

In Acts vii. 2, you will find these words of Stephen : " The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran."

God manifests Himself to the conscience : it sees itself in the presence of God ; it feels that God is there ; it perceives beforehand a judgment which is impending, and, whatever be the lack of outward manifestation, man must find himself before God, must follow Him, whereas before this he did his own will. So it happened to Saul of Tarsus : Saul had not troubled himself about God's will ; but as soon as he had heard Christ, he must enlist himself. The effect produced in the heart is expressed in these words : " What wilt Thou have me to do ?" The communication of life, we know, takes place in the soul. Also, God speaks, even though He should have manifested Himself to the sight, as to Saul. It is His word which makes itself to be heard, even when it is written ; and the written word is in fact of authority, without question, to judge what is said, though it were an apostle who spoke. The Lord Himself refers His disciples to it (" They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them"—Luke xvi. 29), and places it as an instrument above His own words (see John v. 46, 47). I say as an instrument, or, rather, as a rule ; for, whether written or from His own lips, it is from Himself.

This authority of the word is immediate. The Lord may employ Paul, Peter, John, as messen-