

against the whole land." "Thou therefore gird up thy loins and arise and speak unto them, all that I command thee; be not dismayed at them lest I dismay thee before them."

And to strengthen his faith God touched his mouth and said, "Behold I have put my words in thy mouth." Also He gave him a vision of the rod of an almond tree, that is "the wakeful," because it is the first tree to awaken after the sleep of winter. It blossoms when all other trees are bare. So God is wide awake in regard to all His words. Not one of them will fail to the ground, all will prosper in the thing whereto He has sent them. The word of man is like the bare branch without bud or blossom. The word of God is the rod of the almond tree, full of life and beauty, its sunlit blossoms shaking in the wild winds of early spring, sure prophecy of the advent of God's summer. Then when the eye of the prophet had been filled with this fair vision, God gave him the grand assurance, "I watch over my word to perform it." Let us listen to this assurance, for in speaking thus to Jeremiah He announces to all the unvarying relation He bears to His word. It is a general principle which is here enunciated, as applicable to us in our days as to Jeremiah in his; and it is a principle of supreme importance to the Church of Christ at the present hour, and well worthy of the best attention of such a gathering as this. Notice several things that are here established.

I. THERE IS A MESSAGE WHICH GOD CALLS HIS WORD.

It is on the lips of man, but it is the word of God. It is not Jeremiah's word though his lips uttered it, though his mental consciousness, his emotional nature, his will, his conscience were all employed in the utterance of it, and not the least violence was done to any of them. It was not an evolution of Jeremiah's thoughts. Its fountainhead was not Jeremiah's spiritual and mental faculties playing on the facts of providence. It was God's word.

There is a great deal of talk about inspiration in these days. We are often reminded that the Church has committed herself to no theory of inspiration; and there is a sense in which this is perfectly true. She has no more committed herself to a theory concerning the way in which there has been brought forth the Word of God written, than she has committed herself to a theory concerning the way in which there has been brought forth the Word of God incarnate; but she has committed herself to the position that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are in very truth the Word of God, even as she has committed herself to the position that Jesus of Nazareth is in very truth the Son of God; and any separation of the human from the divine in either, she can no more tolerate than could the mother the division of her living child. She answers with an emphatic yes these four questions. Is there a God? Can God speak? Has God spoken? Are these God's words? Yes. This is God's