



OLD  
TESTAMENT  
SHADOWS.

BY

MRS. YAPP.



# Old Testament Shadows;

OR,

## THE HEAVENLY MIRROR.

*JOTTINGS FROM BIBLE READINGS.*

BY

MRS. YAPP.

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“BOW DOWN THINE EAR, AND HEAR THE WORDS OF THE WISE, AND  
APPLY THINE HEART UNTO MY KNOWLEDGE.”

*Proverbs xxii. 17.*

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## INTRODUCTION.



“CANST thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?” No, indeed; no. But our blessed God has given us a “MIRROR,” a true reflection of Himself. Yes, He has given us the Bible, the whole Bible, where, by His Spirit’s aid, we may gaze, and gaze upon His beauty, until our souls are rapt, and filled with adoring gratitude and love.

But we need the whole Book, the Old Testament as well as the New. A very few verses of Scripture may reveal the Lord Jesus to us as the only Saviour, and give us joy and peace in believing; but this is not enough. Our souls must become poor and feeble, and our minds uneven and warped, if in our laziness we keep feeding upon certain truths which we know well, instead of seeking to learn out more and more about our precious Lord.

We need to *feed* upon the whole Book, each truth in its season, and then we shall be nourished up in word and doctrine, strong in the Lord, and

able to bring forth each fruit in its season. Our souls need variety of food as well as our bodies, and our blessed God has provided it for us in the different parts of the Bible.

The Gospels unfold to us the *outward* life of our precious Lord when He trod this earth; but many parts of the Old Testament lift the veil from His heart, and allow us to read His thoughts and feelings.

The New Testament teaches us how to walk so as to please the Lord; but the Old Testament is replete with telling histories, which unfold to us the consequences both of obedience and of disobedience.

The epistles state plainly the precious doctrines which flow from the death of our Lord Jesus; but the Old Testament unfolds the Lord's *ways* with His people—His gentleness, His tender mercies, His deep compassions, His sympathy, the yearnings of His heart over those He loves when He is obliged to chasten them, His readiness to forgive, His pleasure in their obedience, His delight in their fruitfulness, His appreciation of their service, &c.

Thus as we read the whole Book, and compare one portion with another, we increase in the knowledge of God, and may so learn to understand His heart and ways, that obedience, dependence, and confidence become natural and easy. "They that

know Thy name will put their trust in thee." (Ps. ix. 10.) And, "Great peace have they which love Thy law, and nothing shall offend them." (Ps. cxix. 165.) Oh, what losers we are if we neglect any part of God's word!

But the Lord also treats us as His friends, and seeks to lead us into fellowship with Himself about everything.

He opens heaven to us, and shows us what is occupying His mind and filling His heart. He tells us of His delight in His beloved Son, and unfolds His plans and thoughts and purposes concerning Him; He unveils the deep yearnings of His heart over His ransomed Church, and tells us His purposes concerning her. He also tells us His purposes concerning His ancient people Israel, the world, &c.

Thus He seeks to enlarge our hearts and expectations, to give us heavenly and eternal aspirations, and enable us to enjoy and share His pleasures, His desires, and His hopes.

These truths are sanctifying, invigorating, and bracing. They raise us up out of our own puny selves, and our own puny circumstances, and give a grandeur and nobility to our minds.

The word of God is a light to our path (Ps. cxix. 15), to save us from the "snares of death." (Prov. xiii. 14.) A lamp to our feet as "a light that shineth in a dark place." (2 Peter i. 19.) A sharp,

two-edged sword (Heb. iv. 12), to cut off the excrescences of the flesh. "A hammer" (Jer. xxiii. 29) to break the stony heart to pieces. "A fire" (*ibid.*) to melt down our unbelief and pride.

It is food to nourish—"Thy words were found, and I did eat them." (Jer xv. 16.) "Sweeter than honey and the honeycomb." (Ps. xix. 10.) More to be desired than gold; yea, than much fine gold (*ibid.*), and better "than thousands of gold and silver." (Ps. cxix. 72.)

The Lord lead us, with all humility and earnestness of soul, to search His word "as for hid treasures" (Prov. ii. 4), and teach us to hide it in our hearts that we may be kept from sinning against Him. (Ps. cxix. 11.)



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# OLD TESTAMENT SHADOWS;

OR,

## The Heavenly Mirror.



### *THE GARMENTS OF THE HIGH PRIEST;*

OR, JESUS CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOUR.

“Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.”—HEB. iii. 1; EXOD. xxviii.

WE need to take heed to this command, and not only consider the Lord Jesus as our Saviour and Example, but also as our High Priest; and much weakness of soul is caused by neglecting this.

If we turn to Hebrews viii. 4, we find that His priesthood did not commence until He ascended into heaven, and therefore we must follow Him up into heaven, and gaze upon Him *there*, before we can truly consider Him as our High Priest.

But how can we do this? He is in heaven, and we upon earth; and what can we know? How can our eyes look through the clouds? or how can

our ears distinguish those distant sounds? He is crowned indeed with glory and honour (Heb. ii. 9); but how can we see Him?

Our blessed God has given us a looking-glass (2 Cor. iii. 18), a real mirror, in which we can see His glory reflected; and as properly-arranged mirrors reflect what is passing in a street below, so our mirror shows forth the *present* glories, occupations, and joys of our precious High Priest.

In Hebrews viii. 5, and ix. 9, 23, and x. 1, we read, that all the holy vessels, garments, &c., connected with the tabernacle were *patterns*, or *figures*, or *shadows* of the heavenly things. So back in the Old Testament we find our beautiful mirror, wherein we may gaze, and learn out the beauties of Christ.

The High Priest's garments were among those patterns; and in Exod. xxviii. 2 we read, that Moses was commanded to make "holy garments for Aaron, for glory and for honour" (Sept. version)—the very words quoted in Heb. ii. 9. So here, in Exod. xxviii., is our looking-glass, where we may clearly see the *present* glories and honours of our great High Priest, and learn out what there is in Him to satisfy our hearts.

May the Lord help us, that with unshod feet, and holy hands, and worshipping hearts, we may handle these heavenly secrets.

Exod. xxviii. 3. These garments were made "to consecrate" or fill Aaron's hands, that he might "minister" unto God in the priest's office; and typify some most important truths, and special

glories connected with the priesthood of Christ. Let us consider them in detail.

### The Embroidered Linen Coat.

Lev. viii. 7 shows that the *first* garment that was put upon Aaron was the *embroidered* linen coat. (Exod. xxviii. 39.) This certainly points to the spotless, taintless human nature of Christ (conceived by the Holy Ghost), a body prepared for Him by God. (Heb. x. 5.)

Oh, what boundless grace, that *He* should condescend to lay aside all His heavenly joy and glory, and enter that little body! Yes, yes, indeed, He clothed Himself with flesh, that He might be able to give Himself a sacrifice for sin, and thus obtain the right of redemption. *As God*, He could only execute judgment upon sin; but as the Risen Man, God has glorified Him to be our High Priest.

Some persons think that the Lord Jesus is full of compassion and tenderness *because* He became man; but this is in no way true. The compassion and tenderness filled His heart as God, and it was *because*

“His heart is made of tenderness,  
His bowels melt with love,”

that He came and gave Himself for us; *because* He was so full of love and sympathy that He took a human body.

He is the expression of the very heart of God, and in Him we read the deep, self-sacrificing love of God Himself. And now, seated on the throne above, He communes with His Father about us;

“the counsel of peace is between them both” (Zech. vi. 13); and they talk together as to how they can wipe our tears away, how help that erring one, how bless that feeble one, how enrich and gladden another. Oh, the wondrous, matchless grace of our blessed God!

### The Robe of Blue.

The second garment was the robe of blue. (Exodus xxviii. 31–35; Lev. viii. 7.)

“Blue”—the pleasant heavenly colour. Surely this speaks of His heavenly, gracious gentleness. They wondered at His gracious words. He was so gentle and so mild, so tender and so kind, so affable, so genial, so lovely in every way. And oh, He is not changed! He is still the meek and lowly One, though seated on the throne above.

The hem of this robe was hung round about with pomegranates and golden bells. Eastern travellers tell us there is no fruit so refreshing as pomegranates, when they are hot and worn and thirsty in the weary desert. Dear child of God, we are passing through a desert, and we often grow weary and faint and thirsty. But oh, there is refreshment for us at the feet of Jesus, pomegranates in abundance—so sweet, so pleasant, just the very thing we need.

The pomegranates were of three colours—blue, purple, and scarlet

“Blue”—His gentle, gracious words. How often we have been refreshed by them!

“Scarlet”—the colour of blood. It speaks of all His sufferings from the manger to the cross. Oh, the value of the scarlet pomegranates! When treated unkindly, we need to think how He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself. When laughed at for His sake, we need to remember how He was mocked and scourged for us. What strength and courage this gives! What heavenly balm to our wounded spirits! Ah, yes, the scarlet pomegranates hang in rich luxuriance around His robe; and when anything pains or grieves us, we may eat and be refreshed.

“Purple”—the royal colour, a mixture of blue and scarlet. It certainly points to the majesty and glory which God has given Him, as the reward and natural result of His life and death down here. We are prone to forget the *purple* pomegranates. We forget His majesty and power, and so hang down our heads. Ah, if we habitually feasted upon His present and future glories, and our portion in Him, how thoroughly we should despise this present evil world. Think of the joys which await us, the rivers of pleasures, the crowns which we may win, the heavenly jewellery, the white horses for us to ride, the majesty, the glory, the power, the nearness and likeness to Jesus; and shall we not gladly cast away every forbidden thing, and just fix our affections upon things above? Oh, let us feast upon these purple pomegranates, and then all Satan’s “dainty meats” will lose their power to tempt us.

“*Bells of gold between them round about*”—the sweet, harmonious music of the Saviour’s voice. Oh, who can tell the sweetness of His voice to God? The tinkling of those golden bells fills heaven itself with melody. And you, dear child of God, oh, know you not their sound? Those lovely notes! those sweet, those cheering words! how oft indeed have you been ravished with their sound. Then listen, gaze, and feast, and let your soul be satisfied indeed.

### The Ephod.

Exodus xxviii. 6–14; Lev. viii. 7. The ephod comes next, a specially priestly garment. This garment was given to Christ in resurrection, when God said to Him, “Thou art a priest for ever.” (Heb. v. 6.) The foundation was fine linen, the human nature of Christ; and the gold, blue, purple, and scarlet, were worked into it with “cunning work.” All the power, skill, and wisdom of God was expended upon it.

The gold was beaten into thin plates, and cut into wires (Exodus xxxix. 3), that it might be worked into the ephod. The gold represents the divine perfections of the Lord Jesus. His love, His holiness, His patience, long-suffering, tenderness, His confidence in His Father, His obedience, His humility, His self-denial, His self-sacrifice, &c.—all, all was beaten out into thin plates, and cut into wires when He trod this earth. They filled His heart from all eternity; but as the Man of sorrows,

and acquainted with grief, they were beaten out and manifested. And why? oh, why? That He might become "such an High Priest, "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," "able to succour them that are tempted." Oh, think of the love that empowered Him to endure such suffering—"beaten out . . . cut into wires," for the great love wherewith He loved us.

The ephod had two shoulder-pieces, made of two onyx stones, upon which the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were engraved; *not written*, but *engraved*; cut deeply into the stones, so that they could not be erased. Israel was a typical people, and surely these names represent the whole Church of God—each several name engraven upon the shoulders of our great High Priest. They were graven according to their birth; *not* according to their value or usefulness, but according to their *birth*.

Thus *your* name is graven there, dear child of God. As surely as you have been born again, your name has been graven upon *His* shoulders; and He pledges Himself to carry you safe to glory, to answer for all your sins, to meet all your need, to bear all your burdens, to answer for you in every way, and present you faultless before the throne of God.

Oh, what a glorious portion! Should it not fill your heart with rapturous praise, and deepest gratitude and love? Surely you need be careful for nothing; for Jesus has pledged Himself to carry you safely. He loves you intensely, and bears you

upon His shoulders continually. Ah, yes; however disobedient you may be, however worldly, still, still He bears you upon His shoulders; and, though with an aching heart, He still presents you to His Father as His redeemed and precious one, and answers for all your sin.

Dear unsaved one, would you not like to be thus cared for by Christ? Thus graven on His shoulders? Thus carried by Him? One little cry to Him to save you, one look of faith to His precious blood, and *you* also shall share this joy; and Jesus will present *your* name to His Father as one who has fled to Him, and eternal life and eternal glory will be *your* happy lot.

### The Breastplate.

Exodus xxviii. 15-30. Here we have something better still. Well may we exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" The breastplate was made of the same materials. "Fine linen"—it could not have been made without His human nature—"gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and cunning work." All the perfections of Christ, and wisdom of God were needed to form it; and four rows of precious stones were set in twelve enclosures of gold, each stone with one name engraven upon it.

Four *rows* of stones; not four sides of a square, as some of the pictures represent; but four *rows*. And why? Because the breastplate represents the very heart of Christ, and the stones are His loved

ones, His treasures, who fill up and satisfy His heart. Wonderful, amazing truth! *He* fills the universe, *He* sustains, upholds everything; but we, we—the poor half-hearted Church—are “the fulness of Him who filleth all in all.” Ponder it, dear child of God; yes, ponder it well, and love and worship and adore.

But more still. Each stone had its own separate place. He may carry us upon His shoulders *collectively*, but He carries and enfolds us upon His heart *individually*. He loves us with an intense, personal love. Each dear child of God has his own several and special place in His heart. Still more. Each stone had its own setting of gold, and each enclosure was of the same size. The stones varied immensely in value and beauty, colour and brilliancy; but whether diamond, or sapphire, or agate, each one had its own enclosure all to itself of equal size.

Oh, do you not see the preciousness of this figure? As surely as you are born again, you have a place all to yourself in the heart of Christ; and there you are enclosed, enthroned—*enclosed* in a setting of gold, the divine perfections encompassing you round, so that no power in heaven, or earth, or hell, can move you from that enclosure, or steal a portion of it from you—enthroned there by Christ Himself. He gives you that portion of His heart as your own peculiar, personal, and eternal inheritance. It is *yours*, absolutely *yours*, and there you reign supreme; and no one but yourself can affect that portion of His heart.

Again, the enclosures are all of equal size. The poor little agate had as large an enclosure as the precious diamond, and, if anything, a better place; for it was one of the two centre stones. And why? Because our precious Lord wants to convince us that He loves us all with an equal love. He loves you—*you*, dear child of God—as much as He loves the apostle John; not with a collective love, but with an intense, fond, personal love. Do you believe this? Do you believe in your heart that He thus loves *you*—personally, intensely, fondly? that no one can displace *you*? that *you* are enshrined as His loved one, His darling? (Ps. xxii. 20; xxxv. 17.)

We have collective places in our hearts as well as individual ones, and those who fill the collective places can fall out or be displaced by others; but it is not so with those we fondly love; they are enshrined, and no one can take or fill their place. Such is *your* place in the heart of Christ. Oh, believe it, enjoy it, and go on your way singing for joy!

But now for the solemn part. (Exod. xxviii. 30.) He bears your judgment upon His heart before the Lord continually. Not your punishment—that is over; He bore that once for all upon the cross—but He bears your judgment continually. He always bears you before His Father as His loved one; and when your Father has to say of *you*, “She is worldly, disobedient, wilful, unfaithful, or turning aside,” it comes down like a knell upon the heart of Christ, and grieves and pains the enclosure

where *you* are enshrined. When your Father is ashamed of you, that portion of the heart of Christ which is your peculiar portion aches; it is pained, ashamed. On the other hand, when your Father can say of you, how obedient, faithful, loving, self-denying, or unworldly you are, the Lord Jesus rejoices, exults over you.

Oh, ponder it, ponder it well, dear child of God! See what a special joy, and yet what a special responsibility, this truth involves! A portion of the heart of Christ is committed to *you*; *you* can make it ache and weep, or *you* can make it sing for joy; *you* can fill it with shame, or *you* can cause it to glory over you. It is committed to your sole care, and no one has any power over it but yourself. Oh, see the deep responsibility of this blessed, glorious truth, and gird yourself with gratitude and love, and seek to make Him glad! (Prov. xxiii. 15, 16; xxvii. 11.)

A few words only about the chains. (Exod. xxviii. 13, 14, 22-28.) There were four wreathen chains of gold, a lace of blue, and ten golden rings, to keep the breastplate in its place, so that it "*be not loosed*"—answering indeed to Romans viii. 38, 39, and speaking loudly of His unchanging and eternal love, a love that many waters cannot quench, neither can the floods drown.

### The Mitre.

Exod. xxviii. 36-38. The mitre was made of fine linen, with "Holiness to the Lord" graven

upon a golden plate, and fastened with a blue lace upon it. What for? To teach us that Christ bears our iniquity, that *we* may be accepted before the Lord. How wonderful! how glorious! Well may we cry out—

“Hallelujah, what a Saviour!”

All our sin rolls upon Him; He has pledged Himself to bear it; and there in patient, wondrous grace He sits, and keeps us free from every charge of guilt. It rolls upon *Him*, but, blessed be His glorious name, it does not defile Him. That holy plate remains untarnished still. The precious blood once shed avails, and puts it all away.

But oh, beware! for though the sin is put away, it goes down upon His heart, and there it lies as a heavy burden, grieving and paining Him, until *you* return with confession.

Dear child of God, do not abuse this wondrous grace; do seek to walk softly, humbly, lovingly with the Lord Jesus; and if at any time you are overtaken and fall, make haste back to His feet. Let confession be speedy, earnest, and real. Remember the sin has already rolled upon Christ, and has already been met with His precious blood, *that you may be accepted*; therefore return speedily to Him. Go back quickly, quickly to His feet, and seek to remove the burden from His heart, even as He has speedily removed the charge of guilt from you.

May the Lord graciously grave these truths upon

our hearts, and they will be indeed a power within us. We *do* love Jesus, and if our faith but apprehended Him as He is revealed to us in this lovely mirror, we should be able steadily to say "No" to the devil, to friends, and to the world, and "Yes" continuously to our precious Lord.

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### THE FOUNTAIN OPENED.

"In that day, there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."

ZECH. xiii. 1.

WHAT a glorious truth this is! After the Church, the Bride of the Lamb, has been perfected, and caught up to meet the Lord in the air; the precious blood of Christ will become a cleansing fountain to millions and millions of human beings. That precious blood is enough for the sin of the whole world; and its rich, atoning, cleansing power, will be as full and free and mighty then, as when it was first shed. True indeed; its value is infinite, and its power exhaustless.

We read that in those days "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. xi. 26); "and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 9); and that "all nations shall call Him blessed." (Ps. lxxii. 17.) Well may we say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

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## ATONEMENT

AS UNFOLDED IN THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

HEB. ii. 17 ; LEV. iv. 27-35.

WE have already seen that we can only learn out the details of the priesthood of Christ, by using the Old Testament types as a mirror to portray His heavenly ministry. Thus while the New Testament throws light upon the Old, the Old unveils the heavenly scenes; and by humbly, reverently comparing the one with the other, we are enabled to enter into the courts above, and gaze upon our living, loving Lord as occupied unceasingly in the presence of God for us.

As our great High Priest, He combines *in Himself*, all the typical teaching both of the Aaronic and Melchisedec priesthood; for verily He is the perfection of beauty, the embodiment of glory and truth. Let us seek to learn out a few details of His Aaronic priesthood.

The first act of His priestly service, which is mentioned in Hebrews, is to make reconciliation (*atonement*) for the sins of the people.\* (Heb. ii. 17.)

If we turn back to the Old Testament types, we find that the *slaying* of the sacrifice did not make atonement. The sacrifice was *first slain*—not dying,

\* The word reconciliation should be translated atonement or propitiation. It is from the same Greek root as propitiation in Rom. iii. 25 ; 1 John ii. 2 ; iv. 10, and answers to the word *atonement* in the Old Testament.

but dead ; and afterwards the priest presented the blood as an atonement for sin. (See Lev. xvi. 15-19 ; iv. 25-35, &c.) So with the Paschal Lamb. The blood had to be sprinkled as well as shed, in order to save the firstborn.

How precious this points to our blessed Lord ! “By His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.” That precious blood is the propitiation for our sins ; a full, complete satisfaction for them all ; and He ever lives to speak of it to God for us. Thus “*by Him*” (His present continual act), “all that believe are justified from all things ;” “therefore there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.”

If we read Lev. iv. 27-31 we find that under the law the sinner had to *bring* the sacrifice ; but now our blessed God has provided the Lamb, and we have only to *come* and use Him. The sinner then laid his hand upon the head of the lamb (*v.* 29), and all his sin passed from him to the lamb, and with his own hands he slew the lamb. In like manner the poor sinner sees Christ as the sin-offering, and by faith he claims Him as his own. He believes in Him as *the* sin-offering, *his* sin-offering, and instantly his sins are transferred from him to Christ. He can neither remember nor count them, but he owns and feels that *his* sins helped to slay the Lord Jesus, and they all pass from him to Christ.

The priest then took the blood, and in God's appointed way presented it to God, and made atonement for the sinner, and told him that he was

forgiven. (*vv.* 30, 31.) So now our Priest, our precious Lord Jesus, makes atonement for the sinner that believes in Him; He speaks to God of the blood once shed, and that very moment all his sins are blotted out. Until then they weré written down against him; but the precious blood avails, and atonement is complete.

Dear reader, is it thus with you? Are *your* sins blotted out? or do they still rest upon your own head? Oh, fearful, fearful will be the wrath and indignation which must fall upon *you*, if you despise this great salvation! God presents the blood of Christ to *you*. He tells you it is the provision for *your* guilt, a complete atonement for *your* soul. He *commands* you to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, to apply to Him to make atonement for *you*; and if you refuse He will hold you guilty of the blood of His Son, and punish you accordingly.

Oh, flee, flee while there is yet time to Christ! Believe in Him, claim Him as your own sin-offering, and God will accept and bless you for His sake. "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul . . . and I have given it to you" (says God) "upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls" (Lev. xvii. 11), not prayers, nor tears, nor faith, but the blood. If all the prayers, good works, obedience, and faith that have ever been, could be gathered up and presented to God, they could not atone for one single sin. The blood, the blood alone avails, and the Lord Jesus *alone* is able to present it aright to God.

But there is another point. The Lord Jesus not only thus graciously meets the need of the poor sinner who flies to Him, but in His wondrous grace He also atones for all the daily, hourly sins of all His people. In unwearying, faithful love, He answers for all our guilt. He does not even wait for confession, but puts it away with His precious blood, and thus keeps us free from all condemnation.

Dear child of God, do you believe this? Do you enjoy it? Is it the habit of your soul to keep your hand upon Christ as your sin-offering, and to look up and know that all your sin passes upon Him, and is met with His precious blood? It *is* true whether you believe it or not, and *therefore* you are justified from all things; but if you believe it, it will fill you with joy and gratitude, and constrain you to walk very softly, so that the Lord Jesus may not be pained and burdened with your sins.

Have you not often kept away from the Lord because you scarcely knew how to return? You knew you had sinned; yes, deeply sinned, and felt that you needed some fresh satisfaction for your sin, and with one of old, you were ready to cry out, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, or bow myself before the high God?" (Micah vi. 6.)

Oh, dear child of God, the blood, the precious blood of Christ, is God's provision for you! You need no other plea; you must not bring another sacrifice. No tears, no prayers, no deep repentance

will avail. The blood alone will do. Just lay your hand on Christ. Look up to Him, and see Him seated there, your great High Priest, to speak of the blood, and make atonement for you. This gives boldness to enter into the holiest, and at the same time it humbles and softens us, and makes us long to serve Him better.

Oh, think of His amazing grace, His unwearied love! For more than 1800 years, He has carried on His faithful priestly work — confessing and putting away sin. As the cross word falls from your lips, as the wrong act is committed by *you*, He confesses and puts it away. *He* bears the pain; *He* feels the shame; and will you not gird your loins with energy and zeal, and seek henceforth to be a praise and a joy instead of a shame and a grief to Him?

I hope some of you do so walk with Christ that you can say with Paul, you know nothing against yourselves; but even then there are sins of ignorance, and you still need the atoning power of that precious blood. But the Lord Jesus is not grieved with sins of ignorance; He can make allowance for them. They *are* sins, and God in His holiness must demand atonement for them; but He has made such full provision for us in the priesthood of Christ, that He is able thoroughly to pass over all our iniquities, transgressions, and sins; and also to take pleasure in us, and rejoice over every little thing we do to please Him. Surely we will triumph in Him, and glory in the God of our salvation.

*GRACE TO HELP,*

AS MANIFESTED IN THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

HEB. ii. 18; iv. 14-16; LEV. xxiv. 1-4; EXOD. xxx. 7, 8.

THE second point mentioned in Hebrews about the priesthood of Christ is "succour" for the tempted, and "grace to help in time of need." Atonement is not enough, we need "grace to help" as well.

Dear child of God, have you not often confessed some special sin to the Lord, and been assured that it was quite forgiven, and yet afterwards you have fallen into it again and again? And why? Because you were satisfied with atonement and a sense of pardon, and did not seek the needed "succour," which would have secured victory as well as forgiveness.

Our Lord Jesus is appointed by God to give this succour. It is part of His priestly work; and He loves to see us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may not only obtain "mercy," but also "grace to help." He is merciful and faithful; He perfectly fulfils His priestly office; and when we do not obtain this help, it is because we are careless about it.

But let us turn to our heavenly mirror—the Old Testament types—and seek through them to learn out a few secrets connected with this "succour." The seven-branched golden candlestick mentioned in Exodus xxv. 31-39 unveils these secrets,

You remember the words, "I am the light of the world" (John ix. 5); and again, "Ye are the light of the world;" and again, "Let your light so shine before men" (Matt. v. 14, 16), which prove that this golden candlestick typifies Christ and the Church.

There are strange ordinances connected with this candlestick. One was that Aaron, the greatest dignitary in Israel, was appointed to do the menial work of trimming the lamps. We should have appointed Levites to do it. But no indeed; that would have spoilt the type; for Jesus, Jesus only, our great High Priest, is able to trim our souls, and make our light burn brightly.

Again, these lamps were to be trimmed in the holy place, outside the veil, right under the eye of God. Such a thought would never have entered our minds. We should surely have ordained that they should be trimmed in the outer court.

But this also would have spoilt the type. We obtain pardon at the altar of burnt-offering; but if we desire the victory over sin, we must go into the holy place, and there sit down quietly at the feet of Jesus, and commune with Him about it, and allow Him, with His gentle, tender hand, to use the golden snuffers of His word (Exod. xxxvii. 23), and remove the charred wick of wrong thoughts and feelings from our hearts.

For instance, suppose you have been overtaken by temper, you naturally go and confess it, and get it forgiven. But do you go into the Lord's presence, and talk with Him about it? Do you sit

at His feet, and ask Him to give you His thoughts about it? Do you ask Him to search your heart for you, and show you what secretly-indulged feeling caused you to be tripped up so easily? And do you remain under His gentle hand, listening to His words about that temper, until the self-will, or pride, or impatience, is all brought down, and you feel as if you could go through the same scene again without being even ruffled?

Untrimmed lamps would smoke and smell; and ah, how often has sin of some kind or other spoilt our testimony, and sent forth an offensive smell, instead of a sweet savour of Christ?

The hidden or indulged sin of our hearts is the charred wick. Our precious Lord alone can remove it. We cannot do it ourselves. It is of no use to lie upon the ground, bemoaning and groaning over it; we must take it into His presence, and *sit down* there. It cannot be done hurriedly. If Aaron had trimmed the lamps roughly or hurriedly, they would have been sure to smoke. We must give the Lord *time*. We must abide quietly in His presence, and give Him time to talk to us, and show us our wrong thoughts, and correct our wrong judgments, and teach us His ways and His thoughts. Thus our feelings will be gradually changed, and the charred wick be gently removed.

I would repeat it, we must give Him *time*. One reason why so many of God's children go on bemoaning unconquered sin is, because they do

not abide sufficiently long in the Lord's presence to give Him *time* to put their thoughts and feelings to rights. Cleansing by *blood* is instantaneous, but cleansing or snuffing by the *word* takes time; and this double cleansing is necessary in order to ensure victory over sin.

Again, the lamps needed to be trimmed every day; and we need *daily* snuffing. We ought to be ashamed to go about unsnuffed. It is not a painful process, unless we have been sadly neglecting it; and even then our precious Lord is so tender, so pitiful, that we need not fear His hand. He does it with such a gentle, gracious hand. He never upbraids us when He removes our charred wick; but He *does* complain when we are careless about it, and go on without being trimmed. He longs to see us shine brightly, and walk worthy of Him, and is always ready to minister the needed grace.

Then there is the oil—the fresh power and fulness of the Spirit. Had Aaron poured in the fresh oil without removing the charred wick, the lamps would have smoked worse than before. How often is it thus with God's dear children! They go to a meeting and enjoy it; but there has been no self-judgment, no snuffing off of the charred wick, and they come out and have less power to walk with the Lord than before. How important the snuffing! The Lord will never fail to pour in the fresh oil *after* snuffing; and then with righted feelings, and increased joy and power,

we can come forth to serve Him, and bring forth fruit to His praise.

One thought more. In Exodus xxx. 7, 8, we read that Aaron was to burn incense before the Lord whenever he trimmed the lamps. There would be an offensive smell as he trimmed the lamps, and this was to be overpowered by the fragrant incense. How precious! Thus our Lord Jesus presents His own perfections to His Father, whenever He removes the charred wick from us; and the sweetness of that delicious perfume rejoices God, and brings fresh blessings down upon us.

The Lord help us to remember these truths, so that henceforth we may know the joy of having our lamps *continually* trimmed, and thus our light may be kept continually bright and steady. (Lev. xxiv. 2-4.)

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“*ALL MANNER OF PLEASANT FRUITS.*”

CANT. vii. 13.

ONE of our joys in heaven will be, to look back and see that we have helped other Christians to bring forth fruit to the Lord. Our own capacity is limited. Do you not feel how incapable you are of bringing forth certain fruits? or that the quantity is so small, and the quality so poor? And will it not be a joy, to find that you have helped others to bring forth those very fruits in rich abundance? You will enjoy their joy, and share in the Lord's joy over them.

### THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST.

ROM. viii. 34; HEB. vii. 25; EXOD. xxix. 38-43, xxx. 7, 8.

WHAT a precious, joyous truth! Our Great High Priest is always making intercession for us; not only presenting our prayers and praises, but making active intercession for us, and *Him the Father heareth always*. (John xi. 42.)

The continual burnt-offering and perpetual incense that was ordained under the Levitical law beautifully exemplifies this. (See Exod. xxix. 38-43, xxx. 7, 8; Lev. vi. 9-13; Num. xxviii. 3-8.)

The priest was commanded to keep the fire always burning upon the altar (Lev. vi. 9-13); and however careless the people might be, it was his business to offer up a fresh lamb every morning and every evening, so that the sweet savour of the burnt-offering might continually ascend up to God.

The sweet savour of the burnt-offering typified all the glories, beauties, and perfections of Christ; and, oh, how God delights in them! Not only does He delight in all His ways as the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; but think of God's joy in Him *now*, as He fulfils His priestly work for us! What fresh pleasure our blessed God has found in the Lord Jesus to-day! With what delight has He marked His thoughts, His feelings, His words, His ways; His patience, love, and gentleness! What joy He has found in watching His gentle,

loving ways with His foolish and, maybe, wilful people—and His long-suffering grace towards poor unsaved ones!

Yes, yes, indeed, each thought and word and act of Christ has been an offering of a sweet savour to God. Like the incense in the holy place, it has filled heaven with its perfume. And, dear child of God, the Lord Jesus presents all these perfections to God for *you*; and blessings, rich, abundant blessings, flow down to *you*, as the expression of God's continual delight in Christ.

In the sin-offering all our sins are imputed to Christ, and He pays the penalty; but in the burnt-offering all His perfections are imputed to us, and we receive the recompence which He deserves. Thus the substitution is double; and as He was made sin for us, so we are made the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Cor. v. 21.)

This truth of double substitution is also typified in nearly all the sin-offerings. The blood was presented as an atonement for sin, and then the fat and the inwards were burnt as a sweet savour to God, and both were accepted as the offerer's gifts to God. Our union with Christ is so real, and Christ's intercession for us so effectual, that God accepts His perfections as if they flowed from *our* hearts. We stand accepted in the Beloved, and He does not enquire what *we* deserve, but blesses us according to the deserts of Christ. True, He does not always give us joy and power, because when we are proud and wilful they would be curses, and not blessings;

but He deals with us according to His knowledge of our need. Ofttimes the rod, or trial, is the richest blessing He could bestow.

Do you believe this, dear child of God? do you enjoy it? Is it the habit of your soul to draw near to God and ask for what Christ deserves? On the contrary, how often have you used Christ as your sin-offering, and been conscious of forgiveness; but because you did not discern Him as your burnt-offering, you have scarcely dared to lift up your face to God, and have had little expectation of blessings from Him.

Oh, believe in Christ as your burnt-offering! Use Him, enjoy Him as such; and then you will not only be assured of perfect forgiveness, but also have faith to present the perfections of the Lord Jesus to God as if they proceeded from your heart, and be able to ask God to bless you according to His delight in His Son. Oh, what confidence this would give! What quietness and rest of soul! What certainty that God would hear and answer prayer! What joy and gladness! What thanksgiving and praise! Oh for increase of faith that we may take our portion!

But to return to the continual burnt-offering, which specially typifies the intercession of Christ for us. It was the priest's business to provide and offer *that*, and our precious Lord ever lives to make intercession for us. Often, alas! through unbelief or carelessness we neglect to present His perfections to God as our plea for blessing; but *He* abideth

faithful; *He* still speaks to God for us, and blessings unnumbered, and often unnoticed too, flow down to us because of His unwearied intercession for us. Well may we praise and bless His name; and when we reach our home, with what wonder, love, and praise we shall look back, and trace out the blessed, joyous fruits of His patient, loving intercession!

Dear unsaved one, would you not like to have Christ as your Priest? Remember He is *not* your Priest until you come to Him. If you have not fled to Jesus you have *no* Priest, *no* Advocate, *no* Mediator, no one to speak to God for you, no one to plead your cause. The Lord Jesus never mentions *your* name to His *Father*. "I pray not for the world." (John xvii. 9.) These are His own words, and therefore He cannot make intercession for *you*, until you cast yourself at His feet, and receive Him as your own Saviour. Oh, what an awful truth! You stand *alone* before God, a condemned and guilty sinner with the wrath of God abiding on you, and fearful judgment awaiting you.

Oh, flee, flee to the Lord Jesus! Flee to Him at once. Ask Him to become your Saviour and your Priest, and that very moment He will mention your name to God, and become *your* Advocate, *your* Mediator.

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*THE MELCHISEDEC PRIESTHOOD.*

GEN. xiv. 18-20; HEB. vii. 1-17; Ps. cx. 4.

**I**F we turn to Genesis xiv. we find that Melchisedec met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him. In self-sacrificing love to Lot, Abraham travelled more than three hundred miles to deliver him from his captors. It was a noble act, but he must have been very weary; and then Melchisedec brings forth bread and wine, and blesses him.

What a precious type of our blessed Lord Jesus! As the Aaronic priest, He meets all our need as sinners; and as the Melchisedec priest, He feasts, enriches, and blesses those who deny themselves for His sake.

His Melchisedec priesthood is eternal. To all eternity He will delight to bless and feast us. But even now we may know this joy, for it is a special pleasure to Him to refresh and bless His obedient people.

Let us glance at a few Old Testament illustrations. 1 Chron. xvi. 1-3. David had been obedient; he had brought the ark (the type of the Lord Jesus) into its place, and the result was joy and feasting. Oh, give Jesus His place in your heart, and you will have heavenly bread and flesh and wine in abundance! Give Him His place in the assembly, and you will have collective feasting.

1 Kings viii. 62, 66. Fourteen days continued

feasting and exceeding joy was the natural fruit of the expense and labour of building the temple.

2 Chron. xxx. 21-27. Another fourteen days of gladness, joy, and feasting, because Hezekiah had brought the people back to the Lord.

It is always thus. Our great Melchisedec repays a hundredfold, and loves to bring forth the bread and wine, and feast His faithful servants.

The Spirit of God says about Melchisedec, "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered" (and why?), "seeing ye are dull of hearing." (Heb. v. 10-14.) Yes, indeed; we can only learn out the secrets of the Melchisedec priesthood in proportion as our senses are exercised to discern both good and evil.

We read also that Melchisedec blessed Abraham, and Abraham was so enriched and strengthened by this blessing that he not only gave Melchisedec tithes of all, but also refused all Bera's gifts. (Gen. xiv. 21-24.)

It will be always thus when we enjoy the Melchisedec ministry of Christ. The bread He gives is so strengthening, the wine so stimulating, and the blessing so satisfying, that we are enabled to despise and refuse all Satan's "dainty meats" (Prov. xxiii. 6, 7), and get fired with a burning desire to yield up everything to Christ.

Melchisedec accepted the tithes; and, oh, with what joy our precious Lord accepts our freewill-offerings! As our great High Priest He presents our praises, prayers, and first-fruits to God. (Heb,

xiii. 15, 16.) He does not despise our little gifts, but rejoices over them. They are a sweet savour to Him, the outcome of love and gratitude, and He feasts upon them in heaven with His Father.

Is not this a stimulating truth? Should it not stir us up to lay up all manner of pleasant fruits for Him? (Cant. vii. 13) Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, patience, self-denial, self-sacrifice, and obedience; yes, all manner of pleasant fruits, each one in its season, increasing and abounding continually, so that He may have goodly baskets to present to His Father. (Deut. xxvi. 1-11.)

Think again. The Lord Jesus is continually occupied as your great High Priest; and will you not try to make His service for you a pleasant one?

*When you sin*, He takes it upon Himself, and puts it away.

*When you fall*, He is full of compassion, and ready to help you up again, and make you more than conqueror.

*At all times* He presents His own perfections for you, and thus secures abounding blessings for you.

*When you serve Him*, He comes forth to feast you with heavenly bread and wine.

*And when you bring forth fruit*, He gathers it up with delight and joy, and feasts upon it with His Father.

How solemn this is! How important it makes our lives! The Lord Jesus is always occupied for you, for me, and hour by hour we either cause Him the shame and pain of clearing us from guilt, or else the joy of presenting our fruit.

Oh that we thus apprehended Jesus! That we really saw Him thus occupied for us! What power it would give! What steadfastness of heart and purpose! What strength for self-sacrificing obedience and service!

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### *BEREAVEMENT.*

“The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”—JOB i. 21.

THE Lord loves to comfort those that mourn, and He has four special cups of consolation for those whose friends have departed to be with Christ.

First. The joy of the departed. Oh, who can tell the intensity of their joy! (2 Cor. v. 8; Phil. i. 23.)

Second. The certainty of reunion in His presence for ever. (1 Thess. iv. 13–18.)

Third. The Lord desires to heal the broken heart, by supplying the place of the departed one *Himself*; and to fill up the aching void which He has made, by pouring in the fulness of His intense and tender love, and rich and precious sympathy.

Fourth. The new circumstances, give the bereaved ones the opportunity of learning fresh lessons, and bringing forth fresh fruits, which will fit them for higher glory, and closer fellowship with Christ for ever.

Dear child of God, do drink these precious cups; they will soothe your deepest grief, and make you sing for joy. Oh, do not turn away! for if you refuse to be comforted, and nurse your sorrow, the Lord will be grieved, and your heart will become a desolate waste indeed.

*MINISTRY FOR GOD;*

OR, THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS,

ROM. xii. ; 1 COR. xii. ; 1 PETER ii. 3-9.

WE have already considered Aaron as a type of the priesthood of Christ, and we will now touch on a few points in which the sons of Aaron typify the priesthood of believers.

The starting-point is, that they were *born* priests—God-made priests. So every child of God is a born priest, a God-made priest, and should be offering spiritual sacrifices. (1 Peter ii. 5, 9.)\*

There were, however, some blessed points of contrast, which rest upon the one complete and perfect sacrifice of Christ. The old covenant has passed away, and He “is the Mediator of a better covenant,” with “better promises.” (Heb. viii. 6.) One of the most important of these contrasts is, that under the law the sacrifices must be perfect and without blemish; but now our blessed God accepts, and delights in our poor *imperfect* sacrifices. They ascend up to Him, mingled with the much incense of the perfections of Christ (Rev. viii. 3), and are a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to Him.

Again, “Whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be

\* One of Jeroboam’s great sins was that *he* made priests—priests for himself—of the lowest of the people. No one has the right or power to make a priest but God Himself. (See 1 Kings xii. 31 ; xiii. 33, 34 ; 2 Kings xvii. 32.)

holy." (Exodus xxix. 37.) This no longer means that everything which is put upon the altar must be holy. The Old Testament altar had no virtue in itself; it could not perfect the offering; and therefore everything that was put upon it must be intrinsically holy in itself. But *our* Altar—the Lord Jesus Christ—is not only perfectly pure and holy, but He has power to purify and perfect every thing He touches; and therefore, as soon as our offerings are brought to Him, He makes them perfectly holy, and fit to be presented to God.

Another point of contrast is, that under the law the women were not allowed to fulfil the priestly office. But now, in Christ Jesus, there is neither male nor female; and we (sisters) have equal power and right with our brethren, to minister in the priest's office.

The priest's work consisted in ministering *to* God, and ministering *for* God.

As ministers *for* God, they taught the people the way of the Lord (Lev. x. 10, 11; Neh. viii. 2-8; Ezek. xliv. 23, 24; Mal. ii. 7), blessed in His name (Deut. x. 8, xxi. 5), and distributed the flesh of the peace-offerings among the people. (2 Chron. xxxv. 10-14.)

How preciously this unfolds our ministry for the Lord. True, we are not sufficient to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of Him; and if we will but take our true place of ministering for Him, He will make us "able"

(capable) "ministers of the new covenant." (2 Cor. iii. 5, 6.)

You visit a poor woman, and tell her of Jesus, and she is saved. You have been an able minister for God. You go to a mothers' meeting, and seek to set forth Jesus—His sufferings, His worth. You have been bringing forth the flesh of the peace-offering, and inviting them to eat. You seek to instruct a child of God as to her proper place of separation to the Lord; you have been teaching her the difference between the holy and profane, and the unclean and the clean. (Ezek. xliv. 23.) You go to a sad and weary one, and refresh her with some cheering words and precious promises; you have been blessing in His name.

The power of God is with you, and rests upon you; and you go forth in His name to minister for Him, and dispense His good and precious gifts to the poor and needy.

Oh, see your high, your noble calling! You are separated unto the Lord, to stand to minister in His name for ever. (Deut. xviii. 5.) His power is with you, His grace sufficient. He does not send you forth to a warfare at your own charges (1 Cor. ix. 7), but has pledged Himself to enrich you unto all bountifulness. (2 Cor. ix. 11.) He has made you a minister of Christ, a "steward" of the mysteries of God. "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. iv. 1, 2); and in a coming day you will have to give an account of your stewardship. Oh, think how

great your shame will be, if in that day you are proved to have been an unfaithful steward!

Surely, surely the Lord Jesus has a right to all our powers, whether of body or soul. All, all, should be laid at His feet, and used for Him. Then gird yourself with energy and zeal, dear child of God, and seek to fulfil your priestly office, of continually ministering blessings to those within your reach.

One word of caution. The priests were not allowed to minister for the Lord according to their own judgments. Their directions were very distinct and explicit; and the least divergence from those directions was profanity and iniquity in the eyes of the Lord (Jer. xxiii. 11; Ezek. xxii. 26; Zeph. iii. 4), and brought down special judgments upon them. (Lev. x. 1-7; Jer. xiii. 13, 14; Hosea v. 1.)

Remember too the solemn New Testament warning, "A man is not crowned, except he strive lawfully" (2 Tim. ii. 5); and, "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. v. 19.)

The Lord fill our hearts with holy fear and holy zeal, so that we may be intensely earnest in His service, and at the same time extremely careful to serve Him according to His *written* word, and not according to the imaginations of our own hearts.

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*MINISTRY TO GOD;*

OR, THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS.

WE have already considered our priestly service of ministering *for* God; but the special glory and blessedness of priesthood is to minister *to* God. Many of the Lord's people only think of ministry *for* God; but He has specially chosen us to minister *unto Himself*, to offer *Him* spiritual sacrifice, and delight *Him* with the outflow of loving, grateful hearts.

The frequent repetition of the words, "that they may minister unto me," beautifully shadows forth how much God's heart was set upon this ministry. (See Exod. xxviii. 41, xxix. 1, 44, xxx. 20, 30, xl. 15; Lev. vii. 35; Deut. x. 8, xxi. 5; 1 Chron. xv. 2, xxiii. 13; Jer. xxxiii. 22; Ezek. xl. 46, xliv. 11-16, &c. &c.)

Every born priest was privileged to draw near and minister unto Him; but many of them neglected to do so. There were also special joys and honours, and special food provided for those who fulfilled this ministry, which were forfeited by those who neglected it. How true this is now! and how earnest we should be in seeking to fill our glorious place of ministering to God Himself!

In Lev. xxi. 6 we read that the priests offered the bread of their God; and in Num. xxviii. 2 God commands them to offer Him His bread in due season. What a solemn truth! The Lord

lay it upon our hearts, and make us feel our deep responsibility to fulfil our priestly office.

Let us now consider a few details of this ministry as portrayed in our Old Testament mirror.

First. It was the priest's business to offer the appointed sacrifices upon the altar of burnt-offering. (1 Chron. xxiii. 31, 32.)

Second. They went into the holy place by turn according to their courses, and offered incense. (2 Chron. viii. 14 ; Luke i. 5-11.)

Third. They poured out the strong wine unto the Lord. (Num. xv. 5, 7, 10, xxviii. 7, 14.)

Now for the application to ourselves.

First. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living" (or burnt) "sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." (Rom. xii. 1.) This is the *new* order of sacrifice in which our God delights, and which is holy, acceptable, well-pleasing, and a sweet savour to Him. Our very members, which have been the servants of sin, may be presented as a sacrifice to God. (Rom. vi. 13, 19.) Our time, our strength, our talents, our influence, our money, our hands and feet, our ears and eyes, and tongues, should all be laid upon the altar to be used for God, and God alone.

"Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar." (Ps. cxviii. 27.) The cords are His commandments, His precepts (Prov. i. 8, 9, iii. 1, 3, vii. 1-3); and constrained by the love of Christ, we use them as chains to bring our members

into full obedience to Him. This binding implies restraint, and we need it, because the law of sin is still in our members (Rom. vii. 23); and unless we are bound hand and foot it will continually assert its power, and drag us off the altar, and thus much time and strength will be wasted. We should diligently search out these chains, and carefully bind ourselves with them.

Our *tongues* need binding, so that the words of our mouths may be acceptable to our God. (Ps. xix. 14.)

Our *steps* need to be ordered by the Lord, that He may be able to delight in our way. (Ps. xxxvii. 23.)

Our *whole being* needs to be girt up with the girdle of truth (Eph. vi. 14), that we may be preserved from the snares of the destroyer. (Ps. xvii. 4.)

This is the way to present our bodies a living sacrifice to God, and, oh, how He delights in it! True, there would still be sin mingled with it all; but our self-sacrifice is the fruit of the life of Christ within us, and He takes forth the precious from the vile, and rejoices over every little outcome of obedience or love.

Again, sacrifice implies suffering, and so it is. It costs something, and there is pain connected with it. You have to deny yourself, or give up some earthly gain, or risk the anger or frown of those you love, or endure the scorn or jeer of your companions. These things are *not* pleasant; but

you count the suffering as nothing because of the joy of being able to give the Lord some return for all His wondrous love to you.

It is also a *living* sacrifice—active, not passive. You chain up the old man with all his activities, and use all your powers of spirit, soul, and body, to fulfil the will of the Lord. It is active, energetic service, and your desire is to give the Lord that which He delights in.

Thus our whole lives may be presented as a burnt-offering to the Lord; not only our actual service for Him, but also the every-day common things of life. They may all be done as “unto the Lord” (Col. iii. 17, 23), with an earnest longing that all may go up as a sweet savour to Him.

For thirty years our blessed Lord fulfilled the ordinary duties of life; and surely those thirty years were as delightful and precious to God, as His more public after ministry! Oh, let us seek to tread in His steps, not only to do the right thing, but so to do it, that it may be a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to the Lord!

For instance, a servant may sweep a room well, because she prides herself upon being a good servant; but could the Lord accept *that* as an offering at her hand? Or she may sweep the same room under His eye, desiring to please Him; and then her labour will go up to heaven as a sweet savour, acceptable to Him. It is the same with everything, whether great or small. Oh, what a joy to know that all our time and strength may be

redeemed, and ascend as a burnt-offering to our blessed God!

Second. Offering incense. This was a very pleasant part of the priestly service. There was much that was laborious, painful, and trying connected with the ministry at the altar; but how pleasant and refreshing to offer incense! The atmosphere of the holy place was delicious; and while the priest presented the incense to God, he enjoyed the perfume of it himself. Truly we need to go into the very presence of our God, and enjoy the incense with Him.

Had you been standing near the altar when the sacrifices were slain, you would not have found the odour very pleasant. So with us. We often shrink from the pain of presenting ourselves a living sacrifice to God, and many a true-hearted Christian, who has fairly laid herself upon the altar, gets discouraged because she does *not* go on into the holy place to offer incense.

But what is the incense? "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense." (Ps. cxli. 2.) Do you believe this? Are you accustomed to draw near to the Lord, and believe that your prayer is sweet incense to Him? your longings, incense—so sweet to Him, such a joy? (Cant. ii. 14.) It is true; for God has said it, and He cannot lie. But when you believe it, what confidence and joy it produces.

Cant. iv. 9-14 tells us a little of Christ's delight in us. The fruits and spices He mentions are planted in our hearts by Christ Himself, and are

the manifestation of His own life in us. They shadow forth love, joy, peace, meekness, gentleness, &c. ; every fruit of the spirit, every holy emotion of our hearts, every right feeling, all our desires after Christ. All these are incense, sweet incense to God. Do you believe it?

Suppose you are occupied in some service at the altar of burnt-offering; you have a few leisure minutes, and you run into the holy place and enjoy the incense with God. He is delighting in you, and you know it. You look up in His face and catch His smile, and hear His fond, approving words—how refreshed and gladdened you are; how joyously you return to your heavy outside service; how thoroughly all sense of effort or weariness is removed; and with what a spring you can pursue your, maybe, painful service.

There is no effort in offering incense; if you stir it, you would lessen its fragrance. It is the natural outcome of a heart that is burning with love and gratitude to Christ. The priest was commanded to fill his censer with burning coals from off the altar (Lev. xvi. 12); and we must continually get the fire of love renewed, by a fresh sense of the Lord's self-sacrificing love for us. He then filled his hands with incense, and put it upon the fire and presented it to the Lord. In Nehemiah xiii. 5, we read of a *chamber* of incense; and surely the heart of our precious Lord Jesus is our chamber of incense. In Him all fulness dwells; from Him is our fruit found; and we may draw continually from Him,

and thus be filled with the fruits of righteousness, and have censers full of incense to present to God.

The priests were not allowed to offer strange fire before the Lord, and Nadab and Abihu were struck dead for doing so. (Lev. x. 1-6.) How solemnly this teaches us, that we need continually to get fresh fire from off the altar; for if we work ourselves up to offer incense, it brings spiritual deadness and coldness upon us.

Thus real incense ascends up quietly, restfully; it is just the natural overflowing of our hearts, but, oh, so sweet to Him! The little melody that goes on continually, because we are happy in His love; sometimes prayer, sometimes praise, sometimes a little flow of gratitude; all in turn, just the spontaneous outpouring of our hearts—all this is incense. Believe it. Draw near to God, and enjoy it with Him; and daily seek to have your heart so filled by Christ, that your incense may abound, and ascend up continually to be a delight and joy to God. What a holy atmosphere this would form around you, the pleasant genial atmosphere of His smile! and basking in its sunshine, how happy and fruitful you would be!

Third. Pouring out the strong wine to God. "How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! How much better is thy love than wine!" (Cant. iv. 10.) Yes, our love is the wine, the strong wine that He delights in. This was occasional ministry, and not continuous, and so from time to time our hearts are stirred with the grace and love of our Lord, and

boil over, as it were, with gratitude and praise, and pour themselves out to Him. He delights in this ministry. Oh, may we know more of it!

This was one of the ordinances which could only be observed *in the land*. (Num. xv. 1-12.) There was no wine in the wilderness. So with us. If we dwell in the wilderness at a distance from the Lord, our poor cold hearts will have no gushing love to pour out; but if we abide in His presence, our love will increase and abound yet more and more, and we shall habitually know the joy, of causing our Lord to drink spiced wine, of the juice of our pomegranates. (Cant. viii. 2.)

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WORDS OF COMFORT.

ISA. liv. 11, 12

How precious are these verses! They just tell out the deep pity and tender compassion of the Lord towards a sorrowing soul that refuses to be comforted. It is as if He said, "Oh, thou afflicted one, do you not know what I am doing? Can you not trust me? These sorrows shall not hurt you. I want to make you very lovely, to ornament and beautify you, to inlay you with precious stones, and to make you a special delight and glory to myself to all eternity."

Is not this enough, dear suffering one? Will you not trust His wise and loving, tender hand? Will not the eternal gain, of increased and closer fellowship with Him, repay for all your present pain?

*THE PRIEST'S PORTION.*

NUMB. xviii. ; Joshua xiii. 14, 33.

WE repeatedly read that the priests were to have no part nor inheritance with Israel. (Deut. xviii. 1, 2.) The Lord was their inheritance, and the sacrifices of the Lord their food.

Their priestly office was given them as a service of gift. They were brought into fellowship with God, and privileged to feed upon the most holy things reserved from the altar. This was the proper portion of every born priest, and the provision was abundant indeed.

How true this is now ! What a glorious, what a full provision our blessed God has made for us, His heavenly priesthood ! (1 Peter ii. 5, 9.) We are called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. i. 9), and privileged to feast with God our Father upon all the goodness of His house. (Ps. lxxv. 4.)

Special food (Numb. xviii. 8-10), and special honours, were apportioned for those priests who fulfilled their priestly office ; and this typifies the special joys provided now for those who seek to minister to the Lord. But through infirmity or carelessness, many of them neglected their appointed service, and thus forfeited their portion. And, sad to say, it is the same now, and that is why so many of God's children are weak and sickly, and bring forth so little fruit.

Each priest who ministered to the Lord, had the privilege of taking home the heave breast of the peace-offering which he offered, and sharing it with his household ; but the right shoulder was his own special portion. (Lev. vii. 29–36.)

How significant! When we go into the holy place, we learn out more and more of the love of Christ, and then we not only feed upon it ourselves, but also have the joy of unfolding it to others, and sharing it with them. But the shoulder—the strength of Christ—is our own special portion ; we cannot pass that on. Each of us must go into the inner court ourselves, before we can know the joy of using Christ as our strength, and coming out of the wilderness leaning upon our Beloved.

Again, the meat-offerings might only be eaten in the holy place. (Lev. vi. 14–18.) Therefore those priests who remained outside could not partake of them. So with us. We can feed upon Christ as the manna (the bread of God, sent down from heaven to give life unto the world) at all times, and in all places ; but we can only have fellowship with God's thoughts about the life, and words, and ways of Christ, in the holy place. "It is most holy," and can only be handled with holy hands, and fed upon by grateful, worshipping hearts.

The sin-offering also was only permitted to be eaten in the holy place. (Lev. vi. 24–29.) We can feed upon Christ as the Paschal Lamb—our Substitute—in the outer court, and rejoice that in Him we have redemption through His blood ; but

we must be in the immediate presence of God, before we can enter into *God's thoughts* about Him as the sin-offering, or in any measure apprehend the intensity of His sufferings when made sin for us.

The same law applied to the trespass-offering (Lev. vii. 1-7); which teaches us that we must go into the holy place to learn out the heinousness of any act of disobedience.

The ram of consecration was also eaten in the court of the tabernacle (Lev. viii. 31-35); and only as we *abide* in the secret presence of the Lord, and there ponder upon and delight in Christ's claims upon us, can we get steadfastness of purpose, to yield ourselves a living sacrifice to Him.

Oh for hearts which will habitually go in and feast with God, and enter into His joys, His comforts, His delights! If we do *not* go in, we shall *still* be fed; but we shall only have the portion which the priests took home with them.

Again, all the best of the oil, and the wine, and the wheat belonged to the priests. (Num. xviii. 12-20.) How precious true!

The *best of the oil*. Is there any unction or power to be compared to our oil—the power of the Spirit? (Matt. x. 19, 20; Mark xiii. 11; John xvi. 13-15; 2 Cor. i. 21, 22; Gal. iv. 6; 1 John ii. 20, 27.)

The *best of the wine*—"Fulness of joy;" "pleasures for evermore" (Psalm xvi. 11); "abundantly satisfied;" and "rivers of pleasures." (Psalm xxxvi. 8.) Does not this surpass all the possible excitement or pleasures of this world?

*All the best of the wheat*—choice, nourishing, pleasant food ; nothing coarse or refuse. He feeds us with His own bread, and fills us with holy, heavenly expectations and desires.

“*Whatsoever is first ripe in the land,*” and “*everything devoted.*” (vv. 13, 14.) Yes ; when your heart is right with the Lord, how you do rejoice to see some of His children pleasing Him ! How you do enjoy their devotedness and self-sacrifice !

The *firstlings* also. (vv. 15–18.) What pleasure you find in any fresh act of obedience, or increase of fruit, which you discern in others ! Oh, the gladness and joy He has prepared for us ! We need not be humdrum Christians. There are many such, but it is only because they neglect to go into the holy place. We must fulfil our priestly office if we want to feast with Him, and share His joys, His thoughts, His desires.

Again, if we thus minister to the Lord, we get spiritual discernment. It was the priest's business to teach the people the difference between the holy and profane, and the unclean and the clean. (Ley. x. 10, 11 ; Ezek. xlv. 23, 24.) So now, the sweet fragrance and intense holiness of the secret presence of the Lord, makes us sensitive to all that defiles, and quick of scent in the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah xi. 3, margin.) Some devoted Christians are most earnest in outside service for Him ; but because they neglect personal communion with Him, they are slow to discern what grieves Him, or is offensive to Him.

The priests were also commanded to teach the people the law of the Lord (Mal. ii. 7), and in difficult cases to show the Lord's sentence of judgment. If we carefully read Deut. xvii. 8-11, we learn that they had no right to give their own judgment about the matters brought before them; but had to search out the mind of the Lord, and *show* what was His sentence. And if *we* will humbly and reverently search out the mind of the Lord, as revealed in His written word, we shall be able to show others from the Book, what He would have them do.

Oh, the amazing joys and privileges of our priestly office! The Lord make us very earnest and watchful in fulfilling them.

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"COMFORT YE, COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE."

WE should seek to comfort others with the comfort wherewith we ourselves have been comforted of God. Oh, the comfort of His love! Do you know it, dear child of God? If so, let your heart go out in bowels of mercies to those who know it not. Show them the same love which you have enjoyed yourself. Be like-minded with Christ. Have the same mind to others as Christ has towards you. Deal patiently with them. Bear with their ignorance and folly. Let your compassions flow out to them, and seek to help and comfort them, even as He has helped and comforted you.

*ETERNAL MINISTRY TO THE LORD.*

EZEKIEL xliv. 10-16.

EVERY word in this chapter will be literally fulfilled to Israel, upon the earth, in the millennium. But as the past blessings of Israel were shadows of the Church's present portion, so the future blessings of Israel will be shadows of the Church's heavenly portion.

Let us consider these few verses in this aspect.

We here read of two sets of Levites, or rather priests. One set, the descendants of those priests who had joined with Israel when they turned away from the Lord (*vv.* 10-14); the other set, the descendants of those priests who kept the charge of the Lord, and would not join with Israel in their sin. (*vv.* 15, 16.)

The first mentioned, will not be allowed to minister to the Lord in the millennium, but will have the outer service of the temple committed to them. But the others, will be rewarded by being allowed to go near to the Lord, to stand before Him, and to minister at His table.

Surely this teaches us that our future and *eternal* power of ministry to the Lord, and personal nearness to Him, will depend upon our *present* obedience and love. This is confirmed by the very many passages in the New Testament about future rewards.

This is very solemn. Which would you like? To be just inside heaven? saved so as by fire? one of the least in the kingdom? Or close, close to the Lord? abounding in fruit? and able to minister special joy to Him? Every act of our lives will tell for eternity. Every hour may be redeemed by doing His will, or wasted in self-will or folly. All, all will be remembered. All, all will tell, and help to fix our eternal place.

Do you not desire a place of special nearness to Christ by-and-by, and ability to stand before Him and minister to Him? Oh, then, be true to Him *now*; and do not go astray with others. Do not go after any forbidden thing, or turn aside from any of His commandments. If you take His precepts, and bind them round you as a chain, you will soon be filled with the fruits of righteousness, and able to yield Him "royal dainties." (Genesis xlix. 20.)

But you may say, How can I, a poor sinner, yield the Lord royal dainties? By feeding upon the fulness of Christ—the effectual spiritual food which God has provided for you. As the health and vigour of our bodies, depend in great measure upon the food we eat, so our new-born spirits are dependent upon spiritual food. We might as well seek to sustain our bodies upon ashes, as feed our spirits upon earthly things.

Alas! how many of God's children seek their present portion in earthly affections, expectations, and hopes, or even innocent pleasures. They look to Christ for salvation, but seek their daily joy in

these lower things. No wonder there is such weariness, such disappointment, and depression; such blighted hopes; and consequently no power to bring forth fruit unto God.

But, oh! there is some better food. The Lord, the Lord Himself is ours; and we may feed upon *Him*—His thoughts, His feelings about us; His affections, His desires towards us; His words, His ways; all that He has done; all that He is doing; all that He will do; yea, all that He is, or has; this is our food, our proper food; the food our God has provided for us. This will satisfy; and feasting upon this we shall go singing on our way to heaven; we shall be strengthened and gladdened, and have power over sin, the world, and the devil; the fruits of righteousness will abound and flourish within us, and by degrees our hearts will yield the royal dainties in which our God delights.

Our blessed God, by the word of His power, could create ten thousand worlds, or angels without number; but the fruits in which He *delights*, can only *grow* out of loving, grateful hearts. These are His luxuries; and there is nothing in the universe so precious to Him. They cannot be simply created by His power; but are the gradual result of close and happy fellowship with Himself.

Oh, what a wonderful portion is ours! Our God is forming us for Himself, and intends to make us the most wonderful, loving, and loveable beings in the universe. But no two of us will be alike. As the members of our bodies all differ one from

another, so, as members of Christ, we shall all fill different places, and yield different fruits. Each one will have a place, which no one else could fill.

Dear child of God, would you not like a special place? Would you not like to yield the Lord some special luxury? Oh, think of the joy, when in heaven, of finding that you can give Him something which He delights in, which no one else can yield—to know that He enjoys it, that it is pleasant to Him, that He treasures it up, and that He and your Father rejoice over it together.

And such may be your portion. Only follow Him fully; be true, be obedient, be loving, be grateful; and some rare and precious fruits will be perfected, through the very circumstances in which He has placed you. Each fruit has its own flavour, and needs its own special culture to bring it to perfection. Thus the Lord, according to His own unerring wisdom, places His children in different circumstances, that the special fruit which He desires from each one may be brought to perfection.

What courage this should give; what earnestness, what self-denial. Oh, let us gird our loins, and labour together with our God; that in a coming day, He may be able righteously to give us a special place of ministry to Christ, and a special power of gratifying Him.

*SPIRITUAL JEALOUSY.*

“ENVIEST thou for my sake?” said Moses, when Joshua’s jealousy was roused for his master’s pre-eminence. “Would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them.” (Num. xi. 29.)

Is this your spirit, dear child of God? or would you like to be one of the greatest in heaven? the nearest to Christ? the most praised by Him?

Think again; oh, think again; you have not weighed it rightly. This wish will die a natural death if you only see what it involves. I am sure you will not pretend to say, that you are so satisfied with your own obedience and love to Christ, that you would be *glad* to find, that no one had loved or served Him better than you have done. You know something of your own folly; how much trouble you have given Him, how often you have grieved Him; and is your love to Him so small, that it will be a *pleasure* to find, that everyone has given Him *more* trouble, and caused Him *more* pain than *you* have done?

No, no, indeed; rather what joy it will be, when all secrets are unfolded, to see that others loved Him, served Him, obeyed Him, pleased Him, better than you did; and when you remember how *you* grieved Him, what a comfort to know that others were a joy and pleasure to Him! Ah! yes, when we reach our home we shall love Him better than we love ourselves, and think more of His joy than of our own personal gain.

*THE GLORY OF THE LORD.*

EZEKIEL i.

HOW wonderful are the beauties which our heavenly mirror reflects! In this chapter we have a reflection of the glory of the Lord (v. 28), and the frequent repetition of the two words "appearance" and "likeness" prove, that all the particulars mentioned, are emblems of the beauties and glories, which characterised our precious Lord when He—"the brightness of glory"—trod the earth; and also point out how we—His members—can become His glory by reflecting Him.

The mention of a man upon the throne in heaven (v. 26), also proves that the vision applies to the present dispensation, because our Lord Jesus was not enthroned in heaven as *the Man*, until after His resurrection from the dead.

But, oh, how wonderful that we poor sinners may become the glory of the Lord (Isa. xlvi. 13; Jer. xiii. 11; 1 Cor. xi. 7; 2 Cor. viii. 23), and be a constant source of delight and joy to Him! (Isa. lxii. 3, 4; Zeph. iii. 17; Phil. i. 11.)

But how can this be brought about? Our blessed God has told us, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." (2 Cor. iii. 18.) It is a gradual development. We do not grow up into Christ at once, but little by little, from glory to glory, one fruit added to another.

The present collective state of the Church—its worldliness and unlikeness to Christ—makes us feel that *it* in no way reflects these glories; but surely we may do so *individually*, and thus day by day become an increasing delight and praise to our God.

Let us now consider the chapter in detail.

Verse 4. The north is the emblem of judgment. Out of it comes a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself. This is like the fire of the burning bush, feeding on itself; a wonderful figure of all the force of God's anger being spent upon Himself; for we must never forget that Christ, when on the cross, was still the mighty God. Out of this comes brightness; even as out of the fire of judgment that raged round the cross, we get all our brightness and joy. Amber, the flame colour, shows the intensity of the fire.

Verse 5: "*Out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures;*" that is, we get our very life out of Christ's death. We are the outcome of Christ's sufferings, and our new nature bears the image of Christ; so that, though it may be very tiny and feeble, still it is like Him. The likeness of Christ has been formed within us, even as a baby has the likeness of a man, and not of an animal. By nature we had the likeness of the devil, and should have grown up into his image, had we remained unsaved.

Verse 7: "*Their feet were straight feet*"—straight and long, like a hare's foot, to give swiftness and

elegance in motion. "I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments." "I will run the way of thy commandments." (Ps. cxix. 60, 32.) Feet cushioned underneath, to give comfort and ease while running.

"*And the sole . . . like the sole of a calf's foot*"—a divided hoof, able to hold on in difficult places. What a full provision for quick and easy motion! The feet are most important. We shall make but little progress unless they are well formed. "Alas!" you exclaim, "mine are not well formed." Listen, dear child of God—"He maketh my feet like hinds' feet." (Ps. xviii. 33.) Yes, *He*, your blessed Lord, will form them for you. Just spread your need before Him, tell Him your weakness, and as you strive to walk in His ways your feet will grow, and little by little you will learn to walk in the high and difficult places of fellowship with Him; and, oh, remember if there be but progress He takes pleasure in you, as He watches the gradual development of your feet!

"*They sparkled like burnished brass.*" Brass, or bright copper, is not easily tarnished, and does not absorb defilement. Oh, how important for us! Defilement is all around. We cannot avoid contact with it; but in fellowship with Christ we get power to resist it, and can throw it off instead of absorbing it.

Verse 8: "*The hands of a man under their wings.*" What a precious symbol—the hands of Christ to sustain and help each feeble effort of

mounting upward! The wings half fledged, may be, but each flap sustained and helped by Him. How true! "When I am weak, then am I strong." Conscious of weakness we lean on Him, and He upholds and lifts us up. Yes, and to all eternity He will still sustain; for the hands are again seen under the wings in chap. x. 21, when we behold the cherubim in all their glory.

If we do not use our wings we shall lose the use of them, and we must also take care not to overstrain them. Overstraining would be trying to work ourselves up into a frame of mind which is not spiritually natural to us; like copying some one who prays four hours a day. Take care you go into the Lord's presence, but do not fly too long, or strain yourself beyond your power.

"*Four wings*"—two to be used reverently in the presence of the Lord, and two "*joined one to another,*" joined to fellow-Christians seeking to help them upwards. We should gladly join with others; not proudly saying, "I can stand alone," nor withholding our help from another; but seeking to bear the infirmities of the weak, and to help others to mount upwards. We keep others down when we are down ourselves.

This fellowship with other Christians is a great help in our spiritual life. In prayer, we are not so troubled with wandering thoughts if we are praying with another; and the Word often unfolds itself more fully when we read it with another, and thus we grasp the truth more easily. Still, we need to

be careful, and not link with those who will drag us down. We should join our wings with some one who will help us to fly up. Link upwards and not downwards.

Verse 9 : "*They turned not when they went.*" Thorough subjection ; no saying, "I want this or that," but out and out surrender to the Lord, of one mind with the Lord, and every thought brought into captivity to Him.

Verses 10, 11 : "*Their faces.*" These four faces are very wonderful, and are gradually formed or chiselled out as we go "*straight forward*" in the path of obedience.

The face of the *man*, represents intelligence, affection, and sympathy. Our God would not have us hard, but filled with love, not only to Him, but to His people, and to the world.

The *lion*, represents strength and courage, a fearlessness which will not shrink from danger.

The *ox*, patient enduring labour, which will plod on, content to do little things bit by bit, not wanting great things, but patiently and steadily working on.

The *eagle*, keen vision, and rapid upward flight, seeing afar off, and soaring on high into the sunlight of God's presence, and well-nigh forgetting the troubles of the way. The ox goes patiently through the trouble, but the eagle soars above it.

Our circumstances are all ordered by the Lord to help to form these faces, and frequently reveal to us the very face which is most lacking. This is

why we so often find ourselves unequal to our circumstances. But if we are wise, instead of being disheartened, we shall just cast ourselves in our helplessness upon Him, and seek to draw out of His fulness the needed grace, and thus the lacking face will be gradually formed in us, *through* the very things which seem to be against us. We should not turn aside because of difficulties; for it is only as we go "*straight forward*," that the lacking faces will be formed in us.

Thus if my circumstances require courage, and I go through them with the Lord, the lion face will be increased; and if patient endurance is called for, the ox face will increase. We are at school, and our surroundings are appointed by Him, to produce exercise of soul, so that His likeness may be perfected in us. True, we cannot be His *glory* until these faces are formed in us; but, blessed be His name, He rejoices over us as He sees them growing. Thus, even when we are mourning over our failures, we may still look up, and know that He is pleased with, and accepts our efforts to do His will.

"*Wings stretched upward.*" (v. 11.) This implies effort; and in service for the Lord we always need to have our wings stretched upward, with one constant cry—"Help, Lord." As the branch draws its sap from the vine, so we need continually to draw fresh supplies of grace from Him. But we also read—

"*Two covered their bodies,*" which implies perfect

repose and quietness of soul, combined with continued and unwearied effort.

“*They turned not when they went.*” (v. 9, 12.) These words are repeated again and again. Increased intelligence does not lead to less dependence. There is no self-will, no self-importance, but entire subjection.

“*Whither the Spirit was to go, they went.*” The Spirit so wonderfully dovetails Himself into our thoughts and feelings, that we may be guided by Him in everything, and thus walk in obedience to the word of God. Oh, what exceeding patience and love He has! May we be kept from grieving Him.

“*Burning coals of fire*” (v. 13)—the holiness of God. We can welcome it with joy; for the precious blood of Christ has met its claims. The coal from the altar, which would have utterly consumed an unsaved sinner, did Isaiah no harm (Isa. vi. 6–8); and we can “give thanks” at the remembrance of His holiness.” (Psalm xcvi. 12.)

“*Like . . . lamps went up and down among the living creatures*”—the Spirit of God ruling within, and giving light and heat.

“*And the fire was bright.*” No dull flame, but a burning fire of love, leading us on and on, in devotedness and obedience to Christ, so that His very life may be seen in us.” (2 Cor. iv. 10, 11.)

“*And out of the fire went forth lightnings*”—the light and heat shining out of us, to enlighten and warm those around; the love of Christ so filling us,

that it could not be hid, and just flowing out of us in everything we do.

. “*Ran, and returned as . . . a flash of lightning*” (v. 14)—swift and ready obedience. Ready to *run* out and do whatever the Lord desires; but back again, quick as a flash of lightning. The Lord, our habitation, whereunto we continually resort. (Psalm lxxi. 3.) Oh, this is the secret of strength—so to dwell in His presence that it becomes our home, to which we *naturally* return; ready to go out and do anything for Him, but glad and quick to come back, to commune with Him.

The next appearance is “*one wheel.*” (v. 15.) Nothing moves so easily upon the earth as a wheel, and surely this suggests adaptability for service here below. As we go “straight forward” in the path of obedience, an aptitude is formed for the performance of that which at first we did very awkwardly, and what was done with great effort at first, becomes gradually easy.

“*The colour, beryl*” (v. 16), points to the human body. And when our bodies are yielded to Him, how thoroughly we find them adapted for His service on earth!

“*A wheel in the middle of a wheel*”—wound up like a clock, and propelled from the inside. The love of Christ constraining us; our great motive to please and gladden Him. When love grows cold our obedience flags, and we need again to be wound up with the love of Christ.

Again we read, “*They turned not when they*

*went.*" (v. 17.) Their ability was increased, but willing subjection in no way lessened.

"*Their rings were so high that they were dreadful.*" (v. 18.) The wheels resting upon the earth, but so high that they reached up to heaven. This would be terrible indeed to Satan; our hands and feet in service here below, but our hearts and eyes up in heaven; and all we do taken up there, and examined in the light of His presence.

"*Full of eyes round about.*" Spiritual discernment, enabling us to "walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise." Seeing everything all round, and learning how to behave ourselves in the church, in the world, and in our homes. Everything done in a right way as "unto the Lord," and thus "none occasion of stumbling" in us. Thus learning of Him our eyes increase; for, in chap. x. 12, we read that not only the wheels, but their "whole body, back, hands, and wings, were full of eyes;" and, in Rev. iv. 6-8, that they are full of eyes "behind," "before," and "within." A fresh eye is formed whenever we *accept* and *echo* the Lord's thoughts about anything. Oh for the humble, subject spirit, to listen to Him at all times, that we may thus become "full of eyes."

"*The wheels went by them.*" (v. 19.) The wheels—the body—a help, and not a hindrance, both in worship and in service. Surely this is true, if our hands, feet, ears, eyes, tongues, mind, affections, strength, and members are all truly yielded unto the Lord; our energies, all sanctified as servants of righteousness.

“*Whithersoever the spirit was to go they went.*” (vv. 20, 21.) The Spirit of life impelling; the wheels subject to, impelled, and empowered by the Spirit. What a blessed, glorious life! The process is gradual. First there is subjection to, then acquiescence in, and then oneness with the mind and will of God.

“*The firmament over their heads . . . terrible crystal.*” (v. 22.) Terrible majesty, perfect transparency, the piercing eye of the holy God!

But in verse 26 we read of “*a throne as a sapphire stone, and . . . a man above upon it.*” A blue throne, speaking of mercy, love, and grace, and the Lord Jesus seated on it; and therefore we need not fear that eye. The terrible crystal shows out every spot of defilement, but the precious blood meets all the guilt; and streams of mercy, love, and grace, flow forth from our Great High Priest. Yes, we may live under the terrible crystal without flinching; and do everything in His holy presence in perfect ease, and enjoy His mighty, sustaining power.

Verse 23: “*Their wings straight,*” as if they moved with greater ease. If we live under the terrible crystal, the power of Christ will rest upon us, and obedience or service will require but little effort.

Verse 24: “*As the voice of the Almighty.*” Oh, this is wonderfully glorious! Our speech to be as the voice of the Almighty, our movements to be as the voice of God, and everything we do or say

and then we shall not go on doing His work in a wrong way. He will show us our mistakes, and lovingly, tenderly put us in the right way. Oh, how blessed to be thus led and empowered by Him! not doing our own will, or thinking our own thoughts, or speaking our own words, but just *His* messengers delivering *His* message, and conscious of His approval.

Verses 26, 27: "*Above the firmament,*" &c. There sits our precious Lord rejoicing over us, watching, directing, sustaining all our service; and seeking to lead us on and on, into increased fellowship with Himself, until our thoughts and feelings and desires, are all brought into unison with His.

The living creatures were "*under the God of Israel*" (chap. x. 20), and only as we dwell under the shadow and rule of Christ can we become a glory or a joy to Him. Oh for such true, thorough subjection to Him, that all His glory and grace may be reflected by us!

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Ps. civ. 24: "O Lord, how manifold are thy works!" There are no two leaves and no two blades of grass alike. In His wisdom has He made them all. But oh, what a joy to know that there are no two people alike, and there will be no duplicates in heaven! There is a place in heaven, and also a place in Christ's heart, that *you*, and you *alone*, can fill. If this were not true your duplicate could fill your place, and you would not be missed.

*THE BLESSING OF BENJAMIN.*

DEUT. xxxiii. 12.

IF we turn back to Gen. xlix. 27, we read, "Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil." We cannot call this a blessing; but Jacob, by the Spirit of God, told his sons what was going to happen to them. (v. 1.)

Thus Benjamin is the type of a person whose natural character is like a discontented, ravening wolf; not satisfied with getting as much prey as he wanted, but ravening, destroying for the very pleasure of it; delighting in cruelty, restless, greedy, unhappy.

What becomes of such a man? Oh, how wonderful to see the mighty transforming power of the Lord! Let us read Deut. xxxiii. 12, "*The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him.*"

Thus this discontented, ravening wolf, finds a place of rest and quietness, as the beloved of the Lord. Every desire of his heart, every craving is satisfied, and he is dwelling in safety by Him; enjoying His love, and resting under His feathers, satisfied by Him. Is it not a beautiful picture of the blessed, glorious rest, Christ has provided for discontented, miserable, ambitious, longing, and restless souls?

"The beloved of the Lord"—he believes in, and enjoys the sweet, precious, fond love of Christ;

and therefore rests, satisfied indeed. The restless cravings of the wolf are stilled, and he cleaves to the Lord Jesus, looking up into His face, resting in His love, contented indeed, yea, delighting in Him.

*"The Lord shall cover him all the day long."* Not an occasional blessing; but continually covered, sheltered, satisfied with Christ; every longing met by Him.

Oh, what a joy, what a rest, to know that, instead of crushing our desires, He is able and willing to gratify them to the full! "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him." Yes, God has weighed and pondered every possible desire of our hearts, and made full provision for them all in and through Christ. He has given Him to us, and all that He has or is, that we may enjoy Him, and be so filled with His fulness, that it may overflow from us, and pour forth in blessings to those around us.

*"And He shall dwell between His shoulders,"* supported by the Lord, leaning upon Him, listening to Him, full of joy and gladness, and able to go on triumphantly, because dwelling between His shoulders.

What a blessed picture! And such is the result of fellowship with Christ. His mighty, transforming power is so great, that He can change the basest and most despicable nature into that which is noble, lovely, and loveable. There is nothing too hard for Him; and He delights to take up those who are wretched and despised, and to make them honourable and intensely happy.

Do you believe this, dear child of God? Do you believe in His power and willingness to transform you? to overcome all that you abhor in yourself, and make you very beautiful? The power that worketh in you is indeed sufficient. Oh, believe it, enjoy it, rest in it, and calculate upon it!

Like Benjamin, keep close to Him; and nestling in His love, your heart will be filled and blessed; and as you walk with Him, you will grow up into His likeness, and be satisfied indeed

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*"THE STONES OF THE TEMPLE."*

1 KINGS v. 17, 18; EPH. ii. 19-22; 1 PETER ii. 5.

**T**HE Church is the living temple of the Lord, His eternal habitation that He is preparing for Himself. In an earthly building the stones greatly vary, both in size, shape, and beauty. And so will it be in the heavenly temple. Each believer is a living stone, and when the last stone is perfected, the whole building will shine forth beautiful and glorious, and every stone will be in its proper place.

The stones of Solomon's temple were all made ready in the stonemason's yard, "so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was building." (1 Kings vi. 7.) So will it be with the living temple, which our precious Lord is building for Himself. This world is His workshop, and our eternal beauty and glory will depend entirely, upon our preparation here below.

We read of great stones, costly stones, and hewed

stones (1 Kings v. 17, 18); of stones sawed within and without (1 Kings vii. 9); of precious stones for beauty (2 Chron. iii. 6); and of stones inlaid with sapphires and fair colours. (Isa. liv. 11.) Who would not wish to be a beautifully-carved stone, inlaid with fair colours, rather than a small plain stone?

I believe that it depends very much upon our selves what kind of stone we shall each be. If we desire to be beautiful stones, we must yield to the Lord's hand, and walk in His ways, instead of being restless and wilful.

The word of God is the saw—the sharp, two-edged sword of the Spirit—provided by God to hew off the excrescences of our flesh. But we must work together with Him. In the old-fashioned saw-pits, there used to be an upper and a lower sawyer, and the one could not work without the other. Surely it is thus with us. The Holy Ghost is the upper sawyer, and we are the lower ones. Oh, seize the handle of the saw and work with Him, and your sins will be subdued! Do not spare the evil of your heart or ways, but bring every thought and feeling under the power of the keen edge of the word of God, and you will become a hewn stone.

If we do not use the saw, the Lord seeks to bring down our flesh by the circumstances around us; He uses them as His chisel; and thus a Christian's life is often chip, chip, worry, worry, all day long, and the ugliness of the flesh is seen in such,

instead of the beauty of the Lord. True, we shall still have trials and worries, even if we do use the saw against our flesh; but then those trials will become the pumice-stone to smooth and polish and beautify.

Again, there are carved stones: those who specially reflect the beauty of Christ, and grow up into His likeness. But this involves suffering. If stones could feel, a carved stone would suffer more than one that was only cut square; and *we* are living stones, and we *do* feel.

But oh, the gain, the glorious gain! Dear, suffering child of God, take courage. Look up in His face, and learn the secret of His dealings with you. You have set your heart upon some special spiritual beauty, you have asked the Lord to work it in you; and can you not trace His chisel in your present woe, and see that He is indeed fulfilling your desire?

Perhaps you cry out and say, "Oh, anything but this!" But courage, courage! Only a little while. The chisel will soon have done its work, and then to all eternity you will look back and thank the Lord that He did not stay His hand because of your crying. Maybe, you have asked to be inlaid with fair colours, and if so, a piece of the stone must be very carefully and skilfully cut out, to make room for the precious inlaying.

For instance, suppose you are very loving, and you ask to be filled with the affections of Christ. Some of your natural affections must be cut out, wounded, and crushed, to make room for His divine

affections; and thus you learn to love as He does, and become a partaker of His bowels of mercies. The process is very painful; but, oh, the gain, the glorious eternal gain! Yes, whenever any special trial comes upon you, or upon those you love, you may always be quite certain that some special beauty, glory, and blessing will be the result.

Again, we need to remember that we do not find perfect stones in the stonemason's yard. It is the workshop where the stones are being perfected, and the worst side of the stone is mostly exposed. We forget this, and get disheartened, both with ourselves and others. We should like to hide all the evil away, and have something grand and beautiful to glory in. But the Lord is working for eternity, and therefore He allows the evil to be seen, that we may be ashamed of it, and it may be hewn off.

Men very often only hew one side of a stone, and leave the other sides rough, because they will be built into the wall, and not seen. But the stones of the Lord's temple must be cut smooth on all sides. “The king's daughter is all glorious within.” (Ps. xlv. 13.) “And in His temple every whit of it uttereth His glory.” (Ps. xxix. 9, margin.)

The plummet is in the hand of our great Zerubbabel. His hands have laid the foundation of this glorious temple, and His hands shall finish it. (Zech. iv. 9, 10), and none can stay His hand. He is the great Master Builder, and we are the common labourers. He is the great Architect, the Designer, the Commander. The responsibility of the whole

work just rests upon Him ; and our part is to be obedient willing servants, and work together with Him.

The plummet is not in the devil's hands, nor in yours, nor in anyone's hand but the Lord's, and the end will be glory, honour, and praise for ever and ever. Oh, what rest and quietness of soul this gives ! what confidence and rest in the midst of things we cannot understand !

But, you ask, will all the stones be made glorious ? In one sense yes, and in another sense no. Very many Christians will be saved so as by fire, and they will be the small plain stones of the building, cut square, and fitted for their place, but not ornamented.

You may say, How can they be to the Lord's glory ? They will show forth the riches of His grace, and to all eternity will manifest the preciousness of the blood of Christ, which could save them in spite of all their wilfulness and folly, and His wonderful patience in bearing with all their crooked ways.

The beautifully carved stones, inlaid with precious jewels, will show forth the exceeding greatness of His power, in enabling them to overcome their sins, and bring forth the fruits of righteousness. Others will show forth His manifold wisdom, in leading them through fire and through water, and thus enriching and beautifying them.

Thus the exceeding riches of His grace, the exceeding greatness of His power, and His manifold wisdom, will all be manifested, and shine forth to

all eternity ; and while *He* will have the glory, *we* shall share the joy and gladness with Him. And oh, how loud will be our praise, how deep our gratitude, as we retrace His dealings with us here below !

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“*HE SHALL NOT FAIL NOR BE DISCOURAGED.*”

THIS is true of the Lord Jesus in every work which He undertakes, whether redemption, the salvation of Israel, or the training of the church. He will not fail, but will perfect that which He commences to do. He will not be discouraged, but will steadily labour on, until He gains the object upon which He has set His heart.

He is training *us* for Himself, and if we will not learn our lessons in one way, He seeks to teach us in another. He will not give in, but goes on and on until He brings every thought into captivity to Himself, and teaches us to echo His judgments in everything. It rests with us as to whether we will learn our lessons in the dark cellar of distance from Him, or in the sunshine of His presence. It is very difficult for a child to learn his lessons when he is grumbling or crying about them ; and we make very slow progress in the ways of the Lord, when we foolishly fret or rebel against Him. Let us seek to learn them cheerily in His presence, enjoying His smile, and then our progress will be rapid indeed, and He will not only help us, but joy over us with singing.

*JACOB; OR, THE WANDERER'S PROMISE.*

GENESIS xxviii. 15.

**W**E may call this the wanderer's promise, because it was given to a wilful, weary wanderer, who was reaping the fruit of his own sin.

Jacob had deceived his father, and cheated his brother; and therefore had to fly from his home with all its comforts—to leave his father and mother, and all his friends, and start away, forlorn and desolate indeed. Suddenly darkness comes on, and he dare go no further; so, with an aching heart, he makes a pillow of stones, and lies down to rest as best he can.

But, oh, the rich grace, the tender pity of our God! He dreamed, and behold a ladder, whose top reached to heaven; and the Lord stood above it, and gave him this wonderful promise: “Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.”

“And Jacob awaked.” And what did he do? Did he shout for joy? did he burst out in songs of praise? No; “he was afraid, and said, ‘How dreadful is this place!’” And why? He had a bad conscience. He had not judged his sin, and therefore shrank from the Lord's presence.

Jacob's special sin was that he tried to manage for himself by contrivance and cunning. He liked to go his own way, and to do his own will, and was not willing to be led by the Lord. No wonder his life was a sad one, and that he was always getting himself into trouble.

It might have been so different with him. If Jacob had been willing and obedient, the Lord would have gone before him, upheld and guided all his steps, and loaded him with loving-kindness and tender mercies. Oh, what countless blessings he lost through his foolish and crooked ways! Still the Lord was faithful; He kept His promise. He never left him; but went after him in all his wanderings, and never rested until He had taught him to obey and serve Him.

What a beautiful shadow of His ways with us. We are His own, His ransomed ones; and He will never, no, never leave us. He has pledged Himself to keep us wherever we go, and will not rest until He has made us perfectly holy. Still, like Jacob, we shall be terrible losers if we are foolish and disobedient children. True, the Lord will keep us to the end; but, oh, what folly to waste our lives in wandering about in a waste and howling wilderness, instead of living in His presence, and enjoying His smile, and feasting upon the goodness of His house.

There is no joy like the light of His countenance (Ps. iv. 6); and no pleasures like those at His right hand. (Ps. xvi. 11.) But Jacob did not feel

this; he knew nothing of the joy of fellowship with God. He was afraid of Him; for he was self-willed, and his ways were crooked.

Are you like him, dear child of God? are you indifferent to, or afraid of, the presence of God? Or can you say with David, "One thing I have desired," that I may be near Him, that I may hear His voice, that I may dwell in His house? (Ps. xxvii. 4-6,) If so, you will sing, yea, sing praises unto the Lord, and offer Him sacrifices of joy.

Poor Jacob was afraid to trust the Lord, and therefore, instead of telling his desires to Him, he always tried to manage for himself; and what a life of sorrow he had. Oh, may we learn to tell out all our desires to Him! He will never say *no* to us if we are truly obedient, unless we ask for something which He knows would do us harm. He always indulges obedient children, and delights to grant their requests.

But let us follow Jacob a little further.

He goes on to Laban, and is cheated by him, even as he had cheated his brother. This is one of God's unchanging statutes—whatever we sow we shall reap (Gal. vi. 7); it will come back to us again. Let us take care what we sow.

This was his first trouble. Then he had no comfort in his home—he had two wives who quarrelled. He then devised means to get possession of Laban's cattle; and when he thought he had succeeded, Laban changed his wages ten times (Gen. xxxi. 41); and thus kept him in a state of

continual anxiety. True, he did get a large number of cattle; but that was because God took care that he should have fair wages. His prosperity was *not* the fruit of his own cunning.

In Gen. xxxi. the Lord commanded him to return to Canaan, and Jacob was so tired of Laban's service that he was glad to obey. But why does he creep away secretly? (*vv.* 20-22.) He was not accustomed to obey the Lord, and therefore was afraid. He *began* to obey; but knew so little of the Lord that he had not courage to go away openly. Poor Jacob! Then Laban comes after him (*vv.* 25-55); but God forbids him to touch him. Oh, surely, if Jacob had not been well-nigh paralysed by his own sins, he would have shouted for joy when he found that Laban did not dare to touch him!

In Gen. xxxii. we read that the angels of God met him. Yes, when we try to obey the Lord, He will meet us and help us. But see the unbelief of Jacob's heart. God had told him to return to Canaan, had prevented Laban from hurting him, had shown him a vision of angels hovering over him to protect him, and yet, when he heard Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred men, "he was greatly afraid, and distressed." (*vv.* 4-8.)

He was afraid because he knew so little of the Lord. He was afraid when the Lord appeared, and gave him a wonderful promise (Gen. xxviii. 17); afraid of Laban (xxxi.); and now afraid of

Esau. (xxxii. 7-11.) Yes, and he was afraid too, when the Lord came down to bless him at Peniel.

He wanted to go over the brook Jabbok, but the Lord prevented him ; he tried to get away, but the Lord held him fast. At last He touched his thigh, and it shrank ; and when he found out Who it was that held him fast, a little bit of faith sprang up, and he clung to Him and got the blessing.

Would you not have thought he would have gone over the brook with thanksgiving and a shout of praise ? But no ; poor Jacob only says, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." Poor, melancholy man ! No matter how good and gracious the Lord is to him, it seems as if nothing could give him joy. And why ? Because he was still going on in his sin.

Soon after he meets Esau, who falls on his neck and kisses him ; but he is Jacob still, and behaves in his usual cringing and deceitful way. There was no nobility about him, and nothing could make him joyous or happy. (Gen. xxxiii.)

Obedience was a strange thing to Jacob, and he soon wearied of it ; and though the Lord gave him a speedy recompense each time he began to obey, he soon turned aside again to do his own will. Thus instead of fully obeying the Lord (Gen. xxxi. 3), and going to his father, he stopped at Succoth, and bought a piece of land, and built a house. (chap. xxxiii. 17.)

This was only half-obedience, and the dreadful trouble of chap. xxxiv. is the result. Surely the

Lord's rod. Had he gone on as commanded to Hebron, to his kindred, this would not have happened.

See his terror in chap. xxxiv. 30, 31. Oh, Jacob, where is your faith? Why, why distrust the Lord? Ah! he had a bad conscience. But he is in terrible trouble, and knows not what to do; so the Lord in tender mercy appears to him and says, "*Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there.*" (Chap. xxxv. 1.)

Jacob arose and went, and again the Lord appeared to him, and gave him a precious promise; but Jacob had not yet learned to obey, and very soon he journeyed *from* Bethel instead of dwelling there (*v.* 16)—half obedience again.

Then Rachel dies. Why did not Jacob heed the rod and return to Bethel? Ah! he knew not the joy of obedience and fellowship with the Lord, and he wandered still further away from the place where the Lord had told him to dwell, "even beyond the tower of Edar." (*v.* 21.)

Then came Reuben's sin; then followed the sad selling of Joseph, when Jacob refused to be comforted, and for twenty years he mourned for Joseph; then came the famine, and with a broken heart he had to part with Benjamin, and send him into Egypt.

Truly it was trouble upon trouble, trouble upon trouble; but it need not have been so. Had Jacob been obedient, it would have been blessing upon blessing, blessing upon blessing. The Lord was

faithful indeed, and kept His promise, and kept him in all places whither he went; but Jacob did not have the Lord's smile, nor the sustaining strength of His arm. He had no joy, but was always in terror, and dragged out a sad and weary life.

But he learned his lesson at last. In Gen. xlv. we read that he stopped on his way down to Egypt, and sought help and guidance from the Lord. Oh, the grace of our God! He meets him at once and says, "*Fear not, I will go down with thee.*"

The Lord could not say "Fear not" while Jacob was doing his own will. He did promise to keep him wherever he went, and to bring him back again; but He could not say "Fear not," nor could He walk with him as his Companion and Friend. But now at last, after fifty-four weary years of self-will and folly, he learns to say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Oh, Jacob, Jacob, how could you be so foolish? Fifty-four dull, sad years of constant fear, and trial, and misery, instead of fifty-four years of joy, peace, gladness, and comfort of the Holy Ghost.

Dear child of God, will you not take warning? Which will you choose—a life of weary disappointment and sorrow, or a life of well-nigh shouting for joy? Will you not say, "No half-obedience for me. I will try to please the Lord in everything, and do exactly what He tells me"? If so you will have a bright, joyous path, and a heart burning

within you. You will have the Lord, 'not' only as your Saviour to keep you, and bring you back when you wander; but also as your Companion, your Friend, your Upholder, your Strength; and will be able to exclaim with joy, "His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all His paths are peace."

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*JOSHUA ; OR, THE WARRIOR'S PROMISE.*

DEUT. xxxi. 6, 8; JOS. i. 5-9.

**T**HESE promises are exceedingly precious, but they only belong to the obedient child.

Some of God's promises are *unconditional*, and secured to us because of the obedience of Christ, and they are fulfilled in spite of all our failure, or even wilfulness. But others are *conditional*, and are only fulfilled in proportion to our own obedience.

Many of God's children get their faith terribly shaken because they forget this. They are disappointed because some *conditional* promise is not fulfilled to them, and then the devil tells them the Lord does not keep His promises, and thus leads them to distrust Him. If they read their Bibles more carefully, they would perceive that they had no right to expect that special promise to be fulfilled to them, because they had not kept the specified conditions.

Thus the Lord could not promise Jacob to go

*before* him, because he was not willing to be led by Him; nor could He say to him, "Fear not," because he had reason to fear, as long as he was walking in wilful and deceitful ways. Still, in His own rich grace, He promised to keep him in all his wanderings, and to bring him safely back again. But oh, how different are His words to Joshua!

Joshua had learned to obey, and was willing to follow the Lord. He was a pleasant child, and therefore received the sweet and encouraging promise, "*The Lord, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee; He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee; fear not, neither be discouraged.*" (Deut. xxxi. 8.)

His pathway was full of dangers; but what need he fear, if the Lord went before him? His enemies were strong and numerous; but who could harm him, with the Almighty God to uphold and defend him? His needs were great and manifold; but what did that matter, with God by his side to supply them all? Well might he "be strong and of good courage;" for with God for his Guide, he could make no mistakes; and with God for his Helper, he must succeed and prosper wherever he went. May we learn from him to be willing and obedient, that we also may enjoy a steady stream of continuous blessing!

The Lord led Joshua into the land of Canaan, but He will lead *us* into paths of righteousness. He commanded *him* to fight against strong cities,

with walls and gates ; and He commands *us* to fight against the strongholds of sin and Satan, which are within us. (2 Cor. x. 4, 5.) He told him to show no mercy to the old inhabitants of the land, but to destroy them utterly ; and He tells *us* to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit (2 Cor. vii. 1), and to purify ourselves, even as He is pure. (1 John iii. 3.)

Joshua's object was to get possession of the land of Canaan and enjoy its rich provision. Our object is to get possession of our portion in Christ and to enjoy His fulness, so that we may be able to bring forth much fruit to gratify and glorify Him.

Joshua's enemies were *men*, but ours are *sins* ; and as truly as the Lord said to Joshua, "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee," so He promises that we shall get the victory over every sin against which we fight. (Josh. x. 25.)

But remember there is no victory for us unless we fight, even as there would have been no victory for Israel had they remained in their tents. Again, it is fighting all the way. Joshua did not get possession of the land in one day, or by one tremendous battle. It was seven years of continual fighting, city by city, and village by village. Some cities were taken quickly ; others had to be besieged, like Jericho, for some days. At Gibeon they had to fight for thirty-six hours without stopping. It was terrible effort, but oh, what a victory ! And the Lord stayed the setting of the sun for a whole day to give them the needed light. What a

glorious time! But they must have been very tired.

We must attack our sins as Joshua did the cities. He believed in God as able and willing to help him, and so went forth against them; and *we* shall never get the victory unless we fight as well as trust. Again, Joshua went on steadily, from city to city. Do read Joshua xi., and see what a stirring account it is—what faith, what enemies, what courage, what obedience, what unwearied effort.\*

Oh, may we learn to fight as Joshua did! He was steadfastly purposed utterly to destroy his enemies. This is the spirit we need; we are prone to play fast and loose with our sins, to treat them one day as enemies, and the next day to show them a little favour. We need to settle it in our hearts

\* Some Christians think that we ought not to fight; but the New Testament is most explicit upon this subject. Let us glance at a few passages. Romans xiii. 12, Ephesians vi. 11-17, and 1 Thessalonians v. 8, speak of armour. We should not need armour unless we had to fight. 1 Corinthians ix. 25-27 speaks of striving and keeping the body under. 2 Corinthians x. 3-5 speaks of weapons and pulling down of strongholds. Galatians v. 17 tells of the flesh and the spirit lusting against each other. Timothy is commanded to war a good warfare (1 Tim. i. 18), and to "fight the good fight of faith." (Chap. vi. 12.) He is also exhorted to be a good soldier. (2 Tim. ii. 3-5.) Paul says that he had fought a good fight. (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.) In Hebrews xii. 4 we are exhorted to strive against sin. In 1 Peter ii. 11 we are entreated to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; and, in chap. iv. 1, to arm ourselves.

that they are real enemies, that they rob us of our joy and strength, injure *us* eternally, and injure others now also, and grieve the Lord. This will give us steadfastness of purpose in resisting them, and then we shall make steady progress as Joshua did.

In Joshua x. 22–25 we read about five conquered kings, and Joshua said to the Israelites: “Come near, and put your feet upon the necks of these kings.” Ah! this is what we need. But read the next verse: “Thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight.”

Is not that enough, dear child of God? Yes, you shall be able to trample upon every sin against which you fight. The Lord has promised it, and He will do it, so if you will only fight, He will give you the victory. He has provided the armour and the weapons for you, and He Himself will fight for you, and with you, even as He did for Israel. Oh, do not be discouraged because your sins are not conquered at once, but persevere, and victory will be yours! Remember Joshua, and his long marches, and many battles, and arm yourself with the same mind. He did it to get an earthly portion; and *you* do it that you may be a name and a praise and a joy to the Lord, and enjoy your heavenly portion while passing through this world, and receive an exceeding great and eternal recompense hereafter.

Joshua's pathway, as a whole, was one of continual victory; but he was not perfect, and it may help and encourage us to notice his failures. There

are only *two* recorded. One in the matter of Ai (chap. vii.), in which he trusted his own strength, and had to prove his own weakness ; and the other in connection with the Gibeonites (chap. ix.), in which he trusted his own wisdom, and asked not counsel of the Lord, and had to prove his own folly.

But quickly indeed he humbled himself. There was no going on in folly, no effort to justify himself before God or man ; but, humbled and ashamed, he threw himself upon the mercy of his God, and proved His readiness to restore and bless. Oh, may we learn to do the same when overtaken by any sin, and we also shall prove His rich forgiveness and sweet restoring grace !

As a rule, Joshua trusted the Lord for strength and wisdom, and never, never did He fail him. However mighty the enemies, the needed strength was given, and victory was complete ; and however difficult his pathway, the right hand of the Lord just led him safely on, and put a new song of praise into his mouth. Truly his enemies were but bread for him, for their defence was departed from them.

Dear child of God, shall this be your pathway ? Will you, like Joshua, follow the Lord fully, and look to Him to help you in everything you do ? If so, you also may be strong and of good courage, and need fear no evil ; for He will be with you ; He will strengthen you ; yea, He will help you ; yea, He will uphold you with the right hand of His righteousness. (Isa. xli. 10.)

*THE TRAINING OF JOSHUA.*

IT is very interesting to note how the Lord prepares His servants for any special work, and to see how naturally they reap the fruit of their own obedience and faith.

First. The first mention of Joshua is in Exod. xvii. 8-16. We there find him as the leader of the children of Israel in their first battle. He went forth willingly to the conflict, and discomfited Amalek with the edge of the sword. We shall never excel in the things of God, unless we seek to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Second. The next time we hear of Joshua it is as Moses' servant. (Exod. xxiv. 13.) He was humble, obedient, and loving; and though the leader of the hosts of Israel, he willingly took the place of a *servant*. Our Lord Jesus says, "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant," or slave. (Matt. xx. 26, 27.) Thus the pathway to greatness in the kingdom of heaven, is true humility and self-sacrificing service.

Third. In Exod. xxxii. 17 we find that he must have gone up the mount with Moses, and waited there all alone for forty days, while Moses was in the cloud with God. What a picture of patient obedience and self-denying love! How lonely he must have been! How weary! and how anxious! but there he waited until Moses came down again.

We are not fit for special service unless we can go on patiently in self-denying and, may be, lonely, weary service.

Fourth. He chose to remain in the tabernacle alone with the Lord (Exod. xxxiii. 11); he loved His presence, and delighted to be there, rather than in the camp with the people. Personal communion with the Lord, is the real secret of spiritual strength.

Fifth. In Num. xiii. and xiv. we read that he was faithful and true, and not carried away with the stream. He had true faith in God, and knew *He* had power to conquer all the giants of Canaan. We must learn to stand alone when our friends turn aside to worldliness or sin.

Sixth. The Lord speaks of Joshua as "a man in whom is the Spirit" (Num. xxvii. 18), and also as one who had wholly followed the Lord" (chap. xxxii. 12); and in Deut. xxxiv. 9 we read that he was full of the spirit of wisdom.

He was thus equipped and thoroughly furnished to be the leader of the children of Israel; and if we cultivate the same precious fruits of the Spirit; the Lord will most surely honour us even as He honoured Joshua.

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"Well done."—The Lord always says "well done" whenever we try to please Him. He accepts the effort, and praises it, although the thing itself may be done very badly. We do the same with children. We often praise some bad writing, because the child has done its best.

## ISAIAH LII.

WONDERFUL indeed will be the blessing of Israel when they heed these stirring words, and awake and shake themselves from the dust, and return unto the Lord their God! Truly they will break forth into joy and sing together; for the Lord will go before them, and the God of Israel will be their rereward, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God.

But while we look forward and long for that blessed time, we should also remember that the Holy Ghost quotes this chapter three times over, and applies it to the Church. (See Rom. x. 15; 2 Cor. vi. 17; and Eph. v. 14.)

Let us, therefore, seek to learn what our blessed God has to say to us in it.

*“Awake, awake; put on thy strength.”* (v. 1.) Surely the Lord Himself is our Strength, and we put Him on, by going near to Him and leaning upon Him. But we must bestir ourselves. We are prone to lie down and wait for the Lord to lift us up; but His word is, “Awake! awake!” We are poor weak things, and cannot make ourselves strong; but our very weakness should help us to cling to Christ. Indeed, the Lord will not make us strong, because He loves us with such an intense and tender love, that He desires to have us always with Him; and it is a pleasure to Him to be our Companion and Helper in everything He bids us do.

He is Himself our Strength ; and instead of bemoaning our weakness, we should draw out of His fulness, the strength, or faith, or love, or patience, or whatever we need ; even as the branch draws the sap out of the vine.

These stirring words are said to a wilful child, to one who is again entangled with the chains of sin. We should have said, "Go humble yourself, and weep and bemoan your sins ;" but the Lord says, "Awake, awake . . . put on thy beautiful garments." He reminds us of our standing in Christ, and seeks to rouse us from the lethargy of unbelief. He would not have us grovel here below. We are His holy ones, set apart for Himself, and the dust is no place for us. He exhorts us to shake ourselves, and to arise and sit down. True, we may be enchained by sin, or carried captive by the devil ; but of old time He broke our yoke asunder, and the chains have no padlocks on them, and if we will but bestir ourselves, we shall be able to throw them off.

But we must use the right weapons. The order of these two verses is very striking, and we often torture ourselves by reversing it. We must first "awake," then clothe ourselves with Christ as our "righteousness and strength," then remember our high and holy calling, and then sit down in His presence. Yes, sit down before Him, with the chains of pride, or selfishness, or worldliness, still round our necks ; and as we show the chains to Him, and talk to Him about them, they will fall off from us, and we shall be free indeed.

“*Ye have sold yourselves for nought.*” (v. 3.) How sadly true! How often have we sold ourselves to be the slave of some sin! and the harvest has been a heap of ashes. The devil persuades us that he will give us real treasure; but he is only a cheat, and we sell our pleasant and precious things for that which profiteth nothing. We sell the Lord’s smile to please some friend, His approval for some human praise, His precepts for some earthly gain; and the result is an aching and dissatisfied heart.

But mark the cheering words, “*Ye shall be redeemed without money.*” Ah! yes. We are His, His purchased ones; and when we thus sell ourselves for nought, He is always at hand to defend and help; He sees that we have been robbed and spoiled. The devil has beguiled and taken us in, and in pitying love He waits to deliver. But we must come with confession; we must own what fools we have been; we must cast down the gilded baubles at His feet, for which we sold our treasures; we must realize that they are worthless indeed; and then, at once, He will give us back the blessings and joys which we had so foolishly sold.

Verses 4, 5, and 6 unfold the deep compassions of the Lord’s heart. He seems to lift the veil, and leads us into His inner sanctuary, and allows us to listen to the tender yearnings of His heart over us, as He tells out the real pain it is to Him, to see us oppressed by our sins.

“*My people;*” my own, my chosen ones.

“ *Went down into Egypt to sojourn there ; and the Assyrian oppressed them.*” Oh, how often is it so ! You did not mean to stay there long ; only a little while. You had been told the danger of the borderland, but would not believe it ; you thought a *little* disobedience or worldliness would do you no harm ; you did not mean to wander far. But the devil caught you, and held you fast ; oppressed you, and made you howl. You do not belong to him ; he has no right to you ; but you ventured upon his ground, and he caught you. It was all your own fault ; you ought to have known better, and you deserve to be blamed ; but oh, the deep pity of the Lord ! Instead of upbraiding, His compassions are stirred ; He hears you howling in the wretchedness of your soul, and exclaims :

“ *What have I here, saith the Lord, that my people is taken away for nought ? They that rule over them make them to howl, saith the Lord, and my name continually every day is blasphemed.*” Verily sold for nought ; for *you* are howling, and *His* name is blasphemed. What a solemn picture ! And such is always the result of sin. Yes, indeed, of *little* sins ; we gain nothing by them, and the Lord is pained, and His name blasphemed.

“ *Therefore my people shall know my name.*” We shall know it by-and-by, but let us seek to know it now—His love, His gentleness, His compassion, His tenderness ; the deep yearnings of His heart over us, when He sees us tied with the chains of self-will or worldliness. How grieved He is when He

sees us carried captive by the devil, and how ready He is to put forth His power, and deliver us if we will but cry out to Him. If we only knew Him as He reveals Himself in this chapter, what power it would give us, what steadfastness of heart and purpose.

Verse 7: What a lovely description of our Lord! He comes leaping over the mountains of our unbelief and sin, and brings good tidings, and publishes peace. "Good tidings of good," of grand and glorious salvation, of pardon purchased, of "peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near."

Well may we lift up our voice and sing together; for if we believe His glorious message, our sorrow and sighing must flee away, and songs of praise abound. Yea, even the waste places of our hearts will sing, because He is ready and waiting to make us fruitful.

Listen, believe, and sing. We often listen, and doubt, and groan; but if we listen and believe, we shall sing. He publishes salvation, and presents Himself to us as the mighty, gracious Saviour, ready to meet our every need, and grant our every wish. If we believe this we cannot help singing.

Verse 9: "*Ye waste places*"—our conscious barrenness. What do we wish to be? Breathe out the desire to Him. "Lord, I want to be loving," and He will work it in you. He will only work in us the special beauties which we set our hearts upon. If we do not set our hearts upon being meek or patient, those special fruits will not be produced in

us. This truth is very important, and should lead us to gaze very earnestly upon our precious Lord, as revealed in the Scriptures, so that we may discern His beauties, and long to be like Him. The process may be painful, but what does that matter if the result is, that the life of Jesus is manifested in our mortal body?

Verse 10: "*The Lord hath made bare His holy arm.*" Yes, He is ready to put forth the exceeding greatness of His power to make us beautiful and glorious. A workman only bares his arm when he is going to put forth special effort. So our blessed God will put forth special power, that He may grant the special desires of our hearts, and prepare us to be the chosen companions and friends of Christ.

Our eternal beauty and nearness to Christ, will depend upon our present likeness to Him. He has a wonderful variety of places of honour, and glory, and fellowship, to bestow upon those who obey and serve Him. Different natures will fit into the place most fitted for each, and will keep it for ever. The joy of some will be, to be *near* Him; others will prefer something more active; and others will find their chief joy in ministering blessing to others. There is diversity in all that God does, and though every redeemed soul will resemble Christ, yet no two will be alike.

Let us then bestir ourselves, and seek earnestly to grow up into the likeness of Christ while here below. The Lord will most surely meet us in the effort and make bare His arm to help us, and thus

we shall be prepared, and fitted, for special fellowship with Him for ever.

Verse 11: "*Depart ye,*" &c. If *we* had written this chapter, we should have *commenced* with this verse; but the Lord first stimulates and strengthens us, and unfolds the yearnings of His heart over us, and then calls upon us to come out of all that He has severed from us as unclean.

"*Be ye clean.*" Keep yourselves holy, pure. "*Touch no unclean thing.*" Do not demean yourselves, but keep yourselves as a separated, peculiar people unto the Lord.

"*That bear the vessels of the Lord.*" Surely those who go forth to tell the good tidings, to take His messages of love to others, should be clean. But more still. We are also the vessels *of* the Lord, and called to minister *to* Him, as well as *for* Him. Oh, let us seek to keep ourselves so clean, that we may be vessels from which He will love to drink, and our hearts a table spread for Him! He may possibly use an unclean vessel in His service, but would He drink out of it? Let us remember our high and heavenly calling, and seek to walk worthy of it.

Verse 12. "*Ye shall not go out with haste,*" &c. There is no hurried flight; but a calm, steady, majestic walk, a ready obedience to everything which He commands, and a firm refusal to do anything which He forbids. You take your place as a heavenly person, and separate yourself from all worldly associations, amusements, or dress, and keep yourself for the Lord, and the Lord alone.

"*The Lord will go before you.*" He rejoices in your obedience, and goes before you as your Guide and Protector. He may let you suffer persecution, but He will take care that no real harm comes to you. You go forth leaning upon Him, and He Himself is your reward. He acts as a Father to you (2 Cor. vi. 14-18), and watches over you to protect and bless; and promises to reward you for every act of obedience.

Verses 13-15. The transition in these verses is very sudden, and very precious. We are suddenly led to consider the sufferings of Christ. And why? Surely, to stimulate us to be ready to suffer for His sake. (1 Peter iv. 1-3.) He is also presented to us as God's Servant, that we may gaze upon Him as the perfect Servant, and follow in His steps, and yield ourselves to be *His* devoted and obedient servants.

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"I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SIN NO MORE."

THIS is true of every believer in Christ, as well as of Israel in a coming day. (See Heb. x. 17.)

Our sins are all atoned for, met, put away, and cancelled by the one great sacrifice of Christ. The atonement is complete; the justice of God is most thoroughly met; and, therefore, as *Judge*, the righteous Judge, He remembers our sins no more.

But there is another truth which is often forgotten. God, our Father, will deal with us as His children, and also as servants of the Lord Jesus

Christ. “We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ” (2 Cor. v. 10); and we shall then receive rewards, honours, and places of special nearness to Christ, in exact proportion to our obedience while here below. There will be no favour, no partiality, in the judgment; but perfect, even distribution of praise and reward.

We read in Romans xiv. 11, 12, that every one of us shall confess, and give account of himself to God. The righteousness of God will be manifested in the different positions in which we shall be eternally placed. There will be no complaining on our part; for our judgment *then* will perfectly agree with His. No jealousy; for our sense of justice will be so intense that we shall not wish it otherwise.

Again, 1 Cor. iii. 11–15, shows that all our service must be manifested and tested by the fire of God’s holiness.

1 Cor. iv. 5 states that all the hidden things of darkness, and secret counsels of our hearts will be brought to light.

2 Cor. v. 10 proves that we are to receive the things done in the body, whether they be good or bad. Thus, every hour we live is of eternal value, and should be redeemed and spent in pleasing and serving Christ.

This truth is not palatable, and many of God’s children boldly deny it; but *it is true*, for God has said it; and so our wisdom is to believe it, and let it tell upon our hearts and consciences.

### THE LORD'S SONG.

ISAIAH liv. 1-6.

ISAIAH liii. speaks of the sufferings of Christ; and Isaiah lv. is His invitation to all who are weary and heavy laden to come to Him and receive the fruit of His sufferings. But Isaiah liv. is *His* song of joy, which He sings to His redeemed and precious people.

In a coming day He will sing this song to Israel, and its promises will be literally fulfilled to them upon the earth. But *now*, while they are rejected, He sings it to His Church, and loves to see us listen to His voice, and drink in His cheering words. The precious promises also,† are beautiful earthly shadows of our glorious heavenly portion in Him.

Verse 1: "*Sing, O barren.*" Yes, He calls upon us to enter into His joy and sing with Him. We are barren indeed, and quite incapable of bearing fruit of ourselves; but He bids us sing, because He has made provision for us, so that we may be able to bring forth fruit unto God. He has borne our punishment and become our life; and thus we may draw out of His fulness, and prove the all-sufficiency of His grace and power.

Well may He say, "*Break forth into singing;*" for as we perceive our full and glorious resources how can we help singing? He does not say, "Bear fruit first and then sing," but sing at once—sing,

barren as you are, because "From me is thy fruit found." (Hosea xiv. 8.)

Verse 2 : "*Enlarge the place of thy tent.*" You have a tent, dear child of God ; a resting-place for your soul. Yes, you have found rest for yourself in Christ. But what kind of a tent is it ? Is it simply a refuge from the storm ; a hiding-place from the wrath of God ? Is your tent a small one, with poor provision in it, so that you need to go outside it for pleasure and change ?

Oh, enlarge, *enlarge* it ! "*stretch forth*" its "*curtains*"; search out the fulness of Christ, the riches of His grace, the love of His heart ! The treasures are all in your tent, they are like curtains wrapped up, fold upon fold. Unfold them, spread out the curtains, examine your treasures—riches of grace, love, power, goodness, mercy, patience, long-suffering, glory ; yea, all the fulness of Christ. Stretch them out, examine, enjoy them ; and surely you will say, "It is enough, enough ; I can ask no more."

"*Spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.*" Your desires and intense longings—"lengthen" them, "strengthen" them, and fix them on eternal things. You need not root out, or crush a single longing ; you may transplant them all from earth to heaven. Our blessed God has made full provision for everyone of them in Christ, and in the blessings which He has purchased for us.

We need to *lengthen* our cords—to set our affec-

tions upon things above and not upon the things of earth (Col. iii. 1, 2); to *strengthen* our longings, and fix them steadily upon the blessings which the Lord holds out, as the rewards for obedience. Earthly things are not good enough for us; they can never satisfy. Our God has made us for *Himself*, and we require something infinite and eternal to satisfy our longings.

It is a good plan to search out the deep cravings of our hearts, to take them up one by one, and examine them thoroughly, and then turn to the Lord Jesus and His promises, and see what there is in Him, to meet them. Oh, the full provision He has made!

For instance, Do you crave love? Then root your affections in His deep, fond, intense, and tender love, and truly you will say, "I have enough, enough." Do you desire praise? Seek so to walk that *He* may praise you; and the praise will be eternal, and increase and increase, until all in heaven will praise you. So with love of knowledge, power, approbation, greatness, riches, usefulness, &c. &c. Whatever the longings are, there is full scope for them in the things of God, and a full satisfying portion to repay us, if we will but seek our all in Him.

Verse 3: *Thou shall break forth,*" &c. &c. You increase and prosper on every side. Your heart is satisfied, your ambitions gratified, and you have the joy of spreading blessings round you.

Verse 4: "*Fear not; for thou shalt not be*

*ashamed . . . . not be put to shame.*" Oh, this is wonderful! Yes; in heaven we shall look back on our past lives, and even our very sins will unfold to us the riches of Christ's love and grace—His individual, patient, tender love. You look back to the cross and see how He loved the Church; but when you trace His patient gentleness with you, *yourself*, you exclaim, "He loved me; even me!" Oh, we should be losers indeed, if in heaven we forgot our sins. It is *here*, that we test and prove His love; but in heaven we shall revel in it, and specially enjoy what we have learned of it here.

"*Thou shalt forget the shame.*" Not the sins, but the shame. "For your shame ye shall have double" (Isaiah lxi. 7)—double joy. Yes, each sin that we are really ashamed of now, will be conquered as well as confessed; and thus will become a crown of glory to us, and to Christ, in the coming day.

For instance, you do not think much of it, if a great army takes a little city, or if a giant conquers a dwarf; but if a weak man meets a foe so strong that he is knocked down a hundred times, and yet up he gets, and goes at him again and again, and at last conquers, what do you think of him?

So with us, when a sin is so strong that it overcomes us again and again; and yet we struggle on against it, and cry to the Lord for help, until at last it is completely conquered—oh, surely this brings glory and honour to the Lord, and secures a rich reward for us!

What courage this should give! What steadfastness of purpose! and then the joy of knowing that our blessed Lord is close at hand, rejoicing over us when we conquer, and sorry for us when we fall, and ready at all times to give the help we need.

“*Widowhood.*” This seems to represent the time when we are out of communion with Christ—cut off by unbelief or sin from personal fellowship with Him, and therefore unable to bring forth fruit, and an easy prey to our sins.

Verse 5: “*Thy Maker is thy Husband,*” not thy Creator, but thy Maker. To create is to make out of nothing; to make is to form something out of materials within your reach. The Lord Jesus takes us up as we are—filthy, vile, corrupt; and He says, “I will make thee, make thee all that I desire; I will mould and perfect thee, and make thee fit to be my companion, my friend, my delight and joy for ever and ever.” Oh, what rest of soul this gives!

“*The Lord of hosts is His name,*” the warrior God. All might, and strength, and wisdom are His. He does whatsoever He pleases, and He is forming us for Himself; He loves us tenderly, so we need not fear His hand; it will be very gentle. He has all power, and He will perfect us—all wisdom, and knows exactly what will satisfy His heart.

If you are not pleased with anything that you make yourself, it proves that you are deficient in

power, or skill, or wisdom. You were not *able* to make it as you wished, or did not know your own mind. Ah! the Lord Jesus will make us exactly what He wants us to be, and He will be perfectly satisfied with us, and will delight and glory in us for ever and ever.

*“Thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel.”* As our Redeemer He understands, and perfectly satisfies the holiness of God. How lovely! The blessed Lord, who is all-sufficient, all-powerful, all-loving, undertakes to mould, and form, and perfect us for Himself.

Verses 6-8: *“A wife of youth, when thou wast refused.”* A young wife often thinks that she is going to have everything her own way, and when she finds it otherwise, and is refused anything, she is prone to think her husband unkind. She finds things she did not expect, and discovers she must either quarrel or submit.

The Lord Jesus is very loving, very faithful, and very firm; and often refuses to give us something which we have set our hearts upon, because He knows it would do us harm. At such times we are prone to be grieved, and think ourselves forsaken. We misread His dealings, and think He has hidden His face from us, and forget the sweet and wondrous promises of verses 9-17.

But mark the tenderness of His heart, the rich consolations He gives, the tender words He speaks. Far from upbraiding us, as we well deserve, or complaining of our little faith, He condescends to

swear that He will never be wroth with us, assures us, that all our afflictions shall work together to beautify and enrich us, and promises that nothing shall by any means harm us.

Oh for hearts to believe His love, and profit by all His training!

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### *A RESTING-PLACE FOR CHRIST.*

CANT. iii. 7-10.

THESE verses describe one who sought to keep her heart as a resting-place, or triumphant palanquin, for Christ.

She is most earnest that the Lord should be able to rest in His love, and joy over her with singing; and therefore watches lest any thought or feeling should come in which would disturb His rest. There is intense watchfulness, not for her own profit, or to preserve her own ease and comfort; but that *His* rest may be unbroken, *His* joy over her unhindered, and that she may be an abiding delight to Him. This does not depend upon intellectuality or ability of any kind, but upon lowly subjection of heart. There must be thorough obedience and surrender to Him in everything: the word of God carried out in our whole life; the heart braced up; and all our energies, affections, and powers united to seek to make our hearts a resting-place for Him. And oh, how rich the gain, to look up in His face and know that He is delighting in us!

*CONSECRATION.*

EXOD. xxix. ; LEV. viii.

CONSECRATION! What a blessed and glorious truth! But how shall we reach it? and how shall we maintain it? Some Christians say one thing, and some another; so let us turn to our heavenly mirror, and see if it will dispel the mists, and make the pathway clear and plain.

The consecration of the sons of Aaron is assuredly the shadow; so let us follow the details, and may the Holy Spirit teach us the secret of entire consecration and sanctification.

Aaron's sons were first brought to the door of the tabernacle. (Exod. xxix. 4.) So our first step is to come to the Lord Jesus—the door—the only way of access to God.

They were then washed with water (Lev. viii. 6), surely typifying the precious blood of Christ. "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood." (Rev. i. 5.)

They were then clothed (Lev. viii. 13) with the priestly garments of glory and beauty (Exod. xxviii. 40)—the divine righteousness of Christ which is imputed to us, so that we stand before God in His perfections.

They then laid their hands upon the head of a bullock, which was offered up as a sin-offering to God. (Lev. viii. 14–17.) It was a bullock, and not a lamb—presenting the Lord Jesus as the

perfect Servant made sin for us. Dear child of God, have you thus laid your hand on Him? Have you examined His perfect holy life? His obedience unto death? Have you pondered over God's intense delight in Him, and then seen Him consumed by the fire of God's wrath for your sin? If so, you will be filled with gratitude and love, and will intensely desire to give Him some return.

Then followed the ram for the burnt-offering. (*vv.* 18-21.) The ram presents the Lord Jesus as the Leader and Commander; and as *your* burnt-offering, He presents all His perfections to God as a reason why *you* should be blessed. Have you thus apprehended Him? Do you look up and see Him as your Leader and Commander, thus occupied for you? If so, you will long to be His obedient and faithful servant, and yield yourself entirely to do His will.

The ram of consecration was then slain, and its blood put upon their right ears, thumbs, and toes. (*vv.* 22-24.) How natural! You own the Lord's claim upon you. You long to yield yourself entirely to Him; and gladly present your right ear, thumb, and toe, yea, your whole body, to be set apart as His purchased possession. Your one cry is, "Lord, I am thine, wholly thine; and I want to live entirely to thee." He accepts the sacrifice, and seals you for Himself.

The blood is then sprinkled upon the altar. How precious this is. He knows our weakness; and even while He accepts, and delights in our

whole-hearted surrender to Himself, He makes provision for our failure by sprinkling the blood upon the altar.

We then read that the fat, and the inwards, and the rump, and the right shoulder of the ram, were put upon their hands, and they waved them before the Lord. Thus their hands were filled with sacrifices of a sweet savour to God. (*vv.* 25-28.) To consecrate, means to fill the hands. (See margin.) Yes, this is the way to get our hearts full of sacrifices for God. As we apprehend the fulness of Jesus, our hearts well over with love, and praise, and devoted service; so that it becomes our very life to live for Him.

Then Moses, who is a type of Christ, feasts upon the breast. (*v.* 29.) Our precious Lord is refreshed by our devotedness, and His affections are gratified.

They are then sprinkled with the anointing oil and the blood (*v.* 30)—the fresh power of the Spirit, to strengthen and deepen the emotions which have been produced in us.

They were then commanded to eat the flesh of the ram, in the court of the tabernacle, to sanctify and to consecrate them. (*Lev.* viii. 31-35, *Exodus* xxix. 31-33.) Oh, there is such a secret here! We must feed upon Christ, as the One who has purchased us for Himself; we must enter into, and enjoy His fulness, and ponder over our indebtedness to Him. This will sanctify, yea, separate us unto Himself; and this will consecrate

or fill our hands, so that we shall always have something fresh to offer; and find His service and worship a delight.

If we neglect to feed, we shall grow weak and faint, and our hearts will be empty. Conscience may upbraid, and remind us of our vows; but what can poor empty hearts present? We must have our hearts continually filled by the Lord Himself, or we shall soon find we have nothing to offer. But if we feed, and feed continuously in His holy presence, our strength will be renewed, and our hearts overflowing; and thus we shall know the joy of abiding consecration and separation unto Himself.

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### *THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK.*

ZECHARIAH iv.

**A**T first sight this is a very puzzling type; but if we examine it carefully, it becomes very simple.

The candlestick throughout scripture is a symbol of light.

We first read of it in Exodus xxv. That candlestick is a type of Christ and the Church. It was made of a talent of pure gold, which was beaten out into a seven-branched candlestick, each branch holding a lamp, which required to be trimmed and supplied with fresh oil every day.

Thus we spring out of Christ. We are the fruit of His sufferings, and are partakers of the divine

nature, and should be the light of the world. As the fulness of Christ, and the power of the divine life is poured into us, the very light of God shines out of us. We shine out in His likeness, showing forth His praises; and all His varied beauties and glories should be seen in us.

In Rev. i. we read of seven candlesticks, and the Lord Jesus walking in the midst of them. Each several candlestick, or lamp, is both a symbol of a church and of an individual believer. Each church, and each believer, are under the special care of the Lord Jesus, and are individually cared for and trimmed by Him.

Zechariah iv. has at least a threefold symbolic teaching. The first and most evident is its literal teaching to Israel at that time. They had been brought back from captivity, and had begun to build the temple; but their obedience and courage failed, and they gave up the work. So the Lord raised up Zechariah and Haggai, and used them as His anointed ones, to encourage and strengthen them; and thus the temple was finished. This is the literal and surface meaning of this chapter; but if we dig deeper, we shall find richer treasures.

The second teaching is prophetic, and mentioned in Rev. xi. 3, when the Lord will raise up two anointed ones, to be His appointed channels of blessing to the earth, during the reign of Antichrist.

The third teaching is for ourselves.

But notice, Zechariah has to be awakened before he can see this vision. (*v.* 1.) How true of us!

We are so dull, that we need to have our eyes opened, and our spiritual senses quickened, before we can discern the deep things of God.

Again, the vision is not explained to him until he describes it accurately. He describes it imperfectly in verses 3 and 11, and therefore gets no answer to his question—"What are these, my lord?" He calls the branches *trees*, and neglects to mention the two pipes which convey the golden oil out of the branches into the bowl; he corrects himself in verse 12, and the meaning is then explained to him. This is very important. We can only learn God's teaching in His symbols, by examining them very carefully and very minutely.

Verse 2 speaks of a golden candlestick with a bowl upon the top of it, and seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps. Thus each lamp could draw its own supply of oil direct from the bowl. In the tabernacle, the lamps were supplied with oil once or twice a day; but this candlestick had a bowl full of oil, so that each lamp could draw down as much oil as it could burn. How precious true of us! We may draw continually fresh oil from Christ.

It was "*golden oil*" (v. 12)—the perfections and divine riches of Christ, the richest things He has to give; His love, His power, His fulness to flow into our souls.

We read of the oil of joy for mourning (Isa. lxi. 3), oil to make our faces shine (Ps. civ. 15), of oil for the lamps. (Exod. xxvii. 20, 21.) We also

find the priests (Exod. xxix. 21), the cleansed leper (Lev. xiv. 15-18), and the infant of Ezek. xvi. were anointed with oil; and the good Samaritan used oil for the poor wounded man. (Luke x. 34.)

Yes, there is oil to heal our wounds (the wounded man), a full provision to flow into our souls and supply all our need—oil to nourish us, and make our bones fat; oil to give us power over sin (the leper), and power to minister to and serve the Lord (the priest); oil to make us glad, and make our light burn brightly, and cause our faces to shine with the brightness of His glory. May we learn to draw down an abundant supply.

The trees, or rather branches (*vv.* 3, 11, 12), evidently typify the Lord Jesus—the Branch (chap. iii. 8, vi. 12; Isa. iv. 2, xi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5, xxxiii. 15), the fruitful bough by a well, whose branches ran over the wall. (Gen. xlix. 22.) He dwelt in the bosom of the Father, the deep, sweet well of love, and the love so filled and overflowed His heart that it brought Him down to this world of sin, that He might feast, and satisfy us, with His rich and precious fruits.

The Lord Jesus is anointed as Priest and King; therefore the two branches, or two anointed ones (*v.* 14), probably represent Him in His twofold ministry of Priest and King. “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.” (Ps. ii. 6.) “Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.” (Ps. cx. 4.)

The golden pipes seem to shadow forth the Holy

Ghost, because He is the channel of communication between Christ and our souls.

Well may we think of the love of the Spirit, His patience in dwelling in our hearts—such hearts—and never leaving us in spite of all our worldliness, rebellion, and sin. What grace! What humility! Surely it is amazing! His faithfulness also, His gentleness and love.

Oh, how much we owe the Spirit of God! How we have grieved and resisted Him! How often, as the grieved dove, has He been obliged to fold His wings, and wait until we were weary of our folly, before He could induce us to return to Christ! How often have we caused Him to groan within us, instead of looking to Him for continual supplies of oil! Who, who can tell what it costs Him to abide within us? How wondrously He bears with, and even dovetails Himself into our special characteristics, that He may help us to serve the Lord! How He meets and satisfies every feeble yearning after Christ! How patiently He bears with our stupidity, and gives us line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept! And yet He never speaks of Himself, but pours in of the fulness of Christ, and seeks to draw out our affections and devotedness to Him.

The *bowl* (v. 2) represents the word of God. People talk of being taught and led by the Spirit, independently of the Word; but the Holy Ghost always ministers to us through the Word, or in accordance with it.

But we need the fresh power of the Spirit; we need Him as the pipe to convey the fresh flowing oil into our souls, to take of the word of God, and make it a living word to us; to enable us so to hear the voice of Jesus in it, that it may be as if He breathed the very words fresh from His own heart of love into our ears. His precepts also, His desires, His precious promises, all flowing down, to revive and quicken us in His ways.

The oil is not forced out. The olive branches empty the golden oil out of themselves into the bowl; just the fresh outflow of love, and grace, and counsel, and power, from our precious Lord. The bowl—the Word—is always full of everything we need, and we may always have a full supply. We may draw as much as we can use. We may go on receiving and receiving, for we can never exhaust the riches which He has provided for us.

Often, alas! we get but a scant supply; but the fault is in ourselves. The pipe, dear child of God, which leads direct to your soul or mine, is easily clogged. A very little thing will do it, and then our lamps must burn dimly. A little carelessness, or independence, or pride, or worldliness will effectually clog the golden pipe. The bowl is full, full of sweet, loving, powerful words from Christ; but unless the pipe be kept clear, the oil cannot flow down. We are not dependent upon each other for this fresh supply of oil; for each of us have our own separate pipe—the personal indwelling of the Holy Ghost—to fill us with the very fulness of God.

Verse 6 : “ *Not by might nor by power.*” Not by power of will, nor strength of character, nor anything we have in ourselves ; it must be by His Spirit. We are slow to learn this, and are prone to try and get some resources of our own, instead of continually drawing from the fulness of Christ.

Verse 7 : “ *Who art thou, O great mountain?*” Whatever the mountains may be, we need not fear. Our great Zerubbabel is all-sufficient ; He can turn them all into plains. Mountains of self-will, or unbelief, or pride, it matters not ; only let us bring them to Him ; He will subdue them, and the end will be, not groanings, but shoutings of “Grace, grace unto it.”

Verse 9. This verse will be true of every thing and person the Lord takes in hand, whether individual souls, or the Church as a whole, or Israel in the millennium, or the nations of the earth. His hands will perfect everything He touches, and all His works shall praise Him.

Verse 10. Blessed be His name ! He does not despise the day of small things. No, indeed ; He looks onwards to the end, and makes much of the beginnings. May we learn to do the same.

The seven eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the earth, rejoice as they see the plummet in the hands of our Zerubbabel. Yes, our God looks on with delight and joy as He sees Him working ; He trusts His perfect wisdom, love, and power ; and knows the result will be the perfection of glory and beauty.

“MY SERVANT.”

ISAIAH lii. 13.

THE Lord Jesus humbled Himself. He came down to the lowest depths. He was truly God, and equal with God ; but, instead of grasping the glory, honour, and dignity that belonged to Him as God, He laid it all aside, and took the place of a servant. (Phil. ii. 5-8.) And why?

There was something sweeter, better, richer, that He wanted—something so precious and satisfying to *Him*, that for three and thirty years He gave up all His rightful glory as God that He might obtain it. What was it? His Father’s fond, intense approval ; and our adoring, grateful, clinging love.

How different to us ! He gave up untold honour and glory ; and we often most eagerly grasp any honour which we think is our due ; any position in life, or earthly glory which is rightly ours. But oh, there is something sweeter, better, richer, than all the glory or honour within our reach. Let us tread in the steps of Jesus. Let us lay aside our present fancied rights for the *better* thing—even His fond approval, His loving smile. Let us lay ourselves out for the blessing of others, and the eternal consciousness of having helped their souls, will repay us a thousand-fold, for anything it may have cost us here.

## FRAGMENTS.

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“Behold my Servant.” (Isa. xlii. 1.)—Behold Him, and worship Him; behold Him, and delight in His perfect work; behold Him, and copy Him.

There never was a servant so obedient, dependent, self-renouncing, and true; never one who endured such self-denial and restraint. When He trod this earth He was still the perfection of wisdom, yet never spoke His own words; the perfection of strength, and yet never took one step alone. How foolish then for *us*, who are the perfection of weakness and folly, to speak our own words, or try to walk alone! Let us seek to *copy* Him, GOD'S PERFECT SERVANT.

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“Why art thou cast down?” (Ps. xlii. 5.)—Depression is of the devil, and is the fruit of unbelief. It springs from distrusting the love, or power, or wisdom, of our blessed God. It never leads to action, but weakens our hands, and seems to take all the strength out of us. Instead of yielding to it, we should bestir ourselves, and treat it as sin, and seek to get the victory over it. Whatever our trouble may be, He has a cup of rich consolation all ready for us, one which will exactly meet the very thing that troubles us; and it grieves His heart when we refuse to drink it.

**Free-will offerings.**—Our blessed God greatly delights in our free-will offerings. He loves to see us bring Him our little gifts; and He treasures them up, and makes much of them. His righteous claims have all been met by Christ; and He has made us so wonderfully free, that He accepts everything we do to please Him as a *free-will offering*. Thus we may continually bring Him new gift-offerings; not just now and then, but constantly, all day long. Little acts of self-denial, kindness, endurance, meekness, &c. &c., all may go up to Him as gifts; and thus we may keep on giving, giving, giving.

What a joyous, pleasant life! No servile work indeed, but glad and willing service, because we know that He takes pleasure in it. Oh, yes! Our cry is then, “What *may* I do?” instead of, “*Must* I do it?”

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**The Sabbath.** (Isa. lvi. 2-6.)—We *break* the Sabbath, whenever we add anything of our own to Christ’s finished work; and we *pollute* the Sabbath, whenever we do our own ways, or find our own pleasure, or speak our own words; in fact, whenever we give the least liberty to our old man.

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**Distance from Christ.**—If we keep at a distance from Christ, we shall lose all the sweetness of His love, and rich sustenance of His grace; and though we may get food enough to *sustain* life, we shall be devoid of spiritual energy and vigour.

**“Who is blind as my Servant?”** (Isa. xlii. 19, 20.)—This was indeed true of the Lord Jesus. He took the place of subjection, and steadily acted as though He neither saw, nor heard, those things which His Father had *not* commanded Him to deal with. We need to learn this lesson, and, like Him, to be deaf and blind. Deaf, as the Lord’s servants, and blind, as His messengers. Especially should we seek to be blind to any unkindness or slight that may be shown us; any effort to put us down, or push us aside. We should not notice such things, but go on unhindered in our work for the Lord. Again, when fully occupied in the service which the Lord has given us to do, we should avoid being drawn off into other service, which, though right in itself, would cumber us with too much serving. The devil often lays this snare for us, and makes us think we ought to try to put every thing to rights, or enter into every kind of service.

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**“Take away the dross from the silver.”** (Prov. xxv. 4.)—Trial is like fire, and brings the dross or evil in us to the surface. We ought to skim it off quickly, judge it, and put it away. Sometimes we excuse it, or think there is no harm in it; and that is like stirring it in again, and then the Lord is obliged to send more fire.

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**Faith** simply believes God, and echoes what He says; and the *fight of faith* is trying to see things as God sees them, and to judge of them as He does.

**“He instructed him.”** (Deut. xxxii. 10.)—The Lord always makes our circumstances a little too difficult for us. His object is twofold. First, that we may feel our weakness, and be constrained to seek help from Him. Second, that our self-conceit and self-sufficiency may be kept down; and though others may say, “Well done,” we may be conscious of failure, and thus be sheltered from pride.

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**Sins of ignorance.**—Many people think that sins of ignorance are *not* sin; but the word of God distinctly says, “If a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord; though he wist it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity.” Again, If he touch any unclean thing, although it be hidden from him; “he also shall be unclean, and guilty.” (Lev. v. 2, 17.) Well may we exclaim, “If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?” But, blessed be His name, there is forgiveness with Him; and the precious blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin. But little, little do we know how much we owe to that precious blood!

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**Ps. ix. 10.**—“They that know Thy name will put their trust in thee.” We trust Him as much as we know Him; we love Him as much as we know Him; we obey Him as much as we know Him.

Ps. c<sup>x</sup>lv. 10.—Our blessed Lord guides the stars in their courses, and sustains every atom of the universe by His power; and yet His mind is so infinite, and His wisdom and skill so amazing, that it pleases Him to make a new and separate design for every fresh blade of grass, and for every leaf that grows.

But think of His love, of His infinite love. If, in the infinitude of His wisdom and skill, He can give so much thought to the flower of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more shall He care for, watch over, and bless His loved and precious saints? Ah, yes, He loves each one with a fond, an individual love. He is caring for, and occupied with each one, as if He had no other to care for. His eye, His ear, His heart, dear child of God, are continually attent to *you*, to minister to *you*, to bless and succour *you*. He is always at leisure; never pre-occupied; and His love never wearies, or changes, or cools. Believe in this love, enjoy it in its intensity and fondness, and your heart will be satisfied indeed, and truly you will bless His name.

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