

It is the rod of authority too ; for " Christ is a son over His own house." But we see that unbelief cannot avail itself of this. " And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish. Whosoever cometh anything near unto the tabernacle of Jehovah shall die : shall we be consumed with dying ? " (xvii. 12, 13). God had shewn them that there was this grace, and they ought to have trusted in it, especially as they had seen the power in Aaron's remaining in among the congregation, and staying the plague. They had ground for full assurance ; but unbelief prevailed. They were insensible to the value of the priesthood, and their conscience was still under law. For they did not know God, though at the very moment He was acting for them in priestly grace.

The circumstances of chapter xx. put them to the test : the outward power, too, that had brought them out of Egypt was passing away from their minds. Miriam, the expression of it, had died. When apparent power decays, faith is put to the test. Afterwards Moses passed away too. Unbelief does not get the refreshment that faith does. There is no water. They were in a terrible state of mind—wishing they had shared the judgment that had fallen on their brethren ; for there was no confidence in Jehovah. Yet they called themselves the congregation of Jehovah. They had the pride, but not the comfort, of it. Moses and Aaron fell on their faces. There seemed no remedy. But Jehovah appeared. He was the only remedy. And He makes Aaron's rod the means of the application of that remedy. It had already been appointed before the occasion for its exercise occurred. There was real need, and God never denies this. He never says it is