

Their Inventions

Psalm 99:6-8



By JOHN WATT

“Their Inventions”

It is before me to say a few words to you on these verses which we have read together, especially on verse 8—“their inventions.”

You will observe how those three men are linked together: Moses, Aaron and Samuel. They were the three great intercessors of the Old Testament. Moses was the apostle, Aaron the high priest, and Samuel the prophet. Moses and Aaron are called priests here, and Samuel one who called upon the Lord. In Jer.15 Moses and Samuel are linked together as intercessors. Moses and Aaron were linked together in service; Ex.25: 6-8; 29: 11; 40: 22-29; Num.16: 47; Ex.14: 15; 32: 11; 33: 12; Num.14: 13; 16: 21. As priests they had access to God; liberty to approach Him in prayer. God spoke to them—that is ministry; they spoke to Him in prayer. In Luke 10 He speaks to Mary; In Luke 11 we speak to Him. In Heb. 1 He speaks to us; in Heb. 13 we speak to Him. We have then “worship in His holy hill.” This is the desire of the Father, that we might worship Him. In these verses we have prayer, ministry, and worship.

I will now draw your attention to those words “their inventions.” We are living

in a peculiar day. It is called by men a day of progress, a day of inventions. The world is full of inventions. "God made man upright, but he has sought out many inventions." They have "witty inventions." Christendom is full of inventions and we need to be on our guard, as the people of God, lest we should use inventions. We are not left to ourselves in the service of God. He has given us instructions, but where inventions have been brought in, there has been departure from God. We must not get our ideas from the world, nor from Christendom. Israel had many inventions. God complains that they "went a whoring after their inventions."

I have observed that Moses, Aaron and Samuel, who are linked together in our Psalm, had each an invention of his own. We will look first at

Moses' Invention, Numbers 20.

When the children of Israel came into the wilderness of Zin, there was no water for the people, and "they chode with Moses." He was told to take *the* rod and to gather the people together and to "speak to the rock." He took his own rod, instead of Aaron's priestly rod, and "smote the rock," instead of speaking to it. The rock had been smitten once (Ex. 17: 6). Our Lord Jesus Christ was smitten once at Calvary, but He is now on high, as

our High Priest and we speak to Him to-day. The type shows the seriousness of Moses' action in Num. 20. God forgave him his sin, but took vengeance of his invention. He was not permitted to enter the land on account of it.

Next on the list comes

Aaron's Invention, Exodus 32.

The children of Israel were brought out of Egypt and "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor.10:2). He was their lord and they must be true to him. God took him up to the mount, to give him the pattern of the tabernacle, but they were not true to him, during his absence; for they "sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." In their thoughts were the words used elsewhere, "My Lord delayeth His coming," and they "rose up to play." He was receiving the pattern of the tabernacle, every whit of which spoke of Christ's glory; but Satan tried to forestall Moses, by using Aaron to bring in the golden calf, before Moses came down from the mount, with the pattern of God's tabernacle. Thus Aaron took away the hearts of God's people from Him. Aaron was a great orator; God Himself said, "I know Aaron the Levite, that he can speak well." He had no thoughts of his own—he got them from Moses (Ex.4:14,15). In Num. 12 he gets them from Miriam, and here

he gets them from the people. They said, "Up, make us gods." He expresses surprise that it came out a calf. But who made the mould? Aaron did, and it was his invention. Do not express surprise, my brother, when things turn out wrong. Remember you made the mould. Did God forgive Aaron? He did, but He took vengeance on his invention. It was ground to powder, and cast on the waters, and they were made to drink it.

Let us look next at

Samuel's Invention, 1 Sam. 8.

Great men can make mistakes and often, at the end of a useful life, there comes to light some invention which has been hidden there for years. Gideon had his invention and when the gold came from the Ishmaelites, he made the ephod. What a wonderful life of usefulness Samuel had, commencing with lowly service, till his fame as a prophet spread from Dan to Beer-sheba! But grace and gift do not run in the blood, and for any one to handle God's things there must be the spiritual qualifications for the service undertaken. He made his sons judges, but his sons were not men of character, nor men of piety; but wicked men, who seemed to think gain was godliness. This invention of Samuel was used by the children of Israel to obtain a king. We cannot appoint men be-

cause they are our kith and kin, to fill our shoes. They must be devout men, and full of the Holy Spirit. God forgave Samuel, but took vengeance on his invention.

These were not the only men who had inventions. You can trace that line right through the pages of Holy Scripture. We might look at others. There was

Abraham's Invention, Gen. 16.

Abraham asked God for a son. He did not wish the son of his steward, Eliezar, to be his heir. God promised him a son, but he could not wait God's time; so he must try an invention of his own. He had been down in Egypt, and brought up Hagar. If you go down into the world you will bring up something with you. He takes Hagar to wife as if an Egyptian could produce the promised seed. She produces "a wild ass of a man," as the New Translation renders the Hebrew, for the flesh can only produce flesh. Abraham went on with his invention for many years. God did not speak to him while he was attached to his invention. He wanted to save himself and his invention and cried to God "O that Ishmael might live before Thee." The time came when Isaac was born—then his invention must go. "Cast out the bond woman and her son." He was forgiven, but God must take vengeance on his invention.

Then there was

Rebekah's Invention, Gen. 27,

for the sisters can have inventions, as well as the brothers. She wanted the blessing for Jacob, the man she loved. God had marked out Jacob for the blessing, but she could not wait God's time. Isaac was old and blind. He was a man guided by his feelings, for when spiritual vision is gone feelings govern. He loved Esau because he fed him with savory food; he loved the wrong man. To get the blessing for Jacob Rebekah must have an invention. It was gloves for the hands, the only gloves that are mentioned in the Scriptures. Then the skins for the neck. He must take the name of his brother also. Isaac says, "Come near that I may feel thee, my son. The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." It was not Jacob's voice, but Rebekah's, for she put the words into his mouth. How often we have seen a brother using an invention at the oversight meeting. We have felt his hands and said, "Yes, they are your hands, but the voice is not yours—it is the woman's voice. You have gotten your thoughts from your wife." God forgave, but took vengeance on the invention.

Jacob had taken his brother's name and made his hands like Esau's. When his father said, "Art thou my son Esau?" he

answered, "I am thy son Esau." God met him at the brook Jabbok, when he was returning to Bethel, and "wrestled with him" there. Jacob asked for blessing—he had stolen the blessing by saying that his name was Esau. He could not have an invention in the presence of God, he could not tell God that his name was Esau. He said "My name is Jacob." God forgave him, but took vengeance on his invention. "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel." He must "put off the old man, with his deeds, and put on the new man."

Jacob's own sons had a similar invention—they brought to him Joseph's coat dipped in blood. God would not allow this to pass unjudged, though for years they told the same story. They were forced to come to Joseph; and all God's dealings with them, through Joseph, were to get them to judge their invention.

Israel's Invention, Numbers 13

The sending out of the spies was Israel's invention. When you read Numbers 13, you would think that the thought was from God; but when you read Deut.1, you see that it was their invention. They were in a low spiritual condition. When this happens there is a desire for inventions to cover up the condition. When the two came back with their report, they were not believed. Their gospel of a glorious

land was rejected. When the ten gave their report the hearts of the people failed them, and they wanted another invention. They said one to another "Let us make us a captain and let us return into Egypt." Caleb stilled the people and said "Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it." Did God forgive them? Hear the prayer of Moses, Num. 14:19, "Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of Thy mercy, and as Thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now." He forgave, but He took vengeance of their invention, "They shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them which provoked Me see it" (Num.14: 23).

The desire for a king was

Another Invention, 1 Sam. 8.

They wanted to be like the other nations. They borrowed this invention from the nations. God was their King, but they wanted a man to fight their battles — to lead them. They used the failure of Samuel's sons to press their desire. It is always easy to find an excuse to press our point, and to gain our desire. God warned them that it would be conscription under Saul —he would take, by force, from them the things which they valued most. They said "We will have him." God "gave them a

king in His anger and took him away in His wrath" (Hos.13:11). Did God forgive them? Yes, but He took vengeance of their invention. Saul was rejected, removed, then slain on Mount Gilboa. They mourned over him, and should have learned by the failure of their invention.

Yet

Another Invention, Numbers 11.

When God brought His people into the wilderness there were no baker's shops to supply them with bread. He opened the windows of heaven and rained the manna down—fed them with angel's food—with corn from heaven. This was to them like honey, at the start—then they fell a lusting after the fish of Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons, and the leeks and the onions and the garlic. There was nothing before their eyes but the manna. They must invent something to make it more to their taste. They took the food of angels and "ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans and made cakes of it." Today there has been a lusting after the food of Egypt. Christ has been despised, as the food of His people. They do many things to make Him more to their taste. Think of the professing people of God adding things to Christ! Look at the advertisements of Christendom today, to attract those who have no appetite for

Christ. God forgave Israel, but took vengeance of their inventions.

David's Invention, 1 Chron. 13

The Philistines, in returning the ark, put it on a new cart. God never dealt with them for this—they were not His people, and they had no Book to guide them. But when David, the king, borrowed their idea of a new cart, when he should have known better, God would not allow his invention to pass un-noticed. The ark had been lost for a long time and David wanted it back in its proper place, but he did not bring it in “the due order.” He gathered all the captains and military men, but never called the Levites, who were to bear the ark. Instead he put it on a new cart which he had made, and soon found two men to drive it. You can always find two men to drive an invention. Things went well until they came to the threshing floor, the place of testing. The oxen stumbled there, Uzza put out his hand to steady the ark, as if God needed any human hand to support His testimony; and He smote Uzza. David was displeased when God would not countenance his invention, but David must read God's book, judge himself, and go by the instructions given as to carrying the ark. There he found that the Levites were to carry it. God forgave him, but He took vengeance of his invention. Do not copy

the Philistines, or God will take vengeance of your invention.

Peter's Invention, Luke 9

The Lord took three men up into the mount of glory with Him. As the Lord prayed, He was changed. Two men appeared with Him, talking of His death. What a scene; the Lord changed, His garments sparkling, Moses and Elias talking with Him. Could any man think of an invention now? Yes, here comes Peter with new thoughts. He has been asleep; now he talks at random. "Let us make three tabernacles" etc. There was only one tabernacle in the wilderness and every whit of it spoke of Christ's glory. Now Peter wants three. The cloud which had followed the tabernacle appears, and overshadows them, and the Father speaks. His words show that he will take vengeance on Peter's invention, for the worthies of the Old Testament cannot be put on the same level as His Son. God speaks to them of the preciousness of His Son to Him.

Christendom's Inventions

The ground of gathering has been given up by them. In the early days of the history of the church, they came together as disciples, calling upon the name of the Lord. Soon they began to say, "I am of Paul and I of Apollos and I of Cephas," etc. As the Lord's garments were parted

into four, so the church at Corinth was divided into four. We see on all hands today parties and sects. They use the names of men, who become the heads of their parties. We must be on our guard against making the name of Christ the name of a party. We put up signs "Christians gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus meet here." Is not our invention having a "name of the Lord Jesus" party?

Order of Ministry

Christendom has failed to recognize the gifts which the ascended Christ has given, and says that they are centered in one man. In the church the Holy Spirit "divides to every man, severally as He wills," to one the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge" etc. (1 Cor.12: 7-11). Clerisy is a sin against the Holy Spirit. But we, too, are in danger, for we have an *every man* ministry. No man has a right to speak in the church, unless he "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet.4: 11). We need to guard against an *every man* ministry, as much as against a *one man* ministry.

Order of Worship

This has been altered. All saints are priests, fitted by the work of Christ to draw near to God. The divine idea of priesthood has been lost, and things are put into the hands of a special class. They say, "Only those who are ordained can

preach, or lead in worship." The truth is that those who are gifted, and called, by God, can preach, but all His saints are priests, and can worship. *Our* invention is that we think that hymn-singing is true worship. The book which has the largest place with us is the hymn-book. Worship is ascribing *worth* to God.

Baptism

Christendom's way in this, is sprinkling, instead of immersion. Unbelievers are baptized, when only believers should go under this ordinance. The divine order is make disciples first, then baptize them. This order has never been changed, and is always observed in the Scriptures. It is interesting to see that the Lord was not baptized when He was a child, but before He commenced His public ministry. *Our* invention is that we press the mode and overlook the teaching. The teaching is *buried*. You do not take a corpse to the cemetery and then bring it home again, but you leave it there. Do we really accept burial? A missionary preached to some natives who had been great fighters. When they accepted the truth and were being baptized, he noticed that every part of each man went under the water, except the right hand. They wanted to keep that hand to fight with. I am sure that we have done that very thing

—kept our right hand for fighting with our brethren.

Human Rules

God's word has been set aside and human rules have taken its place. It is not "what saith the Book, but what saith the rules?" They teach, for doctrine, the commandments of men. *Our* invention is that we call tradition truth. We hear so much about the truth, and when you inquire, you find it tradition. When you force tradition upon your brother, you bring him into bondage. We often hear "We have done this for so many years," or "Brother So-and-so taught us this." Can it be supported by Scripture? If so, we will bow to it.

A Salary

A stated salary is wrong. It turns the servant from the Lord to the people, and enfeebles his faith. This is an invention. Our invention is that we overlook the true servant, and forget that "the laborer is worthy of his hire." God said "Remember the Levites." There came a time when the Levites had to go to work not because they were not called and fitted for the work of the Lord, but because conditions were such that they were forgotten.

A Limited Fellowship

Christendom has its groups of confederate churches, called denominations. There

are hundreds of such groups. In the apostolic days saints were welcomed into the one church. Leaving one place and going to another they carried letters to inspire confidence. We have an invention today—a circle of meetings. Some godly brethren are refused because they come from meetings which we speak of as not in our circle of fellowship. Pray who made you the master of assemblies, to judge this matter? Where have you a Scripture for cutting off any company who carry out divine principles, who are sound in doctrine, and morally clean? Do they hold the doctrine of Christ? is the test.

Wherein we have departed from God, and from His word, let us confess it. He is gracious, and will forgive us, but He will take vengeance on our inventions.

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