

THE LAST PARABLE OF EZEKIEL

BY

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etc., etc.*

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PREFACE

THE following remarks on the Temple shown to the Prophet Ezekiel do not profess to be a learned exposition of a passage, which presents as to terms, and as to the future realisation, many difficulties. It is rather an attempt made by one who is neither learned nor skilful to reach the inner meaning of the Vision, which had for its purpose (*see* Chap. xliii. 10) to make the soul ashamed. And after all, unless this shame, which is the purpose of the revelation, be the result of the study, no amount of learned research will have been truly useful.

This shame is the recognition of a love of which we are entirely unworthy, of a calling to which we have imperfectly—how imperfectly—responded ; therefore it is a proof that we have learnt something more of the love and of the holiness of God.

A revelation, which was designed expressly to teach a forgotten and neglected truth, the absolute holiness of the God who had made Israel His dwelling-place, cannot but be a lesson to those who are the habitation of God, through the Spirit,

at the present time. Holiness becometh His House for ever, and is realised by us only as far as we realise His presence in His Church, and in each of His redeemed.

In these days, when the line of demarcation between the Church and the world is almost entirely effaced, this lesson may serve to bring back some who have lost the sense of their holy calling to the blessedness of communion with Him in His most holy place. It is with shame and humiliation that these words are written, and it is, in fact, shame and humiliation which have caused them to be written. But the depth of the shame is the measure of the profounder sense of the immeasurable love of God ; therefore the effect of the study of this Vision is to leave us lost in wonder at such a revelation of His love.

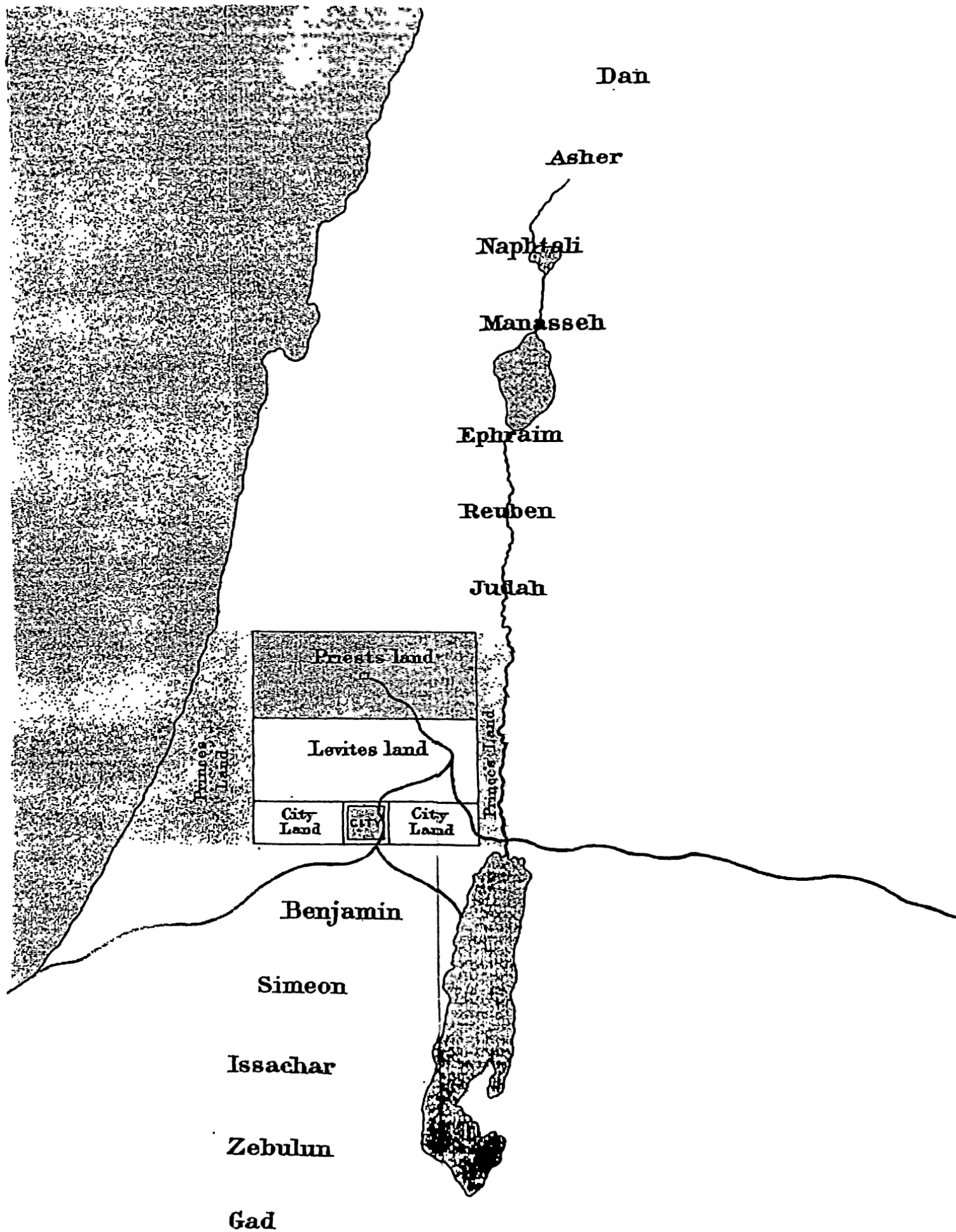
I would ask that each one who begins the study of this part of the Word of God should carefully and prayerfully follow the thread of Divine teaching to the marvellous end of the details given. By following out the spiritual meaning of the forms measured in successive order, a volume of the stupendous history of the revealed grace and glory of God is set before us. All is placed in order before our eyes from the beginning to the end of the story of the love of God to man. But it needs

patient and attentive consideration, and as a necessity, the teaching of God, the Holy Spirit, by whom the Lord Jesus Christ shows to His disciples all things which were written in the law of Moses, in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Him. May He expound to us more fully in this passage of His Scriptures the things concerning Himself!

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I—THE LAND.



THE LAST PARABLE OF EZEKIEL

CHAPTER I

The Figure of the True

"Whose House are we."—HEB. iii. 6.

House magnifical of gold and cedar,
Every precious stone,
Standing 'midst the temples of the ages
Glorious and alone.
House mysterious, marvellous, and holy,
All thy pattern given
By the hand of Him who ere the ages
Built the endless Heaven.
As a mighty sign and wonder standing
In the vanished past—
Is thy secret unto us the aliens
Told at last ?

Strangers once, rude stones from heathen quarries
Now brought nigh, to be
Thy fair house, O God, Thy holy Temple,
Filled with Thee.

Glorious House ! foretold by sign and symbol,
Built by hands Divine ;
Shrine from whence the brightness of Thy glory
Shall for ever shine.
Holy, holy, holy, Lord, Thy Temple !
Every living stone
Brought from chambers of the lonely mountains,
Shaped for Thee alone.

Set according to the pattern measured
Ere the world began,
For Thy dwelling to eternal ages,
Jesus, God, and Man.
Set apart in holiest seclusion,
Only thus to be
Fountain-head of blessed waters healing
This world's bitter sea.
Set apart a tabernacle heavenly
For the risen sun ;
All Thy saints with Thee, ascended Saviour,
Ever one.

IT is now near upon 2,500 years since the God of Israel wrote, by the hand of His prophet Ezekiel, a marvellous and glorious parable. To most of us has that parable been a sealed book. Some impressions of it from time to time may have haunted us as the echo of a lovely song in a strange language, and given us a passing desire to know the meaning of the words.

But, speaking for myself, I would say that seldom did anything remain in the mind more distinct

than glimpses of radiant courts and of strange buildings, upon which palms of victory were carved. The mystery of the vision has, perhaps, been left by most of us as amongst the hidden treasures of the Word of God ; and our busy days seemed never long enough to seek persistently the clue to the enigma.

It is no doubt a study which needs long, and patient, and careful attention. But of the wisdom of God is it said: "If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."

Is it, however, needful or profitable for the soul to learn that which after all may be written only for future Israelites, to guide them in a day which is not for us, but for them? May it not be that in that day they will find in this vision the directions for building the Temple of the Restoration, and therefore know why these revelations were written long ago?

May not, then, the careful study of these detailed descriptions be put off as interesting research—as nothing more? We think of our own need, of the need of the Church of God ; even yet so little aware of the depths of the riches of Christ, of the breadth and length and depth and height of that

which is given to us in Him, and we are willing to leave to the Jews that which is their portion.

But are not the holy places of the past, made with hands, figures of the true? What if there be for us also a revelation in the details of this glorious house of the future?

And bearing this in mind when reading through these chapters, a sudden light dawns upon the soul. A Divine Voice speaks to the "hearing heart" that watcheth daily at the gates of the wisdom of God, waiting at the posts of her doors. It is the Lord who speaks, to give the key to the mystery He has revealed. "Thou Son of Man, show the House to the house of Israel, *that they may be ashamed of their iniquities, and let them measure the pattern.*" Here, then, is something far other than information as to building in a distant future. It is a present conviction of sin and shame brought home to the conscience by the vision of that glorious House. How and why should it make ashamed those to whom it is shown? "*Let them measure the pattern.*" Would it, then, make me also ashamed were I to measure the size and the form of these courts and gates and chambers? If so, the best commentators would be a graduated ruler, paper, and pencil. So be it.

May the Spirit of God direct and teach the soul

that thus obeys His voice. May He enforce the lesson that the conscience, not merely the intelligence, is thus to learn. For the holy places of old were indeed figures of those greater and more perfect, not made with hands. And if these figures are again repeated in the vision of Ezekiel, may there not be a lesson taught which shall make the soul ashamed that has its place in the Holiest of all?

Let us go back, then, to the beginning of this revelation—to a day already marked in the history of the dealings of God with men; twice marked before the days of Ezekiel; once again to be marked at a later time.

That "self-same day" (of Chap. xl. 1) was a day when Ezekiel would remember with sorrow the beginning of the first deliverance of Israel from the house of bondage. Long ago, in Egypt, on that day was the first step to that deliverance taken at the command of God. On that day (*see* Exod. xii. 3) did each household take a lamb, to be kept till the fourteenth day, when, by the blood of the lamb, they were sheltered from the judgment of God.

Now, fourteen years had passed since the people of God were again captives and exiles. On that day each household would again set aside a lamb, but no longer in the land of promise.

As captives and as exiles would they keep the feast of the deliverance. And again on that day, the tenth day of the first month, would they remember the day of Joshua iii. 5, when the Lord did wonders among them—when the waters of the Jordan were divided, and they passed through into the land which the Lord had given them. On that day (*see* Joshua iv. 19) was the memorial of the Lord's mighty hand set up in the midst of the Jordan, to be to them an eternal remembrance. And their first act in the land was the setting apart the lamb that should be slain.

And on this day, when the memory of the past would be sorrowful to the heart of Ezekiel, did the Lord reveal to him a new beginning of a time of eternal blessing in the land where He who is great, and is called the Son of the Highest, shall sit on the throne of His father David, and shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end.

But before that time should come, the day of the vision of Ezekiel was yet to be marked by an act which seemed to destroy for ever the hope of the future glory. On that day (*see* Mark xi. 11-19) did the Lord curse the barren tree, saying to it: "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever." And He went into His desecrated Temple and cast out

them that sold and bought, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers and the seats of them that sold doves, and declared that doomed Temple to be a den of thieves.

But on that day was the true Lamb set apart to be slain: "The scribes and chief priests heard of it, and sought how they might destroy Him." The true Ark should now pass through the river of death, so that in Him, passing forth from death and judgment, a new Israel might take its beginning. The barren tree should be replaced by the Tree of Life, the fruit thereof for meat, and the leaves for healing. And therefore should there be in the latter days for the renewed Israel a glorious future, and there should be built a holy Temple, a house of prayer for all nations. And there should the glory of God dwell amongst men, and His holy name should they defile no more.¹

On that day, the day of the setting apart of the lamb — the day of the passing of Jordan to take possession of the land — the day of the passing away of the old, and the beginning of the new — was the hand of

¹ It must be borne in mind that Ezekiel reckons the months according to the sacred year, in which the Passover marked the first month. This is proved by Chap. xlv. 18, 21, 25, and in Chap. xxiv. 1, by the date given for the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem. Compare Zec. viii. 19.

the Lord upon Ezekiel, to bring him back in vision to the land of Israel. Not at first to Jerusalem, which lay in the distance as the frame of a city on the south, but to the mountain at the foot of which the Lord spoke later of the living water and of the worship of the Father in the spirit and in truth. "He brought me thither." Into the land of Israel, to the very high mountain where the Temple of the Lord was built. The Temple which should stand as the three-fold symbol of Him whose body was the Temple of the living God, of the living Temple which His hands should build as an habitation of God through the Spirit, of the heavenly places into which Christ has entered, to appear in the presence of God for us.

"And behold a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass." Such a man appeared in vision to Daniel and to John. A man "clothed with strength," as it is said in Psalm xciii. of Him who stablished the world that it cannot be moved. "Who is a strong Lord like unto Thee, and to Thy faithfulness round about Thee?" "Unto Thee, O my Strength, will I sing," and give thanks for "the Son of Man, whom Thou madest strong for Thyself."

He had a line of flax in his hand and a measuring reed. He who in His strength setteth fast the

mountains, being girded with power; He who stood to measure the earth; He who measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span; who weigheth the waters by measure; He has also a measure for His heavenly places, and for His holy things.

So did He measure with a golden reed the city, the New Jerusalem, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

In His old and in His new Creation all is measured by Him. Every line and curve in His works that surround us—every rose-petal, every heath-bell, every palm-branch, and every thyme flower—all measured for use, and for beauty, and for harmony in endless variety, by an inflexible law that makes all provision for every form of exquisite loveliness, and for all glorious movements of suns and stars. The telescope and the microscope tell of His perfect measuring. That which is immeasurable is His power, His wisdom, and His love.

The first measurement given in His Word is for the ark to be made by Noah; the second, for the ark of the Covenant shown to Moses on the Mount. Then follow the measurements for the mercy-seat, the shew-bread table, and for all the details of the Tabernacle, ending with the golden altar of incense.

Again, He gave to David the pattern of the Temple, and of every detail, in measurement and in weight. "All this," said David, "the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me all the works of this pattern." And now we have no more measurements till Ezekiel follows the man whose appearance was as brass, and who held in his hand the line of flax and the measuring reed.

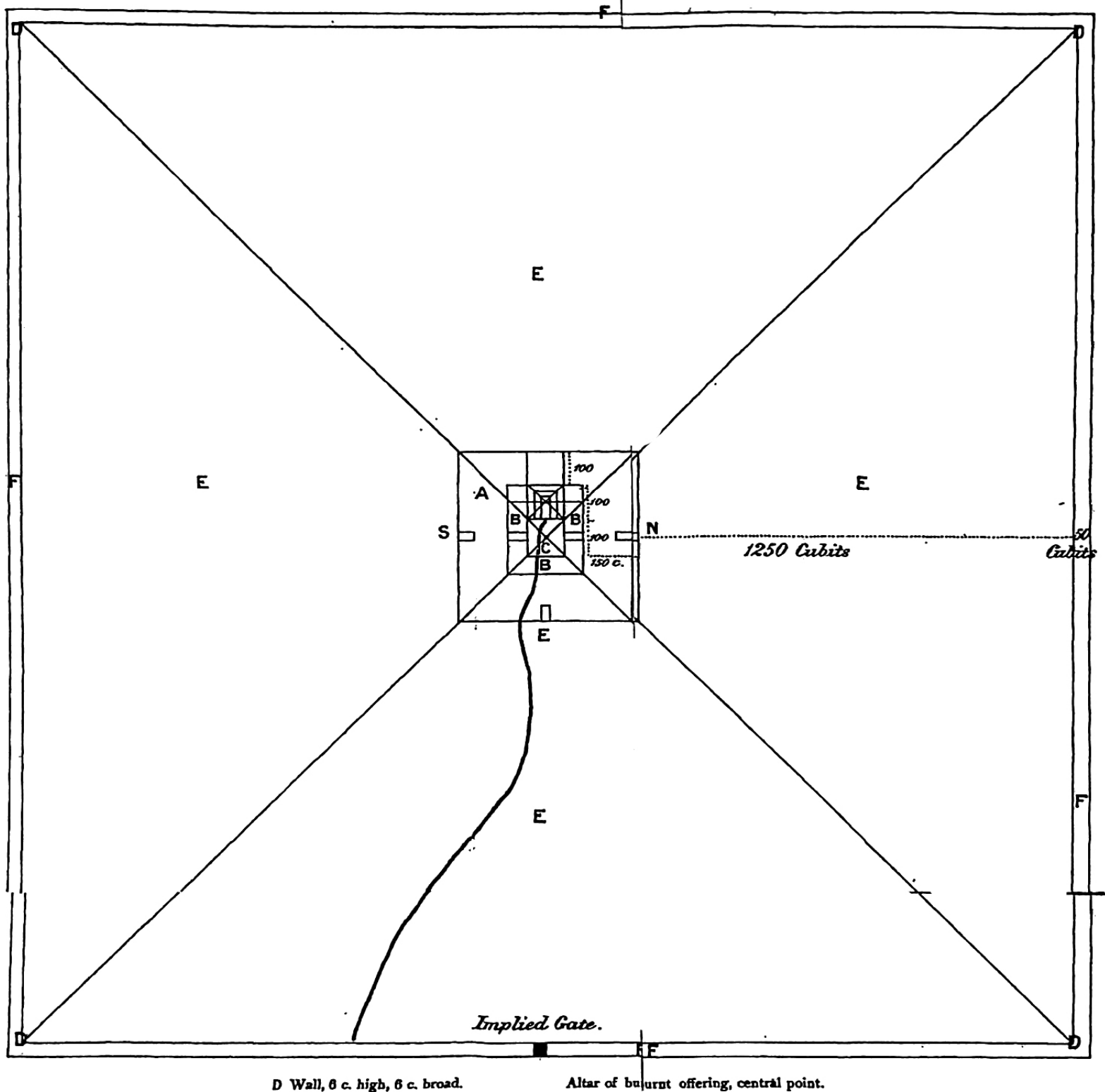
"And the man said unto me, Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thy heart upon all that I shall shew thee, for to the intent that I might shew them unto thee art thou brought thither; declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel."

Let us here pray the prayer of Paul, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, that the eyes of our understanding may be enlightened" to see, and our ears unsealed that we may hear, and our heart be opened as the heart of Lydia, that we may attend to the things the Lord will show us. And let us bear in mind that the lesson to be taught us is in *form* only; not in colours also, as in the Tabernacle, nor in wealth and splendour, as in the earlier Temple—in pure form and measurement only.

II.—WHOLE LIMIT OF THE SANCTUARY.

Outer square, 3,100 c. XLV., 2.
Breadth of surrounding space, 50 c. XLV., 2.
Inner square, 8,000 c. (500 reeds). XLV., 2.

Outer court (A), 500 c. Compare XL., 20, 23, XLI., 13, 15.
Inner court (B), 200 c. Compare XL., 29, XLI., 13, 15.
Altar square (C), 100 c. XLI., 14.



CHAPTER II

This Gate of the Lord

"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving."—Ps. c. 4.

O gate of the Lord, I had dreamed of thee
In nights when in darkness I slumbered ;
A gate that was bolted and barred to me,
Because of my sins unnumbered.

I dreamt of a high and a dreadful gate,
Where I knocked in fear and weeping ;
Where God's white angels in solemn state
Their watch and their ward were keeping.

.
O gate of my Father, revealed to me
In the glorious light of the morning ;
O gate, which the lost and the weary see,
But hid from the eyes of the scorning,

I came to thee, but I could not knock ;
Thou wert open, O gate, before me ;
There was never a bar and never a lock,
And "Enter" was written o'er thee.

I could not ask, for the Lord stood there,
And *His* was the sweet imploring ;
I could but enter that gate so fair
In wonder and in adoring.

Within, in the house of the ancient peace,
In the house of the Father dwelling,
Should ever the song of my gladness cease,
The joy of His welcome telling?

At home with the Lord, while the feet must read
For a while the paths of the desert;
There, still with His manna unfailing fed,
Within, with His love unmeasured.

O gate! the song of my pilgrim days,
My song by the sacred river;
Thy name is Jesus, the gate of praise,
The music of God for ever.

"THE man stood in the gate." The first revelation is not the sight of the Temple of the Lord's glory. It is a gate. It is a way of entrance into the sacred enclosure—a gate in a wall. We hear but of one gate in this wall, great and high. The man stood in the gate, but not with a flaming sword to guard the way. He was there to be the guide into the courts of the Lord's holiness, the secret place of the Most High. Had there been no wall there would have been no gate. But "behold a wall." It was on the outside of the House round about (*see* Plan III., D, D, D, D). It shut out from view the space within.

Let us ask ourselves, Is there now, for us, a Temple of God? Is there now that which is the

habitation of God through His Spirit? Is there still that which is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, of which Jesus Christ is the Corner-stone? Does the House now exist of which Peter the apostle wrote, "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"? And around this holy Temple is there a wall? Or is this Temple common ground? Is there *now* a holy enclosure within which are those who have "washed their stoles," and outside of which are the unclean, and the lovers and makers of that which is a lie?

But before the Lord speaks of the wall, He speaks of the gate. If the Lord is the wall of fire round about His sanctuary, He is the gate also. "By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." The wall is there, but He directs the eye first to the gate, before He gives the measure of the wall, great and high. He shows the open door, and He does not measure it. It is one of the many parables of His immeasurable love.

Is it by entering into the gate of Heaven after death that a man is saved? "Behold, *now* is the day of salvation." "According to His mercy He *hath* saved us," Paul could say, and that to us who

are saved the preaching of the Cross is the power of God—"the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Therefore, before the wall is spoken of, the gate is shown—the Gate of Praise. "I am the Door."

And entering in, we learn the further lesson of His grace. The wall exists as the defence and the security of those who have passed within. From the outside, a barrier; but from within, a wall whose name is Salvation—Salvation to him who has entered by the Gate of Praise. To him who can sing the new song of those who rejoice and are glad in the salvation of the Lord. "We have a strong city, salvation hath God appointed for walls and bulwarks."

One way into this place of safety, this house of defence, this strong habitation, this fortress of the redeemed: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me." And having entered by the Gate, we know that as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people, from henceforth, even for ever. He has enclosed them in the secret place of the Most High—in the shadow of the Almighty. Eternal peace is within His walls for all who are sheltered there. For it is to "any man" that the Door stands open—as to the thief who

passed from the Cross into Paradise. So into the hidden Paradise of God are souls passing whilst yet on the earth below, through Him who is the Gate of Praise—Christ, only Christ.

CHAPTER III

A Wall of Jasper

Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation."—ISA. lx. 18.

A wall most great and high,
To men unseen ;
Dark lands beyond it lie—
It stands between
The blessed garden of the Lord's delight,
The deserts of the night.
Within the Lord doth watch at eventide
Ere sets the day ;
And hand in hand His ransomed walk beside
In white array.

The lion entereth not
Nor ravening beast
That still and sacred spot
Of song and feast.
O wandering souls without that crystal wall
Ye, too, come in—
A welcome waiteth at the gate for all ;
And there the voice of tenderest love doth call
Across the wastes of sin.

Come, for the white array is freely given
That maketh meet

To walk with Christ amidst the songs of Heaven,
To worship at His feet.
Beneath the shadow of the sheltering wings
O come and rest !
Without, the weeping and the wanderings ;
Within, the sweetness of the heavenly things—
The Saviour's breast.

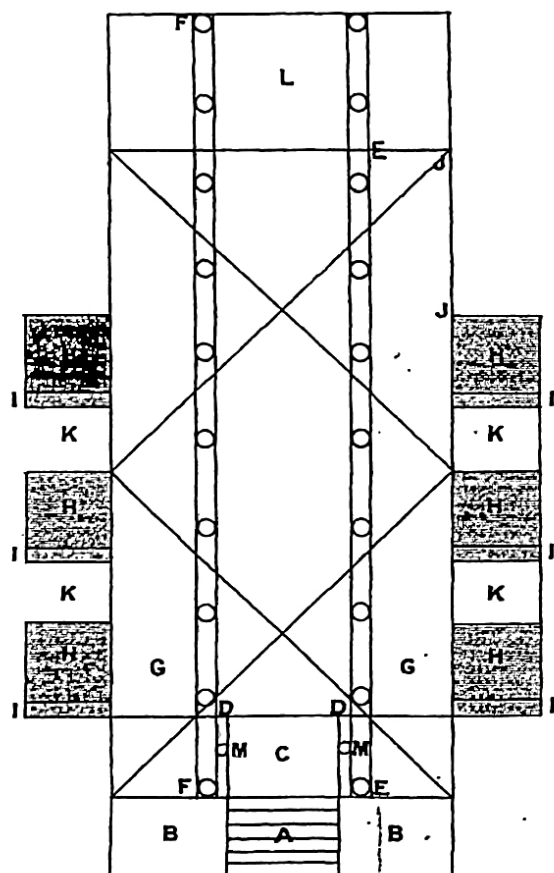
THE measurement begins—it is of the wall. The breadth, one reed of 6 cubits, the height 1 reed. Take the 6 cubits to be the longer cubits (each a cubit and a hand-breadth) the height and breadth of the wall would be nearly, or quite, 12 feet. Remark that it is a wall of extreme thickness. Within this wall a large space—but it is here, at this point, neither measured nor described—we pass through it, walking in a straight line for more than half a mile, and reach the gate opposite the entrance gate—the eastern gate of the outer court of the sanctuary.

Till now we have been on the level of the ground outside the great wall. But now we go up a flight of 7 steps, between two thresholds of 6 cubits from front to back, $8\frac{1}{2}$ cubits wide (*see* Plan III.). We find ourselves in a porch also 6 cubits from (*see* Plan III., Fig C) front to back, on each side of which is a colonnade which is from the starting-point to the end 60 cubits long—nearly 120 feet. Between the pillars runs the central

passage leading from the large square into the outer court. On each side of the side passages are three small chambers, 6 cubits square, and before each one—that is to say on the side facing the gate—a narrow walk of 1 cubit, in which was the door of the chamber, the window being on the side facing the colonnade.

We may imagine a reason for this, which we are not told. The animals for sacrifice would have to be led constantly into the inner court where was the altar. They could not be driven up the steps. Could it be that from the ends of each threshold (Plan III., Fig. B, B, B, B), at right angles to the stairs, was a slope, up which the animals could pass into the side passages, marked G and G? It would then be a provision against their straying into the chambers that the door should be on the narrow walk at right angles to the passage, rather than in the side abutting on the colonnade. This would also explain that the measurement from roof to roof of the little chambers (Chap. xl. 13) was 25 cubits, which could not be if the little path ran side by side of the colonnade, between it and the chamber, the measurement of the whole gate being 50 cubits by 25.

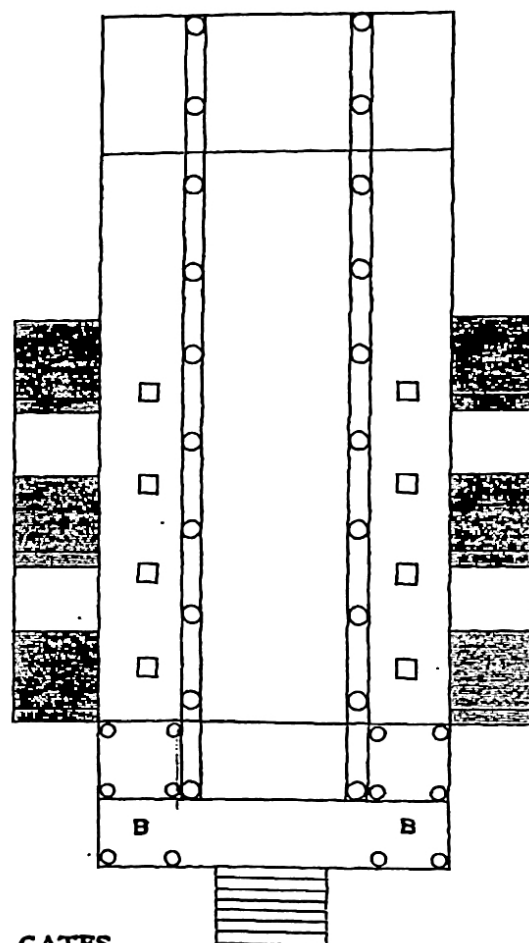
But leaving suppositions, let us consider the form of the gate, which includes thresholds, stairs,



III—OUTER AND INNER GATES.

PLAN OF OUTER GATES, 60 c. by 25 c. XL., 6-26.

- A 7 steps to the gate. XL., 6. Compare L., 22-26. 8 c. wide.
- B Thresholds, 6 c. from front to back, $8\frac{1}{2}$ c. wide. XL., 6.
- C Paved porch, 6 c. from front to back, 8 c. wide. XL., 8.
- DD Entrance of gate, 10 c. XL., 11.
- E Length of gate, 60 c. XL., 15.
- F Length of colonnade, 60 c. XL., 14. Width of pillars, $1\frac{1}{2}$ c.
- G Side walks, 6 c. wide.
- H Chambers, 6 c. by 6 c. XL., 10-12.
- I Space or walk before each, 1 c. XL., 12.
- J Length of gate beyond chambers 18 c. XL., 11.
- K Space between chambers, 5 c. XL., 7.
- L Inner porch.
- MM Entrance pillars.



PLAN OF INNER GATES. XL., 27-43.

- Similar to outer gate, except that there were 8 steps, and a front colonnade, 25 c. by 5 c. XL., 30, 31. Plan given is of N. Gate.
- In the chambers of this gate the burnt offerings were washed. XL., 38.
- 4 tables on each side for slaying the sacrifices (XL., 41), each table of hewn stone, 1 c. high, $1\frac{1}{2}$ c. square.
- N. Gate, except for tables, exactly similar to E. and S. Gates.

a porch of 6 cubits from front to back, the three-fold passages divided by the two rows of pillars, and a porch at the farther end, 10 cubits from front to back (Plan III., Fig. L.) The gate, not including this farther porch, is measured as 50 cubits by 25. The addition of the porch causes the colonnade to be 60 cubits in length.

This gate, then, is not merely a way of entrance, but a place of meeting and conference. Such are the gates of which we read so often in the Israelitish history. A place of judgment, and of authority, as it is written of the husband of the wise woman, that he is known in the gates when he sitteth amongst the elders of the land.¹

¹ Ezekiel had seen a council held in the eastern gate of the old Temple nineteen years ago ; five-and-twenty men, among them the princes of the people, and the Lord had said to him, "Son of man, these are the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city, which say, 'It is not near, let us build houses ; this city is the cauldron, and we be the flesh.'" And Ezekiel had prophesied against them by the Spirit of the Lord falling upon him, and declared to them that which they would not believe to be near, the judgment of God, the sword and captivity, and the fury of the enemy. And as he prophesied the Prince Pelatiah died, smitten by the hand of God. Did Ezekiel recall that day, now when all had been terribly verified, and the old Temple and the holy city were a heap of ruins ? Now he stood in the gate where the prince, according to the mind of God, should sit to eat bread before the Lord ; he alone to enter by it, and go out by it, because it was to be through this gate that the Lord, the God of Israel, should enter.

Of such gates three lead into the outer court from the space which the wall encloses, east, north, and south, all alike in form and measurement. They lead into the court of service.

And before going farther, let us take a general view of these courts, outer and inner, so as better to understand the further course of the man, and of Ezekiel who followed (*see* Plan IV.).

Within the large outer space, and in the middle of it, is the outer court, also square, 500 cubits each way, and in the middle of the outer court is the inner court. It is the measurement of the inner court which needs careful attention. It is not literally square to the eye, the east side being 200 cubits in length, each side, north and south, 150 cubits, and the western side bounded by the front of the Temple and adjacent buildings, forming a line of 200 cubits. This would, then, be an oblong court 200 cubits by 150.

But by taking the eastern side of 200 cubits as one side of a square, we find that the western boundary would be a line I, I, I, I (*see* Plan IV.), passing through the centre of the most holy place. Of this square the centre is the altar of burnt-offering, *which is, in fact, the central point of the whole plan, including the large outer space.*

This actual but unindicated square has to be

borne in mind for the elucidation of the meaning of the measurements. But in following the actual measurements as given in Chap. xli., ver. 12-15, we find that three smaller squares are marked out F, G, and H on Plan IV.

First, a square (F) behind the Temple enclosure consisting of an enclosed space 100 cubits by 80 cubits (including the thickness of the wall), and an unenclosed space behind it of 100 cubits by 20.

Secondly, the square (G), called (Chap. xli. 13) "the house," 100 cubits each way.

Thirdly, the square (H) of the 14th verse, which we may call the altar square, formed by an imaginary line drawn within the inner end of the three gates of the inner court, and along the front of the house. These 3 squares are intersected in the middle by the imaginary line which forms the western boundary of the square (I, I, I, I).

Thus far is the general plan of the Temple enclosures into which we enter by the eastern gate of the outer court, to which we now return, to follow, step by step, the leading of him who measured the whole.

CHAPTER IV

Porches and Chambers

“Where has God placed us? If we have not our part in the first Adam, we must have it in the second Adam—in Christ. There is no place with God for anyone out of Christ. We are sanctified in Christ Jesus, accepted in the Beloved.”

HAVING measured the threshold of the gate, the man measured further each little chamber, three on each side (*see* Plan III., Fig. H). We know from the order of the earlier Temple the purpose of these chambers. It is said of the priest Jehoiada (2 Chron. xxiii. 19) that “he set the porters at the gate of the house of the Lord, that none which was unclean by anything should enter in.” Already in the days of the Tabernacle, porters had kept watch at the gates, by the appointment of Samuel the seer, and of David; and even earlier, whilst Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, was high priest. “Phinehas was over the porters of the tabernacle, and the Lord was with him” (1 Chron. ix. 17-29).

It needed the presence and power of the Lord

for this work of guarding His sanctuary from defilement. It was when the Lord had breathed on His disciples and had said to them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," that He authorised them to receive or to exclude from their company—to receive the forgiven, declaring them forgiven; to exclude the unforgiven, declaring them to be yet in their sins. "Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever."

The needful qualification for a porter is said to be strength. Thus in 1 Chron. xxvi. 7, 8, 9. Only in the strength and power of the Holy Ghost could the Church of God in later days be kept pure and undefiled. And Christians disowned His presence and His power, and the unclean entered even before the days of the Apostles had ended, and now—?

In the days of David the porters served in relays, each relay seven days. In anticipation of the Temple their number was raised from 212 to 4,000 (1 Chron. xxiii. 5). They were employed, not solely in watching the gates and opening them, but they also had charge of the ministering vessels, the fine flour, the wine, oil, frankincense, and spices, and, in 2 Chron. xxxi. 14, also of the free-will offerings of God, for the distribution of the oblations and the most holy things.

Thus all passed through their hands, and under their eye. The unclean person, the blemished offering, the strange incense were not to pass the Lord's gates.

And, in addition to other work, the porters were employed in singing and in playing on the harp, as in 1 Chron. xv. 18. And it is to be remarked by us that they were in part taken from the descendants of Korah. "The sons of Korah died not" (Num. xxvi. 10, 11). They were reserved as brands plucked out of the burning to keep the watch over the Lord's House and to sing His praise.

In 1 Chron. xxvi. 1-19, it is recorded that they were all taken from two of the three divisions of the Levites. Of these three divisions, the Kohathites, the Gershonites, and the Merarites, the Kohathites and the Merarites supplied the porters, the sons of Korah representing the Kohathites. The Gershonites also supplied the singers. Asaph was a Gershonite (1 Chron. vi. 43).

We find the porters reappointed by Hezekiah and Josiah, and later by Sheshbazzar, Ezra, and Nehemiah. They were an indispensable part of the ministers of the Temple. They had their post and their place assigned to them. Therefore the man measured their chambers 6 cubits square, pro-

vided with windows towards the way of entrance, where they kept the watch of the Lord perpetually.

“Then measured he the porch of the gate, and the posts thereof, and the porch of the gate inward.” That is to say, the porch at the entrance, above the steps, and also the porch at the other end of the gate, towards the court within. (*See Plan III., Figs. C and L.*)

To Him who measured the porch, to whom the future is as the present, another Temple was to intervene between the ruined temple burnt by Nebuzaradan and the Temple which He was now showing to Ezekiel upon the very high mountain of the restored Israel. To Him the winter day was already present when He should walk in the porch of that intermediate Temple, and should distinguish there between those who were not His sheep and the sheep who hear His voice. “I know my sheep,” He said, “and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my Father’s hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one.” And they took up stones to stone Him.

But there should come a time when again His

voice should speak by His Apostles in that Temple, doomed as was the first. It should speak again by the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven, and His sheep should hear. For He would still seek His sheep and deliver them out of all places where they had been scattered in the cloudy and dark day, and they would ever be the flock of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. And again, His signs and wonders should be wrought in the porch where they would have stoned Him, and His sheep should be fed by His Apostle Peter, and by His beloved John, and they should be all with one accord in Solomon's porch, an assembly so holy that of unbelievers durst no man join himself to them ; but believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.

Is this work of the Lord's love and grace still only amongst past and future things? Or is there now the holy Temple wherein the Lord has His habitation, and the porch where He sits to teach all those who sit at His feet and hear His words? A porch of rest and peace, the entrance from the disturbed and sorrowful world without into the secret place of the Most High, the pavilion where He keeps His beloved in the secret of His presence from the strife of tongues?

The man, when he had measured the porch

measured the two entrance pillars (*see* Plan III Figs. M, M) and the pillars of the colonnades. And on all these pillars were palm trees. It was the House of victory.

CHAPTER V

Service

“Self likes to be served. Love delights to serve. So we see in Christ, whilst we are on earth, now. When we are in glory, He girds Himself and serves us.”

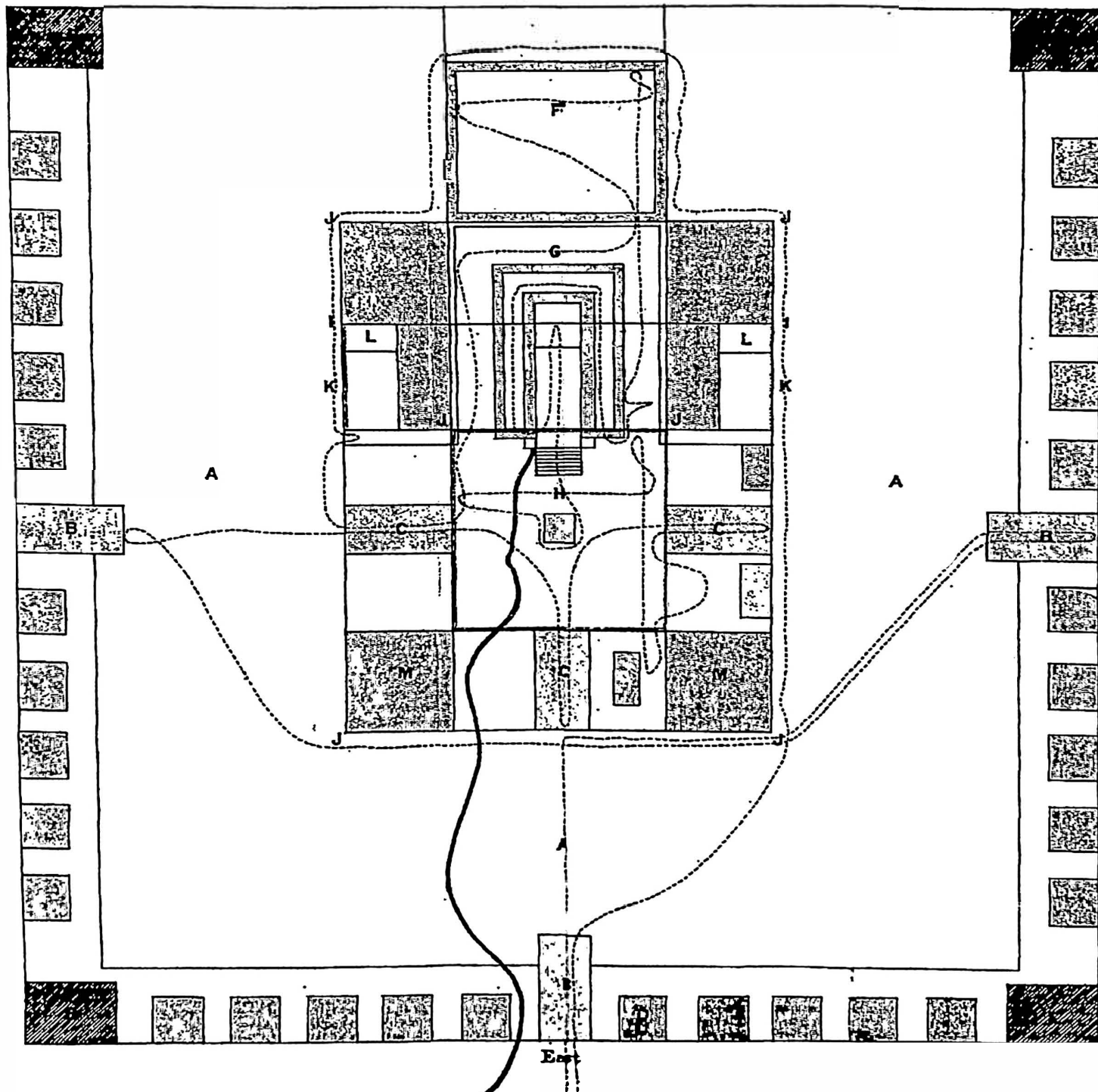
“THEN brought he me into the outward court.” This court, the court of service, had chambers, and a pavement before the chambers round about. The pavement, called the lower pavement, ran along the sides of the gates. Apparently, then, the pavement upon which the chambers stood was raised. In Solomon’s temple there was also a pavement; refer to 2 Chron. vii. 3. Probably the chambers were for the Levites, who were to lodge “round about the house of God,” as in 1 Chron. ix 27-29. Those who were simply for keeping guard would be in the chambers of the gates. But the service of the sanctuary would be the charge of those who had their dwelling in the outer court.

We have followed the man and the prophet into this court, and we who have known and followed

IV.—OUTER AND INNER COURTS.

- A Outer court, 500 c. by 500 c. Measurement ascertained by comparing XL., 15, 19, 29, 47. XLIII., 20.
 B Gates, 50 c. by 25 c. XL., 6, 28.
 C Gates, 50 c. by 25 c. XL., 27-43.
 D 30 chambers (XL., 17), with a pavement in front.
 E Kitchens, 40 c. by 30 c., for boiling the sacrifices of the people. XLVI., 21-24.
 F Square, 100 c. by 100 c., containing the walled space called the separate place. XLII., 13, 18.
 G Square, 100 c. by 100 c. called the House. XLII., 13, 14.
 H Square, 100 c. by 100 c. called the court. XL., 47.

- I Square of inner court, intersecting square of the House, 200 c. by 200 c. The line of intersection is drawn across the centre of the square of the House, the centre being the Throne of Glory. XL., 29, compared with 47 and XLII., 3 and 4, give the measurement of 300 c. by 200 c.
 J Chambers (described XLIII., 1-9), 100 c. long, 50 c. broad in the broadest part, but 50 c. long as seen from the outer court, the breadth of the eastern half being but 25 c.
 K Wall of 50 c. XLIII., 7.
 L Boiling and baking places for the priests. XLVI., 20.
 M Chambers (described XLIII., 10-12). "As long as they" (the chambers, J) "and as broad as they," incorrect—it should be as long as they are broad.



OUTER AND INNER COURTS.

Outer court, 500 cubits square. Inner court, 200.

Line indicating the course of the guide and of Ezekiel.

the same Guide in our own days have learnt that there is for us a court of service, and an example of service in Him who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister"; who came "and is amongst us as he that serveth."

Into this court of service none but the clean may enter. Those who have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb, who have passed within the Walls of Salvation and the Gates of Praise—they only may serve Him day and night in His Temple, and minister to God's High Priest.

It is well at this point to look back and to bear in mind for this present day that which God directed in the days of shadow and parable for those who were to minister in the courts of His House. Not for His priests as regards this outer court, but for the Levites, His ministers; not for those set apart for the ritual of worship, but for the humbler service of "labour in the gospel" (*see* Phil. iv. 3); and yet no less set apart by the Lord for Himself.

The first reference to the service of the Levites is in Numbers i. 47-53. They were not to be numbered with the children of Israel. They were to be numbered apart. And their work being specified—to minister to the House of God, and to carry both

the Tabernacle and the vessels—it is added that the stranger who should come near to do this work should be put to death. And in order to be always in readiness for their work, they should encamp round the House.

This, then, to be first borne in mind, they were separate—set apart for the Lord. In other words, were hallowed—made holy.

In Numbers iii. 6 we have, secondly, the other side of separation. “Brought near” to God; not only separated *from* the people, but separated *to* the Lord.

Thirdly. They were presented before the High Priest. For it was to *him* (ver. 7) that they were to minister; it was *his* charge they were to keep.

Fourthly. They were to keep the charge of the whole congregation before the Tabernacle—representants of the service due from all the people of God.

Fifthly. They had the charge of all the vessels of ministry; to keep them intact and pure.

Sixthly. They were *given* to Aaron and to his sons. *Wholly* given unto him. Given unto him (ver. 19) by the Lord Himself. In Numbers viii. 19, and xviii. 6, it is again repeated: “And *I*, behold, *I* have taken the Levites from among the children

of Israel ; to you they are given as a gift for the Lord."

And seventhly. In Chap. viii. 16: "They are wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel."

The reason of this is given in Chap. iii. 12, 13. A reason we do well to consider if we have any purpose or desire to serve as Levites in the House of the Lord—the same holy God who gave these ordinances as shadows of that which was to come. "I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel, *instead of all the first-born* that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: *therefore* the Levites shall be mine; because all the first-born are mine : on the day that I smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the first-born in Israel, both man and beast ; mine shall they be: I am the Lord."

And why were the first-born of Israel hallowed to the Lord ? Because to them, as well as to the first-born of the Egyptians, the judgment of God was due—the wages of sin, which is death.

This had been clearly explained to the Prophet Ezekiel (Chap. xx. 8). The people, whilst still in Egypt, had defiled themselves with the idols of Egypt ; they had rebelled against the Lord. "Then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them

to accomplish my anger against them in the land of Egypt." But the Lord, for His Name's sake, would spare them ; and yet the judgment must at the same time prove His righteousness and His holiness, for He could not pardon at the expense of His justice. Therefore, as we know, the judgment came upon the houses of the Israelites also, but not on their first-born, whom God would spare. He who spared not His own Son appointed a substitute for the doomed one in each house—the lamb without blemish and without spot, who died for the guilty—so that the Lord could say, "When I see *the blood* I will pass over you." He could see no difference in the sin of the Israelite and of the Egyptian, except that it was a blacker sin in the case of His chosen people. But he saw the Blood, the token of the judgment already executed, and He passed over the guilty and the doomed.

Therefore the first-born were His, redeemed to Him by the blood shed for them ; set apart (Exod. xiii. 12) to the Lord for ever, as those who were alive from the dead. Into this place the Levites were put, being the substitutes for the first-born. "They are *wholly* given unto me from among the children of Israel, even instead of the first-born have I taken them unto me. . . . On the day that I smote every first-born in the land

of Egypt I sanctified them for myself, and I have taken the Levites for all the first-born."

Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb—this is the reason why the Levite was a minister in the House of God, set apart for Himself. Redeemed from death and judgment, death left behind in the land of Egypt; the death of the substitute so completely a judgment past and finished that not a trace of it was to be left on the day following. "Ye shall let nothing" (of the slain lamb) "remain until the morning, and that which remaineth of it until the morning shall ye burn with fire." "*It is finished.*"

But the work was not finished which was to fit these ransomed men for service in God's Holy Place. We turn to Num. viii. 6-22. "Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them." Do those redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb still need to be cleansed? Is it not true of the antitype of these men that they are cleansed from *all* sin by the Blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God? Cleansed once and for ever?

But let us read further. "Thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them: sprinkle *water* of purifying upon them, and let them wash their clothes, and make themselves clean." Not the less is it true that from all guilt and condemnation

from the sin which is upon the *conscience* of the sinner, the blood cleanses wholly, perfectly, once for all and for ever. But there is a cleansing by water also—the washing of water by the Word—which meets the *consciousness* of sin remaining in the heart of him whom the blood has cleansed.

The presence of sin in the believer becomes to him more terribly, more plainly apparent the more he realises the power of the blood which has effaced the guilt and washed him whiter than snow, as justified before God. He finds with a deeper shame the fact of the sin remaining in the old and evil nature, and ready to show itself in the words and deeds even of the redeemed.

It is this work of Christ which is still unfinished, and which remains unfinished till the last member of His body is received into His glory.

Consider Eph. v. 25-27. There we read of three works of grace wrought by Christ for His Church—past, present, and future declarations of His unspeakable love. The work that is past and finished—having loved the Church, He gave Himself for it. Such is the great love wherewith He loved us even when we were dead in sins. He gave *Himself*. Once and for ever He offered the one sacrifice of Himself which has obtained for us eternal redemption. Secondly, His present work,

He sanctifies and cleanses His Church by the washing of water by the Word. He loved the Church before He thus sanctified and cleansed it ; and day by day, hour by hour, for nearly nineteen hundred years, has He been the Servant girded for this cleansing of His own. He it is who applies the Word to the heart that has learnt His love, and such an one will cleanse his way by taking heed thereto, according to that Word of his God and Saviour. Thirdly, His future work. He will present His Church to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing ; but it shall be holy and without blemish in that day of His espousal, and of the gladness of His heart.

Let us consider for a moment the meaning, as explained to us in the Scripture, of the earlier House of God, the Tabernacle, for the same figure is found repeated with further developments in the later house, the Temple of Solomon, and now again in the Temple seen by Ezekiel.

There are three unities in the Tabernacle. It is Christ Himself, then the Church, "whose house are we," and then it is the heavens. He was the Tabernacle, and the veil was His flesh ; and secondly, we are His house ; and then thirdly, He went "through the heavens" (Heb. iv. 14). God dwelt in Christ. "The Father," He said, "dwelleth in

me." God dwells in the house, which is His Church, His "habitation," and He dwells in the heavens.

These three antitypes of the Tabernacle apply also in a similar way to the Temple of Solomon and the Temple of Ezekiel. But it may be remarked that the lesson taught by each figure, though based on the same truth, is a different lesson. The truth at the base of each is the central truth of the Old and New Testaments—atonement by the Blood of Christ.

In the Tabernacle the way of the sinner's approach by means of the blood of the sacrifice was the lesson taught; but it was an imperfect approach, because the sacrifice was imperfect. It was rather an indication of the approach yet to be revealed.

In the first Temple the earthly glory of Christ and the restoration of earthly blessing is shown as the result of the sacrifice.

In the Temple of Ezekiel it is rather that which is approached than the means of approach which is revealed. The awful and glorious holiness of Him to whom the redeemed soul is brought—the fulness of the blessing flowing forth from that perfect nearness which the Blood of Christ has assured to His own. "Christ hath once suffered

for sins, the just for the unjust, *that he might bring us to God*”—to the throne of God, to the bosom of the Father.

It has been truly said : “ We get ourselves so accustomed to certain things by their constant use that the power of their meaning becomes destroyed.” This we find but too true as regards the Scripture truth itself. We read the words : “ How amiable are Thy tabernacles, Lord Gods of Hosts,” and the familiar words may leave us untouched. But would not such a thought as men dwelling in God’s own House greatly surprise and delight us if heard for the first time, and its meaning understood ?

And further, what would be the effect of such a truth, if fully believed, as that God will make us to be His dwelling-place ? “ I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; ” in those who even now are the temple of the living God.

“ The sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest whence she may lay her young.” How beautifully this parenthesis shows us the tender care God has over all His creatures. He fails not to find a house for the most worthless of birds, and a nest for the most restless. What repose is there for the soul that casts itself upon the watchful, tender care of Him who provides so

fully for the need of all His creatures! We know what the expression of "nest" conveys, just as well as that of "house." Is it not a place of security—a shelter from storm—a covert to hide oneself in from every evil—a place to rest in, to nestle in, to joy in?

And thus is it not only that God dwells in His Temple of living stones, but He will have His own to dwell with Him. "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee."

And thus is the threefold meaning of the Tabernacle and the Temples taught to us in the revelation of the love of God; in each we see Christ; in each we see the present habitation of God by the Spirit, His redeemed Church builded together by Him; and in each we see the House of the Father in which we dwell now by faith, but afterwards in fact, when the prayer of Christ shall be fulfilled—"Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am." "Where I am, there shall also my servant be." "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also."

Thus far the figure of the Levites does not lead us. They were washed and cleansed for their service in the lower sanctuary. They then offered a burnt-

offering and a sin-offering. For the offerings that were but figures had to be repeated, because they could not make the comers thereunto perfect. "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."

But the Levite of the Temple not made with hands has neither burnt-offering nor sin-offering to offer. "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once*"; once only.

The Levites, after their sacrifice, were then brought before the Lord, and offered in the presence of all the children of Israel as the offering of the people, who laid their hands upon them, "that they might execute the service of the Lord." So were the servants of God commended to Him for His work in a later day—the believers of Antioch laid their hands on Barnabas and Saul, and sent them forth to preach to the Gentiles (Acts xiii. 1-4), and later recommended Paul and Silas to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. They were the offering of the Church for special service.

"Thus," we read in Num. viii. 14, "thou shalt separate the Levites from among the children of Israel, and the Levites shall be mine." And *after that*, after being put in the place of the redeemed first-born, after the washing, the atonement, and

the presentation to the Lord, "shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tabernacle, and" (Num. iii. 10) "the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death."

And well to be borne in mind is the remarkable expression of Num. xviii. 4: "They shall be joined unto thee"—to Aaron, *joined*, as their name expresses it; for their father, Levi, was thus called by his mother, Leah, who said: "Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, therefore was his name called Levi."

Are all these symbols without a meaning? Are there those now chosen out of the world, of whom Christ said, when He lifted up His eyes to His Father in heaven, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; Thine they were, and thou gavest them me"? Are they not still presented by Christ to His Father: "They are thine, and all mine are thine, and thine are mine?"

Were the Levites sanctified to God? Christ prayed for His own. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

Are there still those redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb who look back on the judgment of their sin as past and over, and who are brought forth

from the land of Egypt and from the house of bondage?

Such is the Levite of to-day—the redeemed, the cleansed, the sanctified—*wholly* given to the Lord, to be His for ever.

All this is not priesthood, it is service in the Lord's House; widely distinct from priesthood—so widely different that the Levite Korah, who took the place of a priest, was made the example of the awful judgment of God. We must bear in mind distinctly that in following out the figure it is Christian work and service that are in question—from the higher work of the evangelist down to the lower work of ministering to the sick, the suffering, the afflicted. But not the lowest work can be accepted by the Lord, not the giving of a cup of cold water, till the Levite of to-day has been as the Levite of old, given wholly to the Lord, redeemed, washed, and offered up; joined to the Great High Priest, to minister to *Him* in the sacred courts of His Temple.

Let us solemnly consider whether this is the case—whether it has been the case, as the rule, or rather as the exception—with those who undertake that which they call Christian work. Or does the history of the professing Church prove to us that the exact contrary has been the case—that work

has claimed, from age to age, to be the means by which a man might possibly, *at last*, attain to forgiveness and eternal life ?

The barest acquaintance with the history of Christendom during the past eighteen centuries is sufficient evidence ; and to look around us, and into the depths of our own natural hearts, furnishes further proof, if proof be needed.

Even now as I write I hear the remark made by one called a Protestant : " I always feel that of all the works that gain heaven, nursing the sick comes first."

Redeemed first, washed first, joined first to the High Priest, is the order of God. Work first, service first, redemption and forgiveness the uncertain attainment at last, is the order of man.

Is it otherwise in this "enlightened" nineteenth century ? On the contrary, is it not a strange feature of modern Christianity that, more than ever, service rendered by man to man, apart from faith in Christ, work, the result of simple, natural kindness, is supposed to give to him who performs it the claim to be a Christian ?

"We shall not be asked," said one, "what we have believed, but how many cups of cold water we have given."

Do we want peace ? God has said Christ has

made peace through the blood of His Cross. Man has said, Let us daily collect the ingredients for making our peace, self-denial, consideration for others, unselfishness, and then we may reasonably expect to have peace at last. One, indeed, has said that as we collect the ingredients for making a cake, and finally have the cake, so finally may we have peace, if we thus provide the materials for it.

Is this "unselfish service," then, after all, the means to an end, and that end our own happiness and self-satisfaction? We reckon up our cups of cold water to our own credit—they are to us as the blood on the lintel, which, when the Lord saw, He passed over the guilty house.

Is this our Christianity? Let us, then, plainly and deliberately take our stand upon our own righteousness, and not only base our claim of eternal happiness upon our good deeds, but understand that they weigh down the scale against false beliefs, against the making God a liar, against unbelief in the record He has given of His Son. Let us assure ourselves that "we shall not be asked" whether we have believed in Christ, or in Mahomet, or in nothing—whether we call truth falsehood, or falsehood truth. Let us persuade ourselves that we fairly come up to the standard

by which *we* measure the character of Christ, and that thus being, as we say, "Christ-like," we are Christians.

Does a Mahometan, then, mean a man whose character resembles that of Mahomet? Or is a Mahometan a man who believes what Mahomet said?

How truly has it been said, "I have not peace in anything in which I take a part, but I have peace in that in which Christ acted alone. Man's part in the work which made peace was only stretching out the sinful hands which crucified Him. This is all man had to do with it. Is it, I ask, by any act to be done now that peace is obtained? No, it is simply by the blood which has been shed—the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Himself." This, and this alone, can give peace to the soul, through faith in Him—through faith in His blood. "We which have believed do enter into rest," and "he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." "There remaineth, therefore, a Sabbath-keeping to the people of God" (Heb. iv. 3-9).

How solemn are those words of God, "Without faith it is impossible to please him." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and "they that are in the flesh *cannot* please God ; for "the minding of

the flesh is enmity against God—it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”

But some will say, “We know, of course, that a man must have faith, but he must have works also if he is to be saved.” And thus it is related with approval of an old ferryman that in order to illustrate this theory he painted “Faith” upon one of his oars and “Works” on the other. “By using one oar,” he said, “I should never get across, but I use both.”

When Cain brought an offering to the Lord, he, too, believed he was using both. And he who would paint “Faith” on both his oars is rarely found. Yet only so does the boat reach the further shore, and the movement, answering to the works, prove the power of the faith that is their cause. And if faith is not their cause and main-spring, the work is amongst those things “highly esteemed among men, but abomination in the sight of God.”

Why are works insisted on by the Apostle James? Because a proof is needed that a man has *faith*. It is obvious that any work a man may do, however good in itself, is not a proof of faith if it could be done by a man who has none. An action which could be performed by a heathen cannot be a proof that a man is a Christian.

Therefore the two examples of good works given by the Apostle James are works which have no merit, and, in fact, no justification, except that they were proofs that the man and woman who performed them believed God. A man took a knife to slay his son—a woman betrayed her country to invaders.

And for works performed by faith God gives a sure reward—not because it is due, but because He loves to acknowledge the faith that was the root from whence the fruits sprang. “Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee *my faith* by my works.” The faith is that which has to be proved. And faith works by love—love to Him who is the object of faith. For he who believes has everlasting life, and fruit will grow upon the living tree—fruit well pleasing to God, because the life of *Christ* in the soul has brought it forth, and the object of the work of faith is also Christ.

But would it not be well to seek to enlist the selfish, the worldly, the idle, in Christian work, so that they may themselves be the better for it? We little know our own hearts if we have not found out that it is our nature to attach a value to our own deeds, and that to our natural hearts our Sunday School classes, our visits to the poor and

sick, our time spent in doing that which we dislike for the good of others, are all counted up to our own credit in our own balance sheets, and the more we find to our balance the farther are we from Christ. That which the Apostle Paul reckoned as dung was not his own wickedness, but his own righteousness. We may labour on, till at last we reach the point of saying, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;" and Christ answers, "Thou knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

But the work done because we are not our own, but are bought with a price—the work, therefore, for which we can have no credit, though the Lord in grace gives a reward, is not our work, but the work of Him who worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. Because it is not our own work, but from the beginning to the end His and His only, it can never add to the treasure of our self-righteousness; we know that *our* share in it are the blunders, the imperfections, the carelessness, the lukewarmness. All that had a value in it is His work, and not ours.

CHAPTER VI

Yesterday and To-day

"As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day."—EZEK. xxxiv. 12.

As a voice to which no voice respondeth,
As an alien in a land unknown,
So the soul in mist and silence wandereth
All alone.

Following through the desert where I journeyed
Weary and astray,
Came there One who sought me in the dimness
Of the cloudy day.

Came the Voice that answered in the language
Of the lonely cry ;
Thou, my God, hast sought me and hast found me,
For Thine own am I.

All the mystery of my soul's enigma
I may never know—
Thou hast known me, Lord, for Thou hast loved me
Long ago.

Every chord untouched by earthly minstrel,
Depths no heart could reach
Sense of that for which no words are fashioned
In our earthly speech,

All in Thee has found the touch, the language,
And the music wakes ;
Silent chambers echo with the singing
When Thy morning breaks.

Now no more an alien amidst strangers
Of another tongue,
But in language of my country joining
Myriads in their song.

In the Fatherland where words familiar,
Are the words divine ;
God, my gladness, God, my Home, my Father,
I am Thine.

FROM the measurement in ver. 19 of Chap. xl. we learn the size of the outer court. Ezekiel followed his guide first to the outside of the eastern gate of the inner court, and then, turning to the right, to the northern gate of the outer court. (*See* Plan IV., Fig. C.) (*See* Plan IV., Fig. B.) After the measurement of this gate and of the southern gate, which corresponded in every detail to the eastern gate, the guide measured a hundred cubits from the inner end of the southern gate of the outer court to the outer end of the southern gate of the inner court.

This latter gate, and the two other inner gates, differed in some respects from the three outer gates. They had eight steps, and a porch outside, extending the whole width of the gate. The width and

length of the inner gates are the same as that of the outer gates. (*See* Plan III.)

By this southern gate the guide and Ezekiel entered the inner court, and crossed the court diagonally to the eastern gate (*see* Plan IV., Fig. C), which had the same measurements as the southern gate. The guide then brought Ezekiel to the northern gate (*see* Plan IV., Fig. C), the measurements being the same. He showed him, near the gates in the N-E. and S-E. corners of the inner court, chambers (*see* Plan V., Fig. H) in which the burnt-offerings were washed. He also showed him eight tables, four on each side, in the north gate, upon which the offerings were slain. He measured these tables, and explained their constructions, there being a border round the tables (translated hooks), apparently a curved shelf where the instruments of sacrifice were laid. The reason for the slaying of the sacrifices in the north gate may be found in Leviticus i. 11. The priest is to kill the burnt-offering on the side of the altar northward. This may also explain the name given to the north gate of the inner court in Ezek. viii. 5, "the gate of the altar."

And in the inner court, near the inner entrance of the north gate, were the chambers of the singers (*see* Plan V., Fig. O), and apparently two other chambers

near the northern and eastern gates, one for the priests (Figs. Q and P, Plan V), the keepers of the charge of the house ; the other for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the altar, " which come near to the Lord to minister to him."

Did the thoughts of Ezekiel travel back to the time of the earlier vision of chapter viii.? Then had a likeness as the appearance of fire, bright as the colour of amber, entered his house, where he sat with the elders of Judah. " And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head ; and the Spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north ; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy. And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, according to the vision that I saw in the plain. Then said he to me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward, at the gate of the altar, this image of jealousy in the entry." Ezekiel had, therefore, been carried by the hand of the Lord into the inner court, and placed at the inner entrance of the north gate. From thence, looking northward—that is to say

towards the outer entrance of the gate—he saw the enthroned idol, the image of jealousy in the entry. The Lord then appears to have led him into the corridor, which in the old Temple, as well as in the Temple of the vision, formed the way of entrance. In the Temple of the vision there were, as we have seen, the chambers of the doorkeepers—three on each side. In the old Temple there were likewise chambers in the gates, as in 2 Kings xxiii. 11. where idolatrous rites were practised; and in Jer. xxxv. 4, where the princes are said to have chambers above the chambers of the doorkeepers. Apparently in one of these chambers was the hole in the wall mentioned in the eighth verse of Chapter viii. There had the Lord shown to Ezekiel yet greater abominations than the image at the outer entrance of the gate. For there, in a secret chamber, stood the seventy elders of the House of Israel, with every man his censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense arose to the creeping things and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the House of Israel portrayed upon the wall round about. “Then said He to me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the House of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery?” And further, the Lord had told him to turn yet again, and he should see greater

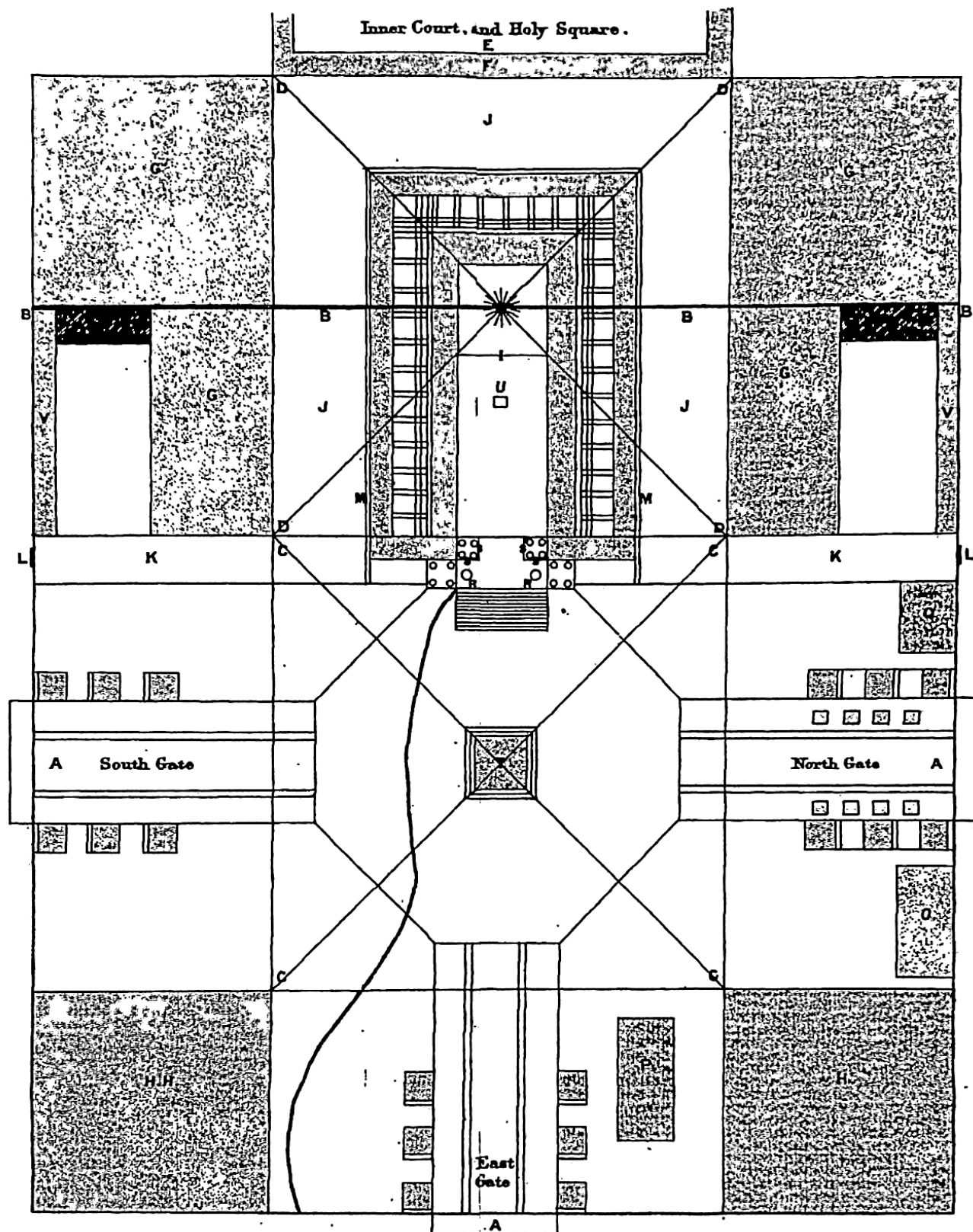
abominations that were done. And turning again to the inner entrance of the gate, "Behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz." There, in the north gate, the gate of the altar, were these abominations. The gate of the slaying of the sacrifices, the gate where the offering of the perfect and all-holy Sacrifice was foreshadowed, was thus specially connected with the idolatry of the people of God. Then should faith have looked forward to that great sacrifice—since then should faith look back to it. And both before and since we see that it is this place of foreshadowing and place of remembrance that has been the point of attack for Satan. For "Christ took part of flesh and blood, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death—that is, the devil." And has it not been in the celebration of that death that idolatry has been enthroned in the professing Church of God? Can we wonder at the words spoken of old, "Son of man, seest thou what they do ; even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary"? And is it a less abomination in the eyes of the Lord that an idolatry more degraded than that of image-worship has taken the place of the remembrance of the death of Christ? The idolatrous Jew and

the idolatrous heathen would have said that the image represented their god, but to the idolatrous Christian the wafer does not represent, but *is* the god he falls down to worship. Did Ezekiel remember the gate of abominations when the Lord now showed him the altar gate of the undefiled Temple? There he saw only that which told of the unblemished sacrifice; there, in the place of the wailing of the women who wept for Tammuz, was the place of song—of the chambers of the singers. For near to this northern gate were the chambers of those who sang the praises of God, whilst the sweet savour of the burnt-offering ascended before Him. So we read in the older Temple did the song of the Lord accompany the worship at the altar of sacrifice. In 2 Chron. xxix. 27, for example, when Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt-offering upon the altar: “And when the burnt-offering began, the song of the Lord began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David, King of Israel.” It has been questioned whether the words “the chambers of the singers,” in Ezekiel xl., 44, might not be read as merely “without the inner gate were *two* chambers.” That there were, however, chambers for the singers in the old Temple appears evident from 1 Chron. x. 33, when the chambers

were provided on account of the songs "by day and night" which formed a part of the worship, no doubt in reference to the morning and evening sacrifice. It would, therefore, be most probable that similar chambers were to be found in the Temple, which far more than the former one was the house of praise. And we should expect to find them in the court of the altar where was the memorial of the death which was to us the opening of the door of Heaven. "Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost, and behold the veil of the Temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom." The death which has brought us life for evermore. "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with him." "Who, his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed."

Therefore, in the history He has given us of sinful man, we have no singing till the day of the redemption of His people, when the Lamb had been slain, and He led them in triumph through the sea by His right hand, glorious in power. "The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become

my salvation. He is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation. He is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people; thou hast redeemed, thou hast guided them in thy strength to thy holy habitation." Singing and redemption—always connected in Scripture, but not in the selfish mind of man. Are not hymn-books full of the singing of angels? Yet in the Scripture the angels never sing. They praise God with a loud voice, but it is only the redeemed who sing. It is not the bare fact of being happy which is the song of the soul. It is the revelation of the unspeakable love of Him who gave Himself for us. Thus did He Himself sing a hymn of praise when He went forth from the upper chamber to His betrayal and His Cross (Matt. xxvi. 30). Then did He joy over His redeemed with singing.



V.—INNER COURT AND HOLY SQUARE.

- A Gates, east, north, and south of inner court. XL, 27-28.
 B West boundary of inner court (an imaginary line) forming the square of 900 c.
 C Altar square 100 c. by 100 c. XL, 47, XLII, 14. Altar the centre.
 D Holy Square, called specially the House (XLII, 13-15), 100 c. by 100 c. The Holy Square is intersected at the centre by the square of the inner court, the Throne of Glory the centre of it.
 E Separate place to the west, 70 c. by 90 c. surrounded by a wall (F) 5 c. thick. XLII, 12.
 G Chambers where the priests shall eat, and shall lay the most holy things, and the meat offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering, "for the place is holy."
 H Chambers at the east end of the court, mentioned XLII, 10-12, and XL, 28. Where the burnt offering was washed.
 HH Similar chambers. XLII, 10-12. Probably where the priests changed their garments before going into the outer court. Compare XLII, 14, with XLIV, 17-19.
 I Temple surrounded by chambers. XLII, 1-11.
 J Space of 90 c. surrounding the Temple. XLII, 10.
 K Way of 10 c. communicating with outer court by means of a door (Door L). XLII, 4-12.
 M Way of 1 c. (This may have been on the other side of the space, along the chambers.) XLII, 4.
 N Boiling places for priests (XLVI, 30), "where also they shall bake the meat offering."
 O Chambers for singers—prospect towards the south. XL, 44.
 P Chambers for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the altar—prospect towards the north—where the burnt offering was washed. XL, 40.
 Q Chambers for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the House—prospect towards the south. XL, 45.
 R Pillars by the door. XL, 40.
 S Breadth of 3 c. between the pillars of the porch. XL, 48.
 T Altar of burnt offering, centre of all. See Plan II. XLIII, 12-17.
 U Altar of incense. XLII, 22.
 V Wall of 50 c. XLII, 7.

CHAPTER VII

A Priest for ever

"But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood."—HEB. vii. 24.

In Thy robes of glory and of beauty,
With salvation clad ;
Crowned with holiness of God's anointing,
With His radiance glad,

Holy, harmless, undefiled, and higher
Than the heavens above,
Great High Priest, who pleadest God's desire,
God's eternal love ;

Not according to my thoughts, my yearning,
Not to meet my need ;
Still, with holiest incense ever burning,
Thou dost intercede.

Lord, I ask not, for beyond my asking
Are Thy thoughts for me—
Thy desire, holier and higher,
My new song shall be.

Given to me, from out the glorious fulness
Of the heart of God,
Riches of His treasure, weighed and measured
By Thy precious blood.

Given according to the prayer ascending
From Thy lips divine—
Given as God to Thee, His Son, has given,
And in Thee to Thine.

Offer Thou the incense of my praises
Thus a savour sweet,
Rising unto God whilst I adore Him
Low before Thy feet.

WE are now in the inner court—the court of the priests—which contains the central square of 100 cubits (Chap. xli. 14), the centre of which was the altar of burnt-offering, the altar which is the centre of the whole. Apparently outside of this square, though within the limits of the inner court, were the two chambers of the priests who had the charge of the house and of the altar (Plan V., Figs. P and Q), “the sons of Zadok, which come near to the Lord to minister unto Him.”

This holy calling of the priests of God concerns us, and that not as a beautiful symbol, but as a fact in the spiritual history of every believing man. For “ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” This is not what we, who are believers, ought to be, but what we are; and yet we may be very far from knowing even that which we are. The Holy

Spirit is given to us, for this reason amongst others, that "we may know the things which are freely given to us of God." And as far, therefore, as we are enlightened by God, the Holy Ghost, shall we understand what it is to be His anointed priest.

We more readily understand the position of the Levite, which we also hold as given to the Great High Priest for His service. It is more obvious to us that we are diligently to follow every good work, to do good as we have opportunity in making known to sinners the way of salvation, and in ministering to the bodily need of our brethren and our neighbours.

The outer court of the Levites is not an untrodden court to Christian people. But the inner court has another purpose, a higher and a more sacred purpose, and a service which, as Levites only, we cannot render—the service of the anointed priest.

What is it to be a priest? There was a meaning to this word in the ages before the call of Aaron and his sons; there must have been always that distinctive call from the time when man was first a sinner, and when first redemption through the Blood was revealed to men. The angels need no priests; but of those recognised as such by men, it is said, before the law was given, "the priests

which come near to the Lord." All men, therefore, could not come near to the Lord, for man is a sinner. But priests taken from amongst men might come near, as those who were to offer up the sacrifice for sin, standing between God and the sinner, brought near in virtue of that sacrifice, and thus bearing witness at the same time to the sin of man and the holiness of God. Yet the priests of old stood but as a symbol of the true priests, and only as a symbol was their office of value before God. For what is the reality of which earthly priesthood was the shadow? Priesthood is Christ undertaking the cause of His people through the wilderness, maintaining us in the presence of God. Priesthood supposes accomplished redemption—not to bring us in, but that which we have when brought in. For the high priest of old was for the redeemed people, not for the heathen, out of whom God had called them. So as a Priest Christ bears His own on His heart, and on His shoulders in the presence of God. Whenever the high priest went into the presence of God, it was in his garments. He could not go in without representing the people. "Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel before the Lord on his two shoulders as a memorial." Also, "Aaron shall bear the names of the children of

Israel in the breast-plate of judgment upon his heart when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually." Whatever value the priest has in God's sight he transmits it to them. The names that Christ is bearing on His heart are the names of His redeemed, of those for whom there is no wrath. They are the names of those for whose need and whose weakness He stands before God. The Christian is always accepted, because always in Christ, and the love of Christ is ever ready for our necessities. The Apostle and High Priest of our profession is Christ. The sinner wants the Apostle—the message from God about acceptance. The saint wants the High Priest. And as He is in the Holiest, having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, so have *we* boldness to enter also into the Holiest in Him ; to stand in the light of God's presence as kings and priests unto God and His Father. We are consecrated to God to be priests—brought in where Christ is. He has not yet taken upon Him His office as King, but He has taken the priesthood ; and, therefore, we are now priests—now brought nigh, now consecrated to God, now accepted of God according to the perfection of Christ. It is not a pretence that we are put into this wonderful position. No ; it is faith in the

Blood of Christ, that has cleansed us as to purpose and thought, according to the perfectness of Christ. This is simple Christianity. There is no true Christianity short of this. We are consecrated by the blood put upon us, and because the blood is upon us, the anointing of the Spirit can be put upon us also. The Spirit is the seal set upon the perfect work of Christ, upon the perfect cleansing from every relic of sin. Therefore now as priests unto God within the holiest place, may we offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, the pure incense of the worship that is in the Spirit and in truth.

Let us follow the history of priesthood as given to us in the Word of God. Look at Exod. xxviii. There were holy garments first described to be made ready before the family of Aaron were consecrated to God. They were to be taken out, set apart, by the command given when Aaron was as yet occupied in making the golden calf, and calling the people of the Lord to sing and dance around it.

So did God choose His own before the foundation of the world; so did He "love them with a great love even when they were dead in sins"; so did He prepare for them the holy garments, "the good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

It would be a study of great interest and profit to go through the details of the holy garments of Exod. xxviii. Others have done this. No doubt the chief reference is to Christ Himself, the great High Priest, but in ver. 40 the sons of Aaron also had garments, and girdles, and head coverings of glory and of beauty.

In Chap. xxix. we have the order of consecration—the sin-offering, the burnt-offering, and the ram of consecration provided, and the meat offering made ready. Aaron and his sons were then washed with water—Aaron was clothed and anointed before the blood was put upon him, for he was a figure of, as well as a contrast to, the great High Priest who was to come.

The offerings, and the order in which they were offered, should be carefully studied; and the putting of the blood on the right ear, thumb, and toe of each one, followed by the sprinkling of the blood on Aaron and his sons alike. And at this point his sons are sprinkled with the anointing oil. The garments were sprinkled also with blood and with water.

And truly the garments, the “righteousness of saints,” made of “fine linen, clean and white,” have for ever [the purity] which is the mark of the atoning blood. If not so they are not the holy

garments of the priests of God. "They have washed their robes," said the elder to John, "and they have made them white in the blood of the Lamb, *therefore* are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his Temple, and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them."

Let us return to Exod. xxix. When the offerings had been slain, and the mark of the blood had been set upon the priests and their garments, when the anointing oil had been sprinkled upon the blood, the service of the priest begins. The Levites were not anointed for their lower service.

This does not mean in reference to the Levite of to-day that he can perform his service apart from that of which the oil was a symbol—the Holy Spirit of God. But the quickening by the Spirit, and the anointing and sealing by the Spirit, are not the same act of God.

The child of God has been born again of water and of the Spirit. He has received the life that is in the Son of God, the resurrection life which the Lord Jesus breathed into His disciples, saying: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." But when that was accomplished He still told them to wait at Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, and He assured them that they should be baptized with

the Holy Ghost not many days after He spoke these words.

And when the Day of Pentecost was fully come, the great crowning act of the love of God, the seal set upon the perfect work of Christ, the baptism of all believers into the one Body that had never before existed, the Body of which the man Christ Jesus is the Head, the anointing with the Holy Ghost and with power, this marvellous act of love fulfilled the great promise of God.

Read the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of the Gospel of John—the great prediction of the coming of Him who could not come till Christ had ascended into glory—and read the accomplishment of this prediction, when the Comforter came down from heaven to remain in the Church of God on the earth till the saints of God are caught up, the raised and the changed, to be ever with the Lord.

From that morning in the upper chamber have the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ been priests to God His Father. They have no more the work of the ancient priesthood, who offered up continually the sacrifices which could never take away sin; they offer up the spiritual sacrifices of praise continually, the fruit of their lips giving thanks to His Name. This is their work assigned to them by God;

but we must look at it as it exists in His mind and purpose rather than in the sad, practical reality.

For is not the court of the priests an unfrequented place? A grass-grown court, silent and desolate, how often and how long !

And as regards their further work, let us return to Ezekiel and his guide. "This chamber," said the guide, "whose prospect is towards the south, is for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the house ; and the chamber whose prospect is towards the north is for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the altar." (*See Plan V., Figs. P and Q.*)

The exact position of these chambers is not given, nor is their measurement, but it would seem probable that the chambers facing the south, by the side of the north gate, would be near the gate (L, Plan V.), which seems to have been a private entrance for the priests, described in Chap. xlii. 12. This entry would therefore be carefully watched, both on account of those entering and those going out, whose garments had to be changed before they went into the outer court.

The farther we advance into the interior of the sanctuary the greater is the insistence on the awful holiness of the Lord's House. None but the priests might enter into the place of the worship of the most holy God.

The priests who had charge of the altar had their chambers facing the large chamber or enclosed court where the burnt-offering was washed. Nothing defiling or impure must be allowed to deface that which was the figure of the sinless sacrifice ; that sacrifice, the memory of which has been and is perpetually defiled by the inventions of the idolatrous heart of man.

How do we now need the faithful service of the priests who have the charge of the altar ? Not a class of men distinct from others who believe, for each one is a priest. But those who are priests have the double responsibility of guarding the holiness of the House of God from the entrance of the unholy, and of guarding the remembrance of the all holy sacrifice from the profane touch of human imaginations and from the approach of the unsaved and the unclean.

For the office of the priest involved the solemn charge of "putting difference between the holy and unholy, the unclean and clean." Therefore in Lev. ix. it was commanded that no priest should drink wine or strong drink before entering into the Tabernacle "lest he die." He was to abstain from all that could dim or cloud the clear perception of this distinction—a distinction then made for a time as a figure of that which was to come ; the

eternal distinction between the Church and the world, the believer and the unbeliever; between righteousness and unrighteousness; between light and darkness; between Christ and Belial.

“Ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said: I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. *Wherefore* come out from among them” (from unbelievers; *see* ver. 14 of this chapter; 2 Cor. vi.), “and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

So is it said also in this vision of Ezekiel, Chap. xliv. 23: “They (the priests) shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.”

Is there cause for shame amongst us now that the difference between the holy people of God, “called saints,” and the unbelieving children of this world is so effaced that it is considered charitable to say we cannot form a judgment with regard to them?

Is the Christian now so far on a level with the unregenerate, that the love of the brethren means to him simply the love of his neighbours, that the

dead and the living, the blind and the seeing, the leper and the cleansed man, can no longer be distinguished the one from the other?

We have but to look around us to remark that it is here that the hatred of the world is aroused against the children of God. Have as much "religion" as you like, take the name of Christ upon your lips, do as many good works as you conveniently can, make distinction, if you think it necessary, between the baptized and the unbaptized; but between the man who is born again, and the man who is not, the converted and the unconverted, the believer and the unbeliever, the man alive with the Eternal Life of Christ, and the man dead in trespasses and sins, and you will have the enmity of Satan and the world under the plea of charity, the hatred of the world and its Prince under the plea of universal love.

It is not the place here to go into all the details of the priest's office and service. The earlier chapters of Leviticus repay careful study on this head, remarking especially the constant presentation before God, by sprinkling and otherwise of the atoning blood.

A sprinkling, a presentation before God which prefigured the one sacrifice, the one sprinkling, the one offering never to be repeated, the offering of

the Body of Jesus Christ once for all ; His entrance once for all into the Most Holy Place ; His obtaining for us the eternal redemption. No more shedding of Blood, therefore no more sprinkling now. The eternal redemption has been obtained, and Christ has sat down, His work for ever done, on the right hand of God.

But this great and perpetual work of the priest of old gives, as it were, the keynote to Christian worship on the earth, as also to the song of the redeemed in Heaven. "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy Blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests." Such is the new song of Heaven, such is true worship offered up by the royal priesthood on the earth below, the continual remembrance of the Blood once shed, and once sprinkled.

So also was the food of the priest to be the bread of his God, given to him "by reason of the anointing, by an ordinance for ever." The meat-offering, the sin-offering, and the trespass-offering were to be his food, Christ, and Christ crucified ; the perpetual food of the believing worshipper in the unseen sanctuary. "For whoso eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood, hath eternal life . . . he dwelleth in me, and I in him."

Nothing recognised as worship before God which is apart from the most holy sacrifice, nothing which is simply the fruit of the ground, the ground the Lord had cursed, brought as an offering to God.

Truly it is predicted of the latter days that there are those who go in the way of Cain, and imagine, as did Cain, that God must be well pleased with the fruit of their hands. But Abel, he who is called by the lips of Christ the first of the prophets, presented the blood of the lamb before God. His prophecy was the lamb.

The Lord made many gifts to those to whom He had given the covenant of an everlasting priesthood. This, again, should be carefully studied in all the details, given chiefly in Num. xviii.

But one last reference can scarcely be omitted, the beautiful parable of Numbers xvii.—a parable repeated under another form in the Vision of Ezekiel. It was the answer to the assertion of Korah and his company that there was no distinction between the priests, who might enter into the holy place, and the people, who were unjustly kept outside. The Lord would show in answer to this assertion “who are His, and who are holy . . . even him whom He hath chosen will He cause to come near unto Him.”

The Lord gave a double proof of the distinction that He had made—a proof by the death of those who denied the distinction, a proof by the life that is His gift to those whose place is in His sanctuary. For after the death of Korah this second proof confirmed the first. “The rod of Aaron for the house of Levi,” having been laid with the rods of all the tribes in the Most Holy Place, “was found in the morning of the next day to have budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.”

For the source of life is in Him whose place is in the sanctuary of God—the well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life, in Him and in His. So is it said that this is the record that God hath given us “eternal life, and this life is in His Son”—a life flowing into us from the innermost Heaven, from the risen Man in the glory of God, and bearing the fruit which is the witness to man of the “life of Jesus, manifest in our mortal flesh.” “He that believeth in me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

Thus the priest had a threefold office, as we find it in Deut. xxi. 5 : “To minister to the Lord. To bless in His name.” And lastly, “By their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried.” So has He declared that the day will come when

His saints shall judge the world, and shall judge angels. Therefore are they called now to judge by His wisdom the things that pertain to this present life; to settle between themselves all matters of dispute, and to regard this even as the office of those who are least esteemed in the Church. For Christ only is the wisdom of His saints, therefore he that is spiritual judgeth all things. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men."

And in the glory of a far holier priesthood than that of old do the anointed priests of God now stand before Him, clothed in righteousness, clothed in salvation; the Lord their inheritance. Truly it is fulfilled to them, "I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord" (Jer. xxxi. 14).

So He measured the court, an 100 cubits long, and an 100 cubits broad (that is to say, the space bounded by a line drawn across the inner entrance of the gates). A court four square. There it stands for us now, measured by the hand of God; the court of His priests, the court surrounding the most holy sacrifice, the court of holiness and of song. Is it a familiar place to us? Or is the court of the Levites our nearest approach in

practical service? We cannot alter the nearness into which Christ has brought us to God, but we may forget and ignore it, and seldom ascend the steps which guide our feet into that place of life and blessing. Does the measurement of the line of flax put our souls to shame?

CHAPTER VIII

The Bread of Life

“ And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head.”—I KINGS xix. 6.

A long day's journey in the wilderness,
To go I know not where ;
Before me far into the burning west
The desert of despair.
Behind me shattered hopes, and fear, and hate,
An empty past—
O God, my soul is spent and desolate
I cast me down, and for Thy call I wait,
That I may die at last.

It is enough, my God—at rest, unknown,
My fathers sleep ;
And why should I live on, for I have sown,
And may not reap.
Beneath the shadow of the desert tree
I lay and wept ;
And from the Lord a blessed stillness came,
And in His arms I slept.

A touch that reached the soul—and I awoke ;
A voice most sweet,
In speech of the eternal home it spoke :
“ Arise and eat.”

Beside me was the bread that came from heaven,
The water of God's river :
A gift mysterious His hand had given,
That I might live for ever.

I asked for death—He gave me endless life ;
I slept beneath His wings,
At rest from fear, from hate, from fruitless strife,
From bitter questionings.
But that eternal life He granted not
For such sweet rest alone,
Far higher than my highest thought His thought,
For He would bring me to a place unsought ;
That place His own.

A place most still and glorious, very far
From all the stir of men ;
Anew He touched me, and the morning star
Shone as I woke again.
“ Arise and eat, the journey is too great ” ;
And once again there stood
Beside me, in the waste most desolate,
The heavenly food.

So ate I, and I drank eternal strength,
And on my way I wend ;
For well I know that I shall reach at length
My aim, my end.
Upon His holy mountain I shall stand,
And see His face ;
And I shall hear His voice in that fair land,
That holy place.

BUT there was yet to be another measurement
before the Temple itself could be entered by
Ezekiel : a measurement of that which was the

central point of the whole—that around which all else was set in order, in reference to which all else was measured.

“He measured the altar, that was before the house” (*see* Plan V., Fig. F). This measurement, taken in Chap. xl. 47, is given in detail in Chap. xliii. 13-17. An altar, 7 cubits high, and 14 cubits in length and breadth. It was higher, therefore, than the floor of the house, which appears to have been, from ver. 8 of Chap. xli., 6 great cubits above the level of the inner court. It is called in Chap. xliii. 15, “Harel, the mountain of God.”

It was that altar of burnt-offering which, from the beginning of the ages, had been the sign to sinful man of the judgment and of the grace of God. When the saints of God had worshipped Him in the old days it was by the offering of a burnt-offering. From the days of Abel, onward, this sign had spoken of sin, and of the putting away of sin by the blood of a substitute. When they came into His presence before a temple or a tabernacle existed, it was before the altar of sacrifice. So had Noah worshipped Him upon the renewed earth, and the Lord smelled a sweet savour, and removed the curse of thorns and thistles from the face of the ground. So had Abram; and later, Abraham built everywhere

an altar, to call there upon the name of the Lord. So had Isaac and Jacob built altars to God ; and at last Moses, after building the altar under the hill, received from the Lord in His glory, on the mountain of Sinai, the pattern of the altar—the one altar upon which sacrifice might now be offered to Him.

It was understood in the days of Joshua that one altar only could be owned by the Lord ; later, as we know, it was forgotten. (*See Josh. xxii.*)

The practice of Israel, compared with the law of God, seems to have differed almost as widely as the practice of the professing Church of God from the New Testament in later days. Exceptions, indeed, were made by the command of God, as in the case of the altar on Mount Ebal, and the altar of Gideon ; also in the case of His inspired prophets, as the altars of Samuel at Eben-ezer and at Ramah, and the altar of David on Mount Sion. The three last, however, were made when the Tabernacle had been forsaken of God, and the Temple was not yet built.

But now, when the sorrowful history of the kingdom of Israel was ended, Ezekiel was again shown the one altar, upon which the lamb was to be offered every morning, as a burnt-offering to the Lord. A perpetual *remembrance*, when the Temple

shown in the Vision should exist, no longer then a *prophecy* of the one offering never to be repeated—the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. The Cross of Christ, the centre of the ways and counsels of the God who is righteous, and who is love. “A just God and a Saviour, there is none beside me.”

Therefore every belief, every notion, every thought concerning God and our relation to Him, can be tested by the Cross. Can it be traced to that centre of the thoughts of God? Or, leaving out the Cross, does it leave us with a vague belief in a God who is either not just or not a Saviour?

Am I trusting simply in the goodness of God, persuading myself that there is no such thing as His justice, and that He thinks as lightly of sin as I do? Am I calling that love in Him which would be cruelty, indifference to evil? Have I succeeded in believing as I should wish, that there is no punishment for sin—no wrath to come from which I need to be saved?

Do I persuade myself, as did William Law, whose dreams are now reproduced for the benefit of Christians, “that from eternity to eternity, no spark of wrath ever was, or ever will be, in the Holy Triune God”? “It is as good sense,” says Law, “as consistent with the divine nature, to say

that God, moved by a wrath in and from Himself, began the creation, as that a wrath in God ever punished any part of it."

Such, then, is the mind of men, so lightly does man think of sin, of that which is abomination in the sight of God, that it was as needful that the wrath of God should be made the subject of revelation as His exceeding love. "For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."

Not merely against the pride, the cruelty, the selfishness of man, but against the root of the evil and of the manifest sin. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him," and upon the branches and fruit of that fatal root, the root of unbelief. "But after thy hardness and unpenitent heart, thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." "God will render to every man according to his deeds, . . . unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation, and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil." "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God,

Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Eph. v. 6; repeated also in Col. iii. 6).

The Lord who swore of old in His wrath that the rebellious people should not enter into His rest is the same God who has declared that to the apostate Church He will give the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.

Christ, who looked round on the unbelievers in the synagogue with wrath, will again be seen as the One before whose face men shall hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and say to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" So will "Christ appear, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Let us trace this thought of the wrath of God as connected with the altar of sacrifice. There was the continual declaration of the awful reality of judgment. There the victim was slain, and the blood poured out, and the fire consumed the sacrifice. It was a lesson to be perpetually taught in those old days; to be perpetually remembered

in our own. The two Christian ordinances are those which tell of the death and of the blood of Christ. "This do in remembrance of me."

I do not *remember* Christ my Saviour in His glory. I *know* Him there. I have daily to do with Him there, entering into the Holiest by His blood. I do not need to remember a friend with whom I am living, to whom I speak at all hours, and under all circumstances, and who speaks to me.

To remember Christ is to remember Him as He was, as He is no more—Christ dying on the Cross ; Christ, from whom the blood flowed which cleanses me from my sin ; Christ made a curse for me, smitten of God and afflicted ; Christ pouring out His soul unto death, for the wages of sin is death ; Christ forsaken of God, but all the while with unshaken trust in the Father into whose hand He commended His spirit at last.

Need I more to prove to me the tremendous reality of the wrath of God than that Cross of Christ ? For "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him ; He hath put Him to grief." "*I will smite the Shepherd,*" God had said. And it was "*the Lord* who laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

Man sees in the death of Christ nothing more than the death of a martyr, dying for the sake of

humanity as a patriot would die for the sake of his country, as a righteous man would die in the cause of right, that others might benefit by his death.

Plainly has the Spirit of God caused it to be written, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." Men can see the one and the condemning aspect of the Cross of Christ, that He suffered from *man* for righteousness. The soul that is taught of God sees the more solemn fact, yet the saving truth, that He suffered from *God* for sin.

The altar tells the tale of that immeasurable, that unfathomable suffering. Christ delivered for our offences, Christ bearing our sins, once offered to bear the sins of many ; wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace upon Him ; all this the expression of the wrath of God against the sin of man, though never was Christ so precious to His Father as when drinking that cup of wrath. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again."

For to the sinner was due the righteous anger of God, and for the sinner, in the place of the sinner, did God Himself, in the person of the Son, receive the stroke of judgment. Not, as some have said, that God punished an innocent man instead of the

guilty; God Himself alone could bear the load, and for love to men, He, as man, has borne it.

For love to men ; more than that, for love to Himself. For the highest love, divine love, would not be love, were it not that for His own sake did God so love the world.

He needed the love, the companionship of those whom He looked upon, and saw them dead in trespasses and sins. He needed the sinful woman of Nain, whose name was cast out as evil; the sinner of Sychar, whose path he had watched from one stage to another of her immoral course. He needed the publicans and sinners, and more incomprehensible to us than that, He needed the self-righteous Pharisee who had thanked God he was not as other men, but who saw himself the chief of sinners when he had seen Christ.

All guilty, all deserving the wrath of the holy and righteous God ; but all loved by Him with great and unfathomable love.

“ Therefore did God set forth Christ for a mercy-seat through faith ”—in what? Simply in the goodness and the mercy of God? No ; “ through faith in His Blood.” Through the belief of the heart that the Blood shed on the Cross of Calvary was enough, eternally enough to efface the last trace of sin from before the eyes of God. For

Christ drank the cup of wrath which the Father gave Him to drink, and no drop remained for those whose sins He bore.

Yes, it was again the message from the God who is a just God and a Saviour. "When I see the blood I will pass over you."

And now is Christ sitting down because the work is done. He is alive at God's right hand because all was finished of that which His Father had given Him to do; He as man is in the glory of God, because He, the man Jesus, had fully glorified God when made sin upon the Cross; and having taken the cup of wrath due to man, He could as man enter heaven with those to whom God gives that which is due to His Son.

"It is important in these days," one has said, "to maintain as clearly as possible the idea of substitution where Christ was alone, the suffering in which we had no part but by our sins. Men are even willing to have Christ as a burnt-offering, a Christ who offers Himself as an *example* to man to offer up self to God; but a Christ who is the sin-offering some often will not have. Are *we* to suffer for our sins and to bear them? If Christ had not gone through that awful judgment—the horrible pit, the deep mire where there was no

footing, which lay in our path—who could have gone through it ? ”

Therefore do we see in the altar on which the sin-offering was laid that the word of God stands firm and unchangeable. “Vengeance is mine, I will repay,” saith the Lord ; and meeting at that point the immeasurable love which averted from the sinner the whole of that righteous vengeance at the cost of God Himself.

There do mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other ; at that point, the prayer and the praise of the redeemed Church, those in the presence of God and those still in the wilderness below meet continually. The older saints looked forward to that atoning death, the later saints look back to it, the rejoicing soul traces his joy to it, and there the sorrowful soul finds everlasting consolation ; the hungry eat the flesh and drink the blood in which is eternal life, and the worshipper falls down before Him who so told His marvellous love to man.

Take away the wrath and the crown falls from the divine love. Would I have a God so cruel, so unjust, as to leave sin unpunished ? Should I not dread a God who would justly punish it in me ? Neither of these is the God revealed in

Christ, and it is the just God who is yet the Saviour who is God alone—"none beside me."

Such a God no man ever invented or imagined. No other is the God of the Bible and of the believer. Can you look at the Cross and say, I do not know whether my sin is forgiven? It is hard for us to believe it, because it is hard for us to believe in such love. We can imagine that which *we* call love, which is indifference to sin; we can imagine a love that may be bought by prayers and good deeds of our own, but the love of God to the sinner, to whom His wrath is due, the love that is measured, not by our goodness, but by the suffering and the death of His Son, can only be known to us by the teaching of the Spirit of God showing us the great and mighty things which we know not, and could never know. "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God."

Yet, when revealed, it is that free grace and love of the just and holy God which man refuses. Man is willing to buy, and to give a great price, to live on the top of a pillar in the burning sun, as in olden days, to leave all dear to him for a solitary cell; or, if more according to his mind, he offers the low price of a Sunday religion, of a little

money for the poor, of a little work in factories and slums for "raising" and enlivening his poor neighbours.

He pays the price according to his own estimate, and considers himself entitled, therefore, to something which his neighbour, who pays nothing, cannot claim.

He will buy, but he will not be bought, for how easy is it to see that then all claim ceases for ever. The claim is on the other side—the claim of *all*. "Know ye not that ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price," and with what a price!—the precious blood of the Son of God. Purchased to be His wholly, His only, His eternally; no room for the smallest reservation.

And here it is that the heart of man revolts. Far rather would he believe that to him Christ is the goodly pearl, for which he imagines he would be willing to sell all he has to buy it. But pride rises up when Christ presents Himself as the merchantman—the heart would consent to be the merchant who buys Him, rather than to be the pearl of great price to His heart. It is strange but it is true.

But Christ the sin-offering is not all that has been offered. The great and continual sacrifice of the burnt-offering gave its name to the altar of

old. Christ offered Himself by the eternal spirit without spot to God ; an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. In the sin-offering we see our side—our sin transferred by the hand laid on the head of the offering, from the guilty one to the victim. In the burnt-offering we see the transference of the acceptance of the unblemished offering to him who presented that offering before God. "The man shall put his hand on the head of the offering, and it shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him . . . it is a burnt-sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord."

An offering wholly burnt, no part of it to be the food of the offerer, or of the priest. God alone is regarded in that perfect offering of Christ to God. A perfect offering, a perfect acceptance—the acceptance of the Beloved of God, and of those accepted in Him the Beloved.

How much more than the putting away of sin ?
How much more than complete forgiveness, than entire justification ?

For beyond the altar is the House, into which Christ has entered—not the holy places made with hands which are the figures of the true, but Heaven itself, where now He appears in the presence of God, and appears for us. His welcome

ours, His acceptance ours. The love wherewith His God and Father loves Him, ours for ever. Thus Ezekiel had been led to the altar as a step to that which was beyond. He was now to see the House, the dwelling-place of God.

CHAPTER IX

The Holiest

"We have the boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus."—HEB. x. 19.

Unto Thee I sing amidst the glory
Of Thy holiest place ;
Psalm and hymn and joyful song ascending,
With the ecstasy of music blending,
Lord, before Thy face.

Shall I not rejoice that I behold Thee
Where Thou art ?
Shall I not give thanks that this, Thy Temple,
Is my heart ?

Thou, O God, the Home of all Thy ransomed,
And the Lamb alone,
Gathering in the walls of love eternal
All Thine own.

Thus our song ascendeth where Thou ledest,
Song of joy divine ;
Thy rejoicing our unmingled gladness,
And our gladness Thine.

THE altar had been measured (refer to Plan VI.).
And now "He brought me to the porch of the

house." Ezekiel could remember the altar in the vanished Temple, and how, long before the Lord had showed him there, between the altar and the porch, that which was an abomination in His eyes. He had seen about five-and-twenty men; were they the high priest, with the twenty-four chief priests? who "stood with their backs towards the Temple of the Lord, and their faces towards the east, and they worshipped the sun towards the east."

That former House had now passed away. Its desecration had been an abomination to the Lord, for it was holy in His eyes, a shadow of things to come. Was it also a shadow of things to come that there should be those who should turn their backs on the true Temple of God—the Temple not built with hands—and look eastward to the dawn of the earthly sun? the light of God behind their backs in His most holy place—the light which they worshipped, that which shall be turned into darkness when the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.

But in the Temple of the days yet to be, now shown to Ezekiel in his vision, the darkness is past—the darkness and the earthly sunlight, and the worshippers of it. The former things had passed away; God and His Temple remained,

The measurement is now given. From ver. 48 of Chap. xl. to the end of ver. 2 of Chap. xli. the details are difficult to place in order. It is easy to see that as the interior breadth of the Temple was 20 cubits, the measurement of Chap. xli. 2 corresponds. But the 3 cubits of Chap. xl. 48, described as being the breadth of a gate, are not clear. We may suppose the 3 cubits to be the measure of side entrances between the pillars. Supposing each pillar standing in the squares D, D to be a cubit in diameter, the space between would be 3 cubits. These squares, D, D and C, C, one of 5 and one of 6 cubits, agree with the breadth from east to west of the porch, which is said to be 11 cubits. The length of the porch would then be measured between the squares C, C, the two single pillars standing at each end.

The number of the steps is not given. As the foundation of the side chambers surrounding the house were 6 cubits above the level of the inner court, there could not have been less than twelve steps.

In the old Temple there had also been a porch of the same length. The pattern of this porch was the first pattern given by David to Solomon. The Lord had made David understand in writing by His hand upon him all the works of all the

patterns. In Solomon's Temple there were also the two pillars that stood one at each end of the porch, with their crowns of pomegranates and of lilies—the pillar Jachin, "He will establish"; the pillar Boaz, "In Him is strength."

And now, between the pillars, Ezekiel followed his guide into the square of the House (*see* Chap. xli. 13), into the House itself, the holy place of the sanctuary.

The man measured the holy place, the length 40 cubits, the breadth 20 cubits—the same as in the ancient Temple. And having measured it, the man passed on. There was yet one further step in the revelation to be made, and he hastened, as it were, to the goal, the centre of that holy square in the innermost recess of the dwelling-place of God, the place called the most holy—the holy of holies, veiled and closed with doors of olive in the ancient Temple—to remain closed in the later Temple till the veil should be rent from top to bottom; till man had done his worst, and beholding the Blood, God could open Heaven to the murderers of His Son.

Into the holy place Ezekiel had been brought by the man who had first taken the measure of the altar of sacrifice. He now led the way into the holiest of all—into that place we now know

as the home of our souls, the place of perfect acceptance; the place where, entering through the Blood of Jesus, we find Him, the accepted Man, the delight of the heart of God.

We find Christ there, once bearing the burden of our sins, and now at the right hand of the throne of God in the glory of the Father. And seeing Him in the glory we know that our sins are gone. "When he *had* by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high."

We see Him there who would not enter into the glory alone, but who would share with His redeemed, His beloved, the love of His Father, the glory which His God had given to Him, the Son of His love. To the praise of the glory of His grace we are accepted in Him, the Beloved; no other acceptance for us than His, therefore perfect and eternal.

Christ also hath once suffered for sins, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to *God*." Could we be brought farther—nearer? Into a greater depth of love—into a more perfect joy?

And having measured that innermost sanctuary, the man said to Ezekiel: "This is the most holy place." Did Ezekiel wonder to find himself there,

where in the old Temple he, even as a priest, might never enter? Why had he been brought there? And why are we, who are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, brought into the holiest by His blood? Well may we wonder to find ourselves there; not only within the holy enclosure of the House of God, not only in the court of service where the redeemed serve Him, not only in the inner court of praise for the redeeming sacrifice, not only in the holy place where His priests burnt incense of thanksgiving; but beyond all these, into the innermost recess of His secret place, there where we are alone with Him, to behold His face.

To that holiest place has *He* led us on, who first measured the length and breadth and depth and height of that altar of suffering and of judgment, and who can now say to us as we stand with Him within the riven veil: "This is the most holy place." Let us fall down and worship Him. Not forgiveness merely, but unutterable love is ours. The moment that God shows us the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus, we cannot wonder at anything. When the angels see the thief who was on the Cross, the woman that was a sinner, one of us, in the same glory with Christ, and like Him, they

will know the exceeding riches of His grace.
After the Cross of Jesus no glory is too great.
That which we have to desire is a heart to own the
unspeakable fulness of the work of Christ.

CHAPTER X

The Secret of This Tabernacle

"Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion."—Ps.
xxxi. 20.

God our Saviour, Man from Heaven,
Lamb whose precious blood
Tells that we are white and stainless
In the eyes of God ;
We adore Thee, free to enter
Thy most holy place,
Brought to Love's eternal centre,
Pure before Thy Face.

We had gone as pilgrims seeking
God in realms afar,
Deaf to Him in stillness speaking
Where the weary are ;
Come to us in blessed nearness,
Near us none betide ;
Others near us, yet without us,
Thou within us, O Beloved !
Dost abide.

There within those chambers silent,
To ourselves unknown,
Closed to all, Thy love could enter—
Thine alone.

In the centre of our being,
In the hidden cell,
Dark and still till Thou hadst entered,
Thou art come to dwell ;
There, O God, our hearts adore Thee,
Where Thou fain wouldst be ;
Thou in us, O Love Eternal !
We in Thee.

BUT for Ezekiel this perfect revelation could not be. For him the lesson referred rather to the shadow than to that which to us is the fulfilment. The glorious Temple yet to be, that which to him and his people will be the fulfilment of his vision, is after all but the example and shadow of the heavenly things which are ours. What, then, was the meaning to Ezekiel of this vision of the most holy place? We shall find it later, when out of that place the Lord spake to him, and explained to him the purpose for which he had been shown "the place of His throne, and the place of the soles of His feet." (*See Plan VI., Fig. J.*)

Let us now only remark the peculiar characteristic of this innermost sanctuary. We find it within the holy House, surrounded by the thick wall of the house, 6 cubits in thickness, the thick inner and outer walls of the chambers which surrounded it, together 8 cubits; by a space beyond, within the "square of the house"; by

chambers beyond this. And again beyond the square of the house and the chambers, the outer court with its guarded gates ; and again beyond, the great square of 3000 cubits, with its thick wall. Beyond that again a surrounding space of 50 cubits wide to separate it from the territory outside, which was the priest's portion of the holy portion of the holy land, an oblation offered to the Lord, "a thing most holy," as in Chap. xlviii. 12. Beyond this oblation most holy was again the holy land, "the land of the possession of the Lord"—the "goodly land upon which the eyes of the Lord rest, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year." Beyond this at last the common earth, which the Lord has given to the children of men.

Within how many enclosures, then was the most holy place, closed to the Jew, and opened to the believer in Jesus? To Ezekiel it was not the home of his soul, but it was the dwelling-place of his God. And the lesson that he had begun to learn was the awful majesty of Him who is "Holy, Holy, Holy, The Lord God of Sabaoth!"

A remark may be made as to ver. 3 of Chap. xli., which refers to the door between the holy and the most holy place. The posts of the corresponding door in the Temple of Solomon were of olive wood, 5 square (1. Kings vi. 31, margin.) If this were the

case in the Temple shown to Ezekiel, the door fixed at the inner corners of the pentagon would be narrower than the entrance measured between the two outermost points of the pentagon, towards the holy place. If the posts were a cubit wide from the angle at which the door was placed to the opposite angle, the difference of the width of the door and the entrance would be 1 cubit, as described in v. 3. (*See Plan VI., L,L.*)

After ver. 4 a new series of measurements begins, that of the side chambers, the wall of the house (Plan VI., M,M, etc.) of the separate place at the back of the Temple, ver. 12 (Plan VI., U) of the square of the house, ver. 13 (Plan VI. P) and the square of the altar, ver. 14 (Plan IV., Figs. C,C,C,C). It is only here that these 3 squares are distinguished, the square at the back, the square of the house, and the square of the altar—all of the same dimensions.

But the measurements begin in ver. 5 by that of the thickness of the wall of the house. An enormous thickness—6 cubits. And in addition to this a separate wall, built against the wall of the house, for the side chambers (Plan VI., M,M, etc.), 30 in order in three storeys, therefore 90 in all; the wall which was against the house diminishing in thickness at each storey, as in the Temple

of Solomon, where the lowest chamber was 5 cubits long, the middle 6 cubits, the upper 7 cubits, in order that the beams of the chambers should not be fastened in the wall of the house, but rest on the ledges formed by the additional wall. The chambers in Ezekiel's vision were probably of the same size, the size of the Temple being the same. The outer wall of these chambers was again of great thickness, 5 cubits (ver. 9). Stairs, apparently winding stairs, led up to the side chambers of Chap. xli. 5-7 (*see* Plan vi., Fig. S, S). By placing them in order round the Temple, 12 at each side, and 6 at the west end, and supposing their dividing walls to be of 1 cubit, a space of 5 cubits square remains at the corners N-W. and S-W. This is probably the space referred to in Chap. xli., 11, and may have been also occupied by a winding stair leading to the western chambers. The space of 20 cubits wide round the house (*see* Plan VI., Fig. P) on the north, west, and south sides had the additional width of a walk, or way, of 1 cubit (Chap. xlii. 4. *See* Plan VI., Figs. Z, Z), leading from the walk of 10 cubits wide (*see* Plan V., Fig. K) which was *before*, probably eastward of the chambers which stood north and south of the House, and which were separated from it by the space of 20 cubits (*see* Plan IV., Fig. G). These chambers mentioned

in vers. 10 and 15 must not be confounded with the "side chambers." It should be remarked that the word "chambers," though used in the English Bible for all indiscriminately, is represented in the original by three different words—one used for the little chambers at the gates, three on each side; one for the "side chambers" of Chap. xli; and one for the dwelling chambers of xl. 44, 45, 46; xli. 10, and the chambers of Chap. xlii.

The side chambers surrounding the older Temple were apparently treasure chambers (*see* 1 Chron. xxviii. 11, 12). For dwelling chambers they would be unfit, on account of the enormous thickness of their walls, making them incapable of having windows which would admit more than a dim light. But the treasures of the House of God have a meaning for us who are taught something of the unsearchable riches laid up in Him who is precious to the heart of God. In Him has God His priceless treasure, and through Him has He made His redeemed to be as the pearl of great price, bought with the Blood of His Son. Now apparently scattered upon the earth are the jewels of the Lord, but according to faith are they stored in the treasures of Heaven, awaiting the day when the Lord will make up His jewels, and the bride

shall come forth adorned for her husband, as a royal diadem in the Hand of God.

Ezekiel was now shown, Chap. xli., 12, the separate place at the west of the Temple (*see* Plan IV. Fig. F). The meaning of this separate place is unexplained. The way of entrance to it is not indicated. But with the space behind it it forms the third square of 100 cubits (*see* Chap. xli. 13). For us there is an unknown place beyond that into which the Blood of Christ has brought us—an unrevealed mystery. We are brought into the most holy place, but our present experience is, as it were, bounded by a line, such as the line traversing its centre, the line which forms the western boundary of the inner court. We can be brought no nearer to the presence of the Lord, for to the centre we are brought. Beyond that line our experience will one day go, but it can never bring us in absolute fact into any nearer place. The day that is to come will but make us fully conscious of the enjoyment of that which now we have in Christ by faith. He has gone to prepare a place for us by taking that place Himself as the glorified Man, the risen and the ascended Head of His Body, the Church. And when He comes again to receive us to Himself, we enter into full possession of that which

even now is ours in Christ. The unexplained space beyond the holiest is farther from the centre and in the outer court. We know of unrevealed regions where the redeemed, who are gathered in before and after the formation of the Church of God, will be with Him in glory, but the mystery of their place and of their service in the future eternal day has not been shown us. We know of the hosts of the redeemed children from amongst heathen races of whom the Lord has spoken, saying that it is not the will of His Father that one of these little ones should perish. We know of the families in heaven (of Eph. iii. 15, Revised Version). But further we know nothing.

The power and the value of the blood of Christ has brought them to God. Of our own place we know much—how much more than we have ever realised—that marvellous place revealed by Christ in glory to His enemy, Saul the Pharisee: “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *Me*?” Thus had Saul received the astounding declaration that there is but one place for Christ and for the members of His Body, and in that place He had seen Him, and by faith had seen them in Him. He knew what the words meant when afterwards he wrote, how often, “In Christ Jesus.”

CHAPTER XI

Incense Within and a Garden Without

“Christ could suffer *alone*, but that finished, could He praise alone? No. ‘In the midst of the congregation will I sing praises unto Thee.’ All worship that is not in tune with the song of Christ is discord in the ears of God.”

“Paul could not stay in the third heavens, he had to walk in this world. But even as walking through this world, Christ is our life.”

THE “building” of Chap. xli. 15 (Plan IV., Fig. G) appears to refer to the chambers north and south of the Temple, separated from it by the space of 20 cubits and the walk of 1 cubit. This building was, according to Chap. xlii. 8, 100 cubits in length on the side towards the Temple, but in breadth 50 cubits within the imaginary line which formed the western boundary of the square of the inner court, 100 cubits beyond that line. Here, therefore, is an indication of the line. For a further description of these chambers we must refer to Chap. xlii. 1-9.

The chambers of Chap. xlii. 10 are those in the north-east and south-east corners of the inner court (*see* Plan V., Fig. H), the better reading of ver. 10 being, "There were chambers in the thickness of the wall of the court towards the east," and in ver. 11, instead of "as long as they, and as broad as they," we should read, as in other translations, "as long as they were broad." But before these chambers are described in detail, the man took the measurements of the various parts of the House itself (Chap. xli. 16-21), door-posts, narrow windows (or latticed windows), galleries of the outside buildings (Plan V., Fig. G), which were three storeys high, each storey receding; the measurement of the woodwork within and without; and the square posts of the door of the Temple.

No costly wood specified, as in the case of seven kinds of wood in the Temple of Solomon, no gold nor silver, no colouring. All is taught in form, simply. Therefore the decorations which were in relief are specified—alternate cherubim and palm trees. The cherubim, being only in relief, could not be represented as in the early chapters of Ezekiel with four faces, but with the two faces mentioned in Chap. i. 10, as being on the right side—the face of a man and the face of a lion.

No other decorations than these, and these everywhere.

The cherubim, when first we hear of them, are also in connection with a tree—the Tree of Life. “Then they kept the way of the Tree, which man might not eat.” It may be that more light will be given us as to the meaning of the symbol of the cherubim. For the present we wait, knowing that it is dangerous to let imagination work where no revelation is given by God.

We are not left in doubt as to the meaning of the next measurement—that of the altar of Chap. xli. 22 (Plan VII.) “This is the table,” said the guide, “which is before the Lord.” The altar, the only altar which John beheld in heaven, the altar of sweet incense—sweet to God. The “perpetual incense” which the high priest for ever offers, the pure incense of sweet spices, the most holy incense offered up where the soul and God are met—to be put “where I will meet with thee, it shall be unto you most holy.”

No remembrance of sin in that sweet savour ; it is the savour of perfect acceptance. The incense of old was not put upon the sin-offering, but on the burnt-offering and the meat-offering, telling of Christ, the Accepted Man, in whom is all the delight of God. “By him, therefore, let us offer

the sacrifice of praise to God continually, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."

But let us not forget that on this altar of sweet incense the Blood of the sin-offering was put (Lev. iv. 7), that we may remember how it is that we share in the perfect acceptance of Him who offered Himself to God, from whose hand, as the Great High Priest, the incense ascends which perfumes the prayers of the saints of God. Thus also could the incense of old be burnt only by the fire taken from the altar of burnt-offering.

Of all praise in Heaven and earth, well pleasing to God, there is the keynote for ever. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy Blood." So do the redeemed in Heaven fall down before the Lamb, having harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. Prayer and praise alike sweet to God through Him who liveth and was dead, and who is alive for evermore. "He ever liveth to make intercession for those who come unto God by him."

Do we know what it is to offer perpetually this incense, pure and sweet, to Him, and through Him, who waits for the morning on the hill of frankincense; who has planted in the garden of His

Sister, His Spouse, all trees of frankincense, with all chief spices?

None but a priest may burn this incense ; none but the redeemed, the anointed, can praise the Holy God. "Praise is comely for the upright." But how solemn are the words of Exod. xxx. 38, "Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people." Is there now no singing of sacred words, are there now no hymns of praise, to which the ear listens, with delight in the music only, in which the lips join for the love of the sweet sound, but which are an offence to the God whose Name is taken in vain?

There was no veil shown to Ezekiel, but doors with turning leaves. The veil was gone.

And having measured the doors and the windows, the guide led Ezekiel forth through the inner court into the outer court by the way toward the north—probably the way, 10 cubits wide, which led to the priests' entry on the north side. (Plan V., Fig. K.) For it was to show him the chambers which stood opposite the House (Plan V. G), 100 cubits long on the side towards the House, but 50 cubits long on the side toward the outer court.

This is easily understood from vers. 7 and 8 of

Chap. xlii. The wall of 50 cubits of ver. 7 completed the 100 cubits on the side towards the court. (Plan V., Fig V.) The chambers were therefore hidden from view from the outer court as far as the line which intersected the most holy place, the boundary line of the square of the inner court. Beyond this line the chambers were no longer concealed.

For us, who are still within that boundary line, though brought to the centre of the holiest, the chambers exist, hidden even from the court of service, the place as in ver. 13 of Chap. xlii. "Where the priests that approach unto the Lord shall eat the most holy things, the meat-offering, and the sin-offering, and the trespass-offering; for the place is holy." There the soul feeds on Christ on the hidden manna, on His Flesh, which is meat indeed, on His Blood which is drink indeed, in chambers unknown to the world, chambers of peace and holiness. And "when the priests enter therein, then shall they not go out of the holy place into the outer court, but there they shall lay their garments wherein they minister, for they are holy, and shall put on other garments, and shall approach to those things which are for the people."

So is the intercourse between the soul and God

in His secret place to be a sacred communion, a joy with which the stranger may not intermeddle. "Even the garments perfumed with the incense of the holy place" must be laid up there, and be unseen in the outer court. There is a danger of spiritual pride which deceives the heart, a lack of reverence and godly fear, alike leading to the casting of pearls before swine, of giving that which is holy to the dogs. It is the secret of the Lord which He shows to them that fear Him, and distinct from His message to the sinners—which is to be carried forth from His most holy place to the world that lieth in wickedness. This, too, is shown later on to His prophet Ezekiel.

As before remarked, the chambers of vers. 10 and 11 of Chap. xlii. (Plan V, H, H, H) are different chambers, probably the same as those mentioned in Chap. xl. 38, where they washed the burnt-offering.

These chambers, as well as the chambers north and south of the Temple, being all measured, the guide led Ezekiel forth to the gate where first he met him, the gate facing the east, in the wall of the large square space surrounding the outer court (Plan II., E, E, E, E). That it is this gate which is in question in Chap. xlii. 15 appears to be proved by the measurement that follows, that of the great space through which the man had led Ezekiel

between vers. 5 and 6 of Chap. xl. He had not then measured it. He measured it now.

Five hundred reeds—that is to say 3000 cubits square (about a mile and a quarter) ; the wall of 500 reeds entirely surrounding it “to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place.” The space then was included in the sanctuary, and was separated from that which is called the “profane place” by the wall of 6 cubits thick, and the surrounding space of 50 cubits in breadth, mentioned in Chap. xlv. 2 (Plan II., F, F, F, F). The “profane place” meaning simply that which was for ordinary uses, the same word as “common,” used of ordinary bread in 1 Sam. xxi. 4. In this case, the “profane place” outside was the holy portion for the priests ; but for ordinary use, for cultivation or for cattle.

For what purpose was the enclosed space with its thick wall ? It seems to have been a place alike open to priests, Levites, and people ; for the people must necessarily pass through it in going to worship in the Temple.

Is there not for us, besides our place in the holiest, and in the holy place, besides the court of worship around the altar, besides the court of service, an outer range where the level is the same as that of the world outside ? A place where the

relationships of the family and of ordinary intercourse exist, where earthly affairs occupy us, where we meet with friends and neighbours, and show ourselves interested in that which concerns them, where we play with the children, and share in the wholesome enjoyment of the beautiful and marvellous works of God ; where, in fact, a great part of our daily life is spent on a ground common to men ?

And yet for him who has been made a priest to God this common ground is bounded on all sides by a great and high wall—the wall of Salvation—within which we may have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness ; within which no corrupt communication, nor foolish talking, nor jesting which is not convenient, may find a place. There may no bitterness, nor wrath, nor anger, nor clamour, nor evil speaking enter. It is a place of peace and love, and though in the same house and in the same room, the everlasting wall stands firm between the believing child of God and the unbelieving men of this world.

So, when the day of the Lord comes, shall two women be grinding at the mill ; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. One has had her habitation in the peaceful garden of the Lord, enclosed within the wall unseen by the world,

which is blind to the things of God, and the other had remained outside. We find these two dwelling-places in the psalm most of us know so well—"A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." And though it is a daily necessity to meet on common ground, as regards our earthly life, those who have nothing in common with the children of God as regards the eternal life, it is spiritually true that the one and the other are separate as light from darkness. The wall is always around the holy people of the Lord, but they alone can see it, and rejoice that the Lord surrounds His people with His presence, "a wall of fire round about them," because He is "the glory in the midst of them."

CHAPTER XII

The Entering In

“ When the Comforter is come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.”—JOHN xv. 26.

Suddenly there came a sound from heaven—
Sound as of a rushing, mighty blast ;
That which God had promised He had given
To the Temple which His hands had fashioned,
He had come at last.

All the house with that great presence sounding,
That eternal voice :
All His love shed forth in grace abounding,
Shall not we rejoice ?

Holy Temple which the Lord has entered,
Lit with tongues of flame ;
We in this dark world the light and glory,
Since He came.

From Thy glorious Temple ever speaking,
Dwelling there for ever,
There unsealed the fountain of Thy pleasures,
Thy celestial river.

Lord, in shame we own the mighty wonder,
That in starless night,
Only from that radiant Temple beameth
Thine eternal light.

Only now from us since Christ ascended,
Can Thy glory shine—
Glory undiminished and unended,
Not our light, but Thine.

Tongues of flame come down from highest heaven,
Still upon each head,
Dimmed by unbelief, yet ever burning,
Where Thy ransomed tread.

AND at this point in Ezekiel's history the revelation of the meaning of the vision is given to him. "Afterwards he brought me to the gate, the gate that looketh toward the east"—probably the gate of the large outer space—"and behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east, and his voice was like the noise of many waters, and the earth shined with his glory. And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city" (Chaps. i.-xi.), "and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar ; and I fell upon my face. And the glory of the Lord came into the house, by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east."

Comparing this with Chap. xlv. 1-2, we see that this latter gate is the eastern gate of the outer court. Nineteen years before Ezekiel had seen the glory depart from the house of God ; first from the

inner court (Chap. viii. 4) to the threshold (Chaps. ix. 3, and x. 4), then to the east gate (Chap. x. 18-19), and finally to the Mount of Olives, on the east of the city (Chap. xi. 23). "So the vision that I had seen went up from me."

And from the way of the east the glory now returned, as in the vision of Zechariah. "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east." The Temple shown in vision to Ezekiel was, it is true, not at Jerusalem, but on a mountain on the site of Mount Gerizim. Yet the glory returning from the east is not affected by this. Both to the Temple and to the city is the return, and the return is from the east in both cases.

Is there for us, apart from the history of the future, a return of which the Vision of Ezekiel is but a sign and a symbol? There was a day when the Son of man—the glory of God upon the earth—departed by the way of the east. "Behold," He said, when for the last time He passed out of the gate of the Temple—"behold your house is left unto you desolate." But to His disciples He said, "I will not leave *you* comfortless; I will come unto you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me . . . a little while, and ye shall not see me; and again a little while, and ye shall see me,

because I go to the Father. . . . Ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

From the Mount of Olives on the east of Jerusalem He departed.

And when the little while had passed—when the day of Pentecost was fully come—was the promise of the Father fulfilled. "There came a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." So did Ezekiel hear the voice of the Lord as a voice of many waters. We are reminded of the words in the vision of John; "The waters which thou sawest are peoples and multitudes, and nations and tongues." A voice spake in the tongues of a multitude of nations on that day of the return of the Lord by His Spirit to take possession of His Temple—the Church—which He had built upon the rock. He entered His living Temple, never more to leave it.

"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you

for ever." "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Therefore at this point of the Vision of Ezekiel was the key to the meaning given. The house was most holy, and was guarded and separated from the common earth beyond, not because it was simply the command of the Lord that it should be a holy place, but because it was to be His dwelling-place, and the Lord our God is holy.

"The Spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court, and behold the glory of the Lord filled the house. And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house, and the man stood by me. And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name shall the house of Israel no more defile, they nor *their* kings (their enthroned idols) by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings (*see* Ezek. xxiii. 39) in their high places. In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their posts by my posts, and the wall between me and them (*see* Ezek. viii. 7-12). They have even defiled my holy house by their abominations that they have committed, wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger. Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcasses

of *their* kings far from me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever."

Does not this remind us of words spoken in a later day, and in reference to another Temple? "Be not ye unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath the Temple of God with idols? For ye are the Temple of the living God; as God hath said, 'I will dwell in them, and walk in them—and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.'" "Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defileth the Temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the Temple of God is holy, which Temple ye are."

And of the individual believer is it not also said, "What! know ye not that your body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God; and ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price."

Here, then, is the great subject of holiness set before us plainly and distinctly. We have often

had confused thoughts about it, perhaps for three reasons.

First, it has been confused with practical righteousness. "How am I to be holy?" has often been the question put when the idea was, "How am I to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world?" Am I thus to be made holy by the law or by grace? Is holiness a condition into which the believer enters once for all, or is it progressive? And all the while it is rightmindedness and right conduct which were meant. It is not lessening the importance of practical righteousness to say that holiness means something more, and, in fact, something which is a reason for practical righteousness.

Secondly, has it not been often forgotten that holiness in the Scripture is never mentioned except in connection with God Himself? A rule of conduct, however right in a moral sense, falls short of a sense of what is befitting the actual reverence of God, which necessitates Him as the object, and His will as the moving cause of all we say and do. This thought is, of course, familiar to the mind of man, but in a totally different form. How many are there who, regarding a church built with hands as the House of God, would therefore, and rightly, shrink from dancing in it,

whilst, though professing to be Christians, they would consider themselves well employed in dancing in a ball-room. A Christian, however, is, if truly a Christian, the true house of God, which a stone building cannot be. It is therefore more inconsistent to take the House of God to a ball-room than to make a ball-room of that which is but a house made with hands.

However, the distinction between that which is morally right and that which befits the presence of God is in a mistaken manner thus recognised by those who regard the dancing as right, and the Church as holy, because it is God's House.

And thirdly, Is it not far more unwelcome to the natural heart to be holy than to be righteous? Could a man be righteous, he could use his righteousness as a decoration of self. But to be holy is to be separated to God, set apart by God for Himself—set apart, separated, from this present evil world, and put, therefore, into the place where hatred and contempt, not where esteem and admiration, are to be our lot.

“If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”

We all know a man is willing to be thought

upright and conscientious, but he is not willing to be thought "a saint." And yet if a man is a true Christian and not a counterfeit one, he is and must be a saint. For what is a Christian? Not only a man bought with a price, the Blood of the Lord Jesus, redeemed, washed from his sins, justified, born again of water (the Word of God) and of the Spirit, but also a man who is a living member of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ—a man who has received the eternal life that is in the Son of God—a man who is the temple in which God Himself dwells by His Spirit, the habitation of God.

Can we wonder at the measurements of the one enclosure after another shown to the prophet of old when we see that it was the dwelling-place of God which was thus guarded and hallowed, only holy because He had made it the place of His throne, and the place of the soles of His feet?

And is it not true that we fail to grasp the meaning of Christian holiness because we have been working it out from an idea we form of moral goodness instead of tracing it back to solid and certain facts connected with the presence of God?

Is it true that Christ died for my sins, and so bought me with an immeasurable price? Is it true that God has given me the eternal life that is

in His Son—breathed into the first believers actually and sensibly on the day of His resurrection? Is it true that God, the Holy Ghost, came down from heaven and baptized all who believed into the one Body of Christ? So that henceforth the believer is an actual member of Christ, who is the Head. Is it true that He came to dwell in the Church, and in the body of the believing man? Have these things really happened, or are they only a mystical way of expressing some vague truths?

If they have happened, the believer is absolutely, eternally holy, and what has been called “progressive sanctification” is but a progress in realising and acting upon these glorious and solemn facts. This realisation is no doubt progressive, therefore a believing man or woman will cast aside one piece of worldly conformity after another, understanding better what is due to the presence of God Himself. But this progress must necessarily arise from an increasing knowledge of the holiness of God.

Low thoughts of Christ are not only the hindrance to progress, but the road that leads to incredible self-satisfaction and self-righteousness. I imagine Christ to be such an one as I am, tempted from within by evil desires which He had to repress, and the next step is to imagine I am

such as He is. And there, necessarily, all desire for progress must stop.

Such is what has been discussed amongst Christians under the extremely unfit name of "Perfectionism." It is but a sure method of being satisfied with the Imperfect, because the Perfect has been lost sight of. Christ has been lowered to the level of the thoughts of man.

Let us realise the tremendous fact that we, if believers, are members of Him who, as man, is absolutely holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; and that we are also, not in figure, but in fact, the dwelling-place of God. A dwelling-place, a temple, holy because He has consecrated it to Himself, set it apart wholly and eternally to be His and His only; holy because He inhabits it now and for ever. Has this thought ever dawned upon those well-meaning Christians who talk of consecrating themselves to God? Can we consecrate to Him that which *He* has already consecrated, that which is His and not our own? Were a child, who is living in his father's house, to tell us "Henceforth I mean to consecrate this house to my father," should we not say that it is a denial of his father's rights, and of facts as they exist?

Thus in Lev. xxvii. 26 is the worshipper for-

bidden to hallow the firstling to the Lord. "The firstling of the beasts, which should be the Lord's firstling, *no man shall sanctify it*; whether it be ox or sheep, it *is* the Lord's."

Shall we not thank and praise Him that He has Himself consecrated the believer, spirit, soul, and body, to be His—His eternal dwelling-place? Do we believe it? Has not Christ said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him"?

Is it, then, strange that the Lord has said to His own, "Wherefore come out from among them" (from the unbelieving) "and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters," saith the Lord Almighty. And "having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Perfecting holiness, as by works is faith made perfect or completed; as the tree with its ripe fruit is the perfected tree, so by personal purity would the Lord have us to give proof of the holiness of our consecration—a consecration carried out and owned in word and deed.

But it is not a holiness acquired by the bearing

of fruit ; on the contrary, no fruit can be borne on the tree that is not already holy to the Lord. For grapes will not grow upon thorns, nor figs on thistles.

“We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord,” said the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonian believers, “because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.” It is thus the belief of the truth—it is not the belief of the fruits. “The Holy Spirit,” has it been truly said, “cannot present to me the works He has produced in me, as the object of my faith. He speaks to me of my faults, of my shortcomings, but never of my good works. He produces them in me, but He hides them from me ; for if we think of it, it is but a more subtle self-righteousness. It is like the manna, which being kept produced worms. All is spoilt—it is no more faith in action ; the Holy Spirit must always present to me *Christ*, that I may have peace.”

“I am sanctified by faith in Him” (Acts xxvi. 18).

And practical sanctification, therefore, flows from the contemplation of Jesus. “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, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." It is faith which sanctifies, as it also justifies, it looks unto Jesus. When Moses came down from the mountain, from before God, he did not know that he also shone with glory, but those who saw him knew it. Moses had looked towards God—others saw the effect. This is practical sanctification, but it is the effect, not the cause, of our being set apart, separated to Himself by God.

"Here is what God has done: He has separated us to Himself as a man who hews stones out of a quarry. The stone is hewn out and set apart, destined to be cut and fashioned, in order to be placed in the appointed building. So does God detach a soul from the quarry of this world to set it apart for Himself—I say not but that there is much to do, for a rough stone cut out of the quarry requires often considerable labour before it can fit into the building for which it is destined. So does God separate, prepare, and fashion this soul for His spiritual building. But the soul is sanctified, set apart for Him, from the moment that He takes it out of the quarry of this world. He takes us out of the quarry to place us under the efficacy of the Blood of Christ. The stone is entirely His, and although He has yet to work upon it, the question

is not of what He does each day, but of the end He has proposed to Himself in thus separating the stone and setting it apart.

If we have not laid hold of this meaning, there will be an entire mistake as to what sanctification is—the separation wrought by God Himself, who places us outside of the things of this world, and makes us Christians. Without this there is no Christianity. God acts effectually. He does nothing by halves ; He must have realities.

Sanctification is attributed to the Father in more than one place in the Bible (*see* John xvii. 17); to the Son in several places (*see* Heb. xiii. 12); to the Spirit (*see* Rom. xv. 16).

Is our prayer for ourselves and for all the children of God continually that of the Apostle Paul—"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; your whole spirit, and soul, and body preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" ? The holiness of our consecration carried out wholly and perpetually in all our ways—is this holiness, and not merely, though necessarily also, righteousness, unselfishness and goodness, the desire of our hearts, that God our Father may be glorified in us ?

"Christ came to make us comprehend quite another thing from the life here below, into which

He entered, and that is, the rule of the Christian's conduct. The Christian has for object, for aim, and for joy, what Christ has for object, aim and joy ; his affections are heavenly, as those of Christ. The spirit of Christ in me cannot find joy in that wherein Christ finds not His joy. It is evident, therefore, that he who is by Christ delivered from this present evil world cannot find pleasure in the life of sin of that world. It is not a question of prohibitions, of giving up, but of having altogether other tastes, desires, and joys. On that account people imagine Christians are gloomy. It is that our joys are altogether different—the world knows them not. This, then, is practical holiness—habits, affections, and conduct formed after the life and calling one has already received from God."

This is the service of the anointed priest. He belongs to the holy place, as going in to worship God. And secondly, he is called to show forth His praises to the world. A priest is consecrated *as well as* redeemed. The nearest place we have to God is priesthood ; the nearest place to the Father that of sonship. And the priesthood, as the sonship, is common to all who believe in Jesus.

The moment the thought of a human priesthood comes in between us and God the truth of

Christianity is gone. To deny the priesthood of all believers is to say that all cannot enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus. We go directly into the presence of God.

CHAPTER XIII

The Gift

"As though God did beseech you."—2 COR. v. 20.

He spake to me in stillness of the night—
He said, "The Gift is given ;
And thine is the unspeakable delight,
The blessed joy of heaven.
For thee the table is in fulness spread,
Poured forth the heavenly wine.
For thee My flesh was given, My blood was shed,
For thee came down the rain of living Bread ;
All—all is thine.

Thine all the riches of My glorious grace,
Unmeasured and untold ;
The hidden treasures of My secret place,
My spices and My gold.
I gave Thee all, for thee I poor became,
That rich thy store may be ;
And poor, with naught but hatred, scorn, and shame,
I gave *Myself* to thee.

I gave *Myself*—what wouldst thou more than Christ
To endless years ?
I gave *Myself*—lo ! hath not this sufficed
For thee the mighty wine of love is spiced ;
Response to gall and vinegar of hate,
Mixed for the anguish of the desolate
To plenteousness of tears.

Far more than fills the measure of thy cup
 My hand has poured,
 And lo ! I fain would enter in and sup,
 A suppliant at thy board ;
 For *Mine* is the unsatisfied desire,
 The hunger and the thirst.
 Thy need was desperate, O soul, and dire,
My direr need was first.

I loved thee when to thee I was unknown,
 A Name despised.
 Thy door was locked and barred to One alone ;
 One only—Christ !
 Of that disdainful heart I died to win
 I claim the whole ;
 I knock and wait till I may enter in
 The palace of thy soul.
 Lo ! more than thou couldst ask My love has given,
 Than thou couldst think ;
 O soul, I come athirst from highest Heaven,
Give Me to drink."

AND now is the commission given to Ezekiel to show to the sinful nation the House which had been measured—the House into which the Lord had entered, the House out of which He had spoken to His prophet.

"Thou Son of man, show the house to the House of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities, and let them measure the pattern."

What are the iniquities charged upon the House of Israel? They are sins against God, the defilement

of His holy Name, the false worship which was not merely idolatry in heathen temples, but in the holy Temple of God. In all these chapters the sin of Israel is thus specified. And to bring it home to them, to display it to them in all its extent and depth, the House was to be shown them, measured by the inflexible measure of God, which determined the form, and the meaning and purpose of the form—the absolute holiness and separateness of the dwelling-place of God.

“ If they be ashamed of all that they have done, show them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof, and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them. This is the law of the house. Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be MOST HOLY. Behold, this is the law of the house !”

Has not a House been shown also to us ? Has not a holy Temple of God been set forth before our eyes, measured, as it were, on the four sides in the record which He has given us of His Son ? And beholding that glorious Temple of which He spake, who is Himself the Temple, “ Thou, Father,

art in me, and I in thee," have we also cause for shame—we who, made one with Him, are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit?

Could we spend one quarter of an hour in beholding Him, and then say, as the Laodicean Church of these later days, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing"? Is our activity in that which we call good works, an activity which is for ever breaking down the barriers between the Church and the world—an activity which has man for its object and man for its mainspring, the service of the priests, or even of the Levites, in the holy courts of the Lord?

We have but to open our eyes and see in what manner much of the work is done which claims to be the service of God. It would be endless and needless to enumerate the "good works" which thus dishonour God's holy Name, and to which those who are truly His children too often lend a helping hand.

We have but to look within ourselves to see the excuses by which we deceive ourselves for thus yoking ourselves unequally in these "good works" with those who have never passed from death to life, who are in their turn deceived by us into imagining that they are the servants of God.

When the Lord taught a prayer to His disciples, what was the first petition He put into their mouths? That His Father's name should be hallowed. Is this *our* first desire, our first care? Or is it indifferent to us that His Name should be named as the Father of all alike, believers and unbelievers ; of the souls dead in trespasses and sin, as truly as of the souls who have received from Him the eternal life that is in His Son?

Does it seem to us to be a proof of our humility that we fail to recognise any distinction between those who by faith have entered in by the Door, and are saved, and those who remain without?

The Lord was provoked to anger continually in the former days by those who sacrificed to idols, and burnt incense on strange altars, and lodged in the graves amongst the dead, and fed on the food that was unclean, and yet said in their pride, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou." But He would not have us to pervert these words of condemnation to prove that His own children are to ignore the fact of their holiness. These words are, *on the contrary*, the condemnation of those who, having neither part nor lot in His Holy Spirit, take the place of His people.

To His own He says, "Thou art an holy people

unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath' chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth." Therefore His Apostle Peter could say, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." And His Apostle John could say, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one."

Is this pride? Rather let us take our pride into the presence of this revealed fact, and see if it can stand before the humiliating reality. "Such has God made me to be, by *His* counsel, by *His* calling, by *His* sacrifice of Himself, and how have I responded in my words and ways, in my thoughts and my desires to His purpose and His love?"

The following remarks may here be helpful, and to the point. They deserve the consideration of those professing and calling themselves Christians.¹

"What is it that reigned in the world before the coming of Jesus Christ? The pagan *religions*?" It was more than that—it was the eternal paganism, the root of all paganisms, the principle which

¹ Lectures on the "Life and Times of Innocent III." By the Comte de Gasparin.

we find at the bottom of all revolts against God—the pagan *principle*.

Let us seek to define it. If I would characterise it in one word, I would say it is the attempt to do without God.

Nothing so alarms our evil heart—and we all know this by experience, do we not?—as to find ourselves alone in the presence of God. A man will do anything and everything to avoid this direct and individual contact; he will invent for this purpose religions in order to avoid religion. Give him the Pantheism which covered and still covers the Eastern world, the pagan principle is not alarmed; there is there no personal God in presence of whom the conscience need be afraid. Give him the Polytheism of ancient Egypt and Syria, natural forces transformed into gods, the pagan principle will adapt itself marvellously to this also. Give him the Greek and Roman Polytheism, the deification of man, the pagan principle will remain at ease. A deified man is, after all, a man. One may accept these religions and do without God.

I go further. We may accept true religions and remain profoundly, radically pagan. Take that Pharisee; he admits many true doctrines with regard to God, but he has built up between God

and his soul an impenetrable 'rampart—his formalism and his religious pride.

Take that rationalist ; he retains more than one right idea borrowed from Christian revelation, but he constitutes himself the judge of it, taking that which pleases him, rejecting that which he does not approve. He has installed human reason in the place where God should be.

Let us go a step further. The indestructible paganism of our hearts has invented a surer way of satisfying them. The grand method for doing without God is to make of religion not a matter of the soul, of each individual soul, but a national matter.

Admit this, and the pagan principle will take alarm at no belief, not even at the Christianity, the most complete and the most orthodox. What does it matter ? This Christianity is not mine, nor yours ; it is that of our country, or of our family, or of our ancestors. It is no longer a question of conversion, or of faith, it is a question of custom and heredity.

Let us look into our own hearts. Where is our natural resistance to the Gospel ? What are we afraid of giving ? Forms, ceremonies, external adhesion, national and hereditary ? Nothing of the sort. We are afraid of giving *ourselves*. And

this is precisely the Christian principle *par excellence*—evil recognised as being the complete corruption of the heart, the revolt of the heart against God ; good being recognised as the conversion of the heart, the return to God.

There is more unity in the world than we are apt to imagine, both in the case of good and of evil. Has it never struck you that the great doctrine of individualism is at the base of all that is good, as, on the other hand, the doctrine of collective beliefs is at the root of all that is evil? That which has produced, in the first case, the universal priesthood of believers, the true idea of morality, the free surrender of the heart, is the Christian principle. That which has produced a sacerdotal class, convents, Roman Catholicism, the servitude of souls, is the pagan principle.

The former is individual, the latter is collective. Let us suppose Christians living in the first ages of the Church—(would to God there had been such!)—who denounced the abandonment of apostolic order, who attacked the old pagan spirit which was gaining ground ; who had foreseen in the near future the magic action of sacraments, the inroads of tradition, of human authority, of a hierarchy, of a sacerdotal class ; the wise and prudent would have mocked at such, for the greatness of small

deviations is known but to few. "Leave alone these narrow-minded, fault-finding men, who are always picking out small errors."

Yes, small deviations ; but the larger follow, and at the bottom of each one we discover an excellent, a pious man. Such were the apostolic Fathers—they lived by faith, and they ruined the faith ; they gave their lives for the Gospel, and they were the authors of all the evil which, for ages to come, was to oppose the Gospel. Let us look at the beginning of the great deviation of which Rome presents the most perfect type, we shall find it in the inoffensive tendencies of the early Fathers—tendencies which developed in an uninterrupted course through the centuries that followed.

First, we find the truth of justification by faith, then little by little justification by sacraments and by works. First, the Saviour—the one Saviour—then by degrees other intercessors, other merits. First, the new birth, then as time went on, adhesion to a church, acceptance of a form, performance of a ceremony. First, the Church of God, by degrees a hereditary and national religion. First, baptism, the expression of saving faith, then by degrees baptism apart from faith, and salvation by baptism. First, the infallible Scriptures open to all, then decrees of Councils and tradition. First, the

universal priesthood of believers, then, little by little, a separate class of clergy.

Thus time passed on, and when baptismal regeneration was definitely pronounced, the pagan principle was avenged. The soul need no longer be brought face to face with God ; baptism no longer served as an expression of personal faith, as a profound symbol of the new birth, burial, and resurrection in Christ, but had become an act of magic transformation in which faith had no part. And from that moment *the barrier between the Church and the world was overthrown*, a hereditary religion replaced the worship of God in the spirit and in truth.

And how is it in our times and in Protestantism ? Never was a time when it was more difficult, I will not say to profess evangelical Christianity—that is perfectly easy—but to take it seriously. The pagan principle stalks abroad amongst the easy-going profession of the Gospel. Having put on a Christian garb in the first century, and a Protestant garb in the sixteenth, it would willingly be orthodox in the nineteenth. It matters nothing under what form it appears, provided that personal faith and the true conversion of the heart are kept out of sight. Protestants and Catholics have alike overlooked the principle of which the first centuries

completed the destruction—the principle of *the Church*.

No epoch in history—pardon me this apparent paradox—is comparable to the first three centuries in regard to the gravity, the extent, the depth, and the durable influence of the evil which then was wrought. It is the epoch of the restoration of the pagan principle invading the Church of God. The Church, the Body of Christ, was the first truth to disappear, and the last to reappear. It must be so. That truth is the great adversary of the eternal paganism of our hearts.

What is the Church? The assemblage of Christians. And what is a Christian? He is a man who has believed in Jesus Christ. And what is believing in Jesus Christ? It is passing from death to life. It is the new birth of the soul. The Church, therefore, is an assemblage of converted people, a marvellous apparition in a world that had seen but national religions—religions hereditary and collective; men who were believers in the same way as they were citizens, whose belief was a matter of course, and entirely impersonal.

The Church, on the other hand, implied a direct relation of the soul with God. Such it was for one short day in the time of the Apostles. No man had as yet invented a faith which was not the

new birth, and Christians who were not converted men. The Church was based on the idea of conversion. The pagan principle set to work to undermine the idea of conversion. It imagined Christians members of the Church, who were not children of God. It imagined purification and salvation by sacraments. It imagined sacerdotalism. The Church was no longer the assemblage of those who were born again; it was a vast institution thrown open to all who would repeat a formulary, undergo a sacramental transformation, obey human direction.

Such had been the infernal work of the first centuries. The Christian principle, the Church, had vanished, and the enemy could now attack the doctrine. Faith being no longer personal, justification by faith disappeared. Salvation was transformed into orthodoxy, truth into tradition, the elders of the early Church into a hierarchy—and more was to follow as the ages passed. Thus began, and thus has continued, the profanation of the outward House of God. A profanation of the professing Church, thrown open to the world, and fallen to the level of the world, who find nothing there to condemn the paganism of the heart, in ceremonies and forms, and in the enforced repetition of creeds which necessitate no saving faith in

Christ. And in a lifeless profession, lifeless souls are well at ease. For a short moment had the outward possession corresponded to the living reality, but the name to live and the profession of eternal life were soon to have no common limit. The name would extend far and wide, and in proportion would the reality include a diminishing number of living souls. The true Church which is the Body of Christ, the nominal and false church which is His opponent, both included in Christian profession, both responsible for the name by which they are called, but distinct as light from darkness in the Eyes that are as a flame of fire, discerning the evil and the good. The one to be presented to Himself at last a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle ; the other to be spued out of His mouth for ever."

Therefore in the face of the sin which had defiled His house, and having revealed to Ezekiel the glory of His presence in that house that was now His dwelling-place, did the Lord give to him the measurement of the breadth and length, the depth and height of the altar of sacrifice. Not according to our righteousness, but according to the value of the unblemished sacrifice, is our standing before Him. " By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus

Christ once for all." Perfect as the sacrifice is the acceptance for every one who believeth.

The altar that was the figure of the Cross of the true sacrifice had to be cleansed with blood for seven days ; it could then be used for the representation of the perfect sacrifice and for the thank-offerings of the redeemed people. The revelation of the glory could have been but as a consuming fire were it not that the altar stood as the eternal declaration of the grace of Him who put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and in whose perfect acceptance all are accepted who believe in Him, loved as He is loved, presented to Himself without spot or wrinkle or any such thing—presented faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, "accepted in the beloved" of God.

"To the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever."

CHAPTER XIV

A Desire

"That the name of the Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him."—2 THESS. i. 12.

Harken ! for the trumpet soundeth,
He is near ;
Yet a moment, ere we know it,
He is here.
O, my coming Lord and Saviour,
Give us yet,
Ere for us the last sun riseth,
Ere the last sun set,
Give us back the vanished glory
Of the ancient days,
Of the morn when hearts united
Sang Thy praise.
When from baptism in the upper chamber,
Thy belovèd sped,
Preaching Christ, the Offering accepted,
Risen from the dead.
Preaching Christ ascended into heaven,
Christ, the Life of men,
God's High priest in that unsullied Temple,
Till He comes again.
Ages of our sorrow and our wandering,
Lie behind us now ;
O that we might be for one short moment
As the crown of gladness and of glory
On thy brow.

There for ever, through the golden ages
We shall shine
In the Father's house resplendent
With the morn divine.
But erewhile in this world's deepening shadows,
O that we might be
As a sunset's fair and glorious vision
Clothed, O God, with Thee !
Through us one last revelation granted,
Ere we pass from hence ;
Of the marvel of eternal beauty
Filling all the ransomed Church, Thy body,
With Thy holiness, Thy gladness,
Thy magnificence.
Once, before we rise to meet Thee
From the place of shame,
Where so long we have dishonoured
Thine all holy name ;
Give us to receive the fulness
Long unclaimed,
Shine in the light of love made glorious,
Made ashamed.
Tell as we have never told it,
What Thou art ;
One last message given in words of fire
From the Father's heart.
Lord, our last cry riseth up to Thee,
Far beyond it answer Thou ;
Not according as we ask or think—
Of the deep sea of Thy blessedness
We have reached but to the outmost brink.
Lord, according to *Thy* heart's desire,
Grant us now.

FROM the inner court into which the Spirit had
carried Ezekiel did the man lead him back into the

outer court of the Levites, to the gate facing the east. (Plan IV., B, East.) This gate was shut. "Then said the Lord unto me, This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it, because the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. It is for the prince, the prince; he shall sit in it to eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same."

To Ezekiel this glimpse into the future history of his people was given. The gate was to be shut because the glory had returned to the Temple of the Lord, and the way by which the Lord had thus entered His Temple was to be trodden by no foot of man except of the man who should in those days be the minister of God, the representative of the King "who shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, to whom the Lord God shall give the throne of his father David, who shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end."

But without forcing the parable, we may be reminded of another gate through which the Lord has entered, and which one day shall be shut—no foot of man to pass through it any more except when in the future day the kings of the earth

shall bring their glory and their honour into it, entering not as dwellers within that gate, but as worshippers only. What is that gate?

In the old time, as we know, the dwelling-place of God was in the midst of His people Israel. To come to Him was to come to the God of Israel. It was already true, according to the prayer of Solomon, that the Lord, the God of Israel, would hear the prayer of the Gentiles who should pray to Him ; but who should, therefore, come from a far country for His great Name's sake to worship in His House at Jerusalem. Of such, God had said : " Even them I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer ; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar, for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people."

But when the God of Israel had been rejected, in the person of the Son whom He sent, all for a while was changed. " The hour cometh," said the Lord Jesus, " and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him." And that neither at Jerusalem nor Gerizim, but in the new and living Temple ; in the Temple the Lord Himself should build for His habitation, and into which the true worshipper should be brought ;

made a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God.

For a while should Jew and Gentile alike be gathered into the new sanctuary of God—the Jew no more a Jew, the Gentile no more a Gentile in that new creation. “For if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (of the new creation). The old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new, and all things are of God.”

The new wine should be put into the new bottles; the new life should be given, the life of the risen Christ; the new song should be sung, led by Christ, the Man in the glory of God. For this purpose did the Lord come as the Sower, not to reap the fruit of the seed sown in the fields of Israel, but to begin the sowing for the new harvest; to form out of Jew and Gentile one new man; to build on the rock of the confession of the man Jesus as the Son of the living God the Church which is in His new creation, as Eve to Adam in the old and ruined race.

When the day of Pentecost was fully come, the Lord descended to enter the Temple He had built. He entered to dwell in that Temple for ever, on the earth through the ages during which His Church is gathered in; in Heaven when His Church is complete, where He shall set a tabernacle for the sun,

for the Bridegroom coming out of His chambers on the day of the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Still that door, opened on the "Day of the First-fruits," stands open for those who are "added to the Lord." He entered, bringing in with Him all who are written in the Book as the living members of His body, "which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there was none of them." That door, opened by Him, can no man shut.

But the day is coming when He shall shut it, and no man can open. The door through which the Lord passed, Christ, and those who are His body, shall be entered no more for ever. The Bridegroom and those who were ready, within that door, and those whose lamps had not oil shut out for ever.

It is true that after that day is passed we read of a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people and tongues clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, who cry with a loud voice, "Salvation to our God, which sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb." We read also of the restored Israel on the earth, of the fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness, when again they shall be called the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord; and we

read of the days that follow, when the "receiving of Israel" shall be life from the dead to all nations of the earth, when "all kings shall fall down" before the King, in whom all nations shall be blessed.

But the door that was closed remains shut for ever. The Church of God remains for ever distinct and unique ; those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb are blessed, but the guests are not the Bride. He that hath the Bride is the Bridegroom, but the friends of the Bridegroom who stand and hear Him shall rejoice greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice, and the Bridegroom and the Bride shall rejoice in their joy.

CHAPTER XV

Desecration

“The Church is the habitation of God, and will be so till the day it is taken up to be with the Lord. The individual may fail, and the Church of God may fail, and has failed, so as to have become the very seat of Satan (I mean those professing to be the Church here below) ; but this has not altered the truth that wherever we find the *true* Church, it is the habitation of God.”

FROM the closed eastern gate of the outer court the guide led Ezekiel to the north gate of the inner court, and through that gate again into the altar square before the House. “And I looked, and behold the glory of the Lord filled the House of the Lord, and I fell upon my face.” For the second time the Lord spoke from the glory to His prophet.

“Son of man, mark well, and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, all that I say unto thee concerning all the ordinances of the house of the Lord, and all the laws thereof ; and mark well the entering in of the house, with every going forth of the sanctuary” (Chap. xliv. 5).

Again did the Lord charge upon His people Israel—"the rebellious" people—the sins of the past. But, as in the previous chapter, it is the one, the crowning sin, that they had broken down the barrier between the holy people and the strangers, between the true worship of the one only God and the worship of idols. "Ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things, but ye have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves."

According to their own inclinations and their own mind had they opened the gates of His House to the unclean, and following a multitude to do evil, had the Levitical priests gone astray after the idols the people loved and worshipped.

It is with shame that we read these things, looking back upon the desecration of a holier Temple not built with hands—a Temple built by the Lord of living stones, but entrusted to man; not only did men build upon the true foundation gold, silver, and precious stones, but wood and hay and stubble. Not only were living believers received into Christian fellowship, but the ungodly and profane; the doors thrown open alike to the clean and the unclean, to him who serveth God and him who serveth Him not.

The history of Christianity needs only to be known in general outline, and the state of

Christianity needs only to be observed to bring home to us a sin deeper and more inexcusable than the sin of the priests of Israel.

The Christianity of the Middle Ages had a theory of separation between the Church and the world, but by the Church men did not mean those who were born again, converted to God, but those who were separated by outward ordinances from the heathen, often themselves the most abominable in heart and life.

The Christianity of to-day makes the world and the Church to be one ; it is uncharitable to raise the question whether those who profess it have believed to the saving of their souls. God is the Father of all alike, equally to be recognised as His children if they are worshipping Him in the spirit and in truth, or reciting prayers to the Virgin and the saints, or dancing in a ball-room, or betting on a race-course, reading His Word with earnest prayer for the teaching of the Spirit, or treating it as the work of the ignorant and foolish mind of man ; loving God and His people, or following the god of this world, and "walking in the counsel of the ungodly."

The words spoken to the Prophet Ezekiel have a deeper meaning for us, and if we are not too dull of heart to perceive it we too shall be filled

with shame and confusion of face on account of the desecration of the Temple of the living God.

The Lord could not pass over the sin of the priests who had profaned His sanctuary. Though restored to His service it could only be to the service of the Levites, and the priests who were allowed to minister as priests are charged to keep the courts of the Lord holy and undefiled. "They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge . . . and they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean."

And for the priests thus separated, and thus charged to maintain the separation of the holy and unholy, had the Lord provided an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. "I am their inheritance, and ye shall give them no possession in Israel; I am their possession."

The Lord made provision for them in detail as to their temporal wants, the meat of the sacrifices, the meat-offering, sin-offering and trespass-offering, the first of all the first-fruits of all things, and every oblation of all. "Every dedicated thing in Israel shall be theirs."

And for their dwelling-place did He assign a holy portion of the land from the holy oblation of Chap. xlviii. 20. "All the oblation shall be five and twenty thousand by five and twenty thousand; ye shall offer the holy oblation four-square; with the possession of the city." (*See Plan I.*)

This holy portion of the priests—the northern part of the oblation—in which was the sanctuary, the most holy place, was 10,000 reeds in breadth from north to south, the sanctuary in the midst, measuring from east to west. This places the sanctuary upon Mount Gerizim.

A like portion of the four-square oblation is then measured off for the Levites, leaving a strip 5,000 reeds in breadth from north to south, occupied by the city, and by the land on each side of the city, the increase of which "shall be for food unto them that serve the city" (Chap. xlviii. 18), the city to be served out of all the tribes of Israel. No longer the possession of one tribe, but of the whole land.

The prince's land, that which lay on each side of the holy four-square oblation, the same measurement from north to south, but no measurement given from east to west. The western portion would no doubt be bounded by the Mediterranean,

the eastern portion by the Jordan. "In the land shall be his possession in Israel."

Here the Lord speaks, in the charge given to the princes, of practical righteousness. "Ye shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just oath." But as always, the reference is to the Lord Himself, for by these just measurements were the oblations of the Lord to be measured. A fixed and righteous measure which, existing for the Lord's offerings, would also ensure justice and righteousness in the measurement of that which is due from man to man.

He that is faithful in that which is least is the man who is, in the first place, faithful in that which is much. "Honesty is the best policy" is the maxim of the dishonest. Divers weights and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the Lord, is the principle upon which the honest man is honest.

And the prince thus made responsible for true weights and measures has the charge of providing the sacrifices and offerings for the people and for himself; and the solemnities and feasts for which these offerings were to be provided are now given.

CHAPTER XVI

The Call and the Answer

“Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”—ISA. lv. 1.

I am come unto the waters,
Thou didst call me by my name.
Thou didst call unto the thirsty ;
I was thirsty, and I came.

Oh, the draughts of life eternal !
There would I beside that river
Lay me down, the parched and weary,
Drink for ever and for ever.

Drink from out the depths unfathomed
Life eternal, life divine ;
Thou, O measureless, exhaustless,
Thou for evermore art mine !

Lo, I come to buy, rejoicing
That with empty hands I come.
Meted to me by the measure
Of Thy love's exhaustless sum,

Are the riches of Thy treasure,
Fathomless and full and free,
Christ, Thy Gift, O God, my Father,
To the destitute, to me.

Wine of Thine eternal gladness
 Hath Thine hand in bounty poured,
 More than fills my cup of blessing,
 Love Divine of Christ my Lord.

Love the golden fruit has gathered,
 Love that mighty wine has spiced ;
 Mine is now the joy of Heaven,
 For that joy is Christ.

THE House needed to be cleansed with blood before it could be fit for the worship and service of the Lord. So do we read that Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. And after this cleansing by the blood, once and for ever, does He continually sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word.

In the case of the Temple shown to Ezekiel the preliminary cleansing is twice commanded—Chap. xliii. 18-27, the cleansing of the altar ; Chap. xlv. 18-20, the cleansing of the House—each to be continued for seven days, including a special offering on the seventh day “for everyone that erreth, and for him that is simple.”

And the blood having thus told of the reconciliation by the blood of the true sacrifice, the feasts of the Lord might be kept. The Passover, no Pentecost, the Feast of Tabernacles, the Sabbaths and new moons. Why should Pentecost be omitted ?

Is it not because that new meat-offering of the first-fruits of Lev. xxiii. 16 pointed not to the restored nation of Israel, but to an earlier offering, the two wave loaves of fine flour baked with leaven, two loaves, but called, taken together, a new meat-offering unto the Lord? An offering presented to the Lord on that day when God, having reconciled both Jew and Gentile unto Himself in one body by the Cross, sent down His Spirit to baptize both into that one Body of Christ. "For his own peace who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace," Christ the first-fruits, and the Church in Him the first-fruits also.

And this Body, called out from the Day of Pentecost to the day when He shall come again and receive to Himself His members, raised and changed, to present them to Himself a glorious Church—this Body will be completed and glorified before the earthly people are again brought upon the earthly scene, still to remember their redemption from Egypt, and now at last to celebrate the dwelling of God with men. "They shall keep the feast of tabernacles" (Zec. xiv. 16-19).

It should be remarked that the proportions of meat-offering and oil to the burnt-offering are altered. In the law the tenth part of an ephah of flour accompanied a lamb. In Ezekiel the sixth part of an ephah. In the law the fourth part of a hin of oil ; in Ezekiel the third part. In the case of the prince, as much flour as he can give, and a hin of oil to each ephah. For a ram, the law ordained two-tenths of flour ; the prince in Ezekiel must bring a whole ephah. Of oil, in the law, the third of a hin ; the prince in Ezekiel must bring a hin for each ephah. For a bullock, three-tenths of flour are ordered in the law, and half a hin of oil ; the prince must bring an ephah of flour, and a hin of oil.

A fuller and deeper knowledge of the divine manhood of Christ, a fuller outpouring of the Spirit of God upon the restored Israel, have thus a mark of indication in the restored offerings, which are the expression of the condition of the soul before God.

But as compared with the Christian state and standing, the contrast is marked no less evidently. Whilst the believer who is now united by the baptism of the Spirit to Christ has his place in the Holiest of all, not only is the Israelite of the future outside, but with the exception of the priests he is allowed no nearer approach than the outer court.

And except on the Feasts of the Sabbath and New Moon, even the sight of the inner sanctuary through the eastern inner gate is not allowed him. As far as the outer porch of that gate he may enter on those festival days, the prince first worshipping at the threshold of the gate, whilst the priests prepare his offerings; and around him the people worship till the evening, when the gate is closed.

The prince having entered by the outer eastern gate goes out by the same. The people enter only by the northern and southern gates of the outer court; those entering by the north go forth by the south; those entering by the south go forth by the north.

They could not therefore remain except for worship—they might not leave in the gate by which they entered anything belonging to them; nor, as we find from the Lord's action in Mark xi. 16, might any vessel be carried through the Temple. That which they brought must be wholly an offering to the Lord left for that purpose in the hands of the priests. The tables of the money-changers and the oxen and sheep and doves should no longer be found in the courts of the Lord. Worship only should be known there.

The exception to the closing of the eastern inner

gate on working days is the occasion of the voluntary offering of the prince. The gate might then be opened, that he might worship at the threshold in face of the altar and the House, and it must then be closed again. And within the gate, closed except on the occasions mentioned, was the daily lamb to be offered as a burnt-offering every morning on the altar. No evening sacrifice as of old, for at evening time it should be light. Time no more measured by darkness within the walls of Salvation and the Gates of Praise. "The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.' "

Therefore amongst the restored solemnities we find no mention of the day of atonement, the holy convocation when the law required that "ye shall afflict your souls. . . . Whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people." Now the Lord has turned the mourning into dancing. He has put off the sackcloth of His people, and girded them with gladness, to the end that glory may

sing praise to Him and not be silent ; that thanks may be given unto Him for ever.

All the omissions in this marvellous picture tell the same tale of settled joy and peace ; no Pentecost, for the first-fruits are housed in the house in Heaven ; no evening sacrifice, for the darkness is past ; no blowing of trumpets which was to summon the nation to the great day of mourning which followed ; no day of afflicting the soul, for He has given them the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ; no veil, for it has been rent for ever ; no laver—the following chapter will explain this ; no shewbread to represent the twelve tribes before the Lord, for all are gathered and owned, and are for ever before His face ; no candlestick, for the glory of the Lord has filled the House.

One only direction remained to be given—the prince should retain his inheritance for himself and his sons for ever, and the portions assigned to each of the Lord's people should be an eternal inheritance. They should dwell in the land for ever, “the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified.”

All this had been spoken to Ezekiel in the inner court, before the House into which the guide had led him by the north inner gate. He now led him

back, not to the north gate, but to the entry at the side of the gate, the way of entrance into the holy chambers of the priests. (*See Plan V., Fig. L.*)

"Behold," said Ezekiel (Chap. xlv. 19), "there was a place on the two sides westward." This place appears to have been the space enclosed on two sides by the holy chambers, and on the side towards the outer court by the wall of 50 cubits in length. In this place, on each side of the Temple, were the priests to boil the trespass-offering and sin-offering (*see Plan V., Figs. N, N*), and bake the meat-offering, "that they bear them not out into the outer court to sanctify the people." That is to say, they were not to carry them to the boiling places in the outer court to which the guide now led Ezekiel, and where he took the last measurement of the details of the House.

He showed him four courts, one in each corner of the outer court. (*See Plan IV., Figs. E, E, E, E.*) These courts, 40 cubits long, by 30 broad, had boiling places all round them, "where the ministers of the house shall boil the sacrifice of the people."

We have now, therefore, the last revelation of the mind of God with regard to the order of the house; His provision for the food of His priests, and for the feasts of His people. "I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people

shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord."

Let us trace back this thought of the feeding of the people of the Lord on the sacred food, the symbolical eating, which is so fully explained to us by the lips of Christ. We find no offerings but burnt-offerings in the early ages; no feeding, therefore, on the sacrifices offered to God. All was consumed, and was for Him only. But when the time came for the redemption of His people whom He had chosen out of all the nations of the earth, we have for the first instance of "eating before the Lord" an atoning sacrifice, the Passover feast. Of the lamb it is said, "They shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire and unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs shall they eat it." Thus were they to eat it year by year, till the day should come when Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us, and the mystery of the slain lamb was revealed to the soul.

Thenceforward we know that the food of the soul is Christ, and Christ crucified—Christ slain as the substitute for the guilty. And we know also that it is not enough for us that He should have been slain, it is needful also that we receive the food of the sacrifice as our life. "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat

the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood *hath* eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."

So are the words of the Lord true to him who thus eats and drinks. "I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul." For to Him do the weary come, and thus receive into their souls the life that is in the Son of God—the sorrowful come, and their heart rejoices with a joy no man can take from them. "Ye shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the Name of the Lord your God, which hath dealt wondrously with you." The Lord would not build His Temple without a provision made for the food, first of the priests in the inner sanctuary, and also of the people, who, eating their part of the peace-offering, worshipped Him in the court of service.

Christ, the hidden manna, the food of the holy priesthood in the holiest place—Christ, the feast of joy for the redeemed in the court of service—for those who seek Him and are crying unto Him in their trouble, that He may deliver them from their distresses. Then do they find that He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

The sacred food of the priests, the meat-offering, the sin-offering, the trespass-offering, and their part of the peace-offering, might be eaten by them alone in the inner sanctuary. It needs for those whom now He has made priests to Himself to know Him in His holy person and in His atoning work, that they may draw from this source the power for worship ; that they may abide in the secret and sacred communion with Him, which is their strength for praise.

And in the Father's House, since the door was opened, and all things have been made ready ; since the sacrifice has been slain, and the lost son has turned his face towards home, has a feast of joy been kept, with the music and the dancing ; and in that joy has the Father His portion, and the son, who was dead and is alive ; and the household who rejoice in the Father's joy. There is for him who believes the feast of sacred communion in the holy place, and the feast of welcome and refreshment in the court of service ; all provided by the love of God—all provided—and all is Christ. " Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts : we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple."

Christ the food ; but it is not only the meat-

offering which His priests should eat; not only should His sacred humanity be appropriated by the soul, but the sin-offering and the trespass-offering which made it possible that the meat-offering should be their nourishment, Christ bearing the curse of sin; Christ made sin for the sinners, His body broken and His blood shed; Christ as the substitute, the atoning sacrifice, received into the soul by faith, so that the Word is verified. "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Thus has God made provision, not for the offering of the sacrifice only, but for the feeding on the all-sufficient sacrifice, the Flesh given for the life of the world.

CHAPTER XVII

The Fountain-Head

"With thee is the Fountain of Life."—PS. xxxvi. 9.

Fountain of the living water
Flowing from the throne of God ;
Christ in glory, we adore Thee,
Source of that exhaustless flood.
Thirsting in the barren deserts
Deeply did we drink,
Of the gladness all surpassing
We could ask or think.

Now within Thy radiant Temple,
Crowning God's most holy hill,
From the fount of His pure river
We have drunk our fill.
Brought to Thee within the Holiest,
Risen and ascended Lord,
Thee we know, the source eternal,
Whence the mighty river poured

Down through all the desert places,
Through the ages traced for ever,
By the trees of leaves for healing,
By the fruit for meat.
Fed by that celestial river,
Fruit surpassing sweet,
In these holy courts of peace and splendour
Thee alone we see.

Radiant glory, chambers still and stately,
 River, healing tree,
 All in mystic speech of heavenly wisdom
 Tell the soul of Thee.
 There brought near to that mysterious centre,
 Thy most holy place,
 Where the ransomed soul alone may enter
 And behold Thy face.

Glad, we lose ourselves to have our being
 Now alone in Thee,
 Waves of that unfathomable river
 Evermore to be : ¹
 Bearing life and healing and rejoicing
 Through the deserts lone,
 For those waters of the life eternal
 Issued from the throne.

AND now the measurement of the House is finished. The outer space, the walls, the courts, the gates, the house and the chambers, the altars and the boiling places—all have been measured. Ezekiel had been shown the transcendent holiness of that sanctuary set apart for the habitation of God. He had been shown how, by one separating enclosure after another, the most holy place was guarded from all communication with the world beyond, that it might be the dwelling-place of the most holy God.

“Mark well,” the Lord had said to Ezekiel

¹ John vii. 38.

“the entering in of the house”—more correctly “that which enters into the house,” even the glory of the Lord. He had seen the Lord enter by the way of the east and take possession of His holy Temple. We, too, who believe in Jesus have seen the “entering in” when, on the Day of Pentecost, God the Spirit descended from heaven to dwell in the Temple of living stones built by the hand of Christ. Thus has the Lord Jesus fulfilled to us the promise that whilst the world sees Him not we should see Him, abiding by His Spirit eternally in His Church, and in each member of His body. And not only is it true of the believing man that God thus dwells in him—he also dwells in God, brought into His most holy place in Christ, as into His eternal home.

Brought into the place where, by the Spirit, Jesus is revealed to the soul; into the place of welcome and of gladness, the place of worship and thanksgiving. Jesus has entered, not into the holy places made with hands, which are figures of the true, but into Heaven itself, where we “sit together in heavenly places in Him.”

Brought now into the Holiest by His blood, we find in that still and sacred seclusion the glory and the sweetness of His eternal presence. We have entered into the light of that glory; we are

enclosed within the walls of that unspeakable love. He has shown us the path of life, and brought us where there is the fulness of joy, where at His right hand are pleasures for evermore.

"This," I have heard it said, "is your selfish Christianity. You glory in being a select few, shut up in the walls and barriers of separation from the world you willingly leave to its fate. What does it matter to you that other men are sinful and miserable if only you are happy and safe? We loathe your happiness, the compound of self-righteousness and selfishness, and we leave you to your enjoyment of it."

The Lord did not leave Ezekiel to remain upon his face in the presence of His glory. He had said to him, "Mark well the entering in of the house"; but He also said, "with every going forth of the sanctuary," or, with all that goeth forth of the sanctuary.

The going forth—of what, and whither? Let us follow the guide.

"Afterwards he brought me again unto the door of the house, and behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward, for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under, from the right side of the house, at the south side of the

altar. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward" (the north inner gate) "and led me about the way without unto the outer gate by the way that looketh eastward" (the gate by which the glory had entered), "and behold there ran out waters on the right side." (*See Plan V.*)

"From the place of his throne, from the place of the soles of his feet" did those waters flow; "they issued out of the sanctuary," as in ver. 12 this source is shown. From the right side did they flow; as now they flow from the ascended Christ at the right hand of God—"a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."

They flowed by the south side of the altar, there where in the former Temple the laver had been set. "He (Solomon) set the sea on the right side of the east end, over against the south." Now, in place of the laver, is a flowing stream, for ever flowing, fresh and pure, as John beheld it in a later day. "There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High." Not only "abundantly satisfied with the fatness of his house," but "drinking of the river of his pleasures," the fulfilment of that promise is ours. "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never

thirst." And not only so, but further, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Let us follow out the history of the thirsty soul, of the wanderers in the dry and barren land where no water is. "Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them." "The poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst."

Have we not known that great and terrible wilderness wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water? and, with a dim sense of One who is the Fountain of life, we began to understand the cry of those who had gone before us: "As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God; my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God," for the Fountain of living waters, heard in the distance, but not yet found.

Then as cold waters to a thirsty soul came to us the good news from a far country, the gospel of love, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink"; even to us did those waters flow down from His high places, for He sendeth the springs into the valleys which run among the hills. And with joy did we draw water out of the wells of salvation. Then did He lead us beside the still

waters. He caused us to walk by the rivers of water in a straight way, wherein we did not stumble. He who had mercy upon us led us; even by the springs of water did He guide us.

And thus did He bring us to the fountain-head, to the most holy place, to worship before the throne of God and of the Lamb, whence those waters flowed, clear and inexhaustible.

And then began the second part of that marvellous history. Not only did we drink of those waters of life, but the water that He gave us became in us a well of water, springing up into life eternal. We had heard His call. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink"; and now the further promise, the glorious seal set upon His perfect work, was to be fulfilled to us. "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." "He spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive"; not yet given when He spoke the words, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

But when He had offered Himself without spot to God, when He had put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, when the resurrection morning, and the entrance of the risen Man into the glory of God, had told the acceptance of that offering, then

could the seal be set upon His redeemed people. God could anoint them with His Holy Spirit, and also seal them, giving them the earnest of the Spirit in their hearts.

On that great day, the Day of Pentecost, did He cause His wind to blow, and the waters flowed. From those who had been baptized by His Spirit into His own body, could the streams go forth, far and wide, and "everything should live whither the river cometh."

Such is the "going forth of the sanctuary." From that day when a Man had become as rivers of water in a dry place, those made one with Him, waves in that stream, have been no longer as a fountain sealed, but as a well of living water, as streams from Lebanon. Filled with His Spirit, it is through them that the river flows onward in its glorious power ; on through the ages has it flowed through the arid places of this desolate earth. The joy which the soul drank in at the source, at the fountain-head in the secret place of the Most High, has been borne forth beyond the walls and the barriers of the sacred courts, a stream deepening as it flowed, till its depth could no more be measured, and the parched ground became a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water in the far deserts of the desolate places.

And it was a river that brought life "to everything that moveth," for its source was the Eternal Life, and He had said, "Because I live ye shall live also." "This is the reward, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." The same life ; we have no other. The old life is forfeited—ours no more. His life is ours. "I live no longer, but Christ liveth in me"—Christ who is our life.

Therefore it is His life in His own, and further, His Spirit in His own—that is the stream whose course we may trace for nearly 1900 years, wherever by faith in Him souls have entered into the Holiest by His blood, to come forth in the power of eternal life.

Still to His own is His commission given, "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead." Still are they sent to open the blind eyes, to turn the lost soul from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God ; to be blamed for their selfish enjoyment of the blessedness of their Father's House ; to be blamed yet more if they bring the water of joy and life to the thirsty in the desert.

Yet there are those amongst the thirsty whose eyes are opened as were the eyes of Hagar by the God of compassion, and they see the well of water, and drink of it, and live. And in turn do they

become waves of that river of life, whose waters widen and deepen as the ages pass.

And in the days when the Lord shall have returned to His land and to His Temple, shall the waters flow forth afresh, and then shall the earth be filled with the knowledge of His glory, as the waters cover the sea. Meanwhile the spring of water whose waters fail not flows unseen by the world, who knows not the servant because it knows not his Lord.

It is well here to remark the glorious prediction given by the mouth of the Lord in the 7th Chapter of the Gospel of John. The following extract which bears upon it will be found helpful :

“ There was a remarkable circumstance in the Feast of Tabernacles ; there was an eighth day, or, as we should say, a first day of the week ; which was not the case with the other feasts. This was the feast of ingathering. Now this eighth day, the first day of the week, is the resurrection day. The whole seven days the people were to rejoice before Jehovah ; such was their portion in their rest. But the eighth day was the solemn assembly, ‘ the great day of the feast.’

“ This surely marks the connection and introduction—the extraordinary connection of the resurrection church with the rest that remained

to the people of God. Our Lord's reference to this 'great day of the feast' marks and confirms, indeed establishes, this. Upon the last day, this great day of the feast, He cried and said, 'If *any man* thirst, let him come unto me and drink, and out of his belly shall flow, as the Scripture hath said, rivers of living water.' Thus spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive.

"In the first place, there is the admission of the Gentiles here, 'If *any man* thirst,' and there is the gift of the Holy Ghost, the witness of heavenly things; the refreshing streams of divine grace, bearing testimony to the glory of the ascended Jesus at the right hand of God. When this stream flowed forth, Jesus was not yet manifest to the world; nor would He be till He came in glory. In the meanwhile, His thirsting saints would be in the wilderness, 'in a barren and dry land where no water was,' waiting for the glory, for the first day of the new and eternal week, when Jesus would appear.

"But as to each, during this waiting time, his belly would be a well-spring of living waters; his own soul, through the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, would be the channel of boundless refreshment; each one that once thirsted would be the source of

refreshment to others. It was not merely he was born of the Spirit, it was not merely that the Spirit dwelt in him, as a well springing up in him unto everlasting life; but it should be from his soul a river flowing forth, a river of the spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Thus the force of the eighth day is made very distinctly apparent.

“The feast of the ingathering properly embraced Israel, the people of God, restored out of the wilderness to the land of God’s rest, to rejoice there, gathered back out of all lands. But it involves with it another scene, dimly marked and given room for, in which indeed Israel, and the world too, had resulting blessings, but blessings which flowed from higher sources, though they might refresh the gladdened plains below; exhaustless, boundless sources of heaven caught supplies.

“Then should Jehovah pour forth His fulness in answer to the desires, quickened and exalted, of the souls athirst. Then should be a time when the mountains, catching the full rain of blessing from above, shall but distribute them by the valleys which the Lord has formed, and the wide scene beneath shall be refreshed by goodness and blessing in the low places far distant and athirst. Blessed be that day when the blood of the Lamb,

through which all has been accomplished, shall be seen in all its glory, in all its value—the blood which has cleansed and redeemed us for communion with the Highest, and purged the defiled inheritance, the now accomplished and perfect rest of God in love and peace.”

This, then, is the glorious purpose of God made known in the Vision which was to comfort the heart of His servant on the day when the lamb was set aside which was to tell of the redemption to come.

And let us remark the contrast so marvellously drawn between the symbolism of the Tabernacle and that of the holy Temple of the Vision. The way of approach is indicated in the Tabernacle; the putting away of sin is shown in repeated sacrifices. But in the Tabernacle we find but one figure of life, though so many of the death through which life is given. And that one figure was not a stream that flowed forth, but a life hidden in the inaccessible Ark in the most holy place. There behind the veil was Aaron's rod that budded, once shown as “a token against the rebels,” and then laid up in the secret place of the Lord's presence, in the place of His throne, from which in a later day the stream should flow, when He who hath abolished

death should have brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

Ezekiel had been shown the place from whence the river flowed, when in Chap. xli. 4 the guide had brought him to the Holiest, and had measured it before his eyes. But there was then no river there—no river had been seen flowing from the threshold nor through the courts of the House. How was it that now it flowed forth an inexhaustible stream? The glory of the Lord had entered that House which had before been measured. From Him flowed the stream of life. When Jesus spoke of that living stream, when standing in the Temple on the great day of the feast, He spoke of a future river only to flow forth when He was glorified, and when He had entered by His Spirit into the Temple His hands had built. For with Him is the fountain of life. His Church is the place of blessing and the place from which the blessing flows forth, but the source is Christ.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Quiet Land

"We which have believed do enter into rest."

Brought from the clamour, from the murmuring voices,
From restless winds, and from the troubled sea,
To that fair land where every breath rejoices—
Brought home to Thee.
The still infinitude of God surrounding,
The mystery of love to man unknown,
The silence that is music ever sounding ;
With God alone.
The silence that is speech and glorious singing,
Both passing sweet ;
There sits beside the fountain ever springing
Another, yet myself, who hears ;
Another—dweller not in days and years
That change and fleet—
But one to whom the troubled sea is still
A vanished sound,
To whom the songs and holy psalteries fill
The stillness all around ;
To whom the glory of a newborn day
Is fresh and fair ;
Not as the ancient sunrise passed away,
But still unfolding there ;
Uprising into everlasting noon
Where smites no sun nor heat,

No night is there where rules the changeful moon
To guide the wandering feet ;
But there the everlasting light is God,
And sun and shade is He ;
In those still meadows green His staff and rod
Shall comfort me.
The sorrow and the gladness passed away—
The midnight and the stars ;
My soul goes forth to free and glorious day
Beyond the prison bars.
Through blessed valleys where my lot is cast
He leads me on,
And there the winter is for ever past,
The rain is passed and gone.
There blossom flowers of His eternal spring,
There rests His dove ;
It is the time when joyful voices sing,
The time of love.
Lord Jesus, land of fountains and of deeps,
My home art Thou,
Wherein high festival my spirit keeps
Now, even now.

THE guide went forth eastward, and measured the river as he went. When he reached the wall which surrounded the outer space he had measured 1,600 cubits. By this time the depth of the water was nearly to the knees. And but a little distance beyond the limit of the enclosed space (2,400 cubits further) it had become a river for swimming that could not be passed over.

Then the guide led back Ezekiel to the brink of the river, and showed him how from the beginning

of its course through the enclosed space were very many trees on the one side, and on the other, "all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed : it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary, and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine."

Thus was the enclosed space which surrounded the Temple courts a garden of the Lord, a "garden by the river side"; as the Lord had spoken to another prophet, "Thou shalt be like a watered garden"—"a garden enclosed."

Thus is the sister and the spouse of Christ, looked at now not as the priest in the inner court, nor as the Levite in the court of service, but in the daily life which is on the level of the common earth ; even there a garden wherein grows the tree of life on either side of the river that waters it, flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb. Not a barren place, though the daily life may be a life of toil, and of business, and of earthly duties and relationships ; but a place that drinketh water of the rain of Heaven, and where shade and fruit are found, and leaves for "bruises and sores." (*See Margin of A. V.*)

Could we desire a more lovely parable of the

daily life that we often look at only with earthly eyes? A life walled in and separate, but offering rest and food and stillness to those who enter in within the sound of the music and the singing in the holy courts, and where, in the heat of the noonday, the Lord God who is the Sun is also the Shade, and where He gives to His own to eat of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.

But the stream flowed on—beyond, far beyond that peaceful garden—far beyond the holy portion of the priests which lay outside, beyond the limits of the holy land, eastward to the desert.

And by this time it would appear that the stream was divided, for in ver. 9 of Chap. xlvii. we read of two rivers, and in the preceding verse it is implied that one branch of the river flowed into the desert, and one into the sea—the sea that we call the Dead Sea, and which is called in Zechariah the former or eastern sea. This branch, again, which appears to flow through the city of Jerusalem, is there divided, one half going to the eastern sea, and one half to the hinder sea, the Mediterranean.

These details, however, connected with the literal river which is several times mentioned by the prophets, must remain to be explained by

future predicted changes in the face of the land. That great changes owing to earthquakes will take place we know from Zec. xiv. A literal river is also described in Joel iii. as watering the valley of Shittim. We are concerned now with the symbolic meaning of this river of living water, for which purpose we need to see both present and future things, as taught by God.

The river that watered the desert could be traced onwards into the far distance by the many trees along its brink. "I will open rivers in high places and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittim tree, and the myrtle and the oil tree. I will set in the desert the fir tree and the pine and box tree together, that they may see and know and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it."

So can we, in looking back through barren ages since the great day when the stream flowed forth, trace the course of that river by the trees whose fruit has been for meat, and their leaves for medicine.

For He who is the Tree of Life lives in His own; as His servant Paul has said, "I live no longer, but

Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Not in Paul only, but in all whose faith is in Him, that life bears, and must bear, the fruit of the Tree that is in the midst of the Paradise of God. For that Tree is their food, sweet to the taste of those who sit down under His shadow with great delight. And because His life is theirs, of them also He can say: "Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits, camphire with spikenard, spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices."

For He has sent His wind to blow upon His garden, that the spices thereof may flow out; and soon will He come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits. And then will be the feast, when He calls His friends to His marriage supper, and they will eat and drink in His presence, and rejoice in His joy.

And meanwhile all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, are laid up for Him, and are an inexhaustible supply for every hungry soul whom He calls from the barren places. No longer guarded by the flaming sword, those trees grow where the river runs. And he who will put forth

his hand and take of that Tree of Life, and will eat, shall live for ever. Its leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed.

It shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, not because the mind of man develops, and the thoughts of man are more enlightened as the months of this world's year pass by, but "because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary"—from the inexhaustible, unchanging source of all life and joy, from Christ at the right hand of God. With Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, no growth in light and knowledge, for He is the Lord who changeth not, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Therefore the faith of His elect is the same faith that was in Paul, and in Timothy, and in the grandmother of Timothy—in His saints of all the ages; but the vessels in which the treasure, the unalterable treasure, is handed on, are fashioned each for his month in the world's changing seasons, the fresh "first-fruits" (such is the word translated new) reappearing every month, and the unfading leaves for ever green.

"Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is, for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat

cometh ; but his leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

And when the waters of the river reached the sea which covers the cities of the plain, the waters were healed. So is the day coming when the many waters which are peoples and multitudes, and nations and tongues, now a troubled sea of misery, which casts up mire and dirt, shall be healed by the stream of life flowing from the sanctuary of God.

The time is not yet come when darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people. The light of the world, once Christ in His own person, now in the person of His people, still shines wherever they are to be found in surrounding darkness.

But the Lord shall come with a shout to raise His dead saints, and to change His living ones, and to take them up to meet Him in the air, and return with Him to His Father's House. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself." Then shall darkness indeed cover the earth—no ray of light left to shine in that starless night.

And then shall the cry be made to the ancient people whose warfare is accomplished, and whose

iniquity is pardoned: "Arise, shine! for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee; for behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon *thee*, and His glory shall be seen upon *thee*. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

For salvation is ever of the Jews. Again shall the word of the Lord go forth from Jerusalem, and from the sanctuary of the Lord, in the midst of His restored Israel, shall the stream of living water flow afresh, till the great sea of sorrow and of misery is healed at last, and there shall be a draught of fishes. "There shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither, for they shall be healed, and everything shall live whither the river cometh. And the fishers shall stand upon the river and spread forth their nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many."

There will still be miry places and marshes unhealed, for the millennial reign is not the perfect state; but the good will be the rule, and the evil the exception; and the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord's glory. For He shall have come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth, and in His days

shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. All kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him, and the whole earth shall be filled with His glory.

Then shall His people Israel spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses, and the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

CHAPTER XIX

Consecration

“Oh, if our hearts only thought of it, the presence of God in us is far more blessed than when of old He dwelt in the Temple. Though not so palpable, it is far more real. Do you believe that the Lord Jesus sent down the Comforter to dwell here? Of course, as God He is everywhere. Do you believe that the Son came down? As God, *He* was everywhere, and yet He came down; and so with the Holy Ghost. He did come down, and where does He dwell? In our bodies, and in the Church of God. And what manner of people ought we to be?”

THUS have we followed the guide into the innermost recesses of that glorious Temple. He has shown us that house “builded for the Lord, exceeding magnifical.” He has led us through the courts and chambers into the place of the throne of the Lord, and we have seen how the glory of God entered to fill the House for ever.

That “entering in” we have seen, and we have seen also the “going forth”—the stream flowing from Him who is the Fountain of life, the ascended Christ, at the right hand of God.

There as God in His own glory, which He had with the Father before the world was ; as man in the glory which His Father gave Him, is He the source of that inexhaustible stream. And as He has given to His own the glory which the Father gave Him, so has He made them to be as rivers in the desert, bearing His life in the power of the Holy Ghost to the barren and desolate places.

And we have seen that the centre of this plan, designed by God and measured by His hand, is the altar of sacrifice, the Cross of Christ. If the sight of this holy Temple, formed from the measurements of God, has brought before our souls something of the holiness and the glory of the Temple not made with hands, it will have humbled us to the dust. We shall measure the pattern with shame all the deeper, because we shall have learnt something more of the love of Him whose atoning death is the centre around which all the courts of the Lord are set.

We shall have learnt something more of the holiness of God—of His consecration of His redeemed to Himself. We shall see that His dealings with us here below have for their purpose that we may be partakers of His holiness—a holiness which separates us with divinely-built walls from this present evil world. And yet in that guarded

sanctuary is the source of all blessing, flowing forth to the world so loved by God that He gave His only-begotten Son to be the life of the perishing.

Christ, He who liveth and was dead ; Christ ascended and glorified, the eternal source ; and His own, brought into the innermost sanctuary by His Blood, sent forth as a stream of life into the world from which He separated them, because in them is His life and His Spirit. "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you"—the commission given to them. And for them His prayer of intercession is ever offered. "Sanctify them through thy truth ; thy word is truth. As thou hath sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world."

May He teach us more of the glorious "entering in" of the Day of Pentecost ; more of the glorious "going forth" of that great day, and of the ages which have followed. One fountain of life—one only—flowing through the world still in revolt against Him, and therefore desolate and sorrowful ; but green and fruitful where the living water flows. If this is true, and such is our high and holy calling, have we not cause for unfathomable shame, and for adoration all the deeper in so marvellous a revelation of His undeserved, unwearying love ?

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