

THE
TRUE SANCTUARY;

ITS

PRIESTHOOD AND MINISTRIES.

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Author of "The Tabernacle; its Literal Uses and Spiritual Application."

"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

"A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."—HEB. viii. 1, 2.

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PREFACE.

ITH feelings of deep reverence and awe, no doubt, was the Tabernacle, and afterwards the Temple approached by the devout among the Jews. Each in its turn was to them the place of God's presence. They beheld the mystic symbols, at least, of his grace and righteousness and power. Here was his sanctuary, or holy dwelling place, in a sense in which that word could apply to no other earthly structure, neither to any other locality on earth. With regard to the temple at Jerusalem especially, the feeling of reverence must have been continually deepening as time advanced. The later generations of the people were looking upon the place of their fathers' solemnities, upon "the house of prayer"

where age after age, their pious ancestors had sacrificed and worshipped. With many, we may suppose, the idea became a fixed one, that a sanctuary of God must of necessity be some earthly structure.

And yet it was to lead to higher and worthier thoughts of himself, that, in connection with a fixed habitation, God manifested his abiding presence among his people. Their prophets and teachers, therefore, testified of another, than an earthly building, when they spoke of the sanctuary of their God. This is especially seen in the book of Psalms. As for instance, the sanctuary is there regarded as the place whence the God of Jacob would send help;^a where his power and glory were seen;^b where his "goings" were witnessed;^c so it is said, "thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary";^d and again, "strength and beauty are in his sanctuary."^e These and many other similar expressions, could scarcely apply literally to the structure, or the house which men's hands had reared. Evidently a better sanctuary was seen;—the true tabernacle was contemplated, even that of which the apostle

^a Psalm xx. 2.

^b Ibid. lxiii. 2

^c Ibid. lxviii. 24.

^d Ibid. lxxvii. 13.

^e Ibid. xcvi. 6.

speaks, and which the Lord pitched and not man. In short, these "holy men of God" spake of that true Shekinah, in which is magnified the grace of him, of whom throughout the scriptures testify.

It is now some years since the writer's attention was especially directed to the subject of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, which is so extensively and minutely brought before us in the writings of Moses. The result was, the publication of a little volume, entitled "*The Tabernacle; its Literal Uses and Spiritual Application.*"* Since then, frequent prayerful meditation on the subject has enhanced in his mind, the deep mysteries of grace and love which the Tabernacle of Witness was designed to shadow forth. In the present volume, his aim is to assist the humble and devout reader of holy writ, in his enquiries after truth. The writer is far from under-valuing such things as, through long continuous use, may have become venerable in connection with places and forms of public worship. And yet he feels that the external may soon, through habit and custom, occupy an undue place in the minds of even the true

* London: W. Yapp, Welbeck Street.

followers of Jesus. "The kingdom of God is within you," says our Lord himself. Where God's kingdom is, there is his sanctuary. Man in Christ is his tabernacle; the new creature in Christ Jesus, is God's sanctuary. And the marvellous grace which the Gospel unfolds is, that the Most High can find his dwelling place in the tabernacle of man's body. This, of course, is through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Should the following pages minister in any way to the instruction, or to the comfort and joy of others, the writer's aim will be accomplished. To the God of all grace he commends this feeble effort to serve him. May he who can pardon its imperfections, use it to the honour of his great name. Amen!

Worksop.

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I.

The True Sanctuary;
GOD'S TABERNACLE.

“How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.”—Psalm lxxxiv. 1, 2.

“Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee.”—Psalm lxxxiv. 4.



THE TRUE SANCTUARY;

God's Tabernacle.

THE Sanctuary or Tabernacle which, under Moses, was set up in the wilderness, has long since passed away. The purpose of its erection, its form, figure, and dimensions, its vessels and furniture, the circumstances under which it was reared, are all minutely described in the sacred scriptures. It was in use, and served exclusively as the place of religious assemblage and worship, throughout the sojourn of the Israelites in the wilderness. Its services were continued after their settlement in the land of Canaan, and indeed were never really and exactly fulfilled till then.^a But these services have long since ceased to be associated with the true worship of God, because the covenant and the "ordinances of divine service,"^b with

^a Deut. xii. 7, 9.

^b Heb. ix. 1.

which the first tabernacle was associated, have given place to a new and a better covenant.

Nevertheless an important purpose was served during the time that the first tabernacle had its standing. The structure, with its ordinary and extraordinary services, was well adapted to the spiritual condition of the people whom God had brought forth out of Egypt. Their leader Moses, it is true, had already learned to endure as seeing him who is invisible.^a Tending the flock of his father-in-law in Midian, after his flight from Egypt, he had in solitude and in silent meditation held communion with him, who, though unseen, is the God of the living and not of the dead.^b It was otherwise with the tribes of Israel, whom he led forth from Egypt. They needed sensible objects as signs and symbols of God's presence and power. If the Lord made known his *ways* to Moses, it was needful that the children of Israel should have *his acts* unfolded to them, and that they should see his *works*.^c And so "there was a tabernacle made." It was their sanctuary, God's dwelling place in their midst.^d Not

^a Heb. xi. 27.

^b Luke xx. 37, 38.

^c Psalm ciii, 7.

^d Ex. xxv. 8.

only was every thing connected with the rearing or setting up of this tabernacle palpable to the senses, but so also was every thing associated with its ministry. The design was obvious;—through visible things, were the things invisible to be apprehended. On God's part, this was, in itself, a marvellous display of condescension and mercy. He, the invisible God, would thus give visible proof that he was in the midst of the people, as dwelling amongst them. They were thus to be led on to higher things, from the seen to the unseen. The law, it is true, could only give knowledge of sin, and thus be as a pedagogue unto Christ;^a but the ordinances of divine service and the worldly sanctuary, sensibly pointed to that which is intangible and spiritual;—to the service which alone avails with God, and to the inheritance which is imperishable. In this light, the tabernacle in the wilderness, with its ordinances and ministrations, is regarded in the epistle to the Hebrews.

But this tabernacle with its instituted services, had other uses than those which it immediately subserved. It was designed to illustrate to us, and through us to ages yet

^a Gal. iii. 24.

future,^a many of the truths and principles of the Gospel. This is undoubtedly the reason why so large a space in the Old Testament is occupied in describing the sacred structure and its appurtenances. Its "ordinances" and services are, however, no longer imposed on the Christian worshipper. This point is even urged and insisted on repeatedly in the Apostolic writings. The Gospel enjoins not the continuance of the ritualism of the law; much less does it usher in a service that might seem intended to outvie in splendour the tabernacle and temple services of the Jews. It is of a new covenant that Jesus is mediator. And this is but in fulfilment of what was promised under the law: as it is written,—
"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah."^b On this statement the Apostle himself thus comments: "In that he saith, 'A new covenant,' he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."^c

According to this testimony, the New Cov-

^a Ephes. ii. 7. Col. i. 26

^b Heb. viii. 8.

^c Heb. viii. 13.

enant is no resuscitation of that which preceded with its outward ordinances and forms. That temporarily served its purpose, and waxed old. There were in it, and that of necessity, the elements of decay. In short, it was designed to pass away, that the New Covenant might take its place. And now, the Gospel points to a worship which is manifestly little dependent on rituals, figures, and forms. It teaches that the true worshippers should worship God in spirit and in truth; and that he, the Father seeketh such to worship him.* And yet the Old Covenant, though set aside, has still its distinctive uses. The Epistle to the Hebrews shows us, how, as associated with it, the tabernacle and the tabernacle services may still aid in elucidating, as in a figure, "the things of the spirit of God." It speaks of another tabernacle; this is unlike the former one. It is not a visible, outward structure reared by man on earth. Its high priest and minister serves not on earth, but in heaven. And so the Apostle writes;—"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty

* John iv. 23, 24.

in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man."* But the tabernacle which was, points to that which is. The New Covenant withdraws the veil from Moses' face; and at the same time, through the first tabernacle which has passed away, we may learn much which would be otherwise inexplicable concerning that true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. What, and when, and where this tabernacle really is, forms the subject of our present enquiry.

In the Scripture passage just quoted, and which is to form the basis of our remarks, the Apostle evidently borrows his expressions from the law. He first speaks of "the sanctuary" of which Christ is minister. The expression τῶν ἁγίων, evidently points to the מִקְדָּשׁ of the Hebrews: as if the Apostle had said, our high priest is minister of holy places, though unlike, yet answering to "the holy place and the most holy," which were consecrated under Moses.^b So again, in the expression τῆς σκηνης, "of the tabernacle," the word itself might suggest the idea of a very fragile and temporary structure; but it does

* Heb. viii, 1, 2.

^b Ex. xxvi. 33.

not follow that that of which the Apostle speaks, is really of such a nature. The true idea is that which was intended to be conveyed by the sacred edifice set up under Moses. It is that of a $\text{p}\psi$, the habitation, the rest, the dwelling-place of Jehovah. The Apostle, as we shall see more fully as we proceed, is not then speaking of something transient and temporary, though the expression he uses might seem to designate but an unstable or a fragile tent. That which we have under the priesthood of Christ, is what the Israelites had under the priesthood of Aaron,—*a habitation of God*. The latter was a symbol or figure; it was of necessity a temporary structure; and one that must ultimately perish. The former bears the same appellation as the latter, else the exact import of the symbol might fail to be seen. But the true tabernacle itself is neither a transient nor a perishable structure. In the Apocalyptic vision it is seen participating in the blasphemy, which the beast rising from the sea, hurls at the name of God.* And towards the close of the same vision, when it is announced that all tears shall be wiped away; when there shall be no

* Rev. xiii. 6.

more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain; even then is a great voice out of heaven heard saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."* Thus permanent and enduring, yea even imperishable is that Shékinah, or habitation of God, of which Christ is the minister and high priest. But that which for a time was the scene of God's manifested presence in the wilderness, is deservedly the object of our devout and prayerful consideration. To this fact the Holy Ghost bears witness in the writings of the Apostle. It may serve to instruct us, and even deeply, in the mysteries of God, as to how he can and does in very deed dwell with men on earth. And so, while in itself, as a thing of time, it must pass away; it points to that which though manifested in time, should neither perish nor decay, but should endure when the glory of God should be revealed, itself an everlasting medium for the manifestation of that glory. In considering, then, what the true Shekinah or habitation of God is, our purpose will be best served, if I mis-

* Rev. xxi. 3.

take not, by following the example of the Apostle in the Epistle from which I quote. From that which was set up in testimony under Moses, our chief illustrations must be drawn.

The tabernacle of Moses then, be it remembered, was a sanctuary ; that is, a Holy Place. Or rather, it comprised Holy Places ; and these, we read, "were figures of the true."^a And yet they were not such figures as men might multiply at discretion. That which was set up, was acknowledged by Israel's God, as the one sanctuary where his people might draw nigh to worship before him. It was temporarily, at least, the true tabernacle to the people ; that is, should any other have been presumptuously set up, then would this latter have been a false sanctuary ; and the former, the true one. The sin of Jeroboam long afterwards, was, that he forsook the holy place, the Temple at Jerusalem, offering service to God after his own mind, and in places which God did not account as holy. For this one sin, ten out of the twelve tribes were at length rooted out from the land of their inheritance, and were driven into an exile from

^a Heb. ix. 24.

which they were never recalled. The fact is of solemn import even to us. Will worship^a may be the sin of the church, as it was of those of old who walked in the ways of Jero-boam. But under the Gospel, the question is one, less of modes and forms, than of the foundation of our hope. God has now his sanctuary; elsewhere, all is defiled. That disowned, or undiscovered, man's professed worship is in vain. In that case, a worse exile and destruction must ensue, than were seen in the scattering of the ten tribes. Surely with Ezra should seeking souls pray, that God would give them a nail in his holy place, and that thus their God may lighten their eyes.^b God is truly praised in his sanctuary.^c

But to advert again to the tabernacle in the wilderness. For the time then present, it was the *one sanctuary*. Now the idea of there being a sanctuary, with its "holies," implied that God accounted not all places as alike holy. The earth, nevertheless, is the Lord's, with all its fulness. It is so, and it was ever so. And yet something was wanted—essentially wanted—to constitute a place holy. It was just this, viz., that God should mani-

^a Col. ii. 23.

^b Ezra ix. 8.

^c Psalm cl. 1.

festly reveal himself, or record his name there. There must be some manifestation of him, that would suitably witness to his holiness as well as to his grace and mercy—some clear demonstration also, that there God was working in power and in love, in accordance with his holy and blessed name. This alone could constitute any place a sanctuary or holy place. Thus Jacob, when wandering as a stranger in a land that might seem to him both homeless and desolate, had “dreams and revelations” assuring him of God’s faithfulness and mercy. “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not,” was his grateful and wondering acknowledgment, when he awaked out of his sleep. Sanctified by God’s presence, to him the place was holy. And he called the name of that place Bethel: and the stones which had been for his pillow, became the anointed memorial pillar, that he had found God’s house, even the gate of heaven.* So when God appeared to Moses in the bush, he thus outwardly and in figure, revealed himself in the wonders of his grace and love as the God of the living and not of the dead. Then said he himself to Moses, “put off thy shoes from

* Gen. xxviii. 10—19.

off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." ^a Thus it was too in the tabernacle which Moses set up. God owned it with his visible presence. The Lord revealed himself as being there ; the pillar of the cloud witnessed it. The worshippers drew nigh to where the Lord was visibly seen to be. The priests and Levites ministered before him, under the covert of his presence. Nowhere besides was God thus manifestly and signally present by wonders and by signs. It was thus THE ONE TABERNACLE OF WITNESS. It *witnessed* for God, even then, that he was there ; and that manifestly he could and would dwell with men. It *witnessed* that only the presence of God in grace, and mercy, and love, could constitute a sanctuary, or holy place :—that God was not in this sense of the word, everywhere present :—that all places are not holy :—that in short the earth is polluted. And to this the Apostle also bears testimony, that the outward creation, subjected unwillingly to vanity, groans and travails in the bondage of corruption ;—it is impure. ^b But the tabernacle told of purposes of love also, on the part of God. It was "THE

^a Ex. iii. 1, 6. Matt. xxii 32. ^b Rom. viii. 20, 21.

TABERNACLE OF WITNESS ;" so called, because itself was not the *very* sanctuary of God, but that it witnessed to "*the true tabernacle.*" Thus the visible pointed to the invisible. It implied that that which was figure and symbol in the tabernacle of witness, must become reality and substance in the true tabernacle. In the latter, grace must really be seen in the triumphs of its love and power. This must be the *very* house of God, the true Bethel;—the place consecrated by God's *very* presence, in accordance with his holy and blessed name. Such a sanctuary or holy place is for us; it is the true tabernacle, the place of scriptural worship and of access to God.

But where is this unseen sanctuary to which the visible so distinctly pointed? It is not, it cannot be in fallen nature. God cannot have his habitation there. To this the tabernacle of witness testifies in its local separation from surrounding places, that were regarded as symbolically unclean. Yes, we have to look away from the natural, and above and beyond it, even to the super-natural. Man must ascend there, even to that which is divine, if he is to find the true sanctuary of God. The

tabernacle which the Lord pitches is unlike that which feeble mortals might set up. It is and must be a living as well as a holy dwelling place;—a house eternal and heavenly. God dwells in light, but it is uncreated light; it is the light of life. And can this blessed and eternal one, indeed, dwell with men upon the earth? How can his holy sanctuary be set up, and where should it be found? Only in the mystery of the holy incarnation, and in that which this glorious mystery involves, is an answer to these questions to be found. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.^a And so power over all flesh is his, that he should give eternal life, to as many as the Father has given him. Redemption is in that gift, and the Lord's tabernacle is pitched. But oh thou Holy One, who should utter these the wonders of thy grace and love! Only in thine unspeakable gift, the gift of thy well-beloved Son dost thou accomplish them. In him the mystery of godliness is revealed;—God manifest in the flesh.^b

But where and what is this sanctuary? Of the true tabernacle, Christ our high priest is minister. So that scripture asserts, with which

^a John. i. 14.

^b 1 Tim. iii. 16.

we set out. And turning to the Epistle in which our subject is specially treated, we find this testimony by the Apostle. "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;" (*not of this creation, Gr.*) "neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."* The holy place into which Christ has entered is not of this creation. It is not material, it is not fleshly. It pertains not to that which is outward and visible. The outward eye sees it not; it is impalpable to the touch. And yet we speak of what really exists—the true tabernacle; it is not an ideal or imaginary one, but that which the Lord verily pitched. Christ is really and truly the minister of it. And, then, turning again to the scriptures, we find that the Apostle further says, "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."^b Heaven then must open to us, when these

* Heb. ix. 11, 12.

^b Heb. ix. 24.

holy places are discovered. This sanctuary stands associated only with heavenly things. The earthly figures may point to these true holy places, but the figures themselves pass away. It is not with the visible, but with the invisible we have now to do.

If into heaven itself Christ has entered, his ministry, of course, is only and purely heavenly. This fact may seem to cut us off from all conscious participation in his priestly ministrations; or at least from all personal connection with them. The natural idea is, that the heaven into which he has thus entered is so remote, that we are necessarily severed from all immediate contact with that holy place, at least so long as we are participants in this present mortal life. But were it so, "the true tabernacle" would not harmonize in its design, with the holy places which are the figures of the true. That which has already been advanced in reference to the sanctuary which Moses set up, would in that case furnish little or no instruction for us.

But far otherwise is the fact. This is manifest from what the Apostle further says. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a

new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, though the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith."* The risen and ascended Jesus, is certainly not far off from the faithful on earth. There is, of course, an unseen heaven above, into which he has personally entered. The great *facts* of the Gospel declare, and these alone declare the true foundation of our hope. But that very heaven, as the sphere into which Christ has thus personally entered, is found within us. And in that heaven within us, can the presence and power of Christ be felt. And, there, even within, is the sanctuary, the heaven in which Christ ministers;—yea, the holy place of the Most High. This is the holy place to which we have nearness of access by faith; hither, the new and living way tends, which he hath consecrated for us through his flesh. And so, says the Apostle, "we have," that is, even now, "such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which

* Heb. x. 19—22.

the Lord pitched and not man." His is a present ministry in a sanctuary, which as the figurative tabernacle shews, is God's dwelling place with men. And as Aaron ministered in holy places, in the midst of the house in which Moses was found faithful as a servant, so our high priest ministers in holy places unseen, which are nevertheless in the midst of the house of God, and which house are we "if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."* To these holy places we can and may, and as true worshippers of God, we must draw nigh.

The reader will here perceive, that the true idea of this sanctuary of God is not that which the first tabernacle might seem naturally to suggest. It is not, as the latter necessarily was, a localized holy place without, but a spiritual state realized within. In this of course the thing symbolized differs from the symbol. Neither is it of necessity the case, that the true tabernacle is approached, whenever men commune with their own thoughts, though such communing may be devout and reverential. Though man *may* find the heavenly sphere within himself, yet all with-

* Heb. iii. 6.

in is not therefore necessarily heavenly. It is not in that which is of our fallen nature that the heavenly sanctuary is found, but only and truly, as we have said, in the supernatural. The true tabernacle is really in Christ, and where God in Christ is manifest. There alone is the true holy place. God would be known by us only in his Son, for then he is known in his grace and love, and his true sanctuary is then and thus seen. And what it is to draw nigh to the holy place will be known, when the mystery is understood, which "hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints, to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you the hope of glory." ^a Blessed, most blessed to the soul, is the discovery of that mystery so long hidden, even Christ within;—Christ, as the last Adam, a quickening spirit; ^b and as the second man, the Lord from heaven. ^c This is the true mystery also of the tabernacle of God within.

Wonderful are the counsels of the most High! In the "last Adam," the quickening

^a Col. i. 26, 27.

^b 1 Cor. xv. 45.

^c 1 Cor. xv. 47.

spirit, fallen man is brought back into the kingdom of God, and into union with God himself.^a This is the very ministry of reconciliation, spoken of by Paul; to wit, "that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.^b To Christ the Son is power given over the world of Jews and Gentiles, that is, "over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as^c the Father has given him."^c "All flesh" is not cut off as it might have been by sin and the fall, but is under the power of Christ for good, that man may be restored and blessed. And so it is found, as the heathen poet testifies, that God is not "far from every one of us."^d And so also, the holy places of which Christ is minister, are nigh. It is by no vivid imaginings of an active intellect, picturing to itself some remote sphere where God and Christ and angels dwell, that the soul has to draw near to the heavenly places. Were it so, then simple ones, with minds untutored and with intellect but little developed, must of necessity fail to realize it. The grand requisite to the attaining of the blessing would then be strength of

^a John i. 1, 17.

^b 2 Cor. v. 18, 19.

^c John xvii. 2.

^d Acts xvii. 27

intellect and not the assurance of faith. But it is not thus. The holy places are accessible to the true hearted and the simple. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." ^a That is the rule. To him, whatever he may be in other respects, the sanctuary of God is near. "We know," was the assurance of the Apostle, "that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have," even now, "a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." ^b And so, though all religious service and even communing within, may not imply access to the sanctuary of God, yet the "true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man," is found by the faithful, when in retirement of spirit, they commune with God. Thus they draw nigh. They acceptably serve and worship thus.

The true tabernacle is set up in short, as the work of renovation and redemption in Christ Jesus is accomplished. It had fallen down through Adam's transgression, and the Lord returns to build it again. He builds again the ruins thereof, and sets it up. The true life was lost in the fall. The light was

^a 2 Cor. v. 17.

^b 2 C.or. v 1

gone. Fellowship with God was at an end. "God is light and in him is no darkness at all."^a Man ceased to be God's dwelling place. Physically as well as spiritually he was altogether unlike what he had been, God no longer saw in him the image of himself. He had become a child of wrath, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God. In short he was now "darkness,"^b and under the dominion of the rulers of the darkness of this world.^c The extinction of the true light in him, was his severance from God as the source of all that is pure, holy and good. No longer in the image of God, his lordship and dominion over the earth, and over all creatures,^d were at an end. Oh how sad was the ruin in which he had become involved! Powerless to rule his spirit, dark passions and ungovernable appetites had the ascendancy within; while, because of outward mortality and corruption, he had become "like the beasts that perish." In this his fallen condition, unless grace had interposed, he could no longer have dwelt in God, nor God in him. Man was thus the

^a 1 John i. 5.

^b Ephes. v. 8.

^c Ephes. vi. 12.

^d Gen. i. 26, 28.

fallen tabernacle which the Lord alone could build again, that he might set it up. In our fallen head we all fell. "In Adam all die."

Surely then nothing can bring us again into communion with God, but the restoration of the life which is the light. It is only in that life which is the light, that God can manifest himself in grace and love and power, as in his own sanctuary. It is that alone by which his image is restored in us. It opens a heaven within, and brings us into union with the heavenly spheres. It is that incorruptible seed of which is the new birth; that seed which is by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever;—that holy seed in and through which men are blessed;—that seed of the woman, which in the redeemed should bruise the serpent's head and take away his power.^a It is that through which the elect are to become conformed to the image of the Son of God, that he may be the firstborn among many brethren.^b In short it is that which the Apostle speaks of as the once hidden mystery: viz, "Christ in you, the hope of glory," in other words we in Christ, and Christ in us. It is the true humanity restored,

^a Gen. iii. 15.

^b Rom. viii. 29.

that it may be fully developed and perfected ; —the image of God in man, that man may be once more in the image of God. That image thus restored, is itself the sanctuary, the tabernacle of the Lord's pitching. A spiritual transformation is thus effected, in itself the only true and abiding evidence that the sanctuary is set up. The change, for instance, is seen and realized in this :—self is denied, disowned, abased ;—pride, ambition, the lust of wealth and power, anger and envy and bitterness and malice, no longer rule within. Thus the man once dead in trespasses and sins,^a has been quickened into life, so that he walks in “the newness of life.”^b From “the life of God,”^c he is no longer alienated as once he was. That life is his life, his very life ; and this life is love : “God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.”^d Thus is the sanctuary, “the true tabernacle” set up. Marvellous is the grace that accomplishes it ! Wonderful is the redemption through which it is effected ! All, in reality, is through the blood of the Lamb, while the Lamb himself is thus enthroned.

^a Ephes. ii. 1.

^b Rom. vi. 4.

^c Ephes. iv. 18.

^d 1 John iv. 16.

And let every creature say, "Blessing and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

God's habitation or sanctuary therefore, be it remembered, is man;—man recovered from the fall;—man regenerate and renewed. The *living* God must have a *living* tabernacle, as his abode. The scriptures multiply their testimonies on this subject. So it is written in the prophets, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."* He who inhabits eternity, condescends to the lowly. In the contrite spirit he finds his abode. His presence revives such a one. Again, in another place, the same prophet writes; "Thus saith the Lord, 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

* Isaiah lvii. 15.

to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." ^a The New Testament is in harmony of course with these prophetic statements, and with much more to the same effect in the Old Testament scriptures. Thus Paul writes to the saints at Ephesus, "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." ^b The Apostle Peter also writes to the same effect. "To whom" (the Lord), says he, "coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house."

What the prophet Isaiah writes, is in agreement of course with what the Apostles teach. And, yet, there is a distinction which must

^a Isaiah lxvi. 1, 2. ^b Ephes. ii. 19—22.

^c 1 Peter ii. 4, 5.

not be overlooked. Speaking in the Spirit, the prophet refers to individuals: the Apostles refer to the church, as the assembly of God. In the former, it is the humble and lowly man, who is God's sanctuary, or dwelling place. In the latter, it is the company of believers, who as living stones are built together in unison,—the house of God, his holy dwelling-place.

In the Gospel, that is unfolded which was not revealed under the old covenant; how “that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel.”^a Only under the new covenant is it said, “there is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”^b The church is one body, the body of Christ, “the fulness of him who filleth all in all.”^c Beyond all controversy, this is a great, yea a glorious mystery. The church, as such,—“the general assembly of the first-born, which are written in heaven,”^d

^a Ephes. iii. 6.

^b Ephes. iv. 4, 6.

^c Ephes. i. 23.

^d Heb. xii. 23.

is ONE,—the dwelling place of God, his holy sanctuary, of which “the tabernacle of witness” testified. But the church is the assembly of the redeemed, It is a *living* house, of which each believer is himself a *living* stone. That which constitutes the church the habitation of God, constitutes each individual in it a habitation of God also. God dwells in the assembly, because he dwells in the individuals of the assembly. “The life of God” is manifest in all, because each one is born of God.” And so the church is one body, but many members.* The unity of this body may not, cannot be broken. Its outward divisions and dissensions may mar its beauty and may greatly militate against the well-being of individuals; still the unity remains, the church is one. Each member is united to Christ, and this unites him with all who are in Christ. What is done for the benefit of the individual, is also for the benefit of the whole body; and what is done for the benefit of the whole body, is also for the benefit of the individual. So it can be said to each, “For all things are yours: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or

* Rom. xii. 4, 5. 1 Cor. xii. 12, 14.

things present, or things to come, all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."* Thus while each individual believer finds in himself the sanctuary of God, because he finds there the principle of regeneration,—“the life of God:” so all believers are being builded together as the one house of God, the sanctuary of his presence, his holy dwelling-place. Thus is it alike with the individual, and with the assembly; and so God dwells with men on earth.

The true tabernacle then is a living sanctuary,—The Lord has pitched it and not man; for it is in man himself. But not in all is the tabernacle set up; alas! “All men have not faith.” But wherever the true tabernacle is found, it has had its history, just as “the tabernacle of witness” had, and a still further history yet awaits it.

Once this sanctuary had no apparent existence where it has now been pitched. For the soul of the true believer was once no holy tabernacle. It was before God, as a land wholly defiled; “a land of idols.” The Lord himself, was then uncared for, because unknown. True there is difference in souls while

* 1 Cor. iii. 21, 23.

in this state. All are not even then, alike filthy and abominable, or alike debased. But at best in such a state, men "worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made." ^a The house of God is not sought unto ; it is unknown. In short, the flesh and only the flesh rules then. And "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." ^b

Then there comes a time of awakening. A change now begins to be wrought within. Devout feelings are excited ; godly emotions are felt. Fear, perhaps, has awakened them ;—fear and dread, for the poor guilty one has been musing on "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." Or God's tender mercies have been called to mind, and also how in the aboundings of his grace he has remembered us in our low estate, and that his own arm has brought Salvation unto us. And so the drawings of his love are felt, and yielded to. But whatever the means, a change has begun to be wrought. It may be but little perceptible to others, but it is that which

^a Isaiah ii. 8.

^b Rom. viii. 7, 8.

our God can take knowledge of. Faith has been awakened in the soul, of which Jesus is the alone and immediate object. Faith, not merely in a doctrinal creed relative to his person or his work, but in himself. He becomes himself, as a living Saviour, the object of confidence and trust, the one in whom the deepest affections of the soul begin to concentrate. It is the beginning of a new life of which lowliness and meekness, purity and spiritual mindedness are the chief characteristics. Though as yet, as has been said, these things which God can take knowledge of, may be scarcely perceptible to men. They are the germ only, existing as in the embryo-state. They have hereafter to be developed. But thus it is in the inner workings of the mind, and there is a passing from death unto life. He having experienced this change is now one of the seed of Abraham,^a one of Israel's sons, though as one born in Egypt. For the true Israel must be brought forth from mystical Egypt, as the natural seed of Jacob were brought from under Pharaoh's rule. As says the prophet, "when Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son

^a Gal. iii. 29.

out of Egypt.”^a Another prophet gives us the key to the typical import of Egypt, when he says, “now the Egyptians are men and not God; and their horses flesh and not spirit.”^b It is fallen nature, that is, the flesh or the natural man, which Egypt with its horses, in other words with its strength, serves in scripture to represent. The holy seed of the new and regenerated life, manifesting itself in the natural man, answers spiritually to the condition in which Israel after the flesh were when in Egypt. The state of the soul is not invariably the same throughout that stage of its experience. “When Israel came into Egypt and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham,” Joseph had been sent before, the man who should “bind” Pharaoh’s “princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.”^c And so “Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly.”^d The seed of Jacob dwelt undisturbed in Egypt, in the best of the land, while they were few and feeble. At length they multiplied exceedingly, when another

^a Hosea xi. 1. Matt. ii. 15.

^b Isaiah xxxi. 3.

^c Psalm cv. 19, 23.

^d Gen. xlvii. 27.

king arose who knew not Joseph.^a Thenceforth had the children of Israel to serve with rigour.^b

All this, which historically is matter of fact, is typical of what the soul experiences, while as yet the holy seed is in mystical Egypt. So long as the religious feeling is subservient, and leaves the flesh undisturbed, there is nothing, or but little of inward conflict; still less is there of opposition from without. But when the new life would manifest itself in power, and the holy seed begins to multiply and increase, then nature rebels. Fierce then is the lusting of the flesh against the spirit, and were it possible it would wholly destroy the holy seed. But alike, while there is peace, and when the season of bondage and oppression comes, there is a difference between that which is born of the spirit and that which is born of the flesh; just as the natural seed of Jacob and Pharaoh's people were throughout distinct. But during this stage of the divine life, there is not that manifestation of the new nature, or of the new man, which constitutes the actual or conscious setting up of the tabernacle of God.

^a Exodus i. 8.

^b Exodus i. 13.

There was no sanctuary in Egypt. The Israel of God, his child, is manifested; there is the people with whom God would dwell, but there is no sanctuary as yet. But as it was literally in Egypt, so spiritually the flesh must be smitten in its first-born, that "sin may not have the dominion."^a Else the living tabernacle will not be reared. O my soul, hast thou had experience of these wonders, and hast thou seen God's mighty hand stretched out thus on thy behalf? Yes, and joy unspeakable was it, when thou wast so far delivered from the dominion of the flesh, that the anti-typical Egypt was no longer thine abode. From that land of idols thou wast brought forth, and though for a long season thenceforth, thy path must be through a desert drear and waste, thou didst triumphantly sing thy mighty Redeemer's praise.^b

Memory fails in calling to mind, much of what experience may have taught in times that are past. But the "tabernacle of witness" will serve as our guide in briefly tracing out what may seem to be connected with the pitching of the true sanctuary. This was not

^a Ex. xii. 29. Rom. vi. 12 and 14.

^b Ex. xv. 1, 15.

at once set up even when the wilderness had been reached. That which then met the eye, was a people separated unto the Lord, having God manifestly with them. The cloudy pillar had been and was still their guide by day and by night. But the tabernacle with its appointed priestly services and worship was not found amongst them. And yet happy, most happy must the people have felt, because of their wonderful deliverance from past bondage, and because of what they already knew of God's condescension and mercy. He was near to them. They were owned of him as his people. They could rejoice in the promises made to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

But to all this, there is something answering in the experience of God's spiritual Israel. The soul delivered from the absolute dominion of sin, is happy in its newly acquired freedom. There is much to awaken, and much to sustain its joy. The apostle John writes to the "little children," because they have "known the Father."^a But just because they are "little children," they have not as yet entered into the thoughts and

^a 1 John ii. 13.

counsels of the Father. As it is in the natural, so is it in the divine life, there are throughout, progressive stages. The "little ones" * are objects of God's special love ; but while tender nurture is needed, labour and service are not exacted.

As to Israel after the flesh, they did not suddenly or all at once cease to remember the leeks and onions which they had freely eaten in Egypt. Much had to be learned in the way of obedience and submission, before the wilderness should be left behind. But meanwhile there had been progress made and experience gained ; the trials and hardships of the wilderness had been in measure tasted, before instructions had been given for setting up the tabernacle of Moses. Till then, however, the true purpose of their wilderness sojourn was unseen. They had not as yet understood that they should in very deed forsake the allurements and false pleasures of the world, and find their portion in God himself, and in communion with him. It remained therefore, that that should be seen and known in the figure and type, which must be verified and experienced by the true Israel, that

* Matt xviii. 6.

God will in very deed dwell with men on the earth. And so the sanctuary was set up.

And yet in still looking at the outward history, we find that there was a tabernacle, from the time as it would seem, that the people entered the wilderness, though it evidently had only a very temporary standing. It is said for instance,—“And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp.”^a The circumstances which led Moses to act as he is here represented as doing, are narrated in the preceding chapter, which the reader can consult for himself. Now though the structure here referred to, was not “the tabernacle of witness:” yet doubtless it does bear its witness, and is intended typically to be considered as one with the tabernacle soon afterwards set up; only it is here seen under circumstances and in a condition, answering to the as yet, undisciplined state of the people. In the Septuagint this structure is called “*τῆν*”

^a Exodus xxxiii. 7.

σκηνην' αὐτοῦ " Moses' tabernacle, and he himself calls it the tabernacle of the congregation. But here as in a sanctuary the Lord talked with Moses. Here too, the Lord was sought unto indiscriminately by the people. There was, however, no division into holy and most holy places, as in the tabernacle subsequently reared. The fact too which the history specially indicates is, that it was pitched outside the camp of the people, even far away from the camp. The reason for this is intimated. The people had already broken the covenant into which they had inconsiderately entered, so that the Lord refused to go with them on the stipulated conditions. For even they must learn while under the law, and that at the outset of their course, that if God should go with them, it must be on the ground of his pure mercy and grace. But as to the tabernacle, regarding the history as a symbolical picture of what is spiritual and unseen, it is here first beheld not in the midst of the people, but outside the camp; and not as under priestly regulations and supervision; but the people might any of them draw near.

Is it thus too in the divine ordering of the

true tabernacle when it is pitched? It may be that it is brought into conscious manifestation thus; and the necessity for it arises from our own manifold sins and trespasses. It is because there is weakness of faith too, and inexperience as to personal communion with God. There is the tabernacle indeed, the holy sanctuary of God; the souls knows it,—feels it. But then it is looked at rather as without than within, as if far off from the camp. They who have had experience of the Lord's ways will understand me here. Some may be in the state supposed, even now. Let them remember that it should not continue thus. Even in that state the Lord is sought unto, and marvellously does he condescend to instruct and bless. There is communion with God in measure, and it is sweet and joyous. But it is impulsive and periodical, rather than continuous. It results more from religious intercourse with others, than from secret communing with the Most High. It is being learned that if sin has not the *dominion*, it yet has strength through the law.* Israel are in this state *tasting* of the grace of God, and are learning how the law

* 1 Cor. xv. 56.

of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, makes us free from the law of sin and death.^a But because of spiritual weakness and conscious failure, they walk tremblingly. The Lord is sought unto believingly, yea confidently; but his resting place and abode is seen as if far away, and altogether outside Israel's camp. Slowly, oh how slowly, do we learn how near our God is to us!

One whole year had passed away from the time that the children of Israel had left Egypt, before the "tabernacle of witness" was set up. There had been failure on their part, as we have seen; but there had been also much honest and true-hearted zeal. Whatever was necessary for the completion of the tabernacle had been freely contributed; and the skilful had laboured diligently, so as successfully to fashion every thing according to the pattern shewn to Moses in the mount. Exactly one year had elapsed, "and it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up."^b The occasion was at once solemn and joyous. For when all was finished, it is said, "then a cloud

^a Rom. viii. 2.

^b Exodus xl. 17.

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.”^a

The time of the completion of the sanctuary and of its being set up, is especially to be remarked. It was not the season from which the year had all along dated its commencement. A change in this respect was to take place, from the time that the children of Israel were brought forth from Egypt. The first day of the year was to date thenceforth from the day of their flight; at least among themselves as a nation it was to be so. “This month” it is said “shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.”^b Life might then seem to have begun anew to them. It was the month Abib, or the season of earing the corn. In this month therefore, there was already tolerably sure promise of the coming harvest of ripened fruits. At this season there was no mistaking the true cereals for grass, for the ear of the corn was

^a Exodus xl. 34, 35.

^b Exodus xii. 2.

developed. And so "all flesh is grass;"* but when God separates a people to himself, it must be made apparent that there is difference between flesh and spirit. This is seen as in a figure, in the time of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. And the first anniversary of their deliverance is signalized by the setting up of God's tabernacle. As yet however all this could be realized only in faith and hope. There was neither seed time nor harvest in the wilderness. Little was there to distinguish the months of spring from any other season of the year. The land of promise must be reached, before they should eat what had been sown and reaped. There the month Abib would bring its own peculiar joys. Meanwhile the unknown bread (manna) was eaten; and in the wilderness the month of the green ears of corn was celebrated as the first month of the year to the children of Israel. And though they were in the wilderness which yielded no green ears of corn, they knew that they were not in Egypt. The land was before them which would yield its fruits, and this was now their's by promise. And faith and hope in the true Israel, have

* Isaiah xl. 6.

their commemorative seasons, the fruits of which may not have yet been brought to light. They are conscious of a spring-tide of life, though the fruits of the holy land may not be apparent. In the liberty of God's children they rejoice; and they reckon that their true life began, when they were first delivered from the bondage of sin and corruption. They associate with it the setting up of the sanctuary, the pitching of the true tabernacle of God. They speak confidently and intelligently of flesh and spirit as being contrary the one to the other, though as yet the fruits of the spirit may be but little discerned. Enough is it that the works of the flesh are known and renounced, and that the soul knows something of communion with God. The fruits of the holy land shall in due time appear. It is in the sanctuary as yet the soul would find its delight.

Then again, on this joyous occasion, the feast of the passover was at hand, by which the people's flight from Egypt was to be commemorated. On the fourteenth day of the month the festival was to be kept; but on the first day of the same month, was the pass-over lamb to be taken from the flock, that it

might be kept up till the day when it should be killed.^a On the day of the selection of the lamb from the flock therefore, was Moses' sacred edifice reared. Unlike its precursor, "the tabernacle of the congregation" it was not pitched far away from the camp of the people, but in the midst of the tribes. And on this the first day of the first month, when the tabernacle of witness was thus set up, it was so filled with the glory of God, that Moses could not enter it. And in all this doubtless, the tabernacle of witness was bearing its testimony to the true tabernacle of God.

But spiritual progress is not marked by the regular succession of days, and months, and years. It is not always commensurate with the period that has elapsed since "the good work began," and so on one occasion the Apostle's exhortation is this:—"When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God."^b It is not because months and years have passed away, but because of the real spiritual advancement which has been made, that it can

^a Exodus xii. 6.

^b Heb. v. 12.

be truly said, "for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." ^a And yet it is as spiritual progress is made, that the true holy sanctuary, seen at first as if without and afar off, is at length found to be within; and that the believer personally, and the church collectively, realize that they are manifestly the living house of the living God. Neither of course can the day or the precise period be marked out, when in individual experience, that stage of the divine life is reached which may answer exactly to the setting up of the tabernacle of witness. The man of humble mind, like the Apostle, judges not his own self; neither judges he anything before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart: and then, says the Apostle, shall every man have praise of God.^b The true tabernacle has its progressive history; nevertheless we cannot always read it in the detail. So the tabernacle of Moses, as a symbol or type, serves us as a sure guide. It discovers to us principles; these in the light of scripture and of experience we seek to apply.

^a Rom. xiii. 11.^b 1 Cor. iv. 3, 5.

Have we not in our souls then, our commemorative seasons? Seasons when for instance, we feast afresh on our paschal lamb, and with greater zest even than when at the first we saw that redemption is in Christ Jesus; and as we thus feast do we not taste of higher, deeper, more lasting joys than before? Or with John the baptist "looking upon Jesus as he walked"^a in the flesh, in humbleness of spirit we muse and meditate; when sorrowfully and penitentially we see in him the suffering Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. And yet at such a season we rise up into sweeter, purer, more intimate communion with our God. We consciously experience, in a way and to an extent hitherto unknown, what it is to have God nigh;—yea in his holy temple, when for the time all the earth is silent before him;^b and that nevertheless this holy temple is within. Is it not with us at such a time, as the first day of the first month in the second year of our departure from Egypt, and the Lord's tabernacle is fully set up?"

Neither is it unfailing consistency always, but often what appears as the reverse of

^a John i. 36.

^b Hab. ii. 20.

this, which leads to the happy result. As it was with the children of Israel of old, so it is with us. Whatever our outward life may have seemed to others to have been, before God in secret we have to speak of tottering steps, of stumblings and falls, of mistakes and transgressions innumerable. It is not that our walk has really been more inconsistent than it was formerly, but having in measure the light of life, in that light our manifold failures become manifest. But marvellous is the grace which makes all things ours, even these very failures. They prove to be for us and not against us; shewing indeed that the spirit is willing, though the flesh is weak. Not that they are to be regarded with indifference, or that the soul may look with apathy upon the sins which "most easily beset it." This would be to decline from the ways of God, and to become the associates of those who "turn back unto perdition." But when struggling against temptations, they are found too strong for us for the time to resist, then the consciousness of failure humbles us the more, and thus it is we learn how grace abounds the more. We have

* Heb. x. 39.

thought with sorrow of the holy spotless lamb taken from the flock ;—of him who through his incarnation became one with us, though separate from sinners. We have mournfully thought of our sins, how they pierced him ; and how he suffered for us, the just for the unjust. And yet our day of sadness becomes a season of joy. The Lord our God is verily with us. We find with Jacob, that what had appeared to be the scene only of desolation, is none other than the house of God and heaven's gate. Does not the Lord dwell with the humble and the contrite ? Our God is with us, and we are ready to offer in his tabernacles, sacrifices of joy. *

Whether Moses' tabernacle to which reference has been made, and which he pitched outside the camp, had really any standing in Egypt, may be uncertain. The silence of the scriptures on the subject, warrants the remark already made, that there was no sanctuary there ; at least, that there was no divine acknowledgment of a sanctuary there. "The tabernacle of witness" was pre-eminently the tabernacle of the wilderness ;

* Psalm xxvii. 6.

and the wilderness was the scene of Israel's wanderings. The tribes journeyed now here, now there. Their "rest and inheritance" lay beyond. Sometimes they advanced; at other times they retraced their steps. But they moved only as the divine symbol of God's presence directed. "And when the cloud" says the sacred historian, "was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys."* Through the symbolic Shekinah, God was thus ever visibly present among the people, while they were in the wilderness. He was visibly and unfailingly their guide, directing their steps, and going before them to seek a resting place for them. It was a wonderful fact. Here was a people, separated from all the nations of the earth, and having little in common with them, who had God shewing by visible tokens that he was in their very midst. There

* Exodus xl. 36, 38.

way lay through the desert in which they now were, but there they could have no settled rest. They dwelt in tents; the Lord's dwelling was also in a tent. It was the Lord's "presence" visibly going with them, that so it might be known that the people had found grace in his sight; so also were they separated from all the people upon the face of the earth.* During forty years it was thus. And what marked out this period as specially wonderful? Signs and miracles were of necessity multiplied, where God's presence was so signally and manifestly apparent. And yet this is less perhaps, the striking feature in the scene, than was the waywardness and folly of the people. And long afterwards when looking back upon this period, David says in the spirit—"To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not you heart, as in the provocation and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and, said it is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: unto whom I swear in my wrath, that they should not en-

* Exodus xxxiii. 15, 16.

ter into my rest." * And yet throughout, the Lord's tabernacle was with this people, and it was known that his "presence" went with them. Surely my God, in thy patience and mercy which became not then and thus exhausted, thou wast indicating that far higher purposes should be accomplished; and thou wast shewing outwardly in a figure, how thou couldst and wouldst, in the fulness of thy grace, dwell with fallen sinful men on the earth. Thine Israel still err and stray. The rich displays of thy grace with which we are continually favoured are but ill requited. Iniquities and transgressions, alas! mark the waywardness of our course. But thy patience fails not. To us belong shame and confusion of face; but to the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him.

But when and where is there any thing answering to a wilderness, it may be asked, where the worshippers of God now are, and where the holy sanctuary has its standing? Assuredly it is no change of outward scene or of place, which brings us there. The business of life, with its varying occupations

* Psalm xciv. 7, 11.

and pursuits, remain the same when the wilderness path has been entered on, as they were before. At least there are but very few occupations, and these such only as are decidedly sinful, which have necessarily to be forsaken in such a case. Outward things remain as they were. The only change which takes place, necessarily affecting any man's "calling" in life, is in the motives and feelings with which this is henceforth pursued.

Egypt, as we have seen, is a type of the flesh and its rule. From this the poor captive soul is brought forth through the redemption which is in Christ. The wilderness is a type of what is realized therefore, after the power and dominion of sin are broken. It points to the position spiritually of those who have entered on the life and walk of faith. Things seen are not looked at by faith, but the things unseen.* The Apostle opens to us in his own experience, how and why the soul's path is outwardly desolate and drear, while the walk of faith is maintained. "For God," says he "who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of

* 2 Cor. iv. 18.

God in the face of Jesus Christ. "But," he adds "we have this treasure in earthen vessels." ^a Those who follow in the steps of the Apostle can also say with him, "for we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake; that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh."^b It is not necessarily outward persecutions which lead to this. Faith disowns all dependence, except on the living God. The flesh stands wholly opposed to such dependence. And thus to faith, the world within and without is as a scene of desolation. As the Israelites were fed during forty years, not with what the earth ministered to them, but with "manna" which fell from heaven, so fallen nature yields nothing from within or from without, which may minister sustenance or strength to the true life. On God alone can faith count; to live the life of faith, is to live much in inward retirement, as if alone with God. The outward man may perish, if so be the inward man is renewed day by day.^c The treasure is in an earthen vessel.

While it is thus, the rest and the inheritance which God gives, are not attained; though it is

^a 2 Cor. iv. 6, 7.

^b Ibid 11.

^c Cor. iv. 16.

written, "for we which have believed do enter into rest."^a Patient suffering and endurance is the lot of all who would really enter into the true inheritance. Faith wins it; the path of faith leads to it. But faith's trials and faith's manifold failures fully demonstrate what the wilderness path is to the people of God. And yet His tabernacle is with them. There is a pillar of cloud, unseen by the outward eye, under whose sure guidance the true Israel seek to live and move. The scene of their spiritual wanderings is around them. They, too, as did the tribes of old, journey now here, now there; now the Jordan and the land of promise are almost in sight, when again the wilderness of Shur, which is over against Egypt, opens to view. At times, for instance, peace reigns within. There are no painful conflicts with sin. The flesh with its thirstings and longings after sensuous objects is dormant. Its impulses of pride or anger, of self-elation or self-seeking, are stayed. The mountains of vision seem at hand. There are Pisgahs, from whose summits, glimpses of the incorruptible inheritance are obtained. Surely the death of self is accomplished; surely the

^a Heb. iv. 3.

flesh is slain. This is the feeling of the soul. In this peaceful, joyous state, it may seem to see the Jordan, as if now fully reached, its true rest lying just beyond. But now again fleshly lusts spring up, and again the flesh wages fierce war with the spirit. It had been only dormant, not dead. And to its grief and dismay, the poor soul is driven back almost to the first openings of its wilderness path; and the state of its former bondage and oppression is so vividly remembered, that it may seem as if barely escaped from, and as yet, after all, only just left behind. So circuitous are the souls wanderings, so fluctuating are its griefs and joys, while in this state. It is, indeed, a waste howling wilderness through which it must pass. It is enough, however, that wherever the true Israel are, there also is the sanctuary of God. And whether the believer's path may seem progressive, or whether he may be retracing his steps, where he is, there too is God's tabernacle. Surely in this we see the marvellous display of divine condescension and love. And that while sins and transgressions still abound, while fleshly lustings and worldly impulses, stubbornness, and pride, and many other evils yet work

within, God should still dwell with men on earth, oh ! this is grace unutterable. Grant, my God, that I may not be of those who do err in heart, not having known thy ways.

Yes, the true tabernacle is God's holy sanctuary or dwelling-place with men, while the fallen degenerate nature compasses us around. God himself is light, and in him is no darkness at all.^a Where the true light is, there God is. And so the apostle of the Gentiles had found not the spiritual wilderness only, but also the true and living tabernacle, when he said, as quoted above, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."^b Here is that light in which God is and in which he dwells ; as it is said, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with the other."^c In the presence of this light, fallen nature and the creature is as darkness ; "and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not."^d God's holy sanctuary is thus pitched in the dreary wilderness, in the land of desola-

^a 1 John i. 6.

^b 2 Cor. iv. 6.

^c 1 John i. 7.

^d John i. 5.

tion and darkness, and truly the Lord pitched it there. "For in him"—the Word—"was life; and the life was the light of men."*

The apostle might well add, as he does, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels." And what is seen of God's tabernacle from without at least is mainly the earthen vessel. Its frailties, its roughnesses and deformities are especially noticed, and no wonder if the living sanctuaries are often depreciated by men, for that which God sees and appreciates is hidden from view. But even this was strikingly shewn forth in the tabernacle under the law; and as was the outward appearance of that structure, so is that of the true tabernacle. Its unseemly appearance gives little indication of what God's dwelling-place really is. As the rough cloth of badgers' skins overlaid the richer coverings beneath, in the tabernacle of witness, so the flesh hides from view what is "life and spirit within." Even Christ himself, *the Word, became flesh, and though he knew no sin his beauty and glory were thus hidden from view.* It was in the presence of this great fact that the Apostle John exclaims, "Behold what manner of love the Father

* John i. 4.

hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not."* If our Lord was unknown while in the flesh, as God's son and as his living tabernacle, how should his disciples, with their manifold imperfections, be otherwise than unknown? And yet it is a vile covering that so hides the beauty of the interior sanctuary. Alas! the poor saints themselves are often more occupied with "the earthen vessel" in which the treasure is, than with the treasure itself. This sometimes leads them away from the path of faith, and from communion with God. It is with the old nature they are occupied, and that in vain; as if their one aim was to adorn the earthen vessel which is destined soon to perish. In like manner, at other times they are discouraged and depressed; for that is seen only, or mainly, which is marred or shattered. But in the interior of the tabernacle of God is found the richness of the treasure. To this the first tabernacle was designed to bear special witness. Rough and uncouth as that structure might appear when seen from without, the real costliness of its materials

* 1 John iii. 1.

was unbounded.* But for its being designed to witness to God's true and living sanctuary, one might have wondered why so costly an edifice should be reared, which should have so temporary a standing, and which should have so little outwardly to strike the eye. How few, too, were permitted to gaze upon its sumptuous richness. For after it was set up, only the priests might enter within. Neither is it the outward eye that sees the beauty and splendour of God's living abode. The Spirit of the Lord alone can disclose its treasures. It comprehends "the unsearchable riches of Christ;" it brings to light God's "unspeakable gift."

Taking that wonderful and costly structure reared by Moses, as I have done, as suggestively the foundation of my remarks, in endeavouring briefly to elucidate my present subject, I would further just observe, that

* The value of the materials, as estimated by Dr. Jennings, in his "Jewish Antiquities," would amount to £182,568. According to more recent estimates, the value of the whole is supposed to have much exceeded that amount. These estimates do not include the precious stones, fine linen, &c., &c. From this the cost of the whole structure will appear to have been immense. How shall we sufficiently estimate the costliness and splendour of the true tabernacle, God's living sanctuary.

simple and unpretending as it might be in its general form and appearance, it was designed marvellously to open out to us as in a type or figure, the mysteries of God's grace and love. The various materials of which it was composed, its furniture and vessels, its rich tapestries, and all its other adornings, its figures of cherubim gorgeously wrought, together with its simpler appendages, down to its sockets and pins, all serve to shew forth in figure what God's dwelling place on earth now is. But to attempt to speak of these things would carry me far beyond the limits which I have prescribed to myself in the present little volume.

One thing may be noticed however in passing, as bearing on our subject in the aspect in which I am especially viewing it, viz., that God's living tabernacle is man; but that the whole assembly of believers form one church, which is also his one sanctuary, the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. In the instructions given to Moses in the Mount, it is said, "Moreover, thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make

them." And again—"And thou shalt make fifty taches of gold, and couple the curtains together with the taches: and it shall be one tabernacle."^a Of these instructions there is almost a verbal repetition, when the work is described as having been completed.^b This repetition—and the remark applies to every part of the tabernacle—may in itself imply that an important mystery is referred to. It evidently marks out the unity of the Church. Each curtain, complete in itself, was formed of the material already prepared, and then woven together to form one cloth or tent. And then these several curtains or tents united together by the taches of gold formed one tabernacle. Surely we have here the many members and the one body in Christ;^c and again the churches of Christ, and all of them forming the one church of God. And what is the mysterious bond which links and cements them in one? This the golden taches may but imperfectly represent. It is assuredly the one common life, the life of God; this is the life of each, and the common life of all; and so God dwells in each, and he dwells in

^a Exodus xxvi. 1—6.

^b Exodus xxxvi. 8—13.

^c Rom. xii. 4, 5.

all ;—they are ONE TABERNACLE.* Neither let us forget, that in the nature of things the churches or the church can have no established, localized, permanent existence on earth, any more than individual Christians themselves have. As John saw in vision, *a candlestick may be removed out of its place.** And while the apostles of the circumcision were many of them fishermen, called in the grace of Christ to be fishers of men ; so the great apostle of the Gentiles was by calling a tent-maker. Under his testimony the churches were—and are gathered. They are outwardly as the work of the tent-maker ; and so as to the outward standing of the churches, God witnesses to us as he did to David of old ; and to us he may seem to say—“Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt,

* The golden taches, in common with the golden vessels generally, may probably typify the truth, as seen under its deeper and more sublime aspects. But, then, we must not confound our doctrinal teachings as to truth, with the truth itself. These may be right or wrong, and many of them may be accepted by some and rejected by others, who are equally intelligent and devout. But Christ Jesus is himself the truth, as well as the life. And in him the truth and the life are one.

* Rev. ii. 5.

even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle." ^a And thus thou wouldst have it our God, that our souls even in this may learn, that "here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." ^b

But the churches as the true tabernacle of God, so called in the epistle to the Hebrews, are elsewhere in the New Testament scriptures called his temple. Thus, for instance, appealing to the Christians at Corinth, the apostle says: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" ^c And then he urges the sin and danger of defiling that temple. And again, "What?" says he, "know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" ^d And when conformity to the ways of the ungodly is being reproved, the apostle appealingly asks, "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" "For," he adds, "ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people." ^e There

^a 2 Samuel vii. 6. ^b Heb. xiii. 14. ^c 1 Cor. iii. 16.

^d 1 Cor. vi. 19. ^e 2 Cor. vi. 16.

was a difference between the tabernacle and the temple of the Jews, though each was in itself a figure of the true tabernacle and of the true temple. The tabernacle, for instance, was in the wilderness; the temple was in the land of Canaan, the promised inheritance and rest. Both types would appear to be necessary, in order to set forth what is God's living sanctuary on earth. Relatively, as to its outward standing on earth, it is the tabernacle; essentially, it is the temple. Both types are needful, therefore, to teach us what the holy, living and true sanctuary is. Not only was the tabernacle under Moses in the wilderness, but because it was there, it was also a moveable structure. The people could have no fixed residence there. Neither was it, as a tabernacle, a permanent erection. The people were but sojourners in the wilderness; pilgrims on their way to the land of their hopes. The temple, on the contrary, was a fixed habitation, and as far as was needful to shew its symbolical import, it was a permanent and imperishable erection. And how both serve as types of one and the same house, or dwelling place of God, is best seen in the epistle to the Ephesians. "Now, there-

fore," it is said to the saints there, "ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God: and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit."^a Here, what the apostle elsewhere says may apply. "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."^b While the old nature, that wilderness to the newly awakened spiritual man, continues, the higher and happier state which awaits us is known in part; but it is hoped for, rather than seen. There is of course the germ within of what shall be; but as yet, there is only the germ. But the living structure that now is, must be further and further developed, until it increaseth and groweth into the completion of that which already it essentially is. Then a greater than Zerubbabel "shall bring forth

^a Ephes. ii. 19, 22.

^b Rom. viii. 24, 25.

the head stone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it."* *

But here historically, "the tabernacle of witness" will serve us with its testimony. Forty years did the Lord "walk in a tent and in a tabernacle" in the midst of his people, while they traversed the desert land. At length the dreary waste was left behind. The barrier between it and the land of promise,—the Jordan with its deep and swelling waters,—was passed over. Thenceforth "the tabernacle of witness" is almost lost sight of. Its offerings, and its priestly services were continued. At Shiloh men worshipped at least for a time. But it might seem to be the

* Zech. iv. 7.

* The holy brethren partakers of the heavenly calling, following faithfully in the footsteps of Jesus, may and do realize in some great degree, what it is to sit with Jesus in heavenly places. The holy land of their inheritance is not strange to them. Their faith having triumphed over the flesh and the world, they dwell in the land of promise, so far as they live and walk in the spirit. But as to the old nature and the outer life of the believer, all is a desert; and in this desert or wilderness, the tabernacle is pitched. Our subject of course leads us to confine our attention, more especially, to the wilderness path of the believer, which all the true followers of Jesus have to pursue. Alas! but few seem to know much about the higher walk of the Christian in the heavenly land.

“Ark of the covenant” rather than the tabernacle, to which they gathered. It is said that David had pitched a tabernacle for it, when he brought it up to him to the holy city:^a but this would seem to have been a temporary structure, which David himself had prepared for the occasion. Still the “tabernacle of the wilderness” had not perished. Once mention is made of it as existing and standing at a late period in David’s history. It was on an occasion of deep solemnity. The nation was under judgment, and the plague raged amongst them. But at this very time grace abounded, and God discovered to his humbled, repentant servant where his name should be recorded, and where his temple should be set up. “At that time,” it is said, “when David saw the Lord had answered him in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there. For the tabernacle of the Lord which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt-offering were at that season in the high place at Gibeon. But David could not go before it to enquire of God: for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the Lord.”^b

^a 2 Sam. vi. 17.

^b 1 Chron. xxi. 28—30.

Down to the days of Solomon, men worshipped in the high places. But whatever uses might be made of the tabernacle of Moses till that time, the spirit of God makes mention of it only once, as actually existing in the land ; and on that occasion David did not dare to approach it. It had been in the heart of the king to build a house for the Lord. This purpose was over-ruled on the part of God, though the motive which had prompted it was approved. To the man after God's own heart, nevertheless, secret councils were divinely opened, and a plan of the temple that should be, was shewn to him. And then at length, that which it had been in David's heart to do, his successor on the throne accomplished. Solomon built a house for the Lord,—the Temple at Jerusalem. What that long transition state may imply, a kind of intermediate state it was, between the manifested presence of God in the tabernacle, and the building of the temple, others better instructed in the things of God may be able to say. But so far as the tabernacle itself is brought under notice in the historical records, it is seen as if gradually merging into the temple. Of course the temple itself was but

a continuance of the type; the witness still of that which was to come. But, now, there was not only interior beauty, but also external grandeur and magnificence. Unlike what it was in the wilderness, now the thought was, "what manner of stones and what buildings are here?" There was no change in the character of the service. It continued the same as that of the tabernacle, only it was that service enlarged upon, and under circumstances in which it could be uninterruptedly performed. All, as a shadow and figure, was the same; but it was the figure intensified, and brought forth with greater boldness of outline. In short it was the Old Covenant service seen in its beauty and in its strength, though, of course, it made nothing perfect. It was the sanctuary with its "holiest," a befitting residence of God, so far as such a structure on earth might be so: but it was "made with hands," that is to say "of this building," or rather of this creation. And so all still pointed to that which pertained to the true tabernacle, "which the Lord pitched and not man."

It is all-important to keep in mind that the temple, with its increasingly imposing gran-

deur, whether in itself as a structure, or in connection with its service, brought in no essential or radical change from what had been while the tabernacle stood. We have, in short, in the land of promise, that which had been in the wilderness, only in a more developed, matured, perfected form. And that which strikes us throughout is the beauty, richness and even gorgeous splendour with which all was associated. Surely all this portrays, though in figure and but dimly as in a shadow, what the tabernacle of God, as his perfected living temple, is destined to be. The thoughts I have expressed, with regard to the living tabernacle being essentially the temple, the reader will find confirmed, if I mistake not, in the Book of "the Revelation." In that book too there would seem to be disclosures of what the Lord's mind is with regard to the temple, when it shall be perfected. Such passages as these, for instance, are worthy of note. "And he" the beast rising out of the sea, "opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and" (or, even) "them that dwell in heaven."* The tabernacle which is thus blas-

* Rev. xiii. 6.

phemed, is evidently the same with those who dwell in heaven. "Again, "And after that I looked, and behold the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened."* And when the revelation and the vision are closing, and John sees a new heaven and a new earth, and the holy city, new Jerusalem comes down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, then is a great voice heard out of heaven, saying, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men."b And, again, when the glorious city, as the adorned bride is contemplated, John adds "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."c Surely God's tabernacle on earth is also his dwelling place in heaven. But to attempt to describe how the glory of the holy city in the new heaven shall illumine and reveal itself in the new earth, would be, on the part of the writer at least, to utter words of folly, rather than of wisdom. And of the blissful, inconceivably blissful consummation who may speak! The temple itself passes away, as having henceforth neither figure nor form. And still it is;—though un-

* Rev. xv. 5.

b Ibid xxi. 5.

c Ibid 22.

seen. The ineffable glory of the Lord God Almighty and of the Lamb, fills the holy city; fills all. And that is the temple. Sun and moon are no more needed, as concentrated sources of light. The Lamb is the light, and God's glory illumines all. And the life is the light of men. Let us unite with the Psalmist and say, "Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord."*

* Psalm cl.





II.

The High Priest and the Priesthood.

“The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.”—Psalm cx. 4.

“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.”—Heb. vii. 26.

“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.



THE TRUE SANCTUARY;

The High Priest and the Priesthood.

THE priesthood was essential in connection with the service of the "Tabernacle of Witness" which Moses set up. There must be order, and therefore authority and rule also in God's house. The priesthood too had its divinely appointed head. Aaron was called of God to this high honour.^a He was the high priest and minister of the sanctuary, or of the holy places which are "the figures of the true."

The priesthood, as an established order, took its rise in connection with the setting up of the tabernacle. Not that the priestly office itself, with its various functions, was of Moses. This existed, so it would appear, from the beginning. One, for others, was ordained in things pertaining to God, to offer

^a Heb. v. 4.

gifts and sacrifices for sins. The office devolved, as it would seem, and by divine appointment doubtless, on the father or head of the family or families associated together in any district, as residents whether in tents or in a town. Abraham, for instance, appears to have been the only one in his household who offered sacrifices to God, though he had an extensive retinue of servants and others born in his house.^a Neither is there reason to suppose that his son Isaac ever himself sacrificed while his father was living. After the death of Abraham, he built an altar and called on the name of the Lord.^b So also during the sojourn of Jacob, with his sons and their wives and children in the land of Canaan, it does not appear that any of them officiated in the priest's office, except the patriarch himself. So too, when the tribe of Levi were chosen to do the service of the sanctuary, with Aaron and his sons at their head as priests, they were accepted as the representatives of the first-born of the families and household of all the tribes of Israel.^c There is no doubt, in short, that the priestly office always pertained

^a Gen. xv. 3, and xiv. 14.

^b Ibid xxvi. 25.

^c Num. iii. 11, 13.

to the first-born son of a family, and that under the appointment of God himself. So that when there was a division of the service into its various parts, requiring a high priest, and priests and Levites, the principle was distinctly recognized throughout. The head and first-born was the one to draw nigh to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins, for himself and for all who pertained to his house. There was no departure from this principle at the death of Aaron, and on the occasion of the deaths successively of the high priests. The first-born succeeded to the office which the death of the father had rendered vacant. It was important. The first-born was priest. It was the principle recognized by God from the beginning.

All associated with the ordering of the priests as well as all the ordinances of divine service in the worldly sanctuary, pointed to that which pertains to "the true tabernacle." The natural order, or that which was in the flesh, figured forth that which is spiritual. Here again the visible pointed to the invisible. The head or high priest was acknowledged as the source and centre of all priestly authority and power, which were exercised by the

others; they deriving their authority and power from God, but as in and through him. And he, as the first-born and representative, was high priest over them and over all, in things pertaining to God.

The priestly order was in accordance with the communication made to Moses, when he was with God in the holy mount. It was shewn to him at the same time with the patterns of heavenly things which he saw there. To Moses the Lord made known his ways; through Moses he manifested to the people his works. Before their eyes were to be set forth the figures of the things heavenly. The ways of Jehovah are seen in him, who is God's first-born;—in him who, without beginning or end of days, is priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec. He, whom Moses saw, was the Christ, the high priest of our confession, the minister of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man. The figure only of what he saw, was seen in Aaron and in the priestly order which he established. The truth of that which the figure set forth was to be found in Christ himself. He it was who gave the law to Moses. This is no mere conjecture. To the spiritual Israel the apostle

says, "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away, from him that speaketh from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." ^a He who speaks now, is the same who spoke on Sinai. And in these last days, "God hath spoken to us by his Son." ^b The same too is the angel, or messenger, "which spake to Moses in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles," says Stephen, "to give unto us." ^c To Moses were the holy mysteries opened, which he set before the people in figures and shadows, after the pattern which was divinely shewn him. And so, as we have seen, he who then spoke on earth, now speaks from heaven. The angel or messenger who then spoke, has further revealed himself. The fact, at once marvellous and pregnant with mercy, is before us: God has in these last days spoken to us by his Son, and he yet speaks. May none of us neglect a salvation so great as that which is now made known.

^a Heb. xii. 25, 26.^b Ibid i. 2.^c Acts vii. 38.

How great then was he who spoke with Moses in the Mount, shewing him the patterns of things heavenly, describing to him the holy places, "which are the figures of the true." And yet with far brighter and fuller discoveries of the glories of his person, does he reveal himself to us under the New Covenant. But we see how closely the past and the present dispensations are linked together in him who once spoke on earth and now speaks from heaven. He who so minutely described the *patterns* of the heavenly things on the Mount, must be intimately associated with the heavenly things themselves. He who ordered and arranged all things in connection with the sacerdotal institutions and services under the law, is himself priest for ever, whose priesthood is necessarily unchangeable;—the same who was with the Father before all worlds, *his* Son, *his* first-born, the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person, upholding all things by the word of his power.^a He it is whom God has appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds (ages).^b He was the one, who in the eternal councils of God, was to

^a Heb. i. 3.

^b Ibid i. 2.

come^a to do God's will. Of him the scriptures every where and uniformly testify.^b And of him, his Son, by whom God has spoken to us in these last days, the apostle is speaking when he says, "We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man."^c Even in the giving of the law there was a revelation of this glorious One, and Moses spoke with him face to face. And yet this is but indicative of the deeper and more intimate revelation of him, with which they are favoured, who realize his presence in the true sanctuary. And there he is both minister and high priest. Of him Aaron and his sons, together with their successors under the law, serve but as feeble shadows and types.

But in speaking on the Mount, when his voice shook the earth, this Blessed One was associating himself personally with that which was instituted under Moses. It was but as the angel or messenger of the covenant he was then revealed: nevertheless he did personally reveal himself to Moses. It was he

^a Rom. v. 14.

^b John v. 39.

^c Heb. viii. 1, 2.

himself who ordered and appointed all; he became thus associated with the outward and symbolical ministrations, so that they were not merely formal services. Through them, as the appointed medium, blessing from him reached the faithful worshipper. He was present in power with the people, through the burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin, so that to despise these offerings was to set at nought the salvation of God. Thus he who was from everlasting, and is unchangeably the same, revealed himself as speaking on the earth. But now having been "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead,"* he speaks as Son from heaven. And he rules and orders all as head and high priest, and strange to say, he serves also as minister in God's living sanctuary. That which from the beginning was as a principle recognized among men, is here seen in all its vast importance when the gracious purpose of God is thus made known to us. God's Son—his first-born—was to be revealed, the head over all, and the true hope of mankind. He who was before all worlds, "the first-born of every

* Rom. i. 4.

creature,"^a "the beginning of the creation of God,"^b the appointed "heir of all things,"^c because he is Son, and heir, and first-born, is God's true high priest; "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."^d And yet he it is also, who is heard saying, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me."^e Oh! how greatness and lowliness meet in him. The high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, is among his brethren as one that serveth; and still he is Lord of all. How exalted too are his brethren; what blessing is theirs!

And "the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched" is in man. It is, as has been said, the regeneration,—the life of God within,—God's image restored to man. This is God's dwelling place, the light in which he dwells; and so in Christ he dwells with men, and his tabernacle is with them. And the assembly of the faithful, who are "the church of the first-born" are God's house. It is here Christ

^a Col. i. 15. ^b Rev. iii. 14. ^c Heb. i. 2.

^d Psalm cx: 4. ^e Heb. ii. 12, 13.

Jesus takes his place, and exercises his rule as the high priest of our profession. This is the church or assembly in whose midst he leads the sacred song; these are the brethren to whom he declares God's blessed name. And these his brethren are the true holy priesthood of which he is the head; and these are sons, whom, as first-born among them, he is bringing to glory.* But who can speak aright of these wonders? In the contemplation of them, surely in self-abasement one is ready to fall prostrate before God, and yet with the psalmist to exclaim, "I will praise thee: for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well."^b

It follows that much that was hidden in mystery under the figures and the types, is opened to us, under the new and better covenant. In the church, or in connection with the "true holies," that is accomplished, the mere outline and shadow of which was seen under the law. And though it was he "who is from everlasting" who spoke with Moses in the Mount, the glories of his name were not unfolded then as now. But from the begin-

* Rom. viii. 29. Heb. ii. 10.

^b Psalm cxxxix. 14.

ning and throughout, all disclosures of God's councils, and all revelations of his will, are found to have reference to him. And the high priest of the true and living sanctuary, sustains other relations to the church or assembly of God, besides those which his priestly office implies. And yet in all, the wonders of his name are seen, and all serve to magnify his true greatness and glory as God's first-born, and heir and head over all. Transcendent in glory and power is he who is high priest in God's living sanctuary.

Even Adam was "the figure of him who was to come," and that when apparently it was said of him only, "it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helpmeet for him."^a True is it, as the inspired history records, that the woman was built up for the man (Adam); and literally was she brought to him, to be acknowledged by him as bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. But in the history, a divine mystery is enshrouded, which in our times is being continuously disclosed. The true helpmeet of whom the spirit of God really speaks in the history, is that which is built up for the man

^a Gen. ii. 18.

Christ. It is his spiritual church—his own flesh, which he, the man, hateth not, but nourisheth it and cherisheth it. This helpmeet is taken from the man, and built up into the woman, “bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh.” And so quoting from the ancient inspired record, the apostle says, “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but,” says the apostle, “I speak concerning Christ and the church.”^a That this church, or mystical woman might be one flesh with the Son of God, he the Christ took on him the seed of Abraham. Thus incarnate, this sinless one compassed himself with our infirmities, that so he might be one in sympathy with her who is his helpmeet. The figure here is changed from that which is more immediately under our notice. But then it serves to open to us the wisdom of the divine councils, in shewing through the very infirmities of the Jewish priests, what are the real excellences of our High priest. And so it is said, “For every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he

^a See Ephes. v. 31, 32.

may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.”^a And can it be, that he who spoke with Moses on the Mount, whose very voice, shook the earth, was the same who, clothed with our flesh, was tempted as we are, yet without sin? Yes, and he is the man to whom the woman, who is his own flesh, is espoused. And the woman, whom he loves as his flesh, is the church. And the church is the living sanctuary of God. And the man is the great high priest, who can indeed have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way. And that which constitutes the sanctuary is in man,—“the life” which is God’s gift to every poor soul that believes in Jesus; and this life is in the Son. And was it such a One, who spake of the tabernacle of witness in the Mount, and in whose presence Moses said, “I exceedingly fear and quake?” Oh! my soul, when these wonders open to thee but dimly, what canst thou do, but bow down in lowliness before thy God, and adore him for his marvellous grace!

^a Heb. v. 1, 2.

Again, in a different way, the same mystery as to the man and his helpmeet, is opened out in another scripture. Thus, for instance, the apostle gives instruction concerning the ministry of woman in the church. "But I would have you know" says he "that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man

also by the woman ; but all things of God.”^a

Of little moment, comparatively at least, would it seem, that the apostle should so emphatically teach that the man should pray and prophesy with uncovered head, and the woman with her head covered, in the assembly of the saints, if some deeper meaning were not involved. Would not nature itself teach what is proper in such a case. Surely we may here say, what the apostle says elsewhere, “this is a great mystery ; but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”^b The man with head uncovered, because he is the image and glory of God, is the same who was from the beginning, and of whom, man in the image of the earthly Adam, is but the figure. The church is the woman, who is the glory of this man. Adam, it is true, whose children we all are, “was not deceived ;” in this he served as a figure of him who was to come. But through the temptation he fell, and so came into the transgression. In Christ only and in the church, does the scripture find its complete fulfilment, when it says, “For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived

^a 1 Cor. xi. 3—12.

^b Ephes. v. 32.

was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." ^a This woman who is "the glory of the man," is the church; and the church and the true tabernacle are one. And the head of the woman, and the high priest of the living sanctuary are also one.

Of such a high priest, so great and so exalted, Aaron and his successors could be but feeble types and imperfect figures. Their order was instituted after the pattern of things seen in the Mount; it was evidently designed to serve temporarily as a shadow of him who was to come, and then to pass away. The apostle therefore dwells at length in the epistle to the Hebrews, on the striking *contrasts* between Aaron and Christ, or between the type and the antitype; and he is careful to shew that Christ as priest, is altogether of another and a higher order than that of the Jewish priesthood. Consequently, in the seventh chapter of that epistle, he comments largely on the words of the psalmist, "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent. Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." ^b

^a 1 Tim. ii. 13—15.

^b Psalm cx. 4.

For even while the Aaronic priests were serving according to the law and ordinance of God, it was given to David in the spirit, to speak of one who was to come, and who should not derive his office or authority from them.

The historical record of Melchizedec, of whom mention is thus made in the Psalms, is remarkable for its conciseness, and for the abruptness with which that illustrious individual's name is introduced into the inspired narrative. This, as the apostle shews, was from no inadvertence on the part of the writer; on the contrary it entered into the very council and purpose of God that it should be so. "Who was Melchizedec?" might the Jews ask, when Moses^a was being read in connection with the temple service, or in the synagogue. How strange that he should come so suddenly upon the scene, and as suddenly pass away! And what was there so peculiar in his priestly order, that it should designate that of one whom David speaks of, and who is priest for ever. Whether such questions were wont to be proposed, may of course be doubted. But the apostle anticipates them for us and sees in that which might

^a See Gen. xiv. 18, 20.

seem a defect in the history, only more full disclosures of the manifold wisdom of God. "For this Melchizedec," says he "king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually."^a A priesthood without beginning or end, an abiding priesthood is that of this Melchizedec, so far as it is seen in the kind of pictorial representation of it, which is given in the history. In this it contrasts with the unbroken genealogy which is given of Aaron and his successors. But the importance of the narrative is seen in this, that it furnishes a kind of panoramic, or symbolical picture of him who is now revealed as priest of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth, a priest for ever. "Now consider how great this man was," says the apostle, "unto whom even the patriarch

^a Heb. vii. 1—3.

Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils." But how great is he who is from everlasting, we exclaim; who is both King of righteousness and King of peace, without beginning or end of days, a priest for ever. Aaron's priestly order had nothing analogous to this, even in figure or in type. Neither was it designed that it should have; for here Aaron's order cannot typify the order of our high priest, but is seen, as has been said, in contrast with it. Aaron was a priest on earth. Our Lord is priest in heaven. "For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law, who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things."^a On earth he was, the incarnate Word, clothed with our very flesh; and though he were a Son, he then learned obedience by the things which he suffered.^b He can fully sympathize with his suffering followers on earth. But his priestly office and functions are after no earthly order. Not till he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead, was his priesthood made known. And "not after the law of a carnal commandment," is

^a Heb. viii. 4, 5.^b Ibid v. 8.

Jesus a priest, "but after the power of an endless life." His is an unseen ministry, but it is a ministry in power. His is an unchangeable priesthood, and his mediation is perfect; he saves therefore, not temporarily or in part, but to the uttermost them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* Surely he is in every respect, such a high priest as became us. And yet it was he who spoke with Moses in the Mount, when his voice shook the earth. His terrible majesty was then seen, and even outwardly seen; the earth and nature trembled at his presence. But he even then spoke of God's house on earth, and gave the pattern to Moses of the "tabernacle of witness" which should be set up. God hath spoken to us in these last days by him. He inspires not terror nor dread now. He is our high priest, a minister of the living sanctuary, of that which is the very house of God.

But Aaron does serve as an important figure and type of this great high priest, who is nevertheless after an order so far transcending his. The earthly priests "serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things."

* Heb. vii. 24, 25.

But the covenant under which they served was not faultless. The new covenant has taken its place. It was God's purpose that the old covenant with its ministry should vanish away.^a The earthly shadows all have their use; they pass away when the heavenly things are seen.

A few of the characteristics of our high priest as typified in Aaron and his successors, are pointed out by the apostle. A brief consideration of one or two of them, may at least suggest matter for profitable meditation. After speaking of the dignified and important office of priest, as fulfilled by those who are taken from among men, he adds; "And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."^b The heir of all, as if waiving his right, humbly accepts office, as one worthy of it and fitted for it. He is "called of God a high priest, after the order of Melchisedec."

^a Heb. viii. 5—13.

^b Heb. v. 4—6.

As is said of him elsewhere, "he made himself of no reputation," and he "humbled himself and became obedient."^a Therefore, also, "God highly exalted him."

Here let me pause. "He glorified not himself to be made a high priest." How much does this imply! He was called of God as was Aaron:—taken from among men as was Aaron;—and, therefore, it must be added, compassed for a time even with at least sinless infirmity, that he might, as Aaron did, compassionate the ignorant and them^c that are out of the way. But this involves the wonders and mysteries which thy holy incarnation opens to view, my Lord! Thou didst clothe thyself with the weakness of humanity, thou Almighty One. Thou didst not even abhor the virgin's womb, when thou didst undertake to deliver men from their bondage unto sin; and so thou wast born into this outer world which thou hadst made, and wast found an infant of days, a babe at Bethlehem. Thou wast also in subjection, and wast under the law, and didst in the days of thy flesh offer up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to

^a Phil. ii. 7, 8.

save thee from death, and wast heard in that thou fearedst with a godly fear.^a Thou wast as man on earth fulfilling all righteousness;^b at the same time, thou wast by signs and wonders opening out the treasures of thy grace and love, in these the days of thy flesh. Though a Son too, thou didst learn obedience by the things which thou didst suffer, while as the leader and captain of thy people thou wast perfected through suffering. Thou didst suffer, my Lord, even unto death, and didst through death destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and this, in order to deliver them who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. And thus wast thou in all points made like unto thy brethren, that thou mightst be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that thou thyself hast suffered being tempted, thou art able to succour them that are tempted.^c And then, for thou wast not a priest on earth, thou didst pass away, that thou mightst be called and glorified as high priest in the living sanctuary of God. On these wonders would I muse

^a Heb. v. 7.^b Matt. iii. 15.^c Heb. ii. 14—18.

and meditate while remembering that thou didst enter on thine exalted office, only as one called and appointed to it; and oh! that in the sight of them I could worthily praise thee.

But to resume my subject, I would here advert to the way in which Aaron received the appointment to his high and holy office. It was by solemn consecration; as it is said to Moses, "And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them (Aaron and his sons) to hallow them to minister unto me in the priest's office."^a And then there was the washing and afterwards the enrobing of Aaron's person; so also there were sacrifices and offerings for sin as we read in the sacred record.^b For Aaron was in himself polluted, as one in the flesh, and needed to offer for his own sins as well as for the errors of the people. Especially is it to be noted, that he must not enter into the holy places made with hands which are the figures of the true, until he was arrayed in those sumptuous garments, which were prepared for glory and for beauty.^c The lowly Jesus knew no sin, though he entered in once for all into the holiest, and that with

^a Ex. xxix. 1.

^b See Lev. viii.

^c See Ex. xxviii.

his own blood. For he bore *our* sins in his own body on the tree. But neither was it till *he* had laid aside the visage marred, and that outer garment the flesh, which is of this creation; nor till he was found clothed with his body of glory, and had covered himself with light as with a garment,^a that his priestly glory became manifest. Then was it said, "Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee;" and again, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec." And now, arrayed in this his ineffable beauty, and in all his boundless glory he is the high priest of our confession. For even *we* have such a high priest, who is declared the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

Another important fact must not be overlooked in connection with Aaron's consecration to his office. His sons were separated unto the service of the tabernacle, together with himself. They had their appointed garments too, in which they ministered in common with Aaron; though the gorgeous robes in which Aaron entered into "the holiest," were worn exclusively by the high priest.

^a Psalm civ. 2.

And so after the solemn service of consecration has been described, it is said, "And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him; and sanctified Aaron, and his garments, and his sons and his sons' garments with him."^a

We read of no associates with Melchisedec in his priestly office. Had there been such spoken of in the divine record, seeing that his was a ministry on earth, it would have supposed a succession of priests. Melchisedec would thus have failed to stand forth in the figure, as a type of him whose priesthood is unchangeable and for ever. But the apostle Peter addresses the scattered strangers, elected in Christ as "a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." And again he says, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."^b The apostle John also ascribes praise "Unto

^a Lev. viii. 30.

^b 1 Peter ii. 5 and 9.

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." ^a It enters into the design of the epistle to the Hebrews, to speak only of the priesthood of Jesus and of its blessings to the Israel of God. But the many sons whom he is bringing to glory are evidently participants in the honours and glories which he inherits. It is because he who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, that he is not ashamed to call them brethren. ^b Our Lord himself says, "and the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." ^c Many true believers may know little and may realize still less of their true standing in Christ. The redeemed nevertheless, are the Israel of God, *a holy nation*, as well as a royal priesthood. Many, ignorant of their priestly calling, may stand without as true Israelites, who seek not as priests to draw near. But assuredly our great high priest, though having an unchangeable

^a Rev. i. 5, 6.

^b Heb. ii. 11.

^c John xvii. 22, 23.

priesthood, has associates with him in his office. They are men who, unlike himself, have known sin. But sanctified in him, they are holy brethren anointed together with him. He is high priest; they are priests. Their functions it is true are not carnal, but spiritual; the honour which is truly theirs, is unassociated with earthly grandeur or power. Their ministry is where Christ is;—in God's living sanctuary. But his priestly honours he does not withhold from the faithful even now. Not merely to know this but to realize it, is the blessing we should fully seek. It is only in our priestly garments we may minister. Arrayed in these, may my soul now stand before thee, thou priest and minister of the sanctuary of my God.

Of the high priest among the Jews, it is said,—“And he shall take a wife in her virginity. A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or a harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife. Neither shall he profane his seed among his people: for I the Lord do sanctify him.”^a The injunction was no doubt wise and even necessary as regards the chiefs of the

^a Lev. xxi. 13—15.

sacerdotal line under the law. For they must be clean, who bear the vessels of the Lord.^a And pre-eminently should he be so, who was at their head.

But the command that the high priest should marry only a virgin, brings us back to the truth which has already been noticed. The church is here seen in type. It is the woman, who is the glory of the man, even Christ. So Paul thus writes to the Corinthians; "Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."^b The new creature, that which is of the new birth, or the regeneration, is the true virgin which is espoused to Christ. "The general assembly of the first-born, which is written in heaven," is the true helpmeet which is formed for the man. She alone is the virgin; and a virgin only should he marry. Profane Jezebels may, for a time,

^a See Isaiah lii. 11.

^b 2 Cor. xi. 1—3.

vaunt themselves, calling themselves prophetesses; but in the sight of the man, who is the high priest, they are vile and unclean. Not these, but the pure virgin shall he receive to himself. Joyous shall the nuptials be. In the fulness of his glory, as priest after the order of Melchisedec, will Jesus Christ be seen; as king and priest will he appear; as king of righteousness and king of peace, and at the same time as priest of God most high, the maker of heaven and earth. The psalmist may seem to celebrate the occasion in that which he calls "a song of loves," when of the bride he says—"The king's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle-work: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace."^a But whence this loveliness of the ransomed bride? Surely it is from himself. The king's bride is the daughter of the king. Thus only is she the worthy bride of him who is heir of all things, and therefore priest over all. Anticipating the time when

^a Psalm xlv. 13—15.

the bride shall have made herself ready, as one adorned for her husband, and pondering on our present condition as set forth in "the prayer of Moses, the man of God," we may humbly say with him, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it."^a

In many other ways, doubtless, did the Aaronic priesthood serve to symbolize the prerogatives and glories of our great high priest, who nevertheless "glorified not himself to be made a high priest." Times and dispensations are continuously but unfolding his glories; while in and by him, as the minister of the true tabernacle, God is especially opening to us his wondrous love, in its secret workings within us.

That, however, which the epistle to the Hebrews especially enlarges upon, is the fullness of his sympathy and compassion. These are so intimate, so assuring, so blessed. The heaviest afflictions seem lightened, or at least they are more easily borne, when even our fellow-mortals are willing to share with us the burden of our griefs. He who gave us

^a Psalm xc. 17.

being, and fashioned us in the womb, knows how sensitive we are to the way in which others regard our sorrows: how their indifference blunts our feelings, or crushes our spirits; how, on the other hand, their compassion draws forth our kindest feelings, and fortifies us against oppression or dismay. That nothing might be wanting on his part, he spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all. His sufferings for us in the flesh, in which he was spared no trial, have fitted him to be at once a merciful and a faithful high priest. O! marvellous is this his grace. Touched with the feeling of our infirmities, he can really manifest in the afflicted soul, his familiarity with our griefs, and can shew also that our very sorrows are his.

It had been said to the children of Israel, "And the Lord will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all that hate thee."^a This was on the supposition that they should hearken to the judgments of the Lord, and keep and do them. Alas! Israel-

^a Deut. vii. 15.

ites were by no means exempt from sickness and disease, the reason for which was sufficiently obvious. They kept not the statutes and the ordinances of God. The plague even of leprosy, that dread disease, broke out at times among the people. But in that sad case, it was the priest himself, compassed with infirmity, who had to deal with the afflicted one. It was a striking and beautiful arrangement, that it should rest with him to determine who were leprous and who were not. He it was who should say when or otherwise, the leper had been healed;—whether the scall were still spreading in the skin, or whether in his sight it were at a stay.^a It was supposed not only that experience had rendered the priest skilful in discerning the character of the disease, but also and more especially that he was prepared to compassionate the sufferer.

It is yet the province of the high priest, but in a far deeper sense, to deal with the spiritually diseased. He it is who pronounces concerning his tempted followers, sorrowing from a sense of their pollutions, when they are clean, and when unclean. Sin and unclean-

^a See Lev. xiii. 36, 37, &c.

ness, that spiritual leprosy which so cleaves to us, he spares not. But he knows when the boil is not lower than the skin, and spreads not.^a He is high priest in the sanctuary within. This is rule and ministry combined. He is high priest with authority; but he is therefore a minister of the sanctuary as well. He is the Word, quick and powerful,—a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. In him the sternness and sharpness of righteous rule and of power are combined with the tenderness of compassion and sympathy. Sharper than a two-edged sword, the Word divides between the soul and the spirit.^b Thus he fulfils his priestly functions. He is even, as we shall have occasion afterwards to observe, the sacrifice as well as the priest, whose blood cleanses from all sin. He rules even when he ministers, and he ministers when he rules. And oh! how his tenderness and sympathy avail us, when sin is being mourned over and confessed. His compassion makes itself to be felt, in *the power of the life within*. He heals the leprous Israelites now; and he, himself the priest, pronounces them clean.

^a See Lev. xiii. 18—28.

^b See Heb. iv. 12.

It was said under the law, "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts."^a Such a priest is he who is after a higher order than that of Aaron. At his mouth should the law of truth and of life and love be sought. But how? He who has for us entered into the heavenly sphere is nigh; they who "wait" know how nigh. That which is written in the prophets is fulfilled in them; "And they shall be all taught of God."^b And to these the apostle John addresses himself when he says,—“I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.”^c And again, “But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.”^d Far different is this teaching from that of man. It puffs not up, but builds up.^e It imparts the mind of Christ, but not opinions of what may be difficult and abstruse.

^a Mal. ii. 7. ^b John vi. 45. ^c 1 John ii. 21.

^d 1 John ii. 27. ^e See 1 Cor. viii. 1

They who are thus taught, may not rank with the learned of this world, but they are wise in "the things of God." They have learned in spirit to be subject to him who is head and supreme in God's house, and they know how blessedly he serves them, while he faithfully and authoritatively rules. And truly his lips keep knowledge. Happy are we, when habitually we seek the law at his mouth.

"We have" then "such a high priest, who is on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle "which the Lord pitched and not man." He is the head over the sanctuary or dwelling place of God, for the ordering of all things connected with it. This too is by the appointment of God, who called him and glorified him to be high priest. Alas! there may be practical forgetfulness of this, and the results are sad whether in the churches or in the individual. Churches then, in their outward standing, may seem to themselves to be rich and increased with goods, so as to have need of nothing. They may have learning and talent, yea genius and wealth and rank, at command; they may even regard these as sanctified

gifts, consecrated to the Redeemer's glory. Their works too may be many, so as to yield satisfaction to themselves, and to command respect, if not approval, from others. It was thus even with the pharisees of old. But if "the amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God," have to say, "Behold I stand at the door and knock," then these very churches are "wretched and miserable, and poor and blind and naked;"^a and that despite all their pretensions to the contrary. The testimony of the "faithful and true witness" is but little agreeable to the flesh, even in those who believe. But if because of this, the assemblies, self-confident and self-satisfied, bow not to his true headship and rule, he is really unknown as "the beginning of the creation of God;" his ministry in the sanctuary is then, also, virtually unknown.

But while it is thus, misrule and disorder prevail. The church, as the woman, is seen usurping authority over the man. She teaches when and where she should be in subjection to her Lord. She is speaking openly her own thoughts, though, perhaps, with appa-

^a See Rev. iii. 14, 22.

rent piety, when she has no permission to speak; she ought to be under obedience, learning of her husband at home. Oh! how often and how much does the woman thus speak to her shame!^a She is but praying and prophesying with her head uncovered, and this to the dishonour of her head. Earnestly and pathetically does he appeal who, at such times, stands at the door and knocks. The question then is,—who will hear his voice and open to him, that they may sup together? The promise is—“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne.”^b

Alas! the ruin that has corporately come upon us, as professedly the people of God, is great, through failure in acknowledging the true headship of Christ in the sanctuary of God. Some may even doubt if churches so organised, as to their outward standing, do now exist, to which the language may truly and fully apply—“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches.” But sad as may be the results of the church’s having disregarded the priestly

^a See 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35.

^b Rev. iii. 20, 21.

rule of Christ, the failure began with individuals, and was perpetuated through personal faithlessness to him. Self-will which dethrones Christ, has its seat in the individual soul. Unopposed, it can assume the appearance alike of humility and devotion; but its waywardness is rebellion, and rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. Only with the truly humble and contrite can the Lord dwell. O! thou faithful and true witness, bear thy testimony in my conscience and in my heart, and so let thy light shine within me, that coming to it, my deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.^a When sin has prevailed, let me confess it unto thee, and not keep silence; so shall I be without guile before thee. And yet, "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer."^b

^a See John iii. 21.

^b Psalm xix. 12—14.

We have "such a high priest," then, the wonders of whose name who shall declare? Seen on the Mount in terrific power, he is as minister of the living sanctuary, unwearingly pitiful and compassionate;—still powerful, but mighty to save. When his voice shook the earth, surely his design was not merely for the moment to excite fear and dread in those who heard him; though so terrible was the sight, that Moses said—"I exceedingly fear and quake." The scene, with its terrors, stands associated with a promise of what yet shall be. So the apostle tells us;—"But now he hath promised, saying, yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven."^a But how or in what sense of the word can language, apparently so terrible in its import, be regarded as a promise? It signifies the "removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." It is, that what is perishable may yield place to the imperishable: that that which is evil may be done away, and that that which is good may remain. So shall the Sabbath or rest of God be ushered in,

^a Heb. xii. 26.

when again all shall be very good. And so when seen on the Mount that burned with fire, amid blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, his purpose was to shew the patterns of heavenly things, that the tabernacle of witness might be set up. He was there, the priest and minister of the true tabernacle, who should afterwards be known in the fulness of his grace and love.

In a word, successive revelations have been progressively unfolding with increasing clearness, what his name imports. That name throughout is ONE: he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Especially is it seen, as dispensations succeed each other, that in him "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."* Our high priest is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, for whom and by whom are all things, to whom be glory for ever. He was before all worlds; —the Son, to whom it is said, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." By his holy incarnation, as the Word made flesh, he became an infant of days. He is seen as the

* Psalm lxxxv. 10.

servant of all, and the Lord over all. Shall his voice shake the earth, and also heaven, and does he sit as judge among the nations? All judgment is committed to him, because he is the son of man; and what in him is terrible in seeming, is merciful in design. The divine councils all refer to him, all divine purposes are consummated in him. He is the man who was made to have dominion over the works of God's hands, and to have all things put under his feet;^a but he is also "the man who is God's fellow."^b "The times of restitution of all things"^c have reference to him; they will be the times of the manifestation of his glory. His is kingly majesty; but this is not to be dissociated from his priestly honours. And so Isaiah, seeing his glory, thus spake of him, saying,— "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the

^a See Psalm viii. 5. Heb. ii. 7, 8.

^b See Zech. xiii. 7.

^c Acts iii. 21.

Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke."* But the tongue of mortals must utterly fail in attempting even to enumerate his manifold glories. He is the man, the heir of all things; the Lamb slain, and yet the King eternal; the priest of God, and yet "the everlasting Father." He is all in all. Be it ours to take up the inspired song, and with joy to recite in spirit the words of David—"The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many coun-

* Isaiah vi. 1—4.

tries. He shall drink of the brook in the way; therefore shall he lift up the head.”^a Be it ours, indeed, to rejoice that in the day of his power, all his foes in us shall submit themselves unto him: “O praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great towards us; and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise ye the Lord.”^b

^a Psalm cx.

^b Psalm cxvii.





III.

The General Ministrations of the True Tabernacle.

“They have seen thy goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.”—Psalm lxxviii. 24.

“We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.”—Heb. xiii. 10.

“Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.”—Ibid. 12, 13

“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.”—Ibid. 15.



THE TRUE SANCTUARY;

The General Ministrations of the True Tabernacle.

THE Law made nothing perfect; and so perfection was not by the Levitical priesthood, else there had been no need that another priest should arise after the order of Melchisedec.^a In the ministry of "the tabernacle of witness," therefore, there was the renewed offering, year by year, of sacrifices;—because, when thus offered at the appointed season, they could not make the comers thereunto perfect. On this very account, the one great sacrifice of Christ is viewed in scripture as in contrast with the many and oft-repeated Jewish offerings. "By one offering," it is said, "he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."^b There is no need for a repetition of Christ's offering

^a See Heb. vii. 11, 19.

^b Heb. x. 14.

and sacrifice of himself in our flesh. As the victim, he here on earth suffered once for all, as if without the gate, being made a curse for us. But having suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, he entered with his own blood into heaven itself, the high priest of the true "holies" in the heavenly and living sanctuary of God. This does not exclude the necessity for the continued ministrations of the sanctuary.

The yearly offerings, on the great day of atonement among the Jews,^a were not to be repeated till the anniversary of that day had arrived. During the interval the nation of the Jews stood accepted of God as his people, and that on the ground of the acceptableness of the sacrifice which had been offered for sin, on the day of expiation, and the blood of which the high priest had brought into the sanctuary. Not till the ensuing year was remembrance again made of sins.^b Nevertheless, there were the daily ministrations of the tabernacle, and that on the very ground that the yearly sacrifice had been accepted.

Not, indeed, for a limited period, but for

^a See Lev. xvi.

^b See Heb. x. 3.

ever, does the one great offering and sacrifice of Christ avail, else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world. But for that very reason the services of the true tabernacle are continuous. Otherwise, why should that tabernacle be pitched? It is God's dwelling place; the ordering of his house is necessary. It is his palace, the palace of the great King; surely ministration and rule are called for there. It is his sanctuary, the unclean shall not enter there. Were there no present ministrations and priestly offerings, as the continual service of the true tabernacle, why should there be a head or chief priest over the house of God? Is it only that he should live to intercede? This assuredly he does. But a high priest supposes priests; and a priesthood supposes service and sacrifice too. And so says the apostle,—“we have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle.” And, again, “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.” True, the ministrations are spiritual and heavenly, in character with

^a Heb. xiii. 15.

the tabernacle which the Lord has pitched. But not the less truly does the priesthood wait on its ministry, and serve in God's sanctuary. So the apostle Peter thus addresses the scattered elect. "Ye also," says he, "as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."^a It is not as it was under the law,—a tribe or a class among believers who are called to the high honour; but believers themselves are at once a holy nation, a household, and a priesthood too.

In considering the ministrations of God's house, the tabernacle in the wilderness and Israel in their journeyings, will alike serve us for our guidance and instruction. The court surrounding the tabernacle, and the tabernacle itself with its two holy places, and the services peculiar to each, were all shadows of what lies above and beyond; in them were seen the patterns of things heavenly. The same may be said of the position of the people in the wilderness, drawing near and advancing onward to the promised inheritance and rest. Of the various ministries,

^a 1 Peter ii. 5.

and of each incident, it could be said—the Holy Ghost this and that signified.

In connection with the “tabernacle of witness,” there was, be it remembered, an outer and an interior service. There was what pertained to the outer court, where the people could any of them and at all times assemble. There nothing was secret or hidden; all was open to the eyes of those who approached the altar of God. Within this court the people offered, while the Levites and priests ministered there together. To the holy places, on the contrary, pertained those services which were exclusively priestly, and which were wholly hidden from the multitude. Into the Holiest entered the high priest, once only in the year, and then not without blood,—the blood of the victim slain in the outer court. From this innermost sanctuary all were excluded except the high priest. There, was the thick darkness in which God, symbolically, dwelt. The high priest’s annual entrance alone, had its peculiar import; “the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first taber-

nacle was yet standing.”^a And yet the connection of the several parts of the service was such, that the neglect of any one important part must render the remaining parts of no avail. The hidden or unseen ministrations within the “holy places” gave efficacy to those which were performed in the outer court. Apart from the services of the outer court, those of the inner sanctuary could not have been accomplished. There were diversities of ministrations, but the service was one.

The general design of this diversified, but one harmonious service is obvious. It was that in virtue of the service, the people might draw nigh to God; and maintain union and communion with him, so that ultimately they might find their rest in him; and all this consistently with the honour and glory of God. Still it was all in figure and in shadow only; for the law made nothing perfect. It remained that that should be realized and perfected in connection with the true sanctuary, which the tabernacle of witness could only foreshadow. But we learn the process as well as the result from the figures of the heavenly

^a Heb. ix. 8.

things under the law. Throughout the law elucidates the gospel, while the gospel is the true interpreter of the law.

This great and unspeakably important design thus shadowed forth in the wilderness services, receives also another and striking elucidation in the journeyings of the people. This is seen in the third and fourth chapters of the epistle to the Hebrews. In that epistle the desert wanderings of the children of Israel, and their continual priestly and sacrificial services, are brought into juxta-position, as alike in figure, pointing to the same spiritual truth. In one as in the other the idea was that of drawing nigh to God; the turning away from what was unholy and unclean, to that which is pure and holy, that God's dwelling place might truly and permanently be with them. In the one case, though again and again retracing their steps, the people are seen journeying on and on towards the sanctuary of Jehovah's presence, that they may dwell near to him and with him in his own holy land; in the other they are seen drawing nigh to his holy dwelling place, through sacrifices continually offered. So in "the true tabernacle" we come nigh in virtue

of Christ's great sacrifice; and apart from that, none can draw near. But the perpetual services of the sanctuary imply continual progress towards the holy, heavenly land, where earthly mindedness and all the vile affections and desires of the flesh being left behind, our everlasting dwelling place is with God and in him. Neither of the figures referred to, would separately give us the true and full idea of what is contemplated in the service of the true sanctuary; conjointly they shew what is really God's purpose concerning us. In the one case we see a holy resting place,—an inheritance as yet far distant, and which, led on by the grace of God, we seek to reach. In the other case we see it near to us, and as if easily within our reach. Thus, too, we learn that the distance between us and our true holy rest is not local in its character, but moral and spiritual: that it is not so much a local heaven as a heavenly nature we need. And so while we press on to reach our inheritance and rest, often in weariness of spirit, it is by the prescribed sacrifice and shedding of blood only that we approach it. In both cases, too, we are directed to Christ as our hope and strength. Moses, with

Joshua as his successor, each points to Christ, "the captain of our salvation," who, himself perfected through sufferings, can alone bring us to glory and never-ending rest. Aaron, with Eliezer and others as his successors, point severally to the minister of "the true tabernacle," whose priesthood is unchangeable, and who saves to the uttermost those who come to God by him. Historical facts and records, therefore, and the ordinances of divine service, are here significant of one and the same thing. They point alike to the "sanctuary," the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man. They indicate that all the services of that tabernacle have, as their immediate and ultimate aim, that we be freed from the dominion and power of sin, and from all the corruptions and pollutions of the flesh, so that in communion with the Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, he may dwell in us and we in him for ever. And this is the very end contemplated in the ministrations of the heavenly sanctuary. We serve God in his tabernacle within us,—in the energy of that new nature which is from Christ, and from the impulses and actings of that true life which is of God. Oh! unfathomable

love, which has so arranged for us poor sinful mortals, that it may and can be thus; and that it shall be thus with all in whom the faith of Christ is truly awakened.

In a word, then, the true rest and inheritance we seek is unbroken communion with God in his sanctuary. For this we serve; and as we serve, we wait and hope. We thus seek the soul's eternal union with Christ and with God. This, too, was shadowed forth in mystery, when the woman was brought unto the man.^a And so it is not to be lost sight of that the Son, the first-born and heir of all things, and the high priest after Melchisedec's order, are ONE. And the ministrations of "the true tabernacle are to bring into full manifestation the man who is the image and glory of God, and the woman who is the glory of the man."

I have spoken of the services of God's sanctuary as being ours. In the scripture, which is now more especially under consideration, the apostle speaks only of Christ the high priest, as being minister of "the true tabernacle." I am assuming that as *high priest*, he is associated with a priesthood

^a See Gen. ii. 22.

of which he is the head. According to "the patterns of heavenly things," as seen in Aaron and his sons, the "holy brethren" sanctified in Christ,^a are thus one with their high priest. They are consecrated together with him; his anointing is their anointing; they are consecrated in holy, heavenly garments as he is. And the one anointing and consecration suffices for the successive generations of priests. Such was the ordinance, when Aaron and his sons were set apart to their holy office.^b So is it also in Christ.

Under the law, even, because the priesthood was one, its services were not regarded as the separate services of many, so much as one entire service, for the due ordering of which the chief priest was responsible. The authority and the power centred in him, as the head or chief, so that the priests severally ministered together with him, and as under his direction. As men and as Israelites, of course, each was responsible before God for his own individual acts. But as to all sacerdotal services, the high priest was responsible for their right fulfilment. So it was not merely as a parent, but also as head of

^a See Heb. ii. 11.

^b Ex. xxviii.

the priesthood, that in the days of Samuel, Eli was charged with the official transgressions of his sons.^a

What, in this respect, was an ordinance and a statute under the law, is truth in Christ. He is the minister of the true tabernacle, the chief and ruler who is responsible for the due ordering of all things in God's house. The believer is, of course, amenable to God for his own misdeeds and wilful transgressions. But all true ministry is really performed only in the power which is derived from Christ. It is in the power of Christ, and in the life of Christ in us, that we serve. He ministers through us, and we minister in and by him. The many services, therefore, are as the varied ministry of one;—that is, of him who is the life and power in all. And then not as a servant in the house, but as a Son over the house, he ministers.^b So, also, he is not only a compassionate, but at the same time a faithful high priest in things pertaining to God. And how, indeed, such a high priest became us! His very faithfulness meets our need, as much as his compassion. For were he otherwise than as he is, how

^a See I Samuel iii. 15.

^b See Heb. iii. 5, 6.

could we attain to full communion with God, the Holy One? He dwells in light, and in him is no darkness at all.

What are those ministrations, then, which stand associated with the true tabernacle, and how and when are they carried on? This is the question which I am here proposing briefly to consider. To define them minutely, I do not attempt. Their nature and general characteristics it is important to consider.

The new and better covenant which, in these last days, God has made with us in Christ, is that which, according to the apostle, determines the character of the ministry associated with the true tabernacle. So when contrasting the Aaronic priesthood with that of Jesus, he thus writes—"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, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle:—for

see, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the Mount. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."* The gifts offered under the better covenant differ altogether from those offered by them who were priests on earth; and for this very reason, that the covenant under which they served differs wholly from that of which Jesus is mediator. And so adds the apostle—"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." And then, in reference to this new bond or relationship into which God enters with his people, it is thus described—"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And

* Heb. viii. 3—6.

they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”*

Christ's, then, is a more excellent ministry, and that by so much as the new covenant transcends the old. The former contrasts with the latter especially in this: that in the one the condition, on the people's part, is,—“Thou shalt,” and “thou shalt not;” in the other the promise, on God's part, is—“I will.” It is the contrast between the law and grace. The first covenant, righteous in itself, depended on what man should do, or not do. On this account it was not faultless, inasmuch as it did not meet the helplessness of our condition. The new covenant is based on God's promise, that he himself will perfect what concerns his spiritual Israel, who are Abraham's true seed.

Of this covenant Christ is mediator,—“the go-between,” if we may so say, on the part of God and man. As mediator, he ministers

* Heb. viii. 7, 8, 10—12.

in his priestly office. He is for God; he is also for man. By him and in him, God puts his laws into our minds, and writes them in our hearts. On our part, he is helper in every time of need. The end contemplated in the new covenant, and which was in figure set forth under the old covenant, is that all in each individual, as a component part of the church of the first-born, shall be fully reconciled to God. That there should be no contrariety nor enmity, but that man shall be brought into the unity of God. God's will will then be his will, and will rule over all. Thus is it to be in God's rest. To bring all this about is the design of the blessed mediator of the new covenant, by the ministrations of the sanctuary or of the true tabernacle, which the Lord himself has pitched.

That which opposes itself to God's will in us, is the flesh, or the carnal mind. This is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God;—neither, indeed, can be;—so that they who are in the flesh cannot please God.* To the life of faith, and to the walk of faith, the flesh in us ever opposes itself. Solemn, indeed, is the warning which

* See Rom. viii. 7, 8.

the natural seed of Abraham have afforded us. We see that with many of them God was not well pleased, for their carcasses fell in the wilderness. For they could not enter into rest, because of their unbelief. And the things that happened to them, were intended as "ensamples" to us, that we should not err as they did.

"The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other."* None are without some experience of this, in whom the true life has been manifested. Often has it been or is their painful feeling, that they can not do the things that they would. But a conscious source of grief is, too, the mingled character of our best feelings and desires. Our holiest motives are associated with some degree of impurity; our highest aims have something in them, on account of which we are humbled before God. It is with us as with the Israelites under Moses, when a mixed multitude went up with them from Egypt. These ever led the way in the murmurings as well as in the lustings of the people. So fleshly feelings and desires mingle

* Gal. v. 17.

themselves with all the workings of the "pure mind" within us. It is as if a mixed multitude were surrounding the sanctuary of God. There are brought together the clean and the unclean. There is that which may be sacrificed, and that which cannot be accepted of God. But our high priest, who is over the house of God, is faithful. He is the living Word, and as such ministers in the true tabernacle. Warning us, therefore, of the danger of seeming to come short of the promise left us of entering into rest, and that from the example of Israel after the flesh, the apostle says—"Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." "For," he adds, "the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."* Such is the minister of the living sanctuary. Holy fear,

* Heb. iv. 11—13.

—yea, even dread, is and should be excited in the thought. Who can be clean in his sight, we ask? Alas! how often we falter in our faith, and, like the “double-minded man,” are unstable in our ways.^a And yet he with whom we have to do searches our inmost spirit, and knows the true character of our most mingled feelings. Often in connection with our best services, our own heart condemns us; and he is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Shall not the creature, compassed with infirmity and pollution, tremble with awe in the presence of this searcher of hearts, who is ever faithful in his priestly service? He judges his people;^b he rules righteously in God’s house. But if holy fear be excited in the thought of what our high priest is, on the other hand confidence and joy are inspired. The living Word, who pervades all, and discerns so minutely between the evil and the good, the unclean and the clean, can ensure the completeness of his own work. He knows how to perfect that which concerns us. Not only because he is compassionate, therefore, and touched

^a See Jas. i. 8.

^b See Heb. x. 30.

with the feeling of our infirmities, but because Jesus, our high priest, the Son of God, who has passed through the heavens, is also "the Word living and powerful," the apostle exhorts us to come boldly to the throne of grace; there we obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need.^a

We see, then, what is the general character of the ministry of our high priest. He is the Word, the searcher of hearts, the mediator of the new covenant, the fulfilment of which is secured by his mediation. Thus, through his ministry, the assembly of the first-born are brought to inherit with him, who is heir of all things, and head over all. So with him they enter into rest.

But it was said of him, that he must, of necessity, have somewhat to offer. What shall he offer? Not the blood of goats and calves. This could never take away sin. "By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."^b As the law teaches, the blood is the life. And by that blood, which is the true and eternal life, he entered the heavenly sphere, having first suffered for us here in the

^a See Heb. iv. 14, 16.

^b Heb. ix. 12.

flesh, that so he might taste death for every man. Little, indeed, could the blood of goats and of calves avail; but this was an offering of unspeakable worth. He bore it as Son of Man, the first-born and priest, into the very holiest where he ministers. It is the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel: with this our hearts may be sprinkled from an evil conscience.^a It is the blood of the new covenant; its seal and its power. It is the blood of the lamb, by which "the accuser of the brethren"^b and all adversaries, are overcome; precious offering, which meets all God's claims, all man's need. It is the atonement;^c also the source and power of redemption;^d of justification;^e of communion;^f washed in this blood, we are made kings and priests unto God.^g Oh! mighty and all-sufficient mediator of the new and eternal covenant, thou hast offered before God in the heavens, into which thou hast entered, that which thou hast given for us and which thou givest unto us,—the blood of the covenant. May thy redeemed praise thee more and more

^a See Heb. x. 22.

^b Rev. xii. 10

^c See Rom. v. 11.

^d See Col. i. 14.

^e See Rom. v. 9. ^f See 1 Cor. x. 16. ^g See Rev. i. 5, 6.

for this thy great gift; it is the life of which mortality shall be swallowed up.^a

Having somewhat to offer, he has entered the holiest, where he now ministers. Herein is seen that which strikingly contrasts with the priesthood of Aaron. Into that which was the figure of "the holiest," Aaron entered once a year for a brief space of time. At all other seasons he ministered in common with the other priests, without at the brazen altar and in the first tabernacle accomplishing the service of God.^b Christ has entered once for all into heaven itself, having sat down at the right hand of God. He ministers therefore *from within*. In the inner sanctuary his power is manifest. There he ever appears in the presence of God for us. There he ever lives to intercede. He lives, and as he said, his disciples, therefore, shall live also.^c And so in the man in whom the true tabernacle is pitched, Christ ministers; and it is in "the power of an endless life." Thus his "saving health" diffuses itself, until the whole man is healed and saved. The new covenant is thus accomplished;—the redeemed "know the Lord" as they are known, and enter into rest;

^a See 2 Cor. v. iv. ^b See Heb. ix. 6. ^c See John xiv. 19.

the many sons are brought to glory; the church of the first-born is perfected in its living head; and, in short, the woman is "built up" and is manifested as the glory of the man.

When the high priest of the Jews went into the "most holy place," no one might enter with him. His brethren, the priests, might not at any time proceed further than the first tabernacle. Even the high priest might be said to minister in fear in the inner sanctuary. Through the medium of the little bells at the hem of his garment, his sound was to be heard when he went in unto the holy place, and when he came out, as it is said, "that he die not."^a

The reason assigned for this is, "that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest."^b Now it is otherwise. In Christ it is made manifest. It is the "new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh."^c This is assuredly the way by which alone humanity may enter the holiest of all;—that is, the heavenly sphere. It is the way by

^a See Ex. xxviii. 34, 35.

^b Heb. ix. 8.

^c Heb. x. 20.

which Christ, as man, has entered there,—while he himself has opened and consecrated it for us. It was through death in our flesh which he took, that he might enter with his own blood. “For Christ also,” says the apostle Peter, “hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit.”^a That he might bring us to God, he suffered for sins. He brings us by that way by which he himself reached God’s dwelling-place for us. It is through the death of the flesh, and the quickening of the spirit. In us the process is slow; for it is not the mere body of the flesh that needs to be destroyed, but the sin that dwells in the flesh, which needs to be taken away. And so the *way* into the holiest which he hath consecrated for us has to be pursued, else the holiest itself cannot be reached. It is the path of regeneration, by which alone the captain of our salvation brings the many sons to glory.

How, then, it may be asked, can any minister with him in the inner sanctuary? True, the forerunner has for us entered, and

^a 1 Peter iii. 18.

has consecrated the new and living way for us. But can we hope ever to enter, much less to minister there, while conscious that we are unclean?—while our prayer still is, that we may be cleansed from filthiness of flesh and spirit? For we have said that Christ, as high priest, ministers not alone. He is the chief-priest among priests; the first-born among many brethren; in short, the head of a priesthood, as Aaron was. And now the holiest is the very place of his ministry. Surely, it is the place of ministry for all the brethren, who are anointed together with him in the holy priesthood. And surely it can no longer be said of him who enters into the holiest of all, "lest he die."

Faith in Christ triumphs; faith in the one offering which he has made for us. In the new covenant, sins and iniquities are remembered no more against us. "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness," writes the apostle, "to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of

faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."* Of course, under Moses, the people found no access into the holiest: it could not be under the law. The blood, that is, the life, was wanted, by which the true "holies" is entered. The *way* into the holiest was not made manifest. Under the new covenant, we have boldness to enter by the blood of Jesus. In this assurance we draw near; we wait, we worship. Our ministry is in the holy sanctuary, where Jesus is. Like him, too, we minister from within, as those who have access to the holiest, and have reached it and entered in. And from within is the healing power which shall, at length, regenerate the whole man.

But the Aaronic and Levitical services are not without their use to us. Neither is it without purpose that we read of people and Levites and priests. And that we have the whole community set before us, as one compact nation and people, pursuing their weary journey through the waste howling wilderness to their far-off inheritance and rest.

It is not, however, distinctions of class that

* Heb. x. 19—22.

are thus in figure represented to us; but rather varieties of state. In Christ we are a royal priesthood, but we are also Israelites and the Israel of God,—a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.* So, also, the Levitical service may pertain to us. As priests, we minister together with Christ, entering with boldness into the holiest; as Israelites, we are ministered unto. In a word, while by faith we draw nigh by the blood of Christ, so that “we who believe do enter into rest;” so at the same time we see the consummation of our hope, as yet remote, and as weary pilgrims we journey on to the inheritance of glory and to the fulness of rest. So also we enter the holiest, and at the same time we wait and serve without. Nor is there contradiction or confusion in the thought. Is not man a little world within himself? And is not the church of the first-born, while accepted in Christ the beloved, as a nation and people, being brought back, little by little, to God, and that through the power of his Christ? Assuredly, both in the church collectively, and in the individual Christian, God is displaying now in one way, and then

* See Ex. xix. 6.

in another, all the wonders of his grace and love, to the glory of his great name. Thus there is an application of the one offering of Christ, by which he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified to the successive generations of believers, and to the ever varying circumstances and states of individual Christians. The Jewish daily sacrifices and offerings might seem to be so many parts in detail of the annual sacrifices which were offered on the day of atonement. It was, so to speak, the application of that one service to the daily circumstances and condition of the people. And so when the apostle speaks of himself as "ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost;"* he was but desiring that the perpetual ministrations of God's living tabernacle should be multiplied and continued. And who, knowing the mercies of God, is not ready to exclaim, "let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the

* Rom. xv. 16.

nations upon earth.”* For our priest is also king for ever and ever.

There are then perpetual ministries connected with the true tabernacle, differing altogether in form from the Jewish services; though the latter set before us the true and essential nature of the former. And as the priestly services under Aaron were but the continuation, so to speak, and the application of those which had been offered on the day of atonement, so those of the true tabernacle are in virtue of Christ's one offering of himself for us, and are such as may be said to flow from that one great sacrifice.

There is, for instance, an outer court, and there are spiritual services associated with it; but though an outer court, it is nevertheless holy. All within its precincts is sacred. Though outside the holy sanctuary, it yet encloses it. This is seen as in a figure in “the tabernacle of testimony.” Only within the sacred enclosure was the sanctuary pitched, at least so long as the people were in the wilderness. Here all promiscuously assembled along with the Levites and priests; only, they were supposed to come as Israel-

* Psalm lxvii. 3, 4.

ites,—as offerers,—as worshippers of God. It was the appointed place of holy service. Alas! the outer court of the Temple, in the present dispensation, as seen in vision by the apostle John, is given up to be trodden underfoot of the Gentiles.* But then no admeasurement is taken of it by the angel. Mournfully apparent is the fulfilment of the vision in our days. The results are painful to contemplate. That which is professedly the outer court, with the services which professedly pertain to it, is what the careless and the irreligious observe. And too true is it, that because of much which is seen there, the name of God is blasphemed, while the faithful “are exceedingly filled with contempt.”

Still there is a true outer court, with its true and divine ministries, and undoubtedly it is in accordance with the patterns of things seen in the Mount. It implies a certain stage or condition of the divine life. It is not simply the fallen, corrupt nature, with its formal, lifeless worship. In that which answers to the outer court of the Jews, we are within the region of true, living faith.

* See Rev. xi. 2.

But it is faith in its feebleness. There are fleshly energies combined with its actings. The unclean, it is true, should not tread these courts. And yet the feeble are found here conjointly with the strong; and believers find a carnal mind working in them. In short, the outer court supposes that state in which faith is working by fear rather than by love. It is faith in its exterior workings, rather than as producing its deep interior results. And yet as of old, the soul may have its longings for these courts of the Lord's house.^a Men enter here with praise; here with thankfulness they bless God's name.^b Here, too, may the soul joyfully exclaim—"I will pay my vows unto the Lord now, in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord."^c Nor in vain has the apostle said—"Wherefore! we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and with godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire."^d

^a See Psalm lxxxiv. 2.

^b See Psalm c. 4.

^c Psalm cxvi. 18, 19.

^d Heb. xii. 28, 29.

Within the court of the tabernacle of witness was placed the brazen altar, or, as it was called, "the altar of burnt offering." To this only could the people approach. It stood before the worshippers as they entered within the gate of the court. At some distance from the altar, and nearer to the door of the tabernacle, was the laver. Here the priests washed, when they were about to enter within the sanctuary. To the altar the offerings of the people were brought, that there, through the medium of the priest or priests, God's acceptance of them might be indicated. The altar of burnt offering derived its name from the Hebrew word *אֲלֹת*, which signifies to go up or to ascend. This was probably because that which was offered upon it, by passing through the fire, ascended up, as it were, to God. The sacrifice or offering thus going up, was said to be "a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the Lord."^a Of course, all the sacrifices were offered on this altar, as well as those which were specially denominated "burnt-offerings." Only there was a continual burnt-offering,^b as a sacrifice ever acceptable to God. But the altar was that

^a Ex. xxix. 18.^b See Ex. xxix. 42.

to which the people had access, and where the priests and Levites ministered in the outer court. The service of the court, of course, was by sacrifice; while the laver indicated the washing of regeneration, which was essential for those who entered within God's tabernacle.

That, therefore, which principally met the gaze of the worshipper within the court of the tabernacle, was the slaughter of the appointed victims. It was a scene from which nature might recoil. The bleatings of the lambs and goats which were being slain, and the lowings occasionally of an ox, were the sounds which then fell upon the ear. Blood being poured out, or sprinkled on this or that, as the case might be, was that which ever and again was seen. Revolting as all this might seem to one's natural feelings, it was that which symbolized the outward ministry of the true tabernacle of God. It was literally the appointed service of Israel after the flesh. The outer court might seem to be the scene of suffering, and wailing, and death;—and yet it was not only this: The altar was really the table of the Lord,^a and the

^a See Mal. 1, 7.

priests, eating the food of the altar, were partaking of the appointed food of his table; as it is said by the apostle—"Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?"* Still it was not to be forgotten that the outer court was the place of death;—not, indeed, of hopeless death, but of death in hope. There was death in this outer place, in order that the blood of the victims might be presented in the holy places within. As for the altar, the sacred fire was continually burning on it. In this fire the priests' portion was roasted; whilst the rest, ascending up as in a vapoury smoke, might seem to pass away into the higher spheres, thus indicating, in a figure, God's acceptance of the offering. Not only were the slain victims thus presented to God, but the meat-offerings also. For through the action of the fire upon these latter only, could they be acceptable offerings. The more earthy portions of the sacrifices, which were not consumed, remained as ashes in the grate of the altar. These were afterwards to be laid up in a clean place;

* 1 Cor. ix. 13.

for these also were not common, or as a thing that is polluted, and therefore to be rejected. But the devouring fire,—the holy, sacred flame,—must consume, and, as it were, absorb into itself, what was offered in sacrifice. Then and thus God smelt a sweet savour. And did not all this point to thee, yea, forcibly and emphatically, to thee, thou holy Lamb of God? And did it not show, in type and symbol, how that, as the great sacrifice appointed and provided by God himself, thou shouldst be put to death in the flesh, and quickened in the spirit? And did it not further testify, that offered up in thee, our poor humanity should be changed and transformed, and at length glorified in God?

These, then, were the appointed services under the law, as fulfilled outside “the tabernacle of witness.” They witnessed to the death and resurrection of Christ; and to the fact that, through death, the believer enters into life. Under the new covenant, all is changed. Christ has come, and for us has poured out his soul unto death. The figures of the good things to come have passed away, being no longer needed. The substance of “the heavenly things” has been

revealed; "the shadows" of them have vanished. There are no victims to be slain now; bloody sacrifices have ceased. And yet as the majority of Christians are agreed, there are still outward services divinely appointed for believers. They are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Is there any connection in principle and in import between these and the ministrations we have referred to? They are the outward Christian services; here *we* minister in the courts of the Lord's house.

According to the apostle's teaching, not only was baptism intended to be significant, but of great efficacy also. Unhappily, all associated with it has in practice become greatly profaned; for, alas! in that which is *professedly* the outer court of God's sanctuary, almost everything connected with outward religious worship, has been perverted and abused. Here is so sad a treading underfoot of the Gentiles, of all sacred things.

But supposing there to be faith, true evangelical faith, in those who are baptized, as also in those who baptize, then would real blessing be associated with the ministry of baptism. Then could it be said, in truth of the baptized, "Know ye not, that so many of

us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." ^a We have here, therefore, outwardly expressed, under another form, what was seen in the court of the Jews—death,—the death of the creature;—but death in hope. It is baptism into the death of Christ, through whom we live again in newness of life. As it is further said by the apostle—"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." ^b Of course, it is the death of our carnal nature,—the crucifixion of "the flesh with its affections and lusts," which baptism sets forth. It expresses outwardly the sincere desire to die with Christ, as to the fleshly mind; to die to self, and to the *will of self*, that so being put to death with Christ in the flesh, we may with him be quickened

^a Rom. vi. 3, 4.

^b Rom. vi. 5, 6.

in the spirit. And through the outward and visible act, when men are thus baptized, God graciously ministers strength for the accomplishment within of that which is outwardly avowed.

But this interior death is not like physical death, accomplished at once, or in a brief space of time;—as set forth in the outward baptism, in the figure, it is a momentary act. It is otherwise, in point of fact, as the experience of believers testifies. Death to self-will is accomplished by a gradual, and it may be by even a life-long process. And here the process of faith is called into exercise—“Reckon yourselves,” says the apostle, “to be dead, indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”^a While this process is going on, the soul knows what it is to be under the power of the cross; in other words, to be crucified with Christ. The conflict between the flesh and spirit may be alike tedious and painful. Bitter, often, are the sorrows which wring the heart at such seasons. Hopeless, almost, is the poor troubled one, at times, as to the issue of the conflict. He may be ready to stagger at the

^a Rom. vi. 11.

promises of God, through unbelief. The very good which he does is so mingled with evil, that he is ready to despair: self-elation and pride tarnish his holiest resolves. Worldliness and earthly-mindedness still so far prevail, that in sadness of spirit the sufferer cries out again and again—"My soul cleaveth to the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word."^a In a very whirl of passion does the soul seem likely at times to be overwhelmed, while the heavenly, and earthly, and hellish powers, are conflicting within. And even in calmer moments, when the soul would serve its God and him only, it has to say—"For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do;" until in anguish it exclaims, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"^b And how may the victory be achieved? Through faith in him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."^c It is the spirit of Christ that triumphs within, so that the believer can say—"I thank God,

^a Psalm cxix. 35.

^b Rom., vii. 19, 25.

^c Rom. iv. 24, 25.

through Jesus Christ, our Lord."* Yet in this true outer court, as in that which was the figure of it, there is death with its wailings and its moans. For thus it must be. Thus only can we draw nigh to the true "holies," by the new and living way consecrated for us through the flesh of Christ. For even our poor flesh is his, when we in spirit also are his. And so are we put to death with him in the flesh to be quickened with him in the spirit. "For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him."^b But it is not all who, with the apostle, can say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."^c O my soul, hast thou known what it is to be indeed buried with Christ by baptism into his death? Then were it thine to say with one of old—"From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."^d

In addition to baptism, we have the Lord's

* Rom. vii. 25.

^b 2 Timothy ii. 2.

^c Gal. vi. 14, 15.

^d Gal. vi. 17.

supper. What has been said with regard to the abuse of the one, may be affirmed, also, of the other. Too obviously, alas! may men pervert that which should be the table of the Lord, so that it is not his table, but their own. It then becomes "a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompense unto them."^a This may be by unwarrantable priestly assumption, on the one hand; or on the other hand it may be by making it the centre and the badge of party views, and even of personal animosities. In either case, the true character of the Holy Supper is lost sight of. And in the place of "holy brethren," partaking in all lowliness of the sacred feast, pride and envy are secretly, perhaps unconsciously, nurtured; while that which should be the scene of concord and peace, is one of confusion and strife.

It was at the paschal feast of the Jews that the Lord's Supper was instituted. The true spiritual passover was on the point of consummation in the death of Christ. The passover, as a festival under the Law, was celebrated in the month Abib, when the corn was as yet in the ear. This season had been

^a Rom. xi. 9.

appointed as the beginning of the year to the Jews. It was the period of their redemption from Egypt, and, as if the natal day, the commemoration of the beginning of life to the nation. They then came forth manifestly as the people of God. They were gathered as God's portion of the fruits of the earth; but much remained to be done. It was as if the corn was only in the ear. Not as yet were the fields white for the harvest.^a So that which was appointed for the feast of the Jewish passover, was a tender lamb taken from the flock. For it was the season when as yet the lambs mingled with the flocks. But the Holy Supper, which followed the eating of the last passover which Jesus celebrated with his disciples, carries us onward in our standing before God, to that which was signified by the Pentecostal feast, or the feast of harvest.^b Thus the character of the feast is changed. The two feasts, that is, the paschal and the Pentecostal are blended together. Spiritually we keep up the two as one feast. "Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us."^c But he has also ascended

^a See John iv. 35.

^b See Ex. xxxiy. 22.

^c 1 Cor. v. 7.

up on high, the first fruits from the dead^a. The harvest has been reached: the vintage has been secured. So we have bread and wine as the outward elements in the feast,—the supper of the Lord.

When Melchizedek met Abraham, returning from the slaughter of the kings, he brought forth bread and wine, and blessed him. After a more signal victory, and over mightier foes, Jesus meets us in the outer court of the sanctuary. He has ascended up on high, having led captivity captive, and has received gifts for men, yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God may dwell among them.^b And now he brings forth bread and wine, the priest for ever after Melchisedec's order, and that, that he may bless us.

The fruits of the harvest and of the vintage, then constitute the outward elements in our Eucharistic feast. In harmony with the truth which is thus intended to be set before us, is the opening of the epistle to the Hebrews. "God," says the apostle, "who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."^c

^a See I Cor. xv. 23. ^b See Psalm lxyiii. 18. ^c Heb. i. 12.

We, therefore, have reached the last days, which were ushered in after the advent of Christ. They are the last days, not so much as to their limited number, nor yet as to their speedy termination, as to the order of God's dispensations and dealings with us. Like the householder, in the parable, who planted a vineyard,^a so God, after many preparatory missions accomplished by his various servants, has sent his Son last of all. After him, there is none other to be sent forth. It is the last process, or at least a stage in the last process in the order of time, which we have now reached. "The ends of the world" have come upon us; for now it is seen and testified, that in Christ Jesus nothing avails but a *new creature*. So these are the last days, as it were the days of the harvest and of the vintage, when the fruits of the earth are reaped. And yet again, Christ's last work on earth, after all his teaching and miracles, was to suffer death and rise again from the dead. The testimony in the Holy Supper is in accordance with this — We "shew the Lord's death," his work of the last days, "till he come."^b Blessed feast of

^a See Matt. xxi. 33, 40.

^b 1 Cor. xi. 26.

love! In spirit we commune with our living Head, knowing to the joy of our hearts that "the ends of the world," with its vain hopes and fears, have come upon us.

But what said our Lord, when breaking the bread at the close of the paschal feast, he distributed it to the disciples, and bade them all drink of the cup? "As they were eating," we read, "Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take eat: this is my body;" and he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying—"Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."^a The true efficacy of the Supper—and surely there is efficacy in it, else why partake of it?—is in the *Lord's Words*. The utterance of any form of words by any official lips, is nowhere in Scripture represented as an essential pre-requisite for the validity of the Supper. The disciples at Troas, evidently as was their wont on the first day of the week, came together to break bread, when Paul, ready to depart on the morrow, preached to them.^b It may be meet

^a Mat. xxvi. 26—28.

^b Acts xx. 7.

and desirable, for the maintenance of order, that "the elders" should have the oversight and presidency of the table of our Lord; but in this they only wait on their ministry. And as it is God's purpose that true spiritual blessing should be associated with the outward baptism, so is it his purpose that there should be positive blessing associated with the Supper. It is bread which is eaten, and wine which is drank; yet assuredly nourishment is ministered to the spirit, while these outward constituents of the Supper are rightly-partaken of. It is not too much to expect that God should even give special blessing with our ordinary food, when that blessing is humbly supplicated at his hands. And so, according to his faithful word, the Lord can minister to the spirit, the true bread of life and the blood of the everlasting covenant, while in faith we take the bread and drink of the cup. And then, as he says—"The bread that I will give is my flesh."^a Precious food! It is that on which the soul must daily live, though at the outward festival of the true assemblies of God, it may be specially ministered. Truly, then, says our Lord

^a. John vi. 51.

—“My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.”^a Most appropriately is this divine food set before us outwardly, under the form of bread and wine. For is it not in very deed as the feast of harvest? And do we not show on earth his last work—his death—until he come?

As to the significance of the Lord's supper, we find in it, emblematically, a concentration of all the great purposes of God which had been partially opened out in previous dispensations. The harvest is the reaping of that which had been sown,—the fruit of past labour and toil. The bread and the wine are the production of what has been reaped and gathered. For sacrifice and offering; and burnt offering, are all consummated in Christ. In the supper, as instituted by our Lord, the Gospel is presented before us as in an embodied form. It is as if the holy land were discovered, and the fruits of it were set before us, that we may eat and live. Under the law, the blood was on no account to be eaten, for it was the blood of beasts. The

^a John vi. 55, 56.

flesh was eaten, in token that the creature was accepted. But it was a higher form of life that was needed, than that which was in the blood of beasts, or of creatures pertaining to the earth. This could not take away man's sin, nor redeem him out of his earthly condition. But Christ came that we might have life,—the true life of God,—and that we might have it more abundantly.* And so he gives us his blood to drink. And we, poor erring mortals, are met with the outward elementary supper, that thus lovingly the Lord may shew how he feeds us with the bread of life, and even drinks the fruit of the vine new with us in his own kingdom. O remember thou, my soul, that it is the spirit which quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing. When he speaks with us of these things, his words are spirit, and they are life.

There is an obvious point of connection between this outward service appointed by our Lord, and that which was ordained under Moses. It is this. The table that now is, and the altar which once was, are virtually one and the same thing, under different aspects. The altar of old, as we have seen,

* See John x. 10.

was the table of the Lord. The offerings were the food of his table. And what, indeed, is the purport of the communications of God's will from the beginning? Is it not in effect this, that he prepares a table for us in the presence of our enemies?^a For his love is unquenchable. The ever-multiplying pollutions and abominations of our fallen race have failed to hinder or to restrain even its tender, unceasing yearnings towards us. It has perseveringly followed us in our wanderings in this world of desolation, where, if left to ourselves, we must, like the prodigal son, inevitably have perished of hunger. But this love, which has proved stronger than death, has ever provided food and sustenance, that man might not perish. And every dispensation has distinctly borne its testimony, that his own hand had prepared a table, at which his redeemed might eat and live. And the altar, under the law, was the emblem of the table of the Lord. The table that now is has taken the place of the altar. But it is, in one sense, an altar; for "we have an altar whereof they have no right to eat, which serve the tabernacle."^b Those who minister

^a Psalm xxiii. 5.

^b Heb. xiii. 10.

only as to what is outward, as the apostle's language implies, have no right to eat our spiritual sacrifices. And, of course, while we draw near to the table around which believers may assemble, the true table which we seek is spiritual and unseen; it is a spiritual altar, and of its spiritual sacrifices we eat.

I have dwelt at some length on this subject; but not more so, I trust, than its importance may seem to demand. The ritualistic tendencies of our times, associated as they are with priestly assumptions and pretensions, are troubling and perplexing the minds of many. A right apprehension of the holy supper, and a full acknowledgment of its claims, is especially needed by those who are thus perplexed. Let the Lord's supper have its legitimate place, and let it be duly estimated in the assemblies of the faithful; this will most effectually silence those who would lord it over the consciences of their brethren. Thus too would it be seen more clearly, that all office in the church, is ministry. It is honourable service, but it is service. They are most honoured in their ministry, who are most lowly in their service. But whatever is priestly in its character, pertains

to all who are fellow-heirs with God's first-born and heir of all; they realize their privilege, in measure as they possess a spiritual mind. All who are clean, eat of the food of the altar; and their's it is, in common, to minister and to feast at the table of the Lord.

But the ministrations of this outer court of the true tabernacle are by no means confined to the public services of the assembly, or the church. What is signified and confessed corporately in the assemblies of believers, has to be realized and accomplished in their personal experience. So the ministrations of the true tabernacle are personal, and, therefore, they are continuous. But whether personal and continuous, or public and occasional, they are in character the same. That which is signified in the church's act in baptism, has to be accomplished in him who is baptized, that in him it may be a verity—a true baptism into Christ's death; in other words, that he may have fellowship with Christ in his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.* Thus, too, is he entitled as a priest of God, daily to eat the sacrificial food of the

* See Phil. iii. 10.

true altar; this is the true bread and wine of Christ's kingdom.

That which is really service in "the true tabernacle," is what ministers to the process of our regeneration. It is that by which the power of the flesh in us is weakened, and by which the new creature is nourished and strengthened. In the outer court of "the true tabernacle," as in that of the first tabernacle, death works that life may manifest itself. So when urging on believers the claims of the higher life, the apostle of the Gentiles says—"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are on the earth."* It is as if he had said—because united to the risen Jesus by faith, you are virtually dead and are risen with him, as to that nature which you have received from him; let the work of death therefore be really wrought in you.

* Col. iii. 1—5.

Mortify your earthly members.—This is the true purport of our outer court service.

The death of the old nature is through our being “crucified together with Christ.” But how is this death most effectually accomplished? By watching against sin and by resisting every inclination to evil, would be the natural reply. And yet evil within us is best overcome, by our nourishing that which is good. Evil affections are strengthened only when ministered unto and indulged. But so also are holy affections strengthened by being called forth and ministered to. Uncherished, it is alike with the evil and the good, they languish. By communion with Christ, therefore, our “members which are upon the earth” are mortified: they are left to languish and to die. By habitually sitting and eating at the unseen table which the Lord has prepared for us, our affections become set on things above. At that table of the Lord, therefore, which is the altar of sacrifice, we chiefly minister as to the inner life. We die as to the outer self while we nourish the inner and true life; and so this our service is ended when death itself is swallowed up of life.

And the hidden table at which we feast is really the altar of God ; and that true altar at which we sacrifice is Christ ; that is, the life of Christ within. Here we bring our offerings, that we may feast with God on the accepted sacrifice,—the food of the table of our Lord. But what can I bring thee, my God, that thou canst accept? What worthy gift can I present to thee, seeing that I am so poor, and, indeed, that all things are thine? Nay, all that is of me, and which I can call mine, is polluted, except as thou givest me through Christ, and of him, that which is good and acceptable. Of thine own, then, and only of thine own, thou bountiful giver, would I offer to thee. Alas! thine own gifts, when rendered back to thee, seem as if mingled with my own pollutions. But in the holy fire of thy love, they become purged ; and thou givest back to my soul, waiting at thine altar, the food of the sacrifice which thou hast sanctified and accepted. It is the bread of the table, the flesh of thy Son ; and the drink-offering is his blood.

What the true sacrifices of the spiritual Israel are, was seen by many, who, as to the dispensation under which they lived, had

only the figures of the true and heavenly things. So even David could say—"O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."^a In the New Testament, of course, their true nature is more distinctly set forth. To the Christians at Rome the apostle says—"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."^b To the Hebrews he says—"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."^c And Peter, also, writing to those whom he exhorts as new-born babes, to desire the sincere milk of

^a Psalm li. 15—17.

^b Rom. xii. 1, 2.

^c Heb. xiii. 15.

the Word, says—"Ye, also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."* Thanksgiving and praise, the fruit of a heart broken and contrite, are sacrifices acceptable to our God. And yet it is only as his mercies are rightly appreciated, that we can offer these the acceptable fruits of our lips. But even the whole man, the body, the outer man, is to be presented as a living sacrifice. Here, therefore, we see what the daily ministrations are, and how they are perpetual. But in the epistle to the Philippians, the apostle gives us two special instances of spiritual sacrifice. "Yea," says he, "and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all."^b And again, in reference to their ministering to his personal necessities, he remarks—"But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God."^c That which faith yields up to God, as the Philip-

* 1 Peter ii. 5.

^b Phil. ii. 17.

^c Phil. iv. 18.

prians were willing to surrender to him even the apostle himself: and that which love and sympathy minister to the necessities of those who labour in the Gospel, are among the sacrifices which God approves. In works of faith and labours of love, are found those offerings which the altar of God sanctifies. The whole life of the Christian is designed to be a perpetual sacrifice acceptable in Christ.

But let our thoughts dwell for a moment upon the exhortation of the apostle, that his brethren should present their bodies a living sacrifice, a reasonable service unto God. It supposes great personal devotion; unwearying consecration of ourselves to him. And yet when such a sacrifice is offered with the best intentions, and with full sincerity, is there no self-elation secretly cherished? Is there no self-satisfaction, is there nothing of self, in short, and nothing of the workings of a fleshly mind, to pollute the sacrifice which we offer? Alas! when looking at his own heart, the cry of the most devoted Christian is that of the leper of old,—unclean! unclean! How, then, shall he bring an offering and a sacrifice acceptable to God? It is the province of our high priest to exercise

oversight in the sanctuary, and to present each sacrifice that is offered. And he is the Word quick and powerful, "piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."^a This is why we come boldly to the throne of grace, for mercy and for grace to help. Our priest, the all-pervading and piercing Word of God, can separate between the clean and the unclean, between the precious and the vile, in God's offerings. The holy fire consumes the vile and absorbs the precious into itself. We thus present to God his own gifts, while he gives us back our portion. His priests feast on that on which he feasts at his own altar. They eat and drink at the table of the Lord.

It is not the compassion, therefore, of our high priest merely, but his high prerogatives also, which inspire our confidence and joy. His part is not merely to intercede on our behalf, in the sight of our infirmities, nor yet merely to succour in the hour of temptation; it is also and especially to accept or to reject that which we offer. The priest's office is

^a Heb. 4. xii.

now, as of old under the law, to say who shall approach God and who shall not,—who and what is clean, and who and what is not clean. Else how should we escape the grievous charge of the prophet against the Jews? “Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar,” says God, speaking by him, “and ye say wherein have we polluted thee? And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And if ye offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil? Offer it now to thy governor; will he be pleased with thee or accept thy person? saith the Lord of Hosts.”^a It is a contrite spirit, a lowly mind, a pure heart, which God accepts. Vile affections, unholy tempers, an earthly mind, pollute his offerings. Oh! how they dishonour him and deceive themselves, whose spirit and temper evince a mind unchastened and unsubdued, and who, nevertheless, unconcernedly reckon themselves acceptable in the beloved. In vain we boast the evangelical character of our faith, if, in place of the fruits of the spirit, there are found in us the works of the flesh. If in the outer court we would eat of the sacrifices of God, having fellowship with

^a Mal. i. 7, 8.

Christ in his sufferings, our earnest prayer must be—"From all evil and mischief, from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil:" "from all blindness of heart; from pride, vain glory, and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness: good Lord deliver us." And "That it may please thee to give us true repentance, to forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorances, and to endue us with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, to amend our lives, according to thy holy word: we beseech thee to hear us, good Lord." For the true place of the Font is in the porch of the church. In the outer court there must be the death of the flesh. There we are buried with Christ by baptism into his death. Thus the quickened spirit eats of the true sacrifice; this is the living bread, and the blood of the new covenant of the Lord's table.

Here, then, is the new and living way consecrated for us, and by which we draw near to the true "holies" in the tabernacle of God. It lies through this outer court. We here put off the old man, that we may put on the new man. We here "cast off the works of darkness," that we may "put on the armour

of light." We here put on the Lord Jesus Christ, while we cease to make provision for the flesh, for its lusts.* Thus we sacrifice at the altar, and wash in the laver. Thus are we baptized into Christ's death, that we may eat at the Lord's table. And yet the power for all this is from the inner sanctuary, from the true holies, into which Christ has entered with his own blood. He works from within; our enthroned priest, "who is on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." He works after the power of an endless life; and so he brings the holy brethren, as sons of glory, into rest. But the work of the outer court must be accomplished; its services must be fulfilled. The veil is rent, and the way into the holiest is made manifest. But for that very reason it must be pursued. As a way it may yet seem long and dreary,—a tortuous wilderness path; nevertheless, it leads to the holy land, whither the Captain of our salvation can safely bring us. As yet, too, this gate of heaven may inspire with dread, and the soul shall say how awful is this place. But faith triumphs; life and immortality

* See Romans xiii. 14.

are brought to light by the Gospel. The font stands not alone in the outer court; the table is there also. Here, then, in this court without, we may experience what the psalmist expresses when he says—"As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" "O my God, my soul is cast down within me," is the utterance which is again and again heard. But it is not the cry of despair. The same holy song, in which the sad lament is heard, gives also the response—"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."*

But there are the ministrations of the tabernacle itself, as well as those of the court of the tabernacle. These, of course, are more interior, and of a higher order. They bring the soul into closer contact with the invisible, while faith may be said to work in a higher sphere. Not that these more interior services are to be dissociated from those which are

* Psalm xlii. 1, 2, 6, 11.

more external. They rather give efficacy to the latter. Nor because of increasing light within, are even the assemblages of believers to be despised. And so to those who have boldness to enter the holiest with a true heart and in the full assurance of faith, the exhortation, is "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more" (not more tardily and seldomer because the night is passing away, and the day star arises in the heart) "as ye see the day approaching."^a

In the tabernacle of witness, there were two holy places or sanctuaries, the inner one separated from the other, to indicate that the way into the holiest was not manifested as yet. But now the separating veil being rent, there may be said to be no division or separation between "the holy" and "the most holy places." And yet the furniture and vessels of the outer sanctuary in the tabernacle of witness, were after the pattern of heavenly things. They indicate to us, therefore, something of the nature and design of the service which is within the true tabernacle.

^a Heb. x. 25.

Referring to the Jewish sanctuary, the apostle says, "Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle accomplishing the service of God."^a The service within the tabernacle was priestly. None but the priests might enter here. Even the Levites who ministered about the altar, were excluded from the holy place, except when their appointment was to take up the holy vessels, to bear them from place to place. There morning and evening the priests, but only the priests, ministered before the Lord. This is in itself significant and important. The way into the holiest is now made manifest that the true Israel, as a nation of priests, may enter. For all have access by faith. But many true Israelites scarcely realize what it is to enter within the sanctuary. Their position is outside. It is only through the power of the anointing which we receive of him, and which teacheth of all things, and which 'is truth and no lie,'^b that we reach the true "holies." Little does it avail, that according to the theory and letter of scripture, men may account themselves the priests of God, except their priestly

^a Heb. ix. 6.^b See 1 John ii. 27.

functions be really exercised, and except they realize and experimentally know, that he who sanctifies and they who are sanctified, are all of one.*

The priests entering into the "holy place" accomplish the service of God. This the priests did under the law. This the priests do under the new covenant. And yet it is Christ my soul desires especially to see, and to have to do with in the living tabernacle. He is minister of the sanctuary; he is mediator of the new covenant. Outside men bring their offerings, even their bodies as a living sacrifices; for death works there, that the true life may flourish. And *within*, we minister conjointly with Christ, that he may minister through us, and on our behalf; and yet it is in the high priest, one's thoughts would chiefly centre. For it is he, by his secret process, who as mediator of the new covenant, puts God's laws in the heart and writes them in the mind. It is so, as by his power, the life manifests itself within. It was not without reason, that the interior ministry of the tabernacle was unseen by any but the priests.

* See Heb. ii. 11.

The most prominent object, as it would seem, in "the holy place" of the tabernacle of witness, was the Golden Altar. It stood before the veil so as to face the Mercy-Seat in the innermost sanctuary.^a On this altar, only *bloodless sacrifices* were offered. No burnt-offerings, or even meat-offerings were to be presented upon it. Here too, no drink-offerings were to be poured out. Incense alone, and that such only as God himself had prescribed, was here to be offered.^b But regularly, morning and evening as the priests ministered within the holy place, and as the morning and evening sacrifices were presented *without*, here the incense was seen ascending before "the mercy-seat."

And within, in the true tabernacle, the priest's eyes may discern the golden altar, or that which answers to it. And this is not an altar for burnt-offering or meat-offering, but for sweet incense. And this incense also, ascends up before the mercy seat, where the Lord sits exalted on his own *throne of grace*. When describing the opening of the seventh seal in the apocalyptic vision, the apostle John says;—"And I saw the seven angels which

^a See Ex. xxx. 6.

^b See Ibid. xxx. 9.

stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake."*

The imagery here may be borrowed from that which is Jewish, but the reference is to the church,—the true and living temple of God. Here is found the interior altar; that which stands within the true "holies." What the offerings are, the vision declares; they are the prayers of the saints. Nor are these meaningless and profitless utterances. They are words of power. Mingled with the pure, fragrant incense, they ascend up before him who is almighty. And the result is announced. There is a loosening and shaking of the heavens and the earth. It is the promise of

* Rev. viii. 2—5.

him who now speaks from heaven, that yet once more he will shake not the earth only but also heaven.”^a

Poor and pitiful may seem the offerings which within, burden this interior altar;—the prayers of saints. Is this all, my soul, that thou canst bring as thine offering within the sanctuary. Is it only thy supplications and entreaties for grace and mercy? Surely it is the altar which, in this case, sanctifies the gift. And where, one asks, is that altar of incense offering,—that table so costly and precious? It is where God and man meet together. The human is received into the divine; the divine blends with the human. It is Christ in our humanity; our nature perfected and glorified in him. It is that, too, which he communicates to us, and which is the germ and power of the regeneration; so that men have power to become sons of God, being born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.^b Here is the altar so sacred, that sanctifies the offerings which faith brings to it; the table so precious, which consecrates the gifts laid upon it. In Christ himself, the sanctifier of all things, and in his

^a See Heb. xii. 26.

^b John i. 13.

boundless merits, is found too the fragrant incense; on this, divine love may be said to feed, as fire does on the fuel which sustains it. Our prayers come before God, acceptable through the merits of Jesus. They are especially our secret, interior prayers. The prayers which may be said to be pre-eminently in the spirit;—the secret, earnest, habitual, continuous cry of our souls for help and deliverance. Such prayer cannot always, even mentally, express itself in words. At such times, its conscious utterance may be a sigh or a groan. “For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”*

At this altar of incense then, prayer is ministry on our part. The blood of the one offering of Christ is already there. This was distinctly taught in the tabernacle of witness. Upon the horns of the golden altar, an atonement was made once a year, “with the blood

* Rom. viii. 26, 27.

of the sin-offering of atonements."* They were also anointed with the blood of the ordinary trespass and other offerings, after part of it had been sprinkled "seven times before the Lord, before the veil of the sanctuary." Within the true sanctuary Christ ministers in the power of "the life." He is within in strength. But though priests, boldly entering within "the holy place," that which the saints offer, is their weakness; their cries for help and for sustaining grace. Through this weakness, God works in power. In the vision of John,^b the angel is seen casting the censer of the incense, filled with fire of the altar, into the earth. There judgment and wrath may seem to ensue; for the heavens are rent, and the earth quakes. It is prayer availing. To the saint, it is the flesh with its earthly mindedness which impedes and enthral's his spirit, that is made to totter and to quake.* It is Christ working with his saints in power, that they, through the life manifesting itself within, may mortify their members

* Ex. xxx. 10.

^b See Rev. viii. 5.

* The writer is not here offering what is to be regarded as an interpretation of the passage quoted from "the Revelation." He only applies the principle which it sets forth, to the subject he has in hand.

which are upon the earth. And poor nature trembles under the process. It is in the condition of the Israelites at the foot of mount Sinai, when even Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake."^a In that which is without, the soul finds no rest; but rather anguish and grief. Above, all is dark and tempestuous; beneath, all is unstable. And yet it is really, only the new covenant being confirmed in the hands of the Mediator; God is putting his laws in the heart, and writing them in the mind, that sins and iniquities may be remembered no more. And did not our Lord himself say, "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."^b In him is our peace.

In the tabernacle in the wilderness was also the Candlestick, with its seven branches; three on each side, the centre pillar with its lamp, being conspicuous above the rest. It was the priest's office to "order the lamps," and to see that they were kept burning. By this means, "the first tabernacle" was illumined within, though the light was not seen outside. When the temple at Jerusalem was built, there were ten candle-

^a Heb. xii. 21.

^b John xvi. 33.

sticks in the place of this one in the tabernacle. The latter sanctuary was lighted in the same way as the first. But in the temple, the light was increased in a tenfold degree.

As to the import of these candlesticks also, the apostle John in the visions of the Revelation, serves as our guide. The seven churches, to which the opening epistles are there addressed, are seen as seven candlesticks. They were obviously set forth as the anti-type of those which were in the temple and tabernacle. The costliness of that which was made under the instruction of Moses, here recurs to one's mind. It was beaten out of one piece of pure gold, and was of exquisite workmanship. Especially, also, should one remember that the central shaft was regarded as pre-eminently the candlestick; the branches being only adjuncts and parts of it. So it is said, the lamps gave light over against the candlestick.* It would seem by this, that the central pillar was especially to be observed; rather than the branches which shed their light upon it. In this is seen, doubtless, the oneness of the church with its living head, while he is pre-eminent above all. We see,

* See Num. viii. 3.

also, how in its oneness with him, the church is precious in his sight. But the striking part of John's vision is, in the revelation which it here gives of Jesus. He is seen arrayed, as in sacerdotal robes, walking in the midst of the candlesticks.^a He is really exercising judgment in the midst of the churches. He is discerning what is right and what is wrong; he rebukes the evil, and speaks approvingly of the good. Thus, as high priest, and as the Word quick and powerful, he is seen ministering; he is "ordering the lamps upon the pure candlestick," and seeing that the light in them is maintained. As candlesticks, the churches were only vessels for holding forth the light.

In the lamps of the tabernacle of witness, of course, the light was fed by daily supplies of the pure olive oil, as the law prescribed. This oil in itself, doubtless, was kept free from every impurity. But as another element had to be introduced in the material requisite for the wick, impurities might be found in this, which would, occasionally, very much dim the light. Frequent snuffing and trimming were thus rendered necessary; a duty which devolved upon the priests. So, too, in the

^a See Rev. i. 12—20.

churches, and in individuals also, the true light is itself fed with that which is wholly pure, yea, supernatural and divine. But, as in the lamp, the oil must permeate the wick in order to its being burnt so as suitably to give forth light ; so that divine substance, also, which feeds the light in the living tabernacle, gives itself through the medium of what is personal to us, so that the light itself is thus affected. Nature, in each believer, answers to the wick, in which and with which the holy oil is consumed. Alas! impurities are too manifestly there, as is seen in the addresses to the apocalyptic churches, and the light is again and again dimmed. It is as if the snuffers were in constant use, as if the lamps needed perpetually to be trimmed. Nay, there is here and there a threat, that the candlestick should be removed out of its place. Shall we wonder at this? Rather, let us humbly adore our God, that he can at all use us as vessels to bear the light. Our pollutions are very many ; but his mercies are great, yea, infinite : and so his grace triumphs over all. Be this our fervent prayer ; take not away thy Holy Spirit from us, O God ; but let the light ever

so shine in us, that in thy light we may see light.

Turning again to the tabernacle of witness, we see how the sacred fire which consumed the sacrifices without, and the incense on the golden altar, was also the alone source of light in the holy place where the priests ministered. Other light was excluded. That was the true light for the tabernacle which had then its standing. Without it, all would have been in darkness. The light which pertains to the living sanctuary, is "the light of life." But whence this light? "In the beginning," writes the beloved disciple, "was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men."^a Precious mystery! The true life is the true light; and in giving his Son, he has given us this light. For "this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life."^b And of himself the Son says, "I am come that they might have life,

^a John i. 1—4

^b I John v. 11, 12.

and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd ; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." ^a This life thus given, sheds its light in the true tabernacle. The ministry of our high priest is exercised in so tending the lamps, that the light may shine, if it may be, undimmed.

But it is the Word, the Word who is God and who became incarnate, in whom is this light of life. He too is priest, exercising his priestly functions as the Word quick and powerful, piercing as a sharp two-edged sword, even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. ^b So as priest walking in the midst of the candlesticks, the churches, he bids the apostle thus announce him to the church at Pergamos ; " these things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges." ^c And again to those at Thyatira, " These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass." ^d And again to the Laodiceans ; " these things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." ^e It is the Word living and powerful throughout,

^a John x. 10, 11.

^b See Heb. iv. 12.

^c Rev. ii. 12.

^d Ibid. ii. 18.

^e Ibid. iii. 14.

who speaks. His are the eyes piercing as a flame of fire, and his feet are as polished brass: he is the Amen, and the true and faithful witness. In him is the life which is the light, and which from himself he imparts and diffuses. At the same time, we have in him such a high priest, the minister of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. How perfect, how powerful, how searching and all-discerning must his ministry be! How unerringly must he distinguish between the true light and the false; between the light of mere carnal reason, and the light of life; between the blind impulses of the senses, and the true actings of the spirit within. Blessed ministry! which ensures that the true light shall shine in the dwelling-place of God. Thou faithful and true witness, thou canst curtail that from me, which would mingle its darkness with thy bright light, and which would overtop the light with that which has become foul and black through its contact with the fire, polluting all with its unsavoury smell. Still order thy lamp, and though it entail on me present suffering and loss, withhold not thy hand; take away that which in me would cast darkness over thy

sanctuary, that still thy light may shine forth. For neither is there any creature, that is not manifest in thy sight ; for all things are naked and open to thine all-seeing eyes, O God; the Word!

And yet again, in addition to the Golden Altar and the Candlestick in the tabernacle of witness, there was the table on which bread alone was offered :—the table of shew-bread. Twelve loaves, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, were here laid up weekly before the Lord. At the end of the week, they were removed to be eaten by the priests, their place on the table being supplied by twelve fresh loaves. Was not this a pledge that Israel, throughout their tribes, were ever in remembrance before God? It was a silent testimony which the sanctuary in the tabernacle of witness, continually set forth.

In the holy place in the heavenly spheres, is this same pledge, in a higher form. In the risen and exalted Jesus it is found. Having tasted death for every man he ascended up on high. In him fallen humanity is redeemed. The Word is now Man in God, the head of the race as it is regenerated in him. He is the second Adam, the Father of the age ever-

lasting.^a In himself is laid up, as on the golden table of the sanctuary, the pledge of a harvest to be gathered in. Then shall nations and tribes innumerable be included in the Israel of God, and all these, his Israel, shall be saved. "To the uttermost" too they shall be saved; even in body, soul and spirit. For this that is written in the prophet must be fulfilled; "when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."^b In the *complete* redemption, and regeneration of the individual, as well as in the gathering up of tribes and nations shall Christ be satisfied with the fruit of the travail of his soul. *This bread of the harvest is already seen before the Lord.*

But "the holiest" itself is open to us, for the veil is rent. Faith draws near, and even boldly enters. How much, indeed, may faith claim and realize. In measure, it calls things that be not as though they were. It rests not in present things, nor makes its account of things seen; but possessing in the germ,

^a See Isaiah ix. 6.

^b Isaiah liii. 10, 11.

that which shall be our everlasting portion, it rejoices in that portion as if it were already in full possession. "The saints and faithful brethren," indeed, are said to be blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,^a though, as yet, few of them are enjoyed. The heir may count upon the inheritance as really his, though hitherto he may have seen, or become acquainted with a very small part of it. So we read in the epistle just quoted, "but God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."^b He who is strong in faith, against hope, believes in hope. To faith, therefore, is the appeal made, when it is said, "having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus."^c The holy priesthood thus, by faith, enter this inmost sanctuary and rejoice. They enter not tremblingly, or as if in fear of judgment or of death, but boldly. They even sit down

^a See Ephes. i. 3.

^b Ephes. ii. 4—6.

^c Heb. x. 19.

with Christ, exulting in the completeness of his redemption. And yet that most holy sanctuary, into which there is access by faith, constitutes nothing less than the eternal sabbath of God, the everlasting rest to which his Israel is journeying, the glory to which the Captain of their salvation is bringing them. And so to reach the goal, they run with patience their weary race, looking to Jesus as their great exemplar. Not as having already attained, is their language, or as being already perfect, we follow after, if that we may apprehend that for which also we are apprehended of Christ Jesus.*

The service in "the holiest" as instituted under Moses was very simple. Into the second tabernacle went the high priest, not without blood. The blood, which was the life, was brought within the veil, and offered before "the mercy-seat." That was all, as to ministry. He was to take of the blood of the sin-offering, which, together with a censer of burning coals and incense in his hands, he had brought within the veil; then with his finger, he was to sprinkle the blood upon the mercy-seat eastward; and seven times was he

* See Phil. iii. 13.

to sprinkle the blood before the mercy-seat. Thus atonement was made; it was for the reconciliation of the sins of the people.^a Jesus with his own blood has made the atonement; and by him we, who believe, "have now received the atonement."^b

But when the high priest of the Jews entered within the second tabernacle in his yearly ministration, he found himself in darkness. There was no light there, not even that of the lamps which was seen in the first tabernacle. The veil, as yet, separated the two "holies." The high priest had only the glimmering light from the censer of burning coals, to enable him to see how and where he should sprinkle the blood of the sin-offering. Virtually he was in darkness. And here, hidden under the figure, is a great truth. As it is said, "He made darkness his secret place."^c And again, in the words of king Solomon, we read; "the Lord said that he would dwell in the thick darkness."^d And yet "God is light," and "in him is no darkness at all." He dwells in light; but it is inaccessible to mortals. His light is darkness

^a See Lev. xvi.

^b Rom. v. 11.

^c Psalm xviii. 11.

^d 1 Kings viii. 12.

to the creature. It is invisible to mortal men. But in the lifting up, or rending of the veil, humanity in Christ is brought into the presence of that light ineffable. Entering "the holiest" by faith, we see light in God's light even now in measure. When all that pertains to the flesh, and to this mortal life shall have been laid aside, and thus the shreds of "the veil" shall have been torn asunder, the church as the bride of the lamb shall for ever sit down in "the holiest." As the woman she must thus be seen as the image and the glory of the man. The church, too, is the body of Christ; and believers are members in particular. At length this whole body shall be full of light;* and there shall be no darkness at all within. And little by little already is it found that the veil being rent, the holy places which were once divided, are really only one. The sanctuary into which our high priest has entered is no more separated from that in which the priests might minister. It is one holy place. So near has our God come to us. So present is he with us.

When speaking of "the holiest" in the tabernacle of witness, the apostle describes it

* See Matt. vi. 22.

as having, "the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy-seat."^a But the ministry of the sanctuary is that which we are more especially considering. With the apostle, therefore, I would here say, of these things "we cannot now speak particularly." Suffice it then to say, that in the ark of the covenant, or the chest in which the tables of the covenant were shut up, God's councils of love are wonderfully shadowed forth. The true ark of the covenant is he, who in the book of Psalms is heard saying, "sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."^b Not till the man, who, as the ark of the covenant, has God's law in his heart, is found in the presence of God, could there be access for fallen humanity. That man is the eternal

^a Heb. ix. 4, 5.^b Psalm xl. 6—8.

Word; he himself became incarnate, that overcoming death and the curse in our nature, he might bring it into the presence of the Most High. He is himself the mercy-seat;—the very throne of grace. From off this mercy-seat, God can commune with us, as he did with the Israelites under the law, from off the mercy-seat in “the tabernacle of witness.”

So in “the holiest” in the wilderness there were, according to the apostle, “the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant.” Within the latter was the golden pot of manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant. Of the censer, as being within the holiest, there is no mention made in the Old Testament scriptures. But the contents of the sacred chest imply that the wonders of redemption shall be for memorials to the glory of Christ for ever. It shall be known that in him is that wherewith he fed his Israel in the desert; and that in him, also, is the power and grace whereby the dead were quickened into life. And, in the true “holies,” in that light in which God dwells and where is no darkness at all, is also the cherubaic glory; the witness that through creation God’s glory has been revealed. The cheru-

bim, in figure, were of multiplied forms. But they indicated that whether it were the lion, or the ox; the man, or the eagle: all were but in manifestation of the marvellous powers, the all-glorious attributes, and the inexhaustible perfections of the Godhead. Thus shall it be seen when the sabbatical rest of God shall be re-established, and God and angels and men shall say—"all is very good."

Meanwhile, as "the holiest" is entered by faith, the deepest joy is realized. The soul rests in calm meditation, and in joyous thankfulness and praise. It is for the moment, a peace unbroken. The feeling is that to which the prophet gives expression when he says, "the Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him."* In blessed foretaste, that which is perfect has come:—the love that never faileth. In the outer court, we serve with fear; with godly fear. And the secret of the Lord is with them even who fear him; and he will shew them his covenant. But perfect love casts out fear; for fear hath torment. But "he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Marvellous grace! And it is further testified;

* Hab. ii. 20.

—“herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.”* Judgment begins at the house of God; but love forbids dismay or terror. Our lot in this world is the lot of God’s first-born;—the Son of his love. But, then, his blessed lot is ours in the inner and higher world. Let praise unceasing be his. The way into this inner and higher sphere is now manifested. He hath consecrated it for us, a new and living way. His cross manifests it; for it is through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.

Ministry pertains, then, to the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man. Christ is the minister of this sanctuary. His is a real and a personal ministry; a better ministry than that of Aaron, because Jesus is mediator of a better covenant than that of Moses. It is easy to speak of it as a fact, that Christ’s ministry is real and personal; to realize that it is so, is our true aim. The subject is vast. Reason may seem confounded at the thought of it. He who is minister, and who personally ministers in the sanctuary of God, is on the right hand of the throne of the

* See 1 John iv. 17, 18.

Majesty in the heavens. Sympathy is his; poor afflicted souls rightly count on that. But his presence with them is through the power of the living Word. In the power of that Word he ministers on their behalf, and as a Son over the house of God, is faithful. He rejects that which is unclean as an offering; that which is acceptable as a gift and a sacrifice, he presents to God on our behalf. In him, too, and in connection with his one great offering, we Gentiles are offered up. He alone is the altar that can sanctify such an offering and a gift. But this offering must pass through the fire,—the fire that changes and transforms all; for so only can it be perfected, as an offering and an oblation acceptable to God. Through the power of that same living Word, believers as priests, minister together with Christ;—he the high priest, they priests in and with him. For in that Word is the life, in the power of which they can alone minister. And as Christ's ministry is real and personal, so is theirs. Theirs is a service and sacrifice of faith. They draw near and minister, by prayer and repentance, by praise and thanksgivings, by the surrender of their will, their affections and their desires

to God. They present their bodies, their persons, their all, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God; which is their reasonable service. So God is served in his living sanctuary. Prayers and supplication are as fragrant incense before him. Their sweet odour is the merit and the grace of Christ. And God's living sanctuary is with men on earth.

The perpetual ministrations of the true sanctuary, really suppose a continual progress in them that believe; or at least a necessity for this. They imply that there is a process of regeneration which has to be accomplished in individual Christians, as also in the corporate body of believers. They indicate the necessity of a growth in the divine life, so that the perfect stature of a man in Christ, may be attained. And as every form of life is sustained only by its own proper aliment, so is this true regenerate life. The spiritual priests partake of the altar, and eat the bread of God. And through the death of the old man within them, and that by means of the strengthening and invigorating of the new, they are perfected in Christ Jesus.

The necessity for this progressive develop-

ment and growth of the spiritual man is seen, in figure, in almost every thing connected with the tabernacle of witness. For instance, it was God's dwelling place among the people. But together with them, it moved from place to place, until the Lord should find for them a permanent rest. But all depended on their making progress through the desert, so that the land of fertility and blessing might be reached. Spiritual advancement, that is, growth in the spirit, can alone answer to this wilderness journey in our case. It is in-spirit going from strength to strength. What at one time was gain, comes at length to be accounted loss. Yea, and all things are before long, counted loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. And so, forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, we press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.^a Zeal in the flesh will long emulate this untiring energy which would see before it only the mark for the prize which it so eagerly desires. And even a fleshly knowledge of Christ, for a time, seems to be gain; perhaps

^a See Phil. iii. 7—14.

it even is so. But at length it is found that that which was gain, is a hindrance and a loss. It fails so to win Christ that we may be found in him. Only by having the humble, lowly, obedient, self-denying mind that was in Christ Jesus,^a do we reach our true inheritance and rest. Neither do we reach it except the Lord's presence go with us, and his dwelling place be in our midst. And where is the inheritance and the rest, is it asked? It is really "within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."^b Whatever ministers to our growth in grace, ministers to our progress in the path of life. For thus only do we enter within the veil.

Even the order in which the tabernacle of witness was approached, during the time that it had its standing, is instructive. The people could draw near to the brazen altar, where their sacrifices and offerings were presented; but only the Levites and priests and not the people, could minister there. The priests, after washing in the laver which stood outside, might enter the first tabernacle, or "the holy place." "The holiest" was closed to all, except

^a See Phil. ii. 5—11.

^b Heb. vi. 19, 20.

when, at the stated intervals, the high priest fulfilled his ministry there. Class distinctions of this kind, as we have seen, should be unknown among the disciples of Jesus. Their acknowledgment, though under other names, is a backward movement, and not a progressive one. It is turning "to the weak and beggarly elements," to be again entangled in the yoke of bondage.* But all true Israelites have not the same standing in faith and hope; nor does the Christian at once exercise his higher functions as a priest of God. There is an interior service, which tends to unite him more intimately with the high priest and minister of the true tabernacle, but to which he may long continue strange, though his sincere faith in Christ admits of no question. And yet progress should be our aim;—progress in faith, in meekness, in righteousness, in godliness and in love. Thus we draw nearer and nearer to God.

Within the tabernacle of witness the furniture was overlaid with gold, and the vessels were of solid gold; whereas without, only brass and silver were found. The priestly offerings within differed, too, from those of

* Gal. iv. 9.

the people in the outer court. Without, gross animal natures were sacrificed; for there it must be seen and known that Christ verily took our flesh. Within, only the sprinkled blood was seen, and the offering on the altar was only incense with its fragrant odours. And surely there is difference between them that are spiritual^a among the saints and them that are not. As the soul becomes familiar with higher forms of truth, its habitual worship becomes purer, simpler, and more fully in spirit and in truth. The law made nothing perfect, and that which the people offered at one time, that they offered at another. But the way into the holiest is now made manifest. And now the surrender of the soul to God in Christ should be complete. And the thought with each should be "if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from the dead."^b

The same thing is taught us when the tabernacle of the wilderness is seen to expand into the temple at Jerusalem. It might seem as if a higher platform had been reached, and though the Aaronic services were still the same, they assumed a character and an aspect

^a See Gal. vi. 1.

^b Phil. iii. 11.

more joyous. And so as David arranged before the temple was begun, singers were appointed, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals. Numbers, too, were instructed in the songs of the Lord.^a And surely the saints pass on to what is more and more joyous; and with ever deepening affection they magnify and laud their God. Theirs is melody of heart, and in spirit they sing the Lord's songs. It is indicative that earth recedes, and that heaven becomes more distinctly seen and known. For is it not Jesus who says, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee."^b

But, in a word, what is this development and growth of which we speak? It is the casting away of the unfruitful works of darkness, that we may put on the armour of light. It is the putting on of the Lord Jesus Christ, and ceasing to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.^c And shall every form of life which we see around us, be continually striving after maturity and perfection, according to the kind and degree of it, and shall

^a See I Chron. xxv. 1—7.

^b Heb. ii. 12.

^c Rom xiii. 11—14.

that life divine, God's gift to us in grace, be an exception to this rule? Assuredly not! Rather do thou, my soul, renounce more and more the pomps and vanities of this wicked world; and resisting with ever increasing steadfastness, the vain desires of the flesh, yield thyself up more and more to the constraining love of Christ. Awaken in thee, eager desires after him as thine all-satisfying portion, that he may fill thee with himself. Then shall the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, effectually free thee from the law of sin and death. Be it thine to be so transformed, that thou mayst bear the image of the heavenly man, as thou hast borne the image of the earthy. Thus shalt thou come nearer and nearer to the true "holies," and shalt know for thyself, that in the life of love, truth is seen and known; and that to love is to know, and that to know is to love, the God of truth and love. And let the prayer of all saints be, "God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad

and sing for joy; for thou shalt judge the people righteously and govern the nations upon the earth. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.”^a Surely it shall be said, “they have seen thy goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.”^b

^a Psalm lxvii.

Ibid. lxviii. 24. →





IV.

The Re-appearing of the High Priest.

“And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”—Acts i. 10, 11.

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”—1 John iii. 2.

“He which testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly; Amen, Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”—Rev. xxii. 20.



THE TRUE SANCTUARY;

The Re-appearing of the High Priest.

THAT the future is pregnant with hope, both as regards the church of the first-born, and mankind universally, is clearly set forth in many scriptures. But this hope is altogether based on the more full revelation of him, who is the Son of Man and the Son of God; in other words on his second appearing. For instance, to Titus the apostle Paul thus writes;—"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify

unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."* Separated from the sins and hurtful lusts in which this present world abounds, believers have this blessed hope to animate and sustain them. The grace which brings salvation has been manifested; the glory has yet to be seen. Blessed is it to realize the hope of this.

Times and seasons, ages and dispensations too, have yet to run their course. So in his address to the Jews, immediately after the day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter says to them, "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began."^b These times may be far remote as to their full accomplishment; but their being ushered in, is evidently dependent, on God's part, on the sending forth and re-appearing of Jesus Christ. We wait for the epiphany, or mani-

* Titus ii. 11—14.

^b Acts iii. 19—21.

festation of his glory. So, also, the apostle Paul refers to "the dispensation of the fulness of times," in which all things which are in the heavens and in the earth shall be headed up in Christ.^a Surely there are wondrous councils and mysteries to be unfolded in the ages which are yet to come. And surely the blessed and glorious result will be, that all shall honour the Son as they honour the Father, and at length God himself shall be all; and that too not in some, but in all.

Meanwhile, he who has put all things under the feet of Jesus, also "gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."^b And so that which is the Christian's immediate and blissful hope, is the coming forth of our great high priest in glorious manifestation, from the secret presence of the Most High. As it is said "and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation."^c

Once in the year, it will be remembered, on the great day of atonement, did the high priest of the Jews enter into "the holiest"

^a See Ephes. i. 10.

^b Ephes. i. 22, 23.

^c Heb. ix. 28.

within the veil. While he was thus concealed from view, the priests, the Levites and the people stood without, eagerly expecting his re-appearance. The blood was offered within, and the great sacrifice on the brazen altar was accepted. All was expectation without. It had been a day for afflicting the soul; sin had been called to remembrance, and confession had been made. At length the high priest again appeared, a pledge and evidence that there had been reconciliation for the sins of the people. That which remained was that they should enjoy blessing. And now all was joy and gladness.

Contrasting the one entrance of Jesus into the highest heavens, with the yearly entrance of Aaron and his successors into "the second tabernacle," the apostle represents him as coming forth also, as did the Jewish high priest, and that, of course, to the unspeakable joy of his waiting Israel. "For Christ" it is said, "is not entered into the holy place made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with

blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”^a

Once only was it needful that Jesus should offer himself, and so enter into heaven itself. His one sacrifice sufficeth for ever. Having suffered once for all, Christ once for all presented himself in the “most holy” place before God. Unlike the high priest of the Jews too, who stood and ministered before “the mercy-seat,” he is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens. All that had to be completed by his death, resurrection and ascension, was accomplished. Humanity in him was before God perfected and glorified. He could say when about to ascend up on high, “all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”^b His life was given, a ransom for the many. Power was

^a Heb. ix. 24—28.

^b Matt. xxviii. 18.

his to quicken henceforth, whom he will. He was that "bread of God which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."^a The high priest was now fully prepared to act as mediator of the new covenant, so that God's laws should be put in our minds, and written in our hearts; and that the Israel of God, should all know the Lord. And so he has sat down on the right hand of God, able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession. This is his mediatorial work. He has power over all flesh; "for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." And so the true Israel await the further revelation of him, when as the great high priest, he shall come in his glory.

There is a striking antithesis to be noticed in the words quoted above from holy writ. "And as it is appointed unto men," says the apostle, "once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Unto man fallen and sinful, death is the appointment; for by sin came

^a John vi. 33.

death. In the natural order of things, therefore, judgment follows in the wake of death. But Christ through death, bears away sin. And to those whose hope is in his coming, who have accepted his death as theirs, through fellowship with him in his sufferings, judgment with its terrors has passed away. In the place of it Christ appears without sin unto salvation. This is in exact harmony with our Lord's own words, "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (*judgment*, Gr.); but is passed from death unto life."^a Blessed assurance! That man whom God has ordained to rule and reign in righteousness,^b and into whose hands all judgment is committed,^c is the man who died for us and rose again. Before his judgment seat (*βῆμα*) all shall appear:^d for he shall scrutinize and judge the reality of his own work. But assuredly God shall be justified in all his sayings, and shall be clear when he is judged. For even as to the ungodly, mankind shall be judged by man; by the man

^a John v. 24.

^b See Acts xvii. 31.

^c See John v. 22 and 27.

^d See 2 Cor. v. 10.

who gave himself for men's salvation. And they, who so know and realize his grace as to love his appearing, look with earnest longing for that event. They are, themselves, drawn nearer and nearer to him, until they shall see him coming forth, their high priest, without sin and to their complete salvation,

As illustrative of the appearing of Christ the second time, the manner of the Jewish high priest's re-appearing from within the most holy place, may be especially noticed. It was, as has been said, on the great day of expiation that he entered into the inner sanctuary. As to the people, that day was designed to be one of solemn and devout contrition. Their conscience, through preceding sacrifices, was not purged from dead works. It was supposed that they would corporately and individually reflect on their spiritual condition, examining into the state of their minds, as to their inmost thoughts and aims. It was further, also, supposed that whatever the outward character and conduct of the people might have been during the year that was past, it would be felt and acknowledged by them, individually and collectively, that the blood of bulls and goats

cannot take away sin. However their sacrifices might serve to the purifying of the flesh, they still, as a people, had conscience of sins. Some of course, yea, doubtless many of them, had "the secret of the Lord" with them, as to the real efficacy of his grace: and to these was made known what is really his covenant.* But as to the nation, the day of atonement was a day of sorrow and of grief. For there was a remembrance of sins again made on that day, every year.

On this solemn day, therefore, various sin-offerings and sacrifices were presented in the outer court. There was the sin-offering for the priest himself, and the sin-offering for the people. There was the casting of the lot for the two goats; the one for the Lord, and the other for the scape-goat, to be let go as a scape-goat into the wilderness. There was the slaying of the sin-offerings, and the bringing of the blood together with incense, within the veil; the blood to be sprinkled before "the mercy-seat" and upon it. Throughout this service, the high priest ministered in white linen, in which he was arrayed in common with the other priests. Then, when

* See Psalm xxv. 5—19.

all was accomplished, coming forth into the tabernacle of the congregation, he put off the linen garments, leaving them there: and, having washed his flesh with water in the holy place, he put on *his* garments, and came forth.^a These garments in which he thus appeared, were those which were peculiarly and exclusively his, as high priest. They were for glory and for beauty. His linen garments in which he had ministered, having been laid aside, was indicative that his service was so far ended. On that occasion and for the present, at least, there was no more sacrifice for sin. In the figure, sin was put away. Then enrobed in his gorgeous sacerdotal dress, the priest came forth into the outer court, where the priests and Levites and the people were assembled, eagerly awaiting his re-appearing. There was then again an offering, but not for sin. Aaron or his successor had come forth, as without sin unto salvation. What remained was, that he should present his own burnt-offering, and the one for the people. In these, God smelt a sweet savour. There was no thought of sin under judgment in them. The idea was, that only of the

^a See Lev. xvi. 24.

acceptance of what was offered; its grosser form being taken away in the sacred fire, that the whole might be as a sweet odour before God. It was for atonement, we are told.* All in short was atoned; that is symbolically, and in the figure. All was brought into oneness and harmony; blended, as it were, in union and in unity with God. It was as if God's will were done, so that his will was the will of all. There was nothing more to oppose or to resist. All was after the divine mind. The offering was as the food of his table. It signified communion between the worshippers and God. And that great and notable day, which at its commencement had been a season for afflicting the soul, was at its close a period of joy and gladness. The priest had appeared again to the people, but not as they had seen him when ministering on their behalf on the earlier part of the day. Then, indeed, he was seen in pure white; for the true high priest Christ Jesus, when offering himself for sin, should himself know no sin. But not thus even, as clad in white, did the priest of the Jews appear. Now was he arrayed in costliness and in splendour; his dress

* See Lev. xvi. 24.

was of richest tints, and of colours significant of heaven and of heavenly things; precious stones were upon his shoulders and upon his breastplate, and on these the names of the tribes were severally engraven. And in the midst of the breastplate were those mysterious symbols, the Urim and Thummim, through which Divine responses were given. With what transcendent gifts was this priest in glorious attire endowed! In measure, he was so in reality; in symbol, he was so pre-eminently. And so he had come forth to cement the union of the people with their God. He was to them the harbinger of salvation and blessing.

But if the sight was so imposing and the scene so joyous when this priest, who had infirmity, came forth, and who could not continue by reason of death, what must the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ be, when as high priest he shall be seen again without sin unto salvation. In innocency and purity, and as "full of grace and truth" he ministered on our behalf in the days of his flesh. Thus was he seen entering into the holy places. Till then, even after his crucifixion and death, he ap-

peared to his favoured disciples in forms similar to that with which they had been familiar, while he went in and out among them. To Thomas he appeared as bearing upon him the very wounds which were inflicted on him on the cross; saying to him in the presence of the other disciples, "reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side."^a But as he said, he had not yet ascended to his Father, and to our Father; to his God, and to ours.^b Of a similar character was his last appearance after his resurrection, but before he entered into his glory. And he led them out" says the evangelist Luke, "as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."^c Very different was all this, from that transient vision of his glory with which the three disciples were favoured, when he was transfigured before them. Then "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light."^d Referring to this event, the apostle Peter says, "for we

^a John xx. 27. ^b See Ibid. xx. 17.

^c Luke xxiv. 50, 51.

^d Mat. xvii. 2.

have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." ^a The transfiguration was a foreshadowing of his power and coming, and of his honour and glory. And so then, that glory was seen encompassing him as a cloud, into which he had not entered when seen as risen from the dead, first of Cephas, then of the twelve, and afterwards of above five hundred brethren at once. ^b But when last of all, he was seen of Paul also, "as of one born out of due time," he had ascended to the right hand of the majesty in heaven. In this momentary revelation of himself too, all was very different from what it had been, when shewing himself to the disciples, after that he was risen from the dead. It was light transcendent which shone around the then conscience stricken persecutor, while a voice spake to him, and reasoned with him on the sin and folly of the

^a 2 Peter i. 16, 17.

^b See 1 Cor. xv. 5, 6.

course he was pursuing. Though declaring himself to be that very Jesus, whom in his members Paul persecuted, he was Jesus, the Christ in glory; and that glory was such as *mortal vision cannot take in, nor define*. Paul was smitten to the earth, and for the time his sight was taken away.

In this glory shall he come forth from the holiest into which he has for us entered, when he shall appear a second time without sin unto salvation. But who may describe it? In his priestly glory, doubtless, he was revealing himself in vision at least, when at Patmos, John saw him walking in the midst of the seven mystic candlesticks. His form was then seen like unto the Son of man, while he appeared as if clothed with "a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters."^a And yet all this was seen in vision only. It is this apostle who tells us, that what the sons of God shall be, "has not yet

^a Rev. i. 13—15.

been seen; but we know," he adds "that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."^a And yet John was one of the three, who were with Jesus, when he was transfigured before them in the holy mount. And if even the Apocalypse were written after the first of his three epistles, yet had it been otherwise, his testimony, doubtless, would have remained the same. What the children of God in glory shall be, has not yet been seen, just because the transcendent glory of Christ has not yet been seen. Enough is it to know that it pertains to him as "Son of Man," and that so also it shall pertain to those who love his appearing. Surely his own words in reference to this, are of all absorbing,—thrilling interest. In profoundest adoration of spirit should they be repeated. "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."^b It is the full consummation of this grace, of which the apostle

^a 1 John iii. 2.

^b John. xvii. 22, 23.

is assured when he says, "we know that we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is."

This appearing of Christ a second time, as high priest in his glory, must necessarily far transcend in grandeur and in effulgence, what the robes of the Jewish high priest might seem to suggest. Here, as ever, the shadow fails. It may mark out the form and figure and outline of an object; but the lustre and the beauty and the life, it cannot pourtray. In Aaron's garments, it is true, there was costliness of material and richness of colour and of tint, as expressive of the glory with which his office was invested. But here we may apply the words of the apostle,—“for even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory which excelleth.”* The bow in the cloud strikes us with the richness of its hues; but its colours so beautiful and diversified, are but the divided and refracted rays which are concentrated in the light itself. So the true glory, which may have reached us as in divided rays in the figures and shadows of the law, is concentrated and embodied in Christ himself.

* 2 Cor. iii. 10.

In him, our humanity was to be brought into fullest fellowship with God, a blending of the human and divine; and "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."^a And so our great high priest, when seen coming forth from "the holiest," will be *arrayed in light*;—light ineffable, and unapproachable by mortals. This is what John saw in vision as the "garment down to the foot." Surely David, in spirit, saw his glory, and said of him, "And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds."^b Of the same glory to be revealed too the psalmist thus sings, "Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain."^c One's very thoughts seem confounded, when a consummation so unspeakably glorious is anticipated. And yet it is in fullest harmony with what the gospel in its beauty and simplicity announces. The Word, who became flesh, was in the beginning with God, and was God. In him too

^a 1 John i. 5.

^b 2 Sam. xxiii. 4.

^c Psalm civ. 1, 2.

was life, and the life is the light of men.^a The end of this wonderful mystery must be in harmony with what it is declared to be at its beginning. The complete revelation of the Word must be the very refulgence of light. And yet all is human. It is the Son who shall be revealed, by whom God has spoken to us in these last days. It is the Son,—the second Adam,—the Lord of heaven. And even *our* hope is to be like him, and to see him as he is. Surely “light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.”^b

All awaiting the coming forth of the high priest on the day of expiation under the law, were outside. The priests and the Levites as well as the rest of the people were there; none were in the tabernacle of the congregation, when the high priest went into the holiest to make atonement. We are placed under happier circumstances, and under a fuller and clearer disclosure of the mind of God. Now that the figures of the heavenly things are done away, and the heavenly things themselves are made known, “the holiest” is open to us. It is all important

^a See John i. 1—4.

^b Psalm xcvi. 11.

to remember, that under the new covenant, the worshippers have not their place assigned them without, but that with boldness they draw near to that which is within the veil. And yet the holy brethren, whose privileges are so enlarged upon by the apostle, are seen, nevertheless, as standing without and looking for the coming of Christ a second time, without sin unto salvation.

The explanation of this is obvious. Man, of course, is not spiritual only but material; and while in the spirit he may be in contact with the heavenlies, outwardly he is associated with that which is of the earth. Within, in the Spirit, the believer finds that which pertains to the higher spheres; to the true "holies" where Christ is. It is the region wherein he as the true light shines, and where his gracious power is felt. Sweet and blessed is the communion of the soul with its living head in that interior sanctuary. The want of it often causes the troubled spirit to cry out with the psalmist, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear

before God."* But while within, in the deep interior of his spirit, the believer does come and appear before God, the material nature, and the sensuous life even with its pious and devout aspirations, leave him still in that state and condition which are analagous to being in the outer court. So at the Lord's table, there are the material bread and wine as the outward constituents of the supper, while the soul feasts with the Lord in secret, on that which is intangible and unseen. It is not the material part, but the spiritual elements which minister to the sustenance and growth of the inner man. But while in spirit communing with Christ and feasting on the holy supper, and within the veil; the *man* outwardly worships with his brethren in Christ, sitting at the table of the Lord. In short, the visible and the invisible, the worlds seen and unseen meet together in man himself; and as the dark world or the world of light opens within him, so is he found a child of wrath, or a son of God. It is as the holy, heavenly sphere of light opens within, that the life is manifest, and the power to worship acceptably, is attained. This gives efficacy

* Psalm xlii. 1, 2.

to all external ministry; and thus the body presented as a living sacrifice is acceptable, and we "render the calves of our lips." With the psalmist let my sincere utterance be, "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising, thou understandest my thought afar off." "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well."* Let me have power to retain my place among thine expectant worshippers. These have fellowship with thee in the very "holiest." And yet they wait as the true Israel of God, standing daily in thy courts. They have offered and served at the brazen altar. They are washed, they are sanctified, they are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. They form the nation of thy priests, the congregation of the Lord. And so they wait, and serve, and plead, and pray, and look for his appearing, who for them has passed through the heavens, whence he shall come to manifest forth his glory, and to bless his redeemed.

But the saints living on earth form only a

* Psalm cxxxix. 1, 2 and 14.

small part of the great congregation of the redeemed. Countless myriads have passed away from things seen, while others occupy their places for a time in this outer world. But the departed together with the disciples of Christ on earth, form the one body, the Church,—the one assembly of God. The gates of Hades prevail not even temporarily to break the oneness or the unity of this one body. Those who have passed away in death have reached, it may be, a far higher platform, than have those who are still in the body. Theirs may be a holier, and a happier sphere. And yet in common with those still on earth, they wait for the full revelation of the glory. At the opening of the fifth seal, for instance, John saw the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held, under the altar.* The lot of these is, doubtless, to be regarded as one alike of safety and of blessedness, but assuredly not as that of the completeness of blessedness or of glory. Their cry is how long, O Lord, holy and true dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? Whatever may be fig-

* See Rev. vi. 9.

urative in this representation of what the apostle saw in vision, the whole is designed to be apocalyptic, and this much seems clearly and literally revealed, that the spirits of some who had sealed their testimony with their blood, were awaiting the full consummation of their hope. To the faithful in Christ who have departed this life, no doubt the language of the apostle applies;^a being absent from the body, they are present with the Lord. Present with the Lord were those souls whom John saw, though they were under the altar. Present with the Lord are the spirits of the just, in a sense and in a degree beyond what is realized or known on earth: though even in this world, the disciples of Jesus can say, "the Lord is at hand." But of those who have fallen asleep in Jesus, as well as of those who are alive and remain, it can be said, "it hath not yet been seen what they shall be." And so it is a vast assembly that waits and looks for Christ's re-appearing. There is "the glorious company of the apostles," and "the goodly fellowship of the prophets;" there is "the noble army of martyrs," and all the successive generations of saints and faithful

^a See 2 Cor. v. 8.

brethren, who have borne their testimony on earth. These have gone before, having died in faith. But with them is "the holy church throughout all the world," praising God and acknowledging him as "the Father; of an infinite majesty." And all these await the manifestation of the Son in his power and glory. For he is high priest over all, and he shall yet appear a second time without sin unto salvation.

He "shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom."^a All do not look for him, for all men have not faith. There is announced in the scriptures of prophecy, a revelation of the Lord Jesus "from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power."^b It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment. Alas! how many through unbelief, have died and do die in their sins. They thus die in their sins, because they live in them. These can have

^a 2 Tim. iv. 1.

^b 2 Thess. i. 7—9.

no hope in the immediate appearing of Christ. The day of expiation, and the priestly intercessions of Christ within the veil, are disregarded by them : and how shall they escape the righteous judgment of God? Oh! what mercy they do slight; how they trifle with the patience and long-suffering of God. To these Christ cannot appear without sin unto salvation. But he shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.

Among the faithful there is diversity of judgment, and widely different views are entertained respecting that great event, the revelation of Jesus Christ. But assuredly it were to mistake the apostle's meaning to suppose that they only are looking for Christ's appearing, who hold certain views as to his speedy coming, or as to what is termed his premillennial advent. It is not they who are skilful in prophetic interpretations who most sincerely love Christ's appearing. The intellectually curious on the one hand, and the hard reasoners' on the other, may have as they think, the clearest views and the most settled convictions, as to what scripture prophecy teaches on the coming of the Lord. On the other hand, many simple Christians

may have opinions altogether crude and unsettled, and views wholly confused or even erroneous on the subject. But the real waiting ones, the worshippers who most decidedly and eagerly look for him, are not they who know most, but those who love most; although it is a happy circumstance when intelligence and love are combined. To love Jesus, is really to know him. Much may be known doctrinally and theologically, while Christ himself is little if at all known. We truly know him only as we are like him; and to know him thus is to love him. And like draws to like. Love seeks love. They all look for him, who sincerely love him. It is in his presence, as far as this is realized, that they rejoice. These love his appearing and so are virtually looking for him. But to many who may yet be but too boastful of their speculative theories and of their carnal reasonings on the prophecies of scripture as yet unfulfilled, the language of the prophet may apply far otherwise than they suppose. "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye

delight in: behold, he shall come saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." ^a The Lord shall judge his people. When his wife hath made herself ready, the marriage of the Lamb will have come. ^b Meanwhile, they are happy indeed who really love his appearing. These are putting on their ornaments. Their adorning is that of a meek and quiet spirit. They are bringing forth the fruits of the spirit; such as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. ^c These *shew* that they are looking for him, who shall appear a second time without sin unto salvation.

As priest of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, Melchizedek stood before Abraham, when he brought forth bread and wine and blessed the patriarch. As a

^a Mal. iii. 1—3.

^b See Rev. xix. 7.

^c See Gal. v. 22, 23.

priest only the psalmist regards him, when in the spirit he testifies that Christ is priest for ever after his order. But the great apostle of the Gentiles associates other honours with those which were sacerdotal, when referring to him as a type of Christ, as of one greater than he. Not only his name, but the name also of his regal city, is symbolical. Personally, Melchizedek was king as well as priest. And while, only as a priest, he stood before the father of the faithful, his kingly honours were known, and at the proper time and place would be fully recognized.

Christ is king as well as priest. Unto the Son, God saith, "thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." ^a Regarded as a type of Christ only, is it important to know who Melchizedek was, or what is the import of his name? Christ the high priest and heir of all is the true Melchizedek, "first being by interpretation king of righteousness, and after that

^a Heb. i. 8, 9.

also king of Salem, which is king of peace." As to his kingly dignity and supremacy too, as well as to his priestly honour, he is "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God."^a But like the historical Melchizedek, though known as king, and though at the proper time and place, to be acknowledged and manifested as king of kings, hitherto his power is sacerdotal, and his authority and rule are chiefly manifested in the house, or sanctuary of God.

No doubt there is a distinction to be made between "the kingdom of God's dear Son," into which "the saints and faithful brethren" are translated,^b and those kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, which have previously formed the kingdoms of this world, as foreseen by the apostle in the Isle of Patmos. Of these latter, little mention is made in the New Testament. But the blessedness of them is the constant theme of the prophets under the law. As yet it would seem, a day must dawn upon the world that shall be pre-eminently the day of the Lord, when the

^a Heb. vii. 3.

^b See Col. i. 13.

Lord alone shall be exalted.^a For as the apostle Paul declares to the Athenians, "God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."^b An outward manifested kingdom has yet, it would seem, to be established, in which a king shall reign in righteousness, and which reign is distinct from his sweet and lordly power, authoritatively exercised in the assembly or church of God, which is the body of Christ, the fulness of him who filleth all in all. For this, David prayed when he said, "give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment."^c

In Melchizedek the character of Christ's reign is typically set forth; righteousness and peace are its characteristics. Righteousness is his sceptre, peace is his rule. It is so through his own transforming power; unruly passions and evil tempers are by him subdued.

^a See Isaiah ii. 17.

^b Acts xvii. 31.

^c Psalm lxxii. 1, 2.

So men submit themselves unto him; theirs is willing and joyful submission. When that which is wrathful and self-seeking is subdued, when pride, and bitterness, and envy, and anger, and malice are effectually put away, then strife is at an end; unrighteousness finds no place: wars cease; the laws of the righteous king are written in the heart. A law appealing with its threatenings from without, is unnecessary; the law of life and of righteousness works from within. And so of his kingdom it is said, "he shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth." Surely "men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed," and the prayers of David the son of Jesse shall then be ended.

The revelation of this blessed kingdom would seem in scripture to be intimately associated with Christ's appearing a second time without sin unto salvation. What shall it be, indeed, but the clothing of his chosen priests with salvation, that peoples and nations may, as saints, shout aloud for joy? "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we

speak.”^a But all things are to be put in subjection under the feet of the Son of man. And the man Jesus, and the woman the Church, are one. The latter is the Lamb’s wife, and the honour and the glory of the husband pertain also to the wife. They shall reign conjointly. His throne and dominion are hers. Nay, the oneness is more complete than the sacred union of husband and wife may seem symbolically to suggest. “For as many of you” writes the apostle, “as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”^b And yet, “to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ.”^c Those baptized into Christ, are one seed with Christ. It is that seed in which all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. Well might the apostle say, “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time, are not

^a Heb. ii. 5.

^b Gal. iii. 27—29.

^c Gal. iii. 16.

worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." ^a O thou high priest and minister of the true tabernacle, when shalt thou be revealed, not in thy priestly beauty merely, but also and because of this, in thy kingly power and glory? Are not thy redeemed, not those on earth merely, but those who have departed this life, eagerly looking for thee? Would, indeed, that it were so, as regards thy believing people on earth. Oh that they knew, and every where appreciated the greatness of thy grace, so as to be pressing on to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Shall not thy glory, embodying itself in them, manifest itself through them as the light of life, diffusing its blessings to the ends of the earth? So let thy glory be revealed, that all flesh may see it together.

The appearing again of the first-born and high priest, will be the shining forth of his glory in a more outward sphere than heretofore. So the sons of God, that is his spiritual offspring, unknown to the world as yet, will then be like their glorified head and chief, seeing him "as he is." ^b But the earnest ex-

^a Rom. viii. 18.

^b I John iii. 2.

pectation of the creature, that is of the creation, waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God; when these shall no longer be unknown. For the creation, it is said, was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected it; in hope that the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, and not only they, but ourselves, which have the first-fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the sonship; the redemption of our body.* The whole of the outward and visible creation is, according to this testimony, to be effected by Christ's second appearing. Its liberation from a thralldom, under which it at present lies, is dependent on that event. The interval may be long or short between the manifestation of the sons of God, and the wonderful and transcendent change which shall take place. But the present state of the visible creation will not be permanent. Its outward materiality and grossness are not essential to

* Rom. viii. 19—23.

it. At present there is, through all its parts, a travailing in pain, an unconscious striving after freedom from the bondage of corruption. A living power or principle is working every where, producing perpetually renewed forms of life, only that these may again perish and decay. So all is subject to vanity, but only temporarily so, and as if unwillingly. For that which the first Adam failed to do, viz., to "replenish the earth and subdue it,"^a that the second Adam is destined to accomplish. Together with him shall the first-born sons of God be manifested. To them shall the creature (or creation) be subjected, that its redemption, as theirs is, and through them may, in Christ their living head, be perfected. And as in our redemption, mortality is swallowed up of life, so in the creation, corruption shall be swallowed up of incorruption: and so all shall stand in the liberty of the glory of the children of God. New heavens and a new earth shall at length testify to the illimitable efficacy of the great sacrifice which God himself has made in the gift and in the one offering of his Son. It is but the further extension of the great atonement:—

^a Gen. i. 28.

a renewed burnt offering, after the coming forth of the priest, and which is for atonement.^a Thus shall all be atoned, and brought into unity and harmony with God.

Little can we comprehend of the nature of that change which shall take place in the visible heavens and the earth around us, and which is dependent on the re-appearing of our risen Lord. It will be, as we have seen, their restoration from bondage to liberty, from corruption to incorruption; and this, that the outward material creation may be brought back into its pristine state and perfection. For surely its present *groaning and travailing in pain* must be in unison with the condition of spiritual beings, once noble and mighty, and in whose sad fall it became involved. Be that as it may, it shall be restored, and into the "glorious liberty of the children of God," shall the Lord re-introduce it. Its hope for restoration is in that promise of God—"behold I make all things new,"^b "when death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire."^c Then shall the curse be done away, and the tabernacle of God shall indeed be with men.

^a See Lev. xvi. 24.

^b Rev. xxi. 5.

^c Ibid. xx. 14.

Meanwhile, the faithful are taught to look even with eagerness for the coming of the day of God, when these things shall be. They form no subject for mere idle speculation, as to how or when they shall be accomplished. They are to be looked for, so that present things may have a less undue hold upon our affections and desires. Their anticipation is to draw away our thoughts from transient and vain pleasures, that we may seek more earnestly the joys that are enduring; in short, that the conviction may become deeply and permanently ours, that things seen are only temporal, and that the things unseen are especially to be desired. "Seeing then" says the apostle Peter, "that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."*

* 2 Peter iii. 11—13.

with awe, but surely it is the blessed promise referred to that excites, at once, our sympathy and hope. The curse and evil shall pass away, while that which shall remain will be the abode of righteousness and peace. Yes, all this shall be as if a burnt-offering which is for atonement, after the coming forth of the great high priest. And there shall be no more curse, but only joy and gladness.

Thus we see that the day of atonement is not soon ended with us, as of necessity the day of expiation was among the Jews. On the contrary it seems of long, long continuance. But as is the beginning so is the end. The time of mourning and for afflicting the soul, has been of long duration, but so the time for joy and gladness shall be of long, long extension. And still must the joy deepen, as the blessing extends. And who, indeed, may enumerate the trophies of Christ's power, which shall grace his re-appearing? For at length, not in that only which may now be regarded as the outer court, but beyond, and far far beyond, there shall be only and continuous and complete atonement. For Christ must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. Even the last enemy,

death, shall be destroyed. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.^a

But what dispensations shall be unfolded, and what times shall run their course, ere all the purposes of God be accomplished, and the king and priest of God be crowned with all his destined crowns, who may say? The times of refreshing announced by the apostle Peter to his own nation, are to be succeeded not by a *time*, but by *times* of "the restitution of all things."^b And of these, it is affirmed, God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. Until these times set in, it is necessary that the heaven receive the risen and ascended Lord. They may be of lengthened duration, the blessing ever widening and deepening while evil and the curse are being rooted out; yea, till the curse itself shall be turned into a blessing.

So there is also announced a "dispensation of the fulness of times," when all things shall be gathered together, or headed up in Christ.^c

^a See 1 Cor. xv. 25—28. ^b Acts iii. 21.

^c See Ephes. i. 10.

What further unfolding of the glory of Christ this may imply, can be as yet but dimly, if at all perceived. It hath pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell. And surely times and dispensations must all fail to bring to light what that fulness includes;—it is the fulness of the Godhead bodily, that dwells in him. But when all things shall be headed up in him, the confusion and disorder which sin has brought in, and which evil has entailed, will have passed away. Beauty and order, peace and harmony will be universal. It is THE GLORY OF THE LORD that must fill all things, and God in Christ shall be ALL.

Blessed then, most blessed is that hope which is given to the saints of God;—the hope of the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ! Blessed, most blessed is the assurance, that to those who look for him, Christ shall appear a second time without sin unto salvation! Meanwhile hope yields its present results, and these are in every way joyous and blessed. He who in hope, is patiently and continuously looking for the coming forth of the high priest from the true “holies,” is personally

being brought into nearer and closer contact with him, and that through greater conformity to him. "We all," says the apostle "beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord."^a They who look for him, their affections centering on *things unseen*, rather than on *things seen*,^b behold what others do not and cannot see. It may be as through a dim and darkened medium, yet do they so behold even now the glory of the Lord, as to realize its blessed and transforming power. While in the days of his flesh, Jesus walked on earth, full of grace and truth, some even then saw his glory, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."^c It is thus even now. Faithful disciples with opened eyes, see the things which are hidden from careless or carnal Christians. As to mere reason and the natural intelligence of mankind, it is said, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." But as regards the perfect, that is the spiritually

^a 2 Cor. iii. 18.

^b See 2 Cor. iv. 18.

^c John i. 14.

enlightened and instructed, it is added, "But God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit: for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."^a As these things open to the spiritual intelligence of the true and faithful disciple, he so much the more seeks access for himself into the holy places, as one of those who "see the day approaching." For the day of Christ dawns upon his soul; then in its blessed light he walks. Thus the apostle Peter when speaking of himself as an eye witness of the majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ, on the day of transfiguration, assures us that we have a more sure prophetic word, unto which we do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in our hearts.^b The morning star is the harbinger in the soul of that day in which Christ reveals himself in his glory. It is experimentally a foretaste of that glory which shall at length burst in all its effulgence upon the many brethren, the church of the first-born. The soul is in fact, progressively drawing nearer and nearer to Christ, while in this case he is in manifested power coming more fully out

^a 1 Cor. ii, 10.

^b See 2 Peter i. 19.

into the outer court. There are times too, when faith and hope yield in measure to sight and revelation, when for the time he is seen who shall appear without sin unto salvation. At such times, when this is our happy experience, he is seen in the spirit, who to the outward eye is invisible. Then can some say with the holy apostle John, "for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." And again, "that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."* Thus the high priest is temporarily seen. He appears, as in his royal priestly robes; he comes forth to comfort and to bless.

Short indeed, generally perhaps, are the intervals during which the believer may thus forget that he is in the world, however conscious he may be, that he is not of it. And so he still waits for the coming, that is for the yet more manifest revelation of the great high priest. Blessed in measure, in propor-

* 1 John i. 2, 3.

tion as he is so, he seeks to be yet more and more fully blessed. His language, henceforth, may seem to be,

“Nearer, my God to Thee,
 Nearer to Thee ;
 E'en though it be a cross
 That raiseth me,
 Still all my song shall be,
 Nearer my God to Thee,
 Nearer to Thee !

Though like a wanderer,
 The sun gone down,
 Darkness comes over me,
 My rest a stone :
 Yet in my dreams I'd be
 Nearer, my God, to Thee,
 Nearer to Thee !

There let my way appear
 Steps unto heaven ;
 All that thou sendest me
 In mercy given ;
 Angels to beckon me
 Nearer, my God, to Thee,
 Nearer to Thee !

Then, with my waking thoughts
 Bright with thy praise,
 Out of my stony griefs
 Bethel I'll raise,
 So by my woes to be
 Nearer, my God, to Thee,
 Nearer to Thee !”

Happy they who in this spirit wait, and are still looking for the coming forth of the great high priest. They find a Bethel, where others see only stones, and pillars of stones.

Meanwhile, they continue to wait, often sorrowful and sad in spirit. Still at such seasons, they know that their Lord is at hand. But often, indeed, their's is a joy unspeakable and full of glory. For them death has lost its sting. Their tabernacle may be dissolved; that true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, remains unshaken, unaffected. They know that they have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. They are confident; yea, willing to be absent from the body; for they will then be nearer to the Lord, and so much the more fully present with him. Here, where evil abounds, there must of necessity be ever recurring interruptions to their peace and joy, and that to the end of their earthly course. And yet blessing, continuous blessing, ever increasing blessing may be their portion, flowing from the inner sanctuary, until Christ shall come forth to glorify them wholly in himself, and so shall reveal unto them and through them his own ineffable beauty and glory. Then will it be seen how in all things he has the pre-eminence. He revealed as the man who is the image and glory of God, that the woman may be revealed also who is of him and one with

him,—the glory of the man. It will be the full revelation of Jesus Christ,—the first-born,—the beginning of the creation of God,—the heir of all,—the high priest over all,—the life of all,—the Word,—himself the all,—the One in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. And joy transcendent! this revelation of himself, shall be at the same time that also of the church as his fulness;—the fulness of him who filleth all in all. In the blissful anticipation, may our hearts be drawn to him more and more fully. And with our inmost souls, may we with the psalmist exclaim;—“O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens. Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due

unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth. Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood-rejoice before the Lord: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth."^a And he who testified to his servant John saith, "Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."^b

^a Psalm xcvi.

^b Rev xxii. 20.

