

This grace is drawn out by Israel's sin ; but grace does not, of course, allow sin. Law could not bring the people into the land. Law must have kept the whole nation out, except Joshua and Caleb, who followed the Lord fully. We see its actings in chapter xvi., in the judgment that fell on Korah and his company. If when redeemed we were put under the law, we should be no better off than before. Still, God cannot allow sin. Neither could He give the people up ; for had He not redeemed them ? as Moses pleaded with Him (Num. xiv. 13-16), " And Moses said unto Jehovah, Then the Egyptians shall hear it (for Thou broughtest up this people in Thy might from among them), and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land . . . . saying, Because Jehovah was not able to bring this people into the land which He swore unto them, therefore He hath slain them in the wilderness." He cannot give them up ; He cannot allow sin, and therefore He brings in priestly grace to meet the difficulty. To take away their murmurings, He does not use the rod of Moses, but that of Aaron. The rod of Moses could only judge them for their sin, and thus take away their murmurings by *judgment*. But Aaron's does it by priestly grace.

God makes it very manifest by whom He will act. Aaron's rod is chosen out of the twelve, and the remarkable sign of its blossoming and yielding fruit, shewed that priesthood was connected with life-giving power, as well as with intercession. Both are needed to uphold them, and to raise them when failing. " The last Adam was made a quickening spirit." This is the care and authority by which we are led through the wilderness. God will allow no other, and no other would do. The priesthood of Christ alone can carry us through.