

# WORDS OF TRUTH.

“The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words :  
and that which was written was upright, even words  
of truth ” (Eccles. xii. 10.)

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# WORDS OF TRUTH

“The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words and that which was written was upright, even words of truth” (Eccles. xii. 10).

## Service—Communion—Worship.

John xii.

AT this supper in Bethany we get three persons brought before us, and they each present one of the precious privileges of God's children, viz. : I. Service; II. Communion; and III. Worship.

### I. SERVICE.

Of Martha not much is said, but the silence of Scripture is important to notice as well as what it says.

“Martha served.” Now if we look at an earlier incident in Luke x. 40, we find her similarly occupied, but “she was cumbered about much serving,” and the Lord had to point this out to her, and also what the one thing needful for her was, viz., to sit at His feet and hear His word. In this way she would be able

to quietly learn His will, and then serve Him as He would have her.

In John xii. no mention is made for her being cumbered about her service, from which one gathers she had heeded the Lord's word to her, and now service has its proper place with her—the Lord Himself being before her in it, the service itself not accupying her mind—and so all is in harmony in this chapter.

Saul of Tarsus, who was zealous in serving God, as he thought, was really fighting against God in persecuting the disciples of the Lord Jesus, and so persecuting Christ Himself, Who has made His own part of Himself; hence the question, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?"

When smitten down to the ground on the way to Damascus by the light of the glory of the One he was opposing, he desires to serve Him now, and so asks, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

How well it would be if each of us, who desires to serve the blessed Lord Jesus, were to wait on Him likewise as to what He would have us to do, instead of, as we have such a tendency to do, making plans for ourselves by which we think best to glorify Him, and thus finding that we are cumbered with our work.

Rather let us follow the example of the perfect Servant—the Lord Jesus—who could say of His God, "He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learner" (as it should read) (Isa. 1. 4), and then went forth and carried out in perfect obedience the service for that day, speaking the words and doing the works which His Father had commanded Him.

## II. COMMUNION.

Of Lazarus too we do not read much, but yet what we do read tells us of the blessed portion that was his—"Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him."

Here he was in quiet fellowship or communion near to his Lord and Saviour. May we know more of this "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John i. 3).

In fellowship with Jesus we learn of Him, and in learning of Him the Father is made known to us. "If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also," and "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 7 and 9.) Jesus delights to make the Father's love known to us, as well as to speak to our hearts of His own deep and unchangeable love, saying, "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love" (John xv. 9).

Can you or I fathom the depths of that love? Never. Yet we may bask in all the fulness of it as it surrounds us on every side. He tells us too of His Father's home, to which He is soon coming to take us to share it with Himself (John xiv. 2-3). Precious Saviour! Blessed hope! "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself."

In communion with the Father we hear His thoughts of Jesus. "This is My beloved Son" (Luke ix. 35.) "Mine elect, in Whom My Soul delighteth" (Isa. xlii. 1.)

He Who was "despised and rejected of men" has now been glorified by God, Who has "highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name" (Phil. ii. 9). Is it

not precious grace to us thus to be given to share with God His joy in Christ Jesus, and to be able truly to say He is "the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely One"? The peace-offering of old presents to us this thought of communion. In this not only did God have His satisfying portion, but in Leviticus vii. 29-34 the priest had his portion given him of God, to share with God in what was a delight and a sweet saviour to Him.

The breast, the seat of the affections, and the right shoulder, the figure of strength, were the priest's portion. We also feed on the affections of our blessed Saviour—would that we did more so!—and we too need, and have the almighty power of that Saviour to lean upon and carry us through. "He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him"; and that might of His "will change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. iii. 21).

Further, we must not lose sight of fellowship with one another. "Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him."

This shows us that there were others who were enjoying this blessed communion together; and we read in 1 John i. 7, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another."

There are different ways in which we may have fellowship one with another, but surely one of the most blessed is when we break bread together, and in communion feed on Christ dead for us, while we also look upwards with joy into



the glory, and rejoice in knowing that He is there, "Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death." The disciples of old "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts ii. 42).

We do not not read of Lazarus saying anything, and yet seeing him raised up out of death and feeding with the Lord caused many of the Jews to believe on Jesus (John xii. 11). So will it be with those who have been raised from being "dead in trespasses and sins," if they are found communing with Jesus, and so conformed to His image.

Well may we adore and praise, as we have fellowship thus with the Father and the Son and with one another in the fat portion that we have so freely given to us.

### III. WORSHIP.

Of Mary much is brought out, and we do well to compare her action in this chapter with that in Luke x. There she "sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word." A thirsting heart being filled by Jesus. Here the heart, filled to overflowing, pours itself out at the Saviour's feet in adoration. With the fragrant and precious ointment she anoints the Lord, "and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." She then wipes His feet with her hair. That which was her glory she lays at His feet. So in true worship the worshipper makes nothing of self, but delights in the exaltation of its Object. In this case, also, others may be refreshed—the house was filled with the odour. Thus when in a company of those gathered to the Name of

the Lord Jesus, the Spirit leads out one heart in worship and delight at the sweetness of the Name of Jesus, other hearts are brought into unison, and truly His "Name is as ointment poured forth" (Cant. i. 3.) It ascends as a sweet savour to God the Father, and is indeed worship "in spirit and in truth" (see John iv.) There may be those who will find fault at this worship. Not only false professors, as Judas, but from Matthew xxvi. 6 we see that the disciples also were indignant at what to them seemed waste; but Jesus appreciated this lavishing of Mary's affections on Himself. In the glory all will be of one accord in singing the worship song of "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain" (Rev. v.).

But let us, who know God as our Father, remember that even *now* He is seeking worshippers to worship Him in spirit and in truth (John iv. 23, 24), so that as obedient children we may be found answering to His desires for us.

It may be helpful to us in this matter to briefly consider the thirtieth chapter of *Exodus*, where the subject of worship is in type brought before us in a remarkable manner.

I. *The place of worship* is pointed out for us in verses 1-10, where the golden altar—the altar that speaks to us not of sacrifices to make atonement for sin (that was at the brazen altar), but of a sweet incense ever ascending to God—was commanded to be put before the mercy-seat, i.e., in the presence of Him who dwelt between the cherubims on that mercy-seat (1 Sam. iv. 4).

But though sacrifices were not offered upon it, yet by the fact that the blood of the sin-offering of atonement had to be put upon the horns of it once a year, we learn that it is only on the ground of an accomplished atonement that worship can be accepted by God from fallen man.

Just then, as of old God's place of worship was in His own presence, so is it for us now. Jehovah's Name was associated with the ark of His glory, and round that as their centre His earthly people assembled to worship Him. God's present Centre for His people is told us in Matthew xviii. 20: "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." Thus as gathered by the Spirit (note the Word says, are gathered, not gather themselves) to His Name, we are in His presence, for He assures our hearts with His word, "there am I in the midst." It matters not how feeble in the eyes of men; even be it only two or three, we can count on the blessed presence of our adorable Saviour.

In Hebrews xiii. 13 we are exhorted to go forth "unto Him without the camp." What does "without the camp" mean? The apostle is evidently referring to Exodus xxxiii. 7, where Moses is mentioned as taking the tabernacle and pitching it without the camp. Now if we go back to the thirty-second chapter, we shall see why he did this. When he had gone up to Mount Sinai to receive the law from God, and remained there forty days and nights (chap. xxiv. 18), the people, tired of waiting, turned from God and caused Aaron to make the golden calf, round which they gathered. They formed

another centre for themselves, and forsook God's centre. Thus was the camp defiled, and Moses, acting for God, removed the tabernacle outside the camp, where "every one which sought the Lord went out."

Again another thought, brought before us by the Spirit in telling us that Christ "suffered without the gate," is, that the place where the sin-offering was burnt was "a clean place" without the camp (Lev. iv. 2).

Now, though the camp, which was essentially Jewish, has not for us the same significance as it had to the Hebrews, to whom the epistle was written, yet the principles of the camp are only too evident in the Christendom of to-day. What are all the sects and divisions in Christianity but the result of other centres than God's Centre—Christ—being formed by man?

The germs of this departure of Christians from the truth are seen in 1 Corinthians i. 10-12, where men were forming themselves into different schools of thought, some following this teacher and others another. So now one says, I belong to this Church, another, I to that, while a third, I hold with those who accept a certain doctrine—a doctrine which in itself may be a scriptural one even; and a fourth, I am with, or follow, some well-known man, who himself may have been a devoted follower of Christ, just as in the apostle's days some said, "I of Paul," or "I of Apollos."

It matters not to Satan who or what it is which forms the centre for Christians, so long as it is not Christ.

Beloved fellow-believers, let us see to it that we are gathered to God's Centre, gathered to

Christ Himself alone, outside all that partakes of the character of the camp of old.

Perhaps some will say, But there are several parties of those who are professedly gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus. Which of them is right? This is a searching and sorrowful matter for exercise of soul, but I think the second reference as to the outside place being "a clean place" will help us. Moral defilement, I suppose all who take the ground of being gathered to Christ's Name will admit, must be dealt with according to principles laid down for us in 1 Corinthians v. 7-13. For if brought into a clean place, we are responsible to maintain it so for the glory of Him round Whom we meet.

But surely for true fellowship it is equally incumbent on us to maintain separation from unsound doctrine respecting the Person or work of Christ. The Word says, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (1 John i. 7). Again, in Acts ii. 42, we find, before fellowship and breaking of bread and spoken of, the disciples were said to continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. Sound doctrine is also frequently urged in the epistles to Timothy (1 Tim. i. 3, 10; iv. 13; vi. 3; 2 Tim. iii. 10, 14; and iv. 2, 3); while the Spirit, through the apostle John, says, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God"; and "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house," etc. (2 John 9-11).

Thus, beloved brethren in Christ, let us beware of looseness as to evil doctrine; let us also

take heed to ourselves that we do not rank ourselves as followers of this or that religious leader (1 Cor. i. 11-14).

II. *The worshippers* are brought before us in verses 11-16 of Exodus xxx. under the type of those who were ransomed. Each was ransomed or redeemed with half a shekel of silver (see Exod. xxxviii. 25, 26); the rich were not to give more nor the poor less. From this we learn that nothing less than a full redemption will fit any to draw near to God, and this all, as believers in Christ, have, for "ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as *silver* and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter i. 18). But now not only are we redeemed, but God has sent His Spirit to dwell in us (John xiv. 17, etc.), that thus we may be able to answer to the Father's desire, and worship Him in spirit and in truth (John iv.). "By Him" (Jesus) "therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His Name" (Heb. xiii. 15).

III. *Worship maintained* (vv. 11-21). God having provided a place for worship for the redeemed worshippers in His presence, as gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus, also has provided a means of maintaining the worshippers in a condition suited to Himself, so that worship may be unhindered.

This is foreshadowed in the brazen laver containing water for the washing of the priests' hands and feet to remove the defilement contracted in passing through a sinful world—

defilement which would have proved an effectual bar to true worship. The Lord told His disciples, in John xiii. 10, that “He that is washed”—or bathed, referring to the bathing of the priests on their consecration (see Lev. viii. 6)—“needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.” We who believe have been bathed, as it were, all over, when we were born of water (John iii. 5), that is, the Word of God (1 Peter i. 23), but we constantly need the application to ourselves, in our walk down here, of the cleansing water of the Word, and the Lord Jesus, in His wondrous grace, still occupies Himself in this washing away of His disciples’ defilements, by means of His Word (answering to the water in the laver), as we read in Ephesians v. 25-27.

IV. *The power of worship* (vv. 22—33). Oil in Scripture is used as a type of the Holy Spirit, and in these verses everything connected with the service and worship of God was anointed with the holy anointing oil. So must it be now; for true worship is “in spirit and in truth” (John iv. 24). Thus we find, in Acts ii. 2-4, the Holy Ghost came down from heaven consequent on Christ being glorified (John vii. 39), and “filled all the house,” and also “sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” Notice, it was the disciples, who were gathered together with one accord, who were thus filled. They were those who believed in the Lord Jesus; for the type shows us that the unsaved natural man was not to be anointed. Exodus xxx. 32 says of the holy oil, “Upon man’s flesh shall it not be poured.”

With us, too, it is "in Whom" (Christ), "after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. ii. 13).

Thus, then, the energy of the flesh can have no place in the worship of God: it would be like the strange fire used by Nadab and Abihu, which brought down the judgment of God upon them (Lev. x. 1, 2.)

The Spirit alone can teach our hearts aright to worship our God and Father. Let us see to it then, beloved fellow-believers, that we do not in any way quench the Spirit by our human energies or arrangements, but leave Him free in the assembly of God's people to lead out one and another to worship the Father and in ministry, as we find in 1 Corinthians xiv. 26-34.

V. *The subject of worship* (vv. 34-38). Lastly, we come to the subject of worship presented in these verses under the type of the sweet incense, composed of four sweet spices, there being of each a like weight. Surely we can see in this the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom every grace and excellency was found in equally full perfect proportion. The fine flour of the meat-offering—a type of Christ's humanity—presents the like thought of there being no unevenness in Him; and so we find too, in John i. 14, He was "full of grace and truth."

The four gospels each present the blessed Person of Jesus to us in different aspects. Matthew as the Messiah; Mark as the Servant; Luke as the Son of Man; and John as the Son of God. And in each His perfection is seen giving satisfaction to the heart of God—"This



is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased ” —and joy, too, to us who know Him as we trace His blessed pathway, and can indeed say, “ He doeth all things well.” The incense was beaten small and put on fire off the altar (see Lev. xvi. 12), and thus most fully was its perfect fragrance brought out and caused to ascend before God.

With our blessed Lord Jesus, all the trials and crushings in His pathway, and finally the testing fire of judgment when upon the cross “ He offered Himself to God for a sweet-smelling savour ” (Eph. v. 2), only served to bring out for God’s delight all the infinite perfections of His Beloved One. On the great Day of Atonement, before the blood was sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat, Aaron caused the cloud of sweet incense, beaten small and put on fire off the altar, to fill the holiest (Lev. xvi. 12, 13). Thus that which spoke of the perfections of the Person of Christ was presented before that which betokened an accomplished atoning sacrifice; in other words, it is the infinite preciousness of the Person which gives its value to the work He wrought. Then as the Spirit of God engages our hearts with Jesus thus, our mouths will speak forth His Name, His Person, His work; and His praise will be the fruit of our lips as we give thanks to our God and Father.

May our hearts know more of what it is to be filled, even now, with delight in the preciousness of Jesus, so that on earth we may begin the note of adoring worship, which we shall carry on in fuller, sweeter strains in His own presence for eternity !

W.H.S.F.

## Typical Exercises of Priesthood.

### IV.

**T**HE Son of God could call worlds into existence by the word of His mouth ; but when leprous sinners had to be cleansed, something more was needed : “ God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son ” (John iii. 16). When worlds were to be framed, God had but to speak. When sinners had to be saved, He had to give His Son. “ In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John iv. 9, 10).

But there was far more to be accomplished than the mission and incarnation of the Son of God. It would, indeed, have availed the leper but little had the priest merely gone forth from the camp, and looked upon his low and forlorn condition. Blood-shedding was essentially necessary before leprosy could be removed. The death of a spotless victim was needed, “ Without shedding of blood is no remission.” (Heb. ix. 22).

And, be it observed, the “ shedding of blood ” was the real basis of the leper’s cleansing. It was not a mere circumstance which, in conjunction with others, contributed to the leper’s cleansing. By no means. The giving up of the life was the grand and all-important fact. When this was accomplished the way was open ; every barrier was removed ; God could deal in perfect grace with the leper. This point should be distinctly laid hold

of, if my reader would fully enter into the glorious doctrine of the blood.

“ And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water ” (Lev. xiv. 5).

Here we have an acknowledged type of the death of Christ, “ who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God ” (Heb. ix. 14). “ He was crucified in weakness ” (2 Cor. xiii. 4). The greatest, the mightiest, the most glorious, the most momentous work that ever was accomplished throughout the wide universe of God was wrought “ in weakness.”

Oh ! my readers, how terrible a thing sin must be in the judgment of God, when His own beloved Son had to come down from heaven, and hang upon yonder cursed tree, a spectacle to men, to angels, and to devils, in order that you and I might be forgiven ! And what a type of sin have we in leprosy ! Who would have thought that that little “ bright spot ” appearing on the person of some member of the congregation was a matter of such grave consequence ? But ah ! that little “ bright spot ” was nothing less than the energy of evil in the place of manifestation. It was the index of the dreadful working of sin in the nature ; and before that person could be fitted for a place in the assembly, or for the enjoyment of communion with a holy God, the Son of God had to leave those bright heavens, and descend into the lowest parts of the earth, in order to make a full atonement for that which exhibited itself merely in the form of a little “ bright spot.”

Let us remember this. Sin is a dreadful thing in the estimation of God. He cannot tolerate so much as a single sinful thought. Before one such

thought could be forgiven, Christ had to die upon the cross. The most trifling sin (if any sin can be called trifling), demanded nothing less than the death of God's eternal and co-equal Son. But, eternal praise be to God! what sin demanded, redeeming love freely gave; and now God is infinitely more glorified in the forgiveness of sins than He could have been had Adam maintained his original innocence. God is more glorified in the salvation, the pardon, the justification, the preservation, and final glorification of guilty man, than He could have been in maintaining an innocent man in the enjoyment of creation blessings.

Such is the precious mystery of redemption. May our hearts, by the power of the Holy Ghost, enter into the living and profound depths of this wondrous mystery.

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*Lord, we are Thine : bought by Thy blood.*

Once the poor guilty slaves of sin,  
But Thou redeemedst us to God,  
And mad'st Thy Spirit dwell within;  
Thou hast our sinful wanderings borne  
With love and patience all divine;  
As brands, then, from the burning torn,  
We own that we are *wholly Thine*.

*Lord, we are Thine : Thy claims we own,*  
Ourselves to Thee we'd wholly give;  
Reign Thou within our hearts alone,  
And let us to Thy glory live;  
Here let us each Thy mind display,  
In all Thy gracious image shine;  
And haste that long-expected day  
When Thou shalt own *that we are Thine*.

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# WORDS OF TRUTH

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"The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words;  
and that which was written was upright, even words  
of truth" (Eccles. xii. 10).

## "Boldness in the Day of Judgment."

**I**T is a most wondrous and blessed scripture that the apostle wrote, teaching us under the Holy Ghost: "Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17).

John himself afterwards experienced the "boldness" of which this scripture speaks, in a very remarkable way. He had his own doctrine made good to his spirit by the same hand that brought him the doctrine.

In the Isle of Patmos he was introduced to a day of judgment. The revelation he got there of the Lord Jesus Christ was a revelation of Him in judicial glory. He saw the Son of Man standing among the golden candlesticks, with white gar-

ments, eyes of flame, a voice as of many waters, a countenance as of the sun shining in its strength, and with feet as though they burnt in a furnace.

A solemn, terrible exhibition of Christ in "the day of judgment" all this was. John falls to the earth as one dead. But the Lord tells him not to fear, speaking to him as the One who had been dead, and was alive again, having the keys of death and of hell. That is, He imparts to the spirit of His saint, then in the presence of judicial glory, all the virtue of His own condition. Jesus was there, through death and resurrection, holding in His grasp all the power of the enemy, for He had the keys of death and of hell. Such a One speaks comfortably to John. He imparts, as I said, the virtue of His own condition to His saint, though in a day of judgment. "As" He Himself was "so" would He have John to be, even in the place of victory, the other side of judgment (Rev. i.).

This was surely wonderful and full of blessing, and John at once feels the power of it, and acquires "boldness" in that "day of judgment." For, though the Son of Man is still before him in the same attire and character as he had already seen Him, in judicial glory, with eyes as of flame, and feet like fine brass, as though they burnt in a furnace, and a countenance like as the sun shines in its strength, John has "boldness." And then he listened to the voice challenging the Church again and again, but he remains unmoved from beginning to end.

This is very beautiful, and has a great character in it. But still more: another scene of judgment succeeds this, of the Son of Man walking among

“ BOLDNESS IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT. ” 19

the candlesticks, and John is yet in the presence of it.

He is carried or summoned by the sound of a trumpet to heaven, preparing itself for the execution of judgment. The thrones were there, thrones of judgment; for the elders are seen clothed in white raiment, befitting those seated in judgment. Voices, lightnings, thunders, instruments of wrath, or witnesses that the Lord was rising up out of His holy place for judgment, proceeded out of the throne; and thence, as we proceed through the book, all that succeeds is in character: trumpets, vials, fire, smoke, earthquakes, and other terrible sights and symbols, enough to make another Moses quake, as in the day of Sinai (Heb. xii. 21).

But John maintains the “ boldness ” he has already acquired, and all through is as unmoved as the symbolic creatures or crowned elders themselves. They were on high, but he was still “ in this world ”; they were glorified, but he still “ in the body ”; yet he is as calm as they. “ As ” they were, “ so ” was he. And when the terrible sealed book is seen in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne, and a loud voice, as of a mighty angel, challenges any to loose it; instead of dreading the moment when such an awful volume should be opened, he weeps because no one was found equal to do so. He longs to have the secret of the throne disclosed. “ The day of judgment ” has no terror for him. He is “ as ” Christ, and has “ boldness. ”

But this security, God’s own calmness and assurance in the “ day of judgment, ” has had its witness, or expression, in different forms, again and again, in the course of God’s dealing with His

elect; as in the time of the Flood; in the day of the overthrow of Sodom; at the time of the Exodus; and also at the time of the passage of the Jordan.

Those were days of judgment; but the security thrown round the elect on each of them was divine; it was God's own safety which He then imparted to His people. They were in the world when its judgment was in progress; but we may say, "as" He was "so" were they. His safety was theirs.

The "Lord God" shut Noah in the ark with His own hand before the waters began to rise. The waters were there the instruments of divine wrath, but the divine hand had shut the door upon Noah; and surely those waters of judgment could no more prevail against the *hand* of God, than they could against His *throne*. And, therefore, "as" the Lord was, "so" was Noah. Their safety was a common one, wondrous to tell.

So even such a one as Lot in another day of judgment. He was saved so as by fire, out of the fire; a salvation in no wise glorious to himself. He suffered loss, for his works were all burnt up (1 Cor. iii. 15). But the angel said he could do nothing till Lot was fully and clean delivered from all possible danger from the judgment. The angel *could do nothing till then*; and, I ask, was not this divine security?

In the night of Egypt, He who carried the sword had already appointed the blood. He, to whom the vengeance belonged, the Judge who was conducting the judgment, had ordained and pledged the deliverance: "When I see the blood, I will pass over" (Exod. xii.). Was not this imparting His own security to His people again?



“ BOLDNESS IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT. ” 21

The Lord must deny Himself (and this He cannot do), or Israel must be safe. Israel may have the same “ boldness ” in that “ day of judgment ” as the Lord Himself in the world through which the sword was going.

So in the passage of the Jordan. The waters were there, as in the days of Noah, ready to overflow their banks, as in the time of barley harvest. But the priests were in the midst of them, and the Ark or Presence of God. And there they stood, the ministers of God in the presence of God, till all the people had crossed the river. The safety of the Ark was the safety of the camp. “ As ” it was, “ so ” were they. Nothing less than divine security was that of Israel amid “ the swelling of Jordan.” The judgment of Canaan was about to begin, but Israel was in God’s sanctuary (Josh. iii. ; Jer. xii. 5).

All this sweetly witnesses how the Lord imparts Himself, or shares His condition with His elect ; and that, too, in the day of their most solemn necessity, so to speak. He is beyond judgment. above it, the Executor of it ; but the value of His own place He communicated to those elect ones in days of judgment.

But this “ boldness ” of ours has a new character in it. It flows from “ perfect love.” God has put the value of the Son of His bosom upon us ; and it is not possible for love to take any higher counsels, or do any more wondrous works than that. The love that has set the value of the Son upon us is a “ perfect ” love ; and our “ boldness,” therefore, is conferred not merely by the *hand* or by the ordinance of God, but by His *heart*.

Noah, or Israel, or even Lot, in their several

days of judgment, might have said, "As He is, so are we." God's safety was theirs. But we rest our security now with the "love" of God, as they did into the *hand* or *ordinance* of God. The security is equal; but ours is the witness of a nearer, more affecting, title. Ours is personal. Noah was in the Ark; we are in God. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God"; and in a new sense we say, "As He is, so are we" (1 John iv. 16). We are *loved* as He is, not merely *secured* as He is. We bear an element of full personal *affection* investing our spirits, as well as an element of "boldness."

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### **Papers on Worship No. 10.**

**H**OW marked it is that there wanted perpetuity in everything which came under "the law of a carnal commandment"! It was so, whether we look at the persons, the sacrifice, or the intercession. But now that there is perpetuity in the Person, the like character attaches to the priesthood, the sacrifice, and the intercession.

Surely, the priesthood being changed, there must of necessity be a change in the whole law and order of worship. To go back to the old pattern now, what is it but virtually to deny the personal glory of the Son, as giving efficacy to His work and office? It is, as has been before noticed, to tread under foot the Son of God. It must necessarily transfer the thought from His order of priesthood to another order. It must introduce human copies of patterns and shadows once given by God, claiming for such things the

value due only to the heavenly things themselves. It must sink the place of worship from heaven to earth. It must consecrate that which God has left out as profane. It must establish form, instead of leaving room for power: producing uniformity to which the flesh can bend, but to the utter denial of unity in the Spirit, of which the flesh must be ignorant.

Let us then most seriously consider what Christian worship really is. Whether we look at our own standing, or at the change which has taken place in priesthood, there is necessitated an entire change in the order of worship. We have seen Aaron's priesthood adapted to the law, and Christ's to the new covenant. Aaron's priesthood was intercessional, so also is Christ's. The Church is sustained by the constant intercession of Christ alone. It is what our necessities require, and is beautifully and graciously adapted to them.

But while this is most blessedly true, is there not another and very different sense in which it is said, "Such an High Priest *became us*"? (Heb. vii. 26). The intercession of the Great High Priest for us is only for us while the Church needs it; it has, so far as the Church is in question, a termination, and it may well be said to be an Aaronic service carried on after the Melchizedek order. But if we take a larger thought of the priesthood of Jesus, comprehending His Person and the whole Melchizedek order, do we not find His priesthood adapted to us, not only because of our infirmities and necessities, but likewise because of that high standing which we by His grace have received, that we might hold fast our profession?

Surely when the Church needs not a priesthood

of intercession, as it will not in heavenly glory, it will enjoy all the peculiar privileges proper to the Melchizedek order, a constant reciprocation of blessing and praise. But our standing is really as high now as then; "*Now* are we the sons of God" (1 John iii. 2). And the saints are now to know the High Priest suitable to their greatness. We are "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" (Heb. iii. 2). To such Aaron's priesthood is not suitable. "*For such* an High Priest *became us.*"

What is it that has constituted us "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling"? Surely these two things (1) that the Son has by Himself purged our sins, and (2) that "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. ii. 11). If there is not the same life in them as in Himself, He could not call them brethren. "Because I live," says He, "ye shall live also" (John xiv. 19.) Is He anointed with the Holy Ghost? They too, in virtue of having been cleansed by His blood, and united with Him as risen, are anointed with the same. He indeed above His fellows, but they with the same blessed Spirit; for "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (Heb. i. 9; 1 Cor. vi. 17).

Now, the High Priest suitable to such a standing as this must not only be "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," but also "made higher than the heavens" (Heb. vii. 26).

The older order would necessarily keep the "holy brethren" out of the "holy place," making those who are partakers of the heavenly calling mere earthly worshippers. And is not this a present fact? Worship should so elevate the soul of the

worshipper that nothing should be known between him and God, save the Great High Priest; but instead of this the ritual to which many saints are subjected causes them to bow the head like a bul-rush.

Such a High Priest, then, became us, "who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people's; for this He did *once*, when He offered up Himself. For the law maketh *men* high priests which have infirmity; but the word of that oath, which was since the law, *the Son*, who is consecrated for evermore." (Heb. vii. 27, 28).

How unlike Aaron is Jesus, our Great High Priest! All His present priestly ministration is based upon the one accomplished sacrifice of *Himself*. This entirely affects the order of worship, and changes it; for our worship is just as truly based upon the already accomplished sacrifice as in His Priesthood. It is our starting-point as worshippers. We are only in the profane place if we approach not God on the ground of our sins having been for ever purged by Jesus; we cannot avail ourselves of His priesthood until this be acknowledged (Heb. i. 3). The Great Priesthood is alone suitable for those who *have come to God through Him*.

Into what an elevated place, then, has that one sacrifice brought us! No place *under heaven* is suitable for His ministry or our worship. Both are properly heavenly. Worship therefore should ever lift us up to where Jesus is, the Great High Priest who *is passed into the heavens*. Aaron was called of God to his priesthood in the tabernacle made with hands; but Jesus had been called of God to His priesthood *in the heavens, the true tabernacle*,

and we are made *partakers of the heavenly calling*. The dignity of His Person, the ground-work of His priestly ministry, and the place of its exercise, all alike proclaim the necessity of a change in the law and order of worship. The law with its ritual and worship all hang consistently together, but it made *nothing perfect*; it bore on its front plain marks of infirmity.

There is great strength of contrast in the last verse of Hebrews vii. It is not merely *men* contrasted with the *Son*, but *men having infirmity*. And so the word of the oath has its priesthood and order in beautiful harmony; but to attempt to blend the two, as the Church has done and is doing, is to introduce the worst confusion. Jesus has not His honour, and the saints have not their privilege.

Let us remember that under the Levitical priesthood there was no provision made for any, either priest or people, to follow Aaron within the veil. Aaron in this respect had *no fellows*. Now the Son also takes this place of Aaron's. He has *no fellows* in any of His sacrificial work, or in offering the incense. But He *has fellows within the place of His ministry*.

Under the Levitical priesthood there was no fellowship *even as to place* between the people and the priests. They worshipped in distinct places. But now all is changed, for that order is now introduced of which it is said, "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one" (Heb. ii. 11). We are one *in life*, and therefore identified as to position with Christ Jesus. He can say in heaven itself, "Behold I and the children which God hath given me" (Heb. ii. 13). There was indeed the great principle of representation in the Levitical priesthood. Aaron bore the

names of the tribes of Israel on his shoulders and on his heart. But there was not the truth of union. There could not be; or even on the supposition that there could have been, what would it have availed, union with a man having infirmity? But now that we have such a High Priest as the Son, in the power of an endless life; and that He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; to have such a One not only as our representative, but as He with whom we are united, what an entire change must this effect as to the whole order of worship. Aaron bore the names of the tribes as something apart from himself, but our High Priest as completely identified with Himself.

How far all typical representation falls short of the reality! Just as in the sacrifices one might see the innocent suffering for the guilty; but the reality, the Holy Lamb of God suffering for sins, feeling the shame of them as His own, and enduring the wrath of God, was incapable of being represented. So there might be some faint shadow of identity between the priest and the people; but the reality of living union with the Son was incapable of being typically expressed. It is "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" which is now the great order of God (Rom. viii. 2). It is not only *through Him* that we come, but now *in Christ Jesus* ye who were far off are brought nigh by the blood of Jesus (Eph. ii. 16). There is now therefore the anointed High Priest, even Jesus; but He has fellows anointed also; those who worship through Him are not the people who stand without, but priests sanctified for the immediate presence of God. The law of worship now is entirely priestly. "By Him

therefore *let us offer the sacrifice* of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name " (Heb. xiii. 15).

Can we find language so suitable to describe the danger of returning to ordinances, or the setting up again a priesthood on the earth between the Great High Priest and His fellows, as that found in the sixth and tenth chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews? May not these passages well make the ear that hears them in these our days to tingle? And can we find any occupation so blessed, whilst journeying through the wilderness, any so fitted to raise our souls out of the dust, and make us tread in spirit the heavenly courts, as to consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus?

Holy brethren, does it appear to you that this paper is not strictly on the subject of worship? You will find it only so in appearance; for our power of real, acceptable worship is in allowing nothing to come in between our souls and our Great High Priest. It is what He is, not what we are, that we have to consider. Are we ever so truly exalted as when magnifying Him? Is it not most practically true in this sense also, that " he that humbleth himself shall be exalted " ? (Luke xiv. 11).

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## Typical Exercises of Priesthood V.

" **A**S for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood



of the bird that was killed over the running water ; and he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field " (Lev. xiv, 6-7).

The blood being shed, the priest can enter directly and fully upon his work. Up to this we read, " the priest shall command." But now he acts immediately himself. The death of Christ is the basis of His priestly ministration. Having entered with His own blood into the holy place, He acts as our Great High Priest, applying to our souls all the precious results of His atoning work, and maintaining us in the full and divine integrity of the position into which His sacrifice has introduced us. " For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices ; wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if He were on earth He should not be a priest " (Heb. viii, 3-4).

We could hardly have a more perfect type of the resurrection of Christ than that presented in the living bird let loose into the open field. It was not let go until after the death of its companion ; for the two birds typify one Christ in two stages of His blessed work, namely, death and resurrection. Ten thousand birds let loose would not have availed for the leper. It was that living bird, mounting upward in the open heavens, bearing upon his wings the significant token of accomplished atonement. It was that which told out the great fact that the work was done, the ground cleared, the foundation laid. Thus is it in reference to our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. His resurrection declares the glorious triumph of redemption. " He rose again the third day

according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. xvii, 4). " He was raised again for our justification " (Rom. iv, 25). It is this that sets the burdened heart free, and liberates the struggling conscience. The Scriptures assure me that Jesus was nailed to the cross under the weight of my sins ; but the same Scriptures assure me that He rose from the grave without one of those sins upon Him. Nor is this all. The same Scriptures assure me that all who put their trust in Jesus are as free from all charge of guilt as He is ; that there is no more wrath or condemnation for them than for Him ; that they are in Him, one with Him, accepted in Him ; co-quickenened, co-raised, co-seated with. Such is the peace-giving testimony of the Scriptures of truth, such the record of Him who cannot lie (See Rom. vi, 6-11 ; viii, 1-4 ; Cor. v. 21 ; Eph. ii, 5-6 ; Col. ii, 10-15 ; 1 John iv, 17).

We have another most important truth set before us in verse six of our chapter. We not only see our full deliverance from guilt and condemnation beautifully exhibited in the " living bird " let loose, but we see also our entire deliverance from all the attractions of earth and all the influences of nature. " The scarlet " would be the apt expression of the former, while " the cedar wood and hyssop " would set forth the latter. The cross of Christ is the end of all this world's glory. God presents it and the believer recognises it as such. " God forbid," says the apostle Paul, " that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world " (Gal. vi. 14).

Then as to the " cedar wood and hyssop," they present to us the two extremes, as it were, of

nature's wide range. Solomon "spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall" (1 Kings iv. 33). From the lofty cedar which adorns the sides of Lebanon, down to the lowly hyssop (the wide extremes and all that lies between), nature in all its departments is brought under the power of the cross; so that the believer sees in the death of Christ the end of the whole system of nature, of the entire old creation.

And with what is he to be occupied now? With Him who is the Antitype of that "living bird," ascending with blood-stained feathers into the open heavens. Precious, glorious, soul-satisfying Object. A risen, ascended, triumphant, glorified Christ, who has passed into the heavens, bearing in His sacred Person the marks of an accomplished atonement. It is with Him we have to do. We are shut up to Him. He is God's exclusive Object. He is the Centre of heaven's joy, the Theme of angels' acclamations. We can behold all the old creation, together with our sin and guilt, for ever set aside by the death of Christ. We can well afford to dispense with earth and nature, inasmuch as we have obtained instead thereof, "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. iii. 8).

"And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy, seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the bird loose into the open field (v. 7).

The more deeply we ponder over the contents of chapter xiii. the more clearly we shall see how utterly impossible it was for the leper to do aught towards his own cleansing. All he could do was to "put a covering upon his upper lip"; and all he could say was, "Unclean, unclean." It

belonged to God, and to Him alone, to devise and accomplish a work whereby the leprosy could be perfectly cleansed; and, further, it belonged to God, and to Him alone, to pronounce the leper "clean." Hence it is written, "The priest shall sprinkle;" and, "He shall pronounce him clean." It is not said, "The leper shall sprinkle, and pronounce, or imagine himself, clean." This would never do. God was the Judge; God was the Healer; God was the Cleanser. He alone knew what leprosy was, how it could be put away, and when to pronounce the leper clean.

The leper might have gone on all his days covered with leprosy, and yet be wholly ignorant of what was wrong with him. It was the word of God, the Scriptures of truth, the divine Record, that declared the full truth as to leprosy; and nothing short of the selfsame authority could pronounce the leper clean, and that, moreover, only on the solid and indisputable ground of death and resurrection.

There is the most precious connection between the three things in verse 7: the blood is sprinkled, **the leper pronounced clean**, and the living bird let loose. There is not so much as a single syllable about what the leper was to do, to say, to think, or to feel. It was enough that he was a leper; a fully revealed, a thoroughly judged leper, covered from head to foot. This sufficed for him; all the rest pertained to God.

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It is a cold, heartless, selfish world we are passing through; and we need to live near the exhaustless Fountain of love, so that we may prove to be streams of refreshing to all with whom we come in contact.

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# WORDS OF TRUTH

"The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words;  
and that which was written was upright, even words  
of truth" (Eccles. xii. 10).

## God's Companionship with Man.

**H**OW finely the voice from heaven varies its tone in the story of Saul's conversion, as given to us in Act ix. !

When it *challenges the persecutor*, how peremptory it is; how loudly it speaks !

When it *addresses itself to the disciple*, Ananias, how it approaches him as with the accents of a well-known voice, and in the style of full personal intimacy !

When it *rebukes the servant*, this same Ananias, how decisive ! and yet giving witness that love was undisturbed, unchanged, because the rebuked servant was still, and immediately put into further service as one trusted and valued.

Precious are these various ways of Him with whom we have to do. How ought we to trust the

One whose love can thus array itself in these its different suits and styles ! He will challenge us when our condition demands it ; rebuke us ; or speak intimately to us ; and His love approves itself equally in each ; for our good and blessing is the end proposed and accomplished. And man, under the drawing and teaching of the Spirit, answers this voice in beauty and fitness also.

The persecutor fell under it at once. He could not but do so. It was as Adam behind the trees of the garden. Saul could not help calling Jesus " Lord " at that moment. It was the necessary utterance of one in such a condition. But as this one is led of God, he follows in beauty and fitness.

I mean this : When called by the voice from the glory that had laid the sentence of death in him, to arise, and stand on his feet, he did so, and appears from that moment as one separated to that voice, or to what had now happened to him.

Like Peter in Luke v., in a kindred moment of conviction, he thought not of the sinking boat, so occupied was his soul with the impressions of the glory or of God upon his spirit. And so Paul now. The three days' want of food, and the loss of sight were, I believe, as nothing to him. He had been separated to that moment in its full power. He had looked on Him whom he had pierced, and was apart ; as in another kindred moment, the house of David and of Shimei will be, husbands and wives (Zech. xii.).

But there is another answer which the voice from heaven gets in this striking scene. Ananias answers it as well as Saul ; and according to the relations in which he stood to it, answers it likewise in beauty and fitness.

The voice, as we have seen, addressed him in

all blessed, gracious intimacy. Ananias' style shows that, Abraham-like, his spirit was at home in the presence of it, in the presence of the glory whence it came. He takes his place instinctively before it. "Behold, I am here, Lord," he says; and then the voice giving its orders and revealing its secrets, Ananias replies (Jeremiah-like or Peter-like, in such cases), intimating that the Lord seemed to be making some mistake, that these directions needed some correction, or at least, interpretation.

And surely this was answering the intimacies of grace with the confidence of faith. This was like Moses speaking face to face, as a man would speak with his friend (Exod. xxxiii. 11). And this was indeed beautiful in its place. Such a spirit of faith being of divine operation, was acceptable to God, and is sweet to us. It was as Jonah in chap. iv. 1, though not so marked; and like Jonah, Ananias has then to be rebuked and corrected, and is *given to know that the error was all his own, and not the Lord's*. When Ananias had questioned the orders he had received to go to Saul of Tarsus, "Go thy way," says the Lord to him.

This was a third voice from heaven, as we have already seen; and this voice, like the earlier voices, is answered in all beautiful fitness. Ananias at once goes; and the moment he sees Saul, he addresses him on the sole authority of the voice he had now heard, and in the spirit which that voice inspired. The Lord had said, "He is a chosen vessel unto me," and Ananias now addressed him, "Brother Saul."

How perfect, like all the rest, this is! The first voice, convicting the sinner, is answered by the sinner separating himself to it.

The second voice, addressing the saint, is answered by the saint in like confidential intimacy.

The third voice, rebuking and arresting the servant, is answered, not only by an act of obedience, but by that act being conducted and carried out in the very style and spirit which that voice was inspiring, in fullest concord with the mind which had directed and awakened it.

This scene gives us, then, in the person of Ananias, an instance of that intimacy with the Lord which faith has reached, and deems itself entitled to.

And, let me say, faith has not in this over-calculated its rights. Grace warranted this intimacy at the very beginning, at the creation. God, then, as we know, delighted in the work of His hand as it grew up and came forth day by day, and when all was completed at the close of the sixth day, looking on all, He tasted rich delight, and consecrated the seventh day in memory of this, His rest and refreshment.

But in addition to this, man becomes the source of special delight. Man had been signalized as the chief point in the whole workmanship, and the head of the whole scene. Peculiar care was used in setting him in the garden, enriched and blest, crowned and espoused, and altogether satisfied. And then the Lord seeks His company. The Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the day, and "called unto Adam and said unto him, Where art thou?" (Gen. iii. 8, 9.)

He was seeking companionship with that chiefest and most excellent work of His hands, as though companionship with him was to complete His enjoyments. The Lord sought man: "Where art thou?" His "delights were with the sons of



men," as He says in another place; and then, **as** at the very beginning, He gave warrant and **title** to man to know this intimacy.

I need not say how Adam disappointed **this** divine desire towards him. But the desire survives and it is still said, "My delights were with **the** sons of men" (Prov. viii. 31).

Among those of the people of God who **have** specially illustrated this personal intimacy with the Lord we might first notice Abraham. **The** Lord, in deep and full grace, warranted this, **and** drew Abraham into it; but Abraham, in faith, **read** his title to it, and used it (Gen. xviii.) I need **not** notice the occasions; they show themselves clearly in the progress of the story.

Moses afterwards is seen in the same place. **He** converses with the Lord as a man with his friend. He debated matters with the Lord, as one **that** would know divine secrets and reasons, and **give** his own mind, and express his own difficulties **and** sorrows.

As we advance we find Jeremiah of this **same** class. He would speak to the Lord about **His** doings and judgments, and inquire of Him respecting the grounds and meaning of His commands (Jer. xxxii. 2).

Jonah also, another among the prophets, **gives** us another instance of the same. He is very **bold**, telling the Lord how it was, and how he had **known** it would be, between God and himself (Jonah iv.).

And this intimacy is not reduced when we **enter** the New Testament. I speak not, however, of **the** intercourse disciples had with the Lord in the **days** of His ministry among them; but of that **inter-**course and intimacy which faith still held **with** Him after He was glorified, when He took, in **a**

divine sense, the relationship to them which He had had of old with patriarchs and prophets.

We see samples of this in Ananias, to which I have already referred, in Acts ix., in Peter in Acts x., in Paul in Acts xxii. All these three reasoned certain points with the Lord, the glorified Jesus, as Abraham or Jeremiah and others had reasoned points with the Lord God in their earlier days. Ananias, Peter, and Paul may all be more or less in error and have to be rebuked, and get their judgments corrected; but still they enjoy an intimacy which it is blessed to think of. They are dealing with One well known by them, and on a title fully approved and justified. Surely again, I may say, it is blessed to think of. And I ask, Is this still to be so? Is the soul to know it, in this day of the Holy Ghost and of an absent Jesus?

The posture of Lazarus at the table with his Lord, and at the side of his Lord, expresses this character of communion. It is found in company with the worshipping Mary and the serving Martha; all beautiful in their place and season (John xii.).

And so the soul knows its present title to the same, though it as well knows how poorly it enjoys it, and how nature and the enemy will hinder it in that, its right and joy. But so it is. We are straitened in our *bowels*, not in our *calling*; in our *experience*, not in our *condition*. Through the Scriptures, and taking occasion by reason of our daily circumstances, we may use this place which has been open to the elect from the beginning. It is surely ours in this day of the Spirit, if it were theirs who walked with God in the infant-day of patriarchs, or in the advancing times of prophets, who had not, however, reached the dispensation of

the Spirit, given on the ascension to glory of the Son of man, as we have done.

And I still ask, Is this still to be so? Is this *eternal* in its character? Is this to be the same in the coming days of the glory, as it has already been in days of patriarchs, of prophets and of apostles, and as it is now?

The holy hill, where we see the glorified, answers this. Speaking of Jesus there transfigured, the evangelist says, "And, behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke ix. 30, 31).

Here was intimacy of just the same character as at the tent in the plain of Mamre; or within the cloudy tabernacle in the wilderness; or in the court of the prison at Jerusalem; or outside the gate of the city of Nineveh; or on the roof of the house of Simon the tanner, or in the temple with Paul. All is unchanged. Scenes change as much as they well can, in all this vast variety: tent-doors, wildernesses, prisons, house-tops, temples, and the like; but the realms of glory, where the translated saints have joined their ascended Lord, claims to be another of the same places, and to witness and exhibit that intimacy which began at the beginning and has been continued throughout.

All ages, then, give us samples of this intimacy, this divine intercourse. Patriarchal, Mosaic, prophetic, evangelic ages, all illustrate it, and the days of the glory will do the same. This intercourse is something of its own kind. It is not grace giving a gift, and faith accepting it. It is not the soul exercised in prayer, or intercession, or thanksgiving, or praise. These things are so, I

need not say ; but it is none of these. It is of its own generation, and bespeaks the title which the believer consciously enjoys of coming near to God, not as a suppliant, nor as a worshipper, but as one that has been let into His confidence.

And I believe till we take this place, till “ we thus walk and talk with Jesus,” we have not fully obeyed that form of doctrine which God, in the riches of the grace of His gospel, has delivered to us.

Wonderful ! save that God is God. He laid Himself out for this enjoyment of His creature, when His creature was untainted and in innocency. The entrance of sin did not hinder this, but this intercourse continued among the fruits of that grace which put sin away ; and if the entrance of sin has not hindered it, neither shall the display of glory. The garden, the ruined world, the kingdom in its glories are alike the scenes of it ; each and all maintain and witness the divine intercourse, this companionship of God with man.

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### **Papers on Worship. No. 11.**

**I**T is profitable to seek to place ourselves in the circumstances of those to whom the New Testament Scriptures were immediately addressed.

Not that the same Scriptures are not immediately applicable to ourselves. They are so because applying to that which is essential and characteristic. But by placing ourselves among those first addressed, we shall the better discern the way in which the Holy Ghost regards and

uses the circumstances of the saints in communicating truth unto them.

Indeed, when circumstances are thus duly regarded, we shall find perspicuity given to many statements which otherwise might be general or vague; and this will be found to be especially the case when any direct contrast with the habit of thought and tone of feeling of those addressed is intended.

A Hebrew under the law moved in a religious atmosphere. From his childhood he had been accustomed to look with veneration on the goodly buildings of the temple. He was instructed concerning sacrifice and incense. He was brought up to revere the consecrated priesthood. The priest in his consecrated garments, coming forth to bless the worshipping people, must have been an impressive though familiar object to him. He must necessarily have attached the most solemn importance to the unseen work of that priest within the holy place.

Now, suppose such a one as this to become taught of God, and so receiving His testimony concerning Christ; he believes on Jesus, owning Him as the Son of God, the Christ of God, and the Lamb of God. He finds in his soul a peace unknown before; and he has confidence in God through Jesus Christ, by whom he has *now* received the reconciliation (Rom. v. 11, margin).

We know that thousands of Hebrews were thus brought into light and peace through faith in Jesus. To such was the Epistle to the Hebrews primarily addressed.

But how would such believers stand in relation to their former associations? Having personal peace of conscience through the blood of Jesus,

would they continue worshippers according to the order of that economy in which they had been brought up?

No. That which gave them peace would destroy every old association. Having learnt the preciousness of the blood of Christ by finding through it remission of sins, they would have to learn it as equally precious because by it they were redeemed from the "vain conversation received by tradition from their fathers" (1 Pet. i. 18). They would have access as worshippers to heaven itself; and that, too, as a holy priesthood, there to "worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (John iv. 23).

The consequence must be that in the city of solemnities itself such a one finds himself in the wilderness. He can no longer have fellowship with the multitude who keep holy-day. His temple and his High Priest are now in heaven; and if he goes up to the Temple in Jerusalem at the hour of prayer, he there has to testify that Israel are blindly groping amidst the shadows, and that all the promises of God are yea and amen in Him whom they had slain, but whom God had exalted to His own right hand (1 Cor. i. 20; Acts i. 33).

But though thus full of heavenly communion and intelligence, such a one would appear to the eyes of those around him as though he had been cut off from Israel; yea, he might actually have been put out of the synagogue (John xvi. 2). If he would speak of worshipping God, he would have it cast in his teeth that he had neither sanctuary, nor altar, nor sacrifice, nor priest. Hard, indeed, must it have been to have maintained that he had all these, when apparently he could not point to one of them. Hard indeed to hold fast the

confidence and rejoicing of the hope steadfast unto the end.

But with a single eye to JESUS all this was possible. Yea, there ought to have been a confidence and rejoicing in the assertion of what he had found, far superior to all that he had left. All he had left was visible and present indeed, things which were palpable to sense, and all he had found was known only to faith; but still he could say what he *had*. He could testify that the only value of all that God once established amidst Israel was found in its representing that which he now in substance knew in heaven. And he could, therefore, say, "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps. xxxiv. 8; 1 Pet. ii. 3).

But how strange and irregular must it have appeared to such to assemble for worship without any *single visible* essential of worship; no prescribed or consecrated place; no sacrifice; no ministering priest. But here came in the profession *that all these they had*: "We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. iii. 1, 2).

Throughout this Epistle the writer takes most lofty ground. He takes his place as one with us, that is, one of the Church; and he tells out what we have. He will not allow any pretension to interfere with ours; and he seeks to stir us up to the holding fast of our profession (iv. 4). But has there not been sad declension here? We have been false witnesses of "the grace of God"; as though He had not blessed us already so abundantly that we can, to the glory of His grace, challenge every pretension, and assert our profession to be yet

higher. Oh that the Lord would lead our souls consciously to take this standing, that by it we might be able to contradict every pretension of the world and of the flesh, whether religious or otherwise! "We have" a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens. "We have" a hope as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil. "We have" an altar, whereof those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. And "we have" a Minister of the sanctuary (iv. 14, vi. 19, xiii. 10, viii. 2).

Let us now turn to the consideration of the Lord Jesus, as this "Minister of the sanctuary."

The apostle Paul was not a minister of the sanctuary; he worshipped there through the ministry of another. He had as much need of this ministry as any of his converts. He stood on the same level with them, in relation to ministry in the sanctuary. He had indeed a most blessed ministry, in a peculiar sense his own, the ministry of reconciliation among the Gentiles (2 Cor. v. 19). He had received the reconciliation through Jesus Christ Himself, and by his preaching others likewise received it. He could speak of it as special grace, that he should have been put into the ministry: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious" (1 Tim. i. 12, 13).

But he was not called out from the multitude of believers, as the priest was from the multitude of Israel, to minister *for them* before the Lord (Heb. v.); though he surely was a chosen vessel to bear the Lord's name to the Gentiles, and though



he had a certain place of authority and eminence in the Church itself. But, however distinct may have been his ministry, or even ministries, he was 'one' of a *common priesthood*. He well knew that there were but two ranks in Christian priesthood; the Great High Priest and the priests. He was one of the priests; and, therefore, though he could magnify his office as an apostle of the Gentiles, he could not magnify his priesthood.

Hence he writes authoritatively as the apostle, while before the Great High Priest he is but brother among brethren. The great subject of priesthood, which he so largely discusses in the Epistle to the Hebrews, demanded that the apostle should himself take the place of a worshipper; that thus his own peculiar office might sink into nothing before the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.

Thus does the apostle acknowledge and declare that Jesus, the Son of God, alone is the representative Priest (Heb. iv. 14, viii. 4). Would that in this acknowledgment the apostle had had more successors.

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## Typical Exercises of Priesthood. VI.

**I**T is of all importance for the anxious inquirer after peace to enter into the truth unfolded in this branch of our subject. So many are tried by the question of feeling, realising, and appropriating, instead of seeing, as in the leper's case, that the sprinkling of the blood was as independent and as divine as the shedding of it. It is not said, "The leper shall apply, appropriate, or realise, and then he shall be clean." By no means. The plan of

deliverance was divine; the provision of the sacrifice was divine; the shedding of the blood was divine; the sprinkling of the blood was divine; the record as to the result was divine; in short, it was all divine (Lev. xiv.).

It is not that we should undervalue realisation, or, to speak more correctly, communion, through the Holy Ghost, with all the precious results of Christ's work for us. Far from it. We shall see presently the place assigned thereto in the divine economy. But then we are no more saved by realisation than the leper was cleansed by it. The gospel by which we are saved is that "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv.).

There is nothing about realisation here. No doubt it is happy to realise. It is a very happy thing for one who was just on the point of being drowned to realise himself in a life-boat; but clearly he is saved by the boat, and not by his realisation. So it is with the sinner that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. He is saved by death and resurrection. Is it because he realises it? No; but because God says it. It is "according to the Scriptures." Christ died, and rose again; and, on that ground, God pronounces him clean.

This gives immense peace to the soul. I have to do with God's plain record, which nothing can ever shake. That record has reference to God's own work. It is He Himself who has wrought all that was needful in order to my being pronounced clean in His sight. My pardon no more depends upon my realisation than upon any "works of righteousness" that I have done; and it no more depends upon my "works of righteousness" than

it does upon my crimes (Titus iii. 5). In a word, it depends exclusively upon the death and resurrection of Christ. How do I know it? God tells me. It is "according to the Scriptures."

There are, perhaps, few things which disclose the deep-seated legality of our hearts more strikingly than this oft-raised question of realisation. We will have in something of self, and thus so sadly mar our peace and liberty in Christ. It is mainly because of this that I dwell at such length upon the beautiful ordinance of the cleansing of the leper, and especially on the truth unfolded in chapter xiv. 7. It was the priest that sprinkled the blood; and it was the priest that pronounced the leper clean.

Thus it is in the case of the sinner. The moment he is on his true ground, the blood of Christ and the word of God apply themselves without any further question or difficulty whatever. But the moment this harassing question of realisation is raised, the peace is disturbed, the heart depressed, and the mind bewildered. The more thoroughly I get done with self, and become occupied with Christ, as presented in "the Scriptures," the more settled my peace will be. If the leper had looked at himself when the priest pronounced him clean, would he have found any basis for the declaration? Surely not. The sprinkled blood was the basis of the divine record, and not anything in, or connected with, the leper. The leper was not asked how he felt, or what he thought. He was not questioned as to whether he had a deep sense of the vileness of his disease. He was an acknowledged leper; that was enough. It was for such a one that the blood was shed; and that blood made him clean.

How did he know this? Was it because he felt it? No; but because the priest, on God's behalf, and by His authority, told him so. The leper was pronounced clean on the very same ground that the living bird was let loose. The same blood which stained the feathers of that living bird was sprinkled upon the leper: This was a perfect settlement of the whole affair, and that, too, in a manner entirely independent of the leper, the leper's thoughts, his feelings, and his realisation.

Such is the type. And when we look from the type to the Antitype, we see that our blessed Lord Jesus Christ entered heaven, and laid on the throne of God the eternal record of an accomplished work, in virtue of which the believer also enters. This is a most glorious truth, divinely calculated to dispel from the heart of the anxious inquirer every doubt, every fear, every bewildering thought, and every harassing question. A risen Christ is God's exclusive object, and He sees every believer accepted in Him. May every awakened soul find abiding repose in this emancipating truth.

*"And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water that he may be clean; and after that he shall come into the camp and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days" (v. 8).*

The leper being pronounced clean can begin to do what he could not even have attempted to do before, namely, to cleanse himself, cleanse his habits, "shave off all his hair," and having done so he is privileged to take his place in the camp, the place of ostensible, recognised, public relationship with the God of Israel, whose presence in that camp it was which rendered the expulsion of the leper needful.

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# WORDS OF TRUTH

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"The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words:  
and that which was written was upright, even words  
of truth" (Eccles. xii. 10).

## The Queen of Sheba.

"**T**HE Queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them; for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here."—Luke xi. 31.

This "elect lady" stands in a line of loved and honoured women who now and again, from the beginning to the end, appear in the varied and wonderful action of the Book of God.

We shall find, in what is said of her, not only historic information, but both moral and typical instruction. And this is common in the inspired narratives; so that the soul is edified and the mind furnished from the same page.

As to her *country* or *kingdom*, I would just observe that we read of several Shebas. One was

grandson of Abraham by Keturah (Gen. xxv. 1-3) Another was of the family of Shem, being grandson of Eber. (Gen. x. 21-18. Another was great-grandson of Ham and nephew of Seba. (Gen. x. 7.)

The Sheba of which this history speaks must have been connected with the last of these, the descendant of Ham, because the Lord speaks of the Queen as being from "the south," and from "the utmost parts of the earth," while Keturah's family were sent to the *east*, and Shem's portion was more at *home* or *central*.

As to *herself*, we may presume that she had never heard the voice of a prophet, nor seen the oracles of God. She had no advantages (as we speak) from education, and was a perfect stranger to the God of Israel. Her soul had, therefore, but a slender stock to trade with. She had simply, in her own distant land, heard of Solomon, his acts and his wisdom. This was all she had, but with such small provision she was ready to take a long, untried journey.

There is something admirable in all this. The state of the soul itself was tested. It proved the love of wisdom to be in her heart; since a mere distant report about it so moves her. As the common saying is, "A word to the *wise* is sufficient." This is the admirable feature in her which the Lord notices. "A reproof entereth more into a *wise* man, than a hundred stripes into a *fool*." (Prov. xvii. 10.) It is the faculty within, the sense or taste of the soul, that is approved by this; and that is indeed the important thing after all. "Through *desire* a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom," while on the other hand "a fool hath no *delight* in understanding." (Prov. xviii. 1, 2.)

## THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

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Here are two different sources discovered to us by the Spirit ; and the first of these was that which rose in the breast of this Queen of Sheba. Her heart was right ; she had a " desire " towards wisdom, and, through that desire, could separate herself from her home and her kingdom to seek it at the distant feet of Solomon.

This is the admirable thing in her which drew forth the notice of the Lord.

The Pharisees had asked for a *sign*, the sure witness of a bad state of mind. The Lord " sighed deeply in His spirit " as He heard this, we read in another evangelist (Mark vii. 12) ; and also contrasted with such a mind the mind that was in this Queen of Sheba ; showing her to be one that was moved by a little to do a great deal ; just, of course, because her *heart* was in it ; while these Pharisees were starving in a land of plenty ; just, of course, because they had *no desire*. They were asking for signs in the very midst of the wonders of the hand of Christ. *She* took a long journey through a barren land, at the mere report of God's provisions in a distant country. With a true thirst of soul, she used what she had, though it was but little. They were reproaching the Lord, as though He had given them nothing, while they were in the thick of His bounties.

Here was the mighty moral distance between them. And the Lord notices it. That which was shining on *her* table was but a taper (according to the Lord's figure in this passage), but the eye of her body was so single, that it gave light enough for her. *Their* table was bright with a number of brilliant lamps ; but the eye of their body was evil, and they stumbled at noonday as in the night.

Here lay the difference. And on this all de-

pend, There is no straitness in God; no lack or indistinctness in the testimony. The candle is not under the bushel, but on a candlestick, and needs nothing in size or brilliancy. Even one raised from the dead could add nothing to Moses and the prophets. The "signs of the times" of Jesus are as clear as the ordinances of the heavens, as the morning and evening sky. But the question is: What is the state of our vision? Are we *willing* to do His will? Is the love of God in us, or the love of the honour of man? (John v. 7.) Is the eye single? Is the body full of light? If so, the *whole region around us* will be full of light also. Every saying of God, every doing of God, will be approved then. All in Jesus, and about Jesus, and from Jesus, will shine before us then. We shall justify wisdom in all her ways. The whole atmosphere which the Lord spreads will be resplendent; the path which faith takes will be lightsome. "The whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light." (Luke xi. 36.)

It was so with this honoured woman. She did not complain that her taper was small. It gave some light, and that she followed. She followed a distant report with a wistful, desirous heart, and she had neither time nor taste to complain that her journey was darksome. It was "full of light," under her "single eye."

This was the admiration of the Lord. Gracious Master! If we did but value His smile; if we did but prize our power and opportunity to refresh His spirit! This was the excellency of her spirit, by which, in the judgment, she condemns the evil-eyed Pharisees.

I might observe that the "men of Nineveh"



## THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

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exhibit a like excellent spirit, because *a few words* of reproof or of threatening from the prophet led them to repentance. (Jonah iii.) The *conscience* in them was sensitive, as the desire of wisdom was in "the Queen of the South." Both drew out the admiration of Christ. (Luke xi. 32.)

In this way our souls receive a very important lesson. We may desire for ourselves, though in a land of Goshen, and not in the utmost Sheba, that we may have like hearty value for everything of God. This is the most excellent condition. "To *love* what is good is better than the *knowing* much about it." Better to desire wisdom than to have gathered a large store of knowledge, or of information. Better to have the spiritual tastes and senses quick and vigorous, than great provision to feed them with.

We know this in human things. How many may be listening to the same music, or gazing on the same scenery, and yet how various the hidden emotion that is produced. The materials have been common to all who have formed the crowd of listeners or spectators. Yes; but the effects have been infinitely various, because the faculty of delight in each has been various, the senses have been of a finer or coarser mould (perhaps, too, in a thousand gradations), and in that lies the reason of all this diversity in the impulse or influence produced.

And so I am sure it is in the ways of the Spirit. The Lord can give the faculty within us an improved or a finer tone. And this is His excellent praise; we honour Him by this acknowledgment, that He has our spirits within His reach and that He can sweep the chords there, or quicken the senses there. That is His glorious power. He

can impart, it is true, further knowledge, and let in the brighter light of new mysteries; but is it not more blessed (may I ask?) when He gives new energy to the understanding itself, or a more delicate tone to the sensibilities of the spiritual mind?

That is, indeed, I believe, the brightest, dearest hour of the soul. And how constantly may this be seen! How constantly do we find that many, who *know* less, have more fervency! And why? Because, as I have been saying, the faculty within, the spiritual powers of the saint, have been retouched, as it were, by the finger of God.

Mary Magdalene, for instance, had but small materials. Her knowledge was not only narrow, but clouded. She ignorantly sought the sepulchre with her spices. But her heart was alive. The faculty, or sensibilities, had been awakened, and her fervent spirit expresses itself in strong, though irregular, action.

There was no great entrance of light into the minds of the thousands who were joined to the Church in the day of Pentecost; but there was a fresh visitation to the soul itself. They received the Holy Ghost. And what gladness and what singleness of heart; what victory over the world; and what conscious possession of a kingdom within, is seen in them!

Sure I am that our *real* power more depends on the state of the faculty itself, than on the provisions for its exercise; on the "eye" being "unclouded," than on the extent of the field of vision. It is hearts we want, and then we shall feel the captivating power of Christ. For there is plenty of that in Him, if we could but get in contact with it.

But there is the mischief. The light that is in us is clouded. Many an attraction finds its way to our minds, which would not dare to show itself there if Jesus were enthroned already; if our sight of Him had been so vivid as to leave His loved and worshipped image there continually.

It is so; and may our hearts increasingly experience it. And this lesson and these encouragements we gather from the history before us. This *moral* of it, as we have seen, was drawn forth by the mind of Christ, and recorded in the Gospels (Matt. xii. ; Luke xi.) And there is a fitness in that. The *moral* of a story is always the *deepest* part of it. There may be these three things in this story :

1st.—The *event*, or historic circumstances.

2nd.—The *type*.

3rd.—The *moral*.

The *moral* lies the most within; and it was the glory of the mind of Christ to draw it forth.

The story is originally given to us in 1 Kings x., and in 2 Chronicles ix. The Queen of the South appears at the beginning of it in the character which the Lord Jesus, as we have seen, so beautifully and profitably noticed, She trafficked for *wisdom*, and the Lord's anointed king in Jerusalem was her merchant. With him, and for it, she bartered gold and spice, and precious stones. So true a disciple of that word was she, in the spirit of her mind (though she knew nothing of it in the Book of God), that "the merchandise" of wisdom is "better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold." (Prov. iii. 14.) And the Lord will not be her debtor. He gives her far more than she had bargained for. Solomon, His ser-

vant and prophet, does more than answer her questions; he gives her such a sight of his magnificence that she is "satiated with fatness." "There was left no more spirit in her"; and "blessed" was she that hungered and thirsted, for she was filled. (Matt. v. 6.) And "blessed" surely it ever is when our hunger and thirst are of that fine and heavenly quality that we can bring them into God's presence; when they are such as bear their own necessary witness with them, that none can answer them but the Lord Himself, His storehouse and fountains.

This was a sister and a co-heir of Solomon. Solomon had desired wisdom, and with it he had inherited all things. The Queen of Sheba had desired wisdom, and in like manner with it was given all things. *They must have understood one another.* She came from amid the dark and distant Gentiles, children of Ham; he had been reared in the city of solemnities, in the Goshen of wisdom, and knowledge, and truth; but the spirit in each was the same, and natural distances and human diversities are thoroughly lost in the commanding light and energy of the Spirit who knit them with one mind together.

Precious and interesting is the moral of all this simple and unvarnished tale of other days; other, it is true, as to time and place, but the same with our own in the grace and power of the same Spirit. It was the *moral* of it which at this time chiefly attracted me. But I would just add, that in this distinguished Gentile we have a sample or type of the nations by and by. For as she, in the days of Solomon, the son of David (which were the days of the typical glory), went up to Jerusalem, seeking for the wisdom that was in the

anointed of the Lord, so in the age of the real glory, the millennial age of the true Solomon, the nations will wait in the *same* city with the same desire and purpose of heart. They will say one to another, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in *His paths*." (Micah iv. 2.)

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## Papers on Worship. No. 12.

THE apostle Paul, then, was a minister of the gospel to every creature under heaven, and also a minister of Christ's body, the Church, on earth. (Col. i. 23-25.) But it was not by the intervention of his ministry that any worshipper worshipped.

The disciples needed his instruction and guidance, and were to know that he had authority; but they were enabled to *worship* as well in the absence as in the presence of the apostle. He might have led their worship, or he might have followed others in it. His office was lost, so to speak, when they stood together in the attitude of worshippers before the Great High Priest: he might have prayed with the disciples (as Acts xx. 36), or they with him (as Acts xxi. 5).

It is indeed most important clearly to distinguish between diversities of ministry and the common standing of all regenerate persons as priests unto God. Paul and Barnabas were set

apart for a distinct ministry to the Gentiles; but this was not setting them apart as ministers of the sanctuary. (Acts xiii.)

They could be ministers of the sanctuary in no other sense than that in which all saints minister there. If they presume to more than this, they must deny either the proper standing of the saints of God, or the place belonging to the Son of God alone. For in the sense of being "*ordained for men in things pertaining to God,*" Jesus is the ONLY minister of the sanctuary. It is therefore no light matter to set up such a pretension as that which an ordered priesthood certainly does. It interferes with the prerogative of Jesus. It is a fearful instance, therefore, of human presumption or ignorance.

The sanctuary in which Jesus ministers is not on earth, as that was in which Aaron ministered, but in "*heaven itself.*" Even there He is pre-eminent, "*anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows.*" But through Him all the redeemed saints of God worship there as equal one with another.

It is nevertheless true that God has now a ministry on earth, as well as a ministry in heaven. But these ministries differ essentially. The ministry on earth goes forth from God to bring sinners to Himself, upon the ground of His manifested love in the gift and sacrifice of His Son. The ministry of the sanctuary is a ministry on behalf of those already brought nigh unto God by the blood of Jesus.

In the former there is nothing positively priestly. The minister of the gospel does nothing *for the sinner*. He proclaims what *the Son of God has done*; what *God* has wrought, and what

*God* declares. "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord." (2 Cor. iv. 5.)

On the other hand, the minister of the sanctuary is actually occupied with doing something *for the worshipper*; for those who have come to God through Jesus, and who have free access into the holiest of all. The minister of the gospel has to tell sinners of the work of sacrifice; a work done on earth; a finished work, never to be repeated: but the work of the priest is continuous; it is a work on behalf of believers alone; a work for the true worshippers, and which they still need.

To confound these ministries is sad confusion indeed. To make the ministry of the gospel priestly in its character is to deceive sinners into the thought that they are worshippers; and it is at the same time entirely to obscure the blessed ministry of reconciliation.

Nor is that error less dangerous which has confounded the ministry of the Spirit, by gift in the Church, with the true service of the one "Minister of the sanctuary," Christ. It is an awful invasion of His office to suppose that any in the Church are *peculiarly* priests.

Now if this great truth has been sufficiently cleared, that there may be many ministers of the gospel, and many specially gifted to minister in the Church, but only one "Minister of the sanctuary," it remains for us to consider the Lord Jesus in this office. And there are three points on which I would rest.

1st. The Minister Himself.

2nd. The place of His ministry.

3rd. The character of His service, and our special interest in it.

I. "We have *such* an High Priest." (Heb. viii. 1.) The person of our Great High Priest, and the connection between His person and His office, having been already dwelt on in a previous paper, I would now say that this language is boasting in its character. And it is rightly so; for we may "glory" in the Lord. It is right to challenge any comparison with Him; and to leave who will to draw the conclusion.

But this is not all that is said of Him here. It is added, "Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." It has been noticed already that the attitude of sitting down, contrasted with the standing of Aaron, shows that the One has completed the work of sacrifice, which the other never did. But there is also to be noticed the place in which He is seated: "On the *right hand* of the *throne* of the *Majesty* in the *heavens*."

How every expression of honour and dignity seems to be collected together there! What an exalted seat is this! There our High Priest is seated! And this other blessed truth is to be noticed: He has taken His seat there at the call of God. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." (Ps. cx. 1.)

Aaron was called of God, but he was never called upon to sit down even in the worldly sanctuary. He was never even, as Moses, spoken with face to face by God. Nor, as Moses, was he up in the Mount with God in the glory. He was below with the people.

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## **Typical Exercises of Priesthood.**

### **No. VII.**

**T**HE blood having been applied in its expiating virtue, there is the washing of water, which expresses the action of the word of God on the character, the habits, the ways, so as to render the person, not only in God's view, but also in the view of the congregation, morally and practically fit for a place in the public assembly.

But, be it observed, the man, though sprinkled with blood, and washed with water, and thus entitled to a position in the public assembly, was not permitted to enter upon the full enjoyment of those private, personal privileges which belonged to his own peculiar place in the camp. In other words, though knowing redemption through the shed and sprinkled blood, and owning the word of God as a rule according to which his person and all his habits should be cleansed and regulated, he had yet to be brought, in the power of the Spirit, into full, intelligent communion with his own special place, portion and privileges in Christ.

I speak according to the doctrine of the type, and I feel it to be of importance to apprehend the truth unfolded therein. It is too often overlooked. There are many who own the blood of Christ as the sole ground of pardon, and the word of God as that whereby alone their habits, ways, and associations are to be cleansed and ordered, who nevertheless are far from entering, by the power of the Holy Ghost, into communion with the preciousness and excellency of that One whose blood has put away their sins, and whose word is to cleanse their practical habits. They are in the

place of ostensible and actual relationship, but they are not in the power of personal communion.

It is perfectly true that all believers are "in Christ," and as such entitled to communion with the very highest truths. Moreover, they have the Holy Ghost as the power of communion. All this is divinely true, but then there is not that entire setting aside of all that pertains to nature, which is really essential to the power of communion with Christ in all the aspects of His character and work. In point of fact, this latter will not be fully known to any until "the eighth day," the day of resurrection glory, when we shall know even as we are known. Then, indeed, each one for himself, and all together, shall enter into the full, unhindered power of communion with Christ in all the precious aspects of His Person, and features of His character unfolded from verse 10 to verse 20 of our chapter (Lev. xiv.). Such is the hope set before us; but even now, in proportion as we enter, by faith and through the mighty energy of the indwelling Spirit, into the death of nature and all pertaining thereto, we can feed upon and rejoice in *Christ* as the Portion of our souls, in the place of individual communion.

"But it shall be on the seventh day that he shall shave all his hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shall shave off; and he shall wash his clothes, also he shall wash his flesh in water, and he shall be clean" (v. 9).

Now it is clear that the leper was just as clean in God's judgment on the first day, when the blood was sprinkled upon him in its sevenfold or perfect efficacy, as he was on the seventh day. Wherein, then, was the difference? Not in his actual standing and condition, but in his personal intelligence

and communion. On the seventh day he was called to enter into the full and complete abolition of all that pertained to nature. He was called to apprehend that, not merely was nature's leprosy to be put away, but nature's ornaments; yea, all that was natural, all that belonged to the old condition.

It is one thing to know as a doctrine that God sees my nature to be dead, and it is quite another thing for me to "reckon" myself as dead, to put off, practically, the old man and his deeds, to mortify my members which are on earth. This probably is what many godly persons mean when they speak of progressive sanctification. They mean a right thing, though they do not put it exactly as the Scriptures do. The leper was pronounced clean the moment the blood was sprinkled upon him, and yet he had to cleanse himself. How was this? In the former case he was clean in the judgment of God; in the latter he was to be clean practically in his own personal intelligence and in his manifested character. Thus it is with the believer. He is, as one with Christ, "washed, sanctified and justified"; "accepted"; "complete" (1 Cor. vi. 11; Eph. i. 6; Col. ii. 10). Such is his unalterable standing and condition before God. He is as perfectly sanctified as he is justified, for Christ is the measure of both the one and the other, according to God's judgment and view of the case.

But the believer's apprehension of all this in his own soul, and his exhibition thereof in his habits and ways, open up quite another line of things. Hence it is we read, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit,

perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Cor. vii. 1.) It is because Christ has cleansed us by His precious blood that we are called to “cleanse ourselves” by the application of the word of God, through the power of His Spirit.

Accordingly it is written : “This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood : and these three agree in one.” (1 John v. 6-8.) In this scripture we have atonement by the blood, cleansing by the word, and power by the Spirit, all founded upon the death of Christ, and all vividly foreshadowed in the ordinances connected with the cleansing of the leper.

“And on the eighth day he shall take two he lambs without blemish, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, and three tenth deals of fine flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil. And the priest that maketh him clean shall present the man that is to be made clean, and those things, before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And the priest shall take one he lamb, and offer him for a trespass offering, and the log of oil, and wave them for a wave offering before the Lord.” (vv. 10-12.)

The entire range of offerings is here introduced ; but it is the trespass offering which is first killed, inasmuch as the leper is viewed as an actual trespasser. This is true in every case. As those who have committed trespasses against God we need Christ as the One who atoned on the cross for these trespasses.

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# WORDS OF TRUTH

"The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words:  
and that which was written was upright, even words  
of truth" (Eccles. xii. 10).

## Typical Exercises of Priesthood. No. VIII.

"HIMSELF bare our sins in His own body on the tree." (1 Pet. ii. 24.) The first view which the sinner gets of Christ is as the Antitype of the trespass offering.

"And the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot." (v. 14.)

"The ear," that guilty member which had so frequently proved a channel of communication for vanity, folly, and even uncleanness, that ear must be cleansed by the blood of the trespass offering. Thus all the guilt which I have ever contracted by that member is forgiven, according to God's estimate of the blood of Christ.

"The right hand" which had so frequently been

stretched forth for the execution of deeds of vanity, folly, and even uncleanness, must be cleansed by the blood of the trespass offering. Thus all the guilt which I have ever contracted by that member is forgiven according to God's estimate of the blood of Christ.

"The foot," which had so often run in the way of vanity, folly, and even uncleanness, must now be cleansed by the blood of the trespass offering, so that all the guilt which I have ever contracted by that member is forgiven, according to God's estimate of the blood of Christ.

Yes; all, all, all is forgiven; all is cancelled; all forgotten; all sunk as lead in the mighty waters of eternal oblivion. Who shall bring it up again? Shall angel, man or devil be able to plunge into those unfathomed and unfathomable waters, to bring up from thence those trespasses of "foot, hand," or "ear," which redeeming love has cast there-into? Oh! no; blessed be God, they are gone, and gone for ever. I am better off by far than if Adam had never sinned. Precious truth! To be washed in the blood of Christ is better by far than to be clothed in innocence. But God could not rest satisfied with the mere blotting out of trespasses by the atoning blood of Jesus. This in itself is a great thing; but there is something greater still.

"And the priest shall take some of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand; and the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand and shall sprinkle of the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord. And of the rest of the oil that is in his hand shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right

## TYPICAL EXERCISES OF PRIESTHOOD.

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hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass offering ; and the remnant of the oil that is in the priest's hand he shall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleansed, and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord." (vv. 15-18.)

Thus not only are our members cleansed by the blood of Christ, but also consecrated to God in the power of the Spirit. God's work is not only negative, but positive. The ear is no longer to be the vehicle for communicating defilement, but to be " swift to hear " the voice of the Good Shepherd. The hand is no longer to be used as the instrument of unrighteousness, but to be stretched forth in acts of righteousness, grace and true holiness. The foot is no longer to tread in folly's paths, but to run in the way of God's holy commandments, and, finally, the whole man is to be dedicated to God in the energy of the Holy Spirit. It is deeply interesting to see that " the oil " was put " upon the blood of the trespass offering." The blood of Christ is the divine basis of the operation of the Holy Spirit. The blood and the oil go together. As sinners we could know nothing of the latter except on the ground of the former. The oil could not have been put upon the leper until the blood of the trespass offering had first been applied. And so of the Christian the Apostle wrote, " In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." (Eph. i. 13.)

The divine accuracy of the type evokes the admiration of the renewed mind. The more closely we scrutinize it, the more of the light of Scripture we concentrate upon it, the more its beauty, force and precision are perceived and enjoyed. As might

justly be expected, all is in the most lovely harmony with the entire analogy of the word of God. There is no need for any effort of the mind. Take Christ as the key to unlock the rich treasury of the types; explore the precious contents by the light of inspiration's heavenly lamp; let the Holy Spirit be your interpreter; and you cannot fail to be edified, enlightened and blessed.

“And the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed from his uncleanness.” (Lev. xiv. 19.)

Here we have a type of Christ, not only as the Bearer of our trespasses, but also as the One who made an end of sin, root and branch; the One who destroyed the entire system of sin; “the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.” (John i. 29.) “The propitiation for the whole world.” (1 John ii. 2.)

As the trespass offering, Christ put away all my trespasses. As the sin-offering, He met the great root whence those trespasses emanated. He met all; but it is as the trespass offering I first know Him, because it is as such I first need Him. It is the “conscience of sins” that first troubles me. This is divinely met by my precious Trespass Offering. Then, as I go on, I find that all these sins had a root, a parent stem; and that root or stem I find within me. This, likewise, is divinely met by my precious Sin Offering. The order, as presented in the leper's case, is perfect. It is precisely the order which we can trace in the actual experience of every soul. The trespass offering comes first, and then the sin offering.

“And afterward he shall kill the burnt offering.” (v. 19.)



## TYPICAL EXERCISES OF PRIESTHOOD.

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This offering presents the highest possible aspect of the death of Christ. It is Christ offering Himself without spot to God, without special reference to either trespasses or sin. It is Christ in voluntary devotedness, walking to the cross, and there offering Himself as a sweet savour to God. (Eph. v. 2.)

“And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the meat offering upon the altar; and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and he shall be clean.” (v. 20.)

The meat offering typifies “the Man Christ Jesus” in His perfect human life. It is intimately associated, in the case of the cleansed leper, with the burnt offering; and so it is in the experience of every saved sinner. It is when we know our trespasses are forgiven, and the root or principle of sin judged, that we can, according to our measure, by the power of the Spirit, enjoy communion with God about that blessed One who lived a perfect human life down here, and then offered Himself without spot to God on the cross. (Heb. ix. 14.)

Thus in the cleansing of the leper the four classes of offerings are brought before us in their divine order, namely, the trespass offering, the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the meat offering, each exhibiting its own specific aspect of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

Here closes the record of the Lord’s dealings with the leprous man and oh! what a marvellous record it is! What an unfolding of the exceeding hatefulness of sin, the grace and holiness of God, the preciousness of Christ’s person, and the efficacy of His work! Nothing can be more interesting than to mark the footprints of divine

grace forth from the hallowed precincts of the sanctuary to the defiled place where the leper stood, with bare head, covered lip, and rent garments.

God visited the leper where he was; but He did not leave him there. He went forth prepared to accomplish a work in virtue of which He could bring the leper into a higher place and higher communion than ever he had known before. On the ground of this work the leper was conducted from his place of defilement and loneliness to the very door of the tabernacle of the congregation, the priestly place, to enjoy priestly privileges. (Exod. xxix. 20, 21, 32.)

How could he ever have climbed to such an elevation? Impossible! For aught he could do he might have languished and died in his leprosy, had not the sovereign grace of the God of Israel stooped to lift him from the dunghill, and set him among the princes of His people. If ever there was a case in which the question of human effort, human merit, and human righteousness could be fully tried and perfectly settled, the leper is unquestionably that case. Indeed, it were a sad loss of time to discuss such a question in the presence of such a case. It must be obvious to the most cursory reader that naught but free grace, reigning through righteousness, could meet the leper's condition and the leper's need.

And how gloriously and triumphantly did that grace act! It travelled down into the deepest depths, that it might raise the leper to the loftiest heights. See what the leper lost, and see what he gained! He lost all that pertained to nature, and he gained the blood of atonement and the grace of the Spirit. I mean typically. Truly he

## TYPICAL EXERCISES OF PRIESTHOOD.

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was a gainer to an incalculable amount. He was infinitely better off than if he had never been thrust forth from the camp. Such is the grace of God. Such the power and value, the virtue and efficacy of the blood of Jesus.

How forcibly does all this remind us of the prodigal in Luke xv. ! In him, too, leprosy had wrought and risen to a head. He had been afar off in the defiled place, where his own sins and the intense selfishness of the far country had created a solitude around him. But, blessed for ever be a Father's deep and tender love, we know how it ended. The prodigal found a higher place, and tasted higher communion than ever he had known before. "The fatted calf" had never been slain for him before. "The best robe" had never been on him before. And how was this? Was it a question of the prodigal's merit? Oh, no; it was simply a question of the Father's love.

Dear reader, let me ask : Can you ponder over the record of God's dealings with the leper in Leviticus xiv., or the Father's dealings with the prodigal in Luke xv., and not have an enlarged sense of the love that dwells in the bosom of God, that flows through the Person and work of Christ, that is recorded in the Scriptures of Truth, and brought home to the heart by the Holy Ghost? The Lord grant us a deeper and more abiding fellowship with Himself !

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• "While all things change, He changes not;  
He ne'er forgets, though oft forgot;  
His love's unchangeably the same,  
And as enduring as His name."

## Papers on Worship. No. 13.

**B**UT what a value was stamped by God on the sacrificial work of Christ when He was thus called of Him. (Ps. cx. 1.) The exaltation of Jesus to the seat on which He now sits proves most abundantly the value of the blood He has shed. How precious that blood must be to God! How perfect its efficacy in His sight! Let us often meditate on the dignity of our High Priest, as shown not only by His person, but also by the seat unto which He has been called of God; remembering that He has taken that seat in consequence of His having "by Himself purged our sins." (Heb. i. 3.)

The word here rendered "minister" is not the word ordinarily applied to the ministry of the gospel. The apostle Paul does indeed once apply it to himself: "*The minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.*" (Rom. xv. 16.) But in that instance the apostle is not speaking of *ordinary* gospel ministry, but of his own special ministry as the apostle of the uncircumcision.

This instance, therefore, only serves to mark the peculiar force of the term. It properly means one who sustains some distinct and onerous office for the public good; and in some instances at his own cost; such, for example, as the sheriff among ourselves.

The word has been transferred to our language in *liturgy*; the public service of God. It might therefore be rendered: "As soon as the days of his ministration [liturgy] were accomplished." (Luke i. 23.) Zacharias, as a priest, performed divine service for the people. So it is said of the Lord a little below in this eighth chapter:

“ But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry ” [liturgy]; more excellent than that of Zacharias or the Jewish priests. *He alone performs divine service for others.* He does this as the great public minister of the Church in heaven.

Any number among the saints might minister and fast before the Lord on earth (Acts xiii.), but they did not stand in such a relation to God as is involved in performing a service for others which they could not undertake. No saint stands towards God in such a relation to any other saint. If any assume it, they in this assume the exclusive prerogative of the Son of God.

I believe that our souls are little aware of the deadening effect of looking to any set of men to perform public service for us to God. It must necessarily take away the soul from immediate dependence on the great public Minister, and His divine service in heaven. It is not that every one is qualified to lead the public worship of the saints, any more than that every one is qualified to teach the saints, or to preach the gospel; but there are none who stand in the same relation to the Church that Zacharias did to the Jews. (Luke i.) None who are called to perform service for them, so that if such a person be wanting, the saints could not worship. Let the saints ever remember this, and guard against any intrusion on that office solely belonging to the Great High Priest. Divine service is now performed in heaven by the one Great High Priest, and He is jealous of the intrusion of any into this His office; as He was when Korah and his company intruded into the office of those whom He once ordained to perform divine service on the earth. (Num. xvi.)

Divine service, then, is only performed *for us* in heaven. We may, that is, all Christians may, perform it on earth before the Lord, as did they of Antioch. (Acts xiii.) I do not at all doubt the antiquity of liturgies, or raise any question as to their spirituality. But this I may safely affirm: that not a vestige is there found in the New Testament of an ordered ritual; and that a liturgy could have had no place in the Church, till, by going back to the pattern of an earthly priesthood, it had lost the sense of the One who performs divine service in heaven; and how all the systems with which we now see liturgies connected show that such declension there has been.

That such was the tendency even in the apostles' days, the Epistle to the Hebrews abundantly proves. That some had drawn back, and neglected the assembling of themselves together, is distinctly stated. And as the Spirit of God in this epistle expressly meets such a condition of things, this epistle becomes of peculiar value to the saints in days like the present, when Satan is so plainly working in the same way.

Remember, it is no question between the comparative advantage of one ritual above another; or whether there may not be evangelical truth and spiritual breathing in a liturgy. It is a much more solemn question. It is a question concerning the assumption by men of an office belonging to the Son of God alone. Korah and his company might have intended to adhere ever so strictly to the directions for priestly service. But that was not the question. It was one of personal intrusion into an office unto which God had not called them. Indeed, they perished with censers and incense in their hands. The controversy of God was with

*them.* And just so is it of all false assumption of office in the Church. It is not a question of what may or may not be done in the office; it is the intrusion into it which is so fearful a sin. For is not reproach thus cast upon the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven? Is He not trodden under foot, if the thought is allowed of the necessity of any one person, or any order of persons, to perform divine service *for us* on earth?

“WE HAVE”—blessed be His name!—“a Minister of the sanctuary” always performing divine service for us above. Be it our soul’s joy to know it more and more.

II. We must now glance at the place of His ministry; His “more excellent ministry.” “A Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” (Heb. viii. 2.)

Moses was indeed faithful; he did everything “as the Lord commanded Moses,” to the most minute detail. (Exod. xl. 16.) Everything was made according to the direction of God; all the vessels of ministry were arranged in the order prescribed. “And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.” (Exod. xl. 33-35.) This was the tabernacle which *man* had pitched; beautiful indeed, and glorious, yet not “*the true*” tabernacle; it was only the shadow of that. And now the shadow is past; as it is said, “A shadow

of things to come; but the body is of Christ." (Col. ii. 17.) But still, do not our minds linger around the earthly shadows, and become occupied with the things "made with hands," instead of those which are "not made with hands?"

In "the true tabernacle" there is no human instrumentality whatever; all is of God. The furniture and the vessels, all so curiously wrought, are now only to be found in the various graces and several offices of the Lord Jesus Christ, for "the body is of Christ." And all these are now displayed and exercised in heaven for us. He can stand in the immediate presence of God, there presenting for us His own fulness of excellency. Moses, the servant, could not bear the glory conferred on the tabernacle he had pitched; he was much inferior to that which his own hands had reared; but Christ as a Son is over His own house, and is Himself its furniture and its glory.

What a solemn lesson are we taught here concerning earthly and human things! Human instrumentality, that which is "made with hands," "of this building" (creation), whether in respect to place, persons, or things, ever fails, and is all disowned of God. Nothing will stand but that which is "made without hands," that is, of God. Men may think they honour God by rearing magnificent buildings, and dignifying them with the name of temple, or house of God; but they cannot be "the true," because man and not God has founded them. Their device and their order all show them to be of the earth. It is well, indeed, if the very appearance of our worship here testifies that it is not of the worldly order and pattern. And this will be so the more we realise that the



place of worship is now changed from earth to heaven. There it is that the Minister of the sanctuary exercises His most blessed office. The Lord Jesus Christ exercised no such ministry on earth; "For if He were on earth, He should not be a priest"; and, therefore, our place of worship must be heaven, because there are no accredited priests of God on earth to offer gifts or to perform divine service. (v. 4.)

III. And now briefly as to the ministry itself. For the Lord Jesus Christ ministers to God in the priest's office; ministering *for us* in it: "*We have such an High Priest.*"

The ministry of Aaron before God was in one of its parts representative. He bore the names of the children of Israel on his shoulders and on his heart *when he went* into the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually. (Exod. xxviii. 29.)

This blessed ministry the Lord Jesus sustains for us. But not *occasionally*, as Aaron when he went in, but *constantly*. He appears in the presence of God for us. He ever presents the saints before God as associated with all His own fulness of excellency and glory. And this in "the presence of God" within the veil, as it is said: "Whither the Forerunner is for us entered." And again: "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, *now to appear in the presence of God for us.*" (Heb. ix. 24.) How blessed is this; our names written in heaven, not in precious stones, but as a seal upon His heart, and as a seal upon His arm. (Song of Sol. viii. 6.) In manifesting His own perfectness and glory in the presence of God,

Jesus appears for us! The real identification of the Church with Christ was but faintly shadowed by the garments of glory and beauty worn by Aaron. (Exod. xxviii. 2.)

Then there was also the ministry of incense. This was a most precious ministry, because it was the medium of the worship of the people. But the offering of incense, all variously compounded as it was, was only occasional, and it might be interrupted. The fragrance of it was not perpetually before God.

When the plague had begun among the people, when destructive judgment had come forth, Moses bid Aaron take "a censer and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense." All this had *to be* done before Aaron could run into the congregation, and stand between the dead and the living. "Behold, the plague was begun among the people; and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people . . . and the plague was stayed." (Num. xvi. 47, 48.) But now the ministry of incense is perpetual: "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." (Heb. vii. 25.) Hence He is able to save right through, from the beginning to the end. Because of this no plague of destructive judgment can come forth against the Church. It is constantly upheld in perfectness by the power of the intercession of Jesus. It is this which ever keeps it in its right place before God, however infirm or erring here.

The blessedness of the ministry of Him who ministers for us in the true tabernacle is that it is entirely independent of us. It is *by* Him *for* us. Our conscious enjoyment of it will depend indeed on our walk, on our humbleness, on our self-

judgment, on many things; but the ministry itself depends alone on our unfailing High Priest. He is a faithful minister, ever performing His functions in a manner well-pleasing to God; whether our souls are realising the value of what He is doing or not. Every saint, even in his most thoughtless mood, is upheld by the intercession of Jesus.

Priesthood is part of the work of *grace*, grace that provides for the putting away our every sin, and aiding our every infirmity, and bearing our every waywardness, in order that we may never be out of the presence of God. Hence, the moment the conscience of a careless saint is re-awakened, he may find full and instant access to God, because, though he has failed, the minister of the sanctuary has not. Long before he is alive to his failure, he is debtor to the ministry of Jesus for having been kept from falling.

Little did Simon think of the sifting power of Satan, but the Lord, who had prayed that his faith might not fail, could point out to him his danger. (Luke xxii. 31, 32.) And so with us oftentimes. We see our failures, or the might and craft of our enemies, and then how precious is the thought that the intercession of Jesus for us has been over all! We are led to value the intercession of Jesus, *after* failure or danger is discovered, as surely Peter was; but its real value is that it is perpetually offered and perpetually prevalent.

However we may fail, therefore, the resources of faith can never fail; for faith reaches out to God, and to God's provisions of grace in Jesus, over every failure. If there be one anguish of soul deeper than another, it surely must be for a

saint to become conscious of sin, but to be without faith to look to God's gracious provision to meet it. But Jesus prays that our faith may not fail.

We are apt to regard the intercession of Christ as only occasionally exercised on our behalf, and exercised because we have applied to it; yea, we know that men have gone so far as to make it appear that the intercession of Jesus was only to be called out by a secondary intercession of others, such as the Virgin, or departed saints, or the Church.

But how false is all this! No; His ministry is marked by the same grace now as when on earth. "I *have* prayed for thee" was His word to Simon Peter. And so when He saw the multitudes fainting He well knew what He would do, and do without being asked. And so now, His intercession is of the same grace; it is according to His own divine and gracious estimate of our many needs. He knows how, in our practical danger, weakness, and foolishness, we look in the sight of God, and He ever makes intercession for us accordingly; maintaining us thus in His own fragrant perfectness. In the challenge of the apostle as to where a charge can be brought against God's elect, he winds up all with this, as though he could go no higher; "Who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh *intercession for us.*" (Rom. viii. 34.)

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"He guards them in a barren land,  
Beset with sins, and fears, and woes;  
He leads and guides them by His hand,  
And keeps them safe from all their foes."

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# WORDS OF TRUTH

“The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words;  
and that which was written was upright even words  
of truth” (Eccles. xii. 10).

## A Little Book with a Great Lesson.

I BELIEVE that the Song of Solomon is the experience of the Jewish remnant at the latter day in a certain stage of their progress in the knowledge of their coming Lord; and thus it may surely be, and is, the experience of a living soul now in the same stage.

Not that I would dare to intimate by this that the soul must necessarily follow one path of experience, and go from one certain stage therein to another, but according to the soul's enlarging knowledge of Jesus, so will, of course, be its enlarging experience, and that there ought to be progress, as we read: “Grow in grace.” (2 Pet. iii. 18.) As the varied relations in which the Lord stands to us are apprehended and embraced by the soul, corresponding experience will arise; and I would here refer to the scriptural illustrations

of what I mean as connected with the Song of Solomon.

REBECCA. She was quickened by the word of Abraham's servant while still in her father's land, and by that quickening was willing to go with the stranger across the desert. She knew but little then of Isaac, his father, his inheritance, or any of his history; but she had been quickened, and was made ready to move away from her old associations at the first report of the messenger. Her experience was according to this simple quickening of the soul.

But as she journeyed homeward, both she and the servant were alone. There was nothing of the restraint of Laban's presence, nor of the whole scene in Mesopotamia, but it was a desert where her guide could speak to her without distraction. She had then risen up from Mesopotamia, and left it, and according to all this he had her ear all to himself, and he feeds her with knowledge of Isaac beyond all that he could have told her in Mesopotamia, amid the interruptions of Laban's house. And through this enlarged knowledge of Isaac her desire would rise, her experience would be formed, the exercises and thoughts of her heart would grow exceedingly.

And all this prepares her, so that on seeing him she *veils herself* and joins him. And then to crown and close all her knowledge of him, and the experience of her soul about his love, she goes with him into the tent. Thus she knew him, not by report as in the journey, but her eye and her ear are satisfied with *him*.

RUTH. This stranger had been also quickened in a distant land. The Lord awakens her soul to kindly purposes towards Naomi, and holy con-

fidence in Naomi's God, and she is ready to join herself with her. She has a sense of this, that Naomi's God may be trusted, and this separates her from Moab and their gods.

Thus she goes to Israel, and there becomes a gleaner in the fields of the rich one. She receives kindnesses from him. She has to toil for her daily bread, but it is made sure to her, though she is still kept in lowly, unenvied condition. All her experience is according to this.

But Naomi's soul is moved to higher thoughts of Boaz, and in due season she remembers the kindnesses between them. She takes knowledge that Boaz is hers by closer bonds; and, through her instructions, Ruth is not always to be a gleaner, but is to change her place, and leave the field for the uncovered feet of Boaz.

Then the experience of Ruth's soul would be very different. He was her gracious benefactor before, but now she seeks him for husband, and thus her thoughts about him must be indeed changed. So at last he becomes her husband, and the fields in which she had once gleaned as the poor stranger become hers, as the companion and bride of the lord of them all; and then, like her sister Rebecca, she must have had her experience advanced beyond all before.

We have thus beautiful illustrations of the soul in its advance in the knowledge of the Lord, and consequent experience. One stage differs much from another in character, but all are parts of the training of the saints.

Now the Song of Solomon I judge to be the experiences and utterances of the soul in one point of the journey from the first quickening to the full and final enjoyment. It is not the experience of

Rebecca, when first awakened to leave Mesopotamia; nor of Ruth, when first made ready in Moab to take the God of Naomi as her God. But it gives us the exercises of Rebecca's heart on the way to Isaac, listening to the tale of her gracious and wise instructor; and of Ruth, not in the fields, not as the gleaner, but at the feet of the suitor.

This I judge to be the general moral of the Song, if I may say so. I can the more admire the perfectness of the Spirit in His ways in making a short book; it is of too intimate and holy a character to be much spread out. It lies within; it is the recesses of the temple. Indeed, it was called by the Jews the Holy of Holies, and that was the smallest as well as most retired part. It expresses the deepest character of communion with God.

There was communion at the brazen altar, or at the brazen laver in the courts; another communion in the holy place, at the table, the candlestick, and the golden altar; and another in presence of the Lord Himself, more immediately in the Holiest; and this highest or deepest character of communion is what the Song expresses.

It may be that the soul cannot at all times enter into it. Ruth would not have been prepared to lay herself at the feet of Boaz when she entered his fields as a gleaner. The teaching and discipline of Naomi were needed to bring her into such communion with him as that which she had with him on the threshing-floor, and this little book seems to open with the soul expressing all this. It opens with strong and fervent desire towards Himself, reaching forth to apprehend Him in some more intimate manner than had been previously so understood. It is as if the saint had



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been conscious of being in a lower order of communion than that which would now satisfy.

She had been keeping the vineyards, been attending to other and more active services, but now was learning that her own vineyard had been neglected, and the deeper things of personal fellowship are now longed for. The soul is here leaving Martha's place, and taking Mary's. She here longed to feed under His own hand and eye, and not another's, and this at once awakes His desire. This is what He waited for in her, so to speak. It is she who opens this communion, begins this song; but He becomes at once responsive, and she confesses that His hand had secretly drawn her into it, though she apparently begins singing, "The King hath brought me into His chambers." (ii. 4.)

But He at once enters with her, and answers her desires after Him with equal desires after her; and He becomes the guardian of this holiest communion, charging the daughters of Jerusalem (saints, who, like Ruth, were not standing in this nearness to Christ) not to disturb His love while she is in it. The communion itself was as sensitive as the roes and the hinds who would be stirred up by the smallest noise or motion. The little foxes spoil the vines, at least such vines as these, having tender grapes. (ii. 15.)

Though all this condition of soul is blessed, and this fellowship is known to be something far beyond what was previously enjoyed when she was among the flocks of *her companions*, and not in His own flock; yet the soul is sure that there is still something better before her when the mountains of Bether shall be passed, and the day breaks. (ii. 17.)

For this is the soul *betrothed*, and *not wedded*. This is Ruth at the feet of Boaz, and not Ruth the wife of Boaz. She therefore *waits* for the shadows to flee away. (ii. 17; iv. 6.) And one of the characters of these present shadows is noticed; it is that which arises from our own weakness in conducting this communion, as when she refused to open to Him because she had washed her feet, and put off her coat (v. 3.) And on one occasion she would fain have the daughters of Jerusalem come with her into this communion with her Beloved. (iii. 6, 11.)

This is like one saint much in the joy of the Lord, desiring the same for those who are still, in spirit, walking on lower ground; and even though the soul is in this blessed communion, yet the Holy Ghost has still His place and independent work in it; therefore the wind is called to blow on the garden (iv. 16), just as we find in such a chapter as Romans viii., though the soul is so blessed there with "the spirit of adoption," hoping for the glory, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body, yet still the Spirit in such a soul has His operations (groaning and making intercession; witnessing with our spirit.) It is the wind blowing on the garden, and if such a soul introduced thus into this communion be untrue to it, she will be humbled even below the daughters of Jerusalem in her own esteem, sending messages, and asking their help to regain her place; but they will not understand her, and they will wonder at her sorrow.

Christ also desires the company of such a betrothed one, as she does His on the other side of the mountains of Bether; and He says, "Return, O Shulamite!" as she says, "Make haste, my

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Beloved ”; “Come, Lord Jesus ”; and thus awakens His great admiration of her. (vii.) And nothing will satisfy such a soul but *Christ's personal love*; all His glory; the substance of His house; without that love would be despised. (viii.)

The soul thus blessed with this communion closes with a gracious recollection of “the little sister ” not yet formed for it, with a sense of other vineyards inferior now to her own, and also with ardent desires (thus ending as beginning her communion), after her own beloved one.

I have been here only noticing a few detached expressions of the love of Jesus, and the saint in the Song of Solomon. I would not attempt more; *experience through the Spirit* can alone interpret them fittingly, and none of us can do it fully.

I believe chapter ii. 8-17 to be a very lovely, gracious portion of this holy and divine composition. The betrothed one recognizes the voice of Christ; she owns the heavens present here, under the symbols of mountains and hills, to be as it were His native place, where He exercises Himself in the ease and gracefulness of the roe or hart, as much at home there as they would be on their mountains and hills.

But though He be thus the heavenly One, and she have not as yet followed Him, she knows that He visits her, and His journeys or leapings from His hills bring Him just outside the walls or the windows where she is dwelling. She is conscious thus of her heavenly Lord, who loves her, and His voice invites her to come abroad, to rise from her present enclosure within the walls and the windows, and to come forth, for He tells her the forbidding wintry season is over, and the flowers and the birds of Spring, and the budding promise

of summer fruit have now all their attractions for her. And He further encourages her by telling her of the sweetness of her voice and the comeliness of her countenance before Him; and He only warns her to destroy all that would hurt the fruit of that land to which He was leading her. She then rejoices in her union with Him, being conscious, too, that He delights in communion with her, and only craves that He would thus act as the heavenly One towards her till the morning of the kingdom breaks.

And from this little allegory I gather the experience of a soul hearing the liberty to which this *present dispensation* brings it. It opens by the soul learning the place of the Lord in this age, that the heavens have received Him; He is at home on the hills and mountains, and she knows she has now to do with One who is thus heavenly; though she may in some sense be within her walls and windows and lattices.

Accordingly, He desires her to enter into the liberty and fruitfulness of such fellowship. All the darker and colder age is past; all that dispensation which kept the saint in bondage is over; the voice of that perfect love which casteth out fear is heard; the darkness is *now* past, and the true light is now shining. (1 John ii. 8; iv. 18.) The saint has now to arise as the loved and beautiful one, being in full consciousness that his Lord's favour and delight is resting on him and in him. He is to "come away" from the spirit of old bondage and fear in the blessed certainty of such a standing and communion as that gives him. All in this dispensation is *for* him; all is encouraging, all is gladdening; as the flowers of Spring, and the birds and varied promises of that

budding season, the saint is now “the love” and the “fair one.” Let him by faith know himself such. Let him simply know himself to be dear and beautiful in the eyes of his gracious Saviour, and then rejoice in the wondrous grace of his Lord, that calls him to *such* fellowship.

And what he has to do is to watch against all that would interfere with such fellowship, as the keeper of a choice vineyard would watch the foxes. The devil may create suspicions; our own lusts may dim our faculty for such rich spiritual joys. But Satan’s accusing, and the darkening influence of our own corruptions, are equally to be denied. Christ tells His saint of His delight in him, and would encourage his confidence. If the poor soul be but in the clefts of the rock, trusting like a poor sinner in the risen life of the Lamb, yet such a one attracts the eye and heart of Jesus, who would fain encourage his confidence, and who invites him to come forth into full communion, to let him see his face and hear his voice in happy assurance of soul.

The soul here seems to take courage, and to fill the place this dispensation gives it, being led to know that union between him and Christ is indeed formed; that Christ feeds among the flowers and fruits now springing, and all desire is that He may graciously carry Himself as the heavenly visitor of the soul, till their fellowship will not be here merely in spirit, but when all divisions will be passed over, and the morning of the kingdom, and the Summer of personal, complete, and everlasting union set them together on the hill-tops.

## Papers on Worship. No. 14.

**I**N another aspect the present ministry of Jesus is one of offering; as it is said, "Wherefore it is of necessity that this Man have somewhat also to offer." (Heb. viii. 3.) Or, as it is subsequently said, "In which were offered both *gifts* and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience." (Heb. ix. 9.)

Under the law, the worshipper might bring his offering to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; but then the priestly ministration began. The priest must lay it on the altar, where alone it could be accepted of the Lord. The worshipper himself could not offer immediately to the Lord. It was only through the priestly ministration that it was "an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord." (Lev. i. 9.)

But now it is by the offering of Jesus Himself, once for all, that we are sanctified as worshippers. (Heb. x. 14.) Jesus gave Himself *an offering* and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour (Eph. v. 1); and now whatever comes up to God through Him has the value of His own offering attached to it, and is of a sweet-smelling savour also. Thus God perpetually attests His own value of the offering of Jesus; even by accepting as precious, through Him, all done or offered in His name. To ask in the name of Jesus is, therefore, of unfailing efficacy, because God is always well-pleased in Him. We know, as priests, the divine estimate of Him through whom we draw near to offer. What a comfort, then, it is to be assured that our persons, our prayers, our thanksgivings, and our services have all of them, before God, the sweet savour of the name of

Jesus set upon them. Everything we desire or do, as having the Spirit of Christ Jesus, however mingled, or however feeble, is *thus* accepted for Jesus' sake.

And, remember, He is a perpetual offerer, as well as a perpetual interceder.' He, Himself, says of those who know not God in Him and through Him, "Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god; their drink-offerings of blood will I *not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.*" (Ps. xvi. 4.) But to us, because of this His ministry for us, the word is, "By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God *continually*, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks (making confession) to His name." (Heb. xiii. 15.)

It was the priest alone who knew how to appropriate the sacrifice; he only knew what was for God, what for himself, what for the worshipper, and what was refuse. It is indeed most blessed for us that there is a minister for us who separates the precious from the vile; and who orders all according to God. Our Great High Priest thus ministers for us. He takes up that which seems to us so clogged with infirmity, and so mingled with impurity, that we can discern no preciousness in it; and, separating the precious from the vile, He offers what is really of the Spirit in the full value of His own offering.

If any souls have been awakened to the desire of serving the Lord, what sorrow have they found in having to learn the wretched imperfectness of all that which they attempt. But if thus we are oftentimes dispirited, and ready to grow weary in well-doing, let us remember this present ministration of Jesus for us. Such should

know its value, for their labour is not in vain in the Lord.

How will His "Well done, good and faithful servant," gladden the heart of many by and by, who here have only deplored their constant failures. Think you, dear brethren, that the Philippians thought their trifling remembrance of the apostle Paul would be "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God"? (Phil. iv. 18.) But it was. The apostle, in communion with the Great High Priest, could see Him take it up and present it in His own name. Thus they were producing fruit, through Jesus, precious unto God; even as just before the apostle had said to them, "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the praise and glory of God." (i. 11.)

Yes, let the saints as priests judge themselves and their works; and if they find, as they assuredly will find, but little of the precious, let them know the One who judges above, and who delights to take out the precious, and present it to God in His own perfectness. Oh! if it were not for this ministry on high, how could we read the word, "To do good and to communicate forget not, for with *such* sacrifices God is well pleased"? (Heb. xiii. 16.)

We are often in danger of coming short of the truth of God, by attaching to the words of Scripture the technical meaning which they may have in the theology of our own days. The words "carnal," "flesh," "world," and "worldly," are known to us as expressive of that which is corrupt in itself, and which is disowned of God.

But if we do not see that God has had long patience both with the flesh and the world, dealing



with them both in a way of probation, previous to His finally giving them up, we shall fall greatly short in apprehending the truth of God. And not only so, but we shall also fail to perceive that every religious effort which man is making now is but the repetition of that which has been previously attempted under far more favourable circumstances, and which has issued in lamentable failure. "Is it not of the Lord of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?" (Hab. ii. 13.)

Let us, then, remember that the time was when God said to the children of Israel, "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." (Exod. xxv. 8.) This was a "worldly sanctuary." A sanctuary suited for God's dwelling-place in the world, and suitable also for the worship of a people of the world.

God had constituted Israel to be *His* worldly people. He had fenced them off from the nations round about them by statutes, and judgments, and ordinances; and He had prescribed likewise "ordinances of divine service" adapted to their sanctuary and to their standing. All here was consistent; all was worldly. Worldly worship, therefore, was then a holy thing in itself; for God had then appointed it.

And it would be so now also, if God had a *worldly people* and a *worldly sanctuary*; but seeing He now has neither the one nor the other, the attempt to approach God, even by ordinances of divine service which He Himself originally prescribed, is most sinful. "He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an

oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighteth not." (Isa. lxvi. 3, 4.)

This is a solemn word. The very act, as the killing an ox for a sin-offering or a burnt-offering, which was once a religious act, acceptable to God, is, when God delights not in it, but man chooses to do it, of moral guilt; it is as murder before God. For one to burn that incense which God Himself so minutely directed to be compounded, and without which Aaron himself could not appear before the Lord, lest he die, is as if he blessed an idol.

Now, if such was God's estimate of His own ordinances of worldly worship when those to whom they were given used them corruptly and wilfully, what must be the iniquity of introducing an order of things distinctly set aside by God? But has not this been done in the history of the Church; and is it not with renewed zeal being attempted in our own day? Forms and rituals of worship, suited only to a worldly sanctuary and a worldly people, are sanctioned and established on every hand. And this is most fearful sin.

The prophet of old was commissioned to rebuke Israel for their corruption and abuse of the worldly sanctuary and its worldly ordinances; but the apostle rebukes the saints of God when tending to turn back to worldly elements. (Gal. iv. 9; Col. ii. 8.) God was dishonoured of old by any neg-

lect of the worldly sanctuary; He is dishonoured now by any attempt to copy or re-establish it.

This enables us to determine the character of things now done in the professing Church. Such things, for example, as an altar 'on the earth, repeated sacrifice, the burning of incense, the consecrating of buildings and of ground, and of persons also, by outward ceremonial. Such rites and ceremonies were so clearly borrowed from the Jewish worldly ritual, and transferred into the Christian Church, as to have become almost universal shortly after the apostles' days.

But where is their warrant in the New Testament? Nay, how can any read therein, and not see the introduction of such things prophesied of, and solemnly warned against? How searching, then, is such a word as this: "I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer, *when I spake, they did not hear*"! (Isa. lxvi. 4.) How needful is that recall to the only source of authority found in the word, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear"; "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (Matt. xi. 15; Rev. iii. 22.)

This marks at once the place whence our wisdom and guidance must be sought. Not in antiquity, nor in the examples of Judaized churches; but in the unquestioned teaching of the Holy Spirit Himself to the churches. This leads us away from all whose wisdom or authority can for a moment be questioned; it places the word of God itself before the conscience of every saint. Errors, however ancient, or venerable, or attractive, are thus detected, and the child of faith is forbidden to countenance them.

This makes the path of faith at all times sure, though oftentimes very difficult; for nothing can be more sure than the steps of one guided by the Spirit of God and the word of God; and yet nothing more difficult than to have to walk in separation from all that exists around.

It is indeed difficult to have to wind one's ways through things so perplexing and so different as the religious systems of our own day. We have to avoid, on one hand, systems formed in imitation of things past; and, on the other, systems more characterized by anticipation of things future. We have to allow that such things were once given by God, and that they will yet again be introduced by Him, while invariably contending that they are positively opposed to His present workings.

There *was* a worldly sanctuary; there is, in the coming dispensation, *yet to be* a worldly sanctuary; but *now* there is none. Existing systems are variously compounded of things proper to these three distinct periods. Some have drawn most from the past, some from the future, some, it may be, most from the present; but all involve sad confusion in the things of God. How many there are who, though in some measure emancipated from the ordinances of the ancient worldly sanctuary of the past dispensation, yet do not allow that there is a worldly sanctuary still to come, and have consequently chosen and instituted that in which God delighteth not, as much as others who are professedly imitating the ancient ordinances. Thus, while denouncing worldly elements, they themselves have invested themselves with that which can only properly belong to the worldly part of the dispensation to come.

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# WORDS OF TRUTH

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"The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words:  
and that which was written was upright, even words  
of truth" (Eccles. xii. 10).

## The Last Days of Christendom.

**T**HERE are two senses in which the expression "last days" is used in the New Testament.

In the opening of the Epistle to the Hebrews there is mention made of "these last days." There it is intended to designate this present dispensation.

But the expression is also applied to THE CLOSING DAYS of this present dispensation. In this way it is used in 2 Tim. iii.; "*In the last days* perilous times shall come"; that is, in the closing season of Christendom. (v. 1.) To this season Jude also refers, speaking in his epistle of "the last time," when there should be mockers. (v. 18.)

Now, it is important that we should know what are the features which the Spirit of God describes as attaching to these "last days."

In this Second Epistle to Timothy we find two distinct marks by which the Holy Ghost has described the closing hour of the present dispensa-

tion. First, the spirit of intellectual liberty, or of free thinking, which rejects the mysteries of God. Second, the prevalence of moral laxity.

In 2 Peter iii. we are told that “there shall come *in the last days* scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming?” (v. 3.) Here “the last days” are marked by a spirit of scoffing, and the object of it is one of God’s precious mysteries, namely, the second advent or coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If we turn to the First Epistle of John, we find the same thing spoken of as the spirit of Antichrist, which was already working, and which scorns the mysteries of the truth. “Little children,” says he, “it is *the last time*.” (1 John ii. 18.) And then he describes what characterizes the last time; namely, the denial that Jesus is the Christ; the denial of the Father and the Son.

Now, from these two witnesses (Peter and John), we get one very definite character of the last times. They are to be marked by a scoffing and infidel spirit, which mocks at the future coming of the Lord, and which denies the great mystery of the Persons of the Godhead.

If we refer to the Epistle of Jude, we shall find it is not these features which are given as marking “the last days,” but a fearful state of moral laxity, such as Paul foretells in 2 Tim. iii. It is moral laxity which is spoken of in both these Epistles. According to the testimony of Paul, men will be “lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, . . . unholy, . . . incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” (vv. 1-4.)

This is an awful picture. And, remember, it is *Christendom* that is there described. It is not about the heathen world that Paul is speaking. The anticipations of Peter, and John, and Paul, and Jude, are about Christendom. They instruct us beforehand that the last days of Christendom are to be marked by a fearful moral or practical condition, as well as by a free-thinking and scoffing spirit which rejects the mysteries of the truth.

You may ask me, What have *we* to do with these things?

Ah! beloved, we *have* to do with them. We ought to know the enemies against whom we have to contend, the forms of Satan's power against which we have to watch. And it will not do to escape one of the snares, and fall into the other. It will not do to guard only the mysteries of the truth. We must watch over our whole behaviour, that we do not slip into the general practical condition of "the last days."

It is very likely that *both* the features described will not attach to the *same* person. The free-thinking intellectualist may be moral and amiable, while the man of ungodly walk may be the professor of an orthodox creed.

Jude does not glance at that of which John speaks.

Now I desire to be practical, to direct your attention specially to one point. When the Holy Ghost takes His *rightful* direction, He speaks of Christ, of "the common salvation." (Jude 3.) His office is to take of the things of Christ, and to show them unto us. But He is in the place of service in the Church; and therefore, when there is mischief at the doors, He turns aside, and ex-

horts to "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints."

It is not for the *orthodoxy* that saints are *here* exhorted to contend but for the *holiness of the faith*. We are exhorted "earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints," against the "ungodly men," who are described as "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness"; the "ungodly men," who deny, not the Father and the Son, but the "Lord" Jesus Christ. Mark! who deny Jesus Christ not *as a Saviour*, but *AS A LORD*; that is, who *practically* gainsay His authority, who "despise dominion," or lordship, who reject restraints. Jude is not speaking of Jesus as a SAVIOUR, but of Jesus as LORD. *His government* is the thought in the mind of the Holy Spirit here.

We should welcome this as a sound and salutary word. It is not evil when a saint does not exercise this continual check on his thoughts, his tongue, his doings? We are not to say that our thoughts, or our lips, or our hands, or our feet, are our own. They should be understood to be *under Lordship*. We are *not* to despise dominion. The Epistle of Jude puts every one of us on a *holy* watch-tower, to watch, not against a spirit that would gainsay the precious mysteries of God (Peter's and John's word do that) but against the tendencies of the natural heart to gratify itself.

If Peter puts you looking in one direction, watching against the forms and actings of the *infidel* mind, Jude erects another watch-tower, from which we are to look out, and guard against the self-indulgent and defiling ways that would *reduce the whole moral man*; to watch against the spirit that gainsays the *lordship* of Jesus over the thoughts,



the words, the doings, and the goings of His people.

• Then he goes on to say, “ Woe unto them ! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.” (v. 11.)

Here you observe how wonderfully fruitful in instruction is the Book of God. We get instruction drawn from the history of heaven. The Spirit in Jude gives it to us (v. 6). He then descends the stream of divine history from the beginning, and gathers these various examples to press them on ourselves, to warn us against a state of moral laxity. And mark how he describes these ungodly despisers of dominion : “ These are spots on your feasts of charity, feeding themselves *without fear*.” (v. 12.) The absence of this “ fear ” indicates this state of moral laxity of which I speak.

O beloved ! I would that this word on which we are meditating might incite us to gird up the loins of our mind. (1 Pet. i. 13.) Do we imagine that we have a right to take our own way in any thing? We have no such right. As has been said, “ The moment you do a thing because it is *your own* will you have sinned.” To do our own will because it is *our own* will is the very essence of rebellion against God.

Here, beloved, Jude is showing us the danger of tampering with the girdle that is to be about the loins. May we bear away his word. We shall be much happier, we never can be losers, by giving up our own will to the Lord Jesus. As one who is redeemed by Christ, and who belongs to Christ, I should have no will of my own. I have no right to do my own pleasure. I have no right to take a walk just to please myself. The

Lord may give me the indulgence of it, and strew the path of my feet with ten thousand mercies ; but the moment I erect *my own will as the principle of my actions* I have “despised dominion.” I have despised the lordship of Jesus. This is the force and bearing of the word of God by Jude.

He then goes back to the prophecy of Enoch. What is it? Is it a prophecy of the Lord’s coming to visit those who are under the power of the infidel spirit? No ; but “to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all the ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed.” It is on *ungodliness* that the judgment is anticipated to fall. And if you and I look around upon Christendom even now, shall we not see a prevalence of ungodliness enough to provoke the judgment of the Lord?

But let us take this word home to *ourselves*. May the Spirit apply it to the conscience :*If I take my own will as the rule of my actions, and thus “despise dominion,” I am (in the principle of my mind), on the road to the judgment of which Enoch prophesied.*

O beloved ! may we welcome this exhortation. Do you wish the Church of God relaxed in its behaviour and moral ways? Is it not to bow to the cross, to the sceptre of Jesus? If He is a *Saviour*, He is also a *Lord*.

“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith.” (v. 20.)

There, again, is the same subject of warning. The saints are urged to build themselves up *on their most holy faith*.

“Keep yourselves in the love of God.” (v. 21.)

And what is “the love of God” of this passage? It is the love of God of the fifteenth of

John. “*If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in His love.*” (v. 10.) It is the *complacential* love of Christ. Does this make the path of a saint legal? No; it only binds the heart to Jesus, with a new cord, as the fresh spring of our affections, the Object of all our desire.

Then again: “And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.” (v. 23.)

Does he speak here of the infidel spirit? No; but take care lest the garment spotted *by the flesh* get around you.

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling,” that is, not from the truth, but from the *holiness* of the truth; for it is added, “And to present you *faultless* before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” (vv. 24, 25.)

In conclusion; let me repeat it, May we welcome this word of warning. Would that it were sounded in the ears of all the people of God. Let them know that we are living in a day of easiness and self-seeking. Christendom is filling itself with a thousand gratifications. Every hour is multiplying the means and opportunities of indulging nature. “The lusts of the *mind*” are greatly nurtured. (Eph. ii. 3.) Skill of all kinds, and labour too, are taxed to contribute to their indulgence. “And the lusts of the flesh” are all akin to this. Oh, may we, in the midst of it all, love the *lordship* of Jesus! Let us bow to His sceptre. Let us kiss it more and more; and instead of saying, “This is

my pleasure; that is my will," let us pray that Jesus may reign in our hearts,

. "The Lord of every motion there."

But again, let me remind you, it is JESUS that is to be our Lord; He who loved us, and gave Himself for us; He who *has saved* His people. And He is to be served, not in the spirit of bondage, or the mere observance of religious rites and injunctions, but in the spirit of liberty and love, a spirit that can trust Him at all times, and that can take all conscious short-coming and failure to a throne of grace through Him with happy boldness. (2 Tim. i. 7; Heb. iv. 16, x. 19-22.)

O beloved; it would be but a poor return for His love and salvation to watch in any wise as *against Him*, and not entirely *for Him*, for He has "not given us the spirit of fear, but of love." May we watch, therefore, that *He* may be glorified *in us* by free and happy service now while He is absent, that *we* may be glorified *in Him*, when He shall appear to take us to Himself. (John xiv. 3.)

### **Papers on Worship. No. 15.**

**T**HUS they are involved in the sin of mingling things heavenly and things earthly.

And is not all this a work of the flesh? Is it not an admission of worldly principles into the Church of God? Do we not see this in the fond desire for official distinction, dedicated buildings, permanent institutions and ordinances, and attempts to attract worldly repute, so common to the systems around? For all this is not confined to the Church of Rome, or the Protestant establishments of Europe, but, with scarcely less promi-

nence, characterizes the systems of Dissenters also.

Surely all these things, under whatever form seen, must be alike offensive to God. We may go back to some ancient institutions of God, or forward to something He intends yet to introduce, or we may assert our own right to worship according to a pattern of our own devising; but in each and all these cases we subject ourselves to that word, "When I spake, they did not hear." (Isa. lxvi. 4.)

It is important therefore to show that there yet will be a worldly sanctuary and worldly worship. This is very largely revealed in the prophets. (Ezekiel xl. to xlviii.) Their subject of hope is the restored nation, restored polity, and restored worship of Israel; but all, when so restored, under and in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the Christian Church has in a great measure applied these predictions to itself, and hence we have the thought of a Christian nation, instead of the holy nation now to be gathered from out of all nations; hence too the thought of the union of the Church and the State, a thought to be most blessedly fulfilled when Christ as a King and Priest shall sit upon His throne; hence too the ante-dating of the day when the kings of the earth are to bring their glory and honour unto the holy city; hence the constant invitations which are given to the world to contribute its aid and patronage to the work of the Church. All this has secularized Christianity, and given a worldly character to its position and its worship.

In the prophet Isaiah we read, "Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for *all* people."

(Isa. lvi. 7.) That is, God would have a house *on earth*, a worldly sanctuary; but it should be open to all; it should not be confined to Israel. The Israel of that future day would have a standing higher than that which belonged to them as the natural seed of Abraham, and in that standing others should be associated with them, even those who were naturally sons of the stranger. Joined to the Lord, these should be brought to His *holy mountain, and made joyful in His house of prayer.* (v. 7.)

The Lord Jesus, the Master of the heavenly house now, and in due time the Builder also of the earthly house and worldly sanctuary, adverts to this scripture in the sequel of His ministry. Jesus went into the temple of God and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, "Is it not written, My house shall be called *an house of prayer for all nations?*" (Mark xi. 17.)

It never was this in its first standing. But when it is of another building, then many nations will come and say, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the *house* of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isa. ii. 3.)

Here we have most clearly a worldly sanctuary, a metropolitan temple on the earth, the fountain of legislation and instruction for all who fear the Lord. Christians may perhaps think that to establish a cathedral on Mount Zion would be an approximation towards the fulfilment of this

word. But if that were done the word would still be, "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: *where is the house that ye build unto me*, and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is *poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*" (Isa. lxvi. 1, 2.)

Ezekiel witnessed in his vision the departure of the glory of the Lord, first from the house and then from the earth (chapters x. xi.); but in the forty-third chapter he says, "And the glory of the Lord came *into the house* by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east . . . and, behold, the *glory of the Lord filled the house* . . . And He said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and *the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile.*" (vv. 4-7.)

Here again we read of that worldly sanctuary yet to be set up.

But not to multiply quotations, let us only revert to two more, both of which lead us onward from the time of the rebuilding of the temple of Zerubabel: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. . . . The glory of *this latter house* shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and *in this place* will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." (Hag. ii. 6-9.)

Here we must note that this worldly sanctuary is set up after the heavens and the earth have been shaken, which, according to the testimony of the apostle in the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, has not yet taken place. (v. 26.)

Again: we read in the prophet Zechariah, "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the Man whose name is the BRANCH; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord; even He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." (vi. 12, 13.)

Now, all these testimonies, and they might be greatly multiplied, tell us of a worldly sanctuary yet to be set up; but not after the old [Levitical] order. There God will be known as the God of peace, even where the real glory will be, where Jesus will sit as a Priest upon His throne. There will be ordinances of divine service there, and ministering priests, and a worshipping multitude. One of those ordinances is mentioned in the last prophet referred to: "All the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to *keep the feast of tabernacles.*" (Zech. xiv. 16.)

The conclusion therefore from these scriptures is that there was a worldly sanctuary suited to a worshipping people in the flesh on the earth; and that there is yet to be a worldly sanctuary in connection with the new covenant, suitable for the true circumcision, the true spiritual seed, on the earth. (Isaiah lvii.) But there is no such sanc-



tuary now. Now there is the heavenly sanctuary only. And this is the contrast so carefully drawn by the Holy Spirit in the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The *first* tabernacle in connection with the worldly sanctuary had its place for a while. During its continuance the way into the holiest of all was not yet laid open, nor could there be any purging of the conscience. (Heb. ix. 8; x. 2.) Now the contrast to this *first* tabernacle is not a second, set up like that on the earth, and in which the worshippers are to be kept at a distance from the holiest, but one set up by God Himself in heaven, in which those only can enter who are cleansed by the blood of Jesus, and anointed with the Holy Spirit; but into which all such do now in spirit enter as alike accepted and equally priests. (Heb. x. 19; 1 Pet. ii. 5.)

The *first* tabernacle is therefore in this chapter looked at in contrast with "the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building," in which the Church now worships. (Heb. ix. 11.)

Such a sanctuary as this heavenly sanctuary alone befits the "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." Man, as man, can recognize the propriety of splendid buildings for the worship of God, and he has ever acted accordingly. But the spiritual house has nothing tangible in it. It is not adapted to the world, nor does it present attractions to the flesh. To one who only judged by appearances there might be some ground for the slander that Christians were atheists; for there was no visible or imposing attraction in their worship. Their worship was in the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands.

## **A Found One Becomes a Finder.**

(John i. 45.)

**T**HERE is a lovely, unshackled simplicity and naturalness in the way of the Spirit in John's Gospel. The divine life is seen acting in the most marked independence of everything like human rules and regulations; and yet all is in the most striking and beautiful moral order. What, for instance, can be more simple or natural than the expression, "Philip findeth Nathanael"? There is nothing official, nothing mechanical, nothing of routine work here. But yet there is beautiful moral order. It is the energy of the implanted divine life, manifesting itself in its own genuine simplicity and native force. It is the living power of grace in the heart, expressing itself after its own peculiar fashion.

"Philip findeth Nathanael." But, we must bear in mind, that, before Philip found Nathanael he had found Christ. He was able to say, in all assurance and confidence, "We have found Him." He does not say, "We are seeking Him and hope to find Him; come and help us in the good work of searching."

This may be all well enough. It is surely well for those who want to find, to go and seek. But Philip was beyond this. His earnest searching had issued in a joyous finding, as is always the case; and having found Christ, he goes and finds Nathanael.

As, in the last chapter of the Book of Revelation, the soul, having heard from above the precious word "Come," immediately turns to the scene around and repeats the "Come," so it was with Philip. Having found Christ for himself,

he goes in search of a fellow-sinner to bring him into the enjoyment of the same blessedness.

Now, it is well to see that there is nothing official in this. No doubt office has its own place and its own value. But there is nothing of office in "Philip findeth Nathanael." It is the power of life and not the functions of office. It is the outflow of the stream of grace from an overflowing heart, made happy by a newly discovered object. And why insist on this?

Simply to answer the pleadings of an indolent heart, which would take refuge behind the claims of official authority, while failing to manifest the energy of divine life. A man may say, "I have no gift, no call, no office." Yes, but have you no life? You may not be called to stand before assembled thousands (often a very slippery place), but can you not find a Nathanael? Is there no one into whose ear you can drop those thrilling words, "I have found Him"? Is there no friend, neighbour, or relative, to whom you can say, "Come"?

You do not need to possess the gifts of a Paul, a Luther, a Whitefield, or a Chalmers, in order to say, "Come." What you really want is a heart filled to overflowing with the joy of a newly found treasure. This is what we all want. If there were more Philips to seek there would be more Nathanaels found. If everyone would just do as Philip did, how blessedly would the work of evangelization go on! This is the way it should be; and this is the way it would be, if persons were able to say, with unclouded confidence, "We have found Him."

It is the hesitancy as to this; it is the lack of holy confidence in the record of God; the absence of settled assurance as to the fulness and efficacy

of the atonement, and its personal application, that produces such unwillingness and incapacity to testify of Christ to others. In a word, before ever Philip can find Nathanael, he must find Christ. The two findings go together. I must find my own way to the feet of the Saviour, before I can conduct my fellow-sinner thither. It is one thing to talk about religion, and another thing to be able to say, "I have found Christ."

This latter is the secret of all successful evangelization. For a man to set about preaching Christ to others, before he has found Him for himself, is a most frightful delusion; yea, it is positive folly and wickedness. There is no one in such an awfully dangerous position as a Christless preacher, a Christless talker about religion.

Reader, allow me to make a direct, solemn, personal appeal to your heart and conscience. How is it with your precious soul at this moment? Can you say with Philip, "I have found Christ"? Are you happy in the Saviour's love? Have you found pardon and peace in His atoning blood?

If you can answer in the affirmative, if you can say, "Yes, thank God!" then I ask, Are you searching for "Nathanael"? Are you doing what you can to spread the knowledge of Jesus?

Think, I pray you, of the beauteous moral order of Philip's history. It contains, in its brief compass, a volume of precious instruction. "The day following, Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and *findeth Philip*, and saith unto him, *Follow me . . . . . Philip findeth Nathanael*, and saith unto him, *We have found Him of whom Moses in the laws and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph . . . . . COME AND SEF.*" (John i. 43-46.)

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# WORDS OF TRUTH

"The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words:  
and that which was written was upright, even words  
of truth" (Eccles. xii. 10).

## How to Study the Holy Scriptures.

**T**HE first and main point is to regard Scripture as a whole, with one great purpose of God pervading it; so that, whenever one reads, one should feel that this part is contributing to the grand object. If the object of Scripture as a whole be misunderstood, then all the subsequent learning must be defective and powerless to a great degree, because I am not consciously instructed in keeping with its own mind and aim

Here so many pious souls lose or miss the energy of the Word. It does, through God's grace in it, help their piety, but there is little power to walk according to God's mind, because God's mind in His Word is not known. They are like flowers kept alive in water, or like animals in youth excluded from light; they have never developed as they ought. Early, sound instruction is therefore of great importance. Much of the time of

Christians brought up in the theological schools is spent in unlearning the defective and false definitions that they adopted from man's commentaries on God's Word.

The first thing, then, is to ascertain the one great subject of Scripture, to the expression and development of which the whole, without interruption, conspires.

The next, that in reading it you be convinced of its plenary inspiration, and because of this, that you note every word and ascertain its meaning, which is best done by writing down the word, and seeing then the use you make of it. It is the *habit* of this that is so useful.

Next, reading distinct books at a time, and seeking for the leading idea or aim of the book, which is easy enough, though perhaps not so easily sustained through all parts of the book; to be able to connect all the parts like a dissected map is very helpful.

Another mode of acquiring a knowledge of Scripture is taking a subject and seeing how it is exemplified in different parts by different aspects and different characters. This gives great power in the practical application of Scripture.

Lastly, I believe the soul acquires a colour and a tone from reading Scripture *ad libitum*. If you are in trouble, or sorrow, or conflict, it is wonderful the effect that reading Scripture will have on you; you are carried into its mind and current almost unknown to yourself. It is change of air and scene; the best restorative power to the moral invalid; and, I need not add, the better you understand the first point (namely, the grand aim of Scripture) the more strength you imbibe from reading it, even in a desultory way.

## **Teachings of the Psalms.**

Book I. (Pss. i.—xli.)

**I**N the Book of Psalms you will find that which is a common principle of prophecy:—The writer expresses his own circumstances and feelings, and yet the prophecy reaches beyond to the future. Just as in Isaiah, where Sennacherib's invasion is recorded, you find what really goes on to the invasion of the Assyrian in the last days. (Isa. xxxvii.)

The first and second psalms are part of a series ending with the eighth; but they are distinct in themselves, and give the general idea of the whole book, so that they form a kind of preface or introduction to the whole Book of Psalms.

The difference between these psalms is taken up in the second part of Isaiah's prophecy, after the typical history of Hezekiah in chapters xxxvi—xxxix. The first psalm answers to Isaiah xl.—xlviii.; the second psalm to Isaiah xlix.—lvii. Both series in Isaiah go on the ground that it is only a Remnant of the people whom God would recognize; and both end with the blessing of this Remnant, and with the declaration that "there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." (xlviii. 22, lvii. 21.)

The former division in Isaiah takes up the question of Jehovah and idols, and the Remnant's obedience to the law, and trust in Jehovah. This answers to Ps. i.

In the latter division, commencing at chapter xlix., Christ takes the place of Israel as Jehovah's Servant, and the Remnant is distinguished by their reception of Christ. This answers to Ps. ii.

In Ps. i. it is the description of the Remnant's

character, and so we have them meditating in the law of Jehovah. In Ps. ii. it is Christ, and we have the nation rejecting Him.

Is it the crucifixion in Ps. ii.?

We are really in "the last days." Peter quotes its beginning (Acts iv.), and applies it to Israel for their rejection of Christ; but in the Old Testament Church-time is dropped out. Thus from the fourth verse the psalm leaps over all the time from the crucifixion to the Millennium. There we have the Adonai sitting in the heavens. He shall laugh at them, and have them in derision.

It is the same principle as we see in Luke iv., where the Lord quotes Isaiah lxi. 1, 2. He stops in the middle of the verse, because the end is vengeance at the second coming. In the first chapter of John's Gospel we see Nathanael owning the Lord as Son of God, and King of Israel, according to His Messianic glory in Ps. ii.; and the Lord says, "You shall see greater things than these"; and in the last verse He takes the glory of the Son of Man, according to Ps. viii. It should be, "Henceforth ye shall see," not "Hereafter." The moment Christ was on earth, there was an adequate object for heaven to open upon; the angels ascend and descend upon the Son of Man. The eighth Ps. is quoted by Paul in Eph. i., 1 Cor. xv., and Heb. ii., to show that He, as "Son of Man," is set over all things which God has made.

"Son of Man" is a wider title than "Christ." You will find in Matt. xvi. that the Lord tells His disciples not to say He is "The Christ," for He was about to suffer as "Son of Man." (Luke ix. 20-22.)

After having the preface to the whole book in Pss. i. ii., we have, from Ps. iii.—viii., the position



of the godly Remnant consequent thereon, and their different exercises in sorrow and suffering while the Messiah is rejected.

Who are the wicked in Ps. i.?

The ungodly Jews.

In Pss. iii.—vii. you see the godly Remnant in three distinguishing characters or positions : confidence ; personal righteousness ; and guilty though obeying the word all the time.

1. You get confidence in God through all their trials, as in Ps. iii.

2. Personal righteousness, so that they can appeal to God as the “ God of my righteousness,” as in Ps. iv.

3. Guilty, and so deprecating God’s anger, as in Ps. vi., “ O Lord, rebuke me not in Thine anger,” for they know they deserve it. But sins are not acknowledged and confessed until Ps. xxv., when atonement has come in and laid the ground for it in Ps. xxii.

Ps. viii. closes the series : and the Son of Man is set over all the works of God’s hands. It is the language of the now delivered Remnant.

What is the difference between Jehovah and Adonai?

Adonai is Lordship. Jehovah is perpetuity, the covenant name with Israel ; the One who was, and is, and is to come ; the Originator and the Fulfiller of the promises.

In Pss. ix., x. we have the historical statements of the circumstances of the Remnant in the last days in the land. Here we find the judgment of the heathen, and God is known in Israel by the judgment He executes. In Ps. x. we have the description of the wicked, lurking in the secret places in the villages. The wicked man is the

character of Anti-christ. Sometimes in the Psalms it is plural ; and sometimes it is characteristic ; and sometimes it rises up to Anti-christ personally. In Ps. x. 18 it is characteristic.

From Ps. xi. to Ps. xv. we have the thoughts and feelings of the Remnant when in the circumstances of Pss. ix. and x. This is a general principle in the Psalms. We have a psalm or psalms describing a certain condition of things, and then a series of psalms following, which bring out the feelings and exercises of the Remnant consequent thereon.

In Ps. xiv. we have the atheist. Here the evil has reached its climax in God's sight. Ps. xv. is the character of the righteous, and describes who the person is who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, when the Lord shall have established the seat of His righteous power in Zion.

In Pss. xvi. and xvii. we have the two great principles that characterize the Remnant : confidence and personal righteousness. Here we have Christ Himself. These psalms form part of a series ; but the distinction between this series and the previous one is that here we have the connection of Christ Himself with the Remnant. Ps. xvi. is Christ's confidence in God as man : " In Thee do I put my trust." The psalm closes with the fruit of trust, in enjoying God Himself : " In Thy presence is fulness of joy ; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

Ps. xvii. is personal righteousness, and it ends with the fruit of righteousness in being like Him : " I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness." Christians *are* like Him now (1 John iv. 17), also they *shall be* when they see Him as He is (1 John iii. 2). They have both.

What does *hades* [hell] mean in Ps. xvi. 10?

*Hades* means anything you please out of this world. In Greek it means "unseen." Heaven was not revealed until Christ went there, though the existence of the soul after death was known. David says of his child, "I shall go to him." (2 Sam. xii. 23.) It is he and the separate soul together. Samuel says to Saul, "Thou shalt be with me"; but as to where they went, all was unknown, invisible, dark. (1 Sam. xxviii. 19.) They did not know where they went. The case of the thief on the cross first threw light upon it. Christ revealed the happy state in which he should be with Him: "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." In Ps. xvi. 10, we see that the soul and the body go to different and distinct places.

In Psalm xvii. we see the world given to the wicked. It is the principle brought out and answered in Dives and Lazarus in a future state. "Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." (Luke xvi. 25.)

Ps. xviii. Here we have the sufferings of the Messiah the central ground of all the history of Israel from Egypt to the glory in the Millennium. His death is the ground for God's dealings in grace with them. They were delivered from Egypt on the ground of Christ's sufferings. The Passover, the Red Sea, etc., were all figures of it. And this principle is true of every saved soul from Abel downwards. No doubt, when David wrote the psalm, he was feeling it all in his own circumstances; but this is, as we have seen, a common principle in prophecy, and especially so in the Psalms.

This psalm celebrates especially Jehovah Himself, the Deliverer, and still declares the speaker's dependence on Him. This is the thesis of the psalm. It then, as is the usual form of the Psalms, goes through all the circumstances which lead the soul up to what is celebrated in the first verse or verses.

In vv. 4, 5, Christ is seen, the sorrows of death compassing Him, and the floods of ungodly men besetting Him.

In v. 6 you have the cry to Jehovah; then in vv. 7-16 you get Israel delivered from Egypt, and brought through the Red Sea, through Messiah's sufferings; though doubtless these are spoken of in a mysterious form.

In vv. 17-27 we have Christ as God's Israel, perfect in trial, and the value of this towards the Remnant's godliness; and then, from v. 28 to the end, the coming in of power in deliverance to Christ, and through Him to Israel in the last days.

In v. 43, He is the Head of the heathen, so that we get to the Millennium.

In v. 44 all come and submit, "yield feigned obedience," as in the margin. They tell lies. It is power subduing, but not faith.

Who speaks in verse 20?

The language is only true essentially of Christ; and yet from the last verse we know it is David who speaks, as also from 2 Sam. xxii. 1, where we find the occasion on which it was composed.

Ps. xix. takes up the two testimonies of God. His works in Creation, and His Word. Creation is a witness to God; only as sin has come in and marred the earth, we have only the *heavens* mentioned as declaring the glory of God. The Law is a witness to Jehovah.

## TEACHINGS OF THE PSALMS.

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Ps. xx. We have the third testimony here, in Christ, who is God's witness, in the day of His distress, the object of the Remnant's sympathy as the dependent One, and of their trust [in Him] as the exalted King.

Ps. xxi. We have an exalted Christ, the answer to Ps. xx. in terms. Thus we have had the testimony of Creation, of the Law, and of Israel, and now the testimony of Christ completes all the testimonies of God.

Up till now we have men against Him in His sufferings, but in Ps. xxii. we have God judging sin in His Person in atonement; consequently we have no judgment on man, but a tide of blessing flowing out, first to the Remnant, then to all Israel, then to the ends of the earth, and lastly to those born in the Millennium.

In v. 22 you have John xx., when Christ declares His Father's name to His brethren; and then you have Him in v. 25, praising in the great congregation of Israel.

Ps. xxiii. The result of Ps. xxii. is that the sheep are taken care of.

Can we look upon Christ here as one of the sheep?

No; but He goes before them in the path of dependence and confidence in Jehovah, and thus He puts Himself among them. But the Psalm speaks of the Remnant, though Christ entered into their place of dependence, taking Jehovah as His Shepherd.

In Ps. xxiv. we have Christ taking His place of glory in the temple on earth, and owned there as Jehovah.

In Pss. xxv.—xxxix., Christ having made atonement, we have the state and feelings of the

Remnant in respect of this work and its results, which have been brought out in Pss. xxii.—xxiv.

Is Ps. xl. the same view of the sufferings as Ps. xxii.?

It takes in a wider range, and shows the root of it all in the eternal counsels. “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.” (v. 8; Heb. x. 9.)

In Ps. xxv. Israel can confess their sins, because atonement has been made. Here it is the general truth of their sinfulness. In Ps. li. it is the confession of blood-guiltiness, owning their guilt in the rejection and death of Christ. It is not that they *know* atonement for their deliverance and peace; this will not be till they *see* Him, and *look* upon Him whom they have pierced. Zech. xii. 10.) But they can confess sins, because atonement has been made, without the personal comfort resulting from the fact of its application to themselves being known. But Ps. xl. is Christ Himself in the most distinct way. It is taken up in Hebrews x. Here it is not the fact of His sufferings in atonement that is before us, but the counsel and will of God which He has accomplished therein.

In Ps. xli. “Blessed is the man that understandeth [not considereth] the poor,” in contrast with the pretensions of the proud. Christ takes this place of the poor and needy in v. 17 of Ps. xl. Christ is really the poor man here, but not exclusively. In Ps. xli., blessed is the one who recognizes those in such a state. In Amos ii. 6, the judgment falls upon Israel because of their conduct towards the poor. Zech. xi. takes this up definitely, and Christ takes up the poor of the flock. It is our place. I don’t know how far we realize it, though we have hymns written for “the poor of

the flock.” It is just what it ought to be with us. Verse 9 is true of Christ. There it is speaking practically of Judas, but not only of him, for in the Psalms we are in “the last days.” (2 Tim. iii. 1; 2 Pet. iii. 3.) So in v. 1, it is not only Christ, but all “the poor of the flock.” (Zech. xi. 11.)

In the first Psalm it is, Blessed is the man who keeps the law; this first book ends with, “Blessed is he that understandeth the poor”! The two things that characterize Israel. They are blessed in doing it.

In Ps. i. we have the blessing in loving God; in Ps. xli. in loving one’s neighbour. In this First book it is the Remnant and Christ *both* rejected, but the Remnant is not cast out of Jerusalem. It is only the Jews in this book, and not Israel. The Ten Tribes do not come in till the Third book. The two sticks in Ezekiel xxxvii. represent, the one the house of Judah and the children of Israel his companions; the other the stick of Ephraim and *all* the house of Israel, his companions. So that the Jewish Remnant includes the children of Israel, who came up with the Two Tribes at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. We find, in Luke ii., Anna was of the tribe of Aser, and Elizabeth was of the daughters of Aaron.

We have now come to the end of the First book of Psalms.

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The Bible.—One God is the living Source from which all flows; one Christ the living Centre round which all the revealed truth circles, and to which it refers, though in various glory; and one Spirit the living Sap which carries its power from its source in God to the minutest branches of the all-united truth.

## Papers on Worship. No. 16.

THEY did not attempt in their places of assembly to vie with the imposing architecture either of the temple at Jerusalem or the heathen temples around them. They had not then heard of "Christian ecclesiastical architecture," nor was the Church then the patron of the arts. Their temple was not of this building.

And the ministry in the heavenly sanctuary corresponds with all this. It is complete and perfect, because performed by One who is divine, and who is beyond the range of this world's cognizance. Christ is entered *once* into the holiest, having obtained *eternal redemption*. (Heb. ix. 12.) The eye of man could scan the beautiful proportions of an earthly sanctuary, and mark the service of an earthly priesthood; but faith alone can enter into the heavenly sanctuary or delight in its glories. No one of its beauties or glories is displayed to the senses; it is the soul alone which has learnt the preciousness of Jesus which is now able to say, "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts." (Ps. lxxxiv. 1.) The Lamb is the light and the glory of it. If He be not the object of faith, no wonder that men should again make the sanctuary worldly.

But even when God had His worldly sanctuary here, how little of its beauty was displayed to the ordinary worshipper! He saw not the golden sanctuary, nor the cherubims and vessels of gold, these things were most carefully hidden from his sight. The priests were charged to cover up the vessels of ministry, even from the sight of the



Levites, who were to carry them. (Num. iv. 20.) The eyes of the priests alone were to rest on these holy things.

Now it is the anti-types of those veiled and precious types with which we have to do. All believers now are priests unto God, and hence now all is open to faith; but open to faith alone. What eye hath not seen, God hath revealed to us by His Spirit. (1 Cor. ii. 10.) The Holy Ghost is specially come down from heaven in testimony of what He knows to be there. He could not witness of a heavenly temple and a heavenly priesthood until the Builder and Sustainer of the temple, and the perpetual Priest, was in heaven.

All attempts to establish a worldly sanctuary now are therefore in direct opposition to the present testimony of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost by His coming was the conviction of the world's sin in having rejected Jesus, because testifying that God had exalted Him; but that blessed Spirit is also, by His very presence in the Church, the conviction of the sin of every attempt now to set up a worldly sanctuary. He has to testify only of a High Priest now ministering in the heavens, "Jesus, the Son of God, who is *passed into the heavens*," and consequently He can only lead the soul to Him He glorifies. All who worship "in spirit" must therefore worship in the heavenly sanctuary, for there alone doth the Spirit lead.

But man, as man, knows not the Spirit of God. The world cannot receive Him. (John xiv. 17.) It is no part of His ministry to guide the flesh into the presence of God, or to teach it to worship. The very presence of the Holy Spirit here is God's most emphatic and solemn testimony to the entire

ruin of man, and his utter incompetency for any good thing.

Regeneration must therefore precede worship. The only "true worshippers" now are those who are separated unto God through "sanctification of the Spirit." (1 Pet. i. 2.) These are now the "holy priesthood," the "royal nation." (1 Pet. ii. 9.)

And it is well for the saints themselves to bear constantly in mind this elementary truth, for it will enable them to test all that assumes to be worship. We may have the senses gratified, the imagination exercised, sentiment and feeling kindled, and we may mistake such things for worship; but they are fleshly things, and when found in saints they sadly grieve the Spirit of God. These are things against which the saints have to watch, and which they have to mortify; but these are the things which must be fostered and gratified by the wilful introduction of a worldly sanctuary.

What more fearful, then, than to confound such a work with the present work of the Spirit of God? Is not this to confound darkness with light, flesh with Spirit? The whole order of a worldly sanctuary must hinder the present testimony of the Spirit of God. Now, to do despite to "the Spirit of grace," to insult the Spirit of God, is indeed fearful sin. (Heb. x. 29.) But what has the Spirit of grace to do in the worldly sanctuary? There the great points are the service of the ministering priest, and the duties of the suppliant people. Grace is excluded in the whole order. Grace establishes the heart, but the worldly sanctuary leads it back again to meats.

Hence, then, we "worship God in the Spirit;" not in sentiment, not in refinement of the

imagination, not in fleshly wisdom or in fleshly power, but "in the Spirit." (Phil. iii. 3.) And this we are able to do, because the resurrection of Jesus has set aside the order of the flesh and of the world, and introduced us into the heavenly things themselves, and because the Holy Ghost has come to dwell in the Church on earth, from Jesus its Head, exalted in heaven. Any return, therefore, to a worldly sanctuary now must be as insulting to the Holy Spirit as it is contradictory of the finished work of Jesus.

But consider a moment longer how truly the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of grace. What is His blessed witness to us? Is it not to *grace accomplished in glory in heaven*? Jesus by His own blood has entered in once into the holy place, "having obtained eternal redemption." (Heb. ix. 12.) This it is which the Holy Ghost has revealed to us. Christ is there, and there "having obtained eternal redemption"; and He there appears "in the presence of God for us." (Heb. ix. 24.) What need we more than this? Can we not by faith see here the witness of our own present acceptance, and the pledge of our own glory? There then is the scene of our worship; there is our sanctuary, our only sanctuary. And it is into this scene of accomplished and abundant blessedness that the Spirit of God has come to lead our souls. "Set your affection on things above," is His unceasing exhortation to us. (Col. iii. 2.) May our hearts know more of the peace and glory of that heavenly sanctuary.

And what should be the characteristic of the worship of the heavenly sanctuary? Surely it should be praise; praise for accomplished redemption. And this sacrifice will not be wanting, if our

souls realize our heavenly portion. None, indeed, can withhold their tribute of praise, who really worship in that sanctuary. "Fulness of joy," and "pleasures for evermore," are at God's right hand; and every heart, led of the Spirit there, declares, "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever." (Ps. xvi. 11, lxxxix. 1.) "Eternal redemption" is the solid basis on which all such joy rests, "eternal redemption" found in the perfect work of Jesus, that work which He Himself ever presents on our behalf in heaven. "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart."

The "worldly sanctuary" knew nothing properly of praise. There was no ministry of song prescribed by Moses. He could sing with the children of Israel the song of redemption after passing the Red Sea; but it was *grace* which had brought them over; they sang the triumph of grace. (Exod. xv.) The "worldly sanctuary" had not then been ordered. In it there was nothing ever *accomplished*, and therefore it had no ground-work of *praise*. There was the constant repetition of the same services; the worshipper's conscience was unpurged; and hence he could never raise the voice of praise and thanksgiving. We speak of the tabernacle in the wilderness.

Few even of the strains of the sweet Psalmist of Israel were adapted to the temple service. That temple was a worldly sanctuary, and its blessings *earthly*; but the ministry of song went beyond all this, anticipating the full and accomplished blessing. Faith could sing then, only because reaching beyond the then present sanctuary.

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# WORDS OF TRUTH

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"The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words:  
and that which was written was upright, even words  
of truth" (Eccles. xii. 10).

## Friends of God.

**T**HE Lord Jesus speaks of this privilege as belonging, through divine riches of grace, to His saints, when He says, "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you." (John xv. 15.)

This friendship, this communication of secrets, gives a wondrous sense of gracious and confiding intimacy. When we pray we feel that we *need* something; when we serve, or when we worship, we judge that we *owe* something; at least that *He* is worthy; but when we are receiving communications (not commands as from a master, but communications as from a friend) we listen, without any necessary reflection upon our own condition, freed of all sense of either need or obligation. Our

proper attitude then is neither standing, like Martha, as to serve, nor kneeling, like Mary, to worship; but like Lazarus, sitting. (John xii. 2.)

The inspirations of a prophet are not equal to the divine communications which a friend receives. They do not intimate the same nearness or dignity. A prophet receives an inspiration as a vessel or oracle, and he may understand it or not; a friend *learns* secrets on the ground of *personal confidence*.

All the elect are, I grant, according to the grace and calling of God, endowed with this privilege; but among them, I believe, *Abraham, Moses, David, and John* had it very conspicuously. They illustrate it.

Abraham was told what the Lord was about to do with Sodom. "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" says the Lord; and then tells him of the business which was then taking Him down to Sodom. (Gen. xviii.)

What a moment that was! The Lord had come to Abraham's tent at Mamrè, and there sat at his table and his feast. The *Judge* of Sodom was communicating with the *conqueror* of Sodom; the divine Judge of that vile, reprobate place, conversing with him who had already, through faith and the victory of faith, refused all its offers.

Again I say, What a moment! And in the confidence which all this inspired Abraham drew near, and stood before the Lord, while the attendant angels withdrew and went on their way. Full of blessing indeed this is.

And so Moses in his day; for we read, "And the Lord spake with Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." (Exod. xxxiii. 11.)

Wonderful! The Lord dealt with Moses as a

man will deal with his friend. He talked with him. (v. 9.) We are not told what He said, because it is the business of the passage rather to exhibit this grace of intimacy, or divine friendship, than to convey information to us. But we do learn the use which Moses makes of this gracious friendship, the very same use which Abraham of old had made of it. He speaks to the Lord about others, just as Abraham had done. He pleads for Israel, as the patriarch had pleaded for Sodom. The Lord had approached Moses as His friend; He was not receiving him as His suitor or His debtor; it was fitting, therefore, that Moses should occupy the place and the moment in a manner which showed freedom from himself.

And never, I may say, was Moses nearer to the Lord, not even when on Pisgah He was showing the land to him in its length and breadth. Indeed the two places were of like elevation, for the Lord was communicating to Moses in each of them. Here He "talked" with him, there He "showed" him. In spirit they were the same place, and that the highest; such as he and Elijah afterwards filled on the holy mount; for there, as we again read, they "talked with Jesus." (Luke ix. 30.)

And so David, as we see in 1 Chron. xvii. David was a *penitent*, wearing sackcloth in the day of the plague, and going up Mount Olivet with dust on his head in the day of Absalom. He was a *worshipper*, too, singing and dancing, as he bore the ark of the Lord to Zion. But David was a *friend*, as Abraham and Moses had been. He received communications from the Lord through Nathan; and then, as one whom the Lord, in the ways of His grace, had thus endowed and privi-

leged, "he went in," as we read, and "sat before the Lord."

Beautiful and wonderful, but withal right. To have stood or to have knelt then would not have been obedient or holy; for holiness is consistency with God; and if He "mourn" we are to "lament": if He "pipe" we are to "dance"; if He convict and reprove us, we may be in sackcloth before Him; but if He deal with us face to face, as a man speaketh to a friend, we may and should sit before Him.

But again, John was the nearest to Jesus at the last supper. He lay on His bosom. And thus it was he who reached the secrets of that bosom. Peter in the distance *used* John's nearness, and the Lord *admitted its title*, and gave him the privilege of it. John pressed that bosom afresh, in the confidence of an Abraham or of a Moses, that the secret which was there would make itself his. (John xiii. 25.)

Surely all this tells us of the peculiar grace of this wondrous thing, this state and relationship of "friends" into which the Lord has called His saints. And we see the glorified saints in the full use and joy of this privilege; for on the holy hill (to which I have already, in a passing way, alluded) Moses and Elias "talked" with Jesus. Sharing the glory they knew the *privileges* of it, while Peter, beholding it, felt the *power* of it, saying, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." (Matt. xvii. 3, 4.)

It is not to present something strange or striking that I notice all this, but rather to aid the soul in assuring itself of that love wherewith the elect are loved; a love which gives us a place where, forgetting both our need and our obligation,



neither kneeling to supplicate nor standing to serve, we may sit to listen, and receive communications, as a man is talked with by his friend. And when we see this to be a way of His grace, we may be still conscious of slowness of heart in ourselves; but we cannot but know that we are in possession of a love on God's part which passes knowledge.

And here, let me add, that this privilege or grace of friendship, of which we speak, is *eminently* ours. It is illustrated in the apostleship of Paul. Paul was let into the secret which had been "hid in God" before the world was, the good pleasure which God had purposed in Himself. (Eph. i., iii.)

And this was not inspiration as of a prophet merely; it was divine communication as to a friend. For Paul *knew* the secret, and knew it for himself. This was more than a prophet. It was this ancient privilege of the elect, at which we have now been looking, but rising into its church-form or fulness. In our apostle, and so in us, this privilege takes us into strange and excellent intimacy. "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself." (Eph. i. 9.) And accordingly we "sit," as David of old did, or as Lazarus of Bethany did, but it is in "heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. ii. 6.)

This excelleth. Friendship, as we have seen, is no new form of grace. It has been among the privileges of the elect from the beginning. But with us it has peculiar elevation, as everything else has that belongs to the Church.

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## Teachings of the Psalms.

Book II, (Psalms xlii.—lxxii.)

**P**SALM xlii. commences the Second Book. The Remnant in this book is seen as cast out of Jerusalem, hence "God" is the name used by the Remnant, instead of the covenant name "Jehovah"; except where the psalm speaks of the future, and then we find "Jehovah." Hence we do not find Christ personally in this book, as we did in the last.

May we not apply parts of this psalm to Christ?

Only by analogy; and then it would apply only to the last days of His ministry out of Jerusalem, when He left Judæa, and went away again beyond Jordan, where John at first baptized. (John x. 40, xi. 54, xii. 36.) It is not His sufferings that we have here. We have had that in Ps. xxii. It is the Remnant cast out. "I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God." (v. 4.)

Ps. xliii. The Remnant is in this Psalm in the midst of hostile Israel.

Ps. xliv. Is the cry of Israel (that is, in the Remnant,) when cast out.

Ps. xlv. Here the Spirit introduces the Messiah coming in glory and power; taking the throne in judgment.

Ps. xlvi. Consequently the Remnant say, now that Messiah is come, "God is our refuge and strength." He whom they had looked at abstractedly as God is become their covenant God, and they can say, "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." God is in the midst of her, and He is Jehovah of hosts.

We may notice a beautiful progress in these

psalms. In Ps. xlii. the Remnant first say, "I shall yet praise Him for the help of *His* countenance." (v. 5.) And at the end of the psalm, "I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of *my* countenance." (v. 11.) The light of God's countenance shining upon him makes his own face shine.

Ps. xlvii. Messiah being come, and as Jehovah becoming their refuge, they look for the bright results of God's glory on the earth, in subduing the nations under them.

Ps. xlviii. Zion is set up now, and becomes the praise of all the earth; and the kings that assembled together against her are troubled, and haste away.

Remark a beautiful progress in this psalm. In Ps. xlii. they remember, when cast out of Jerusalem, how they used to go "to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday." (v. 4.) In this psalm they are there. In Psalm xliii. 3 they cry, "O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles." Now they say, "We have thought of Thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of Thy temple." (v. 9.) Again in Ps. xliv. 1, they say, "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work Thou didst in their days, in the times of old." Now their language is, "As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts; in the city of our God." (v. 8.)

Ps. xlix. This psalm is a kind of divine commentary on it all; showing that men have been set up and put down, just as God pleases. Human power cannot redeem from death; the pride of this

world is nothing. This psalm gives us the putting down of man; all that he is in honour death lays hold of.

What is the meaning of "The redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever"? (v. 8.)

That man cannot redeem from death. He must "give it up as a bad job," as we say, and there is an end of it: "It ceaseth for ever."

Do we get resurrection in v. 15?

The preservation is left vague here. The immediate hope would be of preserving life, but it would meet with the fullest and securest hope those that might be slain.

But does not God's redeeming the soul from the power of the grave imply resurrection?

No. You may redeem by hindering from death, or bringing up from it. The saint is preserved on earth. It is not heaven.

Ps. l. God summons all the people to judgment when He comes.

Ps. li. Here we have the Remnant taking upon themselves the sin of the nation in rejecting Christ, and putting Him to death. It is the confession of blood-guiltiness.

Pss. lii.—lxvii. Are a series, containing general principles expressed by the Remnant consequent upon the circumstances they are in as in Ps. li. Towards the end we see that they are getting out of their difficulties. So in Ps. lxv. they are going to Zion, and praise is waiting for their God there. In Ps. lxvi. they are let in, and they begin to praise.

In Ps. lxvii. blessing stretches out to every one else, though here it is prophetic only.

Ps. lxviii. Christ is ascended, and is going to

dwell amongst them as Jehovah. Paul, in quoting v. 18 in Eph. iv., stops half-way. Here we have gifts for the rebellious also ; that is, for Israel, that the Lord God might dwell among them. In verses 24-29 we find that their Processions are restored. The people are really established.

Ps. lxxix. Here we have the sufferings of the Lord as the foundation of all the blessing. They are Christ's sorrows, from the beginning to the end of His glory. Verse 5 is Christ, as the High Priest, confessing the sins of the people on the day of atonement. He is taking the Remnant's place.

What does it mean, "Then I restored that which I took not away"?

Why, that Christ is taking the place of others ! We should all have been lost if Christ had not taken these words into His mouth. The sufferings of Christ are the foundation of all the blessings in the Psalms.

Do we have the atonement here?

The psalm does not take up that view of the sufferings. We have had that in Ps. xxii. But though we have not the atonement here, we get that which made atonement, and the psalm ends with the glory and blessing of Israel.

Ps. lxx. You get back from the glory of Israel to the poor man.

In Ps. lxxi. it is the poor man still.

Then in Ps. lxxii. we have Christ as Son of David in His Solomon character, looked at in His reign of glory.

What is the force of "Prayer also shall be made for him continually"? (v. 15.)

They are aspirations. the whole psalm is prophetic. Ps. viii. goes out wider, for there

Christ is Son of man. Here He is Son of David, and so the psalm ends, for when David's Son reigns in glory, David's prayers are ended.

Why is "son of Jesse" added? Because Christ was David's Son after the flesh.

This book gives us the Remnant driven out of Jerusalem, and, in the end, their rest anticipatively and prophetically under Messiah as Son of David.

We have their condition as driven out in the first part, and, at the end, their rest under Messiah.

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### **Papers on Worship. No. 17.**

**B**UT faith sings now because in its present sanctuary it finds the themes of everlasting praises. Grace and glory, deliverance and victory, the wondrous salvation of God Himself, are there the subjects of unceasing praise; for their accomplishment is witnessed by the presence there in glory of our Forerunner Himself. (Heb. iv. 14, vi. 19, 20.)

Can that heart be tuned to praise which is taught its need of a daily absolution from the lips of another? Can such a soul sing, in the Spirit and with the understanding, psalms and hymns and spiritual songs? (Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16.) Can an unpurged conscience praise? Such things are impossible. For is not the very act of worship regarded as a duty required by God, and so rendered under a sense of *law*, instead of a blessed privilege arising from the perception and enjoyment of mercy from everlasting to everlasting? The apostle teaches us to give "thanks to Him" who hath made us meet to be partakers of the

inheritance of the saints in light.” (Col. i. 12.) This shows the true ground of thanksgiving and praise to be what grace has accomplished for us in Christ. But if this is not seen and remembered, worship must become a burden instead of our highest privilege. And do we not see that Christians regard the teaching and preaching with which God blesses them far more highly than worship? This is a sure consequence of not remembering the sanctuary in which we worship. Let the soul realize this, and it will instantly perceive what are its grounds of praise, and what the character of its worship. But if a “worldly sanctuary” is established, or the order of a “worldly sanctuary” is introduced, our worship must be degraded, and our souls become lean. Such results must ensue if we take for our pattern the “worldly sanctuary,” instead of by faith, and as led of the Spirit, entering into that which is heavenly. There all is done. There we have subject for praise only.

It would indeed tend greatly both to comfort and elevate our souls, if we realized the unclouded prospect before us. That which is before us is proper to us only as redeemed to God by the blood of the Lamb, and as born of God. (1 Pet. i. 18-23.) The present, whether sorrowful or pleasant, is only to be regarded as the times that pass over us, or through which we have to go as we are on the way to our entering into our rest. The present good things and evil things are alike to faith old things which have passed away, because “faith is the substance of things *hoped for*.” (Heb. xi. 1.) And only the things “hoped for” are substantial, permanent, unshaken, and satisfying. Every desire of good which man is seeking to realize

now, the saint knows can only be realized when Jesus is manifested in glory with His saints. He has to calculate on disappointment in all circumstances, while he most blessedly learns that hope in the Lord in the midst of all circumstances never disappoints. Often indeed, in his pilgrimage through present things, will he have to say, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?" But still, he knows in whom he has believed, and can say, "Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God." But whilst there is the cheering thought of God's commanding His loving-kindness in the day-time, yet the soul is stayed by the prospect of the uninterrupted light of God's countenance, by the prospect, not of occasional, but of uninterrupted, praise.

The true spirit of worship would lead us on into this holy scene. Our present privileges are only ours now, because of what the grace of God has made us to be before Him. God calleth things that are not as though they were. Sons before Him in Christ, and predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ, we have the spirit of sons now. Kings and priests unto God, because washed already in the blood of Jesus, we have the spirit of praise given to us now. Hence it is the things which are to come with which we have to do. If we speak of the world, it is the world *to come* of which we speak; that is, our world, the world subjected to us, and blessed by us. We know the present world as being given into other hands, and therefore it is only the scene of our trial. If we speak of man, and of God being well-pleased in men, we speak of Him that is to come, of whom Adam was a type. (Rom. v. 14.) If we speak of



“good things,” they are not the good things in this life, but good things to come. There is “the evil to come,” out of which the righteous are taken; there are the good things to come, which the righteous enjoy. The rich man might remember that he in his lifetime had his good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things. And there might have been even thankfulness for the good things; but there was no enjoyment of God, no real worship of Him as far above all the blessings He had given. This is the real spirit of worship, even when in the actual possession of all that God can give; yea, when glorified ourselves, to be able to see in God, and own in Him, something far more blessed than anything that we have or can have; and to find the knowledge of Him, and the enjoyment of Him, to be indeed the pleasures which are at His right hand for evermore. (Ps. xvi. 11.)

We find the worship of Israel based upon God’s accomplished faithfulness in their enjoyment of *present good things*. This was prescribed for them of God in the wilderness, but it only took effect in the land. Israel, as God’s constituted worshipping people, had to do with the priest in questions of sin, both in the wilderness and in the land; but the *joy* of worship was not known by them whilst they were in the wilderness.

It was thus the ordinance ran: “And it shall be, when thou art *come in unto the land* which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein; that thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God

God shall choose to place His name there. And thou shalt go *unto the priest* that shall be in those days, and say unto him, *I profess this day unto the Lord thy God, that I am come unto the country which the Lord sware unto our fathers for to give us. And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of the Lord thy God.*" (Deut. xxvi. 1-4.)

Here we have Israel's profession, the profession of the grace which had brought him into the present possession of the land, and of the enjoyment of the fruits of it. We have also the priest of Israel's profession, not occupied about details of sin, but more happily occupied in presenting the thanksgiving of the worshipper in the basket of first-fruits before the altar of the Lord. This must have been the priest's most blessed service.

Next comes the confession of the worshipper : " And thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God, *A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, . . . and the Lord . . . brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which Thou, O Lord, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God: and thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given thee.*" (vv. 5-11.)

How blessedly was the soul led of God to worship and joy ! There was no element of law here, but only the thought of grace ; the sense of personal unworthiness only tending to the magnifying the grace of God which had regarded the affliction and oppression of the poor destitute ; redemption ascribed solely to the power of God, and not

only known as deliverance from present misery, but as introduction into present blessing; and then the blessings actually enjoyed leading on still to the acknowledgment of God who had given them: "And now I have brought the first-fruits of the land, *which Thou, O Lord, hast given me.*"

This is the true spirit of worship. The soul is led from the blessing enjoyed to Him who is blessed for evermore; from the gift to the Giver. The joy will not be less in the gift because there is also the acknowledgment of the Giver.

"Thou shalt worship before the Lord thy God." This is the first thing. "And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given thee."

The spirit of false worship is to rejoice in the work of one's hands; and so we read: "They made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the work of their own hands." (Acts vii. 41,) But in true worship God Himself is the glory of the worshipper; it is in Him that the soul makes her boast. There could not be an ordinance of more joy to Israel than this of the basket of first-fruits: this profession was indeed a blessed one, and the coming to the priest on such an occasion must have expanded their hearts with thankfulness.

But now the Great High Priest is passed into the heavens. And whilst His service there meets all our present necessities, His priesthood connects our souls with good things to come. And we coming to Him by faith now are enabled to make our profession, and to present our basket of first-fruits, and to worship before the Lord, and to rejoice. It was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob, to sing aloud unto God their

strength. (Ps. lxxxi. 1.) And is it not equally our statute, and the law of our God unto us, to "rejoice evermore"? (1 Thess. v. 16.) But then we must worship before the Lord first. We must be in the attitude of worshippers, in order to be able to rejoice before the Lord, and rejoice in His own blessings.

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Abba, Father, we approach Thee  
 In our Saviour's precious name;  
 We, Thy children, here assembling,  
 Now the promised blessing claim.  
 From our guilt His blood has washed us,  
 'Tis through Him our souls draw nigh;  
 And Thy Spirit too has taught us  
 Abba, Father, thus to cry.

Once as prodigals we wandered  
 In our folly far from Thee;  
 But Thy grace, o'er sin abounding,  
 Rescued us from misery;  
 Thou the prodigals hast pardoned,  
 "Kissed" us with a Father's love;  
 "Killed the fatted calf," and called us  
 E'er to dwell with The above.

Clothed in garments of salvation,  
 At Thy table is our place;  
 We rejoice, and Thou rejoicest,  
 In the riches of Thy grace.  
 "It is meet," we hear Thee saying,  
 "We should merry be and glad;  
 I have found my once lost children,  
 Now they live who once were dead."

Abba, Father, we adore Thee,  
 While the hosts in heaven above  
 E'en in us now learn the wonders  
 Of Thy wisdom, grace and love.  
 Soon before Thy throne assembled,  
 All Thy children shall proclaim;  
 Abba's love as shown in Jesus,  
 And how full is Abba's name.

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# WORDS OF TRUTH

"The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words  
and that which was written was upright, even words  
of truth" (Eccles. xii. 10).

## Some Expressions of Divine Grace.

**T**HE heart (if I may so express it) enters heaven when it listens in faith to the story or tale of grace. The work and fruit of grace is all our title to heaven itself by and by. The story or tale of grace, listened to by faith, is all our way, and our only way, into heaven in spirit now.

The self-judgings of the holy principle, and the doings and obedience of the righteous principle, in us, are good and needful; but it is not the property of such things to lead us to and seat us in heaven. It is the silent attitude of faith listening to the story of the grace of God that constitutes the present heaven of the soul.

We have some illustrations of this silent listening of faith, while grace is rehearsing or exercising itself, given us in Scripture.

Look at Genesis iii. The Lord God speaks to Adam, among the trees of the garden, of present penalties on him and his wife. But in His words to the serpent, He lets fall on Adam's ear the tale of grace, which told him that the charm of the serpent's promise should be broken; that instead of alliance between the deceiver and deceived, there should be enmity; and that in that enmity the one who stood for the deceived (God's gift also) should at all personal cost be fully and gloriously the conqueror.

To this tale of gospel grace Adam listens, listens in silence. There is nothing else for him. But, through the Spirit, this so works on his soul that he comes forth from his distance into God's presence; and his heart is so filled with the tale of grace, and with that only, that he seems altogether to forget the present penalty. He comes forth, calling his wife "the mother of all living," thus owning the mystery which had been revealed to him, and that only.

This is full of blessing. This is a beautiful illustration of the virtue that lies in a believing, silent listening to the tale or story of grace. Adam was born in spirit, not only away from that distance into which sin and guilt and conscience had driven him, but beyond the fear or thought of present sorrow, to which his history in the world was about to expose him. He was as at the gate of heaven in spirit.

Look again at Zechariah iii. Joshua, the high priest, is before the angel of the Lord, and Joshua's accuser or adversary is there also. Joshua appears in all defilement and degradation. The tattered garments of a prodigal but poorly hide his shame and nakedness; nay, they rather

witness and publish it. He has nothing to say for himself, and his only wisdom is not to attempt or affect anything. He is deeply and thoroughly silent.

But there is One in the scene who can speak, and does speak. And Joshua *listens*.

And what does the listening Joshua hear? What tale falls on the ear of this polluted one, whose very pollutions make him dumb?

The same precious story of grace. For Joshua (in his filthy garments) hears the Lord Himself, none other or less than He, rebuking his accuser. He hears the same Lord humbling him as a brand fitted for the burning, no better than a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction. But he hears at the same time that he was *chosen*, and that all the provisions of the house of the Lord were to be used for him, and the servants of the house commanded to be active and to stir themselves for him.

This is the tale of grace which the silent, listening sinner hears. And what a gate of heaven that moment was to him! To Joshua, in spirit, heaven had now opened itself, and he enters and sits there.

Look at the same heaven opened again in Luke xv. The earth had shown itself a scene of thorough weariness and disappointment to the heart and mind of Christ, as we see in chapter xiv.

It was not because it was the place of either violence or fraud, of either the lion or the serpent. The varied moral scenery of chapter xiv. had been laid in the religion and in the social friendliness of the human family. Nothing coarse or repulsive had marked it, no blood had stained it, or guile of the serpent disfigured it.

But the heart of Christ takes its journey through

it all, grieved, wearied, and disappointed, and nothing gives Him rest or refreshment till sinners and publicans come and hear Him (xv. 1.)

Oh ! the blessedness of such an attitude and moment both to Him and to us ! There it is that we (and the spirit of Jesus wearied with man) gain the bright heaven of God. Jesus left the Pharisees' feast and the company of an admiring, following multitude, and now found Himself *listened to* by sinners, not followed by a crowd that had miscalculated their strength to be on such a road, but listened to by poor harlots and publicans, who had nothing to give, nothing to promise, nothing to undertake or pledge for themselves, but who came only for what they could get from Christ's stores of boundless grace. And therefore heaven opens itself, and the parables which listening faith is invited to hear tell of heaven's joy over listening sinners.

When the Lord had read from the sixty-first of Isaiah, that wonderful scripture which publishes the riches of goodness or grace, *He closed the book* (Luke iv. 20.)

This action was full of meaning, and of comfort too. It tells us that when Jesus had caused us to hear the tale or story of grace, He had discharged His ministry. And that story (if listened to and received by faith) would be everything to us ; and, in a fine sense, *we might close the Book*, as Jesus did ; we might pause, and muse, and meditate, and again and again turn in our minds this one happy, powerful, elevating tale of grace. It would work liberty, and joy, and confidence, and real gospel sanctification for us and in us (through the Spirit), as it has done in thousands of sinners like us.



But as this tale of grace is listened to in *silence*, so it is to be listened to in *solitude*. We are not only to listen while God Himself rehearses it to us in the gospel, but we are to be there *alone* with Him, apart from our fellow-creatures. It is to be between God and our own souls. We are not to think of others at all. It would disturb the soul in such a sacred moment. For the thought of others might ensnare us. We might remember their excellency and strength beyond our measure, and be led to fear and to unbelief.

Therefore, as we are to be *silent before God*, thus speaking in grace, so are we to be *alone with Him*; that is, our fellow-creatures, as well as ourselves, are to be set aside; for God is to be everything when the question of our peace is to be transacted.

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## Teachings of the Psalms.

Book III. (Psalms lxxiii.-lxxxix.)

**I**N this third book the general interests of Israel are in view in connection with the house of David.

The house of David is distinct from Israel. Israel had failed in responsibility, and Israel was gone, as Israel, before David's time.

In the opening of the First Book of Samuel you will see that the *priesthood*, which was the relationship between the people of God, had utterly failed. The Ark of the Covenant falls into the hands of the Philistines, and "I-chabod" is the sentence pronounced upon the people. (1 Sam. iv. 21.)

Then we have *prophecy*, which is a sovereign

way of God's interposition to recall to relationship with Himself.

The history of David is grace working in power in a sovereign way, to bring in blessing, and to renew God's connection with Israel, resting now on the faithfulness of the house of David.

In this third book we shall get out to Israel, and find less personal connection with Christ, and more the general ways of God going out to all people.

Psalm lxxiii. We find this difference at once in the opening of this psalm : " Truly God is good to Israel." It is still the godly Remnant, but less connected with Christ. The saint is perplexed at the prosperity of the wicked. The body of the people is in unbelief. We know, from Isaiah xviii., the people will be brought back to their land in unbelief. In the fourth verse of that chapter the Lord keeps aloof, not acknowledging them; then the beasts of the earth and the fowls of heaven possess them. It is the inroad of the nations, but in v. 7 the Lord owns them, and the Remnant inherits Mount Zion. When Israel is *owned* you find in the prophets that the Assyrian is the enemy; and when Israel is *disowned* we have the Beast, as Nebuchadnezzar.

Psalm lxxiv. complains of the hostile desolation of the sanctuary, when rebuilt in the land. All public Jewish worship is laid low. You will find that the inquiry, " How long?" is a technical term in Prophets and Psalms, and in those who say it, it is a proof of faith. They know Jehovah will not give up His people. In the trouble faith cries, " How long?" because it knows there must be an end. You find it in Isaiah vi. : " Then said I, Lord, how long?" In Luke xviii. 8 the Lord says,

“When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” Such will be the condition into which the testimony will have fallen that there will be scarcely any amongst the Remnant with courage to say, “How long?” “Neither is there among us any who knoweth how long.” (v. 9.) But these psalms are written to prevent faith failing.

We have the Assyrian coming up to Jerusalem in this psalm. He comes up twice; the first time takes Jerusalem; the second time he finds the Lord there. You will find both in Isaiah. In chapter xxviii. the Assyrian takes the city, and in chapter xxix. he finds the Lord there.

Psalm lxxv. Here the Messiah is introduced as speaking, though the psalm commences with the Remnant. The judgments of God introduce Messiah to the kingdom. He is introduced as delivering the Remnant out of the difficulty. He receives the congregation; then upright judgment will be executed.

Psalm lxxvi. Here, by the intervention of Jehovah, we get the deliverance from the assembled kings, which we read of in Isaiah xxix.

Psalm lxxvii. Gives us the working of faith in this time of trouble. (vv. 9, 10.)

Psalm lxxviii. The Remnant trace back all the history of Israel, and how sovereign grace was brought in by David and Mount Zion, which gives the principle of God's grace delivering by power, when both Israel and Judah had totally failed in responsibility.

Psalm lxxix. This is the cry of the Remnant in Israel, when under the power of the hostile nations in the last days.

Psalm lxxix. This psalm is a striking example

of how their minds go back to Israel of old in the wilderness. (*v.* 2.) The three tribes, Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, were nearest the Ark, and when the camp moved these tribes were immediately next the Ark, behind the Tabernacle, and the Sanctuary went immediately before them on the march of the camp.

Have we any scripture to say when the Ten Tribes will return?

No. Ezekiel xxxvii. defines the *circumstances* of Israel's return, but not the *time*. In Ezekiel we have Judah and Israel his companions as one stick, distinguished from the *whole* house of Israel in the other stick. (*v.* 16.) We have at the Lord's first coming, Simeon and Anna of the tribe of Asher, among the godly Remnant, waiting for redemption in Israel. (Luke ii.)

How far do the Remnant know Christ as the "Man of Thy right hand." (Ps. lxxx. 17)?

I cannot tell. It is all for them, but probably, as is the case with us, it will differ in every one according to the measure of spiritual intelligence in each.

The only things as a matter of revelation which are not in the Old Testament are the Church, and the heavenly Priesthood of Christ.

The cry of the psalm is occasioned by the great distress of Israel (*vv.* 12, 13.) You must remember that Babylon and Assyria, in the last days, are one against another. Anti-Christ is the Imperial Roman Beast's lieutenant in Judæa. Assyria resists the Beast, and all nations come up. Gog is the Assyrian of the last days; the territory now occupied by Russia. We have in Ezekiel the "Prince of Rosh," (translated "chief prince") "Meshech and Tubal."

Psalm lxxxi. celebrates the coming in of God. The new moon is the symbol of Israel re-appearing on the scene : the *new*, not the *full*, moon. It is their restoration before the Day of Atonement, not their full blessing. (Lev. xvi.)

In Lev. xxiii., which records the seven feasts, there is a long interval after the Passover and the feast of Pentecost, when there is no feast at all. In the seventh month, which gives us complete fulfilled time, we find the feast of Trumpets followed by the Day of Atonement, and the feast of Tabernacles, which last brings in the Millennium.

In this psalm, then, we have Israel coming again on the scene. They had failed when redeemed out of Egypt of old ; still they would appear again to reflect the light of Jehovah's countenance.

Psalm lxxxii. is the Messiah judging among the authorities of all the world. He judges among the gods of Israel, and then the world ; and He inherits all nations.

Psalm lxxxiii. The last conspiracy is judged in Idumæa ; the Assyrian joins, and then men know that Jehovah is Most High over all the earth. Melchizedek gave Him this title, when he was His priest upon earth. It is not a title of proper relationship. He was the " Almighty " with the fathers, " Jehovah " with Israel ; He is the " Father " with us. He will be the " Most High over all the earth " in the Millennium. Up to this psalm, save when looking back or looking forward, the cry of the people, as not being in possession of covenant blessings, is addressed to " God."

Psalm lxxxiv. As the result of v. 18 in the previous psalm, we see them in this going to Jerusalem to worship. " Assur," mentioned in

v. 8 of Psalm lxxxiii., is destroyed, and so they can come into Jerusalem again.

Psalm lxxxv. In all the psalms now we are in this time of war and deliverance. Still the deliverance they celebrate is prophetic, for after all they are ushered into in spirit they say, "Show us Thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us Thy salvation." (v. 7.) They are back in the land, and yet are looking for full deliverance, prophetically.

Psalm lxxxvi. Here the psalmist triumphs in Jehovah, and is looking for Jehovah in the midst of his troubles.

Psalm lxxxvii. He boasts in Zion in contrast with all the other places of man's pride. God's people are born there. Doubtless v. 6 refers to Christ Himself.

Is this the Millennium?

No. It is prophesied of, but you never get it *come* in the Psalms, nor yet in Daniel. Prophecy is not needed when we are in the blessing!

Psalm lxxxviii. Here the Remnant is in the depth of conviction of sin under the law.

Psalm lxxxix. Takes up God's mercies, and we find Christ comes in, and that they all centre in Him. (v. 19.) "Then Thou spakest in vision to Thy *Holy One*" (same word as that translated *mercy* in v. 1.) In v. 18 the "Holy One" is really Jehovah, and another word altogether. It is here the cutting off of David's house on the ground of failure under responsibility, and then taking it up again in Christ. When Messiah came He ought to have been received, and so He would have established David's house. But He was rejected, and the house of David was judged. But here it is set up in Christ, the centre of God's mercy. So in the Acts we have Christ in resurrec-

tion as "the sure mercies of David." (Acts xiii. 34.)

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## Papers on Worship. No. 18.

(Conclusion.)

**F**IRST, we have our profession connected with priesthood. "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider *the . . . High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.*" (Heb. iii. 1.) Our worship is based on our profession, and our profession is maintained by the priesthood of Jesus. "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." (Heb. iv. 14.) It is indeed a lofty profession that we make. "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (Rev. i. 5, 6.) This is our profession *now*. Glory will be the actual exercise of that which grace has made us to be.

"By grace ye *are* saved." (Eph. ii. 5, 8.) Before God we stand as His own grace has made us; not as we know ourselves to be in our actual circumstances. We are even now blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. (Eph. i. 3.) It is the Spirit alone who makes us to know, and gives us to enjoy, these blessings here, which are freely given us of God. (1 Cor. ii. 12.) We are not in the inheritance which God has made ours, but we have the Holy Spirit of

promise as the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession. (Eph. i. 13.) The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of promise, and Jesus is the High Priest of "good things to come." The Holy Spirit comforts now by showing "things to come," such as eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man. (John xvi. 13; 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.) But when we look to Jesus, we see Him already entered into the "good things" and entered there for us. It is one of the "good things to come" that "the world to come" is to be subject to Christ and His saints. We do not yet see all things subject to Him, but *we do see Jesus*, who was made a little lower than the angels, *on account of suffering death*, crowned with glory and honour. It is thus that His exaltation maintains us in the profession, that we shall judge the world. (Heb. ii. 5-9.) "God now commands all men everywhere to repent," upon the ground that He is about to "judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance to all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." (Acts xvii. 30, 31.) As risen, He is to judge the world in righteousness; but He has tasted death for us, and as risen, too, we shall reign with Him, and order this world in righteousness. (Rev. xx. 6.) What a solemn joy would the spirit of real worship afford to the soul if it were thus connected with coming good things! It would exalt, it would sanctify, at the very time the soul was owning its absolute dependence on grace. "A Syrian ready to perish" would be the real expression of that soul. (Deut. xxvi. 5.) A sinner once dead in trespasses and sins, quickened by God's



grace, and brought into union with Christ, would never forget his own previous condition, and would gladly remember it, to ascribe worthiness to Him to whom alone it is due : " Thou art worthy ; . . . for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, . . . and made us unto our God kings and priests ; and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. v. 9, 10.)

To be actually in the sanctuary before God is one of the " good things to come." But hope carries us there now, because Jesus the Forerunner is there for us already entered. We are exhorted to hold fast "*the profession of our hope* without wavering." (Heb. x. 23.) Our hope is actually to be where Jesus is for us now. But in spirit we can worship as being there, because Jesus is there for us ; He is a " High Priest of good things to come." It is that which we hope for which stamps our character on us. It is so in man ; the object he aims at gives the mould to his character.

And this is most blessedly true of the saint. " It hath not been yet manifested what we shall be, but we know that, when He [Jesus] shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every one that hath this hope in Him [Jesus, that is,] purifieth himself, even as He is pure." (1 John iii. 2, 3.) If there be hesitation in our souls as to the accomplished work of Christ, that He has by Himself purged our sins ; if we consider not the High Priest of our profession as exercising His ministry for us as already brought nigh to God by the blood He has shed, so that our hope be pardon and acquittal rather than glory, it will stamp its character on our worship, and make it cold and distant. Neither shall we see the purification of the sanctuary as our purifica-

tion, but shall be content with the standard of conventional righteousness.

How deeply important it is to recognize our profession as a profession of "hope," and to own the priesthood of Jesus, not only as meeting all present failure, but as enabling us to maintain our profession of things hoped for! (Heb. xi. 1.) We can and we ought to come before God as those who can now say, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: *Thou maintainest my lot.* The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." (Ps. xvi. 5, 6.) This is our basket of first-fruits; for faith is the substance of things hoped for." (Heb. xi.)

God would not have us to wait till we are manifested as sons in order to enter on our happy worship of the Father; but, whilst we are sons thus in hope, by having the spirit of sons given to us, and having Jesus the Son before God, we can cry, Abba, Father, even now. How truly are we saved in "hope"! (Rom. viii. 24.) How needful is it now, for our soul's strength and joy, to have Jesus for us in heaven, and the Holy Spirit in us here, that we might both hold fast our profession, and use it now in holy worship!

We know, because of having the first-fruits of the Spirit, what it is to groan within ourselves, and these painful groanings would hinder the maintenance of our profession; but then Jesus is on high for us, and we only wait His coming forth to be manifested in all that which we profess already to have received. Then we shall have, not only the Spirit of adoption, but the adoption itself, standing in our own proper place as sons, even in fully manifested heavenly glory. We anticipate this place now, because Jesus the Son of God is

passed into the heavens, and when the "good things to come" are actually ours in possession and enjoyment, our worship will still be in Him and through Him.

We know so painfully the need of Jesus as the High Priest that can have compassion on the ignorant and those that are out of the way, that our souls little reach forth to the "good things to come," so as to give its high and cheering character to our worship. He stoops down to our necessities, and washes our feet; but how little do we consider Him as the High Priest of our profession, and all the "good things to come" which that profession involves!

It is one sad mark of declension, that this very word "profession" has become of such equivocal signification. It is often taken to imply that we are not in truth what we profess to be. But it is a blessed word. All that God by His grace has made us to be in Christ, which will only be manifested in glory, we profess to be now; and the priesthood of Jesus enables us to maintain our profession. All the "good things" which He by His grace has given to us, God reveals to us by His Spirit now, and therefore we worship God in the spirit now, on the very ground of being already blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We wait not to be blessed; we are already blessed. All that God has made Christ to be unto us, unseen, unmanifested, and only taught the soul by God Himself, we take up now, and say, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." (2 Cor. ix. 15.) Our profession involves all that we are in Christ, all that Christ is unto us, and all the "good things" that God has prepared for them that love Him.

Surely we have a basket of first-fruits indeed to bring now to the Priest to present to the Lord. (Deut. xxvi. 1-4.) And is it not often so in the season when the soul first has known liberty? Has there not been the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness? (Isa. lxi. 3.) And the soul has said, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." (Ps. ciii. 2.) But we often forget them; and when the soul comes to be exercised in the truth before God, proving what sin really is; when it becomes acquainted with the deceitfulness as well as the desperate wickedness of the heart, the joy is frequently turned into mourning.

But here it is that we find peculiarly the value of Christ as the High Priest of "good things to come." Whilst the soul is learning experimentally the need of His present ministry in meeting present failure, how blessedly is it led on through the priesthood of Jesus to the time of undisturbed worship and of unhindered praise before God! No sin will there be then to confess, but only praise for mercy and grace accomplished in glory.

This is the value of His being the "High Priest of good things to come," that even *now* it can be said to us, "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, making confession in His name." (Heb. xiii. 15.)

"I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth." (Ps. xxxiv. 1.) For in the midst of our changeableness, Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." (Heb. xiii. 8.)

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# WORDS OF TRUTH

“The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words  
and that which was written was upright, even words  
of truth” (Eccles. xii. 10).

## “The Harps of God.”

(Revelation xiv., xv.)

ONE wondrous thing which may present itself to us in the Book of Revelation is the combination of joys and terrors. The book is full of these combinations; and yet to nature, to the sense of flesh and blood, to the common sensibilities of the heart, such a combination is strange.

And yet so it is. Seals are broken, and judgments take their course.

Trumpets are blown, and again judgments follow. Vials are poured out, and the horrors of the scene are only aggravated.

But joys, and songs, and shouts of congratulation, and the harps of harpers, are heard from beginning to end, all along the line of these awful visitations. From the doxology that we listen to in chapter i, down to the abounding and repeated

exultations in chapter xix., we listen to these joys and praises.

But further. In the progress of this book we may see the furnishing of the heavens and of the earth as they are to be in the millennial age.

Of old, heaven was the dwelling-place of *angels*. I mean, that is the condition in which we see the heavens in Old Testament days. Jacob's vision of the ladder, and many other scenes, as well as passages of Scripture without number, let us know this.

But when the Lord Jesus had ascended, heaven became the dwelling-place of *glorified Man*, as well as of angels. This was a further furnishing of it. Stephen saw it in that condition.

As soon as we read the fourth chapter of this Book of Revelation we find that the same heaven has become the habitation of *translated saints*. The living creatures and the enthroned elders are there; and all through the action of the book, from that moment, they continue there.

Then in the fourteenth chapter we find other companies of saints joining them, and harping with their harps before the living creatures and the elders, as well as before the throne. This shows us heaven in new and wondrous conditions, heaven peopled with others besides angels, who excel in strength, and who kept their first estate, even with redeemed sinners the witnesses of grace. And earth is to be furnished as well as heaven. The opening of this fourteenth chapter shows us the beginning of that work; for there we see the "first fruits," the pledge and sample of that people who are to fill and furnish the earth in the days of the kingdom, or, as we call it, the Millennium. They are learners of the song

## “ THE HARPS OF GOD.”

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that is sung in heaven. They know the joy of *listening*, if others know the higher joy of *singing*. And not only do they listen, but they learn. They know what is harped on the harps of God on high.

With such a people as this, the earth begins to be furnished for its millennial condition. This company of a hundred and forty-four thousand is the first fruits of those who are by and by to occupy the “ footstool ” in the days of the kingdom. (Matt. v. 35.)

And here we may observe there will be a link between the millennial heavens and earth; and the Lamb will form it. It is because this company on Mount Zion are with the Lamb that therefore they understand and share the joys which the heavens know. As there will be a place on earth for the eye to feast itself in the sight of the heavenly glory, so, as we see here, there will be a place for the ear to delight itself in the hearing of the heavenly music. The nations that are saved shall walk in the light of the Holy Jerusalem. (Rev. xxi. 24.) The company with the Lamb on Mount Zion listen to the harps of the harpers round the throne on high.

But of these harpers themselves we must speak a little further. As I have before observed, they are not before “ the throne ” only, but before the four living creatures and the elders. They form a new company in heaven, being (as I judge) the saints martyred before the fifth seal, and to whom “ white robes ” are given. (vi. 9-11.) They are raised and glorified, translated to heaven; and there are (as we find from this scripture, Rev. xiv. 2) given to them harps, like the living creatures and elders themselves, and like them, also,

they sing the new song (v. 8, 9, and xiv. 3), with this difference, as I have just hinted, they sing it before the living creatures and elders, as well as before the throne. The living creatures and elders had sung it in worshipping the Lamb.

Perfect and beautiful in its variety, as well as in its order, is all this heavenly scenery. But as we look off from the harpers to consider the one hundred and forty-four thousand, we still see something beautiful and perfect in its place. This company is in the midst of troubles; the vials are about to be discharged, as the trumpets have now all been sounded. They are in the thick and midst of fearful sights, troubles, visitations, and judgments, such as might well occupy the heart and fill it with terror and forebodings; but they are at leisure from it all, free in their spirits to listen to the voice of joy and worship in heaven. They have deeply retired into the presence of Christ, and their hearts are at leisure to be in company with the calm and the sunshine of heaven, though earth and its terrible circumstances are around them.

This is blessed. How little we know of such leisure by reason of retirement into the presence of Christ! How quickly does the presence of circumstances get the mastery and give all its occupations to our timid hearts! Jehoshaphat's army knew this. The Psalmist now and again seems to anticipate the way and experience of the Remnant (the saved Remnant of Israel) in these closing days of their history, before the kingdom comes. Isaiah says: "And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the Lord shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps." (Isaiah xxx. 32.) But this as we pass



on.

At verse 6 of this chapter we are in the world again, neither in heaven with the harpers, nor on Zion with the one hundred and forty-four thousand. Upon this a voice from heaven addresses John, and says to him, “ Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth ”, the Spirit affirming this, and giving this blessedness its character, saying, “ Yea, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” (xiv. 9.)

That is, those who are martyred in that day, who “ die in the Lord,” are to enjoy an order of blessedness beyond those who outlive that day, inasmuch as they have *reward* as well as *rest*.

John is then given another vision. He sees the reaping of the earth, and the gathering of the vine of the earth, and the casting of them by an angel into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. These actions, I believe, symbolize the setting of the earth in holy order, and in righteousness as for the kingdom. This is as the severance of the tares from the wheat, or the gathering of the good into baskets, and the casting of the bad away, as we read in Matthew xiii. . . .

These actions of reaping the harvest and gathering the vintage close chapter xiv.

After this we are called for another moment up to heaven again. Such is the varied action and scenery of the book. A sea of glass was seen before the throne in chapter iv., but it was then unoccupied; now it is filled, as this passage (xv. 1-4) shows us; filled, I judge, by a company who have been sufferers unto death under the Beast; and therefore it is that this sea of glass is seen by John as “ mingled with fire ”; for those who

stand upon it are not merely conquerors, but conquerors *through death*, martyr conquerors, through martyrdom, or fire: they had refused to take the mark of the Beast in the crisis of the world's history.

They owned Him from whom the world had revolted, and which world was then in its hour of fullest pride and daring. They had fallen victims to it, having loved not their lives unto the death. Like their Lord, they had resisted unto blood; like Him they were martyred; and, accordingly, they stand in triumph now before the throne on high.

This is like Moses and the congregation of Israel on the banks of the Red Sea; they, therefore, sing his song, as we read here, "the Song of Moses"; that is, the song of victory. But Moses and the congregation were not martyrs; they had not fallen under the sword of Pharaoh, as this company had under the sword of the Beast. They were at the Red Sea a *living* people, who had left Egypt in defiance of all the strongest enmity of that land; and it was their *foes*, not themselves who had perished.

But this company on the sea of glass had been slain, martyred for their faithfulness to Christ, which Moses and his company had not been. They have therefore a song beyond the "Song of Moses," even "the Song of the Lamb." This song is a song of victory *through death*. Debtors to the blood of Jesus through redemption, and for all things, still, as saints, like their Lord, they had overcome the world by dying under its hatred and persecution; accordingly, it is theirs to sing the "Song of the Lamb," as well as the "Song of Moses." Theirs is a richer song than that of

Israel, just as they are standing on higher and more wondrous ground, not only on a “ sea of glass,” but a “ sea of glass mingled with fire.” . .

But when we reach this point heaven is, I may say, fully furnished. . . . The best companies have now reached it. The sea of glass, vacant before, is now occupied, and, like their brethren who were on high before them, whether the living creatures or crowned elders of chapter v., or the martyred saints under the fifth seal, this conquering band now receives harps to harp withal. But here fresh wonders break upon the apprehension of the soul. These harps are called “ harps of God.” Wondrous surely ! Harps made for their joy, now that they are enthroned in glory in heaven. As of old, at the beginning, coats had been made for their nakedness, when they were in their sins on earth (Gen. iii. 21), God Himself, as with His own hands, makes robes of righteousness to adorn us, to clothe us worthy of His own presence, sinners in ourselves as we are. And God Himself again, as with His own hands, makes instruments of joy to gladden, as to fill His own courts of glory with suited pleasures. . . .

God Himself serves us at the beginning of our history as self-ruined sinners, and at the end of our history as glorified saints. He serves us in our ruins and in our glories. As the Lord, in the day of His ministry, had healed us, and fed us, and washed our feet, so did He anticipate His ministry in the coming kingdom when He said of Himself, and of all His people, “ Verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth to serve them.” (Luke xii. 37.)

And if the Lord thus anticipates the day when He will serve us in our joy, we ought to anticipate that joy itself and even in spirit take our harps and sing,

“ Lord, I believe Thou hast prepared,  
Unworthy though I be,  
For me a blood-bought, free reward,  
*A Harp of God* for me !  
'Tis strung and tuned for endless years,  
And formed by power divine,  
To sound in God the Father's ears,  
No other name but Thine.”

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## **“The Last Adam, a Quickening Spirit.”**

(Read John xx. 2-23 ; 1 Cor. xv. 45.)

**I**N the twentieth chapter of John's Gospel we find the Lord Jesus in resurrection, consummating all that is found in the previous chapters of the Gospel.

He is here making known His resurrection, and the power of it in the midst of the congregation. He is standing in the solitude of resurrection; a solitary Man risen from among the dead. Alone !

There is none other such as He. He is fulfilling the twenty-second verse of the twenty-second Psalm. All the waves and billows of God's mighty judgment on sin have exhausted their strength on Him. (Ps. xlii. 7 ; Matt. xxvi. 38.) He has endured them in His soul. He is here as having come out from under this judgment, which

none but He could have risen out of. He has borne the judgment of God upon man, and He now stands in the midst of His disciples, making known His resurrection, and setting forth the results of His victory in the congregation, consummating all He had declared in the previous chapters of this Gospel. He is standing above the ruin of the first man, on the landing of resurrection.

Let us see how He reached it. We must look at Him going into other solitudes ere He reached it.

The world, as God made it, was ruined by man: he was the last thing made. The world is involved in the ruin which came in through man. Man filled it with corruption and violence, and God shrouded it in the judgment of the mighty waters of the Flood. (Gen. vi.-viii.)

Who is to repair the ruin? Who is to redeem it?

Christ, the Son of God comes in, to “ make all things new.” (Rev. xxi. 5.) The heavens and the earth were the first thing which God had created in the beginning. Now He begins the “ new creation ” with man. (Rev. iii. 14.)

He becomes a Babe in a manger; touches the weakest point of humanity; a “ babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.” (Luke ii. 12.)

He spends thirty years of His life in retirement, and then enters His ministry as God’s Servant in the midst of a world of sin.

Satan thereon comes to oppose Him. (Luke iv.) He overcomes Satan as God’s Servant, and Satan owns Him as Son of God (v. 41.)

For three years He walks in this solitude of

power as the Servant, declarative of God. "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father," declares Him. (John i. 18.) It is God exhibited in a world of woe. The poor and the wretched, the sinful and the vile, find in Him a relief from every burden, every sin. (Matt. xi. 28.) And yet He puts forth no power for Himself. The poor, and the vile ones of the earth, find in Him the heart of God.

In all this He is in the midst of men, in a distinct solitude all through. Not the Saviour yet, but the Servant; and so perfectly this, that at the end of His pathway He can say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (John xiv. 9.)

His hour then comes that He must depart out of this world to be with the Father. (John xiii. 1.) When His hour was come, He enters another solitude, but it is the solitude of misery and suffering. He says, as it were, "I'll now go where I'll be the Victim." (Matt. xxvi. 24.)

He had been in the solitude of power, anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, declarative of God, up to this. Now He says, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John xii. 24.)

There He accepts all that God's mighty judgment required against the first man; all that His righteousness demanded to put an end to the offending thing for ever.

Satan opposes Him in this, as formerly he had opposed Him as God's Servant. He now opposes Him as the Sacrifice, the Saviour. The Lord accepts the place of Victim. He says, "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done."

(Luke xxii. 42.) It was a solitude of suffering, in which He sought for comforters and found none.

Those who had followed Him in the time of His ministry, now “ all forsook him and fled.” (Mark xiv. 50.) They say, as it were, “ We are mistaken in the man.”

None could be with Him now. He was left alone. Yet not alone, He says, “ for the Father is with me.” Judas intrudes upon this mighty solitude with a betrayer’s kiss; and Jesus says, “ Good for that man if he had not been born.” All combine then, and bear down against Him. The world, Satan, religion, all! One of His disciples, too, denies Him to the enemy. He accepts it from the hand of God. He hid not His face from shame and spitting. He comes charged with this cup to the cross. There He bears the judgment of the sinner from God, and is forsaken of Him. He says, “ My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” (Matt. xxvii. 46.)

He consummates the work by His death. He goes down into death, under which the sinner lay; but rises out of that place, and we find Him in John xx. in the magnificence of His victory; a solitary Man, risen from among the dead; every enemy gone; occupied in dispensing the spoils of His victory; dispensing His blessings as the Risen One.

He had been in the solitude of power, manifesting God; in the solitude of suffering, in which He drained the cup of God’s judgment on man. He is now in the solitude of resurrection, making good in others the blessings of the victory He had achieved; saying, as it were, “ I will now make it all true in you.” “ Go to my brethren,

and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God.” (John xx. 17.)

He does two things as the Risen One.

1. He pronounces “Peace.” What does “peace” mean? It is peace on the other side of judgment. Many have a spurious peace, a satisfied feeling in their own hearts, which will some day pass away. Peace means that there is no hostile element that can ever rise again between the soul of the believer and God. Not peace because of victories, nor amidst enemies, but peace because of their overthrow, their destruction. Like Israel on the shores of the Red Sea, singing the song of triumph after their enemies were drowned in the depths of the sea: “The Lord . . . hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.” (Exod. xv. 1, 21.) This was the chorus of their song of triumph. Their enemies were defeated and destroyed. The Egyptians whom they had seen, they should see again no more for ever. They were drowned in the depths of the sea. They sank into the bottom as a stone. They sank as lead in the mighty waters. Every hostile element was gone; to rise up against them no more for ever.

Can you say you possess this peace with God? (Rom. v. 1.) It is the peace which Christ pronounces, after He had risen out of the waters of judgment. He dispenses it to His people as the Risen One, pronouncing “Peace.” All your enemies are gone; it is what belongs to you as the new race of which He is the Head; the “new creation” of God. The old race (the first man) is judicially ended before the eye of the Judge.



His righteousness demanded the end of the first Adam race, that His love might, without check or hindrance, flow out to those who believe. Every one “ in Christ ” is a “ new creation.” (2 Cor. v. 17.)

2. He now does another thing. You will find that the general desire of anxious souls is to get peace with God, so as to go on with an unburdened conscience in the world, the scene you are in. This is why the people like to hear of the forgiveness of sins, and peace. And they stop there; because this makes no demand upon them.

But Christ does not stop after He has pronounced “ Peace.” You must now get the life of the Person who has given you peace, the life of the Person who bore the judgment, and triumphed over death. And so “ He breathed on them ”, imparting to them His own risen life.

The Lord God breathed into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. (Gen. ii. 7.) But man fell, and this life was forfeited, and man came under judgment. Here Jesus Christ, “ the last Adam, a quickening Spirit,” after bearing judgment, and abolishing death, comes forth and breathes upon them the breath of His own risen life, eternal life; that life which makes free from the law of sin and death.

It connects the believer with Him who has gone out of this scene of the world altogether, who has no connection with it whatsoever. He is the *life* of him who believes; consequently it connects the believing one with the *place* where He is, with the Father. So the apostle writes, “ Your life is hid with Christ in God.” Therefore he adds, “ Seek those things

which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." (Col. iii. 1.)

How, then, can I connect myself with the place and the things out of which He has risen? If I have life in Him, and Him for my life, this life will assert its own qualities, and "overcome the world." He that "is born of God overcometh the world." (1 John v. 4.) Rising above the storms, the disturbing elements of flesh and nature, out of all which Christ has risen, it seeks its own native element "springing up into everlasting life," seeking the level from which it came. (John iv. 14.)

The eternal life was with the Father, was manifested to us in the Son; and is now communicated to us by the Holy Ghost. It is thus a well of water, not a stagnant pool, but a springing well, seeking, like water, its own level, and springing up into everlasting life. . . .

The reason why the saints of God do not enjoy this cloudless peace is, that they are engaging their hearts with the things of earth, and cultivating the nature out of which Christ, their life, has risen; and not cultivating the pursuits, and aims, and interests of that eternal life which is theirs in Christ.

May the Lord keep our hearts in the heavenly atmosphere, the proper element in which this life which He has bestowed puts forth its leaves and fruit; and grant grace that His beloved people may walk in the vigour and power of that word, "Christ in you," through a world where every breath is against them; for His name's sake. (Col. i. 27.)

## Teachings of the Psalms.

### BOOK IV. (Psalms xc.-cvi.)

**T**HIS book is the bringing in of the Only Begotten into the world, which is found in Hebrews i., though here, of course, for Israel. We might say, "The Only Begotten in connection with Israel" is the heading of this book.

Psalm xc. is Israel's connection with Jehovah from the beginning, as being their dwelling place from of old (Exod. xv.), and looking to His return, with the word of faith, "How long?" (vv. 1, 13.)

Psalm xci. Here we have all the titles of God in the Old Testament. We never find a *distinctive* Christian feeling, a child's feeling, in the Psalms, except so far as we partake of Christ's sufferings, and then in this we get Christian feeling. You never get God as the Father in the Psalms. In the Old Testament, the Church is found in Christ only. In Isaiah 1, "Who is he that shall condemn me?" applies to Christ. (v. 9.) In Roman viii. the same language is applied to the Church. (v. 34.) In this psalm the Messiah is taking His place, with Israel, of trust in Jehovah. The former psalm goes back to Jehovah, Moses's God. This goes back to Almighty, Abraham's God. If you know the secret place of the "Most High" as your dwelling-place, you will have the full place of blessing in abiding under the shadow of the "Almighty," Abraham's God. In v. 2 Messiah says, "I will say of Jehovah, He is my God." Thus He leads Israel to dwell where, in their unfaithfulness, they had never dwelt before. In v. 9 Israel speaks; ad-

dressings Messiah. In v. 14 Jehovah Himself speaks of Him as the One who has set His love upon Him. It is a very interesting psalm in this way.

Psalm xcii. Here it is Jehovah taking His place as Most High with the righteous, and it is a good thing to give thanks.

Psalm xciii. states the grand and blessed results. Jehovah reigns, and is set in His place.

Psalm xciv. The cry of the Remnant in Israel for vengeance; and in v. 20 they ask, Is Jehovah's throne to be in fellowship with the throne of the Beast, and of Antichrist? (v. 20; Rev. xiii. 2, xvi. 10.)

From Psalm xcv.—c. we have the details of the coming in of the Only Begotten into the world, coming as Jehovah from heaven, and at length taking His place between the cherubim, and calling up the world to worship Him there.

Psalm xcv. The Remnant summon Israel, while it is called "to-day," to come and worship. If they do not, they cannot when judgment has come.

Psalm xcvi. The nations are summoned to repent. It is the preaching of "the everlasting gospel" of Rev. xiv. 6, 7.

Psalm xcvii. He Himself is actually coming.

Psalm xcvi. He has come and shown Himself, and has overcome His enemies.

Psalm xcix. He is great in Zion, and sitting between the cherubim.

Psalm c. The Gentiles are summoned to come up and worship. In Psalm xcvi. "go-im" (nations) become "ammim," (people); the nations are brought into relationship. These Psalms are "the everlasting gospel" in Rev. xiv.

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# WORDS OF TRUTH

"The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words and that which was written was upright, even words of truth" (Eccles. xii. 10).

## **"From the Top of the Rocks."**

(Read Numbers xxii. to xxiv.)

**I**N the Word of God we have illustrations of all sorts of characters, all of which are for the purpose of furnishing us with examples to copy or to avoid. In the case of Balaam we have, no doubt, a character to avoid. He is spoken of in the New Testament as a greedy, unscrupulously avaricious man (2 Pet. ii. 15). For the sake of mere worldly gain, he, who professed to be a prophet of God, would have cursed God's chosen people, who God had told him were blessed. We see (xxii. 12) that God gives Balaam a definite answer to his first question, which would have been enough for a true servant of God, not only to have answered his question as to cursing, but to have filled his heart with love toward this people, who God said were blessed.

What a wonderful thing that God calls this race "blessed." They had failed in every way. They had even made a molten image, and set it up as their god. Their murmurings and disobediences had several times evoked the chastisement of God upon them, and still God calls them "blessed." It is a wonderful thing, but how much more wonderful that we, who are not even Jews, we who were "sometime alienated and enemies in our mind by wicked works" are brought nigh by the blood of Christ, and brought into a place of blessing that the Israelites of old knew nothing of. (Eph. ii., 13; Col. i., 13, 21.)

Well, God told Balaam that the people were blessed and not to be cursed; for how could anyone curse where God has blessed? This is of course Satan's effort to undo God's plans for the blessing of Israel, and Balaam is ready to become his agent, if only money is forthcoming. And mark how he receives God's answer. Not in a simple, honest way, as his answer to Balak's messenger shows. "Jehovah refuseth to give me leave to go with you." (xxii., 12.) That is as much as to say, "I would like to, but I am afraid of what may happen if I do." And when a man vacillates like that his fall is only a matter of time. So with Balaam, his heart hankers after Balak's gold, and he is not content with "no" for an answer.

On receiving more honourable ambassadors, with fresh promises of reward, he asks God again. What for? Had God's purposes changed? Never! He alone is the Unchangeable One, whose purposes must always be the same, and always carried out. Nor had Balaam's heart changed. He was still intent on those honours

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which the king of Moab offered him. So God tells him to go.

This effort of the enemy to curse Israel is to result in these wonderful blessings, wrung from reluctant lips. God knew that Balaam was determined to go, and so turns the wrath of man to His praise. (Ps. lxxvi., 10.)

We see a somewhat similar instance in the sending of the spies. Why should Israel want to send spies to search out the land God had promised them? What were the sons of Anak to God, or their great fortifications? We get the key to the sending of the spies in Deut. i., 32. They did not believe God. Therefore they were told, in consequence of their own unbelief, to send out spies. The report they brought was untrue and evil. We know the history of their wilfulness. It cost all the men their lives, for they all died in the wilderness. All this was through trusting man instead of God.

It is somewhat the same with Balaam. He wants to go and is told to go, but is prevented from carrying out his purpose. So he goes, but in his greed is shown to be more stupid than the ass he rode, which saw the Angel of the Lord, who was hid from Balaam's eyes. Balaam could not see Him, and, what is more, did not want to see Him. It is, so to speak, a last warning to Balaam that he will not be able to carry out his designs.

This opens his eyes, and he has to own that he is in God's hand to be the channel of whatever He may be pleased to put into his mouth. He even offers to turn back. But he has gone too far. His heart is for going, so go he must. But it is only fear that is at the back of this confes-

sion. There is no repentance. What greater punishment could befall him than to have to utter those words, "I shall see Him, but not now; I shall behold Him, but not nigh"? (xxiv., 17.) To utter all these wonderful blessings, but to have no part in them, was bitter indeed.

Then in chapters xxiii. and xxiv. we have the wonderful fourfold prophecy. And each section has one distinct theme.

1st. Separation from the world.

2nd. Justification.

3rd. Godly order and power for the wilderness.

4th. The coming of the Lord, Israel's King.

1. Separation had always been God's chief desire for His people. And still it is so. We get constant exhortations in the New Testament epistles to keep ourselves separate from all the world's affairs, to come out of the camp to the Lord, bearing His reproach. (Heb. xiii., 13.) How sadly lacking we are in this respect, are we not, that is, the professing Christendom? Not only has the principle of separation been given up, but in many instances the world has been allowed to come in and take the rulership of that which professes to be the Church of God on earth.

2. Thank God that is not the case with justification. That is God's work, and therefore no one can find the least flaw in it. The moment a man believes the word of God concerning His Son, and applies it to himself, he is justified, and nothing can alter it. So this people were justified in God's sight, on the ground of His purposes toward them. Though of course He takes up with His people the faults they fall into day by day, yet His wondrous grace forgives all for Christ's sake, so that the enemies' attack is



frustrated because there is no charge he can bring against God's elect. “ Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.” (Rom. viii., 33.)

3. The next prophecy, showing forth the beautiful order of God's Israel (and as far as principles are concerned God's Church), is taken from a heavenly standpoint. So they all are, in fact, there being no fault found with Israel, for Balaam sees them from the top of the rock, typical of God's view-point. Had Balaam been able to walk amongst the people, no doubt he would have found plenty to curse, and righteously curse, too. But he cannot here. He sees only the perfect symmetry of the whole, seeing it only as God saw it, perfect according to His one purposes of grace.

So as to our own walk, there may be much that requires correction, that grieves God's Holy Spirit; but in these prophecies there is no question of walk. It is a question of God's purposes as regards His own people, and they are perfect. That is the significance of “ the top of the rocks.” (xxiii., 9.)

Looking at the Church in Christ, God sees it as a perfect whole, not mixed with what is abhorrent to Him. We cannot see the whole. Christians are found in that which is dishonouring to the Lord, even so much so that they are not recognizable to us as Christians. But God knows each one of His own, and can see the Church as a whole, having no connection with what is around; though practically, as we know to our sorrow, it is so split up and divided. It is nevertheless one in Christ.

So with our third section of the prophecy before

us, that is, godly order, and power for the wilderness. It is seen as perfect. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" (xxiv. 5.) That wilderness camp was the only place in the world at that moment where God dwelt among men. There only was He given His true place, and in spite of all the failure and unbelief that had been manifested amongst Israel, still God was owned there, as the Head and GOD of that vast congregation. It is in the end of this section that we find the words, "Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee." Those who sought Israel's cursing were to fall into the pit they digged for others. So, in fulfilment of this solemn word we get in the next part of the prophecy the prediction of Moab's overthrow.

4. This last portion is the most blessed of all, referring, as it does, to the coming of the Lord as a King for the Jews. It carries us on till the time when "a king shall reign in righteousness," when this poor earth will have peace, real and lasting; not such a false peace as man speaks of, but when all that is evil and would corrupt will be put down, and not allowed to lift its head (Isa. xxxii.) This is surely a blessed prospect. Happy indeed should we be to know that we had part in it as His subjects; but we have, as we can never forget, a more blessed portion by far. Our thoughts are not for kingdom or rule, though it is true we shall reign with the Lord in that day (Rom. viii. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 12). But He Himself is the object that is before our souls. He Himself is our bright, blessed and sure hope. The chief value our crowns will have for us will be that we shall be able to cast them at His feet,

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acclaiming Him as our Saviour, Lord and Master, as the One who has died for us to bring us to Himself. In that song we shall be alone. Angels cannot sing it. Israel as such cannot sing it. It belongs to those who compose the Assembly of God on earth, whether at present sleeping in the grave, or alive on the earth, and to them only. (Rev. iv., 10, v., 9, 10.)

The last part of this section announces the judgments that shall fall on those nations that are the enemies of God's Israel. And terrible it is, so terrible that the prophet exclaims, “ Alas, who shall live when God doeth this !”

One would think, after all that had happened, that Balaam would have seen God's good hand over this people, and refrained from attempting fresh mischief. But no; if he cannot curse them himself he will seek to bring them under the curse of God. We see from Numbers xxxi. 16 that the sad story of chapter xxv. is the fruit of Balaam's counsel. It was he who taught Balak to tempt the people; and but for the energetic action of Phinehas, this might have done God's people the most terrible harm. And Balaam gets his due reward; he is killed amongst the enemies of God's people, which enemies he had helped as much as he could. It all shows us to what lengths man's heart apart from God will lead him. All Balaam's sin had for its motive selfishness and greed, and each one of us has in our old nature the root of the same terrible plant.

Thank God, those who have received the Lord as their Saviour no longer are under the power of the enemy. The Lord Jesus died that He might deliver those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage, so that we have

perfect freedom from the enemy's thrall (Heb. ii. 14, 15). Nevertheless, the old nature remains in us while we are here in the world, and if given a chance will show itself. But keeping the eye of faith on Christ, we shall be able to hold it in its proper place of subjection, that no evil can ever come of it. It is when the eye is off Him that we become victims to the enemy's snares. May we be kept close to Him, that our actions, yea, our thoughts, may be regulated by a desire that glory should redound to His Name.

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## **Teachings of the Psalms.**

### **BOOK IV. (Psalms xc.-cvi.)**

*(Continued.)*

Psalm ci. describes the principles on which Messiah will govern the house and the land during the Millennium.

Psalm cii. is one of the most remarkable of the Psalms, and presents Christ in a way divinely admirable and affecting. It raises the question, If the temple be rebuilt and Israel be restored, what about Messiah? for He has been cut off. The answer is that He is Jehovah, who made the heavens: "Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of Thy hands." (v. 25.) It is the most beautiful Psalm in the book. He is eternal in being, and His days have no end. It is more than in v. 12. There Messiah says, "Thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever." Here Jehovah says to Him, "Thou art the same." (v. 27.) No creature is that. He is and was, the Existing One. He was

“before all things,” and He is after all things have ended, and He is always the same, the eternal “Now.” And, secondly: “Thy years shall have no end.” That is in relationship to time. The answer of Jehovah begins at v. 25.

Psalm ciii. Messiah praises Jehovah, who forgives sins, and heals in Israel. The Lord took this up in title when He healed the paralytic in the Gospel, and said, “Thy sins be forgiven thee.” (Mark ii. 5.)

Psalm civ. Messiah praises Jehovah in creation.

Psalm cv. He offers thanksgiving to Jehovah, and calls on the seed of Abraham and Jacob to remember how He is making good His covenant, in His dealings of old in their favour, in faithfulness towards them.

Psalm cvi. He praises the Lord for His patience towards them in all their failure: “For His mercy endureth for ever.”

## BOOK V. (Psalms cvii.-cl.)

In the fifth book we have the ways and dealings of God recounted by the people as brought back; with a divine commentary, as it were, on it all, ending in praise. The book is supplementary in its character.

Psalm cvii. gives, in verses 1, 2, the general character of the book. It is the song of the redeemed, as such, recounting all the vicissitudes of their return, and how in it all mercy has triumphed over judgment. This testimony to Jehovah's mercy enduring for ever connects them in principle with the ark when it was brought back by David after “Ichabod” had been written on the people, for there it was that Israel

first sang, "His mercy endureth for ever." I. Sam. iv., 21, 22; I. Chron. xvi., 34.) Though in this Psalm they are the redeemed, and brought back, they are still in trouble, and in verse 39 they are brought low, even after being in the land. As in Isaiah xviii., 2, ambassadors sent by sea bring them back to their land; but in verse 5 they are all cut down, and in verse 7 the Lord gathers them, and establishes them in blessing.

Psalm cviii. God is in the land, and claims it as His own (verse 8.)

In Psalm cix. we have Judas, the son of perdition, but running on into the plural, and thus a type of the apostate Jews in the end.

Psalm cx. Christ is exalted. He is seated at Jehovah's right hand until His enemies are made His footstool. He must be there to deliver them.

Psalm cxi. The works of Jehovah are celebrated. This and the two following psalms go together as a "Hallelujah" in reference to Jehovah's ways with Israel in their deliverance. Each psalm begins with "Hallelujah."

Psalm cxii. The character here of those who are to be blessed on the earth. The fear of the Lord is that which characterizes them especially.

Psalm cxiii. goes back a little to His mercy. Jehovah is to be exalted. It takes up the poor, and the barren woman. He comes in in delivering power when man has failed altogether. They are not facts but moral principles in these psalms.

Psalm cxiv. The question is raised, What is the meaning of the earth trembling, and the sea fleeing? The answer is, It is the same power as of old in the deliverance of Israel, as it says in Deut. xxxii., 36, "The Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when

He seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left.”

Psalm cxv. Praises to His name, in contrast with idols, for their deliverance from death. The dead praise not the Lord (they say), but we do.

Psalm cxvi. is the cry in the depth of distress to Jehovah, and he is heard. He will pay his vows unto the Lord in the presence of all His people. The effect of the trouble was to drive him to Jehovah, and the deliverance calls forth his praise.

Psalm cxvii. The title they have to call upon all nations to join in praising Jehovah, because His merciful kindness is great towards them, and the truth of the Lord, in His faithfulness to Israel, who has fulfilled all His promises towards them, “endureth for ever.”

Psalm cxviii. This psalm brings out in a remarkable way the whole dealings of God with Israel on the ground of His mercy. In verses 10-12 we have the power of man all against the godly; in verse 13, the adversary, and in verse 18, he sees himself the subject of the chastenings of Jehovah. In verse 22 is what Christ quoted of Himself; it is His rejection; verse 25 is the “Hosanna” the children cried in the temple (Matt. xxi. 15); verse 26 is what the Lord told the Jews, that until they said that they should never see Him again (Matt. xxiii. 39). Verse 24 is the true Sabbath for Israel. The night is past with them, so they can say, “This is the day the Lord hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it.” The psalm is summed up with, “His mercy endureth for ever.” It is a summary of all that is going on then until the millennial day.

Do we not have the sufferings of Christ in verse 18?

No doubt Christ entered into it, but the chastening was upon Israel.

Psalm cxix. is writing the Law upon their hearts according to the promise of the new covenant.

We come now, with Psalm cxx., to the songs of degrees. Some have thought they were written on the occasion of the bringing back of the ark; but be that as it may, I doubt not that they depict the process that goes on until they get to the full blessing of unity in Psalm cxxxiii.

The series begins with, "In my distress I cried unto the Lord"; and it ends with, "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," and their praising Jehovah in the temple. (Pss. cxx., cxxxiii., cxxxiv.)

Psalm cxxx. They are not in the depths in this psalm, but it speaks of their having been in them.

Psalm cxxxii. is a plea for the Lord to remember David and all his afflictions. In verse 8 we have a contrast with Num. x. There Jehovah arose to scatter Israel's enemies, and then He returned to the many thousands in Israel; but now the enemies are scattered, and the prayer is that Jehovah, with the ark of His strength, shall arise, and take His rest in Israel. In verse 14 Jehovah says, "This is my rest for ever." It is the restoration of the Ark of the Covenant to its resting-place, and the promises of Jehovah in answer to the supplication of His servant. In each point you find the answer is greater than the request. In verse 8 it is, "Arise, O Lord, into