

ON THE  
GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST  
COMMONLY CALLED SUPERNATURAL.

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THOSE gifts of the Holy Ghost which we formerly treated of under the head of the Endowment of the Church, are by some thought to have been given only for a season, while Christianity was making way in the world: by others they are believed to have been given, like the other gifts and callings of God, without repentance and revocation; and that the Church hath them now in as full right as ever, and ought to be exercising them with as great diligence, and for the very same ends, as did the apostles and primitive Christians. The only way of determining every question of Divine truth is by an appeal to the Word of God; and most especially when, like this, it is a question concerning the will and mind of God itself, and His end in the giving of these gifts. No one knoweth the mind of God, but the Spirit of God; and that Spirit testifieth to the things which are written in His Word. God alone is competent to explain His own intentions: no man, nor council of men, can help us here. And as this is purely a question, as to God's intention in respect to these miraculous gifts, it can in no other way be settled than by an appeal to His own declaration thereof. Not to contradict any man's opinion, therefore, but to discover God's own mind, and give to all men the true grounds

for forming an opinion and a belief, is our object in the following inquiry.

I. The first time that these gifts of the Holy Ghost are referred to in the Holy Scriptures, is in the 68th Psalm, where it is thus written concerning them: "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." That this passage refers to the ascension of our blessed Lord, and to the "promise of the Holy Ghost," which He then received from the Father, and shed down on the day of Pentecost, is expressly declared by the apostle Paul, in the 4th chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians, which contains likewise a full commentary upon it. Having, then, the Holy Ghost both for our author and our commentator, let us endeavour to find out the mind of God. It is the end and purpose of God in the giving of these gifts to Christ, and Christ's end in giving them to us, that we are in quest of: which in the psalm is given with great distinctness in these words,— "Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." These words are so important, as containing the bare and naked end of God, that it is of the utmost importance to have them literally translated. Taking the marginal reading of our English Bibles, and dropping the words in italics which are supplied by the translators, it standeth thus, word for word after the original: "Thou hast received gifts in man; yea, the rebellious even, for an habitation (shechinah) of Jah-Elohim." The latter part of this sentence, which contains the end of these received gifts, is very plain, "For a habitation of the Lord God;" asserting that Christ had received these gifts, in order with them to make a habitation for Jehovah-God. In some way or other, therefore, this is the great end for which the gifts of the Holy Ghost, received by Christ upon His ascension, were given,—to construct for God a place to dwell in. What is the meaning of Christ's obtaining, for God, a place to dwell in, is another inquiry, which we shall come to in due time; but that this is

the very end and purpose of the gifts, is declared as distinctly as words can express it. If I were to say to my son, "Take these, and make for me a dwelling-place;" no one would have a doubt what I intended my gift to be applied to: but if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; and this witness is, that when Christ ascended up on high, victorious over death and him who had the power of death, leading captivity captive, crowned with the spoils of the grave; in this His resurrection-state the Father gave Him certain gifts, for the purpose of constructing a habitation for Him. The end of the gifts is what we are searching after. Let it be understood that we have found it from God's own Word: it is, to prepare God a tabernacle, or house, or habitation.

The former part of the sentence—"Thou hast received gifts in man; yea, the rebellious even"—is not so easy of interpretation. But, fortunately, it concerneth not our inquiry so nearly; which is, not as to the fact of His having received the gifts, but as to the end for which He received them. Yet, though harder to be understood, it is with the apostle's commentary made comparatively plain, and, being interpreted, helps mainly to the resolution of the question which ariseth out of the former conclusion, And how with these gifts is Christ to build for Jehovah a habitation? The apostle's commentary, taking the whole of it—that is, the first sixteen verses of the fourth chapter—is to the effect, that the Church is one thing, whether viewed as a structure building up, or as a body in a state of growth, in which, and through which, and of which, God the Father is the All in all. In the conclusion of the 2d chapter, which is the immediate context (for the 3d chapter is properly marked off in our English Bible as a parenthesis,) he had adopted the former figure of a habitation, suggested, I have no doubt, by the passage of the psalm before us which it was in His mind to quote. And he expresseth himself thus: "Fellow-citizens of the saints, and inmates of God's house, . . . builded, as a house, upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head of the corner; on whom the whole house-structure, fitly framed together, increaseth into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom even you are built into the house, for a

habitation of God in the Spirit." These words are a perfect commentary upon that part of the prophetic oracle before us, which is concerned about the habitation of God, to be constructed by Christ with the gifts of the Holy Ghost which He received from the Father. That habitation is the Church beyond all question. And it explains, moreover, what is the meaning of these words, "yea, the rebellious also." The sole object of the apostle in that 2d chapter, is to explain how the Gentiles should come to be builded into that house along with the Jews. He calls them "children of wrath," "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," "without God in the world," and many other names, significant all of enmity towards God, rebellion against His law, and obedience to the prince of this world. He then explains how this thralldom and alienation and enmity were done away in the cross of Christ, when He reconciled both Jew and Gentile unto God in one body. This is the "leading captivity captive" of the psalm, and the breaking of that spell of Satan which leagued men against their Maker. And then he shews that they, "even they," "even the rebellious," constituted a part of this house, or habitation, which He is constructing for God with those gifts which He received when He ascended up on high. The discourse in the 2d chapter explains likewise that other word of the prophetic oracle, "in the man;" which is, I think, parallel with the word "in his flesh," (ver. 15;) wherein He is declared to have abolished the enmity, and to have reconciled these enemies, or rebellious persons, and prepared them for being builded into God's habitation: it is also parallel with the word "in one body," by offering which upon the cross he put away the enmity which prevented men from dwelling with God, and God from dwelling in men, and so prepared the way for constructing the "habitation of God by the Spirit."

Apply now these lights to the elucidation of the enigmatical verse of the psalm, and it clears itself up thus:—"Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast captured the captivity, Thou hast received gifts in man:" all these things as a man, or in manhood, or by becoming man, Thou hast done in Thy body, in Thy flesh. If any one think that this is too distinct a

notice of the incarnation for so early a prophet, let him correct his judgment by the 40th Psalm; and remember that the Jews had a light upon the subject of the incarnation, derived from their prophets, which might put us Christians to shame. Then it is added, "even rebels." That is, "He hath received gifts, and even rebels:" not only the stipulated reward of God's own people, but even the rebellious Gentiles hath He received as His gift in manhood: as it is written, "I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance." And the apostle Paul accordingly labours to shew how into that inheritance "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints," (Eph. i. 18,) "the rebels" even, the Gentiles also, were introduced, and all builded up together into one house for the inhabitation of God. And having done this in the second chapter, he is so enwrapped in the glorious mystery, and so enraptured with the honour bestowed on him of being its unfolder, that he occupies the whole of the third chapter with a digression, to disburden his heart of its thanksgivings for the same. Then, returning to his task again, he begins the fourth chapter by reminding them of this their high calling, to be God's temple and habitation; and, the more to prevent all schism, as well between Jew and Gentile as between one another, he enumerates their sevenfold unity,— "One body, one spirit, one hope of their calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all; he who is upon all, and through all, and in all of you." Therefore, taking up the figure of the body, which is better fitted than that of the house for the reproving of schism and envy arising out of the diversity of their gifts ("to each of you was [not *is*] given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ," ver. 7,) he proceeds, by the very quotation of the psalm, to shew them that these gifts were all derived from Christ, and distributed according to His pleasure. But upon mentioning the ascension, the Spirit suggests to him another prophetic psalm, which, being introduced at this point of his argument, will give additional force to the great mystery of the membership of Christ in one body, which he is enforcing; and this, according to his rapid and full-minded way, he introduceth in a parenthesis: "Now that he ascended, what

is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things," (Eph. iv. 9, 10.) The psalm to which he now refers is beyond question the 139th, where Christ giveth glory to God for building up to Him His body in the lower parts of the earth—that is, in the grave, where the work is finished by the resurrection of the body, being now begun in the regeneration of the Spirit. The words are these: "My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth: thine eyes did see my substance: yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them," (verses 15, 16.) If any one doubt whether it be proper to speak of the members and the head as one Christ, he is referred to the 12th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, ver. 12; and if he doubt (for there is nothing but doubt, arising mainly from ignorance) whether it be proper for the psalms thus to unite the members and the head in one subject, he is referred to all the psalms whatsoever which speak of Christ as confessing sin—the 40th and the 69th, for instance. The apostle, having thus gathered in the 139th Psalm an additional ground upon which to rest his argument from the body and the members, doth proceed to it in a way which gives new light and confirmation upon that which hath been concluded above concerning the prophecy in the 69th Psalm: "He received gifts," saith he, "and gave some indeed apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." The gifts, then, are men. This makes all clear in the psalm, where it is said, "He received gifts in man, *and even rebels.*" How very literal is an apostolical interpreter! He does not find it necessary, like our translators, (however excellent, and they are the most excellent,) to reject the literal translation, "in the man," and adopt, for the sake of a meaning, "for man:" which, besides being against the structure of the original, sacrifices the truth, that the persons to whom the gifts are given are themselves likewise gifts of God to the man: whereas the apostle, adhering to the letter, makes the

persons also to be gifts—some of whom are apostles, others prophets, others evangelists, others pastors and teachers, others (to complete the catalogue from 1 Cor. xii. 28) workers of miracles, others teachers, others helps, others governors, others speakers with tongues, and others interpreters of tongues. Then he propoundeth the end of such variety to be for the perfect joining together (so the word is translated in 1 Cor. i. 11) of the saints. It is remarkable that the same word is used by the apostle of the body of Christ, when quoting from the 40th Psalm, in Heb. x. 5, "A body hast thou prepared for me." I do not think that it means for the perfecting of every saint, but for their perfect articulation into the one body of Christ; for the bringing about of their unity through means of a diversity of gifts, so as that one could not do without another, as is largely set forth in the 12th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. But the apostle adds his own explanation; for the latter two clauses of ver. 12 are not repetition, but explanation of the preceding, as the change of the preposition sheweth: "unto a work of service (deaconship, mutually helpful to, and serving one another—'he that is a chief be as he that doth serve')—unto the building up as a house the body of the Church; until the whole come into the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto perfect man, unto the measure of the size of the fulness of the Christ."

Without going further into the apostle's commentary upon the passage before us, it is abundantly manifest from the premises that the habitation of God, which Christ was to construct for His Father, out of the gifts which He received when He ascended up on high, is the Church, His body, the fulness of the election which the Father had given to Him for His inheritance. And it is further evident, that the unity of these many members is bound together by the wise distribution which He makes of the Spirit, given to Him of the Father, among the members of the body, in such wise as that one shall be necessary to the help and support of the other, and, all together co-operating, shall make the body to grow, and wax like the body of a child, from its rudiments then forming in the days of the apostles, until it should

attain unto the measure of its appointed fulness—that is, until all the election should be brought in, and the bride of the Lamb, the new Jerusalem, which is the tabernacle or habitation of God for ever, should be completed. If you take the figure of a house, then it is a house composed of living stones, (1 Pet. ii. 5,) whose union or cement is the Spirit; whence it is called a spiritual house, and a habitation of God in the Spirit: if it is a body, God is the soul of it, upon, in, and through all the members, in-working all things in all the members, (1 Cor. xii. 6;) *His* body, to express His mind, and word, and action, for ever and ever; and now, in this present age, intended to serve that Almighty effect in the sight of this dark and erroneous world. Wherefore the apostle, giving to the Corinthian Church orders concerning the behaviour that befitted them when they were gathered together, hath these words declaratory of the doctrine which I am now advancing, that Christ's work with the Spirit is to prepare for God such a living temple, such a speaking, acting body, as shall declare His presence to every beholder: "But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that GOD IS IN YOU of a truth," (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.)

I do not understand how any one can resist such a breadth of doctrine as these passages of Scripture bring to the believing mind; and therefore I have nothing to say in the way of strengthening or confirming what hath been deduced from merely bringing one passage of Scripture to face another. It only remains, therefore, that I say a word or two upon the way in which these gifts of the Holy Ghost, received from the Father on the ascension, and shed down upon the Church on the day of Pentecost, do work together in Christ's hand the end of making a house for God, a temple where "spiritual sacrifices may be offered up to Him, acceptable by Jesus Christ." And this seems to me to consist in two things: the one common to all the persons who compose the unity, the other proper and peculiar to them severally. That which



is common to them all is their life, whereby they become lively stones, and cleave to one another. This in common language would be called the cement, or band, which binds the stones together into one fabric fit for inhabitation. As for the stones, Christ doth not furnish them, but the Father. They are the Father's creation, fallen into disorder and disunion, out with Him and out with one another : all ruins and rubbish, dark, and divested of their Creator's presence, warring against His holy mind, and cast out from His heavenly abode. Christ "having, in the man," by doing the will of God in flesh, and offering it a sacrifice upon the accursed tree, done away with the enmity, and brought reconciliation to pass, doth, when He ascendeth into heaven, receive the Holy Spirit from the Father, that with it He may take as many as the Father will give Him, and make them so to cohere together in the bands of mutual charity, work together the will of God, and manifest forth His glory, as that He shall need nothing else to make His fulness and perfectness known in the sight of all His creatures. The first thing that Christ doth for these disjointed fragments, is to give them a law of coherence, which He doth by imparting to them that principle of life which is in Himself. Then are they in a condition separately to love God, to love one another ; and to perfect holiness, without which they could neither see, nor enjoy, nor shew forth God. This is like the cutting and polishing of the stones in the quarry, and the preparing of the mortar to bind them into one. Then comes the Master-builder's work, to lift up the fabric in its just and fair proportions, to found it surely, and to bind it together with corner-stones ; to fashion and to frame it, and to bring forth the work in all the perfection of beauty and majesty. The arches and the columns, the walls and the ceilings, the floors and the domes, must all have their proper places and adjustments, in order to bring out one symmetrical whole : for it is to be a house for expressing the mind of God. And not the house only, but the priesthood also, is to come forth under the hand of the same Divine Architect : therefore that which in one verse of Peter is thus described, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices,

acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," is a few verses forward described thus,—“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.” The Church is to be not only the container of the manifested God, but she is the actor of His works, and the utterer of His wisdom: and to accomplish this, Christ, when He ascended up on high, received the Seven Spirits, the fulness and completeness of the vital, active Godhead. This is His occupation in heaven, to build the spiritual temple of the Lord out of the materials which He hath impregnated with His own life. And the Church is this temple: we are it; we on earth are it. The idea and the end of the Church is to be such a thing. Christ hath either failed to do His Father's will since His ascension, or the Spirit hath failed, or the materials have succeeded in defeating the Architect; or else the Church is this building of God, where God is heard in His manifold wisdom, and seen in His various actings:—His wisdom, in this membership having the word of wisdom; His knowledge, in this membership having the word of knowledge; His truth, in this membership having the gift of faith; His health, in this membership having the gift of healing; His supremacy of spirits, in this membership having the discernment of spirits; His voice, in this membership having the gift of tongues; and His understanding, in this membership having the interpretation of tongues. But I am not the Master-builder, to scan the work or shew the adjustment of its several parts: I do only point to the variety of offices, the diversity of occupations, the mutual subministration, as being necessary in order to make a habitation or house for any one, how much more for God. If to give my spirit a proper habitation for dwelling in, and a fit organ for uttering itself by, this body of mine, so curiously fashioned and exquisitely adjusted, part to part, so various in its organisations, was all necessary; how much more, to make a proper habitation for the Eternal God, and a fit organ for expressing His various mind and action in the sight of all the creatures which He hath formed! This wonderful office, this most wonderful office, serveth the

Church, if there be any truth in Scripture: and to fit her for serving this office, Christ received the Seven Spirits when He ascended up on high, and bestoweth the various gifts throughout the Church by the which that one Spirit is manifested.

II. The next passage in which God delivers His mind upon the subject of the supernatural gifts of the Holy Ghost is in these words of the 8th chapter of Isaiah, ver. 18: "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion." That this refers to Christ and His Church is expressly declared by the apostle Paul, in the 2d chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews: so that here again we have the Holy Ghost both for the Author and the Commentator, and may surely obtain some insight into the mind of God. But because I have heard some, to whom I have proposed this passage as a light, take objection that "signs and wonders" may have no respect at all to miraculous endowments, but merely to the peculiarity and singularity of His disciples in the midst of the unbelieving world, I count it good here to observe, that in no instance doth the expression "signs and wonders" signify in Scripture any thing but supernatural acts and appearances. In proof of which I refer to these passages: Matt. xxiv. 24; Mark xiii. 22; John iv. 48; Acts ii. 22, 43, iv. 30, vi. 8, vii. 36; Rom. xv. 19; 2 Cor. xii. 12; Heb. ii. 4; in all of which the words used here in the Septuagint for "signs and wonders" occur as the ordinary and constant form of words for supernatural demonstrations of the power of God: nor is there a single instance to the contrary in all the Scriptures. Let us, then, with the more confidence examine for what ends of God those powers and gifts commonly called extraordinary are declared in this passage to have been given.

The prophecy is concerning Him whose name is Immanuel, God with us; against whom it is said, (ver. 8-13,) that the nations shall confederate, and against His land, and against His people, who are exhorted not to look to any human help, nor to form any confederacies in their turn, but to sanctify the Lord of hosts, and to make Him their fear and their dread. Then follows, from ver. 14, a glorious promise of Immanuel

and Immanuel's doings. And, first, He is proposed as a sanctuary: "He shall be for a sanctuary." And so spake He of Himself the very first time He presented Himself at Jerusalem, saying, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up:" "He spake of the temple of His body." Instead, however, of receiving Him as such, it is prophesied that He should be "for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel; for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken," (ver. 14, 15.) Now, it is remarkable, that in the passage of Peter's First Epistle, to which we have already had occasion to refer, this very prophecy is quoted (chap. ii. 8) in a context which treats of Christ and His Church as the spiritual house, and the holy priesthood of the house: which coincides so exactly with the context in Isaiah, where He is presented as a "sanctuary," that I have no doubt the one suggested the other; or rather, to speak more faithfully, that the Holy Ghost in the apostle explained more fully what He had spoken in the prophet. Take now this, also, in connexion with the 68th Psalm and its commentary, as explained above, and a new strength will be given to the declaration of that psalm, that when Christ had ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, the office to which the Father promoted Him, and for which He furnished Him with the Seven Spirits of God, and which He is now fulfilling by the distribution of the same, is the office of building for God a house of habitation, a tabernacle wherein He may abide for ever, even the new Jerusalem, the city of God, which hath the glory of God, and is God's tabernacle, being also the bride of the Lamb, the completeness of the elect, or Church of the living God. When the prophet hath thus proposed Christ as a sanctuary, and declared that he would prove to both the houses of Israel a stone of stumbling, he proceedeth to explain what should be the privileges and prerogatives of those who should receive Immanuel as their teacher, and, being washed and quickened by His word, built up as lively stones into that sanctuary of God. The first of these is, to possess the testimony, or oracle of truth, and the law of holiness, and love among themselves; which is thus beautifully

and forcibly expressed: "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples." Seeing the houses of Israel will no longer keep the oracles of God and the law of holiness, let the sacred trust pass over from them to my disciples. This, accordingly, did take effect from the time of our Lord's resurrection, and hath continued until now. Japheth is dwelling in the tents of Shem. The glorious advantages of "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, and the keeping of the oracles of God," have passed over from the nation of the seed of Abraham and the flesh of Christ, unto the children of Abraham's faith and the disciples of the Spirit of Christ. The testimony is bound up and limited unto, the law is made honourable, and practised only among, the disciples of the Lord upon this earth. But it is immediately added, that only for a time, and not for aye, shall the children of Israel as a nation be so rejected and broken: ver. 17, "And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him." Immanuel, though sore disappointed, as we learn by the 49th chapter of Isaiah, that the house of Israel should not then have been gathered, is however contented with His Father's disposal, sits down at His right hand, and waits until He shall lift up again the light of His countenance upon the house of Jacob: for which happy day He looketh earnestly forward, when "He shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob, and all Israel shall be saved."

These things, however, are but preliminary to the matter properly in hand, yet absolutely necessary to the understanding of the dignity and the tenor of the prophetic strain; which, having thus given the great end of Christ as a sanctuary, and the great reward of His disciples, as the priesthood in that sanctuary,—having the oracle, (that is, speaking forth the very word of God, which formerly issued from between the cherubim,) and having the law (that is, the very mind of God) in their inward parts,—doth proceed to set forth another aspect of the office which Christ and His disciples were designed of God to fulfil: "Behold, I, and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel from

the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion." Formerly the figure was, Christ the temple, and His disciples having the oracle and law of the temple, (uttering the word and accomplishing the service of God;) which answers well to the apostolic doctrine that Christ is both Foundation and Head of the corner; and likewise to the Apocalyptic vision of the new Jerusalem, the glorified Church, which had no temple, for the Lamb is the temple thereof. Now the figure is of Christ and His children, the children whom the Father hath given Him; according to another prophecy, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin he shall see his seed;" and according to the declaration of the evangelist, "To them that believed gave he power to become the sons of God;" according, also, to the name which He receives in this same strain of prophecy, "Everlasting Father," or "Father of the age to come." The apostle Paul saw such a preciousness in this relation between Christ and His people, that he seizeth it at once, in the 2d chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, as a stronghold of the truth of Christ's unity with us in flesh, and in mortal flesh, saying, "Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage," (Heb. ii. 13-15.) A relationship of such strength and endearment will not be mentioned in our prophet for mere accidental or casual purposes, but for some high and solemn end: and what is this? It is expressed in these words, "are for signs and wonders;" which expression, as we have shewn above, in all cases signifies supernatural acts and appearances. As His children, therefore, we with Him are called to be for signs and wonders—that is, to minister the supernatural manifestation of the power of God; to be the hand of God for action, as we are His house for habitation; to be the body in which dwelleth the Spirit of God in all goodness and righteousness and truth; in which, also, and in all the members of which, God himself worketh all signs and wonders and mighty acts in the sight of men. I say, as an interpreter of God's holy word, that who-

sover will limit the office of being for signs and wonders, as if it were not the calling of all the children, doth breave the holy text of its substance, and might as well maintain that His disciples are, not all, but only some of them, for the maintaining of the testimony and the practising of the law. Not with less, but rather with more observation and circumstance, is our privilege to be for signs and wonders introduced, than our privilege to be for a law and testimony.

This being allowed, two questions arise thereon: the first, What connexion hath this office or function of the supernatural agent with the relation of our being children unto Christ? The answer is, That the children ever exhibit the powers and faculties of the Father. Now, Christ is our Father, not as the mortal man, but as the risen man; not as flesh and blood, for we are not born again of flesh and blood, but as the quickening Spirit who begetteth us for God. Our new life holdeth of His risen glory. It is a life, indeed, lived on the earth in flesh and blood—and therefore regeneration is reckoned by our Lord amongst the earthly things—but the sustaining principle and the fatherhood of it is from heaven. That Word which quickeneth is not from earth, but from heaven: as it is written, “For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven,” (Heb. xii. 25.) We are wedded to the risen body of Christ: we are risen with Him from the dead, and should seek the things that are above, where our life is hid with Christ in God. Forasmuch, then, as we are the children of the heavenly man, we should exhibit the form and feature and power and acts of the heavenly man, of the Son of God, of Him in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Now, His actings as the risen man are entirely and altogether supernatural, whether you look at them in the inward man of the heart renewed by His power, or in the outward demonstration which He is to make when He shall come again to destroy the course of this present evil world, to raise the dead, to cleanse away sin, and other mighty acts to do, which are not within the laws of nature, but above them all. We, then, as His children, begotten from above into His heavenly

image, ought to put forth, in order to prove our sonship, some features of the supernatural, not only in the way of a holy will triumphant over the law of sin, and a word triumphant over the law of falsehood, but of a mighty power triumphing over the law of sickness, infirmity, and death: in one word, we should put forth a first-fruits of that power which He Himself will put forth in the day of His appearing. Therefore it is that in our baptism we have promised to us, not only the cleansing away of sin,—the remission, the dismissal, or divorcement of it; which being put away, what is there left but holiness?—but we have also the promise of the Holy Ghost, as given by the prophet Joel, for the purpose of demonstrating that we are children of the risen Christ, members of the glorified and omnipotent Head. Therefore also the apostles and disciples were not permitted to go and preach until they had received that heavenly baptism. Their word must first be instinct with heavenly power, before it can convert men unto God. So also it was with Christ himself: He undertook not His public ministry till He had received the baptism of the Holy Ghost; and to that baptism Peter expressly referreth His miraculous power and doings: "That word (I say) ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him," (Acts x. 37, 38.) Then, also, He began to make disciples: then His word began to be spirit and life. Till that time He was merely the holy man under the law; the type and Father, I take it, of what the Jews shall be when He is revealed as their King, and they as His willing people; from that time forth He became the holy man baptized with the Holy Ghost, putting forth the first-fruits of His celestial glory. And we, being baptized with the same Holy Ghost, are required in this life to put forth the same first-fruits of our celestial glory; and our words, like His words—being in truth His in us—should be spirit and life. This, now, is the answer to the question, How are these signs and wonders connected with the relationship of children? The answer is,



Because the child is like his Father, and puts forth a first-fruits of his Father's power.

The second question arising out of this passage is, For what use were He and His children to be gifted with these supernatural powers? This is the chief question which we have taken upon us to examine; and I think we have full satisfaction upon it in the passage and its commentary. It is said, that they were to be "for signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion;" and it is immediately added, "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?" (Isa. viii. 19.) In these words are contained another use of signs and wonders, to be for the distinguishing of the servants of God from the servants of the evil one. There were some who would have sent the people to those who have familiar spirits, and unto wizards who peep and mutter: God, to deliver the people out of the hands of such necromancy and devil-worship, doth send forth His witnesses, endowed with His own gifts of supernatural power, that the people might seek unto them, and receive the law and the testimony from their mouth. Isaiah's prophecy had in view, not only the distant event of Immanuel's coming, but also the near event of Israel's rejection from her inheritance; and therefore he nameth the forms of idolatry which prevailed in those times, of which the particulars are given in 2 Kings xviii. 16, 17. The form, indeed, was changed in our Lord's time; but it was not the less opposed to the truth, standing in traditions, severities, and observances, which "made void the law and testimony of God." From these opposers of the truth to distinguish Christ and His disciples, they were endowed with the gift of tongues, to discourse openly with all, and so put to shame the peepings and mutterings of the wizards; with prophesyings, to bring to naught the divinations of the enchanters; and with discernment of spirits, to cast the demons out by means of which the people were deceived; with healing of diseases, to make void the pretensions of their fabulous shrines. Now, it is manifest from the text, that these holy

witnesses of the law and the testimony of God were thus miraculously gifted and sent forth, as another resource of mercy for preserving the poor, blinded, and deceived people from their own destruction, and delivering them out of the hands of their blind guides. In like contrast with the scribes and pharisees and doctors of the law, doth Christ set the prophets and apostles whom He was about to endow from on high; and for the same end, of endeavouring to reclaim the wicked people. After having pronounced manifold woes upon the false teachers and perverters of the people, He thus expresseth the same thing with our prophet: "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city," (Matt. xxiii. 34.) In the Gospel by Luke, apostles also are mentioned; and it is introduced by these words, "Wherefore also said the wisdom of God." I know not whether this be a name of Christ, or intended as a loose reference to some of the prophets: if the latter, I should think it is to this very passage of Isaiah the reference is made, "signs and wonders" being the endowments of those who filled the prophetic and apostolic offices. Be this as it may, the passage shews, that, though the effort which Christ made in person had failed, there was another still to be made for reclaiming the Jewish people, by endowing those their children and brethren with the same powers, and sending them forth over the cities of Israel. And if we now turn to the commentary of the apostle in the 2d of the Hebrews, we shall find this idea confirmed. Having shewn Christ's superiority in all respects to the angels, he requires of the Hebrews to give more earnest heed to His word than even their fathers had done to the word spoken by angels through the mediation of Moses: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" (Heb. ii. 3, 4.) In this passage the use of these miraculous endowments is, as in the

prophet, made to be for confirmation of the word which they spake; being God's witness in them, God's manifesting Himself to be working in them. Then he connects this with "the world to come," of which Christ is the ordained Lord, (ver. 5-10,) whence, in chap. v. 5, they are called "the powers of the world to come," being the same with "the earnest of the inheritance" of Eph. i. 13, and "the first-fruits of the Spirit" of Rom. viii. 23. After this, Paul, having shewn the causes of Christ's humiliation, and made the quotation from our prophet, and shewn how Christ works in us what first He completed in Himself, he proceeds in the 3d chapter to treat of Him as the builder-up of a house unto God; "which house," saith he, "are ye, if ye hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope steadfast unto the end."

From the examination of this passage of Isaiah, along with the several comments upon it given by the Holy Ghost in the New Testament, we ascertain two things further with respect to the end of these miraculous endowments. The first, that God would not cast off the Jewish people into their long abasement and misery, until He had given them a ministry confirmed by supernatural witness. To have rejected Messiah was not enough; they must also reject Messiah's children, set up amongst them "for signs and wonders." God must put His difference upon those who give heed to His Son, and those who give heed to others than He; upon the one bestowing His own seal of the Holy Ghost, upon the others bringing confusion and darkness and misery. For it is a thing well recorded, and confessed even by the heathen themselves, that from thenceforward their oracles became dumb, and their deities or demons impotent. Now if God did thus, by raising up and sending forth a body of witnesses, testify to the Jewish people that Jesus was indeed the Christ, before casting them out; will He not do the same by the Gentiles also, amongst whom He sendeth His witnesses when the Jews rejected them: "If you refuse to hear us, we turn to the Gentiles?" God taught Peter both by word and sign, that He was no respecter of persons, "but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him." God in His dealings with the Jews was not partial, nor more

favourable than He is to any other nation. By them He did reveal His tender mercy and long-suffering unto all. If, then, His principle of treating mankind be one and the same, and He did see it good to furnish His witnesses to the Jews with these signs and wonders, He will see it necessary to do the same by His witnesses to other nations: what should introduce a difference? It was not enough for His mercy and goodness, that Christ's disciples should have the law and the testimony; they must also have signs and wonders, with which to make it apparent that Jesus is the Christ: why should it be necessary that to another nation less should be given? The prophet Isaiah is shewing what controversy and argument God would maintain with a nation for the testimony of Christ; and he asserts it to be twofold,—the internal testimony of truth and holiness, and the external testimony of signs and wonders. Those who, sending missionaries into foreign lands, will assert less to be necessary now, must find their warrant for it somewhere else than here, where there is a distinct contradiction of it. Not less, but more, seems to be necessary with a heathen nation: for the Jews had already Moses and the prophets, and believed them; whereas the heathen have neither knowledge nor belief of the Word of God, but are preoccupied in general with the false writings of men. The Jew is a parallel case with ours. They had the Scriptures, and believed them; we have the Scriptures, and believe them. But because they had the Word, did God say they shall not have the miracle? Quite the contrary: He says, they shall have the miracle also. But ye say, because we have the Word we shall not have the miracle. Where learned you to say so? And, in point of fact, how was it with the Gentiles? Was not the Corinthian church as full of signs as the church of Jerusalem? But we must forbear from teaching, and keep to our work of learning from the oracles of God.

The second end which we here discover for these gifts being in the Church, is, that they might serve as God's own witness to the words which the ministers of His Son declare. And this same end doth Peter assign for Christ's own miracles in the 10th chapter of the Acts, ver. 38, already referred to.

Christ himself also appeals both to His words and His works, as being spoken and done by the Father dwelling within Him. That indwelling of the Father was by the Holy Ghost, who is therefore called the Spirit of the Father ; whom also He promised to His disciples, and sent down on the day of Pentecost. Christ in His own person of the Son sustaineth the personality of the Son of man ; the person of the Father is in Him by the Holy Ghost. So also Christ by regeneration becomes in His own personality the upholder of our persons—we have the Spirit of Christ ;—but it is the Holy Ghost which brings us the Spirit of the Father. The human in the saints is of Christ, the superhuman is of the Father ; both inwrought by the Holy Ghost, acting in the former work as the regenerating Spirit of Christ, in the latter as the baptizing Spirit of the Father : and so Christ and the Father have their meeting place in the soul of the saint, in whom the Holy Ghost testifieth both of the Father and the Son. And thus it is that the New Jerusalem, which is the Church glorified, hath for its light the concentration of two Lights, the “ Lord God Almighty and the Lamb,” and them also for its temple: they meet and rejoice together in the Church. This being understood, we are able to comprehend the nature of the witness which the superhuman endowments brought to the word of Christ and His disciples. They were the testimony of God in them, of God in their word, of God in their act: as it is written : “ For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you,” (Matt. xi. 20.) And again : “ The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works ; . . . believe me for the very works’ sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also ; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to the Father,” (John xiv.) And again : “ And there are diversities of operations [in-workings, energisings,] but it is the same God which worketh all in all,” [all the gifts in all the gifted persons,] (1 Cor. xii. 6.) These passages are the best exposition of that to which our attention is more immediately drawn on this head ; “ God also bearing them witness [witnessing with, upon ; that is, upon their word,] both with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts [powers

and distributions] of the Holy Ghost," (Heb. ii. 4;) which is parallel with that prayer in the Acts, "Grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching out thine hand to heal, and that mighty signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy Child Jesus." The testimony of God stood in the powers of the Holy Ghost, which they had ability to exert; and these powers were such as to avouch a present God, an indwelling God. This demonstration stood not in the power alone, but in the goodness and mercy of the works. Power superhuman alone doth not avouch God, but merely an agent of some kind stronger than man; which might be, and oft was, Beelzebub and his subject demons—whose power to do miracles hath been manifested from the time of the Egyptian magicians; and it is prophesied shall be most wonderfully manifested in the time immediately preceding the coming of the Lord: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect," (Matt. xxiv. 24.) So also is it written in the Apocalypse, (chap. xiii. 13, 14.) And our Lord, when charged with doing His works by means of Beelzebub, did answer two ways; neither of which sanction the common notion that Beelzebub could not, that none but God could, perform a miracle: this He never hints at, but takes quite other ground, saying, "A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand;" and, "By whom do your children cast them out?" The first of these answers appeals to the moral character of His works, that they were all against Beelzebub, being works of goodness and mercy, and redemption from evil; that they were manifestly acts against the kingdom of Satan, and, consequently, for the kingdom of God. Now this answer takes for granted a moral sense in man, capable of discerning between good and evil, between a work of God and a work of the devil; to which our Lord appeals the question of His miracles, and not to the degree or amount of power manifested in the work. To the conscience of man, which can discern God's way from the devil's way; not to the sense of man, which cannot measure the amount of power possessed by the evil spirit, doth He make His appeal. The second

answer contains an argument to set them free from their malice : If you think thus evil of me, will you think the same evil of your children, who with me are labouring in the same work ; but if to them you attribute no such league with Beelzebub, why then to me ?

There can be no doubt, then, from this, that it is a very short and limited, yea, and erroneous, view of the evidence of miracles which is now satisfying the churches ; who think that every superhuman work is necessarily of God, and doth attest the worker of it to be a man of God, whom we are bound to hear as God himself. If this were true, why is it that, when the churches are so often told to try the spirits, not the working of miracles, but the doctrines taught, are given as the tests ? This wide-spread error, I perceive, will be a great means of laying the Church open to those great signs and wonders which the false Christs and false prophets, prophesied to appear in the time of the end, shall work. The witness of God, with the word of Christ, standeth in a certain description of miraculous works, and not in miraculous works in general ; gospel works, the counterpart of gospel words ; and therefore proving that it is one and the same God who doth the one and speaketh the other. Of what kind these are we learn from the catalogues of them in the New Testament so frequently referred to. These works speak God to be in the person, and in the body of persons, who do them. None but the members of Christ's body can do works of that kind ; none but the redeemed servants of the Redeemer can work these redemption-works ; every one of which is the taking off some curse which sin hath imposed, and from which only the Redeemer from sin can deliver. Christ pays the price of the redemption ; God takes off the bonds, and sets the prisoner free. A work which will testify of God, must be of such a kind as acknowledgeth Christ to be the Redeemer from sin, by actually freeing some person from some of the bondages of sin. It was in this way Christ spoke when He healed, saying, " Thy sins be forgiven thee ; " " Go, and sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee ; " " Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond ? " As the Redeemer from all bonds

of Satan, and especially from disease and death, is Christ preached by us; as such is He to be manifested by God in the world to come; of which manifestation God gives, in all these signs and wonders and divers powers and distributions of the Holy Ghost, a token and a part; thereby testifying, that Christ is He unto whom He hath given the fulness and completeness of that glorious work. Unless men, therefore, be left so far to themselves as to say, that God hath ceased to testify to the work which Christ performed in the flesh—of casting Satan out; of redeeming all flesh from death, and disease its precursor; of restoring the animal and vegetable world, and all creation, to their original sinlessness, innocency, and subserviency to mankind;—unless men be disposed to say, that they know God hath ceased to be at any pains or charges, in giving testimony to this work of His Son, they have no ground for believing that the age of miracles is past: and if they say, they know the mind of God to have changed in this matter, we ask them for the source of their knowledge; and till they produce this, we must look upon them as unfaithful witnesses of God and of Christ, fraudulent messengers between them and the world. As to the fact which they allege, that there have not of a long time been any such seals; granting their allegation to be a truth, which I do not believe, the answer to it is, that there hath been no testimony to the great work of Christ's redemption such as to be worthy of being so sealed unto. We do not look for these works to be wrought in China, because there is no testimony there to be confirmed by them; nor in the Protestant Church, if so be that testimony hath ceased. Now I frankly avow my belief, that there hath been no preaching of the resurrection and redemption of the flesh, and of the world, in the Protestant Churches, within my memory; and a very poor testimony of the redemption of the soul from sin—an Aminian, Pelagian, or particular-redemption doctrine, and not a Christian one;—preaching for the honours of a system, of articles, or of confessions, more than for the honour of Christ: certainly no preaching of Christ glorified, possessed of the Seven Spirits of God; of Christ to come and redeem the world from the usurpation of wickedness; of Christ to come and raise all the



dead, to glorify His Church, and to cast the wicked into hell. These are the realities of Christ's consummate work, which, being preached, God seals with a first-fruits of the very thing declared ; but these have no more, in an open manner, been declared in this island, or, I may say, in Christendom, since the first three centuries, than in regions which the gospel hath not visited ; and so there has been nothing to seal to. The seal to the preaching of this time, is a good living, a good name with the world, a reputation for learning and eloquence. " Verily it hath its reward." But as the liberty of preaching shall awaken, and the full voice of its glory be heard, its true seal will be given, which is from men, casting out of the synagogue, persecution, and death ; from God, " the doing among them the works which none other man did." " And all this will they do unto you, because they know not the Father, nor" Christ. If they knew the Father, they would know the Father's works, and love the manifestation of them, and desire it : if they knew Christ, they would speak of His glory, and desire His appearing.

The subject of the gifts commonly called extraordinary, and rashly conceived of as given for a local and temporary end, is one of far greater importance than the advocates of either opinion have dared to conceive, or, at least, have ventured to express ; being, as I judge, connected in the closest manner with the edification of the Church in love and holiness ; with her witness among the nations for their conversion unto Christ ; with the glory of God, as the Creator of the human soul for His shrine, agent, and interpreter ; with the glory of Christ, as the Head of the Church, subordinating all the members to Himself for the use of the Creator ; with the glory of the Holy Ghost, as the very life and mind and substance of Godhead, inhabiting, informing, and manifesting forth the being of God, in such wise as that the Church should be God's manifested fulness, the fulness of God, who filleth all in all. Such a subject to have undertaken would even now appal me, had I to work out the form, or to weave the web of it, from my own reason : but, having expressly given myself up to the guidance of God's own

word, in that order in which it hath pleased Him to reveal the same, I feel nowise embarrassed ; but, following the footsteps of the Holy Ghost in the Old Testament, with the candle of the New Testament in my hand, I feel that I cannot go far astray. And if I should err in my interpretations, the error carries its own correction along with it ; for at every turn I appeal to the written word of God, "written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." And the more easily to fall into the method of God, I have chosen to adopt no method of my own, but simply to follow down in order the scriptural testimonies which are found upon this subject. Of these, two—those in Ps. lxxviii. and Isa. viii.—have already been taken into consideration ; and I now proceed to that written in the 28th chapter of the same prophet, and applied to the gift of tongues in the 14th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

The words which the Holy Ghost, in the mouth of the apostle Paul, hath set his seal to, as a prophecy of the gift of tongues, are as follows : "For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people ; to whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing : yet they would not hear." And the manner of His doing so is this : "In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people ; and yet for all that they will not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not : but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe." Nothing therefore can be more distinct, than that the Lord would have us to study the prophecy of the 28th chapter of Isaiah by the light of the 14th chapter of First Corinthians, if we would get insight into the mystery of the gift of tongues, which is nowhere else in the Old Testament individually referred to.

The prophecy begins by denouncing woe upon the drunkards of Ephraim, or the Ten Tribes, represented in that tribe which had the birthright, and spread over the region of Galilee and Samaria, where was the first scene of our Lord's labours, as had

been prophesied by Isaiah, (chap. ix. 1.) Of these drunkards, the utter desolation is foretold by "a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand," (Isa. xxviii. 2.) By the Assyrian out of the north this began to be accomplished upon the same generation whom our prophet rebuked; was consummated upon the generation to whom our Lord addressed the direful woes of Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida; and still continues, both upon the land and upon the people. Then, after the usual consolation to the residue, and promise of a most glorious restitution of all the things which in wrath and judgment were to be trodden down for a season, the scope of the prophecy passeth over, at ver. 7, to the priests and the prophets, the consecrated guardians of the wisdom and knowledge of the land; upon whom the burden proceedeth until the 14th verse, when it passeth over to the political or regal estate; and concludes with a parable, taken from the art of the husbandman (ver. 23.) Of these three portions of the prophecy, it is the middle one with which we have to do; and this consisteth of two parts: the former descriptive of the blindness of mind, the ignorance, error, and uncleanness of spirit, which had come over the learned, studious, and sacred classes of the people; namely, the priests, the scribes, and the doctors; whose state is figuratively set forth in these words: "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way: the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean," (ver. 7, 8.) This is not the drunkenness and debauchery of the flesh—for in the time of our Lord, who made great use of this prophecy, these classes were mostly of the Pharisees, a self-denying sect, and severe as to the letter of religion and morals—but it is that incapacity of understanding anything aright which comes from a perverted and dishonest mind, intent not upon God's glory and the conscience of truth, but neglecting these altogether, for sinful ends of ambition and vain-glory, or mingling them

with the interests of a sect with which we identify ourselves. Such, for example, as are to be found this day among the zealous promoters of the Evangelical sect ; which, in respect of its love of party and incapacity of receiving truth, is the very *fac-simile* of the religious and believing class to whom these words were addressed : " Stay yourselves, and wonder ; cry ye out, and cry : they are drunken, but not with wine ; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes : the prophets and your rulers, the seers, hath he covered," (Isa. xxix. 9, 10.) The perfect identity of the Evangelical sect with these drunkards of Ephraim is shewn in nothing more than this, that if any person there abiding come to the knowledge of any truth as it is in Jesus, he is fain to come out from among them ; and if he will not, they will move heaven and earth to cast him out. The latter part of the prophecy is the judgment of these men, consisting in making a void of the way of wisdom, and adopting a new way in its stead ; which is, the foolishness of preaching ; rejecting the way of the wise and the prudent, of the scribe and the disputer of this world ; and adopting in its stead the way of babes. " Whom shall he teach knowledge ? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine ? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept ; line upon line, line upon line ; here a little, and there a little : for with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people," (Isa. xxviii. 9-11.) They would not take the gift of God for its own preciousness, or for the dignity and excellency of the Giver ; but must have it set out with the arts of the sophist, or in the forms of traditionary learning. God said to them, " This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest ; and this is the refreshing : yet they would not hear. But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept ; line upon line, line upon line ; here a little, and there a little ; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken," (ver. 12, 13.) They would accept of no heavenly boon which would not defer to their notions of manly wisdom ; and God would not give it in any

other form than what is proper to us as children. They stood upon their attainments; God stood upon their foolishness: they would not give way to God, and so they lost the boon of rest and refreshment; and were cast into a restless bed, to pass a long and dreary night: "For 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," (ver. 20.)

I. Such is the prophecy as a whole; and now I proceed to point out the use of it made in general by the Lord, and in particular by the great teacher of the Gentiles. The 11th chapter of St Matthew is nothing more than a running commentary upon it; where the Lord, after denouncing woe upon the cities of Ephraim, (the ten tribes,) (ver. 20-24,) for their unbelief of His discourses and miracles, doth receive (Luke vii. 17-21) the account from His unlearned disciples, the seventy, how wonderfully they, who were but babes, had prospered; and instantly He beheld the fulfilment of this prophecy, and rejoiceth "that those things were hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes." And then He preaches the rest and the refreshment to the weary, "Come unto me," &c. The apostle Paul also, in the outset both of the Epistles to the Romans and to the Corinthians, doth shew that misuse of knowledge on the part of the heathen which had led to the rejection of that method for the innovation of preaching: and especially in the latter of these Epistles, which chiefly concerneth our subject, is he at great pains to shew the Corinthian Church how studiously he had refrained from the wisdom of words, giving it forth as a grand revolution which God had introduced into the world in the matter of teaching, for the end of making void the pride of human learning and natural understanding. And in confirmation of this, as an ancient purpose of the Father, he referreth to a passage in the next chapter of Isaiah, which is but a continuation and enlargement of the passage before us, (1 Cor. i. 19.) At the same time he asserteth for the Church an higher wisdom, "wisdom from God," (1 Cor. i. 30;) which cometh through revelation of the Spirit and in no other way, (1 Cor. ii. *passim*): and accordingly the first two manifestations of the Spirit are "the word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge," (1 Cor. xii. 8.) It ap-

pears, therefore, that the words drawn out of this prophecy and applied by the apostle to the gift of tongues, are part of a dispensation of judgment upon the pride of intellect and the glory of learning, which cannot find out God, but are ever worshipping idols of their own invention and imagination: wherefore God, after long probation taken, both among the Jews and Gentles, did introduce the method of babes, "of those who are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breast." The gospel ever saith, "Put away your natural gifts and acquirements, and become as little children, in order to inherit the kingdom of heaven;" and it further said, "The natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God, which are spiritually discerned: therefore ye must be born again of the Spirit, and, like new-born babes, ye must desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."

Of this continuous rebuke and judgment, which the foolishness of the gospel of Christ bringeth against the most noble attainments of unregenerate and unsanctified reason, the speaking "with stammering lips and another tongue" is a part, and a chief part: and another part is the way of reiterating, and reiterating the simplest truths as nurses do to little children, until they enter into the mind, and grow with its growth, and strengthen with its strength. No one knows at present much about the gift of tongues, because, where it has been given, interpretation hath been refused, and therefore over the words spoken there resteth a deep veil of darkness; but I will undertake from this passage to declare my conviction that, when interpretation shall be given, the words spoken will be found to contain no more than the simplest, most elementary, and most nutritious truths of the Spirit. It further appears, from the very words quoted by St Paul, at least from a clause in the heart of those quoted, that the things spoken is concerning the rest and refreshing. "To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing; yet they would not hear." Now, because the rest spoken of in the prophets is always the millennial glory and kingdom—"rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed"—we gather that the thing

spoken with a stammering lip, and with men of other tongues, concerneth chiefly the coming and the glory of Christ, "the rest which remaineth for the people of God." Moreover, as the stammering lips and the other tongues are parts of the figure taken from the way of instructing children—what a nurse adopteth when she changeth her voice, and breaks down her words to the simplest forms of childish apprehension—we judge that the gift of tongues is greatly for the edification of the children of the Spirit; and the first means adopted of God for drawing out their higher faculties of knowledge, and wisdom, and love, and action. And, accordingly, we find it always to have been the gift first bestowed upon the baptized, (Acts ii., x. 46, xix. 6;) and in the instances now appearing in the Church, this is the only gift which hath been given. But this remark is by no means to be taken as if in disparagement of their importance—for what so important in our life as the education of our childhood?—it is merely proposed as a thing shrewdly to be suspected, from the similitude of teaching children whereby it hath pleased God to set it forth. As a mother, in order to draw out the dormant faculties of her child, doth herself become a child; changing her voice, her utterance, and her very words, into the forms which may best please, most strongly attract, and edify the infant mind; so is it here declared that God will use those gifted with tongues as a means of reducing His mighty voice, which heretofore shook Sinai and the earth, into the compass and dimension of mortal ears; that He may thereby attract unto Himself the love and confidence of His little children, and rear them up, by line upon line, and precept upon precept, to the full stature of the perfection of Christ. As John was the voice of Christ preparing His way before Him; so, it seemeth to me, that these persons speaking with tongues, are the voice of the Spirit seeking access into our hearts by our ears, for the indwelling God to abide in us, and act and speak forth of us for ever. We have seen, from the passage in the 68th Psalm, as interpreted by the 4th chapter of the Ephesians, that the Church is a body for God's Spirit, for God himself, to dwell