Articles by Benjamin Bradford

Benjamin Bradford

First published in Food for the Flock / Ministry in Focus (Food for the Flock, Inc., Ontario, Canada).

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Amiable Tabernacles (1961, Vol. 7 No. 10)

From Food for the Flock, 1961, Vol. 7 No. 10. Parts of this piece could not be read in the scan.

Scripture Reading: Psalm 84:1-12

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Fruitfulness

There also was a golden altar, but not in the court; it was in the sanctuary, standing before the vail. The incense which was burnt upon this altar filled the holy place with fragrance. On the other side of the vail stood the holy ark upon which was the mercy seat, concerning which God said, "There will I meet with thee, and there will I commune with Thee." What a picture of Christ in resurrection; Christ glorified; Christ in His priestly work in the presence of God for us! If Christ were not there, no note of praise would ever reach the ear of God. There would be nothing that we could say or do that would be acceptable to God. Christ, our golden altar in the presence of God, is ministering on our behalf today.

In the first place, the sparrow is mentioned in a manner that reminds us of the sinner coming to the brazen altar, the sinner finding rest and peace at the cross of Calvary. In second place, the swallow is mentioned as having a nest where she may lay her young, where she would have new life. Christ in His priestly work is the secret of all fruitbearing in the Christian's life. The people of God find that rest and shelter result from the work of Christ at Calvary; they must also discover that all fruitfulness

results from His work in the heavens on their behalf. God expects that every believer should be fruitful in every good work. Like the swallow with the young in her nest, Christians are responsible before God to bring forth fruit to His glory.

Communion

The Psalmist now writes, "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be still praising Thee. Selah." He does not say, Blessed are they that visit Thy house. The house speaks of communion with the Lord Himself; communion with Him and with those that dwell in communion with Him. What will be the result of such fellowship? The fruit of praise! Of those that dwell in God's house the Psalmist says, "They will be still praising Thee." It is God's desire that His people might be a happy praising people.

God brought Israel out of Egypt under the shelter of the blood, across the Red Sea by His mighty power, and delivered them from all their enemies. What then did Israel do? "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord" (Ex. 15). That was a song on the ground of redemption by blood, deliverance by power, and guidance by wisdom out into the Wilderness. In response, the first thing that God got from His beloved people was a song of praise, a song that gave God the honour.

In the days when Hezekiah cleansed the temple, the song of the Lord began again, but when did it begin? Only when the burnt offering ascended. When the burnt offering was going up, the song of the Lord went up, and it continued so to do until the burnt offering was completed. How grand! You and I, as the people of God,

ought to be as burnt offerings, voluntarily offering ourselves unto God. The Apostle Paul pleads, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). When such a sacrifice ascends, the song of the Lord begins, and lasts as long as our bodies are living sacrifices unto Him, for such a song will arise within the heart. The Lord help us to place our all upon the altar for Christ.

Henry Dyer used to say, "When I put myself on the altar, very soon I find myself getting off again." It is not pleasant to the flesh to be consumed; therefore, let us bind our sacrifice with cords of love to the horns of the altar. Our sacrifice is not to be a dead one, that would give us no trouble, but a living one, a sacrifice that nature will resist; therefore, let us bind it to the altar with that love that is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. What will the result be? The statement of the Psalm will be true, "They will be still praising Thee."

Comfort

Notice another word, "Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools." Here is another blessed man. What is he doing? Passing through the valley of Baca. The valley of Baca is the valley of weeping. Could any fruit appear in such a valley? Will any praise arise from weeping? Yes, thank God! A well springs up in that valley.

The Lord spoke to the woman by the well and said, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But

whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst" (John 4:13-14). Again Christ spoke, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of His belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37-38). This, Christ spoke concerning the Spirit of God that was in Him.

When one is passing through the Valley of Baca, the valley where there is trouble, sorrow, and loss, tears are shed. Nevertheless, in that valley when there is exercise before the Lord, a well will spring up. What is a well for? It would be a selfish person who would retain it all for himself; a well is to be shared with others. II Corinthians 1:4, says, "The God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble." The God of comfort comforts where? In the valley of Baca, the valley of tears! In that valley God makes a well from which we ourselves may derive comfort and through which we may comfort others who similarly are passing by the Valley of Weeping.

The Lord grant that whatever our circumstances, we may bring God into them and find comfort and consolation which we may share with the weary hearts around us.

Sanctification

Furthermore, we read, "They go from strength to strength, everyone of them in Zion appeareth before God, O Lord God of Hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah. Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of mine Anointed. For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper

in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." God had said, "Separate yourselves from these wicked men," and the sons of Korah separated themselves to become doorkeepers in the house of the Lord. What a blessed change!

The Lord keep His own from dwelling in tents of wickedness. How may a Christian be in tents of wickedness? Through his tongue; there is a tremendous lot of wickedness wrought by the tongue. God save us from dwelling in the tent of evil speaking. Aaron and Miriam got into that tent, and they spoke evil of their brother Moses. God, consequently, visited their tent and smote Miriam with leprosy. How dreadful!

Compensation

"For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." The writer did not say, "The Lord God is a sun" only. No! Jonah felt that the sun was against him and that he needed a shield. God gave him a shield, but it eventually withered. How Jonah raged because the gourd withered, and left him exposed to the sun. God balances things for His people. To Israel in the wilderness He was a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, a sun and a shield to them. We read, "The Lord will give grace and glory." There is no place for glory down here.