

Worship and Remembrance, Volume 3

Daniel Smith

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Foreword

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To my Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ and

To the Saints who gather in His Name who have shown me through the Eternal Spirit the delight and duty of true worship of the Father and the abiding values of the great Sacrifice for poor sinners on Calvary's Cross I dedicate this third volume of meditations

Foreword

This, may it be said to the praise of the Spirit of God who inspires the thought, is my third volume of meditations on Worship and Remembrance. It is in the assemblies of the Lord's people, sometimes known as "the brethren," that I have, during the past twenty years, discovered the value and amiableness of the exercise of true worship. This exercise is of the utmost importance, and it should be the daily duty of all believers to offer their adoring worship and praise to God, our Father, through the atoning merits of His beloved Son, and the energies of the eternal Spirit.

I have found in the assemblies that my spirit has been much exhilarated by the melody and harmony of meaningful and suitable psalms, hymns, and divine songs; by the rich communions with God offered in adoring worship at His footstool; and by visions of His

excellent glories and perfections as Scriptures have been suitably used and applied.

I trust that all who read this volume may be brought more and more to worship “in the beauty of holiness” and “in spirit and in truth.” May they be enabled to express their profound thanksgiving and appreciation for our Lord’s atoning and substitutionary sacrifice on Calvary’s cross. Nothing else but such exercises will be sufficient to prepare us for employments and happiness of Heaven.

I am again indebted to my trusty friends at Prairie Bible Institute, Mrs. Eileen Firth and Mr. Bertram Shelton, for their very thorough revision of my manuscript, polishing my rough stones in so many ways. And I owe so much to my dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Elie Loizeaux and Miss Marie Loizeaux, for superintending the editing and setting up of the type, and for the printing.

I very much appreciate all the encouragement and help in so many more ways, with all three volumes of Worship and Remembrance. My thanks also to Miss Cathy Tune of Prairie for her typing of this volume.

Daniel Smith

Chapter 1 The Glory Of The Cross

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified/ I unto me, and I unto the world (Galatians 6:14).

It is not in human nature to glory in itself or in its own achievements without some measure of vainglory. Some glory in their physical strength; some in their mental proclivities; some in their learning; others glory in honors attained, or wealth gained, or scientific discoveries made.

Saul of Tarsus, afterward the Apostle Paul, made a categorical list in Philippians 3, of all those things in which he could glory after the flesh. Religiously, intellectually, and morally he stood higher than most of his contemporaries. But after his conversion on the Damascus road by direct revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, his chief employment and the design of all his ministry was not to set forth his own praises, but to glory in the cross of the Lord Jesus.

The Title Given Our Lord

This glorying of Paul was most remarkable, for in his day the cross was regarded as a symbol of shame and ignominy, associated only with the most degraded of men. The death of the Lord Jesus on the cross, however, turned the cross into a symbol of life and blessing. In this verse Paul reminds us who He is. Over against the ignominy of the cross he sets forth our Lord in His full title—the Lord Jesus Christ. Everything is in that title to magnify Him in His personal glory and to make Him most desirable to the fallen sons of men.

He is “The Lord,” which states His Godhood. This assures us that what He did on the cross was fully efficacious and answers the purpose for which He hung suspended there, that the work He had come to do was not too heavy for Him, that His righteousness would surely justify us from all sin, that His blood would most certainly procure the pardon of sinners, and that He would be able to keep what men commit unto Him. This title sets Him forth as God.

Next, Paul gives Him His human name—Jesus, which means “Jehovah the Saviour.” It is Heaven’s chosen name for Him because He would “save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). Such was the design of His coming into the world—that by means of the cross He would obtain eternal redemption for us. This is a very sweet name, especially to those who have seen the exceeding sinfulness of sin and themselves as lost and undone.

Then He is spoken of as “The Christ,” which is a translation of the Hebrew “Messiah” and encloses within its meaning the three offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. How precious that name was to those who waited for Him in ancient times! Andrew, after spending most of a day with Him, came forth in the evening to witness to his brother Simon Peter, “We have found the Messiah.” For him the quest of life was over, and the agony of seeking ended. He had found the secret of life.

The Cross as the Power of God

“The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18). The cross is the first fact of the Christian gospel and God’s means of saving sinners.

It has in it the doctrine of atonement—that the Lord Jesus laid down His life for us, gave Himself a ransom for us, offered Himself a sacrifice for the sins of the world, and shed His precious blood to purge away our sins. Upon that cross the blessed Son of God was “made...sin for us...that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The cross is the greatest display of the whole character of God. All attributes of the Godhead are in exercise there. All are united or compounded together to make the sacrifice efficacious, to meet every demand of the law, and to silence every accusation of Satan. How great and glorious, how astonishing and unparalleled, how matchless and boundless, how unchanging and everlasting is His love in the work of the cross! It is there, and there alone, that a full atonement has been made and the utmost ransom paid.

But it is a necessary part of the doctrine that man must receive it and exercise faith in it. It will bring us little comfort and do us little service unless we can, in some measure, appropriate it to ourselves, saying with the apostle: “He loved me and gave Himself for me.” It will bring no joy to our hearts that He has loved others if we do not believe that He loves us. It is faith’s look at the cross, as having a peculiar interest in His love, which makes it work effectually in us, to heal our wounds, relieve our terrors, remove our sins, and reconstitute us into a new creation.

The Glorifying in the Cross

But why did Paul glory in the cross? One atheistic philosopher acknowledged that Paul was among the six greatest minds who ever lived. He was the master of

logic—a master mind. He was no fanatic—not a man overcome by sudden emotion without a basis in reason. But he swept aside all else and tells us that he glories only in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross.”

There are some who would conceal it, some who are ashamed of it, some who regard it even as a shambles, so that in these days of spiritual declension you may hear many a sermon without mention of the cross, and sing many a hymn without a single reference to it. But not Paul! He glories in it because it vindicates God’s justice, honors His holiness, exhibits His wisdom, satisfies His righteousness, displays His love, and purges away all sin and guilt. It swings open a door of hope where no hope was, and a door through which any man can pass and be saved.

Glory, glory everlasting,
Be to him who bore the cross,
Who redeemed our souls by tasting
Death, the death deserved by us!
Spread His glory, spread His glory,
Who redeemed His people thus.
His is love, ’tis love unbounded,
Without measure, without end;
Human thought is here confounded,
’Tis too vast to comprehend:
Praise the Saviour! praise the Saviour!
Magnify the sinner’s Friend.

While we hear the wondrous story
Of the Saviour's cross and shame,
Sing we, "Everlasting glory
Be to God and to the Lamb."
Hallelujah, hallelujah!
Give ye glory to His Name!
Thomas Kelly

Chapter 2 God's Glory And Man's Shame

I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting (Isaiah 50:6).

Our Lord referred to this prophecy as soon to be fulfilled in Himself when He said to His disciples in Luke 18:31-33, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death." The only possible fulfillment of such a prophecy can be found in God's beloved Son.

Remember His Greatness As God

In Isaiah 9:6 the prophet gives us a cluster of names concerning the Messiah. In the midst is this one—"The mighty God." In 40:9 he has the forerunner crying, "Behold your God!" Then in our Lord's coming into our humanity it was said of Him by the angel of the Lord: "They shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23).

Then in 50:2-3 Isaiah has these words from Messiah's own lips: "Behold, at My rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness ... I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering." These are works which only God can do. And it was this same mighty God, the high and holy One who inhabiteth eternity, who created all things, who became flesh to

dwell and converse with men on earth. He was God in our nature—God manifest in the flesh. Without ceasing to be God, or laying aside any divine attributes, He became a true and proper Man and “dwelt among us.”

His Godhood was wonderfully displayed in His Manhood. He did the works of the Father, and those works bore witness of His Deity. The glory of His Godhood broke forth at times when He raised the dead, commanded the winds and waves to cease their raging, and knew what was in man. All divine attributes, perfections, and excellencies were displayed in His wondrous Person. All shone out resplendently in the days of His flesh as “the brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of His Person.” The glory of God was fully manifest and most conspicuous in the Lord Jesus, even though veiled in human flesh.

Remember His sufferings as Our Substitute

Isaiah 50 is an amazing passage, which turns so sharply from a declaration of His Godhood to the pathos of the words in verse 6: “I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting.” No words could so express the sufferings of our Lord and the miserable condition into which He was brought. It was a state of great humiliation—of sufferings of both body and soul. No tongue can tell, no heart conceive what the Lord underwent. The very deep distress of such sufferings was the more manifest from what He said to His Father both in the garden and upon the cross—sufferings which were intolerable to any other but Himself.

“I gave My back to the smiters.” The lash with which He was scourged was of ox leather knotted with slivers of

sheep bone in order to tear away and mangle the flesh. I have heard it said of Isaiah 53:5 that the word “stripes” is really the singular “stripe,” as though His back was so stripped of its flesh that it appeared as one broad stripe.

“My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.” “His cheeks are as a bed of spices,” says the bride in Song of Solomon 5:13, pointing to her Bridegroom-Lover. It is figurative language to describe the beauty of His face. Our Lord evidently did not have the smooth cheeks so common today, but cheeks with hair growing upon them, suggested by the metaphor, “bed of spices.” His looks were graceful and majestic. It is strange that the Roman Church so often presents Him as an infant in a woman’s arms, whereas He was in His full Manhood when He suffered in our room and stead.

Hair on the cheeks once expressed manliness and courage, prudence and gravity, nobleness and majesty. And it is plain to see that our Lord, having hair on His cheeks, was grown to man’s estate. But to have this hair plucked out must have caused excruciating pain and probably accounted for the marring of His visage. “His visage was so marred more than any man” (Isaiah 52:14).

“I hid not My face from shame and spitting.” There is no more shameful act than to spit in another’s face. Our Lord did not hide His blessed face from such shame. As He gave His back voluntarily to the smiters, so also He gave His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. Remember who He was— the One who covered the heavens with blackness, which He does at night in the natural world, and which He did over the whole world when on the cross, as though to hide the shame of man.

But he did not hide His face at such insult. What profanity—to cover the blessed face of the Altogether Lovely One with spittle! Hell must have been at its hottest in such men. It would be a dastardly act to spit in any person's face, but to spit in the face of God's beloved Son is shame beyond description. It is man at the moral bottom of hell's dark pit.

Remember His Comfort as Our Saviour

When we gather round His feast of remembrance, how cooling and comforting is His lovely presence in the midst of His adoring and worshipping people. What comfort His sacrifice has brought to our souls! The blessings of grace, which He has procured for all who believe, which have removed the fierceness of divine wrath, when powerfully applied to the heart by the Spirit of God bring the greatest comfort and refreshment.

He comforts best who suffers most. Who would seek comfort from a proud and haughty spirit? There is nothing which can overtake us that our blessed Lord has not suffered, and therefore He comforts best. It is He alone who can comfort those who mourn, who are in deep distress with afflictions, who languish in prisons, who suffer scandal and slander, who have to endure great physical pain.

And shall we mourn and repine when He so willingly gave His back to the smiters? Shall we hide our witness and testimony when He hid not His face from shame and spitting? The Lord Jesus is not only set before us as our Lord, Saviour, and Mediator, but also as our Example. His sufferings on our behalf are to encourage us to endure suffering for His Name's sake. Men spit only

here on earth. They cannot now spit in His face, for He is where revilers will never come. Nor will they spit in ours save for this short time here on earth.

The cloudless day is nearing,
When Thou, O Lord, wilt come,
Thy radiant beauty wearing
To take Thy people home!
Bright hosts on hosts around Thee
Shall catch Thy living rays,
And all who once have found Thee
Breathe out new songs of praise.
But how shall I then know Thee
Amid those hosts above?
What tokens there will show me
The object of Thy love?
Thy glories, all excelling,
In pure effulgence shine,
But GLORY in Thee dwelling
Will ne'er proclaim Thee mine.
The wounds, Thy wounds, Lord Jesus,
Those deep, deep wounds will tell
The sacrifice that frees us
From self, and death, and hell!
These link Thee once forever
With all who own Thy grace;

No hand these bonds can sever,

No hand these scars efface.

C.A.H.

Chapter 3 A Triple Crucifixion

The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world (Galatians 6:14).

The Galatian believers were in danger of going back to dead forms and ceremonies. They came under the searching eye of the anointed Apostle Paul as to the reality of their faith. He could detect a note of falseness in them. They would like to have added something to the cross to relieve it of its reproach. The carnal ordinances of the Old Testament dispensation had great sensual effect. The symbolic rites were a mighty spectacle to the senses. But Paul's "God forbid" stopped them in their tracks. He sets before them three crosses which make up true, living, Christian experience.

Christ Crucified

"The cross"—there it is in all its ruggedness and fearsomeness. There is a movement of Satan today which expresses itself through supposedly refined intellects and which substitutes the word "death" for "cross." They would like to conceal the manner of our Lord's death to hide its hideous nature. It was something associated with crime, ignominy, and shame. But no cotton wool must be wrapped around that cross to hide what it really was. It was a Roman gibbet, and Paul did not hide the shame of it.

The cross was a synonym for all the sufferings and sorrows which made up our Lord's life on earth and which ended in the cross. It was the mark of the curse. So our Lord died an accursed and ignominious death on the cross. Who can measure the afflictions and

sufferings which our Lord underwent on that gibbet of shame? Hear His prophetic cry in Psalm 69:1-2: "Save Me, O God; for the waters are come in unto My soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow Me." Hence His sufferings on the cross are called a baptism.

There was the buffeting and the spitting, the piercing of His hands and feet, but far deeper were the vials of God's wrath poured upon Him as the sinners' Substitute so that "terrors took hold of Him as waters" until He was "sore amazed" and "exceedingly sorrowful." Drops of sweat fell as "great drops of blood" to the ground as the bitter waters began to flood His holy soul. Such was the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The World Crucified

"The world is crucified unto me." The apostle looked upon the world as carrion—unfit for human consumption. It is a world organization against God and against His Christ. It has no life with which to sustain the life of a believer, but is a dry and barren place—"dry, parched, and thirsty ground." The world is the great Babylon of Revelation and is doomed to fall.

This world may be a very rough place for the believer and a true follower of the Lord will meet with many difficulties, trials, and afflictions. Its principles and practices are quite other than the Lord's kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Everything in it is a snare and trap and pit, and the only safe reaction to the world is to reckon it as a crucified felon—a carcass nailed to the cross.

The world is vastly appealing to the flesh. It makes its appeal to every temperament. It has a religion—the religion of Cain, which would even recognize God, but come before Him with the fruit of its own toil to justify itself. It has recreation, commerce, education, but none of these have any place for God’s Beloved. It has its honors which it heaps on men, many of whom are sunk in shameful dissipation. It has its riches which allure men to spend the whole of life in their pursuit.

This was the world which the apostle spoke of as being crucified unto him. He was not enslaved by its pursuits, enamored by its honors, entertained by its pleasures, bound by its principles, influenced by its smiles, or governed by its spirit. Nor did he fear its threatenings, for they could do no more than kill the outward body. The world was crucified unto him by the cross of Christ.

The Believer Crucified

“I [am crucified] unto the world.” The world scorned Paul as it did his Lord. They must have esteemed him most highly when as a student he sat at the feet of Gamaliel and then blossomed into a great authority of Hebrew learning, a Pharisee of the Pharisees in his strict adherence to every jot and tittle of the law. He had one of the greatest minds ever given to men—a man of great power in logical thinking.

But when Paul was saved by the Lord and began to preach Christ and Him crucified, then the world thought him mad. Indeed, Festus, the Roman governor, cried with a loud voice while Paul was making his defense before king Agrippa: “Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad” (Acts 26:24).

And if that scorn came from a Roman, what shall we say was poured upon the great apostle by Jewry? What conflict arose as soon as he went forth to preach the glad tidings! We read that at Thessalonica “the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar” (Acts 17:5).

When made to face the chief priests and all their council, Ananias, the high priest, had him struck on the mouth (Acts 23:2). We read in the same chapter that more than forty Jews made a compact that they would eat nothing until they had slain him. Both Jews and Gentiles despised him as “the offscouring of this world.” Paul was as carrion to the world for so he was reckoned by the world.

Jesus Christ, Thou King of glory,
Born a Saviour—Prince to be,
While the angel hosts adore Thee,
We joy in Thee,
Singing of Thy grace the story,
Praise, praise to Thee.
Thou the ransom price hast given,
Setting thus the captive free;
Thou art Lord of earth and Heaven;
We joy in Thee.
Through Thy blood we stand forgiven,
Praise, praise to Thee.
Risen Lord! at Thy returning

Sweet and full our song shall be;
Hasting to that blissful morning,
We joy in Thee,
Thou hast read our spirit's yearning,
Praise, praise to Thee.
H. K. Burlingham

Chapter 4 A Bundle Of Myrrh

A bundle of myrrh is my Wellbeloved unto me; He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts (Song of Solomon 1:13).

The Song of Solomon is the song of songs. It is, to me, a most valuable part of the Word of God. It should be regarded as the holy of holies of the sacred writings. You may go to other books for doctrine, or history, or prophecy, but if you would know the love union between Christ and His Church, then you must come to this book. It is written of Christ and His Church, and no other interpretation will suffice. The language is the language of lovers.

The Title She Gives Him

“My Wellbeloved.” This is how the elect bride, the Church, speaks of her Bridegroom-Lover, Christ. He is not wellbeloved to the world, nor is He to those who have little desire but to live in the low valleys of spiritual life. For them the Saviour has but little charm save to forgive their sins and save their souls from hell. But to the mature believer who climbs the mountain of spiritual elevation He is wellbeloved.

It is a heart appreciation of the bride for what her Bridegroom-Lover is in Himself, for undertaking her cause, dying in her room and stead, espousing her to Himself in resurrection life, and giving her love, which is unchangeable and everlasting. It is an expression of her love to Him which springs from His love shown to her. There is nothing which so charms her soul as the love of her Bridegroom-Lover. Compared with that, how low and

mean are the joys of earth which are but husks and empty of any eternal goodness.

The Figure She Uses of Him

“A bundle of myrrh is my Wellbeloved unto me.” By this figurative language she means, first, He is her preciousness. Myrrh in those ancient times was the most costly and principal of spices. It was used in the anointing oil of Exodus 30:23, which was a divinely arranged compound for the anointing of prophets, priests, and kings. It was never to come upon the flesh, nor was it ever to be duplicated for man. The figure speaks of the Lord Jesus as most precious in His Person, His offices, and His graces. “Unto you therefore which believe He is precious” (1 Peter 2:7).

He is also her perfuming. Myrrh is called “sweet smelling myrrh” (Song of Solomon 5:5), and the Church is said to be perfumed with the merits of our Saviour. Worship, praise, prayer, thanksgivings, and intercessions, which rise out of the natural heart of man, are as the breathings of corrupt lungs and nothing but a stench to the holiness of God. It is only Christ present in the heart who can perfume such sacrifices of worship and praise that they rise sweet-smelling and acceptable and delightfully fragrant before God.

How sweet is Christ then to those who find their joy in the fellowship and communion of love with Him! He is so sweet to the heart of believers that they would not be without Him though they were to suffer much for His Name’s sake. He is the tree of life in the bitter waters of Marah (Exodus 15:25).

Again, He is the bride's preservative. Myrrh was used in old times to embalm the dead and so to arrest corruption. Thus the elect bride is saying of her Bridegroom-Lover that it is He who keeps her from the corruptions which are in the world through lust. Without Christ, human life lies in deep corruption which rots the soul. All we are must be sweetened by Christ, or else we will surely sink into a deep pit.

The Place Where She Holds Him

"He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts." She will not cast Him behind her back, nor will she put Him on her shoulder as a burden. She will not have Him anywhere but in front of her, where she can behold His blessed face. And she will have Him near her heart where no other is allowed to come. Nothing is more desirable to a great lover of Christ than His near presence and the sight of Him before the eyes. It is an expression of the bride's desire that she have a living consciousness of His sensible presence.

She would have Him near and close to her "all night"—that is, throughout this long dark night of man's sinning, until the shadows are past and the day of glory breaks. She would not have any interruption to this near communion. How important it is to guard His near presence—to be sure He is with us, not in dreams and fancies, but in reality and truth.

When some sent messages to David's house, Michal, his wife, took an image and laid it in the bed. We must be careful we do not have an image of Christ in our hearts but, rather, His living and real presence. This will surely be for our own comfort and refreshment and delight, for

nothing charms the saints so much as close and intimate fellowship with the Wellbeloved.

Lord Jesus, Thine,

No more this heart of mine

Shall seek its joys apart from Thee;

The world is crucified to me,

And I am Thine.

Thine, Thine alone,

My joy, my hope, my crown;

Now earthly things may fade and die,

They charm my soul no more, for I

Am Thine alone.

Thine, ever Thine,

Forever to recline

On love eternal, fixed, and sure;

Yes, I am Thine forevermore,

Lord Jesus, Thine.

Albert Midlane

Chapter 5 The Lover Of My Soul

O Thou whom my soul loveth (Song of Solomon 1:7).

“Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.” So wrote the Apostle Paul in the best-known love chapter in the Scriptures. It is difficult to define love. We may describe it and delight in it, but find it difficult to define. Charity was the ancient word for love and was so when the King James Version was written in A.D. 1611. But charity has now become a synonym for almsgiving, so we use the word love in place of charity.

Faith is vital to Christian experience, and hope is necessary to our comfort. But faith and hope are vanities of the mind unless there is love for the Lord Himself. The bride-elect in this song of love has, at this point, lost something of the sensible presence of her Bridegroom-Lover, and her heart cries out for a new discovery of Him. In a previous verse she has confessed the neglect of her own vineyard. This often happens when we are taken up with men, or contest for the peculiar doctrines of men, or fight for the cause of men. Then, lo, we sadly discover loss in that close and intimate relationship with our Lord into which His love has brought us. “My own vineyard have I not kept.”

Her Singular Esteem of Him

“O Thou!” We have come to days when it has become common to address the Lord by the plural “You.” There is more than a grammatical nicety, however, to the elect bride’s cry for a new manifestation and expression of her Bridegroom-Lover’s love. She may have been

somewhat neglectful, but she has no doubt about whom she loves. There is no need for her to mention His name. He stands alone—"O Thou!" "You" is a plural word, but this bride has not two lovers. She is not a harlot whose door is open to many lovers. Her heart's affections are wrapped around One only. The streams of her affections flow only in one direction and toward one object—one glorious Person. There is no rival.

But is this true of us? There is a great deal of sentimentalism abroad today, and with it a vicious criticism of those who love the Lord Jesus supremely to the seeming neglect of those near and dear after the flesh. But, says our Lord, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matthew 10:37-38). The history of the Church is replete with martyrs who laid down their lives for the Lord's sake though it meant parting with all loved ones. There could be no rival to challenge their love of Him.

I recall my own mother saying to me when the Lord was directing me to China: "Could you not serve the Lord here in the homeland?" No! I recall another missionary friend whose mother said to her: "If you go to China, it will be over my dead body." And it happened that way! There must be no competitor to the soul's devotion to the Saviour.

Her Confession of Love to Him

"O Thou whom my soul loveth." "Loveth" is in the present tense. She does not say she loved Him ten years ago, or that she will love Him ten years hence. She loves Him in this present. Here was unfeigned and sincere affection toward Him. There may have been some

withdrawal of His sensible presence from her because of her weakness in performing works, or defending the doctrines of men. She may have been a little weakened in her spiritual affections by some temporary lapse, yet she could put her hand upon her heart and say with Peter, "Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee" (John 21:17).

What a heart-rending cry this is—"O Thou whom my soul loveth." She desires Him with all her heart. She can go no further without some new expression of His nearness and communion. She cares not how He chooses to come to her, but she will make this her plea until she comes into the full enjoyment of His presence again.

And can we go on without some real manifestation of His love and grace? We may say we cannot. But do we pant for Him like this? Here in this bride-elect we feel something of the vehemence of desire. How much her heart was set upon her Wellbeloved! How eagerly she desired His coming to her in the way of manifestation! Then let this cry be our cry—that He would come and break into our lives afresh, somehow, with His grace and love, and fully satisfy the deep longings of our souls.

Jesus, Thou Joy of loving hearts,
Thou Fount of life, Thou Light of men,
From the best bliss that earth imparts,
We turn unfilled to Thee again.
We taste Thee, O Thou Living Bread,
And long to feast upon Thee still;
We drink of Thee, the Fountain Head,
And thirst our souls from Thee to fill!

Our eager spirits yearn for Thee,
Where'er our changeful lot is cast;
Glad since Thy gracious smile we see,
Blest, when our faith can hold Thee fast.

Bernard of Clairvaux

Chapter 6 The Fellowship At The Feast

For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread (1 Corinthians 10:17).

It is the blessed habit of the saints to specially remember our Lord at His own instituted remembrance feast. This ought to be our hearty resolve each Lord's day. Nothing should be allowed to disturb these moments of quiet and sacred remembrance. Then let us put aside all worldly care, and all daily business, and all the griefs and sorrows of our earthly pilgrimage, and gather unto Him and with His saints in this feast of love.

The Celebrants of the Past

It is pleasing to remember how many of all ages in the Christian Church have celebrated the remembrance feast and the sufferings and death of the Saviour in this, His own appointed way. It has never been a crowded table; but it has never been a forsaken one. Many are now in Heaven who were constant at His supper on earth, but now feast with Him in the banqueting halls of Heaven.

Many of these dear ones of ages past commemorated His sufferings and death on our behalf at the risk of their lives. The mountaintops were not too cold; the moors and glens not too isolated; the caves of the wilderness not too damp and drear for those noble souls who loved their Lord. They testified their devotion to Him at all hazards and under every hardship. They sat where the Belshazzars and Caesars of this world never sat nor ever shall.

There was a good deal of zeal, warmth, and fervency in their devotion. Their excellent example stirs and excites our own love as we remember them. We can but admire these saints of past days who cleaved to the Lord through grace, and with great purpose of heart kept the feast. They recognized His righteousness for their justification, His fullness for their every need, and His blood for their pardon and cleansing. They would not forget and therefore were resolved to keep the feast.

The Celebrants in Our Own Land

It is pleasing to remember, too, that there are many believers in our own land who come to this appointed ordinance. We who are of British stock have ancestors who once sat at "the table of devils," as in the case of the Druids. We read in our history, and bow in shame as we read, that at one time our ancestors offered up human sacrifices, and these were very popular in Britain.

So we heartily rejoice that missionaries came from abroad and preached the gospel of God's saving grace so that new converts among our forefathers set up the Lord's remembrance feast and spread the sacred elements in our native land. Such dates are unknown; such places are unmarked; but the sweet influence of their faith and love has done its wonders and left behind a testimony of incalculable value among our peoples.

It is cause for praise that there are so many today, though few compared to the vast number of unbelievers, who count a day in His courts better than a thousand elsewhere, and delight to remember their Lord. They neither creep there by stealth, nor steal up, like Nicodemus, by night, but do so openly and publicly and

count it their joy and delight to thus meet the Lord at the remembrance feast.

The Celebrants in Other Lands

It is also pleasing to remember that our Lord's sacrificial love in His death is remembered on all continents and in practically all countries—in the great lands of China, Africa, India, and, maybe with the exception of a few Islamic lands, in all other places of the earth. I myself have been present at a thousand such gatherings in many lands, from the most southerly assembly in the world to almost the most northerly; from the most easterly in New Zealand to the most westerly in the Americas. Still they multiply, and the voice of adoring worship and praise never ceases in the earth.

Thus we are part of a great family of believers—"a multitude which no man can number"—though we may meet in small local fellowships. These small groups, if they but thought of themselves, could easily feel uncomfortable and discouraged or sad. But it is not so. The Lord is present in their midst, and they know they are loved by Him, that they are the gift of the Father to Him, that they are a possession purchased by His own blood. They are morsels together of the one great loaf.

There is an inseparable connection between our growth and increase in love and appreciation for the Saviour and the observance of this remembrance feast. Alas, we think of some who have grown cold in spiritual affections because of the neglect of it. There is nowhere else where we can be better established than in being engrossed and absorbed in remembering the love of Christ in His sacrifice for us.

Then, too, we should see to it that in coming there is tender love for all the Lord's people. There should be no discord among the saints of God. It is a corporate fellowship of all who are saved of the Lord, and the unbroken loaf on the table testifies of that oneness. We are to exclude none who are born of God and who maintain a godly life. But we are to examine ourselves, too. We must put away all that is offensive to our Lord and come, sit down, and enjoy the feast with the Lord and all His redeemed ones.

O God, how wide Thy glory shines!

How high Thy wonders rise!

Known thro' the earth by thousand signs,

By thousands thro' the skies.

But when we view Thy strange design

To save rebellious worms,

Where vengeance and compassion join

In their divinest forms:

Now the full glories of the Lamb

Adorn the heav'nly throne,

While saints on earth that know His name,

Their Lord and Saviour own.

Isaac Watts

Chapter 7 The King And Our Spikenard

While the king sitteth at His table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof (Song of Solomon 1:12).

The highest honor given to man is to have access into the presence of the King of glory. It is an honor even to enter the presence of a king on earth. A single interview with a monarch of repute is highly esteemed, much to be coveted, and never to be forgotten. But we are naturally averse to drawing nigh to God. The Jews of old stood afar off. Even Moses trembled at God's manifestation of His holy presence at Mount Sinai.

The King

The Lord Jesus is the Father's appointed King. "Yet have I set My king upon My holy hill of Zion." (Psalm 2:6). The rule over this world has been given to Him and to Him alone. But before He takes over the government of it, there is to be a successive and continuous demonstration of the failure of man to govern it. Indeed, every man who has grasped at the throne of universal dominion, such as Alexander the Great, several Caesars, Saladin, Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin, and the like, has ended his life in shame and disgrace.

Our Lord, whose goings forth have been from of old, and who existed from all eternity as the Son of God, is constituted the appointed King. He bore this title and character throughout all the Old Testament dispensations, so that believers in that period looked forward to His coming to establish His kingdom.

In the days of His flesh, our Lord rode into Jerusalem and presented Himself as the King in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, “Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass” (Matthew 21:5). The wise men from the east sought for Him as “the king of the Jews.” This also was the title Pilate had written over Him on the cross. But now, having been raised from the dead and given all power in Heaven and in earth, He reigns in Heaven as “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” So these words, “The king sitteth at His table,” are very well suited to His present exalted state in Heaven, and that exalted state is abundantly manifest in that He is both Lord and Christ and sits at the right hand of God.

Our Spikenard

In the Old Testament dispensation, the high priest had access, once each year, into the holy of holies. Here God communed with him from above the mercy seat. Now with such a way open, and with such a welcome awaiting him, what would we have thought if the high priest had neglected to enter in? If he had ever done such a thing, the people would have been shocked at his impiety. They would not have been surprised had fire from God consumed him as it did those who offered strange fire.

But it is very common today, sad to say, that so many believers are guilty of this impiety. One can but wonder that such a freedom is so little prized and cultivated. Israel’s was only a sensuous worship—the ark most splendid—the mercy seat sublime—the cherubim majestic—the cloud of glory effulgent. But these were only “shadows of good things to come.” We may now

behold the full glory of God in the face of our Lord and Saviour.

It is this vision of God's glory in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ which causes the spikenard of praise to break forth from our hearts. It is the manifestation of His glories and beauties, and all that He has accomplished in the way of our redemption, which releases the praise of His saints. These praises, like spikenard, are a sweet-smelling savor unto the Lord—as David said: "Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense" (Psalm 141:2).

Spikenard comes from a very small plant. It was reckoned one of the principal spices because of its fragrance. It was this very costly ointment which Mary broke over the Saviour's feet. The offering of our worship and praise has an efficacy of sweet aroma because all is perfumed with the merits of our adorable Redeemer.

Notice, too, that the King sits at His table with His saints. They feast together and nowhere more so than at His own remembrance feast. Though He is so great a King, and constituted so by the Father, yet we sit at His table as lame Mephibosheth did at the table of David. It is His blessed presence which draws our worship into exercise, even as the sun opens flowers and releases their fragrance. It is the King's delight to sit at His table and view such graces in His people. There should be nothing wanting for His people. He is here and we are with Him. His Person, His grace, His sacrifice, His blood, His righteousness should all draw out our deepest adoration and worship.

O soul-inspiring story

God's majesty and grace
In lustrous strokes of glory
Deep carved in Jesu's face!
Hearts wrapt in contemplation
Of Godhead's Image bright,
Break forth in adoration,
In wonder and delight!
There Manhood, all perfection,
The Godhead-fullness shine;
God's love and man's affection,
The human, the divine;
A life, a death, transcendent,
Revealing God as love:
Here, lowly Man, dependent—
God over all, above!
Unsullied blaze of glory!
O ever-radiant Face!
Thy rich, unfathomed story
Transfigures us in grace!
Made like Thee, soon, completely,
With love-lit eyes we'll scan
God's face unveiled sweetly
In Thine, Thou Son of Man!
Frank Allaben

Chapter 8 The Search For Worship

The Father seeketh such to worship Him (John 4:23).

The Father

It is God the Father of whom the Lord speaks to the Samaritan woman—of Him who is God in nature and Father in office. The name Father seldom occurs in the Old Testament and never there in the New Testament sense. As used in the Old Testament, the word “Father” refers to the Triune God, Jehovah’s relationship to the nation of Israel as their Head, as in Deuteronomy 32:6; Isaiah 63:16; Jeremiah 31:9. In our Lord’s words to the Samaritan woman, He is speaking of God as the Fountainhead of all created things in Heaven and in earth—the Father of all spirits, the God and Father of all men, God of the spirits of all men, the great God our Creator.

When our Lord says that “God is a Spirit,” He does not mean some cold, distant abstraction—a mere assemblage of divine attributes—but a God of life and love with the heart of a Father and with all a Father’s resources and rights. True, men have broken that relationship and strayed like a prodigal into a far country, but that does not change God’s potential nature, though it does alter man’s relation to Him and the treatment man receives from His hands. He put the fatherly heart in all men and did so after the likeness of His own. It is that fatherly heart which yearns over a wayward family.

The Father's Search

The word “seeketh” means more than appears. God the Father is in search of something—something which to Him is very precious and valuable—something which He cannot afford to lose. Great as God is, there are some things He cannot think of letting go. It is the very greatness of God which makes Him, in a sense, needy: for it makes Him understand the value of man, whom He has created.

So when anything of man is lost to Him, He searches for it. He would not part with it. God is no cruel tyrant who says: “I have lost a certain thing in man, but I can do without it.” Others may overlook something they lose, but not God. “Can a woman forget her sucking child?... Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee” (Isaiah 49:15). God cannot forget man. He seeks the lost.

We must not dilute this expression and say God will have us back if we will come, that He will accept our worship if we care to give it. That is far short of the meaning of Scripture. We might ask, but what can God need? What can He be in want of? But we read that He seeks. He seeks something here on earth and from among men. What He seeks is the worship which has been lost to Him and which has impoverished man who no longer worships.

The Father's Search for Worshipers

God is in search of many things lost to Him by man's default—affection, allegiance, reverence, obedience, but primarily worship. This is what He specially seeks and claims. From this earth and from man, whom God has created, there should arise, and that without ceasing,

the fragrance of holy worship. As the Lord even answered Satan: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

It grieves God that man through sin has been ruined of this best of all exercises. But He seeks to have it restored. Does it seem a small thing to you that God should lose the worship of men when He has the worship of myriads of angels? Then you are wrong! God misses the worship of every person.

This concerns God. It should concern us. Everything we do concerns God, but most of all He is concerned about our worship. And is not His desire for our worship enough to provoke us to come to Him with our adoration, since He has made a way back to Himself through the cross of His dear Son? His search is worldwide. His call is universal. The shepherd loses a sheep, and the shepherd misses the sheep more than the sheep the shepherd. The shepherd does the seeking, not the sheep. The woman loses her coin. It does not miss her, but she cannot afford to be without it, so she seeks it. The father loses a son. He is troubled. The prodigal may not miss his father, but the father mourns and misses his son.

God is in earnest. He seeks worshipers. He is worthy to be worshiped. He desires worship from men here on earth, as well as from angels in Heaven. But the worship He seeks is spiritual worship. The outward man is nothing. He wants the inner man of the heart—the innermost shrine. Worship must arise from the depths of a man's soul, but it can rise only through redemption. Forms, sounds, dress, gestures, ornaments are not worship, nor do they help worship. They are things

which hinder worship. God wants our hearts. It is only the blood of Christ which can purge sin from us, remove our guilt, and free our soul from the dread of God, so that man, through such grace, can give to God true worship. The blood of Christ satisfies God's righteousness and the sinner's conscience. The Spirit of God renews the penitent man. It is the Spirit who transforms. We are to use the precious blood. We are to ask for the Holy Spirit. In this way we may come and give to God what He is seeking—the true worship due to His holy Name.

Praise ye the Father! Praise our God most holy,
Who cheers the contrite, girds with strength the weak!
Praise Him who doth with glory crown the lowly,
And with salvation beautify the meek!
Praise the Father—Source of all our blessing,
Before whose gifts earth's richest boons wax dim!
Resting in Him, His peace and joy possessing,
All things are ours, for we have all in Him!
Praise ye the Father! praise ye Him who gave us,
In full and perfect love, His only Son!
Praise ye the Christ, who died Himself to save us!
Praise Father, Son, and Spirit-Three in One!
Lady Margaret Cockburn-Campbell

Chapter 9 The Where, When, And How, Of True Worship

True worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth (John 4:23).

The first meeting place between God and man, after man's ruin by sin, was at an altar of sacrifice. Later on came God's desire for a sanctuary that He might dwell among His people, so the Tabernacle was built. Still later, God gave instructions for the more permanent Temple which Solomon built. In the New Testament, and with the Lord's coming into our humanity, our Lord spoke of His own body as the true temple. Then, later, believers were "builded together" into a holy, spiritual temple, that from their redeemed hearts there would arise worship. God has lost the worship of men through the ruin of sin, and the whole plan of redemption was to restore men to be true worshipers.

God asks and seeks for the worship of His creatures. It was about worship that the Lord spoke to the woman of Samaria. Since she was such a profligate person, we would have thought it more appropriate to have spoken to her about the new birth. Why speak of worship to such a one? Because it was in the matter of worship that the Samaritans had gone far astray, and because the first inquiry of the woman had to do with it. So to this poor sinful woman our Lord spoke of the Father, that the hour was come to worship Him in spirit and in truth. He then added these remarkable words: "The Father seeketh such to worship Him."

What our Lord was emphasizing to this woman was the difference between the outward and the inward exercise—between the unreal and the real—between the unacceptable and the acceptable. Samaria and Jerusalem, with their mounts Gerizim and Moriah, were external places where Samaritans and Jews worshiped. But God is not the God of the outward—not the God of places, but of living beings; not the God of cities and mountains, but of the hearts and souls of men. No sites or buildings, however ornate and beautiful, can substitute for the worship of the spirit. The matter of worship is neither intellectual nor aesthetic, but something essentially spiritual. Worship is not what gratifies the senses or what is tasteful to the ear and eye, but what is acceptable to God.

Where Am I to Worship?

Man asks that question, and answers it in his own way. So often men have chosen a certain sacred spot where a godly man has lived, or where the footsteps of a godly man have trod, and consecrated such places by sacred rites. But God's answer to "Where?" is "everywhere"—on sea or land, in vale or hill, in desert or garden, on moor or fen—anywhere and everywhere.

Where Am I to Worship?

Man asks that question and again answers it in his own way. His answer is—at certain times, certain hours, certain days, and these often arranged by priestly authority, or by ecclesiastical law, or by traditional rule. But God's answer is—at all times and in all seasons. The naming of days and hours is indeed necessary for public gatherings for worship, as in our own assemblies, but

worship itself is to be perpetual, without the restraints of time. All hours are holy. All days are holy. One day may be set aside for corporate gathering, but only because of order and not for restriction.

How Am I to Worship?

Man asks the question and again answers in his own way. He may say—in certain ornate buildings, a pillared cathedral, with forms, ceremonies, vestments, processions, and postures. But all such performances are the will-worship of man's self-righteousness. By these performances man distorts worship. He misrepresents God. He indulges His own sensuous taste. But God's answer is clearly given by His beloved Son to the woman at the well: "They that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." They may be in very poor garments. It matters not a thing. There may be no accompanying music; knees may not be bent; there may be no consecrated building. These things are nothing to God. True worship is in and from the inner man. All else is of little consequence.

Father! Thy sov'reign love has sought
Captives to sin, gone far from Thee:
The work that Thine own Son hath wrought
Has brought us back, in peace, and free!
And now, as sons before Thy Face,
With joyful steps the path we tread
Which leads us on to that blest place
Prepared for us by Christ, our Head!
Thou gav'st us in eternal love

To Christ, to bring us home to Thee,
Suited to Thine own thoughts above—
As sons, like Him, with Him to be!
O glorious grace! that fills with joy,
Unmingled, all that enter there—
God's Nature, Love without alloy—
Our hearts are giv'n e'en now to share!
God's righteousness with glory bright,
Which fills with radiance all that sphere
E'en Christ—of God, the Power and Light—
Our title is that Light to share!
O Mind Divine! so must it be:
That glory all belongs to God!
O Love Divine! that did decree
Our part with Thee, through Jesu's blood.
J. N. Darby

Chapter 10 The Bond Of Love

My beloved is mine, and I am His: He feedeth among the lilies (Song of Solomon 2:16).

This verse is the heart and marrow of spiritual affections. Sometimes an elect bride has a great interest in dress, or jewels, or flowers. But nothing is so precious to her as her bridegroom lover. Nothing she can glory in can equal this, that “my beloved is mine and I am His.” This, too, is the language of the Church to the Lord Jesus and of every believer who is numbered in that elect company called the Church.

My Beloved Is Mine

All the redeemed of the Lord can say, “My Beloved is mine.” He is so because He has been given to us by the Father. It was the Father who sent the Son to be our Saviour, who gave His beloved Son to us as an “unspeakable gift.” Had the Father given the whole multitude of angels, it would have been a mighty spectacle, but He gave a far more eminent gift when He gave His only begotten Son. That gift surpasses all other gifts.

He is ours, too, because He has won our hearts and has become ours by way of possession. He has given Himself to us and enriched us with all the benefits of His grace and love. He has come to abide in us and to make Himself at home in us. He finds a place of rest in His people when the world has closed its doors on Him and shut Him out.

This verse of the elect Bride is free from all supposition. There is an actual and blessed possession of the Lord. What could be a greater miracle than that we should possess Heaven's beloved One? There is a confidence in this word which expresses full assurance and complete freedom from doubt and fear. He may be something abstract to some; a myth to others; a mere fancy to still others; but to His elect Bride He is a living, lovable, lovely, all-glorious Person.

He is ours, also, because He has given Himself to us. "Christ... loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25). It is a most enriching thing that He should thus give Himself to us, that He be joined to us in such a close and intimate union. But it is thus that He has pledged Himself in the dearest union possible and that forever.

And I Am His

We are His, first, by the Father's gift. He who gives His beloved Son to us, has also given the company of the redeemed to Him as a bride to a Bridegroom. We are His inheritance— His property.

We are His, too, because He bought and purchased us. "Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). That price was not a cash transaction. It was no mere silver or gold which could make such a purchase. The price was that of His own precious blood shed on Calvary's cross.

We are also His because we have responded to His love, have given ourselves to Him, and have taken hold of Him by faith. That surrender has been whole and entire. There is no surer claim to His love than the claim of

faith. His love never came to us through any other door than the door of faith.

The marital bond is the most tender known to man. It is the nearest and dearest of all unions. It is conjugal and therefore inseparable. It is a husband-and-wife relationship, even before the actual ceremony; that is, Christ and the Church are espoused and pledged to each other. The union is spiritual and living. “He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.” They have one and the same Spirit. The union is as vital as the branch to the vine with its life-flow from the parent tree to the branch. “It is a great mystery,” says Paul, and we all agree. It is beyond the imagination and comprehension of the natural man. And it is indissoluble. Christ and His Church can never be separated. The union can never be broken.

He Feedeth Among the Lilies

He feedeth among the lilies, that is, in the pure places. It is, I think, a word of warning. We cannot play loose with such a Lover. This is a love union, but a love union based upon absolute holiness. The Lord our God is a jealous God, that is, He has a holy jealousy for the one whom He has loved so dearly and purchased at so great a price. We must feed where He feeds, and beware of allowing our heart’s affections to stray to pastures of worldliness and self-seeking. We must set a watch upon our thoughts, words, and deeds, lest we should grieve Him, who loves us so.

You will always find Him in the pure places—alongside the Father on the throne of glory, among the angels of Heaven, in the Scriptures of truth, in the gathering of His saints. It is summertime in the soul when we are

with Him and can feed among the lilies. Let us feed
where He feeds and be found only in pure and holy
pasture.

O Lord, the Spring of all my joys,
The life of my delights,
The glory of my brightest days,
And comfort of my nights!
The opened heavens round me shine
With beams of sacred bliss,
When Jesus shows His mercy mine,
And whispers I am His.
My soul would leave this mortal clay,
At Thy transporting word,
Caught up with joy the shining way,
To see and praise Thee, Lord.

Isaac Watts

Chapter 11 The Bride's Desire

Let my beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits (Song of Solomon 4:16).

The Lord's people are at times likened unto a flock, or a temple, or a body, or, as in this song, a bride. Here the Lord's elect bride is likened unto a garden. The garden is enclosed, by which is meant that she is separated from all else around. As with a garden, she is set aside for the Owner's own pleasure. The plants and flowers in the garden represent His graces and virtues planted in her by His Holy Spirit.

The elect bride has just been praying for heavenly winds to release her spices. There is often much that is locked up and imprisoned in the hearts of His people so that there is little outflow of praise to Him who made them as a garden for His own pleasure. She has prayed for the cold, chilly north wind, if need be, or the cheery, warm south wind, if need be, or that there come a combination of both, representing, on the one hand, trials and persecutions, and on the other, pleasing and gentle providences, so that there may be a release of sweet fragrance for His pleasure.

The Title She Gives Him

"My Beloved." That is both personal and affectionate. She knows He is hers, and she desires a visitation of His lovely presence. He is her Beloved and there is no other. It is a title which expresses her love to Him. He is the object of all her dearest affections. There is none to compare with Him. There is no rival for her heart. His love, and the many demonstrations and expressions of it,

bring forth a response of love in His elect bride. She has no need to mention His name. Everyone knows who she means when she says, “my Beloved.” He is distinguished from all others and more precious than all others combined. What a sweet title! What music in those two words! She dearly loves Him. He is the desire of all her heart’s deepest longings.

The Invitation She Gives Him

“Let my beloved come into His garden.” Yes!—she was His garden. He had bought and purchased her. He had redeemed and separated her from the common ground of mankind. He had planted in her His own flowers and plants. Thus she was not her own, but His. All the fruit belonged to Him. She was His property, as it were, and here she owns the fact of His claim.

Now, when we gather together to this remembrance feast, we should heartily desire that the Lord visit us in a living way with His sensible presence. We need to have some manifestation of His presence and love to us, so that we are not left comfortless. This He has promised —“I will come to you.”

It is not always that the Lord grants manifestation of His real presence, though we may believe Him to be present with us according to His gracious promise. But sometimes He withdraws His presence where He sees coldness and indifference and a lack of desire for His company. He therefore at times hides His face. It is not that He has abandoned His saints, but He withdraws in order to stir up our desire for the enjoyment of His presence. That awakened desire is expressed by the bride, “Let my Beloved come.”

The Object in Making Such Request

It is that He may “eat His pleasant fruits.” We should desire to give Him the best when things are most fresh. That is why I myself love the worship and remembrance meeting to be early on Lord’s day. Things are freshest in the morning, and our first exercise should be to give our Beloved the worship and praise of which He is worthy. We do not ask that He come and satisfy us. The worship meeting is not a prayer meeting to ask for things, nor an intercession meeting to pray for others. It is that He come among us and find His delight and satisfaction in what we offer Him.

What joy it is to Him to find a company of people whom He has redeemed and saved and rescued from sin, death, and hell! What a pleasure to Him to hear their praises and to smell the fragrance of their growing graces! What a delight to Him to see the fruits of His Spirit blossoming! This is to see the travail of His soul and to be satisfied. It is to witness the blessed results of our union with Him and the grace of God working in us. These are the fruits which are pleasant and well-pleasing to Him. So let us pray that as He comes among us there may be much for Him to gather for His own satisfaction and delight.

Oh, Jesus, Lord, who loved me like to Thee?

Fruit of Thy work, with Thee, too, there to see

Thy glory, Lord, while endless ages roll,

Myself the prize, and travail of Thy soul.

Yet is must be: Thy love had not its rest

Were Thy redeemed not with Thee fully blest,

That love that gives not as the world, but shares
All it possesses with its loved coheirs.
Nor I alone; Thy loved ones, all complete
In glory, round Thee there with joy shall meet;
All like Thee, for Thy glory like Thee, Lord,
Object supreme of all, by all adored.

J. N. Darby

Chapter 12 Feasting With The Lord

I am come into My garden, My sister, My spouse: I have gathered My myrrh with My spice; I have eaten My honeycomb with My honey, I have drunk My wine with My milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved (Song of Solomon 5:1).

This verse is the Bridegroom-Lover's answer to an invitation from His elect bride, the Church, for in the previous chapter she had said, "Let my beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits."

The Lord's Presence

"I am come into My garden, My sister, My spouse." This is a most endearing title the Bridegroom gives His elect bride. "My sister" points to our Lord's incarnation and a closeness through His birth into our humanity, in that He assumed the same flesh and blood as we. All believers are adopted, too, into the family of God, so that in some Scriptures our Lord is not ashamed to call Himself Brother to the company of the redeemed.

Since therefore they are the children of God, He addresses the Church as "sister." "Spouse" is a nearer relation and much more intimate, and thus the relation between Christ and the Church is set in the union of husband and wife, by which they become one—the great mystery spoken by Paul in Ephesians 5.25.

The Lord tells us He is come. But many, I fear, are not sensible to His presence, as with Mary Magdalene in the garden. He was standing by her in the power of

resurrection life, yet she knew Him not, but thought Him a common person as the gardener (John 20:15).

But to those who, as the bride-elect, have deep longings for a manifestation of His sensible presence, He answers their desires and assures them of His presence—"I am come." He does not send a mighty angel but comes Himself, and His spiritual presence is all that believers can ask for in the way of their joy and delight. His personal presence is all she could desire and His real presence is no delusion, no figment of the imagination, no dream or fancy. The Lord's presence can be very real to us.

The Lord's Satisfaction

"I have gathered My myrrh with My spice." Myrrh and spice are sweet perfumes and express in figure the worship and praise of His people which rise like incense before His throne of glory. This is the fruit of His own toil and suffering. It is the harvest of His travail on our behalf. What we offer through redemption is a feast for Him, and He finds His delight and satisfaction as His people give Him His due praise.

"I have eaten My honeycomb with My honey." That He should eat His honey in the comb seems to me to suggest order. The honey in the hive is deposited in a systematic way. It speaks of the orderly way believers meet and the preference they give to worship. The honeycomb may also speak to us of the body of true doctrine in which the love of His people is enclosed. The graces and virtues which He develops in them are sweet as honey, but they appear best when offered in the pure doctrines of revealed truth.

“I have drunk My wine with My milk.” Having eaten, He now drinks to make a complete feast. This is His joy fulfilled. He is filled with exultation when He has His worshiping people before Him in all His righteousness. The milk points to the nourishing life by which they have grown strong in Him, and the wine to the joyous life of the Spirit which bubbles up within them. He is exceedingly well-pleased with all He finds in the midst of His people.

The Lord’s Invitation

“Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.” This is an invitation to His friends. The feast is not for those who love Him not, nor is it for aliens or enemies. His friends are His beloved. These are they whom He loves and who now love Him, and to whom He has given the clearest demonstration of His love.

It is these whom He invites to feast with Him. He Himself is the Bread and Wine of life. The more we eat and drink of Him, the better we will feel, the more holy we shall be, and the more strength we shall have. And please note the word, “abundantly.” It speaks of plenteousness. Of Him we can never partake too richly. The more we eat and drink the more we enjoy Him, and the more our life and love increase toward Him.

Shall we then be content with spare provisions and small pickings when He invites us to partake abundantly? Christ is no niggardly feast. A figure of Him is seen in the rich provision of Solomon’s table in 1 Kings 4:22-23. What a privilege it is to be His and to sit at such a table of bountiful love. May the Lord give us relish and appetite for such a holy and satisfying feast.

How sweet and holy is the place
With Christ within the doors,
Where everlasting love displays
The choicest of her stores!
While all our hearts and all our songs
Join to admire the feast
Each of us cries with thankful tongue,
“Lord! why am I a guest?”
Twas the same love that spread the feast,
That sweetly forced us in:
Else we had still refused to taste,
And perished in our sin.
Isaac Watts

Chapter 13 Altogether Lovely

Yea, He is altogether lovely (Song of Solomon 5:16).

The bride-elect had just finished describing in detail her Bridegroom's features. This word is the summary of her discoveries of Him. The summary is the essence of it all—short and exquisite. She had given a tenfold description of Him, saying, "This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend." There is no other testimony so beautiful concerning our beloved Lord Jesus. This is the very essence of what all the prophets and apostles have said about Him. And it is the verdict of all believers through all the ages of human history. It is a word full of unutterable sweetness.

The Loveliness of the Bridegroom

"In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). All the glories, excellencies, beauties, and perfections of the Godhead are manifest in God's beloved Son. The bride looks at Him from top to bottom.

She begins with His head. "My beloved is white and ruddy." Whiteness points to His absolute holiness and His ruddiness to the blood of His sacrifice. "His head is as the most fine gold." This refers to His divine nature which put a glory upon all that He has done for us as our Saviour and Mediator.

"His locks are bushy, and black as a raven." The locks refer to His counsels and purposes concerning His redeemed. Their blackness points to His wisdom and the

eternal vigor and strength behind those thoughts and purposes.

“His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set.” This refers to His omniscience as “the eyes of the Lord are in every place.” Also this speaks of His concern for His own as being living and quick as rivers and being constantly clear and full of vision.

“His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers.” His cheeks had a well-trimmed beard which gave Him a noble and majestic appearance, and the hairs of His beard were pulled out by His enemies—a most agonizing suffering (Isaiah 50:6).

“His lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.” Lips are instruments of speech and so refer to the wholesome words He spoke—pure words, beautiful words, life-giving words.

“His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl.” His hands tell us of the good works He did, and of His liberality in the distribution of grace and gifts, which are all divine and glorious.

“His belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.” This doubtless refers to His human nature which remained strong and immovable in sufferings, qualities which are expressed in love and grace and compassion to us.

“His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold.” These may be compared to marble pillars, and speak of the strength to bear all the weight of human sin placed upon Him, strength which is lasting and durable.

“His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.” This is His appearance, His looks, His general aspect to His bride-elect. He is tall and stately—majestic and pleasant-glorious and excellent.

“His mouth is most sweet.” This refers to His words and promises and teachings and His kisses, which speak of His intimate touch upon our lives.

No wonder she bursts forth with rapturous song—“He is altogether lovely.”

The Rapture of the Bride-Elect

“He is all desires—all that can be desirable” is one translation. Exceedingly so! Her heart glows in admiration at the sight of Him. It is a surge of pure emotion—the utterance of a soul overcome with adoring wonder. “Yea” is said as though she had but inadequately described Him and must therefore cut off the particulars and simply summarize by saying, “He is altogether lovely.”

It is to be feared that not many believers of this age have such realized vision of the glories and excellencies of their Saviour. Such vision was common among the devoted Puritans of former times. Rapturous and adoring praise was uttered by them. But low degrees of spiritual life, lack of vision, ignorance of His Person, work, and offices have made such vision impossible and such rapturous affection unattainable.

The bride-elect has her eyes on no other. Hers is an undivided heart. He is the one and only Lover of her soul. There is no loveliness for her but in Him, and to her He is a vast universe of glory and beauty. She has gazed upon His every part from head to foot and says,

“He is altogether lovely.” And so He is, not only in His Person, but in His offices and relations, at all times and seasons, and in all circumstances and conditions.

Her heart is all ablaze. This sight of Him set her heart on fire. She silences those whom she calls “daughters of Jerusalem,” who have expressed some surprise at her ardent love of Him. “You ask,” she says, “what is thy Beloved more than another beloved?” She waves them off. She tries to tell them, but is lost for descriptive words. So she sums up His excellencies in these precious words, “He is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend.” Her love for Him is strong and ardent, and the sight of Him is just as a live coal dropped into her deepest affections.

O Lord, Thou King most wonderful,
With heavenly glories crown'd,
Thou Sweetness most ineffable,
In whom all joys are found.
O Lord, Thou Light of all below,
Thou Fount of life and love,
Surpassing all the joys we know,
Or shall know when above:
Thee may our tongues forever bless!
Thee may we love alone!
And ever in our lives express
The image of thine own!
Bernard of Clairvaux

Chapter 14 The Swift Chariot Of Love

Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib (Song of Solomon 6:12).

I would judge these words to be those of the elect bride, the Church. “Ammi,” as we see from Hosea, means “people,” and “nadib” means “prince.” The combination of the words means “a princely people.”

The Bride’s Quickening

The thought seems to be that her soul experienced a quickening of desire for her Beloved, since she heard, as in the previous verse, that He had visited her “garden of nuts” to see how the virtues and graces of His Spirit were flourishing. She may have been asleep at the time and knew not of His visit -something all too common among the Lord’s people. For some reason there had been another temporary withdrawal of His sensible presence from her, but He had so great love for her He could not long stay away.

When she heard of His presence in her garden, it seems that her soul was suddenly caught up in holy rapture. It may well have been something like that of the Apostle Paul when he was “caught up into the third heaven.” Her words, “Or ever I was aware,” are very much like the apostle’s words, “Whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell” (2 Corinthians 12:2-4).

Howsoever it was, there came a quickening of her desire for Him whom she loved. She then ran toward the place where she now knows that she can find Him. She makes

haste to go to Him as though she were in one of the chariots of Amminadib. As a people of God we are often plagued by inconsistencies and the ebb and flow of spiritual affections. How we need just such a quickening of desire for our Well-Beloved!

The Bride's Exercise

"My soul made me [or, my soul became] like the chariots of Amminadib." Her whole soul was in this movement toward Him. Perfect love casts out fear, and boldly she moves toward Him without the slightest impediment or fear. This is the exercise of a quickened soul. Such a one is never content with the mechanical externals of devotion.

There are many who would never dream of neglecting the outward ceremonies of public worship, but whose hearts are never quickened with an outreach of devotion toward the Lord Himself. The outward is nothing to the Lord. He wants the heart. Nor should we ever be content, either in public or in private, with anything less than new discoveries of Christ and the incomings of His grace to us and the outgoings of praise to Him.

The Lord's people are a willing and princely people, as the word suggests. We can only run to Him according to the measure our soul is quickened in its force and feeling. With every kind of spiritual exercise there must be the exercise of the inner spirit, and it is this exercise of soul which creates the standard of our worship and praise.

Such exercise well becomes the company who are the chosen and elect bride of Christ. They are all princes, all the sons and daughters of a great King, all heirs to a

glorious kingdom. All have crowns of life and righteousness and glory laid up for them, all have thrones upon which they are to sit, all have princely robes and fare, all have angels to attend their needs. What a privilege to be the Lord's, and to ride through this world in the swift chariot of His love!

The Bride's Haste

"Like the chariots of Amminadib." She makes haste to move toward Him. Bless God for those seasons when our love has been quickened and has been in great exercise. It is love for Him which lifts up our souls and fills the heart with joy, as it did that of David when he danced before the Lord in spiritual hilarity.

All within this bride was now awake. All was in haste. There was no slumbering thought and no reluctant step. It mattered not what difficulties lay in the way, or how many enemies beset her path. When the chariots of Amminadib moved, they moved swiftly and none could stay them. Thus it is that believers must go out to meet Him "whom our soul loveth." Should we be fearful, or sluggish, or hesitant, or reluctant? God forbid! Let us quicken our pace. Let love burn and glow and carry us forward as we go out to meet Him.

I've found the Pearl of greatest price:

My heart doth sing for joy!

And sing I must, for Christ is mine—

Christ shall my song employ!

Christ is my peace: He died for me,

For me He gave His blood;

He as my wondrous Sacrifice
Offered Himself to God.
Christ Jesus is my All in all,
My comfort and my love,
My life below, and He shall be
My joy and crown above!
J. Mason

Chapter 15 Leaning On The Beloved

Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? (Song of Solomon 8:5).

The elect bride, the Church, is very anxious that her communion and companionship with her Beloved be not disturbed. She says, therefore, "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until He please." She is a little apprehensive about the dangers of any interruption, as she has more than once lost His sensible presence before this. And now we come to a verse which indicates that such communion and companionship are intimately linked with her spiritual progress. To keep in close fellowship with Him is the one thing needful, and therefore that one thing must be guarded at any cost.

The Title Given Him

"Her Beloved." It matters not who the daughters of Jerusalem of the previous verse represent. They certainly are not in the same relationship, but they also do recognize that there is a love union between Christ and His people. He is the Father's Beloved, as the Father thrice opened the windows of Heaven and declared: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." But He is also the Beloved of that great company whom He has redeemed, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

But the words may be the words of the Lord Jesus Himself, spoken by way of admiration—something akin to—"There is none on earth like this one!" If so, then it

is an ejaculation on His part as He admires the faith which has brought her so near.

Her Posture Toward Him

“Leaning on her Beloved.” He is her support. She leans, not upon some church structure, or the outward performance of religious rites, but upon the Beloved Himself. This implies nearness to Him and some familiarity. It has a sense of cleaving unto Him, to go whithersoever He would go, as Ruth said to Naomi. The posture also implies a certain delight in Him as she rests fully on Him. The words also imply a strengthening of herself, realizing that in herself she is weak. He is her strength as well as her safety and security. She is not leaning upon any one part of Him, such as His arm, but upon His whole Person.

The Place of Retreat

“From the wilderness.” From God’s viewpoint this world is a wilderness. When God redeemed Israel from the house of bondage in Egypt, He brought them into a wilderness to teach them that this world has not a single thing which can feed the new life in redemption. It is nought but barren desert. Note, then, the bride “comes up” from this wilderness.

Hers is an ascending pilgrimage. There is a forgetting of former things, as Paul would say, “Forgetting the things which are behind, I press toward the mark.” Bride and Bridegroom march on together through a wilderness which has many dangers, wild beasts, poisonous serpents, and howling wolves. The Lord is Master of all such creatures so that His bride snuggles up to Him and

keeps herself close. This gives her a sweet sense of His protecting care.

The Assertion He Makes

“I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth that bare thee.” This may refer to her state before conversion. Often our Lord reminds us of this to keep us humble and to prevent pride rising in our souls. We were dead in sins, and it was Christ, our beloved Saviour, who alone raised us up.

That work is a resurrection work wrought by Him who is “the Resurrection and the Life.” At His call Lazarus came forth from the tomb as a type of all who receive new life from Him. Only the Lord can raise from the dead, and it demonstrates His great love for us, as was said of Lazarus, “Behold, how He loved him.”

“Under the apple tree” means sitting under the truths of the gospel—that tree laden with so much precious fruit. “Thy mother brought thee forth” has reference to the Church, which from the beginning has always been in travail to bring forth children. The whole history of the Church is one of pain, as of a woman with child, by professing Him, by preaching His gospel, by suffering on His behalf. All who are the Lord’s have come to be so through the travail of the Holy Spirit in the body of the Church.

How precious it is to be in such intimate fellowship, to be so near Him, so accepted of Him. It is the more amazing when we remember what we were—once named “Outcast” but now “Hephzibah, for the Lord delighteth in thee.” Once we were as Hannah, a woman

of a sorrowful spirit; or like Rahab, dwelling in a doomed city; or like Ruth, an idolatress in a heathen world; but, wonder of wonders, now the bride of God's Well-Beloved One. What a change! What a blessing! What wondrous grace!

Fade, fade, each earthly joy,

Jesus is mine!

Break ev'ry tender tie,

Jesus is mine!

Dark is the wilderness,

Earth has no resting place,

Jesus alone can bless,

Jesus is mine!

Tempt not my soul away,

Jesus is mine!

Here would I ever stay,

Jesus is mine!

Perishing things of clay,

Born but for one brief day,

Pass from my heart away,

Jesus is mine!

Farewell, mortality,

Jesus is mine!

Welcome eternity,

Jesus is mine!

Welcome, O loved and blest,

Welcome, sweet scenes of rest,
Welcome, my Saviour's breast,
Jesus is mine!
Mrs. Horatius Bonar

Chapter 16 Make Haste, My Beloved

Make haste, my Beloved, and be Thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices (Song of Solomon 8:14).

This wonderful song now ends with an expression of intense desire on the part of the bride-elect, imploring her Beloved to come back for her. As she began the song, so she ends it, with words of great affection. The bride has had her ups and downs in the circumstances and experiences of life, but none can doubt where her affections lie and what is uppermost in her spiritual desires. The song ends on the same note as the last book of the Bible: “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20). All of us should have that cry rising from the deepest affections within our hearts—“Make haste, my Beloved.”

The Title She Gives Him

“My Beloved” seems to have been her favorite endearment of Him throughout the entire song. She delights in it. She uses it as a vehicle to express her affection for Him. There is no rival and no other on the horizon.

Now there are many who believe in the Lord and who indeed have believed unto salvation, but do they really, really, love Him? Do the heart’s affections flow out spontaneously and vigorously from the heart? There are many whose chief interest is doctrine, or prophecy, or history, or works, but one can have these interests and yet be without very much love for Him. The true knowledge of the Lord will surely generate love.

And please note the personal “my.” She says He is my Beloved—not beloved to all the world, for the vast majority love Him not. But the elect bride has rich experience of His love and distinguishes Him far above all others. These two words plainly tell us who belongs to the company called the bride, and they are the epitome of spiritual rhetoric. Wonderful words! Most excellent title!

The Request She Makes of Him

“Make haste, my Beloved.” She is doubtless referring to His second coming. This is a true bridal heart. She longs and pants after that day when He will come to join her to Himself in marital union. This is her last petition: her last prayer, as John, the lover of the Lord, closes the book of the Revelation. She would have Him return as speedily as possible. Great love begets great longing, and great longing can at times be impatient. Yet He cannot come before the time appointed by the Father. But we can be assured He will not delay a moment beyond that appointed time. She would not have Him come sooner than that, but she does long that all that is necessary to be accomplished previous to His coming may speedily be fulfilled.

Let us remember, though none of us need reminding of it, that our present circumstance is in a filthy, hostile world which hates all that is of God and which has expressed its hostility in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus and by the martyrdom of millions of His people. Our lot is cast in a godless world among a godless people, all the doings of whom vex the righteous soul of the saints.

It is not only the world without but the state of the professed church within which is a sore grief to those of

mature bridal affections. This big thing called Christendom is riddled through with heretical teachings, meaningless ceremonies, and satanic delusions. It is honeycombed with worldliness and shot through with attitudes which ignore and insult the Lord of glory. "O Lord," His loved one cries, "How long? Make haste, my Beloved."

The real Church desires His coming so that "the dead in Christ" shall rise and be clothed with bodies of glory. Then there shall be an end to pain and heartache; there shall be no more curse; then "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 22:3; 21:4).

But it is not to escape this filthy house nor its pain and suffering which inspired this bride. It is rather that her eyes see something of the Bridegroom-Lover in His glory. "Him hath God exalted." Surely our eyes should long to see Him in His exaltation.

The Place From Which She Calls Him

"Be Thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices." She wants Him to come speedily. The creatures mentioned here, as she has before mentioned them in 2:9, are remarkable for their swiftness. But there are other reasons, too. The roe and the hart are pleasant and delightful, and the Lord is full of such sweet virtues. His love for His bride has been proved for its reality and strength and unchangeable character. It is clearly exhibited in His sacrifice in order to make her His. In His Person, in His offices, in His

virtues, in His works, in all His ways He is most excellent.

The place where He now is, is referred to as the mountain of spices. There is mention of not a few mountains in this song—"the mountains of Bether" in 2:17, which may refer to His first coming; "the mountains of the leopards" in 4:8, which no doubt refers to the fierce opposition to Him in the days of His flesh; "the mountain of myrrh" in 4:6, which speaks of the bitterness of death and the grave; and now "the mountains of spices," as at the Father's right hand. It is from thence that she calls Him. She knows where He is. She has Him in the highest Heaven, and He is there in all the fragrance of His infinite merits. He is way yonder—far above the foul pollutions of this world, and it is yonder He has prepared a home for His loved bride. She knows it, and she longs that He would come and transport her to it, that she may be in His sweet company forever, for "In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16:11). "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," and take Thy waiting people home.

I'm waiting for Thee, Lord,

Thy beauty to see, Lord,

I'm waiting for Thee—for Thy coming again.

Thou'rt gone over there, Lord,

A place to prepare, Lord,

Thy home I shall share at Thy coming again.

'Mid danger and fear, Lord,

I'm oft weary here, Lord,

The day must be near of Thy coming again
'Tis all sunshine there, Lord,
No sighing nor care, Lord,
But glory so fair at Thy coming again.
E'en now let my ways, Lord,
Be bright with Thy praise, Lord,
For brief are the days ere Thy coming again.
I'm waiting for Thee, Lord,
Thy beauty to see, Lord,
No triumph for me like Thy coming again.
Hannah K. Burlingham

Chapter 17 The Ark

They shall make an ark (Exodus 25:10).

This is probably the most important chapter in the writings of Moses. God had redeemed Israel from bondage in Egypt and, in the ways of grace, had gathered them to be His people by covenant relationship. The Lord now looks for an affectionate response to Himself from His redeemed people. They are to bring an offering, which suggests a most energetic response.

They were to build God a sanctuary that He might dwell among them (25:8). The materials required are listed in verses 3-7, and there is rich symbolism in these materials. All spoke of Christ in His Person and work, and each of the redeemed had to make this “willing offering” as an appreciation for his redemption. All offerings were to come out of their affections as an expression of gratitude. It was, therefore, a spiritual house—all the materials, and each and every part of it spoke of Christ. The building of it, according to God’s instructions given to Moses, was to be an expression of their spiritual apprehension and appreciation of their Saviour. Each had to contribute, but all was to be brought to a corporate and unified whole.

The first command was the construction of the ark. This was to be a distinctive type of Christ. For this the Tabernacle was built. It was the most treasured thing in the hallowed building. All that concerned God was to be secured in His beloved Son, and all that was ruined in God’s universe was to be recovered and restored in and through Him. The ark takes precedence, then, for God

would have all it represented of His Son enshrined in the first place of the affections of His people. During the wilderness wanderings it was to be known as “the ark of the covenant [or testimony]”—a testimony amidst the barren world around them.

The substance of the ark was acacia or shittim wood, which set forth our Lord’s incomparable humanity and exhibited His kinship with our race. Acacia wood was no common wood. It was not subject to decay and thus pictured our Lord’s undefilable humanity.

But the ark was more than wood. The ark was covered with pure gold within and without. This speaks of the Lord’s deity, for the Saviour of men is the Mighty God. Were He not so, His merit would have no worth. His wounds, His blood, His agony, and His death would be valueless to redeem. Thus we see in the wood and gold a figure of man conjoined to Deity—the God-Man—all that God is, embodied in man.

There was “a crown of gold round about” (Exodus 25:11). This pointed to His Kingship. He is the Father’s appointed King (Psalm 2:6; Revelation 19:6), and though crowned with thorns by wicked men, yet “crowned with glory and honour” by the Father, and with a crown of divine glory.

The ark was made to hold a rich treasure. The first set of tables of the moral law given by God was smashed by Moses for, when he came down from the mount and saw the wickedness of the people, he realized that all parts of the law were already broken. The second set was placed in the ark and not one part was ever broken by Him whom the ark represented. Then, also, the golden pot of manna was laid up in the ark, which declared

Christ to be the true Manna of His people (John 6:32-33). Aaron's budded rod was also in the ark, which spoke of Christ as God's chosen and true High Priest (Hebrews 7:3, 17).

Then we note that the ark was covered with a lid of solid gold. It hid the law from every eye. The law carried a curse upon all who broke it, but the Lord Jesus covered all its terrible demands, and spread Himself as a satisfaction over it. He covers all claims against us.

The lid had a special name—the mercy seat. It was of pure gold since mercy is wholly a divine attribute. It is such mercy which shelters when the sinner is overwhelmed with his sin and filled with terror and dismay. Divine mercy saves.

As the ark supported the mercy seat, so did Christ support God's mercy in the way of righteousness. It is through His death that He becomes a Mercy Seat (Romans 3:24-26). God is able to be merciful to sinners because of our Lord's total righteousness. The two cherubs, one at either end of the mercy seat, were of the same piece of gold as the ark, and they covered it with their wings. All God's rights in being merciful are protected by His own attributes. Their outspread wings, too, spoke of the readiness of divine mercy to spread its gracious message to every place, and if their eyes looked downward, it was only to be absorbed with the beauties and excellencies of Christ as "the ark of the testimony."

A gracious promise was given by God concerning the ark: "There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat" (Exodus 25:22). Thus the place is fixed where man can meet with God,

which is only in Christ. If we come to God in Christ, then God will draw near unto us.

The ark had staves (Exodus 25:13). By these it was borne by the priests. Everything that is of God in Christ has to be carried in testimony through this wilderness world. From time to time it found a resting place for the Lord's people, as we find here and now in Christ when we meet in the assembly of saints.

Let not the ark speak in vain. Obed-Edom was blessed for retaining it (2 Samuel 6:11). When we come to the waters of Jordan, symbol of death, the ark, which is Christ, will lead us through to the land of heavenly rest.

Incarnate Word, God over all!

Compassions's depths, in Thee that dwell,

Moved Thee to call from creature-fall

Our guilty souls, Immanuel!

Eternal fragrance fills the scene,

Eternal glories cast their spell

Where Thou, once slain to rend our chain,

Didst Love unvail—Immanuel!

Now love and light, divinely bright,

Shine forth forever, to dispel

The glooms of night, and thrill our sight

With beauty—Thine, Immanuel!

Frank Allaben

Chapter 18 The Table

Thou shalt also make a table (Exodus 25:23).

After the ark, the next thing presented to us is the table. Like the ark, and all else in the Tabernacle, the thought and plan are God's. This is no human pattern. There are spiritual realities behind these figurative representations, and they set forth all that is made known of God in Christ. Only God could design these figures of His beloved Son.

The substance of the table is one with the ark—choice shittim or acacia wood which resists all taint and decay. It is overlaid with the finest gold. Thus wood is conjoined with gold to set forth the Manhood and Godhood of the Lord Jesus. It is Godhood linked to poor flesh. The Son of God never ceases to be God. He is one with God, and never can be other than that. Such was our Lord in the days of His flesh on earth—God and man in one unique Person.

When believers have received new life through faith in the Lord Jesus, then they crave spiritual food, and no food satisfies but Christ Himself. So first, "Thou shalt set upon the table shewbread [literally, bread of His presence] before Me alway" (Exodus 25:30). It is to be before God, first, for His pleasure. The bread has in it the thought of Christ as identified with His people—"one loaf"—and all for God's satisfaction. Compared with this, the world's dainties are but choking dust, which never satisfy the hungry.

Faith recognizes the Lord in the emblem of the bread upon the table. He Himself said, "I am the bread of life...

the living bread which came down from heaven" (John 6:35, 51). He is the believer's staff of life. But let us not forget how bread is made. It is formed of grain brought forth by the earth, crushed and powdered, mixed with water, kneaded with rough handling, and baked in a hot oven. Our Lord Jesus is clearly seen in all this. The burden of man's sin crushed Him to death. All hell sifted Him as wheat is sifted. All the hot flame of God's wrath blazed around Him. Thus He became the Bread of God—the saving food of the souls of men.

And what of the flour? "Thou shalt take fine flour" (Leviticus 24:5). There was to be no unclean grain, no empty husk, no worthless chaff, which could taint and defile this holy lump. Thus we see our Lord free from all evil in His earthly life. At the end of each week the priests were to eat the shewbread. Thus what is before God for His pleasure becomes food for His people. As all the redeemed are priests in the Church, we can see how God would have us all nourished and sustained by Christ Himself. He is the table who sustains all that is upon it for the pleasure of God and the satisfaction of His people.

The number of loaves upon the table was twelve (Leviticus 24:6). Twelve expresses the number of the tribes. Not one is put aside. Each has its allotted place and represents a spiritual order which was also for the pleasure of God. We seem almost to have forgotten the value of this in our day, but there is loss when anything of God is not made good in us. The order should manifest itself in the way we meet together, the manner in which we dress, the relations we have with one another, and the mutual flow of love. Let us not forsake this spiritual order when we appear before God.

On each returning Sabbath the priests brought new supplies. Never was the table empty. The presence-bread was ever the same in substance and form. Thus we are taught the abiding presence of our Lord as the food of His people, and we are also taught, since we are in Christ as “one bread,” that we should ever continue in our worship and praise of Him.

We should not forget the crown of gold round about the table (Exodus 25:24), which sets forth our Lord’s headship and kingship. He is “the head of all principality and power” and also Head of the Church. It was a border round the table to keep everything on the table that nothing be lost. All is kept in spiritual order for the Lord’s pleasure.

As we come before the Lord as our Table of God’s pleasure, may our desires be to feast upon all that is set before us in Christ. Faith cries, “Evermore give us this Bread!” As the soul of man feeds upon the Lord Jesus as the Bread of Life, it is blessed and gathers strength for the days ahead. May we know what it is to be filled and satisfied, and to experience something of God’s blessedness and delight in His Son.

One body we, one body who partake,
One church united in communion blest;
One Name we bear, one bread of life we break,
With all Thy saints on earth and saints at rest.
One with each other, Lord, for one in Thee
Who art our Saviour and our living Head;
Then open Thou our eyes, that we may see;
Be known to us in the breaking of the bread.

George W. Briggs

Chapter 19 The Candlestick

Thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold (Exodus 25:31).

The candlestick filled the holy place with light so that there was a place here on earth, in the midst of appalling moral darkness, where the pure light of Heaven shone. The candlestick speaks of Christ as the sustaining light of His people.

The candlestick was of pure gold. This is the costliest of all metals and that which God has selected to represent His beloved Son, our all-gold Saviour. The purity of the gold gives evidence that there was no dross, no flaw, no blemish in Him. He is divine. It is this which makes His atoning sacrifice so precious, and meets all the claims of divine law.

It was to be of “beaten work”—that is, the candlestick had to be battered into shape with hard hammer blows. This, of course, points to the sufferings of our Lord. This was in striking contrast to the idolatrous calf which Aaron made, and which very easily came into shape. The candlestick of God was beauteous in form, but it was hard-beaten into such. Everything about it was symmetrical, harmonious, and finely proportioned. It was a beautiful figure of our Lord, and in itself had a brightness and luster which outshone the sun.

The central stem had six branches from its sides like the image of a spreading tree. This would surely tell of how the light of the Lord Jesus would spread throughout the whole earth and cast its light in every place. His love

and grace were to spread over every country and every dwelling place of man as the light of life.

The seven golden branches supported seven lamps. Each burned with a pure flame. The Lord's people had to furnish the oil, and the oil was to be "beaten oil." This suggests that only spiritual exercises wrought in us by the Spirit of God lead to the full revealings of our Lord as the Minister of light. Without light man's heart is just a barren waste, a joyless wilderness, a deathful sepulcher. It is a dreadful darkness, and only the Lord Jesus can spread light in a poor sinner's soul.

While the candlestick was to give light to all the holy place, we are told that it was set "over against the table" (Exodus 40:24). Only His light can illumine all that the table means in God's thought. The seven lamps were to give light "over against it [the candlestick]" (Exodus 25:37)—that is, to show up all its excellent glories and perfections. Only divine light can do that. Not all the processes of human learning, or the elevation of the natural mind, or the discoveries of science can discover the infinite glories of our beloved Lord. The light from Heaven must reveal them, and they can be seen by the saints only as they bring their "beaten oil" for the light.

There is much more to be said about all the beauties of the workmanship on the candlestick. But let me just mention the snuffdishes. These, too, were of gold (verse 38). If the candlestick was just a representation of our Lord personally, then there would be no need for these utensils. But it is Christ ministered by the Holy Spirit through human vessels. Thus Aaron had to light the lamps "between the two evens" (Exodus 30:8, margin).

There were, therefore, elements which could dim the the light, and the snuffdishes were used for the removal of all that would cause the light to burn dim. There was to be a very clear shining of all that pertained to life and godliness. Worship, prayer, meditation, and the holy remembrance feast are some of the “tongs” for this sacred work, so that the Lord can shine in full splendor in our hearts.

Rise, my soul, thy God directs thee;
Stranger hands no more impede;
Pass thou on; His hand protects thee,
Strength that has the captive freed.
Light Divine surrounds thy going:
God Himself shall mark thy way:
Secret blessings, richly flowing,
Lead to everlasting day.
In the desert God will teach thee
What the God that thou hast found,
Patient, gracious, pow’rful, holy—
All His grace shall there abound.
J. N. Darby

Chapter 20 The Tabernacle

Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle (Exodus 26:1).

Having spoken of the ark and the table and the candlestick, God now speaks of the Tabernacle in which they were to be housed. The Lord has already spoken of His desire for a sanctuary where He could be in constant presence among His people (25:8). Now the detailed plan is given. His people are to build it, but all the parts and materials are God-chosen so as to speak of His beloved Son. The construction represents the apprehension of the saints to this revealing of the Lord.

The length and breadth are given in divine measurements— full, therefore, of meaning. A belt of sockets of silver was to be laid down as a solid foundation. Silver speaks of redemption. Into those sockets boards were to be tenoned to make things stable. The boards were of the same choice shittim wood which, as we have seen, declares our Lord's humanity— "Behold the Man!" That Manhood is clearly displayed in His birth, in His manger bed, in His weariness when traveling, in His weeping at the grave of Lazarus, and in His thirst upon the cross.

But the boards were covered with pure gold, setting forth the Lord's deity, which also is clearly discerned in the angel's song, "Christ the Lord." His deity is seen in the stilling of the tempest, in His raising of the dead, in His making the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak. It is also perceived in His victory over death, hell, and the grave, and in His mounting to the throne of Heaven. "Behold your God!" The boards thus display our Lord's dual nature and proclaim the incarnate God. His

perfect Manhood qualifies Him to save, and His Godhood provides the power, making Him the perfect Saviour.

The bars bind it all together and we should take note of couplings, clasps, and rings, all of which are, with the bars, to bind into a corporate whole and compact its solidarity. And this is how the saints should build what is of God in Christ “endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3).

Within the house four pillars rose to separate the inner chamber, and these point to the four Gospels and to what our Lord was in the flesh. These pillars, too, were set in silver to show that what is set forth of Christ in the Gospels is based upon His redemptive death. The vail which separated and hung on the four pillars, which was our Lord in figure, was lavish, strong, and costly. The vail barred the way but also gave entrance to the holy of holies. Only God’s beloved Son could face both God and the world outside as the perfect One.

The coverings of the house were four. The first was of brilliant colors, sparkling with cherubic forms, to make the ceiling of the holy of holies a magnificent heavenly sky. This is the Lord in all His glory, which glory can be seen only from within. The second covering was white to show forth the Lord’s absolute innocence, purity, and holiness. The third was red to testify of His blood sacrifice, for He who would save must bleed and die. This sacrifice alone could atone for man’s guilt and shame. The fourth was a very rough covering and of lowly guise—good for protection against the defiling influences of the world, but from the world’s point of view “no beauty that they should desire Him.”

We should not leave the Tabernacle without noticing that there was no floor in the house. That speaks a solemn warning. Nothing of Christ may lie beneath our feet. No type of Him may be trodden down. And yet another lesson—the door of the tabernacle into the outward court stood open at all times to remind us that the Saviour waits to embrace all who will come to Him.

Come, let us sing the matchless worth,

And sweetly sound His glories forth,

Which in the Saviour shine:

To God and Christ our praises bring;

The song, with which the heavens ring,

Now let us gladly join,

Now let us gladly join.

Great are the offices He bears,

And bright His character appears,

Exalted on the throne;

In songs of sweet, adoring praise,

We would, to everlasting days,

Make all His glories known,

Make all His glories known.

Samuel Medley

Chapter 21 The Brazen Altar

Thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood ... and overlay it with brass (Exodus 27:1-2).

There was only one way into the Tabernacle. The first thing seen on entering was the brazen altar. The first step took the one who entered to the altar. It was specifically “the altar of burnt offering.” As such it was a solemn sight. Fire blazed there. Victims died there. Blood was shed there.

Again, as with all other things, the twofold substance of which it was made proclaims the twofold nature of our Lord. The wood typifies His Manhood. As Man, the Lord never departed from that dependency and trust which was man’s place. Wood is used over and over in order that we may never forget it.

But it is now combined with brass. All within the house is gold: all here is brass. If the altar were all brass, it would be too heavy for a journeying people to carry. If it were all wood it could not survive the fire. Hence the union fits the destined purpose. We see the Lord, then, as the lowly Man and mighty God. The God-man saves because as Man He could take the sinner’s place, and as God bear all the burning wrath of God due man’s many sins. The overlay of brass was to indicate our Lord’s ability to endure all the fire of God’s wrath against sin.

The form of the altar was square. This speaks first of its massive solidity. No storm could move it. The Lord would stand in immovable strength against all the fury of hell and all the rage of wicked men. Also, being square, the altar faced every quarter of earth with the

same front. The scope of our Lord's grace is "all the world" and "every creature under Heaven." It is a universal setting forth of divine grace to all men everywhere.

Horns branched out at the four corners. These speak of subduing power—power unique to our Lord's Person to break every form of opposition whether from men or demons. There was no weak corner. Nothing could overcome Him. He was more than equal to all that was set against Him. These horns were also a refuge. The sword of justice lost its power when a man grasped and held the horns of the altar. It was a place of safety and security within our Lord's protecting arms.

The main purpose of the altar was to receive burnt offerings. Each and every day, and all through the day, flames ascended. Christ is seen in all this blaze of fire. As the Altar, He sustains Himself as the Sacrifice. He is the Altar. He is the Sacrifice. He is the fire-applying Priest. All is divine. All things point to Christ as our All in all.

"The grate of network of brass" is of special interest. It was inside the altar. I think at times we overemphasize or perhaps think too much of our Lord's external sufferings imposed by ungodly men inspired by the cruel hate of Satan. But God's wrath against sin went down into the innermost recesses of His being. The source of sin in man lies inwardly in the center of the heart of man. It was in His inward parts that the real atoning suffering of our Lord was endured. That was where the fire of judgment was most intense. But "the grate of network of brass" endured it.

But this altar does not only speak of God's judgment against all that was offensive to Him. That was necessary to provide any basis for redemption. This also was a sweet-savor offering. Everything that rose up as a sacrifice from this altar rose as a sweet-savor offering. Everything that rose up as a sacrifice from this altar rose as a sweet savor because of the perfections in which Christ offered Himself.

The Lord Jesus is the only Altar to which we must cling with faith, love, and hope. Satan presents his counterfeits. Men build them with sin-soiled hands, but it must be Christ or nothing. Rome speaks of altars but, alas, treads down the real Altar's truth. The Roman altars are built with high steps for man to climb upward with painful self-denials and all manner of external rites, which have no basis in Scripture. This is all Satan's fraud and deceit. Heaven's saving Altar is Christ Jesus the Lord—and He alone.

O Lord, what wondrous love, what grace did Thee contain
To come from Heaven above to bear our curse and pain!

From manger to the cross enduring hate and sin,
All else esteeming loss our wayward souls to win:

Nought stay'd Thy love—no sorrows, no taunts, no outrage sore;
Not all the fiery arrows of Satan's wrath and pow'r—

Not all the stormy billows of judgment's dreadful hour!

I'll praise Thee, gracious Lord, because that cross of Thine
Removed sin's grievous load, and wrought a work divine
Whereon I rest my soul, and wonder, and adore,
As I Thy grace behold, and all God's love explore—

Explore its depths beneath me, its height, its length, its
breadth: A Love whose flow so mighty, thro' life, thro'
death, thro' wrath, To God hath brought full glory, and
life from out of death!

A. T. Eberhard

Chapter 22 The Priest

Take thou unto thee Aaron... that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office (Exodus 28:1).

The Lord has many offices in which He serves His people. All are needed to display the majesty and glory of His Person, and the riches and values of His work on our behalf. Some of these offices are set forth in types of inanimate things, but here He is typified in a living man—Aaron, the high priest of Israel.

This office is demanded because of man's moral and spiritual collapse and his separation from God. Man's dire need is for someone to go into God's presence on his behalf, since he himself dare not go in because of his sinful condition. Aaron, brother to Moses, was chosen of God to be the first high priest of God's chosen and redeemed people. As such he sets forth a picture of our Lord in His priestly office: "We have a great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God" (Hebrews 4:14).

The first point to note is that Aaron was called of God to this office. No man could grasp at this. It was an office ordained of God and its incumbent was selected by God. "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron" (Hebrews 5:4). Thus we read: "So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, to day have I begotten Thee" (Hebrews 5:5). The Father chose the Son to be the High Priest of His people.

Nor could any take up this office in Israel with any physical defect. It was said to Aaron, "Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish,

let him not approach to offer the bread of his God" (Leviticus 21:17). This was to set forth the moral impeccability of God's beloved Son—His utter worthiness to take up such a high and holy office. He is fully worthy.

The function of the high priest was diversified. "Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Hebrews 5:1). There is a cluster of divine truths wrapped up in that sentence. The high priest was to be taken from "among men." Thus it was necessary for the Son of God to assume our human nature and thereby to have sympathy and understanding of our position, and to deal gently with those who are ignorant about divine things.

Again, there had to be a suitable and acceptable offering for sin. So the Lord came forth to die that He might save; to bleed that He might make atonement for sin; to lay down His life that sin might be destroyed and guilt taken away. The Lord is thus the Altar with omnipotent strength to bear the mighty load of man's transgressions. He also is the Lamb of sacrifice to offer His own precious and efficacious blood. He also is the High Priest to carry that blood into God's presence, and to appear before God's face as our effectual High Priest.

The most solemn day in Israel's history was the day of atonement, when the high priest passed within the vail and stood before the mercy seat. The blood he brought in with which to sprinkle the mercy seat was proof of sacrifice enacted and completed. So we see Jesus: "By His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Hebrews

9:12). His soul-redeeming blood has an eloquence which prevails. It represents a full price paid out for all the ransomed race. Each demand of law is answered by that blood. Each due punishment has been absorbed by it.

The high priest also carried a censer into the holy place from which a cloud of incense covered the mercy seat (Leviticus 16:12-13) Thus the Lord fills the heavens with the fragrance of His life and sacrifice. It is a sweet-smelling savor, which satisfies every attribute of the divine character, and therefore none can “lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect” (Romans 8:33).

Yet another function of the high priest was to dispense blessing. “On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel” (Numbers 6:23). His hands are laden with blessings. We see our Lord pouring out spiritual blessings of peace and pardon, reconciliation and adoption, justification, and sanctification, nearness and access, fellowship and communion, and hope of glory.

But there was also much contrast between our Lord and Aaron. The priests of old belonged to our corrupt race. Even Aaron must first enter into the holy place to make atonement for his own sins. In Christ we have a sinless Priest “who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins” (Hebrews 7:27).

The sacrifice offered by Aaron and his sons was part of a fallen creation. The blood was only the blood of beasts, which could never take away sins. It had no saving power. But Jesus entered into the presence of God with His own blood—the blood of God, and therefore fully efficacious to purge sin (Hebrews 9:12).

The priests of old offered often and that through centuries of time. Our Lord presents Himself but once.

Sin was dealt with once. He saves, and saves once and forever. Oh, “consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” (Hebrews 3:1).

Before the throne of God above

I have a strong, a perfect plea;

A great High Priest, whose name is Love,

Who ever lives and pleads for me.

My name is graven on His hands,

My name is written on His heart;

I know that while in Heaven He stands

No tongue can bid me thence depart.

One with Himself, I cannot die;

My soul is purchased by His blood;

My life is hid with Christ on high,

With Christ, my Saviour and my God.

Charitie Lees Bancroft

Chapter 23 The Holy Garments

Thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty (Exodus 28:2).

The priestly garments were designed to exhibit the glories and excellencies of the priesthood first invested in Aaron. They represent another picture of the glory and the beauty of the Lord Jesus as the High Priest of His people. They were “for glory and for beauty,” and were sparkling and dazzling in their bright display of colors and gems.

The inner garment was “a coat of fine linen” (verse 39)—clean and white, which speaks of a life of pure holiness and perfect righteousness in our Lord. The garment clothed the priest from top to bottom and thus displays our Lord in absolute purity from head to foot. This loose coat was fastened by a girdle (verse 8)—“a curious girdle,” and shows the Lord as equipped for skillful workmanship in His toil. It bound the priestly robe to the person of the priest and tells us that the Lord’s work will never be loosed or terminated, for His work on our behalf will engage Him forever.

The robe of blue came next (verse 31). It was shorter than the inner coat. Its chief feature was its blue color. This is the heavenly symbol, pointing to our Lord as “the Heavenly One” or “the One out of Heaven.” All His words and thoughts and deeds were heavenly in character, and His hands were laden with heavenly blessings. This robe had a rich fringe, and there hung from the broad hem pomegranates and golden bells. The richly woven pomegranates symbolized the multitudinous seed of our Lord’s life and sacrificial work

—the great harvest of souls which were to be gathered in one as the fruit of His passion. The golden bells, which intermingled with the pomegranates, gave a sweet, melodious sound to every movement of the high priest. What comforting blessing was the sound of them as the high priest came out of the holy place! They gave sweet assurance he had been heard on their behalf.

Then came the ephod (verse 6). This was a short tunic radiant with diverse colors. This was the real priestly garment which made him fit to enter the presence of God on behalf of others. Two shoulder pieces held it in its place, and in sockets of gold were placed twelve stones with the names of the tribes. Thus we see our Lord bearing us up before God in relation to our every approach and exercise before Him. Believers are safe on such shoulders. None can reach to harm us. It is a place of perfect safety and security. He carries us all in remembrance before God.

The breastplate (verse 15) is a special treasure. Each name is written upon it. In this we see how the saints are borne upon the heart of the Lord Jesus according as God has placed them in relation to His testimony here. The Urim and the Thummin were adjoined, and the words mean “light” and “perfection.” By means of these God’s holy will was made known. In our Lord, then, there is a fullness of light and perfection of every virtue to lead and guide us in the way we should go.

The chains, the wreathen work, the ouches, the rings, and the lace of blue all show how indissolubly the breastplate is knit to the ephod. It tells us in its symbolic way that the saints can never be separated from the

affections of their great High Priest. We are ever upon His heart. We are dearer to Him than ever we imagined.

Finally, there was the miter (verse 39). This was to crown the head. It was made of fine linen with a belt of blue encircling it. Upon this was affixed a golden plate inscribed with the words, "HOLINESS TO THE LORD." His Person, His work, His blood, His righteousness, His all, are of absolute holiness. What beauty! What glory! How wonderful it was to see the high priest in such garments! But how much more wonderful to see our Lord in all His garments of glory and beauty in their spiritual and heavenly reality. What a sight!

Join all the glorious names
Of wisdom, love, and power,
That mortals ever knew,
That angels ever bore:
All are too mean to speak His worth,
Too mean to set the Saviour forth.
Jesus, my great High Priest,
Offered His blood, and died:
My guilty conscience seeks
No sacrifice beside:
His powerful blood did once atone,
And now it pleads before the throne.
Should all the hosts of death,
And powers of hell unknown,
Put their most dreadful forms

Of rage and malice on,
I shall be safe, for Christ displays
Superior power and guardian grace.
Isaac Watts

Chapter 24 The Golden Altar

Thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon (Exodus 30:1).

Our Lord's image is embodied in every part of the Tabernacle. The whole is God revealing Himself in a marvelous type, and all with a view to man's entering in to meet Him there. It represents God's system of grace and glory with which He dwells among His redeemed people. This is clearly seen now in the golden incense altar which filled the whole house of God with sweet and delightful fragrance.

It is doubtless called the golden altar to distinguish it from the brazen altar in the outside court, the covering of which was brass. It was called "the altar of incense" as indicating its use.

Its parts were wood and gold as other furniture pointing to our Lord's human and divine natures. He is God in God-hood's greatness and Man in humanity's low estate. He has glory to sit on Jehovah's throne, but humility to come and tabernacle with men. Only such a God-Man can redeem a sinner's soul.

The altar was square, as was the atoning brazen altar. It shows the strength of the Lord Jesus which cannot fail. All the work He does is based on Jehovah's strength. There is the same presentation to every quarter of the globe. The crown upon the altar indicates our Lord's royal majesty, as it is written of Him, "The government shall be upon His shoulder" (Isaiah 9:6). He who was once so scorned by men on earth wears the heavenly diadem of redemptive glory.

The horns of the altar speak again of authority and power. None can stand before Him. None can prevail against Him. The rings are for transportation and this shows how His great Name will be carried to every place of human habitation— to desert lands, to prison cells, to furnaces of affliction, to hovels of the poor, and to the palaces of kings. No place can shut Him out.

This altar was placed “before the vail,” evidently nearest to the most holy place. The main use was to receive and burn the sacred incense, composed of four chief spices in equal proportions and perfectly blended. The incense was offered night and morning and burned by coals taken off the atoning altar. Thus touched, the sweet fragrance of the incense ascended. It was a fragrance offered within the sanctuary, but we see how atonement and worship are linked together. Thus we are taught the offering of acceptable praise: “Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense” (Psalm 141:2). It sets forth, first, the intercession of our own great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God. We must never forget that His intercessions on our behalf receive their life and vigor and acceptance from His own blood-atoning sacrifice. His prevailing intercession on our behalf rests upon His death on the cross in which justice was satisfied, the law fulfilled, the curse endured, and the covenant discharged.

The only direct allusion to the day of atonement in Exodus is in this portion which describes the incense altar. The blood of the brazen altar was brought and sprinkled upon the golden horns of this altar. God’s thought in this was to have a heavenly priesthood to approach Him in the holiest of all. It is the value of that atoning blood which secures our entrance into God’s

holy presence, and our acceptance by Him. It is an amazing truth that believers can now enter in with the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet too many are content, it would seem, to stand only at the atoning altar for sin's forgiveness, but never to enter within to a life of intercession in association with our exalted and heavenly Lord.

The ingredients of the incense are named in Exodus 30:34. The stacte suggests the outflow of our Lord's life on earth; the onycha, His being crushed in death; the galbanum, His strength of determination to carry it all to completion; and the frankincense, His consecrated Lordship over all. There is a word of warning attached to all this. "Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people" (verse 38). None were to profane this holy type. None were to trifle with the grand reality. None were to rob the Lord of what is His for His own glory.

Our great High Priest is sitting
At God's right hand above,
For us His hands uplifting
In sympathy and love:
Whilst here below, in weakness,
We onward speed our way;
In sorrow oft and sickness,
We sigh, and groan, and pray.
Through manifold temptation,
My soul holds on its course,
Christ's mighty intercession

Alone is my resource;
My gracious High Priest's pleadings,
Who on the cross did bleed,
Bring down God's grace and blessings,
Help in each hour of need.
O, Jesus, blessed Saviour,
We hope to see Thee soon,
Who once on earth did suffer,
Who soon for us will come;
'Twas God's most gracious favor
That gave His son to die,
To live our Intercessor,
To plead for us on high.
A. P. Cecil

Chapter 25 The Laver

Thou shalt also make a laver of brass (Exodus 30:18).

God calls us to Himself as a redeemed people to offer up spiritual sacrifices. But we are afraid to approach Him at times because of some present defilement. It is because of this that much due worship and praise is withheld from Him and intercession not made. But there is set before us a laver which is a very vivid picture of the Lord Jesus as the One who can cleanse from all defilement, make us fit for God's holy presence, and make possible the performance of our function as priests before Him.

Note the material of the laver. Being in the outward court, it was all of brass. Brass represents God's judgment upon sin. There must be moral purity in His saints before approaching Him with a priestly ministry. Thus Christ is set before us as a Laver to make His people thoroughly clean for that service.

But from whence did this brass come? Whose hands supplied it? It was furnished by the offering of the women. They gladly gave their personal mirrors, which were polished brass in those days, for this holy usage (Exodus 38:8). Let us not forget, in this connection, that the Lord's body prepared for Him was "made of a woman" (Galatians 4:4). The Gift of all gifts came by means of a woman. So here we see women bringing their mirrors, which perhaps had once been used as instruments of personal vanity to express self-love, now to reflect the beauties and glories of our Lord as the heavenly Laver.

The place of the laver should be noted. It stood between the brazen altar and the door into the holy place. No priest was to pass by the altar of atonement without identifying with it, nor was he to pass into the holy place as a priest until his hands and feet were washed. This speaks a stern warning against defilement in those who are redeemed. But He who demands such purity also provides in His beloved Son the Laver of cleansing waters. The Lord God who says, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord," is Himself the cleansing Laver. It is only such cleansing by our Lord which can fit us to enter a priestly ministry. The laver cries, "Wash, and be clean!"

If then this laver would cleanse, it must contain waters which have more than human or angelic power. These waters must be divine and have in them all the properties and attributes of God.

It is thus we are to view the Laver, Jesus Christ. He holds a remedy for defilement which can meet every need. He whose blood was once shed in atoning sacrifice, now applies His resurrection life to us to cleanse away every stain however vile in its uncleanness. There is a cleansing flow until no taint of corruption is found. The soul becomes as white as wool and whiter than driven snow. No defilement can live to torment the soul of those who wish to go on with the Lord. But the Psalmist reminds us it is only those with clean hands and a pure heart who can ascend the hill of the Lord and stand in the holy place.

The effectual cleansing of our Lord as the Laver can be seen when He Himself washed the feet of His disciples (John 13:4-5). It may well have been that these feet were

defiled as they walked through the lanes of this world in coming to feast with the Lord, or that their inward lives were also defiled as they argued by the way as to who should be the greatest. But cleansing there had to be before they could sit down to feast with Him. Whatever is not in accord with divine holiness necessitates washing. We must be clean before the Lord. There was no other cleansing fount. No other but the Lord Jesus Christ can cleanse our souls. He must wash and He alone.

Nothing between, Lord, nothing between:

Let me Thy glory see,

Draw my soul close to Thee,

Then speak Thy love to me—

Nothing between.

Nothing between, Lord, nothing between;

Thus may I walk with Thee,

Thee only may I see,

Thine only let me be—

Nothing between.

Nothing between, Lord, nothing between;

Till thine eternal light,

Rising on earth's dark night,

Bursts on my open sight—

Nothing between.

Author unknown

Chapter 26 The Woman's Seed

I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel (Genesis 3:15).

This is one of the most important chapters of the Bible. It shows how evil came into the world, from whom it came, and how God rescued man from it by the promise of the coming Redeemer. They are the first words of God's grace to sinful men. They were spoken immediately after the first man and woman lost, through the subtle work of Satan, the divine image and likeness in which they were created. Satan had deceived Eve by questioning the Word of God, then denying the Word of God, then impugning the character of God—hinting that God was withholding some knowledge they ought to have. All this was vast offense and utter contempt, disregard, and distrust of God's holy Word.

The Scene in Eden

First, there was the guilty party. There they were—fallen sinners now—darkened in their minds, unclean in their affections, rebellious in their wills. So hardening was the influence of sin that there were neither tears of sorrow, nor confession of sin, nor any pleas for mercy. Nothing of that!

Secondly, the devil was there. No mercy was shown him nor was there given him any hope of redemption. Destruction was his doom. His head was to be crushed, and all he had brought in was to be swept out of God's universe.

Thirdly, God Himself was in the garden. His first word of hope to man was concerning the woman's Seed—the promise that His eternal Son would become incarnate and enter this arena to be man's Saviour. He would come into our humanity, not by the activity of man, but by a way contrary to the principles of natural generation. Whereas all of Adam's race would be the seed of man, God's incarnate Son would be "the Seed of woman." Through Him a numerous seed would be "born of God" and not "by the will of men." Such was God's grace to fallen men—such "the glad tidings of great joy."

The Issue of the Promise

The promised Seed—Christ—would be bruised in this rescue work. "The wages of sin is death" was, and ever is, God's judgment upon sin. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). It could not be otherwise since God is absolute in holiness. This death was not annihilation, but an eternal separation from God and an exposure to His wrath. But God came into the garden with a plan already made in the counsels of eternity. That plan involved His beloved Son in descending from Heaven, in assuming our human nature, and in laying down His life on man's behalf.

This He could not do without becoming man, so Man He would become. Thus, having the same nature, He could offer Himself in man's place. Our Lord thus became the Seed of the woman that He might have a life that could be laid down in death, and have blood to shed to pay the ransom price for man's deliverance.

This offering would have to be "without blemish." He therefore came with a new humanity, without any contamination from Adam's life. His personal

righteousness was lived out in every human condition. Thus as His death was to be reckoned to the Believer's account in meeting all the demands of justice, so His righteousness was to be reckoned to him as a robe with which to clothe the believer before God.

The Conflict With Satan

The serpent is the devil as we read in Revelation 12:9, "That old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan." But no devil was he when God created him, but was "Lucifer, son of the morning" (Isaiah 14:12)—a brilliantly shining one—the most beautiful and wise amidst all the host of Heaven. He must have come to Eve as "an angel of light" and, deceiving her, reached Adam. Thus he became "the prince of this world" (John 12:31) and "the god of this age" (2 Corinthians 4:4). There is no place on earth where he and his fallen hosts have not been, no person left untouched by his evil influence.

We must not forget that the Lord came into the world to destroy (disarm) this ancient foe. "It [the Seed of the woman, Christ] shall bruise thy head." And our Lord did! It may have seemed to natural eyes that when He hung on the cross the enemy had triumphed. But no! As all hell's powers flung themselves at Him, He flung them off, "triumphing over them in it [the cross]" (Colossians 2:15).

The devil is a defeated foe. He lies forever under the feet of the Lord Jesus. He still retains power over those who serve him, but he has neither weapons nor powers to assault the Lord Jesus. The goliath of hell is a fallen foe. This battle was fought and won that we poor sinners could be rescued from Satan's enslavement. Those who believe enter a stronghold of security. They are high

above Satan's reach. He may attack, threaten, terrify,
but he can do nothing. What a joyful note, then, we
ought to strike!

Thou Son of God! the woman's Seed,

Who didst for us on Calv'ry bleed,

And bear sin's heavy load:

Spoiler of all the powers of hell,

Who conquered death invincible,

Thou Holy One of God!

Thy blood we sing! By that alone,

With boldness, to th' eternal throne,

Through Thee we now draw nigh;

It silences the voice of sin,

Washes the guilty conscience clean,

And makes the accuser fly!

Behold us, Lord a feeble band,

In conflict with the foe we stand,

The ransomed of Thy cross;

We sing the triumphs of Thy name;

All other glory count but shame,

All other gain but loss.

James G. Deck

Chapter 27 God's Provided Covering

And he [Adam] said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself... The LORD God made coats of skins, and clothed them (Genesis 3:10,21).

The garden of Eden was made the beautiful home of God's masterpiece—man, made in God's own image and after His likeness. He must have been, of necessity, a most glorious creature in his primitive state and therefore in a very happy frame. What his original covering was we are not told, but it may well have been a garment of light—an outward expression of that unmixed light which God set up in his soul. There was no impurity to be seen without. He shone most brightly in the image of his Maker, and God was with him. He was made universal lord and emperor over the whole world. There was perfect tranquility within his breast, and perfect calm without.

God gave the man a wife as a helpmeet, built out of a part of man himself. The happy pair lived in perfect unity. They knew no shame. Though they were naked, yet there were no blushes on their faces. Sin, the seed of shame, had not yet been sown. Their lives were lived in pure delight and unchallenged pleasure. And they were immortal. Death there was not.

The Shame of Nakedness

Man was the cause of his own ruin. God had made him upright, but he threw himself down. Innocence was the robe of glory which God put on these first parents, but together they turned that glory into shame. It is a sight

to cause the deepest lamentation. They were like a stately building in ruins, lying in ashes.

There had been no darkness in their minds, no rebellion in their wills, no disorder in their affections. But now the glory was departed. The crown of perfect manhood and womanhood had fallen from their heads. Sin now brought to Adam and Eve a consciousness of nakedness and a sense of shame. They were now stripped bare of all that had once shone gloriously in them. Countless evils were to be inherited by their progeny: thus Adam and Eve made for themselves, and for all the human family which was to spring from them, a plethora of sorrows. So now they bowed their heads in shame. They were naked indeed—naked of every good God had given them.

Blushing to see the light of day, and fearful now of God's holy presence, they sought concealment by hiding, and made for themselves a silly contrivance to cover themselves. From that guilty pair has come to all men a tendency to cover up sin by self-deceit. That tendency is as natural to sinful man as it is for a fish to swim in water or for a bird to fly in the air.

The Clothing of God

The fall of man did not catch God by surprise. He did not have to look around for a remedy. The contingency plan to redeem was already settled in God's mind from time eternal. This plan was, therefore, fully accomplished though it would need to be worked out in time. It was first given in promises and pictures and finally in the reality of Calvary's cross with the sacrificial and substitutionary death of His beloved and eternal Son.

God in mercy came to their relief. He supplied their need by making coats of skins with which to clothe them. Blood was shed to make that possible. Innocent animals were slain. But why? As man lived only on herbs before the flood of Genesis 9, animals were not slain for food. They died as a sacrifice to set forth in picture the Lamb that was slain on Calvary's tree. "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). The skins were then taken from these offerings for sin and out of these God Himself fashioned clothing to cover the nakedness of the guilty pair.

Such was a picture of the Saviour's righteousness in which all believing ones are enwrapped. It is thus they are made fit for Heaven and for God's holy presence. They must be washed from their sins in the precious blood of Christ and clothed with His pure, spotless righteousness. "The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe" (Romans 3:22). What more could be required?

Adam's original robe of innocence was but natural and human. Our Lord's is spiritual and divine. Adam's robe was soon in tatters. Satan touched it and it crumbled. What God provides through His Son is an "everlasting righteousness"—a garment of beauty and glory which Satan cannot touch and which can never wear out. Happy the soul that can say, "He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:10).

I lift my heart to Thee, Saviour divine!

For Thou art all to me, and I am Thine.

Is there on earth a closer bond than this,

That "my Beloved's mine, and I am His!"

To Thee, once bleeding Lamb, I all things owe,
All that I have, and all I know!
All that I have is now no longer mine,
And I am not my own: Lord, I am Thine!
I pray Thee, Saviour, keep me in Thy love,
Till Thou shalt come, or sleep shalt me remove
To that fair realm where sin and sorrow o'er,
Thou and Thine own are one forevermore!
C. E. Mudie

Chapter 28 Abel's Acceptable Offering

And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering (Genesis 4:4). By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain (Hebrews 11:4).

The testimony of Abel is all-important. It is the first proof of God's declared acceptance because of Abel's trust in the blood sacrifice which pointed to the cross of Christ. The heart and substance of the gospel lies in Abel's brief life—brief because he was slain while still a young and single man.

The Two Offerers

Both Cain and Abel offered a sacrifice to God. We are told that "in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof" (Genesis 4:3-4). John tells us Cain "was of that wicked one" and that "his own works were evil" (1 John 3:12). He was elder brother to Abel in the first human family, and no doubt received the same instruction from parents who had been clothed by the sacrifice of innocent blood and another's righteousness.

Cain came to God. He did not scornfully ridicule the existence of God. He, too, built an altar, prepared an offering, and bowed the knee as Abel did. But the all-seeing eye of God discerned a difference. The Lord "had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect."

Cain's coming before God seemed to be good. The appearance had the mark of godliness. He seemed

neither deficient in sincerity nor devotion. Had it been otherwise, he would not have been “very wroth” so that “his countenance fell.” His deficiency lay in his lack of faith. He was a self-righteous worshiper, and when God stripped the disguise away, it was plainly seen that he “was of that wicked one.”

God had ordained the way of salvation and made it clear to Adam and Eve. But Cain thought he could come in another way, perhaps more suitable to the dignity of man. He put his own reason against the counsel of God and turned away from God’s revealed will to make his own approach to God on his own terms. We see, then, that the wickedness of the human heart does not always show itself in refusal to worship God. Neither does it prove we are acceptable in our worship because we draw nigh with sincerity and devotion. Unless we come with faith in God’s appointed way, the Lord will not accept us. But this is the delusion of many.

Both faith and unbelief implied previous instruction. But while Abel reverently believed what he was taught, Cain presumptuously refused it. The coats of skins worn by their parents were a daily instruction and witness in how sinners were saved and reckoned righteous.

Cain, however, felt neither the consciousness of sin nor the need of pardon. He left his sin offering at the door—a rejection of Christ of whom it was a type. He trampled on God’s truth and knew nothing of his own wretchedness and need. He brought “of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord,” which acknowledged indeed a Creator’s kindness, but it implied neither confession of his sinfulness nor recognition of a Saviour’s love.

Abel, on the other hand, realized he was a man who had sinned and who looked for acceptance through the provision of God's mercy. Acting on this godly belief, he came with purpose of heart to consecrate himself to the Lord and His glory. He, therefore, "brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof." It was an offering which pointed forward to God's promise of the coming Redeemer, who would be God's Lamb of sacrifice. Abel's faith rested in this hope. It was an act of self-renunciation, and he found the grace he was seeking.

Abel's More Excellent Sacrifice

Abel's offering is spoken of as "a more excellent sacrifice." With such an offering he "obtained witness that he was righteous." We have every reason to suppose, as it was in the case of Solomon and Elijah, that fire from Heaven came down and consumed the sacrifice. By such a means did God in ancient days testify to His acceptance of an offering. Abel "obtained witness that he was righteous." We speak of self-righteousness, but in truth there is no such thing. Without Christ man has no righteousness at all. The first element in obtaining righteousness is faith in the Lord Jesus. It is not the act of our faith which is our righteousness, for even that would be a work of man. But this faith is the gift of God and rests wholly on the sacrifice of the Saviour.

May we see our dearest Lord as the "more excellent Sacrifice." It is this alone which brings peace to our conscience. It is said of Abel that "he being dead yet speaketh." Let us, then, hear the voice of Abel and

rejoice in our Lord Jesus Christ as the “more excellent Sacrifice.”

Amazing, holy mystery,

Unfathomed Sacrifice,

Where Incarnate Love on Calv’ry’s tree,

Accursed for sinners, dies!

From His soul, pour’d out unto death, that cry

Utters sorrow and love unknown,

“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?”

O Suff rer, so wounded, so lone!

How couldst Thou—bruised, like crushed worm

Trod down in the dust of death—

O’er that scene of wrathful gloom and storm

Pour love’s sweet undying breath?

’Twas that doom that wrung from Thy soul the plea,

Out of depths of the direful cross,

“My God, O why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

Forsaken, blest Saviour, for us!

For us Thy scars Thou wearest still—

Sweet mark of our advocate!

Soon Thy Form of love our souls shall thrill,

Low bowed at Thy nail-pierced feet!

How Thy wounds shall speak! how Thy soul’s deep cry

Shall in echo forever fall,

“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?”

Lord Jesus! our Glory, our All!

Frank Allaben

Chapter 29 The Altar's Sweet Savor

Noah builded an altar unto the LORD...And the LORD smelled a sweet savour (Genesis 8:20-21).

The sanctifying power of God's grace is demonstrated for us in the lives of godly men of old. The new world upon which Noah stood after the flood was, in a sense, resurrection ground. Upon this ground Noah, the man of God, now builds. As with every true child of God, his life was a new beginning in redemption and characterized by joy in praise and prayer through reconciling blood.

He and his family had built an ark which was scorned by the world. But Noah built it in obedience to God and entered it with calm confidence to find within peace and safety. Now that the flood had abated, God spoke again, "Go forth of the ark," and Noah left it upon Mount Ararat with the old world a veritable graveyard, but a new world visible before his eyes. The riot of evil was past. The new is at rest.

Noah's First Employment

"Noah builded an altar unto the LORD." Worship was his first employment. The last trace of judgment had passed away. The new earth was to be filled with what came out of the ark. But coming forth into this new world, there was much need for work to be done. There would be need for a house for his family and stalls for his cattle. The necessities of existence demanded that he begin immediately to plan and build. But Noah gave God the first place in his new life. The first building was an altar: his first act the exercise of worship.

Thus we are taught the primacy of worship. Those who are truly redeemed are first drawn to this sacred exercise. It is the first concern and comes before all that is to contribute to earthly existence. Thus we see for the first time an altar raised. The ground before the flood was cursed, but judgment made it clean, and having such clean ground, an altar was raised on earth.

The Altar of Sacrifice

The altar itself was a figure of Christ in His Godhood. Only He, because He was God, could bear the weight of human sin. The purpose of the altar was to hold up a sacrifice to God. No multitude of angels could have borne such a weight. Only Deity was sufficient, and it was Deity alone in the Lord Jesus which held the sacrifice intact on Calvary's cross when He was forsaken. He was strong in His own divine right—immovable in His own Godhood.

If the altar set forth our Lord's deity, then the sacrifice upon it was symbolic of His Humanity. "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). Who could count the number of sins? The sins of the whole human race must have been as many as the sands by the seashore. Who but God could absorb all the punishment due them?

Thus our Lord, as the true Altar and Sacrifice, could answer for all our sins. Let no man vainly imagine that we weak mortals can contribute in any way, or carry any of this burden. It is not Christ with angels, or the church, or penance, or purgatory, but Christ and He alone. "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4).

The Sweet Savor of the Offering

“The Lord smelled a sweet savour.” Noah’s sacrificial offering pointed to Calvary’s cross. It is His sacrifice alone which rises to God as a sweet savor. His sacrifice satisfies every attribute of the divine nature.

It is a sweet savor to God’s justice. Justice calls for obedience without faltering and without interruption. Where there is disobedience, then justice demands death. It cannot connive at evil. But in our Lord’s sacrifice there is that which meets every demand of justice so that it is honored with full satisfaction.

It is a sweet savor to God’s truth. Truth can never wink at evil or pretend it is not there. Nor can it restrain from exposing and denouncing it. Neither tears, nor prayers, nor penances can affect truth and cause truth to become untruth by excusing sin. But in the sacrifice of God’s beloved Son, truth smells a sweet savor and is fully satisfied.

It is a sweet savor to God’s holiness. Holiness cannot look upon iniquity or any form of uncleanness. It is of purer eyes than to behold what is impure. But at the cross, where the precious blood of Christ flows and cleanses from all sin, even holiness joys in that sacrifice and smells a sweet savor.

This sacrifice of our Lord’s is the joy of Heaven. It delights every attribute in the Godhead. Then let it be our joy. Let it refresh our souls as we celebrate it.

Lowly Jesus, mighty God,
Suff’ring Lamb and stricken Dove,
In the wrathful winepress trod,

Who can tell Thy wondrous love?
Sin-abhorring, holy Word,
Cursed for sin how didst Thou prove,
Fiery pangs of judgment's sword!
Bruised, profound, amazing love!
Floods of love like rivers, spilled
From the Bosom judgment clove,
All God's universe have filled—
Fragrant, deep, atoning love!
From Thy wondrous Cross alone
Bruised Lamb and wounded Dove,
All God's radiancy hath shone:
Thou art all our Light and Love!
Frank Allaben

Chapter 30 God's Bow In A Dark Day

I do set My bow in the cloud (Genesis 9:13).

This chapter begins a new era in human history. It was a new beginning. There was to be a new system of God's dealing with men. It was to be the establishing of government, which does not appear beforehand, and a committing of that government to the responsibility of man. Animal food was also introduced for man's sustenance instead of only herbs. This meant that man would now feed upon what was the result of death. Death was to yield food for man, which pointed to the death of Christ as the food of those delivered from judgment and who would live in Him.

The offering of sacrifice by Noah was the ground upon which God entered into a covenant with man. In this covenant, God committed Himself and made a pledge, so that it could never be annulled. God's promise not again to drown the world was given in covenant.

The rainbow in the cloud was the sign of God's covenant. It is the most lovely of wonders in the natural world. It is set in the sky on a dark and stormy day.

The Message to Noah

Noah had witnessed the judgment of God on an ungodly world. In that judgment a world had disappeared and was buried. The world that then was, perished. God's long-suffering had given man ample time to repent, but time brought no change. The life of man became nothing more than a lengthened course of iniquity.

When that cup was full, God's justice brought to an end all flesh, save those who were in the ark of refuge of God's design. The ark was an emblem of Christ, in whom alone safety is found. He only can deliver sinners from the wrath of God against sin and provide an all-secure refuge.

When the waters subsided, Noah and his family went forth from the ark. His first act was to build an altar and worship. Worship took precedence. But fallen man is prone to fears. These often linger on in the minds of those saved by the Lord, though there is no ground for such, and "fear hath torment."

What fears, then, might invade Noah's mind and heart? Would he not fear in the dark and cloudy day? Might he not fear another deluge? The gathering of dark clouds in the sky or the fall of heavy rain would easily provoke such fears.

But God in grace not only provided salvation from judgment, but gave His promise that He would not again deluge the world in like catastrophe. To add to Noah's peace of mind, God added this remarkable and beautiful wonder—a bow in the cloud. And what a cheering and comforting wonder it must have been! "I do set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth... The waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh" (Genesis 9:13-17; Isaiah 54:9-10).

The Truth in Christ

The promise of God to Noah was simply a pledge concerning the earth only. But it was a figure, and was related to something much better in Christ. Our Lord is

set in a higher Heaven, and appears to those souls who fear the wrath of God and enter into God's revealed grace in His Son. When all is dark and foreboding, then, lo, Christ appears in all His beauty. The cheering sight of Him assures that God's judgment is past.

The rainbow derives its being from light, and our Lord spoke of Himself as "the Light of the world" (John 8:12). Light is bright and so is our Lord as "the brightness of His [the Father's] glory" (Hebrews 1:3). Light is lovely, and so is our Lord, being "fairer than the children of men" (Psalm 45:2). Light is all-revealing, and so is our Lord. His glorious presence unmask every dark and unlovely thing.

What is light which shines in the many-splendored bow? It is broken light! The charm and comfort of the Lord Jesus to believing souls lies in the fact that He was broken for us on Calvary's cross. From that cross our Lord has risen as a bow of covenant grace. He is our assurance that God's wrath is past and will never sweep the redeemed to perdition.

Thus on the dark and cloudy day, when conscience would accuse and fearful specters start up, or when perplexities puzzle, temptations assault, ridicule and persecutions afflict, lo, Christ our Lord appears as the Bow in the cloud. He shines forth in the midst of burdens which oppress and amidst life's trials and discouragements. How fair and beautiful He is! He is the wonder of God's infinite grace!

Behold the glories of the Lamb

Amidst the Father's throne!

Prepare new honors for His name,

And songs before unknown.
Ye elders, worship at His feet—
His saints adore around,
With vials full of odors sweet
And harps of sweetest sound.
To Thee, O Lamb, to Thee, once slain,
Be endless blessings paid!
Salvation, glory, joy, remain
Forever on Thy head.
Isaac Watts

Chapter 31 Our Shield And Reward

Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward (Genesis 15:1).

It is a most blessed thing to have a true sense of the greatness of God. In chapter 13, Abram, as his name then was, had separated himself from Lot. Lot had set his face toward Sodom, and his ultimate residence in that lawless place brought him a sea of troubles. Abram dwelt at Mamre, meaning “vigor,” which place was in Hebron, meaning “fellowship.” These names suggest Abram’s spiritual vigor and bespeak the strength of a corporate and armed household to support him. It was with such that he was able to rescue Lot after his having been taken captive in the battle of “four kings with five” (Genesis 14:9-16).

After the rescue of Lot, Abram met the priest Melchizedek—a notable type of Christ as the king-priest of his people. From Melchizedek Abram received bread and wine for his sustenance and refreshment, which points to our Lord’s holy remembrance feast. With Melchizedek’s blessing, Abram refused to take anything from the king of Sodom. He was wise enough to discern the wiles of this evil king who would have him trade persons for goods. His reply to the king was full of dignity and wisdom.

“After these things” the Lord graciously relieved Abram of any lurking fears concerning the future, saying, “Fear not, Abram,” and God gave the reason why he was not to do so.

The Lord His Shield

A shield is a defense against hostile powers, and God Himself was to be this to His servant. Hostile foes were still in the land. The powerful king of Elam was not dead nor had he ceased his hostility. Abram could still expect assault. The tide of battle would roll again. Abram's army was small—three hundred and eighteen. The enemy would rise again to wound and captivate. But the Lord Himself was to be Abram's shield, which guaranteed his safety and security.

The lesson for us is plain and clear. As believers we live in a hostile world. The hands of Satan are red with the blood of millions of our race. He is the very essence of hate and "a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44). He enslaves, then revels in man's misery. His wiles are subtle. His ambushes are skillfully laid. His darts are fiery and pitiless. He strikes at any age—from the tenderest child to the weakest aged one. But the Lord Jesus is our Shield and Defender. Against Him all is powerless. He is the comfort of His saints. His office, as such, is made of nothing but love. His shield is lined with love, and behind it believers are safe indeed.

The Lord His Exceeding Great Reward

Abram had been called in the beginning to relinquish his own country and the kindred of his father's idolatrous house. But he was no loser. At the rescue of Lot, the king of Sodom had offered a king's treasury. "Take the goods to thyself," was Abram's noble reply to a tempting offer. In the way of faith every relinquishment is wealth and every loss is gain.

"I am ... thy exceeding great reward." The emphasis is, "I, Jehovah, am!" At this time Abram was not the possessor of a single foot of land which had been promised him. But God was more than land, and God Himself was to be his possession and heritage. Canaan was a gift to Abram, but the Lord Himself was his reward—the portion of His people. All that God is in His greatness, His majesty, His eminence, His excellence, and His glory, is set out in His beloved Son.

What a privilege it is to know Him in a world of superstition and idolatry and overwhelming wickedness! Is that not reward enough for believing? What are the world's vanities—its empty shows, its defiling pleasures, its sordid wit, its lying principles? What is such vanity compared to the possession of Christ, the Lord? All that is of the earth is earthy, and all can be taken away. What is health, or wealth, or fame, or pleasure, compared to God Himself? There are some who are glad when their barns are filled with grain, their stalls with cattle, their houses with luxury, their bankrolls with plenty; but what is such trivia compared to the most blessed God?

It is the Lord Jesus Christ who is the final expression of "the exceeding great reward." He is the portion of all true believers, and even Abram saw His day and was glad (John 8:56). Is it not reward enough, and far beyond our comprehension, to have Him, who died, sustained a curse, and wrought righteousness on our behalf? His death is ours that we may never die. His curse is ours to redeem us from the curse of the law. His blood is ours to wash our souls whiter than snow. His righteousness is ours that we may stand spotless before the Father's face. His life is ours that we may live forever. His

Heaven is ours that we may be with Him throughout the
endless ages of eternity.

Father! in Thine eternal power,
Thy grace, Thy majesty divine,
No soul, in this weak mortal hour,
Can grasp the glory that is Thine!
And yet Thy love is not unknown
To those who have the Saviour seen;
Nor strange to those He calls His own—
Pilgrims in scenes where He has been.
And here we walk as sons, through grace,
A Father's love our present joy,
Find, in the brightness of Thy Face,
A rest no sorrows can destroy.

J. N. Darby

Chapter 32 The Everlasting Covenant

I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant (Genesis 17:7).

There is no greater covenant in Scripture than the covenant which God made with Abraham. There are aspects of the covenant that affect Abraham personally—that he would be great, that a numerous people would spring from him, and that even kings would proceed from him. The possession of Palestine was an aspect which promised unconditional blessing to the nation Israel, of which he was the father and founder. But there was an aspect which was universal, that which promised blessing to all the families of the earth (Genesis 12:1-3).

When God counted Abraham righteous or justified while he was still a Gentile, it was because he believed God (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3). His faith rested solely upon two promises given him of God. The first was that a particular seed would spring from him; the second that a spiritual seed would arise composed of those of like precious faith who would be as the stars of heaven for multitude (Genesis 15:5).

Paul interprets the particular seed as Christ—"To thy seed, which is Christ" (Galatians 3:16), and the promise that in him all families of the world would be blessed as "they which are of faith" (Galatians 3:7), that is, those who would believe God concerning His Son, as Abraham himself believed (John 8:56).

Leaving aside those aspects of the covenant which have to do with Abraham personally, or with Israel as a

nation, we think of that aspect which has to do with Abraham's spiritual seed. "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Galatians 3:8).

The Covenant of Works

In the course of time, the nation called Israel sprang from the loins of Abraham. This nation was his natural seed. With Moses as the mediator, God made a covenant with this nation, but a covenant of an entirely different nature to that made with Abraham. It was a covenant with conditional promises which rested upon Israel's obedience to the law given Moses. The promise of life was conditional upon their works, which would have to be absolute in faithfulness. Three times over the nation swore to obey: "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do."

But an imperfect people cannot keep a perfect law. The covenant, therefore, was soon trampled underfoot. Thus the promises made by God were forfeited. Since the covenant was so violated, Paul concludes most justly that "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Galatians 2:16).

The Covenant of Grace

The covenant of grace is not made with sinful men but rests solely upon God's sovereign will. It was the essence of the covenant made to Abraham and centered in the promised seed—Christ, the Son of God. In this covenant, which is called "a better covenant" in relation to the covenant of works (Hebrews 8:6), God's beloved

Son assumes responsibility for the terms and promises given in that covenant.

For God to be God of any of Adam's race, the people must be holy (1 Peter 1:16). The Son of God assumed responsibility for this, and thus He Himself is the essence of the covenant (Isaiah 42:6). He is the essence, the reality, the fullness of it. He is the beginning and end of it. He is the foundation and edifice of it. Believing in Him and His atoning work, all our sins are dealt with, all guilt removed, reconciliation with God is effected, peace is established, and the way into the holiest opened so that Heaven is assured.

"By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament" (Hebrews 7:22). He is Surety for the Father and Surety for His believing people. By His sacrifice He releases the boundless blessings promised by the Father. Nothing can be withheld from those who believe. All must be given. In His saving of us, and His sanctifying of us through the process of time, He will present us to the Father "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Ephesians 5:27).

"To Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant" (Hebrews 12:24). He stands between man and God. He is one with God and one with man. Union with God is eternally effected in Him. Therefore we have the promise of the Father, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips" (Psalm 89:34).

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord

Is laid for your faith in His excellent word!

What more can He say, than to you He hath said,

To you, who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

“Fear not, I am with thee, oh, be not dismayed!
For I am thy God, I will still give thee aid;
I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My gracious, omnipotent hand.
“The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no never forsake!”
George Keith

Chapter 33 Jacob's Ladder And His Vow

He dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven (Genesis 28:12).

Through the scheming of his mother, Jacob had deceived his father into thinking he was the first-born, Esau, and thus had obtained the blessing of the birthright. To escape the wrath of Esau, his father Isaac sent him away, at the mother's insistence, to her brother, Laban, at Padan-aram. He was as sharp a deceiver as Jacob. But, on the way, Jacob came to Bethel and lay down to sleep.

It was no doubt a painful experience to leave his godly home when all around was a heathen world. Sin had driven him out to be a lonely wanderer. His way was solitary; his journey not without danger. "Be sure your sin will find you out" is an inexorable law of God. Jacob's pillow was now a hard stone. The gloom of the night only added to the inward anguish of his heart.

But Jacob was the chosen of God for sovereign and divine purposes. Jacob was "the lot of His inheritance"—the ground upon which God would build His eternal purpose. Jacob, therefore, was heir of an everlasting portion which could not be lost. In sending him away, his father sent him away with blessing, not with rebuke. Here at Bethel, God made Himself known to Jacob and, in doing so, made no mention of his failure. But there would be twenty years of discipline before Jacob would be rid of his pretense to be Esau. When sleep closed Jacob's eyes a marvelous vision was given him.

The Ladder

The remarkable thing about his vision is that God came in at the beginning of Jacob's wandering with its consequent discipline, to assure him that he was loved of God and cared for by Him. The Lord's purposes stood fast. Jacob's failure did not change God's purpose in grace. "Behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven." The foot of the ladder rested on earth, which was a clear picture of God's beloved Son assuming our humanity as a Babe in Bethlehem, in living the life of a common carpenter, in laying down His life for us, in giving Himself a ransom for many, and in offering Himself as a sacrifice to die a felon's death upon the accursed tree. This is where the ladder stands, in the miry clay of our manhood.

But see where it rises! The One who came down so far, the same ascended to Heaven above, for He was ever co-equal with God, in power, in wisdom, in dignity, in holiness, and in truth. The bottom of the ladder reached down to man; the top of it reached up to God. Thus a link was forged between the two. What a clear emblem this is of God's promised Redeemer!

The Blessing

"Surely the LORD is in this place," said Jacob, "and I knew it not." Of course! He is everywhere. He was here in the revelation of His saving grace. It is only that revelation of God in Christ which can subdue restless flesh and tell those who feel outcast of His own purpose and grace. God's only way to bless is to bring man to Himself, and He can only do that through the revelation of His Son. God was no longer afar off at Bethel; He was

very near. Jacob was no longer an outcast, but the object of God's peculiar care.

There were material blessings for Jacob, such as the promised land and the great increase of his natural seed. He was to spread abroad in every direction. But there was to be spiritual blessing of greater value—"In thy seed [Christ] shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 28:14).

"I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (verse 15). God was there in grace through the revealing of His Son as the Ladder, or else there would have been no such rich promise. The dream calmed Jacob; the promise refreshed him.

The Vow

"And Jacob vowed a vow" (verse 20). If something is of God we must be true to it and pledge ourselves to it. God was the God of Bethel, and Bethel means "the house of God." Through the ladder there was made known a way for Jacob to rise to God, and in honor of this revelation he set up a pillar and anointed it. The God of Bethel is the God of our vows. Jacob vowed that God would be his God. He made a solemn dedication of his heart to Him. God never forgets that! Later on He was to say, "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto Me" (Genesis 31:13). Nor should we forget the day we gave ourselves to the Lord. Oh, let us put our feet upon the Ladder, the Lord Jesus, and through Him ascend to the throne of God which is high over all the earth. The Lord Jesus alone is our approach to God.

O Lord, how infinite Thy love!
It spans all time and space,
Enwraps Thy loved ones to the end
In its encircling grace.
Author unknown
The contrite heart is incense sweet,
Our gracious God to Thee;
It worships at Thy mercy seat
In perfect liberty.
That gift which Thou wilt not despise
Do Thou to us impart
And then accept our sacrifice—
A broken contrite heart.
Chapman

Chapter 34 Humiliation And Exaltation

He was there in the prison (Genesis 39:20).

See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt (41:41).
Joseph opened all the storehouses (41:56).

The history of Joseph occupies a large place in the Book of Genesis. The image of our Lord is easily recognizable, and His voice is clearly heard in all of Joseph's varied circumstances. He is set before us as specially loved of his father, and sent to serve among his brethren but hated of them.

But he would have nothing to do with their evil words and ways and could only bring his father an evil report of them. The favor shown him by his father only brought out their enmity. The more the father approved him, the more they hated him. Sold into Potiphar's household, the wife of Potiphar tried to seduce him. Through her lying, he was cast into prison. In all these things you see pictures of the life of our Lord in His life here on earth.

His Humiliation

Joseph in prison was a guiltless person. He was indeed a sad spectacle—an innocent man cast into a dungeon of infamy and numbered with transgressors. In this we see our Lord "made sin for us," and brought to prison and to judgment. Books have been written to prove the innocence of the Lord Jesus. But they miss the point.

We must go deeper, and remember that the real arrest of the Lord Jesus was by the justice of God. He had no sin of His own, for He could do no sin, yet for us men

and our salvation the whole mountain of the world's sin was laid upon Him. He hung on Calvary's tree laden with the transgressions of all. The guiltless Son of God consented to assume all this. "The LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

He thus appears, by substitution, as covered with the total mass of man's sins, the doer of all their evil deeds, the speaker of all their evil words, the harbinger of all their evil thoughts. It was the justice of God which laid hands on Him, and the love of God that was willing to bear it all. Justice shines out at the cross in all its intrinsic worth, and mercy and love shine there in a blaze of utter brightness.

Joseph spent thirteen years in prison undergoing severe testing. There he interpreted the dreams of two offenders. Of the two, one was restored, the other left to perish. Released from prison, Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dreams—a picture of our Lord as the wisdom of God.

His Exaltation

Joseph was not left in the place of humiliation. He was raised out of it and made to sit on Pharaoh's right hand of majesty, with the government of the whole realm laid upon his shoulders. All the evil that was done to him was overruled by God to bring about his exaltation. Joseph became, not only ruler of Egypt but, in seven years of famine, the savior of all. Thus we learn from our Lord's rejection by Israel that the pleasure of the Lord prospered in His hand, and He was raised up to be Lord of all.

Our Lord, like Joseph, was tested in very lowly circumstances in His life on earth, but the testing only the more manifested His moral glory and qualified Him to rule. His moral worth was proved before His exaltation. God's testings are often in secret before any exaltation to public view.

In his exaltation, Joseph was given a wonderful title—"Zaphnath-paaneah," which means, "a revealer of secrets." He was also the savior of the world. The Lord Jesus is indeed that today! Every blessing of God is administered through Him. As Pharaoh exalted Joseph, so God has exalted the true Joseph, His beloved Son, to be the salvation, and life, and plentiful supply for all men everywhere.

His Plentifulness

"Go unto Joseph!" was the command when hungry men came to buy corn in Egypt as famine, with all its consequent misery, raged throughout the whole world. Supply for all human need was placed in Joseph's hands. At that time the whole world was prostrate in dire need. The staff of life had failed, and hunger presided in every home. But the storehouses of Joseph were full, and only he had authority and power to grant relief. Thus, in vivid picture, we are shown the Lord Jesus as "the Bread of life." To go to Him is to go to the Source of abundant supply and to be satisfied forever.

It is only of the Lord Jesus that it is said, "He hath filled the hungry with good things." The Lord has given His body and His blood for the spiritual food of His people. "My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." It is our heavenly Joseph to whom we must go, for only He can feed us to satisfaction.

Satisfied with Thee, Lord Jesus,
I am blest;
Peace which passeth understanding,
On Thy breast;
No more doubting, no more trembling,
Oh, what rest! Oh, what rest!
Occupied with Thee, Lord Jesus,
In Thy grace;
All Thy ways and thoughts about me
Only trace
Deeper stories of Thy glories
Of Thy grace! Of Thy grace!
Taken up with Thee, Lord Jesus,
I would be;
Finding joy and satisfaction
All in Thee;
Thou the nearest and the dearest
Unto me! Unto me!
Miss C. A. Wellesley

Chapter 35 Gathered Unto Shiloh

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be (Genesis 49:10).

These are the words of the dying Jacob. In dying, he seemed to have reached a spiritual maturity of no common measure. His life had been tempestuous, but the grace of God had at last brought forth the peaceable fruit of righteousness. The good news had come to him that Joseph was alive. If we think of Joseph as a type of the Lord Jesus, then we see that every good is secured in Christ risen. Israel was not now in the inheritance of God. They were in the land of Goshen in Egypt among the heathen; but because of Joseph they were blessed there before returning to the Lord's inheritance.

In the previous chapters we see that Jacob had lost his much-loved Rachel, whom he buried in Bethlehem (35:19). Our Lord was born in Bethlehem. The natural has to go out if Christ is to become All in all to our souls. Saul, on being anointed king of Israel, was sent first by Samuel to Rachel's tomb. This, no doubt, was to teach him that only when all that is attractive to nature is buried out of sight can there be a kingdom of God on earth—a lesson Saul never learned.

We see Jacob's powers of discernment in the blessing of his sons. The corruption of Reuben, and the inordinate violence of Simeon and Levi, caused Jacob to rise indignant over their cruelties. This exposure of the natural man makes way for the blessing which is to come through Judah.

The Promise of Shiloh

The Lord appears under many names and titles in Scripture. Shiloh is one brilliant diadem of them. All that the promised Redeemer is to be, filled Jacob's dying eye. Shiloh means "The Sent One." And when we ask by whom was He sent, there is a plenitude of answers. "God sent His only begotten Son into the world... He... sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins... The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4:9, 10, 14). The Father's Shiloh is the Father's Son. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son" (Galatians 4:4). In giving His Son, God gave everything He could give. God's love can only be measured by the value of His gift.

He was to come of Judah's line. Judah means praise. He must come in this line of sovereignty. Judah is to be the royal tribe and Shiloh the One who shall ultimately have the kingdom. It is reserved for Him, as the name also indicates. It is all very clear to Jacob's anointed eye. He sees the ultimate millennial reign of God's promised Redeemer. But before that the scepter is handed to Him when He shall be crowned with glory and honor as the Prince of peace—which name is also inherent in Shiloh—the scepter was to be temporarily taken from Israel, that is, the right to rule their own lives.

The lawgiver is brought into the text because Shiloh must exhibit a perfect obedience to the law. Without becoming the offspring of one of Judah's daughters after the flesh, and without a spotless life in the flesh, there could be no expiating blood, no justifying righteousness, no kindred relationship, no way for man to be gathered unto God.

During our Lord's time on earth the Jews had no king, and confessed they had "no king but Caesar" (John 19:15). Rome ruled Palestine. Had it not been so, our Lord would have died the Jewish death of stoning. But Moses, speaking prophetically of Him, said, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," and David spoke of Him when he said, "They pierced My hands and My feet" (Galatians 3:13 for Deuteronomy 21:23; Psalm 22:16).

This is remarkable indeed! Crucifixion was the death of an outcast Gentile—a Roman form of death. When the Jews cried out "Crucify Him!" they meant, Let Him die the most accursed of all deaths—outcast of Jewry and outcast of the Gentiles. What hatred of Him in Jewry! What malice toward Him in the heart of the Gentile!

The Ultimate Vindication

The fruit of His passion for Israel will be seen at the close of "the church age" when "all Israel shall be saved" and gathered to Him (Romans 11:26). "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."

But, previous to that, there is a gathering of Abraham's spiritual seed as the fruit of that passion—a people saved by grace, who confess that "He also has become our salvation" and "saved us with an holy calling."

The gathering of this spiritual seed was also in Jacob's mind when he said, "Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." We are gathered, not to some man, no matter how eloquent; nor to some sect, no matter what their man-devised creeds; nor to any form of teaching, no matter how fundamental; but primarily gathered unto

the Lord, to worship before Him, to love and adore Him,
to praise and give thanks unto Him, and pledge and
devote our lives unto Him.

Gathered in Thy Name, Lord Jesus,
Losing sight of all but Thee,
Oh, what joy Thy presence gives us,
Calling up our hearts to Thee!
Loved with love which knows no measure,
Save the Father's love to Thee,
Blessed Lord, our hearts would treasure
All the Father's thoughts of Thee.
How He set His love upon Thee,
Called Thee His beloved Son;
Yet for us He did not spare Thee,
By Thy death our life was won.
Miss C. A. Wellesley

Chapter 36 The Silver Trumpets

Make thee two trumpets of silver (Numbers 10:2).

There is mention of trumpets more than one hundred times in God's Word. The material was to be silver which, in ancient symbolism, denotes redemption. God's message to man is the message of redemption. They were blown by the priests, which suggests that only those chosen of God should sound the good news. The message is that God is reconciled, the ransom has been paid, a remedy provided, a Saviour given. Their notes were to be loud and clear and most distinct.

The trumpets were of one piece as is the gospel message. The silver for them was refined for "the words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" (Psalm 12:6). They were also of "beaten work," to remind us that redeeming grace was the result of the Saviour's sufferings. Redemption was a thorough work. When Israel was redeemed out of Egypt, not a hoof was left behind. Our lives through redemption are to be like that—of wrought and beaten silver.

They Gathered the Redeemed Together

"When they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves" (Numbers 10:3). God's people were called by the trumpets to assemble. Thus they were instruments to establish the relatedness, the oneness, and the fellowship of the Lord's people. They had a unifying effect. God calls His redeemed to holy assembly so that public worship and praise could be

offered Him. Nothing should be allowed to divide or scatter them.

The blessed Saviour, our High Priest, is in the midst, and the blessed Spirit of God inspires the praise. The offering of such praise rises as a fragrant sacrifice before the Father's face in glory. It is sad to think that there are those who lightly esteem public assembly. It is here that spiritual life thrives and relationships are strengthened and fellowship consolidated.

They Ordered Forward Movement

"When ye blow an alarm...the camps...shall move forward" (verse 5). They were thus for ordering the life and movement of the Lord's people. The pillar of cloud and pillar of fire provided guidance, and, when Israel was in right relation to God, the guidance was always toward the land of promise. When the time came for the people to move forward, the trumpets sounded to give order and direction, bringing them ever nearer the Lord's inheritance of rest and fullness.

This will remind us, surely, that the earth is not our rest. We are strangers among its people and pilgrims through its territory. There is a tremendous purpose in being called together in the fellowship of God's Son. That purpose must not only be known but realized. His people need to be kept from wandering. The need is to be released from the bondages of earth and to have their affections set on heavenly things. They must be a people on the march. The gospel trumpets remind us that earth is not our rest or our home. We are to move on, ever on, unto God's eternal purpose.

They Called to Conflict

“If ye go to war...then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets” (verse 9). The redeemed are involved in spiritual warfare. This is not a strange thing for such a peace-keeping people. We live in a hostile world, and warfare is a necessary part of our high calling. There is an incessant conflict, and the battles are “the battles of the Lord.” There are times when we have to stand in bold defiance of the world around.

Our foes are many, and mighty, and wily, and restless. They are in every place and lurk in every corner. There are the hateful hosts of hell, the seductions and snares, the smiles and sneers, the arts and threats of a world which lies in the hand of the wicked one. The trumpets sound out sure victory. The Lord is among His people and they shall overcome.

They Sounded for Praise

“Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets” (verse 10). The trumpets were to sound praise on special days. Salvation is a feast, and is so often described so in the gospels. What a cheering note redemption is! These trumpets teach us to sing aloud and make a joyful noise unto our God (Psalm 81:1). The remembrance feast celebrates the meritorious death of our blessed Saviour, but this ought to bring forth our joyful praise. Our every day should be a feast of gladness and an offering of praise. And when at last the trumpet sounds over our graves, even our sleeping dust shall arise in a new form. Then the redeemed shall gather to be with Him in His home on high, and praise His blessed Name forever.

Rejoice, ye pure in heart,
Rejoice, give thanks and sing;
Your festal banner wave on high,
The cross of Christ your King.
Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, give thanks and sing!
Still lift your standards high,
Still march in firm array;
As warriors through the darkness toil
Till dawns the golden day.
Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, give thanks, and sing!
Yes, on through life's long path,
Still chanting as we go;
From youth to age, by night and day,
In gladness and in woe.
Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, give thanks, and sing!
Edward H. Plumptre

Chapter 37 The Cross, The Church, And Conflict

[They] builded the altar of the God of Israel... And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD... Now when the adversaries...heard... they came" (Ezra 3:2, 11; 4:1-2).

There is a matter of great weight in these verses. In both the Old and New Testaments it is very clear that from the cross of Christ there was to come forth the Church, and that, when the cross and the Church come into view, a state of very great conflict arises.

In the book of Ezra we see this in type. When the remnant came back to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity, they built the altar and set it in its place. The altar is a figure of the cross. Then they built the house of the Lord, which is a figure of the Church. As soon as the adversaries saw the altar raised and the house being built, they came nearer. Then began intense conflict.

In Matthew 16:18-21, the Lord spoke of building His Church. In order to do that, it was necessary for Him to go to the cross. From the time He showed His disciples this, there was intense opposition from the elders, chief priests, and scribes. They took counsel together to make Him suffer many things and finally to crucify Him.

The Cross

There can be no Church without the cross. "Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25). In the thought of God, the cross was to produce the Church, as, in the deep sleep of Adam, God was to

break his body and take out of him the material for building his bride (Genesis 2:21-23). This is the Holy Spirit's first emblem of Christ and His Church and it is one of choicest delight.

The mystery of how the woman was taken out of the man and builded to fullness is very deep. A greater than Adam is foreshadowed, and the deep sleep of the first Adam but points to the deeper sleep of death of the Lord Jesus. The Lord slept that sleep of death, not in Eden's beauteous garden but on the hard altar of the ignominious cross. It was there His side was pierced. There flowed the blood which was to expiate sin, and water to wash its every stain.

The same truth is found in Exodus 12. This book is a presentation of the sons of Jacob, who was called "a prince with God." But they were in bondage and needed to be emancipated. So the cross comes into view again in the lamb slain and its blood used. When we pass into the New Testament, we see the cross in reality, and the Lord on that cross laying down His life, giving Himself a ransom, offering Himself a sacrifice for the sins of His people, loving them and dying for them, and shedding His precious blood, to bring about what God had in view from time eternal.

The Church

The Church is not a man-made organization nor something like a respectable society club which one may join. It is that which is born out of the sufferings and death of God's beloved Son—the fruit of His passion. The cross brings the Church into being and reality. All men do not belong to the Church of Christ, nor do all who attend a local gathering belong to what is of God.

The Church is that company of people who have been “joined to the Lord in one Spirit,” who have been called by Him in love, who have been changed by His Spirit, who have received a new nature, and whose every pulse is in unison with the Lord Himself. By nature the heart of man is a hotbed of evil, a cage of evil birds. It is only through the cross that there could come forth this beautiful new creation—the company of people called the Church. Happy the souls who are part of God’s Church!

The Conflict

The conflict began before man was created. Its origin lies in one who is spoken of in Scripture as “that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan” (Revelation 12:9). The moving cause of the conflict against all that is of God is the devil. He is no figment of a preacher’s imagination, but a mighty and malignant power. Being “the god of this age,” his sway is world-wide.

All through human history, this evil one has sought to oppose the bringing in of God’s eternal thought—the Church, which is the elect Bride of His Son. Defeated and rendered forever powerless against our blessed Lord, he has turned with fury upon His Church. If he cannot overthrow the Church by the frontal assault of persecution, he will put the Lord’s people at variance with one another, so that, not only do we find them suspicious of one another, but actually praying against one another.

How far, beloved, is this from God’s thought! Maybe much of our weakness lies in our limited views of what our Lord wrought on the cross. We think only in terms of its elementary values to the individual—the forgiveness

of sins and deliverance from judgment. Such blessings do flow from the cross of our Lord. But God's thought is the whole Church. Our individual salvation is only the means to a glorious end, and the end is a whole thing—"A glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27).

The Lord of Glory! Who is He?

Who is this King of Glory?

Only the Son of God can be

The Christ, the King of Glory:

Consider all His wounds, and see

How Jesus' death upon the tree

Proclaims Him King of Glory!

Death and the grave confess the Lamb

To be the King of Glory;

The powers of darkness dread His Name,

Creation shows His glory:

He said, "E'er Abraham was I AM";

Jesus is evermore the same

The almighty King of Glory.

Thrice happy who in Him believe,

They soon shall share His glory;

Born of His Spirit, they receive

His secret pledge of glory;

Taught by His cross, for sin they grieve,

He calls them brethren, and they cleave
To Him, their hope of glory.

Robert C. Chapman

Chapter 38 Three Aspects Of The Cross

Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness (Matthew 3:15).

Put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him (Colossians 3:10).

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

The cross was not an end in itself. It was God's means of producing the Church. The Church was to come forth from the sufferings and death of our Lord, as the woman, Eve, bride of Adam, came forth from his broken body during a deep sleep.

The Godward Aspect of the Cross

We often forget, or do not realize, that the first work of the cross was to secure the rights of God in righteousness. No divine purpose could come into being without having a basis in righteousness. God's eternal thought was the Church, but the Church could not be built on any ground but that of righteousness. Thus before our Lord began His ministry. He came first to be baptized of John in the River Jordan. John would have refused Him, but the Lord said, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

This had to be settled first, and the essence of righteousness is a total abandonment and obedience to the will of God. An illustration of this is seen in Abraham's offering of Isaac. It was the noblest act of

Abraham's life. "Take now thy son...and offer him for a burnt offering (Genesis 22:2). No furnace was ever so hot. But Abraham neither questioned, nor argued, nor held back. He rose early to obey. Therefore, said God, "Because thou...hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thee" (Genesis 22:16-17).

When our Lord came into this world, He did so, saying, "I come to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:9); "I delight to do Thy will" (Psalm 40:8); "Not My will, but Thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). That was absolute abandonment to the will of God. But in God's mind was the cross. Why? Because only through the cross could all unrighteousness be removed and the ground cleared for God to erect a new building—a holy temple of regenerate souls. Thus, through the cross, God obtained His rights in righteousness, which could only be obtained by the utter removal of all unrighteousness. That would include God-abandonment, which is the ultimate fruit of unrighteousness. Hence the cry: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46) That swept the ground clean and gave God a site, so to speak, upon which He could build His Church.

The Manward Aspect of the Cross

The Lord also could only build His Church with righteous material. The Church could never be composed of man as he is by nature. Man is utterly unrighteous. We have only to look within to find that sad plague. We are lost property to God. Sin has stripped us naked of all righteousness. "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). That "old man," as he is called, can have no place in the Church of God's building.

But God has sent forth His Son, that through the sufferings and death of His cross there may be a removal of all unrighteousness from man. Man must stand at that cross in total self-abandonment and abhor himself as a lost, ruined, and guilty sinner. He has no power to help himself. By faith he looks upward to Christ as Saviour. There he sees healing for his soul in Him. "In the Lord have I righteousness," he says, believingly. He comes to God, then, with an unanswerable plea, that is, "In Christ, my Saviour, my law-abiding Surety, I bring the righteousness of God." And God accepts him. He has put on Christ. He is seen as righteous in Christ. He is material for the building of God's Church.

The Satanward Aspect of the Cross

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." There is such a being. He is not an empty name, but a mighty power. He is "the prince of this world," who has enslaved all mankind and whose sway is universal. All are his bondslaves and none can free themselves. He is "the god of this age," and sets up every system of idolatry to draw worship away from God. The cross brought utter defeat to this evil one. Seeing our Lord in physical weakness on the cross, he flung all the forces of hell at Him, hoping to overwhelm Him. But the Lord "having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it [the cross]" (Colossians 2:15).

The cross undoes the work of Satan. It removes all the ground of Satan's further work. He can do nothing on God's ground. The cross deprives him of that. Thus the

Church is built on safe ground, against which the gates
of hell cannot prevail.

The Church's one Foundation

Is Jesus Christ her Lord;

She is His new creation

By water and the Word;

From Heaven He came and sought her

To be His holy bride;

With His own blood He bought her,

And for her life He died.

Elect from every nation

Yet one o'er all the earth,

Her charter of salvation

One Lord, one faith, one birth;

One holy Name she blesses,

Partakes one holy food,

And to one hope she presses,

With every grace endued.

'Mid toil and tribulation,

And tumult of her war,

She waits the consummation

Of peace for evermore;

Till, with the vision glorious,

Her longing eyes are blest,

And the great Church victorious

Shall be the Church at rest.

Samuel J. Stone

Chapter 39 The Grapes Of Eshcol

They came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes (Numbers 13:23).

The journey of the children of Israel which led to Eshcol was a deep, dark way of human transgression. All the way through their wilderness wanderings we see this people's proneness to transgress. The Lord had made redemption's way an easy way to His inheritance in Canaan. But, alas, when they came to the borders of that good land their hearts were turned away from God's repeated promise to give all of it to them. It is a sordid history indeed, and a terrible warning to all generations against the sin of unbelief.

Canaan, a Type of Christ

Canaan was "a land flowing with milk and honey," and, as such, was another rich Old Testament type of the Lord Jesus Christ. The spies who searched out the land brought a cluster of grapes from Eshcol as proof of the richness and abundance of the land. It is here faith's eye rests upon our Lord Jesus. He is our true rest—He the mark of our high calling—He the end of weary travelings—He the fullness who alone can satisfy—He the victory over all our enemies—He the land of pure delight.

What a beautiful sight Canaan must have been in all its magnificent abundance. It is a picture of all that is in Christ and all He has purchased and made available for us. All He is and all He has is ours, and such fullness, beauty, and excellence simply boggle the mind and beggar description. What mortal man could ever

describe the glories of our blessed Lord's Person, the excellencies of His nature, the beauties of His character? That is a volume which will take eternity to read, a swelling flood we shall never pass over, an everlasting brightening day which shall know no declining shadow.

Eschol's Grapes, a Type of Riches in Christ

A cluster of grapes is the fruit of the vine, and our Lord spoke of Himself as "the true vine" (John 15:1), and thus all perfection. None of His fruit is bruised or diseased or distasteful. He bears nothing but sweet perfection. This is not so with Adam's race. We all have been rolled in the mire, and our vile iniquities have made us corrupt trees with corrupt fruit. We can never be, on the ground of nature, acceptable or palatable to God. But here in His well-beloved Son is all fullness and sweetness. Here is richer fruit than ever was found in our wilderness of sin and woe. Here is fruit which is the crown of all perfection. Here is positive proof of the richness of God's inheritance.

The Lord Jesus Christ is a cluster of divine and human perfections. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). The divine ingredients are His immutability, omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence. But in Him, also, are all human virtues, being absolute in all love, righteousness, justice, truth, holiness, and mercy.

In Him, too, is a cluster of all spiritual graces, so that John could say of Him: He is "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Isaiah says, "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit

of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD” (Isaiah 11:2), The Jews of old often used the term “cluster” to describe a person whom they regarded as having all excellencies and perfections, and who but their Messiah could be so worthy of such a title?

He is also a cluster of spiritual blessings. All the blessings of the everlasting covenant are in Him and at His disposal, so that all who are His are blessed “with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3).

The grapes of Eshcol were full of rich juice. They had to be cut down and squeezed and pressed before that rich juice could be released. Thus our blessed Lord was “wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). Only so could our sins be expiated, our souls saved, and our persons made acceptable to God.

But the juice of the grape is also for cheering and refreshing. This we find our Lord to be to us as poor sinners, so that in Him we have peace and pardon, salvation and righteousness through His blood. He is indeed a sweet cordial to our sick and saddened hearts.

Each returning Lord’s day should find us drinking fresh raptures from Him and being filled with new measures of joy as we partake of Him. He is Eshcol’s full cluster.

Do we realize what heritage the Lord has given us in His Son? This is the inheritance of His redeemed ones. Let us be certain we are His—altogether His—and let our souls feast upon Him. Oh, for faith’s bright eye to see His worth and to embrace His sweet Person, and to hold Him in our hearts forever.

Jesus! How much Thy name unfolds
To ev'ry opened ear!
The pardoned sinner's memory holds
None other half so dear.
Thy name encircles every grace
That God as man could show;
There only could He fully trace
A life divine below.
The mention of Thy name shall bow
Our hearts to worship Thee;
The chiefest often thousand Thou,
Whose love has set us free.
Mary Bowly Peters

Chapter 40 Aaron's Budded Rod

Behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds (Numbers 17:8).

God's new works are always so interesting and so full of instruction. Here we see a dry stick, a withered rod, cut off from its parent, life-giving tree, breaking forth into bud and blossom and fruit—and all in a single night.

On the return of the spies from the land of Canaan and the evil report of the ten—because the cities were walled, the men as giants, and the Lord's people as grasshoppers by comparison—rebellion arises and blasphemy defiles the tongues of His own redeemed ones. Thus they turn from the land of promise and wander almost another thirty-eight years in a waste, howling wilderness, and suffer darkness and woe and dismal days because of their distrust. And out of this turning back arises Koran's rebellion as he disputes the leadership of Moses and thus challenges God's authority. This brings wrath from God upon him and his family and the first earthquake, when "the ground clave asunder that was under them: and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up" (Numbers 16:31).

But even this terrible judgment does not cure rebellious hearts; once again a plague mows them down, and many are slain of the Lord. Moses now commands Aaron to take incense from the altar and stand between the living and the dead. Thus Aaron is a mediating high priest, and in this office he becomes a type of God's beloved Son. God's wrath is checked. It is at this point that we see the miracle of the budded rod.

Aaron's Rod

Each chief ruler of Israel's twelve tribes is to take a rod. The rod is to bear his name, and the rods are to be deposited before the ark of the covenant. When Moses enters in the morning, eleven of the rods lie as they had been—dead and withered. But Aaron's rod is marvelously changed. There is blossom, bud, and flower upon it. It is a miracle of resurrection life. It is a work no hand of man could accomplish, and it is to be laid up in the ark as a perpetual witness against all rebels (17:10).

The rod exhibits Christ, as was said by Isaiah, "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots" (Isaiah 11:1). God's manifest choice of Aaron's rod meant the rejection of all other rivals. Aaron proved to be God's manifest choice, and he was a figure of Christ to come. Christ alone is God's chosen High Priest of His redeemed people. Only in the Lord Jesus Christ do high priestly functions flourish. His glory can be shared with none other. They who seek it end in God's fierce judgment as did Korah. The Lord Jesus alone is God's Priest, and woe to any who would dare to snatch that office for himself.

The Budding of the Rod

In nature, decay and death lie heavily upon everything. All here below is doomed to wither and to die. Not so that which springs forth from God's Rod, Jesus Christ. The blossom, bud, and fruit on Aaron's rod were never to fail. Its beauty was a never-failing beauty. And all that was true of Aaron's rod was but a beautiful picture of the perpetual Priesthood of our Saviour. "Thou art a Priest for ever" (Psalm 110:4). "This man, because He

continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood" (Hebrews 7:24).

How comforting to the hearts of believers this is! We often mourn because of our coldness and listlessness. We find it difficult at times even to open our mouths in praise and worship, though we should be ashamed to confess it. But in our great High Priest there is nothing but a full flow of mediating grace. Surely our very survival in this hostile world we owe to His constant and prevailing intercessions. We are where we are in the heavenly way and in the distance we have come in our pilgrimage, because of our Lord's prayers and works on our behalf. Bless God, all ye saints, for the Rod of Jesse!

What a lesson this is, too, in the application of His grace to our hearts! We were once as those sapless, withered rods. What use are such but to be burned up and devoured by fire. But God's people have come to life in His dear Son. With the impartation of His resurrection life, we have become alive, and this is surely the work of God. Only divine power could do such a miracle.

Look at the fullness of life in God's budded Rod! Then, surely, we must not forget to examine ourselves and measure ourselves, not with one another, which is not wise, but with our Lord and His transcendent beauty and inexhaustible fullness. Does our life blossom? Is there much fruit on our little rods? "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples" (John 15:8). That can only be as we heed our Lord's admonition: "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me" (John 15:4). Let us be renewed this day in our love for our

dear Saviour, and so love and meditate in His Word that we shall “be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither” (Psalm 1:3).

Sing praise to God who reigns above,
The God of all creation,
The God of pow’r, the God of love,
The God of our salvation:
With healing balm my soul He fills,
And every faithless murmur stills:
To God all praise and glory!
What God’s almighty pow’r hath made
His gracious mercy keepeth,
By morning glow or evening shade
His watchful eye ne’er sleepeth:
Within the kingdom of His might,
Lo! all is just and all is right:
To God all praise and glory!
Thus all my toilsome way along
I sing aloud His praises,
That men may hear the grateful song
My voice unwearied raises:
Be joyful in the Lord, my heart!
He leads His own, His chosen band:
To God all praise and glory!

Johann J. Schutz

Chapter 41 The Brazen Serpent

The LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live (Numbers 21:8).

The wickedness of Israel in the wilderness is almost unbelievable to us did we not know the innate vileness of our own hearts. The rebellion recorded here is not the first but, rather, the eighth. Their souls loathed the manna from Heaven which was a sweet type of Christ to come (verse 5). And as in previous times, God's wrath is revealed against such ingratitude and ungodliness. "The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died" (verse 6). There is poison in the bite, and death is a certain consequence. Multitudes fall and are buried in the desert wastes.

The Brazen Serpent

The plan of healing, following their cry to God for mercy, was a God-given plan. Moses was commanded to make "a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass that, if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived" (verse 9). There was life for a look. All that God required was a look of faith. This applied to all, no matter whether they were learned or unlearned, rich or poor, old or young. There was no other means of healing. It mattered not who they were, or how far or near they were to the lifted-up serpent, there was perfect and instantaneous cure when

they trustfully looked to what was God's plan for saving them.

This is yet another glorious type of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord, in speaking to Nicodemus, took up this type and said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:14-15). This is the remedy of God.

The Need of Man

Our lives are in peril. We all have been bitten by "that old serpent, the devil." His poison has been injected into our veins. Its venom is fatal. We cannot help or heal ourselves. We cannot be healed by looking at some religious leader, or by believing time and nature have some healing balm, or that we may be healed if we deny self and work sacrificially to help others, or if we try to fight our own battles and slay the serpents before they bite.

The law can only diagnose the disease. It tells us that we surely have been poisoned. It traces the venom's course in our blood stream. But it has no cure. It must leave us to perish. Nor can another of Adam's race afford help, for all have been bitten and have the same affliction. Nor can religious rites and ceremonies and performances suck out the deadly poison. Unless God helps us, we must surely perish in this world's wilderness.

The God-Given Remedy

God's remedy is in His lifted-up and crucified Son on Calvary's cross. Only God could provide relief, and He

sent it in His beloved Son. Never let us forget to praise the Father for sending His Son, and to bless His name for the instant relief provided in His Son. But the price of the healing balm is too vast for us to comprehend.

It meant that the Son of God must descend from Heaven's glory to assume "the likeness of men." In that new Humanity of His, He would have to stoop into the mystery of death and be lifted up on a cruel cross to hang as the antitype of Moses' brazen serpent. He was to be lifted up so that He would be conspicuous in His death, and so to be seen by all men everywhere. It is because of who He is that a remedy could be prepared. In Him every divine attribute and every human virtue combine and work together, so that from those wounds of the cross there is merit to expiate all man's transgressions and heal all his wounds.

All that remains for man to do is to look at Him—Christ and Him crucified. It is no more than that—but no less than that. The look must be one of wholehearted faith and trust, believing that this is God's remedy, that it is sure and certain, that it is effectual for every person regardless of how far the poison may have progressed in its course.

There is no other means of healing. The rich must look, for riches cannot save. The poor must look, for poverty cannot pity a poisoned state. The intellectual must look, for the human intellect cannot devise a means of help. The ignorant and unlearned must look, for ignorance cannot write a prescription for so deadly an affliction. The Word of God is very clear to all—"Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 45:22).

We are here gathered around this remembrance feast to remember His being lifted up, and that we might renew our gaze, and feel again the gratitude of His healing power.

No, not despairingly

Come I to Thee;

No, not distrustingly

Bend I the knee:

Sin hath gone over me,

Yet this is still my plea—

Jesus hath died.

Ah! mine iniquity

Crimson hath been,

Infinite, infinite,

Sin upon sin:

Sin of not loving Thee,

Sin of not trusting Thee,

Infinite sin.

Faithful and just art Thou,

Forgiving all;

Loving and kind art Thou

When poor ones call:

Lord, let the cleansing blood,

Blood of the Lamb of God,

Pass o'er my soul.

Horatius Bonar

Chapter 42 The Star And The Scepter

There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel (Numbers 24:17).

One of the strangest characters in the Bible is Balaam. He is made to speak some of the sweetest prophecies concerning the coming of the Lord's Messiah, but these things did not come from his heart, nor did they rise from spiritual affections. In this man we see some of the deep workings of the human soul—how a person can be affected by the Word of God and the happiness of God's people, yet still take the downward road to hell's dark pit.

Balaam's Hire

The hire of Balaam came about by the distress of Balak, king of Moab, over the constant conquests of Israel. Balaam was a Mesopotamian soothsayer who, living in close proximity to Israel, had learned to speak their spiritual language about God. He thus could wear a holy guise over a graceless heart. At first he gives the impression of really wanting to know God's mind. God's answer to his seeking is clear and plain: "Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed" (22:12). But he does not dismiss the representatives from the king of Moab. They return again and again, and both Balaam and the princes lessen the effect of each other's words until God is left out of the deal.

Balaam's eye is upon the costly bribes of Balak. When he rises early to go with the men, a dumb ass is made to speak to block his way: "The dumb ass speaking with

man's voice forbid the madness of the prophet" (2 Peter 2:16). But the love of reward drives him on. So the tale goes on until both Balaam and Balak are thwarted. God put words into Balaam's mouth which are some of the sweetest words concerning the coming Messiah, and thus Christ is set forth even by a soul dead in his sins and most certainly an instrument of unrighteousness. But God makes him a vessel of dishonor to speak His truth.

The Star of Jacob

"I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob." Could any word of prophecy be more sweet and comforting? Could any words glow with greater brightness? It means that in the background this world is sunk in darkness—heathenish gloom. All is the blackness and darkness of a godless world, a world in which all the excellencies and beauties of God's character are utterly unknown, and where the realities of His grace and love and truth are unseen. It is a jungle world where, because of the darkness, evil beasts creep abroad and prowl to vex the sons of men and tear them to pieces. It is a world black with spots, blemishes, and many infirmities.

But into this black night of man's awful sinning the promised Saviour is to come. He is to be the Star of Jacob, and a star is a glittering orb set in the canopy of universal darkness. It sparkles in the gloom. It sends forth its cheering light into the pall enveloping the earth. Such is Jesus our Lord. Oh, what loveliness there is in Him! He who is "over all, God blessed for ever" has become visible to the sons of men and has shone into our black night as "the brightness of His [the Father's]

glory, and the express image of His Person" (Hebrews 1:3). Light from Heaven shines in the Star of Jacob. All that God is, is made manifest in Him. What brightness shines when He appears! What loveliness is spread upon the soul when it perceives the Star of heavenly light!

The Scepter of Israel

"A Sceptre shall rise out of Israel." There is a mystic union between the Star and the Scepter. He, who first came to shine as light into our darkness and bring with Him a cheering ray of hope in a hopeless world, comes also to reign and rule in the hearts which He conquers. They lay down their arms of rebellion and acknowledge that He is Lord. In this generation, "the kingdom of heaven is within you"—that is, our Lord has a spiritual and beneficent rule in the hearts of His redeemed ones. There is no peace until He sits upon the throne of the heart. There can be no love until He is loved as Saviour of our souls and the ruling King on the throne of our lives.

But more. He is the Scepter which shall smite this rebellious world until "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 11:15). This is what is meant by the word: He "shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth" (Numbers 24:17). The wicked are to be overthrown by Him at His appearing. They are to lie down in sorrow. They are to be destroyed. Alas for those who have to say with Balaam: "I shall see Him, but not now; I shall behold Him, but not nigh." The wicked are to see Him come in power and glory. When He calls His

ransomed ones, these are to stand afar off. How sad the words—"but not nigh."

When the Scepter rules over the Father's vast dominions, His elect bride, the company of the redeemed, will be at His side to share His governmental authority and rule. This is the completion of believers' prayers and joys. They shall have nothing more to ask for; no more, indeed, could they want. All hail, Thou Star of Jacob! Make haste, O Thou Scepter of Israel!

Hail, Thou once despised Jesus!

Hail, Thou still rejected King!

Thou didst suffer to release us;

Thou didst free salvation bring.

Through Thy death and resurrection,

Bearer of our sin and shame!

We enjoy divine protection,

Life and glory through Thy Name.

Jesus hail! enthroned in glory,

There forever to abide;

All the heavenly hosts adore Thee,

Seated at Thy Father's side:

There for sinners Thou art pleading,

There Thou dost our place prepare,

Ever for us interceding

Till in glory we appear.

Worship, honor, pow'r, and blessing

Thou art worthy to receive;
Loudest praises, without ceasing,
Meet it is for us to give.
Help ye bright angelic spirits,
Bring your sweetest, noblest lays;
Help to sing our Saviour's merits,
Help to chant Immanuel's praise.
John Bakewell

Chapter 43 A Model Of Zeal

The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned My wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for My sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in My jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him My covenant of peace: and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel (Numbers 25:10-13).

Balaam was a subtle, wretched man of the world. He was divinely restrained from cursing God's people, but this restraint did not regenerate his spirit to make him a child of God. He did not cross over from Moab to Canaan, nor did he leave his heathen friends to identify with the people of God. The poison of sin still worked within Israel through Balaam and, though prevented from cursing God's people, he plotted to entrap them by suggesting to Balak that he invite the young men of Israel to idolatrous feasts and entice them to fornication with the women of Moab.

The Zeal of Phinehas

With the vile lusts of strong nature still predominant in the young men of Israel, they fell for this trap and went over to Moab like fluttering moths around a bright but destroying flame. God's vengeance slew them so that thousands perished for this iniquity. Pestilence broke out, and the penal death it brought piled up the toll of death. It is indeed an awesome and frightful spectacle.

But Phinehas acted. Zeal for God's glory rose in his soul. His arm was made bare, and he took after the chief offender, Zimri, the son of a prince of the tribe of Simeon, and slew him with his javelin and, with him, his partner in crime, the woman Cozbi, daughter of a chief of Midian.

For this zealous act to guard the glory of God, the Lord stopped the plague and brought respite. And God rewarded Phinehas with great honor. "Behold I give unto him My covenant of peace: and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood." It was the reward of zeal for the honor of God. "He was zealous for his God." He could not look on and see God's holy law breached, His commandment defied, His will despised. He rose in righteous indignation to vindicate the honor of God's holy character. He spared not a prince—a prince at least in the line of succession.

The zeal of Phinehas was not based upon natural passion, nor was it the flame of natural temper. He moved in God's will. He did what God would have done. He was an instrument of vengeance in the hand of His God. And that zeal, God testifies, "hath turned My wrath away from the children of Israel." It was a kind of atonement. With the punishment of sin there was a righteous basis for God to stay His wrath. The greatest honor was that the priesthood was given to Phinehas and would be a perpetual priesthood through the ages.

The Antitype in Christ

Phinehas is but a reflection of all that was ever in the heart of his Lord. In him we see the heart and zeal and work and will of God's beloved Son.

It is first seen in our Lord's entering the fray and coming to grips with a rebellious race. For this He left His home on high, assumed our nature, set His face like a flint to deal with man's mountainous iniquities. And let us not forget that this zeal was first of all for His Father's honor and glory. "Lo, I come...I delight to do Thy will, O my God" (Psalm 40:7-8). As He moves to the cross, it is with the words: "The hour is come... Father, glorify Thy name" (John 12:23, 28). "Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee" (John 17:1).

Thus it was first for His Father's honor that, despising the shame and reproach of the cross, He kept steadfast along that forlorn and wretched way to Calvary. It is not first to secure man's redemption, not first to snatch man from the flames of hell, but first to secure His Father's honor and to bring glory to His name.

This is why our Lord chose that punishment of sin be borne in His own body and absorbed in His own being. God's righteous law could not be changed to accommodate the sinful acts of man. Absolute holiness demands that sin be punished. Only due punishment can maintain God's righteous character. So the Lord Jesus bore all our sins in His own body on the tree.

To Him, therefore, is given the covenant of grace and power to transmit that grace to His ransomed seed. Thus there is a way through that covenant grace for man to rise out of his sins and to pass into God's holy presence as without blemish.

It is God's glory that is the brightest beam in the outshining of redemption's story. Justice is honored. The law is magnified. Truth is exalted. Holiness remains unstained. Righteousness is kept without flaw. Grace

rides in triumph and mercy sings its sweet song of salvation. It is all the fruit of Jesus' zeal. Bless God, then, for the Saviour's zeal. Praise God for His glory—His own glorification because His beloved Son fought for that glory and glorified Him on the earth. He who once laid down His life in His zeal to atone for the sins of man now reigns on high as the High Priest of His people forever.

Behold, what wondrous love and grace!

When we were wretched and undone,

To save a helpless, ruined race,

The Father gave His only Son!

Of twice ten thousand gifts divine

No gift like this could ever shine!

O gift of love unspeakable!

O gift of mercy all divine!

We once were slaves of death and hell,

But in Christ's image we shall shine!

For ev'ry gift a song we raise,

But this demands eternal praise!

Praise shall employ these tongues of ours

Till we with all the saints above,

Extol God's name with nobler powers,

And see the ocean of His love:

Then, while we look, and wond'ring gaze,

We'll fill the heavens with endless praise!

William Saunders

Chapter 44 The Promised Prophet

For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you (Acts 3:22).

This is part of Peter's exhortation to the Jews following the healing of the poor lame man at the temple gate. He humbly disclaims the power of the miracle to anything in himself, nor would he rob the Lord of the glory. It is the Lord alone who is to be praised and admired. Thus Peter takes the opportunity of the gathered multitude to preach Christ as the Saviour, whom they had denied and slain. But the Prince of Life was raised from the dead. In exhorting them to turn and believe on Him, Peter testifies that the Lord Jesus is the One about whom Moses prophesied.

"The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet ... of thy brethren" (Deuteronomy 18:15). He was to come, then, of the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh (Acts 3:25). The blessing of Christ was not to be limited to Israel, but extended to all families of all races everywhere. Here we see the necessity of His becoming flesh. If He, as God only, dealt with us, then we must perish. If He assumed angelic nature, then He could have no kinsman relationship to our humanity, no atoning blood with which to save us, and no justifying righteousness by which to make us acceptable to God.

In the early days of the Church, heresies arose—some supposing our Lord had a celestial body, others that His body was a kind of phantom and not real humanity. Especially was this true of the Gnostics, who regarded

all matter as essentially evil. But the words of Scripture are plain: “The Word was made flesh” (John 1:14); “made of a woman, made under the law” (Galatians 4:4); of the seed of Abraham (Acts 3:25); and to come of Judah’s tribe (Genesis 49:10).

Thus our Lord, according to the flesh, assumed our real humanity, even the flesh and blood common to all the children of men (Hebrews 2:14). He who was rich in glory thus partook of our poverty, descending into our lowly condition, passing through all emergent human conditions and circumstances on the one hand, and yet glorifying the Father on the other. This is the wondrous mystery of the Incarnation—unsearchable indeed, but so full of comfort. He is God’s Prophet, giving all knowledge, teaching all the wisdom of God, and effecting and making plain to the simplest the ways of God’s so great salvation.

The Likeness of Christ to Moses

Moses said of the predicted Prophet, Christ, that He would be “like unto me.” He would be marked by certain characteristics of Israel’s revered leader. Moses was a type of Him who was indeed much greater than Moses, and in Christ alone could this type be realized and recognized.

When Moses was born, the tyrant Pharaoh decreed death to him. He came under the edict concerning births in Israel: “If it be a son, then ye shall kill him” (Exodus 1:16). When the Lord Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Herod the king decreed the massacre of all children born there, hoping to kill the Christ (Matthew 2:16).

Moses was called out of Egypt and was to bring God's chosen people with him. Thus he left Egypt (Exodus 12:33). To escape the murderous intent of Herod, our Lord, as a child, was taken to Egypt. But when Herod was dead, He was called out of Egypt, thus fulfilling the word of Hosea 11:1 that God called His Son out of Egypt. The Lord thus left Egypt as Moses did.

Moses was at first rejected by his own people. They scorned his claims as having been sent of God. "Who made thee a prince or a judge over us?" they challenged. So when the mighty Saviour appeared "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1:11). Like Moses of old, the Saviour was despised and rejected and thrust out from among them.

Moses found his home in the wilderness of Midian and so was kept in seclusion for many long years (Exodus 3:1). The wilderness concealed him, and the world heard nothing of him. Thus the Lord Jesus spent many years in the seclusion of Nazareth until, as with Moses, God's time had arrived for Him to come forth and to deliver His people.

Moses attested his divine commission by many signs and wonders. These all proved that he was sent of God. So our Lord moved on earth, giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, life to the dead, health to the sick, food to the hungry multitudes (Matthew 11:5). He turned water into wine and walked on the waters. These signs proved Him to be God manifest in the flesh.

Moses must die and be buried before Israel could pass over Jordan into the Lord's inheritance (Deuteronomy 34:5-6). And so our blessed Lord Jesus must also die

before God's chosen people could pass through the waters of death into Heaven's eternal abiding place.

Moses mediated between God and man. He stood between God and man to pray on man's behalf, and prevailed in his intercessions (Exodus 17:11; 32:11-14). So our Lord presents our cause to the Father as the Mediator of the new covenant. He appears before the Father representing the whole company of those who put their trust in Him.

Moses enjoyed close communion with God face to face. Thus he is pictured, and it is but a feeble picture at best, of that deeper communion which the Son had with the Father as we see in John 17.

But we must never forget that Moses was but the wearer of certain resemblances in very faint colors. The differences were infinite. As the Father's Prophet, the Lord Jesus brings us the full knowledge of God, showing us in His own Person His infinite glories, His inexhaustible fullness, the all-sufficiency of His saving grace, His prevailing prayers on our behalf, and the only way to true sabbath rest of soul. May our ears ever be open and attent to the Prophet's voice.

Son of God, with joy we praise Thee,
On the Father's throne above;
All Thy wondrous work displays Thee,
Full of grace and full of love!
Lord, accept our adoration—
For our sins Thou once wast slain;
Through Thy blood we have salvation;

Soon shall share Thine endless reign.
God, in Thee His love unfolding,
Shows how vast, how rich, His grace;
Blest our lot, with joy beholding
All His glory in Thy face.
Oh, the mercy which hath blessed us,
Purposed thus ere time began,
Mercy which in Christ hath kept us,
Where His blessed race He ran!

S. P. Tregelles

Chapter 45 Accursed Of God

He that is hanged is accursed of God (Deuteronomy 21:23)

There is no more terrifying word in human language than that of being made a curse, and especially a curse of God. Surely this must be the extremity of all possible misery, pain, anguish, and despair. One can bear much of these distresses if they are accompanied by the blessing of God. There are many of God's dear people who quietly, patiently, and even joyously bear the burden of intense suffering. What if there is no blessing but, rather, all is a terrible display of God's wrath? Who can measure or weigh what awful anguish and misery must be wrapped up in what is the curse of God?

The Curse

Sinners are under the curse of God's righteous law. We must fully understand what this curse means. It springs from disobedience. There was no such thing as a curse until sin came in. This earth should never have known the curse. Man had the choice to obey, and power from God to help his obedience. But with the disobedience of the first man, the father and federal head of all the human race, his entire progeny passed into the realm of the curse.

This is something which lies upon every soul of man. It is very humbling to be told we are rebels in God's universe— that we are a fallen, corrupt, and polluted people. But we are weighed in God's balances of absolute holiness, and are found wanting. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are

written in the book of the law to do them" (Galatians 3:10).

This is as plain as can be told. It brings under its curse every rank and condition of man. The poor cannot be excused. The learned cannot devise an excuse. All who have been born of Adam's sinful stock have fallen short of God's standard and broken His laws. Thus all are exposed to the curse of the law.

The Substitution

"He that is hanged is accursed of God" (Deuteronomy 21:23). This word does not apply to every man who has been hanged. Even some innocent people have been hanged. In times of persecution many have been crucified by wicked conquerors. It was a Roman means of death to those who resisted surrender. This word has particular application to God's beloved Son, who came to bear God's curse on our behalf. It was prophetically told by Moses that God's sent Redeemer would hang upon a cruel tree. His sufferings and death upon the cross would absorb all the punishment which the law demanded for all our sins.

This was the plan of our loving God from time eternal. This is the outflow of God's grace—God's way to save men, and the only way He could save them on the basis of righteousness. But this is an awful voice when applied to God's beloved and eternal Son—"He that is hanged is accursed of God." It tells forth in the simplest prophetic terms that God's beloved Son shall appear on earth and expire on the cross. That is God's pledge, and so it must come to pass in the fullness of time.

It is history now. We of this late generation look back and gaze upon the fact of it—that the Son of God as the Son of man was lifted up, a spectacle to God and men, an outcast from Heaven and earth. Had Israel been masters of their own house in our Lord's time, He would have died a Jewish death by stoning. But God's decree brought about Jewish subjection to the Roman Empire, and crucifixion was their cruel invention. Thus the prophecy, made nearly two thousand years before our Lord appeared, was fulfilled in Him. Jesus hangs, accursed of God—made a curse for us. The whole curse of God upon mankind's dreadful sin, and in all its totality, falls upon the sinless Son of God.

The Issue

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law" (Galatians 3:13). That, then, was the price of human redemption. He bore our sins, and this was divine decree from time eternal. This is the deep meaning of the cross and the essence of God's covenant of peace with rebel sinners. There was no coercion upon the Son of God to do this. He did it because His infinite love was set upon the sons of men. All our iniquities were laid upon Him. All our breaches of God's holy law were charged to His account.

Thus all believers are released from any charge the law can make or any accusation Satan may rehearse before God. Every transgression of thought, word, and deed has been fully answered and atoned for. All has been suffered by our Lord in order that we should never suffer. These are the things of God—the eternal counsels of God's infinite mind.

We can never suffer what our Surety has already borne for us. We cannot be placed in double jeopardy. The law cannot exact its punishment a second time, else it would become unrighteous in itself. Thus we are safe and secure forever because of what our blessed Lord and Saviour has suffered for us. Think what would have happened to us if He had not done that! Ours would have been the curse forever. Then let us rise and bless the Lord and praise His holy Name forever.

O Sacred Head once wounded,
With grief and shame weighed down,
Now scornfully surrounded,
With thorns Thine only crown,
How art Thou pale with anguish,
With sore abuse and scorn!
How does that visage languish
Which once was bright as morn!
What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered
Was all for sinners' gain:
Mine, mine, was the transgression,
But Thine the deadly pain.
Lo, here I fall, my Saviour!
'Tis I deserve Thy place;
Look on me with Thy favor,
Vouchsafe to me Thy grace.
What language shall I borrow
To thank Thee, dearest Friend,

For this Thy dying sorrow,
Thy pity without end?
O make me Thine forever!
And should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
Outlive my love to Thee.
Bernard of Clairvaux

Chapter 46 The King And His Glory

He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him (Psalm 45:11).

The titles of the psalms are as fully inspired as the text of the psalms. This one is written to “the chief musician.” No doubt there was a certain man who led the temple choir, but since the psalm is Messianic it points to our Lord as the Chief Musician, of whom it was written: “In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee” (Hebrews 2:12). “Shoshannim” means lilies. It is the song of the lily, which is notable for its whiteness, its fragrance, and its delicacy. It reminds us of the Bridegroom-Lover’s description of Himself in the Song of Solomon 2:1, “I am the...lily of the valleys,” which expresses our Lord’s absolute purity, fragrant excellence, and deep humility.

The psalm is written for “the sons of Koran,” and you will recall that the founder of this line was brought under the judgment of God and swallowed up in the first recorded earthquake for his rebellion against God’s appointed leaders, Moses and Aaron (Numbers 16:26, 31-32). But here we see his descendants leading the praises of God. It reminds us that grace can cut off the entail of sinful heritage. It is also a “maschil,” or song of instruction, and “a song of loves,” expressing, as does the Song of Solomon, the love union between Christ and His elect bride, the Church.

Psalm 45 makes reference to the psalmist’s heart, lips, tongue, and hand in verse one. All are included to work together to compound this most delightful psalm. It bubbles up from his heart. It is his own personal discovery of the glory and excellence of the Redeemer

—“Things” he says, “which I have made.” It is a love song, and love songs begin with the heart; thus he first mentions his heart as bubbling up or inditing it. In spiritual matters the heart is more important than the brain. “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness” (Romans 10:10); “My son, give Me thine heart” (Proverbs 23:26); “Let not your heart be troubled” (John 14:1). This is not to belittle the processes of education, or the elevation of the mental faculties, but in the realm of spiritual life and affections the Bible emphasis is upon the heart.

The King’s Personal Glory

The matter which so engaged the psalmist’s thought was of “things...touching the King.” And while no mention is made of His name, there is really no need, since none could answer the description but God’s beloved Son. “Thou art fairer than the children of men” (verse 2). This refers to His personal glory which is natural and essential, original and eternal. He far transcends any to be found in the realm of created beings. Everything in Him is divinely fair and beautiful, and there is nothing really fair and lovely but what is in Him. “Grace is poured into Thy lips: therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever” (verse 2). This may refer to the doctrines of the gospel which He taught when on earth, which were the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth, as was said. It is His words which are so sweet to the believer’s taste and which minister such spiritual refreshment to the soul.

The King's Official Glory

Here we see His appointment to deal with all enemies who have challenged God's authority in His own universe. "Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O most Mighty, with Thy glory and Thy majesty" (verse 3). The psalm goes on to speak of His arrows in the hearts of such enemies. In this the psalm looks forward to the day when He will subdue all principalities and powers and wind up all these present kingdoms of darkness, which final works are described as "terrible things." The day of final battle has yet to come, and our Lord's coming forth will be one of wrath and terror to all His enemies. This will be most manifest in His dealings with Antichrist and the destruction of "the man of sin."

The King's Divine Glory

"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre" (verse 6). This is the Father addressing the Son, quoted in Hebrews 1:8. How, then, can anyone deny His deity? It is very clear that He who is our Saviour is the great, true, and living God. The glory of God shines in His face and was fully manifest in His life here on earth as the Son of man. He is the full expression of the Godhead, and so we may comfortably conclude that all He did for us was efficacious and answered the purposes for which it was done. Also, since He is God, no force of man can topple His throne which stands immovable and impregnable forever. It is a throne, too, which is bathed in righteousness.

The King's Moral Glory

"Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness" (Psalm 45:7). It is part of the glory of God

to do this, and it expresses the absolute purity of His character. Righteousness is interwoven in the essence of His nature. So also is hatred of iniquity. These two qualities forced God to raise up the cross of Calvary so that His righteousness should remain unsullied, and His severity against wickedness know no respite. Both attributes have their full satisfaction in the cross of the Lord Jesus.

“All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia” (verse 8). These are all principal spices and speak of the fragrance of our Lord’s life in His person, in His offices, in His sacrifice, and in His risen and glorified life in Heaven.

But all this wondrous revealing of our Lord’s glories and excellencies is shown forth to provoke us to worship. The psalm goes on to speak of His bride, the Church. We are to be by His side on the throne of glory and in the most intimate of all relationships. But we are never to forget who He is. “He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him” (verse 11).

Begin, my tongue, some heav’nly theme,

And speak some boundless thing—

The mighty works, or mightier

Name Of our eternal King.

Tell of His wondrous faithfulness

And sound His pow’r abroad;

Sing the sweet promise of His grace,

The love and truth of God.

O might I hear Thy heav’nly tongue

But whisper, "Thou art Mine!"

Those gentle words should raise my song

To notes almost divine.

Isaac Watts

Chapter 47 The Significance Of A Kiss

Judas...kissed Him (Matthew 26:47-49).

This woman...hath not ceased to kiss my feet (Luke 7:45).

Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth (Song of Solomon 1:2).

A kiss has many meanings in Scripture. Joseph kissed all his brethren as a token of reconciliation (Genesis 45:15). David kissed Jonathan in their final farewell—a kiss of friendship (1 Samuel 20:41). The father of the prodigal son “fell on his neck and kissed him” on the son’s returning (Luke 15:20). In the Church, Paul admonished believers to “greet one another with an holy kiss” (1 Corinthians 16:20).

As to the latter we must remember that, as in the Far East today, men and women sat separately, and greeted one another separately, so that this kiss was no doubt confined to members of the same sex. It was a “kiss of love” (1 Peter 5:14) and had the same effect as a love feast in India—it abolished all social distinctions and any spirit of discrimination and partiality.

The Kiss of Judas

“Now he that betrayed Him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He: hold Him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed Him” (Matthew 26:48-49). The word used here means fervently. This betrayal kiss was more demonstrative than the ordinary kiss of a formal greeting. Never in all the years of His association with

the intimate band of disciples did Judas ever call Jesus, Lord! His discipleship had been play acting—the very essence of hypocrisy.

Judas had privileges few men ever had. He companied with our Lord and belonged to a band of men who were to attend Him in His impeccable walk on earth, to hear His purpose to undergo the uttermost of God's wrath and to drink the very dregs of anguish for man's redemption. He must have seen the signs of coming distress on our dear Lord's face as He approached the mysteries of His substitutionary sacrifice and the shameful cross.

Was Judas so perverse and hardened that he never at any time read the language of the Saviour's heart, interpreted His incessant prayers, the meaning of His mighty pleadings, the appeal of His outstretched hands? Yet Judas betrayed Him, and did so with the sweetest symbol of love. It is the only time we read of anyone kissing the Saviour's face, and it was with the filthy lips of this wretch of all humankind, whose very name has become a symbol of infamy.

The Kiss of Love by a Woman

"Seest thou this woman?" said our Lord in a gentle but stinging rebuke to Simon the Pharisee, who had given Him no water to wash His feet, no kiss of greeting, no oil for His refreshing. "This woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet" (Luke 7:45). It is not likely that the woman was Mary Magdalene, nor Mary of Bethany, though the latter did much the same in anointing the Lord. This woman was a woman of sin, and our Lord's forgiveness had brought forth this act of pure devotion. She had tasted that the Lord is gracious and

expressed her love of Him in this lowly and loving act of kissing His feet.

This act of complete devotion brought from the Saviour an assurance to Simon of her sins forgiven, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much" (verse 47). That word must have dropped in her guilt-ridden soul like "sweet smelling myrrh" and carried its own blessing and refreshing. Her kisses upon His feet expressed her deep sense of her un-worthiness, but also demonstrated a soul now filled with love of Him. She had no doubt heard His public utterances of good news and sought Him out. What vehemence of affection! How much her heart was set upon God's beloved Son! How desirous she was of His word of forgiveness! Her kisses on His feet were out of the abundance of her heart and must have given a great deal of satisfaction to our Lord.

The Kiss Desired by His Elect Bride, the Church

"Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth" (Song of Solomon 1:2). This book is "the song of songs" that is, unexcelled by any other song and unsurpassed by any other song, whether of divine or human origin. There is no adequate interpretation of this song except that which relates it to the love union between Christ and His Church. He is the Bridegroom-Lover; she the elect bride.

Here she desires a new discovery of His love, a new touch of His love upon her life. Here the kiss has spiritual significance since in this book we are in the realm of heavenly things. She seeks something more intimate and real than mere form and ceremony. Rather, she seeks "the kisses of His mouth." The love of Christ is

a believer's true desire. It is the purest desire of the human soul to long after some special manifest demonstration of it, which has the effect of raising our affections toward Him.

To have such a touch of His love upon our lives is a believer's heaven on earth, and the beginning of glory. A believer prefers this to all the most excellent things of earth. It is a surprising and astonishing grace that the blessed Lord of glory would stoop to kiss such wretches as we are, and to receive us into His loving embrace.

When we gather to Him, we should do so with this fond desire. True, we are here at the remembrance feast to express our devotion to Him, but the best incentive to do that will be to feel His touch of love upon our own lives. It would not be inappropriate at all to come to this feast of love with this desire: "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth."

Longing for the Bride, Lord Jesus,

Of Thy heart,

To be with Thee in the glory,

Where Thou art:

Love so groundless, grace so boundless,

Wins my heart.

When Thy blood-bought Church, Lord Jesus,

Is complete;

When each soul is safely landed

At Thy feet;

What a story in the glory

She'll repeat!
Then Thy Church will be, Lord Jesus,
The display
Of Thy richest grace and kindness
In that day;
Marking pages, wondrous stages,
O'er earth's way.
Miss C. A. Wellesley

Chapter 48 Our Lord's Place In Heaven

He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight (Acts 1:9).

Our Lord's ascension into Heaven was a historical event. He went up in His resurrection body, having been raised from the dead. His ascension was actual, physical, historical, visible, and in the presence of His disciples. We read that He was "received up" (Mark 16:19); "carried up" (Luke 24:51); "taken up" (Acts 1:9); and that He, by His own power, went up (Ephesians 4:9). We are told that "a cloud received Him." Had there been no clouds then He would have become smaller and smaller in His ascent, and this the Father does not allow His Son to become to us.

The Seven Stages of His Ascension

(1) Hebrews 4:14—"A great high priest, that is passed into [through] the heavens." This refers to the visible heavens. In the Tabernacle of old the Jewish high priests passed first from the altar through the outer court, which answers to the visible heavens.

(2) Ephesians 1:21—"Far above all." So we are told of His ascension. This means far beyond and infinitely higher than all created intelligences.

(3) Hebrews 9:24—"Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands... but into heaven itself." This is entrance into the realm above the air, clouds, sun, moon, and stars, into the realm of God's actual abode, where He reigns upon the throne of all the universe.

(4) Hebrews 8:1-2—"An high priest...of the sanctuary." This sanctuary answers to the holy place in the earthly tabernacle—a kind of second heaven which in the Tabernacle was entered through a veil, and where Jewish high priests served the table, the lampstand, and the incense altar. These ministries in their spiritual form, our Lord now took up as the High Priest of His redeemed people—a sparkling evidence that He would relieve soul hunger, chase all dark gloom away, and perfume all our sacrifices of praise with His own adorable merits.

(5) Hebrews 6:19-20—"Within the veil; whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." This would answer to the Jewish high priests' entrance into the holy of holies, though they did not do so as forerunners. Our Lord entered within the veil that He might sprinkle before the mercy seat His own blood of everlasting efficacy, and guarantee our following Him into the Father's real presence.

(6) Hebrews 8:1—"Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." This is the essence and crown of His function as our High Priest, for it demonstrates His excellent dignity. The words ascribe to the Lord Jesus equality with the Father combined with His office of priestly administration.

(7) Hebrews 9:24—"To appear in the presence of God for us." These words may read: "to appear face to face with God for us." He turns, as it were, to unashamedly look full into the face of His holy Father and, as the Son of Man, be assured of the efficacy of His intercessions on our behalf. He carries a full receipt in His pierced hands for our everlasting acceptance.

The Four Attitudes of our Lord in Heaven

(1) Sitting—"He was received up into Heaven, and sat on the right hand of God" (Mark 16:19). It is significant that it is Mark, whose Gospel emphasizes our Lord in His earthly toil, who tells us of our Lord sitting in the heavenly place. This indicates the end of His toil—the completion of His earthly work.

In Hebrews 1:3 we are told that He, "when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." His sitting, in this instance, indicated the end of the purging of our sins—the completion of redemption.

In Hebrews 10:12 we read, "This man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." The emphasis here is on the words "for ever." The Lord did not have to rise to repeat redemption's work. It was finished forever.

(2) Standing—There are two references to His standing. The first is in Acts 7:55, when He stood in Heaven at the martyrdom of Stephen. It would appear as though He graciously went over to the door, as it were, to personally welcome His martyred servant.

In Revelation 5:6, we read that "in the midst of the throne...stood a Lamb as it had been slain." Here we see Him rise to pour out the final judgments of God upon a godless world, so to wind up all the kingdoms of darkness and so to establish His own glorious kingdom on this very earth where He was crucified.

(3) Ministering—Hebrews 8:2 tells us of His serving. In the days of His flesh our Lord spoke of "being among you as one that serveth." He continued in this lowly

office, even in His triumphal resurrection days (John 21:13). And now in glory it is still His delight to serve His people, ministering to their daily needs from the true tabernacle in Heaven.

(4) Waiting—He waits, first, before His return until all His enemies are put under His feet (1 Corinthians 15:25). But, also, He waits for His elect bride, the Church, and for that blessed day when He shall receive her into His arms of loving embrace (John 14:3). We often think of ourselves as the waiting ones. But our Lord waits, too, and that with great eager anticipation to receive the bride whom He has won to Himself with so great a measure of struggle and anguish.

Oh, what love! How marvelous beyond thought is the love which exists in this union of Christ and His Church. How bright our future when we shall be Home in His prepared place for all the ages of eternity!

Golden harps are sounding,

Angel voices ring,

Pearly gates are opened,

Opened for the King:

Christ the King of Glory,

Jesus, King of Love,

Is gone up in triumph

To His throne above.

He who came to save us,

He who bled and died,

Now is crowned with glory

At His Father's side:
Never more to suffer,
Never more to die,
Jesus, King of Glory,
Is gone up on high.
Praying for His children
In that blessed place,
Calling them to glory,
Sending them His grace:
His bright Home preparing,
Faithful ones, for you;
Jesus ever liveth,
Everloveth, too.
Frances Ridley Havergal

Chapter 49 The Headship Of Christ

Head over all things (Ephesians 1:22).

Headship is not lordship. Our Lord Jesus Christ is Lord of all, but His Headship must be distinguished from that office. His Headship refers to four things in particular.

Head Over All Creation

“The Head of all principality and power” (Colossians 2:10). These are angelic powers, demonic powers, and cosmic powers in God’s created universe. Angelic powers ordained the law on Mount Sinai (Galatians 3:19). Demonic powers are fallen angels who have power over sinful men. Cosmic powers are laws which govern the universe. The Lord Jesus Christ is Head of all powers and authorities. This is a strong assertion of His deity and uniqueness. His hand moves every wheel in the pages of creation’s story and governs and guides it all.

Head Over All Kings

“The Prince [Ruler] of the kings of the earth” (Revelation 1:5). In the course of human history certain men, such as Alexander of Greece, Napoleon of France, Hitler of Germany, and Stalin of Russia have grasped at the throne of world dominion. All such ended their lives in shame and disgrace. This sad world has no real headship. That headship died in Adam, who was the natural head. The explanation of the confusion that marks world governments is that there is no real head.

At the end of time, these governments will seek to plant a human head on the body of mankind. He will be the

beast of Revelation 13. But at our Lord's appearance, He is to cast the beast, the false prophet, and the devil into the lake which burns with everlasting fire (Revelation 19:20; 20:10). The Headship of Christ will be vindicated and established in all realms of God's created universe. He alone shall be the reigning power.

Head Over the Millennial Kingdom

"On His head were many crowns" (Revelation 19:12). Thus is our blessed Lord to appear for the inauguration of His millennial kingdom. The crown of Godhood is His, and this shall be acknowledged by all. The worth of this no mortal power has ever grasped. The crown of manhood is His. This, too, will be clearly revealed for He is to come as the Son of man, and we shall see Him in glorified humanity in all its perfect excellence and beauty and unclouded glory. The crown of redemption is His, for He is the one and only Redeemer; the marks and exhibitions of His sufferings on the cross will be the evidence that He, and He alone, bore the crushing burden of His people's sins. This world, which has been the scene of His humiliation, His surrender to shame—to agony, to death—is to be the scene of His glorious reign. In this way He will be totally vindicated before all the universe.

Head of the Church

"The head over all things to the church" (Ephesians 1:22). The difference between our Lord's Lordship and Headship is that His Lordship is more positional; His Headship more functional. As Head of the Church, which is His body, He has, of course, a supreme position; but

we think of the head of our body more in terms of function.

(1) The head is the seat of dignity. “That in all things He might have the pre-eminence” (Colossians 1:18). The head is the highest, the most beautiful, the most highly exalted part of the body. This is where God has placed the head. In the same way, our Lord is Head of the Church. There is no such thing as a vicar or substitute head. God has given no man authority to be the head of the Church. One body with two heads would be a monstrosity. The Lord Jesus is the sole, living Head of the body, which is the Church.

(2) The head is the seat of government. It is the head which tells each member how to act and move—when the arm is to be raised or lowered, when the lips are to speak or remain silent, when the foot is to walk or halt. Only the head can govern. Believers are not under a law of external, carnal commandments, not even “the Ten Commandments” as external laws; but under moment-by-moment direction of the living Head, Christ, who is the embodiment of all moral law.

(3) The head is the seat of wisdom. There is no wisdom in the foot, or the arm, or any other member of the body. Wisdom is in the head. What a privilege, then, to be a member of that body whose Head is the wisdom of God, and who “is made unto us wisdom,” so that we can seek His wisdom in all earthly and heavenly matters.

(4) The head is the seat of sympathy. There is within the human body a marvelously constructed telegraphic system. The very moment a hurt is given the body, even to the farthest member, the head immediately knows and commands members to hurry in their sympathy and

help. Thus we see the Lord Himself as the Source of all our comfort. He, too, must appoint those who are to be His messengers of sympathy to those who are in hurt or any distress.

(5) The head is the seat of supply. "The Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Colossians 2:19; Ephesians 4:16). Our Lord is the Supply Center for all the needs of all members of His own precious Body, the Church. Life is starved without Him. His is a constant agency of supply to meet every need, every day, every hour.

(6) The head is the seat of honor. "That in all things He might have the pre-eminence" (Colossians 1:18). Much of our Lord's glory is seen in the wondrous titles of Colossians 1:13-18. It is like standing on a gold mine or sailing on a sea of glory. In India, when friends garland a person to do him honor, they do not place the garland on the foot or the arm, but only around the head. Thus all the saints cry: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory" (Psalm 115:1). Said Paul in this same connection, "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Corinthians 15:10). Then let us come and adore our Lord as "Head over all things" and recognize His peerless Name.

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation; O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation; All ye who hear, Brethren and sisters draw near, Praise Him in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, who, when darkness and sin is abounding, Who, when the godless do triumph, all virtue

confounding, Sheddeth His light, Chaseth the horrors of
night, Saints with His mercy surrounding.

Praise to the Lord, O let all that is in me adore Him;

All that hath life and breath come now with praises
before Him; Let the Amen Sound from His people again:

Gladly for aye we adore Him.

Neander: Winkworth

Chapter 50 Our Great High Priest

Thou art a Priest for ever (Psalm 110:4).

The office of priesthood is as old as man's ruin. The spiritual collapse and moral delinquency following his fall demanded someone to go into God's presence on man's behalf, since no sinful man could enter God's holy presence. In the beginning, the head of the family was the priest. Then after two thousand years and the choosing of Israel for sovereign and divine purposes, the tribe of Levi was set apart as priests, with the family of Aaron as high priests. That dispensation passed away when in the fullness of time the Lord of glory became flesh. With the death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord, there are five notable Scriptures in the Letter to the Hebrews which clearly declare the substance of His Priesthood. This is not after the Levitical order, but "the order of Melchizedec." These Scriptures explain five basic truths of His Priesthood.

His Proper Manhood

"In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren" (Hebrews 2:17); "Every high priest [is] taken from among men" (5:1). Our Lord passed through every human experience of distress. He remembers His own grief as the Son of man, and His own utter dependence upon the sympathetic help of His Father in Heaven. It is because of these unutterable and inexpressible woes in His life on earth that He is now such an understanding and sympathetic High Priest in the heavens and able to succour us (2:18).

His Essential Greatness

“A great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God” (Hebrews 4:14). He has an essential right to be where He is on the throne of Heaven and, being who He is, we have no fear that His intercessions on our behalf will fail. The particular phase of His ministry in this regard is His supply of grace. For this we are to come boldly to Him that “we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (4:16). We need both mercy and grace—mercy to forgive us when we fail; grace to strengthen us that we may not fail again. “Abba, Father,” cried our Lord in His own dire need as the Son of man. That cry from our lips reaches the Father when we cry in the name of His dear Son.

His Infinite Compassion

“Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him” (Hebrews 5:7-9). What is stressed here is His “compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way” (verse 2). We are naturally slow in hearing the ways of the Lord. When Peter failed, it was with tender compassion that the Lord looked on him. His compassions fail not. He is One to whom the most timid may come with their burdens, and when they do so they will find Him not hard and exacting, but tender and sympathetic.

His Prevailing Intercession

“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25). It is because He ever liveth by the power of an endless life that His priesthood is unchangeable. His office will never pass to another, as was the case of the Jewish high priests, who surrendered their office by reason of death. Our Lord remains High Priest for ever by virtue of the fact that “He ever liveth.” Thus eternal salvation is assured us and secured for us. He continueth ever—therefore His priesthood continueth ever—therefore His intercession continueth ever—therefore His salvation continueth ever. Our eternal salvation is bound up with His eternal priesthood and the efficacy of His eternal intercessions.

His Heavenly Ministry

“A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Hebrews 8:2). This heavenly sanctuary is the place where He exercises His priestly functions. The greatness of His office is matched only by the greatness of the sanctuary in which He ministers, which is Heaven itself. Think of the glory of the Tabernacle Moses built in the wilderness, and the magnificence of the Temple Solomon erected in the promised land. But these were sanctuaries which could crumble and be destroyed, which took place when the Babylonians razed Solomon’s house magnificent.

The sanctuary in Heaven is not so. Entering the heavenly sanctuary, as our Lord did, was not entering where there was but a symbolic presence of God in the Shekinah glory. He moved into God’s real presence, and

into a sanctuary which God pitched and not man—a sanctuary eternal in the heavens. The particular emphasis here is upon our Lord serving as “a minister of the sanctuary.” Whatever be our need while here on earth below or in Heaven above, it is our Lord’s delight to be amid His redeemed people “as One that serveth.”

Christ, above all glory seated,
King eternal, strong to save,
To Thee death—by death defeated—
Triumph high and glory gave.
Jesus, hail! enthroned in glory,
There forever to abide:
All the heav’nly host adore Thee,
Seated at Thy Father’s side.
Worship, honor, power, and blessing
Thou art worthy to receive:
Loudest praises, without ceasing,
Meet it is for us to give.
J.R. Woodford And J. Bakewell