natural hereditary tendency to any evil, the greater will be the angelic protection afforded him, against that evil. "He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."

In fact, it is often said that a strong character has a great advantage over weak men, in the fact that he is strong, and can resist influences which would overwhelm a weak man; and that weak characters, like weathercocks, are carried about by every shifting wind. But here, again, men forget to estimate the operation of the Divine Providence. The weaker the man's hereditary disposition, the less will evil influences be permitted to assault him. The weaker man has weaker resolution, and weaker will; but, on the other hand, his temptations are weaker. The Lord's ways are equal with all men. He keeps every man in spiritual balance between good and evil influences, with the liberty, and the ability, to choose for himself between good and evil. And on his liberty and ability depend his responsibility.

If it were not so, a weak man could not be censured for yielding in temptation; and a strong man would show no virtue in resisting evil. But, the stronger the man, the stronger his temptations, and, at the same time, the stronger his protection. There is evil enough in any and every man, to destroy him, if, for one moment, the Lord should withhold angelic protection. And, on the other hand, there is protection enough to save every man, if he wills to be saved from evils. True, a strong man has to bear temptations which would tear asunder a weak man. But the weak man is never called upon to bear so much pressure. No man is called upon to bear any more than is good for him, if he will do his duty in the case, as he is able to do it, with the Lord's help.

"Every back is fitted to its burden," because, providentially, the burden is fitted to the back that bears it. When the crisis comes, the Lord supplies to the man strength to bear it. "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." (Deuteronomy xxxiii. 25.) "Jehovah is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? Jehovah is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? . . . Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. . . . Wait on Jehovah, and be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart." (Psalm xxvii. 1, 3, 14.)

XXXI.

THE EVIL SHEPHERDS.

The Word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovih unto the shepherds: Woe to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool; ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock.

The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick; neither have ye bound up that which was broken; neither have ye brought again that which was driven away; neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd; and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, My flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them. . . . Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the Word of Jehovah; Thus saith the Lord Jehovih: Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require My flock at their hand; and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them. For thus saith the Lord Jehovih: Behold, I, even I, will both search My sheep, and seek them out.—EZEKIEL xxxiv. 1–6, 9–11.

SELF-LOVE, which works for self-interest, neglects duties, and injures the neighbor. And, finally, it must be deposed from its leadership, that others may be saved.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

The Lord, through the prophet, Ezekiel, had pointedly exposed and rebuked the evils of the Israelites, and had warned them against the inevitable results of such evils. And now, in this chapter, the Divine exposures and warnings are especially directed against the rulers of Israel, who had become very corrupt, personally and officially, using the people for selfish gain.

THE SHEPHERDS.

In this sense, the shepherds were all the leaders, the kings, princes, and magistrates of the civil State, as well as the priests of the Church. All these had been using their power and influence to oppress and plunder the people. Long before this time, the Lord had plainly taught that "He that ruleth over men must be just. ruling in the fear of God;" *i.e.,* in the love of God, and in the fear of failure to carry out the Divine laws for the good of the people. And the exposure of such evil ways came in the form of a parable concerning the evil shepherds, who abused, rather than protected, the sheep entrusted to their care; and who, by their evils, finally destroyed themselves.

It is the business of a shepherd to take good care of the sheep; and to be watchful of the conditions surrounding them; leading them to good pasture, and to fresh water; and protecting them from enemies, from sickness, from accident, from straying from the fold, etc. And a shepherd who does not do his duty in these things, is not a good shepherd; and he should be removed from his position.

And, to a great extent, a somewhat similar relation exists between any leader, or ruler, of men, and those who are under his influence. The king, the prince, the governor, the judge, the magistrate, the priest, the

teacher, and, in fact, any one who holds an office for the good of the people, should work for their good, honestly, sincerely, wisely, and generously, and in the name of the Lord, who is the source of all good. The shepherd who accepts the position, merely for selfish gain, and who is indifferent to the welfare of the flock, will soon allow the flock to suffer, in many ways; and the sheep will be scattered.

THE JEWS.

In its application to the people of Israel, the text shows that these evil consequences were very apparent. Evil and selfish rulers looked on with indifference, while the people fell into bad ways. The great and powerful nation of Israel became broken and scattered. Ten of the twelve tribes were wandering in Assyria, etc.; the tribe of Judah were mostly in captivity, some in Babylon, and some in Egypt; and the few of Israel remaining in Jerusalem were under the dominion of foreign conquerors. And these evil conditions had been induced by the evils of the people, left to the mercy of their own lusts, by the indifference and selfishness of their leaders, in both Church and State.

THE DIVINE SHEPHERD.

Because of the unworthiness of the Jews, their dispensation was brought to an end, and the Christian Church established, instead. And this great change in spiritual conditions is foretold in the text, in the language of parable, in which the Lord states, "I will deliver My flock," "I will both search My sheep, and seek them out." Jehovah came among men, as Jesus Christ, "to seek and to save that which was lost." And Jesus proclaimed His relation to fallen men, when He said, "I am the good Shepherd." And Jesus' whole

career on the earth was a living illustration and example of the good work of a good shepherd, loving his sheep, and doing good to them, in every way; while also making every effort to protect them from every kind of evil. And all are protected and led, who trust in the Divine Shepherd, and follow His leading.

THE PASTOR, AS A SHEPHERD.

There is a figurative literal sense, in which a shepherd especially refers to a pastor of a church, because he holds towards the people the relation of a leader and teacher. And, in this sense, the unfaithfulness of a pastor will re-act upon the people; for, to some extent, they will trust him to teach them genuine truth, plainly and lovingly, but courageously, and for their own good, spiritually and naturally, for the spiritual world and for this natural world. And they will look to him to warn them against false principles and evil ways. And if he is indifferent as to their good, and careless in his teachings, he will leave undone the good work which it is his especial business to do.

If there are any who are wandering into wrong feelings and thoughts, he will allow them to go on, without the light of plain and practical truth. If there are any whose circumstances are tending to make them doubt the universal and constant providence of our Lord, the careless shepherd will allow them to grow sick and weak, in spirit, and in life. If any are broken by severe discipline, he will fail to do his part in binding up their wounds. If any are wandering away into fallacies of the senses, he will fail to seek them, and to do his part to restore them to the fold of the church. And in such circumstances, in order to help the people, it will be well to remove the careless or selfish shepherd from the position which he abuses.

PREPARATION.

The work of a shepherd requires preparation for its duties. The good shepherd must understand the nature of sheep, and their needs, and how and where to supply these needs; and what are the dangers to which sheep are subjected; and how to meet, or avoid, such dangers. And so, the pastor needs a certain preparation for his work. He must prepare his understanding, by a proper knowledge of the Divine Truth, and of the Sacred Scriptures, as the Word of God, the repository of truth. And he must prepare his heart by a vigorous love of his people, and a love of being useful to them. He must know their spiritual needs, and their practical dangers, and the ways in which to meet such perils, and to escape injury.

And he can understand these things for his people, only as he understands them for himself, in the possibilities and the perils which come to his own heart and life. For men are similar in their spiritual organism, and in their spiritual needs. Our Lord has said of men, "He fashioneth their hearts alike." But the only real shepherd, is the Lord, Himself. And those who work for the spiritual good of men, must seek to have them clearly understand their relation to the Lord, as their Divine Shepherd. And the spiritual sheep know His voice, and follow Him, in loving trust.

THE BAD SHEPHERD.

But the bad shepherd in the church, is one who is more interested in himself than in the people; who takes a position as pastor, merely as a means of worldly support, or to afford himself an opportunity for a literary career, or for public notoriety. Such an attitude of mind would make the pastor spiritually careless, even if naturally alert in all things necessary to make the

external church a flourishing and paying institution, financially. There would be spiritual indifference towards the flock, as long as the shepherd thought first of himself.

And, in this relation, indifference is evil. A man must act from some motive; and if the motive is not distinctively good, it must be evil; for there is no middle-ground in human motives. At the foundation of every motive, or moving power, there is some form of love, either a good love, *i.e.,* love to the Lord, or to the neighbor, or love of being useful, or a bad love, *i.e.,* a love of self, or love of the world.

Thus, if a man is indifferent to the spiritual good of others, he does not love them, spiritually. And he who loves himself first, does not love his neighbor, at all; nor does he love the Lord. For the love which comes first, in our hearts, controls all other loves, and gives quality to the character. If you do not love your neighbor as yourself, *i.e.,* equally with yourself, you do not love him at all, unselfishly. Thus, the shepherd who loves himself first, uses his flock merely as a means of serving himself.

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING.

And this leads us to the spiritual meaning of our text, in which the reference is to principles, and not to merely human persons. In the highest sense, the Lord is the Shepherd of the church, and of every individual of the church. The Divine Pastor is the Divine Love, in our Lord, Jesus Christ, the one only God of heaven and earth. And the Divine Teacher is the Divine Truth, in our Lord. And these two qualities, Love and Truth, are the qualities of the Divine Shepherd. And their flock is composed of our human minds, our hearts and understandings, into which the Divine

Love and Truth can enter, and in which they can operate, in producing and sustaining a new and regenerate quality of life.

And when we recognize the fact that such is our relation to our Lord, we exclaim, "Jehovah is my Shepherd; I shall not want."

And we recognize our Shepherd in Jesus Christ, who plainly says to us, "I am the good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine." Our Lord's infinite love flows into our hearts, when we are willing to make room for that love; which practically means, when we are willing to resist and reject from our hearts the love of self, and its evil affections. And when that regenerate love enters our hearts, it becomes our Divine Pastor. It leads us in the right way, and it inclines our hearts to learn the truth, to love it, and to heed it. And thus it teaches us, by opening our understanding, inwardly, and thus giving us the inward light of the Spirit, in which truth is seen clearly.

And, to the degree in which this Divine Love is accepted as our Shepherd, and followed in practical life, every person becomes a shepherd, within the sphere of his individual influence; acting in the name of the Lord, and carrying the Lord's love and wisdom to the fellow-men. And such a love watches over the spiritual and natural interests and welfare of all the Lord's children, loving to be useful to all. Such a love leads us to be fair and upright and generous, in all relations and dealings, with all men.

Such a love will be a true and efficient Shepherd in our mind, and in our practical life; going through all our mind, feeding our mental sheep and lambs; strengthening any affection or thought in us, which may be relapsing into weakness; healing our spiritual diseases; binding up anything in us which may have been broken, in the struggles of life; restoring any good

quality which was in danger of being driven away; seeking out and finding such good things as had become temporarily lost to our consciousness; and keeping all the spiritual sheep and lambs of our mental flock held together in the bonds of active love, daily feeding upon the sunny mountains of the spiritual Zion, free from dissensions, and protected from all dangers, from within and from without. This is the regenerate state of him who is a sheep of the Good Shepherd.

THE EVIL SHEPHERD.

But, if we have allowed the spirit of self-love to set up itself as the shepherd of our heart and life, it will be an evil shepherd. A bad shepherd is one who teaches falsity instead of truth, and who leads to evil, in the life, instead of goodness. And, in such case, all the evil results named in our text follow in our minds. The spirit of self-love as a shepherd, dominates everything for selfish purposes. And then, all the spiritual sheepfold, which our Lord is seeking to build up in our hearts and lives, will be scattered and lost, driven away by dissension, diseased by spiritual uncleanness, sick with false notions, broken with trouble, and ruled with harsh cruelty, which makes life a burden.

THE PROMISE.

But, even if we recognize that this dreadful condition has something of a parallel in our own life, the last part of our text gives us great encouragement, when it states that our Lord will depose the evil shepherd, and will, Himself, become our Shepherd, if we will heed His teachings, and follow His laws of life. No natural tendency of our mind is too strong for our Lord's power; but He can, and will, work miracles in our hearts and lives, if we will give Him the opportunity;

i.e., if we will cease doing evil, and continue to do good, according to His laws. There is nothing that can resist His power in our heart and life, if we work with Him. Our hereditary inclinations to evil may be strong and clamorous; and yet they will yield, and come under our control, if, in the name of the Lord, we exert ourselves to resist their desires.

Consider the picture of David, the shepherd boy, without armor, and with no weapon but a little sling, and a stone from a brook, going up to meet the great giant, Goliath, who was clad in a full suit of armor, and armed with a huge spear, and an enormous sword, and protected by a great iron shield. Outwardly, it seemed to be a very unequal combat. But the shepherd-boy went forward with confidence that Jehovah would give him the victory over a quarrelsome heathen giant, who was blasphemously defying the God of Israel and His army. And the single stone from the brook, striking the giant in the forehead, struck him dead, in the name of the Lord.

The stone from the brook is the truth from the letter of the Lord's Word, such, for instance, as the truth of the Ten Commandments. Armed with these, and with confidence in the Lord's providence, we, too, can strike down the great giant, Goliath, in our own natural mind, the towering spirit of self-exaltation. Our Divine Shepherd can help us, in the measure and degree in which we act as good shepherds of the flock of His spiritual sheep, in our own minds.

OUR PART.

And this is our practical part of the work, to keep our mental sheepfold in good order, with every good and true affection and thought sustained; every evil feeling and false thought, like a wild beast, destroyed

and cast out; every weak love strengthened; every timid thought encouraged; every wandering and lost affection and thought restored; every living principle drawn into the fold, under the guidance of the Good Shepherd, who gives us the gracious promise, "I will feed them in a good pasture; and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be. . . . They shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid."

XXXII.

EZEKIEL'S PROPHETIC VISION OF THE DRY BONES REVIVED.

The hand of Jehovah was upon me, and carried me out, in the spirit of Jehovah, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them, round about: and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and lo, they were very dry. And He said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord Jehovih, Thou knowest.

Again He said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the Word of Jehovah. Thus saith the Lord Jehovih unto these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah.

So I prophesied, as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I looked, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said He unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord Jehovih: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

Then He said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovih: Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up out of your graves, and I shall put My spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I, Jehovah, have spoken, and performed, saith Jehovah.—EZEKIEL xxxvii. 1–14.

IN its degenerate condition, the church among men on earth is dead, in evils, falsities, and sins, because it is no longer receptive of life from the Lord. But the Lord, in His merciful love, provides a new church, in which there is life, because men are instructed in spiritual truths, and are thus enabled to re-open their minds, and to receive spiritual life from the Lord.

THE LITERAL MEANING.

The text has long been supposed to refer to a general resurrection, at some distant time, when men should awake from death, and re-enter their old physical bodies. But the text carries its own evidence that it does not refer to any such physical resurrection, but that it is a prophetic vision, intended, literally, to encourage the Jews in their existing condition of distress, on earth.

Ezekiel, the prophet, was among the captive Jews, exiles in a foreign land, whose hopes of returning to their former home were fast dying out. And the text expressly declares that the Lord would cause them to return to their own land. Held in bondage, and their dead buried in a foreign land, they despaired of reaching their old home in Judea. And they were thinking of themselves, in this world, and not of any general resurrection at some future time. In fact, many of them, with the Sadducees, did not believe in any life after physical death. And none of them had any con-

ception of a distinctively spiritual life, or of a spiritual world, apart from the life of the natural world. And even those of them who believed in a resurrection expected to return to life in the natural world.

THE RESURRECTION.

And, in the second place, no such general physical resurrection, or return to the material body, ever took place, or ever will occur. The physical body is formed of the material substances of the physical world; and it is adapted to use on the physical plane of life. And it cannot enter into any other world. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," *i.e.,* the spiritual kingdom. The death of the physical body is the end of the man's physical existence. And the material body then decays, and loses its organized form and identity.

The resurrection is not the rising of the dead body, but the rising of the living man, the spirit, from the dead body, and into the more advanced life of the spiritual world. The resurrection-body is not the old dead body revived, but it is the spiritual body, the body of the spirit of man, an inward body, in which the man was born, and which existed within his material body, while he lived on earth. But natural death takes away the outward and physical body, and allows the man to live in his inward and spiritual body, which is formed of spiritual substance, and adapted to his life and uses in the spiritual world.

But natural-minded men, who do not think spiritually, but only in the light of their natural senses, insist upon interpreting everything according to natural appearances, and from a natural-minded standpoint. And yet, even those who believe in a physical resurrection, often have a general understanding that our text refers, also, to the inward and mental resurrection from the spiritual death of evil and sin, to the new life of regeneration and righteousness.

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING.

But, in its spiritual meaning, our text illustrates the subject of regeneration. Natural death is the rejection of the lower nature of man, the external part, including the impurities of the body. And, in the resurrection of regeneration, there is a death and rejection of the impure and lower things of the natural mind.

THE VALLEY.

The prophet was given a vision of a valley full of dry bones. The earth, in its form, and in its conditions, is a symbol of the mind of man. On the earth's surface, mountains are the high places, representing the higher states of mind, higher levels of affection and of thought; while valleys are the low places, representing the lower states of mind, lower levels of mental life. Comparatively, the natural mind is like a low place, a valley, and the spiritual mind is elevated, as a mountain. Human life begins on its lowest level, its valley; and it needs to be opened upward and inward, into the higher things of more advanced manhood.

In the mental valley, our natural thought sees things as they appear before the natural senses; but, on the higher levels, things are seen as they are, in the light of spiritual truth. And so, in the progress of regeneration, our Lord is constantly calling to us, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob. And He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths. For the law shall go forth from Zion, and the Word of Jehovah from Jerusalem." (Micah iv. 2.)

It requires constant and considerable work to climb

from the valley up to the mountain-top. And the steady climbing represents the constant effort of the regenerating man to reach higher mental levels. And this climbing is done by rejecting, and leaving behind us, the lower ways of the senses, and adopting a clean and orderly life, in feeling, thought, and action. "Who shall ascend into the mountain of Jehovah? Or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart." (Psalm xxiv. 3, 4.)

BONES.

In the physical body, the bones have the least life, as compared with the other parts, especially the vital organs, the heart, the brain, the lungs, etc. And so the bones represent those things in the mind which are least receptive of life, and furthest removed from the centres of life. The bones represent the external natural mind, as compared with the internal and spiritual mind. In a particular sense, the life of the intellect, as compared with the life of the will, is like the bones, necessary and useful, but not full of life, until made alive by the inflowing loves of the will, which act upon, and within, the intellect, to use it for the work and purposes of the heart.

A bone cannot do anything, in the way of action, but it is acted upon by the muscles and nerves. And yet the bony framework affords a means by which the muscles can do their work. So our intellectual life, of itself, is cold and dead, until it is warmed by our heart's love, and put to work for our heart.

At first, we hold the truths of the church intellectually, as doctrines, which may be put to use, when our heart feels the need of them, in our practical life. But, before they are put to use, the life in them, as our mind holds them, is such life as is in the bones, very

remote from the centres of life. But, as our heart puts these doctrines to use, in learning how to love goodness and truth, and to practise them in our conduct, then representatively, these bones begin to live; they begin to be clothed with flesh and nerves, and covered with skin, and thus built into a complete mental body, ready for the uses of life. The building up of the body, on its bony framework, represents the building up of the mind, in the process of regeneration, beginning with the knowledge of doctrine, and gradually covering that mental framework with the living things which make up a full man.

DRY BONES.

In the prophet's vision, the bones were seen to be very dry, *i.e.*, very dead, very far removed from life. And so, in the unregenerate mind, even the mere knowledge of truth is very dead, because it is not intimately connected with any living principle.

In the vision, the bones were separated, and scattered about, and not even associated as a skeleton; representing the condition in the unregenerate mind, in which truths are not associated and arranged as a complete system, but are merely detached and separate notions, not brought into actual use. And, in this case, the question properly arises, "Can these bones live?" Can there be any genuine spiritual life brought into these detached notions, lying dead in the natural memory? Can there be any spiritual life in the mere knowledge of doctrines, scattered about in the memory, but not brought into use in the hearts life?

We have seen young men and women who were brought up in the Sunday Schools, and instructed in the doctrines of their churches, and in the words of the Scriptures; and we have seen these young persons bury their knowledge in the dust of sensuous life, or scatter

it, like dead bones, in the valley of a low and selfish life, without any spiritual thought or noble aspiration. "Can these bones live?" No, not in their present condition.

LIVING.

But our Lord, who is life, itself, can fill them with life, if they will turn to Him, seeking life. And the way in which the Lord gives life to the bones of dead doctrine, is represented in our text. He builds them up into a full body. The application is both general and individual. At the end of every general church, or dispensation, men sink into very external conditions of mind; and even their knowledge of truth lies in scattered and dead pieces. But the Lord then establishes a new church, a different condition of the church, with such persons as can be induced to be regenerated. The Divine Truth is brought to such persons, in a different form, so that it will reach their minds, and arouse their attention. And then the old knowledges of doctrine will serve, like bones, for a framework, on which the Lord can build up the full man, with spiritual flesh and nerves; and to whom He can give spiritual life.

The prophet, prophesying to the dead bones, represents the Word of the Lord, coming to the dead mind, *i.e.,* the unregenerate mind, with new light and life. The Lord causes breath to enter into our dead minds, when He gives us a consciousness of the spiritual quality of regenerate life, in which we can spiritually breathe the atmosphere of Divine Truth.

In the Hebrew, the words for wind, breath, and spirit are all derived from the same root-word. Breathing is a sign of life. When a man dies, we say that he expires, or breathes out. And thus, the coming of the breath represents the coming of spiritual life into the dead mind.

Sinews (or nerves) are then given to the skeleton; for the same Hebrew word (*gid*) covers both sinews and nerves. The nervous system is the means of extending the brain throughout the whole body, representing the means by which the truth is carried throughout the whole mind, from the interiors of the spiritual mind, through all degrees, and to the outward natural mind. In the natural body, when there is no nerve-force, there is paralysis and deadness. And so, in the mind, the living force of living truth must circulate through all parts, or they cannot have spiritual life.

THE FLESH, ETC.

And the flesh is given. The flesh here represents the good, which comes into the will, or heart. Thus, while the nerves represent the intellectual part, the flesh represents the affectional part of the mind. And these two are necessary to any spiritual life. Putting flesh upon the bones thus represents rebuilding the spiritually dead man, by revivifying his heart, so that it may receive the regenerate life.

This is the meaning of the bread used in the holy supper, which there represents the flesh of the Lord, which means the Divine Goodness, which is the Divine Love, adapted to our reception.

When the nerves and flesh are provided for the body, it still needs to be covered by the skin, which has very important uses, in protecting all the body. The skin is exceedingly sensitive to all kinds of impressions, of heat or of cold, of danger or of delight; while, at the same time, it acts as a cleanser of the body, in carrying away the accumulating impurities.

The skin, as the external covering of the whole body, represents the outward life of conduct, the practical doings of our daily life, in which all our inward prin-

ciples are carried into action; and by means of which all our mental impurities may be recognized, and rendered harmless, by being cast out, and not allowed to become a part of our actual conduct. And, as the healthy skin completes the usefulness and the symmetry of the body, so a good and useful practical life completes the manhood, whose interior life is in a good heart and a clear understanding.

And, as the skin needs constant care and cleansing, in order to protect the whole body from disease, so the cleanliness and health of our outward life are absolutely necessary in order to protect our spiritual life.

And our text declares that the resuscitated men shall know the Lord, when they are revived; representing that the man who is spiritually made alive by the Lord, then first truly knows the Lord.

THE RESTORATION.

The text describes the bringing together of the different parts of the body. "There was a noise" and "a shaking." The noise is the mental sound of the disturbance of the old conditions of the mind, and the clashing of the old dead states against the influence of the new life now beginning to operate. The shaking, or trembling, is the agitation of the mind, when made to loosen its hold upon old things, and to receive the new life.

"And the bones came together, bone to his bone;" *i.e.,* the scattered ideas of doctrine, which were lying in the memory, without cohesion or system, began to come together, into a general system of truth, covering all parts of the mind and life, and applicable to all our action. The mind perceived that all things are related and associated. This was a necessary preliminary condition, before the nerves and flesh could be added to

the skeleton; *i.e.,* before spiritual wisdom and love could be given.

And yet, there was no breath in the body, until the Lord gave it; *i.e.,* even with good and true principles, we have no spiritual life in these things, until we recognize that they are from our Lord, and that they are the Lord's presence in us; and that they are not inherent in ourselves, nor procured by any power of our own.

THE FOUR WINDS.

The breath, or spirit, was called to "come from the four winds," to give life to the dead bones. The four winds, literally, are winds from the four points of the compass, North, South, East, and West. But, spiritually, they represent the four general states of human life, the natural understanding and the natural will, and the spiritual understanding and the spiritual will. These different phases of life are the aspects of life from four different mental standpoints, differing in quality and in degree. And, to meet the wants of men on these four different standpoints, or mental conditions, there are four different gospels in the New Testament, each peculiarly adapted to men in one of the four mental conditions. A similar idea is conveyed by the fact that the holy city, the New Jerusalem, is to be built square; *i.e.,* with four sides.

That the breath, or spirit, is to come from the four winds, means that it is to come from all the quarters of the spiritual world, from external truth and from external good, and from internal truth and from internal good; to bring spiritual life in all its aspects, to reach and supply all forms of mind; *i.e.,* to bring all the good and true principles of heaven, for the use of the church.

And when they received life, the bodies "stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army;" *i.e.,* the re-

generate mind begins at once to stand upon its new principles, in practical life: and, doing so, it finds such principles applicable to all the multitude of human actions. And then the regenerated mind is seen to be "the whole house of Israel," a spiritual church, looking to the Lord. Thus our Lord restores Israel to his own land, spiritually, by restoring men to a regenerate state.

APPLICATION.

Set before you a human skeleton of dry bones. And set beside it a living human body, in full health and vigorous operation. And then consider the great contrast between the two objects. And recognize the fact that there is as great a parallel contrast between yourself if unregenerate, or regenerate; if, spiritually, a mere skeleton of a man, or a full and living man, in vigorous spiritual health, and in loving, intelligent, and orderly activity. And then we shall understand what the Lord means, when He says to us, individually, "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." For He will open the old graves of our dead hearts, and raise our souls into spiritual life. And, in this, our Lord will fulfil, spiritually, the promise of our text, "O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel."

XXXIII.

THE TWO STICKS JOINED.

Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel, his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and all the house of Israel his companions: and join them one to another, into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. And when the children of Israel, thy people, shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not show us what thou meanest by these? say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovih; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick; and they shall be one in Mine hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes.

And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovih: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms, any more, at all: neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be My people, and I will be their God.—EZEKIEL xxxvii. 16–23.

IN the regenerate mind, celestial and spiritual principles are conjoined, in their interior life, and in their

exterior action; and thus they form one church of the Lord, living in the protection of His universal providence.

THE LITERAL SENSE.

In the literal sense of our text, the prophet Ezekiel is commanded to perform a certain representative ceremony, as a prophecy of what the Lord would do for the Israelites, in the future. And a Divine promise seems to be given, that the scattered tribes of Israel shall be gathered together, and restored to their former home, under one king, and under the Divine protection.

But, as a matter of fact, in literal history, no such general restoration has taken place: and it is not at all probable that it ever will occur. But it is certain that the ancient Jews, themselves, expected such a literal restoration. And, in fact, the same hope for the future still comforts many of the modern Jews. But the Christian Church knows that the history of Israel, as narrated in the literal sense of the Bible, is representative and symbolic, typifying our regeneration. The prophecies of the Scriptures are fulfilled primarily in human minds. And they were given for the purpose of helping men in spiritual progress. Many of these prophecies have been fulfilled literally, also, because the literal conditions were the direct outcome of the corresponding spiritual conditions. But the literal part has generally been of very secondary importance.

But, in very many of the Scripture prophecies, the conditions were not possible to fulfil, literally. And they were clearly intended to be understood figuratively, representatively, symbolically, and correspondentially. The application of the Scripture prophecies to the ancient Israelites, and to the other ancient nations, is a matter of past history; but their spiritual application is for all time, and for all men; and it is of the greatest importance, to us, to-day.

THE STICKS.

In his representative action, the prophet Ezekiel was commanded to write upon one stick the name of Judah, and on another stick, the names of Joseph and Ephraim. The custom of writing names upon sticks, or staves, to represent persons, is very ancient. Examples of such writing are mentioned, nine hundred years before the time of our text, in the book of Numbers, xvii. 1-4: "And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and take of every one of them a rod, according to the house of their fathers, of all their princes, according to the house of their fathers, twelve rods: write thou every man's name upon his rod. And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi: for one rod shall be for the head of the house of their fathers. And thou shalt lay them up in the tabernacle of the congregation, before the testimony, where I will meet with you."

In our text the prophet was to join the two sticks, either by fastening them together, or by holding them in such way that they should extend from the two sides of his hands, as if he held one long stick, only. The language of the text does not require us to suppose that these sticks were actually made one, by a miracle; but only that they should be brought together as one, to represent the prophecy that the tribes named on the sticks should be brought together under one king, as one people. But, even in such case, the tribes would still retain their distinct tribal organization and characteristics, as the States of our American Union still retain their individual statehood, while also bound together as one country. The sticks named in our text interest us, because of what they represent, in our own life.

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING.

These two sticks were named for Judah and Joseph, two of the tribes of Israel, descendants of two of the sons of Jacob. The twelve sons of Jacob, and the twelve tribes of Israel, represent all the good and true principles of the church, in the aggregate. Judah represents the celestial principle, the love-principle, which is especially seen in love to the Lord, and in the love of goodness, in principle and in the life, in which good is done, because it is good. And Joseph represents the spiritual principle, the truth-principle, seen in the love of truth, and in doing good because the truth so teaches. And Ephraim, the son of Joseph, represents the understanding of spiritual truths. Thus, in one sense, Judah represents celestial good. And the companions of Judah represent celestial truths, which are always the companions of their kind of good. And, in the same aspect, Joseph represents spiritual good; and his companions represent spiritual truths.

The names of Judah, Joseph, and Ephraim were written on two sticks of wood. Wood represents natural goodness, in the practical daily life. And writing the name on the stick represents making known the quality, or character, belonging to the person, and for which he is named. For, originally, names were given to persons to indicate their personal characteristics. And thus names represent the quality, or character, of the person, or thing, named.

And this is the basis of naming persons and things, in the Scriptures. For instance, before the birth of Jesus Christ, it was revealed to Joseph, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, because He shall save His people from their sins." (Matthew i. 21.) And the word Jesus means a Savior. And when we read that, in asking for blessings, we must ask "in the name of the

Lord," the meaning is that we must ask in the love of those qualities for which the name of God stands.

JOINING THE TWO STICKS.

These two sticks, on which the names of Judah and Joseph and his son were written, thus represent, literally, these two tribes of Israel; or, in a more general way, Judah and Israel. But, spiritually, they represent the celestial and spiritual principles, the love-principle and the truth-principle, or love and wisdom, or goodness and truth. Love flows into a man's will, or heart, and fills him with a perception of goodness. But truth flows into a man's understanding, or intellect, and gives him a recognition of truth.

But a man may know many truths, while he does not love goodness, and does not apply the truth to his own practical conduct of life. But when he loves goodness and knows truth, and lives according to these principles, the Lord unites goodness and truth, in the man's mind, and in his life. And this uniting of goodness and truth is represented by joining the two sticks, in the hand of the prophet, and at the command of the Lord. And thus the two sticks became as one stick, for the purpose of the representation.

This agreement, or union, of good in the heart with truth in the understanding, is the heavenly marriage in the regenerate mind, which is effected by the vital union of goodness and truth, in which love flows into wisdom, and gives it motive-power, while wisdom enlightens love. And this spiritual marriage can occur only when goodness of heart and wisdom of intellect are joined in practical goodness of conduct. The actual good life of daily conduct is the ground on which our good and true principles meet, and in which they unite, in regenerate goodness. And these things are represented by the

names being written on sticks of wood, because such wood represents practical goodness.

THE HAND OF THE PROPHET.

And these two sticks were joined in the hand of the prophet. The prophet represented the Word of the Lord, the Divine Truth revealed to men, by the Lord, through the prophets and others. The hand, with which we take hold of anything, and apply it to our use, represents power, the power which our mind exerts, in taking practical hold of any good or true principle, and applying it to the conduct of actual life. As the two sticks became as one, in the hand of the prophet, so, in the power of the Divine Truth drawn from the Lord's Word, the good loves in our hearts are inwardly united with the truths in our intellect, in the measure and degree in which we apply these principles to all things of our daily life, the formation of our affections, the arrangement of our thoughts, and the government of our action.

This spiritual agreement and union are meant in the words of our Lord, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way: first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matthew v. 23, 24.) The altar represents our worship of our Lord: and there cannot be any genuine worship except in the degree in which our love and our wisdom are in agreement. If our knowledge of truth rebukes our heart, for not loving the truth that we understand, then, spiritually, one brother, the understanding, has something against the other brother, the heart. And it is vain for us to offer any gift of worship to our Lord, until we determine to reconcile our knowledge of truth and our love of goodness; because the actual quality of our worship depends upon the actual condition of agreement between the different parts of our mind. Theoretical worship of God is not genuine, nor sincere.

THE LORD'S WORK.

You will observe that the Lord declared that He would make the two sticks as one in the hand of the prophet. In this statement it is emphasized that this uniting of goodness and truth in our regenerate life is the work of our Lord. We learn the truth from our Lord's Word, and we make an effort to open our hearts to our Lord, and to love the things which He calls good; and we compel ourselves to obey our Lord's commandments, as our laws of life and rules of action. But all the interior and spiritual work of uniting our hearts and our intellects, comes from our Lord, alone, who is the Source of all goodness and truth and life. And so, while we exert ourselves to do our own part of the work of regeneration, we must look to our Lord to do His part, within us.

Historically, there were two Churches, the Celestial Church, in which love to the Lord was the dominant principle; and, later, the Spiritual Church, characterized by love to the neighbor. From the Celestial Church the celestial heaven was formed; and, from the Spiritual Church, came the spiritual heaven. In a certain sense, these two heavens are separate and distinct, as our will and our understanding are distinct, and as our heart and our lungs are separate. And yet our Lord, Jesus Christ, at His coming on the earth, brought these two heavens into closer union, by means of the redemption and regeneration of men wrought by Him, through His Humanity. In this larger sense, these two Churches are one, and these two heavens are one, as our will and our

understanding form one mind, and as our heart and our lungs form one body. And these general conditions represent the particular changes which go on in the mind and life of each regenerating man, on earth and in heaven.

GATHERING ISRAEL.

In our text and context, Jehovah promised to gather the Israelites into one nation, and one kingdom, with one king, and one shepherd; and to cleanse them of their evils; and to protect them from the self-defilements of idolatry and other transgressions against the Divine laws. These promises are spiritual in their nature; and they are made to all persons who are working for regeneration. The tribes of Israel, taken captives by the heathen, and dragged away from their homes and country, and falling into all kinds of defilements by detestable things, represent our natural minds, fallen into false notions, and into natural tendencies to evil, and into acts of sin; and thus dragged away from the only true home of the human mind, which is in righteousness and in regeneration. In this disorderly condition, our natural minds are divided in their allegiance to many conflicting notions. There is no one great Divine Truth, accepted as King over our whole mind; and there is no one great Divine Love, adopted as Shepherd over our united mind.

But, in the work of regeneration, our Lord changes these conditions. In the degree and measure in which His Truth is accepted as the one King of our mind, and His Love as our one Shepherd, He draws together all the scattered elements of our life, and brings them into one mental kingdom, and one mental sheepfold. In the measure in which we recognize Him to be our spiritual King and our Shepherd, we see that He is King over all things in our intellect, and Shepherd of all things in

our hearts. Gradually, as we open our hearts to Him, more and more, He builds up His church in us, and extends His influence over all things of our life. However disjoined the different elements of our mind and life may have been, He will gradually draw them into one harmonious manhood, one kingdom of truth, and one nation of goodness. Gradually, He will elevate all things of our natural life into close connection with our spiritual life.

And then David shall be the king forever, not historically and literally, but representatively and spiritually, when the Divine Truth which David, as the king, officially represented, shall control our whole and undivided mind and life. For, in our spiritual-minded condition, we shall look to the Divine Truth, not merely as an external authority controlling our actions, but as a Divine principle, clearly seen and understood, and known to be the spiritual law of all our being.

OUR GOD.

Our Christian God, our Lord, Jesus Christ, is a God of principles, of Love and of Wisdom, in which we can see and feel that we live, and move, and have our being. He is not a God of arbitrary power, who compels fear and obedience, but a God who fills our hearts with love for His goodness; who enlightens our intellect with clear understanding of His principles of truth; and who, by His power, sustains our activities, "in the beauty of holiness," and in the joy of communion with Him. And then our life will not be a continued struggle against God's laws and power, but a constant co-operation on our part with God's laws, to separate ourselves from all our natural tendencies towards evil, falsity, and sin. Knowing our natural tendencies, we shall understand the dangers before us. And, in this Divine

instruction and leading, we shall be protected from the "defilements," and "the detestable things," and the transgressions, which seek to hold our natural mind. And, in our all-pervading love for our Lord, while we live in "the beauty of holiness," we shall hear and understand His gracious promise, "They shall be My people, and I will be their God."

XXXIV.

INVITATION TO THE GREAT SACRIFICE.

And thou son of man, thus saith the Lord Jehovih: Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves and come; gather yourselves on every side, to My sacrifice, that I do sacrifice for you, a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh and drink blood.

Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. All ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of My sacrifice, which I have sacrificed for you. Thus ye shall be filled at My table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord Jehovih. And I will set My glory among the nations.—EZEKIEL xxxix. 17–21.

ALL who have ears to hear spiritual things, are invited to a spiritual feast, in the inward sense of the Divine Word, by which they shall be instructed in truths of all degrees, and imbued with spiritual good of all kinds; so that they may be formed into a new church, which shall be in interior worship, and thence in external worship, also.

CONDITIONS.

Even the casual reader can easily see that the statements of the text are not intended to be understood literally, but that they form a figurative prophecy. Historically, this calling was especially addressed to the Gentiles, at the coming of our Lord in the flesh. But, personally, the call is extended to all men who are in mental condition to heed its invitation.

Similar conditions are mentioned in Revelation xix. 17, 18: "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come, and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all, free and bond, both small and great." It is not at all probable that God would invite any one to a cannibal feast, to eat captains and princes and mighty men. And, certainly, no one could feast upon chariots, which were wagons, made of hard wood and iron, etc. And it is evident that God would not call the men of Israel to such a feast, and invite them especially, to eat fat, and to drink blood, as in our text; when, from the establishment of the Israelitish Church, He had always positively forbidden the Israelites to eat fat, or to drink blood, even of the beasts used for food. Certainly, the intended meaning of the text is to be found in its representative sense, only.

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING.

The prophet represents the Word of God, which was often given through the prophets. And the prophet speaking to the fowls, etc., represents the Word of God teaching human minds. Fowls, literally, mean birds of all kinds. Man is the head of all created life; and all the powers and capacities of all the creatures below man, represent the different abilities of man's mind. In general, beasts represent human affections, in the life of our heart; while birds represent human thoughts, in our intellectual life. Because of their representative meaning, beasts and birds were used in the Israelitish sacrifices.

The call to all these birds and beasts, to assemble at

the Lord's sacrifice, is a spiritual call to human thoughts and affections to come together, to associate themselves, for a common purpose; to come together from all different degrees and aspects of life, to feast in the good and true things with which the Lord will feed them, from the inward life of His Divine Word.

To sacrifice is to make holy, to devote to holy and spiritual purposes. Hence sacrifice represents worship of the Lord, and an acknowledgment that all the goodness and truth which we have, are from Him. It is called a "great" sacrifice, because it represents a general state of worship of the Lord, from genuine faith and love; and because it requires the worshipper to perceive the Divine character of the Lord, Jesus Christ, as the one God of heaven and of earth, from whom are all life, and goodness and truth. And the mountains of Israel, on which the feast was to be given, represent the exalted states of will and of understanding, in the man who comes to that spiritual feast.

EATING AND DRINKING.

To eat, spiritually, is to receive a principle into our affections, and to appropriate it; that is, to make it our own, so that we adopt it into our character. Flesh, as a solid part of the body, represents goodness; and blood, as a fluid, represents truth. And, as blood is the living fluid, in which life circulates, it represents the Divine Truth, circulating in man's mind. This Divine Truth is from the Word of the Lord; *i.e.*, from the Lord, through the Word. As the regenerating man receives a good principle into his will, his heart, this goodness makes a new condition in the man's will, a new quality of life.

And when the man receives into his understanding, or spiritually drinks, a new truth, that truth works a new state of the man's understanding, his intellect, and of his

practical life, also. Thus, to eat flesh and to drink blood, mean, spiritually, to receive goodness and truth. And such reception of living food from the Lord, constitutes a feast, in the regenerating mind, which is able to appreciate and to use such living food of the spirit. And this is a feast with the Lord, because, in it, the man is conscious of the Lord's presence, spiritually, and of communion with Him.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

And this is the spiritual meaning of the eating and drinking in the holy supper, in which bread and wine are used representatively, with a meaning similar to that of the flesh and blood: for flesh and blood are the representatives of goodness and truth, among the things of the animal kingdom, while bread and wine have the same signification in the vegetable kingdom.

Literally, men take the bread and the wine, in the holy supper, in remembrance of the last supper of the disciples with the Lord, in which all used bread and wine. But, when a worshipper understands the spiritual significance, he takes the bread and the wine to represent his spiritual association with the Lord, whenever he receives the Lord's good and true principles into his heart and understanding, and thus mentally feasts with the Lord.

And, in such case, the spiritual feast is a great sacrifice, because, in it, ordinary things of human food are exalted, and made holy, by using them for a holy purpose, representatively, for communion with the Lord.

As a practical example of this sacrifice, observe the fact that there are persons who fear the use of wine, in the holy supper, lest it may arouse a disorderly taste for abusing wine. But, while this danger might exist for a man of very external states of mind, who regarded the matter as one of form, alone, experience has shown that

a habit of intemperance has been cured, in men who have been led to regard wine in the holy supper as holy, and as a sacrifice, used with a spiritual purpose, and with a determination to live by spiritual principles; and, if necessary, to avoid the use of wine in any other way than in the holy supper.

SPIRITUAL FOOD.

In our text, the fowls and beasts are called to a feast in which they shall "eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan." Spiritually, the mighty, or powerful, are those who have in their minds the knowledges of truth, from the Divine Word, by which they know how to shun evil and falsity, and to do good, in heart and in conduct. And, apart from persons, the mighty are these truths of the Lord's Word, by which a man has spiritual power. In all practical things, it is recognized that "Knowledge is power," because it gives a man the means of carrying out his intentions and purposes. And so, spiritually, to eat the flesh of the mighty is to receive the actual good which comes to the sincere mind by means of the knowledge of truth.

Kings and princes, who are leading men, in ruling a country, represent the leading or primary truths, which rule in the mind, the great fundamental principles of our minds, in all degrees, and of all kinds. The earth represents the church on earth; for, with men on earth, the church is built upon the natural mind, as a lower foundation. And so, to drink the blood of the princes of the earth, representatively and spiritually, is to receive the Divine Truth, in its fundamental forms, its great principles, even as applied in the life on earth.

DIFFERENT ANIMALS.

Rams represent the good of charity, or love to the neighbor, which is spiritual good. Lambs represent innocence, in heart and in life, in principle and in practice. External and natural innocence is a negative state, in which the person has not done any sinful acts. But spiritual innocence is a positive state, in which the person is in such a good condition of heart and of thought, that he would not be willing to indulge any wrong feelings or thoughts. Goats represent faith, which is more external than love, but which holds the mind in the light of truth. Bullocks, and other cattle, represent our natural affections.

BASHAN.

"Fatlings of Bashan" represent the good that is in the natural mind, and in the natural life, but from a spiritual origin. Fat, which is built up from the oil of the body, the warm, smooth element, represents goodness from the Lord, a warm, gentle affection, with the delight in goodness, which belongs to such affection. In its highest sense, fat represents celestial good, in which the Divine Love is intimately present. And, in its general sense, fat represents such good carried down into the lower degrees of man's mind, even in the natural life. Fatlings are cattle well fed, and fattened, and thus in good condition. And they represent the good which makes a man's mind to be in good condition, spiritually. The land of Bashan, on the East of the Jordan, and next to Gilead, was a great cattle-country, occupied by the half-tribe of Manasseh. And, being on the East of the Jordan, and not in the principal part of Palestine, it represented the natural mind, in the regenerating man. And thus "fatlings of Bashan," represented heavenly goodness, as it exists in the natural mind and life.

And thus, the call to feast upon the flesh "of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan," is a spiritual call, to go to our Lord's feast, to which He calls us, in His Divine Word; and in which He will fill us with charity, innocence and faith, and regenerate natural affections, which will produce good conduct in practical life.

TO BE FILLED.

"All ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken," means that there shall be every good and truth in abundance, all that can be used. To us, with our modern customs and ideas, the literal sense seems repulsive. But we must remember that it is representative, only. It does not mean that men should become drunken, but only that there is enough blood provided to make one drunken, if he drank too much. It is not meant that blood will intoxicate, but the meaning is figurative. For, as a fact, truth will mentally intoxicate a man who takes more truth intellectually than he uses in his heart.

INTOXICATION.

Physical drunkenness does not come from the use of vinegar, or soured wine, but from the abuse of good wine. So, spiritually, mental intoxication does not come from merely false ideas, but from the falsification and abuse of spiritual truths, by an insincere mind, which knows the truth, intellectually, but perverts its meaning, in favor of selfish lusts.

Thus, to be filled with good things is to be spiritually filled with every good love, and every truth of faith, to fulness of heart and of understanding. To be thus filled at the Lord's table, is to be receptive of these spiritual things in the worship of the Lord, and by means of His holy Word, by which we know of these things,

and by which we are enabled to receive them. At all times, the Word of the Lord supplies to the regenerating mind a feast in all things necessary to a heavenly and happy life.

HORSES AND CHARIOTS, ETC.

Our text also calls us to feast on "horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war." A horse, the intimate friend and intelligent servant of man, represents the intellectual life, in man's understanding, and especially the understanding of the Divine Word. For this reason the horse is frequently mentioned in the representative language of the Scriptures. A chariot, as a vehicle, for carrying men, represents a doctrine, a statement of truth, which carries the truth within it. To eat horses and chariots, spiritually, is to receive, and to make our own, an intelligent understanding of the Lord's truth, and of the doctrines of the church.

And "men of war," whose flesh was also to be eaten, representatively, are the truths in our minds, combatting against all that is evil, false, and sinful, in our own natural tendencies. And to eat these men of war, is to receive and use the mighty truths of the Divine Word, in resisting evil, and in doing good.

THE LORD'S GLORY.

After the invitation to the great feast, our Lord says, "And I will set My glory among the nations." The glory of the Lord is the bright light of His Divine Truth, as a halo surrounding everything of His love and wisdom, in regenerate minds. To set the Lord's glory among the nations, representatively, is to give the light of His Divine Truth to those who are prepared to receive it; *i.e.,* to those who are in interior good; and who, therefore, are in interior worship, from which they are in external worship, also. Such minds shall understand

the Lord, because they receive new and spiritual truth in the good of love, *i.e.,* in love to the Lord and to the neighbor, which is the good of life. And they shall be intelligent in spiritual things. All such minds are ready to receive instruction in spiritual truths, that they may know the Lord more and more, and in higher aspects of His Divine life and character; and that they may form a new and spiritual church.

Our text is a Divine call to all such minds, to assemble upon the spiritual mountains of Israel, the high conditions of regenerate character; there to be gathered into closer bonds of love, and into greater spiritual intelligence. It is our heavenly Father's call to us, to climb up to greater heights of spiritual and natural character, and to live in the daily use and enjoyment of the grandest principles of love and wisdom which the God of love can give to His loving and obedient children. Our text is our Lord's call to us, to enter into that genuine religion which occupies and nourishes every part of our many-sided human life; a religion which will go with us through every day of every week and year, "to guide our feet into the way of peace;" that we may live "in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life."

XXXV.

THE WATERS FLOWING FROM THE LORD'S HOUSE.

He brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house, eastward; for the forefront of the house was toward the East; and waters came down from under the right side of the house, at the South of the altar.

Then brought he me out of the way of the gate, northward, and led me about the way, without, unto the outer gate, by the way that looketh eastward; and behold, there ran out waters, on the right side.

And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees.

Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. Afterward, he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over; for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. And he said unto me, Son of Man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river.

Now, when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees, on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the East-country, and go into the desert, and go into the sea; being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that everything that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and everything shall live whither the river cometh.—EZEKIEL xlvii. 1–9.

THE Divine Truth flows out from the Lord, with the Divine Love, to angels of the different heavens, and to men on the earths, to each according to the quality and degree of his mind and life.

THE DIVINE TRUTH.

This prophetic vision representatively pictures some phases of the progress of regeneration, in the human mind and life. The Divine Truth seems to increase in volume, and to rise to greater heights, the more the man attains greater perception and understanding of the truth.

The man with a measuring line may be viewed in several aspects. Naturally, he would appear to be an angel, sent upon this special mission. But, in the supreme aspect, He is the Lord, in His Divine Providence, leading and enlightening the regenerating man. And, impersonally, he represents the regenerating man's perception of the truth, developed by the Lord, and being the Lord's presence in the man.

The house of the Lord, or temple, in one sense, represents the church, which is the Lord's dwelling-place with men. In a more general sense, the house, or temple, represents heaven, which is also the Lord's dwelling-place with men. But these two meanings make one, in their application to human life, because, in the higher sense, both the church and heaven are, spiritually, in the human mind; *i.e.,* in the hearts and intellects of regenerate men, in this world, and in the next world. There is no mere locality which would be heaven in any spiritual sense, without the presence of regenerate men, who are angels, and in whom the Lord spiritually dwells.

In the highest sense, the house, or temple, is the Divine Humanity of the Lord, in which the Divine life comes to men, and dwells with them, and they with

Him, in His "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

THE DOOR, OR GATE.

The door, or gate, of the Lord's house, represents the introductory truth, which informs a man's mind about the Lord and His church, and which thus serves to introduce him into the church; not merely the church as an external institution, but rather the principles of the church, which form an interior church in the mind, by introducing the mind into practical goodness in the daily life.

We recognize this practical use of introductory truths, in the passage in the Revelation (xxii. 14) referring to the holy city of the New Jerusalem: "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in, through the gates, into the city."

"The waters issued out from under the threshold of the house." This water represents the practical truth from the Lord, for use in man's life.

THE SPIRITUAL QUARTERS.

The waters flowed eastward. In the spiritual world, the quarters are not matters of locality, but of mental states. The Lord is "the Sun of Righteousness." And the spiritual quarter in which any angel dwells, depends upon his mental attitude towards the Lord, as the spiritual Sun. The East, where the sun appears to rise, represents the Lord's love; or, in us, our love for our Lord. The West, opposite the East, represents the least degree of love to the Lord. The South, in which is the greatest light, represents the greatest light of intelligence in Divine Truth. And the North, opposite the South, represents the least degree of spiritual intelligence. This least degree is in the natural mind of man,

the external mind, which sees things in the light of the natural senses. In ancient times, temples for worship were built with an eastern aspect, *i.e.*, "the fore-front of the house was toward the East," so that the worshippers should face the East, to represent that their minds were turned to the Lord.

"The waters came down from under the right side of the house, at the South of the altar." The right side represents the affectional side, the side of the will, or heart; and the left side represents the intellectual side, the side of the understanding. The waters coming from the right side represents that the truth comes from the Lord's love, and appeals to man's love of the Lord. For a man's reception of the truth depends on how much his heart is interested in it.

When some of the disciples of Jesus had labored all night, in fishing, and had caught nothing, Jesus instructed them to cast their net on the right side of the boat, and they would find plenty of fish. To cast the net of argument on the right side of the ship of doctrine, is to teach men from love, from a desire to do them good. And this state of mind is always successful in finding the living facts of knowledge, which are represented by fishes, which live in the waters of truth. That the waters came forth "at the South of the altar," represents that truths come from the Divine intelligence, and that they come to a man's highest intelligence, in his worship of the Lord.

NORTH AND EAST.

The prophet was taken by way of the gate northward, and led to "the outer gate, by the way that looketh eastward." It is necessary for a man to begin his regeneration in the spiritual North, the coldest and darkest quarter, because this quarter represents the natural mind,

which is ignorant of spiritual things. A man must begin where he is, naturally. But the text declares that, although the prophet was at the North gate, and passed out of that gate, even to the outer gate, or most external state of mind, yet he then looked eastward; *i.e.,* towards the Lord. And there he saw the waters running out, at the right side. And everyone who looks to the Lord will be able to see the spiritual waters of truth coming from the Lord, in the truths of His Word, and in the church.

Our loves are the heat from which our light comes. If we love the Lord, we look to the Lord, and we see in spiritual light. If we are intellectual in a worldly way, only, and for self, we are not spiritual-minded, but spiritual things seem to be unreal and obscure. But, if our love is a regenerate love, even although we may not be intellectual in the things of this world, we are in spiritual light, according to our level and degree of life; and the things which concern our spiritual life, we see in sufficient light to make them sure to us. And, in such a case, a regenerate man, of simple mind, and perhaps imperfect education, who may not be able to formulate an application of the truth to every detail of life, can recognize the truth when it is taught, because his love places him in an affirmative attitude of mind, in which he sees the truth in its own light. But the intellectual natural man, who does not love the Lord, is not in the light of love; and he does not see spiritual truth, because he is in a negative state of mind towards the truth; and he is in the supposed light of the natural senses.

THE MEASURING.

Going eastward, the guide measured the length of the stream of water, from one point to another, four times, and with marked results. To measure anything, spiritually, is to discover its quality, or character. Naturally,

we measure anything to discover its length, width or height. But, spiritually, we measure anything to discover its goodness, its truth, or its elevation in the scale of mind, and of spiritual principles. The cubit was the customary unit of measure, representing our mental measure, or rational judgment, by which we determine the character of a thing.

Hundreds, thousands, etc., as "round numbers," which complete a certain quantity, represent a complete and full state of mind and of life. When you are asked whether you have ever seen a familiar object, you reply, "Yes, I have seen it a thousand times;" *i.e.,* to a full extent, so often as to be familiar with it.

The prophet, going eastward, and following the stream of water from the door of the house, represents the mind looking to the Lord, and following the stream of truth, as it flows onward, increasing and deepening. And the fact that the journey is measured several times, and the depth of the water tested at each measurement, represents that the mental journey beside the flowing stream of truth, is made by successive stages, or steps of progress, each of which forms a complete general state in the mental experience of the regenerating man. And the fact that the waters became deeper, at each successive step, represents that the mind enters more and more deeply into the truth.

TO THE ANKLES.

At the end of the first stage of progress, the first one thousand cubits, the first completed state of mind, the waters were up to the ankles. The feet represent the natural man, or the natural mind of a man, which is the lowest part of his mental organism. Waters up to the ankles were waters that covered the feet. And these represented the Lord's truth as seen by the mind, at the

end of its first stage of progress, when it is natural-minded, seeing merely the external side of the truth, as it applies to the things of man's natural life. Such, for instance, would be the state of a man's mind, when he has learned that the Scripture is the Word of the Lord, and that its rules must be obeyed in the practical conduct. The man then knows much of the truth, and has intelligence in the truth, in the natural degree; *i.e.,* as it applies to his conduct, as a natural man. This is good, as far as it goes: but it is only the first completed state of mind, in the progress of regeneration. And then the Lord leads the man to measure another thousand cubits, along the stream of Divine Truth; *i.e.,* to take the next general and complete step in spiritual progress.

THE KNEES.

And then the water reaches to the knees. The knees are at the top of the lower part of the limbs, but below the thighs. And so they represent that state of mind which is called spiritual-natural; *i.e.,* while it is natural-minded, it is influenced by spiritual light and spiritual conditions, which are forming, within, but which have not yet come to the man's manifest consciousness. In this state, the man stands in the waters of truth much deeper than his ankles, for the lower limbs are covered. The man has reached a mental condition beyond mere obedience to the Lord's law of conduct. And he feels, although obscurely, the drawing of his affections towards principles, as well as rules. His natural mind is inwardly filled with a greater power, which he feels, without understanding it. His mind is growing spiritually rational.

THE LOINS.

The leader then measures another thousand cubits; and the waters are up to the loins. The man has now

completed another stage of progress, and he has become distinctively spiritual-minded. The loins represent the affection of love to the neighbor. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;" *i.e.,* have your affections girded with truth, and your spiritual intelligence active.

THE RIVER.

Measuring another thousand cubits, the stream becomes a great river, too deep to be forded, but necessitating swimming. This represents the completion of the last stage of progress in regeneration, when the man becomes distinctively celestial. In this mental state, he has progressed even beyond the love of the neighbor, as a neighbor; and he has reached the highest state, that of supreme, complete love to the Lord, an all-absorbing love of the Divine Love, in which truth becomes a great river, covering the whole man, and buoying him up, as he swims, mentally, feeling that he is immersed in infinite truths, which cover all possible cases of his experience.

Such is the great increase of truths in the progress of regeneration, as the mind grasps, more and more, the spirit and life of the Lord's truth. The more completely we follow the course of truth, the greater the truth will become, to us, because the more we shall be able to perceive, and to understand, the Lord and His truth. And then the mind "takes the water of life freely," in the freedom of love, and not by compulsion.

This river is the same as the river seen by John, in apocalyptic vision, of which he says, "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God." (Revelation xxii. 1.) It is the same river of which the Psalmist says, "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High." (Psalm xlvi. 4.)

On the banks of that river there were very many trees, which represent living and growing principles, things known to the regenerating mind; and which, as we learn from the context, bear many fruits, representing the practical good works, or outworking, of our accepted principles.

HEALING THE WATERS.

It is said that these waters "go into the desert, and go into the sea," where "the waters shall be healed." The desert is the natural mind, which is naturally dead to spiritual things. And the sea is the natural memory, the general repository of all things seen and heard. And the natural man, with all his memory, is spiritually dead, until the waters of Divine Truth come into his mind and memory, and take their place there, as Divine things. The natural memory may be full of the knowledges of doctrine, etc., but there will not be any spiritual life in these things, in the man, until they are acknowledged to be the Lord's.

And, on the other hand, all these Divine things will not be able to take a firm hold in the man's mind, until they flow into his natural mind and memory, and set these in order. And both these processes are involved in the healing of the waters, when they go down to the desert, and into the sea. And then "The knowledge of Jehovah shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea."

Geographically, we might suppose that these waters, flowing East from the temple in Jerusalem, would flow into the Dead Sea. And even this would be symbolic of giving life to the dead things of man's natural mind, by the waters of truth from the Lord.

Wherever these living waters flowed they caused everything to live. And it is so, spiritually; for the Lord's life is carried to men's souls by means of the

Divine truths, taught to men, from the Divine Word. And, wherever those truths are admitted into the heart and the understanding, and allowed to form the conduct, they carry the light of heaven, and they regenerate the man.

FISH.

In the healed waters swam a great multitude of fish, of all kinds. Fish, as a low form of life, cool-blooded, living in water, represent the practical facts known to us, things which are certainties, applicable to our daily experience. These facts are scientifics, knowledges of doctrine, etc., which will make good mental food, when made alive by acknowledging their source in the Lord.

APPLICATION.

Reviewing the history of the Churches, we can see that, in the Jewish Church, the water of truth was up to the ankles, only, because the truth was seen in its natural phases, only. In the First Christian Church, the water was up to the knees, with some glimpses of spiritual things, yet with doctrine which interpreted the Scriptures literally. But, in the New Church, the stream of water from the sanctuary is as deep as the loins, to many, who see truth as spiritual truth. And, to a few, the great truth has become a broad river to swim in, a stream of celestial life. We see our Lord, Jesus Christ, not merely as a natural man, but as a Divine Man, in whom is all the Divine Life. We see Him as Power, as Truth, as Love, and as Life. And the truths which flow from these living principles, may cover all things of our life, spiritual and natural. And, then, in our minds, "everything shall live whither the river cometh."

XXXVI.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM OF THE GREAT IMAGE.

Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his bowels and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

Thou sawest, till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

This is the dream. And we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thy hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

And after thee shall arise another kingdom, inferior to thee; and another third kingdom, of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided: but there shall be, in it, of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken.

And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not joined with clay.

And, in the days of these kings, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms; and it shall stand forever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.—DANIEL ii. 31–45.

THE love of ruling over others, will, at first, induce some of the leaders in the church to learn, and to teach, the good and true principles of the church, from the Divine Word, in order to build up a church. But such leaders will gradually decline in intelligence and knowledge, until they teach literal rules instead of spiritual truths; and until, finally, all the good and truth of the church shall be adulterated with evil and falsity, and the church shall be brought to an end; and then the Lord shall come, to establish a new church. These things refer to the general church, on the earth, and also to the particular churches in the individual minds of men on earth.

BABYLON.

Bab-el, or Babylon, represents the love of ruling over others, from self-love, which would subject everything to its dominion, using even the holy things of the church to rule the souls of men, and thus to dominate the whole world. The king of Babylon represents this lust of dominion. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had conquered many nations; and he was ambitions to rule the whole world. And while in this state of mind, he had the significant dream which is narrated in our text. The

dream was a revelation from the Lord, as to the future conditions of the church.

But, to place the subject upon a level of thought which the king, or any other natural-minded man, could understand, the prophet Daniel was led to interpret the dream as if relating to a series of earthly kingdoms. But the important meaning of everything in the Word of the Lord relates to man's spiritual life; and to earthly things only as they embody and illustrate spiritual principles. And so, in reaching the spiritual meaning of the dream, Daniel's interpretation of it needs as much explanation as does the dream, itself. Thus, the dream may be interpreted in several aspects.

THE CHURCHES.

There have existed on the earth four general churches, or four general conditions of the Lord's church among men, the celestial church, of Adam; the spiritual church, of Noah; the natural church, of the Israelites; and the spiritual-natural church, the First Christian Church. Among the ancients, who understood something of the correspondence between natural and spiritual things, the wise men referred to these different ages, or churches, of human progress, by the names of different metals, of greater and less value, as "The Golden Age," "The Silver Age," "The Brazen Age," "The Iron Age," etc., because, in these different ages, different principles dominated men on earth.

THE METALS.

Gold, as the most valuable among common metals, and the least subject to corrosion, has always represented the most excellent principle in human life, the love-principle, especially as directed to man's unselfish love of the Lord. This is called the celestial principle, which

actuates those who dwell in the celestial heaven, the third heaven, which is the highest condition of heaven. This is the "gold, tried in the fire," which makes men spiritually rich in character. Silver represents a lower grade of principle, but still a heavenly element of human life, the love of the neighbor, the spiritual principle, called charity. This is lower than love to the Lord, because love to the Lord is the love of goodness, itself, while the love of the neighbor is, fundamentally, the love of truth, and the love of the good which comes by means of doing the truth. This is the characteristic love of the angels who dwell in the second heaven, the middle heaven, called the spiritual heaven. Brass, or copper, represents natural good, good as it comes to a man who obeys the laws of the Lord, in his natural life, in order that he may do good. Iron represents natural truth, the truth of law, or rule, which controls the conduct. These are the qualities of good and of truth which exist with those who are in the natural heaven, the lowest general form of heavenly life.

Thus, there is a correspondence between the comparative values, and the qualities, of these metals, and those of the different Churches, or different aspects of the general Church, among men on earth.

THE HUMAN BODY.

And there is also a correspondence between these different degrees of human life, and the different parts of the human body. When the man stands erect, his head towers above the rest of his body. And his head is of the greatest importance and value. And it corresponds, comparatively, to the golden principle of love to the Lord, the highest element of human life, which is the head of all things in man. Next below the head come the breast and arms, which are of great value, and which

correspond to the silver principle of love to the neighbor, the spiritual principle of regenerate life. Next below, come the abdomen and thighs, which here represent natural good, to which brass, or copper, corresponds. And below this, come the lower legs and the feet, which represent the life of natural truth, the iron of the mind. All these different elements are necessary to a good and fully developed manhood.

And there is a similar relation between the different elements of life, in the heavens, the higher and the lower. Thus, these comparisons and correspondences relate to human life in all its different aspects, whether in the different churches which have existed on the earth, or the different conditions of the church in the heavens, or the relative conditions of principles in men's individual minds.

THE IMAGE.

And these are the things represented by the great image, seen by Nebuchadnezzar. And we can easily see that this image was a reflex of the image erected in the king's own mind, by his ambitious thoughts, while he reflected upon his own greatness, the splendor of his kingdom, the extent of his power, and his desire to govern the whole world.

But the dream reveals to men (to each as he is able to see and to understand the case) the inevitable final result of the love of dominion, working in a human mind, and in general human history; because the love of rule is based on the love of self; and, finally, it will look to self, alone, and will depart from the Lord; and it will thus necessarily perish, spiritually, by self-destruction, in the love of evil and in the life of sin.

The head of the image was of gold, representing celestial love, love to the Lord. The upper body was of silver, representing spiritual love, love to the neighbor. The lower body was of brass, representing natural goodness. The legs were of iron, representing natural truth. All these were good and necessary to a right manhood. And if the feet, also, had been of good iron, only, the image would have represented a noble manhood, in which the different principles bear similar relations to each other. But the weakness of the image was in its feet, because they "were part of iron, and part of clay." And the iron and clay would not make a firm and strong joining; and so the image could not stand firmly. The clay, which would not join with iron, represents a state of natural evil, which would not unite with natural truth, and which would not furnish a firm basis in a good natural life.

HUMAN HISTORY.

And now we have the full history of the principle of the love of ruling over others, and its inevitable final self-destruction. This great image had its head of gold; *i.e.,* in its beginning, and in the highest states of the mind, there was some love to the Lord; and the ruler supposed that he loved to rule for the sake of doing celestial good to those whom he ruled, because they were the Lord's children, brought under the king's care.

But the operation of the dominant love of ruling, gradually dragged down the mind, below this celestial love, and brought a new mental condition; *i.e.,* a forgetting of the Lord's claims, and a love of ruling the neighbor because the ruler wished well, spiritually, to those whom he ruled. This was a descent to the breast and arms of silver, and a departure from the head of gold.

But, as the fundamental self-love, hidden in the love of ruling, gradually increased its force, even the spiritual element of love was forgotten; and the ruler persuaded himself that he ruled others for their external and natural good. This was descending to the bowels and thighs of brass. And again, the gradual descent brought about another new state of mind, a forgetfulness of

goodness, even on the natural plane, and a descent to the legs of iron, the hard laws of natural truth, by which the ruler persuaded himself that it was right for him to rule others, and that they ought to see it to be right.

But the descent did not stop, even at this stage; but the mind of the ruler set aside all ideas of either spiritual or natural goodness or truth; and he tried to stand upon feet partly of iron and partly of clay; *i.e.,* he operated from selfish motives, but tried to put on an appearance of following the law. But the iron of natural truth and law, would not cohere with his miry clay of evil; and so the whole image lost its secure standing.

THE DESTRUCTION.

When the great image stood upon the low plane, a stone from an adjacent mountain rolled out upon the image, and broke it to pieces. The stone struck the weak feet, and threw down the image, and ground its whole form to dust, like mere "chaff of the summer threshing-floors." The clay, the iron, the brass, the silver and the gold, were all destroyed.

The "stone," which crushed the image, was the Truth of the Lord, revealed to men, and coming out from the great mountain of the Lord's love. The Lord, Himself, was in His truth. And, as the truth passed along, in human minds, it grew, and "became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth;" *i.e.,* it filled the church, and the minds of men, with the love of the Lord. This stone was not taken from the mountain by human hands, but it came out, as of itself; representing that the truth which disperses false and evil things, is not any man-made creed, but the spirit of the Divine Truth, itself.

These things explain both the dream and Daniel's interpretation of it. But, when Daniel said to the king, "Thou art this head of gold," it is not meant that either the king, or Babylon, was in a celestial state of mind.

But Babylon was the degenerate remnant of what was once a celestial church, in which the rulers once ruled in the name of the Lord, and for the good of the people. In every church, we can trace the gradual decline in its characteristic quality, until its end. In every stage of progress, as long as something of a church could be maintained, existing institutions have been permitted to continue. When men became sensuous, and lost all spirituality of character, they could still be kept in some kind of order, externally, by means of external churches. But when a church could no longer serve for any good, it has come to its end.

THE CHURCHES.

The Most Ancient Church possessed great spiritual intelligence. But its members began to degenerate, by wrongly eating of the tree of knowledge; *i.e.,* by appropriating to themselves, as their own, the truths revealed to them by the Lord. And thus they fell into the pride of self-intelligence, in which they were destroyed, as represented by the allegory of the deluge. The destruction of the Ancient Church is represented by the casting out of the people of Canaan, by the Israelites. The end of the Jewish Church is represented by the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, and by the carrying away of the Jews, into captivity; and by the coming of Christ. The end of the First Christian Church is minutely and graphically pictured in the Scriptures, especially in the Book of The Revelation. And, at the end of the First Christian Church, the Lord came again, not physically, but spiritually, in a fuller outpouring of light and of life, to those "who have ears to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Every church which finally has been brought to an end, has degenerated by its inversion of the image of God, in man; and its attempt to stand the heavenly gold and silver upon feet of iron, mixed with clay; an attempt

to uphold the principles of heaven upon a life of selfish evil.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.

The image seen by the king stands before us, as a striking picture of the final end of every unregenerate mind. We may seek to cover our selfishness with pretended virtues; and we may even deceive ourselves as to the evil of our real motives; but we cannot thus stop the downward trend of our character, nor its final self-destruction. Nothing but actual regeneration can break the course of degeneration.

And, to meet this case, the last part of our text was given: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." This is the spiritual kingdom of the Lord, Himself, especially in His Second Coming, in the Spirit, to build His kingdom in the hearts of those who love Him. This kingdom shall be built up by means of the Divine Word, especially in its inward and spiritual meaning. And this kingdom "shall stand forever." "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of our God shall stand forever." (Isaiah xl. 8.)

The First Christian Church, as a dispensation, passed through all the states represented in our text, from the gold of its early state, down to silver, brass, iron, and even clay, until it was brought to an end, at the Second Coming of the Lord. And now, in the rising progress of the church, the case is inverted; for the individual man and the general church, must now work up, again, from lower to higher things. And the promise comes to the New Jerusalem, at this day, that our Lord will lead us back over the lost ground, that we may regain our spiritual inheritance. "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood, brass, and for stones, iron." (Isaiah lx. 17.)

To the man of the New Jerusalem, every good principle, loved, understood, and built into the daily life, will open itself in its higher phases, and will elevate the mind to higher things, that the man may return nearer and nearer to his Lord.

PRESENT CONDITIONS.

Often, we wonder why the New Jerusalem does not descend from heaven more rapidly. The great stone of the doctrine of the Lord, the great truth of the Divinity of the Lord, Jesus Christ, as the one God of heaven and of earth, has struck upon the weak feet of the great image. But we are living in the age when the great crushing of the image is still going on. The good that is now in the sects of Christendom, is largely natural good, rather than spiritual good. And much that is called good, is mixed with the clay of man's natural evils.

Look about you, in all phases of human life, and ask yourself what foundation is ready for the New Jerusalem to stand upon. These are times of wide-spread disorder, of colossal schemes for selfish purposes, of impatience against all legal restraint, even by right and truth. These are times of bold self-assertion and insolent self-seeking. Crime abounds; a great many men are not faithful to their trusts, nor loyal to their obligations. Immorality stalks through the land, with brazen face. All kinds of irrational isms seek to supplant genuine Christianity. Coarse, rude and vulgar evils laugh at refinement. These are not conditions which prepare foundations for the holy city to descend upon. But, in spite of the times, those individuals who are willing to climb to higher spiritual conditions, will find the way open to them, and the right path revealed. Therefore, "Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live." (Amos v. 14.)

XXXVII.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM OF THE GREAT TREE.

Thus were the visions of mine head, in my bed. I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth; and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth. The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much; and in it was meat for all. The beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof; and all flesh was fed of it. . . .

And behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven. He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches.

Nevertheless, leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven; and let his portion be with the beasts, in the grass of the earth. Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him: and let seven times pass over him.

This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will; and setteth up over it the basest of men.

This dream, I, king Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now, then, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof. . . . Then Daniel . . . answered and said, My lord, . . . the tree that thou sawest, . . . it is thou, O king: thou art grown and become strong; for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth. . . . This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord, the king: that they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; and they shall make thee to eat grass, as oxen; and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will. And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots, thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule. Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity. All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.—DANIEL iv. 10–28.

THE Celestial Church began in a living and flourishing condition; but, as its members gradually fell into the love of their own wisdom, as their own; and as they forgot the Lord as the Source of all truth and life; they finally caused the destruction of the church. But some remains of goodness were preserved and nourished by the Lord, in the interiors of men's hearts; until a new church could be formed and established. These statements apply historically, to the aggregate church; and also personally to the conditions of mind in men, individually.

THE LOVE OF RULING.

Our text deals with the love of ruling over the minds of others; and it illustrates the inevitable effect of such a love, upon the minds of men, individually and collectively. There are two kinds of the love of rule, a good love and an evil love. The good love of rule is a love of administering the things of the Lord's providence among men. This love may exist in a regenerate mind, because its purpose is to do good to others, from the Lord, and for their happiness. Such a desire to rule is merely the desire to carry out the Lord's rule among men, in the name of the Lord, and according to His

revealed laws for human life. But the evil love of ruling over others is a form of self-love, which seeks to subject others to its purposes, and for its gain. This evil love originates in the hells; and it enters into unregenerate men.

Literally, our text deals with Babylon and her great king. And Babylon represents the evil love of ruling over others. And her king represents the leading false principle which directs this evil love. The Babylon of the time of our text, was the degenerate remnant of a once celestial church. The city of Babylon was a very great city; and the worship in its temples was very elaborate; while its external institutions were very flourishing, and apparently prosperous. And, in this sense, its external condition was represented by the great and flourishing tree, in our text.

THE GREAT TREE.

And the history of this tree represents the spiritual history of the mental conditions represented by Babylon. A tree, growing in the earth, from a seed, represents a principle planted in the mind, and growing there, through various stages of progress. In this sense, our Lord, in His parable of the mustard seed, compared the growth of this small seed to the growth of His truth in men's minds. The great height of the tree, in our text, and its growth and strength, represent the far-reaching intelligence of the mind, in which the Lord's truth is growing and strengthening. That the tree reached up to heaven, means that the mind attained the understanding of heavenly things. That its sight reached to the end of the earth, means literally, that it could be seen from a very great distance, because of its great height.

But, spiritually, it means that the mind's intelligence in truth extends to the ultimates of the church; *i.e.,* to

all things of nature, as well as to all things of the spirit. The leaves of the tree were fair; *i.e.,* the rational thoughts were true and abundant. The fruit was much; *i.e.,* the good works were abundant, as the results of good principles. In the tree there was food for all; *i.e.,* the growing truth affords life and satisfaction for all parts of the man's mind. The beasts found shelter there; *i.e.,* the affections of the mind found a resting-place in the truths known. The birds dwelt there; *i.e.,* the thoughts dwelt among the truths known.

Thus far, the tree represents a mind in a good condition, growing and flourishing, on all planes of life. It represents what the mind should be, in its regenerate states.

THE DESTRUCTION.

But, in our text, this tree represents a mind which degenerates, which falls from these high and flourishing conditions, and meets almost total destruction. And the cause of this great destruction, is that the man indulges and cultivates a love of self, and a love of ruling over others, for his own purposes. And this evil principle induces the destruction of the great and flourishing tree of truth, in the mind.

It is said that the tree was hewn down, at the command of a watcher and a holy one, who came down from heaven; thus representing the Divine Providence, and the Divine Power, operating in the mind of man, to bring to an end such conditions as are dangerous to the man's spiritual life; and leading him through various experiences, until he can be restored to good conditions, on a permanent basis. For, in certain conditions, when the mind has run its full course, and completed one stage of its retrogression, the Lord brings about, or permits, a judgment to come upon the existing conditions, to bring them to an end, in order that a new

beginning may be made, on a different level of mental life.

But all the knowledge and intelligence which the Lord's truth formerly built up in the growing mind, will fall down, and come to nothing, when they are perverted and abused by the man's growing love of self, and his love of ruling over the minds of other men. For a good or true principle can retain its vitality and growth, and its fruitfulness, so long, only, and in so far, only, as it is received and used as the Lord's good, or truth, and for the Lord's revealed purposes in the life of men. Goodness and truth, perverted to evil purposes, become evil and falsity in the mind which corrupts them. In such a mind, all the good beasts and birds are warned to "get away" from the tree, because it is soon to fall. Good affections and true thoughts depart from the mind in which the selfish love of rule grows into control of the life.

THE STUMP.

But the Lord, in His infinite mercy, leaves the stump and roots remaining, to provide for future restoration and growth. For, if there is sufficient vitality in the roots, they may produce a new tree, under suitable conditions. The deep roots of the mind are the affections of the will. From these fundamental principles, new life may grow and bear fruit, in new conditions.

When a man allows his mind to destroy itself, in corrupting the principles which he knows, he is reduced to a state which is almost dead, spiritually. But, if there are any remains of goodness still left in his heart, from the Lord, the Lord will preserve these remnants; and, from them, by means of providential leadings and instruction, the Lord will draw out the latent spiritual life of the man, and lead it to a new growth. He will protect the man from falling into permanent spiritual death.

And He will do this by surrounding the man with such circumstances and conditions as will hold him in the knowledge of natural goodness and natural truth. He will keep the man's mind in the light of the letter of the Divine Word, so that he can form his conduct according to the Lord's commandments. These Divine commandments will protect a man from falling into actual evils of life, and from fixing himself in such evils, and thus falling into spiritual death.

These things are represented by the band of iron and brass, which was put around the stump of the tree, as stated in our text. Literally, men preserve a stump of a tree, by placing around it a strong band, or hoop, to prevent the rain and the wind and frost from splitting the stump, and inducing decay. This band, or ring, represents the protection given to the mind of a man, in times of trial. A band of iron, represents natural truth, literal truth; and a band of brass represents natural good. And if a man, who has fallen into evils, can be kept under the binding influence of the letter of the Divine Word, so that he will keep the Lord's commandments in his daily life, then whatever latent good is in his heart can be preserved, as the basis of a new spiritual growth.

And these things will be left "in the tender grass of the field;" *i.e.*, amid the practical knowledges of natural things, in daily life, where a man's character is formed These things are meant, also, by his eating grass like the ox. And the stump will be wet with the dew; *i.e.*, the truths of the Divine Word will come to the mind, as they apply to the little details of daily life.

WITH THE BEASTS.

But, in degenerating, the man has fallen below "the measure of a man," and has become as a beast, following his natural impulses. The quality of his affection is no

longer spiritual, but only sensuous. To some extent, he has profaned known truths. His mind no longer enjoys the human characteristic of spiritual rationality, which is the capacity to see spiritual truth in its own light. The man thus falls back into what he is, of himself, without the recognized help of the Lord. And this condition brings him into mental association with evil spirits, who are here meant by beasts, among whom he will live.

SEVEN TIMES.

"And let seven times pass over him," or, literally, "seven times shall change upon him." Literally, it is supposed that Nebuchadnezzar was insane for seven years. But, spiritually, the reference is not to times, but to mental conditions. As a symbolic number, seven has two meanings, completeness and holiness. And these two meanings harmonize in the fact that holiness is a state of completeness in the observance of the Divine laws. These "seven times" represent the complete succession of mental changes of state, which the fallen man must undergo, before the latent good that remains in him, from the Lord, can be developed, for his restoration to true human life. The old states of mind, which he corrupted, must be allowed to work themselves out, to a fulness, or completion, before the inward life of holiness can be developed. And then the man can be taught that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men;" *i.e.*, that the Divine principles must govern men's minds and lives.

It is said in our text, that the Lord "giveth the kingdom to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men." The Hebrew word here rendered "basest," does not refer to character, but to social position: it means humble, in a humble position, in a low station, socially. And the literal idea is that the Lord

sometimes raises up very obscure men, and makes them to be kings. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, . . . that He may set him with princes." (Psalm cxiii. 7.) "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree." (Luke i. 52.)

And our Lord does these things in our minds, and in our character, when He disciplines us, until we put down our own self-exaltation, and exalt the interior and higher qualities of regenerate love, which, at first, we despised.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR, AS THE TREE.

Some of the persons named in the Scriptures are merely representative, and not intended to indicate actual individuals. But Nebuchadnezzar was an actual individual, and a very famous king of Babylon, who lived about six hundred years before Christ; and who reared many stupendous engineering and architectural works. But his excessive personal ambition finally drove him insane, probably into that peculiar form of insanity known as lycanthropy (wolf-manhood), in which the man imagines himself to be a beast, and falls into the habits of beasts. These notions are easily forced upon an unsettled mind, by the evil spirits who are mentally associated with the insane man.

But, spiritually, these things represent the low fallacies and falsities into which men fall, when they exalt themselves, and forget the Lord. The human element in the mind is then dethroned, and the animal part of the man asserts its influence; and the man then lives "with the beasts;" *i.e.*, he lives an animal life, rather than a rational human life.

THE KINGDOM SURE.

But, if the infinite love and mercy of the Lord can develop any new good in the man, he will be restored to

rational manhood, and his spiritual kingdom will be sure, for him. As a means of preparing the mind for its restoration to true humanity, Daniel, when he interpreted the dream, advised the king, "break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity." And this is always the means of improvement, to cease evil and falsity, and to obey the Lord, by giving life to our spiritual nature, which we have kept in poverty and distress, while we were exalting our self-love and our self-derived intelligence.

THE APPLICATION.

The text declares, "all this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar." But, while there was, in this case, a literal fulfilment of prophecy, yet this was merely the external side of the case, which symbolizes the spiritual side. The case of Nebuchadnezzar presents a good example of Solomon's saying, "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Nebuchadnezzar represents human nature under the deadening influence of the selfish love of ruling over others, and especially the lust of dominating the souls of men. This infernal spirit exists in individuals, and in churches, both in this world, and in the spiritual world.

Human history on our earth affords many examples of excessive ambition, sometimes seeking to control the world mentally, and sometimes physically. Xerxes, Cæsar, Napoleon, and many others, have streamed brilliantly across the horizon of human history, but have sunk into miserable ends.

But to each of us, in our own little way, the same spirit of self-exaltation comes along, in the course of our experience, and seeks to control us. But happy are we, if, early in our career, we discover the infernal nature of

this malignant evil; and when we resist and reject it, and look to our Lord for light and guidance.

Sometimes, it occurs to us to ask why our Lord does not prosper us in just such ways as we would wish. But, if we are not now prospering spiritually, as we should do, it must be because, in our minds and lives, there is not yet a sufficient foundation on which to build the best life of which we are capable. And our Lord is permitting our tree to be cut down, and the seven changes to come over us, until we see, and seek, His laws of life, to govern all our personal experience; until we have no self-will opposed to His will, which is full of love and goodness for us, when we are ready to receive His gifts. And then, "the Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee, and thou . . . shalt be turned into another man." (I. Samuel x. 6.)

XXXVIII.

THE FEAST, AND THE HAND-WRITING ON THE WALL.

Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives and his concubines, might drink therein. . . . They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood and of stone. In the same hour, came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote, over against the candlestick, upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. The king cried aloud, to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans and the sooth-sayers. . . . Then came in all the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. . . . Now the queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet-house: and the queen spoke and said, . . . Let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation. Then was Daniel brought before the king. . . . Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another: yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

O thou king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar, thy father, a kingdom, and majesty, and glory and honor. . . . But, when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. . . . And thou, his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; but hast lifted

up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, and thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them: and thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand is thy breath, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified: then was the part of the hand sent from Him; and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written, Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.

This is the interpretation of the thing: Mene, God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. Tekel, thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Peres, thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. . . . In that night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain. And Darius, the Median, took the kingdom.—DANIEL v.

WHEN genuine love and faith cease, and the love of self prevails in the church, there grows up the spirit of Babylon, which is the love of ruling over others, especially of ruling over the souls of men; making dominion over others the secret end, and religion merely the means. And this spirit finally will profane the holy things of the Divine Word, and will exalt itself above the holy Word, and even above the Lord. And such a spirit will destroy the church in which it prevails.

THE LITERAL STORY.

Belshazzar, a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, is here called a son, in the general sense of a lineal descendant. The Chaldean name, Belshazzar, means a prince of God. It was nearly the same name as that given to Daniel, by the Chaldeans, when he and his companions were taken to Babylon. But we are to avoid confusing the two men, Belshazzar, the Chaldean king, and Belteshazzar, the Hebrew prophet, Daniel. Belshazzar, the king, was a man of sensuous tastes and habits, and a heathen idolater. He was living among the heathen ways of the

ancient Orientals, including polygamy, and gross immorality, without any Christian standard of virtue.

While at one of his great feasts, and while under the influence of heavy drinking of wine, it occurred to him to give style to his carousal, by the use of the beautiful and valuable golden and silver vessels, which Nebuchadnezzar had stolen as plunder, from the altar of Jehovah, in the temple at Jerusalem. These sacred vessels, dedicated to worship of the true God, only, the king insolently used for the animal pleasures of a debauch, in a low-minded company. And such an act was sacrilege and profanation, which were intensified by the fact, that while drinking from the sacred vessels of the only true God, these Babylonians praised their own heathen idols, dead images, of gold, silver, etc., which had no life nor power.

As the text states that these Babylonians drank wine from the gold and silver vessels of Jehovah's temple; and then that they praised the gods of gold and of silver, etc., we might, at first, naturally infer that they were praising the God to whom these gold and silver vessels belonged. But this was not the case. And the fact that these two passages about gold and silver happen to come into the text, nearly together, does not involve any such association. These heathen carousers were, practically, denying the true God, and expressing their contempt for Him.

THE VISION.

And, while they were doing so, a vision of impending judgment was revealed to them. Their spiritual eyes were opened, and they, or some of them, including the king, saw a hand, writing some obscure words upon the wall of the room. Of course, this scene was in the spiritual world, and was revealed to the spiritual eyes of those who saw it. In the spiritual world, the plastic

substances can be readily formed to represent anything which the Lord desires, and even the things which the angels think and feel, and desire to represent.

This scene greatly impressed the sensuous king. And, naturally, he called upon his wise men, to read and to interpret the mysterious writing. But they were not able to do so. But the queen, who had not been present at the carousal, but who had been attracted to the banquet-hall by the excitement of the occasion, suggested to the king that he should call Daniel, to interpret the writing. This queen was probably the queen-mother, and not one of the wives of the reigning king. And she was probably of a better personal character than the women who had been carousing, as is suggested by the facts that she was not invited to the feast, and that she cherished the memory of Daniel.

Daniel read and interpreted the writing on the wall; and he proclaimed a severe judgment against the king and his kingdom. And this judgment was literally fulfilled that very night, in the death of the king, and the taking of the kingdom, by Darius, the Mede, who had been besieging the city. This is the literal story, which is merely the outside of the more important spiritual story.

BABYLON AND THE FEAST.

Babylon represents the selfish love of ruling over others. And the king of Babylon represents the leading false principle, which directs this evil love of rule. When we transfer the scene to the minds of men, a good feast is a reception of goodness and truth, of love and of wisdom, from the Lord. But evil men do not come together to receive goodness and truth from the Lord, but to feast on their own evils and falsities, which are opposed to the Lord's principles.

When an evil man's selfish love of ruling over others

becomes active, the king, the leading false principle, makes a mental feast, and calls in all the lords of the land, which are the prominent principles of the natural mind; and all the princes, or all the leading truths; and his wives, or his natural affections; and his concubines, or his disorderly sensuous affections. When all these evils and falsities join in a mental feast, it is a debauch, a carousal, in which the laws of goodness and of decency are disregarded.

But, while an evil man's mind may be in this condition, yet, he may know many true doctrines, drawn from the Word of the Lord, and taught in the church. And while he is under the influence of the wine, *i.e.*, of truth such as he has, he seeks to make the true doctrines of the church agree with his own false notions. These doctrines of the church are the golden and silver vessels from the altar of the Lord, in His holy temple; *i.e.*, from the Lord's presence in the church. And the evil man's own notions are the wine which he puts into the holy vessels of the Lord's temple. The literal scene, of the king and his companions drinking their wine from the holy vessels stolen from the altar in the temple, is the graphic counterpart of the mental scene in the evil mind, which calls all its capacities to feast in evil and in sin, and yet seeks to force the teachings of the Lord to agree with its evil life.

PROFANATION.

When the heathen used the vessels of the Lord's temple in their sensuous carousals, they committed an act of sacrilege, by abusing holy things. And so the human mind, which uses the Divine Truths to uphold and justify its own selfish evils, commits profanation, by the intentional abuse of known truths. These are the men who, in their own minds, "make the Word of God of none effect, by their traditions."

And this sin of profanation is a most serious evil, because it is not done in the simplicity of ignorance, but in the duplicity of wilful evil. And the profound character of this evil is seen in the fact that the heathen, while drinking wine from the vessels of Jehovah, praised their own idols, mere images made of various metals, as well as of wood and of stone; dead things, which could do nothing. This is a picture of the man who, while he knows the truths of the Divine Word, and the doctrines of the church, yet uses these things of the Lord to deny the Lord's supremacy; and, in heart, to exalt himself above the Lord.

IDOLS.

An idol of gold is the evil of self-love, in which the goodness of the Lord is profaned. An idol of silver is the falsity, which, in the mind worshipping this evil, destroys both the Divine Truth and the love of the neighbor. An idol of brass is the natural evil, evil on the natural plane, which is a corruption of that natural goodness which comes to men in keeping the Lord's commandments. An idol of iron is a hard literal rule of conduct, which is opposed to the Divine rules for human life. An idol of stone is a literal statement accepted as a truth, and yet used in such a way as to make it false, in effect. An idol of wood is that which the man desires as good to his sensuous life, but which is not good according to the Divine standard.

And, for a man to praise all these idols, while drinking from the Lord's vessels, is, for instance, to use the letter of the Divine Word to justify his own selfish evils of affection, and falsities of thought, and sins of conduct. And this, practically, is making a hell out of those things which the Lord gives us as a means of making a heaven within us. And this is abuse, sacrilege, profanation. It is putting self in the place of God, in our hearts, and in

our thoughts. It is making a hell in our own hearts; *i.e.,* in our own actual character, or quality of mind. It is living in coldness so dense that the Lord's love can not warm it, and in a darkness so thick that His wisdom can not enlighten it; because these sources of life are shut out from the man's mind. Thus the man fills up the measure of his evil character. He brings upon himself the judgment, which, necessarily, must come to things which have run their course.

THE JUDGMENT.

The hand-writing on the wall of the palace proclaimed this judgment against the king and his kingdom. And the king saw the part of the hand which wrote on the wall; and he was greatly troubled. Even to the evil man, sunk into the lusts of sensuous life, there sometimes come warnings and premonitions of his self-imposed, impending fate, which the Lord, in His loving providence, has sought to prevent, but which the man determinedly prefers, in character and in life.

When a disturbing premonition of trouble comes to the evil man, naturally, he consults his own thoughts, and his self-interest, to think what may happen to him. For, naturally, in his mind, a sense of trouble means loss or trouble to his own evil and selfish qualities. It does not occur to him that the loss means his loss of spiritual life. And his self-dependence is represented by the king, Belshazzar, calling in his heathen astrologers, etc., to read and interpret the writing on the wall. And the fact that these heathen wise men could neither read nor interpret the writing, represents the spiritual fact that our own selfish notions and worldly ideas cannot point out to us the dangers of our selfish life, and our impending judgment.

But the queen-mother, who was not one of the

carousers at the feast, remembered Daniel, the prophet of Jehovah; and sought him, to read and interpret the writing on the wall. This queen represents what there was remaining of the better nature, in the mind, the "remains" stored up by the Lord, especially in childhood; and by which the man could be led to look to the Lord, and to His holy Word, for light, in distress. And Daniel, the prophet, represents the Divine Word. And Daniel interpreted the writing on the wall, and plainly informed the king of his condition, and its results.

THE INTERPRETATION.

"Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin." "Mene, God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it," *i.e.,* brought it to an end. We say, of anything which has come to its completion, or end, "Its days are numbered." "Tekel, thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting," *i.e.,* lacking in character. "Peres, thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."

As to the literal sense, naturally we wonder why Daniel reads the writing as "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," but in explaining it, uses the word "Peres" instead of "Upharsin." There is no difficulty in this, but merely an idiom of language. The Book of Daniel is written in the ancient Chaldee, or Syrian language. The word "Upharsin" is a compound of two words, "U," which means "and," and "pharsin" which means "dividing." In our language, we would have written it in two words, "and dividing." But, in the Chaldee, the word for "and" is joined to the following noun, and they are written in one word. Grammatically, the words "Mene" and "Tekel" are past participles, expressing things which have been done, *i.e.,* numbered and weighed. But the word "pharsin" is an active present participle, meaning, "dividing," that is they are now dividing your king-

dom. But, when Daniel explained the meaning, instead of using the active present participle, "pharsin," he used the past participle, "Peres," meaning "have divided," as if the Medes and Persians had already divided the kingdom.

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING.

Spiritually, to number is to estimate the character of a thing, as to whether it is true. And to weigh anything is to test its goodness. Thus the word "Mene" is explained by Daniel as meaning "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it." Personally, a man's own mind, his mental kingdom, is meant. And this is numbered; *i.e.,* estimated as to the truth that is in it. And when it has filled up the measure of its career, and has falsified all truths which have come to its knowledge, its days will be spiritually numbered, and its career finished, brought to an end, in the judgment.

"Tekel, thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting;" *i.e.,* thou art weighed as to character, as to goodness, and art found lacking in goodness, and without sincerity. "Jehovah is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed." (I. Samuel ii. 3.)

And Job says, "Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity." (Job xxxi. 6.)

"Peres, thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." And, spiritually, to divide the kingdom of the mind, is to destroy it, because a human mind truly and spiritually lives only when the Lord dwells in it, as His kingdom. And this kingdom must be in goodness and truth, united in life. But if the man separates the truth which he knows, from his heart, and from his life, he destroys his spiritual kingdom; because then the Lord can not dwell therein, as its King. And then the man's mental kingdom is captured by his spiritual enemies, his own evil loves and false thoughts.

The heathen Medes and Persians represent the evil states of a man's mind, in which he separates charity and faith, or goodness and truth, and thus allows his mental kingdom to fall under the power of evil and falsity. And, in that dark night, the king is slain, by the loss of spiritual life.

These representative pictures teach every rational man that his spiritual manhood, and his future happiness, depend upon his daily resistance to the suggestions of self-love and its accompanying falsities. The spiritual world is all around us, as well as within us. And, every day of our life, each thing and circumstance presents, before us, a handwriting on the wall. And, if we were as wide-awake to our spiritual interests, as we are to our natural life, we could see the writing, and read the interpretation. And we should always find, on the walls of our life, a judgment written against everything in our character that is not good and true. To every such evil and falsity in our mind and life, comes the proclamation, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting" in every element of heavenly life. "Thy sorrow is incurable, for the greatness of thine iniquity." (Jeremiah xxx. 15.)

XXXIX.

DANIEL'S VISION OF THE FOUR BEASTS, ETC.

Daniel spake and said, I saw, in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet, as a man; and a man's heart was given to it. And behold, another beast, a second, like to a bear; and it raised up itself, on one side; and it had three ribs in the mouth of it, between the teeth of it. And they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.

After this, I beheld, and lo, another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it, four wings of a fowl. The beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.

After this, I saw, in the night, visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured, and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it: and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and behold, in this horn, were eyes, like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things. And I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire.

A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.

As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.

I saw, in the night, visions, and behold, one like a Son of man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days; and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit, in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever. . . . The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom, are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first: and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the Most High; and shall wear out the saints of the Most High; and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the dividing of time.

But the judgment shall sit; and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.—DANIEL vii. 2–18, 23–27.

THIS chapter contains a revelation concerning the successive changes in the spiritual conditions of the church among men on earth. This church, finally represented by Babylon, had, in its first state, some understanding of

truth; but, in its second state, it studied the letter, only, of the Scriptures; and, in its third state, it falsified the truths of the Divine Word, and made falsities appear as truths; and, in its fourth state, it formed and taught the doctrine of "Salvation by Faith, alone," which was apparently confirmed in the letter of the Scriptures, but which deadly heresy gradually destroyed the spiritual life of the church; so that the First Christian Church was brought to an end, as a dispensation, and a New Christian Church was raised up, to understand, love and practise spiritual Christianity.

THE BEASTS.

In vision, Daniel saw four beasts, which came up out of the sea, and which were very peculiar, and very different. These four beasts representatively picture the conditions and activities of the four general churches, or general states of the church, among men, on earth. Literalists always seek to apply these representative revelations to material things, and to historical personages and countries on this earth. But, in its profoundest and most important meaning, the Word of the Lord always relates to men as spiritual beings, and to the principles and the activities of their spiritual nature; and hence, the application must be to the operations of the spiritual world, in which all of man's spiritual activities occur.

When Daniel asked the meaning of these things, the angel whom he asked, interpreted them as referring to four kings, which should arise out of the earth. But we must remember that this conversation was in the spiritual world, into which Daniel then saw, and in which he acted, because his spiritual senses were then opened, as a seer. And the angel was not speaking in a literal way, but representatively, so that his language was as much representative and symbolic as were the things of

the vision, of which he was speaking. To the angel, the earth did not mean the physical earth, but that which, spiritually, is called the earth, that is, the earthly side of man's mind, his natural mind, as distinguished from the heavenly side of his mind, his spiritual mind. And, to him, a king did not mean merely a ruler on the physical earth, but a ruling principle, on the earth of the mind, that is, in man's natural mind. Always, in the important sense of all prophecy, and of all revelation, the whole scene is laid in the human mind.

The four beasts represent four successive general conditions of the human mind, during which different mental kings, ruling principles, swayed men's minds. And, in the representative account of these beasts, we may see the spiritual history of every man who degenerates, gradually, into fixed conditions of evil, falsity and sin; and in whose mind and life, the church of the Lord is finally destroyed.

THE FOUR WINDS.

Daniel's vision was at night, thus representing a dark state of the church, and also the external and representative phases of truth, dealing with symbols, and not clearly proclaiming interior spiritual truth. "The four winds of heaven strove upon the great sea." The blowing of the wind represents the operation of Divine influences upon the human mind. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John iii. 8.)

But when the Divine influences operate upon men, each man meets them, and uses or abuses them, according to the quality of his own character. Good men receive the Divine influx, and open their hearts to its love, and their intellects to its wisdom. But evil men, in receiving, pervert the quality of the Lord's goodness and

truth, and turn them into evil and falsity. The great sea, spiritually, is the natural mind of man, in the waters of whose memory all things are collected. The four winds of heaven, operating upon the great sea, thus present a representative picture of the Divine influence bearing upon the natural mind of man.

There were four winds, to indicate the four quarters, or points of the compass, from which the wind may blow. The North represents the darkest spiritual quarter, whence come the Divine principles in their most external, and least spiritual form, as natural truths, practical rules. The South represents the lightest quarter, whence come the spiritual truths which most enlighten the human mind. The East, the quarter in which the sun appears to rise, represents the Lord, especially as to His Divine Love, rising upon a cold and dark world. Thus the East is the quarter of spiritual good. And the West is the quarter of natural good. As a result of the operation of the winds upon the sea, four great beasts came up, out of the sea, in succession.

THE FIRST BEAST.

The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. A lion, known as the king of beasts, and a beast of very great strength, represents power, and the Truth in its power. In this good sense, the Lord was called "The Lion of the tribe of Judah," the spiritual King, the Divine Truth, embodying the Divine Power. And the lion, or Truth in its power, had eagle's wings. The eagle, being very powerful in flight, and flying very high, and being very far-sighted, represents man's rational thought, by means of which he thinks, elevates his mind, and perceives truth in its high aspects. Wings, being the arms of birds, represent the power of thought. A lion, with eagle's wings, represents, in a good sense,

the Divine Truth, in the minds of the men of the church, accompanied by rational thought, which enables the man to perceive spiritual truths.

This was the state of mind, in the early conditions of the church. But these wings were plucked, to represent the fact that the rationality of the mind was diminished, by the failure of men to live according to the light of spiritual truth. But still, the lion stood up, like a man, to represent that men strove to elevate their minds, on the standard of a right life, as they then understood the laws of life. And, in this way, they became real men, to a certain degree, as is represented by the heart of a man being given to the lion.

THE SECOND BEAST.

But a new state came upon men, represented by a bear, a long-haired beast. The hair is the most external part of the body; and thus a long-haired beast, in which the hair is a prominent feature, represents literal truth, external truth, as in the letter of the Scriptures. Personally, bears here represent those human minds in which there is a knowledge of the literal sense of the Scriptures, but only an external understanding of the Bible; *i.e.,* who see the truth in its literal aspects, but do not understand it in its spiritual phases. The three ribs in the bear's mouth represent the fulness of knowledge of the letter of the Word, held by such minds, but held in the teeth, only, and not digested; *i.e.,* held in the outward thought of the senses, and not taken into the inward thought.

This represents an age of literalism in the church, when there was a large amount of external learning about the literal sense of the Scriptures, but no openness of mind to the inward and spiritual meaning. And the natural result of this mental condition was to eat up

the spiritual life of the church; or, representatively, to "devour much flesh." For, in the sensuous, unspiritual mind, a knowledge of the merely literal sense of the Scriptures gradually sinks into mere fallacies of the senses.

THE THIRD BEAST.

And so the state of the church changed again, and fell into a worse condition, represented by a leopard, a cunning, treacherous, fierce, blood-thirsty beast, the symbol of the love of falsity, a passion which loves to pervert and falsify good and true principles. And, in doing this, it uses four wings; *i.e.,* the power of thought in double portion, which means both in the will and in the understanding. In this way, the false ideas seen in the intellect, are confirmed in the heart, and embodied in the conduct. And this leopard had four heads, to represent that, in that state of the church, the interior principles of men's minds were conjoined with the literal fallacies and falsities of their natural minds. And, in this state, dominion was given to the leopard, in men's minds.

THE FOURTH BEAST.

And this condition led to a further spiritual decline, in which men's mental states were represented by the fourth beast, described as dreadful and terrible, and very strong, and very destructive. This was the condition of mind in which men, misled by a sensuous misunderstanding of the literal sense of the Scriptures, reasoned away the necessity of a good life, a life according to the Divine commandments; and imagined that human salvation comes by "faith, alone," and by a "Vicarious Atonement," in the shedding of the physical blood of Christ. This idea, of "Salvation by Faith, alone," without regard to spiritual character, being confirmed in the minds of men, from a mistaken view of the literal sense of the

Bible, destroyed the spirituality of mind, in the men of the church. The great iron teeth of this terrible fourth beast, represent the hard, sensuous literal thought by which the letter of the Scripture was mentally masticated, and prepared for the mind's use.

The fourth beast delighted in devouring and destroying everything else; thus representing the spirit of ruling over others, as that evil spirit, represented by Babylon, took possession of the church; and made even the holy things of the church, and of the Divine Word, mere means of exalting the dominion of the leaders in the church. These were the last states of a declining and dying church, when, in human hearts, the will of men was usurping the place of the will of God. At this time, this terrible beast had ten horns, representing much power, in pushing the falsities and fallacies into notice, and in defending these things.

THE LITTLE HORN.

And then there came up another horn, a little one, which had eyes resembling human eyes, and a mouth speaking great things. And this little horn plucked up three of the other horns, to represent the abuse of the power of literal knowledge, in opposing many things even in the literal Scriptures. And this was done with the help of the horn's eyes, which were like men's eyes, representing the abuse of knowledge, in applying the letter of the Scriptures to excuse evils in men, and this with an appearance of spiritual intelligence. And the mouth of the little horn represents the doctrine spoken and taught by the perverted church, and apparently founded on the letter of the Bible.

THE ANCIENT OF DAYS.

All these things, having corrupted the church, were followed by the judgment upon the First Christian

Church, nearly one hundred and fifty years ago, when the "last judgment" occurred, in the spiritual world, and upon the spiritual conditions of men. The "Ancient of days" is the Divine Father, the Divine Love, or Divine Goodness, as distinguished from the Son of Man, which is the Divine Truth, the Divine Humanity, in and by whom the Divine Love established the New Christian Church, as a spiritual church, having the Divine Word, and understanding it in both its letter and its spirit. The fire and brightness about the Ancient of days, and the whiteness of His raiment and His hair, represent the love, wisdom and purity which characterize the Divine Father. The hosts who minister to Him represent the universal acknowledgment of Him, in the heavens, and in the spiritual church.

At the coming of the Lord, a judgment was executed, and all the power of the terrible beast, and of such of the other beasts as then remained, was then destroyed, and men were redeemed from such evil power. The books opened for the judgment, were the mental books of men, the states of mind which they had written in their own character.

The Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, that is, in the letter of the Scriptures, which were the means of judgment against those who perverted and abused the letter of the Scriptures, to excuse their own evil life. And, in the measure and degree in which men received the Lord, in His second and spiritual coming, an inward coming to the minds of men; dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, came to the Lord, again, in a restored church, an everlasting kingdom, with all the good affections and the true thoughts which are the inward nations and peoples of the mind.

THE BEASTS AND KINGS.

The apparent interpretation of the text, by supposing the beast to represent certain kings in the literal history

of the earth, was given for the uses of natural-minded men, who could thus find apparent confirmation of the Scriptures, in such things as they could understand, during the ages of the church before men could perceive truth in its interior and spiritual phases. For the Divine Providence often operates by indirect methods, to lead men, finally, to such things as they would not receive at first. And so, in the First Christian Church, it was the general belief that, in our text, the first beast, the lion, represented the king of Chaldea; and the second beast, the bear, represented the king of Media; and the third beast, the leopard, represented the king of Persia; and the fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, represented the king of Macedonia, or Greece; and the little horn represented the great king of Syria, Antiochus Epiphanes. And, while it is true that those kings and nations may have well represented such conditions, still, these earthly kings were merely representative; and the things represented were the ruling principles of men's minds, in the changing conditions of the inward and spiritual church.

These representative beasts very closely resemble other beasts, named in the Apocalypse, which are also symbolic and representative of human conditions of character.

A WARNING.

The declining states of the general church afford each of us a constant warning. When the gentle winds of heaven blow upon the restless sea of our natural mind; when we feel a Divine influence, and perceive a Divine truth; if we hold fast to the truth, and keep it clear and elevated, and never allow it to be obscured, or perverted, by the fallacies of our senses, then we shall live in spiritual love and wisdom, and in natural righteousness, also. And then, in us, our Lord shall build His "everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him."

XL.

THE VISION OF THE RAM AND THE HE-GOAT.

I was in Shushan, in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision, and I was by the river Ulai. Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold, there stood before the river, a ram, which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other; and the higher came up last.

I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward and southward; and no beasts could stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and magnified himself. And, as I was considering, behold, a he-goat came from the West, over the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. And he came to the ram that had the two horns, which I saw standing before the river, and ran upon him in the fury of his power.

And I saw him come close unto the ram; and he was moved with anger against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns; and there was no power in the ram to stand before him; but he cast him down to the ground and trampled upon him; and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand.

And the he-goat magnified himself exceedingly: and, when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and, instead of it, there came up four notable horns, toward the four winds of heaven. And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceedingly great, toward the South, and toward the East, and toward the glorious land. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and some of the host, and of the stars, it cast down to the ground, and trampled upon them. Yea, it magnified itself, even to the Prince of the host; and it took away from Him the continual burnt-offering, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. And the host was given

over to it, together with the continual burnt-offering through transgression; and it cast down truth to the ground; and it did its pleasure, and prospered.

Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said unto that certain one who spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the continual burnt-offering, and the transgression that maketh desolate, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed. And it came to pass, when I, even I, Daniel, had seen the vision, that I sought to understand it; and behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man.

And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.

So he came near where I stood; and when he came, I was affrighted, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man; for the vision belongeth to the time of the end.

Now, as he was speaking with me, I fell into a deep sleep, with my face toward the ground; but he touched me, and set me upright.

And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the latter time of the indignation; for it belongeth to the appointed time of the end.

The ram which thou sawest, that had the two horns, they are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough he-goat is the king of Greece: and the great horn that is between his eyes, is the first king. And as for that which was broken, in the place whereof four stood up, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not with his power. And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and do his pleasure; and he shall destroy the mighty ones and the holy people. And through his policy, he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart; and in their security shall he destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand. And the vision of the evenings and

mornings which hath been told is true: but shut thou up the vision; for it belongeth to many days to come.—DANIEL viii. 2–26.

CHARITY, which is the love of the neighbor, brings life and prosperity to the church among men. But faith, when separated from charity, becomes perverted and false; and, by false reasonings, it obscures and corrupts the truth in men's minds, and destroys the spirit of worship, in the church, until a spiritual church can no longer exist in such minds.

THE RAM.

The principal features of the text are a ram and a he-goat, and the contention between them. The ram, as a sheep, corresponds to charity, or love of the neighbor, which is the spiritual principle of the church, and the distinguishing characteristic of the spiritual degree of human life.

In the Scriptures, those persons who are principled in charity, are often called sheep, and the Lord's flock; and the Lord is called their Shepherd. This ram had two horns. A horn, as a weapon, represents power, by which the animal acts. And here, as the horns of a ram, or sheep, the horns represent the power of both charity and faith, because, in the regenerate man, charity and faith are united, and they co-operate, as do the will and the understanding. And thus the horns represent, in another aspect, the power of truth, in the church, when loved in the will, and known in the understanding; and thus when both internal and external. The horns were "high," to represent their elevation to the high places of the mind. One was higher than the other, because charity is more exalted than faith. And the higher one came up last, or later, because interior charity is formed later, by means of a clear faith in known truths.

Remembering that, spiritually, the text treats of conditions in the minds of men, the ram pushing in different directions, represents the true and loving principle of charity, opposing all evil and false influences, which come from the different quarters of the natural mind.

THE GOAT.

But a he-goat came out of the West, and opposed the ram. A goat corresponds to faith. In a good sense, the goat is true faith, in union with charity; but, in the opposite sense, as when opposed to the sheep, the goat corresponds to faith separated from charity, "faith alone," which is a merely external faith, an intellectual belief, but not joined with a regenerate love, nor with a righteous life. The sheep and the goats are used in the sense of those who are in charity, and those who are in faith, alone, without charity, in the Lord's parable, in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew; as well as in the Old Testament, as in Ezekiel xxxiv. 17, 18, 22.

This goat came from the West. The West, opposite the sun-rising, represents the condition of mind in which a man sees goodness and truth in the most remote degree, the most external plane, the natural-minded state. And, in a bad sense, this external state of mind is in natural evil. And the spirit of false faith, faith alone, without charity, comes from evils in men's hearts. That this goat came over the whole earth, means that this mental condition of a false faith pervaded the whole church. And that the goat came over the earth without touching the ground, means that this faith was theoretical, and not connected with a good, practical daily life.

THE GOAT'S NOTABLE HORN.

The goat's notable horn represents the power of a false faith, in destroying goodness and truth, in the minds of

men who adopt it. That the horn was located between the goat's eyes, means that the power of a false faith was due to its appearance of intelligence, which attracted attention to its arguments. But this apparent intelligence was self-derived intelligence, which does not see truths, but sees such arguments as favor the self-love, because it looks out upon the universe from the standpoint of self-love, and, therefore, of self-derived intelligence. And thus the notable horn of the goat means self-derived intelligence, which felt great anger against the principle of charity, and which attacked charity, with great fury, to expel it from the minds of the men of the church, by means of cunning false reasonings.

The goat broke the two horns of the ram, to represent that, in the minds yielding to the spirit of "faith alone" this false principle broke the power of charity and true faith, and destroyed their character, and perverted them into their opposites, by reducing the mind to a sensuous condition, in which it could no longer see truth in its higher phases. And then this spirit of "faith alone" dominated the church, and corrupted the life of the church.

THE GOAT'S HORN BROKEN.

And even when the goat's single horn was broken, there came up four new horns, in its place; which means that, even when the principal argument of "faith alone" was apparently refuted, the same spirit of self-intelligence would come up again, in falsifying the letter of the Scriptures, in all ways, and thus inducing the conjunction of falsity with evil, in the heart and in the conduct.

THE LITTLE HORN.

From one of the four horns came forth a little horn, representing the insinuating fallacy of "FAITH ALONE." For instance, it was argued that, as a man cannot do

good from himself, he must not exert his will to restrain his evil tendencies, because, then, he would be depending on his own power; but that he must let his evils alone, and the Lord will take them away. And thus, by a subtle fallacy, a man would be left to the mercy of the hells, and failing to exert his own power to control his own conduct, as well as his feelings and thoughts, according to the Lord's commandments; in which work the man should act as of himself, but trusting in the Lord to sustain his strength and his intelligence: and this is trusting in the Lord, and not in self.

This horn is called "little," because it does not appear to have the great power which it exerts. But it became "exceedingly great, toward the South, and toward the East, and toward the pleasant land," or glorious land; *i.e.,* it exerted great power against goodness, and against spiritual intelligence, and against the life of the church, and against the brightness of truth, which reveals the Lord.

And this little horn dragged down, and trampled upon, some of the host (or army) of heaven, and of the stars; *i.e.,* this spirit of "faith alone" opposed the good and true principles of the church, and somewhat destroyed their influence, by falsifying the knowledges of truth in the church.

And the horn magnified itself against "the Prince of the host;" *i.e.,* against the Lord, as the Divine Truth; and it took away the continued burnt-offering, which was the daily sacrifice; and it cast down the Lord's sanctuary, and the truth, itself; *i.e.,* the spirit of "faith alone" destroyed the life and spirit of worship, in the minds of men, by falsifying the whole truth as to the Divine Humanity; because men were led to look to the Divine Humanity merely as a scheme of salvation, by "faith alone;" whereas men should look to the Lord, in His Divine Humanity, as the God of Love, reaching

down to fallen men, in order to give them power to resist their own evil tendencies, and to do good, as of themselves, but looking to the Lord for direction and power.

THE TIME OF THE GOAT'S POWER.

Holy ones, or angels, spoke as to the duration of the power of the goat; and they declared that such power would extend two thousand and three hundred days, and that, then, the sanctuary would be cleansed. The number, two, relates to goodness; and three relates to truth. The addition or multiplication by hundreds, or thousands, merely extends and intensifies the meaning of the first number. That the goat's power should continue two thousand and three hundred days, means that the spirit of "faith alone" would continue, in many minds, until it destroyed all the goodness and all the truth; and until the end of that dispensation in the church; and that then, the Lord's sanctuary would be cleansed; *i.e.,* a new church would be raised up, to worship the Lord in love, in wisdom, and in righteousness.

GABRIEL, AND HIS INSTRUCTIONS.

Gabriel was sent to Daniel, to explain the vision. The same angelic messenger was sent to Mary, the mother of Jesus, and to Zacharias, to instruct them. The word Gabriel means, "God is mighty." In the literal sense of the Scriptures, the name seems to be applied to an individual angel; but, in fact, it is the name of a society of angels, in heaven, whose special use is to enlighten men's minds as to the Divine character of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Gabriel instructing Daniel, represents spiritual truth revealing itself in the letter of the Old Testament, which letter seems obscure, as if asleep, until it is touched and awakened, by the inward, spiritual sense, as Gabriel awoke Daniel.

In our text, Gabriel's interpretation of the vision is but a further use of representative and symbolic language, corresponding with the same spiritual principles. But Gabriel's words need explanation, to bring out their spiritual meaning. It is said that the two horns of the ram represent the kings of Media and Persia, and that the goat represents the king of Greece; and that the goat's horns are different kings. But a king, as a ruler, represents a ruling principle in the human mind. The kings of Media and Persia here represent the principle of charity, or love to the neighbor; and the king of Greece here represents "faith alone," without charity.

"When the transgressors are come to the full;" *i.e.,* when evil has filled up its measure of power, and has brought that dispensation of the church to its end, there will arise "a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences;" *i.e.,* the false principle which springs from evil, and not merely from ignorance. This evil falsity is fierce, because it has no gentle love for the neighbor. Those who love evil, and who are not willing to resist their own evil inclinations, convince themselves that "faith alone" is sufficient for salvation, without a good life. And they soon come to regard righteousness as unnecessary. And then they exalt themselves, and their self-will, above goodness and the will of God. And finally, they exalt themselves above the Lord, in their own estimation. These are spiritually insane. And it is observed that many who are intellectually insane proclaim themselves to be the Lord.

THE REPEATED STORY.

Thus, we see that the vision of our text graphically and symbolically describes the combat between faith and charity, when separated. It is the same old story, often repeated in the Bible, from Genesis to the Revelation. It

comes to us, first, in the apparent history of the first human family, when Cain kills his brother Abel. And it repeats itself, in every age of man's history, and in every dispensation of the general church, which comes to an end, and is succeeded by another church.

But the same coming of the Lord, which brings a new church, also brings to an end the old church, in a general spiritual judgment, in the spiritual world. In this judgment, the power of the goat shall be broken; and a new dispensation shall begin its career, in the new light of spiritual truth, and in the warmth of spiritual love.

Salvation is not by "faith alone," nor by works alone; nor by any thing else, alone. It is in the union of love, faith and righteousness. God saves men from themselves, from their own evils of heart and of life, in the measure and degree in which they are willing to give up their evils, and to keep the Lord's commandments. A man's place in the spiritual world is a direct result of his actual character, the quality of his love and his thought, as practically embodied in his conduct. When a young man asked our Lord the direct question, how to attain everlasting life, Jesus replied, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

XLI.

THE MAN AMONG THE MYRTLE TREES, AND THE HORSES.

I saw, by night, and behold, a man riding upon a red horse; and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were horses, red, speckled and white. Then said I, O my lord, what are these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will show thee what these are. And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered, and said, These are they whom Jehovah hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth. And they answered the angel of Jehovah that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.—ZECHARIAH i. 8–11.

THE INWARD SENSE.

IN its inward sense, the text displays the decline of the church; and it indicates the quality of the understanding of the Divine Word, in different stages of the failing church. And the application of the text is brought pointedly in contact with each of us, in our self-examination.

THE LITERAL MEANING.

Literally, the time of our text was about five hundred and twenty years before Christ. A few months previous to this time, the prophet Haggai had declared to the Jews that Jehovah very soon would "shake the nations," and redeem Israel. And the Jews became impatient in awaiting such an event, and somewhat doubtful as to

the future. And then there came, to the prophet Zechariah, a series of eight visions, relating to the present and future conditions of the heathen, and of Israel.

Zechariah reassured the Jews of the Lord's favorable intentions towards them; and he prophesied the impending restoration of Jerusalem, and the final triumph of Israel.

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING.

A revelation by visions at night, indicates an obscure revelation, not made in clear insight into truth, but made in a general way, to minds not yet prepared to see truth in its own clear light.

Those who are mentally in the night are in natural-minded states, which are states of darkness, and of ignorance as to the principles of goodness and of truth. And if such persons are evil in character, they are in the thick darkness of falsity. At the time of our text, the Jewish Church was in a condition of deep and thick darkness, because of very great degeneration in the character of its people.

Zechariah, as a prophet, represented the truth of doctrine, and those who are in the knowledge and truth of doctrine; *i.e.,* "who have ears to hear" "what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

THE MAN.

Zechariah saw a man, who, according to the eleventh verse, was an angel of the Lord. Angels are persons in the spiritual world, in whom the Lord's truth is known, loved, and practised. And they are often employed by the Lord, to proclaim, or to communicate, His truth to men on earth. But impersonally, angels represent the Divine Truth, in which the Lord comes to men, spiritually.

HORSES.

The man seen by the prophet was riding on a horse. Symbolically, the horse represents the human intellect, the understanding; and especially the understanding as to the Divine Word. A red horse is mentioned. Red is the color of love, or goodness, the most vigorous and fundamental color. And the red horse here represents man's understanding of the Divine Word, as to the goodness, or regenerate love, which is taught in the Lord's Word. And this man on the red horse was an angel, sent to examine into the existing conditions of the Gentiles and heathen, as to their understanding of the quality of love, and of goodness, which is the embodiment of love.

MYRTLE TREES.

This man on the red horse stood "among the myrtle trees, in the bottom." Standing is a position in waiting for something to occur, or to be ready. And so it represents a mental state of awaiting results, in order to take further action.

The myrtle is a small evergreen tree, of aromatic odor, and with thick foliage. The myrtle represents rational truths of simple and inferior order, rather than those grand, far-reaching rational truths which are represented by very large and lofty trees. Truths represented by myrtles may be spiritual truths, but not on high spiritual levels. In the prophecy of the restoration of the church, meaning the regeneration of the individuals of the church, in Isaiah lv. we find that, in verse 13, the results of the change from evil to good are thus symbolized: "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree; and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to Jehovah for a name, for an everlasting sign, that shall not be cut off."

And the work of this angel among the myrtle trees was to comfort the Jews with the thought that, in spite of their hard conditions, internal and external, the Lord still kept His angels among them, for their good, and to induce them to look to the Lord, in all things, and to obey His commandments; and thus to return to a state of mind, and of life, in which the Lord could be with them, and could save them from their evils.

IN THE BOTTOM.

This angel-man was among the myrtle trees "in the bottom," that is, in a low place, something of a valley, like a former river-bottom, now dry. Being in a grove, it was also a shady place. These circumstances represent that the angel, in seeking to know the conditions of the church among men, came down to such mental levels as men were occupying; that is, external and lower planes of thought, in the natural mind.

And here, behind the angel, were horses, red, speckled and white. That which is behind another, is in an inferior position, representing an inferior state, a more external condition.

COLORS.

These horses of different colors represent different conditions, in different men, or at different periods in the career of the church. In a bad sense, red, or the color of love, represents evil love. The church was in a very unregenerate state; and so the horses would reflect the colors of the church. In this sense, a red horse would represent the understanding of man corrupted as to the comprehension of genuine love, or goodness, as taught in the Divine Word.

In a good sense, a white horse represents a clear knowledge of the Divine Word; as in Revelation xix. 11-14: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse: and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True; . . . and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him, upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." In this case, in the Revelation, the rider on the white horse was distinctly named "The Word of God." And He was the Lord, Jesus Christ, "the Word made flesh," who thus, sitting on the white horse, represents His spiritual association with the regenerate mind of man, which, in a symbolic sense, as a horse, bears up and carries, the Lord, in all its thoughts. But, of the evil man it is said, in the Psalms, "God is not in all his thoughts."

But when used in a bad sense, the white horse is white from paleness and lack of vigor. And then he represents a dying mind, spiritually losing its vitality. And this was the state of the church, as represented in our text.

And other horses were speckled; that is, mixed in color, partly light, partly dark. This condition represents a mixed state of mind, having some knowledge of truth, yet mixed with falsities and evils.

WALKING TO AND FRO, ETC.

These horses were said to be those "whom Jehovah had sent to walk to and fro through the earth;" that is, inquiries were made, as to the states of men in the existing church, as to their understanding and love of the Divine Word. And the searchers reported to the angel that they had fulfilled their orders, and had "walked to and fro through the earth;" that is, the revelation of existing conditions was now to be made; which was that they had found all the earth sitting "still, and at rest." The earth represented the church among men on earth; and the conditions observed were

those of the people of the earth; that is, the existing states of the church, in men. That everything was found to be "still, and at rest," means that there was no activity, no motion, because there was no life. It was the stillness of indolence, inertness, and death, and not the quietness of peace.

Literally, this report was in view of the recent prophecy of Haggai, that Jehovah soon would "shake the nations," and break them. And the report of the searchers indicated that there were no present signs of any such shaking up of the spiritually cold, indifferent, selfish, and dead states of the heathen world. Externally the nations seemed to be quiet, and even secure in their selfish ways. But this apparent external quiet did not prove an internal peace; but the heathen nations were fast filling up the full measure of their iniquities, when they would come to judgment, and to self-destruction, according to their interior states of character.

THE APPLICATION.

The heathen in our minds are our selfish passions and notions, which often feel at rest, and quiet, when we are ignorant of our real quality of character; and when we do not see the inevitable results of such interior life as we are living, in evil. In such circumstances, our case would be more hopeful, if we did not feel so self-satisfied and secure, in our evils. Our natural mind may seem to be still and to rest, in its sensuousness, while our spiritual mind is engaged in a severe struggle for its life.

It seemed hard to the Jews, to live in distress while the heathen nations were living at ease. And this is more or less the case, always, in the life-struggles of human beings, in the search for spiritual life. While the church remains in the material world, it must meet

the sensuous conditions of this world; and it must come into conflict with such states. Our natural minds are seeking natural peace and ease, even while our interior minds are seeking the spiritual peace and rest which come with regeneration, in goodness, truth, and righteousness.

And while we are longing for success in our mental conflict, our Lord will sometimes open our minds, by means of His holy Word, and will give us a glimpse of existing conditions in the world of our own sensuous natural mind. He will show us the angel of Truth, occupying the representative horse of our intellect, and standing in the myrtle grove, the rational thoughts of our minds. And we shall recognize our own different conditions of understanding, some red, some speckled, and some white; mental conditions in which we sometimes attempt to understand the Lord's Word from selfish and evil loves, or from mixed truths and self-derived notions, or in the deadly whiteness, or paleness, of a lack of spiritual life.

And when such conditions are revealed to us, in and through the Divine Word, it is for us to exert ourselves, to enter into pure loves and true thoughts and righteous conduct, so that our Lord may restore us to spiritual vigor; and may expel the heathen from our minds. And then, in us, spiritually, "Jehovah shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem."

XLII.

THE FOUR HORNS AND THE FOUR CARPENTERS.

I saw, and behold, four horns. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah and Israel and Jerusalem.

And Jehovah showed me four carpenters. Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to terrify them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah, to scatter it.—ZECHARIAH i. 18–21.

THE text describes the vastation, or laying waste, of the church, by false principles, originating in evil loves; and, afterwards, the restoration of the church, by the Lord, by driving out the false principles and establishing a new church, in which were spiritual truths.

HORNS.

In the symbolic language of the Scriptures, a horn represents power, because it is a weapon, by means of which power is used. Swords, clubs, guns, etc., in the hands of men, and the horns, claws, etc., of animals, add greatly to the power which the individual can exert. And so in symbolism these things represent the power which they help to exercise.

In our mental life, in an orderly state of mind, the power of our love is exerted by means of the truth which we know and love and use. And so, in this good

sense, a horn represents the power of truth against evil, falsity, and sin.

But, if our life is disorderly and unregenerate, we do not depend upon the Lord's truth, but upon false principles, notions of our self-derived intelligence, which are mental darkness. And then, that which we regard as our power, is the power of falsity against goodness and truth. Hence, in this bad sense, a horn represents this power of falsity, exerted in the mind, against the Lord's truths, which are the laws of human life. And such power of falsity destroys the life and principles of the church, in the mind which cherishes falsities; and also in the church in the aggregate, when such falsities prevail among men.

Horns are frequently mentioned in the Scriptures, in several aspects, and in both good and bad senses. The central life of our Lord is the Divine Love; and His Divine Power is exerted by means of His Divine Truth. And so, whenever horns are mentioned in the Scriptures as belonging to the Lord, they represent His Divine Truth. And horns are often mentioned as belonging to men, to represent the power given to men, by the Lord, by and in the Divine Truth, revealed to men.

Among the Israelites, the suggestive force of these symbols was increased by prevalent customs. Horns were often worn as articles of ornament, and as representative of existing conditions. For men, a metallic band or fillet, was worn around the head; and from the front of this band there extended forward and upward, diagonally, a slender horn of metal, from a few inches long to a foot long, and often highly ornamented. And for women the horn was often much longer; and it extended almost perpendicularly, from a setting in a cap, or other head-dress. When the person held his head high, his horn was held up, or exalted; but when the man was depressed in spirits, and his head drooped,

his horn was held low. And thus the position of the horn represented the state of the wearer's mind. And thus the horn, as a representative, became very familiar to the Israelites.

CEREMONIAL HORNS, ETC.

Horns were also used in ceremonials. The olive oil, used for anointing priests and kings, was kept in flasks made of the horns of cattle, somewhat resembling the old-time powder-horn. At each of the four corners of the altar of incense, and also of the altar of burnt-offerings, there was a representation of a horn, symbolizing the power of truth, in worship.

But when the church degenerated, and her worship became hypocritical, it is said in the prophecy through Amos iii. 14, "I will visit the transgressions of Israel; I will also visit the altars of Bethel, and the horns of the altar shall be cut off, and fall to the ground;" by which is meant that the power of the church shall perish, because of evil in the men of the church.

IN VISIONS.

And in the symbolic visions of the prophets, many horned beasts were seen, which are especially mentioned. Daniel, in vision, saw a certain goat with a notable horn. At another time, he saw dreadful beasts with prominent horns: one beast had ten horns. And John saw a great dragon with ten horns. All these bad beasts represented falsity, warring against the Lord's truth, for the destruction of the church.

SCATTERED.

In such cases, the truth became obscured, in the minds of men who depended upon self-derived intelligence.

The falsities which sprang from evil, thus scattered the truths of the church, breaking up the life of the church. For the church can live from the Lord, only, and in the knowledge of the Lord, and in the love and practice of the Lord's revealed principles. And sometimes, when such a state of mind became somewhat general among the people of the church, the people were dispersed, scattered among the nations, in captivity to the Gentiles.

And this condition is represented, in the symbolic imagery of the text, by the horns which "scattered Judah and Israel and Jerusalem." Judah represents the church as to its goodness, or love; Israel represents the church as to its truth, or wisdom; and the city of Jerusalem represents the church as to the doctrines taught in the church. And goodness, truth, and right doctrine, are all scattered from the mind of the man who indulges in falsities, and who depends upon his own self-derived notions, instead of the Divine Truth.

FOUR.

There were four of these horns shown to the prophet. In symbolism, in general, even numbers refer to the life of the will, or heart, and thus represent man's condition as to love, or goodness; while odd numbers refer to the life of the understanding, or intellect, and thus represent the man's condition as to truth, intelligence, and knowledge.

Two, as a number, represents goodness, because of the union of love and wisdom, the two uniting in a righteous life. Four is twice two: and it includes two in a double form; thus, in one sense, representing goodness both inwardly in the mind, and outwardly in the conduct.

In nature there are four quarters, or points of the compass, North, South, East, and West, to represent

all the general conditions of the human mind, natural intelligence, spiritual intelligence, spiritual love, and natural love.

But when a man has degenerated in character, these representatives, in their reference to him, change their representation to the opposite quality. Thus, in the evil man, the North, South, East, and West denote conditions of falsity and of evil. And these are the mental conditions which are induced by the four horns mentioned in the text, the power of falsity, which had scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.

CARPENTERS, OR SMITHS.

But it was the Lord's intention and plan to restore the church, by counteracting the evil effects of falsities in the church. And we must remember that such falsities, being derived from evil, are not merely false doctrines, taught in the church, but false principles, loved in the heart, and cherished in the thought, and practised in the life, and encouraging selfish lusts instead of righteous loves, and vicious thoughts instead of true ideas. And, in order to break the force of these vicious falsities in human minds, the Lord brought against them the literal sense of His Divine Word, truth in ultimates, as applied to man's every-day practical conduct, so that the man could see what he should do in his daily life.

And we can clearly see the great power exercised by plain literal truths, laws of conduct, which hold the man strictly to a certain course of action, whatever may be his own notions, or theories. And thus, by keeping a man's attention upon his action, the practical work he is doing, his mind can be released from the deadening influence of falsities, at least gradually, if he can be led to be willing to be so released.

These practical truths are the carpenters whom Zechariah saw in the vision. The Hebrew word here translated "carpenter," in the common version of the Bible, is, in the American Revised Version, rendered "smiths." Evidently, the word refers to men of skill, mechanics, artificers, craftsmen, who are skilful in the use of iron tools. And iron tools represent truths in their literal aspects, for practical application.

TO TERRIFY.

And these skilful mechanics were sent out to "fray" (*i.e.*, to frighten, or terrify) the four horns, or falsities, and thus to drive these falsities from the minds of the men of the church. If a man can be kept in good work, doing good according to the revealed truth of the Lord, even in outward form, his mind will become more and more open to new truths, which agree with the practical good that he is doing; and, gradually, he can be led out of former false notions.

But, in the man's mind, the new practical truths, as working rules of daily conduct, must enable the reform to reach the same levels of thought and of feeling which the falsities occupied. And so there are "four carpenters" to "fray" the four horns; *i.e.*, the new truth can reach and overcome every form and phase of the old falsity, if the man will allow the good influence to operate within his mind. And so, in the first vision of Zechariah, there were four horsemen, who were searching into the spiritual conditions of the church.

And this balance of four against four may well suggest to us the balance of power, the equilibrium, maintained in our minds by our Lord, in the operations of His Divine Providence, so that we may be always in spiritual freedom to turn to goodness and truth, and to resist evil and falsity. Whatever may be our actual temptations, there is always present with us, adequate

spiritual help and protection, which we may use if we are willing to do so. In Isaiah liv. 16, 17, we read, "Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals, in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work. . . . No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee, in judgment, thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of Jehovah."

LIFTING THE HEAD.

It is said that these horns "scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head;" *i.e.,* conquered men, crushed and humiliated them, so as to break their courage and independence. The head, as the highest part of man's body, represents his ruling-love, with its intelligence.

The effect of the oppression of a man's mind by false ideas, drawn from evil, is to crush all that is noble, spiritual, and manly in him. But the new truths, taught in the letter of the Divine Word, and there put in a form to be brought into practical use, will scatter the "horns of the Gentiles," and will enable the man to lift up his head, again; *i.e.,* to elevate his interior manhood, and to regain spiritual intelligence.

Literally, "the horns of the Gentiles" were the dreadful falsities learned by the Israelites from the surrounding heathen nations. But spiritually, those heathen are within our own natural minds.

The general literal intent of the vision in our text, was to encourage the Jews, and to assure them that their present national afflictions would come to an end, and that better days were in store for them. The Jew expected better days to come to him in better external conditions; but the intelligent Christian looks for his "better days" in inward changes, in the improvement

of his own character, under the Divine leading and teaching.

Zechariah says, "Jehovah answered the angel who talked with me, with good words and comfortable words." And our Lord always answers our every sincere inquiry for spiritual life "with good words and comfortable words."

The text representatively illustrates our Lord's deliverance of Israel, in the distant past, and His promise to overthrow her enemies in the future. And the history of Israel, as narrated in the Scriptures, presents, to our enlightened intelligence, a representative and symbolic picture of our own individual careers. And while the record may well make us serious, yet it gives us also ample reason to rejoice in the possibilities before us, in the measure in which each of us is willing to become, like Nathaniel of old, spiritually, "an Israelite, indeed, without guile."

XLIII.

THE MAN WITH A MEASURING-LINE, ETC.

I lifted up mine eyes, again, and looked, and behold, a man with a measuring-line in his hand. Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof. And behold, the angel that talked with me went forth; and another angel went out to meet him; and said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls, for the multitude of men and cattle therein: for I, saith Jehovah, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.—ZECHARIAH ii. 1–5.

THE text representatively reveals the spiritual quality of the New Church; showing that the Church will be greatly multiplied; and that the Lord will be present in it, in both its internal and its external.

MEASURING.

A man appeared, having a measuring-line. This man, seen in spiritual vision, was an angel, a regenerated man, in the spiritual world. And, as an angel is a messenger of the Lord, so the work which he was sent to do, was the Lord's work through the man. And, as the action of the angel was representative, it represented the spiritual action of the Lord, among men.

In natural things, we measure anything to ascertain its size, which is represented by length, breadth, and thickness, or height. But spiritual things relate to qualities rather than to quantities; they regard character rather than dimensions. And so a spiritual measurement is to ascertain qualities of character. Where, in natural measurements, we find length, breadth, and height, these dimensions represent, respectively, the goodness, the truth, and the elevation or level, in men's minds, which are ascertained by spiritual measurement.

We use these ideas as figures of speech, when we say of a mean man, that he is a narrow man, or a small-minded man; and of a generous and good man, that he is broad-minded and large-hearted. The standard by which things are measured, spiritually, is the truth of the Lord, as revealed in His Divine Word. And, in man, the ability which uses the standard, or measuring-line, is our rational faculty, our capacity to perceive the revealed truth, and to recognize it as the truth, in principle. And when our Lord sends an angel to us, to show us the spiritual measurements of different human states of mind and of life, our rational minds must be open and active, in order that we may comprehend what the angel is showing us.

MEASURING JERUSALEM.

In the case before us, in our text, the angel was to measure Jerusalem. Literally, he was to measure the city of Jerusalem, as to its natural dimensions; perhaps to repair and rebuild it. But this action was symbolic and representative of a spiritual measurement of the conditions of the church, among men; for Jerusalem, which was the head-quarters of the church, in Israel, represented the church; and the relative dimensions and conditions of Jerusalem represented the spiritual qualities and conditions of the church. And the measurement was to determine the quality, or spiritual character, of the life of the church. Changed conditions in

the character of the men of the church would be revealed by new spiritual measurements.

The measurements of Jerusalem as it stands, would refer to the revealing of the spiritual character of the existing church. But the measurement of the Jerusalem seen in vision, often applies to the future spiritual conditions of the church, especially after the coming of the Lord.

THE TWO ANGELS.

"And behold, the angel that talked with me went forth; and another angel went out to meet him; and said unto him, Run, speak to this young man," etc. Both of these angels represent the Lord's truth, sent to the mind of the regenerating man. We see the Divine Truth in different aspects: in our will, or heart, we receive an idea of the goodness which must be carried out; and in our intellect we enter into an understanding of the ideas involved in the case.

TOWNS WITHOUT WALLS.

The angel revealed the promise of the Lord that "Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls, for the multitude of men and cattle therein." Literally, in ancient days, in Oriental lands, large towns and important places were protected by high walls. But many of the small towns and villages, especially in a farming country, were built on the plains, or on the hill-sides, or in the valleys, and without walls. And, in such times, when robbers and enemies were abundant, the ability of a town to live unmolested, without walls, indicated a state of peace, tranquillity, and freedom.

Sometimes it happened that a walled city became overcrowded, so that the surplus population had to encamp outside the walls. And, generally, in connection with all large cities, or towns of importance, there

was a foreign element, which resided outside the walls, often temporarily, and lived by trading with the citizens, as well as with travellers coming and going.

In our text, the literal idea is that Jerusalem shall enjoy a season of peace and prosperity, during which the population shall so greatly increase that many persons will have to be accommodated outside the walls, where the foreign element will also be gathered.

THE SPIRITUAL SIDE.

But the spiritual picture portrays the conditions of the Lord's Church, in the future, the New Church, in its regenerate states, interiorly receiving the Lord and His truths. And then the citizens within the walls will represent the intelligent persons of the New Church, who attain the higher conditions of heaven; and the dwellers in the suburbs will represent the Gentiles, drawn towards the New Church, from all around, and coming under the influence of the New Church, at least externally, in the natural degree, as good natural men, in the natural heaven. For the New Church, like all other churches, and, in fact, all other things, must have its internal and its external. In the natural heaven there is knowledge of truth, from the Word, and a good life, according to the truth; but there are no interior and spiritual perception and intelligence, which give insight into the principles of truth.

And it is so with men of the church on earth: some are distinctively spiritual-minded, while others see truths on the natural plane of thought, only, but live a regenerate life. But all such are in the church, each on his own plane, and in his own degree.

These external men are meant by the cattle named in our text, as distinguished from the men, in the phrase, "for the multitude of men and cattle therein." For, in

comparison, and spiritually, the interior difference between spiritual men and good natural men, is represented by the difference between good men and good cattle. One class is open to natural life, and the other to life distinctively spiritual in quality.

A similar idea is shown in the arrangement of the inhabitants of each heaven, where the wisest and best of the angels dwell in the centre, and others outwardly from the centre, decreasing in intelligence towards the circumference.

WALL OF FIRE.

The Lord declares that, although Jerusalem may become overcrowded, and may overrun into the suburbs, outside the walls, yet her people shall be safe, for He "will be unto her a wall of fire, round about."

A wall is for the protection of the things within the enclosure. And an adequate wall of fire would be a very great protection, for it could not be scaled, nor broken through. Such an impenetrable wall of fire is the Lord's love of His people, which always surrounds them, and, by His Divine Providence, always protects them from all outward enemies, in the measure and degree in which they love the Lord, and, in their dealings with each other, live according to the laws of spiritual love.

This wall of fire is one which no evil spirit can scale, or break through. And it is a perpetual fire, which can never die out. "The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." (Psalm xxxiv. 7.)

A wall, protecting men, represents a doctrine, or the system of doctrine, in the church, protecting a regenerating mind from the prowling enemies of the natural suggestions of his own senses, as well as the infestation

of other evil influences. And the doctrine of love is the most perfect wall, because "the self-evidencing reason of love" makes all things clear to the mind which lives in the sphere and action of such love.

PERPETUAL FIRE.

Fire represents love, especially, and in the highest sense, the Divine Love. And this never-failing Divine Love was represented by the perpetual fire which was kept burning on the altars, in the tabernacle of Israel, and in the temple, and never allowed to go out. And this perpetual fire was also intended to represent the constant love which men should have towards the Lord. When Jehovah appeared to Moses, He appeared "in a flame of fire, in the midst of a bush." (Exodus iii. 2.) The fire represented the Divine Love, the Father, as seen in the letter of His Word, which was represented by the bush, which also, in another sense, represented the external humanity of the Lord.

GLORY.

Our text ends with the Divine promise to Jerusalem, "I will be the glory in the midst of her." As Jerusalem represents the church, especially as to its general system of doctrine, built up in the mind, as a city is built upon the earth, the "glory" in the midst of Jerusalem is the Divine Truth, interiorly within the doctrine of the church, and shining brightly from the Divine Love, which is the inmost of the church, as light shines from fire.

In another aspect, this "glory in the midst" is the inward and spiritual meaning of the Divine Word, which shines through the outward letter of the Sacred Scriptures. And, in the profoundest sense, the "glory"

is the inmost Divine life shining in the Divine Humanity in Jesus Christ, the one God of heaven and of earth.

This Divine character, shining through the Humanity of Jesus Christ, is represented in many paintings by the halo, or surrounding brightness, about the head of Jesus.

When we see and understand the Divine character of Jesus, and comprehend the presence of God in man, this great revelation of spiritual truth calls us to elevate our minds even to greater degrees, that we may see the truth in even higher aspects. Thus the voice of our Lord says to us, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee." (Isaiah lx. 1.) "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man, in heaven; . . . and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory" (Matthew xxiv. 30); *i.e.*, the Lord's Divine Truth shall shine forth through the letter of the Word.

The interior church could not be established with the Israelites, because they were in low and natural-minded conditions, in which they could not perceive interior things. And so a new church, the First Christian Church, was established, to provide conditions in which men could begin to elevate their minds into spiritual states, at least in simplicity, as spiritual-natural men. But the First Christian Church could not understand interior spiritual things; and so, in the Second Coming of the Lord, a new church, the New Jerusalem, was established, to receive the Lord in His Divine Humanity, in clear spiritual light, and without mystery; and to receive the Divine Word in its inward and spiritual meaning, as the glory of the Lord shining within the literal Scriptures, upon those who have ears to hear "what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

XLIV.

JOSHUA, THE HIGH PRIEST, ETC.

And he showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of Jehovah, and Satan standing at his right hand, to resist him.

And Jehovah said unto Satan, Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan; even Jehovah, who hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?

Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those who stood before Him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him He said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.

And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of Jehovah stood by. And the angel of Jehovah protested unto Joshua, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, then thou shalt also judge My house, and shalt also keep My courts, and I will give thee places to walk among those that stand by. Hear now, O Joshua, the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for behold I will bring forth My servant, the Branch. For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith Jehovah of hosts; and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig-tree.—ZECHARIAH iii.

THE text is a prophecy that the infernal false principles of the Israelitish Church would infest the First

Christian Church, which would be established by the Lord, but which would fall into many falsities of ignorance; but that the Lord would remove such falsities, and would give the church truths, instead; and that the men of the church would have the understanding of truth, from the Lord, in the measure in which they would reject falsities from their minds and lives.

And, as all Divine prophecies are universal in their scope, covering all human conditions to which they are applicable, so the text also prophetically reveals conditions of the First Christian Church, at the Second Coming of the Lord, and the formation and establishment of the New Church, symbolized by the descent of the New Jerusalem, as narrated in the Apocalypse.

THE LITERAL PICTURE.

The Jews who had been in captivity in Chaldea, had returned to Palestine, to find their country and its people in a degenerated condition. The temple of Jehovah, in Jerusalem, had fallen into decay, and the service and ceremonies of the church were neglected. Some of the Jews recognized and deplored the evil of these conditions; but they feared that their national and personal evils had been so great that they could not expect the forgiveness of Jehovah, nor His help in the restoration of the people and of their former institutions.

But the prophets, especially Haggai and Zechariah, encouraged the leaders to make great efforts towards the restoration of Israel, and especially for the rebuilding of the temple of Jehovah. And, for their encouragement, the vision narrated in our text was given to Zechariah; in which Joshua, the high priest, was represented as a man accused of a serious crime, and brought before the judge, and confronted by his accuser; and, according to custom, clad in neglected and filthy garments. But the Lord is represented as pardoning the criminal, and ordering his release, and his restoration to his former conditions; thus representing that the Lord would pardon and forgive Israel, and restore former conditions of prosperity, if the people of Israel would walk according to the Lord's commandments, and reform their lives.

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING.

But, in the spiritual meaning, this dramatic picture of Joshua and Satan brought to judgment, represents the dominant condition of mind in the Jewish Church, in which the Divine Word was falsified by the spirit of self-derived intelligence.

Joshua, as the high priest of Jehovah, here represented the Lord as to the Divine Word, and also in another sense, as to the natural humanity of the Lord; for those who profaned and perverted the Divine Word, even in its letter, would reject and despise the Lord, as "the Word made flesh."

Man's selfish mind is always ready to accuse the Divine Word and the church of falsity and inconsistency. But the purpose of the Lord is not to condemn men, but to save them from their own evils and falsities; and so the Lord always rebukes Satan, the adversary, and the accuser of men. And this rebuke involves not only condemnation of Satan, but also the earnest Divine effort in opposition to Satan's work. The more Satan can prove that men are burning in the fires of evil, the more the Lord seeks to rescue each individual person, as we would pluck a burning stick from the fire.

SATAN.

Satan is not a personal proper name, but an official title, meaning "an adversary," as, for instance, an adver-

sary, or opponent, in a suit at law. But the First Christian Church, taking everything in the Bible as literally as possible, supposed Satan to be an individual person, a fallen angel. But, in fact, there is no such great personal devil, an adversary and antagonist to the Lord. The devil is the principle of evil, in the heart of an unregenerate man, either on earth or in one of the hells; and any man in whom evil forms his fixed character is a devil. Speaking of Judas, Jesus said, "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?"

A distinction is made between the devil and Satan, the devil meaning the principle of evil, in the aggregate, and Satan meaning falsity in the aggregate. Satan resisting Joshua, the high priest, represents the spirit of sensuous falsity, operating in the individual mind of a man, or in the aggregate mind of the church, and antagonizing the Divine Word, especially in its life and spirit, and this, often, even while those who are in falsities profess to be governed by the literal sense of the Divine Word.

In every line of human life on earth, personal, official, or commercial, when we seek to do right, Satan stands at our right hand, to resist us; to alarm, depress, and discourage our efforts.

The hand represents power, which we exert especially by means of our hands. The right hand represents the power of the will, or heart, in its love of goodness. And the left hand represents the power of the understanding, or intellect, in its knowledge of truth. Satan standing at the right hand represents the false principles of our unregenerate nature exerting themselves to destroy the good which is in our hearts, from the Lord.

Thus Satan is the adversary, the accuser of the brethren, representatively personified. And when, by regeneration, this false spirit is cast out of our mind, our

condition is represented in another picture, given in the Revelation xii. 9, 10: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world. . . . Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down."

THE FIRE-BRAND.

Among the Orientals, when any one escaped a great danger, he was called "a fire-brand," or "a brand plucked from the fire," where, otherwise, he would have been destroyed. And the same figure of speech is applied to spiritual dangers, and to a repenting sinner, who is saved from the fires of hell.

FILTHY GARMENTS.

By Oriental custom, a prisoner charged with a capital crime, was allowed to go without attention to his personal appearance; and he was clothed in filthy and ragged garments, as appropriate representatives of his supposed character. A similar custom existed among the Romans; and such accused persons were called "sordidati," or filthy ones. And, in English, the primary meaning of the word "sordid" is filthy, vile.

Garments, which clothe the body, represent the truths which clothe our affections, *i.e.*, which enable our affections to present themselves properly. Good and honorable persons, especially in their appearance in public, are properly clad in decent clothing. But a low, mean, degraded, and filthy person seems appropriately clad in filthy clothes, or in rags. The mind has a natural perception of the fitness of things, in these representatives.

And so, in the Scriptures, clothing is often mentioned in the way of representing spiritual conditions. In

Isaiah lxi. 10, it is said, "I will greatly rejoice in Jehovah; my soul shall be joyful in my God: for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation: He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness;" referring to the glorious truths which are given to the regenerate mind, by the Lord.

CHANGE OF GARMENTS.

When Jesus was transfigured before His three disciples, it is said that "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." In this case, even the appearance of the garments was changed.

And a change in the appearance of garments, or a change of garments, represents a change in the state of mind of the man who beholds these things, or who is thus represented.

Filthy garments represent the false principles which spring from evil. And to have the high priest clad in filthy garments is, representatively, to have the church taught falsities instead of truths; and to ascribe falsities to the Lord's Word, and thus to the Lord, *i.e.*, to pervert and falsify the teachings of the Divine Word; and to hold in contempt the Divine Humanity of the Lord. But to take away the filthy garments of Joshua, and to clothe him with good clothing, is to restore to the church the understanding of the Divine Word, and thus to lead the church to reject the falsities of self-derived intelligence. And, in this way, the Lord regenerates the church, and causes the iniquity of men to pass away; *i.e.*, to be rejected by men, and remitted to the hells, whence it came.

THE MITRE.

After clean garments were given to Joshua, "they set a fair mitre upon his head." A mitre, or bishop's official

hat, represents the intelligence and wisdom of the church, from knowledge and love of the spiritual truth taught by the Lord, in His holy Word.

WALKING IN THE LORD'S WAYS.

The angel then said to Joshua, "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, then thou shalt also judge My house, and shalt also keep My courts." That Joshua should walk in the ways of Jehovah, represented that the church should live according to the teachings of the Lord's Word. The proof that any one sincerely believes a truth is that he obeys that truth in all his life, inwardly in his affections and thoughts, and outwardly in his conduct.

Joshua, as the high priest, had charge of the church, as the servant of the Lord. It was the Lord's charge, but, in a certain way, delegated to the priest. And so the church must have charge over the Divine things of goodness and truth, entrusted to the church, either the church in the aggregate body, or the church in each man's mind.

To judge the Lord's house was to lead the house of Israel. But, spiritually, it is to apply the good principles of the Divine Word to the conduct of life, when the rational mind is opened to see spiritual truths, in their principles and in their practical application. To keep the Lord's courts is to keep the externals of the church in good order.

SIGNS.

The prophets and the priests of Israel were official representatives of the Lord; they were signs before the people; and, as such, their doings were closely observed by the people. Ezekiel, at the command of the Lord,

enacted a parable before the eyes of the Israelites, removing his household goods, as if to go into captivity. And then the Lord instructed Ezekiel to say to the people, "I am your sign; like as I have done, so shall it be done unto them: they shall remove and go into captivity." (Ezekiel xii. 11.) These are the things meant by the men that sat before Joshua being "men wondered at;" *i.e.,* men who were signs to the people.

THE BRANCH.

But the greatest of all signs to men would be the Messiah, the Lord, Jesus Christ, meant by the Branch, the Humanity which should grow out of the Divine Jehovah. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." (Isaiah xi. 1.) "Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, Behold the Man whose name is the Branch: and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of Jehovah; . . . and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne: and He shall be a priest upon His throne." (Zechariah vi. 12, 13.)

THE STONE.

"The stone that I have laid before Joshua," represented the Divine Word, even in its literal sense, set before the church, that the people may ascribe the truth to the Lord. And this Word would serve as a corner-stone of the new temple to be built in the minds of the people of the church. In its highest sense, this stone is the Humanity of the Lord, as the foundation of the church on earth, and of the inward temple in every regenerate mind. "Behold, I lay, in Zion, for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation." (Isaiah xxviii. 16.)

This stone is said to have seven eyes. Eyes, by which we see, represent the understanding, or intellect, by which the mind sees. Seven represents that which is perfect and holy. To have seven eyes, representatively, is to have full and perfect understanding of the truth. But, as it is a stone which the Lord lays, or sets, it represents the perfect watchfulness and providence of the Divine Wisdom. When the prophet Zechariah had seen a golden candlestick, with its seven lamps, the Lord said "These are the eyes of Jehovah, which run to and fro through the whole earth" (Zechariah iv. 10); *i.e.,* the perfect Divine Providence.

To engrave upon this stone is to impress the Divine Wisdom upon the Divine Word, even in its letter. And when the Divine Word is received by the church, as the truth of the Lord, loved, understood, and practised, then the iniquity of the land shall be removed.

VINE AND FIG-TREE.

And then "every man shall call his neighbor, under the vine, and under the fig-tree." In the hot countries of the Orient, in times of prosperity, families would often take their meals in the open air, under the shade of trees and vines, especially the grape-vine and the fig-tree, because these were the common possessions of the country, yielding the fruit for the table. In such times, a passing neighbor, or traveller, would be invited to join the family in their repast. And these things became the representatives of peace and prosperity. The grape-vine represented spiritual truth, bearing the grapes of spiritual goodness. And the fig-tree represented natural truth, bearing the figs of natural goodness. And thus when a man could rest and eat in peace, under his own vine and fig-tree, he represented a condition of mind in which the man of the church, well instructed

in truth, can rest in the spiritual peace of regeneration, in the love and understanding of both spiritual and natural goodness. "And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, . . . all the days of Solomon." (I. Kings iv. 25.)

These representative promises were given to ancient Israel; and they are given to us, also, and to every other age of the church; for the Divine Love and Wisdom are earnestly seeking to bless men, at all times, and in all places. All these glorious pictures of noble spiritual conditions may be portraits of our lives, to-day, if we are willing to search out our evil tendencies, and to repent of our evils, and to reform our lives. Our Lord has promised that "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." O Lord, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee."

XLV.

THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK AND THE OLIVE-TREES.

And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, and said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick, all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: and two olive-trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord? . . . What are these two olive-trees upon the right side of the candlestick, and upon the left side thereof? . . . What are these two olive-branches, which, through the two golden pipes, empty the golden oil out of themselves? And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.—ZECHARIAH iv. 1–4, 11–14.

THE text treats of the spiritual light which shall be in the New Church, from the Lord, from the goodness of love, by means of heavenly truths.

AWAKING.

Natural life and spiritual life are distinctly different experiences. While a man is engaged in the works and thoughts and phenomena of his corporeal life, he is as if asleep towards the distinctive experiences and phenomena of his spiritual life. The spiritual world is the inward world, the world of life and of causes, while

the natural world is the outward world of effects and embodiments of spiritual principles. But, in our ordinary natural experiences we are not conscious of the activities even of our own spirit, within our own body. And so when the Lord suddenly opens the eyes of a man's spirit, and allows him to see into the spiritual world, it is comparatively as if a man were suddenly awakened from sleep, to renew his consciousness amid the phenomena of his natural life.

And a similar awakening occurs in the mind, when we pass from merely sensuous forms of thought to spiritual phases of thought, and to rational perception of principles, whose comprehension is obscure to us in our natural-minded states. These things are meant by the prophet's statement that the angel awoke him, as if from a sleep, when he was called, again, to see the symbolic representatives displayed in the spiritual world. And so in the Scriptures natural-mindedness is often referred to as a state of sleep; and when men are called to elevate their minds to spiritual truths, they are called to "awake." "Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in dust." (Isaiah xxvi. 19.) "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem." (Isaiah lii. 1.)

THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK.

The prophet saw a golden candlestick and two olive-trees, etc. The candlestick was a lamp-stand. The Hebrew word used in the text, is a general term for a light, covering and including lamp, candle, torch, etc.; as, in our language, we speak of a "light," whether it be by gas, or candle, or oil lamp, or electrical lamp, etc. For instance, in II. Samuel xxii. 29, it is said, "Thou art my lamp, O Jehovah: and Jehovah will lighten my darkness." And, in Psalm xviii. 22, we read "Thou wilt

light my candle: Jehovah, my God, will enlighten my darkness." And the same Hebrew word is translated "lamp," in one case, and "candle" in the other case.

In a natural figurative sense, the vision of the text refers to the work of Zerubbabel, in repairing and refurnishing the temple. But, spiritually, it relates to the coming of the Lord, Jesus Christ, and to His work in repairing the spiritual church, in the minds of men, by bringing down the life and the truths of heaven. In a specific sense the vision symbolizes the New-Jerusalem Church, in the heavens and on earth. This Church is in spiritual light from the Lord. And in a special sense this Church is the temple of the Lord, in which the Lord is known and worshipped in His Divine Humanity, which is the temple of Jehovah, in the highest sense. In Revelation i. 20, it is said, "The seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."

The candlestick was of gold. Gold corresponds to love to the Lord. And where love to the Lord exists in the church, those who constitute the church are in the perception and use of the highest light of truth, the truth of love, from the Lord, by means of His Word.

THE BOWL, PIPES, ETC.

The lamp-stand had one bowl, on the top, to contain oil, which was thence fed to the seven lamps, by means of seven pipes, one pipe from the bowl to each lamp. The bowl and the distributing-pipes represent the doctrines of the church, from the Divine Word; which doctrines, as vessels, hold the truth and the goodness of love, and serve as means for the practical use of these spiritual things. This bowl was on the top of the candlestick, or lamp-stand, to represent the source of the oil, or heavenly love, in the highest things of life, which come down from the Lord.

There were seven lamps, because seven represents that which is holy. And the seven lamps were the holy truths of the church, from the Lord, through His Word; for, in the supreme sense, the Lord is the holy One. It was revealed to Moses, "Thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold; of beaten work shall the candlestick be made; . . . and thou shalt make seven lamps therein; and thou shalt light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it." (Exodus xxv. 31, 37.)

LAMPS.

In general, a lamp signifies a doctrine, from which shines the truth, as light. So it is said, in Psalm cxix. 105, "Thy Word is a lamp to my feet, and a light unto my path." The seven lamps on the candlestick were figuratively called "the seven eyes of the Lord," representing the Lord's full and holy watchful providence over all things of human life. The church on earth, in the degree in which it has the Divine Truth, unperverted, is "the light of the world," in a lower degree, because it proclaims the Lord, Himself, as "the Light of the World," in the highest degree. And, in this sense, Jesus said to His disciples, "Ye are the light of the world."

THE OLIVE-TREES.

The olive-trees in the vision represented the Celestial Church, the Church principled in supreme love to the Lord, which includes a heavenly love for the fellow-men. The fruit of the olive-tree, the ripe golden olive, full of warm smooth oil, represents the practical love of the Lord, as seen in the love of men, as the Lord's children.

There were two olive-trees, to represent, in one sense, celestial love, on the right side, and celestial intelligence, on the left side. For the right side refers to the things

of the will, or heart, with its loves and affections; and the left side represents the things of the understanding, or intellect, with its thoughts. And thus, in one aspect, the two olive-trees represented love and charity, or the celestial man's love to the Lord, and his love to men. Representatively, these two qualities of love, and, personally, those persons in whom such qualities especially predominate, are represented by the picture of the redeemed, in I. Kings xxii. 19, "I saw Jehovah, sitting on His throne, and all the hosts of heaven standing by Him, on His right hand and on His left."

KNOWEST THOU NOT?

When the prophet asked the angel for information about the things seen in his vision, the angel at first replied by asking the prophet, "Knowest thou not what these be?" And this counter-questioning occurs twice, during the same vision. Naturally, it would seem that the angel would know that the prophet would not understand these things without instruction. But the angel's questions were intended to define the prophet's state of mind, and to draw out his thought, and to fix the matter more firmly in his mind. The prophet then represented the church among men. And the question of the angel, "Knowest thou not what these be?" carried an inference that the prophet should have known such things; *i.e.*, that the church should be in a state of mind to understand the relations of spiritual and natural things, because these things are set forth in the Divine Word, which is with the church, and which would be understood if men were in regenerate and enlightened states.

A somewhat similar case is mentioned in Revelation vii. 13, when John was witnessing the representative phenomena of the spiritual world: one of the elders

asked him, "Who are these, that are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they?" John then did not understand what he saw, but he wished to inquire; and so he replied, "Sir, thou knowest." And then the angel instructed John. This questioning of the angel may well represent the great spiritual fact that our mental questioning, our asking for light and for goodness, although it seems to be our own action, is instigated by the Lord; and we act only as if of ourselves. The Lord's love and wisdom flowing into us, in the degree of our openness, arouse in us the desire to inquire further, and the effort to understand the things of spiritual life. And yet our Lord permits to us the appearance that we feel and think from our own minds, in order that, as of ourselves, we may make the necessary efforts to acquire the higher character.

ANOINTED.

The angel instructed the prophet that the two olive-branches were "the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." "Anointed ones" were such as were anointed with olive-oil. Because of the correspondence of olive-oil to the goodness of love to the Lord, such oil was used, in the representative church in Israel, according to Divine command, revealed to the church through the prophets. Many things were so anointed, including the tabernacle and many things in it; the altar and its vessels, in the temple; the priests and their garments; the prophets; the kings; the stones which were set up as witnesses; the arms of soldiers, as their shields, etc.; and, finally, individuals anointed themselves to express gladness and love. And, in all these cases, the anointing oil was used to represent the love, as given to men, by the Lord, to fit them for His service. And men who were anointed for the service

of the Lord were said to have been "born of oil;" *i.e.*, filled with the spirit of love.

STANDING BY THE LORD.

These two anointed ones are said to "stand by the Lord." The objective picture thus drawn is of a king, sitting on his throne, with two trusted servants beside him, one on each side, ready to do his immediate commands. But the spiritual picture is of the Lord, as the Divine King, enthroned in the mind of the regenerate man. And the two "anointed ones," standing beside Him, are the principles of love to the Lord, on the right hand, and love to the neighbor, on the left hand. These are the servants of our Lord, in men's minds, acknowledging the Lord as the Ruler, and doing His bidding, in all the particulars of daily life, as they arise, in practical experience. And happy is the mind in which the anointed ones thus stand ready to carry out all things of the Lord's will.

And in our text God is called "the God of the whole earth." The earth here represents the church, in the minds of men. And the Lord is God of the universal church, in all its branches. And so Jesus said "All power is given unto Me, in heaven and in earth." (Matthew xxviii. 18.) And, in the highest sense, heaven and earth are the Divine and the Human, in the Lord, Jesus Christ. And, in the lower sense, heaven and earth are the spiritual mind and the natural mind, in men. And when both of these minds receive the Lord's love and wisdom, they become regenerate, and of a heavenly quality. And the Lord is then enthroned within them. And beside Him stand the two olive-trees of heavenly love and wisdom. And then, in such a mind, the will of God is done on the earth of the natural life, as it is known and done in the heaven of the en-

lightened spiritual life. Every day of our life our Lord is seeking to teach us His holy truths; and to lead us into the goodness of heavenly love. Every day, in all His words, and in all His works, He is setting before us the embodiments of His infinite love and wisdom. And the facts of life, as they pass before our vision, are constantly asking us, "Knowest thou not what these be?"

XLVI.

THE FLYING ROLL.

Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold, a flying roll. And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits. Then said he unto me, This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for everyone that stealeth shall be cut off, on this side, according to it; and everyone that sweareth shall be cut off, on that side, according to it. I will bring it forth, saith Jehovah of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by My name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it, with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.—ZECHARIAH v. 1–4.

THE text is a representative prophecy of the impending destruction of the Jewish Church, which had become entirely perverted in doctrine and in life.

THE ROLL.

The roll seen by the prophet was a roll of manuscript, a book, or scroll, as books were then made, before the arts of printing and binding had been invented. Ezekiel, describing one of his visions, says, "And when I looked, behold, a hand was sent unto me; and lo, a roll of a book therein." (Ezekiel ii. 9.)

A book takes its character from the things that are written in it, or from the character of its writer. If the contents of a book are true, the book represents the truth, in some phase and degree, according to the nature

of its contents. But if its contents are false, the book represents falsity. The Word of the Lord is called "the Book," because it is filled with Divine truths. But this book mentioned in our text contained the things which were written in the minds of the men of the corrupted church, in Israel; false, perverted principles, springing from self-love. And so this roll, or book, represented the malignant falsities which were destroying all spiritual life in the Jewish Church. And the fact that it was a "flying roll," passing through the air, represented that it was passing through the corrupted Church, destroying all goodness and truth in the minds of men.

THE SIZE OF THE ROLL.

This roll was of immense size for a book; *i.e.,* it was about thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide. This great size represented the immense power for destruction exercised by these false principles, pushing their way through everything in a man's mind. The common cubit was the standard of linear measure; and it was about eighteen inches of our modern measure.

The length of anything represents its measure, or quality, as to goodness; and its breadth represents its measure, or quality, as to truth. In this case, the length was twenty cubits. Twenty, as a number, represents the interior principles of goodness stored up in the mind of a man, by the Lord, especially in the man's childhood; and called "remains," principles remaining with him when he comes to the temptations of adult life. And the breadth of the roll was ten cubits. And ten, as a number, represents all, or a complete series, as the Ten Commandments, including laws for all human life. Here, as the width refers to the truth, the "ten" measures the whole character of the roll, as to the truth of its principles. And, as this roll represents the mental

conditions of the corrupted and dying Jewish Church, its goodness was all perverted into evil, and its truth into falsity. And thus, those Divine principles which had been revealed to men as the means of spiritual life, had been corrupted by men, and turned into spiritual death. That which the Lord had given to men for a blessing, they had turned into a curse.

THE CURSE.

And so, when the angel explained to the prophet the meaning of the roll, he said, "This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth." In this case, the curse is used in the sense of the condemnation, or penalty, which returns upon the man who swears falsely, calling God to witness the truth of that which the man knows to be false. Such a penalty is always attached to an oath, even by the civil law, as well as by the Divine law. For the value of an oath is in its absolute sincerity and truthfulness. And any other standard would imperil the lives and liberties of all persons in a community. And, as every responsible man understands the nature and importance of an oath, he brings upon himself the civil and spiritual penalties of perjury, when he swears falsely, intentionally and deliberately. "Evil shall slay the wicked." But, to the evil man, it seems that the Lord sends troubles which come upon evil men. In Jeremiah v. 25 it is said, "Your iniquities have turned away these [good things], and your sins have withholden good from you." And in Isaiah lix. 1, 2, it is written, "Jehovah's hand is not shortened, that He cannot save, neither is His ear heavy, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you."

THE FACE OF THE EARTH.

The curse named in our text is said to "go forth over the face of the whole earth." The whole earth represents the whole church of that dispensation; and also the whole natural mind of man, as distinguished from his spiritual mind, which is the heaven of his mind. "The face is the index of the mind;" and so the face represents the interiors of the mind, which express themselves in the face. In the evil man, the conscious interiors are the interiors of his natural mind, because his spiritual mind is closed.

And thus the curse is said to "cut off" those who do evil; *i.e.,* inwardly, in their own minds, men's confirmed false principles cut them off from the supply of spiritual life, which is from the Lord, and which can enter into such minds, only, as are open to the Lord.

STEALING.

The two classes of evil-doers specifically mentioned in the text, are those who steal, and those who swear falsely. Literally, to steal is wrongfully to deprive another person of his property, either his worldly goods or his mental property. But, spiritually, to steal from another person is to take away his spiritual property, his good and true principles, or his rationality, or his spiritual freedom. If any of these is stealthily taken away from a man, he is robbed of his right sense of good and evil, of truth and falsity, and of righteousness and sin. And thus he is robbed of the means of spiritual life. And, in a more profound sense, the evil man steals from the Lord, when he refuses to love and obey the Lord, and to acknowledge his life to be the Lord's gift.

When the monstrous curse of falsity goes through the mind of a man, "everyone that stealeth shall be cut

off;" *i.e.,* such falsity cannot carry life to the mind, but it carries death, because it cuts off the mind from the source of spiritual life, in the Lord; because the evil man refuses to go to the Lord for life. He prefers the things which are spiritual death, although he hears the loving invitation of the Lord, saying "Ye would not come unto Me, that ye might have life." Spiritual stealing takes away all good from the heart, and destroys the "remains" of goodness stored up there, by the Lord, in the man's early years.

SWEARING.

The swearing here referred to is forswearing, swearing falsely, lying under oath, committing perjury, as we can see by the fact that, in the fourth verse of our text, it is mentioned as the act of "him that sweareth falsely by My name." The mere act of swearing, or taking an oath to tell the truth, was not objected to, among the Israelites, but on the contrary, oaths were ordained by the Lord, and regulated, and specified, under the charge of the priests. Swearing by the name of the Lord is affirming by the highest authority, and in the most solemn manner. And when we call God to witness our sincerity and truthfulness, if we deliberately lie, we commit one of the gravest of crimes. And, spiritually, in perjury we confuse goodness and evil, and truth and falsity; and finally we destroy our own spiritual rationality, and our spiritual freedom. For "the sinner is a slave to his sin." False swearing destroys the interior "remains" of truth, stored up in a man's mind, by the Lord. "Ye shall not swear by My name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God." (Leviticus xix. 12.)

It is said in our text, that the thief and the false swearer shall be cut off "according to" the curse, or

flying roll; *i.e.,* by the operation of that overwhelming falsity, working in the unregenerate mind. By the statement that these evil-doers shall be cut off "on this side and on that side," is meant on the right side and on the left; *i.e.,* as to the good in the heart, and as to the truth in the understanding. For the right side represents the things of the will, or heart, the affectional nature; and the left side represents the things of the understanding, the intellectual nature.

THE HOUSE, ETC.

It is said of the curse, or flying roll, "it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by My name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it, with the timber thereof and the stones thereof." Spiritually, a man's house is his mind, especially his will, or heart, in which reside his ruling loves, the fundamental motives of his character. The great destructive false principles, represented by the flying roll, enter into the interiors of the man's will, and consume the spiritual vitality of all his affections. And, in the mental house of the perjurer, the great falsities falsify all forms of truth.

The text states that the curse shall consume the house, including the timbers and the stones. The timber, which is of wood, represents the natural goodness which should be built into every man's life. And the stones represent the natural truths which form the foundation, or wall, of the good man's mental house. And such natural goodness and truths are destroyed by the curse of fixed falsity.

GENERAL REPRESENTATION.

In one phase of our text, the two sins enumerated, stealing and false swearing in the name of the Lord, stand as the general representatives of all prevailing

sins; because they represent sins against the commandments on the two tables of the Decalogue, one for man's relations with God alone, and one for his relations with men: taking the Lord's name in vain being a sin against the first table of the law; and stealing from men being a breach of the law on the second table.

Evils, falsities, and sins never dwell singly and alone in the mind and life of any man. Evils are gregarious: and wherever you find any one evil in a definite and fixed form, holding possession of a man's mind, there you will find an unregenerate heart; and there you will find every other evil, at least in its potency, and in its beginnings, even although circumstances and policy may have suppressed the outward expression of such evils. Every man has a general level of character, either for good or for evil; and neither his virtues nor his vices extend above or below his general level. No man can be regenerated as to a part of his character, and unregenerate as to the rest. For regeneration does not progress by quantity, but by quality: and every man's general quality of character gives tone to each department of his mind and of his life.

The picture of the enormous flying roll, destroying everything in its path, is graphic and forcible. Men of the world, in any community, would look with abject terror upon the coming into their houses of such a literal instrument of Divine vengeance. But, although unrecognized, there is such a terrible curse flying through the mind of every man who has fixed his mind in evil and falsity, and his life in sin. It is a deadly curse, which he has formed in his own heart and intellect, and whose power he cannot escape, because he loves the corrupt things which form and constitute that deadly curse. The only escape from these conditions is in repentance and regeneration, before the evil has fixed itself in our completed character. It is for us ever

to heed the Word of our loving Lord, seeking to save us from the self-made hell which confirmed evil sets up in every unrepentant heart. "Turn ye from all your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel xxxiii. 11.) "Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so Jehovah, the God of hosts, shall be with you." (Amos v. 14.)

XLVII.

THE WOMEN AND THE EPHAH.

Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up, now, thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth. And I said, What is it? And he said, This is an ephah that goeth forth. He said, moreover, This is their resemblance through all the earth. And behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead. And this is a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah. And he said, This is Wickedness. And he cast her into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof. Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and behold, there came forth two women; and the wind was in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork: and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven. Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? And he said unto me, To build it a house in the land of Shinar: and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base.—ZECHARIAH v. 5–11.

THE text is a revelation that, in the perverted Jewish Church, even its external good was inwardly filled with the love of evil, which had perverted its goodness, and would still further profane the Divine Truth.

THE EPHAH.

The ephah was the largest of the dry measures in common use among the Israelites. It was about equal to our modern bushel measure. As solids represent the things of goodness, and liquids represent the things of truth, a dry measure represents the measure of goodness, the test of the quality of goodness, in the thing

measured. Thus, in a general sense, the ephah represented goodness. The ephah is said to "go forth," when it is put into practical use.

Speaking of the ephah, the angel said, according to the Authorized Version, "This is their resemblance through all the earth." But the Hebrew literally says, "This is their eye through all the earth." The eye represents the understanding, the intellect, which is the eye of the mind, by which mental things are seen intelligently. The reference seems to be to the fact that the ephah was of the usual kind, with the usual appearance. But, spiritually, it refers to the fact that this ephah represents the general kind of natural good, as in the church, that is, goodness as measured in the outward conduct, especially in the acts of piety and devotion.

LEAD.

This ephah had a leaden cover, or lid. Lead, as a base metal, represents goodness of the lowest degree, *i.e.,* natural and corporeal good, good as known to the natural senses, sensuous good. The leaden cover was said to be "a talent of lead." The Hebrew talent was a large weight, which varied in different times, but which was about one hundred pounds of our common avoirdupois weight. A talent of gold, and a talent of silver, became common amounts for great enterprises, requiring large sums. In the parable of the talents, in Matthew xxv. 14-30, we have an instance of the use of the term. A talent, thus used in the way of a coin, represented knowledge of truth and of goodness; for knowledge, like money, is not goodness, nor is it truth, but it is only a means of procuring these things. As this large leaden cover represented corporeal and sensuous goodness, the fact that it was a "talent" of lead indicates that there was, in the mind represented, a

knowledge of the things which form corporeal goodness. This leaden cover was lifted up, or off, to expose the contents of the ephah.

THE WOMAN.

In this case, the contents happened to be a woman, sitting in the ephah. A woman represents the affectional life, good or evil, according to the character of the individual. Here, as the perverted church is pictured, the woman represented the love of evil. And, to indicate this fact, the angel, in speaking of her, said, "This is Wickedness" [literally "evil"]. This evil woman represented the general state of the corrupted church. The ephah represented natural good, good in the external action: and the woman represented evil in the heart, the love of evil, dwelling within the external goodness of the piety and devotion of those who constituted the church. The Jewish Church, although still very punctilious about mere externals of worship, very pious, and apparently devoted to the forms of the church, yet indulged all kinds of evils, in the heart.

We remember how forcibly Jesus exposed those evil conditions, in His denunciation of the "Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," who thus represented the Jewish nation in general: "Ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which, indeed, appear beautiful, outwardly, but are, within, full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." These statements expose the evil character of the Jews, even in the midst of their outward piety and professions. And this is the meaning symbolized by the evil woman in the ephah.

That she was "sitting" in the ephah, means that her will was fixed in such evil; for sitting indicates a position somewhat permanent, and one in which the person

is at rest, and not merely in a transient, changing state of mind. And that she was "in the midst" of the ephah, means that she was thoroughly and fully fixed in such condition.

SHUT IN.

After the angel had shown the woman to the prophet, he cast her down again, or crowded her down, into the ephah, and closed the ephah with its leaden cover. This action denoted that the Jewish Church, represented by the woman, was fixed and confirmed in its evils of heart, which existed within all its external goodness of piety and devotion; and that such inward evils were shut in, and covered up, by the sensuous and corporeal good, in which such men placed religion. And such joining of evil in the heart with outward good in the action, constitutes profanation of goodness.

When the angel closed the ephah, it is said that "he cast the weight upon the mouth" of the ephah. But in the Hebrew, literally, it is called a "stone of lead." Ancient weights were often made of stone. And the weight was commonly called a stone. And, even in our day, in Great Britain, a weight of fourteen pounds is called a "stone." A stone represents truth on the natural plane, natural truth; or, if used in a bad sense, it represents natural truth perverted into falsity. And thus the term "a stone of lead," meaning sensuous falsity, is in agreement with the lead, itself, which represented sensuous evil, from which such falsities are derived.

TWO WOMEN.

After the ephah was closed, there appeared two women, who lifted the ephah, and carried it away. As a

woman represents affection, these two women represented affection existing in other churches, other conditions of the church, which perceived the evil character of the Jewish Church, represented by the woman shut up in the ephah; and so they were directed by the Lord to banish her from among them, and to thrust her away, where she could be by herself, without contaminating the other churches. For some of the Gentile churches, although ignorant of clear spiritual truth, were in a state of simplicity, and well disposed towards the Lord. And their natural good affections were protected from contamination by the hypocrisy of the Jews, by allowing them to recognize such hypocrisy, and to reject it from their own life. And there were two of these women, to represent their good natural affections in a state of union. And, individually, when our good natural affections are united with such truths as we know, our Lord can protect us against the spirit of hypocritical piety, by exposing to us its character.

WINGS.

These women "had wings, like the wings of a stork." Wings, which are the arms of birds, represent power, because they are the chief means by which the bird exerts its power. And as birds represent our thoughts, their wings represent the power of thought. And flying represents using the power of thought. And the banishment of the evil spirit of hypocritical piety was effected by thinking over these things; *i.e.,* using the power of thought, which is represented by flying away with the ephah in which was the evil woman.

And that these two women "had wings like the wings of a stork," means, literally, that their wings were long, powerful, and capable of swift and extended flight. The

stork represents natural thought, such as is capable of strong and continued thinking.

THE WIND.

It is also said of these two women, that "the wind was in their wings," which is a figurative way of saying that their wings made use of the wind. But, spiritually, the meaning is more profound. In physical nature, the blowing of the wind, by which many necessary purposes are accomplished, represents the operation of the Divine Providence, especially in flowing into men's minds with the Divine Truths, by which men are regenerated. And so, in the account of the creation of man, in Genesis ii. 7, it is said that "Jehovah God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." And the same Hebrew word is the root-word from which we translate wind, breath, and spirit.

THE LAND OF SHINAR.

These women were to carry away the woman in the ephah, to "the land of Shinar," where they were to build her a house for herself, and where they would set the ephah in order, on its "own base." The land of Shinar was the ancient name of Chaldea, or Babylonia, as is known from Genesis x. 10, where, speaking of Nimrod, "a mighty hunter," it is said; "The beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech, and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar." It is said of the descendants of Noah, "and it came to pass, as they journeyed from the East, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there." (Genesis xi. 2.) And there they began to build the great tower of Babel.

The land of Shinar represents a state of merely external worship, joined with evil in the heart, which produces profanation of all goodness and truth. It is, for instance, the devoted external piety of the man who believes that he will be saved from the wrath of God by the "Vicarious Sacrifice" of Christ, and who depends on such a salvation, and does not have the desire, or intention, to co-operate with the Lord, in changing his own character from evil to good, by repentance, instruction and regeneration, whereby the Lord saves a man from the man's own evils.

The evil woman in the ephah, carried to the land of Shinar, is a representative picture of the removal and separation of the Church of hypocritical piety, filled with evil in the heart, so that it shall not be mingled and confused with other forms of the church, but shall stand by itself, to fill up the measure of its own destiny.

And, in the land of Shinar, a house shall be built for that Church. The house is a man's home, where he lives in private. And it represents the man's interior will, in which he lives to himself. And thus, the banishment of the evil woman from her associates, and having a house built for her, in a distant land, where she could be "established and set there upon her own base," represent the separation of hypocritical goodness, and its building up of itself, upon its own foundations of character, and thus being known as to its qualities.

THE PROPHECY.

Literally, our text seems to be a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the nationality of the Jews, which, in fact, soon came about, through the Roman conquest of Judea. But, spiritually, the text depicts a judgment upon the Jewish dispensation, and also a judgment upon similar mental conditions, in the individual minds of men, in all ages.

The Jewish Church, as a dispensation, long ago came

to an end, banished by its own evils. Individual members still exist, and its organizations exist in scattered fragments. But, for many centuries, the Jews have been religious outcasts among the Christian nations, and also, to some extent, even political outcasts. Some of the Jews, perhaps many of them, still look forward to the restoration of Israel, and the literal fulfilment of the prophecies of their national return to Jerusalem. But these things will never come, physically. The prophecies of the Scriptures are fulfilled spiritually, but not often literally. And where there are literal fulfilments, these are but the results of the spiritual fulfilments. These prophecies were not meant finally for the Jews as a people, but for the renewed and regenerated Church of the Lord, the New Jerusalem, of which ancient Jerusalem and its people were merely literal and figurative representatives; as with men at all times, the things of our bodily life are merely figurative symbols of the things of our mental life.

In every age of the church, from the Most Ancient Church to the present times, the evil in man has been the failure to love the Lord and His Divine Goodness and Truth, and to trust in His Divine Providence. But men have sunk into the love of self, and into trust in their own abilities; and thus they have destroyed spiritual love and faith and righteousness, in their own hearts and lives. And then, by their own evils and falsities, they are carried away from a state of spiritual freedom, in which they might be regenerated, and they are taken into a state in which they plunge into all kinds of perversions of goodness, and falsifications of truth; and they dwell in their own self-derived notions, in the practical denial of all the qualities of character which distinguish the God whom they pretend to worship. They are carried to the spiritual Shinar, the mental state of self-love and hypocritical worship; and

there, like their ancient prototypes, the descendants of Noah, they seek to build a great tower, which shall be based on their own natural senses, and yet reach up to heaven. But such a tower for self-worship will always end, as did the old one, in confusion of ideas, and in the dispersion of all things which would constitute spiritual manhood. "It is not in man, that walketh, to direct his steps." (Jeremiah x. 23.) "For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him." (Isaiah xxviii. 26.)

XLVIII.

THE FOUR CHARIOTS AND THEIR HORSES.

And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of brass. In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; and in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grizzled and bay horses. Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these, my lord? And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth. The black horses which are therein go forth into the North country; and the white go forth after them; and the grizzled go forth toward the South country. And the bay went forth, and sought to go, that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and he said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth. Then he cried upon me, and spake unto me, saying, Behold, these that go toward the North country have quieted My Spirit in the North country.—ZECHARIAH vi. 1–8.

THE text is a prophecy that doctrines for a new church will be drawn from love and charity; and that such a church will be formed from well-disposed persons who have been in ignorance of spiritual truth.

CHARIOTS.

Four chariots were seen in vision. All vehicles are made to hold and serve men; and, therefore, they represent doctrines, forms of statement, which contain truths,

in condition for practical use. In Psalm xx. 7 it is said, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of Jehovah, our God." To trust in chariots is to trust in doctrines; and to trust in horses is to depend upon man's own natural understanding; but to remember the name of the Lord, is to trust in the Lord for instruction and guidance.

There were four chariots, which, respectively, were supposed to travel to the four points of the compass, North, South, East, and West, whose significance we shall take up later.

MOUNTAINS OF BRASS.

These chariots came out from between two mountains. Mountains, as the highest points of land, represent the highest principle in the human mind, the principle of love, especially love to the Lord. Love is the origin of everything that is good.

There were two mountains, to represent the two distinct forms of love, love to the Lord, and love to the neighbor.

And these mountains were formed of brass. Brass is a "base metal," useful in many ways, but much less valuable than the "precious metals." Brass represents natural goodness, the good of the natural mind, in the practical life, as distinguished from heavenly good, represented by gold, and spiritual good, symbolized by silver. Thus, the two mountains of brass represent natural goodness, goodness in the natural life, as relating to love to the Lord, and love to the neighbor. And the fact that the chariots came forth from between these two mountains of brass, means that the doctrines sent out from the Lord were on the mental plane of natural goodness, such goodness as the natural man could use, in his love of God and of the neighbor.

As the streams of water which fertilize the valleys, flow down from the mountains, so all the practical truths of our daily life, which keep our natural conduct in good order, flow down from the mountains of our highest loves, our profoundest desire for union with our Lord, and for the best consociation with our fellow-men. And, to illustrate the fact that all good comes to us from the tops of the mountains, when Moses, as the servant of the Lord, was given the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments of practical life, for the use of all men, he had to go up to the top of the mountain, to receive them. And every regenerating man, when in trial and temptation, and conscious of the need of Divine guidance, sings, with David, "I will lift up mine eyes to the mountains, whence cometh my help. My help is from Jehovah, who made heaven and earth." (Psalm cxxi. 1, 2.)

HORSES.

The chariots were drawn by horses. The horse represents man's intellectual principle, the understanding, especially man's understanding of the Divine Word. In Ezekiel xxxix. 17, 20, it is said, "Thou son of man, thus saith the Lord Jehovih: Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to My sacrifice, that I do sacrifice for you, upon the mountains of Israel. . . . Ye shall be filled at My table with horses and chariots, with mighty men and all men of war." And a similar feast is proclaimed in Revelation xix. All these things symbolize a spiritual feast, in the truths and doctrines, etc., in the Word of the Lord.

In our text the chariots, drawn by horses, represent the doctrines of the church, carried along in man's understanding, and by his knowledge of the Divine

Word, by each mind according to the quality of its understanding.

COLORS.

The different conditions and qualities of human understanding are represented by the different colors of the horses, red, black, white, gray, and bay. Red is the color of love and of goodness, for goodness is love applied in action. A red horse represents the quality or character of the understanding, as to love, or goodness. And as the chariot drawn by red horses was sent out first, it represents the condition of the mind at the beginning of the formation of the New Church, because the degree and quality of the truth, in the doctrines proclaimed, is always such as is adapted to the states of the men who are to be helped by it. The Divine Truth is in all degrees, and it reaches all planes of the human mind. And so the Divine Word contains truth on every plane, and in every degree. But, in each particular case, the truth which reaches the man is that phase, or degree, of truth, which is on the level of the man's present mental openness. For this reason, in our text, the chariot with the red horses represents doctrine given to reach men who are in natural goodness and love, but not yet in the knowledge of spiritual truth. For, in general, the New Church will not be formed from the remaining fragments of the First Christian Church, but from the Gentile world; *i.e.,* from those who have not been instructed especially in the doctrines of the First Christian Church, but who are good at heart, and in the simplicity of sincerity.

The black color represents mental darkness, ignorance of truth, such for instance, as is in those minds which look at everything in a literal and external way.

White represents the light of truth, and also purity, which is clean. The white horses represent the under-

standing of the Divine Word, when the mind has acquired some knowledge of truth, which shines in the understanding. In Revelation xix. 11, 13 ,14, it is said, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True: and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. . . . And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him, upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

Grizzled, or gray, is a mixture of white and black. And the grizzled horses represent a state of understanding in which there are some truths known, together with some ignorance, and obscurity as to knowledge.

BAY, OR STRONG.

Bay horses were also seen. The Hebrew word here translated bay, means "deep red." And it is the term often used for "strong," as if a strong person would have a deep red color, rather than a pale color. The American Revised Version of the Scriptures gives the word as "strong." "Bay" is defined to be reddish-brown, chestnut-color. As there is no other text in the Scriptures in which the same Hebrew word is used in the sense of color, we cannot gain any idea of it by comparison. The word is used in other texts, but with the meaning of "strong;" as, for instance, in Psalm xviii. 17, speaking of the Lord; "He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them that hated me; for they were too strong for me."

The idea of the color seems to be that of reddish-brown, a vigorous, healthy color. And the general idea is that of strength. And this idea is in agreement with the representative meaning. The bay (or strong) horses represent a state of the human understanding in which

there is sufficient knowledge to enable the man to resist evils and falsities; and thus to be strong in the power of truth.

The different colors of the horses resemble similar things mentioned in Zechariah, and in the Revelation.

FOUR SPIRITS, OR WINDS.

When the prophet asked, concerning the horses and chariots, "What are these?" the angel replied, "These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth." In the American Revised Version of the Scriptures it is said, "These are the four winds." In both the Hebrew and the Greek, the same word stands for wind, breath, and spirit. And so, at times, the exact sense is difficult to know. In either case, these horses would represent the Divine influence going out to men, in their different mental conditions, each according to his present mental needs; for it is said that these horses go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth; *i.e.,* the God of all the church, in all its parts. In Psalm civ. 3, it is said of the Lord, "Who maketh the clouds His chariot; who walketh upon the wings of the wind."

The literal idea refers to the four quarters of the earth; *i.e.,* the four points of the compass. But the spiritual meaning relates to the fourfold influence of the Lord, going out to men, to reach each man on his own level of thought and life. For this reason there were four sides to the holy city, seen by John, in vision, and representing the New Church, which is descending from heaven, into the minds of men, according to their several capacity to receive such a Church. Jesus plainly told the Jews that they were excluding themselves from the kingdom of heaven by their evil character, but that the church would be formed from the Gentiles: "And

they shall come from the East, and from the West, and from the North, and from the South, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God." (Luke xiii. 29.) And, in John's vision, the horses of different colors came into view "when the Lamb opened the seals" of the great Book, which was the Word of God, whose seals were opened by the Lamb, when the Lord revealed the inward and spiritual meaning of the Scriptures, and sent out its spiritual truths, to reach all men who were willing to receive such truth, in any of its phases.

THE SPIRITUAL QUARTERS.

In a general sense, the East, where the sun appears to rise, represents the Lord, because the sun represents Him. But, specifically, as referring to men, the East represents love to the Lord, and the goodness which such love forms in the man's heart. A man is said to dwell in the East, spiritually, when he lives in spiritual love to the Lord. The West, opposite to the East, represents a state of love which is natural and external, rather than spiritual and internal. The South, where the sun is at noon, when its light is greatest, represents the light of spiritual intelligence. And the North, opposite to the South, represents a state of natural-minded intelligence, holding natural truth rather than spiritual truth, *i.e.,* such phases of truth as are seen from the standpoint of the natural mind. Comparatively, the North and West represent such truth and love as are seen in the letter of the Scriptures, while the South and East represent such truth and love as are seen in the spiritual sense of the Divine Word.

The text assigns different colored horses to go in different directions. The black horses went to the North country, at first; and, afterwards, the white horses followed after them. The North represents the colder and

darker state of mind, in which the man is in natural loves, and is in obscure light as to truth. And, as black represents a similar condition of mind, it is adapted to the spiritual North. The going of these black horses to the North represents the introduction of the letter of the Divine Word to the well-disposed but ignorant Gentiles, who were to be brought into the New Church, finally. And this was to be brought about, later, by the greater light of truth sent to them, when they should be ready to receive it; and which is represented by the white horses following after the black horses. Thus, after these Gentiles had received the letter of the Divine Word, and had conformed their conduct to its literal laws, they would be ready to have their minds opened to higher forms of the truth, applicable to their mental states, as well as to their bodily conduct.

The grizzled (or gray) horses went to the South country, as they represented a state of mind in much more light of truth than the black horses represented; and they could communicate to the Gentiles intellectual knowledge and understanding of truth.

The bay (or strong) horses requested to be allowed "to walk to and fro through the earth;" that is, to have a wide range for their influence. In one sense, the earth represents the natural mind in man, as distinguished from his mental heaven, or spiritual mind. And, in this sense, to walk to and fro through the earth, is to carry the Divine Truth to the natural mind, with such strength of purpose as to enable the man to resist and overcome his natural tendencies to evil, in the light of the Divine Truth, and by its strength, and in the name of the Lord, and in the acknowledgment that His strength produces the change in the man, from sensuous to spiritual conditions.

QUIET MY SPIRIT.

The text ends with the peculiar expression, "Behold, these that go toward the North country have quieted My Spirit in the North country," or, literally, "have caused My Spirit to rest in the North country." The idea is not that anything could be done by the horses and chariots which would make any difference in the Spirit of the Lord, as He is in Himself; but the condition mentioned means a state of mind induced upon men, in their attitude towards the Spirit of the Lord. Representatively, the Spirit of the Lord rests, and is quieted, when men no longer strive against the Lord's Spirit, working in them for their regeneration. The Lord rests in the heart of a regenerate man, whose mutual love affords a resting-place for the Divine Love. The Sabbath rest, after the creation of the universe, was not for the recuperation of a tired Creator, but it represented a spiritual condition of human regeneration, in which the Lord could rest in peace and love, in the man's heart. "Jehovah, thy God, in the midst of thee, is mighty: He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing." (Zephaniah iii. 17.) And, in this state, there is mutual love, and the man rests in the Lord. "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for Jehovah hath dealt bountifully with thee." (Psalm cxvi. 7.)

These conditions were to be brought about "in the North country;" *i.e.*, among the Gentiles, who had been in ignorance, and without the Word of the Lord; but of whom the New Church shall be formed, by means of the Divine Word, first in its letter, and afterwards in its spiritual meaning, also. Little by little, our Lord is building His New Jerusalem, for the permanent Church, in heaven and on earth, various, perhaps, in forms, but one in love and truth. "Look upon Zion, the city of

our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down: not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Jehovah shall be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams. . . . For Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our law-giver, Jehovah is our king: He will save us." (Isaiah xxxiii. 20-22.)