

Jesus the Great Prophet to His People

by J. C. Philpot



We are now considering the prophetic office of Jesus, and hope, with God's help and blessing, to show that it is one of peculiar grace, and full of divine blessedness to his believing people. May the Spirit guide our thoughts and direct our pen in our Meditations on the grace and glory of Jesus as the Prophet of his Church, that he may make himself very dear, near, and precious to both writer and reader, and that, preserved from all error and led into all truth, we may exalt his great and glorious name, as we sit at his feet hearing his word and looking up to him for that heavenly instruction which is so blessed a feature of his prophetic office to communicate.

In unfolding this subject, as some degree of order is necessary to clearness, we shall endeavor to show,

- I. The essential nature of the prophetic office.
- II. The peculiar qualifications of Jesus to sustain his prophetic office.
- III. Jesus executing his prophetic office upon earth.
- IV. The present mode of sustaining his prophetic office in heaven.
- V. The spiritual bearing which his prophetic office has on the experience of his believing people.

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The essential nature of the prophetic office.

The peculiar, and what we may call the primary and essential character of the prophetic office, is sometimes, we think, not clearly understood. The leading idea of a prophet is usually considered to be that he is one who predicts future events. This certainly is one part, and a very important part, of the prophetic office; but it is by no means the primary or essential feature--and indeed, as regards that office as sustained by the Lord himself, it was quite a subordinate feature.

The primary and essential character of a prophet is that **he SPEAKS for God**. He is as God's mouth, ([Jer 15:19](#)), to speak God's words. This is plain, not only from the derivation of the word in both the Hebrew and Greek languages, but from several passages in the word of truth. Take for instance the following Scriptures—"Then the Lord said to Moses— See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet. You are to say everything I command you, and your brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his country." ([Exo 7:1-2](#).) We point out the parallel expression, which so fully proves the truth of our assertion that the primary and essential idea of a prophet is that he speaks for God—"You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him." ([Exo 4:15-16](#).)

The Lord's words to Jeremiah, when he called him to the prophetic office, bear most closely also on the same point—"Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; and before you came forth out of the womb I sanctified you, and I ordained you a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child, for you shall go to all that I shall send you, and whatever I command you you shall speak." ([Jer 1:4-7](#).) The distinguishing feature of Jeremiah's call to the prophetic office was that the Lord "put his words in his mouth." These words were words of authority and power; and thus by them he instrumentally rooted out, and pulled down, and destroyed, and threw down the enemies of God and godliness, and built and planted the Lord's own peculiar people. This was surely a much wider and more authoritative commission than if he had been sent merely to predict future events. It is perfectly true that he predicted the seventy years' captivity, the destruction of Babylon, and the return of the children of Judah to their own land, with other prophecies, some of which are still unfulfilled--but this was only a part of his prophetic mission.

Similarly, when the Lord called Ezekiel to the prophetic office, he said to him, "You shall speak my words unto them, whether they will hear or forbear." ([Eze 2:7](#).) And again, "And he said to me, 'Son of man, listen carefully and take to heart all the words I speak to you. Go now to your countrymen in exile and speak to them. Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says,' whether they listen or fail to listen.'" ([Eze 3:10-11](#).) The leading, the characteristic feature of a prophet, then, was that he came to the people with a "Thus says the Lord" in his mouth; that his words were not his own words, but God's words, and his message the express message of the Lord of hosts.

This view of the fundamental character and position of a prophet may prepare us to see a little more clearly into the peculiar suitability of such an office, and the wisdom and mercy of God in providing such a means of speaking to the children of men. Man, being created in the image

and after the likeness of God, was, from the very constitution of his intelligent being, made capable of receiving direct communications of the will and good pleasure of his heavenly Creator. Thus, in Paradise God walked and talked with Adam, instructed him into the knowledge of his will, and set before him a precept what to do, and a prohibition what to shun. ([Gen 2:16-17.](#)) In this state of innocence and happiness there was no need of a prophet to speak for God to man, as the Lord himself communed directly and immediately with him as the pure and intelligent creature of his hand.

But when Adam sinned and fell, this mode of direct and immediate communion of man with his Maker was at once cut off. Man, stripped of his native purity and innocence, felt his nakedness and shame, and, full of guilt and terror, fled from the voice of the Lord which he once had heard with delight, to shelter himself from the indignant eye of Justice amid the trees of the garden. But O, the unparalleled mercy and goodness of the Lord! Where sin had thus abounded--there did grace much more abound; for in the very garden where man had so awfully and wilfully sinned and fallen, there mercy was revealed, and the very trees which had been witnesses of the fall, and had in vain sheltered guilty Adam from the wrath of his justly incensed Creator, now witnessed the first promise of redemption by a Mediator of God's own providing, one no less than his own Son, in due time to be made of a woman—of the seed of that very woman who had first sinned and then dragged the man down with her into the pit wherein she had herself fallen.

The former way, then, of direct and immediate communication between God and man being cut off by sin, the glorious plan of redemption, which had lain from all eternity in the bosom of God, now provided a new way whereby God could once more commune with man. A Mediator having been provided, and a ransom found through and by his blood, a way was made whereby, no longer as before, immediately--but mediately, communion might be re-opened on a different footing, and resting on a surer and more blessed basis. This, then, is the foundation of the prophetic office, first in the Person of the Mediator, and then in inspired men sent of God as witnesses of him.

We like to trace truth up to its eternal source, and to show the strong foundations on which the ordinances and appointments of God rest. There is in all the ways and works of God unspeakable wisdom; and when we can see this wisdom not only, as in creation, full of harmony and beauty, but as in the covenant of grace, replete with love and mercy, it has a blessed tendency to satisfy the mind with the fullest persuasion of the certainty of revealed truth, and to draw up the heart and affections to the Lord in the spiritual enjoyment of it. This must plead our excuse if we seem to any of our readers to have at all wandered from our subject.

Now no sooner was the covenant of grace brought to light in the first promise, than it was acted upon, at first indeed dimly and obscurely, but ever with increasing clearness, until fully revealed in the Person and work of the Son of God, when, by appearing in the flesh, he brought life and immortality to life. Thus, in a sense, Abel, the first martyr, was also the first prophet, for he testified for God and for the way of salvation through the atoning blood of the promised Mediator, when he "brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof." The Apostle therefore says of him, "by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts—and by it he being dead yet speaks." ([Heb 11:4.](#)) "He being dead yet speaks." He spoke for God, as a prophet of the future, when he offered unto him a more excellent sacrifice than Cain; and "he yet speaks" for him as a prophet of the past, for his testimony being recorded in the sacred page, it still utters its voice as a witness for the way of salvation through the blood of the Lamb, wherever the word of truth is borne. Thus, as there is no speech nor language where the silent voice of the starry heavens is not heard, ([Psa 19:3.](#)) so wherever, in the providence of God, the Bible is carried, in every tongue and to every nation, does Abel still speak as a silent prophet, and as

one who sealed his testimony with his blood, to those who have ears to hear his voice. But if the instance of Abel be somewhat obscure, the next that we shall adduce is stamped clearly enough by God's own testimony.

Enoch, certainly, was a prophet of the Lord, as Jude plainly testifies, and one of his prophecies, as yet unfulfilled, is preserved for us in the word of truth. He walked with God, and he spoke for God. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousand of his holy ones." ([Jud 1:14](#).) What a clear view was given him of the second coming of the Lord Jesus in all the glory of the Father, attended with ten thousand of his holy ones, "to execute judgment upon all;" and how distinctly he saw the character and predicted the end of all those base creatures which, under the cloak of a profession, have ever infested, and will in the last days still more awfully infest, the Church of God.

Noah was the next prophet recorded in the word of truth, for he was "a preacher of righteousness;" ([2Pe 2:5](#);) and the blessed Lord himself spoke in him by his Spirit when he preached by him unto the spirits now shut up in their awful prison, awaiting the judgment of the great day, even those rebellious and disobedient antediluvians against whom Noah testified, both by word and deed, when he prepared the ark to the saving of his house. ([1Pe 3:18-20](#); [Heb 11:7](#).)

But time and space will not admit of our pursuing further this subject, or to trace out the stream of prophecy from its original source down to the close of the canon of the Old Testament. Let these two observations on the general character of prophecy suffice:

1. It pleased God to choose a people for himself in the seed of Abraham, to whom he might make known his will, and he therefore raised up a succession of prophets among them to be as his mouth, to speak to them in his name. As they, in thus testifying of him, had continually to predict coming judgments or to promise future blessings, the idea naturally attached itself to the office of a prophet, that he was one sent to foretell future events--but always in connection with the primary feature of his character--that he was specially sent by God, and spoke in his name and by his special authority. To foretell the future was indeed necessary to their office, and the fulfillment of their predictions was a proof of God's speaking in and by them. The following words of Moses throw the clearest light on the whole subject—"But any prophet who claims to give a message from another god or who falsely claims to speak for me must die. You may wonder, 'How will we know whether the prophecy is from the Lord or not?' If the prophet predicts something in the Lord's name and it does not happen, the Lord did not give the message. That prophet has spoken on his own and need not be feared." ([Deu 18:20-22](#).)

2. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," ([Rev 19:10](#);) both in the Old Testament and the New, and thus the whole series of prophets testified to the Person and work, grace and glory of the Son of God. To testify of him was the delight of their heart and the theme of their tongue. They themselves indeed did not fully understand the full import of their own prophecies--but they know that salvation by the promised Messiah was the theme of them all, as the Apostle Peter declares—"Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things." ([1Pe 1:10-12](#).)

In similar language he testified to the same truth when, almost immediately after the day of Pentecost, he spoke unto the people in the porch of the temple—"Starting with Samuel, every prophet spoke about what is happening today. You are the children of those prophets, and you

are included in the covenant God promised to your ancestors. For God said to Abraham, 'Through your descendants all the families on earth will be blessed.'" ([Act 3:24-25](#).) Thus, too, our blessed Lord reproved the two disciples journeying to Emmaus with the slowness of their heart in not seeing and believing that which the prophets had testified of him. "You are such foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. Wasn't it clearly predicted by the prophets that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his time of glory? Then Jesus quoted passages from the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining what all the Scriptures said about himself." ([Luk 24:25-27](#).)

Blessed Interpreter! blessed interpretation! O that he would do to us by his Spirit and grace what he afterwards did to all his disciples just before he was parted from them and carried up into heaven! that he, even he, would open our understanding that we might understand the Scriptures, and under his divine teaching, as the Prophet of his Church, might sit at his feet and hear his words, and know in sweet experience that they are Spirit and they are life to our soul.

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The QUALIFICATIONS of the Lord Jesus to sustain the office of Prophet to his people.

i. In opening up this part of our subject, we shall first examine the foundation of these qualifications, which we shall find in great measure identical with that on which his priestly office rests, that is, **his glorious Person**, as Immanuel, God with us. That he is God, actually and essentially God, as the second Person in the glorious Trinity, is the foundation not only of all his offices--but of everything that he is to the Church of God. Omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, all of which are essential attributes of Deity, are needed in him who shall atone as Priest, teach as Prophet, and rule as King.

The Deity of our blessed Lord does not, therefore, rest merely on single texts of Scripture, however numerous or however clear. We bless God for giving us these direct testimonies to strengthen our faith and to defend it against gainsayers; but the indirect are, if possible, stronger still. The Deity of our blessed Lord is so interwoven with the truth of God that could it be torn from it, the whole of revelation must fall to pieces. His blood, his righteousness, his grace and glory, and the whole scheme of salvation as accomplished by him, are so dependent upon his Deity, that without it and separate from it, they have not only no value or validity--but would have no existence--no place in the word, and no place in the heart of the family of God.

View this in connection with his offices. If Jesus were only a man, his blood, as at once **Priest** and Sacrifice, could not be of sufficient value to put away one sin, much less millions of sins of millions of sinners. If he were only a man, his eye could not see, his ear hear, or his lips instruct, as the **Prophet** of his Church, thousands of his believing people who are crying and looking to him from all parts for instruction. If he were only a man, how could his shoulders support the weight of sovereignty as **King** over all things in heaven and in earth? Thus the very foundation of all his offices is his eternal, actual, essential Deity, for without that every other qualification would be utterly ineffectual.

But here again, as in the case of his priestly office, we are met by that blessed and glorious truth of his real, proper, and eternal Sonship. This is as necessary a qualification for his office as Prophet as his eternal Deity; and, in fact, is intimately and indissolubly connected with it. When, then, we assert that the true and proper Sonship of our blessed Lord is an essential qualification to his sustaining the office of Prophet to his Church, we do so as a declaration of a grand and important gospel truth.

In our introductory remarks on the nature of the prophetic office, we showed that the fundamental character of a prophet was that he was one who spoke for God. Now, this is just the character that our blessed Lord sustains to the Church as the Son of the Father in truth and love. He speaks for the Father to the Church; for the Father speaks in and by him. Twice did the Father speak with express voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and added on the holy mount, "Hear him." ([Mat 3:17](#); [Mat 17:5](#).) The peculiar grace and glory of the Christian dispensation, its eminent and distinctive feature, is that in it God speaks in and by his dear Son. How clearly and beautifully is this declared by the Apostle in the opening chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews--"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken

to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs." ([Heb 1:1-4.](#))

When we have a view by faith of the Son of God as the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person, well may we feel and say--Who so proper, who so suited to speak for the Father as his own Son, who had forever lain in his bosom? Who so perfectly and intimately acquainted with the Father's will, who so able to reveal that will to the sons of men? In whom can we find love and power so blended; such zeal for the glory of God, such pity for the children of men; such majesty and such mercy; such infinite purity, yet such unspeakable condescension; such a representative of God, such a messenger for man! He and the Father are one--one in essence, one in will, though in Person distinct. To be one with the Father in essence, yet distinct from the Father in Person, is the peculiar character of his eternal relationship to him as his only-begotten Son.

The Word is his title as a Person in the Godhead, "For the Word was God." But why is he the Word? Because God speaks in him and by him. But why does the Father speak in and by him? Because he is his Son. Who is so fit for the Father to speak by as his own Son; or, who is so fit to speak for the Father? Out of the Son, the Father can neither be seen, nor heard, nor known. God is in himself essentially invisible, for he dwells in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man has seen or can see. But he has been pleased to reveal himself in the Person of his dear Son. Thus in seeing him we see the Father, as he told Philip; ([Joh 14:9;](#)) and in beholding his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, we view the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. ([Joh 1:14;](#) [2Co 4:6.](#))

In a similar way we cannot hear directly and immediately the voice of God. When that voice spoke on Sinai's blazing top, all the people that were in the camp trembled; yes, the whole mount itself quaked greatly; for so fearful was that voice that those who heard it entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more; and so terrible was the sight that even Moses, the man of God, and the typical mediator, said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." ([Heb 12:19-21.](#)) As, then, we cannot see God but as revealing himself in his Son, so we cannot hear God--but as speaking in his Son. This was John the Baptist's witness of him. "No man has seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him." ([Joh 1:18.](#)) As coming from the bosom of the Father, how qualified was he to speak of him and for him, as John so plainly testified--"He has come from above and is greater than anyone else. I am of the earth, and my understanding is limited to the things of earth, but he has come from heaven. He tells what he has seen and heard, but how few believe what he tells them! Those who believe him discover that God is true. For he is sent by God. He speaks God's words, for God's Spirit is upon him without measure or limit." ([Joh 3:31-34.](#))

In our next topic we shall hope, with God's help and blessing, to enter still further on the qualifications of the Lord Jesus Christ to sustain the office of Prophet to the Church of God.

In all his works and in all his ways, whether in creation, in providence, or in grace, the infinite wisdom of the great and glorious Sovereign of heaven and earth shines forth with conspicuous luster. It is true that in consequence of the darkness, unbelief, and infidelity of the human mind, as sunk and debased by the fall, this wisdom is for the most part hidden from the eyes of men; but when, under the teaching and testimony of the blessed Spirit, we are brought to see light in God's light, then this infinite and unspeakable wisdom begins to open itself to our admiring view. As taught by the Spirit to see in creation his wonderworking hand, we can join with David in

saying, "O Lord, how manifold are your works! in wisdom have you made them all. The earth is full of your riches." ([Psa 104:24.](#)) As favored to trace his providential hand, we can look back upon all the way by which he has led us these many years in the wilderness, and see wisdom and mercy stamped upon every step.

But whatever view we may obtain by faith of the only wise God as working in the wonders of creation, or as ruling in the complicated affairs of providence, it is in the domain of grace that his wisdom is more especially discovered to a believing heart; for as the gospel is the grand final revelation of his mind and will in the salvation of his people, it is the greatest display of the wisdom of God that could be afforded to his intelligent creatures, whether redeemed men, or admiring, adoring angels. A sense of this made the Apostle say, "We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began." ([1Co 2:6-7.](#)) This, on another occasion, made him stand as if on the brink of holy wonder and admiring awe, with the cry in his heart and mouth, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways ast finding out!" ([Rom 11:33.](#))

The angels, therefore, themselves, those bright and glorious beings who always behold the face of the God and Father of the Lord Jesus in heaven, derive their deepest lessons of instruction into the wisdom of God from contemplating his gracious dealings with his people--"His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord." ([Eph 3:10-11.](#)) This manifestation of the wisdom of God to angelic intelligences by means of the Church was typically represented to the Old Testament saints by the two cherubim of beaten gold who covered the mercy seat with their wings, and turned their faces towards it, as if seeking ever to penetrate into the divine mystery of mercy and grace for guilty man through the incarnation of the Son of God; as the Apostle speaks, "Which things the angels desire to look into." ([1Pe 1:12.](#)) The Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, in his Person and work, as the Mediator between God and men, in all the offices that he sustains, in all the riches of his grace, and all the fullness of his glory, is "the wisdom of God," as well as "the power of God;" ([1Co 1:24;](#)) for "in him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." ([Col 2:3.](#))

But as these treasures are hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed only to babes, ([Mat 11:25,](#)) he himself is "of God made unto us wisdom," ([1Co 1:30,](#)) that by sitting at his feet and hearing his words; ([Luk 10:39;](#)) by taking his yoke upon us and learning of him; ([Mat 11:29;](#)) by union and communion with him as living members of his mystical body; ([Eph 5:30;](#)) by being joined to him as one spirit with him; ([1Co 6:17;](#)) by drinking into his mind; ([1Co 2:16;](#)) by beholding with open face as in a glass his glory, and being changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, ([2Co 3:18,](#)) we may possess in him, and derive from him that wellspring of wisdom which shall be in us as a flowing brook. ([Pro 18:4.](#))

The bearing of these remarks on the wisdom of God, as displayed in the Person and work of Christ, may perhaps not be immediately obvious, but they have been dropped by us in connection with that part of our subject which is still before us, that is, the qualifications possessed by the Lord Jesus for the fulfillment of his office as Prophet to his people.

If, then, the blessed Lord is "the wisdom of God," this wisdom will shine forth, not only in the constitution of his glorious Person as Immanuel, God with us, but in every one of his covenant offices. Not only as Priest and King but as Prophet he shines forth in the glory of the Father. Infinite wisdom, infinite love, and infinite power--the wisdom of God the Father, the love of God

the Son, and the power of God the Holy Spirit, all combined in the Person and work of Immanuel to glorify the Father, to exalt the Son, and to save the Church. To understand, to believe, to love, to revere, and adore the heavenly mystery of this wisdom, love, and power--to realize it in sweet experience, and to be filled with all the blessed fruits which spring out of it for time and for eternity, will be our highest wisdom and richest mercy.

With the desire, then, to look into some of these depths of wisdom, love, and power, let us now resume our subject--the qualifications of Jesus to sustain the prophetic office for the glory of God and the good of his people.

We have previously dwelt chiefly upon those qualifications which he possesses as a divine Person in the glorious Trinity, antecedent to and irrespective of man, viewed as fallen or unfallen. These were two--1. His eternal Deity; 2. His true and proper Sonship. Both of those, we have seen, were necessary to qualify him to speak for God as his mouth. He was "the Word," who "in the beginning was with God;" who alone had seen the Father; ([Joh 6:46](#);) who knew the Father as the Father know him; ([Joh 10:15](#);) who came forth from the Father; ([Joh 16:28](#);) the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father; ([Joh 1:18](#);) and who revealed what he had seen and heard that he testified. ([Joh 3:32](#).) It is very strengthening to faith to have a view of these qualifications of the blessed Lord to testify of the Father. We want certainties, the fullest evidence, the clearest assurance, that what Jesus has declared of the Father he knew, not by inspiration, as the prophets, but by actual personal sight and knowledge; that he came from the bosom of the Father; that he was "ever by him as one brought up with him, and daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." ([Pro 8:30](#).) What a repose is this for faith, that it can rest with implicit confidence on all that Jesus has testified of the Father as alone knowing him, and yet graciously revealing him to the sons of men. In the things which concern our everlasting peace, in the solemn matters of eternity, where our soul's comfort and joy, not to say its eternal salvation, are at stake, how needful it is to have a foundation on which faith can firmly build and stand secure amid all the storms of temptation, waves of affliction, and the foaming billows of unbelief and infidelity, urged on by the breath of Satan.

Believer, your faith has to rest upon and deal with the words of Jesus Christ, for he has "the words of eternal life." Your faith, if it has not already been, will have to be tried with fire. Look well, then, to the foundation, and see that it is firm and good. We shall have, with God's help and blessing, to dwell more fully upon this part of our subject when we come to see how our Lord's prophetic office bears upon a believer's experience; but we wish to impress upon the mind of our readers the necessity as well as the blessedness of having true and believing views of the qualifications of our Lord to speak in the name of the Father, as "the brightness of his glory and the express image of his Person," before the foundations of the earth were laid, or the dayspring knew its place.

But now we come to **those qualifications which are more immediately connected with his pure HUMANITY**; and these we shall find as necessary as those which are based upon his eternal Deity and Sonship.

1. It is his being man as well as God that makes him fit to be a Mediator--"for there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." ([1Ti 2:5](#).) It is his being "the man Christ Jesus," as well as God the Son, which makes him capable of being the arbitrator or "umpire," (margin,) for whom Job longed, ([Job 9:33](#),) that can lay his hand upon us both. As God, Jesus could speak to God for man; as man, he could speak to man for God. High as the highest, he became low as the lowest; equal with the Father in his divine nature--he became equal with man in his human nature. The Prophet of whom Moses spoke was to be "from the midst of the children of Israel, of their brethren." "The Lord your God will raise up unto you a Prophet from the midst of you, of your brethren;" and again "I will raise them up a Prophet from

among their brethren, like unto you, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." ([Deu 18:18.](#))

The promised Prophet was to be raised up from the midst of, and from "among the brethren," for he was to be of the seed of the woman, ([Gen 3:15.](#)) and of the seed of David according to the flesh. ([Rom 1:3.](#)) To be a brother he must assume their nature, as the Apostle declares--"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same;" ([Heb 2:14;](#)) and again--"We all know that Jesus came to help the descendants of Abraham, not to help the angels. Therefore, it was necessary for Jesus to be in every respect like us, his brothers and sisters, so that he could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God. He then could offer a sacrifice that would take away the sins of the people." ([Heb 2:16-17.](#)) This qualified him to say, "I will declare your name unto my brethren; in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto you." ([Heb 2:12.](#)) His qualification as man to sustain the office of a Prophet was as needful as his qualification as God. To save man God became man. To teach his brethren the Son of God became their brother. This pure and perfect humanity he assumed in the womb of the Virgin, and the Holy Spirit, under whose divine and supernatural operation and overshadowing this human nature was conceived, filled it, at the very instant of its conception, with every grace, making it a holy temple in which all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily.

2. But though this human nature of our blessed Lord was in the instant of its conception sanctified and filled with all heavenly grace, yet was it capable of both natural and spiritual growth, and a further increase of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. We therefore read of Jesus in his earliest years, that "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." ([Luk 2:40.](#)) The growth spoken of there refers to his body, as he is said elsewhere to have "increased in stature," (verse 52,) growing as we grow from childhood to youth and manhood, but without any of those drawbacks of sickness and infantile complaints to which we are subject, from which he was perfectly free, as having no taint of disease or seeds of mortality in his pure and holy frame. His being said to "wax strong in spirit" refers to his being more and more filled in his soul with strength and wisdom, from more continual accessions of the power and unction of the Holy Spirit. No new grace was imparted to his soul, as no new member was added to his body; but as his pure human soul, like our own, expanded and grew with his bodily growth, so was it more and more filled with the Holy Spirit. The divine nature was not to our blessed Lord in the place of a soul. The two natures were essentially distinct, and though mysteriously united in the Person of the God-man, there was, as the Athanasian Creed has well expressed it, no "confusion of substance" from their intermixture, which would have been the case had his essential Deity been as a soul to animate his body.

And if it be asked why the human soul of Jesus needed the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, as it was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sin and sinners from the moment of his conception, we answer, that without these gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit it would not have been consecrated to the service of God, nor could it have lived unto him and for him according to the full measure of its capacity. The whole of his human nature, body and soul, would still have been "a holy thing;" ([Luk 1:35;](#)) but as the body without natural growth would have ever remained a babe, so would his soul not have grown up into all its fullness of wisdom and grace unless the same blessed Spirit who had formed and sanctified it in the womb had continually replenished it with heavenly treasure. This is beautifully unfolded in the words of the prophet--"Out of the stump of David's family will grow a shoot--yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root. And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on him--the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. He will delight in obeying the Lord. He will never judge by appearance, false evidence, or hearsay." ([Isa 11:1-3.](#)) By the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit the human nature of our blessed

Lord became a holy temple, consecrated to the service of God, replenished with every grace, and qualified not only to do and suffer the whole will of the Father, but to sustain every covenant office.

3. But it was more particularly at his baptism when the Spirit of God descended from heaven in a bodily shape like a dove, and rested on him, when the Father proclaimed with an audible voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," that he was consecrated to the active service of his heavenly Father. This corresponded to the anointing of the prophets of old to their prophetic office, as Elijah was commanded to anoint Elisha to be prophet in his room. ([1Ki 19:16](#).) Then the Father sealed him, ([Joh 6:27](#);) bore witness of him, ([Joh 8:18](#);) testified to his Sonship, gave him the Spirit without measure, ([Joh 3:34](#);) and bade us hear him. Then the Holy Spirit, as John the Baptist saw, descended from heaven and abode upon him; ([Joh 1:32-33](#);) and by this visible descent and perpetual abiding on him anointed him in a more especial manner with all those divine gifts and graces whereby he was qualified to fulfill his mission as the Messenger of the covenant in the most perfect and complete manner for the glory of God and the good of his people.

We may thus draw a distinction between those graces of the Holy Spirit whereby he was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, ([Psa 45:7](#); [Heb 1:9](#);) and that special communication of heavenly graces and gifts whereby he was peculiarly set apart and qualified to finish the work which the Father gave him to do. Our blessed Lord lived a life of faith upon his heavenly Father. The actings of this faith in all its diversified phases may be clearly seen portrayed to our view in those Psalms which beyond all controversy contain the experience of Jesus in the days of his flesh. There is not a grace or fruit of the Holy Spirit possessed by his people in measure--which the Lord did not possess without measure. And these, it must be borne in mind, were active graces, drawn out and called into continual exercise by the same Holy Spirit who had communicated them.

As read with an enlightened eye, the Psalms wherein our Lord speaks show all these graces in constant and active exercise. Faith in all its actings, hope in all its anchorings, love in all its flowings, patience in all its endurings, humility in all its submittings, prayer in all its supplicatings, praise in all its adorings, obedience in all its yieldings, zeal in all its burnings, devotedness in all its self-sacrificings, holiness in all its flame, and worship in all its fervor--all, all those graces and fruits of the Holy Spirit may be seen shining forth as with beams of heavenly light in the personal experience of our blessed Lord in those Psalms in which he speaks. They were, as it were, framed for him by the Holy Spirit before he came into a time state, that they might be not only prophetic of his sufferings for the benefit of his Church, but be the spiritual utterance of his own holy soul in the days of his flesh.* This personal experience of our blessed Lord forms another and most necessary qualification for his sustaining the prophetic office. He thus possessed the tongue of the learned, that he should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.

* When we speak thus of the experience of the Lord Jesus Christ being contained in the Psalms, we would strictly disclaim the view that all of them refer to him. That some do is evident from their being applied to him in the New Testament, and from his own words; ([Luk 24:44](#);) but it would be monstrous to refer such Psalms as 32 and 51 to him. Beyond all controversy, however, Psalm 22, 40, 69, and 110 belong to him; and if, in Psalm 22 for instance, his bodily sufferings are described by his own lips, is it not in full harmony with this to consider the sufferings of his soul, in other words, his inward experience, similarly described by himself; more especially as he used the first verse to express that most dolorous of all his sufferings when the Father hid his face from him? This is what we mean when we say that the Psalms contain the experience of Christ.

4. But this leads us to another qualification of our blessed Lord to sustain the prophetic office--that he had a personal experience of temptation. We have already seen that, in the depths of infinite wisdom, it pleased the Father to send as a messenger of the covenant one who had that intimate and ineffable knowledge of himself which none possessed but his only-begotten Son. Now as thus in his divine nature Jesus was thereby qualified in the highest degree to speak that which he knew, and to testify that which he had seen, so it pleased the father that in his human nature he should possess similar qualifications. We have already seen this under its two most principal features--1. The gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon him without measure for the benefit of others; 2. The personal experience which he possessed of every grace of the Spirit. The former made him a preacher, the latter made him a believer; by the first he lived for God, by the second he lived to God; by the one he broke the bread of life to others, by the other he had himself food to eat the world knew not of; by the first the words that he spoke were spirit and life to his believing people, by the second he could say, "And he who sent me is with me. The Father has not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." ([Joh 8:29](#).) The distinction that we have thus drawn between the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon the Lord for the exercise of his prophetic office and the grace with which he was filled as a matter of his own personal experience, may not be obvious to all our readers, but the difference seems clearly pointed out by comparing [Isa 11:2-3](#) with [Isa 61:1-3](#) --"The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, making him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord," evidently points to an inward experience of godly fear which we know in the word of truth often stands for the whole sum of vital godliness; but his being anointed "to preach good tidings unto the meek" evidently points to the gifts conferred upon him to speak for God to his people.

But as a part of this personal experience, it was needful for the Lord to know experimentally and feelingly the reality and power of temptation. Immediately, therefore, after his baptism, before he entered on the discharge of his prophetic office, he was led, or as one of the evangelists forcibly expresses it, "driven," ([Mar 1:12](#),) that is, carried by a mighty impulse of the Spirit, into the wilderness, there to be tempted of the devil. Into the record and nature of those temptations we shall not enter, though doubtless much profitable instruction is contained in them. It will be sufficient for our present purpose to direct the attention of our readers to what we may call the Apostle's divine commentary upon them--"For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to support those who are tempted." "For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities--but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." ([Heb 2:18](#); [Heb 4:15](#).)

The Lord's people are, for the most part, a very tried and tempted people. It was therefore needful that their suffering Head should be tried and tempted too, that in his own soul he might have a personal, individual, and deep experience of the nature and power of temptation. It was not sufficient that he should know temptation as the omniscient God; he must know it as suffering man. As he knew poverty by being poor, not having a place to lay his head; persecution, contempt, and hatred by being despised and rejected of men; suffering and sorrow by being himself a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; desertion of God by his Father forsaking him in the hour of his most dolorous agony--so he learned the power and pangs of temptation by being himself personally tempted. He "was in all points tempted like as we are," so that not a single temptation from without or from within can assail the child of God of which Jesus had not a personal experience; yet be it ever borne in mind, "without sin," of which there was no seed or taint in either body or soul. Here the gracious Lord differs from us. Temptation never comes to us without meeting with and stirring up sin; but in him there was no sin to stir up, as he said himself--"The prince of this world (Satan) comes, and has nothing in me," ([Joh 14:30](#)),--nothing sinful to work upon, nothing corrupt to incite, nothing of his own spawn to beget upon, nothing combustible to inflame.

All figures must be essentially incomplete and inherently imperfect to set forth divine truth, and especially one so deeply mysterious and inscrutable by the human intellect as what passed in the soul of the holy Redeemer as tempted by the prince of darkness; but we may perhaps, with this reservation, employ two simple comparisons to illustrate the difference between temptation assailing the holy soul of Jesus and temptation assailing our corrupt heart.

A raging sea may beat against a pure, white marble rock, or against a bank of earth. The former it can neither move nor sully; wave after wave is repelled and dashed off; whatever streams may lave its sides, the rock remains as before; the salt water has not penetrated its substance or mingled itself with it. So the pure and holy soul of Jesus, of him who is the "Rock of Ages," repelled and shook off, unmoved and unsullied, the fiercest, foulest temptations of Satan--felt them, knew them, experienced them, but never mingled with them, nor they with it. In the wilderness, on the top of the exceeding high mountain, on the pinnacle of the temple, with what holy calmness did Jesus shake off the assaults of the tempter, with "It is written!" Not that he did not feel the power of the temptations, but the Lion of Judah shook them off as the dew-drops from his mane. But we are a bank of earth, against, which, when the sea of temptation beats, it mixes with the native soil, washes off pieces, and runs off in muddy streams, as entering into its very substance. As in our figure the same sea assails rock and bank, so the same temptations assailed the Lord and us; but how different their effect! He felt them without sin; we feel them with sin. They mingled not with his pure soul, and therefore defiled it not; but they do mix with our corrupt heart, and sadly pollute it.

But take another figure, of a still humbler character, to illustrate the difference between the effect of temptation in the Lord's case and ours. On your right hand is a golden vase filled with the purest, clearest water; on the left is an earthenware vessel in which the water looks clean and good, but for this reason only, that all the dirt has subsided to the bottom. Stir both with the same stick. The water in the vase is still pure and clean; the water in the bowl is at once turbid and thick. Whence the difference? Not in the stick that stirs; not altogether in the receptacle; but in the mud at the bottom of the water. But if our figures are imperfect and inadequate (and we fully admit that they are so), yet fix your eyes--your believing eyes--for sense and reason are useless and worse than useless here, on these two points, and seek to enter into them, though unable to comprehend them--1. "In all points tempted like as we are;" 2. "Yet without sin." In these two points the whole truth and the whole mystery of our Lord's temptation are locked up and contained.

But if any, still wanting some explanation of the mystery, should inquire how the Lord could feel temptation as we do if there was no sinful principle in him to mingle with it, let him ask himself if he never feels temptation when he abhors it? The fiery darts of Satan, as, for instance, blasphemous and infidel temptations, things that your very soul abhors, do not these grieve and distress your spirit, which hates and abhors them? The more heavenly-minded, spiritual, and holy a man be, the more acutely he feels these "masterpieces of hell." This then may give you a faint conception of the way in which the holy soul of the Redeemer felt, most acutely felt, felt in proportion to his own spotless holiness, the temptations of Satan, yet was never tainted by them.

But we must pause. We have rather run out to sea, as the wind filled our sail; still, we trust we have not gone out of our course if, fixing our eye on Jesus as our polar-star, we have followed up our intention to lay before our readers the qualifications of our gracious Lord to fulfill that prophetic office for the benefit and blessing of the Church of God which he undertook in the everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure.

Thus far the qualifications of our blessed Lord to sustain the office of Prophet to his Church have formed the subject of our Meditations. As all the relationships which the Lord bears to his

people, as their covenant Head, are living springs of strength and consolation to them in exact proportion to their faith in him and to their receiving of his fullness grace for grace; ([Psa 87:7](#); [Joh 1:16](#); [Gal 2:20](#);) and as this faith is fed by knowledge, and works by love, how desirable it is that all who believe in his name should clearly see with anointed eyes, and experimentally feel with confiding hearts, the strong foundation on which their trust in him is built. "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." ([Isa 28:16](#).) Our faith, if indeed it be the faith of God's elect, has to be tried as by fire. We need then look well to two things--1, the foundation itself; 2, the faith which stands on that foundation. Failure in either would be perilous, if not fatal. We are at present engaged with the foundation; the faith which builds upon it will, in due course, come under our notice.

O you, then, who would build for eternity, but are often deeply tried and exercised about your faith whether it be indeed wrought in your heart by the mighty power of God, look well to the foundation. How can your faith be strong if the foundation be weak? Or how can your faith firmly embrace the foundation, unless you clearly see it as laid by the hand of God himself in Zion, and know for yourself that, as a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation, it is able to bear all the weight of your aggravated sins, all the burden of your continual sorrows, all the pressure of your daily needs, all the load of your complicated perplexities? This is the reason, then, why in all our previous attempts to set forth the covenant offices of our exalted Lord, we have dwelt so much on his qualifications to sustain them for the glory of God and the salvation and sanctification of his people. Let us ever bear in mind that the glorious Person of Christ is the grand object of our faith. "Look unto me,"--not my offices--"and be saved--all the ends of the earth;" ([Isa 45:22](#);) "Come unto me,"--to myself, to me, the God-man, "all you that labor and are heavy laden," ([Mat 11:28](#);) are his gracious words. First himself, then his offices; first the Son of God, then the High Priest over the house of God; first the Son given, then the Wonderful Counselor; first the mighty God, then the Prince of Peace. ([Isa 9:6](#).) From his glorious Person, his covenant offices derive all their grace and glory, all their beauty and blessedness, all their suitability to our wants and woes.

Unless, then, we have a living faith in his Person, we cannot have a living faith in his work. We first embrace his glorious Person, as revealed to our soul by the power of God as his only-begotten Son, and then, by receiving out of his fullness supplies of heavenly grace, live a life of faith upon him. If, then, our faith has to embrace him as "the Messenger of the covenant," ([Mal 3:1](#);) as the promised Prophet, to whose words we are to hearken, under penalty of eternal ruin; if we turn away our ear from him and harden our heart against him; ([Deu 18:15-19](#);) if all the saints who are in his hand "sit down at his feet and receive of his words," ([Deu 33:3](#);)--and we are among that favored number, surely we cannot be too well grounded and established in a spiritual and experimental knowledge, first of his glorious Person, and then of his covenant office as Prophet, whereby he leads in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment; that he may cause those who love him to inherit substance, and he will fill their treasures. ([Pro 8:20-21](#).)

In pursuance, then, of this desire to lay a sure foundation for faith, we have thus far endeavored to show the qualifications of our gracious Lord--both as the Son of God and as the Son of man--to be the Messenger of the Father, the Revealer of his mind and will, the Mouth by which he speaks to the sons of men.

Jesus the Great Prophet to His People

by J. C. Philpot

The execution of the office of Prophet by our blessed Lord upon earth.

We have already seen that Jesus was consecrated to the service of his heavenly Father from the womb, that every grace and gift of the Spirit rested upon and filled his pure humanity, and that thus initially he was Priest, Prophet, and King from his miraculous conception and birth. But it was at his baptism, as we have already pointed out, that he was peculiarly consecrated and set apart for the work which his Father had given him to do. When found in the temple by his sorrowing parents, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions, he said unto them, "How is it that you sought me? Know you not that I must be about my Father's business?" ([Luk 2:46](#); [Luk 2:49](#);) but it was after his baptism that he could more specially say, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to finish his work." ([Joh 4:34](#).)

i. The first step towards doing this will and finishing this work which we shall notice is, his receiving words from his heavenly Father, that he might speak them in his name.

In our introductory remarks on the nature of the prophetic office, we showed that its peculiar and most prominent feature was, that the prophet was, as it were, the very mouth by which God spoke. "Thus says the Lord,"--not "I his prophet," was not only his only title to be heard, but the only message with which he came. Now this "Thus says the Lord" involved the necessity that whatever he uttered in the name of the Lord should be the very words which God spoke unto him; for if they were in the least degree modified or altered, there would be no certainty that they were the full and exact expression of the mind and will of the Lord of hosts. We all know that if a messenger be allowed to put the words of him who sent him into his own language, they cannot be fully relied on. Thus our blessed Lord, as the anointed Prophet of the Father, had words given to him, which words he spoke exactly as the Father gave them to him.

As this is to our mind a point of deep importance, yet one which we have rarely if ever seen touched upon, we shall devote a few minutes' attention to it.

When Moses went up into the mount, the whole pattern of the tabernacle was set before him, and the injunction was given him, "Be sure that you make them after their pattern, which was showed you in the mount." ([Exo 25:40](#).) Not a loop, therefore, or pin could Moses put in or leave out in the construction of the tabernacle to make it swerve one item from the pattern set before him. Had there been the least deviation or alteration from the exact pattern, it would not have been the Lord's own tabernacle. The additional loop would have been not the Lord's, but man's, and therefore an ungodly intrusion into the sanctuary; and the deficient pin would have taken from the fullness of the Lord's house, and made it imperfect. (How far this is applicable to the service of the Christian sanctuary, and condemnatory of all additions not commanded, and of all deficiencies not supplied, let our readers judge.)

Thus, in a similar way, our blessed Lord, as the Prophet of the Most High, received words from his heavenly Father, full in number, and exact in nature; and these words he spoke in his name and by his authority, no more and no fewer than they were given him. How plain are his words on this point--"For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting. Whatever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." ([Joh 12:49-50](#).) These words were "the words of eternal life," ([Joh 6:68](#),) and as such were

"spirit and life" ([Joh 6:63](#)) to those who received them with power from his lips.

But, as we shall presently show, they were in a more especial manner given by him to his disciples, according to his own divine language in his intercessory prayer--"I have given unto them the words which you gave me." ([Joh 17:8](#).) And that those were the exact words given him by his heavenly Father is plain from what he also elsewhere testified--"Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work." ([Joh 14:10](#).)

But the question may arise as an objection to this view, "If the Lord Jesus were indeed God, possessing, as such, all the perfections of Deity, if, as you have so much insisted upon, the Son of the Father in truth and love, and as such intimately acquainted with his mind and will, what need was there that express words should be given him? Could he not have spoken them in his own name, and by his own authority, as he said to the roaring sea, 'Peace be still?'" ([Mar 4:39](#).) Such questions are not very reverent, as we should receive the truth in the simplicity and humility of little children, and believe where we cannot comprehend; but as we cannot always still the objections of our reasoning mind, and this question admits a sufficient and satisfactory answer, we have anticipated it, and shall reply to it.

When our blessed Lord took our nature into union with his own divine Person, it was to become the Father's servant--"Behold my servant," etc. ([Isa 42:1](#).) A servant, in his character as a servant, does his master's will, and speaks his master's words. For a servant, then, in the highest and fullest sense of the word, to have a will different from his master's will, and to speak words different from his master's words, would be not obedience but disobedience, not service but rebellion. As, then, the blessed Lord came as the most obedient and devoted of all servants to do his Father's will and his Father's work, ([Heb 10:7](#); [Mat 26:39](#); [Joh 17:4](#).) and as his deepest grace and highest glory were to do both perfectly, so when he came as a servant to speak his Father's words, it was to him no degradation, but, on the contrary, a most gracious and blessed humbling of himself to speak them just as they were given him, without addition, diminishing, or alteration. He was as perfect as a prophet to speak for God, as a priest to die unto God. It no more, then, detracts from his Deity and divine Sonship that he did not speak his own words than it detracts from them that he did not do his own will. Will and words, doing and dying, obedience and suffering, death and resurrection, grace and glory, were all determined on in the eternal Covenant, and were as fixed, certain, and unalterable as the stars in their courses or the sun in the sky. Fixed as these, do we say? Aye, much more, for the Covenant will stand when the stars fall from their places, and the sun, like a weary giant, pales and faints in his daily race.

We do not think, however, that we should have dwelt so long upon this point were there not this peculiar blessedness in the words of Jesus as Prophet being the words of the Father, that 1, they thereby perfectly reveal the mind and will of God; 2, that, as spoken by the Mediator between God and man, they are words of peace and reconciliation from that just and holy God against and before whom we have so grievously sinned; 3, that, as applied to the heart by the power of God, they are spirit and life. We much wish that our limits allowed us to dwell more on this peculiar feature of the Lord's ministry, as it formed its chief power and glory, but we must pass on to the second step of the execution of his prophetic office, which we consider to have been,

ii. The choice of disciples.

Our blessed Lord had to found a church on earth. The grain of wheat had to fall into the ground and die, that it might bring forth much fruit. ([Joh 12:24](#).) And after this grain of wheat had fallen into the earth and risen out of it--in other words, after the Lord Jesus had put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, had risen from the dead, and gone up on high, it was the will of God that his

death and resurrection should issue in a glorious crop of redeemed sinners. But that this crop might be gathered, laborers were needed; and that these laborers might go forth fully commissioned by the Lord of the harvest, they themselves must first be taught to plough, sow, and reap. Our Lord, then, for this purpose chose disciples, "whom also he named apostles, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils." ([Mar 3:14](#); [Luk 6:13](#).)

In unfolding this part of our subject, it may, perhaps, be well to bear in mind that the Lord's calling and ordaining of his twelve disciples were distinct events, and took place at different periods of his ministry. He first drew disciples unto himself by those secret cords of his grace whereby, as made willing in the day of his power, they forsook all and followed him. It was at Bethany beyond Jordan, when John was baptizing, that the Lord thus drew to himself his first disciples. "Behold the Lamb of God" was the word of power which, as it fell from John's lips, the Holy Spirit applied to the heart of two of his own disciples, and made them follow Jesus. One of the two was Andrew, who, having found for himself the Messiah, the Christ, must needs, in the overflowing of his heart, tell his brother Peter the good news,** and bring him to the same blessed Lord. Philip is the next whom Jesus finds as a poor, lost, wandering sheep, and whose heart he touches and subdues with the word of power, "Follow me." Philip finds Nathanael, the Israelite without deceit; and the omniscient eye which saw him under the fig-tree wins him to believe that not only good, but the Giver of all good, could come out of Nazareth. ([Joh 1:35-51](#).) These disciples followed the Lord into Galilee, and were present with him at Cana, where he wrought his first miracle, in turning water into wine, to manifest forth his glory and to confirm their faith. ([Joh 2:11](#).)

We need not, however, particularize the call of the disciples by their gracious Master. It is sufficient for our purpose to show that to call, ordain, and commission them was a leading feature of the execution of his prophetic office. We may therefore divide this branch of his earthly ministry into three distinct periods--1. The call of the disciples, which took place at different times in the first year of his ministry; 2. Their ordination in a more special and solemn manner to be apostles, which seems to have occurred in the first quarter of the second year of his ministry; and 3. Their final commission after the resurrection, when he breathed on them the Holy Spirit, as the foretaste and pledge of the full effusion of that sacred Comforter on the day of Pentecost. It was to the disciples thus called and ordained that he gave the words which the Father had given him. These words they received with power from his lips; and by this reception of them a spiritual knowledge of him, and a divine faith in him, were raised up in their hearts, according to his own testimony--"For I have given unto them the words which you gave me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from you, and they have believed that you did send me." ([Joh 17:8](#).)

iii. This introduces us to another leading feature of our Lord's ministry, that is, the peculiar character of his teaching. This we may view under three different aspects--1. Its general bearing on the people at large; 2. Its peculiar reference to his own immediate disciples; 3. Its character toward the afflicted family of God.

1. As regards the people, it was with authority, and not as the scribes. At the time of our Lord's appearance on the earth, the pure word of God, the living oracles which had been committed to the trust of the Jewish church, ([Act 7:38](#); [Rom 3:2](#);) had become overlaid by the traditions of the elders. Such pure and holy breathings towards the word of truth, and such an insight into, and experience of its spirituality and power as we find described in Psalm 119, and enforced by the prophets, were no longer known or taught by those who sat in Moses's seat. The tithing of mint, anise, and cummin; the washing of cups and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables; and a frivolous and burdensome code of traditions had, as it were, smothered the true knowledge of God and the worship of him in spirit and in truth. Formality and ceremony, long robes and broad

phylacteries, praying in the market-place and at the corners of the streets, were substituted for justice and the love of God; and as this mere formal religion was to some a mask of hypocrisy, and to others a cloak of covetousness, the scribe and the pharisee ruled over an ignorant people.

To beat down, then, this corrupt pharisaism, to show the spirituality of the law, and how the precepts of God had been overlaid and perverted by the traditions of men, formed one leading feature of the Lord's prophetic ministry. It must be borne in mind that the Lord Jesus, as the promised prophet, was "a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God." ([Rom 15:8](#).) The Jewish people being in outward covenant the people of God, to them was Jesus sent, and to them he preached. Our limits will not allow us to enter further on this branch of the Lord's personal ministry; but it will be found the animating breath of many of his parables, his discourses, John 6, 8, 10, and especially of his Sermon on the Mount. But though our space does not admit of our entering more fully into this branch of our Lord's ministry, yet we would earnestly call our readers' attention to the wisdom, power, and authority with which he spoke. This was felt and acknowledged even by the people themselves, though they derived no personal benefit from it, for we read that "they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." ([Mat 7:28-29](#).)

But with whatever power or wisdom he spoke, none received his words as the words of eternal life but the elect remnant, for it was with the rest as the apostle speaks--"What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened. As the Scriptures say--God has put them into a deep sleep. To this very day he has shut their eyes so they do not see, and closed their ears so they do not hear." ([Rom 11:7-8](#))

2. In order, then, that his words should not wholly fall to the ground, God gave him a few disciples, who would receive them, and be saved and sanctified by them. There is something peculiarly emphatic in the language of Peter, when the Lord said unto the twelve, "Will you go away?" It seems as if at his Master's voice faith immediately sprang up in his heart. "Lord," was his answer, in the name of them all, "to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." He might find words elsewhere. The scribes and pharisees had them in abundance. But where could he find words which dropped eternal life into his soul but those which fell from the lips of the Son of the living God? Thus, apart from the wisdom and authority with which he spoke, there was a power, a special power, which attended his words to the heart of his disciples. Others might say, "Never man spoke like this man;" others might hang upon his lips, ([Luk 19:48](#)) and wonder at "the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." But all this astonishment and admiration passed away as the morning cloud and the early dew. Eternal life was not communicated thereby. But as the distinguishing feature of his words, as spoken with power to the hearts of his disciples, eternal life gushed with them into their souls.

3. But besides our Lord's peculiar and personal ministry to his disciples, there was a scattered remnant to which his words were made words of power. Look, for instance, at the Syrophenician woman; ([Mar 7:26](#);) the man sick of the palsy; ([Mat 9:2](#);) the woman with the issue of blood; ([Mat 9:22](#);) the woman who was a sinner; ([Luk 7:47](#);) Zaccheus; ([Luk 19:9](#);) Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. ([Joh 11:5](#).) These are all instances of believing, pardoned, and saved sinners, to whom the Lord's words were words of power as distinct from those which were given to his disciples. This peculiar feature of the Lord's ministry is blessedly opened up in that portion of the word of truth which he read in the synagogue of Nazareth, and claimed as his own--"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." ([Luk 4:18-19](#).)

Thus, as distinct from his public preaching, when "he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all," ([Luk 4:15](#)), and from his private ministry, when, after he had spoken to the multitude in parables, "when they were alone he expounded all things to his disciples," ([Mar 4:34](#)), the Lord had a peculiar ministration for the afflicted remnant--the lost sheep of the house of Israel, whom he was sent to seek and save. ([Mat 15:24](#); [Luk 19:10](#).) These were the poor to whom he preached the gospel, ([Mat 11:5](#)), the broken-hearted whom he came to heal, the captives to whom he proclaimed deliverance, the blind to whom he gave recovering of sight, and the bruised whom he set at liberty. In sweet harmony with this peculiar ministry of our gracious Lord are the opening sentences of the Sermon on the Mount the invitations, "Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden," etc.; "If any man thirsts, let him come unto me and drink;" the promises, "My sheep shall never perish;" "Him who comes unto me I will never cast out;" and the gracious declarations contained in John 6 and similar passages.

There is, indeed, this peculiar blessedness stamped on the whole personal ministry of the adorable Lord, that grace being poured into his lips, all that he spoke is full of profit and instruction to the Church of God. Take, for instance, his conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. Here was a poor sinful creature, dark as midnight, and dead as the dust of Adam, who comes to draw water, as she had often done before, little thinking whom she was that day to meet--the Son of God in the guise of a weary traveler. But mark how, in his conversation with this guilty daughter of sin, the blessed Lord, as the anointed Prophet of God, put forth truths of the deepest import to the Church of the living God. That God is a Spirit; that those who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth; that the water which Jesus gives is a well of water springing up into everlasting life--what a power and influence have these living truths had on the Church of Christ, and will have while there is a Church on earth. And yet to whom were they spoken? To a Samaritan--to one so hated by the Jew, that he would not, were he half dead with thirst, have taken a cup of cold water from the hands of any one of the abhorred race. To a sinful woman, living at the very time in immoral adultery with one who was not her husband. This is but one instance to show that this Prophet never spoke, but grace and truth dropped from his lips.

Another instance is his conversation with the carnal multitude which sought him not because they saw the miracles, but because they ate of the loaves, and were filled. ([Joh 6:26](#).) What holy and sublime truths did he discourse in their hearing! What a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined--not for them who strove among themselves, and murmured out, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" but for his believing saints who eat his flesh and drink his blood, and experimentally know that his flesh is meat indeed and his blood drink indeed. That carnal, unbelieving, murmuring multitude passed away, dying in their sins; but the truths spoken in their hearing, and recorded by the Holy Spirit in the pages of John, live forever.

John 8 affords another instance of the deepest and most blessed truths dropped by our Lord in the presence of his enemies. They called him a Samaritan, and said that he had a devil--no, took up stones to cast at him; but those words, which to them were a savor of death unto death, have been to thousands a savor of life unto life. Blessed be his holy name that such gracious words fell from his lips and blessed be the eternal Spirit, the Comforter, who has recorded them in the inspired page!

When, too, we pass on to the closing scene, and are admitted to hear those heavenly discourses whereby our gracious Lord consoled the hearts of his sorrowing disciples, (John 14, 15, 16,) well may we long to sit at his foot, and drink in the rich contents of that legacy of peace which he there left, not for them only but for all who would believe on him through their word. Dear friends, friends of truth, friends of the Friend of sinners, lovers of the Son of God, can we believe too firmly, prize too highly, love too dearly, the words that dropped from the lips of the

Redeemer as the Prophet sent by the Father? It is by believing them that we feel their power and sweetness, and experience their liberating and sanctifying influence.

* The Sermon on the Mount may be considered as embodying and illustrating the three distinct features of the Lord's personal ministry which we have pointed out. Thus in its opening sentences it is addressed to the afflicted remnant; in those parts where the spirituality of the law and its opposition to the interpretation put upon it by the traditions of the elders are enforced, it is addressed to the people; and in those passages where the Lord says, "You are the salt of the earth," etc., it is spoken to the disciples.

But in the warmth of our heart we are anticipating a future subject of meditation--the bearing which the prophetic office of the Lord Jesus has on the experience of a believer. We have not yet finished the mode of its execution.

Next to the "unspeakable gift" of his dear Son, the greatest blessing which God has bestowed upon the Church is the gift of that holy word which testifies of him. And if this be true of the Scripture generally, as a divine revelation of the mind and will of God and of his testimony to the Person and work of the Son of his love, it is especially so of that portion of the inspired record which contains the words actually spoken by the Lord himself, when tabernacling here below. What indeed would the Church of Christ have fully and clearly known of the gracious words which the Lord Jesus spoke when on earth, as the Prophet of the Most High, had they not been stored up, and thus, as it were, forever embalmed in the four inspired Gospels? Memory, it is true, at first, and tradition afterwards, might for a season, have retained a small remnant of them; but what with the frailty and treachery of the one, and the corrupting tendency of the other, nothing certain, nothing pure could have been preserved for the benefit of the Church in the succeeding periods of time. But the Holy Spirit having inspired the four evangelists to commit to writing the exact words and actions of the blessed Redeemer as they were spoken and performed, the faith of the Church has a solid ground on which to rest, and each successive generation of believers can sit at his feet and hear his words almost as if they were still dropping from his gracious lips.

But as we are still engaged with the execution of his office here below, another feature of our Lord's prophetic ministry demands a few moments' consideration.

iv. The miracles by which the Lord authenticated his divine mission. These were essential to prove that he was sent by God as the promised Prophet. Had he not wrought miracles, there would not only have been no open proof of his divine mission, but he would have been inferior to Moses who gave the law, and to Elijah who restored the law--both of whom proved their commission of God by the wondrous deeds which they wrought in his name. The subject is too wide for us to enter into in our limited space. It will be sufficient to show from two passages the connection between our Lord's miracles and the belief that he was the promised Prophet. The first is in connection with the miracle of feeding the five thousand--"When the people saw this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, "Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!" ([Joh 6:14](#).) The other is the Lord's answer to John, when he sent two of his disciples to Jesus with the inquiry, "Are you he who should come," (that is, the promised Prophet,) "or do we look for another?" "Jesus told them--Go back to John and tell him about what you have heard and seen--the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Gospel is being preached to the poor." ([Mat 11:4-5](#).) There the Lord appealed to his miracles, that he was "he who would come," the Shiloh, the Prophet of whom Moses spoke.

But though our limits preclude us from dwelling further on the Lord's miracles as a proof of his divine mission, yet we cannot but make upon them, as viewed in connection with the execution of his prophetic office, the following observations:

1. They were so vast, so numerous, and so well authenticated, that one would think that only infidelity itself would try to deny or explain them away. When five thousand men, for instance, were fed with five barley loaves and two small fish, there were five thousand witnesses to the truth and reality of the miracle, besides the disciples, who distributed them to the people, and afterwards filled twelve baskets with the fragments which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. Could all these have been deceived? Take five thousand hungry people now at some national gathering. To feed such a number, what an apparatus of provisions would be requisite! Did not, then, each man of this hungry multitude know for himself that there was no such apparatus to feed them? They were in "a desert place," ([Mat 14:15](#)), far from any human habitation, and were faint for lack of food. Now, how could provisions in sufficient amount to feed such a famished crowd have been brought into this wilderness, and the people thus abundantly fed--not see or know it? Where were their eyes, not to see the camels loaded with loaves, or the boats on the shore of the lake filled with glittering fish? The large amount of provision needed and consumed precluded all collusion or mistake on the part of the disciples; and there could have been no deception of the senses on the part of the famished multitude, when each hungry man ate the bread and tasted the fish, and found and felt his hunger and faintness gone.

These observations are indeed obvious enough, but the deep-seated infidelity of our wretched heart sometimes needs a seasonable check, and faith itself may occasionally need confirming by taking a closer view of the solid grounds on which it rests. We have, therefore, purposely selected this one miracle to show how clear the proof that it was wrought by a divine power; but the same train of reasoning, a little modified according to the circumstances of each, may be applied to them all. They were too open, too palpable, too vast, too supernatural, to be anything but real manifestations of divine power.

2. They were almost all miracles of mercy. The only exceptions that we can call to mind were, the permission given to the unclean spirits to enter into the herd of swine, and the denunciation of the barren fig-tree; of which the first was a just punishment for keeping for profit a herd of unclean animals, contrary to the law; and the other a standing warning against all barren professors.* Contrast with the beneficent miracles of Jesus, some of those wrought by Moses and Elisha, and it will at once be seen what compassion for suffering, and what power to relieve it, met in his tender, loving heart.

* As the fig-tree stood by the way-side, and was therefore no man's property, no one was injured by its destruction; and being barren, no one would have been benefited by its continuance.

3. Our Lord's miracles were wrought immediately by his own power, and not like those of Moses, mediately by the power of God. In other words, Moses and the prophets only wrought miracles instrumentally by the power of the Almighty; the Lord Jesus wrought them by his own power as himself the mighty God. Moses could do nothing without his rod; Jesus had but to say, "I will; be clean," and the leprosy departed; "Lazarus, come forth," and the dead man issued out of the tomb.

v. But while treating of the execution of his prophetic office, we must not omit another noticeable point; that the Lord, as a Prophet, predicted events that would come to pass. Thus he prophesied his own sufferings, death, and resurrection, the treachery of Judas, the fall and recovery of Peter, the destruction of Jerusalem, the spread of the gospel among all nations, and his own second coming. To work miracles and to predict future events are the two grand credentials of a prophet. Both of them, therefore, were in an eminent degree possessed and manifested by our blessed Lord as the anointed Prophet of the Father.

vi. One more feature will close this branch of our subject. Jesus sealed the truth of his prophetic

mission by his sufferings and death. Persecution and death was the frequent if not the usual treatment of the prophets. How pathetically does the Lord apostrophize Jerusalem--"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the prophets." ([Mat 23:37.](#)) As a prophet, then, he too must suffer persecution and death, and that at Jerusalem--"Nevertheless, I must walk today and tomorrow, and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." ([Luk 13:33.](#)) He sealed his mission with his blood.

Faithful unto God, faithful unto man, he laid down his life not only as a sacrificing Priest, but as an attesting Prophet; and as by dying on the cross he fulfilled that part of his priestly office which his heavenly Father gave him to do, which was to be executed on earth, so, by the same precious death, he accomplished that part of his prophetic office which he was to perform in the flesh to the glory of God.

Jesus the Great Prophet to His People

by J. C. Philpot

The present mode in which the Lord sustains the prophetic office in heaven.

Our blessed Lord had a work given him to do on earth, as he himself declared--"My food is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." ([Joh 4:34.](#)) And thus, toward the conclusion of his earthly ministry, he could appeal to his heavenly Father, "I have glorified you on the earth; I have finished the work which you gave me to do." ([Joh 17:4.](#)) But though he did not bow his sacred head, nor lay down his precious life, until he could say, "It is finished," we must not thence conclude that the gracious Lord laid down his covenant offices when he breathed forth his spirit on the cross.

We know that it was not so with his **priestly** office, for the Apostle says, "We have" (now have) "such a High Priest, who has sat on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;" ([Heb 8:1;](#)) and again, "And having" (that is, now having) "a High Priest over the house of God." ([Heb 10:21.](#)) That Jesus, as "having an unchangeable priesthood," and being a priest "who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life," ([Heb 7:16; Heb 7:24.](#)) "ever lives to make intercession for us," is the hope and help of all our approaches to the throne of grace. Thus we have the fullest, clearest evidence, without and within, in the word and in the heart, that Jesus is still executing his priestly office in the courts above.

So also with regard to his **kingly** office. Though he never ceased to be King, for as he was "born King of the Jews," ([Mat 2:2.](#)) so, even in death, the title put upon the cross proclaimed him "Jesus, the King of the Jews;" still, it was chiefly after his resurrection that the regal scepter was put into his hand. Thus when he appeared to his disciples after his resurrection, he said to them, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." ([Mat 28:18.](#)) And this royal scepter he still wields as crowned King in Zion, for "he must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet." ([1Co 15:25.](#))

In a similar way, then, the blessed Lord did not lay down his **prophetical** office when he laid down his precious life, for the Church's glorious Head has never parted with one atom of his grace or his glory--but resumed it with his other covenant characters after his resurrection. Of this we have the clearest proof in the communion which he held with the disciples before his ascension. Thus, in his conversation with the two disciples journeying to Emmaus, we read that, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." ([Luk 24:27.](#)) And similarly; as regarded the rest of the disciples, we read, "Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things." ([Luk 24:45-48.](#)) The opening of the minds of the disciples to understand the Scriptures--what was this but fulfilling his office by which he still taught them after the resurrection as the anointed Prophet of the Father?

1. But as the blessed Lord was about to withdraw his personal presence from his disciples, and to go to the Father, that he might sit at the right hand of the Majesty on high, there was a necessity that while he still retained his prophetical office there should be a change in its mode of administration. This he fully and clearly opened up to his disciples in his last discourses with

them, where he promised them "another Comforter," even "the Spirit of truth," who should "teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance whatever he had said unto them." But though the mode of administration is changed, that it is still Jesus who teaches is plain from his own words--"I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth--for he shall not speak of himself; but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come." ([Joh 16:12-13](#).) "I have yet many things to say unto you." Does not this show that Jesus still had many things to say to his disciples? And when should he say them but from the right hand of the Father when he had baptized them with the Holy Spirit and with fire? Until that full and heavenly baptism they could not bear the weight of instruction which he had to impart.

But again, "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs; but the time comes, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father." ([Joh 16:25](#).) What time was that of which he said that when it came he would show them plainly of the Father? Not between the resurrection and the ascension, for though he was seen of them forty days, and spoke to the disciples of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, ([Act 1:3](#).) yet his visits were but occasional, and their minds were as yet unprepared for a fuller revelation of the Father. Clearly then the time was from the day of Pentecost, when they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. We see, then, plainly that though there was necessarily a change of ministration, yet that the blessed Lord still continued to fulfill his prophetic office after his ascension to the right hand of the Majesty on high. To show the nature, and to give them an earnest of this change before he left the earth, "he breathed on his disciples, and said unto them, Receive the Holy Spirit." ([Joh 20:22](#).)

2. But as the Lord before his ascension gave his disciples a charge to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, and as he promised to be with them even unto the end of the world, it was necessary that there should be a continued supply of the Holy Spirit to ratify that promise in raising up, commissioning, and qualifying a series of heaven-taught ministers to feed in each successive generation the Church of God. Our gracious Lord, therefore, as the Head of his body the Church, when he went up on high, received gifts for that express purpose. This was spoken by the mouth of prophecy many hundred years before its fulfillment--"You have ascended on high, you have led captivity captive; you have received gifts for men; yes, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." ([Psa 68:18](#).) But what these gifts were the Apostle unfolds in his divine commentary on that prediction--"That is why the Scriptures say--When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people. He is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ." ([Eph 4:8; Eph 4:11-12](#).)

Jesus, then, is still the Prophet of his Church, and is still executing this office at the right hand of the Father. But his own personal ministry having ceased when he himself withdrew his presence from the earth, he carries it on now--

- 1, by sending forth **his Spirit** into the heart of his people to testify of himself; and,
- 2, by qualifying, commissioning, and sending **his servants** to preach the gospel with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven.

Jesus the Great Prophet to His People

by J. C. Philpot

The bearing of the Prophetical Office of the Lord Jesus Christ on the experience of his people.

Whatever the blessed Lord is in himself to his Church and people, it is only so far as he is spiritually and experimentally made known to the soul of each individual believer that any personal benefit or blessing is derived from him. Thus the Apostle declares that he "of God is made unto us wisdom;" ([1Co 1:30](#);) but if there is no discovery or revelation of him as such to our soul; if he does not himself teach us by his Spirit and grace; if we are not personally and individually taught and brought to sit at his feet and hear his word; if we do not take his yoke upon us, and learn of him to be meek and lowly in heart, he is not made "wisdom" to us as living members of his mystical body--nor do we derive any benefit or blessing from what he thus is to the Church of God. It is so with every other office that he sustains in the courts above.

Is he a High **Priest** over the house of God? It is only as the efficacy of his atoning blood is made known to our conscience, and our prayers, as perfumed by his meritorious intercession at the right hand of the Majesty on high, enter into the ears of the Lord Almighty, that we derive any personal benefit from his high priesthood.

So with his **kingly** office. Unless he reigns and rules in us, and sways his gentle and peaceable, yet powerful scepter over our hearts--we are but his subjects in name, and are utter strangers to the influence of his constraining love. Indeed, all profession which does not spring out of a real, vital, experimental knowledge of, faith in, and love towards the Lord of life and glory, is but a miserable delusion--which, to those who live and die in it, will end in destruction and perdition. If, then, we profess to receive the Lord Jesus as our risen and glorified Prophet, how needful it is to search and examine what individual and personal influence this belief has upon our heart and conscience. To this point, then, we shall now direct our readers' attention.

We have already shown that our blessed Lord, as now sustaining the office of **Prophet** to his Church and people, teaches them by his Spirit. This is no detraction from, or derogatory to his prophetical office, for such is the Unity of the divine Essence, that though the Persons in the blessed Trinity are Three, yet the work of each is the work of all, and the work of all is the work of each. As the Apostle says, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administration, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which works all in all." ([1Co 12:4-6](#).) Thus, the Father teaches; ([Joh 6:45](#);) the Son teaches; ([Joh 16:25](#);) and the Holy Spirit teaches. ([Joh 14:26](#).) But though in this sense each of the Persons in the glorious Trinity teaches the Church of God, yet we must bear in mind that they only teach it in consequence of the gracious Lord being the Mediator between God and men. Only because the Son of God has redeemed the Church by his own precious blood, has risen from the dead, gone up on high, and is in the presence of God for us, is any divine teaching imparted to the members of his mystical body. The gift of the Spirit depended on Jesus being glorified. ([Joh 7:39](#).) It is still, then, he who speaks from heaven ([Heb 12:25](#)) to the souls of his dear people, for his words, as applied by the blessed Spirit, fall with power upon their hearts, and thus become life and spirit to their fainting souls. Thus it is still true, "My sheep hear my voice," though the good Shepherd is enthroned in the highest bliss, and his bodily presence withdrawn from the earth.

But before we can personally realize the blessedness of having the Lord himself thus for our

teacher, we must be made to feel and that deeply our ignorance, our darkness, our unbelief, our thorough helplessness to procure or produce any saving knowledge, either of himself or of any divine truth connected with him. This deep and abiding conviction of our ignorance and helplessness is the first fruit of the first moving of the blessed Spirit on the crude and wild chaos of our heart, enlightening the eyes of our understanding to see, quickening the soul into divine life to feel, and planting in the conscience that fear of the Lord which, as the beginning of wisdom, trembles at this discovery of our ruined condition.

But as it is so important to make straight paths for our feet here, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, let us consider this part of our subject a little more clearly and closely.

One of the four promises of the New Covenant is, "I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts." ([Heb 8:10.](#)) This putting of his laws into their minds, and writing them in their hearts, is the fulfillment of the general promise to the Lord's family as opened up by the Lord himself, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God." ([Joh 6:45.](#)) To share, then, in divine teaching is to possess a sure and blessed evidence of being a child of God. But the question still arises--What are the marks and what the effects of this divine teaching? In a day like the present when "many run to and fro, and knowledge is increased," it is easy to be deceived with the mere natural and notional knowledge of the letter of truth, and mistake light upon the word for the light of life in the soul. The distinction between them is better felt than described; for as you cannot explain light to a person born blind, or the sound of music to one that is deaf and dumb, so you cannot by mere words lay open the deep mystery of divine life in the heart; nor indeed do we claim to ourselves an unailing discernment.

"For neither man nor angel can discern

Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks

Invisible, except to God alone."--Milton.

But whether we can clearly discern the difference between natural and spiritual light or not, or whether we can or cannot clearly describe it, the fact, the grand, the all-important fact still remains the same; that there is in the regenerated family of God a light, a life, a teaching, a power, an unction, a knowledge, a savor, a heavenly blessing, which may be imitated and counterfeited, but still remains unapproached and unapproachable by all but the elect of God. This is "the anointing which teaches of all things, and is truth and no lie," that peculiar "unction" which is "from the Holy One," and whereby the saint of God "knows all things." A few marks, then, and evidences of this divine teaching we shall attempt to show; but in so doing we shall chiefly confine ourselves to the peculiar bearing which the prophetic office of the risen Lord has on the work of grace.

1. Conviction of sin, it is evident, is the first mark and effect of divine teaching. "When he has come, he will convince the world of sin." ([Joh 16:8.](#)) This conviction we see in those who were pierced in their heart under Peter's sermon; ([Act 2:37;](#)) and in the case of the Philippian jailer. Indeed, what knowledge can there be of salvation by the blood of the Lamb if guilt and condemnation have never ploughed up the heart and made deep wounds in the conscience? As Hart truly says--

"What comfort can a Savior bring

To those who never felt their woe?

A sinner is a sacred thing,

The Holy Spirit has made him so."

If we read, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound," we read also, "Blessed is the

man whom you chasten, O Lord, and teach him out of your law." ([Psa 94:12](#).) Thus to be taught out of the law, so as to know its curse, condemnation, guilt, fear, wrath, and bondage, is a blessing, for it breaks up the fallow ground of the heart, prevents sowing among thorns, and opens the furrows deep and wide to receive the pure seed of the gospel when it comes with power to the soul.

2. The second mark and effect of this divine teaching is that which the Lord himself has given--"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that has heard, and has learned of the Father, comes unto me." ([Joh 6:45](#).) To come, then, to Jesus for pardon and peace, for mercy and deliverance, for teaching and instruction, is the Lord's own mark of being taught of God. And to show us that this is a spiritual coming under heavenly drawings, he declared, "No man can come to me except the Father who has sent me draws him." It is by these secret drawings of the Father that we come to Jesus. The eyes of our understanding are spiritually enlightened to see his glorious Person at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens; and we come to him as the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. As it stands on this sacred ground, at Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the blessed Spirit takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to the soul; faith is raised up to believe in the things thus presented to view; hope anchors in them as divine realities within the veil; and love flows forth to embrace the Person and work of the Son of God--as full of grace and glory, as all its salvation and all its desire.

But as we are now showing the special bearing which the prophetic office of Jesus has on the experience of a child of God, we shall trace this out as connected with his coming to Jesus as the risen and glorified prophet of the Most High. As such we have already shown that he now teaches us by his Spirit.

3. The blessed Spirit, then, as a needful preparation for his own divine instruction, convinces us of our ignorance, of the veil of unbelief that is by nature spread over our heart, and of our utter inability to take it away. So great is this darkness, as a matter of personal inward experience, that, like the darkness in Egypt, it maybe "felt;" so deep this ignorance that all knowledge or capability of knowledge seems utterly gone; so strong, so desperate this unbelief that it seems as if thoroughly incurable. And yet amid all this deep and dense cloud of ignorance, darkness and unbelief--rays and beams of light every now and then break through, which, though they seem at the time only to show the darkness and make it deeper--yet really are a guiding light to the throne of God and the Lamb. There Jesus sits enthroned in glory, not only as an interceding High Priest to save, not only as an exalted King to rule, but as a most gracious Prophet to teach.

We read, "Nevertheless, when it (that is, Israel) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away." ([2Co 3:16](#).) Thus, in soul experience, as the veil is felt to be thick and strong over the heart, there is a turning to the Lord with prayer and supplication that he would take it away; and as he, in answer to prayer, is pleased to do this, light is seen in his light, his truth drops with savor and sweetness into the soul, and the word of his grace sways and regulates the heart, lip, and life.

4. As, then, the veil of ignorance and unbelief is taken away, and the heart, under divine operations, becomes as the wax to the seal and the clay to the potter, there is raised up an earnest desire to know the mind and will of God, that we may be instructed into the one, and do the other. But Jesus, as the anointed Prophet of the Father, has revealed to us the mind and will of God. In his holy example, in his meek, humble, and devoted life, in his suffering death, and especially in his gracious words, as filled with the light and power of the Holy Spirit--Jesus has revealed the mind of God--for in seeing him we see the Father, and in hearing him we hear the Father. Now, the Apostle says, "We have the mind of Christ;" ([1Co 2:16](#);) and again, "Let this

mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." ([Phi 2:5](#).) But this mind of Christ can only be in us by the teaching and testimony of the blessed Spirit, for "the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God;" and as thus taught and blessed of the Spirit, we become spiritually-minded, which is life and peace. "He who is joined unto the Lord is one spirit;" ([1Co 6:17](#);) and as thus baptized into his Spirit, there is union and communion with him. Thus the Lord breathes, as it were, his mind into the soul--that it may see as with his eyes and feel as with his heart, hate what he hates, love what he loves, be warm for his truth, zealous for his honor, and earnest for his glory.

So also with knowing and doing the will of God from the heart. ([Eph 6:6](#).) It can only be learned at his feet who did it with a perfect heart, who submitted himself wholly to it in the gloomy garden and on the accursed tree; and who now, at the right hand of the Father, enables his people to do what that will commands, abstain from what that will forbids, and bear what that will imposes.

5. The ministry of the gospel, as flowing out of and connected with the prophetic office of the Lord Jesus, has here also a spiritual bearing on the experience of the saints of God. We have before shown that when Jesus went up on high he received gifts for men, and these gifts he poured forth in sending apostles, prophets, etc., to testify of himself. Thus every servant of Christ, whom he teaches by his Holy Spirit, and sends into the gospel field to labor in his service, is a witness to the present life of Jesus as still a Prophet to his Church and people in the courts above. When at Damascus gate Jesus spoke from heaven for the first time to his chosen vessel Saul, he said, "Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you." ([Act 26:16](#).) "What I will show you." Do not these words show that by fresh and continued appearances of, and communications from Jesus, Paul's ministry was maintained? Again--"And he said unto me, Depart; for I will send you far hence unto the Gentiles." ([Act 22:21](#).) He has not ceased, nor will he ever cease, to send laborers into his harvest; for his own gracious promise connected with the ministry of the gospel is, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." When, then, he qualifies and sends one of his own servants, all his experience first and last, his knowledge, understanding, gifts, abilities, success, and blessing, are all so many standing testimonies that Jesus still speaks in and by him. What he is as a blessing to any of the living family he is by the grace of God and as if the spring were to cease to flow, or were diverted from its course, the brook at once would fail, so, were Jesus to withdraw the continual supplies of his grace to his servants, their gifts would wither, their ministry dry up, and they become like a summer stream, which "vanishes in the heat." ([Job 6:17](#).)

So also with the gracious hearers of the ministry of the word; they too have a share in the blessing which Jesus sends down as the risen Prophet of his Church. When the ministry of the word is made life and spirit to their soul, when the gospel comes "not in word only but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance," when the hard and stony heart melts into contrition and love, under the voice of the Beloved speaking through his sent servant--then the hearer as well as the minister has an evidence that Jesus still lives and lives to bless.

6. We might name also the precepts of the gospel which Jesus has prescribed, the ordinances of his house which he has instituted, the whole course of holy obedience which he has enjoined, as closely connected with his prophetic office. But as we purpose, with God's help and blessing, to view him in a subsequent article as King in Zion; and as this part of our subject will fall more conveniently under the consideration of his kingly office, we shall not now dwell on these points. We could not indeed, altogether pass them unmentioned by; but our present space as well as the reason already alleged prohibit us from entering further upon them.

7. We might also instance as closely connected with an experience of the prophetic office of Jesus, the inward possession and practical exemplification of that wisdom which is "from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." Indeed all that in a believer is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report; all his excellence and virtue as a saint, all his praise in the churches--all, all flow out of his union and communion with Jesus as a risen Head, and are all connected with the teaching which he gives, and the supply of grace which he ministers. How fully, how blessedly is the whole of this divine teaching summed up in Paul's prayer for the saints of God at Ephesus--"I keep asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the wonderful future he has promised to those he called. I want you to realize what a rich and glorious inheritance he has given to his people. I pray that you will begin to understand the incredible greatness of his power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else in this world or in the world to come. And God has put all things under the authority of Christ, and he gave him this authority for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is filled by Christ, who fills everything everywhere with his presence." ([Eph 1:17-23](#).)

With this prayer, which may the Lord fulfill in our readers' hearts and ours, we close our Meditations on the prophetic office of Jesus.