

ADDRESSES

ON THE EPISTLE TO

THE HEBREWS.

P. R. Morford.

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SO GREAT SALVATION.

ORDER AND BEAUTY.

LIGHT AND PERFECTION.

THE FRAMING OF GOD'S WORLD.

SO ✎ ✎
GREAT ✎
SALVATION.

Being Notes of Addresses
by P. R. MORFORD, at
Streatham, during May
and June, 1907. ✎ ✎

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“SO GREAT SALVATION.”

(MATT. XIV. 22-31 ; ACTS XXI. 30 ; HEB. I., II. 1-4.)

I DESIRE grace to put together the thoughts that are in my mind ; and to present what I would venture to call the “New Departure.” It is marked in each of the scriptures we have read together, and that new departure I believe to be summed up in one of the last few words we read : “So great salvation.” The Epistle to the Hebrews was, no doubt, written exclusively to those who were Hebrews, and as such it should have had a keen interest for them, but WE have to be careful not to miss its present bearing, and it is rather with a view to its present application to us that I desire to touch on it.

In God’s dealings with Israel of old, He fenced them off from the pollutions that were around them. He put them in a fold, and that fold was salvation to them. It was a fence round them on every hand, but in its very character it was what man as such could take account of. I mean the fact that God took up for Himself a particular nation and connected His name as He did with a particular spot upon earth, was what even men who were ignorant of

God could take note of. Salvation in God's previous ways, therefore, was connected with a visible centre. Now I desire to shew you that in connection with salvation to-day, God has taken an entirely new departure, and He has no longer connected salvation exactly with a visible centre, but with an order of things—a system, we may call it, for want of a better word—which has its centre outside the present *seen* world.

I refer to Matthew xiv. because Matthew was written for the same people as the Epistle to the Hebrews, and therefore it seems to me that it largely gives us side-lights on the same truths which have been recently before us here. In chapter xiv. we start with the confirmation of Christ's rejection. He is rejected by His brethren in the last verses of chapter xiii., and in the beginning of chapter xiv. we find His forerunner beheaded—John the Baptist; when the Lord Jesus hears of that He withdraws into the wilderness, and there He feeds the people, He ministers to them. Then we find He constrains His disciples to get into a ship, and while they embark on the sea He Himself takes a place on high, on a mountain—a pattern, no doubt, of His present priestly place on high with which the Epistle to the Hebrews commences. Now why does He constrain them to get into the ship? I have little doubt that it was that they

might taste in their experience the true character of things down here. The outward place of the disciples was in the order of things in which salvation was found, to which I have already referred, namely, the fold of God here, and I suppose that in measure the boat into which they were constrained by Christ to enter sets forth that order of things. The effect of Christ's priesthood on high was, I have no doubt, that it brought down the winds and waves upon the order of things in which the disciples found themselves, for His place on high was consequent upon His rejection. And now He descends from the mountain and appears to them as walking on the water. I ask you to note carefully that, because I believe His position as walking upon the water was in itself the new departure. It was one which had nothing in common with the previous position of the disciples, and one in which Christ shewed His complete supremacy over every element of evil down here. Now, as in that position He addresses them (they fear, thinking it was a spirit, but He addresses them)—“ Be of good cheer ; it is I ; be not afraid.” It is very evident from what follows that His presence on the water was meant to draw the disciples to Himself where He was. The boat was in itself a bulwark against the storms and the waves, but His presence outside it was intended to so

operate in their souls that it should draw them to give up the position in which after all He had placed them, and to set their affections in motion that they should join Him in the wholly new circumstances in which He was presenting Himself to them. That apparently has its effect on one of them—that is Peter; for, mark you, Peter answered. It is very evident that the request of Peter is the answer to the drawing of Christ's love: "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." We see Peter, led by affection to Christ to quit the old order of things. Now I turn to Acts xxi.

Here we get a contrast. We find Paul led by affection to his people to *cleave* to the old order of things. He had gone up to Jerusalem near the end of his ministry. He had met James and the apostles, and had recited to them the wonderful works of God among the Gentiles. Then James had told him how many thousands of Jews there were that were zealous of the law, and a course was pointed out to him in which, I think, affection for his people led him blindly. Once more, and for the last time, he entered the temple courts, purifying himself with men who had taken a vow. The effect was, that instead of conciliating the people, it only drew forth upon him wrath. An attack was made; and in contrast to Peter, who was drawn out of the old order of things, Paul was shut out. It has

always seemed to me an extremely important moment that we get summarised in that short sentence: "And forthwith the doors were shut." The massive temple gates, seldom or never closed, and requiring, I believe, twenty porters to push them, were definitely shut, and the new departure was then and there established. And what was it? Salvation and God's testimony, which up to that moment had been connected with God's Temple and the "within" of Judaism, was henceforth definitely outside in the person of Paul. Paul was *shut out*. Peter was *drawn out*. The shutting out was God's government; the drawing out was Christ's priesthood. Peter was drawn out in affection to the Lord. I have no doubt it was affection, because what marks affection is that it does not calculate. One could verify that in the very tenderest relationships of mere human life here. Where love is in question, where love comes in at the window, so to speak, commerce and business and calculation go out at the door, and rightly so. There was no calculation with Peter. That is extremely important, because many a soul might say: Well, I can see Christ in that new position and after all my heart does go out to Him, rejected of men and owned of God, but what is it going to cost? If you consider what it is going to cost, you are lacking in real affection.

I believe where the love of Christ operates in our souls the effect is that we do not calculate. You may say impossibilities face you ; well, love does not take those into account, it steps out. Peter stepped out ; he answered to it, and it was when he began to calculate that he got into trouble. He then began to find, in pattern, the opposition of Satan and of the world. But now he appeals to the Lord : " Lord, save me ! " and the Lord stretches forth His hand and draws him to Himself. That shews us most plainly the present priestly grace of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, to draw us out of the old religious order of things, to help us to mark the new departure which is brought about in His Person, and in affection to Him to go forth to Him " without the camp, bearing his reproach " truly, yet learning of Him all the grace with which He can uphold us in His new but blessed circumstances. The question may suggest itself to you : If the Lord's favour is over me (as it undoubtedly is), and if His present earnest wish is that I should quit the old religious order of things, how is He going to effect it ? I am sure He will bring us to it, but how ? Is it going to be in affection to Him that I am drawn out, or is it going to be that in affection to the fold it will necessitate the Lord shutting me out ? I refer to the point I started with ; that was that with the old order presented in the boat, and

up to the last moment with the temple, salvation had been connected, but it had a visible centre, and it was what men as men could take account of. Now we want to turn to God's new departure, no longer in pattern, as those two cases shew very clearly—but God's new departure in reality in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ; I believe that what Peter said in Matthew xiv. covers the whole of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Lord, if it be thou." I think "*thou*" covers the truth of Hebrews, for it brings before us the person of the Lord Jesus Christ presented in affection. In the first chapter of Hebrews we get, in the first verse, the previous order of things to which I have drawn attention: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets"—there we have plainly enough the old order. Now we come to the second verse: "Hath in these last days spoken unto us [literally] *in Son*," that is the new departure—absolutely new. Now I think the working out of the Epistle to the Hebrews will shew how salvation for us is connected with God speaking to us in Son.

God has come out in a wholly new character—"in Son." It is not so much that He speaks in *the* Son, but God addresses Himself to us in that character—in one of the tenderest characters of affection that are known to man; God speaks in that character, "in Son." We get the con-

trast further on in the epistle (chap. xii.) where none dared to draw nigh to God, when He promulgated His fiery law from Sinai ; but here God speaks to us in Son, and the effect is that we draw near to God. There is no need to stand afar from Him when He speaks in that character of tender relationship.

The rest of the chapter unfolds to us the person of Him who is the Son. I shall dwell on that a little because it is essential that we should see who the "*thou*" is to whom Peter was drawn out. We are told first of all that He brings the full revelation of God. Then: "Whom he hath appointed heir of all things." That is an important statement which we get before the unfolding of the greatness of His Person. He made the worlds, and He is at the same time the heir of them. God begins to unfold at the very outset the width of the new order of things which He has brought about for our salvation. "By whom also he made the worlds." That of course refers primarily to the worlds of creation, but I have not a doubt that it carries us on to the immensity of that new and glorious moral universe which God is fashioning under His hand for His eternal glory and pleasure.

Now we get the glory of His Person brought in. No human language could possibly transcend the greatness of the presentation here of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is

the effulgence of God's glory, and the expression of His substance. No man has seen God at any time ; no man can see God and live ; God dwells in light unapproachable ; but here is One who is the shining forth, the daybreak of His glory. What would we have expected to see ? Some material brightness and magnificence surrounding Christ, as painters portray Him ? In no way ! The brightness of God's glory was moral brightness. It was seen in that He could come into this very world of sin, and find His place in the company of publicans and sinners, and say, "It was meet." That is, He brought into the positive view and touch of men the brightness of God's glory, and that completely dimmed all the brightness of the religious Pharisees, and curled the lip of scorn against Him.

Then, He was the expression of His substance. God is a Person, but He is a Spirit, and Christ came here the moral imprint of the nature of the blessed God Himself ; as much the imprint as that which is graved in a seal, for I believe that is the very word employed here. Do we really take in that the blessed God whom the heavens cannot contain, who dwells in light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen nor can see—that *He* made Himself in His moral features fully and absolutely known in the lowly Person of Jesus ? That is what He did. What

was that One doing who was here? He was "upholding all things by the word of his power." Millions of suns all held in their proper position by that very One who came here in lowly grace, who blessed little children ; it is incomprehensible, except in the way in which it is told us here, except as we learn it in affection to Him, by the power of the Spirit.

Now we come to two important points. "When he had by himself made purgation of sins." That is found at the very threshold of Hebrews, and for a very good reason. They were to know the Lord Jesus Christ as priest, and it was as priest that He acted towards Peter, but it is very essential that we should see that the question of sins has been settled to start with. Have we all had the question of *our* sins settled? If you have, you can have to do with Christ as Priest ; if not, let me implore you to have them settled before God. He made purgation of sins. Was that final? If it was not final, He could never have done what He did afterwards. He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Do you want to see the entire putting away of sins? "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." That is the fullest and freest confirmation that Christ has put away sins. The priesthood of Christ is not for sins, but for infirmity ; and while sins are

mentioned in Hebrews, it is that we may have no more consciousness of them. SIN in Hebrews is apostasy ; there may be weakness, but sin removes us from the pathway of God's will here.

Now we get the quotation from the first of the many psalms quoted in Hebrews. "Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee." The importance of that quotation is, that it brings in the great underlying fact in Hebrews of the rejection of Christ. Look at the beginning of the psalm : "Why do the heathen rage . . . let us break their bands asunder." What does that mean? The absolute rejection of Christ by the rulers, religious and otherwise : by Jew and by Gentile, for when it is quoted in the Acts the Gentiles first and then the Jews are brought in. That establishes the fact of Christ's rejection here. If we are to learn anything of Christ's priesthood, we must not only know first that the whole question of sins has been dealt with once and for ever, but we must learn the rejection of Christ here. Christendom fails to take in that thought and, ignoring His rejection, they fail altogether to get the good of His priestly grace. The same thing applies to us. If we ignore the place of the rejection of Christ here, we shall most certainly fail of laying hold of His priesthood and priestly grace. "Jesus . . . suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." The Epistle to

the Hebrews is built up largely on those two psalms, ii. and cx. Psalm ii. commences with His rejection, and that is the beginning of the book of psalms. The topstone is Psalm cx.: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." There again is the rejection of Christ. He has enemies, but they are going to be crushed beneath His feet. †

Now I touch on Psalm cii. It is of the greatest importance; it shews us the cutting off of Christ from the old order into which He entered here by grace. We should little have dared ourselves to apply it to Christ were it not so applied in this chapter. Christ had entered the order of things here. He had remained in retirement from it for thirty years, and for three years He had been suffered but very grudgingly to move about in blessing to men. But now in Psalm cii. here is Christ speaking, no doubt on the cross, or in His passion in the garden: "He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days." That was a fearful plaint on the part of Christ. Religious men esteemed that Christ had been here long enough when He was thirty-three, and they put Him to a malefactor's death. Did Christ feel it as a man here? We get here the secrets of His communing with God. Study the end of Leviticus ii. We find

there a most affecting type of this very moment. We find a meat offering of the firstfruits, in which green ears of corn were to be cut down and dried by the fire ; then there was to be added to them oil and frankincense. I have no doubt that refers to this moment shewn in Psalm cii., when our Lord Jesus Christ was cut off at the age of thirty-three, men having estimated that He had lived long enough. "Dried by the fire." We get there the effect of God's judgment, inapplicable to Himself personally, but bringing before us the place He took positionally as being cut off. Then there were the oil and frankincense, for in that very moment He shone under God's eye in all the beauty and moral excellence of the oil of the Spirit and the frankincense of His own blessed Person. What was the divine answer which we get quoted in Hebrews ? "Thy years are throughout all generations . . . thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." That is the blessed answer of Jehovah to Christ upon the cross, that as man His years should have no end. Cut off ! Yes, truly He was, but here the divine title, "the Same," is applied by Jehovah to Him as man, that is as man He is to have years of life for evermore. Of course as a divine Person He is eternal in His being, but viewed as man, as the One who was cut off here, He receives life for evermore. Centuries of dying men have come

on the scene, and have passed away, but there is one glorious Man, who in His own Person spans the whole gulf of time since His death and resurrection and ascension right on to the present moment. He will never grow old, and His heart is unchanged. It is the same to you and me as when He said to Peter, "Come"; come out of all that would hold us in bondage here. Outwardly Jerusalem perished; the Roman armies came and swept it away. But the principle that answers to Jerusalem has gone on. Christendom has taken it up; the old things are gone on with. All is based on the old order which God has set aside, and the new departure is not taken account of, but it should appeal to us. Christ has taken up that new position, and He says to every one of us, "Come."

What is going to be your answer to that? Is it to be the readiness of the heart of impetuous Peter—impetuous, yet in real and true affection? Are you going to respond to it, or are you going to calculate, or to say: What suited my father will suit me, and I am prepared to go on with the old things? Well, they are not connected with salvation to-day, for salvation has an invisible centre to-day, and that centre is Christ at the right hand of God. Look at the beginning of chapter ii. Chapter i. ends by bringing in angels as taking their place as subservient to the new departure which God had brought in. If

you remember, the old order was given by the disposition of angels ; Psalm lxviii. tells us that the blaze of glory at Sinai was angelic glory. Now that has been set aside, for a new glory has come to light, not in angels, but in the Son. Angels retire, as you see in Luke ii. When Christ comes on the scene the angels “unselfishly hymn the advancement of another race” ; here they retire in favour of the heirs of salvation, and become their servitors.

Now chapter ii. begins with this : “ Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed. . . How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ? ” I believe this “ great salvation ” lies in the new departure which God has made ; that He has no longer connected salvation with that which had a visible centre and formed a fold here upon earth ; but He has connected it with Christ risen from the dead—salvation spoken by Him and centring in Him, and it is to bring enfranchisement to us from the religious world. All is summed up in that one word to Peter, “ Come. ” Why does it say : “ How shall we escape ? ” It is one of the unanswerable questions in scripture. The whole religious order of things (which is based on the past dispensation) has disappeared under God’s eye, and is about to come under God’s unsparing judgment. It will take the character of Babylon, and as such it will be utterly destroyed. If, therefore, we cleave to

that order in spite of the affectionate bidding of Christ, "Come"; if we refuse the opened door which He places before us, then this unanswered question comes in: "How shall we escape?"

Do we then deliberately elect to go back from God's new departure and to cleave to the old? Or are we prepared, as He shews us the marks in His hands and His feet, as the magnificence of His glorious Person and the deep affections of His heart open out to us to draw us out of the old order, are we ready to respond to His call and to go forth to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach? May God give us that grace!



THE CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION.

(HEB. II. 5-18; III. 1-6.)

IN the previous address I endeavoured to speak of salvation in its present bearing, and I ventured to call it God's NEW departure; that is, that God had had previous ways with men, or rather with the nation of Israel, for He had taken them up and put a fence round them, and under His gentle cherishing care they had been shepherded and preserved from every foe; that that fact involved a visible centre of which men could take account, but that now, in the Lord Jesus Christ, God had, so to speak, taken a new departure, and had connected salvation no longer with one particular nation, nor with any visible centre, but with an invisible one, and with what we might call (for want of a better word) a system, an order of things, which lay in its very nature outside the course of what is going on here; that that is connected with the Lord Jesus Christ; that God had truly in days of old spoken through the prophets, but now He has spoken to men in the Son, and the Son becomes the centre and upholder of that new divine system with which God has connected salvation.

I also tried to shew that there is a natural reti-

cence in our hearts to give up what is visible in order to accept what may be invisible, that is faith, but that there is the tender grace of the Lord in securing our leaving the old order of things here, and of course the old order to us is the religious order of things which still goes on in Christendom, and which, after all, is modelled on the old order of Judaism. There is the tender grace of the Lord to break for us the links which are, under God's eye, broken for us in His death; in the case of Peter we saw the grace of the Lord, while allowing the disciples to enter an order of things (figured in the boat) which set forth the then religious order, namely, Judaism, so that they might feel the true condition of things on earth, but He presented Himself supreme, above the power of evil, and outside it, in order to draw their hearts to Himself. That is His present service, for I think His service to us in the early part of Hebrews is largely individual. There is the magnetic power of His love to draw us out of that in which in flesh we should rest, probably of a religious character—to draw us outside of it to Himself, to take a pathway which nature could not tread.

Then we saw that, while the Lord drew Peter out of the boat, Paul's affections still linked him in some measure with the old order: he loved his brethren after the flesh. It is often the same with us; we have links with the old religious

order which has passed away from God's sight. You remember Paul went up to the temple, and the great brazen gates of the temple were definitely closed against him. Henceforth God's testimony, as connected with Paul, was outside Judaism, there was a clean break made.

Now the great end of Christ is to draw us in soul outside the old order. Perhaps you say: I am not prepared for that path. No! nature never would be, but the point Christ raises is: Is He great enough? He raised it with Peter. There is a path which the vulture's eye hath not seen, &c. Nature in its strongest forms—the young lions or the eagle or the vulture—man with the keenest intelligence and foresight and courage—could not tread that path of separation to the Lord Jesus Christ. The gateway of that path lies in the appropriation of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ; in fact the links which are to uphold us in that path were forged by the Lord Jesus Christ in His death. The strongest man is bowed in the presence of death, but it was in death itself that Christ forged those links which are to bind you and me to Himself. That is how it worked with Peter in the very taking of the path which *naturally* he never could tread, that is, walking on water. Christ could, but He was ever man of another order, and He still is. The condition is different, that is, He has exchanged the condition of lowliness and humility

here as Man in flesh for resurrection, but His unique order of manhood is the same as it was before His death ; and as God's blessed Son He could walk here in supremacy over every power of evil, Satanic or human.

Now He invites us to the same path. Just weigh for a moment what it meant that He was here, not only superior to, but in supremacy over, the power of Satan, and every power of man that could be against Him ; and yet He went into death, though it had no claim upon Him, that He might defeat every foe, and forge those links which are to endure for ever. Now He calls us to that path of separation. Salvation is a great thing in Hebrews, it is "great salvation." I want to shew you the force of that. You may depend upon it that, as surely as the path that Christ took for you and me led Him outside the religious order here (for it was the religious order that put Him to death), so surely will the acceptance of that great salvation on your and my part lead us outside the religious order of things here to a Person, to Himself. It was marked by His place of supremacy on the waters, and His command of the winds, the power of the air and the power of man here.

Now would you not like to be set up here by Christ superior to every adverse influence ? It will never be in your own power. He will never set us up here independent of Himself, nor even

in heaven shall we be self-supporting, but His point is here so to draw us to Himself that we shall be superior in His company to the forces of evil which are matched against us. Are we prepared to commit ourselves to Him, to fix our eye upon Christ? One moment of self-occupation or occupation with evil, and down we go, we begin to sink. Thank God we cannot sink. Peter could not sink, because under Peter on the water was the Lord's prayer. You say: what do you mean? Well, the Lord had told him: "I have prayed for thee," and when Peter got into circumstances that were too much for him, when he had a friend at court and got into the high priest's palace, and Christ was about to have the false sentence passed upon Him, then Peter began to sink. He got his eye on the winds and waves. In what way? Anything great? No, just a simple serving maid in the high priest's palace. You would not think that a man used to facing the storm and one, too, who loved the Lord could succumb before a simple maid. It was not because of what she was, but because of the awful power of the world system which she represented. Peter had a very bad fall, but he could not sink, because the Lord's prayer was underneath him. And it is underneath you and me, not to make us careless, but for our encouragement, that the moment we begin to sink our eye may be on Christ; and

what does He do? All His power for us as maintained by the Holy Spirit is at our disposal. He put forth His hand, and drew him to Himself; that is Christ's present action for you and me in the early part of Hebrews. You and I have taken a path. There was a moment when we left iniquity, but the point is, are we leaving it to-day? Is it maintained? It is only maintained as we keep our eye on Christ, and He draws us to Himself. That is Christ's present service as Priest on our side. Whatever our circumstances, whether rough or easy, Christ supports and succours us in them that He may draw us outside of them to His own company. We are here as men and women in the flesh, and we are in things common to man. Death may make its inroads on our family circle. How awful that is! And if it does, and we are not drawn to Christ through it, we shall just get hardened. I can speak from experience, do not think that death in itself draws us to Christ. I know it does not, but it is His sympathy tasted in it that draws us to Himself; and He can feel *with* us. What are the two most blessed words in scripture? "Jesus wept." That is how Christ comes in to us if we suffer bereavement. Then health may give way. How it must cast one on God! Look at Job: could any one be in a more pitiful condition than he was? But he learned God in it, and that although he could not know

Christ's sympathy. He was wonderfully supported, but you and I are infinitely better off, for we have the sympathy of a Man in heaven. Do you know the "feeling with" of the heart of that Man? Then our business prospects may go. I have dreaded that. You may have a wife and family, and you feel if your employment goes how heartrending it would be for them. Can I learn the sympathy of Christ in that? I believe I could, though thank God I have never tested it yet. He is great enough to draw us outside the circumstances to Himself, to His own blessed company.

That brings us to the point where He takes the place of Captain of our salvation, as shewn in Hebrews ii. We have spoken of salvation, and what the present character of it is; that it has no visible centre, but that it is connected with an unseen order of things which centres round a Person—the Captain of our salvation. How has He received that place? Scripture tells us. He was "made perfect through sufferings." How could Jesus be made perfect? Was He not always so? In His own Person as man most certainly He was, but this is not a question of what He was, but what He was made. Read the whole verse: "For it became him, for whom are all things" (that is evidently God) "in bringing many sons to glory." That is what God is doing. How is

He going to bring them? Well, there is a Leader and Captain of their salvation, and now God has made Him perfect. There are often honorary posts in an army; they may or may not be filled by men qualified for the posts, but now here is one who has an official position, and yet, while it is official, it is one in which He identifies Himself in His love with us. He is Captain of our salvation; He has been qualified for it through sufferings. He is God's blessed Son, but as a divine Person in heaven He had never touched and tasted the position in which we were here. As such He had never had to combat the forces of evil here, but if He was to be a Leader He must be One who, in His own Person, should have met every foe; and, thank God! He did it. He went right through it. He met the whole power of Satan, the strong man. The moment He went forth on His ministry He defeated him without going outside the limits of a man. He, God's Son, could have commanded the stones to become bread: He could have cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, or taken up the inheritance that was presented to Him; but, no, He would not go outside the limits into which He had come here as man; and He overcame the great enemy in those limits so that Satan had to retire. He steadily refused to take up His inheritance apart from death. In one stupendous miracle Satan presented under

the eye of Christ here the whole empires of this world from beginning to end—from the rebel kingdom of Nimrod to the great fourth beast of Rome, with its iron power extending over the whole earth. Satan presented them all under the eye of Christ: "Take it all," he said, "apart from death." What did that involve? It involved that His brethren would be left out for ever. No! Death must come in, and Christ was to be qualified for His office through sufferings here, that He might take up that official position as perfected for it. Think of it! How immense it is!—It became God, in bringing many sons to glory—that is what God is doing. Through whom is He doing it? Through Jesus, the Leader of salvation, and He has qualified Him for that position through sufferings.

Now that is the next point. There is the Captain of Salvation. What is He Captain of Salvation for? In order that, having drawn us to His side, He might lead us into all God's counsels and purposes. It is a great thing to see that at the outset. The working out of it can be seen through the rest of the Epistle to the Hebrews. There is the old ground, of which I have already spoken, to which belong the first principles—the beginnings of the oracles of Christ; that is, washings and baptisms, eternal judgment and resurrection—all those things are the immutable bases of God's dealings with men. (Ch. vi.) They

were all seen in the old order, and embrace the baptism of John the Baptist. Those are the foundation truths of God's relationship with men. Now we come to something much more wonderful in Christianity. It is not for a moment that they are set aside, all those things are the beginnings of the oracles of Christ, but what we have come to is perfection. Where? In Christ. Perfection is presented to us in Him. What does that involve? It involves a wholly new order of things outside the old, and all seen in a Man in a new place, and that Man God's Son—all seen in Christ. That is what perfection is. The apostle says, "Let us go on unto perfection." That is new ground, and you see the reluctance with us is to take new ground. Yet the service of Christ for us is that we should take new ground in our souls, and go forward from the old order on to the new. Perhaps we say, "It is all very nice, but it is too high for us." But nothing can be higher than Christ. He is at the very highest point—seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high—for you and me. The only point is, are we prepared to surrender ourselves to Him? He is prepared to lead us in; why is there the hanging back? Hebrews attributes it to what we feed upon. The apostle had to reproach the Hebrews that they were not prepared to take new ground; he says, You are sluggish, and all you are fitted to eat is milk;

you ought to be feeding on strong meat, which is for them who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil. They were babes when they ought to have been full-grown men. They were dwarfs when they should have been priests. It was their food that was in question; they could only assimilate milk, which is the proper food for babes. We might say, Who of us are not babes in divine things? But it is not the ground to take. We ought to be going on. If you present good and bad to a babe it knows no difference, but when you present good and bad to a full-grown man he has his senses exercised and he knows the difference.

What is milk? I think it is being content to turn everything of the ministry of Christ on to my side—how everything affects me. Yes, He is my Saviour, thank God for that! He has forgiven me my sins, and that is all I want to know. It is right enough to know that, but Christ is not satisfied with that; He has not stopped there. That is milk, and if I am confining my food and nourishment to all that Christ is to ME, I shall not have my senses exercised.

Now what is strong meat? It is that with which Christ would feed us when He has drawn us to His side. It is the only food of those who are spiritually full-grown, and it concerns God's counsels and purposes centred in Christ. Are

these too high? Christ is not too high, and the truth of His present position is not too strong meat for those who love Christ. Milk is MY blessing; strong meat is what centres round CHRIST, and do not you think any soul who loves Him would say: I would like strong meat; I would like to know what God has secured for His heart in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is perfection in a Man in a new place altogether under the eye of God. Are we prepared to be led by Christ into that? Or are we sluggish and hanging back and saying we have got all we want? If we take that ground we shall not stop there, we shall go back. That is the high road to apostasy. If we are not running, in Hebrews, we are going back. I would put things very simply. Are you prepared to surrender yourself to Christ as Leader of our Salvation? And where is He leading us? To God's present purposes and thoughts. It is not here that He is leading us to heaven—that is not the point in Hebrews at all. He IS there, and we are running to Him there; but what He is prepared to lead us into has a present bearing. He is prepared to lead us into the truth of God's counsels and purposes as seen in Himself as Man, that is perfection. God has His heart now fully met in a Man; He never had before.

Now there has come out of heaven another sort of man altogether, a new order of man

in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in Him every thought of the blessed God for man has found its answer. There is a perfect answer in that glorious Man to the heart of the blessed God for man. Think of that for a moment. It is not simply that God has made Himself known to us, but He has got an answer to His own heart in a Man, and having found that answer, He will not stop anywhere, He cannot. "It became him, for whom are all things"—think of the width!—"and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory"—think of the height of it! We were indeed poor sinners, but it is not here a question of such but of whom He is bringing in on the same platform as the Lord Jesus Christ Himself—"to glory." But glory lies right outside the course of this present world. Have you ever thought of Romans ii. ? "To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." All these things lie outside the course of this world, and what God is effecting for His people is, He is leading them outside the course of this world to where everything speaks of His attributes having been met and glorified—His righteousness and His holiness. Are you prepared to contemplate the wonderful place we have under God's eye? I know we are as familiar with these verses as with any passage in scripture, but look at this: "Both he that

sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one : for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." He that sanctifieth—that evidently must be the Lord Jesus Christ. What is sanctification? It is a positive setting apart for God from the course of this world. You are drawn out from the old things—set apart from them altogether. It is not the same as consecration, consecration goes further ; it is outside the idea of the old things altogether. But sanctification is this, that you are set apart, positionally and in your soul, from the old order of things.

Now there is the Sanctifier and there are the sanctified ones. Are you prepared for the next portion of truth? I do not know anything greater in the revelation of God than what follows—"*All of one.*" What can that mean? We cannot explain it but we can admire its pristine beauty. Is it possible that the Lord Jesus Christ abiding as Man in perfection under God's eye, it can be said of those who are set apart through His death—where He has forged the links by which He has bound us to Himself—that the Sanctifier and the sanctified are ALL OF ONE—of one genealogy, of one stock, and of one company! They are ALL OF ONE. The Old Testament has prefigured it many times. Think of Rebecca and Isaac—the wife taken for Isaac was to be of the same stock. So Eve was taken out of Adam. Do we really accept it that

as part of God's sanctified company we are all of one with the Lord Jesus Christ as Man, that is, we are not only on His platform but we are of the same company, of the same stock, as the Lord Jesus Christ? Is it possible that He can lift us to the same level? He does. He stretches out His mighty hand from where He is to lift us up to His own place to be one with Him, and that is under God's eye. It is not under men's eye, but what God's saints are under His eye.

Now that which immediately follows is: "Wherefore he is not ashamed to call them brethren." For ever He will remain the First among equals. The saints are the equals but He is ever the First. May God guard us from ever speaking of Christ as our elder brother! Nothing could be more derogatory to His glory than that. He is the First among equals; *we* are the equals, but He is NOT ASHAMED to call us brethren. In resurrection? Yes, He is in resurrection, and we, still down here in this world, are all of one with Him under God's eye. This is how He substantiates it: "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." That is Christ's verification of the fact that He is not ashamed to call us brethren. I can picture the joy of His blessed heart when, in resurrection—having cut all the old links, and having taken

up the ground on which He could associate His poor disciples with Himself, He could say to Mary Magdalene—that new Eve who was no longer to carry a message of death to the world but of life to His brethren—"Go to my brethren!" It was the first time He could ever say that, and now in resurrection He can associate you and me with Himself before God. How fully He has declared God's name! Death has told out the name of God to us in letters that will never perish.

Now what position does He take with regard to us? "In the midst of the church"—what a place Christ takes in resurrection that He can associate with Himself that which He speaks of as His assembly! "I will sing praise unto thee." What is that? It is the verification of the place we have with Him as His brethren. He can identify Himself with His brethren Godward. That is the great place Christ takes as Priest here—not as offering priest but as ministering priest—praising priest. He does not take this place simply in regard to a few saints, but we are led to His place Godward in regard to every blood-bought saint on earth. He holds a place Godward in regard of them all, and He voices the praise of the whole redeemed company at this moment to God, in the midst as identified with them.

He is the glorious man in resurrection in

the new place. Yet is He still man? Yes, He is. I often think we believe Christ would cease to be man some day: that He was man when He was here, but is not exactly man now. But He is as truly man now—and will be for eternity—as He was when here. When the Lord Jesus Christ came into human condition He came into it for ever. See how these other two quotations shew that. He goes on to say here, quoting from Isaiah viii., “I will put my trust in him.” Although He takes that wonderful place Godward, look at the place He takes with us. He still maintains His place here in connection with the brethren; He will be trusting in Him. He says further on in the same chapter: “Behold I and the children which God hath given me.” Look at what He has won in His death! Children which God has given Him. It is not as begotten ones exactly, but as companions of His, and that in the face of all the opposition that is here in this world. If you read Isaiah viii. you will see how they had refused the waters of Shiloah that go softly, as you also find in John ix. The religious order of things was refusing the sent One. In chapter x. Christ was associating with Him the children which God had given Him—His sheep, and it was the joy of His heart to be able to do it.

“Forasmuch then as the children are par-

takers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part in the same." Do not let us make any mistake there. The word used for "taking part" here is a word which has nothing whatever to do with coming in on a common level. He took part from without, and that is most distinct from the other thought. He never came here on our level. He came into human condition, and He truly took that life to which, in you and me, sin was attached. If He had not done so He could not have made atonement. Because you and I were here in flesh and blood, He likewise Himself took part in the same from without, as man of another order altogether ; not taking His character and all that He was from Mary—from whom He was truly born—but as coming with it all from heaven in His own blessed Person. Why did He become man ? In order that He might die. As divine, death had no application to Him, but as man He came, that dying He might enter the stronghold of our great enemy. Here were His saints, all their lifetime subject to bondage through fear of death ; and there was the great Goliath : like the champion of the Philistines and the nation of Israel, their strong men all trembling, and here the mighty David comes on the scene. Christ passed down into death itself—entered the stronghold of Satan. He has gone right down into it, that "through death he

might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

As we see Him as the true David, meeting the great enemy of our souls in his own stronghold—on his own ground—(and death had grappled with One, the Lord of life, whom it could not hold ; it had to disgorge its prey)—as we see Him untainted, as He was in His own blessed Person, by the touch of death, as you and I never could have been—do we love Him? I read in that incident in the Old Testament, that when Jonathan saw Goliath dead before David all his heart went out to him, and, king's son as he was, he stripped himself of all that would have given him ornament and grace and dignity here, and conferred it all on him who had won his heart. Has Christ won our hearts like that, as we see Him meekly passing into death that He might meet that foe which we never could have met? Are we prepared to strip ourselves and then to own Him as the Leader of our salvation? That is where Jonathan failed. He would have David be as a king to him, but would be next himself. That will not do! He must be first in the kingdom, but there is no question of my being next to Him. I only mention that because Hebrews is very solemn as to warnings against apostasy, and I think the

plaint of David for Jonathan may very well come as a warning to us. "Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided"! Jonathan kept in with the wrong order of man. Bound as he was by links of affection to the old order, which passed away and lost all its glory before God, he did not escape; and that is what it says here: "How shall we escape?" It will be no good if even a David could mourn for us, as I believe Christ would mourn for us.

What has made the dividing line for us? The death of Christ. He has come here Himself; He was made in all things like unto His brethren—"that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." That has made a clean cut. Are you and I prepared to accept it? Do we want to keep on with Christ and with the religious order of the world too? We cannot have both, and hence the question comes in: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

What a Leader He is, and what qualifications He has for it—won at the deepest cost to Himself, that He might have the joy before God of associating us with Himself! And now He is addressing Himself to us individually in this part of the epistle, as much as to say: "Are you prepared to surrender yourself to me as

captain of your salvation?" And if we are, then Christ is prepared to lead us in to see things from God's standpoint, and to know the place He has in perfection as man under the eye of God.



UNTO SALVATION.

(EXO. XXIV. 1 ; XXV. 4 ("fine linen"), 9 ; HEB. IX.
10 ("until the time," &c.), 28.)

YOU will have noticed in reading the chapter in Hebrews that Exodus xxiv. comes very largely into it, and forms, in a way, the basis of that which is brought forward. I attach great importance to Exodus xxiv. and with it chapter xxv. because it seems to take us beyond almost the whole of the Old Testament in its bearing, and I desire to dwell a little on it, because I believe the understanding of it to be of importance in helping us to grasp the bearing of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The very setting of the chapter in Exodus has its import. In chapter xx. you remember God gives the law to Moses from the fiery mount, and then in chapter xxi. He immediately begins to unfold the laws and commandments which are to be proper to the people as in covenant with Himself. It is affecting to see that He begins with the type of the Hebrew servant, no doubt shewing there that what underlay the whole of the new economy that was to come in was that Christ was, after all, about to take the place of true Servant to Israel, His ear being bored ; "I love my master,"

&c. Whatever might be entrusted to Israel, Christ would be the only One in whom it could be carried out. It is to Christ that the chapter points forward. Then this chapter comes in as an interlude of almost a different character from all that surrounds it, and what follows it is Moses going up into the mount and receiving from God the pattern of that which was to portray God's ways down here. That is, Moses was not only to make the tabernacle as he was directed, but he was shewn the pattern of it ; he was to work from sight, not simply from directions. It is not till we come to chapter xxxii. that apostasy sets in in Israel, and God is tempted to give them up. The great cheer of our hearts is that before apostasy set in, God gave a perfect pattern of that which was to present Christ and Christ's world under His eye. Outside and before all the failure He shewed Moses a perfect pattern of that which was to abide under His view and continually present Christ there. We ourselves are faced with the inroads of apostasy. It will certainly come about, and will sweep away all that owns the name of God here except His true saints ; but as surely as Moses was given the pattern of that which was to abide unfallen under God's eye, so certainly have we to-day, in Christ and God's world, for our faith, that unfailing, untarnished, new order of things, the contemplation of which

may buoy up our souls above all the failure that may come in here—above the inroads of apostasy itself.

Exodus xxiv. is of the greatest interest, because in its scope God opens out a vista beyond the dispensation which He was bringing in for Israel. The central point of the chapter is: "also they saw God." Now my desire is that we might get the apprehension of what it is morally to see God. The thought leads us outside the range of Judaism, of that form of religion which God gave to Israel; it was God registering His purpose to have a people who could draw near to Himself apart from apostasy, ruin and failure, and who could abide there because of the place which Christ was yet going to have before Him as man. God shews here first of all the new covenant which He would establish with Israel, but He also brings in the thought of how everything would be purified, and even of reconciliation itself, how He could have a representative company under His eye at home there, and for His pleasure. I touch on Exodus xxiv. that the types there may expand for us the truth of the New Testament, for the Old Testament casts the most wonderful light on the New. We want the whole Bible for the full revelation of God in Christ, for though we do not learn from types as such, the types of the Old Testament expand for us the actuality

which we get in the New, and give width to our affections as we touch divine things.

Here we find that God calls: He says, "Come thou and worship ye afar off." I admit it *was* "afar off," but the call to them was to come up and worship. Before that happens God gives His words, and we have to distinguish between this chapter and Exodus xx. In the latter, God came down in demand on the people, who in self-confidence so rashly said, "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do"; while they say the same here, they are taken up on the ground of the sprinkled blood, as meeting their responsibility and opening the way for the drawing nigh to God. The thick darkness and the thunderings have no place here, but it is evidently God foreshadowing the way He would write His new covenant on the hearts of Israel, and, anticipatively, on the hearts of all who love Him. Moses ratifies the words by building an altar with twelve pillars, representing Israel unfallen—twelve, a complete unfallen testimony, as it was to abide under the eye of God. Ruin and failure were about to come in, but before and outside it all God had this witness and testimony under His eye. Everything is crumbling at the present moment, but not what God has established. We need to be conducted to God's presence to see there what abides, and in that way we shall, morally, see God. There were the

sacrifices by the young men, not exactly by the priests, and Moses then takes the blood, reads in the audience of the people, and puts the blood before them as the blood of the covenant ; he then sprinkles the blood on them and on all that was under God's eye. The moment that happens, "then went up Moses," &c. It is very evident that if approach is to come in there must be first of all purification. The blood is the basis of all.

Now that leads us on to Hebrews ix. where Christ is come an High Priest of *coming* good things—that is to say, that the things with which Christ's priesthood is concerned are not yet come into evidence. WE know them because we know Him within the veil. He came in connection with the greater and more perfect tabernacle—(of course the tabernacle had not yet been made in Exodus xxiv.)—but the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ has brought into view all that is to abide under God's eye for ever. Faith alone could take account of it. Simeon had an idea of it as he surveyed the little Babe, and most certainly the angels had a great sense of it when they sang: "Glory to God in the highest," &c. The tabernacle itself brought into view the whole system and world of blessing in which God was going to find His pleasure for ever. Christ came in connection with THAT.

Then we read "by his own blood." Christ came to die. Stupendous thought! He on whom death had no claim, who being a divine Person, as such could not die; He came into manhood, and even in manhood death had no claim on Him, but He came by His own blood. There never was a moment when Christ was here that He had not come to die. From the very moment of His circumcision death was in view—"A sword shall pierce through thine own soul also" referring to Mary. He came by his own blood; that is the basis of everything. There is the shedding of the blood, and the sprinkling affirms the taking away under God's eye of all the old. And the death of Christ alone is the doorway by which we can draw near to and see God. We do see God. God in His essential being is unknowable, He dwells in light unapproachable; but we can see God morally, and it is the death of Christ which has rendered that possible. Having come in that way by His own blood He "entered in once for all . . . having obtained eternal redemption." Is there not a magnificent difference between the death of Christ and everything that preceded it. The sacrifices of old by their blood foreshadowed the death of Christ, but it was the blood of unintelligent victims. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself spotless to God." How

different that was ! The Lord Jesus Christ entered into death in all the sensitiveness of His divine being, yet as man ; it was He who had pronounced the sentence of death upon man, which was God's mercy, little as man knew it to be such. I can see the divine intelligence connecting itself with that spotless offering, for it was "by the eternal Spirit." The sacrifice is no unmeaning figure. Christ went into it in the keenest sensibilities of the heart of a divine Person come into manhood. Read the record of Gethsemane, then we may understand something of this verse.

What is the effect of it ? It purges our conscience from dead works to serve (to draw nigh to in worship) the living God. The old scene is closed up, and a new scene is opened out to us in which we can draw nigh to God. How is that made effective in you and me ? We know it by faith I admit, but I think we have to weigh the force of the blood-shedding and the sprinkling of the blood. If we turn to Hebrews ix. we find there that He is the Mediator of God's new terms for us. "That by means of death . . . they which are called [that embraces Christianity] might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator." Not only does the testament bring before us God's covenant with His people but at the same

time we get it in Christ's will. Christ's will was most certainly to bring His people into God's presence. In order that that will should become effective there must be the death of the Testator. He could gather round Himself here on earth that little company which after His death was to be called "his brethren," and with which He could identify Himself in worship to God ; but it needed His death to set aside the old ; it needed purgation, by which all the sinful order should go before God. Have you ever, on your knees, read John xvii. ? There you get the will of Christ spoken as it were in secret between Christ and the Father, but it is opened to His own. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am"—that is the will of Christ. How blessed it is to go in with unshod feet and listen to it ! But He must die that it might take effect. What a will proves is the affections of the one who makes it to those who are beneficiaries under it ; and what could more prove to us the unchanging love of Christ than His testament to us ? In the case of a human testament the man dies, never again to handle the provisions of his testament ; that has to be left to others. The great joy of my heart is to know that Christ has not only made and left His testament, and died that it might come into effect, but He has become His own executor, so to speak, His own carrier-into-effect

of His own testament, in resurrection power. He is the mediator of the new covenant. That is how it affects you and me. Have you ever viewed the death of Christ from this side, to learn how Christ brings the provisions of His own testament into effect? That is the part He has as mediator of the new covenant, and it is that He may assure our hearts of His present love, and ever link them with His death itself in order that through that death we may see God.

The great point is that we should see God. It is of course a moral thought because God is Spirit, but Christ appears before His face for us, and that is the one point to which He would lead us. Then is introduced Exodus xxiv.: "Neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law" It was not merely the ten commandments that were in view in Exodus xxiv. ; it was carrying them on to the thought of God's new covenant—of what God could be for them. The old covenant is on the ground of what man can be for God, a ground untenable by man. The new is what God *is*, not simply can be, for man, and that set forth to the death of Christ. This it was that was in view. "He took the blood of calves and goats, with water," there we get the thought of purification from the system of this world and its defilement—"and scarlet wool, and hyssop." It is im-

portant to notice, in passing, the symbols which are employed there. Scarlet is without doubt the figure of human glory, everything that is highest and most notable in man as such. No one ever had title to it but One. Saul would have clothed the daughters of Jerusalem with scarlet, but he had no right to it ; he fell on the mountains of Gilboa. Here we find the scarlet employed to shew that man at his very best had to go. Hyssop, a symbol of that which is lowest and most despised, that too must go in death. It shews this, that all human glory, religious or otherwise, has no place whatever with God ; it must all be left behind. "Sprinkled both the book, and all the people . . . and all the vessels of the ministry." The whole system which God intends to bring in under His eye, and has already brought in in Christ, and all the vessels of the sanctuary (God's saints)—holy vessels meet for the Master's use—they are all sprinkled with blood and by the scarlet wool and hyssop. It is the new covenant ; God has made a complete clearance under His eye from dead works, that we may draw near to Him. It is not simply that I must be cleared from what is around me ; I have to be sprinkled from an evil conscience because whatever is around me in the world has its answer in my heart and has to be set aside.

"It was therefore necessary that the patterns

of things in the heavens should be purified with these ; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." They were but patterns of things in the heavens ; the heavenly things themselves are Christianity proper—God's saints of to-day. They are not in heaven, nor are they patterns of things in the heavens. Christianity is wholly heavenly in its conception and being ; it has no roots here. It is here for a moment on the floor of the wilderness. The tabernacle had no floor except the desert sand ; in the trial of jealousy the dust of the floor is spoken of. The tabernacle stood on the sockets of silver, on the ground of redemption. It was not in touch with the earth ; it took the true character of Christianity as set apart by the death of Christ. Do we see that its character is heavenly, that it belongs to heaven, and God can assert its right to heaven at any moment by taking it there?

Then : "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." This is very important because it brings in the place in which Moses was a very feeble type of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. It takes us back to Exodus xxiv. Immediately purification is made, God's new covenant with the people is announced, and reconciliation comes in. God secures under His

eye that in which He can be at home and find His complacency ; He finds the outlet of His heart without hindrance. "Then went up Moses and saw the God of Israel." Nothing else in the Old Testament can possibly come near that. We get there in figure how the blood—in the death of Christ—becomes the doorway into the true vision, in its immensity, of God Himself.

Let us touch on two points in that chapter. "There was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone." The thought of a sapphire stone is always of that which is divine ; it is the sparkling gem which sets forth what is of God. In Ezekiel i. 26 we get the sapphire stone, and the verse brings in the thought of the divine glory centering in a Man. But why "paved work"? May it not suggest to us the way in which, in Christianity, the Lord Jesus Christ has fitted together in human hearts the work of God, to be a glorious place for His feet. All is but type and therefore anticipative here, but God gave testimony in Exodus ~~xxiv.~~ xiv. to that which He would bring about for His pleasure. Christ came here that He might finish God's work, piecing it all together, that it might be a resplendent pavement for the glory of the place of His feet. It is a great conception ! I can see the work of Christ in the building in of the knowledge of God in souls. We may say each one is so different, there is no uniformity ;

each one's acquaintance with God must be essentially different, but when it is all put together we find one glorious finished work in which Christ is expressed: "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Have we so entered God's presence that we can survey under His feet the paved work of the sapphire stone?

"The body of heaven in its clearness"—there in type the counsels of God seem to be brought before us that we may survey them. If we look into heaven all is blue; it is the intensity of the depth of space, infinite and like God's counsels. In Christ God has brought His counsels so near that we contemplate them as the body of heaven in its clearness; and see the place of His feet glorious.

"Upon the nobles . . . he laid not his hand"; we may venture into God's presence, may have boldness for it in the apprehension of the death of Christ. Here, in the type "they saw God, and did eat and drink." It was not indifference; there was communion. Afar off it was, I admit, but the effect of seeing God there with the paved work of sapphire under His feet, was that they were not afraid.

The immediate consequence of that is that Moses goes up into the holy mount and receives from God the pattern of the tabernacle, and the first thing God says is, "Speak . . . that they bring me an offering . . . willingly . . . gold,

silver," &c. Every beautiful element which came from the hearts of the people as a willing offering was to go to make up the structure of the tabernacle. That is what immediately follows Moses going up on high.

Now when we turn to Hebrews we find "Christ is entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." The true Moses has entered in, and what is there is not simply the pattern of the tabernacle, but in His own Person it is presented unfadingly before God, outside the whole question of apostasy ; and the elements that compose it are what He takes willingly from the people. The offerings are all inwrought under the skill of the divine Architect into the beauty of that which would present Christ under God's eye. He has gone to heaven truly to represent us, but in Him the antitype of the tabernacle is upheld and maintained in its divine beauty. We have our part in the offerings, for the affections of our hearts are embodied in that unfading building under God's eye. Christ appears in the face of God for us, and the effect is that we can see God. His death and His entrance into heaven have brought God into view morally. Everything finds its proper place ; nothing henceforth will be out of order ; therefore we are connected already with the times of restitution. While we feel intensely the character of the apostasy, may

we be preserved in the knowledge of what abides before God ! “ Now to appear in the presence of God for us ” covers the whole period of Christianity. His offering is final ; that is just touched on here : “ Now once in the end of the world ” (the consummation of the ages). There is nothing to look forward to as regards God’s ways ; they have reached their climax in Christ risen. Christ has dealt with sin, and has already brought in under God’s eye a perfect, unfading, unfailing world, and He represents His people in the face of God. He exhausted the judgment. The victims of old were consumed in the fire, but now One has been into the fire who, in the greatness of His Person and work, has exhausted the judgment, and removed it from under God’s eye for ever.

There is a living world presented under the face of God in Christ at the present moment, and there is a dying world of dying men outside the scene of blessedness. “ It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this [the] judgment.” Think of the contrast ! Death closes man’s responsibility by God’s appointment, and what then ? If a man has never seen God he enters on a condition of judgment which he will never be able to exhaust. It is not “ *the* judgment,” that is, the judgment day, but “ after this, judgment,” that is, unending judgment. Think of the contrast ! A dying world, and a living

world in which God finds His complacency because Christ is there—Christ who was once offered to bear the sins of many, many in contrast to the Jew. Christ's death could not be limited to Israel ; His blood was "shed for many."

"Unto them that look for him shall he appear . . . unto salvation." Hebrews is very wide, and takes us beyond purely christian ground as such. I was using the pattern of Peter leaving the boat to shew the present character of salvation. It has no visible centre as of old. Its centre is a glorious Person who is supreme, above the power of death, and salvation lies in joining Him in that place of supremacy in affection to Him. Peter walked, and Christ drew him to Himself. Christ will appear "apart from sin." He has had to say to sin ; He will never touch it again. Reconciliation exists under God's eye. The scene under God's eye is filled by Christ. But now "shall he appear . . . unto salvation." One has often wondered why Matthew goes on to say, "when they were come into the ship the wind ceased." That belongs to Hebrews ix. When Christ comes back to the order of things here it will involve the instant subduing of every foe, of all that is contrary to Him, and the bringing in of salvation publicly. You and I as Christians will be with Him then as distinct from those spoken of here who wait for Him. Salvation is

hidden in Him at this moment, but it will come into public display, evil will be put out, and God's world and His groaning saints set free. All hangs for us to-day on seeing God. We may even now be with God and see how He has removed the old ground in the death of Christ, and that He is on new terms with us altogether, as a consequence of which we can draw nigh to Him.

The truth of Hebrews is stated in terms broad enough to include both the earthly and the heavenly families of God. His favour has placed us, who have learned the value of His blood during this period of His rejection, among the latter favoured number, but in the present appropriation of our Lord Jesus Christ as High Priest of good things to come, WE may anticipate the good of that coming moment when, unto them that look for Him, He will appear the second time, apart from sin, "*unto salvation.*"



CLOTHED WITH SALVATION.

(HEB. XIII. ; 1 CHRON. XIII., XV., XVI. 1-3 ;

PSA. CXXXII. 1-16.)

THE last verse I read gives the key to what I wish to bring before you : " I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy." I have endeavoured on former occasions to speak from the Epistle to the Hebrews of the thought of salvation, and I wish to pursue and conclude that thought in those words in Psalm cxxxii. which I have just quoted. The " her " refers to Zion. " The Lord hath chosen Zion."

I want to speak now of what I have ventured to call the great revival, and the light of it in which we are placed. All these incidents we have read bring before us God's great revival. God has " brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus through the blood of the everlasting covenant." That is what I apprehend to form for God (and I trust for us too), in all its blessed effects, the great revival.

Let us just refer in starting to the three thoughts of which I have previously spoken in connection with salvation. The first is the

“great salvation,” spoken of in Hebrews i. and ii. We connected with that the illustration of Peter leaving the boat and joining the Lord. He was drawn out by affection to the Lord, from the old order of things (in which salvation had been placed outwardly with a visible centre and circumference), just as in the case of Paul in the temple (Acts xxi. 30) the Lord’s providence shut him out. At all events they both came outside to a new order of things, to salvation without a visible centre ; with a centre indeed, but that centre Christ in heaven. Then I spoke of the “Leader of our salvation” in chapter ii., connecting it with the fact that when Peter was outside the boat the Lord stretches forth His hand and draws him to Himself.

That represents the present moment, and the blessed, willing place Christ takes up, having qualified for it through sufferings and having passed through death that He might make propitiation for the sins of the people ; and that if we but submit ourselves to Him in the supreme position He has taken up over death, the power of Satan and the world, He is prepared to lead us into the counsels of God Himself. Last time we took up the end of Hebrews ix. : “To them that look for him shall he appear the second time without (*lit.* apart from) sin unto salvation.” There we get a further illustration from the incident of Peter. A moment comes when Christ

and Peter rejoin the boat ; that is, Christ identifies Himself with what is of God here on earth. That looks forward to the future. Salvation will not then have its present character of a system circling round the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven, an invisible Centre, but will be brought into public view in the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. In connection with that we saw the present moral effects of being brought to God, and of knowing that there is a glorious Man in heaven itself, there to represent His saints in the face of God.

Let us now pass on to another thought of salvation, that of clothing—God's priests clothed with salvation by His mighty power. I would suggest that Hebrews xiii. brings before us the clothing of God's priests. By clothing we understand, of course, that by which we can outwardly take account of people. With God the thought of clothing is what His eye takes account of, and hence is connected with the hidden man of the heart. That is the idea here. I will first develop a little the circumstances in which this is brought to light from the Old Testament scriptures. It stands connected with the fact that God has (and is marked as being the One who has) "brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." The very idea of it refers to the moment when God in type brought again

His testimony from the power of the enemy. God had centred His testimony of old in Israel, in the tabernacle which He had put for His pleasure, and in the ark of the covenant, which was His central point ; but for His good ends He permitted the wrath of man to take His glory captive, and to carry it into the land of the Philistines. The Philistines were very sorry they had taken it, for their gods had secured a prize which they could not hold. So it was when the Lord Jesus Christ was delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God into the realm of death. Death grappled with a foe then who could triumph over it, and God in His mighty power brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus. When we turn to the type of the Old Testament, David is used under God's good hand to bring up the ark from Kirjath-jearim to the tabernacle which he had prepared for it, and the incidents connected with it have a very plain voice to us in connection with salvation, and with God's saints shouting aloud for joy. I think these two ideas come out in Hebrews xiii., one is in verse 15 : "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually." That gives us God's saints shouting aloud for joy. Then verse 21 shews the effect of what I was calling the great revival. "Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing

in his sight, through Jesus Christ." There we find the clothing of salvation. I dwell on the dress, the clothing, of salvation, which, I take it, must involve this, that we are here apart from every form of human religiousness. It is God's priests who are clothed with salvation, and this chapter gives us the clothing of His priests, and, remember, the Levites were included in this as being also priests. The point all through Hebrews is that Christ is the great Priest, and the place He takes is to lift His brethren on to His own platform, having passed into death that He might make purgation of sins. He can lift them on to His own platform that they may be with Him in priestly association, as we find pictured in Aaron and his sons. We referred to Matthew on the first occasion, and chapter xvii. of that gospel shews us the disciples conducted to the holy mount, and the climax of it all is that they see none but Jesus only. That answers to Hebrews x., the thought of the holiest. It is not ourselves in evidence; we disappear from view, but what fills our gaze is Jesus, He in whom God's love and counsels centre. In the holiest there was nothing seen but gold—that which spoke of Him. We go in as priests, then we come out as priests, and chapter xiii. shews us the clothing, the way in which the priests are known without. When men speak of what is known in the religious

world as the clergy there is the term "the cloth," and they have to be "true to the cloth." It signifies in man's eyes an order of priesthood. But there is a divine idea, that is, the clothing, and it is that the priests, as having gone in, come out here in the character of God ; but they are to come out in salvation. I am not speaking of salvation of the soul in its first touch with Christ, when it finds the atoning value of His death for the forgiveness of sins. I understand salvation here to be, in the main, the idea of deliverance, of being set free from all that would trammel one and hold one back from having part in God's testimony here. One great snare is that of religious imitation, of the ideas of human religion. The Hebrews had been set free (or rather the epistle was written to set them free) from the old religious order in which God in His providence had put them. It was effete, it had lost its power, and God was delivering them from it, but there was just the danger that human religion in some specious way might get hold of them, and there is the same danger with us.

In 1 Chronicles xiii. David summons all Israel to bring again the ark of the covenant to its proper place, that is to say, he seeks to bring about a revival, and now there is awful failure. He had no doubt the right idea. Anticipatively he doubtless had faith in God as the bringer

again from the dead of the Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep ; but unfortunately he was not in accordance with his own prayer in Psalm cxxxii. that God's priests might be clothed with righteousness, and righteousness is that which is due to God. The bringing of the ark, under God's ordering, to the temple was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ raised from the dead, and of His receiving His supreme place as mount Zion. When our souls get the apprehension of this, Christ gains the place of supremacy in our affections, and we enter on the joy of God's great revival. David had the true idea, but he allowed human religiousness to come in and to mar it. There is the same danger with ourselves. We may get the sense of God's revival, and our souls joy in it, yet allow some human element to work. They went down to fetch the ark, and (in spite of what was due to God—that His Levites should carry the ark of His covenant, prefiguring that eternal covenant of the blood of Jesus) they put the ark on a new cart, and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart. God plainly shewed His disapproval. There came a moment when one put forth his hand to steady the ark, and he had to learn that God would have none of it. Whence did they get the idea of the new cart ? In 1 Samuel vi. we find that the ark was in captivity amongst the Philistines, and Dagon

had had to fall down before it ; it had wrought havoc in their midst. As a figure of Christ going into death, it was death's destruction, and the diviners of the Philistines give this advice: "Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts make a new cart." That is whence the idea of the new cart was imported by David. God's priests were not giving Him His rights. They were bringing in human invention, they were warped by human religiousness. But the first point is, and the prayer of David himself was, "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness." Now God brought in disaster upon them. David was displeased ; but where the arm of the flesh was put forward to support God's testimony, God would have none of it. Paul was in the same spirit at Philippi. At the first entrance of the testimony, God's gospel, into Europe Satan would foster and forward it if he could have a hand in it. What did Paul do? He unmasked the spirit of Python. He would have none of it, and God will have none of it. He will not allow the arm of flesh to come in to support the ark of the testimony. It was His priests, the Levites, who were to carry it, and David learned it at deep cost to himself. It is very affecting how he alludes to it in Psalm cxxxii. It is a song of degrees, those degrees in the soul in reaching the truth of God's habitation. I believe David had a very

bad time of it after Uzza was struck down. Disaster had come in upon his revival, and the ark abode three months in the house of Obededom, and God blessed the whole household. David had great affliction, but after that he could sing: "Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah," and he describes how the ark was brought up. He learned that it was not man's strength that could support it; it was the ark of *God's* strength: "Arise, O Lord, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength." In 1 Chronicles xv. we find the lesson that David learned: "None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the Lord chosen for ever." That was a great step in advance. I would we all learned that. You may be sure that is the way, if we are to have our part in God's testimony here -- God's testimony of what exists in the Lord Jesus Christ risen from the dead, and of what He is about to bring out of heaven in Him when He appears to them that look for Him unto salvation. How blessed is our part to be here in connection with it. It means standing apart from the world and its religion, but what a place to be in, to present God down here, and to be connected with His testimony. David had taken this idea of a "new cart" for the ark from the Philistines, and he must get rid of the leaven by overcoming the Philistines in order to be brought

to God's order, a fact that shews the important place chapter xiv. has in its setting between chapters xiii. and xv. But God's priests, the Levites, alone can carry that testimony, and it may be through deep exercise that they have to come to that fact. Some breach has to come in. "Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions." Are we afflicted in connection with His testimony? Do we take it from God? There is immense blessing if we are with God in it. What will it carry us to? That it is His priests alone that can carry His testimony. Have we gone in? It raises the whole question of Hebrews. Have we gone in to that blessed place where we ourselves sink out of sight, and the Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, fills our vision? David learned that lesson, and now we see once more God's priests clothed with righteousness, and they take up the ark "after the due order." That is righteousness.

Now I would suggest that 1 Chronicles xv. gives us the idea of the priests being clothed with salvation. I desire that we may come in our souls to the apprehension of the fact that God has raised from the dead our Lord Jesus, for I think it is when it takes effect in our souls that there is what is pictured in this chapter. (Ver. 16.) If we are always miserable it means that we do not know what God's testimony here is,

nor our happy and blessed part in connection with it. And this holy and abiding joy is reached through exercise and deep afflictions, but if we tread that path it will lead us into unruffled peace and serenity, for Christ has entered into God's rest, and we may be clothed here with salvation and with song, the two-fold portion of God's priests. This chapter xv. is marked by song all through, and in Hebrews xiii. we get: "Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually.... giving thanks to his name." You come there to the song: "Let thy saints shout aloud for joy."

I desire to shew the excess of the heart of God. When Christ was raised from the dead it set forth the very exuberance of the joy of heaven; nothing could contain it. In the prayer of David, after he had passed through deep exercise on account of the breach of Uzza, it is wonderful to see him not only actually dancing, but his heart dancing in Psalm cxxxii. He loved mount Zion; he loved mercy; that is why he was a man after God's own heart. He can say: "Arise, O Lord, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength;" then: "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy." That is his prayer; what is the divine answer? It far exceeds every thought even of David's heart. Look at verse 13: "The Lord hath chosen Zion." What

is that? It was Jerusalem literally, but Jerusalem as typifying God's sovereign mercy. It points on to the establishment of it in the risen Lord Jesus Christ. When mount Zion comes into view before God—Christ risen from the dead—it means that the floodgates of the heart of the blessed God are opened out, and He can bless, not according to our need, but according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. What is His answer to David? "I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread." David had to say, "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness"—let them do things "after the due order." What was the divine answer? "I will also clothe her priests with *salvation*." David had said: "Let thy saints shout for joy." But the answer of God is: "Her saints shall shout *aloud* for joy." I love to see the answer of the blessed God; if we ask according to His will, doing that which is pleasing in His right, how He can give the abundant blessing of heaven upon it! We get it there in Chronicles. When everything is done after the due order then God can bless without reservation.

"So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the house of Obed-edom with joy." How David must have trembled exceedingly as once more

that ark was brought out ! True, he had been through deep affliction, but affliction does not make a man bold. It gives him confidence in God, but it makes him very careful as to himself. They no sooner started in confessed weakness than God came in to give them joy and confidence in Himself, for it says : " When God helped the Levites ;" would He let them go on with trembling knees ? No, " It came to pass that they offered seven bullocks and seven rams." There was the bringing into view, so to speak, under the eye of the blessed God, of the divine perfection of the sacrifice of Christ in its peculiar beauty as referring to Aaron's sons, and hence figurative of the church. You remember the bullock and the ram were the portion of Aaron's sons as presenting Christ in association with His brethren at the present moment, inside the altar rail, so to speak. At that moment their hearts went up (as ours well might), as He helped them, that is, He carried His testimony here. There was the " sacrifice of praise " as it brought into view under the eye of the blessed God the divine perfection of the sacrifice of His blessed Son.

" And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen ;" he put on outwardly that which was to be the mark of the priests—clothed with righteousness—and he received the answer to his soul—not only to be clothed with right-

eousness, but also with salvation. "Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting . . . making a noise with psalteries and harps."

Could the world appreciate it? No, it despised it. The joy of God's saints in connection with His testimony cannot appeal to the world; if it does, you may depend upon it there is some human element in it. The effect on Saul's daughter was that she despised him. But David was unaffected by scorn. It was before the Lord, so that he could afford to be despised. Chronicles does not relate that, but Samuel does.

David could anticipate the answer to his prayer in Psalm cxxxii.: "I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread." I ask you to look what the effect of it was there, as David came in his soul into some of the good of being connected with the priests clothed with salvation. (Chap. xvi. 1-3.) It was a good day, a day of fatness and blessing. It must be so.

As the greatness of God's testimony dawns upon us, may we desire to be here as priests, knowing our priestly place as clothed with salvation and our share in His testimony. One has to check the rising thought: "Yes, I see all that, and it is very beautiful, but it belongs to Sunday morning." Do not let us be deceived.

There is no level below Hebrews xiii. ; God has no other. In Israel of old (and Christians often miss the true meaning of it) there were the priests proper—those who could approach God within ; then there were the Levites, who were also priests, but theirs was to carry God's testimony through the wilderness, and then there were what are spoken of as the common people—what men to-day would call the laity, that is, outside the priestly order. Seeing these three classes in Israel, Christians may be inclined to say: Cannot I take the place of all three in turn? May there not be a thought with us that on Sunday morning we can be priests, on Sunday evening Levites, and on Monday morning that we revert to the position of common people? But that will not do at all: there is no level below that of priests. It is what we are as priests in our proper service Godward that must give its character to and mark us in every other relationship. True, in God's great privilege to us we may have the character of Levites. The youngest sister may be a Levite, like the little maid in Syria (2 Kings v.), who was right away from her land ; she was a true Levite in God's testimony. We may be allowed to serve Christ publicly, it may be in preaching. Can I preach the gospel below God's level? No, what I am with God must give its character to what I am with men.

Then I have my common duties. I have to go to work, God's discipline for fallen man, and to find my level among my fellows, and if I do not take it I shall very soon find it! Then there is the mother with the toil and care of the household, but all has to take its character from the priest, and that not what *I* am as priest, though I *am* a priest in association with Christ, but what *Christ* is as Priest. And what we call the common drudgery even would spring into brightness if we realised what is said in Colossians: "For ye serve the Lord Christ," that is, the anointed Man in His supremacy casts the light of His glory over the common drudgery of Monday morning, and we come out as God's priests. What is the common pathway? Is it one of depression and grumbling, and keeping as it were just our heads above water? God's thought for us is to have our feet above water. That is what Peter had, and that because he was with Christ. It was with Christ that Peter learned to be here as one of God's priests clothed with salvation, and as one of God's saints to shout aloud for joy. May that be our happy portion! Amen.



ORDER ❧

AND . .

BEAUTY.

**Brief Notes of Addresses
by P. R. MORFORD, at
Brixton, during February
and March, 1907. ❧ ❧**

**LONDON:
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BRIEF NOTES
OF ADDRESSES AT BRIXTON.



THE SHEWBREAD.

(LEV. XXIV. 5-9 ; NUM. IV. 5-8 ; HEB. VIII. 13, IX. 1-6.)

WHAT I have before me is to say a little as to what I would venture to call the *ordering* of God's world which was set forth in the tabernacle. Certain things were presented which had their place in the material 'house, but, as we are perfectly aware, they were really figures of divine realities, and of the elements which mark God's eternal order. God's world is marked by order and beauty. It is what He has always had before Him, and the light of which He has given to men in different ways. If we look at the last verse I read, we shall see "these things being thus ordered"—certain things are brought together in a few verses, to set forth the ordering of God's system, and it is to these things that I would call attention.

I connect Hebrews viii. 13 with what follows, because I think it shews the character of the things presented—that is, that they are new things—for if we speak of God's world, it goes without saying, that it is characterized by all that is *new*. It does not exactly say here "new

covenant," but "*new*." God has uttered that one word as characterizing all His system, and if He has made utterance with regard to anything whatever, that word must be in power—power sufficient for the carrying into effect of all that is spoken. So as He has said "*new*" in regard to His world, it is certain that He will bring into effect all that He has so purposed.

Now, we get that thought of order and beauty in the expression the "*worldly sanctuary*." We commonly use the word "*worldly*" in an invidious sense, but that is far from the thought here. It conveys the thought of ordered beauty, in which God's glory is displayed in Christ; it is a scene of delight opened up for the heart of man to expand itself in, that man may rejoice in that in which God finds His pleasure, for it sets forth "*the true tabernacle which he has pitched*." It was a heavenly thought brought into this world. It has nothing akin to this world, or to the order of this world, but it speaks of all the verdure and beauty that lies in the Spirit. "*As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes that the Lord hath planted—(lit., 'pitched')—and as cedar trees beside the waters.*" It presents that order of things which lies in Christ, and which is maintained in the power and unction of the Spirit.

It is a "sanctuary"—that is, an order of things which is marked by holiness—it partakes of the character of God : it is a holy scene, and then, too, it is marked by life—all is living. It is not that we set ourselves to make a model of the tabernacle, but that in our hearts God has set His living world, the living ideal that is before Him in Christ, and which comprises all that is in living relation to Himself before He brings it into display.

I read the verses in Hebrews ix. because there we get brought together certain things which mark the system which God has brought into view, and, as I said before, all these things are covered by the one word "new"—"In that he saith New." I think there is a covenant made in regard to God's system. All hangs on what Christ will *be* and *do*. He has taken His seat on the right hand of God, and an amnesty is proclaimed. All henceforth depends on Himself. It is all "I will," not "Thou shalt." That is, it depends on what never can be broken. As to Israel God will take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and will write there His new covenant. He writes *Christ* there—God's "*I will*." What a wonderful thought it is! God will no more remember all the wickedness of men, but instead He says, "All shall know me in themselves." God sets out to promote His own knowledge in the hearts of men. He brings them into

the intelligence of Himself, so that they know *Him* in themselves. God commences with the 'little ones,' but *all* shall know Him "from the least to the greatest."

Now, having said so much, I would like to take up a little the detail of what comes out here. The writer does *not* develop it in Hebrews—he says, "Of which we cannot now speak in detail"—because when we come to speak of what hangs upon Christ, it is all so vast—so immense—that if we were to stop and meditate on what it involved, we should lose the thread of what the apostle is seeking to bring before us there.

To-night I want to speak of the table of the shewbread. Then there is the veil and the golden censer, and the pot that had manna and Aaron's rod that budded. These things, I admit, were but types, but they were patterns of the heavenly things, and as such we may well turn to them, to expand and develop the new things which are brought to pass in Christ.

I will turn again to Leviticus xxiv. 2-5, "Thou shalt take fine flour and make twelve cakes thereof." I have no doubt that what God had in His mind in causing those loaves of fine flour to be set before Him, was the setting forth of His intention to make Himself known in man. That is, properly in Christ and in those who are of Christ. I feel that in taking up this thought it will most surely lead into the con-

sideration of Christ Himself. The loaves were to be set in two rows of six on the pure table before the Lord. The table, you will remember, was made of shittim wood, overlaid with pure gold. It is spoken of as the "pure table." It is Christ as the basis of testimony and the bond of fellowship. The cakes were to be placed on the table.

But now as to the loaves themselves. They were to be made of fine flour, and, I take it, the fine flour is a symbol of purity, and when placed on the pure table they were to be anointed with the frankincense. They were thus characterized by purity, but they were marked, too, by the fragrance and grace of Christ Himself. In Christ here, God was manifested in flesh, but that is continued under His eye now in those who have come under the sweet savour of Christ. It speaks no doubt first of Israel as having that place before Him, but there is room left for the wider thought of God manifested in His administrative power, in man, in Christ. The shewbread (lit., the bread of the presence) took its character from the pure frankincense which was laid upon it. Now I will just dwell a little on the thought of the frankincense. Turn to Exodus xxx. 34 : there were to be four ingredients in equal parts, "tempered together after the art of the apothecary." If we come to the gospels, we get

there the unfolding of the "second Man out of heaven." I think you get in them the "holy confection," tempered together by the art of the apothecary. The apothecary is one who combines certain elements by his skill and intelligence in order to give a perfect confection. So the gospels are no mere historical description of the life of Christ, but they are the record, divinely inspired, of the appreciation the writers had of the holy graces which characterized the second Man—out of heaven. They could by the Holy Ghost appreciate and combine the elements which went to make up that pure and holy confection. I refer in that way the four spices which go to make the confection, to the record left us in the gospels of the life of Jesus here. He came here, the second Man out of heaven, taking part in real, true, human condition apart from sin, yet having all His springs in heaven. It is there we get the "fine flour"—there was no predominant characteristic. He was the heavenly Man come here to present the heart of God to man, and on the other hand, He was here for the delight of God in presenting all that was beautiful and gracious in Man, under His eye. I just put it before you, and ask you, dear friends, to study the frankincense.

It was to be beaten "very small"—and in order that it might yield its full perfume, it was necessary that it should be beaten very small ; so we

see that it was in bruising and in smiting, that is, in death, that all the fragrance which marked the life of Christ here was fully drawn out.

Now I want to come on to another thought of the shewbread, and I will turn you to Numbers iv. 7, 8, where we find the testimony in movement. The thought I desire to press in connection with the shewbread is that God is manifested in Man, as coming under the savour of Christ and characterized by that savour, in the holy place. I know perfectly that Christ presented God here, but it is not that thought that I desire to press, but that of the second Man, the *Man out of heaven*. There never was a moment when God had not Christ before Him, and blessing in Him for man. Ruin and failure came in in connection with the first man who was of the earth, earthy—but it did not divert God from His purpose—it could not touch what was God's great purpose in Man. Now I am sure we do not want to let slip one thought of the blessed God, and I desire for myself grace to go forward in all the light of that which He has secured for man and in Man. Christ and the Spirit are under God's eye, and all the power of the anointing *abides*.

I turn to Numbers iv. because we see God's provision for the testimony in *movement*. There were certain things to be carried out by the priests before the pure table and the shewbread could take their passage through the wilderness.

They had to be covered in a particular way from the gaze of men, and only the priest who had access within could perform this work of covering.

I propose to illustrate these thoughts from the condition of the saints at Corinth as set forth in the first epistle to them.

Now in 1 Corinthians v. we find a common report going forth from the brethren there. They were such as had the pure table, they had Christ as the basis and bond of fellowship, then, too, they had the place of the shewbread (ver. 7) "they were unleavened," but for all that the report that went forth from them was a bad report—there was no savour of holiness, but of unholiness. They were the shewbread truly, for God's thought abides, and as such the apostle can say to them, "let us keep festival," but at the same time the fragrance of Christ was lacking there, so that the report that went forth from them was a very grievous one.

Now how had this come about? I think it was that they had not done their priestly work. They had not availed themselves of their access within to cover the table for its journey—the covering of badgers' skins, the holiness which repels evil, had been omitted. That covering was inherent in Christ. Holiness was intrinsic in Him. You remember the incident in the Pharisee's house? How is it that that poor defiled woman can be found at His feet? It is because of the

holiness that was there—intrinsic holiness. Holiness is essential in God's world, and it is essential in those who have part in His testimony here: there must be the covering of badgers' skins, the holy vigilance that should mark us as passing on with God's testimony. It is the office of the priest, as I have pointed out, to place the coverings, and if we fail in this our priestly office, we shall suffer and lose all through our course here, even if we do not make open shipwreck as did this man at Corinth.

But what is the result of the badgers' skins being omitted? The scarlet (type of human glory as in royalty) is seen in—"ye have not rather mourned"—"now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings *without us*." What a reproach! They anticipated the moment of display, and what should have been their secret hope, is made evident before the time. There had been no self-judgment, no mourning, but because they had the pure table, God has to come in, as we find later on in the epistle, and bring in weakness and even sleep, that they may be recovered to the truth of all that is proper to them as a holy priesthood. I ask you, dear fellow Christian, have *you* accepted the solemn truth of what I have endeavoured to point out?

Now I turn you to Corinthians xv. 47, 48, 49, where I think we see that if the Corinthians have failed to accept the covering of badgers'

skins, the apostle will recall them to the truth of what underlies all—"The cloth wholly of blue." It is the heavenly colour. It is Christ here, as come "out of heaven" characteristically. The second Man out of heaven come here that He may give character to His own—that men might partake of His own heavenly character, "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." It is in this way, I think, that Paul recalls them to their heavenly character—to the cloth "wholly of blue." It is that which underlies the whole testimony of the Christ—it is what comes nearest to the pure table and the shewbread. It is the truth of the second Man out of heaven.

I feel sure it is a thought in which we are greatly deficient. I feel myself to be so, and I bring my own exercise before you that we may all be helped on in this most necessary truth. It is not the line of what He is from God, manward, but the other side of the truth, what He is as man—*Godward*.

I desire to press this, that there is a new order of man, "as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." If God brings in a new world, He will have that world filled with a new order of man entirely, with those who have partaken of the character of the Heavenly One.

If we turn to 2 Corinthians iii. I think we see how God effects His will in those addressed in

the first epistle. He writes *Christ* upon their hearts—His “yea.” He shews them the stability of His purpose *in Christ*, and the effect is they behold “the glory of the Lord with unveiled face.” And what is the result of that? Change. They come out in His image. That is the effect of the new covenant teaching. You behold *His* glory, you bear His image—“the image of the heavenly.”

So we see God has before him a world of order and beauty, and He purposes to fill that world with men who have partaken of the character of the second Man, the One who is “out of heaven,” and it is in such that He maintains this thought of the pure table and the shewbread, which have their place before Him.



THE GOLDEN CENSER.

(HEB. VIII. 13, IX. 1, 4-6; EXO. XXX. 34-38;
LEV. IX. 23, 24, X. 1-3, XVI. 12, 13; 2 COR. V. 11-21;
JOHN XII. 3.)

WHAT was before me in these addresses was to present some elements in the ordering of God's world as set forth in these types, and in this connection I took up last week the pure table and the shewbread. This time I would like to dwell a little on the "golden censer" and on the thought of the frankincense. I will refer you first of all to Leviticus x., where we get the sorrowful history of the failure of Nadab and Abihu; not that I desire to occupy you with failure, but I feel it laid upon me to say a little as to this chapter, more especially as many of us here are young.

Two things are brought together here—fire and incense. Leviticus viii. gives us the consecration of the priests; chapter ix. the offerings for them. The great climax is reached when the fire consumes upon the altar the offerings and the fat. Then in chapter x. we get, after all has been fully set up, the failure of Nadab and Abihu in their approach to God.

The fire, it is evident, is the sign of God's judgment, it is God's consuming judgment. Now if we refer to the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, we see that He has sustained the fire of God's judgment, but He has *exhausted* it. When we read of the sacrifices in the Old Testament we find that the fire consumed the victim, but in His case He has consumed the judgment.

The state of man is such that the holy judgment of God must needs consume them should they approach on any other ground than of the death of Christ, and in the case of Nadab and Abihu we read that "fire came out from before the Lord and consumed them." It does not say they took strange incense, but "strange fire"—that is, their approach to God was on a false basis entirely. They took up the incense, that which was "pure and holy," and associated it with strange fire, and the result is, judgment hastens to meet them, God comes forth in righteous judgment and consumes them. Nadab and Abihu proved through their act that they took up the death of Christ as though He suffered only at the hand of *man*, as a martyr. They failed to apprehend that He suffered vicariously at the hand of God as the *victim*; that man, as such, might be ended in His sacrifice. They placed all the moral beauty of Christ, that which could only be available for men through His death, on a false foundation, upon fire of their own kindling,

and it drew down upon them the righteous wrath of God, so that "fire went forth from before Jehovah and consumed them both."

I pass on to chapter xvi. I do not dwell on judgment, save as to shew how obnoxious to God is the intrusion of flesh into His presence. Verse 12 shews us that it is from the very place where the victim has been offered that Aaron takes his censer full of burning coals, it is with this and with his hands full of incense beaten small that he comes within the veil. He goes in in all the fragrance of the Person of Christ, brought out by smiting and by burning. He puts the incense on the burning coals of the altar, that is, he takes up the great divine sacrifice of Christ as the basis of his appreciation of all that He was morally. You cannot get the good of the incense, so to speak, apart from the holy sacrifice of Christ, but when it is placed on the coals of the altar, then it brings in the atmosphere of heaven. I believe it is so now ; at this present moment, the fragrance of His holy Person is what pervades the atmosphere of heaven. The priest enters within the veil that way, in all the sweet savour of Christ. What ascends to the blessed God is a holy fragrance instead of the ill savour which results from the use of strange fire. Men have set up a new god to-day, *man* is their god, and God is made subservient to man ; they essay to get good from man, a perfume from man—but that is all false

incense—"strange incense" hateful to God. (Exo. xxx. 9.) If our hearts are drawn near to Christ to appreciate the moral beauties of His Person as brought out through death, we shall not be attracted by the false god of this world. The sweet spices with which the false woman decks her bed (Prov. vii. 17) will have no attraction for us if we know the fragrance of the holy perfume.

Now if you turn to Exodus xxx. 34 you find there are four principal spices used to make the holy confection. No doubt it figures the perfection of our Lord Jesus Christ as man under the eye of God. But notice that it says, "Take unto *thee*," it does not say God made it. I mentioned last time that in the four gospels we have the record of the apprehension the writers gained of the moral perfections of our Lord Jesus, and I think this is figured in the four principal spices.

"Thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy." My thought to-night is not merely to take up the detail of the frankincense, but to shew how it was open to certain persons to qualify in the "art of the apothecary," that is, to shew how we may apprehend and appreciate those blessed graces which are inherent in our Lord Jesus Christ, so that He may get a truer and more absorbing place in our affections. I have no doubt that what is conveyed in

the compounding is His death, and in the next verse (36) "beaten small," we have reference to His sufferings. Those infinite perfections had to be tempered together, so that in result there was confection "pure and holy," the perfume of Christ's own moral worth, a worth which came out of heaven and was sustained by heaven. It was only in death that the full fragrance of the Person of our blessed Lord could be reached.

Well, I think there is little doubt, dear fellow saints, that when we meet together in the Lord's presence, the Spirit would lead us to appropriate and appreciate the value of Christ's holy Person, and would give us in that way to breathe the very atmosphere of heaven.

It says here, verse 36, "Thou shalt beat some of it very small and *put it before the testimony.*" I want to call your special attention to that. If you have taken up the place of priest in the appreciation of Christ, that must be connected with God's testimony, and you dare not disregard it. God has no thought of blessing man for man's own pleasure; he is blessed for God's pleasure. So if you take up the incense it is as apprehending it to be "holy for the *Lord.*" You have to bring it into the holiest in all its fragrance. The thought of fellowship and testimony are closely bound together. The testimony is the bond of fellowship. There is a solemn warning addressed to those who should

make any confection like it "to smell thereto." It says, "He shall even be cut off from his people." Dear fellow saint, if you fail to connect your appreciation of Christ with God's testimony, there is nothing before you but to be cut off from His people. If you are trying to secure for your own personal satisfaction that which is proper to the testimony, be assured that you will sooner or later lose the privilege of christian fellowship. Let me beg you, put the testimony first, setting yourself to gain the apprehension of Christ, and then bring it before the testimony. Do not allow subsidiary things to come in and draw you away from the great interest He has set before you.

Now, I do not think that you could get the moral import of all this in the Old Testament. The holy men of old who wrote the Scriptures were in a sense *channels* through whom the word came, but when you come to the New Testament you have *vessels*, those who are characterised by the sweet savour. The censer was there, but men could not see it, only God's eye saw it, for it was treasured up there before Him; but all was awaiting the moment when Christ would come here and take up in his Own person everything that lay in God's purpose for man.

I want now to turn you to the New Testament. I have spoken to you so far in connection with the figures, but I will turn you now

to 2 Corinthians v. 11, 16-21. We see the truth of reconciliation unfolded there. We saw in connection with 2 Corinthians iii. God's amnesty. God had sent forth His great proclamation of the forgiveness of sins through Jesus, in order that he might write "yea" in the hearts of His own. There is no longer the demand of law, but righteousness is ministered to you from the glory. God's holy judgment has been satisfied, for the divine sacrifice has exhausted the fire, and God has pronounced the great fiat of His will in that one word "new." He has secured everything in the second Man out of heaven, that new order of man; He brings in what is wholly new in man and for man, and hence it can be said here "if any man be in Christ—new creation." He is put in touch with all God's ideal for man. "New things *have* come to pass." All is secured in our Lord Jesus Christ risen from the dead and glorified; and in that new world "all things are of God." It is not simply that God has come out and made Himself known to us to-day, but in results He will make Himself known in the hearts of all, "from the least to the greatest." I think you can well understand how this can be brought about, if you come to the sense of the complacency of heaven in our Lord Jesus Christ. You are brought into the blessed atmosphere of heaven, where all is

pervaded by and redolent of the cloud of incense—of all that Christ is to God. You come to appreciate the divine savour of all that He is to God, but the basis of all is that He was made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. It is from that holy fire that all the fragrance of Christ is drawn out.

Now, I would like to shew you how one person learnt to appreciate the greatness of our Lord Jesus Christ when He was down here. In John xi. we see how death had laid its hand on Lazarus. They had told Jesus of his sore sickness, but He had not hurried to prevent the in-coming of death, so that not only had death supervened, but corruption, too, was at work. But Jesus comes to the tomb—One who held in His hands the elements of life and of death. He could lift up His eyes to heaven and say, "Father," and could turn to the grave and command it to yield up its prey, conscious that in His own blessed Person lay the solution of the whole question of life. He can speak in living power to His own and cry, "Lazarus, come forth," and he comes forth.

Mary was at the graveside, and as she beheld that mighty One dealing with the death and corruption that were there, she apprehended in Him the One in whose hands were all the elements of life and death, and in the next chapter we find her lavishing upon Him all the

fragrance of her ointment. She poured it upon His feet, and she wiped them with her hair, and the house was filled with the odour. She poured upon Him all her heart's appreciation of His perfections, and in that way she has left us a pattern of priestly service. Never mind that she was a woman ; she was a pattern of the new order of priesthood. "And the house was filled with the odour of the ointment"—everything pervaded by the blessed fragrance of her act, and all ascending up to God for a sweet savour. And it has never ceased going up to God : I believe the fragrance of that act marks the whole course of Christianity. Mary had the divine idea of reconciliation, and in the fragrance of her perfume she disappears. Mary is heard of no more. And as we come into the sense of the complacency that rests on Jesus, we too disappear. The golden censer is the first thing in the holiest, it shews the divine appreciation of all that was morally true in Christ.

Golden censer, thou didst hold
Every pure and gracious fragrance
In thy vessel's holy mould.

All the gathered sweets of love,
Folded in the breast of heaven ;
Plucked on earth to breathe above.

I would add one more word in connection with Revelation v. 8, 9. There you find the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders

falling down before the Lamb: there is perfect subjection to that One, and more. They say, "*Thou art worthy.*" There is the perfect appreciation of Him. Every one of them have golden vials full of odours. There you get the divine beauty of the golden censer in eternity. There is the perfect appreciation of all that Christ is to God, and it all ascends up to God for a sweet savour.



“THE COVERING VEIL.”

(HEB. IX. 3-6; X. 19, 20; GEN. III. 22-24;

EX. XXXVI. 35, 36; NUM. IV. 5, 6.)

LAST week I was attempting to say a little as to the “golden censer,” in connection with what I called the “ordering of God’s world,” as seen in type in the tabernacle. I took up the expression from Hebrews ix 6., where it says, “These things being thus *ordered*,” and have endeavoured in a simple way to bring out certain principles of the order and beauty connected with God’s world. The apostle does not develop the things he enumerates as marking God’s order: he lays them aside as too weighty to dilate upon *there*, but he suggests them, and then proceeds with the line of truth which is before him in the epistle.

In chapter viii. he shews Christ as having taken up the place of Minister of the holy places, and in that way, as the One having charge of the holy vessels. The expression used conveys the thought of Minister of public worship—that is, He controls and directs the worship of the universe. Of course this primarily refers to

the place He will take up in the coming age, when every circle and every family will render its worship by Him to God, as we see in the last book of the Psalms.

Still, even now, we anticipate that time, as knowing Him who fills that place at the right hand of God. We come under the touch of the great Minister of worship, who, having charge of the holy vessels, can fill and use them in the divine service.

I think the middle part of Hebrews shews us how the holy vessels are filled and fitted for approach to God. He takes them up and makes them confident of God's power to lead them aright in connection with the testimony.

As I have said before, what is before me is not so much to develop the thought of God's approach to men in Christ, but of how all in God's world is to take its character from the second Man out of heaven, so that in *that* character man may come under the eye of God for His pleasure.

In this connection I have already spoken of two things in the holy place—the table with the shewbread and the golden censer of incense. The incense was what formed the atmosphere of both the holy place and the holiest; it was the connecting link between them, so to speak; it was really the atmosphere of heaven. I connect that with reconciliation—the complacency of

God in all that He has secured for *Himself* in Christ. It is Christ presented under the eye of God in all His moral graces.

Now, to-night I wish to speak a little of the second veil. I do not want to take it up too literally, but to give you one or two definite thoughts as to it. To begin with, it was wrought with cherubim of cunning work. To get the idea of cherubim I am going to ask you to come back with me in thought to the very beginning—to Paradise.

In Genesis iii. God puts the man and the woman in the garden to dress it and to keep it, so that it might bring forth its natural fruits. Then in the midst of the garden God sets the trees of life and of knowledge. They were not guarded in any way, but with regard to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God placed upon man His restriction, "Thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." We know how Adam and Eve disregarded God's restriction with the result that they came under death. The first man was of the earth, earthy; he was utterly incompetent in himself to touch the question of good and evil; but he anticipated the solution of it in himself and fell. The truth was, the solution of good and evil lay in the Man out of heaven, the second Man, the heavenly Man, One in whose heart there was

not, nor could be, any answer to the evil, and who had power to bring in the good.

Then God barred the way to the tree of life. He placed at the east of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way. The cherubim are the ministers of judicial authority. The sword is no doubt a picture of death, and what man found was that at every turn death met him. The tree of life could never again be approached, save through the solution of the question of good and evil, and for that God's Man must come forth—the second Man out of heaven. He alone could meet the position brought about through man's disobedience. Christ could say, "*Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. Thy law is within my heart.*" A body was prepared Him, in which He could carry into effect the will of God and bring to its issue the whole question of good and evil. He came into human condition, but He came here as "*that holy thing,*" One to whom evil had nothing to say.

Now, we read of the veil in Exodus xxxvi., that it was to be "of cunning work." It was made of blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen, *with* cherubim. It set forth the divine beauty of the second Man out of heaven. There was the blue—the heavenly colour; the purple, royalty and imperial power, belonging to God's King. Then the scarlet—human glory

Christ is the only Man to whom glory belongs. It was that in which Saul clothed the daughters of Israel, but in God's thought only one Man was entitled to glory *as* man, and that was Christ: it is inherent in Him, and man's glory is in having Him as his Head. Then there is the *fine linen of righteousness*—He is the righteous One.

But why is the veil wrought with cherubim? We must go back to the garden—to Paradise. The way to the earthly paradise is closed for ever; never again will it be opened up; but God had in mind to create a far more blessed and wondrous paradise than ever the first which man lost. It was that which He set before Israel, in figure, in the tabernacle; but the secret of it all lay in what was found in the holiest, and that is guarded by the cherubim. The tree of life was guarded by the cherubim; now here again we find the ark guarded and covered by the cherubim.

I think that the Gospel of John really gives us the veil. If we turn to chapter v. 27 we read, "The Father . . . hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is Son of man." That gives us the cherubim woven in the veil. Then again, in chapter viii. a poor woman is brought before Him, taken in the act of sin. What is the result? Those who accused pass out from His presence, one by one. And why?

Because the cherubim are there in His holy Person. There is the perfect discrimination of good and evil. Then again, at the close of the gospel, they come to lay hands on Him, and take Him; but they fall backwards — the cherubim are there.

But there is another thought in connection with the veil, which is brought out in Exodus xxxvi. It is set forth on four pillars. I think they refer to the four aspects of the sacrifice of Christ, as given to us in Hebrews x. 8, and taken up from Leviticus, namely—“Sacrifice and offering, and burnt offerings, and offering for sin.” I believe the four pillars give us thus the four-fold aspect of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. He became Man in order that He might die. Had He remained only in Godhead condition, He could never have died; but He takes up human condition in order that He may die, and in that way lay down His life for the redemption of man.

The pillars are made of shittim wood, but overlaid with pure gold. Christ took part in life here, that He might lay it down and so fulfil in that one great sacrifice all that was set forth in the types of old. His death was one holy, exclusive sacrifice; but it needed four types to set it forth.

Well, it was on the four pillars that the veil was spread forth. But how were they

supported? They rested in sockets of silver. For the first veil the sockets were of brass, but not so here—they were of silver. That gives us the thought of redemption. There never was a moment in the life of Christ here when He was apart from the fact that He had come to die. The whole truth of the incarnation rests on this fact, that He came to die. Take away the four pillars, and the veil falls. There is an attempt of man to-day to get the veil apart from the sockets of silver and the four pillars, that is, to have incarnation without redemption. But it cannot be. He came to die.

Then as to its attachment—it was suspended on the four pillars by hooks of gold. All the attachment was from the top, according to the truth of the glory of His Person. When here He could speak of Himself and say, “The Son of man, which is *in heaven*.” Heaven is proper to Him. All His attachment was there, and in the presence of it we can but worship and adore.

In passing, I will just allude to Numbers iv., where we find the testimony in movement. The ark of the covenant was never seen by Israel, much less by man; it was always covered by the veil. When it was standing the veil shut it in, and in movement the veil again covered it. Then the badgers’ skin, signifying the holiness that repels evil, was placed over the

veil, and last of all a "cloth wholly of blue." The veil was inside, but what came under the eye of man in the testimony in movement was the heavenly colour—the grace of the Man who was "out of heaven."

In the case of the vessels which present our side, the order is quite different, as we see in connection with other vessels of the sanctuary. What appears before men in connection with these is the covering of badgers' skins, that which must repel evil; but that was inherent with Christ, and hence not placed outside in the type.

Now turn to Hebrews x. 19, 20. We find there the way into the holiest dedicated for us, that is, it is *new-made*, it is the inauguration, the bringing in of what is wholly *new*.

We have sometimes thought of the veil in Hebrews as being rent, but that is not the idea there. It *is* rent in the gospel narrative (see Matt. xxvii. 51), not removed but rent, in order that God may come out in the fullest revelation of Himself. In the death of Christ there was the full revelation of God Himself—the flood-gates of His love were opened up, so to speak. But that is the "veil of the temple;" you do not get the idea of the veil of the tabernacle being rent, but a new and living way is opened up for us *through* the veil, that is to say, His flesh. Christ has

taken a road that you and I otherwise could never have trodden, and that man in the flesh never will tread. He received in His own Person that flaming sword which turned every way, and which barred the way to the tree of life. The sword was quenched, its force was exhausted in the Person of Jesus, and the new and living way is opened up.

Man dies, and after death there is judgment—he enters upon a condition of inexhaustible judgment; but Christ, as the Victim, exhausted the judgment, and then He died, but in so doing He opens the way to life.

The question raised in Paradise, the question of good and evil, is solved in the cross, and He opens up there the new and living way right in to the heart of God. You have boldness for entrance. Well, how? I think you must connect that with the “cunning work” of the veil. “Cunning” means *knowledge*. It is as we apprehend the value of the Person of the “second Man out of heaven” in the power of His death that we have boldness for entrance within. We come to the knowledge, the consciousness of what is in Him, of what God has secured in Him, and we worship.

Adam and Eve reached out their hand for knowledge, but it evaded their grasp; here it is brought within our reach, brought to us in Christ. In His holy Person lies the solution of

the whole question of good and evil. And further, it is in the acceptance of His death and in the apprehension of the mystery of His Person, as the second Man out of heaven, that God draws around Himself, in the great Priest, a company of worshippers. And in result He will fill the whole universe with a worshipping company.



“THE GOLDEN POT THAT HAD MANNA.”

(HEB. IX. 1-6; EXO. XVI.; NUM. X. 33, XI. 1-9; JOSH.
V. 10-12; JOHN IV. 6-10, 33-35, VI. 11.)

IN pursuance of what we have had before us, I would like to repeat that God has a world of His own before Him, one which is filled with divine realities and wherein everything is “new.” It was this divine order that He was pleased to set before Israel in the tabernacle; it was the setting forth to men of an ordered system of blessing and beauty, and it is that which He is still setting before the hearts of His people in Christ, so that it may become effective in them in forming them according to His mind.

I do not for a moment suppose that we can learn the new things which are brought to pass in Christianity through the old, through the types, but I *do* think that the new are expanded and developed through the old. The fact is, until we have the new, we cannot understand the old, and the type in its very nature falls short of the antitype.

We have had before us the pure table (Lev. xxiv. 6) and the shewbread; the golden censer and the incense. Then last week we looked at

the covering veil, whereon the cherubim were embroidered.

Now, all these things were outside the ark of the covenant. They had their place and setting in God's order, but to-night I want to come to something which was *within* the ark—the "golden pot which had manna."

The ark of the covenant—of which I do not propose to speak—is a beautiful type of our Lord Jesus Christ as Man. It was made, you will remember, of shittim wood, overlaid with pure gold—blessed figure of His humanity, covered by all that He was as divine. But there was that which was inherent in Him, that which was "within," and it is in that connection that I desire to develop a little the thought of the golden pot that had manna.

The manna was God's answer to the murmuring of the children of Israel. It was what met them in their wilderness circumstances. And in the same way the manna is of all possible account to us, for we too have to taste very really what the wilderness is. We have to realize that Christ is no longer here, and that changes the whole aspect of things for us. I think Mary had to taste it in the garden. (John xx.) It was no garden to her, but a wilderness, and her heart was desolate in the absence of the Lord.

I think each one of us has had in some way to taste the desolation of the wilderness in the

absence of Christ. Then there is the pressure of circumstances and the exercise that comes upon us as moving with the testimony. Many of us have cried out, "Lord, how long?" in connection with the testimony. We have allowed our hearts to get under the burden of things.

Now, in Exodus xvii. we see that God takes account of all the groaning that is incidental to the pathway. He does not rebuke them ; their murmuring only calls forth the depths of His sovereign mercy to meet it.

Later on, when they have eaten of the bread from heaven, and have been refreshed by the waters from the rock, God treats their murmuring very differently, as we see in Numbers xi.

I take it the manna is the provision of heaven in response to the groaning of man. It is support and food ministered to meet the necessity of the wilderness and to bring in rest. It is in the appreciation of Christ as having come down out of heaven to meet all the need of man, that we are supported above the circumstances of the wilderness. It is my desire to-night that each heart might gain a truer apprehension of Christ as the full answer from God to all man's need—it would be great gain to us. I would just say in passing that the giving of the manna supposes that the people are already in relationship to God. They are already delivered

from Egypt and across the Red Sea, but it is then, when the desert sands are all that are before them, that God brings forward the bread of heaven for their sustenance. In the previous chapter Israel had encamped at Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm-trees, but they had to take their journey from thence, and we learn that the people murmured—they forgot the bondage of Egypt, but they remembered the leeks and the onions and the fish, and they mourned for the flesh-pots of Egypt, but God meets them in the sovereignty of His grace and the manna is given. "In the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground." (Exo. xvi. 13, 14.)

The thought of the "dew," I think, is the ministration of the Spirit to effect the appreciation of Christ in the grace which He walked here. It is the preparation of the soil for the appreciation of the heavenly Man.

Why did the manna fall upon the dew? It was because it is necessary that a clean place should be made for that which is "out of heaven." The natural man cannot receive divine things; there must be a work of the Spirit in order that Christ, as the heavenly food of the believer, may be received and appreciated.

The manna is Christ as the food and support of the believer, and the work of the dew is to prepare a clean place for the manna. All the ministration of the Spirit is in view of the introduction of Christ. The Holy Spirit does not in that way bring Himself into evidence. "He shall testify of me." He promotes the appreciation of Christ in the hearts of those who love Him.

You get a beautiful illustration of this in the Epistle to the Colossians. There you see the thing in its fulness. There is the dew first, but it has made room for the manna. It is not the Spirit that is in evidence but Christ—"Christ in you the hope of glory." You will scarcely find any mention of the Spirit in Colossians—it is all *Christ*. The dew descended, so to speak, as *refreshment for man, but having done its work it disappears*; it is merged into the blessedness of the manna. Christ has come into evidence in God's people.

As to the manna, I have no doubt it sets forth the heavenly grace of Christ come here into manhood, and so available for the support and sustenance of God's people.

In verse 33 Moses says to Aaron, "Take a pot." He does not say a *golden* pot. The Old Testament could not give us that; it is reserved for the New Testament to bring that out. So in Hebrews we learn that it is a golden pot—

that is, there is the sense that only a vessel which was holy and divine could be great enough to appreciate the grace of God's free-giving. Who, then, is that divine and glorious vessel?

I think John's gospel again will give us the truth of the golden pot. It is Christ as set forth there—*God* truly, yet taking a bondsman's form. God's own blessed Son, dwelling ever in His bosom, yet found among men as Man. It was in Him that God could secure for Himself a vessel capable of holding the grace of His provision for man. God desired to have brought under His eye a vessel capable of securing and appreciating the grace of heaven, and He secures it in Christ. We see how Christ estimated the grace of God. He says in John iv., "If thou knewest the *free-giving of God*."

Returning to Exodus xvi. we find that God gave straight away *His* estimate of man's need. God Himself measured the capacity and need of man's heart, and He absolutely met it. I think if we get the consciousness that there is no scant nor waste in God's world, it will be a great thing for us. If we measure the provision according to God's measure, we shall find that we neither lack nor have we too much: "he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack." We have to be simple in accepting the grace of

God, and we shall find that measured in God's measure it will suffice for all our need. How much often we lose of contentment and peace because we do not pass God's provision for us through God's measure. When they "*meted it with an omer*," it says, "he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack." Here is the miracle! There is no scant and no waste in God's world.

You get an illustration of this in John vi. A great company was gathered together, and the Lord says, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" He was testing them. How could there be any lack with Christ there? All the resources of heaven were there in His Person, and there could be no scant there, no want. He was the second Man out of heaven, come to give His life for the life of the world, and it says, "When they were filled, he said unto them, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." All has to be measured in God's measure, and all were filled.

Moses said, "Let no man leave of it till the morning," and those who disobeyed learned that it bred worms and stank. If we want to institute a system of grace-insurance we shall find to our cost that it will bring in corruption. The grace God gives is the portion for each day *in its day*. Yet all God's ways tend towards His great end, the sabbath of rest, and when

that is in question, though they gathered the portion of two days on the sixth day, it neither bred worms nor stank.

Now in verse 31 we get a description of the manna, it was "like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey." I think that "honey" brings in the thought of wisdom—true wisdom, but as seen in man, and as seen in perfection in our Lord Jesus Christ. Then Numbers gives us another thought, it speaks of the taste of it as being "like fresh oil:" there was all the freshness and nourishment of the Spirit in it.

Well, the manna was to be taken and laid up "before the testimony"—the whole point of God's dealings with us is to connect us with His testimony. It is not a question merely of how the manna meets my individual circumstances, but there is the apprehension of Christ, as such, laid up before God, before the testimony. The moment we make ourselves or our circumstances our centre we miss the whole point of God's grace for us. His desire is that everything should be made subservient to the testimony.

Now I only just allude to the next chapter; it shews us how the people, fed and refreshed by the manna and the water from the rock, are able to meet and defeat Amalek, and that brings in a most beautiful picture of what will come to pass at the close of the present age.

Antichrist is overcome through the "word of their testimony," and what follows is that the Gentile comes and eats with them before God. The Gentile rejoices for all the good that God has done to them, and "takes a burnt offering and sacrifices for God," and they eat together before Him.

In Numbers xi. the scene is changed : up to this point all had been rest—the tabernacle had been preparing for about a year, as you will see from verse II of the previous chapter : "on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, the cloud was taken up. . . . And the children of Israel took their journeys." The testimony makes its first move. Meanwhile they had had the law given, and they had been occupied with the tabernacle ; but now all is finished, and we get the blessing of Moses on the setting up of the tabernacle. Then almost immediately we read that the people "murmur." They had not done so while they were occupied with the construction of the tabernacle and while they were at rest, but no sooner is the cloud lifted and the camp sets forward on its journey than there are murmurings. They did not like the *movement* of the testimony, it involved too much. And, alas ! how often is it the same with us to-day ; we are not prepared for the movement of the testimony.

Israel had been fed with bread from heaven,

and refreshed with water from the rock which followed them, but they murmured, and the wrath of God fell upon them and consumed them. God sends forth a burning among them—He brings in Taberah. They forgot the intervention of God for them in Egypt, and how He had delivered them from bondage, and they said, "we remember"—but it was only the leeks and the garlic and the fish. They had no appreciation of the food of heaven, they wanted a change. They said, "There is nothing before us but this manna." Then the scripture recalls to us the beauty of the manna—it was "as coriander seed, and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium." There is no possibility to-day of finding out what bdellium was or its colour; but scripture does speak of it at the outset as being found in a land where there was water and gold, and very good gold, too. (Gen. ii. 12.) But the people "went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil." They were not content with it in the form in which God had given it, nevertheless the taste was still as of "fresh oil." Oil gives the thought of the grace of heaven, the fulness of heaven, and it was gathered "morning by morning"—it was always available for the day's need.

Then Moses hears the people "weep through-

out their families." They were weeping for the earth-roots of Egypt, and the provision of heaven is despised. Moses himself is displeased ; he despairs at the wickedness of the people and says, "I am not able to bear all this people alone kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, and let me not see my wretchedness." Then God commands him to come before the tabernacle, and seventy of the elders of Israel with him, and He takes and puts upon the elders the spirit that was upon Moses, that they may bear the burden of the people with him.

A beautiful thought connected with the manna is that it is spoken of as "angels' food." (Psa. lxxviii. 25.) Now there are the "elect angels" (1 Tim. v. 21) ; that does not mean that they are infallible ; they are not self-supporting, nevertheless they are the elect angels, those who are preserved in integrity before God, fed with food of God's providing. The manna being spoken of as "angels' food," conveys to us, I think, that the very same grace that can hold the elect angels in salvation is available for us.

If we turn to chapter xx. we see how Moses fails of being a vessel great enough to contain the grace of heaven. The people are again murmuring, they chide with Moses for water, and the Lord says, "Speak ye to the rock before their eyes, and it shall give forth his water." God would have met their thirst in

the plentitude of His grace. But Moses takes the rod and says, "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? . . . and he smote the rock twice." The water came out abundantly, for man's failure cannot limit God's grace. Moses failed to appreciate the grace of heaven, and to sanctify God before the eyes of Israel, and he cannot bring them into the land.

Now turn to John iv., we read, "Jacob's well was there," and One was sitting on the well-side "wearied with his journey." Who was He? "The Son"—He of whom the apostle wrote: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." But He was here as man, and He had journeyed and was weary. Did He murmur? What do we find in Him? Only the deep appreciation of the grace of heaven for man. All was in His hands—all grace was in Him. He could say, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of *him*." *He* was the gift of God, and all that God had to give was in His hands for man. I ask you, think of the contrast. There was one omer full of manna treasured up before the Lord—it was one man's measure for one day, and here was a Man, a glorious and divine vessel, who could hold and appreciate perfectly God's provision for man's

day. He had come here, God's Son, yet subject to the conditions of manhood, weary and thirsty, but does He murmur? Far from it—He will maintain under God's eye the perfect appreciation of the grace of heaven.

I do not know whether you have noticed that in John vi. twice over it is stated that the Lord "gave thanks." Now why does the Spirit chronicle that? It is to mark out the "golden pot that had manna." God had here in Christ, One, divine in His Person, "pure gold," who could appreciate and hold all the resources of heaven in Himself, and who could blessedly appreciate all the giving of heaven to meet man's need.

Now, to-day we have the immense privilege, as we see in Hebrews x., of going in. We may go in and contemplate the golden pot that is before Jehovah. It is only as the dew has done its work, and has made place in us, that we shall have ability to enter within, and learn in Him all the blessedness and grace of heaven.

The golden pot was for the eye of God only, but now, we as God's priests, and as the subjects of the work of God's Spirit, have the immense privilege of going in. "We have boldness for entrance by the new and living way, which he has dedicated for us." The manna was stored up before the Lord, but for all the generations that it must have been there, there could be no

corruption there. It was impossible, for it was held in a divine and holy vessel, capable of preserving it in all its freshness and purity under the eye of God.

My desire is that each heart may appreciate the free-giving of God to meet all the need of man, that we may learn Christ as the One who can meet all the groanings of our hearts, and fully satisfy them so that we, too, may come out here as being “thankful,” as Colossians iii. puts it, “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body ; and be ye thankful.” That, instead of murmuring, there may be thanksgiving.

Now, I only just refer for a moment to the ceasing of the manna. (Josh. v.) I think it shews us how Christ can bring us into His own circumstances, and as there we learn all that He is in His own sphere and home. It was given in type to Israel to know these things, and we read that having eaten of the “old corn of the land,” the manna ceased. It was no longer a question of the manna come down to meet them in their wilderness circumstances, but they were at home in the land now, and they eat of the corn of the land. It is Christ at home in His own circumstances.

In John xx. Christ brings His disciples into the atmosphere of heaven. He speaks peace to them, and breathes on them and brings them

into His own resurrection life. They feed upon Him there, so to speak, as the old corn of the land. They learn Himself in all the beauteous surroundings of His own home and sphere. I have no doubt that in the future, when the saints are actually taken up to be with Christ Himself, that there will be no need of the manna. It will "cease," for the Sabbath—God's rest in God's land—will be reached ; but at this moment we are in an over-lapping time, so that while, on the one hand it is our privilege to be with Christ, in His own circumstances and home, apart altogether from the wilderness and wilderness circumstances, on the other we have to feed on the manna, God's provision for the wilderness. We taste down here all the grace of heaven, and in that way we are maintained here for the will of God.



THE DEW

(EX. XVI. 13 ; JUD. VI. 36-40 ; PSA. CXXXIII ; JOHN XVII. ;
COL. III. 12-16.)

YOU will remember that last week we were looking a little at the thought of the manna, but there is that which is inseparably connected with the manna in scripture—that is, the dew—and as we had little time to speak of it then, I desire to take it up more fully this evening.

In Exodus xvi. we read: "The dew lay round about the host, and when the dew that lay was gone up," &c., the manna was found upon "the face of the wilderness." The manna is Christ, but Christ as available in grace to meet all that is incidental to the wilderness. The thought of the dew is rather the ministration of the Spirit to make room for the appreciation of Christ according to all that He is in His person. We do not get the dew under that particular name in the New Testament, but there is that which answers to it in a spiritual sense as having part in God's ways,

and we have to look for the truth of it in the spirit, not in the letter. The dew is that which prepares a place for the manna, and in that way sets forth to us the preparation of the soul by the work of the Holy Spirit, in order that Christ may be received and fed upon. It was when the dew was "*gone up*" that they found upon the face of the wilderness the small round thing which was to be their meat.

Heavenly dew, like jewels flashing,
Thou shalt be recalled above ;
All thy blessedness re-garnered
In the treasures of Love.

But thou leavest on the desert,
Round and small and passing sweet,
God's provision for the needy—
That new portion—angels' meat.

In Psalm lxxviii. it is spoken of as the corn of heaven and as angels' food (lit., the bread of the mighty), and in a spiritual sense that food is still available for the support in life of a new order of man, of those who in that way have assimilated the character of that which is "out of heaven."

When the dew was gone up there was something left upon the face of the wilderness, and it is that thought which I desire to expand a little to-night from the Epistle to the Colossians. The

Spirit never makes Himself prominent. He makes room and place for Christ.

The dew fell round about the camp, it surrounded the host of Israel, and did its silent work for all. So now the grace of the Spirit is available for all Christians, so that Christ as sustenance may be appropriated in their hearts. God has secured for Himself, in Christ, Man of a different order, the second Man out of heaven, and room and place has been secured for that Man, so that His order may be maintained here, under the eye of God, by the work of the Holy Spirit.

I would like to illustrate the thought from Judges, if you will turn to it, chapter vi. 36, &c. You will remember that the moment of which this scripture speaks was a particularly dark one in the history of Israel: it was night. It looked almost as if the enemy was to have gained his entire way with the people; but God was about to raise them up a saviour in Gideon, and He appears to him and addresses him.

In referring illustratively to details in the lives of Old Testament saints, we, who have in this day the Spirit, may see involved there much of which the persons themselves were probably unconscious. Scripture however records these details for our learning (Rom. xv. 4), and the Spirit delights to bring them into view for

us that we may see *the continuity of God's ways.*

Gideon, we read, "made ready a kid and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour." The cakes being unleavened may shew us the place of Israel before God, even though they were then at their lowest point.

Then Gideon asks a sign. Doubtless he had little more in his mind than to seek God's grace to strengthen his weak faith yet his actions are significant to us. The Israelites were surrounded by their enemies, and it looked as if all was over with them, but Gideon provides materials for a sign from God. We may see there the challenge, as it were, to God to shew His sovereignty in blessing in the bestowal of the dew. He places a fleece in his threshing floor, and says, "Let the dew fall upon it *only.*" The fleece suggests the thought of the "flock." He took up Israel as being in that way the flock of Jehovah, and said, Let the blessing be ours only, and God answers him. There is a verse in John xvii. which I connect with this thought, verse 2, "that he should give eternal life to *as many* as thou hast given him." He bestowed the blessing of eternal life on *as many* as were given to Him of the Father by His sovereign gift.

Then Gideon finds that God accepts the challenge, and the effect is that Gideon wrings

out a bowl full of water from the fleece while the ground around is dry. The blessing is given in plentiful supply.

Then the test is reversed, and Gideon says, Let all around be blessed, and let the fleece be dry. Can God bring in blessing apart from Israel? Yes, God's sovereignty can as easily effect the one as the other. The fleece is laid aside, Israel in that way is "cut off," and the nations are grafted in. (Rom. xi. 17.) They come into the blessing which Israel despised.

I merely take up the signs of Gideon illustratively, not as limiting them to the sense in which I have used them. There are many other interesting thoughts connected with the dew in the Old Testament. In the prophecy of Micah it speaks of Israel as being "a dew from the Lord" among the nations, "that tarrieth not for man." That, again, speaks of God's sovereignty. He does not tarry for man. The blessing is spontaneous, not drawn out by man's need, but given freely of God, unasked by man.

I pass on to Psalm cxxxiii., "There the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." The expression "eternal life" only occurs once else in the Old Testament, and that is in Daniel in another connection; but here we see God commanding the blessing, even life for

evermore, *where the dew has taken effect*, in the production of unity.

Brethren are seen dwelling together in unity, and the scripture speaks of it as being "good and pleasant," and the result is God commands blessing to descend upon them.

Now that brings us to John xvii. It is a dark moment indeed—it was the moment of the Lord's betrayal. Judas had gone out, and it was night. It was the darkest moment that ever came upon this earth. But it is just then that we get the thought of the blessing descending upon Mount Hermon. There is a rift in the clouds, so to speak, and we see all the blessing of heaven descending upon the mountains of Zion in the Person of Christ.

I remember many years ago crossing a mountain pass with a friend. Clouds and darkness surrounded us and shut us in on every hand ; but suddenly the clouds parted above and we looked upon a vista of perfect beauty, for towering up into the heavens was a solitary mountain peak bathed in sunlight. The clouds closed in again on us, but the memory of that rift in the clouds has never passed from me.

Now Mount Hermon was, I suppose, the loftiest mountain in Palestine ; its head pierced the clouds, drawing down upon itself all the dews of heaven and dispensing them to the earth around.

In John xvii., as I have said, we could not get a darker moment. The Lord Jesus was about to pass into death that He might make a way through for His own, but at that very moment we get a rift in the clouds. We look upon our Mount Hermon—Christ, the second Man out of heaven, who has access *as Man* into the very bosom of heaven. He says, "Father"—He can look up through all the clouds right into heaven itself and say, "Father." He draws down upon Himself all the grace of heaven for man. He becomes charged with all the blessings of the Spirit and He dispenses them to men.

In the midst of His disciples He stands forth pre-eminent. He, as Mount Hermon, towers above the mountains of Zion—He morally was infinitely above all those who surrounded Him, and He dispenses the blessing of heaven upon them, but—there is no limit to the blessing—He says, "Thou hast given him power over all flesh." Gideon tasted the power of God to deal with all flesh when he reversed the sign of the fleece, and the day is coming when Christ will take up "all flesh;" but the present prayer of Christ is in connection with those whom the Father has given to Him *out* of the world. The dew of heaven descends in connection with His own Person. He is charged with all the fulness of heaven for man; He is given "power over all

flesh." The effect of the blessing that descends is unity. Unity is Christ's theme in His prayer, it is the great effect of the knowledge of God. He prays first for the apostles (vers. 11, 12): "that they may be one, as we are." The Father had entrusted His name to the Lord Jesus Christ as man here (chap. xvii. 12, "thy name which thou hast given me"), and that one, blessed Man had been able to bear it unsullied through this world; but now He is going back to the Father and He prays Him that they may be kept through that very name which had been given Him. He commits them in that way to the Father's name, "that they may be one, as we are."

Then His prayer goes out further, and He prays for those that should believe on Him "through their word." (Vers. 20, 21.) Think how great was the heart of Christ, that He could take in, not only those who were with Him then, but *all* those who should yet believe. He was drawing down all the dew of heaven in His own Person, and He desired that it should be good for us in the present day, as for those who were with Him then: "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

In verse 23 we get a further thought: "that the world may *know* that thou hast sent me"—it is the day of His coming out. Then faith

will have turned to sight, and the world will "*know*." But even now for us, as I have said, it is the moment of knowledge, we have eternal life in the knowledge of the Father and the Son.

I pass on to Colossians iii. I think that shews us the moment when the dew has "gone up." But there is something left upon the "face of the wilderness"—it is the grace of Christ. Colossians is all Christ. In Ephesians it is God that is prominent, but in Colossians it is the second Man out of heaven, it is Christ. The dew had been there, and it had done its work. The Holy Spirit had come down, and had made room for Christ in the hearts of these saints, and now it is not the Spirit who is in evidence here, but Christ. There were all the traits of the heavenly Man coming out—meekness, lowliness, forbearance, forgiveness, love. The whole work of the Holy Spirit is so to engage the hearts of the saints with Christ, that Christ morally may be in evidence.

The Colossians were Gentiles, they were in that way outside the flock, but the Spirit had done His blessed work in them so that in effect Christ was seen in them, as it says in chapter i. 27: "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." There was now on the face of the

wilderness that which was Christ—Christ in all His moral traits of beauty, as the second Man out of heaven.

Then the Colossians are exhorted to “put on therefore . . . bowels of mercies,” &c. ; it is the work of the Spirit that has made it possible that these qualities should characterise them as that which was proper to them.

The traits of the heavenly Man come out in those who are still down here and in that way still connected with the “face of the wilderness.” We shall not get the desert in the coming day, it will have altered its character then, it will be “the garden of the Lord,” planted with God’s cedar trees and rejoicing and blossoming as the rose. “He will comfort all her waste places . . . and make her desert like the garden of the Lord.” (Isa. li. 3.) But to-day we have the desert, but connected with it is the “small round thing,” the manna, the grace of the heavenly Man.

I think this passage we have read (Col. iii. 12-16) gives us a most beautiful picture of the moral traits of Christ—“bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind”—one will dominates the whole scene, every other will is sunk into oblivion, and God’s will rules, with the result that nothing is seen under His eye but Christ—Christ characterises the whole scene for God.

Then the peace of Christ "rules" in their hearts, for they are called to it in one body, and they are "thankful." The connection of the "peace of Christ" with "be ye thankful" is extremely beautiful. We are brought to a scene where there can be no grumbling, no murmuring. All is deep thanksgiving in man, in answer to the blessedness of God's provision, in answer to the grace of heaven that has reached us through Christ.

I believe all this is the result of the place that Christ has taken as our Mount Hermon in the midst of the mountains of Zion. He pierces the clouds at their darkest moment, as I have said, and the first words we hear are: "Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." All is to ascend to God, as a sweet savour, in answer to the grace that has come out of heaven here in the dew. He leaves us the pattern of thanksgiving in His own utterance, "Father, I thank thee."

In the days to come everything will be marked by thanksgiving. There will be the response of praise from "everything that hath breath" to the grace of heaven. But even to-day we can "sing with grace in our hearts to the Lord," we can be here as "thankful."

Well, I have endeavoured to shew how the Spirit, having done His work, can bring

out Christ in the saints. He can leave room upon the face of the desert for Christ in all His moral perfections, as "out of heaven," yet coming out here in those in whom the Spirit has wrought, in whom He has brought about unity, and *there* God can command the blessing, "even life for evermore."



“AARON’S ROD THAT BUDDED.”

(HEB. IX. 1-6 ; 2 TIM. II. 7-22 ; NUM. XVI. and XVII. ;
JER. I. 11, 12.)

WE have had before us on the several occasions on which we have been together certain things in the ordering of God’s world, as seen in the tabernacle and referred to in Hebrews ix. What is before God is a scene wholly apart from ruin and failure, and in those things which He had set before Himself in the tabernacle of old, He was securing a type of all that He would yet bring to pass for Himself in Christ, the second Man out of heaven.

The first thing we noticed was the pure table and the shewbread ; then the golden censer ; then the covering veil ; and, fourthly, the golden pot that had manna ; and last time in connection with the manna we considered the thought of the dew as being largely connected with it in scripture.

Now, to-night I want to speak of another thing that was enshrined in the ark of the covenant, and that is “ Aaron’s rod that budded.” The ark of the covenant was itself the central

thought in the whole system, setting forth the Lord Jesus Christ in the glory of His person, and, as I have said before, there are certain things which are inherent in Him—things which were *within* the ark, and Aaron's rod was one of them.

I shall have to turn to the Old Testament to get the thought of the rod unfolded, and I trust I may be helped in bringing before you the thoughts I have in connection with it. It is said of Aaron's rod that it "brought forth buds and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds," and I would like to shew why it was that God used the figure of a rod bearing almonds in connection with the vindication of Aaron as priest. It was for that reason that I turned to the verse in Jeremiah, which gives us the force that God attached to the symbol.

The question is asked of Jeremiah, "What seest thou?" And the answer is given, "A rod of an almond tree." Then the Lord responds, "Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it." The word for "hasten" or "watch over," as the margins of our Bibles have it, is from the same root as "almond." So, I take it, God explains through this figure to Jeremiah that He watches over His own testimony. The rod was in itself a witness to resurrection, for the dry rod bloomed blossoms and bore almonds, and it is in the Lord Jesus

Christ, as risen from the dead, that God has secured His testimony, which only awaits the time of display. For the moment the rod is, as it were, laid up before the Lord ; but in the Lord Jesus Christ there is the pledge before God that He has secured, and will yet bring into display, all that He has set forth in His testimony.

It was said to Jeremiah, "Thou hast well seen," and I think if we get the vision of how God has secured the perfect answer to His ways in Christ risen from the dead, we, too, shall hear the word spoken to us, "Thou hast well seen." And, too, we shall have the sense that God has secured everything immutably in connection with His testimony in Christ risen.

The circumstances in Numbers which lead to the bringing in of Aaron's rod are extremely complicated. We shall see further on that the rod is the vindication of the priesthood, and in that way looks forward to the priesthood of Christ, but at the same time it is priesthood not so much as connected with the going *in* as with the coming *out*. It is not that aspect of priesthood which is so largely developed in the latter part of Hebrews, and with which we have been occupied lately, but rather that side of it which looks on to the carrying of God's testimony and God's people through the wilderness to God's place of security. It was for this

reason that I read 2 Timothy ii., for it shews us how God maintains His testimony in those who love Him, in spite of the ruin and unrighteousness that mark Christendom, and which may so easily find place in our own hearts.

Now I turn to Numbers xvi. ; it is a very solemn chapter, but one which must appeal to all our consciences as having its bearing on the present time. Then, too, it is important that we should refer to such Old Testament scriptures as the Holy Ghost quotes from in the New, to get the true force of such a quotation. So in Numbers we find the people exhorted thus, "Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs." In 2 Timothy it says, "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord* depart from iniquity," and it is a question not so much of lawlessness, there, as of unrighteousness. It is not the lawlessness of those who have never had to do with God, but the unrighteousness of those who, owning His name outwardly, are yet walking in unrighteousness. It is very important for us to mark this distinction, as having sought to "follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." We have no other possible charter to-day than 2 Timothy ii., and we want to be certain of our ground. All depends on God's

* The best MSS. read "the Lord," not "Christ."

"sure foundation," and I believe it is that which is brought into view in Numbers xvi. and xvii., where we have the vindication of the authority and priesthood of Christ in resurrection.

Korah, Dathan and Abiram rose up against Moses and Aaron, and said they took too much upon themselves. Moses and Aaron, taken together, set forth the authority and priesthood of Christ. The rebellion was against the authority and grace of God as set forth in Christ.

Timothy speaks of a "great house," and it is in that that we find the "rebels." It is rebellion in those who profess to know God, not only in the world outside, but in those who are within as well.

God's house takes its character from God just as a man's house may take its character from the man who is its head, and in God's house, *as such*, there can be no vessels to *dishonour*; it is only in man's house that there are such. Christendom has rebelled against the ordering of God's house and God's world, and it has sought to form a house after its own pattern and order. That is the sin of Christendom, it is rebellion against God's order in His testimony: it has rebelled against Christ in His two-fold character of Leader, as seen in Moses, and Priest, as seen in Aaron. Then in Numbers we find three judgments are brought in:

first, on Korah; secondly, on Dathan and Abiram, and lastly, on the congregation itself. They had claimed that "all the congregation of the Lord is holy," and that Moses and Aaron had taken too much upon themselves; but God vindicates them, and the congregation comes under judgment. It will be so in result with Christendom. Man has rebelled against God's order in His house, and has brought in his own house, a "great house" truly, but one which is characterised by unrighteousness and rebellion. In Numbers it speaks of God "shewing" them that are His, but what characterises the present moment is, that "the Lord *knoweth* them that are his;" they are waiting for the time to come when the Lord will "shew" them that are His; but they have under their feet this sure foundation—the *Lord knows* them.

Hymenæus and Philetus were saying that the "resurrection is past already"—they were trying to anticipate the moment of display, and to shew that the moment for their vindication had come, and that they had everything already. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure"—things are as stedfast before God as ever they were or will be, and the Lord knows "them that are his."

Well, there was to be a test for Korah and his company—each was to bring his censer and "put fire therein," that is to say, they were

all on the professed ground of redemption. The fire of the altar was there for them, as for all, and they were to put incense thereon before the Lord. They were credited with ability to take up the appreciation of Christ, and they made bold to do so; but for all that we read in verse 35: "there came out a fire from before the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense."

Following on the words, "The Lord will shew who are his" (ver. 5), you get the exhortation, "Depart from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs." That is a very important principle: you get the counterpart of it in Timothy. On God's side of the seal we have "the Lord knoweth them that are his;" but our side, and it is a very solemn consideration, is "Let him that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." It may be that some of us have never professed to take that ground, or, on the other hand, having taken it, are we maintaining it? The word to us all is, "Depart from unrighteousness." And why depart from it? Because everything here is going down to the pit. The moment is coming when the rebellion of Christendom will come under the judgment of God, and when all religious rebellion will sink down into the pit. All that has the character of Babylon will

sink as a millstone into the depths of the sea, and rebellion will be brought to an end for ever. This chapter in Numbers gives us a fearful picture of the way in which God's summary judgment will fall. We read that "the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods." Then fire comes out from before the Lord and consumes the two hundred and fifty who offer incense. God will yet vindicate the authority of Christ in the judgment of Christendom : He will consume the rebels.

But He will have an enduring witness to His sovereignty in connection with all that has taken the place of being "devoted" to Him. The censers of the "sinners against their own souls" were to be taken out of the burning because they were hallowed—they had that place—but they were to be beaten out thin, nothing was to be covered : they were diverted from their first use, and were to be for a covering of the altar. They were in this way an abiding witness of the vindication of God's Priest.

I think this whole chapter serves to point out how the natural heart of man rebels against God's sovereign right to conduct His own testimony, and we have not to go beyond our own hearts to realise the truth of it. Naturally, we

are all insubordinate to the right of Christ to direct His own witness as He will.

Now had it been a question merely of authority, all would have been over with Israel—they would have been consumed, swept out of existence; for a further departure comes in, the whole congregation murmur against Moses, and say, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord." (Ver. 41.) But here a fresh thing comes in to meet the insubordination of man, and if God has to come out and consume the rebellious by plague, there is yet the blessed grace of the Priest who stands between the dead and the living. God cannot overlook rebellion, but Christ has taken His place between dead and living. Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense," and that is the service of Christ—with the fire from the altar, that is, in the value of His own accomplished death, and in all the fragrance of His priestly grace, He stands between the dead and living, and the plague is stayed.

It is only for the moment that the judgment of God is held back, and it is in virtue of the position of Christ, as the great and gracious Priest, who stands before God in the value of His accomplished sacrifice and in all the value of His Person. God will yet vindicate the authority of Christ, and He will vindicate it in the judgment of Christendom; but for the

time judgment is stayed because of the present position of Christ.

Well, these are the circumstances which lead to the bringing in of Aaron's rod.

Then God proposes a new test: that which was the symbol of authority was to be taken from the head of each tribe and laid up before the Lord (chap. xvii.), and God gives this testimony: "the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom." Then Moses lays up the rods before the Lord, and on the morrow when he looked Aaron's rod "brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." That was the great miracle—that from the dry rod, cut off from all natural supply or support, there is every evidence of vitality. It shews the power of God to bring in outside of and apart from nature all that speaks of life and energy and fruit; but all is in connection with the "man whom *I* shall choose." It is not merely a rod as the symbol of authority—authority alone will never bring in life—but in connection with Christ as Priest, God shews His ability to bring in every mark and stage of vitality and beauty. I think it goes further than what is personal to Himself, and takes in the whole new order that comes under Him in resurrection; it is not only that in Christ is all vitality, but that in Him there is the setting forth of life in every stage of it—there were buds,

blossoms and fruit from the rod, and that is laid up in the divine presence, the witness of what will yet be brought out in display.

In *1 John ii.* we find believers spoken of as babes, young men and fathers. There is the diversity and increase of natural growth. In that way they are like the buds, the blossoms and the fruit; but in Christ we have come to the One who is the source of all life. It is set forth in Him in its entirety, and all is there at once as inherent in His person.

The apprehension of His person must be illimitable, every divine quality is expressed in Him, and in Him there is everything that can delight the renewed taste; there is that which meets every state and every variety of christian growth.

There was no vitality in the other rods; they remained what they were, dry rods, and they looked every man on his own rod, and took it again from the hand of Moses; but God had vindicated the man of His choice, and the evidence of life out of death—that is, life outside all that is natural—is laid up before Him for ever. God has the evidence before Him to-day of vitality and life in Christ in resurrection.

There is another thought connected with the almond tree, and that is, it is the harbinger of the coming day. You get that thought, too,

confirmed in 2 Timothy: "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." The almond tree is the first to bloom; there are no leaves, it is not a question of profession, but there are buds and blossoms and then fruit. That is the perfect pledge of the coming day—the summer. God will hasten His word "to perform it."

In Christ Himself there is the bringing out to view, as it were, of the rod; but it is for faith. We have the pledge in Christ risen and ascended that all that God has purposed to effect will be displayed by-and-by. The moment has not yet come when the Lord will "shew" them that are His, for the rod is to be laid up before the Lord, but faith has the assurance that when He shall appear then we also shall appear with Him in glory.

In 2 Timothy iv. 8 the apostle speaks of the "crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." The day is in view, that day when God will give the "crown of righteousness" as His vindication of those who have had part in His testimony down here. If we have taken the path of departing from unrighteousness and desiring to follow the path of righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart, I have no doubt there will be the gracious answer from the Lord

in that day when He will award the crown of righteousness, not only to the apostle, but to "all those who love his appearing."

The appearing is the moment when all that was typified in Numbers xvi. and xvii. will be actually effected, when He will sweep the scene of all that has the character of rebellion against His authority ; but at the same time it is the moment when He will vindicate those who have departed from unrighteousness, and who have desired to suffer with Him, that they may reign with Him.

Dear friends, I ask you, are we going to succumb to the influence of the unrighteousness which is around us? We have His priestly grace for our support, and our comfort is this in the day of reproach: "The Lord knoweth them that are his."

Then again, we know that Christ Himself in resurrection is before God as Man in all the beauty and power of life for evermore. He is there as the witness of every variety of life—beautiful, normal, fruitful life before God—and the evidence that you are His lies in this, that your affections cling to Him, you forsake unrighteousness for Him, and you pursue the path of righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on Him out of a pure heart.

There are those of a pure heart even to-day. They are such as are not seeking their *own*

glory, but His glory. It was a "pure heart" that was lacking in Korah, Dathan and Abiram—they had their *own* glory before them. Jude gives us the summing-up of their course. He speaks of those who "perished in the gainsaying of Core." (Ver. 11.) That is the closing-up of the great system of men—they perish, they go down to the pit. But, on the other hand, he presents to us One who can keep us without stumbling. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

LIGHT  

AND . .

PERFECTION.

**NOTES OF ADDRESSES
BY P. R. MORFORD *M*
AT OLD KENT ROAD
APRIL AND MAY, 1907. *M***

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*NOTES OF ADDRESSES
AT OLD KENT ROAD.*



THE PRIEST WITH URIM AND WITH THUMMIM.

(EXO. XXVIII. 29, 30 ; EZRA II. 61-63 ; HEB. I. 1-12 ;
II. 6-13.)

I DESIRE to bring before you a few salient points in Hebrews and have read the scriptures in the Old Testament which refer to the priest with Urim and with Thummim as giving a key to the epistle. We read in the passage in Ezra, of which there is an exact parallel in Nehemiah, of some who, at the restoration of Israel to the land, had married outside the priestly order and were unable to trace their genealogy—that which alone could give them right and title to have access to God in priestly service. You will remember it was said to them that they should not eat of the holy things “till there stood up a priest with Urim and with Thummim.”

Now we pass down the ages from the restoration of Israel to God's land, to the moment when Christ having come, died and ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high, judgment was about to fall on the unrepentant nation and on the guilty city Jerusalem. Many of the people

had turned to Christ (Acts xxi. 20), yet clung, in order to avoid His reproach, to the old order of Judaism. The epistle before us was written to disengage the affections of such from the venerable system to which their hearts were still attached and to engage them with a glorious Person in heaven, who had entered there as Man. With Him was connected a new and living system that would wholly supplant the lifeless order of Judaism, shortly to disappear under the onslaught of the Roman arms. Now the great question must arise with those to whom the epistle was addressed: "Has that priest yet stood up for whom we look?" The old priestly order on earth was about to pass away; was there anything to take its place for them? What those who were godly among them had to learn was that the priest *had* arisen with Urim and with Thummim—one bearing those marks—and that as attached to Him they were entitled to appropriate holy things.

Now the blessedness of this discovery is not confined to them, but has its bearing on every soul that loves Christ to-day. That which has come to pass in His having gone to the right hand of God is as available for you and me as it was for the Hebrews. Therefore I believe that in this epistle we find the answer to what the Tirshatha spoke of—that this priest *has* arisen with Urim and with Thummim and that in

knowing Him we are entitled not only to eat of—to appropriate—the holy things as presented to us in Hebrews but to know our priestly genealogy as connected with Him. This may seem a little difficult at first view, but if we ponder it I believe it will yield great profit.

It is essential for us to accept at the outset that while there are, at the present moment, venerable systems of religion in this world, all claiming to have a place before God, our place is to be here apart from them, but associated with the Lord Jesus Christ in His rejection here, yet enjoying the good of the glorious place He occupies as Priest in the presence of God. I believe it is as possible for us as it was for these Hebrews, if dissociated from the old order. It all hangs on this: Are we prepared to share Christ's rejection? There are two psalms which give the keynote to the Book of Hebrews; one is Psalm ii., "Thou art my Son," &c. This psalm supposes the rejection of Christ: "Why do the heathen rage?" (Vers. 1-4.) We find them banded together against Jehovah and against His Christ, and in view of that He is saluted by God as Son. The other is Psalm cx., "Jehovah said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Then Christ has enemies? Alas, He has! He is refused and rejected in the very world into which He came in grace. What lies at the

foundation of our entering on the good of the Epistle to the Hebrews is that we be prepared, not only to own, but to share in the refusal and rejection of Christ. We cannot know Him as Priest if we do not own Him as refused and rejected here. Are we prepared for this? That is the first point and I emphasise it strongly for this reason ; Christendom, as seen in the venerable and stately religious systems around us, with great and pretentious claims, has ignored the rejection of Christ, and ignoring His rejection it has lost His Priesthood. If we too ignore His rejection we shall lose His Priesthood ; the one hangs on the other. Read Psalms ii. and cx. and you will be convinced that His place on high depends on the fact of His refusal here. " If he were on earth, he should not be a priest." His Priesthood is in heaven ; His place here is refused Him. That is the first thing.

Now the key to what the Tirshatha said was this, that the Priest who was to arise was to be the Son. That was hidden in the Old Testament ; it is revealed here. " God hath in the end of the days spoken unto us by His Son." God has spoken to us, but in what a character ! Dear friends, it is one of the tenderest relationships that God could have selected. He has come to us in the Person of the Son, and if the Son comes to us He must bring to our hearts the knowledge of divine affection. He

has not spoken to us in the character of Judge, nor of King, but of Son. It means that divine affections have come out to engage ours.

Now I think the Hebrews must have wanted—and we, too, shall want—verification of the fact that Christ is that Priest having Urim and Thummim. Before I touch on what these mean (not that I profess to bring anything new before my brethren, though everything is new in Christ) I would ask you to survey *where* they were. *What* they were is unknown; where they were is fully known—they were on the breastplate. The priest in going in bore them there continually, and that shews us that the thought to be conveyed is one of divine affection, while what they were actually is unknown, yet we know that through Urim God chose to communicate His mind to Israel; hence the moment Hebrews opens we find God speaking. God has fully communicated His mind to us in the Person of the Son, who has entirely displaced the oracles of old. God—the blessed God—has most certainly spoken, and His mind is fully revealed.

Now as to the meaning of the two terms. “Urim” and “Thummim” are two Hebrew words, both in the plural, and the plural is used to mark intensity. “Urim” signifies light or lights, and “Thummim” perfections. The plural conveys the idea of intense light,

and perfection, for we cannot qualify perfection. If we bear these two thoughts in mind we shall see how the Epistle to the Hebrews hangs on the fact that the Priest has arisen bearing those two marks—Urim and Thummim, intense light and perfection. When God saluted Christ as Son it was as come into manhood ; so it is here, as come forth from God as Man to make known the heart of God, that Christ is viewed as the Priest with Urim and Thummim. In the first chapter of Hebrews we get largely the thought of the Urim—intense light, and in the second we have the thought of perfection, both being presented in Himself as *Man*, though a divine Person—God's blessed Son.

If, therefore, He bears these two marks, what is the thought of light? Making God known ; nothing else is light! Is that true of Christ? Has Christ brought to us the light of what God is? Let me give you a simple illustration. Refer to Luke xv. 2 : "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." It scandalised the religious people, those who belonged to the order of things about to pass away. But the Man who was there receiving sinners was in that very act setting forth what God is. The light of God shone in its intensity—bowels of mercy, tender compassion, that yearned over the fall of His creature, and sought to win his heart in affection, that he might come into

the joy of the blessed God. Christ in Luke xv. vindicated the heart of God and His actions: "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad." Christ has brought the light of God here, as stated in Hebrews i. 2. Is that intense light? Indeed it is—the brightness, the effulgence, the daybreak, the shining forth of God's glory. That is seen in that very verse in Luke xv., for His glory was that He could meet man just where man is. More than that, He was not only the effulgence of God's glory, but He was the expression of God's substance. "No man hath seen God at any time;" no creature will ever know absolute Deity, that is outside the grasp of what is finite, and ever will be. God dwells in light unapproachable, but He has sent forth Christ, the expression of His substance. All that is to be known of God is to be learned in Jesus, and nothing outside of Him.

How great He is! He upholds all things by the utterance of His power. Now what did He do? "When he had by himself made purgation for sins;" that is the very first thing before we can touch anything else; sins are all done with. But are they all done with for you? Is there any one here who does not know the forgiveness of his or her sins? You cannot know Christ as Priest unless you know Him as Saviour; that is supposed here. Before He

took His place on high as Priest He went into and dealt with the whole question of sins (at what a cost to Himself!), and having done it He seated Himself in His own divine Majesty on the right hand of the Greatness on high. I ask you, Does He whom we know as Jesus bear the marks of having the Urim and Thummim, of having brought to us the intensity of light? Every heart that loves Him will say, Yes, He does. You can only touch it in divine affection; it is only as our hearts go out to Him and we love Him that we can lay hold of His glorious place as Priest.

I do not propose to go through this chapter in any detail, but I will touch on one very particular point in connection with a passage in Psalm cii., "He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days." There is nothing more affecting than this, that the Lord Jesus Christ—perfect here as Man under God's eye, perfect in His ways before men—was yet at the age of thirty-three deemed by men to be unfit to live here any longer. When He was only just entering on manhood, so to speak, they crucified Him. Do you think that was nothing to Christ? You say, He was going to rise again. Yes, but that psalm lets us into a secret. It tells us what Christ thought as Man, what His soul entered into as Man at being cut off. There is

one very affecting type in the Old Testament, and that is, the green ears of corn dried by the fire (Lev. ii. 14) which were offered to Jehovah, cut off before they were ripe, in one sense, and yet in another in greenness, in ripeness. They were a type of Christ, I believe, according to Psalm cii. Man's sickle had gone over the corn, under the hand of God no doubt, and Christ was cut off. That was the plaint of Christ on the cross—"In the midst of my days," but then the divine answer follows immediately—"Thy years are throughout all generations . . . thy years shall have no end." Think of what the divine answer was! It was given to Him who laid the foundations of the earth, and who was to fold up the heavens. Before time began, Christ was the great Artificer who formed the earth. He will fold up the heavens as a man folds up a garment and lays it by. Who is that? Jesus. And going down to death there as Man He is reminded by Jehovah of that. When all else changes He will not. "Thou art THE SAME"—that is a divine title. He is unchangeable in His Person; death did not change Him, though He did die here. That glorious Man, cut off in the freshness of His youth, is as young to-day as when He rose from the dead. Since the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus history has rolled on its course here for one thousand eight hundred years; great men have arisen, had their short spell, and gone

into the grave. Generations of dying men have been here, but there is one Man who lives, who in His life as Man has spanned all that interval of time, and who lives to-day just the same. You say, We cannot see Him; no, though in one sense we can. He lives as Man (not only as divine, for as having part in Godhead He is the everlasting Father, but as Man He has years for evermore); "Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." There is one Man who has bridged in His own life and Person as Man the whole gulf of time that has intervened since He went into heaven. That is the One with whom we have to do in Hebrews; that is the One who has the light of God—Urim and Thummim.

Now I turn to the other side, only asking you to remember that God spake by Urim. It was said of Saul that God answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets; it is in Jesus God speaks to-day; God has unfolded His mind to us in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now as to the Thummim, I was pointing out that the word signifies perfections. Most Christians have a very good sense that God has made Himself known to them in Jesus; but there is another side in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and one, ignoring which, we fail in the proper understanding of Christianity. Not only is God presented to us in intense light, but on the other hand, man is presented to God in that same

glorious Person. The greater part of the New Testament is taken up with this truth, that He presents man to God in His glorious Person as Man, the Second Man out of heaven—another order of man altogether. Think of Christ's baptism. There was Christ fulfilling all righteousness, identifying Himself with the poor of the flock, and going down to baptism ; and heaven could not contain itself at the sight ; it was rent asunder. The heart of the blessed God *must* come out and find expression. The Spirit of God was identified with that glorious Man who presented under God's eye what man should be to God ; for Christ was that. The apprehension of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ in that way will shew us what the Thummim was—perfection there in His glorious Person.

The question is asked in chapter ii., "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Those who have studied the Old Testament will, no doubt, remember that, in Psalm viii., the first word "*man*" (what is *man*?) is different from the second (son of *man*). The first is weak, frail, mortal man ; while the second is "the Son of Adam." Who is that?—Christ. Not weak, frail, mortal man, but the strong Man ; Son of Adam ; not Adam fallen—but the second Man out of heaven. What has God done with Christ? He has put all things under His feet. Before Him the angels

retire and that Man's glory comes into view. God has brought into view in Christ another order of Man in whom is perfection, and *He* has taken a place Godward. I wish to dwell on at least one of the traits of perfection in His Person : "It became him . . . to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." The place Christ has taken at the head of His people is that of Leader of their salvation ; He is the true Joshua ; He has identified Himself with those who love Him, and taken a place on their behalf Godward. He has been qualified for the place He has taken through sufferings ; it is not the idea of His atoning sufferings exactly, true and terrible as they were, but that He has passed through the very sufferings through which His people have to pass here, and that is His qualification to be their Leader.

His perfection is summed up in this, that He became Man in order to suffer. Now it goes on to say : "Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." Can you identify Christ, the Lord Jesus, as the Priest who has arisen having Urim and Thummim ? Do these scriptures bring Him before you as the One who presents the full light of God to your souls, and who, on the other hand, is great enough as Man to present man in perfection before God ? It is no question of our weakness and failure ; God has not got *us* under His eye, but Christ as Man,

and, for the first time, God has seen in a Man perfection. He did not see it even in Adam innocent. We are not of an innocent order of manhood, but of a fallen one. Christ—the Lord Jesus Christ—is not of the innocent order of man, as Adam was, and He was certainly never of the fallen order, as you and I are. He came into human condition, took true human life, but apart from sin, in order to lay down that life in atonement ; but in His own blessed Person He was ever when here—and He is for ever in resurrection—Man of His own order, unique in His Person, the second Man out of heaven. I would ask you to study the unique manhood of Christ. He is “ God over all, blessed for ever ” ; but the other side of the truth, which is equal and a very necessary side to know, is that He is, at the same time, Man of His own blessed, unique order ; and in that way He is under God’s eye perfection ; Thummim is set forth in His Person.

You will remember that when they came to the Tirshatha, the first point was that they should not eat of the holy things until that priest arose. Now Hebrews brings before us holy things, and “ eating ” is laying hold of them and appropriating them. It is important therefore to see that what God sets before us *are* holy things. He speaks of the tabernacle, and in it of the holy place, and of the most holy place. We often utter these words lightly, but if God says “ holy ”

and "most holy," He means "holy" and "most holy," and we are not entitled to touch these holy things unless we have found and recognised in Christ the Priest who bears those two divine marks—of having come from God to present Him to us, and of having gone to God to present man to God in perfection.

The other point is this, they were unable to trace their genealogy. They had no right to approach God until they could find their place as priests, and they would never be able to do that until that Priest stood up. Israel to-day has no priestly class ; they have their Rabbis, but they have no sacrificing priests. They are a people without sacrifices, although, in God's overruling providence, they are also without idols. They have deliberately ignored the one unique sacrifice of Christ. Their genealogy is gone ; hence they have no priest. In the future, when God again takes Israel up, they will have to find their genealogy in that glorious Man, who has spanned, in His own Person, the gulf of the ages. And it is given to us now, while Christ is in heaven, to trace our genealogy in Him. And how? First we must recognise Him as bearing Urim and Thummim on His breast. Does He carry them in divine perfection, and available for us? I think every one who knows Him will say, Yes, He does! "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one"—sanc-

tified—set apart from this world and its religion, which still goes on to-day. Judaism has disappeared to an extent, but Christendom has come into view “saying they are Jews and are not”; and Christ’s great service is to set His people apart—not only positionally but intrinsically apart—that they should be holy. There is no greater thing in God’s world than the Sanctifier and the sanctified being “all of one.” Think of the grace that can take us up, who a little while ago were sinners, and can lift us on to Christ’s own platform in resurrection and say: “Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one.”

Now, can you trace your genealogy? If you accept that you are “all of one” with Him you may trace your right to approach God in priestly service. That is the height to which He would conduct us.

The succeeding chapters in Hebrews are given to bring us consciously into presence of these realities, that there may be an answer inwrought in God’s people to the glorious position presented in Christ for the affections of their hearts. But no succeeding chapter can transcend in greatness the two first, for these bring before us the unique glories of the Lord Jesus Himself, as on the one hand bringing God to man and on the other presenting man to God.



GOD'S TITHES.

(GEN. XIV. 8, 9, 17-20 ; PSA. CX. 1-5 ; HEB. VII.)

WE were looking last time at a two-fold thought in the first two chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews—the foundation on which the super-structure is built—the glory of Christ's Person, as being Himself the Priest who has arisen with Urim and with Thummim. We were taking the thought from the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, where those of the priesthood who were unable to trace their genealogy were told that they should not eat of the holy things till that priest arose. Looking on to Hebrews, we found that that Priest has arisen, that the glorious Person of our Lord Jesus Christ exactly answers to that mysterious person foreshadowed by the governor of Jerusalem ; for on the one hand we have in the Lord Jesus Christ the intensity of light in the revelation to our souls of the blessed God Himself. He has brought God close to us, He Himself being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His Person. In that way we find Urim, that is, intensity of light, in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Son, and, as

being the Son, is alone capable, and fully capable, of making God known to us. On the other hand, we were glancing at this—how that in Him, at the same time, is found Thummim, perfection. We cannot say intense perfection, for we cannot qualify it; it must be what it is, and we find it alone in Christ as Man in heaven—in no other man; but in Him God can see everything that His heart had ever sought and purposed in man. There was, and is, in the Lord Jesus Christ, raised from the dead and rightly crowned with glory and honour, an absolutely full answer in man to the heart of God. I will repeat what I said then, and I still think it to be true, that what follows in Hebrews cannot possibly transcend the greatness of the first two chapters; they present His Person; the rest gives us what is built on it, and how our souls are conducted into the good of the holy things, which, after all, are all displayed in Himself.

I will now pass on, in order that we may see something of the side on which the Lord Jesus Christ has a place before God according to what He is in the truth of His Person as Man. I mean that there is another side in Hebrews before we come to chapter vii.: the side of our weakness and circumstances here needs to be taken into account. Things are not glossed over; there is reality with God. We are viewed

here as needing mercy and grace ; we are here in weakness, in the wilderness, with every tendency in our hearts naturally to apostatise ; but there is the voice of God, and there is the priesthood of Christ to carry us above our weakness, and to lift us on to His own side. That is the proper side of priesthood—His own side. But the intervening chapters shew us how He lifts and supports us above the pressure here—above every form of pressure which is common to man—bereavement, loss of health, and so on—everything that could affect us naturally. He is prepared, without perhaps altering the circumstances, to lift us into His own company, that we may get our hearts expanded. The natural tendency of pressure here is to compress us, so to speak, to turn us in upon ourselves ; but the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ is to widen us out, to draw us to His own side. That comes in incidentally ; but I would like now to deal a little with the side on which we may contemplate the greatness of Christ's position and Person as the Introducer, the Inaugurator, and at the same time the Sustainer of a wholly new order of things which subsists at this present moment before God in His Person, and into which Christ is prepared to introduce us if we will allow Him to do so.

A very great point in the Epistle to the Hebrews is that Christ is Priest after an entirely

different order from that which obtained in Israel. That order was Aaronic, and it was compassed with infirmity and with human limitations. The order of Christ's priesthood is not Aaronic. He was of a tribe of which nothing was said concerning priests. The order of His priesthood is that of Melchisedec. It is important that we should understand this, for in that way everything is new in Christ: if He were here He would not be a priest. That at the very outset shews that all claim to the priesthood here is absolutely futile and fictitious. There is only one Priest to-day, and He is in heaven. His order, unlike Aaron's, is not hereditary; it centres in the glorious Person of the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. When chapter vii. opens we find that it speaks of Him under the figure of Melchisedec. I admit it is actually Melchisedec who is spoken of, but he himself is a mysterious person brought on the scene, assimilated (as it says here) to the Son of God, in order to portray to Israel and to us the fact that God had ever before Him (before He established Aaron's priesthood) an order of priesthood that lay outside every human limitation, and outside the power and reach of death itself. So when we read of Melchisedec we may well see that it is not that actual person, but the Lord Jesus Christ with whom we have to deal. Melchisedec was, as his name implies, king of

righteousness, and at the same time king of Salem, that is, king of peace. In thinking of Melchisedec, therefore, let us keep before our souls Him of whom Melchisedec was but a very feeble type. In Christianity we have come to One—the Lord Jesus Christ—in whose Person righteousness and peace have kissed each other ; they have come into affinity in His Own blessed Person, and they abide there. He is King of righteousness and King of peace.

We have another king mentioned in Genesis xiv.—the king of Sodom. I suppose Abraham only took up the pursuit of the kings there because of Lot's position. Lot, his relative, who had got into a false position, had been taken captive, and Abraham comes in to rescue him from that false position. The king of Sodom presents the power and riches of this present world ; in Melchisedec were presented the power and wealth and support of *God's* world. They are there in very sharp contrast, and the point when Abraham got the support of God's world in His priest was when he was returning from the slaughter of the kings—when, so to speak, all the riches and opportunity of this world lay at his feet ; it was in a moment, not of weakness, but of victory, when the one in whom the riches of this world were summed up was willing to bestow everything upon him. He came forth to meet him, but Abraham

would have none of it, for God ministered to him in that mysterious personage the support of His own world, and He won, once and for ever, the allegiance of Abraham's heart. Melchisedec brought forth bread and wine. I know of nothing which gives us a greater idea of the resources that are in the Lord Jesus Christ as man than that thought. He brought forth bread and wine—the support and joy of a scene which was totally opposed to the one set forth in the king of Sodom. He brought them forth—we are not told whence; they were extraneous to his person. When we come to Christ, they are intrinsic, they are inherent in His Person. In the more or less necessarily feeble types in the Old Testament there were extraneous things brought in to convey the truth of Christ's official position before God, but when we come to the reality of His blessed Person we find that they are all inherent in Him. So here, the support and joy of God's world—the bread and wine—are in Himself, in whom righteousness and peace have kissed each other. He is King. The idea of a king conveys one who has the ability to publicly administrate these things. Christ will take that place in the future, and no doubt this chapter looks on to the future in its full application, but we can get the good of it at the present moment. He has ability to administrate righteousness and peace. They are not mere

negations ; they are moral territory, so to speak, won and administered in the hands of this great Person, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. We view Him here under the type of Melchisedec, apart from every human limitation. Last time we were looking at Him as the One in whom the gulf of eighteen centuries has been bridged. He has passed into heaven in the midst of His days, and as Man has length of days for ever and ever. Of course, as a divine Person He necessarily has ; but in that one Person—a Man—the gulf of time has been bridged, and we know Him in all the freshness of perpetual, blessed Manhood. Here we find Him independent of every earthly limitation. The Aaronic order was limited, but Christ is viewed as outside all this, and He abides a Priest continually.

“Consider how great this man [not simply “was,” but] is :” that is, Melchisedec assimilated to the Son of God. I ask your attention to the end of verse 8 : “of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.” There are two things that I want to emphasise : one is, that God has secured for His pleasure a world of living affections ; on the other hand, there is one Man who is capable of supporting that world before God for eternity. I do not know whether those thoughts are simple. God has brought in for His own heart a system, a world, a sphere (whatever we call

it) of moral things which are living in the hearts of His people—living affections not subject to death. We have affections here because we all have relationships, but they are all tinged with death. The tenderest relationship in nature has to go, to be closed up in death; but here we find brought out a world of living affections which God has formed for His pleasure, and which, in their very nature, are beyond the reach of death. We come to One of whom it is witnessed that He liveth, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, and we shall find that He in His Person is capable of supporting that world of living affections before God for ever. The ancients pictured a huge being, I think called Atlas, on whose shoulders the heavens were supported, and he bowed himself under their terrific weight; but here we pass from fable to truth, and we find a Person so great that He bears upon His shoulders—nay, not simply upon His shoulders, but on His heart—He can sustain before God, that glorious world which Hebrews brings before us. He has title to do it in that He Himself has gone down, in death, under all its weight and burden.

Now I turn to the thought of tithes. Abraham gave Melchisedec the tenth of all. It is not the question here at all of our paying tithes; I think we do so, but that is not the side of the truth here. The question is, that there is

One great enough to receive them. God ever set out to gain the affections of His people ; He would have living affections, and yet the whole scene was marked by death. Death came in, and the blessed God never obtained from man that perfect answer that He sought. Yet He left on record that He claimed His rights, and His rights were to the affections of man's heart. I believe that is why Christ is King of righteousness. So Abraham acknowledged that Melchisedec had the right to the tenth of all ; the tenth is God's portion. If we trace it through Scripture we shall find it extremely interesting. Jacob says later on that of all that God will give him he will give Him a tenth. I do not think it was a mere hard bargain on Jacob's part (as we have often thought), but a recognition of God's portion. It is not the idea of a tenth of one's income—a kind of spiritual income tax—that is not the idea, for our whole income is His ; but it has a spiritual meaning. God only registered His title in material things that we, and men generally, might apprehend that God claims His right to our affections. He is going to get His portion among men, even if it is a tenth only.

Now the point here is that there is One great enough to receive tithes. God set up His priesthood on earth, an Aaronic priesthood, that they might be able to gather up the affections of the

people and present them to God. That was the proper place of the priesthood of old, I take it, for they were set there to receive tithes ; but there was one thing that spoilt it all. Death marked the whole scene, and marred it in its character. The priests themselves, on account of death, were unable to hold the tithes they received. Now what I find presented in the tithes is, in the first place, the fact that God has brought in for Himself an unfailing answer to His own heart in living affections from the hearts of His people. On the other hand, there is One here, not only great enough to receive them, for it says here (again speaking, I know, of Melchisedec, but Melchisedec as assimilated to the Son of God) : "Here men that die receive tithes ; but there he . . . of whom it is witnessed that he liveth." What does that mean ? It means this, that not only is He great enough to receive tithes, in contrast to the failing priesthood of old, to find, to form and to gather up for God all that is of God in the hearts of His people, but what is more, He can hold them, and why ? His hands will never relax in death. He died once ; He went under the burden of this world of woe and sin, not only to remove that burden from before God, but that He might too become a sympathising Priest (able to enter into all our infirmities) ; that He might rise out of death and

take the place of priesthood in resurrection, and be great enough to hold all that He receives. "Consider how great *this man!*" He is great enough not only to know how to find all that is of God here and to form it, but to sustain it and hold it all before God for ever. That was the point I wanted to come to in this chapter.

Now passing on we find that : "The priesthood being changed, there is . . . a change also of the law," and that "after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another [or, a different] priest." "There is a . . . change also of the law," the old law was one of limitation, it made nothing perfect. (See vers. 18, 19.) That is the character of law. There has been a disannulling of it, but if we place ourselves under it in any shape or form we shall fail entirely of apprehending God's glorious world and our place in Christ. It is not that there is no law in Christianity, but if we place ourselves deliberately under the law of demand we shall be losers for ever, and the woeful thing is that Christendom is a sort of mixture of law and grace. Christ is brought in to try and make me fit to approach God. All that marked that line of things was absolute weakness. The law made nothing perfect, but when we come to what is here we have come to perfection. "A change of law ;" what is that change? The law hangs on the priest. If there is a different

priest there must be a change of law ; I believe we get that different law unfolded in the next chapter in the new covenant. It is the law of what God can be to us, and is for us, and we get, connected with it, a better hope by which we draw nigh to God. (Read vers. 18, 19.) The great point in the Epistle to the Hebrews is that we should know what our title is to draw nigh to God, and that everything is in the Priest and not in ourselves, and if we learn the place He has before God we shall learn what that better hope is by which we draw nigh to God. He is the Surety, the Pledge, of a better testament. We see it all described in Him—that Man continueth ever: He has the priesthood intransmissible ; He abides Priest. It is asked whether there will be priesthood in eternity. I do not know, but I am quite certain of this, that that glorious scene which God has brought in for His own heart cannot possibly support itself, but must be supported in the Son. It says of Him here, "He is able to save to the uttermost all that approach God by him." I do not think that this is saving as far as our first relationship with Him goes—that is all supposed in Hebrews—but here it is to save us from the trammels of a religious system which is effete as claiming approach to God in connection with man down here, and not in connection with

Christ's priesthood. We need saving from that. It presses on us on every side ; it is not simply outside, we find it in our own hearts. Now He is here to save us from it. He is able to save out and out—right through—those who approach God by Him.

At the end of the chapter we find not only that righteousness and peace have kissed each other, but when we look at the priesthood of old we find that between what was personal in the priests and what was official there was very great disparity. In their official character they had a place before God, in one sense, apart from weakness ; in their personal character they were compassed with infirmity—men who needed to offer for their own sins as well as for the people's. Now the great stand-by for our hearts is the thought that between what the Lord Jesus Christ is in His Person and what He is in His official character there can be no possibility of disparity. Let me make that perfectly clear. Christ's place as a Priest is an official place, that is, one in which He has a place before God as such ; but, on the other hand, there is what He is personally. Now between those two there is absolutely no disparity ; there is no gulf between what Christ is in His own Person morally and what He is in the position He has taken up before God. That is the great comfort to our hearts. It gives us

the greatest possible confidence, for it shews us that He cannot fail in support for us ; it is impossible that He could ever give way. "Such an high priest became us, holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." These last few words give us His position, the others the moral qualities of His person. "Holy, harmless, undefiled"—could that ever be said of one of the priesthood of old? Not even of Aaron himself. What is Christ's position to-day? Separated from sinners ; it was not so when He was here. He has taken a place now in regard to the worship of God. If we are bringing before Him our sins, and what He has saved us from, we are not laying hold of Christ as He is presented here, as the great Priest that becomes us. He is separated from sinners and made higher than the heavens. That is His official position. Now look at His personal position. "The law maketh men high priests which have infirmity ;" that is what marked them as to their persons. In one particular at least even Aaron has to confess his infirmity to Moses. Christ is not compassed with infirmity ; in His own Person He is outside all that. "The word of the oath, which was since the law," &c. In the law everything depended on man ; in the oath everything depends upon God. Christ is made High Priest by the swearing of the oath, and that "maketh

the Son consecrated for evermore." That is the greatness of His glory, that He is "perfected for evermore." What He is in His Person is exactly commensurate with the official position He holds before God ; so that not only is He able to present the affections of His people before God, and to gather them up, but He can give effect to them in His own Person ; for what is the thought of the Son? The One in whom every divine relationship centres. The One who is capable, not only of expressing the heart of God, but of expressing in that place the heart of man towards God, because He is the Son. He can never lower that place, for His official place and personal glory exactly respond to one another. The way in which He has made God known to us is exactly equal to the way in which He has presented man to God.

He is Priest for ever after this new order, and we may know Him in that place. The great function of priesthood was to be able to gather up all that was for God and to present it before Him. Never before was it efficiently done, because the men belonged to a dying system, till One took it up who had been into death, and of whom it is witnessed that He liveth, and He is capable of securing the tenth for God and of holding it for ever. Would it not give us great stability if we laid hold of the thought of God's living world? Here outwardly death

is still upon men, and yet in God's people here living affections are kindled Godward which death will never be able to break off; they can never pass away, for they are all held in the undying hands of that glorious Man who can maintain them ever before God—who lives on account of the Father, and can give us to live on account of the Father. We get the same thought in John vi. There Christ is able to bring forth food for the whole multitude, but, what is more, He is capable of supporting God's world before Him, and He will never let it pass away. He will raise up all that the Father has given Him. Nothing that is of God—that is of divine affections—will ever pass into death. They are in the keeping of Christ, and we are brought in touch with an order of things outside death. Death cannot touch Christ, and it cannot touch those undying affections which He has already kindled in our souls. One can say little about it, but I ask you just to consider how great that Man is who is marked by upholding that whole world in affection before God, and has ability to save to the uttermost those who approach God by Him.

DIVINE SERVICE.

(HEB. VIII. ; IX. I.)

AT Sinai God made a covenant with Israel, but what followed on that was complete breakdown. Here we get God promising a new covenant, and what marks all connected with that is, that it is entirely outside the breakdown. When we get to this chapter we are lifted entirely outside the failure and the ruin that is here, because everything hangs upon God, not upon man. I want to dwell upon that to make the ground clear, that while it does bring in the "us" at the end of the previous chapter, and this chapter says "we have," still it is the holy brethren, not viewed in connection with the breakdown, nor even in connection with their individual circumstances of trial and pressure and difficulty (the earlier part of the epistle has been occupied with that, and how it is met), but viewed here as Christ's companions, the holy brethren, the sanctified company. It is imperative that we should notice that, else we might fail to see the true bearing of the place Christ takes here. As I said, chapters iii., iv., v. and vi., and even chapter vii. to some extent, shew the priestly place Christ has taken in regard to our weakness here, not exactly sin, for sin is wilful in Hebrews

and only conducts to apostasy ; hence the saints are not viewed as being liable to sin, but they are viewed in the earlier chapters as being here in weakness, and the first aspect of Christ's priestly care for His saints is that He lifts them above the weakness. In all that is incidental to us as here, pressure of every kind, summed up (as we have often heard) in bereavement, the breaking of links here, or the failure as to our bodily health, or the exigency of contrary circumstances—the point is, are we with God in them? If we are, if we are not seeking our own will, all the priestly service of Christ is available for us. It is not that Christ alters our circumstances, but He has ability to lift us up to His own level. That is what Christ is effecting in the earlier part of the epistle, where you find Him who has gone through the heavens, and He has left the marks of His love on all that He has passed through. He has passed through as the high priest did in going into the holy place, and He is there to succour, and not only to succour, but to sympathise. Do we weigh it enough, that Christ sympathises with us? It is the beating of His heart as Man with ours. God does not sympathise as such, He compassionates ; but Christ entered into true human condition that He might feel with us. I can have the greatest concern for my fellow-saint who is in

evil circumstances, but if I have been in them and am out of them myself I can *feel with*, I can sympathise, and Christ *feels with*, and He lifts us above them. What for? That He may lift us into His circumstances; that is Hebrews. He takes us off our platform that He may lift us to His platform.

Now I would like to touch the side by which Christ is before the face of God in regard to taking us in as to priestly service. The first side must be known, however. If we have not known His sympathy, if we do not know His priestly grace to lift us to His level, we shall never be there according to God. Now the first covenant was made with Israel, and the result was complete breakdown; but before the breakdown came in God shewed to Moses a complete pattern of that which, in Christ, was under His eye and was to abide. Truly the breakdown had to come in, but it had not come in when God shewed the pattern to Moses. There is no breakdown in the Spirit, and I want to bring before you in this chapter the scene where there is no breakdown. You will see the importance of the new covenant coming in in the latter part of the chapter, because if the new scene beyond the breakdown comes before us we must be in suitability to it, and we cannot be in suitability in ourselves, everything must be of God. It all depends upon Him;

we have to come to an end of ourselves. We have to come to this—I can be nothing for God, but there is everything in God. It is all over on the line of “Thou shalt” or “Thou shalt not”—the death of Christ proved that; the old is disappearing. At the end of this chapter God pronounces the word “new,” and if God has said “new” it means that the old must go in me, in you, in creation. God has got what is new, entirely new, before Him. Christianity is what is new; it is the test of everything.

If that be so, we shall find that, first of all, a new order of priesthood comes into view, presented in type in Melchisedec, that mysterious personage, assimilated to the Son of God. Christ outside the failure and ruin has resources great enough to uphold God’s world, great enough to minister to all that belongs to it. We shall find also a new covenant, new worshippers and a new sanctuary; it is all living and real *now*, not simply in the future. We have come in this chapter to the chief point of the epistle—“Now of the things which we have spoken this is the *sum*”—it is the heading up, the climax. “We have such an high priest.” Remember, beloved fellow-saints, we are viewed here, not as connected any longer with our weakness, but with His strength. We are in connection with Christ, the One who is there on our behalf. “Such an high priest became *us*.” Yes! It is

the holy company, God's holy company, whose calling is so great that it needed such a High Priest to be for them. In the mind of God none less than such a High Priest would befit the holy brethren. These very chapters are to confirm in our souls the knowledge of the place in which He has put us in connection with His Son. Properly, He has called us to sonship, though that is not developed here. "The word of the swearing of the oath maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore."

"We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens." We are conducted in thought, at the very outset of this chapter, to God's presence ; we are taken where we may survey things from God's standpoint. How do we do it? Well, in that way we have to abstract ourselves, we have to view ourselves as drawn aside from our circumstances and surroundings. God in His power once enabled a wicked man to be abstracted from things here. He can effect what He will, and by His sovereign power God once abstracted that very wicked man Balaam by a vision and a trance. Much more by His Holy Spirit can God abstract us, and make us see things from His standpoint. I refer to that particularly because there is a covert allusion here to Balaam's prophecy. He was taken up to the top of the rocks and saw Israel from God's side, and then

he describes their beauty and order. (Num. xxiv. 5, 6.) It was not that God was concerned with cedars and waters; they all figure what comes under God's eye in its moral beauty and order in Christ by the Spirit. If we see with God we shall view all that is of God; we shall see it according to its definite order and beauty outside the breakdown. Naturally we are so occupied with breakdown, even in the few of us who have the privilege of walking together. How much we see one another's faults! I have no doubt that those goodly tents of Jacob and tabernacles of Israel would have looked very different if Balaam could have gone in and out among them; he did presently, and he quickly enough knew how to drag the people down to his own level when he saw all that was going on in their midst. But he viewed them here from above, from God's standpoint; and he, though he failed, may well bring before us this—that we also should view things from God's standpoint. We shall not then be occupied with the failure in one another, or even in ourselves, but with what is of God there—with God's world. This is the effect of the New Covenant.

Now Christ is introduced in a twofold character, as Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. There are two distinct thoughts there, and I desire to present simply the Lord

Jesus according to them. I speak for a moment of the tabernacle. The tabernacle which God gave was no doubt intended to be a figure of that great world of blessedness which was going to be for ever under His eye in Christ, and which He was going to form for and according to His pleasure. It is boundless and limitless as the heart of God itself. I have no doubt that it compasses every family that is going to be blessed under God's hand in Christ; for of course God is not concerned merely with material things, but with living, moral realities,—living beings—and the tabernacle was intended to embrace the whole universe that God will bring in for His pleasure. Then there was one part of it, called the sanctuary, which particularly presented the place of association between Christ and His companions of to-day—the holiest. There Aaron and his sons were meant to enter and worship; as a matter of fact, they never did; failure came in on the first day. But Christ is Minister of the sanctuary as well as of the true tabernacle. It is curious that the quotation from Numbers xxiv, 5, 6, "as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted," was also rendered "as tabernacles which the Lord pitched." We come here to the reality of what was there shadowed forth, "the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man," to what is now under God's eye in its unfailing beauty

and order. That gives us a competent test for everything that lays claim to being of God here. If it has been pitched by Jehovah, it is of God ; if it bears marks of having been pitched by man, we can eschew it. It is a simple guide for the simplest of us—to see whether the tabernacle we have to do with, the religious order presented to us, has been pitched by man or by God. It is obvious that if there is anything of man in the way it has been set up, it is not of God.

I have no doubt that the tabernacle was properly pitched when the Spirit descended from above, as related in Acts ii. ; He pitched then the house of God, but, at the same time, it was the initiation of God's new world, of a limitless sphere of blessing. The Spirit had come down, on the ground of redemption, to bring in an unfailing order of things that was to be for God. Now we have got One who is Minister of that order of things, not only in the broad aspect as the tabernacle, but in its inner view as the holy place. Aaron was, of course, minister of the old tabernacle ; here he is entirely eclipsed by Christ, who comes in as the official Minister of that glorious order of things that is before God in Himself and in His saints, as "all of one" with Him. The great care of Christ in that way is to take in hand the holy vessels of divine service. The first tabernacle was filled with holy vessels of

divine service; in the next chapter we find a great many of them enumerated, and they all have an answer at the present moment in Christ and the holy brethren who are connected with Him, and I think the thought of the Minister of the sanctuary is One who can preserve the holy vessels and the holy places clean and fit for the service of God. We get a similar idea in 2 Timothy, where the distinction is drawn between man's tabernacle—the "great house," and what God has pitched: "the sure foundation of God stands." When that distinction takes effect in our souls, so that we stand apart from iniquity (what man has pitched), then we find this: "He shall be a vessel unto honour, meet for the Master's use." How will He use us? In service Godward. Here He is the Minister of holy places, or holy things, or holy vessels. What are they? I believe they are His holy brethren, His called companions of the present day; they all set forth living realities. Christ can lift you and me (who a little while ago were sinners in this world) into His own company, and form and fashion and mould us there so that He can use us in His own service, and then His great care is to keep us clean and ready for the service of God. He undertakes that, and I think we feel the need of it. To be practical: one comes to a meeting, half distracted it may be—there has been all

the rush and worry of business or domestic life, so that perhaps there is half an hour before one can get at all right ; all the pressure has to be got over. Well, Christ's service is to hold us free from distraction : He takes up the holy vessels to keep them clean and ready for the service of God. That is a great thing, for God *will* be served. He has laid it down in His word that He will be served : " Let my son Israel go, that he may serve me." I do not mean service in the way simply of preaching the gospel. That is one side of service, and I think it flows from this ; but God will be served in the way of worship. One often feels as if He did not get much. If we look at the side of the poverty of our worship, the little we have to bring, we have to confess that there is very little for God. We want to turn from that side to this, *that God is efficiently served*. I mean this, that it is by Christ. Christ has taken up a place to-day of service Godward, and *He* serves God ; all is in His hands. It is not a question of my being a " tiny vessel," but that Christ is the great vessel. He is the One in whom everything is sustained Godward. I would like to bring before you the greatness of the place Christ has as Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, and He is that in such sort that there is no breakdown or failure in God's service. God is efficiently served because the One who has charge of

the sanctuary, the One who is Minister of it, is Christ, and on man's behalf He stands before God. If we laid hold of that it would lift us above the meetings, whether they are poor or not. What is under God's eye is Christ, and connected with Christ are the holy brethren, apart from the weakness and failure here. I can well remember how often that chapter used to be read in the Old Testament about the first-fruits (Deut. xxvi. 1-5, &c.); that is right enough. In one sense we do bring the firstfruits when we come together, that is, Christ; but the point is, that we are not content to leave that relative outside that is always a hindrance, "our father the Syrian." He represents our old condition, what we were, not as connected with Christ, as holy brethren, but afar from God. We cannot afford to bring the Syrian in, he spoils everything. We must view ourselves here as abstracted from our condition and circumstances. It is Christ who is before us, and Christ is before God, and God is efficiently served.

The word minister here has a very large application. It is a peculiar word; it carries with it the thought of a public, official place. We have the word in its application to service, that is, "liturgy;" and so the word here is properly "liturgist"—one who takes up an official, public place. I admit Christ has not got

that place at the moment. There is no public worship to-day. The idea prevails in Christendom of public worship, but it is as yet too early for that, for Christ is rejected here. There can be no public worship where Christ is rejected. There is going to be public worship, for that is what will mark God's world in a coming day. When He ushers in His day there will be public worship. Read all the last psalms of the fifth book. "Let everything that hath breath praise the name of the Lord." Will that be public worship? Yes. Why? Because Christ will not be rejected then; He will be in honour. Now Christ has already the place of Minister of worship, and He is going to have it publicly, too. When God's world is brought into display God will be publicly and efficiently served, but by Christ. He is going to uphold that great scene of worship pictured in the end of Psalm xxii., "All the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." Read the last psalms, every one beginning and ending with Hallelujah—"Praise ye the Lord." Everything is called upon to join in that grand chorus of worship to Jehovah. Is that scene going to be self-supporting? No, it will all be held in the hands of a Man, and that Man God's blessed Son, Christ. He is great enough to be set in that glorious, official position in which He can support the magnificence of that hymn of worship to God

right through the ages. He will then be seen in His true character of Minister of public worship. To-day *we* know Him in that character, but it is hidden ; it is all before God in secret ; it is worship in spirit and in truth. And if we know Him in that character, we shall be able to pass in spirit with Him into all the breadth of what He upholds to-day before the face of God. We have but to lay hold of Him in the glory of His Person and in the greatness of the official position He occupies before God. He holds that official position, not in any coldness of office, but in affection. As a Priest all His affections as Man are engaged, and then He sets all our affections in motion. It would give us great confidence in our meetings to know this, that God is efficiently served. Christ takes up your poor heart and mine, and He can form and fashion and fill and fit them for the service of God. So it goes on to say here : " Every high priest . . . somewhat also to offer." What has Christ to offer ? I believe He offers to God the affections of the holy brethren, affections which He Himself has formed. He forms His holy brethren for the service of God. When Christ was on earth, there was one whose action brings before us anticipatively the beauty of this position—Mary in John xii. We see there, if only in pattern, how Christ, as Minister of the sanctuary, could take her up as a holy vessel—

though nothing in herself—and could fit her to come into the worship of God, and in that way I think the alabaster box of ointment shewed the measure of praise which Christ could draw from her heart. She herself disappears as an individual ; she is here a pattern of the worshipping company. At the end of this chapter we find that Christ has ability, as Minister of the sanctuary, to take up the worship of the hearts of the ministering company (as set forth in the alabaster box of ointment), to present all to God—all of the sweetest fragrance before God. We have the poor always with us, but there are moments when we can afford to be abstracted from occupation with the poor, to let the worship and adoration of our hearts flow out to God through Christ.

Think of the greatness of His position Godward, that He can uphold the worship of our hearts ! I do not think Mary was occupied with her poorness ; she was lifted outside herself, and Christ and God in Christ was the one Object ; everything was surrendered that it might be expended on Him, and He was great enough to take it all up.

Now why does the new covenant come in at the end of the chapter ? It is because if we are to be put in touch with a scene that is so great as this we must be formed in suitability for it. That work must be of God ; it can be nothing

in ourselves, we cannot work ourselves up to it. We might see the level of it, and determine to be "up to date" in our meetings, and not go on a sort of low level. Very well—that only means confusion. That is the old order, of what we *ought* to be. That is near "disappearing," and to bring that in now spells disaster. How many times we have tried it! We have felt things are not up to the level at which they ought to be, and that we must just raise the tone a little! That is simply Sinai—what we ought to be for God, but what comes in here is what *God can be for us*: "I will"—all is of God, that we may be brought into the conscious knowledge of Himself. It is that, and that only, from which worship can spring, and in which we may be suitable and at home in that glorious scene into which He would conduct us. That is why the new covenant comes in: the old one was ineffective, and God found fault with it. It was not efficient to lead men into the service of God. It failed because men were on the line of what they could be to God; but what a comfort to let all that side go!—to place ourselves unreservedly in the hands of Christ, as Minister of the sanctuary, that He may do what He will for us and with us. Our responsibility is to be separate for Him; His glorious privilege to take us up as vessels "meet for the Master's use," He knows what

to do with them. Our privilege is to surrender ourselves into His hands.

Now the end of this chapter tells us how we are formed for the enjoyment of and entrance into this holy scene. First of all there must be forgiveness: "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." God says: I have met all that in atonement through the death of Christ. If Christ has taken His seat on high, having made purgation of sins, it is the guarantee that God will remember them no more. When a Sovereign ascends the throne there is usually (in the case of political offenders at least) what is called an amnesty granted; that means a "not-remembering-any-more," and that is what is used here, though it is a still stronger word. That is the effect of Christ having taken His place at the right hand of God. Do you know God's amnesty, God's no-more-remembering of sins? But then there is another side. God comes in to teach us, and how we need it! He teaches us line upon line, and what is the force of His teaching? That we should come to the consciousness of Himself as our God, not simply as our Saviour, but to the conscious knowledge of Himself in the enjoyment of our souls. Looking forward to the future, we have: "I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." It is Christ written there, and to-day in anticipation Christ is formed in

the affections of our hearts by His Spirit. That is, we are taught to love Christ, and if so, we appreciate what is of Christ. And what is the effect? We know God consciously, and that cannot be taken from us.

I desire to shew you God's way of working. When He sets out to teach people, with whom does He start? The lowest form! "For all shall know me, from *the little one* among them to the great one." That is where God starts—with the little one. Nobody need be left out where God is left free to work.

None of His own need despair of knowing the blessedness of Christ as presented in this chapter. God has said "new;" the old has disappeared from His eye; then why not from yours and mine? If we accept His amnesty and surrender to His teaching, the old order will disappear from our eye too. We shall be able to let the old go, and to take up in conscious suitability our glorious place with Christ, the Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.



HOLY BOLDNESS.

(LEV. XXI. 10-24; HEB. X. 1-30.)

THERE are two great principles, not only principles but privileges, in Christianity which mark it off most definitely from the Jewish religion which preceded it. Both of them are brought forward in this Epistle to the Hebrews that they may have a separating effect upon those who are addressed, and both are used in the way of the strongest warning lest, having been presented, they should be refused. The first of these two privileges we find in chapter vi., which we passed over for the moment; the second is in chapter x. The first is the abiding fact that God's Holy Spirit has come down here, where Christ was, in order to maintain in power all that came in through Christ, and to bring to light the powers of that world which is shortly coming into display. That is chapter vi. It unfolds, on the positive side, the present blessings which come to God's people outwardly, in the outward profession of Christianity, consequent on the power and presence of the Holy Ghost down here. It brings in the awful results if that power and presence be renounced. This

chapter x. brings to light the second great principle of Christianity, upon which in fact all is founded, and that is the one, unique, exclusive sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ: *one*, in that there can be no place for a second; *unique*, in that our mind or the mind of men could never have conceived it—much less have carried it into effect—but only could it have found its source in the heart of God; *exclusive*, in that having, as it has done, accomplished the whole of God's will, it can leave no possible room for any other intervention on the part of God. That again is presented in the way, first of blessing, then of warning: blessing if the good of it be taken heed to; awful warning if its value be slighted. The two things have been falsified in man's hands. The power and presence of the Holy Ghost here have been superseded by the human invention of a clergy; the unique, atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ has been displaced among men by sacraments. In those two thoughts you get the key to the ruin and failure of that which outwardly bears the name of Christ and professes nearness to God. So much for the failure; now for the good.

We may read in chapter vi. the positive blessings that have come in in the profession of Christianity through the presence and power of the Spirit. They are positive blessings if

men will avail themselves of them. I allude to verse 4 onwards: "Those who were once enlightened"—that is the first effect of the presence and power of the Spirit; "And have tasted of the heavenly gift"—that is the second great blessing; "And were made partakers of the Holy Ghost"—that is, the Holy Ghost has come within the range of man, and has brought here the blessings of heaven. There is a sphere here marked by the Holy Ghost, and the very profession of Christianity brings men into touch with that sphere. "And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come;" I have no doubt these last are summed up in the power of resurrection. They are all positive blessings to be known and enjoyed here in the power of the Holy Ghost. If any one falls away from them all is over, for sin in Hebrews has the character of apostasy. Priesthood is not for sin in Hebrews, but for infirmity—a very different thing. Infirmity is weakness, and the Spirit can join His help to our weakness (Rom. viii. 26), but not to our sin. It has often been said that when Sarah laughed it was infirmity; when she lied, it was sin. Sin in Hebrews has the character of departure from the living God; that is why the warning comes in. So in chapter x. we find the warning coming in if we neglect or slight the one great sacrifice of Christ.

Now as to the positive side of the blessing. The whole tenor of the middle chapters of Hebrews is the presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Minister of the sanctuary, as the One who takes hold of the holy vessels of service, which are God's saints. Christ takes them up that He may fit them in separation from this world for the service of God. We saw how "if a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use ;" and then the Master of the house takes those vessels and fits and prepares them for the service of God. That service of fitting and preparing is a very real thing, and I want to give an idea of it. I have no doubt that all whom I address know the forgiveness of their sins. They have received it by faith in the announcement of God's glad tidings to them, but I do not think that that in itself will give them fitness to enter God's presence. There must be God's work in the soul—what I speak of as God's fitting of the vessel ; He must produce there that which is akin in nature to Christ. If God works to bring about Christ in the soul (which is the effect of the new covenant), what will result in the vessels is that, not only will they know the forgiveness of sins as a matter of faith in the glad tidings, but they will have it in conscious enjoyment by the power of the Holy

Ghost. You say you do not see the difference. It is this: the first thought is forgiveness of sins in regard to your justification or clearance; but here it is no more conscience of sins in regard to approach to God. Neither you nor I could draw nigh to the presence of a holy God at this present moment if there were the stain and conscience of sin upon us; but the work of Christ is through His Spirit, to perfect us as to conscience. It all rests upon His atoning death, for by one offering we are perfected. He has established the will of God, and in doing that He has set aside man's will. The work is all on God's side; there may be failure on ours. I read that extremely important scripture in Leviticus because it is of great help to us to see where the failure comes in. The positive side is this, that Christ came here into manhood that He might carry into effect God's will. He has done it; He has taken away the system of sacrifices (which after all gave only temporary relief to the conscience), and in place of that He has established God's great will. That has put us out of court; there is no room for our will.

Now God's will is our sanctification. What is sanctification? Setting apart. What is in question here is God's priestly company, the companions of Christ. In the Old Testament God set apart visibly and actually the tribe of

Levi, that they might be a priestly company and serve Him in divine things. Not only were they positionally set apart, but there had to be in them bodily correspondence with their calling ; I do not say spiritual correspondence, but if there was in them a bodily blemish they were thereby unfitted for the intimacy of priestly service. They were not disqualified as to being sons of Aaron, and in a certain measure they could appropriate holy things, they could eat them, but they were disqualified from the service of God from coming unto the veil. In Christianity it is not bodily defects that disqualify. We have come to a new order, the order of the Spirit, and what disqualifies now is moral deformity where there should be none, for the sacrifice of Christ has paved the way for perfection. If there be hesitancy on our part to enter in, if there be moral deformity, we cannot place that burden on Christ. Let us individually weigh these traits in Leviticus, which I think will throw up into stronger light the beauty of the boldness into which the Spirit would lead us in Hebrews x. It is the death of Christ, as having set aside our wills and established God's will, that gives this boldness. He has effected all, and He is prepared to take up the holy vessels (the holy brethren), and fashion them that they may have boldness for the privilege of entering into the presence of the blessed God.

Now as to the hindrances mentioned in Leviticus xxi. 16-24. You will see very plainly that it is the generations of Aaron's seed that are in question. It is not a question of sinners but of the priestly company to which I think we come in this part of Hebrews. They are viewed as apart from the weakness and failure of the flesh here, properly speaking, but as those who are set apart by Christ's death—are constituted His companions. These are addressed here. (Ver. 17.) I say this to start with, that these blemishes were not in the power of the individual to remove. The Spirit brings before us moral blemishes so that in self-judgment we may have them removed. That is the great advantage of Christianity over Judaism, that if these things exist in us they are brought before us that we may judge them, and in judging them they disappear. They are almost too simple for us to dwell on, but if we go through them on our knees with God, I believe He can and will in one moment expose things to us that hinder our approach to Him, and give us power to judge them. The effect on any man who had a blemish was that he could not go in unto the veil. (Read vers. 21-23.) Why? ". . . . that he profane not my sanctuaries: for I the Lord do sanctify them." God would surround Himself only with what is of Christ.

I believe that while the negative side is

largely touched on here, it brings us to the positive side of Hebrews x. the moment we touch the thought of the veil. To return to Hebrews again, the sacrificial order of things was wholly ineffective to bring souls to God. It doubtless gave relief of conscience for the time, but on the great day of atonement the remembrance of sins was made every year. It was a system of bringing sins to mind. Christianity is a system of putting sins out of mind. "I will remember no more"—that is the point with God. My sins shew what I was. If God would bring us into His own service in worship, He would lead us beyond what we were; He would lead us to what He is, that is, to Christ. He presents before us the great sacrifice of Christ, which has taken the place of all the sacrifices of old: "A body hast thou prepared me." That body was the vehicle of Christ's obedience. Weigh for a moment the simplicity of scripture, that Christ took a body! He who was Himself "over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 5), came into true human condition; He took human life that He might die, and it was truly human life. Had it not been, there would have been no atonement, for He laid down that very life to which in you and me sin had to say. He took human life apart from sin but He truly laid down that life; that was atonement. That was the great force of His

taking a body, in order to carry out God's will, as it says: "Mine ears hast thou digged" (Ps. xl. 6, marg.), which is translated here: "A body hast thou prepared me."

Now in death, Christ has set aside once and for ever the human will, and with it the great system of sacrifices which have to say to the old order; but He has established on an unalterable basis God's will, which is the sanctification of His people. "By the which will we are sanctified"—that is, set apart for God—"through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." How affecting it is in the Supper—"This is my body, which is . . . for you"! There was one Man here whose body was wholly for God: it was the vehicle of unswerving obedience to God. He had never learned to obey, it was His to command, but He "*learned obedience*" here in that in lowly manhood His body was at the disposal of God, and that body was given up in death, the very climax of obedience. He laid down His life; none could take it from Him. That body which could see no corruption, but in which God's will had been done, went into the grave, and "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." That sets aside the old order, and therefore we get this great contrast: "Every priest standeth daily ministering and offering often-

times the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins"—that is the old order—"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." Christianity is a perfected system, it is a perfect order of things. The work of Christ has been carried out to the full, and now Christ has sat down in perpetuity at the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. You have come to perfection in the work of Christ, and the whole effort of Satan is to rob people of it. The great professing system, the church of Rome, knows that its doom is sealed by this verse, and they will not let the people know it; they translate that verse: "This man, *offering* one sacrifice for sins," an unfinished sacrifice! What a mockery! We have not come to an order of sacrifice which is going on at the present moment, but to a finished one, perfect in One who laid down His life, and has sat down on the right hand of God. What is the consequence? It is that "by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." His saints, the priestly company, are not only set apart by Christ's death according to God's will, but they are perfected, that is, they are brought in touch with an order of things which is in itself perfection, for it rests upon a perfect work. I wonder whether we young saints have come to it,

that we are "perfected for ever;" that is, as to our conscience, that there should be no more conscience of sins with us. It is not that we are here in the unfitness of Leviticus xxi.: we see what the work of Christ has effected for us, and that by that one offering God has perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Have you a difficulty about it? How can you have a difficulty when the Holy Ghost is a witness to you? But where? In the very fact that He is here and can address you, and here it is even in the inspired page: "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us," not for faith, but for the consciousness in your soul—there is the positive declaration that you have the forgiveness of sins. If that be so, if God has perfected the companions of Christ, what can hinder their approach? Nothing. The whole chapter is to lead God's saints up to enter on their privilege with boldness, and what is that? The way into the holiest. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest . . . by a new and living way . . . dedicated for us." Think of the contrast in Eden. God had walked with man, not on the ground of redemption, but in that measure of holy communion which could exist between the Creator and the unfallen creature who was formed in His likeness. When man fell, God drove out Adam and his wife, and He placed at the east

of the garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword to keep the way of the tree of life. The cherubim were the ministers of God's authority, and the flaming sword, I have no doubt, was death. If man ever attempted to regain the state of innocence here, he was met point-blank by death. Man in flesh cannot force his way beyond the mystery of death, which in its fiery power turns in every direction. But what have we come to here? A new and living way; once more the way of life, but "through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." That is, He came here into true human condition that He might die, but it was in His death that He Himself underwent the very penalty that He had pronounced upon man at the beginning. He tasted death; we do not in the same sense, for we have been privy to evil, and we cannot tell what death must be in the sight of a divine Person. He tasted it, for He could weigh it, and He knew its evil power and bondage and terrors for man, but He went into it. By that means He has made a new and living way for us. The cherubim no longer guard that. No! The cherubim are on our behalf. Think of the veil in the Old Testament, which sets forth in its perfect beauty the life of Christ. It was spread out upon the four pillars made of shittim wood overlaid with gold. In that way we get portrayed in its beauty the whole life of Christ,

telling us that when Christ was here it was ever in view of redemption ; He came to die. Death had no claim upon Him ; man could never take His life from Him. He laid it down, and there never was a moment when Christ was here but what His death was in view. Even in that supreme moment when, as Man here, He was on the mount of transfiguration, Moses and Elias spoke of His departure, His exodus, from this scene.

I invite your attention to the thought of the veil, for there was set forth in that the perfection of His humanity—the blue—the heavenly colour ; the purple, the royal colour ; the scarlet, human glory, to which, mark you, Christ alone had title. Then it was woven with cherubim, that is, the very judicial power of God which was against man in the garden of Eden is now for man ; it is woven in the veil, through which we pass.

I would like to remove a very common misconception in regard to the veil. People often speak of the “rent veil” in Hebrews, but in Hebrews the “*rent* veil” is not spoken of. In Matthew xxvii. we read that when Christ died the veil of the *temple* was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. What was that for ? It was an actual fact, and it was a figure of God’s *coming out*, of God’s approach to man ; the rending of the veil set forth that

the death of Christ had set free the flood-gates of God's heart of love. But there is nothing about the rent veil here in Hebrews, nor about the temple. It is the veil of the tabernacle that is in question here, not of the temple. *This* veil was never rent. The fact is, that while we could never have gone in if God had not come out, what is set forth here is not God's coming out, but our going in. We go in by the way God came out: we go in *through* the veil. What does that mean? I think it means this, that what we are as natural men or women can never have to say to God's holy presence. If we approach Him it is *through* the veil, it is in the conscious appropriation of the death of Christ for ourselves, and of His body given for us, and there is no other way. It is not exactly through a *rent* veil, but through the veil, that is, in the full appropriation of His death. (Read vers. 19, 20.) There is no having to say to God apart from that, the veil excludes all that is of myself; that has to be left outside, but I go in as *of Christ*—as an entirely new order altogether. The old order must be left outside, for the cherubim are there. God does not abate one bit of His judicial authority; we get that at the end of chapter xii. and again in this: "Our God is a consuming fire," and "the Lord shall judge his people." The judgment of God is not

abated one bit, but it is on behalf of His people.

Now what an immensity of privilege lies before us, "A new and living way," &c.; that is to the holiest of all, and that is a privilege open to every one of us. I do not say it brings us to the full thought of the church, or of worship, but it brings us in that direction. It takes us right up to the threshold, so to speak, and then it introduces the great Priest over the house of God. There is One great enough to take up the whole order of worship of God's house, and this is all brought in, not to discourage, but to occupy the saints with the goodness of God. (Read ver. 22.) There is no room for an evil conscience, and our bodies being washed with pure water means, I suppose, that in our ways down here we are separate from the world and its defilement. Then warnings come in, but first of all every encouragement is given to us for taking up our privilege of boldness for entrance into the presence of God.

Now I touch on our behaviour in accord with it. We want to be a truly provoking people. It says: "to provoke one another to love and to good works." I would like to meet a provoking sort of brother, one who when I met him would set in motion what might otherwise be laggard and dull in me—love and good

works. But what is it all connected with? "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." That is most important. People come to the meetings, and sit at the very back, and go out first, and then when you meet them they say: "They are such a cold lot there." Well, do *you* shew any love? The assembling of ourselves together is to get into conscious warmth, into God's presence. We should each bring our share of the warmth and affection acquired in the knowledge of the love of God. We must help to keep the others warm; that is what I take to be the assembling of ourselves together. "But exhorting one another . . . the day approaching." How encouraging it is.

Now the warnings come in: "If we sin wilfully." Why does it emphasise wilfully? It is when our will is at work; that makes it perfectly distinct. It is not a mere question of failure here, but a deliberate course of our will in departing from God, and there is no room for our will if Christ died to establish God's will.

Now the solemn thing is this, that Christendom has substituted sacraments for the sacrifice of Christ. It has put baptism out of its place, and it has put what it calls the Eucharist—the Lord's Supper—in the place of the one great sacrifice of Christ. While we may be in a

measure free from that which marks Christendom around us, we have to be on our guard lest it should creep into our hearts. The danger is, if we do not fully know the value of redemption, of our putting meetings and sacraments in the place of the Lord's sacrifice. Even the breaking of bread, as is the case in Christendom, may be used by us as a means of assuring ourselves of forgiveness, rather than as the remembrance of His love shewn in His death. For when we come together to break bread, it is to remember Christ in the consciousness of being perfected in Him and with no more conscience of sins, not to get confirmation of the forgiveness of our sins, and we have to examine ourselves that the principle is not at work in our hearts. If it is, we may well beware of the warnings that come in here; it is most certain that the cherubim are still active, and will vindicate God's authority. Remember the Corinthians: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." I only allude to these warnings that we may weigh them in His presence, and judge ourselves lest we fail of the "Spirit of grace:"—"hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace." What is grace? It is the distinctive word of Christianity, for it is God coming out in the fulness of His love in the death of Christ, that He might lift us on to Christ's platform before

Him, and the Spirit has come here to carry it into effect. And what if we sin wilfully? We insult the Spirit of grace. This warning need not discourage, for it enhances to our souls the value of that unique offering of Christ. That has set us apart, to start with, and then it has perfected us that we may have boldness. This can only be as we maintain self-judgment, as we see to it that the word of God has its full place with us, and that we are not harbouring some secret thing that is hindering its operation, for it is this which results in those moral blemishes which we have spoken of.

The wonderful position into which He has brought us is of being sanctified and perfected—as to the consciousness of the forgiveness of sins—that we may have boldness to enter God's presence, to sit there at the feet of Christ. I suppose the thought of the holiest is where everything speaks of Christ. None but Aaron could enter the holiest of old, but when he entered, what met his view in the light of the glory which abode upon the mercy-seat? All was covered in, but what was revealed to Aaron's view, as he gazed round, was gold—nothing seen but gold. Truly, beneath the gold in the ark of the covenant was the shittim wood, shewing the spotless humanity of Christ; true also that all His saints were shewn in type in the boards of the building; but what met

Aaron's view was only one thing—gold—that is, Christ under God's view. When we enter the holiest there is only one thing that meets our view, and that is Christ. The human mind has no entrance there, just as of old, natural light had no entrance. The boldness for entrance must be by God's work alone, that we may be there at home in His presence, in the consciousness that God has fitted us to approach Himself—that the flaming sword has been sheathed in the death of Christ, and that now the very justice and authority of God, as seen in the cherubim woven in the veil, are on our behalf, to give us, not fear, but confidence.



OUR BIRTHRIGHT.

(HEB. XII. 14-24.)

WE come here to the climax of the teaching in this epistle. It is important to see that holiness is so greatly insisted on. We began these addresses by seeing that Hebrews is the unfolding of *holy things*. It very largely treats of the "holy place" and of the "holiest," and we must give the word "holy" its full force. Last time we spoke of those who were debarred by a blemish from going within the veil, yet they might eat of the holy things. Here it says: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." The importance of that is, that it involves a certain state in us in order that we should lay hold of the glorious things set before us. If that state be lacking in us, we shall fail to lay hold of the glories that are presented here in connection with Christ. I emphasise that strongly, because in chapter viii. we saw how Christ prepares the holy vessels for the service of God, and these intervening chapters shew how the holy vessels are fitted and formed to appreciate God's things, not simply as a matter

of faith, but in conscious enjoyment, and for that there must be christian state, that is, holiness—practical holiness in separation from this world and its religious systems, and intrinsic holiness, inward holiness and self-judgment, the being near to God and shrinking from evil.

I do not propose to refer to the things previous to verse 22, except as to Esau. The blessing of Isaac belonged to Esau. It was his birthright, but Jacob stole it, and Isaac refused to revoke the blessing. Jacob was blessed with a blessing almost as large as we get unfolded to us in verse 22 onwards, spiritual blessings (I have no doubt)—“Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven” (Gen. xxvii. 28)—not merely earthly ones, and there was very little left for Esau. He deliberately turned away from them all. He said: “Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swore unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.” (Gen. xxv. 32, 33.) The things that come out in this chapter are the birthright of every Christian, not by natural birth, but by the fact that every Christian is introduced into the family of God. I mention it to seek to impress the awful responsibility of turning away from what God presents, of selling for a mess of pottage (that is, for a share of this world's

honour) those things which cannot be known apart from a state in us which answers to them, that is, holiness. I would speak to those who are young, that we may not despise our birthright. With regard to Esau we should not exactly have thought that selling his birthright was profanity, but God views it as that. These things have come to us as our birthright, and if we despise them we come under the ban of Esau, and mark it well, we shall find *no* place of repentance, though we seek the blessing earnestly with tears. How plaintive his cry was to his father: "Bless me, even me also, O my father."

What I desire to bring under our view now are the eight things which I have read in verse 22 onwards. It is instructive that eight are presented, a number peculiarly connected in Scripture with the introduction of a new order of things. They are brought forward in strong contrast to Mount Sinai, and the connection follows immediately on Esau. "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched," &c. Bounds were set about the mount lest the people should draw near. The glory of devouring fire on that mount was angelic glory; the chariots of God—thousands of angels—had descended on Mount Sinai, and Jehovah in the midst of them, to proclaim His fiery law among the people (Psa. lxxviii. 17), and the consequence was that none dare approach the mount on

penalty of death. In Christianity we have come to an order of things entirely different in its character, and one to which we may draw nigh. I have often thought how it was illustrated in Christ being here wholly apart from the law. How very possible it was to draw nigh to Him ! Think of John viii., where the Jews were inviting the thunders of Sinai to descend on that hopeless, sinful woman in Christ's presence ; but they themselves had to retire, as Christ lifted up Himself and said : " He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Convicted in their own consciences they found the judgment they had courted for another recoiling on their own heads, but the woman discovered that there were no bounds about Christ—she could remain in safe-guard in His presence. I believe Christ's attitude presents to us how the Jews called forth what was latent in His Person—convicting power was there, for grace *and truth* came out in Him—but the woman found Mount Zion in His presence. We get there the contrast between the two systems, one connected with Mount Sinai, and the other with Mount Zion.

I do not think we can weigh these eight statements (Heb. xii. 22–24) too carefully. Let us look at the first four, and afterwards at the last four—I think they arrange themselves in that way. Each one is separated from the

next by the word "and;" hence there can be no doubt as to the place each occupies. (Read vers. 22, 23 as far as "heaven.")

"Ye are come unto mount Sion," that is the first. "The city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," second. "An innumerable company of angels, . . . the general assembly," third. The "church of the firstborn [ones], which are written in heaven," fourth. I do not now go further than that.

It is of the greatest importance that we should lay hold of the meaning of those four before we look at the next four. It will only be possible here to give a few hints, so that we may weigh the matter before God and search it out for ourselves. I would say this to start with: each four hangs on the first of its set. The first four, therefore, depend on mount Sion.

I turn aside for a moment to say this: I do not think "Ye are come" refers to any sort of christian progress; it is not the portion of the more advanced in distinction to others. It presents Christianity—what I speak of as the birthright of the family of God—in its normal aspect; it is the right and title of every Christian. We have come to these things; they have not come to us as yet. They present to us properly what will come into display and be patent before the eyes of men in God's coming

world. They will have come to us then, but we have come to them now, not only in faith but in consciousness, if there be holiness, that is christian state. These things are the birthright of the very youngest Christian, but what we have to see to is, that we follow holiness in order that we may lay hold of them.

In taking up the first four I would ask you to note that they depend upon the first mentioned, that is, mount Sion. The first four differ from the second four in that they bring before us (and this is very important) *what God has secured for His own pleasure*. Let our thoughts be disengaged for a moment from how the things affect us, and let us see the thought of the blessed God, and how He gets His own heart met in these four great elements presented to us here at the outset. "Ye are come to mount Sion:" that stands all alone. It is not a material mountain, but, where types are used, we must go to the Old Testament to see how they are employed. In Psalm lxxviii. we find something connected with mount Sion, namely, election, that is, choosing. God chooses, according to His sovereignty. It must be right, for it is according to the sovereignty of His nature. We read there that He chose mount Sion: He discarded every other claim on His notice, but He chose "mount Zion which he loved. And he built his sanctuary like high

palaces." (Psa. lxxviii. 68, 69.) If it says that God chose it and loved it, it could not be a material mountain. The whole thought of mount Sion is extremely beautiful in Scripture. I do not dwell on it, but I ask you to look at its initiation in connection with bringing the ark to it, for it was at that point that it was first sung: "For his mercy endureth for ever"—and that in spite of Israel's failure.

What does mount Zion present? The impregnable position taken up by Christ risen from the dead. Psalm cxxxii. would give a key to that, too; in fact, Scripture teems with the whole thought of mount Sion. Think of Psalm xlviii.: "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion;" no doubt the literal future city is in view, but it also has reference to the present position of Christ, and in that glorious Man, risen from the dead, the whole heart of the blessed God has been met, for in Him every purpose of God's sovereign counsel has found its establishment, and can never fail. All that is in man's hands will fail, like the ark carried into captivity, for He "delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hands (Psa. lxxviii. 61); but now His glory is gathered up in a Man risen from the dead. That is what we come to in mount Sion, and it gives character to the other three.

"The city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem:" that carries us a step further. I do not think the thought of the city here is the aspect in which the nations walk in the light of it, but as to how it meets the heart of God. I believe the aspect here is this, that every divine principle that was seen in the pathway of the Lord Jesus Christ when down here is enshrined and wrought out in God's city—is treasured up there for the heart of the blessed God. For instance, you get the principle of the city and the details of it in the last few chapters of the Revelation. There were gates on each side of it—"on the east three gates; on the north three gates," and so on—I have no doubt that presents absolutely perfect accessibility. See how that came out in Christ when He was here! Men had not to go out of their way to get blessing from Him. Grace in His own blessed Person met them just where they were, and I believe that very principle is enshrined in the thought of the city. Then there were streets of gold like transparent glass; that presents the walk of the saints in righteousness under the eye of God, that is what came out in the Lord when here in perfection. "Looking upon Jesus as *he walked*," John the Baptist could say: "Behold the Lamb of God." You get that principle summed up and maintained there. "And the gates of it

shall not be shut at all by day ; for there shall be no night there." Why? Because of the light of holiness within. When Christ was here the gates were never shut with Him, yet nothing that defileth could enter in. Christ entered the Pharisee's house ; we could not have entered, for we should have dropped to the level of the Pharisee, but it could not be so with Christ : there was the intrinsic holiness which allowed the gates to be open equally for the Pharisee and the woman. She knew that the gates were open, and the holiness within attracted her, producing repentance. There was none with the Pharisee ; she was attracted, he was not. There never was a moment when Christ was here when the gates were not open. Every divine principle that came out in the pathway of Christ is treasured up under God's eye in the city. It is there already—the building of the city, Christ in His saints ; but when it comes into display it will be under His eye for ever. Do you wonder it is the "city of the living God"? No, it is no wonder, if it is the record of those "books that could not be written." (John xxi. 25.) The four gospels have been written, but the great library that will enshrine every principle of the pathway of the Lord Jesus Christ is the heavenly city.

"The heavenly Jerusalem:" it is God's new metropolis, but a metropolis that meets His

heart; it is living, and expressed under His eye in Christ and all that hangs upon Him to-day. I am not speaking of what it is for us—it is an immense blessing—but of what it is to the heart of the blessed God, that He should secure for Himself a city.

Fair city! Where the length and breadth and height
Equal in every part and jasper-bound,
Mark the great record God Himself has found:
One wide, far-reaching miracle of light!

“To an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly:” we find that angels have a place in connection with the city, as doorkeepers at the several gates. They do not form part of that system of glory, and they do not inaugurate it, but they are in that way the guardians of it. This stands in contrast to Sinai. The glory of Sinai was devouring fire, and that was angelic glory, as shewn in Psalm lxviii. Jehovah came down in angelic glory in demand upon man—that is why man could not draw near. He gave the law “by the disposition of angels,” according to Acts vii. 53. We have not come to angelic demand to-day, but to the innumerable company of angels, the general assembly. That is a peculiar expression which occurs but once in the New Testament. It gives the idea of a great festal gathering. When Christ came into this world, apart from law

but in grace, as a little Babe, the whole scene was changed for God and for heaven, in such sort that the angel of the Lord came from heaven, and suddenly with him a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying : "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men !" It is not simply "in *a Man*," but "in *men*," that is, the whole scene was altered under the eye of God, because Christ was there as Man. Reconciliation had already come into God's view. God could already find complacency in this scene, because Christ was under God's eye. He is great enough to fill God's eye and heart. Do we believe it? What power it would give us in preaching the gospel if we saw that He fills God's eye and heart. Hence God can send out His gospel from *His* side.

When you come to Christ ascended into heaven you come to this : "An innumerable company of angels, the general assembly." Let the good of the scene presented here sink into your hearts for a moment. Here is the great angelic host, and they must be a most wonderful world of beings, greater than men in power and might, as Scripture tells us (2 Pet. ii. 11) ; yet when, in the birth of Christ, they saw man that had fallen now taken up in a new order of Man, an order of Man out of heaven—the Creator come here into human

condition—when they saw the advancement of man, then (as has been so beautifully said) “they unselfishly hymned the advancement of another race.” They retire in favour of man. These mighty heavenly beings—angels of which in their various families there must be tiers upon tiers in their great princely ranks, right up to Gabriel “who stands in the presence of God,” and to the Archangel Michael himself—what is their one occupation? The great festal gathering. What about? The Man in heaven. “Lift up your heads, O ye gates . . . and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory?” The angels could answer: “The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. . . . The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.” (Psa. xxiv.) There is a Man gone in there, and that Man God’s blessed Son, and all the voice of the angelic host in heaven is concentrated on hymning the praises of that glorious Man. And we have come to this. Heaven is open to faith, and we can already anticipate the glorious song of which Christ is the centre. There His name is all the music, and His love the song. Angels have never needed redemption, but they can voice the joy of heaven that the Lamb who was slain is there in the power of resurrection, and it is all for the heart of the blessed God. It is a wonderful scene—an innumerable company of angels, not

now in demand upon men, but in celebration of that glorious Man who has entered heaven.

“Church of the firstborn [ones], which are written in heaven.” This is the only place other than chapter ii. 12 in which we get the assembly mentioned in Hebrews. Hebrews has a very wide character: there is no doubt that God’s church, the church of the living God, is brought in, but in a very abstract way. But here we get a very pointed allusion to the place the church has to-day. Referring to the Old Testament again: in regard to the firstborn, whether of man or beast, God had said, “It is mine.” (Exo. xiii. 2.) If of a beast (unless of an ass) it was slain; if a man it might be redeemed; but it belonged to Jehovah. Instead of the firstborn of all Israel God chose one particular tribe, Levi (Num. iii. 12), and said: “therefore the Levites shall be mine; because all the first-born are mine.” Here in Hebrews I think you get again what is taken instead of Israel. It is a spiritual kind of Levi, so to speak; it is the church of the firstborn ones, and they are taken as the pledge of the whole redeemed company. That is our glorious privilege of to-day, to be here for the heart of God, so that He can say, “they are mine.” “Church of the firstborn [ones], which are written in heaven.” They are written there in virtue of redemption. There is no other possible way (for the five shekels had to

be paid) (Num. xviii. 16), but they are there nearest to the heart of the blessed God. They are there in anticipation of all the blessing which God will bring in in the future. He is going to bring every earthly and heavenly family into blessing, but there is one peculiar family, the saints of to-day, those who are associated with Christ in His rejection, and yet whom He associates with His present place before God. They are not written in the earth. They have no place here. You could not find their epitaphs on the tablets of this world's roll of honour. They are registered in heaven, because Christ has a place there, and they are for the heart of God: He says, "They are mine."

Do not these four thoughts bring before us what God gets for His pleasure? It is good to survey them, because they lift us out of our things, and we need to see them as one glorious whole, all depending upon mount Sion. Everything for God is established and summed up in Christ risen from the dead.

Now I turn to the last four. (Read ver. 23: "and to God the Judge of all," &c., ver. 24.) "God the Judge of all" gives its character to the last four. The importance of these things is this, that when we come in the apprehension of our souls to what God has secured for His pleasure, we shall then be prepared to come

into the consciousness of the blessing He has for man. I am not now speaking of the forgiveness of sins; I have got that by faith to start with; but have I got it in conscious enjoyment from God's side? We get here the blessing that flows out to man, but we view it from God's side. "God the Judge of all." There is a danger with us when we come to the thought of "judge" in Scripture to associate exclusively with it the idea of penal or punitive judgment. I do not think it always bears that meaning, and it does not here. In the fourth book of Psalms the thought of judging the earth is for blessing, not at all in the way of punitive judgment. When God takes up the thought of judgment, it is for blessing. So in the Book of Judges—when there were judges, Israel had a very good time. I think we may read that thought here. It may involve punitive judgment, I admit, because God blesses in view of Himself, and to-day in this world, if what is irreconcilable to authority were not restrained and judged, the rest of men would have a very bad time of it; therefore the inauguration of God's rule on earth no doubt involves punishment, but the grand thought is that we have come anticipatively to God the Governor of all. If that be true, that God is Governor of all, and we know it beforehand, it means this, that every abuse will be righted, and everything put in its proper place. When God

rises to judge the world it will be in righteousness. In Acts xvii. we read that God "hath appointed a day"—(and a very long day, too, thank God)—"in the 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." Doubtless that judging the habitable earth may involve at the outset of it—and very likely in some degree all through—punitive judgment, for the good of the mass ; but the great thought is undoubtedly that of governing. Now it is the greatest joy to us—where we see evil rampant to-day, wrong taking the place of right, oppression in the seat of justice, the vile person in the place of the righteous man—to know that God is going to put all that right in the hands of a Man, and that He has given the pledge of it in having raised Him from the dead. In spite of the unrighteousness of man in regard of Him, and that He died apart from justice (for there was no judgment in His condemnation at man's hands). God has raised Him from the dead, and that is the pledge that God will put right every iniquity. God protect us from trying to put it right ourselves ! God will do it by a Man, and meanwhile we can keep our souls quiet, because we know God as the Judge of all beforehand. What a scene it brings before our souls !

Surveying it from God's standpoint, while we see the awful condition of things here, we can say to our souls: "Rest in the Lord." It is not that we do not seek to do good, for we are to be well-doers and blessers, and we do not shut our eyes to the evil; but we are not trying to set things right, but we leave that to God.

"The spirits of just men made perfect." That is not very simple at first sight; let us take an illustration. In chapter xi. we see how God wrought in the souls of men down the ages to bring Christ known there in affection under His view. It was His world that He was setting in their hearts in divine affection. (Eccles. iii. 11.) Those men—Abel, Enoch, Noah, &c., are not dead, they live. Take Moses, for instance; "there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses" (Deut. xxxiv. 10), yet the closing chapter of his history, as far as the Old Testament only tells us, would remain an enigma. At one moment in his history he did not give God His place (Num. xx. 10), and for that God cut him off from going into his inheritance in the land. Moses went up into the mount Pisgah, and died there, and God buried him. (Deut. xxxiv. 5.) We see the thread cut off there, as it were, and we do not understand it. Here we have come to the spirits of perfected just men, not to their bodies, and not to perfected just men, but to their spirits. Christ Himself said of those very men that they

all live unto God. (Luke xx. 38.) If we pass on in thought to the mount of Transfiguration, we find Christ there, and with Him Moses and Elias. Now there we have the key to God's ways. If we only had God's ways down here in view we should have no key, but in the mount of Transfiguration we have the key. Had Moses lost anything? No, indeed; for we see him there in the joyful contemplation in Christ of the substance of the blessed land he had only been given to survey in type from mount Pisgah. We have come to the spirits of perfected just men. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses and the others all live for us; their lives are not mere histories. They live to God, and do they not live for us? They do, and what is more, we have the key to all their histories here, and their histories are for our instruction, that we may learn how God could discipline them that He might reproduce in them Christ in His moral features. Do not murmur and say: I do not think Moses deserved to be shut out of the land; get to the thought of "God the Judge of all," that is the key. "The Judge of all the earth" (Gen. xviii. 25) has done right, and these all live to Him, and form part of that great system of blessing to which by grace we have come. It is beautiful to see that when God brings in His glorious world He does not leave one of His saints out; they are "sons of God, being sons of the resurrection." (Luke xx. 36.)

“Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.” The idea of mediator is one who takes the place of negotiator, and the idea of “new” here is that of fresh and juvenescent. So the new covenant means the completely new terms on which God is with man, outside the old order of demand. In Jesus the mediator of the new covenant we have come to terms which are always fresh and new. I wonder sometimes, when I get up in the morning (perhaps it is Monday morning, and everybody is feeling the returning burden of daily toil) whether I have the sense that I am on terms with God in Jesus which are perpetually fresh. We know His mercies are fresh every morning, but this is more than mercies. God is on absolutely new terms with me in Jesus—perpetually fresh terms. Do you not think a sense of that would keep us above the pressure of things here, that in Jesus we have a negotiator, One who carries into effect the entirely new terms on which God is with His people, terms that never lose their freshness. We have to go through the pressure and toil here, but the point is that there is a Man who can keep us in the perpetual freshness of God’s attitude towards us. It would keep us bright and spiritually youthful in such sort that “as thy days, so shall thy strength be” (Deut. xxxiii. 25), that is the older we grew, the stronger and fresher we should be. Jesus cannot grow old. As I said the first time

I was speaking here—In His own life as Man He has spanned the whole gulf of time since He returned to heaven; and in Jesus there is a perpetually fresh covenant established and carried into effect.

And then, last, we have come to "The blood of sprinkling, that speaketh *better* than Abel." It is not simply that it is better than the blood of Abel, nor "speaks better things," but "speaks better than Abel." And when you get the blood of sprinkling it is not quite the idea of what is individual, it refers to all the people (see Heb. ix. 19), and it brings in here (I have no doubt) the idea of Christianity, and embraces perhaps even more than that. We have come to the blood of sprinkling, and the blood is that which sets apart entirely for God, and its character is that it speaks better than Abel. What has Abel's faith to say? "By it he being dead yet speaketh." He speaks of a world which was to be founded entirely upon redemption and to be marked by the moral intrinsic excellence of Christ as the Victim; it is specifically stated in Scripture that the blood was offered with the fat thereof. We have come here to a voice better than Abel's. It is the voice of Christ, and He addresses us from heaven, from the heights of God's counsels and purpose in Himself, seen already in connection with that world which is to form the

home of our hearts beforehand. He encourages us to lay hold to-day of that which is before God, which is based on redemption, and marked by the moral excellence of Himself as the Victim.

And just as we appropriate what God has secured for His own pleasure, so shall we lay hold in conscious power and liberty and enjoyment of the blessings in which He has come out for man, to be known both now and in the day of His manifested power and glory.

We cannot add to it, for we have come to the climax. We have only taken up a few thoughts in the epistle. May the effect be that we get before God about them, and search into the things and weigh them, until in the knowledge of Christ they become part of our moral being, until we can live (while the pressure of our circumstances may be unaltered) outside the circumstances, so that already (as we often sing) we may live in the "stainless joy" which "gleams through the present gloom."

"The new creation's stainless joy
Gleams through the present gloom ;
That world of bliss without alloy,
The saints' eternal home."

THE FRAMING OF GOD'S WORLD.

(HEB. X. 37-39 ; XI., XII. I, 2 ; HAB. II. 1-4.)

I DESIRE to call attention to a part of the third verse of Hebrews xi.—“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God,” and to speak, if I may be helped, on the framing of God’s world* or worlds. The prophet Habakkuk comes in to help us as being the source of the quotation in the end of Hebrews x.—“Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith.” I do not refer to that for the moment beyond this, that in Habakkuk we get a vision ; here we have the reality. In Habakkuk it was written upon tables, and I think Hebrews xi. gives the writing on tables, while the effect comes out in the beginning of chapter xii.

Those whom the apostle addresses are not of them who turn back to perdition, but of those who were determined by God’s grace to go on, those who are of faith to the saving of the soul. This is a remarkable chapter, and in reading it all I am quite aware that it would require weeks to speak of it in any detail, but I desire to touch on a few salient points that they may be for encouragement to us and that we might *read* them. The importance is not merely in having the writing on tables but that we should *read*, and

* The warrant for giving Hebrews xi. 3 a moral *application* in addition to its primary reference to the material creation, is confirmed by the use of the same word in the plural in Hebrews ix. 26, where its moral bearing is evident.

if we read I think the effect will be evident in regard to all of us. My desire is first to touch on the writing on tables—the framing of God's world.

The third verse of Hebrews xi. is unique in that while all the other verses (from the fourth onward) speak of *men*, the third speaks of an act of power on the part of God, and no doubt refers primarily to the creation itself, when by His utterance the worlds sprang into being from nothing; but here it is stated in a moral connection (and by a moral connection I mean what can be weighed in God's scales, so to speak—what counts in the sight of God), and the way it appeals to me is this, that we get in this chapter the framing, not of this world, but of God's world, that is, the building up of it. It is not simply creation. It is putting it piece by piece together according to a particular intention, and the mighty Architect who frames that world has the whole of the plan of it before He starts. No one would think of building a house without the completed plan before him. God had the great plan in all its beauty before ever He started out, and He started very early. We go back to Abel.

The framing of God's world is a living thing. It is not a material idea, but it is built up in the hearts of men right down the ages, from Abel onward. It is all a living structure, a putting together piece by piece—of what?—the character of Christ. It is the building into men's souls of Christ; that is what I understand by the framing

of God's world. If we take the other illustration it holds equally good. The hearts of men were the tables, and what was written there? A vision, but not only a vision—it was in vision in the Old Testament; all lay then in the future. To-day it is all in reality—*Christ* is written there, not the "*Nay*" of man. "*Nay*" was written on man's heart naturally, but God has come out in a new way altogether and He has written "*Yea*" in indelible marks by His Spirit. No longer "*Thou shalt not*"—He wrote "*I will*" and that was Christ.

That came out in Christ when He was down here. The leper came to Him—"If thou wilt," and the answer was "I will." It was the mind of God told out in Christ here.

Christ then has been written down the ages. The exquisite beauty of this chapter is that somewhere in the life of every man who is brought forward in it—sometimes quite at the end—but somewhere in the life of every man of faith seen in this chapter, some trait of Christ came out under God's eye, and God, so to speak, put His finger on that trait and said: That is Christ, that is part of My world and will never pass away; that stands. It is not perhaps what we should have picked out, but it is selected by the divine Architect as forming part of the world which He is framing by His utterance. How living it makes it all! They are living things, they form no part of the structure of this

world, they are outside it all, but are far more real than the things we touch and handle ; and all God's ways with us will be to attach our affections to that order of things which is all centred in Christ.

There is no knowledge outside of Christ ; scripture knows of none. Christ is the one theme and object and source of all divine knowledge and there can be none outside of Him. Although in this chapter we are directed to men of like passions with ourselves it is not to occupy us with *them*, but with the traits of Christ that came out in them. We learn *Christ*, and not the men.

I should like to call attention to a verse in Ecclesiastes iii. 11. I believe that verse covers Hebrews xi.: "He hath made everything beautiful in his time : also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end." I think that is the framing of God's world. It views things outside the question of sin and the fall. I know Ecclesiastes deals with things down here on earth ; so does Hebrews, but it brings into view the work of God, the worlds which sprang into being under His touch of power. It shews how right down the ages God set in the hearts of men—not this world of sin and death—but His beautiful world which was ever before Him in the One who was yet to be the second Man out of heaven—in purpose ever Man, re-

joining always before Him—in *Christ*. It was the world of which Christ was already in purpose the centre, which was to take all its character from Him, it was *that* world He set down here in the hearts of the men of faith. He drove the present world out of their hearts so that there was no place for it, and set there Christ in faith, and what was the consequence? There was in their hearts, as there might be in ours, the work of God "that no man can find out from the beginning to the end," the results of which God in His grace portrays for us on living tables so that we may read.

Abraham saw and welcomed Christ's day, and laughed as he saw it. That was the joy of God's world—

"The sun which, smiling, lights us,
Is Jesus Christ alone."

We find when God's world comes into view that all its bases must be laid in redemption. Abel shews us that! All must be on a new basis. The old order was to pass away and was already superseded for faith by the simple offering of the blood and the fat thereof—the recognition there of the moral excellence of the Lord Jesus Christ coming out in its fulness in death. The scene was to be put on a moral basis of redemption before God. "And by it he being dead yet speaketh." Abel's faith stands good for us. Abel, Enoch, Noah, all live to God, and we can read Christ in the living tables of their hearts.

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death." Death had come in. The righteous man departed from this scene and Enoch was found here, the seventh from Adam. If God allowed death to mar this scene He gave witness to this fact, that He would not allow death to run its full course down here without breaking in upon it in His sovereign power. He shewed His sovereign right to take the seventh man straight into His presence apart from death if He saw fit, and He *did* see fit. It is a grand thing to know that God has seen fit to interrupt death's course in this world, and will do it again.

The saints are a heavenly, not an earthly people, and translation is what is proper to them. In Christ Himself when here it was inherent. "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" "I ascend," &c. Ascension was inherent in His Person, and now it is not only the proper *hope* of the Christian, it is more. John brings it forward not only as a hope, but as that which is proper to us. If we saw that more, we should not speak of the rapture simply as an event ; we are attached to a Person in whom translation was inherent, and it is so in connection with Him in God's people. Will the rapture come to us as a surprise? I do not think Enoch was taken by surprise. He walked with God and *was not*. He took a path, begat sons and daughters, and walked with God, and that path led outside this scene ; it was an

unbroken path. I do not believe that to a heart that is with God the rapture will be a surprise. It is just what God has set in our hearts as the proper term of walking with Him. In Enoch, then, the great fact of God's title in His sovereignty to set aside death if He will, is portrayed ; Enoch lives.

Then Noah comes on the scene ; " By faith Noah, being warned of God . . . prepared an ark to the saving of his house," &c.

In that way it was Noah's conception of Christ by faith that saved his house. God said to him : " Come thou and all thy house into the ark ; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." God is giving that conception of Christ in the hearts of the saints ; they have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and are saved, and their house. God is bringing into His world by faith a man and all that hangs upon him. It shews the greatness of God's heart. Noah prepared an ark but it was in the conception of Christ that all his house was carried through the flood.

I believe that down to verse 17 of this chapter we get God's world that was written in men's hearts, and that after that it is more the Man who fills that world. We want to see the principles that mark that world. It is all on the ground of redemption, and all apart from this earth. The saints of God like Enoch have no roots here, and with them translation will not be a tearing up of roots, for Christianity is that we live in

the light of heavenly things. We get Noah, a preacher of righteousness in a world of corruption, and his building was probably a subject of scoffing and mockery to all who looked on ; but it was Noah's conception of Christ and it brought all his house into safety.

Next we get Abraham. What marked him was that he looked for a city which had foundations, whose builder and maker was God. God said to Abraham, when Lot left him choosing this world (what half filled Lot's heart was this world)—“Lift up now thine eyes, and look *from the place where thou art*,” and He appeared to him with the promise of a son. God gave the name, Isaac, “He will laugh.” It was a bringing into presence for faith of His world and the Man who was to fill it. The point with Abraham was this, that he fell on his face and laughed. It was not the laugh of unbelief as it was with Sarah ; there is nothing of unbelief here. When he fell on his face and laughed, he himself was gone, and his faith looked forward into God's world, and he saw there Christ, the true Isaac, the true Son of laughter, and he entered there in spirit into the faith of Christ. He looked for a city which had foundations, that is, foundations that could not be shaken or overthrown like the cities of the plain or Jericho—moral foundations, having their answer in Christ.

“Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed,” &c.

I think the woman, at all events in this chapter, and very largely in scripture, presents the subjective side of faith ; what is conceived in the heart. It is not quite the same character of faith, as in the man. In a man we get objective faith, he sees Christ before his soul ; but with the woman there is the idea of conception in the mind and affections.

Now Christ is in Himself a reality and a conception which is outside the natural ken altogether. The natural mind of man has never conceived Christ. Man's imagination has never conceived Christ. He is unique. Human thinking has never compassed Him. The highest conception of man's mind will be Antichrist. He will be the awful outcome of the conception of the human heart, fully answering to its pride. Every thought to which man's heart has gone out will find its fulfilment in the man of sin.

In Sara we get the conception of Christ in the heart by faith. Christ is begotten, in that way, in the affections of the saints.

Our hearts are absolutely incapable of embracing and receiving the character of Christ naturally, but as come under the touch of the work of God there can be the conception of seed, so to speak, that is, of Christ. "When she was past age." It is all outside nature. Christ is outside the natural mind, however educated, trained and theological it may be ; but to the heart that loves Him, Christ is within. He is formed there in affection.

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but . . . embraced [that is, saluted] them."

They saluted them, that is, welcomed the promises anticipatively in Christ. They recognised Christ in them, and saluted them. Then they declare that they seek a fatherland. Do *we* seek a fatherland? That is what we take our character from. These worthies, who had not yet come to Christianity, but in whose hearts Christ was written by faith, sought a fatherland, and what was the effect? "Wherefore God is not ashamed *of them*, to be called their God." That is God's great answer to faith. He is not ashamed of them. The blessed God vindicates the heart of faith which in simple dependence on Himself takes a course that must terminate outside this world. "He hath prepared for them a city"—a metropolis.

So much for the fatherland, for God's world; now I think we get brought more into prominence the Man who fills that world.

We have had the birth of Isaac, but now Abraham and Isaac come on the scene in a new way. "By faith Abraham . . . offered up Isaac . . ." &c. That gives us in figure Christ risen from the dead. Isaac, in whom all the promises centred, was to pass into death, but Abraham's faith accounted that God was able to raise him up from the dead. No doubt Abraham had the general faith of the resurrection of the dead, but he had more than

that. He accounted "that God was able to raise him [Isaac] up, even *from among* the dead." There we get the particular faith of resurrection in Abraham.

Christ has been raised from the dead—taken out from dead persons, He Himself the blessed first-fruits of that which is to fill all the scene. Now we get the answer to Abraham's faith.

Isaac was the "only-begotten" son. That expression has a unique meaning, and as such is always applied to Christ, except in this one instance. It has the force of the one darling of the heart. He received him, in figure, from the dead, which shewed that he was the true son of laughter. He received him back to be the father of millions of millions, though everything else was going into death. We see how everything in God's world is to centre in Christ risen from the dead. His character is continued in every one that follows.

The building of God's world is not, so to speak, the laying of one stone and then of another stone: it is all cumulative. What came out in Abel formed part of the faith of Enoch, and so on. All works up; nothing is lost in God's world. They are not separate traits that are exhibited. Everything seen in Isaac comes out in those that follow.

"By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come." The blessings of Jacob and Esau are very comprehensive in character. Jacob came in and stole the blessing, but that is

not spoken of here. It is not Jacob's faith or Esau's that is in question, but that of Isaac.

"By faith Jacob . . . blessed both the sons of Joseph," &c.

The blessing that Jacob gave to both the sons of Joseph did not please Joseph at all. He brought his two sons, born in the land of adversity, the foreign land, their names Forgetting and Fruitful, he brought them to Jacob, just about to die, who crossed his hands wittingly, and conferred the prime blessing on the younger. It is the action of Jacob in guiding his hands wittingly that is dwelt upon. That dying man of faith had the full purpose of God before him, so that he could overstep the limits, the dictation and the rules of nature, and could guide his hands wittingly, as he leaned there on the top of his staff, crippled as to this world, but his heart entering into all the purposes of God in regard of His people. In the light of God's counsel and purpose he saw Christ portrayed in the "Fruitful" and "Forgetting," and refused to uncross his hands.

"By faith Joseph, when he died [or 'when he was coming to an end'], . . . gave commandment concerning his bones."

Joseph was a wonderful type of Christ in one way. He could say: "Go and tell my father of all my glory in Egypt"; but there is not a word about that here. Joseph's life is left out, and it is his end that is brought before us. That is very

beautiful. The glory of Egypt had no part in God's world ; it was all tinsel. His high position in God's providence is one thing, but it is not presented in this chapter.

He would have his bones taken out of Egypt and identified with the place of God's testimony. Human glory disappears, and his faith is concerned with his desire to live before God, and that his remains should be identified, not with the glory of Egypt, but with the testimony of God in reproach and rejection.

Time would fail us to dwell in any fuller detail on these traits of Christ, but Moses calls for comment for a moment.

"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child," &c. It is literally—"because they saw **the** child beautiful." He was beautiful to God. It is the faith of Moses' parents that is brought out here. I believe they in faith caught some gleams of Christ in the face of that child. That face itself was afterward to catch the very glory of the covenant he was to usher in. When Moses came out from the presence of the Lord his face shone, and in faith his parents looked on to that point in the history of Moses, and saw the child beautiful to God, marked out by Him in the faith of His world as part of its building.

"By faith he was hid three months of his parents." That child was placed in the very last spot that you and I would have chosen for him—

in the river of death. They might have carried him as far as possible from the river, but the faith of his parents put him in the place which signified death, where every other child was placed to die.

Moses, when he was come to years, took up the faith of his parents. He was "confirmed," so to speak, and refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He put the two worlds in the balances; this world had no attraction for him. Instead of the "pleasures of sin for a season" he chose reproach with the people of God. God wrote all that in His book, and built it into His great world which is going to endure for ever, and we can read Christ in Moses' name as it stands there.

It does not say: "*they* kept the passover" but that *he* did. The people are not brought forward until in the type they come in on new ground.

"By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned."

All imitation of faith must inevitably fail, but the Red Sea was passed by faith, that is, the appropriation of Christ's death for themselves, and they entered the land.

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days."

Jericho was in the land, and yet it was in possession of the enemy, who had no right or title to it, and God was going to rase it to the ground

and make it part of His inheritance. The rams' horns speak of the beauty and power of the Victim, and they were sounded by the priests. It was the priests who preceded the people; the presentation of Christ in His beauty and power was the testimony that felled all the powers of this world. The moment for the saints of God to shout has not yet come. In silence God's witness goes on, and the whole of the testimony is the beauty and power of Christ in proclamation; but the moment will shortly come when He will say: "Shout!" We are here in the intense expectation of that moment when all will come into display.

Rahab received the spies, a type of Christ in testimony as to the good of God's land. God's counsel and purpose as connected with His land were presented to her faith, and she received that testimony in peace.

"What more shall I say?" He had brought them up to that point, and then he pours out in one stupendous mass of material what else God built into His world, without dwelling on details.

There were those tortured. They might have recanted and thus had a resurrection to this life, but they refused it that they might obtain a better resurrection. They could afford torture and death in order that they might get a resurrection to God's world. We have the Spirit's epitaph on them: "Of whom the world was not worthy."

Then we come to the topstone—"Jesus the

author and finisher of faith." (Heb. xii. 2.) That is the completion of it all; all *His* character came down and covers the whole of the framing of God's world. Christ known in the affections and heart will mark that world through the ages.

In Ecclesiastes iii. we read that there is a time for everything. Faith ever acted in a timely way and it would be instructive to trace in Hebrews xi. how these principles were acted on—"A time to be born and a time to die"—"a time to weep and a time to laugh"—"a time to get and a time to lose"—"a time of war and a time of peace." May they find an answer in our ways down here!

To Habakkuk it was said, "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." We have seen here not merely the vision but the reality written and made plain upon the tables of every heart that appreciated Christ. The important thing for us is that we may *read*. What do we read? Christ—nothing else! Then if we read Christ, He so engages the affections of every heart that loves Him that we *run*. "Let us run," the response to "that he may run that readeth it."

May Christ to-night so lay hold of our affections as we see Him giving His character to the framing of God's world in this cloud of witnesses, that we may "run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith."