

# TYPICAL TEACHINGS OF EXODUS

BEING A SIMPLE EXPOSITION

By

E. Dennett

1889

"A shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Col. 2: 17.

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## PREFATORY.

THE following chapters are very simple and purely expository. In dealing with the Tabernacle and its sacred vessels, the subject might have been made more attractive if embellished with illustrations. It may be questioned, however, if pictorial representations, though they may have their value in an educational point of view, whether for the young or for the student, do not really hinder rather than aid in the apprehension of spiritual teaching. Now that the veil is rent, and believers have access, in virtue of the precious blood of Christ, into the holiest, into the immediate presence of God, the meaning of the Tabernacle is best understood by looking *back* upon it through the light of the fulfilment of all in Christ. For He, and He alone, is the key wherewith to unlock these sacred mysteries. In a word, it is Christ who explains the Tabernacle, and not the Tabernacle which explains Christ. The Tabernacle indeed was not a type, but an antitype, and was only "a figure for the time then present," "the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." (Heb. 9: 8.) It is therefore the earnest hope and prayer of the writer that the perusal of these pages may, by the blessing of God, help the reader to discover more of the beauties and the excellencies of the person of Christ, and to understand more fully the nature and perfection of His work, as well as the blessed place of privilege and grace into which believers have consequently been brought.

E. D., LONDON, 1882.

# EXODUS

## CHAPTER I.

### ISRAEL IN EGYPT.

#### EXODUS i.

THE grand subject of the book of Exodus is that of redemption. In Genesis we have creation, and then, after the fall, and the announcement of a Deliverer in the seed of the woman, who should bruise the serpent's head (Gen. 3: 15) — the revelation, in fact, of the second Man, of whom Adam was a figure (Rom. 5: 14), and in whom all God's counsels should be established — "all the great elementary principles which find their development in the history of the relationships of God with man, which is recorded in the following books." The book of Genesis has therefore been aptly termed the seed-plot of the Bible. But in Exodus the subject is one — redemption with its consequences, consequences in grace, and when the people, showing their insensibility to grace, as well as ignorance of their own condition, had put themselves under law, consequences of government. Still the grand result of redemption, the establishment of a people before God, in relationship with Him, is achieved; and this it is that lends such an interest to the book, and makes it so instructive for the Christian reader.

The first five verses contain a brief statement of the names of Jacob's sons who came into Egypt with their father — they and their households, numbering, together with Joseph and his house already in Egypt, seventy souls. The particulars, of which this is a brief summary, are found in Genesis 46. The immediate occasion of their going down to Egypt was the famine; but by the famine, as by the wickedness of Jacob's sons in selling their brother to the Ishmaelites (Gen. 37: 28), God was but accomplishing the fulfilment of His own purposes. Long ere this He had said unto Abram, "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years: and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance." (Gen. 15: 13, 14.) This is the history of the first twelve chapters in Exodus; and it fills us with admiration to reflect that, whatever the actings of men even in wickedness and high-handed rebellion, they are made subservient to the establishment of the divine counsels of grace and love. As Peter indeed said, on the day of Pentecost, concerning Christ, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." (Acts 2: 23.) Thus even the wrath of man is yoked to the chariot wheels of God's decrees.

There is undoubtedly a reason for the children of Israel being shown to us, at the opening of the book, in Egypt. In Scripture Egypt is a type of the world, and hence Israel in Egypt becomes a figure of man's natural condition. Thus, after the statement that "Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation" (v. 6), the narrative passes rapidly on to describe their circumstances and condition. First, their increase and, indeed,

prosperity are indicated. They" were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them." (v. 7.) They were the children of promise, albeit in Egypt, and as such God's favour was resting upon them. Hence this picture of earthly prosperity. God never forgets His people, although they may forget Him.

Now another figure appears on the scene — "a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph." (v. 8.) The statement that he "knew not Joseph" is exceeding significant. Joseph in Egypt was a type of Christ in His earthly glory, and consequently not to know him is characteristic of a moral state. Pharaoh in fact is the god of this world, and as such must of necessity be in antagonism to the Lord's people. Accordingly we read at once of his crafty devices and malicious designs to destroy their prosperity, and to reduce them to helpless and hopeless bondage. (vv. 9-12.) And what was his motive? "Lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land." (v. 10.) Satan knows, what we are apt to forget, that the world must hate the children of God, and that they, if faithful, must be in antagonism to the world, and hence he in the person of Pharaoh seems to provide for the contingency of war, and to prevent their deliverance. He therefore "set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses." <sup>1</sup> Thereby they are brought under bondage to the world, "and the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage." (vv. 13, 14.) The other side of the picture is, "The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew." (v. 12.) This arose from the fact already pointed out, that, whatever their condition, they were the people of promise, embraced in the purposes of God, and as such were watched over, shielded, and blessed; so that Pharaoh, as the god of this world, was powerless to accomplish their destruction. The real question was, as the issue shows, between God and Pharaoh; and the king of Egypt was, in his schemes against the children of Israel, fighting against God. Hence his failure on every side. On the other hand, the condition of the Israelites portrays most strikingly the condition of the sinner — the sinner rather who has been made to feel the iron yoke of his slavery to sin and Satan. As with the prodigal, who falls lower and lower, until he is at the point of death and in utter degradation, before he comes to himself, so here God makes the children of Israel feel the weight of their burdens, and to taste the bitterness of their vile servitude, to awaken in them a desire for deliverance before He commences to act on their behalf. There is such a thing as the sinner being insensible to his degradation, and contented, if not happy, in his alienation from God; but if he is to be saved he must pass through the experience which is foreshadowed by this account of the condition of the Israelites. Until then, he never knows his real state, or desires deliverance.

The rest of the chapter (vv. 15-22) is taken up with a description of another attempt to enfeeble, and in time to destroy, the children of Israel. But again there is the activity of another on their behalf. Pharaoh was an absolute king, and none of his subjects dared to oppose his will; but even these feeble women are sustained in their disobedience, because

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<sup>1</sup> Not even the site of these cities — although many conjectures are offered — can with any certainty be now identified.

they judged it their first duty to fear God. The mightiest monarch in the world is powerless as against God, and equally so against those who are identified with God and His people. Hence Shiphrah and Puah "did not as the king of Egypt commanded" (v. 17), and God dealt well with them, and because they feared God, He made them houses. (vv. 17-21.) "If God be for us, who can be against us (Rom. 8: 31.) We may therefore learn, first, the utter impotence of the enemy to frustrate the purposes of God; secondly, the invincibility of those who are connected with His purposes; thirdly, how the fear of God can lift the feeblest and humblest above the fear of man; and then, last of all, how grateful to the heart of God is every sign of fidelity to Him in the midst of a scene where Satan reigns, as the god of this world, and oppresses and seeks to destroy His people.

But Pharaoh's enmity increases, and he "charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive." (v. 22.) The next chapter will show us how God used this very decree of the king to prepare a deliverer for His people.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE BIRTH OF MOSES.

EXODUS ii.

THIS chapter, full of interest, is made more attractive to the spiritual mind by the divine commentary which is given in Hebrews 11 upon its main incidents. Here it is a simple record of the human side of the actions recorded; there it is rather the divine side, or the estimate which God formed of the deeds of His people. It is only, therefore, by the combination of these two aspects that we can glean the instruction which is thus afforded. As in the case of the birth of our blessed Lord at Bethlehem, so here, little did the parents or the world around understand the significance of the birth of the son of Amram and Jochebed. It is thus that God always works, noiselessly laying the foundation of His purposes, and preparing His instruments until the moment, before determined, arrives for action, and then He makes bare His arm in the display of His presence and power in the face of the world.

But we must trace the events of the chapter. "And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived and bare a son; and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months." (vv. 1, 2.) How simply beautiful this natural scene! And how well our hearts can enter into the feelings of this Jewish mother! The king had commanded that every son that was born should be cast into the river (Ex. 1: 22); but what mother could consent to give up her child to death? All the affections of her heart would revolt from it. But, alas! there was the inexorable decree of this despotic king; and how could she, a poor, feeble woman, and a feeble woman of a despised race, resist the will of an absolute monarch? Turn to the inspired comment in the New Testament: "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment." (Heb. 11: 23) True, they owed allegiance to their earthly sovereign, but they also owed allegiance to the Lord of lords, and trusting in Him they were lifted above all fear of the king's commandment, and concealed their child — the child whom God had given to them — for three months. They counted upon God, and they were not confounded; for He never leaves or forsakes them that put their trust in Him. This is a most blessed action of faith, — and in a twofold way. With their eye upon God, they dared to be disobedient to the king's wicked command, and they were fearless of the consequences. Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in a later age, they believed that the God whom they served was able to deliver them out of the king's hand. (Daniel 3: 16, 17.) The rulers of this world are powerless in the presence of those who are linked with God by the exercise of faith.

The time, however, came when this "proper child could no longer be hid (v. 2); showing the increasing vigilance of the enemy of God and His people. But faith is never wanting in resources. We accordingly find that "she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him." (vv.

3,4.) As with Isaac and Samuel, so likewise with Moses, death must be known, at least in figure, by the parents, both for themselves and for their child before he can become an instrument in service for God. It is not a little remarkable, in this connection, that the word here used for ark is not found elsewhere in the Scriptures, except for the ark in which Noah and his house were brought through the flood. There is another resemblance. The ark of Noah was pitched within and without with pitch. Jochebed daubs this ark with slime and pitch. Noah acted under divine direction, and hence the word there used for pitch means also a ransom (Exodus 30: 12; Job 33: 24, etc.), shadowing forth the truth that a ransom must be found to deliver from the waters of judgment; but this Hebrew mother used pitch of another kind, and therefore did not know the full truth — Yet she thereby confessed the need of redemption, her faith owned it, and thus her ark of bulrushes, containing its precious freight, floated in safety amid the flags upon this river of death. There may not have been divine intelligence, but there was true faith, and this ever finds a response in the heart of God. Remark, also, that the sister, and not the mother, watches for the issue. This might easily be explained on human grounds, but is there not another solution? The mother believed, and could consequently rest in peace, although the child, dearer to her than life itself, was exposed upon the river. In like manner, Mary, the sister of Lazarus, is not found at the sepulchre in which the Lord of glory lay, because she had entered into the mystery of His death. (John 12: 7.)

We now pass on to consider the action of God in response to the faith of His people. "And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it," etc. (v. 5.) It is exceedingly beautiful and instructive to see God thus behind the scene arranging all for His own glory. The daughter of Pharaoh was acting from her own inclination, and for her own pleasure, and knew not that she was an instrument of the divine will. But everything — her going down to the river to bathe, the time of her doing so — all was according to the purpose of God in respect of the child who was to be the deliverer of His people. Accordingly she saw the ark, had it fetched, opened it, and saw the child; "and, behold, the babe wept." (v. 6.) Even the tears of the babe had their object, and they were not shed in vain; they excited the compassion of this royal woman, as she said, comprehending the secret, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." (v. 6.) The sister who had been anxiously watching to see what might become of her baby-brother, receives the word of wisdom at this critical juncture, and said, "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother." (vv. 7, 8.) The child Moses, who had been exposed on the river in consequence of the king of Egypt's decree, is thus restored to his mother under the protection of Pharaoh's daughter. And there he remained until he had grown, and then Jochebed "brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water." (v. 10.) His very name shall declare the power of Him who had saved him from death, brought him out of the waters of judgment in His sovereign grace and love. Thus the man of God's choice, the one He had marked out as His chosen instrument for the deliverance of His people, and to become the mediator of His covenant with them, finds shelter under the roof of Pharaoh.

During this period he became learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds." (Acts 7: 22.)

Another epoch of his life is now presented to us. Forty years had passed away before the incident occurred which is described in the eleventh and following verses. "And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and, when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known. Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well." (vv. 11-15; see also Acts 7: 23.) As we read this narrative, it might be supposed that the act of Moses, in killing the Egyptian, was nothing beyond the impulse of a generous heart, feeling the injustice which was done, and interfering to avenge it. But what is the interpretation of this act by the Spirit of God? "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." (Heb. 11: 24-27.)

We must, however, carefully guard ourselves from concluding that the Spirit of God *endorses* all that the narrative records in Exodus. No doubt Moses acted in the energy of the flesh; but though he had not as yet learned his own nothingness and incompetency, he yet desired to act for God; and it is from the epistle to the Hebrews we learn the true character of his actions before God. That there was failure is clear; but it was the failure of a man of faith, whose actions were precious in the sight of God, because he was enabled, in the exercise of faith, to refuse all that might have tempted the natural man, and to identify himself with the interests of God's people. But this passage in his life demands a more particular notice. First, then, it was by faith that he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. What else, indeed, could have led to the renunciation of such a splendid position? Besides, he might have argued, he had been placed in it by a most singular and striking providence. Might it not be therefore that he should occupy it, and use the influence connected with it, on behalf of his downtrodden brethren? Why, he might succeed in securing the whole influence of the court on behalf of his nation; would it not be, then, to fly in the face of Providence, to forsake such a vantage-ground? But Providence, as has been often remarked, is no guide to faith. Faith deals with things not seen, and hence seldom agrees with the conclusions that are drawn from providential events and circumstances. No; the influence of the god of this world (Pharaoh) can never be employed to deliver the Lord's people; and faith can never be sheltered by or identified with it. Faith has God for its object, and must therefore be identified with what belongs to God, and be in antagonism with all that is opposed to God. As another has said, "How many reasons might have induced Moses to remain in

the position where he was, and this even under the pretext of being able to do more for the people; but this would have been leaning on the power of Pharaoh, instead of recognizing the bond between the people and God: it might have resulted in a relief which the world would have granted, but not in a deliverance by God, accomplished in His love and in His power. Moses would have been spared much affliction, but lost his true glory; Pharaoh flattered, and *his authority over the people of God recognized*; and Israel would have remained in captivity, leaning on Pharaoh, instead of recognizing God in the precious and even glorious relationship of His people with Him. God would not have been glorified; yet all human reasoning, and all reasoning connected with providential ways, would have induced Moses to remain in his position; *faith* made him give it up." And giving it up, he chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God. Identification with them had more attractions for his faithful heart than the pleasures of sin; for faith views everything in the light of God's presence. Yea, he rose still higher; he esteemed the *reproach* of Christ — the reproach arising from identification with Israel — greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. Faith thus lives in the future, as well as in the unseen. It is the assurance of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen; and hence it governed, controlled, the heart and path of Moses.

It was faith, then, that actuated him when "he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens." (v. 11) And even when, stirred by "seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian," he "supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them." (Acts 7: 24,25.) And so it was to be, but the time had not yet arrived, nor could God yet employ Moses — precious as his faith was in His sight. As Peter had to learn that he could not follow Christ in the energy of nature, whatever the affections of his heart (John 13: 36), so Moses had to be taught that no weapon could be employed in the deliverance of Israel save the power of God. When, therefore, he went out the second day, and seeing two Hebrews striving together, sought to reconcile them, he is taunted with killing the Egyptian, and is himself rejected. (vv. 13, 14.) Pharaoh too heard of what he had done, and sought to slay him. He is thus rejected by his brethren, and persecuted by the world.

From this point he becomes a type of Christ in his rejection; for he is rejected by the people whom he loved, and becomes in his flight separated from his brethren. "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." He still trod the path of faith, though that path led him into the desert amongst a strange people. But God provided His servant a home, and a wife in one of the daughters of Jethro (Reuel). Zipporah is thus in figure a type of the church, for she is associated with Moses during the time of his rejection by Israel. But the heart of Moses is still with his people, and hence he names his son Gershom; "for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land." (v. 22.) Joseph, on the other hand, names his sons Manasseh — "for God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house;" and Ephraim — "for God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction." The comparison is most instructive, and shows in what special aspects Joseph and Moses are types of Christ. If Joseph presents us with Christ as raised through death to the right hand of the throne

over the Gentiles, and thereon disclosing Himself to, and receiving His brethren, Moses gives us Christ more exclusively as the Redeemer of Israel; and hence, though he marries during the time of his rejection, and is thus in some sort a figure of Christ and the church in this dispensation, his heart is still with the children of Israel, and therefore he is a stranger in a strange land.

The last three verses bring before us the condition of the people, and reveal at the same time the faithfulness and compassion of God. They belong rather to the next chapter.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE COMMISSION OF MOSES.

EXODUS 3, 4.

MOSES was no less than forty years in the wilderness, learning the lessons he needed for his future work, and being qualified to act for God as the deliverer of His people. What a contrast to his former life at the court of Pharaoh. There he was surrounded with all the luxury and refinement of his age; here he is a simple shepherd, keeping the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law. Forty is the number of probation, as seen, for example, in the forty years in the wilderness of the children of Israel; also in the forty days' temptation of our blessed Lord. It was therefore a time of testing — testing what Moses was, as well as a time for him to prove what God was; and these two things must ever be learnt before we are qualified for service. Hence God always sends His servants into the wilderness before employing them for the accomplishment of His purposes. Nowhere else can we be brought so fully into the presence of God. It is there, alone with Him, that we discover the utter vanity of human resources, and our entire dependence upon Himself. And very blessed is it to be withdrawn from the busy haunts of men, and to be shut in, as it were, with God, to learn in communion with Himself His own thoughts concerning ourselves, concerning His interests and service. Indeed it is a continual necessity for every true servant to be much alone with God; and where this is forgotten, God often brings it about, in the tenderness of His heart, by the disciplinary dealings of His hand.

The time at length arrives when God can begin to interfere for His people. But let us recall the connection. In the first chapter the people are seen in their bondage; in the second, Moses is born, and introduced into the house of Pharaoh. Then he casts in his lot with the people of God, and in the warmth of his affection seeks to remedy their wrongs; but, rejected, he flees into the desert. After forty years, being now eighty years old, he is to be sent back into Egypt. The third and fourth chapters contain the account of his mission from God, and of his unwillingness to be thus employed. But before this is reached, there is a short preface at the end of the second chapter — which really belongs to the third as to its connection — which reveals the ground on which God was acting for the redemption of His people. First, it tells us that the king of Egypt died, but his death brought no alleviation of the condition of the children of Israel. On the other hand, they "sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God, by reason of the bondage." They were thus reduced to the lowest extremity. But God was not insensible, for He "heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them." (Ex. 2: 23-25.) Their condition touched the heart of God, drew forth His pitying mercies, but the ground on which He acted was His own sovereign grace, as expressed in the covenant He had made with their fathers. It was this same mercy, and His faithfulness to His word, which both Mary and Zacharias celebrated in their songs of praise in connection with the birth of the Saviour, and of His forerunner John. "He hath holpen His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy; as He spake to

our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever." And again, He "hath raised up an horn of salvation for us . . . to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant; the oath which He sware to our father Abraham," etc. (Luke 1: 54, 55, 68-73.) It is impossible that God should forget His word, and if He delay to accomplish it, it is only for the brighter display of His unchanging grace and love.

Having, then, laid the foundation in these few words, the next scene brings before us the dealings of God with Moses.

"Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." (Ex. 3: 1, 2.)

It is most interesting to trace the appearings of God to His people, and to note how the manner of each is related to the special circumstances of the case. (See Gen. 12, 18, 32; Joshua 5, etc.) Here it is strikingly significant as connected with the mission on which Moses was about to be sent. There are three parts to the vision thus vouchsafed — the Lord, the flame of fire, and the bush. Observe, first, that it is said the angel of the Lord appeared unto Moses (v. 2); and then *the Lord* saw that he turned aside, and *God* called unto him out of the midst of the bush. (v. 4. Compare Gen. 22: 15, 16.) The angel of the Lord is thus identified with Jehovah, yea, with God Himself; and there is no doubt that in all these appearings of the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament Scriptures, we behold the shadowing forth of the coming incarnation of the Son of God, and hence that, in all these cases, it is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity — God the Son. The flame of fire is a symbol of the holiness of God. This is shown in various ways, especially in the fire on the altar, which consumed the sacrifices; and in the epistle to the Hebrews we have the express statement that "our God is a consuming fire;" i.e. testing everything according to His holiness, and thus consuming everything which does not answer its requirements. The bush was meant to be a figure of Israel. There is nothing more easily consumed by fire than a bush; and it was chosen on this very account to represent the nation of Israel — the nation of Israel in the furnace of Egypt — the fire burning fiercely round about it, and yet not destroying it. It was therefore a consolatory assurance to the heart of Moses — if he could read it aright — that his nation would be preserved however fiercely the fire might burn. In the language of another, "it was meant to be an image of that which was presented to the spirit of Moses — a bush in a desert, burning, but unconsumed. It was no doubt thus that God was about to work in the midst of Israel. Moses and they must know it. They too would be the chosen vessel of His power in their weakness, and this for ever in His mercy. Their God, as ours, would prove Himself a consuming fire. Solemn, but infinite favour! For, on the one hand, as surely as He is a consuming fire, so on the other the bush, weak as it is, and ready to vanish away, nevertheless remains to prove that, whatever may be the siftings and judicial dealings of God, whatever the trials and searchings of man, yet where He reveals Himself in pitifulness, as well as in power (and such it certainly was here), He sustains the object,

and uses the trial for nothing but good, no doubt for His own glory, but consequently for the very best interests of those that are His."

Moses was attracted, as well he might be, by "this great sight," and "he turned aside to see." (v. 4.) Then it was that God called to him out of the bush, and called him by name. But he must be reminded of the holiness of the divine presence. "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." (v. 5. Compare Numbers 5: 1-3; Joshua 5: 15, etc.) This is the first lesson which all who approach God must learn — the recognition of His holiness. True, He is a God of grace, of mercy, and also that He is love; but He is all these because He is a holy God, and He could never have manifested Himself in these blessed characters, had it not been that in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other. But unless our feet are unshod — remembering the holiness of Him with whom we have to do — we can never receive the gracious communications of His mind and will. Hence the very next thing we find here is that He reveals Himself to Moses as the "God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." (v. 6.) This revelation was designed to act upon the soul of Moses, and it does — for he is bowed in heart before Him who spake — and he "hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." (See 1 Kings 19: 13.) Thereon Jehovah announces the purpose of His manifestation to Moses.

"And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters: for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto Me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." (vv. 7-10.)

The order of this communication is most instructive. (1) God reveals Himself as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. His own character is the foundation of all His actings. It is exceedingly strengthening to the soul to learn this lesson — that God ever finds His motive within Himself. It is on the ground of what He is, and not on the ground of what we are. (Compare Eph. 1: 3-6; 2 Tim. 1: 9, 10.) (2) The occasion of His action was the condition of His people. "And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows," etc. (v. 7 *seq.*) What infinite tenderness! There is not a word to show that the children of Israel had cried to the Lord. They had sighed and cried by reason of their bondage, but it does not appear that their hearts had turned to the Lord. But their misery had touched His heart, He "knew their sorrows, and was come down to deliver them." So "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5: 8.) (3) His purpose was to deliver them out of Egypt, "and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land

flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites." (v. 8.) There is nothing here between Egypt and Canaan. The wilderness does not appear. In like manner, in Romans we read, "Whom He justified, them He also glorified." We thus learn, as has been often remarked, that the wilderness is no part of the purpose of God. It belongs to His ways, and not to His purposes; for it is in the wilderness that the flesh is tested, that we learn what we are as well as what God is. (See Deut. 8) But as far as God's purposes are concerned, there is nothing between redemption and glory. So in the actual fact, there were only eleven days' journey from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea (Deut. 1: 2), but the children of Israel were forty years through their unbelief in accomplishing the distance. (4) Moses is thereon commissioned as their deliverer. The Lord had heard the cry of the people, though not addressed to Himself, and seen their oppression, and therefore He will send Moses unto Pharaoh that he may bring them forth out of Egypt. (vv. 9, 10.)

We now come to a most sad exhibition of failure on the part of Moses. When in Egypt he ran before he was sent; he thought that, in the energy of his own will, he could emancipate his brethren, or at least redress their wrongs. But now, after forty years spent in "the flesh-subduing solitudes" of the desert, he not only is unwilling to be employed upon the magnificent mission with which the Lord would entrust him, but he raises objection after objection until he wearies the tender patience and long-suffering of Jehovah, and His anger is kindled against Moses. (Ex. 4: 14.) But every fresh failure of Moses proves the occasion for the display of greater grace — even though in the event Moses suffered through his whole life from his backwardness in obeying the voice of the Lord. Miserable history of the flesh! Now it is too forward, and now it is too backward. There is only One who was ever found equal to all God's will — who always did the things that pleased Him — and that was the perfect servant, the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us glance at this series of difficulties which Moses raises.

"And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (v. 11.)

Who am *I*?" It is quite right that we should have the sense of our own utter nothingness; for we surely are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves. But it is also right that we should think much of God. For when He sends it is not a question of what we are, but of what He is — and it is no small thing to be invested with His authority and power. David had learnt this lesson when he advanced against Goliath; for, in reply to his taunts, he said, "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." (1 Sam. 17: 45.) This objection therefore was nothing but distrust. This is distinctly shown out in the answer he received, "CERTAINLY I WILL BE WITH THEE: and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain." (v. 12.) The presence of the Lord was to be both the warrant for his mission and the source of his strength. As the Lord said in after days to Joshua, "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage." (Joshua 1: 5, 6.) The Lord knows the need of His servant, and provides for his weakness by giving a token which should reassure him — should the subtlety of his heart lead him into doubt, — so

that he might be able to say, "Now I have a proof of my divine mission." Surely this was enough to scatter his hesitation and fear. Listen to his answer:

"And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them?" (v. 13.)

God had already revealed Himself to Moses as the God of his fathers — and this might have been enough, but nothing can ever satisfy doubts and fears. And what an incidental glimpse is thus given of the condition of Israel, so as to render the supposition possible that they might not know the name of the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob! God bears in grace with his feeble, hesitant servant, and replies, "I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." (v. 14.) This is the expression of the essential being of God — His name as the self-existent One; and thereby affirms His eternal being. It was this name the Lord Jesus claimed when He said to the unbelieving Jews, "Before Abraham was, I AM." (John 8: 58.) But this is not all. Having revealed Himself as to His essential existence, He adds, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is My name for ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations." (v. 15.) This is pure grace on the part of God. "I AM, is His own essential name; but as regards His government of, and relationship with, the earth, His name — that by which He is to be remembered to all generations — is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. This gave Israel, now visited and taken up of God under His name, a very peculiar place." It points indeed to their election by the sovereign grace of God, and to their being beloved for their fathers' sake; and at the same time reveals the fact that Israel shall be for ever the centre of God's ways, and the key to His purposes upon the earth. Hence, as long as Israel is under judgment, scattered throughout the world, the period of earthly blessing is still postponed.

It was consequently in this name that God was come down to deliver; for as soon as He assumes it, He graciously allows that the people, whom He has thus brought into relationship with Himself, have a claim upon His mercy and compassion. Hence the detailed instructions which are now given to Moses (vv. 16-22), in which the whole history of God's controversy with Pharaoh is given, with its final issue in the redemption of His people. First, Moses is enjoined to assemble the elders of Israel, that he may announce to them, that the Lord God of their fathers had appeared to him, and communicated to him the purposes of His grace towards them, in bringing them up out of the affliction of Egypt unto a land flowing with milk and honey. (vv. 16, 17.) He is foretold that they would hearken to his voice, and that he and they should go together unto Pharaoh, to ask for permission to go three days' journey into the wilderness, that they might sacrifice unto the Lord their God. (v. 18.) He then is forewarned of the stubborn opposition of Pharaoh; but he is likewise told that God would Himself deal with the Egyptian king, and compel him to let them go; and, furthermore, that when they went out they should not go empty, but that they should spoil the Egyptians. (vv. 19-22.)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> As there has been some controversy upon the statement, here and in Ex. 11: 2, that the Israelites were commanded to borrow the valuables of the Egyptians on the eve of their exodus, it may be well to point out

These instructions are important for all time; for they place beyond a doubt the exact foreknowledge of God. He knew with whom He had to deal, the resistance to be met with, and how it was to be overcome. He saw all things from the beginning to the end. How consolatory to our feeble hearts! Not a difficulty or trial can befall us which has not been foreseen by our God, and for which in His grace provision has not been made! Everything has been prearranged in view of our final triumph, and of our victorious exit from this scene, through the display of His redeeming power, to be for ever with the Lord! Surely Moses might now have been contented.

"And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee."  
(Ex. 4: 1.)

Could unbelief be more presumptuous? The Lord had said, "They shall hearken to thy voice." Moses replies, "They will not believe me." What wonder if the Lord had utterly rejected His servant when he thus dared to contradict Him to His face? But He is slow to anger and of great mercy; and truly this scene is full of beauty as revealing the depths of the tenderness and long-suffering of His patient heart. He will therefore bear with His servant, condescend still more, and give even miraculous signs to strengthen him in his weakness, and to dispel his unbelief. "And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And He said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: that they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee." (Ex. 4: 2-5.) Two more signs are even added. His hand, on putting it into his bosom and taking it out, became "leprous as snow;" and on repeating the act "it was turned again as his other flesh." (vv. 6, 7.) Then, in case they should not hearken to the first, or to the second sign, a third was added. He was to take water out of the river, and pour it upon the dry ground, and it should become blood upon the dry land. (v. 9.) These signs are significant, and especially so, it should be observed, in relation to the matter in hand. A rod in Scripture is the symbol of authority — power. Cast down, it became a serpent. A serpent is the well-known emblem of Satan; and hence it was power become Satanic, and this was exactly what was seen in Egypt in the oppression of the children of Israel. But Moses puts forth his hand, at the word of the Lord, and takes the serpent by the tail, and again it becomes a rod. The power that had thus become Satanic, resumed by God, becomes a rod of chastening or judgment. Hence this rod, in the hands of Moses, becomes henceforward the rod of God's authority and judicial power. Leprosy is a figure of sin in its defilement, sin in the flesh breaking out and defiling, with its pollutions, the whole man. The second sign therefore presents us with sin and its healing, effected, as we know, only by the death of Christ. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from

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that the word has been wrongly translated. There is no idea of "borrowing" in it. It means simply "to ask." The context shows that owing to God's manifest interposition the children of Israel would be in "favour in the sight of the Egyptians;" and being made to feel that they had suffered wrong at their hands, they gladly gave them whatever they desired — it may be as a kind of propitiation — with the full knowledge that they would see the Israelites no more. *What they gave was therefore an unconditional gift.*

all sin. Water represents that which refreshes — source of life and refreshment as coming from God; but, as poured out on the earth, become judgment and death. Armed with such signs, Moses might surely return and convince the most hardened doubter. Nay, he is not yet himself convinced; and hence he now replies,

"O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." (v. 10.)

This objection shows most conclusively that self was the beam in his eye that obstructed the vision of faith. For was it his eloquence or the Lord's power that would effect the emancipation of Israel? He speaks as if all depended upon the suasive words of human wisdom, as if his appeal was to be made by human art to the natural man. How common the mistake, even in the Church of God! Hence eloquence is that which even Christians desire — giving it a place beyond the power of God. The pulpits of Christendom are thus filled with men who are not of a slow tongue, and even the saints who in theory know the truth are beguiled and attracted by splendid gifts, and take pleasure in their exercise apart from the truth communicated. How different was the thought of Paul. "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God." And again, My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." (1 Cor. 2: 1, 4.) It is on this account that God often uses the "slow of speech" far more than those who are eloquent; for there is no temptation in such cases to lean upon the wisdom of men, all beholding that it is the power of God. It is this lesson — a lesson which contains at the same time a withering rebuke — that Jehovah now teaches Moses. "'Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.'" (vv. 11, 12.) The servant could not require more; but the danger lies in forgetting that the mode in which the Lord may employ us may not bring honour to ourselves. On the contrary, we may be regarded as the apostle was, as weak in bodily presence, and in speech contemptible (2 Cor. 10: 10); but what of this if we are made the vehicles of the power of God? The servant must learn to be nothing that the Lord alone may be exalted. But Moses evidently desired to be something, himself, and overwhelmed by the prospect, and, it may also be, borne down by the sense of his incompetency, notwithstanding all the grace and condescension of the Lord, he desires to be excused from so difficult a mission. He therefore says,

"O my Lord, send, I pray Thee, by the hand of whom Thou wilt send." (v. 13.)

That is, "Send any one, but not me." Five times did he thus raise objections to the Lord's commands, presuming upon His forbearance and long-suffering. But now "the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses; and He said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee; and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be,

even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God. And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs." (vv. 14-17.) Thus the halting of Moses was overcome, but not until the anger of the Lord was kindled against him on account of his unwillingness to obey His word; but he lost much. Aaron was henceforward to be associated with him, and indeed was to have the most prominent place before man; for he was to be the spokesman of his brother. In tender grace, however, the Lord reserves to His servant Moses the chief place before Him, giving him the honour and privilege of being the medium of communication between Himself and Aaron. Aaron was to be a "mouth" for Moses; Moses was to be to Aaron "instead of God;" i.e. he was to impart to Aaron the message to be delivered. The purposes of God cannot be frustrated; but we may suffer from our obstinacy and disobedience. It was so with Moses. How many times afterwards, during the forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, must he have bewailed the unbelief that led him to refuse the trust which the Lord desired to commit to his hands alone! Finally, the rod of authority is given to Moses — the rod wherewith he was to display the power of God in miraculous signs as an attestation of his mission. This rod plays a most important part throughout the career of Moses, and it is most instructive to trace the occasions of its appearance and use. Here it becomes, as it were, the seal of his mission, as well as the sign of his office; for in very truth he was invested with the authority of God to lead His people out of the land of Egypt.

Moses now returns to seek the permission of Jethro to return into Egypt. God had prepared the way, and hence Jethro consents, saying to Moses, "Go in peace." (v. 18.) The Lord watches over His servant, notes the feelings of his heart, and even anticipates his fears by saying, "Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life." (Compare Matt. 2: 20.) "And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of God in his hand." (v. 19, 20.) Thereupon the Lord further instructs him, and even reveals to him the character of the final judgment through which He would compel Pharaoh to let His people go. Even more: He now teaches him the true relationship into which He had by grace taken Israel. For the first time is this revelation made: "Israel is My son, even My firstborn;" and it is this which decides the character of the stroke which should fall upon Egypt. "And I say unto thee, Let My son go, that he may serve Me: and if thou refuse to let him go, *behold, I will stay thy son, even thy firstborn.*" (vv. 22, 23; compare Num. 8: 14-18.)

One thing now only remains to qualify Moses for his mission. There must be faithfulness within the circle of his own responsibility before he can be made the channel of divine power. Obedience at home must precede the display of power to the world. This explains the following incident: "And it came to pass, by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. *So He let him go:* then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision." (vv. 24-26.) Moses had neglected, from what cause we know not — it may be through the influence of his wife — the circumcision of his child; and hence the Lord had a personal controversy with him, which must be settled before he could appear

before Pharaoh with divine authority. The Lord thus laid him low, dealt with him, brought his failure to remembrance that he might judge it, and return to the path of obedience. To borrow the language of another: "God was going to put honour on Moses; but there was a dishonour to Him in the house of Moses already. How came it that the sons of Moses were not circumcised? How came it that there lacked that which typifies the mortifying the flesh in those who were nearest to Moses? How came it that God's glory was forgotten in that which ought to have been prominent in a father's heart? It appears that the wife had something to do with the matter. . . . In fact she at last was obliged to do what she most hated, as she herself said in her son's case. But more than that, it endangered Moses; for God had the controversy with him, not with his wife. *Moses was the responsible person, and God held to His order.*" The words we have ventured to italicise convey a most important principle, and explain fully the ground of God's dealing with Moses. But he received grace to bow before His chastening hand; and most blessed is it where we are enabled to acknowledge with Paul, "We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead." (2 Cor. 1: 9.) The two parts of Moses' qualification, then, were divine authority and personal condition; and these two ought never to be disjoined. For all who would speak in the name of the Lord, or be employed by Him in any service whatever, it is of the utmost importance that they should remember this. Nothing can compensate for the lack of condition of soul. Herein lies in fact the secret of our feebleness in service. If our ways, or, as in the case of Moses, our houses, are unjudged, the Spirit of God is grieved, And as a consequence we are not used for blessing. It is not enough therefore to have the words of God in our mouth; but we must be walking with their power in our own souls, if we are to speak with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

All is now ready; and accordingly we have a beautiful scene at the end of the chapter — a scene which must have gladdened the heart of Moses, and, with the blessing of God, nerved him for the arduous path on which he had entered. First, however, the Lord sent Aaron "into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord who had sent him, and all the signs which He had commanded him." (vv. 27, 28.) The place of their meeting is most significant. It was in the mount of God (Ex. 3: 1), i.e. Horeb, that the Lord appeared to Moses; here now Aaron meets him; and it was in this same place that Moses afterwards received the two tables of stone, with the Ten Commandments written with the finger of God. Leaving this, however, now, it may be remarked — for it contains a most practical lesson — that it is ever most blessed when relatives can meet in the mount of God. Then, as with Moses and Aaron, the conversation will be upon "the words of the Lord," and the meeting will issue in blessing. If, on the other hand, we descend to a lower level, as is too often the case, our communications will be rather concerning ourselves and our own doings, and this will result neither in glory to God nor in profit to ourselves.

Remark, too, that it is from the mount of God they proceed on their mission. Blessed are those servants who go directly from the presence of God to their labours. Coming into Egypt, they "went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: and Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the

signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that He had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped." (vv. 29-31.) The word of the Lord was thus fulfilled. Moses had said, "They will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice." But the people did believe, according to the word of the Lord; and touched by His grace, as they heard how He had visited them, and looked upon their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped. True that afterwards, when their difficulties increased, they murmured in their unbelief; but this cannot diminish from the beauty of the picture before us, wherein we see the word of the Lord, in all its freshness and power, reaching the hearts of the elders, and bowing them in adoration in His presence.

## CHAPTER IV.

### FIRST MESSAGE TO PHARAOH.

EXODUS 5, 6.

THESE two chapters occupy a special place in the narrative. They are really of a prefatory nature, introductory to Jehovah's conflict with Pharaoh by judgments. They are at the same time most instructive as illustrating the ways of God. The message is delivered in grace, the opportunity for obedience is proffered — God waiting in patience and long-suffering before His hand is lifted up in judgment. It is even so with the world at the present time. Now is the time of God's forbearance and grace, during which the message of His mercy is proclaimed far and wide, and whosoever will may hear, believe, and be saved. But this day of grace is hastening on to its close, and the moment the Lord Jesus rises from His seat at the Father's right hand, the door will be shut, and judgments will begin to fall. In like manner these two chapters describe, so to speak, the day of grace for Pharaoh. But while the king of Egypt was a man, he was also, in the position he occupied, as already pointed out, a type of Satan as the god of this world. There is, therefore, further instruction to be gleaned from these chapters in this aspect, and it is this aspect indeed that occupies the prominent place. This will be seen as we proceed.

"And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go. And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God; lest He fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let (hinder) the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens." (vv. 1-5.)

The question, be it remembered, is that of the redemption of Israel; and hence it is one in which the people could have no part. God must act for them; and He it is consequently that enters into controversy with Pharaoh. Pharaoh, as the god of this world, Satan, holds the people in bondage. It is God's purpose to deliver them; the message therefore entrusted to Moses is for the ear of the Egyptian king. And what is the object of God in the emancipation of Israel? "That they may hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness." It is for His own joy, His own joy in the joy of His redeemed. It is for the satisfaction of His own heart. How marvellous that the joy of God is concerned in our salvation! The delivery of the message brings out the true character of Pharaoh. "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." He thus places himself in direct and complete antagonism with God. Solemn position! And this antagonism was never lessened, but went on until it ended in the overthrow and destruction of Pharaoh and his legions. A warning lesson, surely, for all who are unreconciled to God, as well as a revelation of the awful corruption of human

nature, which can thus impiously confront, and audaciously defy, the power of God. Nor was this the transient expression of an irritated mind. For, in reply to the continued appeal of Moses and Aaron, he charged them with interfering with the work of the people. The god of this world is the incarnation of selfishness, and must therefore hate God. This was exemplified at Philippi. The moment the preaching and action of the apostle interfered with the gains of the masters of the damsel who was possessed with the spirit of divination, it drew down upon him and his companion their bitterest enmity. So with Pharaoh. The prospect of losing the service of his slaves fills him with anger. The effect was that he increased the tasks of the people, laid upon them heavier burdens, in order to rivet more firmly than ever the fetters of their bondage. It is ever so. But spite of the power and subtlety of Satan, he always defeats himself. Indeed he has no foresight. He cannot see into the future any more than ourselves, and as a consequence he is continually overreaching himself. The people were idle (Pharaoh said), and "therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God." (v. 8.) He desired accordingly that increased work should drive all such thoughts out of their minds. Ah! Satan will compass land and sea to prevent even one of his poor slaves escaping from his service. Hence if a soul is convicted of sin, and begins to yearn after liberty and peace with God, to escape from Egypt and to be saved, Satan will surround that soul with a thousand snares, fascinations, and entanglements. He will seek, just as Pharaoh did with the children of Israel, by increased occupation, by decoying him into a whirl of excitement or activity, to expel all such desires from his mind. If one such should read these pages, let him beware of these subtleties of the evil one, and let him turn resolutely away from all these wiles which are but intended to lure him to destruction; yea, let him, in the consciousness of all his need, and all his helplessness, look away to Him who through death has abrogated the rights of him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, that He might deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Heb. 2: 14, 15.) Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, all such will be turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

The officers of Pharaoh were faithful, and mercilessly discharged their merciless duty. (vv. 10-14.) The iron of oppression entered into the souls of the children of Israel, and in the bitterness of their hearts they "cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants?" etc. (vv. 15-18.) But they cried in vain; for mercy is unknown to Satan, to him whose pleasure is found even in the sorrows of his servants. Disappointed in not finding relief at the hands of Pharaoh, they turned in their anger upon Moses and Aaron, and charged them with being the occasion of increasing the pressure of their servitude. "The Lord look upon you, and judge" (they said), "because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us." (v. 21.) How true this is also in individual experience. In the bitter exercises through which the awakened sinner often passes, when he is overwhelmed by the sense of his guilt, and is made at the same time to feel the heavier weight of Satan's hand, how often he is tempted to wish for the days when he was free from all such conflicts and sorrows, not seeing that they are the pathway to deliverance.

Even Moses bows for the moment before the storm. Yearning, as he doubtless did, for the welfare and redemption of his people, and stung by their reproaches, doubt springs

up before this new phase of Pharaoh's policy, and becoming impatient, he said, "Lord, wherefore hast Thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that Thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all." (vv. 22, 23.) Moses thus shared in the disappointment and impatience of the people. He had not yet learned to walk by faith and not by sight, nor to rest in the Lord and to wait patiently for Him. But yet even his failure arose from sympathy with the oppressed Israelites; and one of the first qualifications to help others is identification with their condition.

So far Moses had fellowship with the mind of the Lord; and He understood the thoughts of His servant's heart. He therefore commissions him anew, and again declares His purposes of grace and mercy, announcing His immutable fidelity to His covenant. Already He had accomplished two things; He had taught both Moses and the people the character of their oppressor, and the nature of their yoke. He had seemingly shut them up into Pharaoh's hand, and thereby produced in them a conviction of the hopelessness of their condition. This is uniformly His method. He never presents Himself as a Saviour until men know that they are guilty and undone. The Lord Jesus said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." As soon as men are willing to acknowledge themselves lost, then the Saviour stands before their souls. It is so here. The children of Israel are apparently in a worse case than before; they are despairing, and so is Moses. Thereon we have the blessed presentation and announcement of Exodus 6. The Lord therefore was but bringing His people through necessary discipline in Exodus 5. He does this for two reasons; to separate His people from the Egyptians, to produce between them an irreparable breach, and to pave the way for the display of His own power, that the children of Israel, indeed, might know that it was His hand alone that could bring them out of the land of Egypt. First, He declares that Pharaoh shall, under His hand, drive them out of his land. (v. 1.) Next, we have a revelation of great significance:

"And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am JEHOVAH: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by My name JEHOVAH was I not known to them." (vv. 2, 3.)

This by no means implies that the name Jehovah was not used before; on the contrary, it is often found. But He had never yet taken it in relationship with His servants. Now He formally adopts it as His name of relationship with Israel, and it is only with Israel that it is thus employed. Believers of this dispensation know Him as their God and Father; and hence it would betray ignorance of their true position and relationship, as well as a confusion of dispensations, for them to use the term Jehovah. It is a name reserved for Israel, and consequently it will again be employed when they are brought back to a knowledge of their relationship with God in the millennium. That Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New is another question, but a question of exceeding moment and importance. He was really Jehovah in the midst of Israel, and as such forgave their iniquities and healed their diseases (Ps. 103: 3); but He is never Jehovah for Christians. He has deigned to bring them into more intimate relationships; as indeed He revealed to Mary, and to His disciples through her, when He said, "Go to my

brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." (John 20: 17.)

Having now formally entered into relationship with the children of Israel, He recalls the covenant, with its terms, which He had established with their fathers (v. 4; compare Genesis 17: 7, 8); and then expressly states that it is in pursuance of His covenant (for He is faithful) that He has "heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage." (v. 5.) It is on this foundation that He will deliver; viz., on what He is for them as Jehovah in the covenant which He made with their fathers, and the message which He now sends is accordingly most complete and comprehensive. It embraces His whole purpose for the nation. It gives, first of all, the name He has taken, Jehovah — "I am Jehovah;" it declares redemption — they shall be emancipated and redeemed, they shall be brought into relationship with Himself, they shall be His people, and He will be their God; they shall know Him as their Redeemer, as the Lord their God, which brought them out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and they shall be brought into the land which He had sworn to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and they should possess it for an heritage. And everything is made to depend upon what He is, the whole concluding with the repetition of the announcement, "I am Jehovah." He is thus both the Yea and the Amen, the Alpha and Omega, of their redemption. Surely a message of exceeding beauty. As everything is founded upon, so everything is completed by, what He is in Himself. All that He is therefore guarantees the commencement, and also the accomplishment of the redemption of His people.

Moses carried and delivered the message he had received unto the children of Israel: "but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage." (v. 9.) Thus reduced to utter hopelessness, with their misery darkening all their souls, they are deaf to the gracious voice that proclaimed liberty and blessing. Moses is then sent again to Pharaoh to demand the liberty of the people; but disappointed at the fruitlessness of his mission to the Israelites, he replies, "Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips?" (v. 12.) There is therefore nothing but failure. Pharaoh had rejected the Lord's demand; the children of Israel, stupefied by their heavy yoke, will not hearken to the glad tidings of grace, and Moses is unwilling to proceed; for he recalls his old objection, showing that, while he knew something of his own natural incompetency, he had not yet learnt that his all-sufficiency was to be found in the Lord. It is ever a fatal mistake when we measure the difficulties of service by what we are. The question is what God is; and the difficulties that appear as mountains, looming through the mists of our unbelief, are nothing to Him but the occasion for the display of His omnipotent power.

The section ends, as far as appearances are concerned, with utter failure. But the Lord is not affected by human weakness or human resistance; His purposes, flowing from His own heart, and accomplished by His own power, are unchangeable. It is therefore exceedingly beautiful to note the action recorded in verse 10. "And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt." Unmoved by the deafness of His people, the failure of His servant, or the open antagonism of

Pharaoh, He calmly proceeds to effect the redemption of His people. It will be observed that from the thirteenth to the thirtieth verse is a parenthesis. It would seem to be introduced for two reasons. It constitutes, in the first place, a new point of departure. Exodus 5, and the first part of Exodus 6 are, as we explained, preliminary — a kind of preface. On the one hand, the period embraced in it is a kind of day of grace for Pharaoh, when looked at simply as a man; on the other, it brings to light the real character of the conflict on which Jehovah was about to enter, and reveals the exact position and condition of all the parties concerned — Pharaoh, the children of Israel, and Moses. At the same time, the foundations on which Jehovah was about to act for His people, are laid broad and deep in His own character and covenant. That period now passed, the Lord commences anew, and hence the repetition of the charge to Moses and Aaron, embracing the object and scope of their mission. This gives the opportunity, in the second place, for the introduction of the genealogy of the people to be redeemed. The point of interest for us lies in the parentage of Moses and Aaron. "And Amram took him Jochebed, his father's sister, to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses." (v. 20.) "These are that Aaron and Moses, to whom the Lord said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt, according to their armies. These are they which spake to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt: these are that Moses and Aaron." (vv. 26, 27.) Aaron was thus the elder brother, and it is interesting to notice that pious Amram and Jochebed were blessed in the preservation of both their children spite of the edict of the king. Aaron had in nature priority over Moses; but grace never follows the order of nature. It recognizes all the natural relationships which God has formed, and it can only bring sorrow if not dishonour where this truth is not tenaciously held; but as it is above, and outside nature altogether, it acts in its own sphere and according to its own laws. God therefore, acting according to His own sovereign rights, chose Moses, and not Aaron, though in consequence of the failure of Moses, and from tenderness to his weakness, He afterwards associated his brother with him in his work. But the divine order is, Moses and Aaron, while the natural order, as seen in the genealogy and in verse 26, is Aaron and Moses. The last three verses simply connect the narrative with verse 10. For the objection of Moses in verse 30 is evidently the same as that in verse 12. And yet there is reason for its repetition. In Ex. 3 and Ex. 4 Moses makes five difficulties in reply to the Lord; here in the sixth are two, making seven together. It was therefore the perfect exhibition of the weakness and unbelief of Moses. How it magnifies the grace and goodness of the Lord; for if in His presence man is revealed, it also brings to light what He is in all the perfection of His grace, love, mercy, and truth. Blessed be His name!

## CHAPTER V.

### JUDGMENTS UPON EGYPT.

EXODUS 7 - 11.

THESE chapters cannot be divided, as they form one continued narrative — a narrative of awful significance, containing, as it does, the record of the successive judgments which fell, with ever increasing severity, upon Egypt, until God thereby compelled Pharaoh to release the children of Israel from the iron bondage in which they had been held. We have therefore at the commencement a restatement of the mission of Moses and Aaron, of the purpose of Jehovah, and the manner in which He would effect, spite of the opposition of Pharaoh, the redemption of His people.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee; and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay My hand upon Egypt, and bring forth Mine armies, and My people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth Mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them. And Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded them, so did they." (Ex. 7: 1-6.)

The Lord thus communicated to His servants what He intended to do, and how it would be accomplished. He unrolled the scroll of the future before their eyes to prepare them for their task, and to strengthen their faith. In like manner He has revealed to us the course of this world's history, warned us of the impending judgments, with the certain destruction of the world, and all who belong to it, if they heed not the monitions of His word, and the invitations of His grace; and, at the same time, He cheers us also with the sure prospect of redemption by power out of it, when the Lord returns to receive His people unto Himself. He thus desired that Moses and Aaron, as He also desires for us, should have fellowship with His own purposes concerning both the world, the god of this world, and his poor, abject slaves. How it strengthens the heart and braces the soul to be filled with the thoughts of God! And what grace on His part to communicate them to us, that we may speak to others with authority and power!

Before we proceed to analyse these chapters there is one point — inasmuch as it often occasions difficulty to the believer, as well as draws forth the attacks of the enemy — that cannot be omitted. It lies in the words, "And I will harden Pharaoh's heart." (Ex. 7: 3.) The doubt that Satan would suggest in connection with this is, Where was the sin of Pharaoh if his heart was thus hardened? Or, How could God righteously destroy one whom He had hardened to resist Him? If the place in which these words occur had been carefully observed, the difficulty would have vanished. The fact is, the practice is so common of citing single verses of Scripture, apart from their context, that difficulties are

created which would be dissipated in a moment, if the context were carefully examined. *Be it then noted, that this is not said of Pharaoh until after he had contemptuously rejected the claims of Jehovah.* He had said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." (v. 2.) He rejected the word of the Lord, placed himself in open antagonism to Him and His people; and now his heart is judicially hardened. And God still acts upon the same principle. We thus read in 2 Thess. of some on whom He will send strong delusion that they should believe a lie. But wherefore? *Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.* (2 Thess. 2: 9-11.) Let the warning sink deep into the hearts of any unconverted ones whose eyes may fall upon these pages. There will be a time even for them, if they continue to refuse the gospel of God's grace, when it will be impossible for them to obtain salvation. God has fixed a limit even to His day of grace, even as He did for Pharaoh; and when that limit is overstepped there remains nothing but judgment. "Today," then, "if ye hear His voice, harden not your hearts." (Heb. 3: 15.)

There is yet a pause. Moses and Aaron go in unto Pharaoh and present their credentials — attested by a miraculous sign, the sign which the Lord had taught Moses at Horeb. "Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent." (Ex. 7: 10.) The wise men of Egypt, the magicians, did the same with their rods; but "Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods" (v. 12) — the Lord thus vindicating the mission of His servants. As, however, He had foretold, Pharaoh was not convinced; for "He hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said." (v. 13.) Now God Himself appears on the scene, and a succession of terrible judgments falls upon Pharaoh and his land — judgments which will be known while time shall last as "the plagues of Egypt." They are ten in number. First, the waters of the Nile are turned into blood (Ex. 7: 14-25) then follow the plagues of frogs (Ex. 8: 1-15), of lice (Ex. 8: 16-19), of the swarms of flies (Ex. 8: 20-32), of the murrain of the cattle (Ex. 9: 1-7), of boils (Ex. 9: 8-12), of thunder and hail (Ex. 9: 18-35), of the locusts (Ex. 10: 1-20), of darkness (Ex. 10: 21-29), and finally that of the death of the firstborn of man and beast. (Ex. 11, Ex. 12) The Psalmist recounts them more than once in graphic language when celebrating the mighty works of the Lord in song — describing "how He had wrought His signs in Egypt, and His wonders in the field of Zoan" (Ps. 78: 43; see also Psalm 105: 26-36).

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to give a detailed interpretation of these several plagues. Their general object is clear if we remember the character of the controversy which God had with Pharaoh. He dealt thus with Pharaoh as the oppressor of His people, as being in figure the god of this world; and hence His conflict was with Pharaoh and all that wherein Pharaoh trusted. We therefore read that He executed judgment upon the gods of Egypt. (Ex. 12: 12; Num. 33: 4.) It was consequently the brilliant display of God's victorious power in the stronghold of Satan; for if Satan rise in conflict with God, the issue can only end in his utter defeat. First, therefore, the waters of Egypt — specially that of the sacred Nile, source of life and refreshment to Egypt and its people, from the monarch to the humblest of his subjects — are turned into blood, the symbol of death and judgment. As a consequence, "the fish that were in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river: and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt." (Ex. 7: 21.) Thus the river in which they

boastfully gloried as an emblem of God, became an object of distaste and loathing. The plague of frogs followed. The frog was regarded with veneration by the Egyptians, being included by them among their sacred animals. Under the judicial hand of God these now "came up, and covered the land of Egypt." They were even to come into the house of Pharaoh, into his bedchamber, and upon his bed, and into the house of his servants, and upon his people, and into the ovens and kneading-troughs. (Ex. 8: 3-6.) The objects of their sacred admiration were thus turned into a pest — beheld with horror and detestation; and for the moment the heart of Pharaoh was so bowed under the affliction that he was constrained to sue for respite. (Ex. 8: 8.) The next blow was of a different kind — aimed more at the persons of the Egyptians. This was the plague of lice. Both ancient and modern historians testify to the scrupulous cleanliness of the Egyptians. Herodotus (2: 37) says that so scrupulous were the priests on this point that they used to shave the hair of their heads and bodies every third day, for fear of harbouring vermin while occupied in their sacred duties.<sup>3</sup> This stroke would therefore humble their pride and stain their glory, rendering *themselves* objects of dislike and disgust. The swarms of flies come next. (Ex. 8: 20-32.) It would seem to be impossible to fix with any precision an exact meaning to the word translated "flies," many contending that "beetles" are indicated. Be this as it may, the plague shows an increasing severity by the effect produced. It is also in connection with this that we find, for the first time, a formal division put between the children of Israel and the Egyptians. (Ex. 8: 22, 23.) The Lord in the next place dealt with the cattle — sending a grievous murrain, so that "all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one." (Ex. 9: 6.) Pharaoh verified for himself the destruction made (v. 7); but his heart was still hardened. This blow fell upon one of the sources of Egypt's wealth and prosperity. Bodily sufferings, both for man and beast, followed — arising from "a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt." (Ex. 9: 9.) The destruction of the growing crops of the field by hail and thunder formed the next plague; and this was succeeded by the locusts; and they "went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt." (Ex. 10: 14, 15.) This blow reached the sources of supply for bodily needs. The locusts gone, at the entreaty of the Egyptian king, and he still hardened, there was now "a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." (Ex. 10: 22, 23.) "In Egypt the sun was worshipped under the title of Rê or Ra: the name came conspicuously forward as the title of the kings, Pharaoh, or rather Phra, meaning 'the sun.'" <sup>4</sup> Not only therefore was the source of light and heat eclipsed for the Egyptians; but the god they worshipped was obscured — and his powerlessness demonstrated — a proof, had they but eyes to see, that a mightier than the sun, yea, the Creator of the sun, was dealing with them in judgment.

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<sup>3</sup> Cited from Dr. SMITH'S *Dictionary of the Bible*. See Article "Lice," and for other testimonies.

<sup>4</sup> WILKINSON'S *Ancient Egyptians* (iv. 287-289), cited from SMITH'S *Dictionary of the Bible* under article "Sun."

The death of the firstborn was the final blow. But comment upon this may be reserved until the twelfth chapter. Looking, however, at these plagues as a whole, one cannot fail to be struck with their correspondency with those that will be visited upon the world at a later day, during the sway of the antichrist. (See Revelation 16: 1-14.) Pharaoh indeed is no mean adumbration of this last antagonist of God and His Christ. But as God was glorified in His controversy with the one, so will He be in that with the other; for if Pharaoh rushed to his doom, and was whelmed in the waters of the Red Sea, he and all his host, the antichrist, rising to a still greater height of daring impiety, will, together with the "beast" whose false prophet he had been, be "cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." (Rev. 19: 20.) Well then might the Psalmist cry, "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little." (Psalm 2: 12.) It would be folly, indeed, to be deaf to the lessons which God's controversy with Pharaoh so loudly proclaims. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." (Rom. 8: 7.) Every unconverted one is therefore in open antagonism with God — an enemy of God. What grace on His part to send such repeated messages of grace, such fervent entreaties of love, beseeching, by the gospel, sinners to be reconciled to Him. He has given His only begotten Son to die, and on the foundation of the atonement which He has made for sin by His death, He can righteously save every one that believeth. But if His grace is refused, "how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2: 3.) What folly, then, on the sinner's part to rest for a single day in his unsaved condition, knowing not how soon he may be called to a doom as irrevocable as that which fell upon the Egyptian king.

It may be interesting now to trace for a little the opposition of the Egyptian magicians to the wonder-working power of Moses and Aaron in the presence of Pharaoh. The chief of these are mentioned by name in the New Testament. We read, "As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth." (2 Tim. 3: 8.) This reference is highly important as showing that a principle of Satan's acting is embodied in the conduct of the magicians. What, then, it may be asked, was its especial character? It was, in one word, *IMITATION*. Thus when Aaron cast down his rod, and it became a serpent, "they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents." (Exodus 7: 11, 12.) So also when the waters of Egypt were smitten with the rod of God, and they became blood, the magicians "did so with their enchantments." (Ex. 7: 22.) It was the same in the case of the frogs. (Ex. 8: 7.) Their action was thus an imitation of the action of Moses and Aaron. In Timothy also the men who are said to resist the truth, as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, are described as "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." (2 Tim. 3: 5.) This is one of Satan's most dangerous subtleties. If he can succeed in open opposition to the truth, he will not conceal himself; but if this door of antagonism is closed, he will transform himself into an angel of light. It was so in Paul's days; and it is especially the case at the present moment. Professing Christians would scarcely be led away by the open exhibition of Satanic power; but how many are seduced by it because outwardly it is an imitation of the divine. Take one of the grossest examples of this. If Roman Catholicism, with all its vile profanations of the truth, were not dressed up in the outward garb of Christianity, could it by any possibility deceive souls? But claiming to be able to dispense every blessing, which has been secured by the death of Christ, it seduces the

souls of men by thousands, and brings them under the complete dominion of its falsehoods and corruptions. It is therefore, as a system, one of Satan's most successful instrumentalities. But there are greater dangers. There is not a single operation of the Spirit of God, nor a single form of His working, that Satan does not imitate. His counterfeits are around us on every hand, within and without. But thanks be to God, He has provided us with sufficient safeguards, and with the means of the detection of every phase of his ensnaring arts. "These things," says John, "have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." (1 John 2: 26, 27.) The Spirit and the word of God are sufficient to preserve us from the most dangerous simulations of the truth that Satan may present to our souls.

More than this, if there is but the steadfast adherence to God and His truth, the workings of Satan will in due time be exposed. Three times did these instruments of his "withstand" Moses. But when the plague of lice was brought in, a question of producing life from the dust of the earth, the magicians were powerless, and compelled to confess that it was "the finger of God." (Ex. 8: 18, 19.) Life belongs to God; He only is its source; and hence here the efforts of Satan are baffled, and we read of no farther attempt on the part of his instruments to intercept the force of the divine signs. In the next chapter, indeed, we find that they "could not stand before Moses because of the boils." (Ex. 9: 11) They themselves have fallen under the punitive hand of God. We may therefore rest confidently, whatever the present seeming success of the evil one; for "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." (Rom. 16: 20.)

It will give a more complete view of this section if the effects of these judicial plagues on Pharaoh's mind are also noticed. A momentary impression was produced by the scourge of the frogs. "Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat the Lord, that He may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord." (Ex. 8: 8.) Moses responded to this request, and fixed the time for the entreaty, that, in the divine answer to it, Pharaoh might as certainly recognise the hand of the Lord as in the infliction of the judgment. It is beautiful to notice God's tender ways of grace, even with a hardened sinner. If there be but the slightest turning of heart to Him, although He knows that it is not real, there is readiness to hear — a striking testimony to the fact that He willeth not the sinner's death, that indeed He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3: 9.) The Lord thus heard, and "did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields." (Ex. 8: 13.) But what was the consequence? "When Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said." (v. 15.) What a picture of the evil heart of man! Bowed down under the hand of God, alarmed for the consequences, he cries for relief, and promises that if it be granted he will certainly conform himself to the divine commands. The relief is bestowed, and he straightway forgets both his fears and his vows. Many a sinner has thus been brought by sudden sickness down to the door of death, and he has cried aloud for mercy. God heard his

prayer, and restored him to health. But instead of devoting himself, as he thought and purposed, to the service of God, he returns to his former course of forgetfulness and sin. The fact is, in all such cases, the conscience has never been really awakened; there has been no sense of guilt before God, no acceptance of His testimony to man's lost and ruined condition, and consequently no recourse to His saving grace as revealed in Christ Jesus as the Saviour; and the vows that were made, were really made as a kind of propitiatory offering to obtain the removal of the hand of God. When relieved, therefore, since there has been no change, no conversion to God, the stream of their lives, diverted for a moment, naturally returns to its former channels. Oh, how many there are of whom this is true! how many of whom it may be said, when they saw that there was respite, they hardened their heart! If these words should meet the eyes of any such, let them sink deep into their hearts; if so be that, awakened to their true condition, they may, while the opportunity still lingers, confess before God that they are guilty, undone sinners, and look alone to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. "Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath" (as Pharaoh did), "against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." (Rom. 2: 4, 5.)

The fourth plague — that of the swarms of flies — seemed to produce a deeper impression. "Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land." This was a most subtle offer, and one that might easily have ensnared Moses and Aaron if they had not known the character and mind of God. Satan has no objection whatever to his servants being religious if they will still continue under his sway. They may profess to serve God as much and as loudly as they may, if they will but recognise his authority. If they will but fall down and worship him, as in the temptation presented to our blessed Lord in the wilderness (Matt. 4), he will grant them all the desires of their heart. If they will but remain of the world, the world and its (rod will love their own. Hence Satan will continually advise — "Serve me *and* God. Sacrifice to your God, but remain in the land." One word of Scripture will unravel all such specious reasonings: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matt. 6: 24.) Moses, who has true discernment, because he has the mind of God, perceives this, and accordingly replies, "It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God: lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God, as He shall command us." (Ex. 8: 26, 27.) Moses was not deceived; he knew that Christ was, and must be, an object of contempt to the Egyptians "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (1 Cor. 1: 23) and that there must be irreconcilable antagonism between them and His people. "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." (John 15: 20.) Egypt therefore could not be a place for the people of God. Moses thus adds two things: First, they must go three days' journey into the wilderness. The number three is significant in this connection — three days' journey being the distance of death. (Compare Num. 10: 33.) They must moreover sacrifice to the Lord their God, as He should command them. Here are truly grand and fundamental principles. Nothing but

death — death with Christ — can separate us from Egypt. Hence Paul says, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world" (Egypt) "is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Egypt). (Gal. 6: 14.) No outward change or reformation will bring us out of the house of bondage — nothing but the cross — the death of Christ, made ours through faith in His name. Secondly, there must be obedience to the Lord. No other authority must for one moment be allowed or accepted. Obedience is the first duty, and covers the whole ground of the responsibility of the Christian. Hence indeed the necessity of a total break with, separation (by death) from, the world. Had Moses consented to remain in Egypt, he would have acknowledged Pharaoh's government, and this would have been inconsistent with Jehovah's complete and absolute claims. These two principles — separation from the world, and obedience to Christ — should be engraven upon the hearts of the Lord's people. For they are the basis of their true position and responsibility. Everything indeed flows from these two sources. One thing more may be learned from these words of Moses. No service, or so-called service, can be acceptable to God unless according to His word. Worship and service must be governed by the Lord's own mind. It is therefore not what we deem good and pious, not what we may term worship or good works, but what He considers such. The word of God is consequently the test of everything, and must have the supreme place in the heart and conscience of the Christian, and regulate his whole life. All the corruptions of Christendom, all the failure and ruin of the church, are to be traced back to the neglect of this vital principle. The word of God is the only lamp to our feet, and light to our path. (Ps. 119: 105.) The moment a single human regulation is accepted, whether by the individual or the church, declension and corruption ensue; for another authority is conjoined with that of Christ. It is, as a consequence, our responsibility to test everything around by the word of God. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." (Rev. 2: 11, etc.)

Pharaoh does not openly reject the demand of Moses; he temporizes, dissembles, to obtain the removal of the stroke. His cry is, "Entreat for me." (Ex. 8: 28.) Moses assents, but adds the solemn warning, showing that he saw through the king's flimsy veil of hypocrisy, "Let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord." (v. 29.) But the trouble gone, the usual record is made, "And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go." (v. 32.) Thereon followed another judgment; but Pharaoh was impervious to the stroke. At least there was no outward sign of any relenting. This led to a most solemn and, we may say, awful message as a preface to the next infliction — the plague of thunder and hail. (Ex. 9: 13-19.) The king staggered under the blow, and again besought relief. He even confessed that he had sinned, and that the Lord was righteous, etc., and once more promised that he would let the people go, provided there might be no more mighty thunderings and hail. (Ex. 9: 27, 28.) The iniquity of Pharaoh is thus brought to light. He sees and avows his guilt, and yet persists in his evil course — his open antagonism to the Lord. For, spite of his confession, no sooner had the Lord answered the entreaty of Moses than he reverted to his hardened ways. But again and again are we reminded that this was no surprise to God. All this happened "as the Lord had spoken by Moses." (v. 35.) He saw the end from the beginning; but He removed His hand at the intercession of Moses on behalf of the Egyptian king. God is never impatient even in the presence of open rebellion. He waits

His own time — bearing with the wickedness and impiety of men in long-suffering and grace. If He is thus forbearing, we surely might learn to be so also — turning our eyes to Him, confident that in His own time He will vindicate His righteous government before the eyes of the world. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." (Ps. 37: 7.)

A new action took place in connection with the threat of the locusts. The servants of Pharaoh, alarmed at the prospect, now interfered. They said unto him, "How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?" (Ex. 10: 7.) At their instance "Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the Lord your God: but who are they that shall go (v. 8.) This reveals once again the wretched heart of this most wretched king. If compelled, he will relax his grasp, but even then he will retain all that he can. He clings tenaciously to what he possessed, and so tenaciously that he will bargain, if possible, with Moses concerning those who should depart. But "Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go: for we must hold a feast unto the Lord. And he said unto them, Let the Lord be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you. Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve the Lord; for that ye did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence." (vv. 9-11.) This was surely a cunning wile of Satan — professing willingness to let the men go if they would but leave their little ones behind in Egypt. Thereby he would have falsified the testimony of the Lord's redeemed ones, and retained a most powerful hold upon them through their natural affections. For how could they have done with Egypt as long as their children were there? Satan knew this, and hence the character of this temptation. And how many Christians there are who are entangled in the snare! Professing, to be the Lord's, to have left Egypt, they allow their families to remain still behind. As another has said, "Parents in the wilderness, and their children in Egypt. Terrible anomaly. This would only have been a half deliverance; at once useless to Israel, and dishonouring to Israel's God. This could not be. If the children remained in Egypt, the parents could not possibly be said to have left it, inasmuch as their children were part of themselves. The most that could be said in such a case was, that in part they were serving Jehovah, and in part Pharaoh. But Jehovah could have no part with Pharaoh. He should either have all or nothing. This is a weighty principle for Christian parents. . . . It is our happy privilege to count on God for our children, and to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6: 4.) These admirable and weighty words should be deeply pondered in the presence of God. For nowhere does our testimony so manifestly break down as in our families. Godly parents, whose walk is blameless, are seduced into permitting their children practices which they would not for one moment allow for themselves, and thus to flood their houses with the sights and sounds of Egypt. This all springs from not recognizing, as Moses did, that the children, together with their parents, belong to God, and form His people on the earth; that therefore it would be a denial of this blessed truth to leave them in the place out of which they themselves, by the grace of God, through the death and resurrection of Christ, have been delivered. It cannot therefore be too strongly urged, that the parent's responsibility covers the whole family; that he is bound before God to hold his children as belonging to the Lord, or otherwise he can never train them up in the way

they should go, counting upon Him to show that they are manifestly His by the work of His grace and Spirit.

Pharaoh was angered by these demands, and Moses, together with Aaron, is driven from the king's presence. The locusts are thereon called for by the power of God, and "they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened." (v. 15.) Under the pressure of this grievous stroke, Pharaoh once again summoned Moses and Aaron into his presence, confessed his sin against the Lord their God, and against them — besought forgiveness, and asked that they would entreat the Lord their God "that He may take away from me this death only." (vv. 16, 17.) The Lord heard the intercession of Moses, and the locusts were removed, and cast into the Red Sea; "there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt." (v. 19.)

Forgetting immediately his terror and his word, darkness was brought over the land of Egypt for three days. (vv. 22, 23.) Once again "Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the Lord. only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you. And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt-offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God. Our cattle also shall go with us; *there shall not an hoof be left behind*: for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; and we know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come thither." (vv. 24-26.)

The question was one of leaving Egypt to serve the Lord. He therefore not only claimed the people as His, but also all their possessions. On this account Moses repudiated Pharaoh's title to anything. To have done otherwise would at once have been the acknowledgement of his authority. Pharaoh was indeed the enemy of the people of God, holding them in captivity in opposition to His will. As such he is treated by Moses in the rejection of his claims. Besides, they were going forth to sacrifice to the Lord their God, and until delivered from Egypt they knew not with what they must serve the Lord. Pharaoh's stipulation therefore could not for a single moment be allowed. There lies in the words of Moses a principle of the first importance — that God claims all that we have as well as ourselves. Everything must on this account be held at His disposal. He gives, and He demands from us. This was beautifully exemplified in the case of David when providing materials for the temple. "Of Thine own have we given Thee." (1 Chr. 29: 14.) We must not, as the people of God, take from the world, even as Abraham refused to be made rich by the king of Sodom (Gen. 14: 22, 23); neither must we own the world's claims upon what the Lord has given us. Not a hoof must be left behind, or it might be that very hoof the Lord would demand for sacrifice. It is also striking to observe that, according to the words of Moses, the Lord's mind could not be learned in Egypt. They must be redeemed out of it, and be separated, through death and resurrection, unto God before they could be instructed as to the nature of His service. Though Pharaoh thus opposes every demand upon him concerning the Lord's people, we see that he temporizes with his subtleties; for Jehovah's hand is lifted up in judgment, and is falling in its successive strokes upon Pharaoh and his land, so that he would fain escape their power. Now, however, he is roused to a higher pitch of stubbornness, rushing headlong to his doom, spite of grace, warning, and judgment. "The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to

thyself, see my face no more: for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die. And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more." (vv. 27-29.)

The Lord thereon proceeds to instruct Moses preparatory to their march out of Egypt.

"Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether. Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow" (i.e. "ask;" see note on page 25) "of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold. And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people." (Ex. 11: 1-3.)

Everything was thus prepared; and Moses accordingly delivers his final message — a message full of solemnity and dignity, suited indeed to the majesty of Him whose messenger he was. The contents of the message will be considered in the next chapter. Moses having ended his mission, "went out from Pharaoh in a great anger (11: S.) He was now in full communion with the mind of God, filled as he was with a holy indignation against Pharaoh's sin. (Compare Mark 3: 5.) All his timidity has vanished, and he stands before the king calm and fearless, consciously invested with the authority of Jehovah. But as the Lord had foretold, and now repeats, Pharaoh would not yield. "Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you; that My wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt. And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land." (vv. 9, 10.)

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE PASSOVER LAMB.

#### EXODUS 12.

Two things contained in the eleventh chapter may be recalled. First, the announcement of the judgment upon the firstborn; and, secondly, the difference made "between the Egyptians and Israel." (11: 4-7.) It is in the passover lamb that the reconciliation of these two things lies. For God now raises the question of sin, and thus necessarily presents Himself in the character of Judge. But the moment He does this, both the Egyptians and the Israelites alike are obnoxious to His judgment, inasmuch as both are sinners in His sight. True it was His purpose to redeem Israel out of Egypt, and it is also quite true that in the exercise of His own sovereign rights He can make a difference between the one and the other. But God can never cease to be God, and all His actions must be the expression of what He is in some aspect or character; and hence if He spare Israel — they being equally guilty with the Egyptians, both alike being sinners — while He destroys Egypt, He can only do so in harmony with His own nature. In other words, His righteousness must be as much displayed in the salvation of the one as the destruction of the other. And it is of immense moment to perceive that grace itself can only reign through righteousness. (Rom. 5: 21.) Now this is the very problem solved in this chapter — how God could righteously spare Israel when He destroyed the firstborn of Egypt. He appears to both alike as a Judge; and it will be seen that the only ground of the difference made, lay not in any moral superiority of Israel over Egypt, **BUT WHOLLY AND SOLELY IN THE BLOOD OF THE PASCHAL LAMB.** It was grace that made the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; it was grace too that provided the lamb; but the blood of that lamb — type as it was of the Lamb of God, Christ our Passover (1 Cor. 5: 7) — met every claim which God had upon Israel because of their sins, and hence He could righteously shelter them while the destroyer was carrying death into every household of the Egyptians. It was in the blood of the Lamb that mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other. This will be fully seen as we pursue the details of the chapter.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." (vv. 1, 2.)

Before God time counts for nothing as long as the sinner is in his sins. Until we are sheltered under the blood of Christ we have not begun to live in His sight. We may have lived thirty, forty, or fifty years; but if we have not been born again it is all waste time. Waste time? Waste as far as God is concerned; but, oh, how pregnant with results for eternity, should we continue in that condition! Every day of that period has added to our guilt, to the number of our sins, all of which are recorded in the book that will be opened at the judgment of the great white throne, should we pass into eternity unsaved. What a verdict upon the world's strivings and activities, upon the hopes and ambitions of men! They tell us of the nobility of life, speak of deeds of glory and fame, and seek to inspire

our youth with the desire to emulate the deeds of those whose names are enrolled in the historic page. God speaks, and by one word dispels the illusion, proclaiming that not yet have such begun to live. Without life towards Him, however great such may loom in the eyes of men, they are dead, their true history has not yet commenced. So with the Israelites. They have been hitherto the servants of Pharaoh, slaves of Satan; they have not yet commenced to serve the Lord, and hence the month of their redemption was to be the first month of the year to them. From this point their true life's history began.

"Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: and if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls: every man, according to his eating, shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year; ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: and ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts, and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his Legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.

"And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the LORD'S passover. For I will pass through flip, land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread. even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever.

"In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one-and-twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he

be a stranger, or born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread." (vv. 3-20.)

In the midst of judgment God remembers mercy. If He will smite the Egyptians, and if He cannot (cannot consistently with the attributes of His character) spare Israel, unless His claims upon them are fully and adequately met, He will Himself, acting from His own heart, in the exercise of His sovereign rights, according to the riches of His grace, provide the lamb whose blood should form the foundation on which He could righteously exempt His people from the stroke, and bring them out of the house of their bondage. Observe it well, that in the matter of our salvation, as in the redemption of Israel, the question is not what we are, but what God is. It is grounded therefore upon the immutable basis of His own character; and hence as soon as atonement has been made (as will be seen in the progress of this history) all that God is, is pledged for our security.

There are several features in this Scripture demanding distinct and separate notice. First, the lamb. As already pointed out, the whole value of this passover lamb springs from its being a type of Christ. Paul thus says, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast." (1 Cor. 5: 7, 8.) We are warranted therefore, on divine authority, in seeing the Lamb of God under the shadow of this interesting type; and it is on this account that every detail of this chapter becomes invested with such exceeding interest. On the tenth day of the month the lamb was to be taken — a male of the first year, and without blemish — and it was to be kept up until the fourteenth day of the same month. This has generally been thought to correspond with the setting apart of the lamb in the counsels of God; i.e. on the tenth day, and the actual sacrifice in time on the fourteenth day. But another suggestion has been made, which is given and commended to the judgment of the reader. The tenth day, according to this, will correspond with the entrance of Christ upon His public ministry, when He was marked out by John the Baptist, in a most striking way, as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1: 29.) Then if the Lord's ministry embraced the term of three years, made up of two whole years and parts of two more, this would, according to Jewish reckoning, be four years, and the time of His death would therefore correspond with the fourteenth day. But why, it may be asked, is the number ten taken for the setting of the lamb apart? Because it is the number of responsibility Godward, and it thereby teaches that ere our blessed Lord was publicly owned as the Lamb of God, He had met every responsibility before God, and was thus proved to be without blemish, qualified by what He was in Himself, to be the sacrifice for sin. He was God's Lamb, and it is full of blessed consolation that the lamb was of God's providing Man could have never known what sacrifice would have been acceptable. Israel would have remained in bondage until this day, had it been left to them to devise a means of satisfying the claims of God on account of their sins. Hence God in His mercy and grace furnished a lamb whose blood would suffice to take away the sin of the world. There can never be therefore any other method of cleansing from sin, any other means of shelter from the just judgment of God: the blood of Christ, inasmuch as it is provided by God, is exclusive of all other methods.

The lamb was to be killed on the fourteenth day of the month. "The whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening." (v. 6.) All must be identified

with the slain lamb. It was for the whole assembly it was to be killed. As a matter of fact every household had its lamb, for every family must be specifically under its shelter; on the other hand, "the assembly of the congregation" is looked upon as a whole. These two unities were ever preserved in the Jewish economy — that of the assembly, and that of the household. That of the family runs throughout the patriarchal age; and now that God is calling a people out of Egypt for Himself, while He establishes the unity of the whole, that of the household is still preserved. They are combined in the ordinance of the passover — the families apart, and the congregation as a whole.

In the next place the sprinkling of the blood is enjoined. The slain lamb would not have ensured the protection of a single household. Had the people rested in the fact that the lamb was killed, the destroyer would have found no bar to his entrance into their houses. There would not have been a house in all their tribes without its dead, equally with those of the Egyptians. No; it was not the death of the lamb, but the sprinkling of the blood, that secured their safety. (vv. 7, 13, 23.) Let the reader ponder it well. Is there no danger of his resting in *the fact* of Christ's death for protection — without a moment's concern whether he is under its blessed efficacy and value before God? The death of Christ will not save a single soul (we do not speak of infants) apart from faith in Himself. It is quite true that He has made a propitiation for sin — a propitiation which has glorified God in every attribute of His character, on the ground of which He can righteously, and with glory to Himself, bestow a full, complete, and an everlasting salvation upon every sinner that approaches Him through faith in its value. For God hath set forth Christ "a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, at this time, His righteousness: that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. 3: 25, 26.) But there must be the personal identification with the shed blood through faith or it will have been, as far as such an one is concerned, shed in vain. How then, let it be inquired, did the Israelites come under its protection and value? *It was simply and solely through the obedience of faith.* They were enjoined to "take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts, and on the upper door-post of the houses," to "take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning." (vv. 7, 22.) They thus had nothing whatever to do excepting to believe and obey. It was not theirs to discuss the method provided, its reasonableness or otherwise, or its probable value. Everything depended upon the heed they gave to the word of God. So now God requires nothing from the sinner but faith — faith in His testimony to his own condition and guilt which expose him to judgment, and faith in the provision made for his need through the death of Christ. If an Israelite, from any pretext whatever, had disregarded the divine command, he could not have escaped the destroyer's stroke. In like manner if a sinner now refuses, on any plea, to bow to God's word respecting his condition, and also concerning Christ, nothing can avert the stroke of eternal judgment. But the moment the Israelite, in simple obedience, sprinkled the blood upon his dwelling, he was inviolably secure through that night of terror and death. The moment, too, a sinner believes in Christ, he is everlastingly safe, for he is protected by all the unspeakable value of His precious blood. Then he may sing with exulting confidence -

"Though the restless foe accuses,  
Sins recounting like a flood;  
Every charge our God refuses;  
Christ hath answered with His blood."

Remark, also, to emphasize this truth still more, that the safety of the people depended in no degree whatever upon their own moral state, nor upon their own thoughts feelings, or experiences. The sole question was, whether the blood was or not sprinkled as directed. If it were, they were safe; if it were not, they were exposed to the judgment then passing through the land of Egypt. They might have been timid, fearful, and despondent; they might have spent the whole night in questionings; but still, if the blood was upon their dwellings, they were effectually shielded from the destroyer's stroke. It was the value of the blood, and that alone, which afforded them protection. Again, if they had been the best people in the world, as men speak, they would have perished equally with the vilest of the Egyptians, if without the sprinkled blood. The foundation of their safety, be it repeated, lay alone in the blood of the Passover lamb. It is the same now with every one in this land. Very soon judgments, far transcending those of Egypt, will descend upon this world, and these will be but the precursors of the last judgment of all before the great white throne, the certain issue of which is the second death (Rev. 20), and no one will escape these unless sheltered by the blood of Christ. Can the reader, then, wonder if the question is pressed upon him with earnestness, nay, even with affectionate vehemence, Art thou safe through the blood of Christ? Give thyself no rest day or night until this question is settled, until thou knowest, on the foundation of God's immutable word, that thou art as safe as the Israelites were in their sprinkled dwellings on this dark and terrible night.

It should be remarked, moreover, that the sprinkled blood was for the eye of God. As another has observed, "It is not said, When *you* see it, but, When *I* see it. The soul of an awakened person often rests, not on its own righteousness, but on the way in which it sees the blood. Now, precious as it is to have the heart deeply impressed with it, this is not the ground of peace. Peace is founded on God's seeing it. He cannot fail to estimate it at its full and perfect value as putting away sin. It is He that abhors and has been offended by sin: He sees the value of the blood as putting it away. It may be said, But must I not have faith in its value? This is faith in its value, seeing that God looks at it as putting away sin; your value for it looks at it as a question of the measure of your feelings. Faith looks at God's thoughts." It would save anxious ones from many weary days and nights of perplexity and anguish if this point were remembered. There is nothing beyond accepting God's own testimony as to the value of the blood. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." All that God is, is against sin, and consequently all that He is, is satisfied with the blood of Christ, or He must still punish sin. His declaration, therefore, that He will spare when He sees the blood, is a distinct testimony to the fact that it has made a full and perfect expiation for sin. If, then, He is satisfied with the blood of Christ, cannot the sinner be also satisfied? And remember that the sinner's unworthiness cannot be pleaded as a bar to its efficacy. If it might, then the blood alone were not sufficient. The moment

God's eye rests upon the blood, His whole moral nature is satisfied; and He as righteously spares those who are under its protection and value, as He smites the Egyptians.

The question, however, may be preferred, In what way can we now be brought under the efficacy of the blood of Christ? The Israelites were brought under the shelter of the blood of the passover lamb through faith. They received the message, believed its import, sprinkled the blood according to the directions given, and were thus secured against the judgment-stroke. It is simpler now. The glad tidings of redemption through the blood of Christ are proclaimed, the message is received; and immediately it is received, the eye of God beholds the soul under all its efficacy and value. Every one, therefore, who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ is delivered from the wrath to come. Peace with God is thus founded upon the blood of Christ. For "the blood signified the moral judgment of God, and the full and entire satisfaction of all that was in His being. God, such as He was, in His justice, His holiness, and His truth, could not touch those who were sheltered by that blood. Was there sin? His love towards His people had found the means of satisfying the requirements of His justice; and at the sight of that blood, which answered everything that was perfect in His being, He passed over it consistently with His justice, and even His truth." Peace with God, therefore, we repeat, is based upon the blood of Christ.

There is yet another thing. The passover lamb, whose blood had been sprinkled upon the dwellings of Israel, was to be eaten, and eaten in a special manner with its accompaniments, and in a prescribed attitude. Each of these points has its own interest and instruction. "They shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire." It must not be eaten "raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof." (v. 9.) Fire is a symbol of the holiness of God applied in judgment; and hence the lamb on which they fed told, in figure, that Another had borne the fire of judgment, passed through it, on their behalf. "Roast with fire" speaks thus of Christ who bore our sins in His own body on the tree, and was made sin for us, when He was exposed to the full, unsparing, and searching action of fire — God's judgment against sin. If therefore He spared His people, it was only on the ground of Another bearing what was their righteous due. What love then was expressed in delivering up His Son to such a death! Well might the Spirit of God say, He *spared not* His own Son, when He devoted Him to receive the stroke of the sinner's judgment.

"To us, our God His love commends,  
When by our sins undone;  
That He might spare His enemies,  
He would not spare His Son."

And how gratefully must the children of Israel have fed upon this lamb roast with fire. If their eyes were opened they would surely say, "The blood of this victim is screening us from the awful judgment which is falling upon the Egyptians; the flesh we are eating has passed through the fire, to which we otherwise must have been exposed." And the thought, as they expressed it, could not fail to move their hearts to thanksgiving and praise to Him who had in His grace provided such a mode of escape and safety.

Two things were to accompany the eating of the lamb — unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Leaven is a type of evil, and hence the unleavened bread speaks, as on the one hand of the absence of evil, so on the other of purity and holiness. The apostle Paul speaks of the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. This may be entered into more fully when we speak more at large of the feast of unleavened bread associated with the passover. (vv. 14-20.) It will suffice now to have marked its character. "Bitter herbs" represent the effect of entering into the sufferings of Christ in our behalf; repentance, self-judgment in the presence of God. These two things therefore portray the state of soul in which alone we can truly feed upon the lamb roast with fire. And it is beautiful to notice, how that the One who has borne the righteous judgment of God against their sins now becomes the food of His people. Remark, too, that nothing was to be left until the morning. Should there be any remaining it was to be burnt with fire. (v. 10.) The same direction was given afterwards for most of the sacrifices that were to be eaten. (See Leviticus 7: 15.) This was a provision undoubtedly against the danger of its being consumed as common food. It could only be eaten in association with the judgment through which it had passed. "The flesh" of Christ cannot be eaten except in the apprehension of His death. So here on the passover night, together with the morning, when the judgment had passed, they might forget the import of the lamb roast with fire; but the direction to burn what was left would recall its character, as well as prevent its degradation to common food. It was only around the passover table that they could properly feed upon the passover lamb.

Their attitude was to be in harmony with the position into which they had been brought. "And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the Lord's passover." (v. 11) All bespeaks the character to be assumed consequent upon their redemption — for they were about to leave Egypt for ever to march through the wilderness as pilgrims to their promised inheritance. Their loins were girded — in readiness for service, detached from the scene in which they had so long been held as captives, so that nothing might detain or impede them when the signal for the journey should be given; their shoes on their feet — prepared, shod for the march; their staff in their hand — the sign of their pilgrim character, for they were quitting what had been their home, to become strangers in the wilderness; and they were to eat the passover in haste — for they knew not at what moment the summons might be given, and hence they were to be ready — watching and ready. A true picture of the believer's attitude in this world. Would that we all more entirely answered to it! Again and again are we exhorted to have our loins girded; and to have our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace (Eph. 6) is necessary if we would have on the whole armour of God. To maintain indeed the pilgrim character belongs to one of the first lessons of our Christian life, seeing that this is not our rest; and to be in the attitude of waiting for Christ belongs to our expectation of His return. This is true, but it is another thing to ask if these things characterize believers now as they should. What we need is a deeper sense of the character of the scene through which we are passing — that it is a judged scene, that God has already judged it in the death of Christ. "Now," said He, "is the judgment, of this world." Having the sense of this in our souls, we shall have no temptation to linger in it; but as true pilgrims, with our loins

girded about, and our lights burning, we should ourselves be like unto men that wait for their Lord. (Luke 12: 35, 36.)

The feast of unleavened bread is appointed in connection with the passover. (vv. 14-20.) It was not kept in the land of Egypt, for on the same night that God smote the firstborn the children of Israel commenced their journey. But the connection is preserved to show its true typical significance. It is the same in 1 Cor. 5, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (vv. 7, 8.) Leaven, as before explained, is a type of evil — evil which spreads and assimilates the mass through which it spreads to its own character. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (1 Cor. 5: 6.) To eat unleavened bread therefore will signify separation from evil — practical holiness. Mark, too, that the feast was to last for seven days — i.e. a complete period of time. The lesson, then, in its interpretation is that holiness is incumbent upon all who are sheltered by the blood of the Paschal Lamb throughout the entire period of their lives on earth. This is the import of the connection of the feast with the passover. If we are saved by the grace of God through the sprinkled blood of Christ, our wretched hearts might reason — we might indulge in sin that grace may abound. "No!" says the Spirit of God, "but as soon as you are under the value of the death of Christ, you are under the responsibility to be separate from evil." God thus looks for an answer in us, in our walk and conversation, to what He is, and to what He has done for us. It was to enforce this truth that the Israelites were enjoined to keep this feast "by an ordinance for ever;" first, indeed, to remind them that God had on this self-same day brought their armies out of the land of Egypt, and then to teach them the obligations under which they were thereby brought to maintain a walk in accordance with their new position. And may we not add that believers of the present day need to have this obligation recalled to their minds? The one thing to be pressed upon the consciences of all now is the responsibility of keeping this feast of unleavened bread. Looseness of walk, evil associations, and worldliness, are ruining on all sides the testimony of God's people. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." (John 17: 16, 17.) May this prayer of our blessed Lord be more manifestly answered in the increasing separation and devotedness of His people!

From the 21st to the 28th verse the account is given of the assembling of the elders by Moses to receive the directions already considered. The people on hearing the message "bowed the head, and worshipped. And the children of Israel went away, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they." (vv. 27, 28.) One interesting particular is added. Provision is made to keep the children instructed as to the meaning of the passover (vv. 26, 27); and thus from generation to generation the account should be transmitted of the Lord's delivering grace and power when He smote the Egyptians.

The Lord having thus marked off His people in His grace, and secured their exemption from judgment through the sprinkled blood, proceeds to smite Egypt as He had declared.

"And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

"And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men. And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading-troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them [such things as they required]: and they spoiled the Egyptians." (vv. 29-36.)

The blow, so long threatened, but delayed in long-suffering and mercy, at length fell, and fell with crushing effect upon the whole land; for "the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle." The hearts of all were wrung with anguish under this sore and bitter stroke, darkening every home in the land, "and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead." Pharaoh's stubborn heart was reached, and for the moment bowed before the manifest judgment of God. He "rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians;" and sending for Moses and Aaron, bid them depart. He made no conditions now, but granted all they had claimed, and even sought a blessing at their hands. His people went further, and were urgent to send the children of Israel away; for they said, "We be all dead men." Hence, too, when asked they gave them anything and everything they desired, and thus, according to the word of the Lord, "they spoiled the Egyptians."

"And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot, that were men, beside children. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle. And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual.

"Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations. (vv. 37-42,)

God thus emancipated His people from the thralldom of Egypt; and they took the first stage of their journey from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. But, alas! they were not alone. They were accompanied by a "mixed multitude." This has been the bane of the people of God in every age; source of their weakness, failure, and at times of open apostacy. Paul warns the believers of his day of this special danger (1 Cor. 10); as also Peter (2 Peter 2) and Jude. The church at the present moment is likewise afflicted; nay, it would be hardly too much to say that the church in one aspect is composed of this "great mixture." Hence the importance of the apostle's words to Timothy, "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ" (*Lord*, it should be) "depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work." (2 Tim. 2: 19-21.) Their departure was in haste, for they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual. No! they were cast wholly on God. He had separated them off from the Egyptians, sheltered them by the blood of the Lamb, and now it was His care to lead them forth and to provide them food by the way. Leaven must not be brought out with them.

"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.  
Is the wilderness before thee,  
Desert lands where drought abides  
Heavenly springs shall there restore thee,  
Fresh from God's exhaustless tides."

For centuries God's eye had been upon this moment (see Genesis 15: 13, 14); and on the self-same day — the day He had before ordained — His people went forth. They have not as yet crossed the Red Sea; but in the statement that "all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt," the Spirit of God anticipates their full and perfect deliverance. The blood that sheltered was the foundation of their complete redemption. It is no wonder therefore that it is added that the night of their exodus was to be much observed unto the Lord, and indeed to be held in perpetual remembrance. It was to be observed, remark, unto the Lord, in order to bring continually before their minds the source of that delivering grace and power which had brought them out of Egypt. So now in another way. In the same night in which the Lord Jesus was betrayed He took bread and gave thanks, instituting for His people the precious memorial of His death; so that as often as we eat the bread, and drink the cup, we might show forth the Lord's death until He come. Throughout the whole of our pilgrimage He would have us to remember Him — to remember Him on that "dark, betrayal night," when, as our Passover, He was sacrificed for us.

The chapter concludes with "the ordinance of the passover," which contains mainly two things. First, as to the persons who might partake of it: "There shall no stranger eat thereof: but every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof." Again, "All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof." (vv. 43-45, 47, 48.) There were then three classes who might keep the passover. (1) The Israelites, (2) Their servants bought with money, and (3) The stranger sojourning with them. But the condition for all these alike was circumcision. None could have a place at the passover table unless they had been circumcised. Only thus could they be brought within the terms of the covenant which God had made with Abraham (see Gen. 17: 9-14), and on the ground of which He was now acting in bringing them out of Egypt, and taking them to Himself for a people. Circumcision is a type of death to the flesh, and has its antitype, as to the thing signified, in the death of Christ. Thus Paul writes to the Colossians, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." (Col. 2: 11, 12.) Unless therefore all these specified classes were brought on to the ground of the covenant, they could not enjoy the privilege of this most blessed feast — a feast which derived all its meaning from the blood-shedding of the Paschal Lamb. It is exceedingly interesting to notice the special provision made for two of these classes. The Israelites, as such, were entitled to the passover, if they were circumcised. But outside of these were two other classes. A hired servant might not, but a servant bought with money might, if circumcised, be at the feast. It should be remembered that this feast possessed essentially a household character. Hence a servant bought with money became, as it were, incorporated with the family, an integral part of the household, and on this account was included. But a hired servant had no such place or standing, and was consequently excluded. In the "stranger sojourning with thee," we may see a promise of grace to the Gentiles, when the middle wall of partition should be broken down, and the gospel be proclaimed to the whole world.

Then, lastly, there is a provision as to the lamb itself. In one house shall it be eaten: thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; *neither shall ye break a bone thereof.*" (v. 46.) Both the meaning of the type, and the unity of the household, or of Israel, if the whole congregation be considered, would have been lost if this injunction had been disregarded. The blood was upon the dwelling, and the passover lamb was only for those under the shelter of the blood — for no other, and thus it must not be carried forth out of the house. The sprinkled blood is an indispensable condition for feeding on the lamb roast with tire. Neither must a bone be broken, because it was a type of Christ. Hence John says, "These things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken." (John 19: 36.) It is clear therefore that Christ was before the mind of the Spirit in the paschal lamb; and very blessed is it for us as we read the narrative when we have fellowship with His own thoughts and discern

nothing but Christ. May He anoint our eyes ever more fully, that Christ alone may fill the vision of our souls as we read His words!

## CHAPTER 7.

### GOD'S CLAIMS.

#### EXODUS 13.

THE narrative of the exodus from Egypt is suspended to bring in certain consequences — responsible consequences for the children of Israel — consequences which flowed from their redemption out of the land of Egypt. For although they are still in the land, the teaching of the chapter is founded upon their having been brought out, and is indeed anticipative of their being in Canaan. If God acts in grace for His people, He thereby establishes claims upon them, and it is these claims that are here unfolded. A redeemed people become the property of the Redeemer. We thus read, "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price." (1 Cor. 6: 19, 20.) It is on the same principle that the Lord here speaks unto Moses, saying, "Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine." (v. 1.) But another thing is introduced in this connection. The feast of unleavened bread was enjoined in the last chapter immediately after the sprinkling of the blood. That was to show that the two things — shelter by the blood, and the obligation of a holy life — can never be separated. It is now given again, with instructions for its observance when the Lord should have brought them into the land of the Canaanites, (v. 5), in connection with the sanctification of the firstborn.

"And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage. for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. This day came ye out, in the month Abib.

"And it shall be, when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which He sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the Lord. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days: and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee; neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters. And thou shalt show thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes; that the Lord's law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the Lord brought thee out of Egypt. Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year.

"And it shall be, when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as He sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee, that thou shalt set apart unto the Lord all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the Lord's. And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem.

"And it shall be, when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage: and it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem. And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt." (vv. 3-16.)

Two or three remarks may be added upon the feast of unleavened bread to include the additional particulars here given. It was to be connected for ever with the remembrance of two things. First, with the day of their redemption. "Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage." (v. 3.) The Lord would ever have His people remember the day of their deliverance, the day in which they were brought out of darkness into light, out from under the judgment due to their sins into the perfect favour of God in Christ. Secondly, they were not to forget the source of their deliverance. "For by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place." (v. 3.) To Him alone had they been indebted. No other arm could have riven their fetters, smitten their oppressor, protected them from the destroyer, and given them deliverance. He alone could have ransomed them from the hand of the enemy. Thus the Lord Jesus read, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4: 18, 19) It is therefore exceedingly significant to find that, immediately upon these two things being recalled to their minds, it is added, "There shall no leavened bread be eaten." If the Lord acts for His people, it is to redeem them from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. (Titus 2: 14.) Since He is holy, He looks for holiness in His redeemed, and throughout the complete period (seven days) of their lives. No leaven must be seen in any of their quarters. Not only so; but upon every recurring festival the father was instructed to teach his son the significance of the feast. Responsible for his children, he must carefully explain to them why no leaven could be permitted. It would be inconsistent with the ground of redemption on which he stood. "This is done," he should say, "because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand," etc. (vv. 8, 9); and all this that the Lord's law might be in his mouth. Here is the secret, both of separation from evil and separation unto God. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy word." "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." (Psalm 119: 9, 11) It is thus that believers now can truly keep the feast of unleavened bread, by heeding and obeying the word of God.

Thereon follow the directions for the sanctification of the firstborn. Devotedness, consecration, must also mark the redeemed, and will be ever a fruit of true separation; and hence the feast of unleavened bread precedes the setting apart of the firstborn. First, we may notice the exception to this general law. "Every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all

the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem." (v. 13.) The conjunction of the firstling of an ass with the firstborn of man is most striking, and the more so that both alike were to be redeemed. There is also another thing. The firstling of the ass was to be redeemed with a lamb; the first-born of Israel were redeemed with a lamb on the passover night. Add, that the ass was to be destroyed if not redeemed, as the Israelites would surely have been when the Lord smote the Egyptians, and the parallel is complete. What then do we learn by it? That man, as he is born into the world, is classed with the firstling of an ass; that both alike are unclean, and as such doomed to destruction, unless redeemed with a lamb. Can anything be more humbling to the pride of the natural man? Boasting of what he is, and of his intellectual capacities, let him here behold the divine estimate of his condition. A more degrading comparison could not be made, and yet it is a comparison to which every believer readily sets his seal as divinely true. For that was our state by nature — lost and helpless — and we had surely perished if, in the riches of God's grace, we had not been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. On the other hand, how it magnifies the grace of God in condescending to such as we were, in meeting us when in that state, bringing us to Himself, and associating us for ever with the Lamb by whom we have been redeemed! If by nature we could not have fallen lower, by grace we could not have been raised higher; for He has predestinated us "to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren." (Rom. 8: 29.)

It is important to observe the ground on which God claimed the firstborn. It is expressly connected with the destruction of the firstborn in the land of Egypt. (v. 15.) As we have seen, Israel was spared on that dreadful night solely on the ground of the sprinkled blood of the slain lamb — on the ground of the death of another. It was therefore on the principle of substitution; and this in fact is the ground of God's claim in this chapter. If God spared the firstborn because of the Paschal Lamb, He thereafter claimed them as His own. It is so now. We belong to Him who has redeemed us, because He took our place, and bore our sins in His own body on the tree. He died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again (2 Cor. 5: 15.) It is well to ask ourselves frequently if we are recognizing His claim — His claim upon us, upon all that we are, and upon all that we have? This truth also the father was to impress upon his son (vv. 14-16); for thereby he would be taught the Lord's claims upon him equally with his father — that both alike, as redeemed ones, owed their service to the Redeemer. It is an immense point gained when the believer looks upon himself and his family as belonging to the Lord. Whether they are individually owning that claim is another matter, and it cannot be pressed too much *that there is no salvation apart from individual faith*; but it is of great moment that the head of the household should continually remember that he and all his are the Lord's. Only then will he be able, by God's blessing, to bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, to govern them for Him, and as in His sight; and it is only as the children perceive this truth that they will look upon parental rule as expressive of the authority of the Lord. Let believers, therefore, not weary in telling their children of the Lord's claims upon the ground of redemption.

The narrative is now resumed.

"And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt. But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt. And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him; for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you. And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people." (vv. 17-22.)

The first thing this part of our chapter brings before us is God choosing the way for His people through the wilderness. If He lead His people out into the wilderness, He will undertake for them in every respect; He will expect nothing from them but obedience to His word. Mark, moreover, the tenderness He displayed in choosing their path. He had respect to their weakness and timidity. He "led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt." Beautiful exhibition of His tender compassion — revealing to us how fully He enters into and feels for His people in all their feebleness and fears. True He had other purposes for them; but it is sweet beyond expression to notice that He determined the particular way by which He would lead them out of regard to their condition. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame. He remembereth that we are dust."<sup>5</sup> (Ps. 103: 13, 14)

After the statement of the manner of their march, mention is made of the bones of Joseph. This is most beautiful. Turning back to the deathbed of Joseph, we read that he "took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." (Gen. 50: 25.) In the epistle to the Hebrews God's estimate of this action is recorded. "By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones." (Heb. 11: 22.) In our chapter we find God's response to His servant's faith. There was surely enough to occupy the mind of Moses on this passover night — in arranging for the departure of so large a multitude. What leisure could he have had to care for the bones of Joseph? But Joseph had taken an oath of the children of Israel in dependence upon God. He believed, and therefore he spoke; and putting his trust in God it was impossible that he could be ashamed. To the natural eye there was little probability indeed — when Joseph was dying — of his people leaving Egypt. But this dying saint rested upon the sure word and promise of God, and therefore with confidence "gave commandment concerning his bones." Years had passed away — nearly four hundred (for the Israelites

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<sup>5</sup> Much discussion has been raised upon the statement that the children of Israel went up *harnessed* out of the land of Egypt (v. 18) — as if of necessity the word meant, armed as warriors. But this is a mistake. It does not seem to imply more than that they went in regular marching order, as would be necessary in conducting the movements of so large a host.

were in Egypt altogether four hundred and thirty years; (Ex. 12: 41) — and God did visit His people, and the oath was remembered, so that the bones of the patriarch accompanied them in their exodus. It is surely a noteworthy example of the faithfulness of God, as well as the preciousness in His sight of the faith of His servant.

The next verse (20th) records the names of their first camping places. "They took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness." They started from Rameses (Ex. 12: 37), then came to Succoth, etc., as here described. These places were all in Egypt, and although much learning and research have been expended upon the subject, their identification has scarcely reached the limits of conjectural probability. What is of more importance is to notice that they were divinely guided on their march. He who selected their path, guided them in it, went before them in the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, in all their wanderings. These gracious symbols of His presence He never took from them as long as they were in the wilderness. This is only an illustration of the truth, that the Lord is ever the guide of His people. He who leads them out of Egypt may ever be seen before them in the path on which they have entered. He never says, "Go;" but His word is always, "Follow me." He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. (1 Peter 2: 21.) He Himself is the Way, as well as the Truth and the Life. (John 14: 6.) It is quite true that we have not the visible guidance which the children of Israel enjoyed; but it is no less discernible and certain to the spiritual eye. The Word is a lamp to our feet and a light unto our path. (Ps. 119: 105.)

It is interesting to remark that there was no such guidance in Egypt or in the land. This brings out the important truth, that it is only in the wilderness that the indication of a way is needed. And there it is in His tenderness and mercy that the Lord takes the lead of His own — showing them the way in which they should walk — where they should rest, and when they should march, leaving nothing to them, but Himself undertaking all for them, only requiring that their eyes should be kept fixed on their Guide. Happy are the people who are thus led, and who are made willing to follow, who by grace are enabled to say

"Only Thou our Leader be,  
And we still will follow Thee."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### GOD AS THE DELIVERER OF HIS PEOPLE.

EXODUS xiv.

IN chapter 12 God appears as a Judge, because when once the question of sin was raised, the holiness of His nature necessitates that He should deal with it — and deal with it righteously. God therefore was there against His people on account of their sin, although means were found, in His gracious provision and according to His direction, to satisfy, through the blood of the Paschal Lamb, His righteous claims. But in this chapter, He who was against the people because of their sin, is now for them because of the blood. His righteousness, His truth, His majesty yea, all that He was, had been satisfied by the sprinkled blood. A propitiation<sup>6</sup> had been made on the ground of which He could undertake the cause of those who had been brought under its value. Consequently He appears here as a Saviour — a Deliverer. Historically there is an interval between these two characters. He was a Judge on the passover night, and a Deliverer at the Red Sea; and this is the order of apprehension in the case of the majority of awakened souls. When first convicted of sin, when it is really the work of the Spirit of God, God appears to the soul as a Judge because of guilt. But when there is peace of conscience through the apprehension by faith that the blood of Christ has met God's claims, and cleansed from guilt, then the soul perceives that God Himself is on its behalf, and sees the proof of it in His raising the Lord Jesus from the dead. These two stages are clearly marked in Romans 3 and 4. Thus in Romans 3 it is faith in the blood, believing in Jesus (vv. 25, 26); while in Romans 4 it is faith in God. (v. 24.) And there is no settled peace until this second stage is reached. But while these two things are separated historically in connection with the children of Israel, and generally in the experience of souls, it must not be forgotten that they are but two parts of one and the same work. The Red Sea, therefore, in this aspect, while it presents more striking effects in the display of God's power, on the one hand in the redemption of His people, and on the other, in the destruction of Pharaoh and his host, is but the consequence of the sprinkled blood on the passover night. *The blood was the foundation of all God's subsequent actings for Israel.* Hence, while it is quite true that redemption was not known until the Red Sea was crossed, the blood-shedding was a deeper work, because it was that which glorified God concerning the question of the people's sin, and enabled Him, in harmony with every attribute of His character, to work for their complete deliverance. It is only when this distinction between the two things, and, at the same time, their connection, are remembered, that this chapter can be understood. Bearing it in mind, the key to its interpretation will be possessed, and it will be seen that every action it records is in relation to the truth thus explained.

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<sup>6</sup> When we say, "a propitiation," it will be understood that we are speaking of the typical value of the blood. Propitiation proper was made by the blood sprinkled on the mercy-seat. (Compare Lev. 16: 14 and Rom. 3: 25.)

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them: and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord. And they did so." (vv. 1-4.)

The first thing which the Lord did was to shut up His people, as far as man was concerned, in a perfectly hopeless position. Encamped by the sea, and surrounded by the wilderness, He so placed them that if Pharaoh followed after them, as He purposed he should, that there would be positively no human way of escape. This was done to entice Pharaoh to his destruction, and to reduce the children of Israel to entire dependence upon Himself. Both things were accomplished; for the Egyptians were to know that He was the Lord, and the Israelites were to confess that He was their salvation. This will be brought before us in the narrative.

"And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: and he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand. But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baalzephon." (vv. 5-9)

What a revelation of the possibilities of the human heart is seen in the case of Pharaoh! Though the Lord had made bare His arm in successive judgments, and at length had extorted a cry of anguish from every household in the land of Egypt, we yet find the king and also his servants recovering from the blow which had for the moment overwhelmed them with sorrow, repenting of the release of Israel, and daring to follow after to bring them back to their former servitude. They thus pursued them, "all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon." This, as explained, had been arranged of the Lord. To Pharaoh and his people, it would appear utter folly to occupy such a position, and an evidence, it might be, that they were guided by human folly rather than divine wisdom. They march on therefore in full confidence of an easy victory. For what could rescue a nation of fugitives, encumbered with women and children, from their grasp? So also it appeared to the unbelieving children of Israel. They were sheltered by the blood, they were guided by the pillar of cloud, and they surely might have said, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" But sight was stronger than faith. The sea was before them, and Pharaoh and his mighty armies behind. To the natural eye escape was impossible, and captivity or death certain. This was the effect produced on their minds.

"And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness." (vv. 10-12.)

Unbelief marked every word they uttered, and because they were judging according to the sight of their eyes. They were sore afraid; they would die in the wilderness; they had known it would be so, and servitude in Egypt was far better than the death that now awaited them. The mistake they made was in leaving the Lord out of their calculations — as unbelief ever does — and thus making it a question between themselves and the Egyptians. Moses was sustained; his faith was unfaltering, and he could therefore encourage their hearts as well as rebuke their unbelief.

"And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." (vv. 13, 14.)

In truth a work was to be wrought that day in which the people could have no part. For there were two things from which they needed to be delivered — Satan's power as represented by Pharaoh and his host, and death and judgment which were shown in figure by the Red Sea. And these two are connected. For through man's sin Satan has acquired rights, and wields death as the just judgment of God. It is quite true that the children of Israel were already sheltered by the blood of the paschal lamb, and that they might therefore have rested in perfect peace. But they knew not the value of that blood. That it had saved them from the stroke of judgment, that their houses escaped when God smote the firstborn of Egypt they knew; but they had not yet learned, that this same blood had secured everything for them, deliverance from their foes, guidance through the wilderness, and even the possession of the promised inheritance. Hence the moment Pharaoh appears on the scene they "were sore afraid," and "cried out unto the Lord." The Lord met them in their weakness and doubt, and reminds them by this message which Moses delivered that the work was His, both to save them from the land of Egypt's king, and from the waves of the Red Sea. They were to cease from their fears, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord; for their enemies should disappear for ever from their eyes, the Lord would fight for them, and they should hold their peace. Blessed truth, that salvation is of the Lord! It is one, however, that we are slow to learn. How many become entangled in the thought that they must do something. But no; He who has provided the Paschal Lamb, whose blood cleanses us from our sin, will do all the rest. Salvation is His own perfect, finished work. To add to it in any way by our own doings or strivings is only to mar its beauty and completeness. Nay, what is there that man can do when Satan and death are in question? Man is helpless in the presence of such foes. He cannot escape, he cannot overcome them, and hence perforce — if he would but learn the lesson — he must

stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord. How quieting to the heart of the timid and the anxious! Let them then enter upon the full enjoyment of this precious message, if terrified by Satan's power in the prospect of death: "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

Following the record we shall perceive how the Lord verified the words of His servant.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: but lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen." (vv. 15-18.)

There is no inconsistency between the command of Moses, "Stand still," and that now given, "Go forward." They had truly to be reminded that they could do nothing; but faith should have perceived that the work was done, and marched boldly forward through the sea which seemed to bar their advance. Death, and the power of death, had been overcome, the salvation had been completed, and hence they were to go forward. The order and the teaching of the order are beautiful. The Lord completes the work, and by the finished work of salvation a way of escape from Satan's power through death has been opened. Being opened, it is for the believer to walk through it, to go boldly forward in confidence in Him who, having been their Judge, has now become their Saviour. This the Lord proceeds to unfold by the farther command addressed to Moses. He will show His power over the sea before the eyes of His people, to pacify their fears, and to assure them of His protection and care. But this must be explained more fully. Together with the command to the children of Israel to go forward, Moses was directed to lift up his rod, and stretch his hand over the sea, and divide it, so that the children of Israel might go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. The Egyptians should be hardened to follow, and to follow for their own destruction, and God would be glorified both in the salvation of His people and the destruction of their foes. Having thus directed Moses, the Lord proceeds to act.

"And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left.

"And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them: there remained not so much as one of them. But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore. And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and His servant Moses." (vv. 19-31.)

The several points in this miraculous deliverance may now be noted. First, the angel of God removed and went "between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel." God thus interposed between His blood-bought people and their pursuers. For indeed all that He was, in every attribute of His character, was engaged on their behalf. That panic-stricken multitude might well be scorned by the flower and chivalry of Egypt, but they were under the aegis of Omnipotence, and before they could be reached God Himself must be met and overcome. Oh, what strength and consolation lie in this precious truth, that God Himself undertakes the cause of the feeblest of those who are under the shelter of the blood of Christ! Satan may set all his legions in battle array, and seek to terrify the soul by the display of his power, but his vauntings and threats may alike be disregarded, for the battle is the Lord's. It is therefore not what we are, but what God is. And it should be observed, that He that is *for* the believer is *against* the enemy. That which gave light to the children of Israel was a cloud and darkness to Pharaoh and his army. The presence of God terrifies all but those who are cleansed from sin by the precious blood. Hence the camp of Egypt was shut off from Israel, and "the one came not near the other all the night." (v. 20.) How fearless, then, we ought to be, when this truth, God for us, is so plainly revealed. Elisha knew its power when, in answer to the expressed fears of his servant, he said, "Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them;" and then, when in answer to the prophet's prayer the young man's eyes were opened, "he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." (2 Kings 6: 15-17.) Be it, however, repeated, that the alone foundation of God being, for us is the precious blood of Christ. This, then, is the first thing here taught, that God protects His people as against the power of Satan.

The second thing to be remarked is, the division of the waters of the Red Sea. Moses was to lift up his rod, and stretch out his hand over the sea. (v. 16.) The rod is a symbol of the authority and power of God; and hence it was before it that the waters

retired. The strong east wind was used as an instrumentality, but in connection with the mandate of His power as expressed in the use of the rod. Thus God opened a way through death for His people. As, on the one hand, He shielded them from Satan's power, so, on the other, He through death delivered them from death. This is the typical significance of the Red Sea — death, and also resurrection — inasmuch as the people were brought through to the other side. "As a moral type," therefore, to use the language of another, "the Red Sea is evidently the death and resurrection of Jesus, so far as the real effecting of the work goes, in its own efficacy as deliverance by redemption, and of His people as seen in *Him*; God acting in it, to bring them through death out of sin and this present world, giving absolute deliverance from them by death, into which Christ had gone, and consequently beyond the possibility of being reached by the enemy." This is beautifully illustrated by two particulars. They "went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground." Wherefore? Because — we speak of the typical teaching — Christ had gone down into death, and exhausted its power. He "death by dying slew," and in death met and vanquished the whole power of Satan. Through death He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Heb. 2: 14, 15.) All the force and power of death were therefore expended upon Christ, and as a consequence believers pass through on dry ground. Then, moreover, we find that "the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left." (v. 22.) Not only had death no power over them, but it became a defence. Thus "the very sea they dreaded, and which appeared to throw them into Pharaoh's hands, becomes the means of their salvation." It was the way of their deliverance from Egypt, and instead of being their enemy had become their friend. How blessedly all this is fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Christ, every believer should know. It is not only that we have been sheltered from judgment through the sprinkled blood, but through the death and resurrection of Christ, and our death and resurrection in Him, we have been brought out from Egypt, and delivered both from the power of Satan and of death. Already we have passed from death unto life, have been brought completely out of our old condition on to new ground in Christ Jesus. We might still go farther, and point out how this type will be fulfilled in another way. Death, which is the enemy of the sinner, has become the friend of the believer, and will but prove the means of our passage, should we depart before the Lord returns, into His presence.

The last thing to be noted is the destruction of the Egyptians. In the temerity of their daring presumption they "pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen." That pillar of fire even did not keep them back, but, in vain confidence in their own strength, they pressed onward, but to a sure and certain doom. "And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily." They were now convinced of the hopelessness of the contest, and would fain have fled; but it was all too late. At the Lord's bidding, once again Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and it returned and covered all Egypt's host, so that "there remained not so much as one of them." (v. 28.) "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: *which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned.*" (Heb. 11: 29.) The solemn lesson is thus conveyed, that to face the power of death in human confidence is certain destruction.

Only the blood-bought people can pass through in safety. All others will surely be overwhelmed; and yet how many a soul dares to meet death and judgment in its own strength. Let all such be warned by the fate of Pharaoh and his army. There can be no escape apart from Christ. He only is the way of safety, because He alone has met and overcome death, is the One who has died, has risen again, and is alive for evermore, and has the keys of hades and death.

Three things conclude the chapter. There is first the repetition of the fact that Israel walked through the sea upon dry land, and found the waters a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. It is the contrast emphasized between the salvation of Israel and the destruction of the Egyptians. There are only then two classes. There could be no other — the lost (the Egyptians) and the saved (the Israelites). The former were swallowed up in death and judgment, while the latter were brought through in safety, because they were covered with the value of the blood of the Lamb. We then read that "the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians." (v. 30.) He had before sheltered them from judgment, but now He saved them from the foe. Satan's power was brought to nought, and they were consequently delivered. The full meaning of this term will appear in the next chapter; but it may be remarked that it is here for the first time that the word "saved" acquires its full significance. Lastly, the effect produced upon the minds — in the souls of the children of Israel — is noted. They "saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and His servant Moses." Such a display of power — destructive on the one hand, and redemptive on the other — had bowed their hearts and begotten reverent fear in their souls. In Egypt they had no doubt feared the Lord in the sense of dread — dreading Him as a holy Judge; but now it was fear of another kind — fear begotten by the manifestation of His wonder-working power, and which led them to look upon Him as their Lord. It was the fear of an intimate relationship — the fear which would desire to please, and dread above all things to offend. It was the offspring of recognizing the holiness of God in their salvation. This is shown by the fact that they also believed the Lord, and His servant Moses. The testimony of what and who He was had been unfolded before their eyes. They received it, and now not only had Jehovah chosen them to be His people, but they also by faith recognized and owned Him as their Lord. They also believed Moses — as their divinely-appointed leader. Indeed they were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. (1 Cor. 10: 2.) There was therefore both a work wrought for them and in them — and both alike proceeded from the power and grace of God. He who so marvellously brought them out of Egypt and through the Red Sea, produced a response in their hearts to what He was, and what He had done for them. Salvation is never entered into or enjoyed until these two things are united. Thus the work, on the foundation of which God can save sinners, has long been completed; but until it can be said that the sinner believes he is not saved. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ("the judgment") but is passed from death unto life." (John 5: 24.)

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE SONG OF REDEMPTION.

EXODUS xv. 1-21.

THIS chapter occupies a most important place — both as marking the new position into which the children of Israel were now brought, and as expressive of the feelings — begotten in them undoubtedly by the Holy Spirit — which were suited to it. It is really a song of redemption; and at the same time it is prophetic in its character, embracing as it does the purposes of God with respect to Israel until the millennium — when "the Lord shall reign for ever and ever." (v. 18.) It has therefore a twofold character, applying primarily to Israel, and then, inasmuch as the passage of the Red Sea was pre-eminently typical in its character, also to the position of the believer. Bearing this in mind, its interpretation will be the more easily apprehended.

"Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation;<sup>7</sup> my father's God, and I will exalt Him. The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is His name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone. Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of Thine excellency Thou hast overthrown them that rose up against Thee: Thou sentest forth Thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. And with the blast of Thy nostrils the waters were gathered together: the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with Thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou stretchedst out Thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in Thy strength. unto Thy holy habitation. The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them: all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them: by the greatness of Thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till Thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over, which Thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O

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<sup>7</sup> This translation is more than questionable. The Septuagint, the Vulgate, Luther, and the French version, agree in rendering it, "He is my God, and I will praise (or glorify) Him, my father's God, and I will exalt Him."

Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in; in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the Lord brought again the waters of the sea upon them: but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea." (vv. 1-19.)

The first thing to be remarked upon this outburst of joy is, that we have no singing mentioned in Scripture, except in connection with redemption. Angels even are never said to sing. At the birth of our blessed Lord "there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2: 10, 14.) So in the Revelation John says, "I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." (Rev. 5: 11, 12.) It is only therefore redeemed ones who can sing, and we learn therefrom the true character of Christian song. It should express the joy of salvation, the accents of praise and gladness produced in the soul by the knowledge of redemption. "Is any merry?" says James, "let him sing psalms." (James 5: 13.) That is, if any one is overflowing with true joy — joy consequent upon known redemption, joy in the Lord as the Redeemer, it should be expressed in psalms — psalms of praise to God. "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord." It was then, when they knew for the first time what redemption was, that they poured forth the gladness of their hearts in song., And there should be no other, indeed there is no other, song for the Christian. To take another into his lips is to forget his true character as well as the only source of his joy.

The song itself may be considered in two aspects — its general subject, and the truths it contains. As to its general subject, it is simply the Lord Himself, and what He has done. But this embraces a great deal. It is the Lord Himself as apprehended and known in redemption. "The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation." (v. 2.) For it is only in redemption that He can be known. Thus, until the cross of Christ He was not, could not be, fully revealed. He was revealed to the children of Israel in the character of the relationship into which they were brought, but it was not until the redemption was accomplished, of which this recorded here was but the type, that He made Himself fully known in all the attributes of His character. But whatever the measure of His manifestation in each succeeding dispensation, He could not be apprehended, even so far, except through redemption, typical or otherwise, and the consequent relationship into which the redeemed were brought. The children of Israel knew Him as Jehovah; we, by grace, know Him as our God and Father, because the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; but whatever the dispensation, He Himself, as so revealed, is ever the subject of song, for it is in Him alone that His people in every age rejoice. As, however, we have remarked, there is another thing, and that is, what He has done, and this is fully brought out in the song of Moses and the children of Israel. There are necessarily two aspects of this — the salvation of His people, and the destruction of their enemies. This is expressed in every variety of phrase, and with all the sublimity of expression which beseeemed the majesty of Him who had thus wrought on their behalf. It is not what they had

accomplished, but what the Lord has done. It Was not their, but His triumph that they celebrated. They have lost sight of themselves in the presence of such an astounding display of redemptive power! "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." (v. 1.) They thus magnify the Lord, for they perceive, as divinely inspired, that the work which He had achieved redounded to His own exaltation and glory. "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power;" and again, "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (vv. 6, 11.) Surely believers of this dispensation might learn from this primal redemptive song, what should be the character of their praise when gathered for worship in the power of the Holy Ghost. As it is the first song of redemption, it contains the principles of praise for all future generations. It deserves, on this account, the prayerful consideration of every believer.

It is, however, when we consider the truths it contains, that we learn its fulness and variety. The first is that they were now *redeemed* - redemption being, as pointed out, the burden of their song. "The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become *my salvation*." And again, Thou hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed. Until now they were not redeemed, they did not know salvation. They had been perfectly sheltered from the destroyer in Egypt, but they could not be said to be saved until they were brought out of Egypt, and delivered from Pharaoh — from Satan's power. There is the same difference observable now in the experience of souls. There are many who know the forgiveness of their sins through the blood of Christ; but afterwards not knowing themselves — the nature of the flesh still in them — or the power of Satan to harass and disturb — they not only lose their joy consequent upon pardon, but sometimes fall, through the difficulties which surround them on every hand, into a state of despondency and alarm. Brought into the consciousness of their utter inability to do any thing, or to resist the enemy, they are made to cry, as in Romans 7, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (v. 24.) It is then they are taught that the Lord Jesus has not only provided cleansing for their sins through His precious blood, but that also, through His death and resurrection, He has brought them out of their old condition, and put them in a new place in Him on the other side of death and judgment. Their eyes are now opened to see that in Him they have been completely delivered from all that was against them, and therefore that Satan has lost his rights over, and consequently has no further claim upon, them. They are thus set free; their evil nature has already been judged, and Satan's power has been vanquished, in the death of Christ, and hence, delivered, their hearts are filled with thanksgiving and praise. That many stop short of this full blessing is only too true, but it is, nevertheless, the portion of every believer. And there never can be full assurance of salvation — firm and solid peace — until this complete deliverance is known. No doubt it must be learned experimentally, but it depends entirely and alone upon what Christ is and has done; and accordingly the whole of this blessing is presented to sinners in the gospel of God's grace. It may be that the soul learns forgiveness of sins first; but it is no less the fact that a full redemption is provided for, and preached to, every one who will receive the message of the gospel. It is of the first importance that this truth should be known; for through ignorance of it, there are thousands who are a prey to doubts and fears, instead of rejoicing in the Lord as the

God of their salvation. Souls in such a state have little freedom in prayer, or worship, or service; but when once the truth of redemption dawns upon them, like the children of Israel in the scene before us, they are constrained to give vent to their new-found joy in songs of praise.

But there is more. Their position is changed. "Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation." They were brought to God as to the new standing they occupied. In the desert, just indeed entering upon it — this marked their character as pilgrims — they were yet brought unto God's holy habitation. This corresponds with our position as believers in the Lord Jesus. He once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. This is our place as His redeemed. That is, we are brought to God according to all that He is; His whole moral nature, having been completely satisfied in the death of Christ, can now rest in us in perfect complacency. The hymn therefore does but express a scriptural thought, which says -

"So near, so very near to God,  
I cannot nearer be,  
For in the person of His Son  
I am as near as He."

The place indeed is accorded to us in grace, but none the less in righteousness; so that not only are all the attributes of God's character concerned in bringing us there, but He Himself is also glorified by it. It is an immense thought, and one which, when held in power, imparts both strength and energy to our souls — that we are even now brought to God. The whole distance — measured by the death of Christ on the cross, when He was made sin for us — has been bridged over, and our position of nearness is marked by the place He now occupies as glorified at the right hand of God. In heaven itself we shall not be nearer, — as to our position, because it is *in Christ*. It will not be forgotten that our enjoyment of this truth, indeed even our apprehension of it, will depend upon our practical condition. God looks for a state corresponding with our standing — i.e. our responsibility is measured by our privilege. But until we know our place there cannot be an answering condition. We must first learn that we are brought to God, if we would in any measure walk in accordance with the position. State and walk must ever flow from a known relationship. Unless therefore we are taught the truth of our standing before God, we shall never answer to it in our souls, or in our walk and conversation.

The third thing to be observed is, that their present position was the pledge of the fulfilment of all the rest. "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in; in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." (vv. 17, 18.) The power God had displayed at the Red Sea was the guarantee; first, that He would accomplish all His purposes respecting Israel; and, secondly, that that power would finally be exhibited in His everlasting reign. Faith, begotten through the knowledge of redemption, lays hold of this — embracing the whole scope of the purposes of God, and looking upon them as if already accomplished. It is so in the epistle to the Romans. "Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He

called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified." (Rom. 8: 30.) If indeed the purposes of God could be frustrated, He were not God. There may be enemies in the way — and they may set themselves against the execution of His declared will. But faith says, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Thus Israel could sing, "The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them: all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them: by the greatness of Thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till Thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over, which Thou hast purchased." (vv. 14-16.) In like manner, the apostle cries, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" No — nothing, for he is "persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8: 35-39.) The efficacy of the blood secures the completion of all God's counsels, brings in all that He is — His majesty, His truth, His mercy, His love, His almighty power — on behalf of His people. It is therefore not presumption, but simplicity of faith, to anticipate the consummation of our redemption. It is not to overlook the character and might of our foes; but, measuring these by what God is, the soul is immediately certified of being more than a conqueror through Him that loved us. It is to derive the full and blessed consolation of the truth, that God is acting by His own power outside of us, and for His own glory. The legions of Satan — the dukes of Edom, the mighty men of Moab, and the inhabitants of Canaan, may seek to bar the way to the inheritance, but when God arises in His strength on behalf of His blood-besprinkled host, they will be scattered as chaff before the wind. Thus the end is sure from the beginning, and hence our triumphant song of victory may be raised before a single step has been taken in the wilderness path. And the issue will be to the glory of the One who has redeemed us. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. So we read in the epistle to the Philippians, that it is according to God's purpose and decree, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2: 9-11.) What joy it should be to the heart of the believer to contemplate that while we are brought into unspeakable blessing, yet that the result of redemption will be the exaltation of the Redeemer. In this Scripture the reign spoken of has undoubtedly primary application to the earth. It is the everlasting kingdom of Jehovah — the millennial sway of the Messiah, who must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. But in principle it goes further — for He shall reign for ever and ever; and this too will be the fruit of the cross. There He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and as a consequence He is now, and will be for ever, exalted.

There is another thing demanding our notice. So far, everything that has been considered is connected with the purposes of God. But in the second verse there is an exception. No sooner can they say, "The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become

my salvation," than they add, "He is my God, *and I will prepare, Him an habitation;*<sup>8</sup> my father's God, and I will exalt Him." This is different from The sanctuary which Thy hands have established, in the seventeenth verse. That looks on to the accomplishment of the purposes of God in the establishment of the kingdom and the temple at Jerusalem. But this was to be a present thing: "I will prepare Him an habitation." It is in fact the tabernacle. This will come more properly before us in subsequent chapters; but it may be noted here that this is the first time mention is made of a habitation for the Lord with His people. He had saints before this, but not a people; and until redemption was accomplished He never dwelt on earth. He visited His saints, and appeared to them in many ways, but He never had His dwelling-place in their midst. But as soon as expiation for sin has been made by the blood of the lamb, and His people have been brought forth out of Egypt, saved through death and resurrection, then He inspires their hearts to build Him a habitation.<sup>9</sup> He led them by the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, as soon as they commenced their exodus; but He could not have a dwelling-place in Egypt, in the territory of the enemy. But when they are brought on to new ground, He can identify Himself with them, dwell in their midst, and be their God, and they His people. It is so also in Christianity. Not until atonement had been made, and Christ had risen from the dead and ascended up on high, did God form His present habitation on earth through the Spirit. (Acts 2; Eph. 2) It is so with the individual believer. It is not until he is cleansed by the blood of Christ that his body is made a temple of the Holy Ghost. The truth therefore is, that God's dwelling upon earth is founded upon a completed redemption. And what an immense privilege. Although the wilderness was no part of the purpose of God, yet, in His ways with His people, they wandered there forty years. How blessed, then, for these weary pilgrims, looking onward to the inheritance, to have the habitation of God in their midst; a place where they could approach Him, through the appointed priests, with sacrifices and incense; the centre, too, of their encampment. How it would inspire the hearts of the godly with courage to behold that tabernacle, with the cloud resting upon it, the symbol of the divine presence. Hence the agonizing cry of Moses, after the people's failure, "If Thy presence go not, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? *Is it not in that Thou goest with us?*" (Ex. 33: 15, 16.) Nor should it be forgotten that God has also now His dwelling-place on earth. This truth is, amid the confusions of Christendom, in danger of being ignored. But, spite of our failure, God does dwell in the house which He has formed, and will dwell in it until the return of the Lord. This truth should inspire us also with strength and consolation; for it is no mean privilege to be brought out of the sphere, and from under the power, of Satan into the scene of the presence and the power of God. It is the only place of blessing on earth, and happy are they who have been made sharers of it through the grace of God in the power of the Holy Ghost.

This was no common joy which found expression in this song of jubilant praise. It evidently pervaded the whole host; for "Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a

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<sup>8</sup> It may well be doubted if the Hebrew word is here properly translated. (See the note on the translation of this verse, page 110.) The comments made upon the English text may, however, stand; for the truth is of all importance.

<sup>9</sup> The thought of building a sanctuary came from God, and not from Israel. (See Ex. 25: 8.) It was His desire to dwell in the midst of His redeemed.

timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances." (v. 20.) And Miriam cried, as she led the chorus of their song, "Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." (v. 21.) It is the first mention of Miriam by name, and it is exceedingly interesting to notice that she was a prophetess. It was she, most probably, who watched over the ark of bulrushes in which her infant brother Moses was laid, and who was the means of his restoration to his mother. Thus she also becomes prominent in Israel, not only from her connection with Moses, but also from her own distinct gift. It is the way of the Lord to bless all connected with the man of His counsels; and at the same time it reveals to us how sacred is the family tie in His sight. But in the scene before us it was her honour and privilege to be the leader and mouthpiece of the joy of the women of Israel. The hearts of all were filled with gladness, and found their utterance in music, dancing, and song. They were redeemed, and they knew it on this happy morn; and laden with the joy of their salvation, they tell it out in these accents of gratitude and praise.

## CHAPTER X.

### MARAH AND ELIM.

EXODUS xv. 22-27.

FROM this point to the end of the eighteenth chapter is a distinct section of the book. To understand it aright, it must be remembered that as yet Israel was not under law, but under grace; and hence this brief period closes, in figure, with the millennium. The careful reader will find in this statement the key of many of the events recorded. For example, the murmurings recorded in chapters 15, 16 and 17 are borne by the Lord with long-suffering and tenderness, and their needs are ministered to out of the fulness of His unwearied love. But after Sinai, murmuring of the same character are the occasion of judgment, for the simple reason that the people had been, at their own request, put under law. Being therefore under the reign of righteousness, transgressions and rebellion are instantly dealt with according to the requirements of the law which formed the basis of Jehovah's righteous rule; whereas before Sinai, being under the reign of grace, they are borne with, and their sins and iniquities are covered.

The wilderness journey of Israel had now to be entered upon. The strains of their song had scarcely died away before they commenced their pilgrim journey.

"So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; and they went out into the wilderness of Shur: and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them, and said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee. And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters." (vv. 22-27.)

This, then, was their first experience: "They went three days in the wilderness, and found no water." The expression — "three days," is always significant in Scripture. Numberless examples may be gleaned from a concordance; and it will be found that very frequently it is associated with death; and so here the three days will mean the distance of death. They had in figure passed through death, and now they must learn it practically. If God in His grace gives us a perfect standing before Him, if He associates us with Christ in His death and resurrection, the object of all His ways with us will be to bring us into practical conformity with our new position. The children of Israel must thus be taught that, as a consequence of deliverance from Egypt, the world had become a desert to them, and that this must be entered into by the acceptance of death. This is the fundamental

necessity for every believer. There can be no progress, no real break with the past, until death is accepted, until he reckons himself dead to sin (Rom. 6), dead to the law (Rom. 7), and dead to the world. (Gal. 6) Hence the character of God's dealings with souls. He will teach them experimentally — as in the case of Israel before us — and thus enable them to apprehend the true character of the path on which they have entered. And what was the first experience of Israel? *They found no water*. Like the Psalmist, they were in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is. (Psalm 63) No; every spring of earth is dried up for those who have been redeemed from Egypt. There is not a single source of life — nothing that can minister in any way to the life we have received in Christ. And how blessed it is for the soul to apprehend this truth. Starting on our pilgrimage, elated with the joy of salvation, how often are we surprised to find that the sources at which we had drunk before — and drunk with delight — have now run dry. We ought to expect this; but never is the lesson learned until we have gone the three days' journey in the wilderness. It is indeed a startling experience to discover that earth's resources are exhausted; but it is an indispensable requisite if we would know the blessedness of the truth that "all our springs are in Thee."

They passed onward and came to MARAH. Here there was water; but they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. This is the further application of the same principle. First, there was no water to drink; and, secondly, when it is found it is so bitter that it could not be drunk. This is the application to the soul of the power of that death by which they have been delivered. The flesh shrinks from it — and would refuse it altogether. But for those who have been delivered from Egypt, and are pilgrims journeying on to the inheritance, it is absolutely necessary. Truly it is Marah — bitterness; and accordingly it troubled the people, and they murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? What a contrast! A few days ago, as with one heart, they sang, with exultant joy, the praises of their Redeemer; and now the song is silent, and discordant murmurs take its place. So is it with the believer — now filled with praise, and immediately after the flesh complains and murmurs because of the trials of the wilderness. But Moses intercedes for them, and the Lord showed him a tree, which, when cast into the waters, made them sweet. This is a beautiful figure of the cross of Christ — which utterly changes the character of the bitter waters. "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." Or, as Paul cries, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. 6: 14.) Bring the cross into the bitterness of Marah waters, and at once they become sweet to the taste — are welcomed as the means of deliverance and blessing.

Thereon follows a most important principle — a principle ever applicable to the walk of the believer. It is one found throughout the Scriptures, and in every dispensation; viz., that blessing is dependent upon obedience; that is, the blessing of believers (for the children of Israel were now redeemed) is dependent upon their walk. They were to be guarded from the diseases of Egypt, if they would diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord their God, and would do that which was right in His sight, etc. (v. 26.) In the same way our blessed Lord says, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John 14: 23.)

This principle cannot be too much insisted upon. There are many believers who have known the joy of salvation, and who are yet without the conscious enjoyment of a single blessing. The reason is that they are careless of their walk. They do not study the Word, or "give ear to His commandments," and are consequently walking as seems right in their own eyes. What wonder is it, therefore, that they are cold and indifferent, that they are not in the conscious enjoyment of the love of God — of fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ? No; it is to the obedient ones that God comes, and delights to come, in the sweetest manifestations of His unchanging love; it is to those who have a conscience about every precept of the Word, and are seeking, in the power of the Spirit, to be found in obedience in every particular, to those whose delight it is to be doing the will of their Lord, and whose one aim it is to be at all times acceptable to Him, that He can draw near and bless according to His own mind and heart. Nothing can compensate for the lack of an obedient walk. All our blessing — as to its apprehension and enjoyment — is made dependent upon it. It is moreover the means of growth, and the condition of communion.

It is on this account that it is immediately added, "And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters." That is, they at once found refreshment, rest, and shade — the wells and the palm trees being, as one has said, "types of those living springs, and of that shelter which had been provided, through instruments chosen of God, for the consolation of His people." How welcome the rest to the already weary pilgrims! and how tender of the Lord to provide such grateful refreshment for His people in the wilderness! As the Shepherd of Israel, He thus led them, as it were, into green pastures, and made them to lie down by the still waters, to comfort and strengthen their hearts.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Doubtless the numbers twelve and seventy are significant. Twelve is administrative perfection in government in man (Israel). Seventy is not so clear. But it will be remembered that the Lord adopted both of these numbers, in the twelve disciples, and in the seventy (Luke 9, 10); and thus it would seem to point to the fact that through these He would minister these blessings to Israel.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE MANNA.

EXODUS xvi.

THE enjoyments of Elim were but transient, however blessedly they unfolded the loving, tender care of Jehovah. The children of Israel were pilgrims; and as such it was their vocation to travel and not to rest. The next stage of their journey therefore is immediately recorded.

"And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: and the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full! for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger." (vv. 1-3.)

The wilderness of Sin lay "between Elim and Sinai." It occupied therefore, as indeed has already been indicated, a very special place in the history of the children of Israel. Elim would ever remind them of one of their most blessed experiences, and the journey likewise to Sinai would recall to their minds a period distinguished by long-suffering and grace in God's dealings with them; whereas Sinai would be ever engraven on their memories in connection with the majesty and holiness of the law. Up till Sinai, it was what God was for them in His mercy and love; but from that time the ground, by their own action, was changed into what they were for God. This is the difference between grace and law; and hence the peculiar interest attaching to the journey between Elim and Sinai. But whether under grace or law, the flesh remained the same, and took every opportunity of revealing its corrupt and incurable character. Again the whole congregation murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. (v. 2.) They had done so at Pi-hahiroth, when they saw the army of Pharaoh approaching; they repeated their sin at Marah, because the waters were bitter; and now they complain again because of their pilgrim fare. "They soon forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel; but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert." (Psalm 106: 13, 14.) The recollection of Egypt and Egypt's food possessed their hearts, and forgetful of the bitter bondage with which this had been connected, they looked back with longing eyes. How often this is the case with newly-emancipated souls. There must always be hunger in the wilderness; for the flesh can find no gratification for its own desires, or satisfaction in its toils and hardships. It is the place where the flesh must be tested. The Lord "humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." (Deut. 8: 3.) This is the conflict. The flesh craves that which will meet its

desires, but if we are delivered from Egypt this cannot be allowed: the flesh must be refused, looked upon as already judged in the death of Christ; and therefore we are debtors not to the flesh, to live after the flesh, for if we live after the flesh we shall die: but if we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body we shall live. (Rom. 8: 12, 13.) But the Lord, as we have seen in Deuteronomy, has His object in suffering us to hunger; it is to wean us from the flesh pots of Egypt, and to attract us to Himself — to teach us that true satisfaction and sustenance can only be found in Himself and His word. The contrast is therefore between the flesh pots of Egypt, and Christ; and very blessed is it when the soul learns that Christ is enough for all its needs. In their unbelief the children of Israel charged Moses with the design of killing them with hunger. But their hunger was intended to create in them another appetite, by which alone their true life could be sustained. The Lord, however, gave them their request, even though He sent leanness into their soul. For, as will be seen, He gave them the quails as well as the manna.

"Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in My law, or no. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the Lord hath brought you out from the land of Egypt; and in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord; for that He heareth your murmurings against the Lord: and what are we, that ye murmur against us? And Moses said, This shall be, when the Lord shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the Lord heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against Him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord.

"And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the Lord; for He hath heard your murmurings. And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God." (vv. 4-12.)

Before we speak of the manna, two or three particulars have to be noted. The first is the grace with which God meets the desires of the people. In Numbers 11 He also meets their desire under similar circumstances; but "the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague." (v. 33.) Here there is no sign of judgment — only patient and forbearing grace. The difference springs, if we may so describe it, from the dispensation. In Numbers they were under law, and they were dealt with accordingly; here they are under grace and hence grace reigned spite of their sin. Secondly, their murmurings were the occasion of the display of the glory of the Lord. (v. 10.) Thus the display of what man is brings out of the depths of the heart of God the revelation of what He is. It was so in the garden of Eden, and indeed all down the line

of His dealings with man. This principle is seen in perfection in the cross — where man was exhibited in all the utter corruption of his evil nature, and God was fully revealed. The light shineth in darkness, even if the darkness comprehends it not; and indeed the glory of the Lord shines out all the brighter because of the darkness of man's iniquity, which becomes the occasion of its display. Mark, moreover, that murmuring against Moses and Aaron was murmuring against the Lord. (v. 8.) All sin is really against God. (See Psalm 51: 4; Luke 15: 18-21.) Hence it is that the Lord says, "I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel." (v. 12.) It is not enough remembered that all our complaints, our expressions of unbelief, our murmurings, are against the Lord, and come immediately into His ears. How often would our sinful words die away on our lips if this thought were in our minds. If the Lord were visibly before our eyes, we should not dare to utter what we often permit ourselves now to say in the hastiness of our unbelief. And yet we are really before Him, His eyes are upon us, and He hears our every word.<sup>11</sup> Lastly, remark the difference between the quails and the manna. The quails have no special teaching connected with them, whereas it will be seen that the manna is a very striking type of the Lord Jesus. The quails therefore were given to satisfy the desires of the people, but brought no blessing. It is in connection with these, indeed, that the Psalmist says, "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul." God may hear the cry of His people, even in their unbelief, and grant them their desires — but for discipline rather than for present blessing. Thus many a believer, forgetting his true portion in Christ, has desired the things of this world the flesh pots of Egypt, and he has been allowed to attain his object, but the consequence has been barrenness of soul — and such barrenness of soul that he has only been restored through the disciplinary trials of the Lord's loving hand. If we turn back in heart to Egypt, and are permitted to gratify our desires, it can only lead to sorrow in days to come. As, for example, Paul writes to Timothy, "They that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Tim. 6: 9, 10.) This is only one form of turning back to Egypt, but the principle is applicable to every object which the flesh can desire.

The account of the actual bestowment of the quails and the manna is now given.

"And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp; and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hear frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat. This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating; an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons: take ye every man for them which are in his tents. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack: they gathered every

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<sup>11</sup> See, for an example of this, John 20: 26, 27.

man according to his eating. And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted." (vv. 13-21.)

It will be observed, and the significance of the fact has been indicated, that there is the barest mention of the quails, but a full description of the manna. It is with the manna therefore that we are specially concerned. When the dew was gone up, "behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, *This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat.*" (vv. 14, 15.) This then is the meaning of the manna: the bread which God gave the Israelites to eat in the wilderness. It is consequently the proper wilderness food for the Lord's people. Hence when the Jews said to our Lord, "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat," He replied, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." (John 6: 32, 33. Read especially from 48th to 58th verses.) The manna then, it is clear, is a type of Christ — of Christ as He was in this world — as the One who came down from heaven, and who as such becomes the food of His people while passing through the wilderness. It must be especially noted that until we have life by feeding on His death — eating His flesh and drinking His blood (John 6: 53, 54) — we cannot feed upon Him as the manna. Having received life, then we are told, "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by" (because of) "the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by" (because of) "Me." (v. 57.)

Leaving the reader, however, to study for himself this most significant Scripture, it will suffice now to recall the two points named; first, that the manna of our chapter sets forth Christ; and secondly, that Christ in this character is the food of His people while in the desert. There is a difference between the children of Israel and believers of this dispensation. The former could only be in one place at a time, for we have here an actual historical narrative. The latter — Christians — are in two: their place is in the heavenlies in Christ (see Eph. 2); and in their actual circumstances they are pilgrims in the wilderness. As being in the heavenlies, a glorified Christ — typified by the old corn of the land — is our sustenance; but in wilderness circumstances it is what Christ was here, Christ as the manna, that meets our need. And amid the weariness and the toil of our pilgrim path, how blessed and how sustaining it is to feed upon the grace, the tenderness, and the sympathy of a humbled Christ. How our hearts rejoice to remember that He has passed through the same circumstances; that He therefore knows our needs, and delights to minister to them for our sustainment and blessing. It is for such a purpose that the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews says, "Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." (Heb. 12: 3.) As one has said, speaking on this subject, "For instance, something may make me impatient during the day; well, then, Christ is my patience, and thus He is the manna to sustain me in patience. He is the source of grace, not merely the example which I am to copy;" and it

is thus as the source of grace, sympathy, and strength to us in the wilderness that Christ is the manna of our souls.

There are some practical directions concerning the gathering of the manna which are of the utmost importance. First, they were to gather it every man according to his eating. (vv. 16-18.) As a consequence he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack. The appetite governed the amount collected. How strikingly true this is of the believer! *We all have as much of Christ as we desire — no more, and no less.* If our desires are large, if we open our mouth wide, He will fill it. We cannot desire too much, nor be disappointed when we desire. On the other hand, if we are but feebly conscious of our need, a little only of Christ will be supplied. The measure therefore in which we feed upon Christ, as our wilderness food, depends entirely upon our felt spiritual need — upon our appetite. Secondly, it could not be stored for future use. No man was to leave of it until the morning; but some disobeyed this injunction, only, however, to find that what they had thus left had become corrupt. No; the food collected today cannot sustain us on the morrow. It is only in a present exercise of soul that we can feed upon Christ. Much damage has accrued to souls from forgetting this principle. They have had a rich repast of manna, and they have attempted to feed upon it for days; but it has always issued in disappointment and loss instead of blessing. God only gives the portion of a day in its day (see margin of v. 4), and no more. Thirdly, it was to be collected early, for when the sun waxed hot it melted. No time, indeed, is so precious to the believer for gathering the manna as the first moments of the day when in quiet he is alone with the Lord. He has not yet entered upon the experiences of the day, and he knows not what may be the precise character of his path; but he knows that he will need the sustaining manna. Let him therefore be diligent in the early morning, and let his hand not be slack to gather, and to gather as much as he may need; for even should he seek it afterwards, he will find that it has all disappeared before the and the heat of the day. How many a failure may be traced back to neglect on this point! A trial comes — unexpectedly comes, and the soul breaks down. But why? Because the manna was not collected before the sun was hot. All should lay this to heart, and be on the watch against the artifices of Satan to divert our minds from this one necessary thing. Let all diligence be employed that, whatever the emergency throughout the day, there may be no lack of manna.

In connection with the manna the Sabbath is also given.

"And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you, to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that today, for today is a sabbath unto the Lord: today ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none.

"And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to (rather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep My commandments and My laws? See, for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day." (vv. 22-30.)

We read in Genesis 2 that "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made." (v. 3.) This fixes the meaning of the sabbath or the seventh day; for it should be carefully observed that it is the seventh and no other day, showing clearly that it is God's rest. This meaning is asserted most distinctly also in the epistle to the Hebrews. (See Heb. 4: 1-11.) The sabbath therefore is a type of God's rest, and as given to man expresses the desire of God's heart that he should share with Him in His rest. It is found here for the first time. There is not a trace of it through all the patriarchal age, or during the sojourn of the children of Israel in Egypt, but, as found in this chapter in connection with the manna, it has a most blessed significance.

But a few remarks must be made before this is explained. The object God had in view in its institution has been indicated; but, as is abundantly clear, man in consequence of sin never possessed the thing signified. Nay, more, God Himself could not rest because of sin. Hence, when our blessed Lord was accused of breaking the sabbath, He replied, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." (John 5: 17.) God could not rest in the presence of sin, and of the dishonour done to Him by it, and as a consequence man could not share it with Him. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews develops this latter point. He shows that the children of Israel were shut out from it because of their unbelief and hardness of heart, that Joshua did not give them rest, that in David's time it was spoken of as yet future, and he argues that "there remaineth therefore a rest (a keeping of the sabbath) to the people of God." (Heb. 3 and 4) The question arises then, How is it to be possessed? The answer is found in our chapter. The manna, as we have seen, prefigures Christ, and consequently the connection teaches that it is Christ, and Christ only, who can lead us into the rest of God. He is the only way. The apostle thus says, "We which have believed do enter into rest" (Heb. 4: 3); that is, it belongs to those who believe in Christ to enter into rest — not by any means, as some have taught, that the rest is a present thing. The context shows distinctly that it is a future blessing. There *remaineth* therefore a rest for the people of God. That believers may have rest of conscience and rest of heart in Christ is most blessedly true; but God's rest will not be reached until we enter upon that eternal scene in which all things are made new, when the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. (Rev. 21: 1-7.)

There are two circumstances connected with the institution of the sabbath in this place which demand a brief notice. The first is the double provision of manna on the sixth day, that the people might rest in their tents on the seventh. If collected thus on any other day in self-will, it became worthless and corrupt; but when done in obedience in view of the sabbath it remained sound and good. The truth taught, however, is that when sharing

in God's rest, in His grace, throughout eternity, Christ will be still our food; nay, it might be said that our enjoyment of that rest will consist in feasting with God upon the once humbled Christ. Nothing less will satisfy His own heart than that we should have full fellowship with Himself concerning His beloved Son. There is perhaps another thought. It is that whatever we acquire of Christ here becomes our eternal possession and delight. Gather as much manna as we may, two omers instead of one; if it is kept for the rest that remaineth, it will be a source of strength and joy throughout eternity. The second thing is that some of the people, spite of the injunction they had received, went out on the seventh day to gather manna, but they found none. (v. 27.) Whatever the exhibitions of grace man's heart remained the same. Disobedience is native to his corrupt nature, and displays itself alike, whether under law or grace. The Lord rebuked through Moses the conduct of His people, though He bore with them in His long-suffering and tender mercy. Taking the sabbath, as has been explained, as a type of God's rest, and therefore, since sin has come in, as yet future, it will be at once seen that there is a distinct typical teaching connected with there being no manna on the sabbath. The time for the manna will then be for ever past. Christ will never more be apprehended in that character; for the wilderness circumstances of His people will then have for ever passed away. The store they collected while in the desert may still be enjoyed; but there will be no more to be gathered. The same lesson, in one aspect, may be seen in the direction given by Moses at the commandment of the Lord.

"And Moses said, This is the thing which the Lord commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord, to be kept for your generations. As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited: they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan. Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah." (vv. 32-36.)

There is doubtless an allusion to this in the promise to the overcomer in the church at Pergamos: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna," etc. (Rev. 2: 17.) Thus Christ in His humiliation is never to be forgotten, but always to be remembered, and gratefully to be fed upon throughout eternity by His people.

"There on the hidden bread  
Of Christ — once humbled here -  
God's treasured store — for ever fed,  
His love my soul shall cheer."

Hence an omer full of manna was laid up before the Lord, before the Testimony, to be kept for their generations. For forty years, during the whole of their wanderings in the desert, until they came to a land inhabited, this was their daily food; they did eat manna until they came into the borders of the land of Canaan.

## CHAPTER XII.

### REPHIDIM AND AMALEK.

EXODUS xvii.

ONCE again the children of Israel move forward and meet with other difficulties. But "all these things happened unto them for ensamples" (types): "and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (1 Cor. 10: 11) There is, therefore, a special interest attaching to all their wilderness sorrows and experiences.

"And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the Lord, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink. "Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the Lord? And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. And the Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go: behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb: and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not!" (vv. 1-7.)

As in the case of the manna, so with the smitten rock, the people's sin was the occasion for this display of power and grace. In Rephidim there was "no water for the people to drink." And what did the people do? Were they not encouraged, by their past experiences of God's faithfulness and tender care, to turn to Him in the confidence that He would interpose on their behalf? Were not the quails and the manna fresh in their recollection as the evidence of the all-sufficiency of Jehovah to meet their every need? Had they not learnt that the Lord was their shepherd, and that therefore they should not want? All this, indeed, might have been expected; and, were we ignorant of the human heart, of the character of the flesh, it might have been expected as the natural results of what they had seen of the wonderful works of the Lord. But so far from this being the case, they chode with Moses, and said, "Give us water that we may drink." In their sinful murmurings and unbelief, they looked upon Moses as the author of all their misery, and were almost ready to kill him in their anger.

An observation or two may be made upon the character of their sin, before the gracious provision accorded to their need is considered. The people chode with Moses; but in reality, as Moses said, they tempted the Lord (v. 2); saying, by their acts, "Is the Lord among us, or not?" (v. 17.) Moses was their appointed leader, and was, therefore,

for the people Jehovah's representative. To chide with him was thus to chide with the Lord; and to complain of their privations was in fact to doubt, if not to deny, the Lord's presence. For had they believed that He was among them, every murmur would have been hushed, and they would have rested in the assurance that He who had brought them out of Egypt, parted for them the waters of the Red Sea, delivered them from the hand of Pharaoh, and guided them in all their journeys by the pillar of fire by night, and the pillar of cloud by day, would in His own time hear their cry, and supply their need. It shows the very solemn nature of the sin of murmuring and complaints, because of the trials of the wilderness, and teaches us, at the same time, that the essence of all such is doubting whether the Lord is with us. Hence the antidote to all such tendencies, to these common snares of Satan, by which he so often entangles the feet of the Lord's people, and robs them of their peace and joy, even when he does not compass their fall, is a firm, unwavering hold upon the truth that the Lord is among us, that He leads His people like a flock through every stage of their wilderness journey. How beautiful, in contrast with the conduct of Israel, is the perfect attitude of our blessed Lord. When tempted by Satan in the wilderness, He in immovable dependence, repelled his every suggestion with the simple word of God.

Moses cried unto the Lord, and the Lord heard his prayer, and, spite of the people's sin, "He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river. For He remembered His holy promise, and Abraham His servant." (Ps. 105: 41, 42.) Thus grace still prevailed, and satisfied the needs of the people. But it is in the typical instruction of this incident that the chief interest lies. Even as the manna, the rock also speaks of Christ. Paul thus says, "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." (1 Cor. 10: 4.) But the Rock was smitten before the waters flowed. Moses was directed to take the rod — the rod wherewith he had smitten the river — and there with Jehovah standing before him on the rock in Horeb, he was to smite the rock, "and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink." The rod has been explained to mean a symbol of God's power, and in smiting it will therefore set forth the exercise of His judicial power. We behold then, in this smiting of the rock, the stroke of His judgment falling upon Christ on the cross. The smitten rock is a crucified Christ. It was the people's sin, remark, that led to the smiting of the rock — a striking exemplification of the truth that "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." Surely this is a sight both for sinners and saints. Sinners may behold Christ on the cross bearing the judgment of sin, and learn, if they will but ponder it, what sin is in the eyes of a holy God; and as they learn this lesson, let them also be warned of their coming doom if they continue in impenitence and unbelief. For if God spared not His own Son, when dealing with the question of sin, that Son, who was the delight of His heart, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, how can they expect to escape? Saints, moreover, cannot too often look back to the cross. And how will their hearts be touched, humbled, melted, as by grace they are enabled to say, "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." (1 Peter 2: 24.) Throughout eternity they will never forget that their sins necessitated that death; while they will never cease to remember that God was glorified by it in every attribute of His character, and hence that it is the everlasting and immutable foundation of all their blessing. It is indeed a most solemn, as well as precious, truth, that the Rock must needs be smitten before the people

could drink. Inasmuch as sin was in question — sin which had dishonoured God before the whole universe — all that God was demanded it for His own glory; and inasmuch as the people would have perished without water, their needs demanded it that they might live. But God only could provide it, and hence in the directions to Moses another beautiful unfolding of the grace of His heart is exhibited.

The Rock was smitten, and "the waters gushed out." Not before — this was impossible; for because of sin God was, as it were, restrained. His mercies and compassions, His grace and His love, were pent up within Himself. But immediately that atonement was accomplished, whereby the claims of His holiness were for ever satisfied, the flood-gates of His heart were opened to pour forth streams of grace and life throughout the world. Hence we read in Matthew, that as soon as the Lord Jesus had yielded up the ghost, "the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom." (Matt. 27: 50, 51.) God was now free in righteousness to come out in grace to a sinful world with offers of salvation, and man — the believer — was free to enter boldly into His immediate presence. The way had been revealed by which man could righteously stand before the full light of the holiness of the very throne of God.

The water which flowed from the Rock is an emblem of the Holy Spirit as the power of life. This is clear from the gospel of John. Our blessed Lord thus said to the woman of Samaria, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4: 14.) In John 7 He uses the same figure, and John adds, "This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." (v. 39.) Two things are indeed clear from this passage — first, that the "living water" is a type of the Holy Ghost; and secondly, that this "living water," the Holy Ghost, could not be received until Jesus was glorified. In other words, the Rock must first be smitten, as already seen, before the waters could flow out to quench the thirst of men.

There is one lesson of great practical importance that cannot be overlooked. There is nothing that can satisfy the undying needs of man but the Holy Ghost as the power of life — everlasting life; and this blessing can only be received through a crucified and risen Christ. Hence He cried to the Jews, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." (John 7: 37.) And the proclamation still goes forth, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22: 17.) May every one who reads these lines have this truth impressed upon his soul in the power of the Holy Ghost!

Thus the Lord met the murmurings of His people by grace, and gave them water to drink; but the names — Massah and Meribah, given to the place — remained as the monument of their sin.

Immediately after the waters being fetched out of the rock comes conflict with Amalek. The connection of the incidents is most instructive as illustrating the ways and the truth of God. The manna is Christ come down from heaven, the smitten Rock is Christ crucified, the living water is an emblem of the Holy Ghost; and now together with

the reception of the Spirit comes conflict. It must be so; for" the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: that ye should not do the things that ye would." (Gal. 5: 17.) Hence the order of these typical events. What then, it may be enquired, is symbolized by Amalek? It is often stated that it is the flesh; but this is only part of the truth. As to Amalek, his real character is readily apprehended from his origin. (See Gen. 36: 12.) But the point to be discerned here is, that Amalek sets himself in open antagonism to the people of God, and seeks to hinder their progress, and even to destroy them from off the face of the earth. It is therefore the power of Satan — acting through the flesh it may be — that thus challenges the onward march of the children of Israel. And the subtlety of Satan in the time chosen for the attack is plainly apparent. It was just after the people had sinned, at a time, therefore, when an enemy might have supposed that they were under the displeasure of God. This is ever his method. But if God be for His people, He will suffer no foe to accomplish their destruction. The people indeed if left to themselves might easily have been scattered; but He who had brought them through the waters of the Red Sea will not now leave them to perish. The Lord was their banner, and thus their defence was sure. Let us then notice how the defeat of Amalek was accomplished.

"Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur, went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon: and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side: and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword." (vv. 8-13.)

First, then, we find that Joshua at the commandment of Moses, places himself at the head of chosen men for the battle. Joshua represents Christ, in the energy of the Spirit, leading His redeemed to the conflict. What a consolation! If Satan marshals his forces to assail the Lord's people, Christ, on the other hand, leads out His chosen men to meet the foe. The battle therefore is the Lord's. This is illustrated again and again throughout the history of Israel; and it is as true in principle of the conflicts of believers of this dispensation. This, if apprehended, would calm our minds in the presence of the sorest difficulties. It would help us to cease from man, and to count upon the Lord. It would enable us to estimate at their proper value the restless activity and the schemes of men, and to look for deliverance alone to the Lord as the Leader of His people. In a word, we should then remember that there can be no successful defence offered to our foes but in the power of the Spirit of God.

There is yet another thing. If Joshua leads his warriors in the plain, Moses — with Aaron and Hur — go up to the top of the hill; and the fight below depends upon the uplifting of the hands of Moses above. Moses, as thus seen, is a figure of Christ above in the value of His intercession. While He leads His people in the power of the Spirit below,

He maintains their cause by His intercession in the presence of God; and secures for them mercy and grace for seasonable succour. They have therefore no strength for conflict apart from His priestly intercession; and the energy of the Spirit as leading them onward is in relation to this intercession. Paul indicates this truth when he says, "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword" (or, we may add, Amalek)? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us." (Rom. 8: 34-37.) The Lord Himself taught His disciples the connection between His work above, and the Spirit's action in them below, when He said, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." (John 16: 7.) Hence, too, He terms the Holy Ghost "another Comforter" (John 14: 16); and the apostle John applies to our blessed Lord the same title (i.e. Advocate, but really the same word Paraclete; 1 John 2: 1).

But no one man could be a perfect type of Christ. The hands of Moses were heavy, so that they were sustained by Aaron and Hur. This, however, only brings out more fully the truth of the intercession of Christ. Aaron, though not yet formally set apart, represents the priesthood, and Hur, if the significance of the name may guide us, typifies light or purity. Together therefore it will mean the priestly intercession of Christ maintained in holiness before God; and hence an intercession, since it is based upon all that Christ is and has done, which is ever effectual and prevailing. The lesson should be well observed. The battle below depended not upon the strength of the warriors, nor even upon the Holy Spirit, but upon the enduring and efficacious intercession of Christ. For when Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. Hence the necessity of dependence. Apart from it, we may be ready for the conflict; the cause may be a just one, but our failure will be sure and inevitable. But with it, having Christ on high on our behalf, and Christ in the energy of the Spirit as our Leader, "when the wicked, even our enemies and our foes, come against us, they will stumble and fall." Then no foe can stand before the Lord's people.

Amalek was thus discomfited with the edge of the sword. But such a victory — revelation of the source of their strength, and the unchanging character of the enemy — was not to be forgotten. It was to be recorded as a memorial.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi: for he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." (vv. 14-16.)

Two things were combined in this memorial — the record of their deliverance from Amalek, and the pledge of his final overthrow. Every display of the Lord's power on behalf of His people bears this double character. If He step in and vindicate them from the assaults of their enemies, He, by that same act, assures them of His continual protection and care. Every interposition therefore of His between them and their foes

should be rehearsed in their ears, and written on their hearts, both as the memorial of the past, and as the guarantee of His immutable defence. Hence when the Psalmist celebrates a past deliverance, he exclaims, "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident." (Ps. 27: 3.) In the same confidence Moses built an altar. By it he gratefully owned the divine hand, as well as expressed that the praise of the victory belonged to the Lord. It is precisely here that so many fail. The Lord vouchsafes help and deliverance, but they forget to build their altars. Driven into the Lord's presence in their straits, they too often neglect to praise Him when relieved from their pressure. Not so with Moses. By building the altar he declared before the whole of Israel, It is the Lord who has fought for us and secured the victory. This is proclaimed by the title he affixed to it — "The Lord our banner." He therefore it was who led our hosts, and He it is who will lead our hosts; for His controversy with Amalek will never cease. As long as He has a people on the earth, so long will Satan seek to encompass their overthrow. We need to remember this, but with all the prospect it involves, our hearts will be confident, if we can but grasp in power the truth of Jehovah-nissi. The battle is the Lord's, we fight under His colours, and hence — whatever the stubborn persistence of the foe — the victory is assured.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### MILLENNIAL BLESSING.

#### EXODUS XVIII.

THIS chapter brings to a close the dispensation of grace in Israel's history. From Egypt to Sinai all was pure grace. At Sinai they put themselves under law. Hence the special character of chap. 18. The manna, as explained, presented Christ in incarnation, the smitten Rock His death, the streams that flowed from it the gift of the Spirit; and now, following the dispensation of the Spirit, we find in figure the blessing of Jew and Gentile, and the establishment of governmental order in Israel. Indeed, the Church, the Jew, and the Gentile, are all typically delineated. This will be perceived if the several points of the following Scripture are indicated:

"When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel His people, and that the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt, then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back, and her two sons; of which the name of the one was Gershom; for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land: and the name of the other was Eliezer; For the God of my father, said he, was mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh. And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God: and he said unto Moses, I thy father-in-law Jethro am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her.

"And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance, and kissed him: and they asked each other of their welfare: and they came into the tent. And Moses told his father-in-law all that the Lord had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the Lord delivered them. And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh; who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly He was above them. And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God." (vv. 1-12.)

Jethro, the priest of Midian, the father-in-law of Moses, now appears. He had heard of all that God had wrought for His people, and thereon brought Zipporah and her two sons to Moses. The very names of the children explain the typical character of the whole scene. The first is Gershom; "for he said, I have been an alien" or a pilgrim "in a strange land." It is reminiscent therefore of the weary days of Israel's absence from their own land when they were scattered as strangers throughout the world. (See 1 Peter 1: 1.) The name of the second is Eliezer; "For the God of my father was mine help, and delivered

me from the sword of Pharaoh This undoubtedly recalled the past; but it is also a prophecy of the future, and therefore, interpreted typically, speaks of the final deliverance of Israel, preparatory to their introduction into blessing under the reign of Messiah. The two names thus mark two distinct periods in God's dealings with Israel: the first covers the whole time that will elapse between their being carried away captive into Babylon; while the second points to that momentous hour in which the Lord will suddenly appear and snatch His people from the very jaws of the enemy, when He shall go forth and fight against those nations who will be gathered against Jerusalem to battle. (Zechariah 14) But the sorrows of their dispersion, as well as their deliverance from the sword of Pharaoh, are looked upon in this scene as past, and they are now in possession, in figure, of their long-delayed and long-looked-for blessing.

The Church is seen in Zipporah. She was the Gentile wife of Moses, and as such prefigures the Church. All thus is in keeping with the millennial character of the picture; for when Israel is restored, and rejoices in the happy sway of Emmanuel, the Church will have her part in the gladness of that day, associated as she will be in the glories of the reign of the thousand years. It will be a day of unspeakable joy to Him who came of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and every pulse of His joy will awaken a response in the heart of her who will occupy the position of the Lamb's wife. He therefore, and she together with Him, whatever her lesser measure, will have fellowship in gladness over the day of Israel's espousals.

Next we have the Gentiles, as symbolized by Jethro's blessing, and confessing Jehovah's name. And observe how this is produced. Moses, the Jew, declares to Jethro "all that the Lord had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the Lord delivered them." This relation bows the heart of Jethro, and he rejoices because of the deliverance of Israel, praises the Lord for it, and confesses His absolute supremacy. We thus read in the Psalms, "Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people; Thou hast made me the head of the heathen" (Gentiles): "a people whom I have not known shall serve me. As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me." (Ps. 18: 43, 44.)

Jethro then unites in worship with Aaron, and the elders of Israel, together with Moses, before God. Moses is here the king, and hence he with Israel, and the Gentiles (Jethro) eat bread before God. It is the union of Israel and the Gentiles in worship. It is the scene predicted by the prophet: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob: and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isa. 2: 2, 3)

In the remainder of the chapter the establishment of judgment and government is recorded:

"And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even? And Moses said unto his father-in-law, Because the people come unto me to enquire of God: when they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another; and I do make them know the statutes of God, and His laws. And Moses' father-in-law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: and thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness: and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: and let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace. So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.

"And Moses let his father-in-law depart; and he went his way into his own land." (vv. 13-27.)

Two things have to be carefully distinguished — the failure of Moses, and the thing symbolized by the appointment of the rulers over the people. To take the latter first, it is evident that this arrangement for judging the people emblematically portrays the order in government which the Messiah will set up when He assumes His kingdom. As the Psalmist speaks, "He shall judge Thy people with righteousness, and Thy poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness." (Ps. 72: 2, 3.) Hence it is that this section closes with this account. But while this is divinely intended, the failure of Moses in listening to Jethro must not be concealed. Indeed, if it were, some most valuable instruction would thereby be lost. The first mistake he made was in listening to Jethro on such a matter. The Lord had given him his office; and it was to Him he should have had recourse on every subject that concerned His people. The pleas Jethro advanced were indeed specious and subtle. They were grounded upon his anxiety for the welfare of his son-in-law. "Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone." If Moses would but do as he advised, then he said, "So shall it be easier for thyself," etc.; and again, "Then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall go to their place in peace." It was not therefore concern for God,

but for Moses, that actuated Jethro. But the arguments he advanced were those most calculated to influence the natural man. Who is there, even among the Lord's servants, that does not at times feel the weight of his responsibility, and who would not rejoice at the prospect of its being lessened? There is indeed no more seductive temptation presented at such a moment than that of the need of a little care for one's self and one's comfort. But, dangerous as it is, and as it was in the case of Moses, if he had remembered the source of his office, as well as his strength, he would not have yielded to it. For if his work in judging the people were of the Lord, and for the Lord, His grace would be all-sufficient for His servant. He taught Moses this lesson, as we find in the book of Numbers, when Moses complained to the Lord, and in the very words that Jethro had instilled into his mind, "I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me." (Num. 11: 14.) The Lord heard his complaint, and directed him to associate seventy men with himself to aid him in his work, saying, "I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone." (v. 17.) Though, therefore, the Lord granted him his desire, there was no additional supply of strength for the government of Israel, but Moses was now called upon to share with the seventy the Spirit which he before possessed. According to man, the counsel of Jethro was wise and prudent, evincing much sagacity in human affairs; but according to God, its acceptance was characterized by doubt and unbelief. In reality it left God out of the calculation, and made the health of Moses its chief aim, losing sight altogether of the fact that it was not Moses, but the Lord through Moses, who bore the burden of the people; and hence that it was not a question of the strength of Moses, but of his resources in God. How apt are all to lose sight of this important truth — that in any service, if occupied in it for the Lord, the difficulties in it should be measured, not by what we are, but what He is. We are never sent to warfare at our own charges, but every true servant is sustained by the all-sufficiency of God. Moses might be despondent in the presence of such a task, and Paul might almost faint under the pressure of the thorn in the flesh, but to both one and the other the divine word is spoken, if the ear be but opened to hear, My grace is sufficient for thee."

Several valuable instructions may be deduced from this narrative. First, it is always exceedingly dangerous to listen to the advice of a relative in the things of God. When our blessed Lord, together with His disciples, was exceedingly occupied with His ministry, "so that they could not so much as eat bread," His friends or relatives "went out to lay hold on Him: for they said, He is beside Himself." They thought not of the claims of God, and could not understand anything of that zeal which was consuming Him in the service which He came to fulfil. Relatives look through the medium of their claims, or their natural affection, and hence the eye, not being single, cannot judge aright in the presence of God. It no doubt called for much self-sacrifice and loss of ease and comfort for Zipporah, and Moses, too, in the work to which he was called. It was nevertheless no small honour and privilege to be thus engaged; and had he been fully alive to it, he would have resolutely closed his ears to the seductive voice of the tempter in the person of Jethro.

Secondly, we gather that when once a word of distrust or complaint is admitted into our hearts, it is not very easily dispelled. As we have seen from Numbers 11, Moses uses

the very words in his complaint that were suggested by Jethro. It is exactly here that Satan is so successful. There may be but a half unformed thought, an insinuation, in our minds, and immediately he comes and puts it into words, and presents it to our souls. For example, feeling weary in service, and it may be despondent through weariness, how often will Satan suggest that we are doing too much, going beyond our strength; and if we accept the temptation the thought may hamper us for years, even if it does not find expression in murmurs before God. We need therefore to be very watchful over our hearts as not ignorant of the devices of the enemy.

Lastly, it lies on the surface that man's order by no means represents the mind of God. To human eyes the governmental system advised by Jethro was very orderly and beautiful, and far more likely to secure the administration of justice among the people. Man always thinks he can improve upon the order of God. This has been the secret of the ruin of the church. Instead of adhering to the Scriptures, which reveal the divine mind, man has brought in ideas, plans, and systems of his own; and hence the manifold divisions and sects which characterize the outward form of Christianity. The safety of the Lord's people lies in steadfastly cleaving to the word of God; and in the refusal therefore of all counsel and advice which may be given apart from it by man.

Jethro had done his work, and, by the permission of Moses, he went his way into his own land. (v. 27.) What a contrast with Moses and the children of Israel! They were going God's way and to His land; and, as a consequence, were pilgrims passing through the wilderness; but Jethro went his (not God's) way, and into his own (not God's) land. Instead therefore, of being a pilgrim, he had a settled home, where he kept no sabbath, but found his own rest.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### SINAI.

EXODUS xix, xx.

A NEW dispensation is inaugurated in these chapters. Up to the close of chapter 18, as before indicated, grace reigned, and hence characterized all God's dealings with His people; but from this point they were put, with their own consent, under the rigid requirements of law. Sinai is the expression of this dispensation, and is thus associated with it for all time. The apostle contrasts it with Zion as the seat of royal grace, when he says, in writing to the Hebrews, "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard, entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more. . . . But ye are come unto mount Zion." (Heb. 12: 18-22.) He shows that Sinai had then passed away, and had been succeeded by another dispensation the expression of which was mount Zion. It is with the former that our chapters deal. The time and place are both distinctly marked. "In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount." (vv. 1, 2.) The Lord thus fulfilled the word which He gave to Moses: "Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain." (Ex. 3: 12.) They were to hold a feast unto the Lord (see Ex. 5: 1; Ex. 10: 9); and they might have done so had they but known themselves, and also Jehovah's heart. But they were about to be tested in a new way. Grace had already searched them, and discovered nothing but disobedience, rebellion, and sin; and now they were to be tried by law. This has been the object of God in all His dispensations — to test, and thereby to reveal, what man is; but blessed be His name, if He has disclosed the incurable corruption of our nature, He has revealed at the same time what He is — each revelation of Himself being according to the character of the relationship into which He entered with His people. Thereby He taught that, if man were completely ruined and lost, help and salvation were to be found in Him, and in Him alone. The giving of the law from mount Sinai has, on this account, a peculiar importance and interest. All its circumstances therefore are worthy of our attention.

"And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

"And Moses came, and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the Lord." (vv. 3-9.)

There are two things in the message which the Lord commissioned Moses to carry to the people. First, He reminds them of what He had done for them and in a way which should have taught them their own utter impotence, and that all their resources were in God. "Ye have seen," He says, "what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself." He had delivered them from Pharaoh, destroyed him and his armies; He had borne His people by His might, had brought them to Himself, and given them a place of nearness and relationship. He had done everything for them, and He appeals to their own knowledge in proof of it; and such an appeal was calculated to touch their hearts with gratitude, as it recalled to their minds the source of all the blessing which they now enjoyed. Then, secondly, He makes a proposal. "Now, therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine," etc. The bearing of this proposal must be distinctly marked. God had redeemed Israel by His own power: in pursuance of His purposes of grace and love He had made them His own people, and He had engaged to bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey (Ex. 3: 7, 8); and all this was founded upon the pure grace of His own heart, and was governed by no conditions whatsoever from the people. He reminds them of this in pointing them back to the work He had wrought on their behalf. But now to test them He says, "I will make your position and blessing dependent on your obedience. Hitherto I have done everything for you; but now I propose to make the continuance of My favour contingent upon your own works. Are you willing to promise absolute obedience to My word and covenant on these terms?" This in substance was the proposition Moses was charged to carry to the children of Israel.

And Moses faithfully fulfilled his mission. He "called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him." (v. 7.) Surely such a message would produce deep exercises of heart. It might be expected, at least, that they would need time to consider it in all its significance. They could not have forgotten that already, even in the short three months that had elapsed since they crossed the Red Sea, they had sinned again and again; that every fresh difficulty had but witnessed their failure and sin. If therefore they had gone over their past experience, they would have seen that if they accepted these new terms everything would be lost. They would surely say one to the other, "We have disobeyed time after time, and we fear that the same thing might happen again, and then we forfeit all. No; we must throw ourselves unreservedly upon that same grace which has saved, led, and preserved us in our journey through the wilderness. If grace does not still reign we are a lost people." So far from this, however, they instantly accept the proposed condition, and said, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." Their past experiences had gone for nothing. They thus betrayed

the most utter ignorance, both of the character of God, and of their own hearts. It was in fact a most fatal mistake. Instead of clinging with tenacity, because of their own felt impotence, to what *God was for them, which is grace*, they foolishly offered to make everything depend upon what *they could be for God, which is the principle of law*. It is ever the same. Man in his folly and blindness ever seeks to obtain blessing upon the ground of his own works, and rejects a salvation which is offered to him in pure grace; for he is unwilling to be nothing, and grace makes everything, of God, and nothing of man. Hence it is that race wounds the pride and self-importance of the sinner, and thereby provokes the resistance of his depraved heart.

Moses carried back the message of the people, and the Lord prepares to establish His new relationship with His people on the ground of law. First of all, He puts Moses in the place of a mediator. "Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever." He gives him a position that the people should be compelled to acknowledge. After this, directions for the people are given in connection with the promulgation of the code by which they were to be governed, and which sets forth the standard of God's requirements. Everything commanded betokened the change of dispensation. Before they had to do with a God of grace; now they have to do with a God of righteousness. This necessitated distance on the part of God (for He had to do with sinners), and separation and cleansing on the part of the people. The first was signified by the "thick cloud," in which He said He would come to Moses, and the second by the various prescriptions for the people.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: there shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.

"And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives." (vv. 10-15.)

The people were thus to be "sanctified" for two days. The meaning to be attached to this term is always determined by the connection in which it is found. Here it will signify the separation of the people — setting them apart unto God on the ground of their promised obedience. This would doubtless involve their separation externally from everything unsuited to the presence of a holy God. They were likewise to wash their clothes. Everything, it will be remarked, has now to be done from their side. Moses was to sanctify them and they were to wash their clothes; for the moment they undertook to obey, as the condition of blessing, they in reality accepted the responsibility of fitting themselves for God's presence. No doubt they acquired thus a kind of ceremonial qualification to meet with God., but the very distance at which they were kept, proved at once how inadequate were their efforts. They might wash their clothes never so

scrupulously, and make them so clean that no human eye could detect defilement, but the question for their consciences, if they had but understood, was, Could they so cleanse themselves as to be able to bear the inspection of a holy God? Let Job answer the question. "If," says he, "I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt Thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me." (Job 9: 30, 31.) The Lord Himself has answered it for us. Speaking to Israel, by the prophet, He says, "Though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before Me." (Jeremiah 2: 22.) **MAN CANNOT CLEANSE HIMSELF FOR GOD.** This is the lesson of the whole Scripture.

Why, then, it will be replied, did the Lord give this commandment to Israel? For the same reason that He gave them the law to prove what was in their hearts, to bring out fully to view what was lurking there, to expose indeed the corruption of their nature, and thereby to teach them their ruined and guilty condition. In measure they learnt the futility of their own efforts; for spite of all their "sanctifying" and "washing" they could not draw near to God, and they were terrified at His voice. It is so oftentimes in the experience of sinners. Awakened to some sense of their condition, they begin to try to improve themselves, to purify their own hearts, and to qualify themselves in this way for the favour of God. But they soon discover that the only effect of all their efforts is to bring to light their own sin and vileness. Or if they succeed in weaving a robe of self-righteousness, and in thus concealing for a time their deformities, the moment they are brought into the presence of God, the robe itself appears in the light of His holiness as nothing but filthy rags. Man indeed is utterly helpless, and until he learns this he can never understand that the only way to cleanse his robes from every spot and stain — so white as to satisfy even the requirements of God's holiness — is in the blood of the Lamb. (See Rev. 1: 5, Rev. 7: 14.)

The people were then sanctified, and they washed their clothes, and fasted in preparation for "the third day." The third day is often significant and typical; and so here it would seem to speak in figure of death. It was, then, on the morning of the third day that the Lord descended upon mount Sinai, with all the accompaniments of His awful and terrible majesty. There were thunders and lightnings — expressive of judicial power, the necessary attitude of God in His holiness, when coming into contact with sinners. There was also a thick cloud upon the mount (see verse 9) setting forth His distance and concealment. As the Psalmist says, "Clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne." (Ps. 97: 2.) Moreover the voice of the trumpet, both the herald of the approach of God, and the summons for the assembling of the people, was exceeding loud. Every possible solemnity surrounded the divine steps, and all the people that were in the camp, spite of the preparations they had undergone, trembled. If they had confidence in themselves before, it must now have been rudely shaken, if not dispelled; for if prepared to meet God, why should they fear? Was it not He who had borne them on eagles' wings, and brought them to Himself whom they were to meet? Was He not their Saviour and Lord? Why then did they tremble at the signs of His presence? Because they in their folly had undertaken to meet Him on the ground of what they were in themselves, of their own doings, instead of casting themselves on His mercy, His grace, and love. Fatal mistake! and now they were made to

feel it. But their word was irrevocable, and they cannot yet be released from its obligations. Moses therefore brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly." (vv. 17, 18.) As we read in the Psalms, "The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel." (Ps. 68: 8.) Fire was thus the characteristic of the Lord's presence upon Sinai — fire and smoke, fire being the symbol of His holiness, but of His holiness in the aspect of judgment against sin. "Our God is a consuming fire." Hence meeting with Israel on the ground of law, fire was the most significant expression of the fact that righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne. Moses therefore speaks of the "fiery law" that went forth from God's right hand, fiery because being "holy, and just, and good," it could only judge and consume those who did not answer to its requirements. It is of this effect that he speaks when he says, "We are consumed by Thine anger, and by Thy wrath are we troubled." (Ps. 90: 7.)

Moses spake to God when the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, and God answered him by a voice. He was then called up to the mount, and what was the nature of the first communication he received? Already bounds had been set round about the mount; for the place whereon God stood was holy ground, and the penalty of death was attached to any one, man or beast, who should even touch the mount. But even this was not enough. "Go down" said the Lord unto Moses, "charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish." (v. 21.) All alike, priests and people, were to be kept at a distance, Moses and Aaron excepted — lest the Lord should break forth upon them (v. 24.)

All these details are most solemnly interesting, as showing man's utter incapacity to stand on his own merits before God, and as teaching at the same time, that if the sinner ventures on such a foundation to come into contact with Him it can only be to his own destruction. God moreover apart from atonement, cannot meet the sinner on the ground of righteousness without destroying him. When will men learn that there is, and must be for ever, the most irreconcilable antagonism between holiness and sin; that God must be against the sinner, unless the claims of His holiness are met; and that these claims can never be met except in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ? In this light it is a touching scene. God in all the awful majesty of His holiness upon Sinai; the people in all their distance and guilt, trembling at what they saw and heard, shut off from the mount, but brought out of the camp to meet with God, and to receive the requirements of His righteous law which they had undertaken to obey.

"And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and

showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain. Remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it.

"Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's." (Ex. 20: 1-17.)

There are several points in connection with the giving of the law which demand distinct and especial attention. The first is the nature of the law itself. The commandments are ten in number, and they are based upon, or rather flow out from, the relationship into which God had entered with His people in redemption. "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Looking at the commandments together it will be seen that the first four relate to God, and the last six to man; i.e. they define responsibility towards God and towards man. Hence they were summed up by our blessed Lord, in answer to the question, Which is the great commandment in the law? as follows: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matt. 22: 35-40; see Deut. 10: 12; and Lev. 19: 18.) Love to God — perfect love to God, perfect according to their capacity — and love to their neighbour, according to the standard of self-love, were thus enjoined upon Israel.

But remark that in the details of the commandments the characteristic is prohibition. "Thou shalt not" — if we except the fourth, and even in that "keeping the sabbath" means the abstinence from all work — is the essence of the whole. This fact has an important bearing upon the second point to be considered — the *object of the law*. These ten commandments were the standard of God's requirements from Israel. They had voluntarily undertaken obedience to His voice, and to keep His covenant as the condition of blessing. In response to this the Lord revealed through Moses what He required. A standard therefore was erected by which it could be easily ascertained, even by themselves, whether or not they were obedient to God's word. By these commandments therefore He came to prove them, that His fear might be before their faces that they might not sin. (v. 20.) But He knew what was in their hearts, though they might be ignorant, and hence the giving of the law really had for its object the bringing to light what was in His people's hearts. This accounts for the prohibitive form of the commandment. For why should it be said, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not

steal, Thou shalt not covet, unless the tendency to all these forms of sins was found within them? The apostle Paul explains this in Rom. 7. "I had not known sin," he says, "but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law, sin was dead." (vv. 7, 8.) The lust was in the heart before the law came, but not being forbidden he could not know it as lust; but immediately the commandment said, Thou shalt not lust, it sprang into the light, and the opposition of the heart to God was made manifest. The law therefore entered, as the apostle elsewhere says, that the offence might abound (Rom. 5: 20); i.e. to make the offences known. They were committed before; but they were not seen as offences until they were forbidden. Then their nature could no longer be concealed, and all might understand that they were transgressions of the law of God.

This point is of the utmost importance, inasmuch as it is contended even now, although the gospel of the grace of God is fully revealed and widely proclaimed, that obedience to the law is the way of life. How many thousands indeed are deluded by this fatal snare. Let such ponder the words of the apostle, "If there had been a law given *which could have given life*, verily righteousness should have been by the law." (Gal. 3: 21.) True it was said, Ye shall keep my statutes, and my judgments; which if a man do, he shall live in them (Lev. 18: 5); but how could sinners, by nature and by practice, keep the commandments of God? Hear indeed the Holy Spirit's own reasoning, through Paul, upon this matter: "As many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. *But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident*: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them." (Gal. 3: 10-12.) This removes every difficulty, and places beyond a doubt the true object of the law, which was, as we have said, to erect a standard of God's requirements, and so to convict man of sin. The law entered that the offence might abound. And the law can be very blessedly used now for the same purpose. If a man, strong in the confidence of his self-righteousness, be encountered, he can be probed and tested by it: he can be asked if he loves God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself, and thereby the deceitful character of his own works be exposed.

If this point is understood, and if there be simple subjection to the word of God, there will be no difficulty in apprehending that the law is not given as a full revelation of the mind and heart of God. The way in which it is often spoken of would lead souls to suppose that there could not be a further and fuller revelation. But if so, where, as another has asked, shall we find His mercy, His compassion and love? No; "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good;" for it is a revelation of God, as every word and act of His must necessarily be, but to maintain that it is a full and perfect revelation is to ignore the need of atonement, to be blind to the true character of the person and work of our blessed Lord and Saviour — to forget, in a word, the difference between Sinai and Calvary. Until the cross, it was impossible that God could perfectly reveal Himself. But immediately that the work wrought there was completed, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom — to signify that God was now free — free in righteousness — to come out in grace to the sinner, and that the sinner, who believed His

testimony to the efficacy of the blood of Christ, was free to go into the immediate presence of God. The law unfolds His righteous character, and consequently His requirements from Israel; but God Himself still dwelt in the thick darkness — unrevealed.

One other point demands a passing notice. Granting that the law is not the means of life, it is sometimes said, Yet is it not the rule of Christian conduct? Look at it well, and then ask if this is possible. Take for example the prohibitions as to one's neighbour. Would God be satisfied with a Christian who abstained from the sins there specified? Nay, would a Christian be satisfied himself that, in abstaining from these things he answered to God's mind as to his walk? Suppose now, that he even did love his neighbour as himself, would this rise to the height of the example of Christ? What does the apostle John say? Hereby perceive we love, because He laid down His life for us. That is, the true expression of love is seen in the death of Christ for us. Hence the apostle adds, "And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (1 John 3: 16.) To do this would surely be loving the brethren better than ourselves — going therefore marvellously beyond the scope of law. The truth is, as Paul has taught us, we are "dead to the law by the body of Christ; that we should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom. 7: 4.) The law was a rule for Israel; but Christ, and Christ alone, is the standard of the believer. "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." (1 John 2: 6.) It is therefore an infinitely higher standard, involving far greater responsibility, than that of the law. This contention, indeed, that we are still under the law, notwithstanding the statement, "Ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6: 14), springs from ignorance of what redemption is. When it is seen that believers are brought through the death and resurrection of Christ out of their old condition, and have a new place and standing altogether; that they are not in the flesh but in the Spirit (Rom. 8: 9), it is easily perceived that they belong to a sphere into which the law cannot enter; and that as Christ is the only object of their souls, so the expression of Christ in their walk and conversation, as they pass through this scene, is their only responsibility. We commend these points to the careful attention of every child of God.

The effect of the giving of the law is now seen. As in the previous chapter, the people are filled with terror, and "they removed, and stood afar off." (v. 18.) They might have thus learned that sinners cannot stand in the presence of God. "And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die." (v. 19.) A sad confession of what they were, and a significant indication of what would come of their promised obedience. Ah! if the sinner would but learn the lesson, that if God speaks with him when in his sins he must die! For holiness and sin cannot co-exist, and if brought into contact, apart from atonement, there could be but one result. These trembling children of Israel, therefore, do but express the simple truth. God had drawn near in His holiness, and they shrink abashed from His presence, lest they should die; and thereby they proclaimed that they were sinners in their guilt, and as such unable to listen to His voice. Moses thereon exhorted them not to fear, telling them that God was come to prove them, and that His fear might be before their faces that they should not sin. The way indeed was plainly marked for them in the ten commandments, and it would soon be seen if they would walk in it or not. The position is now clearly shown. The people are at

a distance, actually and morally. God was in the thick darkness, significant of the fact that He must remain concealed as long as He was on the ground of law. Moses occupies, in the election and grace of God, the place of mediator. He thus can draw near to the thick darkness where God was. He is thus a type of the "one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 2: 5.)

The chapter concludes with directions concerning worship. For as soon as the formal relationship is established between God and His people, though on the ground of law, provision for worship must be made. Three things need only be noticed in this connection. First, that God could not be approached except through sacrifices. Secondly, He could come and bless them in all places where He would record His name — notwithstanding what they were, on the ground of the sweet savour of their offerings.<sup>12</sup> Thirdly, the character of the altar is specified. It might be an altar of earth. If of stone, it must not be of hewn stone, "for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto Mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon." (vv. 24-26.) Man's work and man's order are prohibited. Thus in worship everything must be according to God; and if there be but the introduction of a single thing for beauty, or convenience, it is polluted, and man's nakedness is discovered. How jealous, therefore, Christians should be against the admission of anything in worship which is not stamped with the authority of the word of God.

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<sup>12</sup> The sin-offering was not yet prescribed. These, therefore, were all sweet savour offerings.

## CHAPTER XV.

### JUDGMENTS.

EXODUS xxi - xxiii.

IN this section are contained the various "judgments" or statutes which God gave to govern His people in their various relationships. It will scarcely be necessary to expound these minutely, though the significance and bearing of each class may be indicated. They afford a striking view of the care of God for all that concerned the walk and ways of His people; and if penalties are attached to the breach of these different laws, it is only in accord with the dispensation which had now been established.

The first relates to the Hebrew servant.

"If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever." (vv. 2-6.)

We have in this Hebrew servant a beautiful and expressive type of Christ. The point to be observed is, that having served six years, he should "go out free for nothing." But if his master should have given him a wife during the time of his servitude, and sons and daughters were born to him, then his wife and children should belong to his master, but he should go out by himself; and the only way by which he could retain his wife and family was by becoming a servant for ever. The typical application of this to Christ is most interesting. He took the form of a servant (Phil. 2); He came to do God's will (Heb. 10); not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. (John 6: 38.) He served perfectly His full allotted period, and might therefore have gone out free. As He said to Peter, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Matt. 26: 53, 54.) There was no necessity, as far as He was concerned, that He should go to the cross; no necessity whatever, excepting from the constraint of His own heart, and from His desire to accomplish the glory of God, and to obtain His bride, the pearl of great price. Why, then, did He permit Himself to be nailed to that shameful cross? to be led as a lamb to the slaughter? He was free before God and man. None could convince Him of sin. He stood absolutely free; and hence we ask again, Why did He "not go out free"? Because, we reply, He loved His Master, His wife, and His children, and therefore would become a servant for ever. His "Master" had the supreme place in His soul, and He burned with a holy desire to glorify Him on the earth,

and to finish the work which He gave Him to do; He loved His wife — the Church — and gave Himself for it; and He was bound by the same ties of immutable affection to His children — His own, considered individually — and therefore He would not go out free, but presented Himself to His Master that He might serve Him for ever. His ear was thus bored — sign of service (compare Ps. 40: 6 with Heb. 10: 5) — in token of His abiding position. He will consequently never cease to be the Servant. He serves His people now at the right hand of God (see John 13); and He will serve them in the glory itself. He Himself says, "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." (Luke 12: 3 7) This picture therefore combines the lowly service of Christ on earth with the service He carries on, now that He is glorified, at the right hand of God, and will for ever carry on for His people throughout eternity. It reveals at the same time the matchless grace and the unfathomable love of His heart, which thus led Him to take and to retain this position. And how wondrous it is that His affection should associate the Church with His "Master." "I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free." Blessed Lord, Thou hast thus linked Thine own, through the might of Thy love, with Thy God and Thyself for ever!

The next paragraph contains directions as to a maidservant that has been sold by her father.

"And if a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall not go out as the menservants do. If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her. And if he have betrothed her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish. And if he do not these three unto her, then shall she go out free without money." (vv. 7-11.)

Though she might "not go out as the menservants do," yet God in His tenderness carefully guarded her rights in the position occupied. The tendency is only too often apparent to treat those who are entirely subject and dependent according to changing moods and caprice. This was not to be. If her master changed his mind, and she became evil in his eyes (see margin), she should have the option of redemption. She must not be degraded in her service, nor could he sell her to a strange nation. By his deceitful dealing he had forfeited rights which otherwise he would have possessed. Whether betrothed to his son, or to himself, her rights were carefully maintained; and if these were neglected, in case he took another wife, then she should be absolutely free. Thus, in His compassionate love, the Lord surrounds His weak and defenceless ones with laws to secure for them equitable and considerate treatment.

Offences, to which the penalty of death is attached, are next introduced.

"He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a

place whither he shall flee. But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from Mine altar, that he may die. And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death. And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death." (vv. 12-17.)

The case of murder is first dealt with. This is no new enactment. To Noah God had said, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man." (Gen. 9: 6.) At the hand of every man's brother would He require the life of man. Man therefore was made his brother's keeper, and God protected him whom He had made in His own image by the most solemn penalty which He could exact; for life belongs to Him, and hence he could not suffer another to trench upon His prerogative. Thus when Cain slew his brother Abel, the Lord said unto him, "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground." (Gen. 4: 10.) For wilful murder there was no release from the penalty, even though the murderer might have fled for protection to God's altar. (See 1 Kings 2: 28-32.) He must die. There is no countenance in the word of God for the modern philanthropic movement for the abolition of capital punishment. It substitutes indeed human ideas in the place of God's primeval law. In fact, it exalts man over God. The directions given by our Lord, in the "sermon on the mount" (Matt. 5: 38-48), apply only to the relationships of the fellow-subjects of His kingdom, and not to those existing between man and man, and in no way therefore set aside the precept given to Noah.

An exception is made. "If a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee." (Compare Deut. 19: 4, 5; indeed the whole chapter.) If we apply these statutes to the action of the Jewish nation against Christ, remembering how they did "lie in wait," and that they at length succeeded by bribery and artifice in securing His apprehension and condemnation, it might seem as if there were for them no possible escape. But our Lord Himself prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23: 34); so that God in grace, if they repent, on the ground of this intercession, will impute ignorance to them, and appoint them a city of refuge for escape and safety. Hence Peter, when preaching to them, said, "I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." (Acts 3: 17.) Grace thus can relieve from the penalty of the law, on the ground of the atonement for sin that was wrought out by the death of Christ.

Both smiting and cursing father or mother (vv. 15, 17) incurred the same penalty. Thus God established by the holy sanctions of His law parental authority; and demanded for it the reverential regard of children. Disobedience to parents is given as one sign of the perilous times of the last days (2 Tim. 3: 2), fully showing the value in the eyes of God of the subjection of children to their parents. For, indeed, it is God's authority they represent, and hence is absolute in its character *when used for God*, demanding implicit and unconditional obedience. (See Deut. 21: 18-21; Eph. 6: 1; Col. 3: 20.) Hence the gravity of the sins here specified. But if smiting and cursing earthly parents deserve death, how much greater the sin of open-handed rebellion against God

Man-stealing, and man-selling, slavery in fact, as still practised in many parts of the world, had also the penalty of death. (v. 16.) Man may be a sinner, and yet, notwithstanding God's claims upon him, claims too which must be met ere he can be delivered, he is of such value in the sight of God, that his liberty must be sacredly respected by his fellow-man. How marvellous that, with such a scripture, slavery in its worse forms — stealing, selling, and holding men as mere chattels — could be upheld, even within the recollection of the present generation, by professed followers of Christ!

In the next paragraph are found offences against the person with their specified penalties.

"And if men strive together, and one smite another with a stone, or with his fist, and he die not, but keepeth his bed: if he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit: only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed. And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished for he is his money. If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow; he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. And if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish; he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. And if he smite out his manservant's tooth, or his maidservant's tooth; he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake." (vv. 18-27.)

Two things only need be noted, leaving the details for the reader himself. The first is, that all these enactments reveal the tenderness of God in protecting the bodies of His people — and specially of those occupying a subject position. The second is, that we find here the true character of law. Grace is absent. It is eye for an eye, and tooth for a tooth, etc. Our blessed Lord especially cites these provisions to point out their contrast with grace. He says, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." (Matt. 5: 38, 39.) On the ground of law an exact equivalent is demanded — no more, and no less; but grace can remit every claim; for dealt with in grace ourselves, our whole debt remitted, we must act on the same principle in our relationships with one another. Be it, however, never forgotten, that the foundation of grace itself is laid deep in righteousness, and hence it reigns through righteousness (Rom. 5: 21), having thus been established upon an everlasting and immutable basis.

The responsibility of the owner for the acts of his cattle is then laid down.

"If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die; then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit: but if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his

owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death. If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give, for the ransom of his life, whatsoever is laid upon him. Whether he have gored a son, or have gored a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done unto him. If the ox shall push a manservant or a maidservant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned. And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit, and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein; the owner of the pit shall make it good, and give money unto the owner of them; and the dead beast shall be his. And if one man's ox hurt another's, that he die, then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the money of it; and the dead ox also they shall divide. Or if it be known that the ox hath used to push in time past, and his owner hath not kept him in; he shall surely pay ox for ox; and the dead shall be his own." (vv. 28-36.)

It will suffice again to indicate that the same principle of righteous equivalent also obtains in these directions. Even the death of the owner, as well as the ox, is enjoined if there had been a guilty knowledge of the propensity of the animal, and he had made no provision to guard against it. (v. 29.) How vividly it brings before our minds the truth taught by our blessed Lord, that even the hairs of our heads are all numbered. Everything is provided for, and every relationship, with their various breaches, adjusted in harmony with the righteous government under which Israel was now placed. There is one particular that should not be unnoticed. The manservant, or the maidservant, was priced at thirty shekels of silver. It is to this the prophet Zechariah refers: "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver." (Zech. 11: 12.) It is Christ who is thus set forth who was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver. (Matt. 26: 15.) Such was man's estimate of the value of God manifest in flesh, of the only begotten of the Father!

In the next place (Ex. 22), we have the law of restitution in cases of theft.

"If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him; for he should make full restitution: if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep, he shall restore double. If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution. If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field, be consumed therewith, he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution. If a man shall deliver unto his neighbour money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, let him pay double. If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges, to see whether he have put his hand unto his neighbour's goods. For all manner of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, which another challengeth to be

his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour. If a man deliver unto his neighbour an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast, to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it: then shall an oath of the Lord be between them both, that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbour's goods; and the owner of it shall accept thereof, and he shall not make it good. And if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof. If it be torn in pieces, then let him bring it for witness, and he shall not make good that which was torn. And if a man borrow ought of his neighbour and it be hurt, or die, the owner thereof being not with it, he shall surely make it good. But if the owner thereof be with it, he shall not make it good: if it be an hired thing, it came for his hire." (vv. 1-15.)

Zachaeus refers, without doubt, to this provision of the law (v. 1) when he said to the Lord, "If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." (Luke 19: 8.) As in the previous chapter we saw how God guarded the life and the persons of His people, we perceive in this how He protected their property, and made all who disregarded His law answerable to Himself. But the question for our souls is, If robbing a fellow-man is thus condemned, how can the sin be met of robbing God? How can those who are already sinners make restitution to Him? It is impossible; and if left to ourselves we must for ever have remained under the consequences of our trespasses. But we read in the Psalms of One who said, "Then I restored that which I took not away." (Psalm 69: 4.) He was the trespass-offering as well as the sin and burnt-offerings. He has therefore made full and adequate restitution (we can say, if we believe) for all our trespasses. There is not a single breach which could be laid to our charge which He, in His wondrous grace and mercy, has not repaired. This brings before us a very blessed aspect of His death. In the chapter the offender had himself to make restitution. We could not do this, and had there been no substitute for us — no one to restore to God that which He had not, but which we had, taken away, we must have for ever been answerable to His claims — for ever answerable, but having nothing to pay. The more therefore we remember this, the more shall we magnify the grace of Him who of His own will answered to God for us, so that He can righteously acquit us from every claim, yea, and as righteously bring us into the unclouded light and joy of His own presence. Blessed be for ever His most holy name!

We now pass to injunctions of another kind. The first of these refers to carnal desire. (v. 16.) The guilt is supposed here to attach mainly to the man — not, however, excepting the woman from her share. But man cannot lightly sin, and act as if he had not sinned, especially in the way here mentioned. Hence he incurred the obligation of endowing her to be his wife. The principle is laid down by Paul. "Know ye not," he says, "that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith He, shall be one flesh." (1 Cor. 6: 16.) For the same reason our blessed Lord taught, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." (Matt. 19: 9.) What a comment upon human laws which permit divorces upon other grounds — to the utter neglect of the wisdom of God, and which at the same time betray the most complete ignorance of the fundamental relationships between man and woman. While therefore we

are bound to obey the powers that be, when they are not in conflict with the authority of God, the law of the land cannot be the guide of the conscience of the believer or of the church.

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." (v. 18.) The essential idea of a witch was commerce with spirits, which finds its counterpart in the spiritualism of the present day. Hence in Leviticus she is described as "a woman that hath a familiar spirit." (Lev. 20: 27.) The witch of Endor is the exemplification of her kind; for we read that Saul went to her and said, "I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring him up whom I shall name unto thee." (1 Sam. 28: 8.) This is the very thing that spiritualists profess to do — to bring the inquirer into communion with departed spirits. Like Saul, unable to obtain communications from God, they seek information concerning things unknown and unseen through the agency of spirits. It is in fact a turning from God to Satan. The whole system, whether in Israel or our own day, is Satanic. A witch therefore was to be destroyed; and this shows the utter antagonism of her vocation to God; and the spiritualism now in vogue is no less hateful, and, if persisted in, no less destructive to souls.

Two sins are then named to which is attached the penalty of death. The first is that of the flesh — and of the flesh in its most horrible and revolting form. The second is idolatry. God could not suffer the acknowledgement among His own people of any god beside Himself. It would be a denial of His own claims and authority, and the subversion of the very foundations of His relationship with His people; and on their part it would be the denial of His true character, and the rejection of His absolute sway. The worship of the true God, and of false gods, could not therefore co-exist. The apostle thus says, "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." (1 Cor. 10: 20, 21.) The acceptance of false gods amounts to a rejection of the true God. Hence, on the other side, when the Thessalonians were converted, it is said of them, "Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God," etc. (1 Thess. 1: 9.)

Tenderness and compassion are then inculcated in several cases.

"Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto Me, I will surely hear their cry; and My wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless. If thou lend money to any of My people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury. If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down: for that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto Me, that I will hear; for I am gracious." (vv. 21-27.)

The stranger comes first, and the remembrance of what they had been in the land of Egypt was to govern their conduct toward such. They had been in bitterness of soul through hard bondage when under the iron yoke of Pharaoh, and they could therefore enter into the feelings of those who were strangers in a strange land. The helpless are next commended to their hearts; and of all the helpless ones that appeal to our compassion, surely the widow and the fatherless have the first claim. God thus surrounds them here with the powerful defence of His own arm. If any should afflict them, they should be killed and their wives and children should become widows and orphans. Throughout the whole of Scripture these two classes are ever indicated as the special object of God's care, and hence should be objects of our compassionate concern. James accordingly says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (James 1: 27.) The two following directions concern the poor — the first, to save him from extortion as well as to prevent the rich from making gain of his poverty; and the second, to secure him from destitution and nakedness. These laws, spite of the fact that the children of Israel were now governed from Sinai, permit us to see into the depths of the heart of God. What inexpressible tenderness in the provision that a pledged garment should be given up "by that the sun goeth down: for that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto Me, that I will hear; for I am gracious." The heart of God must be expressed by His people, and He is touched by the sight of one who has nothing to cover his body when he lies down to sleep!

Respect for constituted authorities is also enjoined: "Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people." (v. 28.) The term "gods" evidently is here used of authorities, or judges, as in margin. (See John 10: 34, 35.) The apostle Paul cites this scripture when before Ananias and the sanhedrin. (Acts 23: 5.) It corresponds with the exhortations in various epistles. (Rom. 13; 1 Tim. 2: 2; 1 Peter 2: 13-17.) The path of God's people is thus, as far as regards kings, governors, and magistrates, extremely simple. To all authority, of whatever form, they owe respect and obedience as long as it does not clash with what is due to God. They are put in this place of subjection by the Lord Himself.

The firstfruits and the firstborn are to be offered to God. (vv. 29, 30; see Ex. 13: 12, 13.) They were thus to acknowledge both their dependence and the source of their blessing, and to avow that they themselves belonged to the Lord. It was God who would give the ripe fruits and the "liquors," and in token of this He required an offering to Himself. The firstborn of their children He likewise claimed, but on the ground, as explained in chap. 13, of the destruction of the firstborn of Egypt on the night of the Passover, and their own redemption through the blood of the Paschal lamb.

In fine, they were to "be holy men unto" the Lord, apart from evil, and separated unto God; for He who had made them His own was holy, and He would have them suited to Himself. On this account they were not to defile themselves with unclean food, flesh polluted by unclean animals, and fit only for dogs. A holy people must be holy in their ways, as beseems a holy God. Subjects of another kind are introduced in the next chapter (Ex. 23).

"Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil: neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment. Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause. If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee, lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him; thou shalt surely help with him. Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause. Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked. And thou shalt take no gift; for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous." (Ex. 23: 1-8.)

Sins of the tongue begin this section. The first relates to raising or receiving (see margin) a false report. How much mischief has been thus perpetrated, and even in the church of God! There are few who would not be horrified at the thought of raising a false report. Such a sin would be condemned by all upright minds; not even a man of the world would extenuate its guilt. But, as the margin indicates, the word has a wider meaning, and will include also the receiving of a false report. Many who would shun the first sin fall into the snare of the second. A report is heard, and is apparently true, and is circulated, whereas had any trouble been taken to verify it, its falsehood might have been detected. Christians, above all, should be careful as to this, refusing every report to another's discredit, unless vouched for by unimpeachable testimony. The responsibility is thus cast upon the hearer, as well as the repeater, of reports. If this were remembered many a slander would be nipped in the bud, many a tale-bearer unveiled, and many a breach of fellowship avoided. The antidote is found in that charity which "thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." (1 Cor. 13: 5-7.) Then false testimony is condemned — a sin known by the modern name of perjury. This injunction, as well as that in the next verse, and in verses 3 and 5, would seem connected with the administration of justice. Nothing escapes the eyes of a righteous God, no evil tendency or influence, and hence He makes provision for the conduct of His people in every circumstance of their lives. It is difficult to be alone in opposition to a multitude, though the cause may be just. With the Lord before the soul it becomes simple. On the other hand, a poor man is not to be countenanced in his cause; i.e. when it is unjust, nor when it is just shall his judgment be "wrested." (v. 6.) Some are liable to influences from the rich, and some from the poor, especially in a day of democracy and contempt of lawful authority. But the heart must be free from both, and it will be free if in obedience to the word of God. Interspersed with these commands, a special direction is given concerning the ox or the ass of an enemy. The anger of the heart must not be exhibited against an enemy's cattle, nor must help be refused to the cattle of another on account of their owner's enmity; "but if thou see his ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again; and wilt thou not, in so doing, heap coals of fire upon his head?" So, too, if an ass overburdened be met with, "though his owner hate thee, thou shalt surely help him." The compassions of God flow out to His dumb creatures, and His people should in all things be a reflex of Himself.

Truth and righteousness are also enjoined. (v. 7.) The ground given is most noteworthy — "For I will not justify the wicked." God is righteous in all His ways in government, of unerring discrimination, and does not permit man to "find anything after Him." But, as the Psalmist confesses, He will be justified when He speaks, and clear when He judges. The wicked therefore can never escape His condemnation. But in grace He has revealed a way by which He can justify the ungodly. (Rom. 5) Under law this was impossible. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe." (Rom. 3: 21, 22.) On this ground He can be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. (v. 26.) A warning is added against the acceptance of gifts. The question, be it remembered, is still one of judgment between man and man, or the discernment of truth from falsehood. To receive a gift in such a case would blind the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. It might shut out God from the soul, and thereby prevent a single eye. The ninth verse is a repetition of the injunction contained in Ex. 22: 21. This shows its importance in the eyes of God, and it is added here with emphasis, "Ye know the heart of a stranger." The children of Israel were thus qualified by their own experience to sympathize with strangers (compare Heb. 4: 15; also Heb. 2: 18); and the recollection of their own past sorrow was to mould their conduct towards those who were in the same circumstances.

Divers ordinances follow concerning the land and the feasts, etc.

"And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: but the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave, the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard. Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest; that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid and the stranger may be refreshed. And in all things that I have said unto you, be circumspect: and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.

"Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto Me in the year. Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt; and none shall appear before Me empty:) and the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God. Thou shalt not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; neither shall the fat of My sacrifice remain until the morning. The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk." (Ex. 23: 10-19)

The land was to enjoy her sabbaths, in perpetual token that it belonged to the Lord. Hence it, as well as man, must share God's rest. Here, however, the poor and the beasts of the field are prominent. There was consideration both for the one and the other — both alike, whatever the distance between, being creatures of God. The children of Israel were

thus reminded that they were but tenants, and that, as holding their land as well as their vineyards and oliveyards from the Lord, even the poor and the beasts of the field must be considered, since they were the objects of His care.

The sabbath for man comes next. The feasts in full are found in Leviticus 23; and there, as here, the sabbath comes first. But in this chapter three only are mentioned in addition to the sabbath — the feast of unleavened bread, the feast of harvest, and the feast of ingathering, i.e. the passover, Pentecost, and the feast of tabernacles. The feasts in full, as given in Leviticus, symbolize the whole cycle of God's ways with Israel. On this account the sabbath takes precedence, because the end and results of all God's ways with them (as indeed with believers of this dispensation) is to bring them into the enjoyment of His rest. Having, then, revealed His object, the methods by which this is to be accomplished, or His successive means to this end, are typically unfolded. But though only three are found in this chapter, they are very significant. Unleavened bread is the first;<sup>13</sup> next we have that of the firstfruits, symbolical of Christ in resurrection, as is seen more fully in Leviticus; then the feast of ingathering, type of the harvest of souls, of which the resurrection of Christ was the pledge, and of which Pentecost was the blessed commencement. We thus read, "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's, at His coming." (1 Cor. 15: 23.) Primarily, the application in this scripture would be to Israel, but, interpreted broadly, the ingathering here spoken of will include the saints of this, as well as of the millennial dispensation — in a word, the vast multitude of the redeemed of every age and dispensation. Three times in the year they were thus to keep a feast unto the Lord, and on these occasions all their males were to appear before the Lord God. This was the central thought of the feast, the gathering of the people around Himself on the foundation which He Himself had established — on the foundation, in fact, of redemption. They were accordingly, as a redeemed people gathered around Jehovah, to be circumspect concerning all that He had said unto them; and they were not even to mention the name of other gods, nor let it be heard out of their mouth. (v. 13.) They belonged, as a redeemed and a sanctified people, alone and entirely to the Lord.

Leavened bread is once again forbidden in connection with the blood of the sacrifice; for inasmuch as the sacrifices pointed to Christ, leaven, as an emblem of evil, would have falsified their typical teaching. Christ cannot be associated with evil. Hence the leaven was absolutely prohibited. Nor was the fat of the sacrifice to remain until the morning. (Compare Ex. 12: 10.) The full explanation of this will be found in the directions concerning the peace-offering. (Lev. 3) "The fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. And Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which is upon the wood that is on the fire: it is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord." (vv. 3-5.) The fat therefore was God's portion. (See also Lev. 4: 8-10.) It must, on this account, not be neglected — be left over until the morning, but offered immediately. God must have His part before His people had theirs. This is the secret of all blessing — giving the Lord the supreme place, thinking first of what is due to Him, and losing sight of all else until this is rendered.

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<sup>13</sup> The meaning of this has been expounded in connection with Ex. 13.

The first of the firstfruits of their land was to be brought into the house of the Lord their God. In Deut. 26 will be found a beautiful description of this obligation, together with the manner in which it was to be discharged. It is an inspired exposition of this injunction. Lastly, we have a most remarkable prohibition. (v. 19.) Three times it is found in the Scriptures. (Ex. 34: 26; Deut. 14: 21.) God will have His people tenderly careful, guarding them from the violation of any single instinct of nature. The milk of the mother was the food, the sustenance of the kid, and hence this must not be used to seethe it as food for others. Some have seen a spiritual teaching in this enactment. That analogies might be profitably drawn is undoubtedly true; but this would be more suited to private study than for public exposition.

This section concludes with the provision God had made for their guidance to the place He had prepared, together with warnings as to their conduct, and a statement of the manner in which they should be put into complete possession of the land.

"Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him, and obey His voice, provoke Him not: for He will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in Him. But if thou shalt indeed obey His voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off. Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works; but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and He shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee.

"There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren, in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil. I will send My fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come; and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee. I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land. And I will set thy bounds from the Red Sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee. Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against Me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee." (vv. 20-33.)

An angel was to go before them for guidance and safe conduct. He is often referred to in this connection. (Ex. 14: 19, Ex. 33: 2; Num. 20: 16, etc.) The prophet Isaiah terms Him the angel of His (Jehovah's) presence. (63: g.) Who then was this angel? It is evident, both from this scripture and chapter 14, as well as from others, that divine attributes are attributed to Him. It is said for example here, "My name is in Him." So in Exodus 14, after being spoken of as an angel, He is identified with Jehovah. (24th verse

with 19th.) It is the case also in Genesis 22, in connection with the sacrifice of Isaac. (vv. 15, 16.) That He is divine is therefore clear; and the inference is thus justifiable (one that has been drawn by godly students of the Word in all ages) that in this angel we have no other than the Second Person of the Trinity, God the Son, Jehovah, and that as such, in His manifold appearings, we may perceive foreshadowings of His incarnation. It is He who has ever been the leader of His people; and it is He who here takes His place at the head of the children of Israel to keep them in the way, and to bring them unto the place which God had prepared. As Isaiah speaks, "The angel of His presence saved them: in His love and His pity He redeemed them: and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old."

Hence the solemn warning addressed to Israel. They were to beware of Him, obey His voice, and provoke Him not. He was holy, and inasmuch as His people had placed themselves under law, He could not pardon their transgressions. "My name" — expression of all that God was in His relationship with Israel — "is in Him," and hence He would act in righteousness, on the basis of the law which had been given as the standard of their conduct. On the other hand, obedience was made the condition of His complete identification with their cause. Their enemies would in that case be His enemies, and He would cut them off.

It will be seen that all these instructions contemplate the land rather than the wilderness. This must be borne in mind. Two things are added in this connection on which all their blessing would depend — separation from evil, and serving the Lord their God. (vv. 24, 25.) These conditions of blessing are unalterable. They are as true now as they were with Israel. The Thessalonians are thus described as having turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God. (1 Thess. 1: 9.) Where God indeed is in question, there can be no complicity with evil. He claims all that we are and have, and when this claim is recognized, He can bless us according to the desires of His own heart. So here the blessings follow — earthly blessings because they were an earthly people, but blessings of this character without stint or limit. Mark, moreover, that God loses sight of nothing that affects His people. He tells them that He will not expel their enemies in one year, "lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee." (v. 29.) He would lead them on — and bless them as they might be able to bear it. But, in due time they should possess the full extent of their territory — "from the Red Sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river" (v. 31) — a promise, alas! which was lost and never realized, excepting for a brief period during the reigns of David and Solomon (1 Chr. 18; 2 Chr. 9: 26), owing to the unfaithfulness of Israel. Even in Solomon's reign, indeed, it was only partially accomplished; for there were still left of the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites (2 Chr. 8: 7, 8) who had not been expelled. It remains, therefore, to be fulfilled in all its extent and blessing under the sway of Him of whom David and Solomon were but shadows and types. What Israel lost under responsibility will then be fulfilled in grace and power.

Finally, absolute separation is once more enjoined. There must be no covenant with the people of the land or their gods; nor should they suffer them to dwell in the land. If so, they would be surely made to sin against the Lord. There can be no alliance between

the people of God and His enemies. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God."  
Would that this truth in all its power were graven upon the hearts and memories of all  
who bear the name of Christ!

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE RATIFICATION OF THE COVENANT.

EXODUS xxiv.

THE covenant having been now unfolded and explained the ground of Jehovah's future relationship with Israel its solemn ratification is recorded in this chapter. As preparatory to this, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, were summoned to come up unto the Lord. (v. 1.) But not all could draw nigh. "Worship ye afar off. And Moses alone shall come near the Lord; but they shall not come nigh, neither shall the people go up with him." (v. 2.) The position of the mediator is clearly marked — a position of the highest honour and privilege, conferred upon Moses by the Lord in His grace. Moses was no more deserving of access to God than his companions. It was grace alone that endowed him with this special place. All is significant of the dispensation — presenting a perfect contrast with the position of believers since the death of Christ. Now it is no more said, "worship ye afar off," but "let us draw near." (Heb. 10: 22.) The blood of Christ has such efficacy that it cleanses the believer from all sin, so that he has no more conscience of sins, he is perfected for ever through the one offering of Christ, and hence, the veil being rent in testimony to the fact that God has been glorified in the death of Christ, he has liberty of access into the holiest of all. There he can worship God in spirit and in truth; there he can joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the reconciliation (Rom. 5: 11); for he is without spot before the all-searching eye of a holy God, and can stand in holy boldness before the very throne of His holiness. What a contrast between law and grace! Law, indeed, "having shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. 10: 1); but in grace, through the one sacrifice of Christ, our sins and iniquities are remembered no more (Heb. 10: 17,), we have through Christ access by one Spirit unto the Father. (Eph. 2: 18.) In some sort therefore Moses, in the place he enjoyed, was a type of the believer. There was, however, this immense difference. He drew near to *Jehovah*, we have access unto *the Father*, we worship God, God in all that He is being now fully revealed, and revealed as our God and Father, because the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The occurrence of the names of Nadab and Abihu cannot fail to arrest attention. They were both sons of Aaron, and with their father were selected for this singular privilege. But neither light nor privilege can ensure salvation, nor, if believers, a holy, obedient walk. Both afterwards met with a terrible end. They "offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them; and they died before the Lord." (Lev. 10: 1, 2.) After this scene in our chapter, they were consecrated to the priesthood, and it was while in the performance of their duty in this office, or rather because of their failure in it, that they fell under the judgment of God. Let the warning sink deep into our hearts, that office and special privileges are alike powerless to save; and also the lesson, that God cannot accept

anything in our worship which is not rendered in obedience to Him. The offering must be of His own providing, and the heart must be in subjection to His will.

Moses, in the next place, descended to the people, and told them "all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do." (v. 3.) Notwithstanding the terror of their hearts at the signs of the Lord's presence and majesty upon Sinai, they remained in total ignorance of their own powerlessness to meet His holy claims. Foolish people! It might have been supposed that ere this their eyes would have been opened; but in truth, we repeat, they were ignorant both of themselves and of God. Hence once again they express themselves as willing to promise obedience as the condition of blessing. God had spoken, and they had assented, and now the agreement must be confirmed and ratified.

"And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." (vv. 4-8.)

There is but one altar if there are twelve pillars — one altar because it was for God, twelve pillars because all the twelve tribes must be represented in the sacrifices to be offered. The priesthood not yet being appointed, ("young men" do the priestly work of the day. They were probably the firstborn, whom the Lord, as we have seen in chapter 13, claimed specially for Himself. Afterwards indeed the tribe of Levi was exchanged for these, and appointed for the Lord's service. Thus it is said, "And thou shalt bring the Levites before the Lord: and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites: and Aaron shall offer the Levites before the Lord for an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the Lord." (Num. 8: 10, 11; also Num. 3: 40, 41.) Until the substitution of the Levites for the firstborn, "the young men" occupied the place of service in connection with the altar. There were only, it will be remarked, burnt-offerings and peace-offerings — for the reason before given, that until the question of sin was formally raised by the law sin-offerings have no place. The offerings were for God (though the offerers as well as the priest had their share in the peace-offerings, in communion with God — Lev. 3); but the special significance of the rites of this day is to be found in the sprinkling of the blood. Half was sprinkled upon the altar. Then, having read the book of the covenant in the audience of all the people, they again said, *All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.* Moses thereon took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning these words. (vv. 7, 8.) Before explaining the meaning of this solemn act, the passage from the Hebrews referring to it, as giving fuller details, may be cited. "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the

law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament" (covenant) "which God hath enjoined unto you." (Ex. 9: 19, 20.) Here we find the interesting particular, not given in Moses, that the book was sprinkled as well as the people. There were thus three sprinklings — upon the altar, upon the book, and upon the people.

The first enquiry must be as to the signification of the blood. It cannot be atonement, because the people and the book are sprinkled equally with the altar; nor, for the same reason, could it be cleansing. The life is in the blood (Lev. 17: 11), and consequently the blood, the shedding of it, will represent death, and death, when connected with sacrifice, as the penalty of sin. *Here therefore the sprinkling of the blood signifies death as the penal sanction of the law.* The people promised obedience, and then they, as well as the book, were sprinkled to teach that death would be the penalty of transgression. Such was the solemn position into which, by their own consent, they had been brought. They undertook to obey under the penalty of death. Well therefore might the apostle say, "As many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse." (Gal. 3: 10.) It is the same now in principle with all who accept the ground of law as the way of life, all who are trusting to their own works as the condition of blessing. They know it not, but thereby they are really binding upon their shoulders the curse of the law, like the Israelites in this scene, and accepting the condition of death as the penalty of disobedience.

The people therefore were sprinkled with blood upon having promised obedience. It may further help us to compare the expressions found in Peter's epistle, which doubtless refer in part to this transaction. Writing "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" - *i.e.* to the Jewish Christians among the dispersion of these regions — he describes them as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." (1 Peter 1: 2.) This order is very significant, though it has occasioned difficulty owing to the fact that the allusion to the Jewish nation has been missed. As a nation they had been elected by the sovereign call of God, sanctified by fleshly rites — separated from the rest of the nations (see Eph. 2: 14), and set apart to God (Ex. 19: 10), sanctified, moreover, unto obedience — this was the object proposed, and, as we have seen, accepted by the people; and then they were sprinkled with the blood, the covenant of God with them being thus sealed with the solemn sanction of death. The terms therefore exactly correspond; but how great the difference in their meaning! Believers are elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, He "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." Eph. 1: 5.) They were not therefore, like Israel, the objects simply of an earthly election, and for earthly blessing, but the objects of an eternal choice — to be brought into the enjoyment of the intimate relationship of children, in a place of perfect nearness, accepted in the Beloved. They have been sanctified, not by external and carnal rites and ordinances, but by the operation of the Spirit of God in the new birth, in virtue of which they are absolutely set apart to God — no longer of the world, even as Christ is not of the

world; and they have been sanctified unto the obedience of Jesus Christ<sup>14</sup> — i.e. to obey as Christ obeyed, His walk being the normal rule, the standard for every believer (1 John 2: 6); and they have been sanctified moreover, not to the sprinkling of blood, which testified of death for every transgression, but to that which speaks of atonement having been completed, and the perfect cleansing of every soul who is found under its value. — Peter thus draws a perfect contrast, and the contrast is that which is found between law and grace. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1: 17.)

The covenant ratified, "Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel," go up; and they saw the God of Israel: and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness. And upon the nobles of Israel He laid not His hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink. (vv. 9-11) Moses alone was permitted to draw near before the covenant was established, but now the representatives of the people have this special grace accorded to them; and they draw near in safety. Two things in this scene are marked. They saw the God of Israel. God displayed Himself in the majesty of His holiness to their gaze. The paved work of a sapphire stone (see Ezek. 1: 26; Ezek. 10: 1), and the additional description, "as it were the body of heaven in its clearness," speak of heavenly splendour and purity. God therefore revealed Himself to these chosen witnesses according to the character of the economy which had now been established. Moreover they did eat and drink. It was in virtue of the blood that they were admitted to this singular privilege, for privilege it was to see the God of Israel and enter into relationship with Him, albeit the very character of the revelation vouchsafed told of distance rather than nearness. Still as men in the flesh they ate and drank in the presence of God, and, as another has remarked, "continued their terrestrial life." They saw God and did not die. For the covenant was only now inaugurated, and failure not having yet come in, God could thus on that foundation permit their access to Him as the God of Israel.

Moses is once again separated from Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the elders. He resumes his mediatorial place — to receive the tables of stone, etc., which God had written — the lively oracles, as they are described by Stephen. (Acts 7: 38.) For this purpose Moses is called up to the Lord in the mount. (v. 12.) Leaving the elders, and appointing Aaron and Hur in charge, he goes up, and for forty days and forty nights he was alone with God. During this time the glory of the Lord was displayed, and 91 abode upon mount Sinai and the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel." (vv. 15-18.) This was not the glory of His grace, but the glory of His holiness, as is seen by the symbol of devouring fire — the glory of the Lord in His relationship with Israel on the basis of law. (Compare 2 Cor. 3) It was a glory therefore that no sinner could dare approach, for holiness and sin cannot be brought together; but now, through the grace of God, on the ground of accomplished atonement, believers can not only draw near, and be at home in the glory, but with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Cor. 3: 18.) We approach boldly, and with

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<sup>14</sup> Both these terms, obedience and sprinkling, belong without doubt to Jesus Christ; i.e. it is the obedience of Jesus Christ, as well as the blood of Jesus Christ.

delight gaze upon the glory, because every ray we behold in the face of Christ glorified is a proof of the fact that our sins are put away, and that redemption is accomplished.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE TABERNACLE.

EXODUS xxv. 1-9.

WITH this chapter we enter upon a new subject — that of the Tabernacle. It is not finished until the close of Ex. 30. But this again is divided into three parts. In the first place, in the directions for the construction of the Tabernacle and its vessels and furniture, those vessels are described which manifest God. This part reaches to Ex. 27: 19. Secondly, the dress and the consecration of the priests are given, in Ex. 28 and 29. Then, lastly, the vessels of approach — i.e. those that were necessary for drawing near to God, are detailed in Ex. 30. It will be observed that some of those which manifested God — some part of His glory — are also used for approach; but if the chief design of each is remembered, confusion will be prevented, and the arrangement easily understood. Opportunity will be found, as the several parts of the Tabernacle pass under review, of indicating the meaning of each more precisely. In the mean time, the division given may help the reader to enter with more intelligence upon the study of this section of the book.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take My offering. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim-wood, oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate. And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it." (vv. 1-9.)

There are three things in these directions to be noticed. The first is their object — which is making a sanctuary. "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." The primary idea of the Tabernacle therefore is, that it was the dwelling-place of God. As remarked upon Ex. 15: 2, God never dwelt on earth with His people until after the Red Sea was crossed — until redemption in figure was accomplished. He visited Adam in the garden, appeared to and communicated with the patriarchs; but until He had redeemed His people out of Egypt, nothing is said of making a sanctuary in which He might dwell. The Tabernacle was thus a proof of redemption, and the sign that God had brought a redeemed people into relationship with Himself, He being the Centre round whom they were gathered. Such is God's thought in redemption. He will not only, according to His own purposes, save His people, but also, according to His own heart, He desires to have them in a place of nearness, gathered around Himself — Himself their God, and they His people. We know in result how imperfectly, through the people's failure under responsibility, the desires of His heart were realized. Still He had His sanctuary in their midst, both in the wilderness and during the kingdom in the Christian dispensation His people themselves form His house; in the millennium He will have

another material sanctuary at Jerusalem; and finally, in the eternal state, the holy city, new Jerusalem, will come down from God out of heaven, and form upon the new earth the tabernacle of God with men. (Rev. 21: 2, 3.) Then the counsels of God's heart will be displayed in their consummated perfection, and, inasmuch as the former things, with all the sorrows connected with them through man's sin, will have passed away, there will be nothing to hinder the full, perfect, and blessed enjoyment arising out of the unhindered flow of God's heart to His people, and their hearts to Him, and from His perfect manifestation, and their perfect worship and service. But the type of all this is found in this sanctuary, which Israel was instructed to make that God might dwell among them.

The tabernacle may, however, be viewed in another way. The house in which God dwelt must be of necessity the scene of the revelation of His glory. Hence, as will be seen when considering it in detail, every single part of it is fraught with some manifestation of Himself. As another writes, "The glories in every way of Christ the Mediator are presented in the tabernacle, not precisely, as yet, the unity of His people, considered as His body, but in every manner in which the ways and the perfections of God are manifested through Him, whether in the full extent of the creation, in His people, or in His person. The scene of the manifestation of the glory of God, His house, His domain, in which He displays His being (in so far as it can be seen), the ways of His grace, and His glory, and His relationship through Christ with us — poor and feeble creatures, but who draw nigh unto Him — are unfolded to us in it, but still with a veil over His presence, and with God not the Father." On this account the spiritual mind traces with delight the typical teaching of the minutiae of this sanctuary, learning therefrom the various measures and methods in which God has revealed Himself, and that they are only to be understood when the key of every secret they contain is possessed in the person of Christ. Remembering this will check on the one hand all flights of the imagination, and invest on the other our meditations with a new interest, inasmuch as Christ Himself will ever be before the soul.

There is yet a third aspect of the tabernacle. It is a figure of the heavens themselves. There were the court, the holy place, and the holy of holies. The priest thus passed through the first and second into the third heavens — the scene of the special presence of God. Paul speaks of being "caught up to the third heaven." There is an allusion to this significance of the tabernacle in the epistle to the Hebrews — "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into" (literally, *through*) "the heavens, Jesus the Son of God." (Heb. 4: 14.) Christ is looked at in this scripture as having passed, like the Jewish high priest on the day of atonement, through the court, the holy place, into the holy of holies (all of which are symbolical of the heavens), into the presence of God.

In this connection it may be mentioned, and this is the second point, that the tabernacle was made after the pattern shown to Moses in the mount (vv. 9, 40, etc.), and was therefore the type of heavenly things. This teaching is developed in the epistle to the Hebrews. We there read of Christ as "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 8: 2); and again it is said, "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these" (the blood of animal sacrifices); "but the heavenly things themselves with better

sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are the figures of the true*; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (Heb. 9: 23, 24.) It is easily understood therefore that the tabernacle was the scene of priestly ministration; for since it was God's dwelling-place, it was also the place of the sinner's approach to God (or rather of the approach of a people brought into relationship with Himself) in the person of the priest. As a matter of fact, the high priest only entered once a year into the holy of holies (see Lev. 16); but this was in consequence of the failure of the priesthood, and in no way marred its original design. All this, indeed, together with the veil, and the exclusion of all but the priests from the holy place, will but teach, even by the contrast, the fuller and more blessed privileges which believers of the present dispensation enjoy. They have liberty of access at all times into the holiest of all, the veil being rent, inasmuch as they are perfected for ever, having no more conscience of sins, through the one offering of Christ (Heb. 10), and they draw near, not to Jehovah, but to their God and Father in Christ Jesus.

The last point referred to is the invitation addressed to the people to bring offerings of materials of which the tabernacle was to be composed. It is a bright exhibition of grace on the part of God thus associating the people with Himself in His desire to have a sanctuary to dwell in their midst. Hence it was only of willing hearts that the offerings were to be taken. This is exceedingly beautiful. God first produced the willingness, and then ascribed to them the offering they rendered. He counted upon the fellowship of the people, expecting a response to the expressed desires of His heart. The people did respond, as will be seen later on in the book, and so fully that proclamation had to be made to stay the offerings. A fine example of this was seen also in David in regard to the temple: "He swore unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob; surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." (Ps. 132: 2-5.) If in lesser measure than characterized the king of Israel, yet the required offerings flowed out in abundance from willing hearts, hearts made willing by the grace of God, which thus enjoyed the privilege of contributing materials which, when made up according to the directions given, would form Jehovah's dwelling-place, and which separately would be employed as an emblem, and a manifestation of some ray of His glory.

The typical significance of the several materials offered will be explained in connection with their special place in the tabernacle. It will suffice now to say that they all point to Christ.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE ARK WITH THE MERCY-SEAT.

EXODUS xxv. 10-22.

THE ark and the mercy-seat are in one sense two distinct things, though in another they form a complete whole. They are described as distinct and separate, and it will thus be best to follow, in our exposition, the order of Scripture:

"And they shall make an ark of shittim-wood two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold; within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. And thou shalt make staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them. The staves shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee. And thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy-seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end; even of the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel." (vv. 10-22.)

There are several things to be considered in connection with the typical significance of the ark. It was on the one hand a manifestation of God in Christ, and on the other the place of His throne and government in Israel.

First, then, the ark may be viewed as a figure of the person of Christ. This is seen from its *composition*. It was made of shittim-wood, overlaid with pure gold. The shittim was a kind of acacia, a wood said by some to be imperishable. Be this as it may, it is a type of what is human; and if a wood, as some affirm, that would not rot, incorruptible, it was a most suitable emblem of the humanity of our Lord. The gold is always a symbol of what is divine. The structure of the ark, therefore, figures the union of the two natures in the person of Christ. He was "very God, and very man." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Thereafter we read, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the

only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (John 1: 1-14.) He was thus God and man, God manifest in flesh. *The contents of the ark* are also significant in this connection: "And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee." (v. 16.) That is, the two tables of stone, with the ten commandments written thereon, were deposited in the ark, and hence it is frequently termed the ark of the covenant (Num. 10: 33; Deut. 31: 26, etc.), because it contained the law on which the covenant was founded. But it points in a marked way to Christ. Speaking thus in the Spirit in the Psalms, He says, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: *yea, Thy Law is within My heart.*" (Ps. 40: 7, 8.) The testimony in the ark, therefore, exhibits the law of God in the heart of Christ; setting forth, first, that as born into this world, being of the seed of David according to the flesh, He was "made under the law" (Gal. 4: 4); and secondly, that He obeyed it perfectly. The law within the heart, indeed, brings before us the perfection of His obedience — the fact that God found in Him, and in Him alone, truth in the inward parts, a full and complete answer to all the requirements of His holiness, so that he could ever rest in Him with perfect complacency, and, as He beheld Him always doing the things that pleased Him, expressing the delight of His own heart in the words, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3: 17.)

*The rings and the staves* (vv. 19 - 15) have also a voice. The object of these was "that the ark may be borne with them." (v. 14.) This shows that God's people were pilgrims in the wilderness, journeying on to the place which God had prepared for them. But the time would come when the inheritance should be possessed, and when the temple, suited in magnificence to the glory of the king of Israel, should be built. The staves, which in the desert were no to be taken from the rings of the ark (v. 15), should then be withdrawn (2 Chr. 5: 9), because, the pilgrimage past, the ark would, with the people, have entered into its rest. (Ps. 132: 8.) The staves therefore in the rings speak of Christ, with His pilgrim host, as being Himself with them in wilderness circumstances. It is Christ in this world, Christ in all His own perfectness as man — Christ, in a word in all that He was as the revealer of God; for in truth, He was the perfect presentation of God to man. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." (Matt. 11: 27.)

Secondly, the ark, with the mercy-seat and its cherubim *formed God's throne on earth*, in the midst of Israel. "The ark of the covenant," says one, "was the throne where God manifested Himself, if any could go in in righteousness (not, I think, separate from holiness, or taking merely duty as the measure of what was accepted), and as the seat of His sovereignty over every living man — the God of the whole earth. The law — the testimony of what He required of men — was to be placed there. Over it was the mercy-seat, which covered it in, which formed the throne, as the cherubim (formed of the same piece), which were its supporters, did its sides." God is thus spoken of in the Scriptures as dwelling between the cherubim. *The cherubim* are perhaps symbols of God's attributes; and hence the throne of God is sustained by all that He is. For this reason they are throughout the Old Testament connected with judicial power, because since God had to do with sinners His throne was ever judicial in its aspect. God may thus be viewed as sitting on His righteous throne between the cherubim. If it be asked, Why then, since

Israel continually broke His law, were they not instantly destroyed? the answer is found (though we are anticipating the truth of the mercy-seat) in the attitude of the cherubim. As executors of the judicial power of God, they would necessarily demand the exaction of the penalty of transgression. But "their faces shall look one to another; towards the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubim be" (v. 20.) They thus saw the sprinkled blood on the mercy-seat, the blood that was annually put upon it on the great day of atonement (Lev. 16), whereby the claims of the throne were adequately met, and itself rendered favourable to the transgressor. Otherwise God, governing in righteousness, must have visited destruction upon His people.

It was also the *place where God met and communed with Moses*. (v. 22.) The meeting-place of Jehovah with His people was at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. (Ex. 29: 42, 43.) Moses alone (save the high priest exceptionally on the day of atonement) enjoyed the privilege of meeting God, and receiving communications from Him at the mercy-seat. He was, owned in grace as the mediator. All believers now enjoy this privilege in virtue of the efficacy of accomplished redemption. But of all Israel, Moses alone was free to go on all occasions into the very presence-chamber of God. It was there God spake with him (see Num. 7: 89), and entrusted him with His commandments for the guidance of the children of Israel. It is only there that God's voice can be heard, and His mind apprehended; and whoever would become increasingly acquainted with His will must be found continually in retirement from the world, and even from believers, shut in alone with God.

If now we turn to the book of Numbers, we shall find *the directions for the transport of the ark through the wilderness*. "And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering veil, and cover the ark of the testimony with it; and shall put thereon the covering of badgers' skins, and shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof." (Num. 4: 5, 6.) The veil, as will be explained in its place, is an emblem of the humanity of Christ — His flesh. (Heb. 10: 20.) We have then, first, the ark; i.e. Christ, covered with the veil of His humanity. Next, came the badgers' skins, expressive of that holy vigilance by which He absolutely protected Himself from evil, as is seen, for example, in the scripture, "By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." (Ps. 17: 4.) Then came the cloth wholly of blue — symbol of what is heavenly. "The badger's skin was inside in this case, because Christ kept His perfection absolutely free of all evil, and so the heavenly came out manifestly." It is Christ therefore in the wilderness, and while passing through it He was ever characterized by that which is heavenly. As such, be it ever remembered, He is our example. "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked."

#### THE MERCY-SEAT.

The mercy-seat, while forming the lid, and thus completing the structure of the ark, is in another sense complete in itself, and as such, from its importance, deserving special notice. It was placed "above upon the ark" (v. 21), and was therefore in the holy of holies — the scene of the special manifestation of God, and indeed, as explained, the basis of

His throne. God dwells there between the cherubim. It differed from the ark in that no shittim-wood entered into its composition. It was made of pure gold, as also were the two cherubim, which were formed out of the same piece as the mercy-seat. Gold is the emblem of what is divine — of divine righteousness. If then it is considered for a moment in connection with the testimony in the ark, there is the combination of human and divine righteousness, the testimony pointing to the law — human righteousness — which was in the heart of Christ (Psalm 40), and the gold to God's righteousness, which is displayed also in Him. The mercy-seat is therefore in a peculiar manner a type of Christ. The apostle indeed applies the term directly to Him. He says, "Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth a propitiation" (a mercy-seat, literally), "through faith in His blood," etc. (Rom. 3: 24, 25.)

This allusion will be at once understood if reference is made to the action of the priest on the great day of atonement. After putting the incense upon the fire before the Lord, it is said, And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood seven times. (Lev. 16: 14.) So also he did with the blood of the goat of the sin-offering for the people. Two questions will elicit the meaning of this act. First, Why was the blood sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat? To make propitiation for the sins of the people. Being sinners they could not stand of themselves in the presence of a holy God. The blood therefore was carried in by divine direction, and sprinkled, in the manner described, on the mercy-seat to make propitiation for the people's sins; and also before the mercy-seat, but here seven times, that when the priest approached he might find a perfect testimony to the efficacy of the work. Once, as is often said, was enough for the eye of God, but in grace He vouchsafed that it should be sprinkled seven times, as a complete assurance for the eye and heart of man. What, then, secondly, did it accomplish? It accomplished atonement, satisfied all God's holy claims as against the people — yea, if we think of the blood of Christ, glorified Him fully in all that He is, and glorified Him for ever concerning the question of sin, so that He who was against us because of our guilt, is now for us because of the blood. The mercy-seat therefore speaks pre-eminently of Christ; for, as John speaks, "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." (1 John 2: 2.) The sins of believers are gone, and gone for ever; and such is the value of the propitiation made that God can now righteously send out in His grace the gospel to the whole world, and beseech sinners to be reconciled to Him. (2 Cor. 5: 20.) Christ, we repeat, is figured by the mercy-seat; and hence we learn that God is now only approached through Him, as in the wilderness He could only be approached at the mercy-seat. But, blessed be His name, whoever does now approach to Him through Christ will find the perfect testimony to the value of His atoning work in God's presence. But observe it well, that the blood is the only ground of access. He is set forth a propitiation through faith in His blood. Believing therefore in the value of His blood, according to God's testimony concerning it, whoever comes may come boldly, nothing doubting, in the full confidence that the way is thus opened for the guiltiest and the vilest into the immediate presence of God. For "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves,

but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption." (Heb. 9: 11, 12.)

The cherubim formed part of the mercy-seat. These, as already said, are symbols of the divine attributes, and, as such, of judicial power. But since God has been glorified by the blood on the mercy-seat, all His attributes are in harmony, and all are exercised on behalf of believers. In the cross mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other; and therefore justice is satisfied, the claims of righteousness met, so that the cherubim are favourable to the dispensation of mercy to all who approach trusting in the value of the blood. Blessed truth! All that God is, is against sin, and now all that God is, is for the believer. The blood upon the mercy-seat has wrought this mighty change.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE TABLE OF SHOWBREAD.

EXODUS xxix. 23-30.

THE ark, with the mercy-seat and the cherubim, was the sole occupant of the holy of holies. Nothing else was to be found in the immediate dwelling-place of God. But passing from without through the veil (supposing for a moment the erection of the tabernacle) the holy place is entered — the scene of the customary service of the priest. There were three vessels here — the table of showbread, the candlestick of pure gold, and the altar of incense — though the last is not yet described. It is the first of these in order as here given — the table of showbread — that we have now to consider.

"Thou shalt also make a table of shittim-wood: two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt make unto it a border of an handbreadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about. And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them. And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal; of pure gold shalt thou make them. And thou shalt set upon the table showbread before Me alway." (vv. 23-30.)

*The composition of the table* is the same as that of the ark. It was made of shittim-wood, and overlaid with pure gold. (vv. 23-25.) The meaning, therefore will be the same — the shittim-wood presenting that which is human, and the gold that which is divine. It is then Christ, Christ in His human and divine natures as combined in His one person. This indeed is the beauty of everything connected with the tabernacle. It is Christ everywhere, Christ in Himself or in some of His varied perfections and glories.

*The bread on the table.* It is in the book of Leviticus that we find the particulars of the loaves — "And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the Lord. And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the Lord. Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the Lord continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. And it shall be Aaron's and his sons'; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it is most holy unto Him of the offerings of the Lord made by fire by a perpetual statute." (Lev. 24: 5-9.) (1) The loaves or cakes were made of fine flour. This at once points to the meat-offering which, in like manner, was made of fine flour, with the addition of oil and frankincense. (See Lev. 2) No leaven is mentioned, whereas in the two wave loaves (Lev. 23: 17) leaven is expressly specified — for the

obvious reason that, in this case, the loaves represent the church, and therefore leaven — emblem of evil — is found in them. But the fine flour is a type of the humanity of Christ, and hence the loaves of the showbread are without leaven, He being holy, harmless, undefiled, absolutely without sin. (2) The loaves were baked. They set forth therefore Christ as having been exposed to the action of fire — the judgment of God's holiness by which He was searched and tested when upon the cross, and found to answer, and to answer perfectly, its every claim. (3) They were twelve in number — six in a row. So on the shoulders of the high priest, there were the names of six tribes on the one, and the names of six tribes on the other. The loaves equally point to the twelve tribes of Israel. The number twelve signifies administrative perfection of government in man, and thus there were twelve tribes, twelve apostles, twelve gates, and twelve foundations in the holy city, new Jerusalem. (See for an illustration of this meaning Matt. 19: 28.) The twelve loaves may then be taken to represent Israel in its twelve tribes; and this will give us, in connection with the significance of the number twelve, God revealed in Christ in association with Israel (for Christ was of the seed of David, and heir to his throne — Luke 1: 32) in perfection of government. This will be displayed according to the predictions of the prophets (e.g. Psalm 72) in the millennium. But the loaves were on the table, and hence, on the other hand, Israel is seen in association with Christ before God. (4) Another thing should be noticed. "And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the Lord." (Lev. 24: 7.) The frankincense typifies the sweet fragrance of Christ to God. Observe therefore that Israel in its twelve tribes is ever presented before God, covered with all the fragrance of Christ, and maintained there through all the night of their unbelief in virtue of what He is, and of what He has done — the sure promise of their future restoration and blessing. Hence the loaves were to be set in order "before the Lord continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant." (Lev. 24: 8.) They may be unfaithful, as they have been, but God cannot deny Himself; He abideth faithful, and as a consequence, though they have been scattered throughout the world because of their unbelief, He will yet perform His counsels of mercy and truth, and gather them from the four corners of the earth, and reinstate them in their own land in fulness of blessing — blessing which will be established in and secured by Him who is symbolized by the showbread table.

An illustration of this may be gathered from *the border of the table*: "And thou shalt make unto it a border of an handbreadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about." (v. 25.) It is very clear that the object of this border was to maintain the loaves in their position; and if the ornamental crown of gold be taken as an emblem of the divine glory of Christ, the lesson taught will be, that Israel is secured in its position through Christ before God by all that He is as divine.; nay, that His divine glory is concerned in their maintenance in it, as well as in preserving them. for all the blessing which He Himself has secured, and on which they will therefore one day surely enter. But there is more than Israel's position in this symbol. It embraces in principle that of every believer. There in the holy place, ever before the eye of God, covered with the grateful fragrance of the frankincense, he is seen in Christ. It is indeed the perfect presentation of the believer to God. In other words, it is our acceptance in the Beloved.

We may now consider *the bread as food for the priests*: "And it shall be Aaron's and his sons'; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it is most holy unto Him of the offerings of the Lord made by fire by a perpetual statute." (Lev. 24: 9.) Feeding indicates identification and communion with the thing fed upon. This is expressly brought out by the apostle Paul in his teaching concerning the Lord's table. "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread, one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." (1 Cor. 10: 16, 17.) It was the same with the priests. For example, they ate also of the sin-offering in certain cases (Lev. 6: 26), and thereby identified themselves with it. Feeding therefore upon the showbread is a symbol of the fact that Christ, as the Priest, ever identifies Himself with Israel before God. It was only to be eaten, it will be remarked, in the holy place. It is, then, Christ, in communion with the thoughts of God, identifying Himself with the twelve tribes in the exercise of His priesthood. This brings before us a very blessed aspect of truth. That He is the High Priest of this dispensation all admit; but it is not sufficiently borne in mind that, notwithstanding Israel's unbelief, He identifies Himself with them before God in His priestly office, and that He will come out of the holiest, into which He has entered, as Melchizedek and be a Priest upon His throne over a willing people. "The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion: rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: Thou hast the dew of Thy youth. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." (Ps. 110: 2-4.)

Then we have *the provision for the journey*: "And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them." (vv. 26-28.) The children of Israel were pilgrims in the wilderness, and hence the tabernacle and all its furniture were made for them. in this character, and accompanied them in all their wanderings. Christ is ever with His people; and the very rings and staves, equally with the table itself, composed of gold and shittim-wood, point to Him as the God-man. But it is in the book of Numbers that the details for the transport of the table, when on the march, are given. "And upon the table of showbread they shall spread a cloth of blue, and put thereon the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls, and covers to cover withal: and the continual bread shall be thereon: and they shall spread upon them a cloth of scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put in the staves thereof." (Num. 4: 7, 8.) The inner covering, it will be observed, is a cloth of blue — symbol of what is heavenly; next, a cloth of scarlet — scarlet being an emblem of human glory or Jewish royalty; and outside came the covering of badgers' skins — a type of protection from evil as a consequence of holy watchfulness. Regarding the whole, the table with its showbread as Christ in association with Israel, to be hereafter displayed in perfection of administrative government, the meaning of this arrangement will be apparent. The cloth of blue was immediately upon the gold; i.e. the heavenly character of Christ was in intimate association with what He was as divine. The scarlet next — royalty, or human glory, because being in the wilderness the time for its manifestation had not yet arrived. That will be connected with the kingdom at His appearing. The badgers' skins are therefore outside, as concealing His human or royal

glory, and as expressive of that holy vigilance which guarded Him on every hand from evil while in wilderness circumstances.

All the vessels connected with the table were made of gold (v. 29), all significant of that which was divine, as befitted the service of the One who was really God manifest in flesh, and who will be confessed in the future day of Israel's blessing as their Lord and their God. It will thus be seen that every detail, as well the whole table, speaks of Christ. May our eyes be opened to perceive every aspect of His person and work as presented to us by the Spirit of God!

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE CANDLESTICK OF PURE GOLD.

EXODUS xxv. 31-40.

AFTER the table of showbread follows the candlestick. The altar of incense, though belonging to the holy place, is omitted here, because it was a vessel of approach, rather than of display; and, as already pointed out, everything connected with the manifestation of God is given before that which was needed to come into His presence is described. Unless this distinction is borne in mind, instead of order and method, all will seem to be confusion.

"And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold; of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same. And six branches shall come out of the sides of it: three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side: three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower; so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick. And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers. And there shall be a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick. Their knops and their branches shall be of the same; all of it shall be one beaten work of pure gold. And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. And the tongs thereof, and the snuff-dishes thereof, shall be of pure gold. Of a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels. And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount." (vv. 31-40.)

First of all, we have *the form of the candlestick*. If the description be carefully read, it will be seen that the candlestick had seven branches; *i.e.* a central shaft with three branches springing out from either side. (See vv. 31, 32, also Ex. 37: 17, 18.) There were, therefore, seven lamps upon the one candlestick. The number seven also plays an important part in its ornamentation. There were "three bowls made like unto almonds" in each of the six branches (v. 33), and "four bowls made like unto almonds" in the candlestick (v. 34); *i.e.* in the central stem from which the branches sprung. The number seven is thus a marked characteristic.

The next thing for consideration is the *material of which it was made, and the character of its light*. As in the mercy-seat, so in the candlestick, there was nothing but pure gold. (v. 31.) No shittim-wood is found in its structure, and hence nothing human is prefigured by it. All is divine. From Ex. 27 we gather that the light was fed by "pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always." (v. 20.) Oil in Scripture is ever a symbol of the Holy Ghost. The apostle thus says of believers, "Ye have an unction

from the Holy One" (1 John 2: 20); and Paul speaks of our having been anointed." (2 Cor. 1: 21.) Putting therefore these three things together in their typical meanings — the number seven, the gold, and the oil — the result is that the significance of the candlestick is, - *Divine light in its perfection in the power of the Spirit*. It is God giving the light of the Holy Ghost, and this is displayed in its sevenfold perfection. In addressing the Church in Sardis, the Lord speaks as having "the seven Spirits of God "; *i.e.* the Spirit in His perfection (as indicated by the number seven) and energy (Rev. 3: 1); and we read also of "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God." (Rev. 4: 5.)

What, then, it may now be inquired, was the *purpose* of the candlestick? This would seem to have been twofold. First, it was set in the holy place "over against the table." (Ex. 26: 35; Ex. 40: 24.) It thus stood opposite to, and threw its light upon, the table of showbread. This therefore it may be inferred was the object in its being thus placed. Now the table of showbread symbolizes, as explained in the last chapter, the manifestation of God in man (Christ) in perfection of administrative government; and the twelve loaves on the table represent Israel, and also in principle believers of this dispensation, in association with Christ before God. The light of the candlestick shining, then, upon the table is the Holy Ghost bearing testimony to the future display of administrative perfection in Christ, when He shall have taken His power, and shall reign from the river unto the ends of the earth; likewise to Israel's (as well as the believer's) true place in connection with Christ before God. These truths may be obscured or forgotten on earth, but there in the holy place before the eye of God they are fully displayed, and exhibited by the perfect light of the Spirit. But secondly, the light was for the illumination of the candlestick itself. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick. And Aaron did so; he lighted the lamps thereof over against the candlestick, as the Lord commanded Moses." (Num. 8: 1-3.) That is, giving out the light of the Holy Ghost, reveals the beauties of (or beautifies) the vessel through which it is displayed. A perfect illustration of this is seen in the transfiguration of our blessed Lord, when, as we read, "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." (Matt. 17: 2.) It was ever so throughout the whole of His blessed pathway for those whose eyes were opened (see John 1: 4; John 2: 11); but on the mount His beauty was manifestly displayed. So also in the case of Stephen. We read that he was "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," and that "all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." (Acts 6: 5, 15.) It is so with every believer in the measure in which the light of the Holy Spirit — Christ, indeed, shines out through his walk and conversation.

But it may be further asked, What answers on earth to the perfect light of the Spirit as symbolized by the seven-branched candlestick in the holy place? Christ when here answered to it perfectly. He was thus the light of men, the light of the world, etc. (John 1: 4; John 8: 12.) Never for one moment was the light of the Spirit obscured in Him; it shone purely and steadily, illuminating the darkness through which He passed with its blessed, life-giving radiance throughout the whole of His life. He was a perfect vessel. After His departure from this scene, and His ascension, the church was constituted the

light-bearer. (Rev. 1: 20.) That is her character, however grievous her failure — a failure which will finally issue in her utter rejection as the vessel of testimony upon earth. (See Rev. 3: 16.) The individual believer answers to it also in the measure in which he presents Christ in his walk and ways. Paul thus writes to the Philippians, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation (generation), *among whom ye shine as lights in the world.*" (Phil. 2: 14, 15.)

It is also interesting to observe *how the light was maintained*. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive, beaten for the light to cause the lamps to burn continually. Without the veil, of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning, before the Lord continually: it shall be a statute for ever in your generations. He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the Lord continually." (Lev. 24: 1-4; also Ex. 27: 20, 21.) First, the children of Israel were to bring the pure oil olive. This will point to the responsibility of God's people on earth, the vessel in which it was to be displayed — Israel then, now the church. Aaron was to order the lamps. By this is taught that the light of the Spirit, in its display, can only be maintained by the priestly care and intercession of Christ. He alone could use "the tongs thereof, and the snuff-dishes thereof," for both alike were made of pure gold. (v. 38.) Every ray of light that shines out below, whether through the church or the individual believer, is but the answer to His priestly work. In this connection, it may be remarked that the oil olive was to be "beaten" for the light (Ex. 27: 20), and that the candlestick itself was to be made of "beaten" work. This may point to the fact that the intercession of Christ is grounded upon the efficacy of His work on the cross, the term "beaten" shadowing forth the sufferings of Him, by whose stripes we are healed.

Lastly, notice *the duration of the light*. It was to be "from the evening unto the morning." The lamp is for the night; and all through the night of Israel's unbelief, until the day dawn, and the shadows flee away, the golden candlestick is to be ordered before the Lord. The testimony to their true place is maintained all through the weary years of the darkness of their unbelief by the intercession of Him whom they have rejected and crucified. But at last He Himself shall be for them "as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." (2 Sam. 23: 4.) The hope of the Christian is more immediate; for "the night is far spent and the day is at hand." But while waiting, may our lamps — fed with the true oil, and ordered before the Lord continually — shine out ever more brightly until the Lord's return!

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE CURTAINS OF THE TABERNACLE.

EXODUS xxvi. 1-14.

THE last chapter closes with an injunction to obedience. Man's thought or design must have no place in God's house. There His authority must be upheld and acknowledged as supreme. This is a principle of the last importance; and is accordingly asserted again and again in the course of these communications. Having then reminded Moses that the pattern shown him in the mount must be ever kept in view, the Lord proceeds to instruct him concerning the composition, size, etc., of the curtains which were to form the tabernacle, the tent, and their coverings.

"Moreover, thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubim of cunning work shalt thou make them. The length of one curtain shall be eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and every one of the curtains shall have one measure. The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; and other five curtains shall be coupled one to another. And thou shalt make loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain, from the selvedge in the coupling; and likewise shalt thou make in the uttermost edge of another curtain, in the coupling of the second. Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that is in the coupling of the second; that the loops may take hold one of another. And thou shalt make fifty taches of gold, and couple the curtains together with the taches; and it shall be one tabernacle.

"And thou shalt make curtains of goats' hair, to be a covering upon the tabernacle: eleven curtains shalt thou make. The length of one curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and the eleven curtains shall be all of one measure. And thou shalt couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and shalt double the sixth curtain in the forefront of the tabernacle. And thou shalt make fifty loops on the edge of the one curtain that is outmost in the coupling, and fifty loops in the edge of the curtain which coupleth the second. And thou shalt make fifty taches of brass, and put the taches into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one. And the remnant that remaineth of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remaineth, shall hang over the backside of the tabernacle. And a cubit on the one side, and a cubit on the other side, of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent, it shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle on this side and on that side, to cover it. And thou shalt make a covering for the tent of rams' skins died red, and a covering above of badgers' skins." (vv. 1-14.)

There are, it will be seen, four sets of curtains. The first is termed the tabernacle (vv. 1-6); the second — those made of goats' hair — is named the tent (vv. 11, 12); and the remaining two are called simply "coverings." Three terms (and it is so also in the original) are applied to the four sets of curtains; viz., "the tabernacle" to the innermost of

all, "the tent" to the second, and "coverings" to the outermost two — those made of rams' skins dyed red, and those made of badgers' skins.

Following the order of the scripture, the inner set — the tabernacle — may be first considered. These are made of four materials — fine twined linen, blue, purple, and scarlet. Besides this, there were cherubim embroidered (see margin) upon them. It is in these materials that their typical teaching lies. *The fine twined linen* is a symbol of spotless purity. The priests were on this account clothed with it (Exodus 28: 39-43); and on the great day of atonement Aaron was dressed in this material (Lev. 16: 4) that he might typify the absolute purity of the nature of the One of whom he was but the shadow. In the New Testament the fine linen is spoken of as the righteousnesses of saints. (Rev. 19: 8.) *The blue* is always a symbol of what is heavenly — the very colour pointing unmistakably to this significance. *The purple* is emblematic of Gentile royalty. The gospel of John, for example, records that when the soldiers, with coarse brutality, were mocking the claims of Jesus to be the King, they put on Him a purple robe. (John 19: 2.) *The scarlet* sets forth human glory, and it may be at the same time, Jewish royalty. David thus speaks of Saul having clothed the daughters of Israel in scarlet with other delights (2 Sam. 1: 24) — as expressive of the dignity he had put upon them; and in Matthew's gospel, where Christ is specially presented as the Messiah, He is said to have been clothed by the soldiers in scarlet, ere they bent their mocking knee before Him, and cried, "Hail, King of the Jews!" (Matt. 27: 28, 29.) Applying all this to Christ the significance is most striking. It gives Christ in the absolute purity of His nature, Christ in His heavenly character, Christ as King of Israel (and, as King of Israel, invested with all human glory), and, last of all, Christ as reigning also over the Gentiles. The last two features coalesce, because when Christ shall sit upon the throne of His father David, it will be the period of His world-sovereignty, when all kings shall fall down before Him, and all nations shall serve Him. (Psalm 72: 11.) It is therefore Christ as He was as Man in this world, and Christ as He will be in the future display of His glory in this world, as Son of David, and as Son of man. But there is another thing. Cherubim were embroidered on these curtains. Cherubim have been explained to signify judicial authority. This gives an additional representation of Christ — of Christ as having authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man. (John 5: 27.) It is thus a full display of what Christ was essentially as Man, and of His glories and dignities connected with the earth. Blessed were those who, admitted in the exercise of their priestly office within the precincts of the holy place, had the privilege of gazing upon these varied displays of the excellencies and glories of the Christ of God!

*The dimensions* of the curtains are not without meaning. The length of one curtain shall be eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and every one of the curtains shall have one measure." (v. 2.) Now  $28 = 7 \times 4$ ; and consequently the length is seven times four; and the breadth, being also four cubits, divides the length into seven; *i.e.*  $28 / 4$  gives 7. Seven and four are thus characteristic. Seven is the perfect number, being absolutely indivisible excepting by itself, and the highest prime number; and four is that of completeness on earth — as seen, for example, in the four corners of the earth, four winds, four-square, four gospels, etc. The dimensions of the curtains will then betoken perfection displayed in completeness on earth; and such a meaning could

only be applied to the life of our blessed Lord. The curtains of the tabernacle consequently speak of the complete unfolding of His perfections as Man when passing through this scene.

We have, next, *their arrangement and number*. Five curtains were "coupled together one to another," so that there were two sets of five — as there were ten in number. Ten is the number of responsibility towards God, as, for example, in the ten commandments (see also Exodus 30: 13, etc.), and five is responsibility towards man. (See Gen. 47: 24; Num. 5: 7, etc.) We are thus taught that Christ as Man met the whole of His responsibility both towards God and towards man, that He loved God with all His heart, and His neighbour as Himself — going as to this, we know, even infinitely beyond. And He was the only One by whom these responsibilities were fully and perfectly discharged.

Then *the couplings* have likewise a voice. There were fifty loops of blue and fifty taches of gold, by which the curtains were connected. Remembering that blue is the heavenly colour, and that the gold is divine, and that the two numbers of ten and five, which have just been explained, enter into the composition of the fifty, we learn that the heavenly and divine character of our blessed Lord secured the perfect adjustment of His twofold responsibility as Man towards God and man; or that they were perfectly united by His divine and heavenly energy. These meanings, the reader is cautioned, are suggestions, but suggestions which are worthy of devout consideration in the light of Scripture, and which, if examined in the presence of God, cannot fail both to be interesting and profitable.

(2) The curtains of goats' hair. These came next to, immediately above, those which are denominated the Tabernacle, and formed the tent. This covering points also to Christ — "to His positive purity, or rather to that severity of separation from the evil that was around Him, which gave Him the character of prophet — severity, not in His ways towards poor sinners, but in separation from sinners, the uncompromisingness, as to Himself, which kept Him apart and gave Him His moral authority, the moral cloth of hair which distinguished the prophet." In confirmation of this interpretation, Zechariah says, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment (margin, a garment of hair) to deceive," etc. (13: 4; compare Matt. 3: 4.) The dimensions of these differ from the curtains of the tabernacle of the same width, they were two cubits longer — thirty cubits instead of twenty-eight — and there was one more curtain. While unable to suggest any typical value to the numbers, the reason of their larger size is yet evident. They were to extend beyond, on all sides, so as completely to protect the tabernacle curtains. "And the remnant that remaineth of the curtains of the tent e. the goats' hair curtains), the half curtain hat remaineth, *shall hang over the backside of the tabernacle*. And a cubit on the one side, and a cubit on the other side, of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent, *it shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle on this side and on that side, to cover it*. (vv. 12, 10.) The meaning will be, then, that Christ in all that He was, as symbolized by the inner curtains, was guarded by that perfect separation from evil which sprang from His positive and absolute purity. He could therefore challenge His

adversaries with the words, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (John 8: 46.) Yea, He could say to His own, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." (John 14: 30.) So complete was His moral separation from all evil that He could even touch the leper and not be defiled.

The couplings of the curtains were of brass instead of gold. The colour of the loops is not mentioned. Brass in this connection would seem to signify divine righteousness, not, as seen in the gold, according to what God is in Himself, but as testing man in responsibility. This will be shown more fully when the brazen altar comes to be considered. The aptness of this significance in connection with goats' hair curtains will be at once apprehended. It brings before us Christ as morally separate from sinners, but tested by divine righteousness in His path all through His earthly sojourn — and tested, it need scarcely be added, only with the result of discovering that He answered perfectly its every claim.

(3) Above the "tent" — i.e. the goats' hair curtains — were two coverings; first, one of rams' skins dyed red, and next, another of badgers' skins. The ram was chosen as the consecration offering in connection with the setting apart of the priests to their office. It is called "the ram of the consecration." (Ex. 29: 27.) Dyed red will point very evidently to death. The meaning therefore is entire consecration, devotedness unto death; and where was that ever seen in its perfection except in the One who humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross? The badgers' skins are an emblem of that holy vigilance exhibited in His walk and ways, which preserved Him from all evil. Jerusalem is said to have been "shod with badgers' skins," the provision the Lord had made to protect her from evil in her walk. The vigilance so symbolized is often expressed in the Psalms: "By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer;" and again, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." The coverings therefore likewise proclaim the perfectness of the One whom they typify. At the same time it must not be forgotten, that the features they portray ought to be seen in every believer. For in all that Christ was in His walk through the world He is our example. If therefore we admire the perfections and excellencies that were displayed in Him, we should remember that He is set before us as the standard of our responsibility.

"My Saviour, keep my spirit stayed  
Hard following after Thee;  
Till I, in robes of white arrayed,  
Thy face in glory see."

If for a moment the Tabernacle is supposed to be complete, it will be seen that the badgers' skins only met the outward gaze. But the priest who enjoyed the privilege of entering the holy place, saw the full beauty of the fine twined linen, the blue, the purple, and the scarlet, and of the embroidered cherubim. It was Christ without and it was Christ within; but it was Christ without as seen by the natural eye — discovering no beauty that man should desire Him; and it was Christ within as seen by the eye opened by the Spirit of God; Christ therefore as the chiefest among ten thousand, and as the altogether lovely.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE FRAMEWORK OF THE TABERNACLE.

EXODUS xxvi. 15-30.

THERE are several distinct things comprised in this section. First, the framework of the Tabernacle, with its foundations, is described.

"And thou shalt make boards for the tabernacle of shittim-wood standing up. Ten cubits shall be the length of a board, and a cubit and a half shall be the breadth of one board. Two tenons shall there be in one board, set in order one against another: thus shalt thou make for all the boards of the tabernacle. And thou shalt make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards on the south side southward. And thou shalt make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons. And for the second side of the tabernacle on the north side there shall be twenty boards, and their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. And for the sides of the tabernacle westward thou shalt make six boards. And two boards shalt thou make for the corners of the tabernacle in the two sides. And they shall be coupled together beneath, and they shall be coupled together above the head of it unto one ring: thus shall it be for them both; they shall be for the two corners. And they shall be eight boards, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board.

"And thou shalt make bars of shittim-wood; five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle, for the two sides westward. And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall reach from end to end. And thou shalt overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings of gold for places for the bars: and thou shalt overlay the bars with gold. And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was showed thee in the mount." (vv. 15-30.)

Attending carefully to the particulars given, it will be seen that the number of the boards constituting the tabernacle, was forty-eight. There were twenty for the south side (v. 18); twenty for the north side (v. 20); six for the sides of the tabernacle westward (v. 22); and two for the corners of the tabernacle in the two sides (v. 23) — making the total of forty-eight. Then observe that each of these boards had two tenons (v. 17); and each tenon had for its base, or foundation, a socket of silver. (v. 19, 25.) In addition there were four sockets of silver underneath the pillars for the beautiful veil (v. 32); so that there were one hundred sockets of silver underneath and supporting the framework of the Tabernacle.

(1) Beginning then at the foundation, the typical teaching of the sockets of silver may be first considered. Leaving, however, their full exposition until the subject is

reached in chapter 30, it will suffice now to indicate its outlines. We find, then, that when the people were numbered, every man was to give half a shekel of silver as a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, that the rich should give the same as the poor, and the poor the same as the rich; and that this "atonement" money was appointed for the service of the tabernacle. (Ex. 30: 11-16.) In another scripture, it is stated that the sum thus given amounted to one hundred talents, and one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels; and that the hundred talents were used for the sockets of the boards, etc., and the rest for hooks for the pillars, etc. (Ex. 38: 28.) It is thus evident that the silver sockets, being made up of the ransom money, are a figure of atonement, of the blood of Christ, which He gave as a ransom for many. (Matt. 20: 28.) It is in allusion to this, and to Numbers 31: 49-54, that Peter writes to Jewish believers, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold." (1 Peter 1: 18.) The blessed truth is therefore taught that God's dwelling-place is founded upon redemption, the redemption which has been effected through the precious blood of Christ. But God's dwelling-place is now composed of believers, and hence the church as such, and every individual believer as forming part of the church (for every Israelite of the required age was represented in the atonement money), are placed before God upon the sure and efficacious foundation of accomplished atonement. The ground of the standing of every believer is the precious blood of Christ, and hence he appears before God in all its unspeakable and infinite value.

Now, as explained, there were one hundred of these sockets — i.e. ten times ten. Ten is the number of responsibility towards God. The blood of Christ therefore, as represented by the silver, has met the highest expression of our responsibility God-ward, — has made an atonement adequate — fully adequate — to all God's claims, and thereby cleared us completely and for ever. Well might the soul, in the perception of this perfect work, joyfully exclaim -

"On Christ the solid Rock I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand."

(2) The boards; and first as to their material, form, and length. They were made of the same materials as the ark, and the table of showbread — of shittim-wood, overlaid with gold (vv. 15, 29.) They therefore refer primarily to Christ; but also, as will be seen, to the believer. Each board had two tenons — which fitted in their respective sockets of silver. Two in Scripture is the number of adequate testimony: as, for example, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." (2 Cor. 13: 1; Deut. 19: 15.) Each board contains therefore in itself an adequate testimony to the value and completeness of the atonement on which it rests. (Compare 1 John 5: 6.) The length of each was ten cubits. (v. 16.) This again points to responsibility God-wards — in this case applicable to believers. Having a standing before God on the ground of redemption, responsibility is never to be forgotten. The standing indeed is the measure of it; and accordingly each board was ten cubits in length.

Together, as we have seen, they were forty-eight in number — i.e. twelve times four. Twelve is administrative perfection; and four is completeness on earth. The whole

number therefore will be administrative perfection displayed in all its completeness in Christ, or, if the boards are taken in connection with the divine dwelling-place, through the house of God. The former will be witnessed during the millennium; and, in one aspect, the latter too, as Christ will not reign apart from the church. The two numbers, twelve and four, are thus characteristic of the holy city, the New Jerusalem. It may be, that the Pentecostal church at Jerusalem, organized under the twelve apostles, was a passing shadow of this administrative perfection.

One thing more is noticeable — the provision made for their security when standing in their silver sockets. There were five bars of shittim-wood on either side, running through rings of gold (vv. 26-29); and the boards were, in addition, coupled at the corners by rings (v. 24.) The ring is a symbol of security — there being no end to it; and consequently, since the bars were to strengthen and secure the framework, the two together may well signify eternal security. And this both the church and the individual believer enjoy. Concerning the former, the Lord Himself said, "Upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16: 18); and of the latter, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand." (John 10: 27, 28.)

The boards completed, they are then to be set in their places. And remark that, once again, Moses is admonished to do everything according to the pattern he had been shown in the mount. It was to be truly an "example and shadow of heavenly things," and consequently there was no room for human thoughts or imaginations. Obedience was the part of Moses, and faithfulness in the execution of the heavenly design. So now fidelity to the word of God, obedience to every part of it, is what God requires from believers in connection with His church. Once admit human regulations, human authority, and the church ceases, in so far, to be a true witness for God. This is the third time that this injunction has been given — showing the importance of obedience in the eyes of God.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE BEAUTIFUL VEIL, ETC.

EXODUS xxvi. 31-37.

THE framework of the Tabernacle, considered in the last chapter, comprised the Tabernacle proper; *i.e.* the holy place, and the most holy. Outside of this, as will be seen in due course, there was the court of the Tabernacle, completing the threefold division. But inside the framework there were only these two — the holy place and the holy of holies. So far, however, this division has not been shown; but provision is now made for it in the direction given in the following scripture concerning the veil.

"And thou shalt make a veil, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made: and thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim-wood overlaid with gold: their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver.

"And thou shalt hang up the veil, under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the veil, the ark of the testimony: and the veil, shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place. And thou shalt set the table without the veil, and the candlestick over against the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south: and thou shalt put the table on the north side. And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework. And thou shalt make for the hanging five pillars of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold, and their hooks shall be of gold and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them." (vv. 31-37.)

(1) There are several distinct points in the description of the veil to be considered. As to its materials, it will be perceived that they correspond in every particular with those of the curtains forming the Tabernacle. (Ex. 26: 1.) As in these, therefore, so in the veil, it is Christ who is presented — Christ in what He is as to His nature and character, Christ in what He will be as Son of man and Son of David in the future glories of His millennial reign, and Christ, moreover, as Son of man invested with supreme judicial power. There is one difference to be noted. In the curtains of the Tabernacle the fine twined linen comes first; here the blue has the precedence, and the fine twined linen comes last. The reason is that the curtains display Christ in connection with the earth, and hence the absolute purity of His nature is the first thing declared; whereas the veil shows Christ rather in connection with heaven, and consequently the blue — His heavenly character — is prominent. The interpretation of the veil is found in the epistle to the Hebrews: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, *through the veil, that is to say, His flesh.*" (Heb. 10: 19, 20.) From this two things may be gathered. First, that just as the veil in the Tabernacle concealed the scene of the immediate presence and manifestation of God, so the flesh of Christ, Christ in incarnation, concealed from the natural eye the presence-chamber of God. He was God manifest in flesh; but His flesh, at the same time,

was calculated to blind the eyes of men to this astounding fact. The second is, that just as the veil was the only way into the most holy place, so Christ is the only way to God. He thus said to Thomas, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." (John 14: 6.)

The supports of the veil were threefold. There were, first, the pillars, then the hooks, and lastly, the sockets of silver. (v. 32.) *The pillars* were of shittim-wood, overlaid with gold — as seen in the boards, etc. This symbolizes, as shown more than once, the person of Christ in His two natures, human and divine — as the God-man. The lesson then is — inasmuch as the veil was supported by these pillars — *that everything in redemption depends upon the person of Christ*. If He had not been man, He could not have died for our sins; and if He had been only man, His sacrifice could not have availed for all His people. But being God and man He could make propitiation for the sins of His people and for the whole world. (1 John 2: 2.) The whole value of His work flows from His person; and hence the importance of holding fast the true Scriptural teaching on this point, and of guarding this most blessed doctrine on every hand. If the truth of the person of Christ could be undermined, the whole fabric and structure of redemption would be endangered. Hence the care and, it may be added, the delight of the Spirit of God to testify to it in every shape and form, in figure and type, as well as in distinct words. *The hooks* were of gold. Gold is divine righteousness. If then, as shown, everything in redemption depends upon the person of Christ, it is equally true, as seen in the fact that the veil was suspended upon these hooks of gold, that everything likewise depends upon the display of God's righteousness in Christ. Or it might be affirmed more directly still, that Christ holds the place of the way to God in divine righteousness. For since He glorified God on the earth, and finished the work which He gave Him to do, God's righteousness was seen in raising Him from the dead, and setting Him at His own right hand. All that God is, is concerned, and righteously concerned, in placing and sustaining Him in the position He thus occupies. The *sockets* were of silver — figure of the blood of atonement. This carries us down to the foundation of all — the work which Christ wrought out on the cross. These two things — the blood and the veil — are conjoined in the passage already cited from the Hebrews. God will never have it forgotten that the cross is the foundation of everything, of the blessing both of the church and of Israel, as well as of the reconciliation of all things. And the delight of His own heart in what Christ is and has done, is sufficiently revealed in the fact, that every minute thing in connection with His sanctuary points to the one or the other — all alike revealing, if in different aspects, Christ and His work.

The position of the veil is most important. "And thou shalt hang up the veil, under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the veil, the ark of the testimony: and the veil, shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy." (v. 33.) It thus shut off, as before explained, the holiest of all, in which the ark of the testimony — the throne of God on earth — was placed, so that none might enter there, save Aaron once a year on the great day of atonement. (Lev. 16) And what, it may be asked, was the meaning of this? The answer may be given in the words of Scripture: "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." (Heb. 9: 8.) If then, on the one hand, as we have seen,

the veil, as a figure of Christ, teaches the blessed truth that it is through Christ alone that access can be obtained to God, the veil in itself, on the other hand, speaks of distance and concealment. God indeed could not fully reveal Himself, could not righteously go out to the sinner, or bring the sinner in to Himself, until the question of sin should be taken up and settled once and for ever. This Christ did, and, as a consequence, immediately that He gave up the ghost, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. (Matt. 27) The veil therefore in the Tabernacle showed that the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest, and by that, not only proved that the question of sin was not yet dealt with, but also that the people were sinners, and as such unfit for the presence of God. Both gifts and sacrifices were offered on their behalf, but these could not make them that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience, or they would have possessed an indefeasible title to enter the holiest. No; it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins; and hence, with guilt bound upon their consciences, they dared not come into the presence of a holy God; and He (be it said with all reverence) could not go out to them, for God in His holiness is a consuming fire.

The existence of the veil therefore reveals the contrast between the position of Israel and that of believers. Israel was shut out, never had access into the holiest; Moses, owned in grace as the mediator, and Aaron as the high priest, once a year, were alone permitted to enter. But now every believer enjoys this precious privilege. (See Heb. 10: 19-22.) The veil is rent; for "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption." (Heb. 9: 11, 12.) Inside the rent veil is therefore our only place of worship; and we can enter with all boldness, because Christ by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Nor should another contrast be forgotten. Even when Aaron did enter the holiest, he was not in the presence of God as the believer now is. God was only revealed then as Jehovah; but now believers know Him as their God and Father. Hence the apostle says, "Through Him (Christ) we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Eph. 2: 18 see also John 20: 17.) While therefore we are filled with admiration at the wisdom of God, as seen in the depicted glories and adumbrations of Christ in the Tabernacle, we are constrained to bow before Him with adoring praise as we learn, by contrast, the grace that has brought us into the full enjoyment of all here typified, and of even larger blessings than these.

(2) The arrangement of the holy furniture follows. (vv. 33-35.) It will be needful to remember once again that the altar of incense is not yet described, because it is a symbol of approach (and hence belongs to the last division of this section). The articles given are all symbols of display. Leaving on this account, for the present, any detailed exposition, a brief notice may be given of the arrangement in this scripture. The ark, first of all, was to be put into the holiest, and the mercy-seat upon the ark of the testimony — with "the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy-seat." Nothing else was found in the most holy place, because, as before explained, it was the scene of the presence and manifestation of God. There, dwelling between the cherubim, He was approached with the incense from off the golden altar, and with the blood of the sacrifices on the day of atonement; and there Moses stood to receive communications for the people. The beautiful veil shut it off

from the holy place. It was therefore the inner compartment of the Tabernacle. Outside the veil, in the holy place, the table of showbread and the candlestick were arranged; the former on the north, and the table on the south side. To borrow the language of another, "Outside the veil were the table with its twelve loaves and the golden candlestick. Twelve is administrative perfection *in man*; seven, spiritual completeness, whether in good or evil. The two are found outside the veil, inside which was the most immediate manifestation of God, the Supreme, but who hid Himself, as it were, in darkness. Here was light and nourishment; God in power in union with humanity; and God giving the light of the Holy Ghost. Therefore it is that we have twelve apostles attached to the Lord in the flesh, and seven churches for Him who has the seven Spirits of God. The twelve tribes were, for the time being, what answered externally to this manifestation. It is found in the new Jerusalem. The primary idea is the manifestation of God in man and by the Spirit." And these two truths are connected — shown to be connected by the relative positions of the table and the candlestick; the light of the candlestick indeed ever testifying to the truth embodied in the table of showbread

(3) The last thing connected with this part of the subject is the "hanging for the door of the tent." This "hanging" shut off the court of the Tabernacle from the holy place, and formed the doorway into it. It occupied the same position in reference to the holy place, as the beautiful veil did in respect of the holy of holies. When therefore the priests came from the court (not yet described), they passed through this "hanging" into the holy place to accomplish their service. Its materials correspond with those of the beautiful veil. But there is one important difference. There were no cherubim embroidered on the "hanging." Otherwise it was the same; and hence the typical teaching of the one will apply to the other. What, then, is the significance of the omission of the cherubim? These, it will be remembered, set forth the Son of Man in His judicial character. The "hanging," then, equally with the veil, is a figure of Christ — with His judicial character carefully excluded. The reason is obvious. In the "hanging" He is presented in grace, to those that were without, as the way into the position and privileges of priests, as the way into the presence of God in this character. The pillars are also made of the same material, as well as the hooks; and point likewise to the person of Christ, and to divine righteousness, as accomplished and displayed in Him at the right hand of God. But there are five pillars instead of four. This may arise from what has been already stated — that the "hanging" is Christ in presentation to the world in race, and thus brings with it the thought of responsibility man-wards. The sockets were of brass instead of silver. Brass, as ever, is divine righteousness testing man in responsibility. This will be more fully explained in the next chapter; but it is easily understood that Christ presented in grace, is Christ presented to, and hence a test of, responsible man. The moment, however, the question of his sins is settled, not only before God, but also for his own conscience, Christ is become for him the way into God's presence. Thereafter everything is socketed in silver, for he stands now upon accomplished atonement; in Christ he has redemption through His blood.

Everything still portrays Christ. It may be, and undoubtedly is, difficult to interpret some of the minute details; if, however, Christ is before the soul, some ray of His glory will soon be discovered. Let there but be patience and conscious dependence, combined

with watchfulness against the activity of the mind, and the Spirit of God will delight to unfold these shadows to the souls of His people.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE BRAZEN ALTAR.

EXODUS xxvii. 1-8.

PASSING outwards from the holy place, the first thing met, when the Tabernacle and all its arrangements were duly ordered, was the laver. But this is omitted here for the same reason that the altar of incense was not described in the last chapter. It was a symbol of approach, and not of display; and consequently the brazen altar is next given. This, as will be seen, had a peculiar character. It was a manifestation of God, and, at the same time, was the meeting-place between Him and the sinner. It is in this aspect the boundary of His display; i.e. He does not go out in manifestation beyond this limit; for, meeting the sinner here, the sinner (i.e. the priest acting on his behalf), when everything is prepared, has the liberty from this point of passing in, and would thenceforward need the symbols of approach.

"And thou shalt make an altar of shittim-wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare; and the height thereof shall be three cubits. And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof; his horns shall be of the same: and thou shalt overlay it with brass. And thou shalt make his pans to receive his ashes, and his shovels, and his basons, and his fleshhooks, and his firepans: all the vessels thereof thou shalt make of brass. And thou shalt make for it a grate of network of brass; and upon the net shalt thou make four brasen rings in the four corners thereof. And thou shalt put it under the compass of the altar beneath, that the net may be even to the midst of the altar. And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with brass. And the staves shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar, to bear it. Hollow with boards shalt thou make it; as it was showed thee in the mount, so shall they make it." (vv. 1-8.)

Before entering upon the uses of the altar, it will be necessary to explain its typical meaning. The shittim-wood is found here equally with the ark, the table, etc. But it was overlaid with brass instead of gold. Brass, indeed, is its characteristic. Now brass is divine righteousness, not like that symbolised by the gold according to what He is in Himself, suited, that is, to the divine nature, but as testing man in responsibility. It has always allied with it, on this account, a certain judicial aspect, inasmuch as, meeting man in responsibility, it of necessity judges him because he is a sinner. The altar as a whole, then, is God manifested in righteousness. Hence it formed the meeting-place between God and the sinner; for as long as the sinner is in his sins, God can only meet him on that ground, where he is as under responsibility. The altar consequently was the first thing that met the sinner's eyes when coming up out of the world into the court of the Tabernacle. But then it was an altar — and as such was a symbol of the cross of Christ. When the sinner therefore came to the altar, when he came believing in the efficacy of the sacrifice, though the altar tested him in responsibility, he found that all his sins were gone, and that he could stand before God in all the sweet savour of the sacrifice which had been

consumed there. Its very position displays this character. It was just outside of the world, and just inside the court. So when Christ was rejected, He was cast out of the world — lifted up above it, when nailed to the shameful tree. But there on the cross, as on the altar in figure, He met and bore the whole of man's responsibility "went down under all God's holy judgment against sin, and so abundantly answered to every claim of His glory, that the fire fed gratefully upon the sacrifice, which, totally consumed upon the altar, went up as a sweet savour of acceptance to God. It was the burnt-offering, and not the sin-offering which was placed upon the brazen altar. The sin-offering was burnt without the camp. The brazen altar teaches rather what God found — His part — in the death of Christ; and it is not until we have learnt this truth that we can draw near with holy boldness into His presence.<sup>15</sup>

If we consider now the uses of the altar, further instruction upon this point will be gleaned. It was pre-eminently, as just stated, the altar of burnt-offering (Lev. 1) Besides this, parts of the meat-offering, of the peace-offering, and indeed of the sin-offering, were also burnt upon "the altar of burnt-offering." (See Lev. 2: 2; Lev. 3: 5; Lev. 4: 10) Without entering at this time into the specific characteristics of these several sacrifices, it will be enough to say that they shadow forth different aspects of the death of Christ; and it is therefore in the combination of all, that we learn the infinite value, and the unspeakable preciousness of that one sacrifice which they typify. The brazen altar tells therefore of Christ, of that one sacrifice of Christ when He through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God. When the sinner (an Israelite) therefore brought a sacrifice, he owned by that very act that he could not of himself meet God's righteous claims, that he was a sinner, and as such had forfeited his life; and hence it was that he brought another life to be offered up in his stead. Coming thus, he identified himself with the sacrifice, as shown by putting his hand upon its head. (Lev. 1: 4, etc.) If he brought a sin-offering, the fat only of the inwards, etc., of which was burnt upon this altar (see Lev. 3), when he put his hand upon its head, his guilt was transferred (in figure) to the offering, and it was consequently burnt as an unclean thing — charged with the offerer's sins — outside the camp. If it were a burnt-offering, by the same act of laying his hand upon the head of the victim he became transferred, as it were, into, completely identified with, all the acceptance of the sacrifice. Two things were thus effected. On the one hand, his sins were put out of God's sight; on the other, he was brought before God in all the acceptance of Christ. Thus, if the altar tested man in righteousness, it revealed the grace that had provided a perfect sacrifice on his behalf; so that God could meet him in grace and love, as well as in righteousness, and give him a title to stand in perfect acceptance in His holy presence. The very size of the altar illustrates this truth. It was five cubits square. It was responsibility man-wards completely displayed and met in the cross of Christ.

How abundant then the encouragement which God gives to the sinner! The claims of His throne, His government, have been met by the altar; for the blood has been sprinkled upon it, and the sacrifice has been consumed. He can therefore receive in grace and in righteousness every one that in faith approaches the altar; and it is to announce

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<sup>15</sup> It should never be forgotten that while the burnt-offering sets forth God's part in the death of Christ, it was yet accepted for the offerer to make atonement for him. (Lev. 1: 4.)

these glad tidings that the gospel is sent forth into every land. The cross of Christ is the meeting-place now between God and the sinner. It is on the foundation of what was accomplished there that He can be just and the Justifier of every one that believeth in Jesus. There is no other ground on which He can bring the sinner into His presence. If the Israelite rejected the brazen altar, he shut himself out for ever from the mercy of God; and, in like manner, whoever rejects the cross of Christ, shuts himself out for ever from the hope of salvation.

The horns of the altar may also be considered. There were four — one on each corner. (v. 2.) In certain cases the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled upon these, as, for example, in the sin-offering for the ruler or for one of the common people. (Lev. 4: 25, 30, etc.) The horn is a symbol of strength. When therefore the blood was sprinkled upon the horns, the whole strength of the altar (and it was displayed in all its completeness) which had been against, is now exercised on behalf of the sinner. The horns of the altar became thus a place of refuge, an inviolable sanctuary, for all who were rightfully under their protection on the ground of the sprinkled blood. Joab sought this protection when he fled from Solomon (1 Kings 2: 28); but inasmuch as he had no claim upon it, for he was a murderer, he was slain. This is like the sinner who, in his extremity, would fain claim the benefits of the death of Christ to escape the judgment, though he is still alienated in heart from Him. But wherever there is trust in the value of the sacrifice which has been offered to God upon the altar, there is no power in earth or hell that can touch the soul that rests under its shelter and protection.

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,  
I will not, I will not, desert to its foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,  
I'll never, no never, no never forsake."

It will be interesting to look for a moment at the provision for the journey detailed in Numbers 4: "And they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth thereon: and they shall put upon it all the vessels thereof, wherewith they minister about it, even the censers, and the fleshhooks, and the shovels, and the Mangers, all the vessels of the altar; and they shall spread upon it a covering of badgers' skins, and put to the staves of it." (vv. 13, 14.) The purple cloth was put immediately upon the altar. Purple is royalty, and this makes the interpretation evident. It is the sufferings of Christ — as seen in the altar, — and the glories that should follow, as shown by the purple. The cross first, and then the crown. But the altar was in the wilderness, and hence the badgers' skins were without, covering up the purple. The time for the assumption of the royal glory of Christ had not yet arrived. In the meantime the badgers' skins — emblem of that holy vigilance which guarded Him from evil while passing on through the wilderness in rejection, and while waiting for the time of His kingdom, were alone seen.

The vessels of the altar were all made of brass, in harmony with its characteristic feature. The staves wherewith the altar was to be borne were of shittim-wood and brass, as the altar itself. Finally, Moses is again reminded that the pattern shown him in the mount must be his guide. The wisdom of God alone could devise the altar which was to

embody so many blessed truths. A king Ahaz, enamoured by the beauty of the Syrian altar, may reject the altar of God (2 Kings 16); but it was the ruin of him and of all Israel. (2 Chr. 28: 23.) So now men may refuse the preaching of the cross of Christ, finding in it, according to their thoughts, either a stumbling-block or foolishness, and choose an altar for their worship which meets their own aesthetic tastes, and which will not therefore offend the prejudices of the natural man; but, as in the case of Ahaz, it can only end in their everlasting ruin. God only can prescribe the suited way and method of access to Himself.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE COURT OF THE TABERNACLE.

EXODUS xxvii: 9-19.

THE brazen altar having been prescribed, the court of the Tabernacle follows. This, it will be remembered, was the open space surrounding the Tabernacle, enclosed by hangings of fine twined linen, as detailed in this scripture. It formed the third division — when considered as a part of, or rather as connected with, the Tabernacle proper. In this, as shown before, there were the holy of holies, the innermost compartment; then, passing outward, the holy place; and then the court which is here given. This is also a manifestation of God — teaching how that Christ is ever before the mind of the Spirit in every part of the sanctuary; and that Christ is thus the only key to unlock its mysteries.

"And thou shalt make the court of the tabernacle for the south side southward there shall be hangings for the court of fine twined linen of an hundred cubits long for one side: and the twenty pillars thereof and their twenty sockets shall be of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver. And likewise for the north side in length there shall be hangings of an hundred cubits long and his twenty pillars and their twenty sockets of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver. And for the breadth of the court on the west side shall be hangings of fifty cubits; their pillars ten, and their sockets ten. And the breadth of the court on the east side eastward shall be fifty cubits. The hangings of one side of the gate shall be fifteen cubits: their pillars three, and their sockets three. And on the other side shall be hangings fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three. And for the crate of the court shall be an hanging of twenty cubits, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework; and their pillars shall be four, and their sockets four. All the pillars round about the court shall be filleted with silver; their hooks shall be of silver, and their sockets of brass. The length of the court shall be an hundred cubits and the breadth fifty every where, and the height five cubits of fine twined linen, and their sockets of brass. All the vessels of the tabernacle in all the service thereof, and all the pins thereof, and all the pins of the court, shall be of brass." (vv. 9-19.)

It appears from this description that the court of the Tabernacle was one hundred cubits long, and fifty cubits broad. (vv. 9-13.) It was made as follows: first, there were twenty pillars on each of the two sides, north and south (vv. 10, 11), and ten pillars at each of the two ends, east and west — the pillars on the east side, the side of entrance, being made up of three on each side of the entrance, and four for the hanging of the gate of the court. (vv. 12-16.) Altogether there were sixty pillars. On these pillars — or, to speak exactly, on fifty-six of them — excluding the four which were for the hanging of the gate — were suspended the fine twined linen which formed the court. Of this there were one hundred cubits on each side, fifty cubits at the west end, and thirty on the east (vv. 9-15) — altogether two hundred and eighty cubits. The gateway, at the east end, was composed of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with

needlework — the same in every respect as the hanging for the entrance into the holy place — and was twenty cubits in length. The sockets of the pillars were all of brass, and the hooks and the fillets for the hanging were of silver. (v. 17.) The typical teaching of these things will be perceived to spring from their twofold symbolical presentation of Christ and of the believer.

*The fine twined linen* is an emblem, as shown more than once, of the spotless purity of Christ, of the positive purity of His nature. Here it may be seen in another way. The measurement of these hangings of fine twined linen was two hundred and eighty cubits. In the curtains of the Tabernacle (Ex. 26: 1, 2) there were also two hundred and eighty cubits — there being ten curtains, and each curtain being twenty-eight cubits in length. The measurements of these two were therefore equal. The curtains of the Tabernacle present Christ, Christ in His nature and character, and Christ in His future glories and judicial authority; but as so presented He was for the eye of God, and for the eye of the priest. As such He could not be seen from without, only from within. The fine twined linen hangings present Christ also, but not so much to those within as to those without. They could be seen by all in the camp. It is therefore the presentation of Christ to the world, Christ in the purity of His nature. He could thus challenge His adversaries to convict Him of sin; Pilate had to confess again and again that there was no fault in Him; and the Jewish authorities, though they sought with eagle-eyed malice, failed to establish, or even to produce, a single proof of failure. Not a single speck could be detected upon the fine twined linen of His holy life, His life of practical righteousness which flowed from the purity of His being.

There is another thing. These hangings were five cubits high (v. 18); and their lengths at the two sides one hundred cubits, and at the two ends fifty and thirty cubits. These latter numbers can all be divided by ten and five. Accepting then the power of these numbers as responsibility towards God, and responsibility towards man, it follows that the spotless purity of His life sprang from His perfectly meeting this twofold responsibility. He loved God with all His heart, and His neighbour as, yea, more than, Himself. To those therefore whose eyes were opened these curtains proclaimed the coming of One who should perfectly answer in His life and walk to every claim of God.

*The pillars, their sockets, fillets, etc.* The material of the pillars is not stated. It might seem, at first sight, from the tenth verse, as if they were of brass; but on comparing Ex. 38: 10, it is most probable that the brass refers alone to the sockets. It might be inferred from analogy that they were of shittim-wood overlaid with brass; but where Scripture is silent human inferences are, even if permissible, uncertain. Two things, however, are mentioned. They were socketed in brass, and capped with silver. (Ex. 38: 17.) Brass is divine righteousness testing man in responsibility. Hence, indeed, brass is characteristic of the outside, as gold is of the inside, of the Tabernacle. Man's responsibility must be tested and met before he can be brought into God's presence. Christ in presenting Himself to the world, as symbolized by the line twined linen hangings, stands upon the ground of having met every claim of divine righteousness. This is the foundation of His character as Saviour. Silver speaks of redemption. The pillars were capped with it, and the curtains were suspended upon it. So Christ displays the

efficacy of His work. It is His crown of glory even at the right hand of God. If therefore He searches the sinner by the sockets of brass, He declares to him at the same time the value of the blood as shown by the silver. Brass testing man discovers his need, and as soon as the need is known, the silver is there to meet it. The pillars were fifty-six in number — excluding those for the gateway — on which the hangings were suspended. Fifty-six are seven times eight. Seven is the perfect number; and eight is that of resurrection. The practical righteousness of Christ, perfectly displayed in His earthly life, is sealed as it were by His resurrection. He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, *according to the Spirit of holiness*, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. 1: 4.)

*The hanging for the gate of the court* is the same as the curtain forming the entrance into the holy place, and, as in that, adumbrates Christ in all that He is in connection with the earth, His heavenly character, His royal glories as Son of man and as Son of David, and His spotless purity. Once again there are no cherubim, and this is because He is here the Door, the Way, as presented to the world; for we are told that God sent not His Son to judge the world (that was not His mission then), but that the world through Him might be saved. (John 3: 17.) There are now no cherubim and a flaming sword to keep the way of the tree of life, for that flaming sword has descended upon that holy victim which was offered up to God on Calvary, and thus having satisfied, and that for ever, the claims of God's holiness, He can now present Himself in all the attractions of His person and grace to the world, as the way, the truth, and the life. There, before the eyes of all, this hanging for the gate was displayed, and while every colour told of Christ, all together, in their harmony and beauty, united in the proclamation, "By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." It may be observed also that Christ is the way into the holy place, and into the holy of holies as well as into the court. "He is the only doorway," one has remarked, "into the varied fields of glory which are yet to be displayed, whether on earth, in heaven, or the heaven of heavens."

But there is yet another aspect of the court of the Tabernacle. If, on the one hand, it presents Christ, it gives, on the other, and because it is Christ, the standard of the believer's responsibility. No lower one can be raised or accepted; for He has left us an example that we should walk in His steps. The measurements, considered in this aspect also, are significant. The curtains of the Tabernacle were, as stated, two hundred and eighty cubits. These display Christ before the eye of God. But as He is, so are we in this world. (1 John 4: 17.) They are therefore the curtains of privilege — revealing, as they do, our perfect acceptance before God. The fine twined linen hangings were also two hundred and eighty cubits, and inasmuch as they display the practical righteousness of the life of Christ, His blameless walk, His spotless purity, they are the curtains of responsibility. In the Revelation it is said that the fine linen is the righteousnesses of saints. (Rev. 19: 8.) The responsibility of the saint is measured by his privilege, by what he is before God. There is another thought. Our responsibility to walk as Christ walked (1 John 2: 6) is our responsibility to God. But these curtains were five cubits high. Five, it will be recalled, is the number of responsibility towards man; and thereby it may be learned that we are responsible to man as well as to God — responsible to present Christ in our walk and conversation.

The pillars may also point to the believer. Socketed in brass, grounded in divine righteousness, whose claims have been met, and with the value of redemption, as typified by the silver upon our heads, are prerequisites for such a display of Christ. There were also pins and cords. (Ex. 27: 19; Ex. 35: 18.) These were for stability — to keep the pillars with the fine twined linen hangings in their place. Interpreting this of the believer, it will teach that the source of his strength is not in himself, that he needs a power from without if he is to maintain the exhibition of practical righteousness before the world; and, indeed, the wider truth, that, though he is given a standing on the ground of divine righteousness, and is under the value of redemption, he could not maintain the position for a single moment if left to his own resources. The pins and cords therefore reveal that the believer is "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Peter 1: 5.) All is of God; all that the believer is, has, and enjoys, is the gift of His grace. His position as well as his responsibility can only be maintained in dependence on the Lord. All these pins, equally with the vessels of the Tabernacle in all the service thereof, and all the pins thereof, were of brass. (v. 19.) Thus everything outside the holy place and the holy of holies, was characterized by divine righteousness, but divine righteousness testing man in responsibility because it was the meeting-place between God and the people. (See Ex. 29: 42.) Since, however, man cannot of himself meet its claims, the righteousness of God is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe. While therefore he is saved by grace, he stands, as so saved, upon the immovable foundation of divine righteousness before God. For grace reigns, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom. 5: 21.)

# CHAPTER XXVI.

## THE PRIESTHOOD.

EXODUS xxviii.

BEFORE entering upon this subject, it may be well to recall the point at which we have arrived. With the exception of the altar of incense and the laver, the tabernacle, with its sacred vessels, is now complete. Beginning with the ark of the covenant, the table of showbread and the candlestick were then described. The tabernacle (the beautiful curtains), the tent (the curtains of goats' hair), and the coverings of rams' skins dyed red, and of badgers' skins followed. Next came the boards of the tabernacle, and their erection, and the division between the holy of holies and the holy place by the veil, and the "hanging for the door of the tent;" i.e. the entrance from without into the holy place. The sacred vessels were then arranged: the ark, with the mercy-seat and its "cherubim of glory," was put into the holiest, and the table and the candlestick occupied the holy place. In the next place, the brazen altar was prescribed, and lastly, the court of the tabernacle. So far, everything given is a manifestation of God, or, as it is often termed, a symbol of display; i.e. it reveals in type or figure something of God in Christ. It is God, so to speak, coming out to His people. Thenceforward the order is reversed. It is not now the question of God coming out, but of going in to God. All that follows therefore concerns access into His presence; and consequently all the vessels that have been omitted are symbols of approach; i.e. vessels needed for drawing nigh to God. But before these are entered upon there is a break, and the appointment and consecration of the priesthood are detailed. The reason is, that there must be the designated persons for approach before the vessels could be used. There is therefore a divine order in this seeming confusion. God has come out in type and figure to His people; then He indicates those who are to be set apart for His service in the sanctuary — those who are to enjoy the special privilege of access to Him; and lastly, the vessels etc., are given, which they would need in their holy employment in the house of God. This arrangement will also help us to understand the introduction of the commandment concerning the provision for the oil for the candlestick at the end of Exodus 27. The oil, as has already been explained, is a type of the Holy Ghost. The children of Israel are enjoined through Moses to bring the oil, and thus are formally linked (in figure) with, and so represented in, the light of the candlestick which was to be ordered by Aaron and his sons from evening to morning before the Lord. In other words, the people are defined (though this truth will be more definitely stated when we come to the atonement money) for whom the priests are to act before the priests are appointed. It will thus be seen that every detail, and the position of every verse, as well as the order of the subjects, are stamped with divine wisdom and significance. All being thus arranged, the priests are to be set apart for their holy office.

"And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons." (v. 1.)

Two or three preliminary remarks will conduce to our understanding of this subject. The necessity for the appointment of priests lay in the fact that the people were sinners, and as such, inasmuch as there was no provision as yet for cleansing them from the guilt of sin, had no title to come into God's presence. Man as he is cannot, dares not, come before God. The object of the priestly office was, therefore, to minister unto God (v. 1); but to minister unto God on behalf of the people. (Heb. 5: 1, 2.) In this dispensation there is no such thing as some of God's people acting as priests on behalf of others in this special way. All believers are now priests (see 1 Peter 2: 5, 9); all alike enjoy liberty of access into the holiest of all. (Heb. 10) Aaron therefore is a type of Christ — a type of Christ when he is alone; but when he is associated with his sons, he with them is a type of the Church as the priestly family; but the Church, at the same time, in association with Christ. This distinction will appear most clearly in the next chapter. It is of the first importance to be clear upon this subject, because, through ignorance or indifference to the truth, thousands of professed believers have gone, and thousands more are going, back to Jewish ground, on which they accept the existence of a special order of men who claim to possess, like Aaron and his sons, the particular privilege of going to God on behalf of their fellow-men. The assertion of such a claim is to attack the very foundation of Christianity, inasmuch as it denies the perpetual efficacy of the one offering of Christ. Aaron then, be it remembered, is a type of Christ; but if he is seen together with his sons, then the privileges of the Church, in association with Christ as the priestly family, are presented. The choice of Aaron and his sons was of pure grace. An essential qualification for the office was divine appointment (Heb. 5: 4); but Aaron was not chosen on the ground of any merit in himself; he was simply in this matter the object of divine and sovereign favour. He had no claim whatever upon God for such an honour; but God gave it to him in the exercise of His sovereign prerogative.

The chapter contains two things — the priestly dress, and the priestly office. The two are intermingled, but the dress comes first for consideration.

"And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, for glory and for beauty. And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office. And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a brodered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen. And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work. It shall have the two shoulder pieces thereof joined at the two edges thereof; and so it shall be joined together. And the curious girdle of the ephod, which is upon it, shall be of the same, according to the work thereof; even of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen." (vv. 2-8.)

There were six holy garments in all (v. 4), or, if we add the plate of pure gold put on the mitre (v. 36), seven, these constituting the garments for glory and for beauty. The ephod comes first, because it was pre-eminently the priestly garment. Without it the

priest could not be in the full exercise of his office. It was made of the four materials — blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, which have so frequently been considered, with the addition of gold. (v. 5.) The gold is mentioned first, and signifies that which is divine. If, however, we take the gold as an emblem of divine righteousness, it will signify that this is the ground on which Christ, as Priest, exercises His office; that His intercession is according to it before God, and therefore of necessity prevalent. In the remaining four materials there are the heavenly character of Christ (blue), His glories as Son of man and Son of David (purple and scarlet), and His spotless purity (fine twined linen), as holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. Two things are thereby taught. First, that Christ acts for us as Priest in all that He is as divine and human, as the God-man. The whole value of His person enters into the exercise of His office — the gold speaking of what He is as divine, and the varied colours of His perfections and dignities as man. The apostle combines these two things in the epistle to the Hebrews: "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God," etc. (4: 14.) He is Jesus, and He is the Son of God. It is this most precious truth that is displayed in type in the materials of the ephod. How it enlarges our conceptions of the value of His work for us as Priest to remember what He is in Himself, and that we are thus upheld in His intercession by all that He is as Jesus, and as the Son of God! Secondly, these materials reveal the character of His priesthood. There are royal glories portrayed as well as His essential nature and character. He will indeed be a Priest on His throne. (Zech. 6: 13.) Now He exercises His office on behalf of believers after the Aaronic pattern on the great day of atonement inside the veil; but the full expression of His priestly office for Israel will be seen in His Melchizedek character. (Ps. 110; Heb. 7) The ephod of Aaron spoke of these coming glories, which will be displayed when Christ will be both King of righteousness and King of peace. Strictly speaking therefore, the dress is emblematical of Christ as Priest for Israel, though Aaron never went in to the holiest. in the character it exhibited; for failure came in through Nadab and Abihu, and, as a consequence, he was forbidden to go into God's presence, except once a year, and then not in the garments for glory and beauty. (Lev. 10, 16) But Christ will take up all that these garments typified, and then will be seen, for the first time, God's thought of the priesthood for His people fully accomplished.

*The girdle of the ephod*, was embroidered with the same materials as the ephod itself. It is therefore to the significance of the girdle itself that our attention is directed. In Scripture it is constantly typical of service. One beautiful example of this is found in Luke — in the words of our blessed Lord Himself. He says, "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that He shall *gird Himself*. and. make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and *serve them*." (Luke 12: 37.) The girdle of the ephod will, then, signify the service of Christ as the Priest, the service He renders to us before God in this capacity. A Servant — the perfect Servant — ever delighting when in this world to do His Father's will, He in His love and grace, though He be glorified, remains a Servant still. He is gone into heaven to appear in the presence of God for us. (Heb. 9: 24.) It is in this character He maintains unwearied intercession on our behalf, whereby He secures for us those continual ministrations of mercy and grace — mercy for our weakness, and grace for our succour when we are tempted — which we need as a people passing through the desert. It is most consoling to

raise our eyes, and behold Christ invested with His priestly girdle, for thereby we are assured that He will save us all the way through, bring us through the wilderness in safety, and introduce us into the rest of God, because He ever lives to make intercession for us. And how it reveals to us the depths of His own heart! Moses complained to the Lord that the burden of Israel — the burden of leading them in their wanderings — was too heavy for him. But the Lord Jesus, as our great High Priest, is never weary, notwithstanding the continual failures and unbelief, and the going back in heart to Egypt, of His people. He is ever unwearied and unresting in His service, because His love is inexhaustible. Blessed be His name!

We have next the onyx stones and breastplate.

"And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: six of their names on one stone, and the other six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth. With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold. And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial. And thou shalt make ouches of gold; and two chains of pure gold at the ends; of wreathen work shalt thou make them, and fasten the wreathen chains to the ouches. And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it. Foursquare it shall be, being doubled; a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof. And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row. And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper; they shall be set in gold in their inclosings. And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes. And thou shalt make upon the breastplate chains at the ends of wreathen work of pure gold. And thou shalt make upon the breastplate two rings of gold, and shalt put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. And thou shalt put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings which are on the ends of the breastplate. And the other two ends of the two wreathen chains thou shalt fasten in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulderpieces of the ephod before it. And thou shalt make two rings of gold, and thou shalt put them upon the two ends of the breastplate, in the border thereof, which is in the side of the ephod inward. And two other rings of gold thou shalt make, and shalt put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, toward the forepart thereof, over against the other coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod. And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod. And Aaron shall bear the

names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually. And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the Lord: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually." (vv. 9-30.)

First, there are *the two onyx stones*, with the names of the children of Israel, six tribes on each, engraven thereon, set in ouches of gold, and put upon the shoulders of the ephod, *etc.* That this description relates in figure to the exercise of the priestly office is clear from the statement that "Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial." The onyx stones were gems — precious stones, figurative of the excellencies of Christ, and combining this with the fact that they were set in gold will give us two things; first, that the names of His people appear upon the shoulders of the Priest in all His beauty and excellency, and, as symbolized by the gold, set in divine righteousness. The shoulder is the emblem of strength. (See Isa. 9: 6; Isa. 22: 22, etc.) Christ therefore, as here portrayed, upholds His people in the presence of God in all His omnipotent strength; and He has the title to do so, seeing that they are set upon His shoulders in divine righteousness and invested with all the radiancy of His own beauty. What a comfort to us in the consciousness of our utter feebleness! He who upholdeth all things by the word of His power maintains us before God; and, as He bears us up in His presence, God beholds us as having an undeniable claim to be upon the shoulders, and sees us encompassed by all the excellency, of the High Priest. Our memorial is thus before Him continually; for Christ cannot be in the presence of God without our names being seen upon His shoulders. Remark also that the ouches in which the onyx stones were set were fastened by two wreathen chains of gold, binding them on His shoulders in divine righteousness.

The breastplate follows. Its materials corresponded with those of the ephod. (v. 15.) It was four-square in shape, and there were set in it four rows of precious stones; and on these stones likewise were engraven the names of the children of Israel according to their twelve tribes, etc. The typical teaching will then be of the same character — noting, however, the differences between the shoulders and the breast. (1) Aaron then bore the names of the children of Israel on his heart, as well as on his shoulders. The breast is symbolic of the affections. It teaches therefore that if Christ upholds His people before God, on the one hand, by everlasting strength, He bears them also, on the other, on His heart in everlasting love. Everlasting strength and everlasting love unite in the presentation of believers before God by the Priest. On the heart of Christ! And who shall sound its depths? If we think of power, we remember His words, "No one can pluck them out of My hand." If our thought is of love, we are reminded of the apostle's challenge, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" And these two — strength and love — and these two as united in Christ — are engaged in presenting us before God. He has bound us upon His shoulders — bearing our weight — with His own almighty strength, and He has fastened us upon His heart with His own deathless and unfathomable love. This will help us to comprehend a little of the efficacy of His intercession, based as it is upon the efficacy of His sacrifice, on our behalf. (2) The names of the children of Israel

were graven upon the precious stones. The scene of the exercise of the priesthood, according to the thought of God, and actually so in the case of Christ, if not in that of Aaron, was immediately in God's presence — before the full blaze of the holiness of His throne. Now the action of light upon precious stones has the effect of bringing out their varied and manifold beauties. Hence, as was remarked in connection with the onyx stones, the names of God's people, as borne upon the heart of the priest, shine out in all the sparkling lustre and beauty of the stones on which they are engraven. This symbolizes the fact that believers are before God in all the acceptance of Christ. When God looks upon the great High Priest, He beholds His people upon His heart, as well as upon His shoulders, adorned with all the beauty of the One on whom His eye ever rests with perfect delight. Or, looking at it from another aspect, it might be said that Christ presents His people to God, in the exercise of His priesthood, as Himself. He thus establishes in His intercession His own claims upon God on their behalf. And with what joy does He so present them before God! For they are those for whom He has died, and whom He has cleansed with His own most precious blood, those whom He has made the objects of His own love, and whom finally He will bring to be for ever with Him; and He pleads for them before God according to all the strength of these ties, according, as before observed, to all the claims which He Himself, on account of the work He accomplished on the cross, has upon the heart of God. (3) The breastplate was fastened by wreathen chains of gold, and "a lace of blue," and rings of gold to the ephod. We gather, then, that the breastplate cannot be detached from the ephod. It is bound up inseparably with the priestly office of Christ. It is fastened to the ephod — the priestly garment — by chains of gold, in divine righteousness, divine righteousness as suited to the nature of God, by all that Christ is therefore as divine. It is also an eternal connection as typified by the rings — the ring being without end, and hence, as seen when considering the framework of the tabernacle, an emblem of eternity. As Priest, Christ can never fail us. If He has once undertaken our cause, He will never lay it down. Surely this truth will strengthen our hearts in times of trial or weakness. We may be despondent, but if we look up we may rejoice in the thought that our place upon the heart and shoulders of Christ can never be lost. There are seasons when many believers feel as if they could not get into the presence, or obtain the ear, of God — doubtless through failure, or coldness of heart, or spiritual feebleness. These things are not to be excused; but surely it would prove an antidote to Satan's temptations at such periods to remember, that if we cannot pray ourselves, Christ never fails to bear us up in His prevailing intercession, and that we are bound inseparably upon His heart and upon His shoulders. Nay, it would soon dispel our gloom and coldness of heart, because it would lead us to look away from ourselves, and to expect all from Him, and from His continual ministry for us in the presence of God. As another has said, "He presents us, as that which He has on His heart, to God. *He cannot be before Him without doing so*; and whatever claim the desire and wish of Christ's heart has to draw out the favour of God, operates in drawing out that favour on us. The light and favour of the sanctuary — God as dwelling there — cannot shine out on Him without shining on us, and that as an object presented by Him for it." (4) Aaron bore the judgment of the people in connection with Urim and Thummim. These were put in the breastplate of judgment. (vv. 29, 30.) Urim and Thummim probably mean "lights" and "perfections." "These we need to get blessing, Stood we before God, such as we are, we must draw down judgment, or lose the effect of this light and perfection of God, remaining without.

But, Christ bearing our judgment according to these, our presentation to God is according to the perfection of God Himself — our judgment borne; but then our position, guidance, light, and spiritual intelligence are according to this same divine light and perfection. For the high priest inquired and had answers from God according to the Urim and Thummim. This is a blessed privilege." All these things indeed do but teach how perfectly Christ as the Priest acts and cares for His people.

*The robe of the ephod* is next described.

"And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue. And there shall be an hole in the top of it, in the midst thereof: it shall have a binding of woven work round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of an habergeon, that it be not rent. And beneath, upon the hem of it, thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about: a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about. And it shall be upon Aaron to minister; and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not." (vv. 31-35.)

The robe of the ephod was all of blue — indicative of what is heavenly, adumbrating the heavenly character of the Priest, and it may be, at the same time, the scene of the exercise of His functions, or rather, that His character was suited to the place. He is thus spoken of in the Hebrews not only as holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, but also as made higher than the heavens. (Heb. 7: 26.) Care was to be taken that "it be not rent" (v. 32), for what is heavenly in character must needs be indivisible in its perfection. At the bottom of the robe there were to be pomegranates of blue, of purple, and of scarlet, and bells of gold in alternation; and the object is stated that it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not. (v. 35.) The symbolic significance of these two things is plainly marked; it is the fruits and testimony of the Spirit. And hence "going in" and "coming out" mark two distinct periods. Speaking now of Christ, of whom Aaron was but the figure, He went in when He ascended up on high, and the sound was heard on the day of Pentecost in the testimony which the Spirit of God then raised by the mouth of the apostles. There were also fruits connected with that testimony — fruits of the Spirit in the walk and life of those who were converted through the instrumentality of the testimony. (See Acts 2) The same thing will take place when He comes out, and both alike flow from Christ in His heavenly character. Peter links together the two periods. He cried to the multitude, who had come together in amazement at the witness of the Spirit, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams," etc. (Acts 2: 16, 17.) What was passing before their astonished eyes was but a sample of that, though of different character, which should be witnessed when the Priest comes out with blessing for Israel. It is in this last connection that the meaning of the colours of the pomegranates may be apprehended. The fruits of the Spirit are heavenly in character, and consequently "blue" is

the first colour. But they are also "purple" and "scarlet," because they will be then associated with the kingdom-glories of Christ; yea, with the glories which He will inherit both as Son of man and as Son of David. The two periods — going in, and coming out — may thus answer to the early and the latter rain, at least in association with Israel. (See Hosea 6: 1-3.)

Then there is *the plate of gold*.

"And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre, upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord." (vv. 36-38.)

This is the gracious provision which God has made for the imperfections and defilements of our services and worship. He can only accept that which is suited to His own nature. Everything offered to Him, therefore, must be stamped with holiness. This being so, if left to ourselves, notwithstanding that we are cleansed and brought into relationship with Him, and having a title of approach, our offerings never could be accepted. But He has met our need. Christ, as the Priest, bears the iniquity of our holy things; and He is holiness to the Lord, so that our worship, as presented through Him, is acceptable to God. Blessed consolation, for without this provision we were shut out from God's presence! Hence the apostle speaks not only of the blood and the rent veil, but also of the High Priest over the house of God. (Heb. 10)

The direction as to *the coat of fine linen follows*.

"And thou shalt embroider the coat of fine linen, and thou shalt make the mitre of fine linen, and thou shalt make the girdle of needlework." (v. 39.)

The fine linen, as ever, is a type of personal, and, as applied to Christ, of absolute personal, purity; and its being embroidered tells that, as such, He was adorned with every grace. All the garments alike therefore speak of Christ; although, be it remembered, they were the shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things. This caution is ever needed when considering types and figures. It should be also again stated that these garments for glory and beauty were never worn inside the veil. This fact makes them the more applicable to our position; for had Aaron enjoyed access, as thus arrayed, into the holy of holies, it would have been the sign of the full acceptance of the people whom he represented. We are accepted in the Beloved; and Christ, as glorified, ministers in the true sanctuary as the High Priest of His people, and consequently He puts us into the enjoyment of all the blessings here prefigured. This may be gathered from the epistle to the Hebrews, and explains to us how it is that Christ is there presented in every way as a contrast with that which, in the old dispensation, had fore-shadowed Him, whether in His person, His office, or His work.

The arraying of Aaron's sons together with himself (vv. 40-43) is more properly connected with the subject of the next chapter, the consecration of the priests.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTS.

EXODUS xxix. 1-35.

HAVING given the details concerning the priestly robes, the Lord instructs Moses, in the next place, as to the ceremonies to be observed at the consecration of the priests. For the moment the first three verses may be passed over, as the particulars of the general directions upon the subject of the sacrifices to be offered are found further on in the chapter.

"And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water. And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod. And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre. Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him. And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them. And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them: and the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons." (vv. 4-9)

The first part of the process was *washing them with water*, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. (v. 4.) This action is most significant, as water is a symbol of the word of God, as for example in John 3: 5; Eph. 5: 26, etc. Emblematically therefore this was the new birth, or sanctification by the Word, being thereby set apart for the service of God. Our Lord thus prayed: "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." (John 17: 19) Aaron was washed with water — if he be considered by himself — to make him in figure a type of the absolute purity of Christ. Christ was personally without spot; Aaron is rendered so typically by the application of the Word, through the sanctification of the Spirit, as it is termed by Peter. (1 Peter 1: 2.) If Aaron is taken in association with his sons, the washing proclaims in type the truth that only those who are born again, separated unto God by the application of the Word to their souls, can occupy the place of priests, and enjoy the privilege of "ministering" in the holiest. Priests cannot be made by man, and the pretence of doing so is utterly to ignore the plainest and most fundamental teaching of the Scriptures. Priests can only be made by God, and every one who is born again, cleansed by the precious blood of Christ, and indwelt by the Holy Ghost, is a priest. To arrogate the claim therefore of ordaining priests — and to do so apart even from the question of their condition before God — is to intrude into a region which borders upon profanity, as well as to deny the rights and privileges of all the people of God.

Aaron is now separated from his sons for the next action; *he is robed and anointed alone*. First, the priestly garments, described in the last chapter, are put upon him — the garments for glory and beauty. Thereon he is anointed with oil which is poured upon his

head. It has already been explained, and must be here recalled to understand this action, that when Aaron is alone he stands before us as a type of Christ; but that when he is in company with his sons, the Church is shadowed forth as the priestly family. This gives the meaning of his being anointed with oil immediately after being arrayed in the sacerdotal robes. Afterwards it will be seen that he, together with his sons, is sprinkled with blood before the anointing oil. It is as a figure of Christ that he is anointed without blood. For Aaron's great Antitype being absolutely holy needed not the blood, and hence it is recorded that, on His entering upon His mission to Israel, He was anointed by the Holy Ghost at His baptism. (Matt. 3; Acts 10: 38.) He received the Holy Spirit, was anointed, on the ground of His absolute holiness, whereas His people (as will be seen) are sealed and anointed on the ground of their perfect cleansing by His precious blood. Aaron being anointed by himself without blood is a type of Christ — Christ in His full character as Priest, the Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

*Aaron and His sons present the Church as the priestly family*, but as associated with Christ. First, as in the case of Aaron alone, they are all robed. These garments are not the same as those described in detail in the last chapter, but those briefly indicated at the close. They are said to be coats, girdles, and bonnets, and were of fine linen, and embroidered, and said also to be "for glory and for beauty." (Ex. 28: 39, 40; Ex. 29: 9.) The fine linen embroidered shows forth the purity of the nature of Christ adorned with every grace. The robing of Aaron's sons is really the putting on of Christ; and this, in fact, brings them into association with Him; for the Church possesses nothing apart from Christ. If believers, for example, are brought into the position of priests, and the enjoyment of priestly privileges, it is in virtue of their connection with Him. He is the Priest, and He it is who makes them priests. (See Rev. 1: 5, 6.) Everything flows from Him. Thus, when Aaron is put into company with his sons, it is not so much that he becomes merged into the priestly family, but rather to teach that all the blessings and privileges of the priestly family are derived from Christ. But in order to this they must first be invested with robes for glory and for beauty — robes which adorn them with the glory and beauty of Christ.

The next step was *the sacrifice of the sin-offering*. Aaron and his sons were encompassed with infirmity, were sinful men, and needed to offer for themselves, as well as for the sins of the people. They must be brought, consequently, under the typical value of the blood before they could enter upon their sacred office and minister in the sanctuary. Hence the following direction:

"And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock. And thou shalt kill the bullock before the Lord, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar. And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul that is above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and burn them upon the altar. But the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung, shalt thou burn with fire without the camp: it is a sin-offering." (vv. 10-14.)

The sin-offering is a type of Christ bearing the sins of His people. Remark then, first, that *Aaron and his sons put their hands upon the head of the bullock*. This action signified the identification of the offerers with the victim to be offered. (Compare Lev. 4: 4, etc.) After the laying on of their hands, therefore, the bullock which was about to be slain stood before God as the representative of Aaron and his sons in their sins. Their guilt was symbolically transferred, imputed to the victim, which is now looked upon as bearing their sins. Hence by the act they owned their guilt, their desert of death, and their need of a substitute. In the next place *the bullock was to be killed before the Lord*. As charged with the sins of Aaron and his sons, the stroke of justice fell upon the appointed victim, thereby proclaiming that death was the penalty of sin. If they at all entered into the meaning of what was being enacted, how solemn this transaction must have appeared in their eyes! They must have had a glimpse of the real character of sin before God when the bullock was brought, and when, after silently laying their hands upon its head, it could not be spared, but must die. It is a shadow, if only a shadow, of the cross — of the death of the Lord Jesus, whose soul was made an offering for sin. And it is as we stand there in spirit, and hear His cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" that we are made to comprehend the awful nature of sin — its hatefulness to God, inasmuch as it necessitated the death of His only begotten Son. Believers, as they look back upon that solemn scene, can say, "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree;" and at the same time learn something of the doom from which, by the grace of God, they have been delivered. Surely it was grace, and grace alone, that provided the sacrifice; and it was love, deathless, unquenchable love, on the part of Him who suffered Himself to be led as a lamb to the slaughter that He might redeem us to God.

After the victim was slain *the blood was sprinkled*. It was put upon the horns of the altar, and the rest was poured out beside the bottom of the altar. (v. 12.) The blood was thus wholly for God. The life is in it (Lev. 17: 11), and this action consequently signified that the life of the victim was offered up to God instead of that of Aaron and his sons. This was done on the principle of substitution — God in grace accepting the death of the sin-offering in the place of that of those for whom it was offered. Further, *the fat that covered the inwards, and the caul, etc., were burnt upon the altar*. The fat was prohibited to the children of Israel equally with the blood. It is an emblem of inward energy, force of will, etc. It is burnt upon the altar because the sin-offering was a type of Christ, and thus teaches that, while He was charged with the sins of His people, God found in Him, even as in the case of the burnt-offering, that which completely answered to His own mind — truth in the inward parts. His infinite acceptability to God was never more fully proved than when He bowed His head under the sins of His people. In grace He took our place; but in thus accepting the stroke of judgment that was our due, every thought of His heart, every movement of His will, every energy of His soul, were perfect before God. It was indeed in His death on the cross that He proved His obedience to the uttermost, that He showed that the glory of God was so completely the one motive of His giving Himself up to death, that not even the waves and billows of judgment could turn Him aside. Lastly, *the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung, were burnt without the camp*. It was a sin-offering, and as such must be cast out and consumed, inasmuch as it was looked upon as under the imputation of the guilt of Aaron and his sons. It was thus altogether a type of Christ — of Christ as suffering without the gate, rejected of men, forsaken by God,

because He, in His grace and love, suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. This process completed, *Aaron and his sons were now under all the efficacy and value of the sin-offering.*

The burnt-offering follows the sin-offering.

"Thou shalt also take one ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. And thou shalt slay the ram, and thou shalt take his blood, and sprinkle it round about upon the altar. And thou shalt cut the ram in pieces, and wash the inwards of him, and his legs, and put them unto his pieces, and unto his head. And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a burnt-offering unto the Lord: it is a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the Lord." (vv. 1518.)

As in the case of the sin-offering, Aaron and his sons put their hands upon the head of the burnt-offering; but instead of the transference or the imputation of their guilt, they themselves are transferred, so to speak, so as to become identified with the ram about to be slain. In other words, while the actions are similar the effects are contrasted. The victim in the sin-offering is looked upon, after the laying on of hands, as laden with the guilt of those for whom it was about to be offered as a sacrifice; whereas in the burnt-offering Aaron and his sons are regarded by the same act as invested with all the acceptability of the sacrifice. Their sins were transferred in the first instance, and in the second their standing was changed on to the ground of the value of the offering. The ram was then slain, and the blood sprinkled round about upon the altar; the life was presented to God. This was not all; but the whole ram, having been cut in pieces, and its inwards having been washed, to make it a more fitting type of the spotlessness of Christ, was burnt upon the altar. "It is a burnt-offering unto the Lord: it is a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the Lord." In the sin-offering the flesh of the bullock, etc., were burnt with fire without the camp but the whole ram of the burnt-offering was consumed upon the altar because the whole was acceptable to God. The burnt-offering is a type of the perfect devotedness of Christ unto death; and in this aspect it is not looked upon as bearing sins, but as wholly consecrated to the will and glory of God. As such, therefore, Christ on the cross, under the action of the holy fire — tested, that is, by the searching judgment of God's holiness, was entirely a sweet savour to God. As bearing sins, God hid His face from Him; but as obedient unto the death of the cross, when through the Eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God, He furnished a new motive for love to the Father's heart. "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again." (John 10: 17.) In this aspect "He was in the place of sin, and God glorified as no creation, no sinlessness could. All was a sweet savour in that place, and according to what God was as to it in righteousness and love." The difference between the two offerings is shown by the words used. The word "burn" in the burnt-offering is not the same as that used in connection with the sin-offering, but the one employed for burning incense. This of itself denotes the infinite fragrance and acceptance of Christ as the burnt-offering. But the point in our scripture is, that it was offered for Aaron and his sons; and accordingly as soon as it was consumed upon the altar *they were brought also under all its efficacy.* Their sins were cleared away by the sin-offering, but now they

stand before God in all the positive acceptance and savour of the burnt-offering — both of these results being gained for the believer by the death of Christ, for these offerings do but present the varying aspects of His one sacrifice.

These offerings were in a measure preparatory, relating rather to their personal fitness. *The ram of consecration* is now added. Speaking generally, this sacrifice has the character of a peace-offering (see Lev. 3), and represents another aspect of the death of Christ — its value for us, the obligations under which we are brought and the communion with God, with the Priest, and with the whole Church into which we are introduced. But here it has special relation to the office of Aaron and his sons, as will be seen from the scripture.

"And thou shalt take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him. Also thou shalt take of the ram the fat and the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and the right shoulder; for it is a ram of consecration. And one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer out of the basket of the unleavened bread that is before the Lord: and thou shalt put all in the hands of Aaron, and in the hands of his sons; and shalt wave them for a wave-offering before the Lord. And thou shalt receive them of their hands, and burn them upon the altar for a burnt-offering, for a sweet savour before the Lord: it is an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And thou shalt take the breast of the ram of Aaron's consecration, and wave it for a wave-offering before the Lord: and it shall be thy part. And thou shalt sanctify the breast of the wave-offering, and the shoulder of the heave-offering, which is waved, and which is heaved up, of the ram of the consecration, even of that which is for Aaron, and of that which is for his sons: and it shall be Aaron's and his sons' by a statute for ever from the children of Israel; for it is an heave-offering: and it shall be an heave-offering from the children of Israel of the sacrifice of their peace-offerings, even their heave-offering unto the Lord.

"And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons' after him, to be anointed therein, and to be consecrated in them. And that son that is priest in his stead shall put them on seven days, when he cometh into the tabernacle of the congregation, to minister in the holy place.

"And thou shalt take the ram of the consecration, and seethe his flesh in the holy place. And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy. And if ought of the flesh of the consecrations, or of the bread, remain unto the morning, then thou shalt

burn the remainder with fire: it shall not be eaten, because it is holy. And thus shalt thou do unto Aaron, and to his sons, according to all things which I have commanded thee: seven days shalt thou consecrate them." (vv. 19-35.)

As in the two preceding offerings, so here, the hands of Aaron and his sons are laid upon the head of the ram of consecration, and thereby they are identified with its value before God. Thereon two distinct actions in respect of the blood are given. First, after the ram was killed, the blood was put upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron and of his sons, on the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot; and it was sprinkled at the same time upon the altar round about. They were thus brought under the value of the atoning blood; for the blood that was offered to God on their behalf, brought them also under His claims, so that henceforward they were not their own, but bought with a price. These several parts of their bodies were therefore sprinkled to signify, that from this moment they were to hearken alone, act alone, and walk alone, for the Lord as those who were redeemed by the precious blood. It is so, too, with believers of this dispensation. Inasmuch as they are redeemed, they belong to the Redeemer, and, set at liberty from the bondage and power of Satan, they enjoy the precious privilege of living unto Him who has died for them, and risen again. Their ears, hands, and feet are all to be used for Him, in His service. After this, a second thing was directed. Both they and their garments were to be sprinkled with the blood upon the altar, and with the anointing oil. (v. 21.) They are thus set apart by the blood, and by the unction of the Holy Ghost. "And it is important to remark here that the seal of the Holy Ghost follows on the sprinkling with blood, not on the washing with the water. That was needed. We must be regenerate; but it is not that cleansing which puts us by itself in a state God can seal; the blood of Christ does. We are thereby perfectly cleansed as white as snow, and the Spirit comes as the witness of God's estimate of the value of that blood-shedding. Hence, too, all were sprinkled with Aaron. The blood of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, have set us in association with Christ, where He is according to the acceptableness of that perfect sacrifice (it was the ram of consecration), and the presence, liberty, and power of the Holy Ghost." The cross and Pentecost are in fact connected — the efficacy of the blood, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, and both are here enjoyed — at least in figure.<sup>16</sup> These three steps lead to the Christian position. Washing with water comes first, then cleansing with blood, and lastly the unction of the Holy Ghost. "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." (Rom. 8: 9.)

In the next place, parts of the ram of consecration (v. 22), "and one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer," etc., were put in the hands of Aaron and his sons to be waved for a wave-offering before the Lord. The loaf, the "oiled bread" (v. 2 compared with Leviticus 2) was a meat-offering, representing Christ in the perfection of His humanity, or rather the holiness of His life in devotedness to God, the entire consecration of every faculty of His soul to the will and glory of God. Taken then in connection with the parts of the ram, their hands were, in fact, filled with Christ, with Christ in all that He was in life, and all that He was in death to God. Now the meaning of

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<sup>16</sup> Compare the law for cleansing of the leper in Lev. 14, remembering that there it is a question of cleansing from sins, and not, as here, of consecration to the priesthood.

the word, which is translated in this chapter "consecrate," as may be seen from the margin, is "to fill the hand." This gives us the scriptural signification of consecration. The general thought is, that it lies in our yielding something to God, and hence the soul is thrown back upon itself to seek for strength to devote itself and all its energies to God's service; and, indeed, with this view, it is often called upon to attain it by a solemn act of self-surrender. Scripture reveals a better way. It lies, as seen in this chapter, in being filled with Christ. It is Christ possessing, absorbing, and controlling our souls. It requires no effort therefore on our part, though indeed it requires the maintenance of constant self-judgment, the abiding refusal of the flesh in every shape and form. For Christ is willing yea, desires, to possess us wholly, and if the Spirit be ungrieved, He will dwell in our hearts by faith; and as then He becomes the alone object of our lives, so He alone will be expressed in our walk and conversation. This is consecration according to God — as prefigured by filling the hands of Aaron and his sons.

Having waved the contents of their hands before the Lord, Moses received them, and burnt them upon the altar for a burnt-offering, for a sweet savour before the Lord: it is an offering made by fire unto the Lord. This teaches us both what is acceptable to God in worship, and consequently what is true priestly work. It is the presentation of Christ — the Christ who has passed through the holy fire of judgment, as made sin for us on the cross — it is this which ascends up as a sweet savour to God. This, indeed, is having fellowship with God concerning, the death of His Son; our souls entering, by the Spirit, both into what He is, and into the character of His death, and presenting Him and His work, as thus apprehended, before the eye of God. We delight in presenting, and He delights in receiving. And, blessed be His name, He first fills our hands, and He alone can first fill our hands, with that which He delights to accept. This, then, is our work as priests, our privilege as worshippers, ever to present Christ before God. It will therefore be easily understood, that the flesh can have no part in such work, that, in fact, worship can only be by and in the power of, the Holy Spirit.

Finally, there are diverse instructions concerning eating different parts of the ram of consecration. Moses was to have his part — the breast — after it had been waved for a wave-offering before the Lord. (v. 26.) Aaron and his sons had their part. (vv. 27, 28, 31, 32.) Thus God, and Christ as Priest, and the whole Church, as symbolized by Aaron and his sons, feed alike upon the offered sacrifice. It was the fellowship of God, of Christ, and His people — all having their part — in accomplished atonement. We also learn that Christ alone is the food of His people. Brought under the full value of His sacrifice whereby they are consecrated and sanctified, He becomes their sustenance and strength. (v. 33.) Two prohibitions are added. First, no stranger should eat of this priestly food. It must be confined to those who are hallowed for the office of priests. Secondly, the flesh of the consecrations must be eaten the same day. (v. 34.) Priestly food must be eaten in connection with the altar. In like manner you cannot feed upon Christ if you dissociate Him from the cross. It is as offered to God, and glorified by Him because of the work He accomplished, that He is our food, and is fed upon in fellowship with God.

Seven days these ceremonies were to be repeated; and seven days the altar was to be sanctified. (vv. 36, 37.) The priests must have a perfect consecration, and the altar at

which they were to serve must be perfectly sanctified. The consecration and the sanctification alike must be according to the perfection of the requirements of a holy God.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE CONTINUAL BURNT-OFFERING.

EXODUS xxix. 38-46.

FOLLOWING upon the consecration of the priests, we have directions for the continual burnt-offering — continual because it was to be offered morning by morning, and evening by evening, throughout the generations of the children of Israel. It was, in fact, a perpetual daily sacrifice.

"Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year, day by day continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning, and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even: and with the one lamb a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil; and the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink-offering. And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereto according to the meat-offering of the morning, and according to the drink-offering thereof, for a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the Lord. This shall be a continual burnt-offering throughout your generations, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the Lord; where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to Me in the priest's office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the Lord their God." (vv. 38-46.)

There are, it will be observed, three things in this scripture; viz., the burnt-offering and its accompaniments; the meeting-place between God and His people; and Jehovah dwelling among them, and being their God.

The burnt-offering was composed of two lambs of the first year, one to be offered in the morning, and the other in the evening. It was never to cease being offered. (See Num. 28: 3, 6, 10, etc.; Ezra 3: 5.) Its meaning, as explained in the last chapter — i.e. as an emblem of the sacrifice of Christ in this character — is His devotedness unto death, wherein He, in the place of sin and for God's glory, proved His obedience to the uttermost, even to being made sin for His people. All therefore was consumed upon the altar, and went up as a sweet savour unto the Lord (see Lev. 1); and this sweet savour set forth the acceptability of His death to God, yea, the infinite delight which God found in the death of Christ in obedience to His will. Inasmuch, therefore, as the offering before us was perpetual, God laid a foundation thereby on which Israel could stand and be accepted in all its fragrance and savour. It thus becomes no mean type of the position of the believer, revealing the ground of his acceptance in the Beloved; for just as the sweet savour of the continual burnt-offering ever ascended to God on behalf of Israel, so Christ in all His acceptability is ever before His eyes on behalf of His own. We can therefore

say, "As He is, so are we in this world;" for we are in the divine presence in all the savour of His sacrifice, and in all the acceptance of His person.

The accompaniments of the burnt-offering were two; first, "a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil;" and, secondly, "the fourth part of an hin of wine." The first was a meat, and the second a drink-offering. The meat-offering, as was pointed out in connection with the consecration of the priests, is an emblem of the devotedness of Christ in life, His entire consecration to the will and glory of God. The fine flour was mingled with oil (see also Lev. 2), to shadow forth the mysterious truth that Christ as to His humanity was begotten of the Holy Ghost. It represented consequently the perfection of His life below — His life of perfect obedience, every energy of His soul flowing out in this channel, finding it His meat to do His Father's will, and to finish His work. Israel was consequently before God in all the value and acceptance of His life and death — of all that He was to God, whether considered in the perfect consecration of His life, or in the highest expression of the perfection of His obedience as displayed when He was made sin on the cross. The drink-offering was composed of wine. Wine is a symbol of joy — "it cheereth God and man;" and since it is here offered to God, it speaks of His joy, His joy in the sacrifice presented. But it was offered by His people, by the priest on their behalf. It expressed on this account also their communion with the joy of God in the perfectness of the life, and the devotedness unto death, of His only begotten Son. Such is the heart of God. He would bring us into fellowship with Himself, have us feast on His own delights, that the joy of His own heart, flowing out, and filling also ours, might overflow in praise and adoration. Hence John says, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1: 3.)

The next point is the meeting-place of God with His people. Moses was permitted in grace to meet Jehovah at the mercy-seat (Ex. 25: 22; Num. 12: 8); but the people could not pass beyond the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. It was here that the burnt-offering was presented on the brazen altar; and hence this was the meeting-place, on the ground of the sacrifice, between God and Israel. There could be no other possible place; just as now Christ forms the only meeting-place between God and the sinner. It is most important to see this truth — especially for those that are unsaved — that apart from Christ there can be no drawing nigh to God. "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14: 6.) Mark well, moreover, that God cannot be approached except on the ground of the sacrifice of Christ. This is the truth foreshadowed in connection with the burnt-offering. If the cross, Christ crucified, be ignored, no relationships can be had with God, excepting those that may exist between a guilty sinner and a holy Judge. But the moment the sinner is led to take his stand upon "the sweet savour" of the sacrifice to God, upon the efficacy of what Christ accomplished by His death, God can meet with him in grace and love.

There is a further thing — the consequence of coming to meet and dwell with His people. God will sanctify the tabernacle by His glory; He will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar; and He will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons to minister unto Him in the priest's office. (vv. 43, 44.) In virtue of the sacrifice He claimed

everything, and set all apart to Himself. The tabernacle, the altar, and the priests are alike sanctified — claimed as belonging to and for the service of, Jehovah. The expression "by My glory," as applied to the tabernacle, is remarkable. There only in all the earth, in the holy of holies, was His glory manifested — in the bright cloud, the Shekinah, which was the symbol of His presence. Being thus displayed, it separated the tabernacle off from every other thing on the face of the earth, made it a holy place, sanctified it. But more. His glory being there became the standard of everything presented. The question — looked at in its higher aspects, in the light of the truth now possessed — for all who approached, and for everything that was offered, was accordingly that of suitability to God's glory. Hence we read in the epistle to the Romans that "all have sinned and come short of His glory," showing that unless we answer to its claims, could even stand before the immediate display of His glory, we are guilty sinners. It goes still further. The Tabernacle itself was on earth, and in the midst of God's earthly people. As sanctified by His glory, therefore, it became also prophetic — prophetic of the day when the whole earth will be filled with His glory. It was thus a bright promise of millennial blessing.

This leads on to the third thing — God dwelling in the midst of His people. This was the declared object of the erection of a sanctuary (25: 8). and the end of His dwelling with them was that they might be brought into relationship with, and know Him as the God of redemption, as the One who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. The ground indeed of His dwelling in their midst was accomplished redemption. Thus, as has been already said, He never dwelt with Adam, Noah, Abraham, or the patriarchs, however intimate the intercourse with Him which they were permitted to enjoy. Nor did He, nor could He, dwell with Israel while in the land of Egypt; but after He had brought them out of the house of their bondage, and across the Red Sea, He then desired to have His sanctuary in their midst. The sweet savour of the sacrifice — emblem of the acceptability of the sacrifice of Christ to God — made it possible for Him thus to surround Himself with those whom He had redeemed. But there is more than even dwelling with them: there is also relationship. "I will be their God." It is not, be it remarked, what they shall be to Him, though they were His people by His grace, but what He will be to them. "Their God" — words fraught with unspeakable blessings; for when God undertakes to become the God of His people, deigns to enter into relationship with them, He assures them that everything they need, whether for guidance, sustenance, defence, succour — yea, everything, is secured for them by what He is to them as their God. It was in view of the blessing of such a wondrous relationship that the Psalmist exclaimed, "Happy is that people, whose God is the Lord." (Psalm 144: 15.) As, however, we have seen, if He dwelt among them it was that they might know Him — and know Him through redemption. This was the desire of His heart, and in pursuance of it He had visited them in Egypt, smitten Pharaoh and his land and people with judgments, brought them out with a high hand and an outstretched arm, brought them unto Himself, and now directed that His tabernacle should be erected. He would have His joy in the happiness and joy of His redeemed — in surrounding Himself with a happy, rejoicing people. Such was His thought, however little they entered into it; but a thought which, if postponed, will one day find its full and perfect embodiment. The Tabernacle in the wilderness, indeed, surrounded by the tribes of Israel, is a figure of the eternal state. The purpose which God expresses here was repeated (Lev. 26: 12) and reaffirmed as to the

millennium. (Ezek. 37: 27, 28.) But these were but shadows of the full blessing that God designed for His people, and could not be more because of what they were; and hence it is not until the eternal state is reached that it is realized in perfection. Even now God dwells upon the earth, for the church is His habitation through the Spirit; and every believer, who has received the Spirit of adoption, is a temple of the Holy Ghost. But when all God's purposes in Christ are accomplished, the redeemed of this dispensation will, as the new Jerusalem, form the eternal tabernacle and dwelling-place of God. (Rev. 21)

"But who that glorious blaze  
Of living light shall tell!  
Where all His brightness God displays  
And the Lamb's glories dwell.  
God and the Lamb shall there  
The light and temple be,  
And radiant hosts for ever share,  
The unveiled mystery."

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE ALTAR OF INCENSE.

EXODUS xxx. 1-10.

THE place which the altar of incense occupies in the directions which Moses received is most instructive. Up to the end of Exodus 27 everything is arranged in respect of the manifestation of God — the symbols of display, as they are sometimes termed. Thereon it becomes the question of approaching God; and hence the next thing is the appointment and the consecration of the priests — these only having the privilege of entering the sanctuary. But before proceeding further, the perpetual burnt-offering is given, as considered in the last chapter; for until the people are before God in all the acceptance of its sweet savour, and God Himself is dwelling in their midst, sanctifying the tabernacle by His glory, and setting all apart for Himself, there could be no drawing nigh — no access into His presence. In other words, there could be no worship apart from the savour of the sacrifice, and the presence of Jehovah. Everything thus being prepared, the symbols of approach follow — i.e. those sacred vessels that were used in connection with coming into God's presence; and the first of these is the golden altar — or the altar of incense.

"And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon; of shittim-wood shalt thou make it. A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be: and two cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of the same. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof: and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof. upon the two sides of it shalt thou make it.; and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy-seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it; a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations. Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat-offering; neither shall ye pour drink-offering thereon. And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sinoffering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the Lord." (vv. 1-10.)

It was made of the two materials which characterized the ark, the table of showbread, etc. — shittim-wood and gold. (vv. 1-5.) The altar itself therefore — apart from its use — was a figure of the person of Christ — Christ as both God and man, God manifest in flesh. Connected with the altar this is significant — teaching, as it does, that

there is no access to God but through Christ, that He indeed is the foundation both of our approach and worship. The priest (the worshipper) at the altar saw nothing but the gold, and God saw only the gold — that which was suited to Him, suited to His own nature. The remembrance of this gives boldness when bowing in His presence. It is indeed a wondrous mercy that Christ is before the eye of God, and before the eye of the worshipper — Himself the meeting place between God and His people, as well as the foundation of His people's acceptance.

The position of this altar is given in the sixth verse. It was to be put before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony. The brazen altar, as has been pointed out, was outside, in the court of the tabernacle — the first thing — that met the eye of one coming out of the camp to the entrance of the court. The lesson was, that the question of sin must be settled before admission could be obtained. The altar of incense was inside — in the holy place — and none but the priests have access to it. There was in fact the laver between; but this is not yet mentioned, because the value of the sacrifice on the brazen altar brings at once (in figure) to the golden altar. The brazen altar tested man in responsibility; and the claims of God's righteousness having been met by the sacrifice, He could introduce the believer into His own immediate presence — give him priestly privileges, and consequently access, in the person of the priest, to the altar of incense. Once the claims of the brazen altar met, nothing could shut out the worshipper from the golden altar. His title was perfect. This is seen in the epistle to the Hebrews. The blood that was shed on the cross gives boldness of access into the holiest. (See Heb. 10) There is, therefore, the most intimate connection between the two altars.

The use of the altar may now be considered. Aaron was to burn sweet incense (incense of spices) thereon morning and evening when he dressed the lamps. (vv. 7, 8.) The materials of which the incense was composed are named in verse 34. It is there called a perfume. Remark that it was burnt on the altar. It was the action of fire that brought out its sweet fragrance; and the fire used for this purpose was taken from off the brazen altar. (See Lev. 16: 12, 13.) The same fire therefore that consumed the sacrifice brought out the fragrance of the incense. This explains its significance. The fire is a type of the searching judgment of God — of His holiness as applied in judgment, and it was through this that our blessed Lord passed when upon the cross. But the only effect of the action of the holy fire upon Him was to bring out a "cloud" of sweet perfume. The incense typifies this — the fragrance of Christ to God; and inasmuch as it was to be a perpetual incense (v. 8), it shows that this fragrance is ever ascending before the throne. If the efficacy of His work is presented in the savour of the sacrifice, the acceptability of His person is denoted by the incense. The two things are distinguished on the day of atonement. Aaron went in with incense into the holy of holies before he sprinkled the blood upon and before the mercy-seat. So Christ Himself entered with His own blood; but, if it may be so said, where all is inseparably connected, He Himself takes the precedence even of His blood. It is indeed what He is in Himself that gives the blood its unspeakable preciousness.

But what, it may be inquired, is the meaning of this action on the part of Aaron? First, Aaron is a type of Christ, and a type of Christ at the altar in the holy place. He is

thus, in burning the incense, a figure of the prevailing intercession of Christ. Aaron, be it remembered, goes into the holy place in all the virtue of the sacrifice which has been consumed upon the brazen altar. The incense moreover that he burns with the holy fire is always acceptable to God. Hence it teaches that the intercession of Christ ascends to God acceptably through the efficacy of what He is, and what He has done. It cannot therefore fail. And as this incense was perpetual, so He ever liveth to make intercession for us; and on this account He is able to save His people to the uttermost — all the way through — even to the end of their wilderness journey. What comfort this assurance gives to His people encompassed by the infirmities, difficulties, and trials of their desert path! Secondly, Aaron at the altar of incense is a figure of the believer, inasmuch as all believers are priests. This aspect is exceedingly instructive; for thus regarding the burning of the incense it is a type of worship. First, then, it should be observed again, that Aaron (and the believer as presented by him) is before the golden altar in all the sweet savour of the burnt-offering. For it is through the virtue of this sacrifice that access into the holy place is enjoyed. This is of great importance. It teaches that there can be really no worship until we know what it is to be brought into God's presence in all the acceptance of Christ — not only knowing that our sins are cleared away, but also apprehending that we are before God in all the acceptability of Christ Himself — in all His inexpressible fragrance. Secondly, it is Christ, in all that He is to God, which is presented to God in worship — not our own feelings, not our own thoughts, but that which delights the heart of God, and that is Christ Himself, Christ as the One who has glorified Him on the earth, and finished the work which He gave Him to do. Thirdly, we gather that the essence of all worship lies in communion with God in all that Christ is, and in all that He has done. For when we worship by the Holy Spirit, we present to God that in which He delights, and we delight in that which we present, and thus our thoughts, feelings, and affections are in unison with those of God Himself. Then worship — adoration of the highest character — is the result. Such is our priestly work at the altar — the perpetual presentation of the merits of Christ; and if we intercede there, our intercession also is according to the value of Christ. Hence He could say, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you." (John 16: 23.)

There is a connection, it will be observed, between the incense and the lamps. Aaron is directed to burn the incense when he dresseth the lamps morning and evening. The lamps, as explained when speaking of the candlestick, are the manifestation of God in the power of the Spirit. This was seen in perfection in Him who was the light of the world, and should be displayed likewise both in the Church and in the believer. But the point here is, that the light was maintained by priestly care. Aaron dressed the lamps. It is so now. The manifestation of God in the power of the Spirit is ever dependent upon the priestly action of Christ; and the burning of the incense — intercession or worship — will always be in proportion to the display of the Spirit's power. These three things indeed, are inseparable — the priestly care of Christ, the manifestation of God in the power of the Spirit, and the worship of His people. In other words, if believers are not shining as lights in the world, they cannot burn incense at the golden altar, they are powerless for worship. Walk and worship are related; for if the believer is not in the presence of God in his ways throughout the week, he will not know what it is to be inside the rent veil when gathered around the Lord at His table to announce His death. Or, still

to put another aspect, there will be no worship except as the result of the manifestation of God in the power of the Spirit. Hence the lamps must be dressed when the incense is burnt.

Warnings follow as to the use of the altar; and if Lev. 10: 1 be combined with this scripture, there are three things forbidden to be used upon this altar. First, there must be no strange incense. The incense offered must be divinely compounded, and no other could be accepted. If for a moment this be taken literally, what awful presumption is witnessed in many "churches" in Christendom in this day! Base imitations of this holy compound — the penalty of making which was death (see v. 38) — are used in public services by those who claim to be priests, and for the worship of God. Even a Jew would regard it as abomination, and yet professing Christians can endorse its use! Surely an evidence both of the corruption of Christianity, as well as the power of Satan. Looking at it as an emblem, we are taught that nothing but the fragrance of Christ is acceptable to God in worship. Everything offered apart from Christ is "strange," and cannot be accepted. Secondly, no burnt sacrifice, no meat-offering, and no drink-offering, must be offered upon this altar. This would be to confound the golden with the brazen altar, and consequently to forget our true priestly position. It would be the same mistake now, if, when gathered for worship, we took our place at the cross, instead of inside the rent veil. This is an error into which many souls unwittingly fall. The consequence is, they never know the joy of being brought to God in virtue of the work of Christ, and hence they cannot occupy their true priestly position. Lastly, the scripture from Leviticus forbids the use of strange fire. It must be God's fire — fire kindled from heaven, from before the Lord (Lev. 9: 24), and no other. Applying this to believers, the lesson is, that they can only worship by the Spirit of God. Natural fervour and natural emotions, however produced, would in this sense be "strange" fire. It was for this reason, doubtless, that the priests were forbidden to drink wine or strong drink when they entered into the tabernacle. The effects of wine simulate those produced by the Spirit of God. (See Acts 2: 13-15.) The fire, equally with the incense, must be divine to be acceptable upon the golden altar — a lesson which Christians of this day would surely do well to lay to heart when the attempt is made on every hand, by sights and sounds, to work on the natural man, and to aid him in the worship of God. May they learn that all such things are really abominations in the sight of God!

Once a year atonement was to be made upon the horns of the altar with the blood of the sin-offering of atonements. (v. 10.) The account of this is found in Lev. 16. The reason of it was the imperfection of the priesthood. The true place of the priest was before the golden altar; and being what he was, he defiled the very place of his approach to God (compare Lev. 4: 7); and hence the need of the continual application of the blood of atonement. This is instructive from its typical contrast. One sacrifice now avails for ever. Christ has perfected for ever by His one offering them that are sanctified; and consequently without interruption they enjoy perpetual access even into the holiest of all.

Finally, a remark may be made upon the provision for the carrying of the altar through the wilderness. The staves and the rings are given here, and need no observation, as they are of the same material as the altar. But in Num. 4: 11 we find that there were

two coverings: first, a cloth of blue, and secondly, outside, the badgers' skins. The blue — emblematic of what is heavenly — the heavenly character, as flowing from priestly intercession, and indeed as connected with the priestly position — was concealed. It was for the eye of God alone. Then came the badgers' skins — signifying that holy vigilance by which Christ guarded Himself from evil. This is outside, because it is a question of passing through the wilderness where evil abounds. It teaches therefore that if the heavenly character is to be maintained, there must be unwearied watchfulness, and incessant diligence to guard ourselves — through the use of the Word — from the contaminations and pollutions which beset us on every hand.

# CHAPTER XXX.

## THE ATONEMENT MONEY.

EXODUS xxx. 11-16.

THE atonement money has been already referred to when treating of the sockets of silver under the boards of the Tabernacle. At first sight, the introduction of the subject in this place seems peculiar; but in truth it is another mark of the perfection of the design of the Spirit of God. The priests have been appointed and consecrated; the golden altar, with the manner of its service, has been described; but before Aaron can approach to burn incense, there must be a redeemed people on whose behalf he must act. For the very essence of the priesthood is that they were appointed on behalf of others. Hence, as soon as the golden altar has been given, the people are identified with the Tabernacle as represented by the atonement money. Every detail of the order of the subjects is therefore divinely arranged.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them when thou numberest them. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the Lord. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls. And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls." (vv. 11-16.)

Two things appear in the first verse of this direction — the occasion, and the object of the atonement money. The occasion was — "when thou numberest the people." When they were numbered each man was brought, as it were individually before God; and this was the precise moment chosen to remind them of their condition, and of their consequent need of redemption. As long as sin is not dealt with, if God is brought into contact with men as such, He must from the very holiness of His nature take cognizance of their guilt. Hence this gracious provision. Its typical significance is simply the truth which is found in every page of Scripture; viz., that all men need a ransom for their souls. The object is "that there be no plague." For, as has been remarked, if God notices the sinner in his sins, it must be for judgment, unless he is under the protection of atonement. A striking illustration of this is found in the reign of David. The king was tempted, being proud of the strength of his armies, to have his people numbered. "Go," said he to Joab, "and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people." But he neglected the ordinance as to every man giving a ransom for his soul, and "the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel, from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the

people, from Dan even to Beersheba, seventy thousand men." (2 Sam. 24) This was the more remarkable from the fact that David confessed his sin immediately after the people were numbered; but though the Lord dealt with him in tender grace and compassion, and gave him the choice of the nature of the punishment, judgment could not in righteousness be avoided. The Lord's claims must be acknowledged. Every one of the people that was numbered was amenable to His righteous judgment, and this was to be acknowledged by the ransom money.

The sum to be given was half a shekel of silver (See Ex. 38: 25-28), after the shekel of the sanctuary — i.e., as explained, ten gerahs. Ten is the number of responsibility Godwards; and the lesson consequently is that man's responsibility to God as a sinner must be met. Now silver is a figure of the blood of Christ — i.e. the silver of the ransom money. Peter alludes to this when he says, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter 1: 18, 19) It will be observed that he speaks of gold as well as silver. There is a special reason for this. On one occasion, after a striking deliverance or preservation of the people from the perils of war, so that when they were numbered it was found that there was not one lacking, gold instead of silver was offered for the ransom money. (Num. 31: 49-54.) The apostle, therefore, combines the two in contrast with, or as a type of, the blood of Christ. Our Lord Himself speaks of giving His life (and the life is in the blood) as a ransom for many. The half shekel of silver was thus a plain figure of the blood of Christ; and hence we learn that it is that precious blood alone that can meet our responsibility to God as sinners, and make atonement for our souls. It is in Christ that we have redemption — through His blood, and in no other way. This is a familiar truth, so familiar that it has become, as it were, a household word. But is there no danger of losing its significance through its very familiarity? Besides, it is against this most blessed and precious truth that all Satan's art and subtlety and malice are directed. Hence it has come to pass that many, even of the professed teachers of Christianity, have either rejected it, or are occupied in insinuating doubts concerning it. It needs to be proclaimed therefore, and repeatedly proclaimed, with increasing earnestness. But it will never be received, unless it is first understood that man both by his nature and his practice needs redemption, that he is a lost, guilty sinner, and that he cannot redeem himself, that, as the Psalmist says, "none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." If this be first accepted, then it may be received that there is no atonement for the soul excepting by the precious blood of Christ; that without the shedding of blood there is no remission; and that it is only by the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, that all sin can be cleansed away.

Another thing demands special notice. Every man, whether rich or poor, was of precisely the same value before God. "The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less." (v. 15.) When the question of sin is raised there is no difference between man and man in the sight of God. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Some may have gone further in outward iniquity, in open crimes; but as to state before God, all — the outwardly moral as well as the immoral, the rich as well as the poor — are sinners under condemnation. Wealth, position, attainments, or even moral character, are of no avail before God. All alike have sinned, for there is none that doeth

righteousness, no, not one, and all alike need the redemption that is to be found through the blood of Christ alone. Man's heart rebels against this; but the question is, whether it is the truth of God. (See Rom. 1 - 3)

Arising out of this truth, every man had to give for himself. They shall give every man a ransom for their souls. In this matter the rich could not give for the poor, but every man for himself was to be brought into distinct and personal relationship with God as to his ransom or redemption. Unless the money of each one numbered was represented in the silver sockets, he could not be regarded as redeemed. It is so now. Every one must have a personal interest in the blood of Christ or he cannot be saved. The prayers of another will not of themselves save him, unless he is thereby, in the grace of God, led to know for himself Christ as the Redeemer. It is my own guilt, my own sins, that need to be cleansed away, and hence, unless I am under the value of the blood of Christ for myself, I am still exposed to the just judgment of a holy God. Let the reader weigh this matter, and weigh it solemnly in the presence of God, and let him not cease to weigh it until he has ascertained whether he has a claim, through faith, upon the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ. It must be a personal transaction, a personal dealing with God, and a personal interest in the blood. Then, and then only, can redemption, through the blood of Christ, be known and enjoyed.

The last thing noticed is the use made of the atonement money. (v. 16.) It was appointed for the service of the tabernacle. In fact, as already seen, it went to make the sockets of silver which formed the foundation of the sanctuary. The house of God was founded upon redemption, and the ransomed people were identified thus with it — every one of them being represented by the money which had been given, and represented therefore in all the value of that which the silver typified. The object indeed was, "that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls." The silver therefore on which the tabernacle rested testified, on behalf of the children of Israel, that atonement had been made for their souls. They might but feebly enter into this blessed fact for themselves; but the memorial was ever before the Lord, and the question then, as now, is rather, Does He look upon us as redeemed? Has He accepted our redemption price? For if He is satisfied, we also may surely rest in peace.

Thus in grace God linked the people with the tabernacle in which He Himself would dwell, and into which the priests should enter on their behalf. They might not be permitted themselves to enter, but they were all represented in the atonement money, and had therefore their memorial ever before the Lord.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE LAVER.

EXODUS xxx. 17-21.

THE laver is the last of the sacred vessels enumerated. Together with this, the Tabernacle and its arrangements are completed. It was placed outside, in the court of the Tabernacle, between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar; i.e. between the brazen altar which was inside the entrance into the court, and the entrance into the holy place. Thus, passing the altar of burnt-offering — on their way into the Tabernacle — the priests would encounter the laver on the road. The reason of this will be shown as we proceed.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat. When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not: or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord: so they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations." (vv. 17-21.)

It will be observed that nothing is said as to the shape of the laver. All the illustrations that are given of it in works on the Tabernacle are without authority — in fact, they are purely imaginary. There is, without doubt, a divine reason for the concealment both of the shape and size, as it is the thing typified, rather than the vessel itself, to which the Spirit of God would direct our minds. The silence of Scripture is as instructive as its speech, and it is the happy privilege of the believer to bow to the one equally with the other. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." (Deut. 29: 29.)

It was made entirely of brass — both the laver and its foot. The significance of this material has been frequently explained, but may again be recalled. It is divine righteousness testing man in responsibility, and consequently testing man in the place where he is. Brass on this account is always found outside of the Tabernacle, while gold, which is divine righteousness as suited to the nature of God, is found within — in the holy place, as well as in the holy of holies. But testing man, it of necessity condemns him because he is a sinner; and hence it will be found to have associated with it a certain judicial aspect. There is another element to be specified. The laver was made out of a special character of brass, out of the brazen mirrors (see margin) used by the women who assembled at the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation (Ex. 38: 8) — out of the very articles that revealed, in figure, their natural condition, and thereby showed their need of

cleansing.<sup>17</sup> If the brass therefore revealed and judged the condition of those it tested, the water was there to cleanse and purify. For the water is a symbol of the Word. It is so used in John 3: 5, compared with James 1: 18 and 1 Peter 1: 23-25. It is also found in Eph. 5: 26 — in the special sense of the water of the laver.

But this will be seen more fully as we consider the use of the laver. It was for Aaron and his sons to wash their hands and their feet thereat. "When they go into the Tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not," etc. It was an imperative, as well as a perpetual, obligation upon the priests to wash their hands and their feet on the occasions specified. Now, before explaining the character of this washing, it will clear the way, and aid the reader, to make a few preliminary remarks. Remark then, first, that the washing of the bodies of the priests, as at their consecration, is never repeated. It is the hands and feet only that are repeatedly to be washed in the laver. The reason of this is obvious. Washing the whole body is a figure of being born again, and this cannot be repeated. Our Lord taught this truth in John 13. In reply to Peter He said, "He that is washed" (literally, bathed; i.e. washed all over) "needeth not save to wash" (another word) "his feet, but is clean every whit." The feet, or, as in the case of the priests, the hands and the feet might be defiled and need to be cleansed again and again, but the body never, for that was cleansed once and for all in water at the new birth. Observe, secondly, that it is water and not blood in the laver. It has often been attempted to deduce from this ordinance for the priests, that the believer needs the repeated application of the blood of Christ. Such a thought is not only alien from the whole teaching of Scripture, but it also tends to undermine the efficacy of the one sacrifice of Christ. Yea, it impugns the completion of atonement, and consequently the title of Christ to an abiding seat at the right hand of God. The blood of Christ has to do with guilt, and the moment the sinner comes under its value before God he is cleansed for ever; for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. The one object of the Spirit of God in Heb. 9 and 10 is to enforce this precious and momentous truth. That it has been lost sight of in the whole of Christendom is only too true; but the guide of the believer is not to be found in the current teachings of men, but in the immutable word of God. Whoever therefore will read the two chapters indicated — and read them with a sincere desire to understand their teaching — will at once perceive that there is never a question of the imputation of guilt to the believer, but that he is entitled to rejoice in having no more conscience of sins, if he has been once cleansed by the precious blood of Christ.

What then, it may be distinctly asked, was the nature of the cleansing at the laver? It was confined, as pointed out, to the hands and the feet. Comparing this with John 13, a difference will be observed. In the case of the disciples, the feet only were washed; in the case of Aaron and his sons, it was their hands and their feet. The difference springs from the character of the dispensations. The hands are indicated for the priests, as well as the feet, because with them work was in question: they were under law. But with the disciples the feet only are washed — because, though done before the Lord had left them, it was an action typical of the present position of believers — with whom it is no question of work, but one of walk. Let it then be repeated that the priests were never rewashed, or

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<sup>17</sup> See, for an instructive illustration of this truth, James 1: 24, 25.

re-sprinkled with blood. They are looked upon as born again in figure, and as abidingly under the value of the blood. But thereafter comes the question of defilements in their service and walk. Now if there had been no provision for these, they would have been debarred from their priestly functions in the sanctuary; for how could they have gone in before God with defiled hands and feet — into the presence of Him of whom it is said, "Holiness becometh Thine house"? Hence this gracious provision of the water — symbol of the Word — that, ere they entered into the holy place, they might cleanse their hands and feet from the defilements which they had contracted.

Bearing in mind, then, the difference of the dispensations (as shown by the inclusion of the hands), the teaching of the laver corresponds entirely with that of John 13. That is, it is a question of cleansing from defilements. We find thus our Lord seated with His disciples, and it is said, "having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." (v. 1.) This statement is significant on two accounts; first, as showing that it was a dealing with those who belonged to Him; and secondly, as revealing the motive of the ministry which He was about to perform, that indeed it flowed from His unchanging heart of love. "During supper" (not "supper being ended the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself." (vv. 2-4.) The meaning of this action was — that as He could not continue longer with them, for He was going to God, He would show them how they might have part with Him in the place to which He was going. They had been washed (v. 10); but in their passage through the world their feet would be defiled, and thereby, unless, as in the case of the priests, provision were made for their cleansing, they would be unable to have part with Him (v. 8) — they would be unable to enjoy communion either with the Father, or His Son Jesus Christ. Hence He reveals to them, by this symbolic act of washing their feet, how He by His ministry on their behalf would remove the defilements they might contract. There are three points in the act to be noticed. First, having laid aside His garments — emblematic of His departure from this world — He took a towel and girded Himself — an act expressive of His service on behalf of His own. Then, secondly, He poured water into a basin. Water is also here a symbol of the Word. Lastly, He began to wash His disciples' feet — i.e. to apply the Word so as to effect their cleansing. Bearing this in mind, we shall easily understand what answers to this in Christ's present ministry for His people — the truth really set forth by the laver. The apostle John says, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," etc. (1 John 2: 1.) The context shows that this is stated of those who have eternal life and are brought into fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. It is also clear that there is no necessity that such should sin. "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not;" and then he adds, "If any man sin." The advocacy of Christ with the Father is therefore for believers — and a provision for sin after conversion — God's means of removing the defilements thus incurred. If, then, a believer sins (there is never any question of the imputation of guilt, but) his communion is interrupted; and this can never more be enjoyed until the sin is removed — forgiven. As soon as he sins, Christ as the Advocate undertakes his cause, intercedes for him. An illustration of this is found in Luke. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he

may sift you as wheat: but *I have prayed for thee*, that thy faith fail not." (Luke 22: 31, 32.) It is so now — as soon as, not before, the sin is committed Christ intercedes; and the answer to His intercession is the application of the word through the Holy Ghost, sooner or later, to the conscience. An illustration of this point also is found in the same gospel. After Peter had denied His Lord as he had been forewarned, there was no sense of his sin, not even when he heard the cock crow, until the Lord looked upon him. (Luke 22: 61.) This reached his conscience, broke his heart, as we may say, so that he went out and wept bitterly. In like manner, when the believer falls into sin, he would never repent if it were not for the intercession of the Advocate; and, as a matter of fact, he does not repent until, in response to the prayer of the Advocate, the word, like the look upon Peter, used by the Holy Spirit, reaches the conscience and lays bare the character of his sin before God. Then he is at once bowed in the place of self-judgment, and confesses his sin. This leads to the next and final stage. Confessing his sin, he finds that God "is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1: 9); and, his soul restored, he is able once more to enter the tabernacle, or, in other words, to enjoy again fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

This truth — the truth really of the laver — is of all importance for the believer. It is essential, in the first place, to know that we are cleansed once and for ever as to guilt. But learning this, it is equally essential to understand that if sins after conversion are unconfessed and unjudged, we are shut out from communion with God, disqualified for priestly service and Worship; and not only so, but that if we remain in this state, sooner or later God will deal with us, in answer to the intercession of Christ, to bring our sins to remembrance. The advocacy of Christ therefore meets the need of the believer — being, as it is, God's gracious provision for our sins — for the removal of our defilements, so that we may be free to go in, without let or hindrance, into His immediate presence for worship and praise. One thing more may be added. Aaron and his sons were always to wash at the laver when they entered into the tabernacle. This may teach us our need of continual self-judgment. How often are we hindered in prayer, worship, and service from neglect of this. There has been some failure, and we have not recalled it, or carried it into God's presence for confession and humiliation; and hence, even if unwittingly, we have been entering the tabernacle with defiled feet. As a consequence we have been made to realize our coldness and constraint, our inability to occupy our priestly position. May we never therefore forget the use of the laver — our constant need of having our feet washed by the loving ministry of our Advocate with the Father!

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE HOLY ANOINTING OIL AND THE SWEET SPICES.

EXODUS xxx. 22-38.

THE Tabernacle, with its sacred symbols, has now been completely detailed. Two things only are wanting — the anointing oil and the sweet spices.

"Moreover, the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, and of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin: and thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil. And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony, and the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt-offering with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot. And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy. And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto Me throughout your generations. Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured; neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you. Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices, with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight: and thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy: and thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy. And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the Lord. Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people." (vv. 22-38.)

The oil of holy ointment is given first. It was compounded, according to divine direction, from myrrh, cinnamon, sweet calamus, and cassia in their several proportions, mixed with an hin of olive oil. (vv. 23, 24.) The Psalmist, speaking of the Messiah, says, "All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia;" and in the preceding verse he says, "God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy Fellows." (Ps. 40: 7,8.) This will help us to understand the typical meaning of the holy anointing oil. The spices, then, speak of the graces of Christ. His very garments smell of these sweet perfumes. But they were mingled with oil, and oil, as has been frequently stated, is a figure of the Holy Ghost. Combining, then, these two things together, we learn that the

graces of Christ — the moral fragrance of His excellencies — were expressed in the power of the Holy Ghost.

This holy anointing oil was used to anoint the tabernacle, the ark, and all the sacred vessels, the priests, etc. (vv. 26-30.) First, the tabernacle, etc., were anointed. This is of great significance. For looking at the tabernacle as the house of God, the scene of His manifestation, and the place of priestly service and worship, the fact that everything was anointed with the holy oil teaches that everything connected with the house of God, its regulation and service, all the priestly work carried on in it (see 1 Peter 2: 5), must be ordered in the power of the Holy Ghost, and that when so ordered it will be expressive of the sweet fragrance of Christ to God. For indeed it is in the power of the Spirit that God reveals Himself, and it is in the power of the Holy Ghost alone that worship and service can be rendered. If therefore everything connected with the house of God were arranged even according to His own word, and yet the holy anointing oil — the power of the Holy Spirit — were lacking, it could not be acceptable to Him. Notice also the effect — everything is sanctified, becomes through the anointing "most holy," so that whatever touches anything on which the oil has been put should likewise be deemed holy. (v. 29.) This is the effect of the action of the Spirit of God. Whatever His power rests upon is set apart for God, and everything that comes under His action, even by contact, is also claimed as holy. The whole sphere of His action is sanctified. (See 1 Cor. 7: 14.)

Aaron and his sons were also anointed. The significance of this has been explained in the consecration of the priests. But there is a special reason for its being introduced here in connection with the tabernacle. It is to point out — to emphasize — that the essential qualification for priestly service is the anointing and power of the Holy Ghost. Every other qualification may be possessed — born again, robed, and under the value of the blood; but if there be not, in addition to these things, the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the priestly position cannot be truly occupied. Even our blessed Lord Himself is said to have been anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with power (Acts 10: 38), and all who are His must be so likewise if they would enjoy the privileges into which they have been introduced. The lesson is needful in a day of incessant activity, and of legal service on every hand. Let it then be ever remembered that, though children of God, we can neither worship nor serve apart from the present power and action of the Holy Spirit. (See John 4: 24; Phil. 3: 3.)

There are two warnings. First, "Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured." (v. 32.) This teaches that the Spirit of God cannot rest upon or dwell in the natural man. It is in direct violation of this truth that in ecclesiastical ordination unconverted men are professedly endowed with the gift of the Holy Ghost. The anointing is never received until after the new birth and known forgiveness of sins. When we are justified by faith, and have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, we are both anointed and sealed. (See Rom. 5: 1-5; 2 Cor. 1: 21, 22.) Secondly, no imitation of this anointing oil was to be made under the penalty of death. (v. 33.) It is thus a heinous sin to imitate the action of the Spirit. Ananias and Sapphira did this when they professed to devote the whole proceeds of the property they had sold to the Lord's service. (Acts 5) The same penalty, observe, was attached to putting it upon a stranger, upon those who had no title to it. God

is holy, and He jealously guards His sovereign rights, and cannot but visit any infringement of them with punishment. If He seems now to pass by such sins unnoticed, it is owing to the character of the present dispensation — being one of grace; but the sins themselves are no less in His sight.

The sweet spices were also made into a perfume by divine direction, and will mean, as in the former case, the graces, the moral fragrance of Christ to God. It appears from Ex. 25: 6 compared with Ex. 35: 8, that these spices formed the sweet incense which was burnt upon the golden altar, as also indeed from the direction that it should be put "before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee." (v. 36.) This being the case, there is the additional thought that the graces of Christ were brought out through the action of the holy fire; that His exposure to the judgment of God's holiness (fire) upon the cross, as there made sin, did but bring out all that was most precious and fragrant to God. He was indeed never more precious in His eyes, His perfections were never more fully displayed, than when He proved His obedience to the uttermost in the very place of sin. Hence He could say, "Therefore doth My Father love me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again." It was for God's glory that He passed through the fire of judgment, and in doing so all the "sweet spices" of His moral graces and the perfection of His entire devotedness were brought out, and ascended up as a sweet savour to God. On this account — because of the preciousness of its typical significance — it was to be beaten very small (for the more it was beaten the more was its fragrance emitted), and put before the testimony of the tabernacle of the congregation, where Jehovah met with Moses. Moses as the mediator would thus be before God in all the acceptability of this holy perfume; and hence God could meet him in grace, and communicate to him His mind and will for His people.

There is also in connection with this a warning with a penalty. None was to be made like it. This perfume was "most holy," "holy for the Lord." Whosoever therefore should make any like it, to smell thereto, should be cut off from his people. (v. 38.) Counterfeits of the graces of Christ, and finding satisfaction in these, are both an abomination before God. Just as we have seen that the Lord guards against any imitation of the action or the power of the Holy Spirit, so here He also warns against any imitation of the fragrance and preciousness of Christ. Man can neither do the one or the other — whatever his pretences. But such is the subtlety of our hearts that we often deceive ourselves, as well as others, into the acceptance of the sweetnesses of nature, its grace and amiability, as the work of the Holy Ghost, as resemblances to Christ. There can be no likeness to Christ except as the result of the work of the Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit, as we have seen, is the gift of God. It would be, therefore, hypocrisy of the worst stamp to present knowingly to others any natural qualities, any human graces, the effect of training or cultivation, as the product of the Holy Ghost. Nothing can please God, and nothing should please us, which has not been wrought out by His Spirit for the glory of Christ.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### QUALIFICATIONS FOR SERVICE.

EXODUS xxxi.

ALL the details of the Tabernacle have now been given. One thing only remains — the provision for the execution of the various commands which Moses had received. Both alike proceed from the Lord; for all must be of grace.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship. And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee: the tabernacle of the congregation, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy-seat that is thereupon, and all the furniture of the tabernacle, and the table and his furniture, and the pure candlestick with all his furniture, and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt-offering with all his furniture, and the laver and his foot, and the cloths of service, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office, and the anointing oil, and sweet incense for the holy place: according to all that I have commanded thee shall they do." (vv. 1-11)

We learn then from this scripture two things. First, that God alone can designate His servants for their work; and secondly, that He alone can qualify them for the service to which they are called. Both these points deserve special attention. It will be remarked that both Bezaleel and Aholiab are divinely named. They were distinguished by name, and called. This principle runs through all dispensations. The apostle adduces it when speaking of the priesthood of Christ. He says, "So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, today have I begotten Thee. As He saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Heb. 5: 5, 6.) In like manner he speaks of himself as "an apostle by the will of God." (1 Cor. 1: 1; 2 Cor. 1: 1, etc.) This is a point of great moment; for it were worse than presumption to intrude into the things of God uncalled and unsent. It is true that God does not call His servants by name in this dispensation — at least since the days of the apostle Paul; but every servant should look to be divinely certified as to his work, to be undoubtingly assured that he is doing, whatever he may be engaged in, the divine will. Such a conviction is the source both of confidence and courage. The Lord thus speaks to Joshua, "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." (Joshua 1: 9.) The essence of all service, indeed, lies in obedience; for if I am not doing God's will it is not service. The Lord Himself characterizes the whole of His life of service as obedience: "I came down from heaven," He says, "not to do Mine own will,

but the will of Him that sent Me." (John 6: 38.) It should therefore be our first concern to ascertain whether we have been sent by the Lord, whether we have been called to our work and service, like Bezaleel and Aholiab; and if we are found sitting at the feet of the Lord, His mind in this respect will soon be revealed.

But the second thing is, that called by name they were filled with the Spirit of God, and made dependent on the Lord for wisdom and understanding, to execute the work entrusted to their care. Man's wisdom is of no avail in the service of God. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." The apostle Paul says, If any man thinks himself to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise. It is on this account that intellectual men — men who lean to their own understanding — exhibit oftentimes nothing but folly when dealing with divine things. But it is the servants of God who have the most need to remember this truth. How often are they tempted to bring their own reason, or understanding, to bear upon the Scriptures, or upon the difficulties in the church of God — to their own confusion. If, however, it were remembered that there can be no understanding or wisdom apart from God — none whatever, excepting as received of Him, they would be kept in constant dependence — the only condition of its reception. It would produce waiting on God rather than activity — activity surely when the word for action has been given — but waiting in order to obtain the needful wisdom for the service required. Another thing may be added. The proof of divine wisdom in service is that the thing done is according to the word of God. "According to all that I have commanded thee shall they do." The word therefore is both the guide of the servant and the test of his service — the proof of its being done with divine wisdom according to the divine mind. No discretion whatever was left to Bezaleel and Aholiab. There was no classification of the articles to be made, or of the materials to be wrought, into things essential and non-essential. There is not the slightest trace of a single thing being left to their own thoughts or imagination. On the other hand, nothing was left to their own wisdom. Everything was to be done according to the commands given to Moses. It was not open to Bezaleel to work after one, and Aholiab after another pattern. Both alike were bound in the most minute detail by specific directions from God. This fact needs to be emphasized in a day when even Christians are contending for liberty to do every man according to that which is right in his own eyes. The various sects of Christendom, with their manifold ecclesiastical polities, show that they have been formed by no Bezaleels and Aholiabs, but rather by those who have received no divine commission, and endowed with no spirit of wisdom and understanding. For they will not bear the test of the word of God, and on this account have to be rejected by all who have heard the word, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Sam. 15: 22.) It is then in this direction that any recovery must begin, where all is in ruin, and where everything is stamped with declension and departure from the word of God. We must begin by refusing everything that will not stand the divine test, and then we must seek, spite of our weakness and confusion, to order everything according to the mind and will of God.

Once more the sabbath is enjoined.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore, for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed." (vv. 12-17.)

As one has said, "The sabbath is always found whenever there is any principle whatever of relationship established between the people and God: it is the result proposed in every relation between God and His people, that they enter into His rest." The meaning of the sabbath has been expounded before, but its continual injunction as revealing the heart of God cannot be overlooked. He knew what His people were, and how they would always fail under responsibility, so that, in this sense, He was never disappointed in the result. On the other hand, the annexation of the sabbath to every relationship between Himself and the people shows how earnestly (if such human language may be employed) He longed that His people should enter into the consummation of His purposes for them, and have the enjoyment of blessed fellowship with Himself in sharing His rest. The rest of God is what the sabbath signifies, and this was the goal God proposed to His people. That they never entered into it we know, and it is fully stated in Hebrews 4; but His purposes never fail, and hence what is lost under responsibility will be established according to His own counsels of grace. There remaineth therefore a rest (a sabbath-keeping) for the people of God; and all who believe will enter into that rest — the object and result of all the counsels and ways of God with respect to His people. We therefore of this dispensation are, even as the children of Israel, pilgrims in the wilderness, journeying on to the rest of which God has spoken; but under the leadership of the Captain of our salvation, we cannot fail of its possession.

The chapter, and this section of the book, concludes by the record of the giving the two tables of testimony. "And He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." (v. 18.) It is necessary to recall that all the instructions from chapter 24 to this point were given in the mount. Moses had been alone with the Lord. The Lord had been "communing with him" concerning the revelation of His mind for the people. Having ended, He gave him the two tables of stone, containing the terms of the covenant which He had made with His people. Moses has described this elsewhere. He says, "The Lord delivered unto me two tables of stone, written with the finger of God: and on them was written according to all the words which the Lord spake with you in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, in the day of the assembly. And it came to pass, at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the Lord gave me the two tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant." (Deut. 9: 10, 11) It appears therefore that the contents of the two

tables were the ten "words," or commandments, spoken in Exodus 20, but now written by the finger of God — the commandments which Israel undertook to keep as the condition of blessing. They abandoned the ground of grace on which they had been put after they had crossed the Red Sea, and of themselves, and for themselves, on God's proposal, undertook the responsibility of obedience. Moses had been forty days and forty nights in the mount, during which he neither ate nor drank (see Deut. 9: 9), being as it were in a state above nature, in order to be able to become the channel of God's communications for His people. The flesh must not intrude, must indeed be set aside, and in some sort nature also, if we would hear the voice of God. The reader will not fail to remember the case of Elijah (1 Kings 19: 8), and also that of our blessed Lord — both of whom, like Moses, fasted forty days and forty nights. But as has been remarked by another, "The Lord Jesus must in all things have the pre-eminence. Moses, naturally far off, is separated from his natural state in order to draw near unto God. Christ was naturally near, and more than near; He separated Himself from nature to meet the adversary on behalf of man." This contrast is most significant, and shows plainly that the most devoted of the servants of God can be no more than a shadow of (typifying even by contrast) the excellency of Christ. (Compare also the case of the apostle John in Rev. 1: 10.)

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### APOSTASY, MEDIATION, AND RESTORATION.

EXODUS xxxii - xxxiv.

THE Lord had been occupied with the blessing of His people, giving instructions for the erection of His sanctuary that He might dwell in their midst. Moses was on high to receive these communications of His grace. The Lord was "communing" with His servant concerning the establishment of the precious things connected with the relationship on which He had entered in grace with Israel. But even while He was thus engaged, sin and even apostasy are witnessed in the camp at the foot of Sinai. Above, all is light and blessing; below, all is darkness and evil.

"And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play." (vv. 1-6.)

There is a striking resemblance, in one aspect, between this scene and that witnessed at the foot of the mount of transfiguration. In both alike Satan holds full sway. In the one before us it is the nation who have fallen under his power, in the other it is the child whom he has possessed; but the child again is a type of the Jewish nation of a later day. The absence of Christ on high (shown in figure also by Moses on Sinai) is the opportunity seized by Satan — under God's permission — for the display of his wicked power, and man (Israel) in the evil of his heart becomes his wretched slave. But it should be observed that Satan, whatever his activity, can never forestall God. He may seek to thwart, and he may appear to succeed in postponing the accomplishment of, but he can never frustrate, the purposes of God. Thus, in the scene before us, the Lord had made an end of communing with Moses (Ex. 31: 18), and had arranged everything according to His will, before the people fell into sin. It is so throughout the whole of the Scriptures. Satan, having no foresight, is always a day behind; so that if he seem to gain a momentary success, it is only to expose himself in the end to a more crushing defeat. This fact should encourage the hearts of believers while waiting for the moment, which will come "shortly," when the God of peace shall bruise Satan under their feet.

The act of the people is no less than open apostasy. Its several features may be briefly indicated. First, they forgot and abandoned the Lord. Secondly, they attributed their deliverance from Egypt to Moses: they described him as "the man that brought us out of Egypt." Finally, they fell into idolatry. They wanted visible gods — testifying against themselves that they were "children in whom was no faith." Aaron fell with them — apparently without a struggle. The man who had been designated to the priestly office, the one who was to enjoy the privilege of entering into the holy of holies to minister before the Lord, became the instrument, if not the leader, of their wicked rebellion. Priest and people alike accept the evil inspiration of Satan, and worship the gods which their own hands had made; and they cried, as they worshipped, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Another thing should be remarked, Aaron seeks to conceal the shame of their idolatry by putting the Lord's name upon it. Having built an altar, he made proclamation, and said, "Tomorrow is a feast to JEHOVAH." This is just what an apostate Christendom has done. Having set up their idols, they call it the worship of the Lord; and thereby souls are deluded into acceptance of that which is really an abomination before God. What was this golden calf? It was, Aaron would have said, but a symbol of Jehovah. So Romanists and Ritualists argue, and they thus dignify their idolatry with the name of Christ and Christianity. This scene therefore — picture on the one hand, it may be, of the last state of the Jews, which will be worse than the first, is no less instructive, on the other, for the present day. In fact, Israel rejected Jehovah, and His servant Moses. They became apostate, and apostasy is the only word which expresses the true condition of modern Christendom, which, while owning the name, really rejects the authority of Christ at the right hand of God.

It was no wonder that the wrath of the Lord waxed hot against His people.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people: now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation." (vv. 7-10.)

Israel had indeed exposed themselves to the righteous judgment of God. They had voluntarily promised obedience to God's law as the condition of blessing; and the covenant had been sealed by the sprinkling of blood — emblem of death — as the penalty of its breach. This penalty they had now incurred. God no longer therefore treats them as His people. They had rejected Him, and had spoken of Moses as the man who had brought them up out of Egypt; and the Lord takes them on their own ground. Hence He says to Moses, "Thy people, which *thou* broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves," etc. (v. 7.) Then, after describing their sin, He announced His solemn judgment: "I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people: now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume

them; and I will make of thee a great nation." (vv. 9, 10.) Thus Israel, if dealt with according to the righteous requirements of the law which they had accepted, and to which they had promised obedience as the condition of blessing, were lost beyond recovery, and would perish through their own wilful sin and apostasy.

The announcement which the Lord had made evoked from the heart of Moses an intercession of unparalleled beauty and force. The Lord had said, "I will make of thee a great nation." but in his magnificent love for his people, losing sight of himself, and utterly disregarding what might be termed his own interests, he thinks only of the Lord's glory, and the misery of Israel. Through grace he was enabled to take up the true place of a mediator; and he pours out his whole soul in his pleading intercession. The character of his appeal is most noteworthy. He does not for one moment extenuate the sin of the people — this he could not do: nor does he entreat for mercy, for there was no room for mercy in the covenant of Sinai. What he does therefore is to throw himself upon God — and upon what His glory necessitated in connection with the people He had redeemed. First, he urges the dishonour that would be done to His name among the Egyptians, if Israel should be destroyed. He reminds Jehovah of the link established with His people through redemption. God had said to Moses, "thy" people; but Moses pleads that they are "His" people. He will not accept the breaking of the link, but cries, "Lord, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against Thy people, which Thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did He bring them out?" etc. (vv. 11, 12.) Spite of their shameful apostasy, the plea of Moses was that they were still God's people, and that His glory was concerned in sparing them — lest the enemy should boast over their destruction, and thereby over the Lord Himself. In itself it was a plea of irresistible force. Joshua uses one of a like character when the Israelites were smitten before Ai. He says, "The Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of the land, shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: *and what wilt Thou do unto Thy great name?*" (Joshua 7: 9.) In both cases it was faith taking hold of God, identifying itself with His own glory, and claiming on that ground the response to its desires — a plea that God can never refuse. But Moses has another. In the energy of his intercession — fruit surely of the action of the Spirit of God — he goes back to the absolute and unconditional promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, reminding the Lord of the two immutable things in which it was impossible for Him to lie. (Heb. 6: 18.) A more beautiful example of prevailing intercession is not found in the Scriptures. Indeed, in the emergency which had arisen, everything depended on the mediator, and in His grace God had provided one who could stand in the breach, and plead his people's cause — not on the ground of what they were, for by their sin they were exposed to the righteous indignation of a holy God — but on the ground of what God was, and on that of His counsels revealed and confirmed to the patriarchs, both by oath and promise. The Lord heard and "repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people." What encouragement to faith! If ever there was an occasion when it seemed impossible that prayer should be heard it was this; but the faith of Moses rose above all difficulties, and grasping the hand of Jehovah, claimed His help; and, inasmuch as He could not deny Himself, the prayer of Moses was granted. Surely the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

"And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides: on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome; but the noise of them that sing do I hear. And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and straved it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it. And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it of. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf." (vv. 15-24.)

The covenant of Sinai had been broken — broken irretrievably. Still Moses took the two tables of stone with him, as he turned from the presence of the Lord to go down to the camp; and the Spirit of God takes occasion from this circumstance to call attention to its divine and perfect character. "The tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables." (v. 16.) All was divine — divine in its origin, and divine in its execution. But these divine tables of the law never reached the camp. It was impossible. The people had made a complete breach between themselves and God; and there could be therefore no further question of obedience on the ground of pure law. They might be objects of mercy in response to intercession, but as open transgressors they had broken the covenant which they had so readily accepted, and had now become idolators. Joshua thought it was a noise of war he had heard in the camp; but Moses, who had been so long in the presence of God, was more quick to discern the true character of the sounds that reached their ears. "And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount." Remark, how completely Moses had fellowship with the Lord's own mind concerning His people. The Lord's anger had waxed hot against them, and though Moses as mediator had pleaded with Him on this account, yet his own anger waxed hot when he descended and saw the golden calf. If, therefore, he broke the tables of the law, it was only the expression of the necessity which had arisen on account of what the people had done with the covenant, and the act, at the same time, was in entire conformity with the mind of God. To quote the language of another, "His exercised ear, quick to discern how matters stood with the people, hears their light and profane joy. Soon after he sees the golden calf, which had even preceded the tabernacle of God in the camp, and he breaks the tables at the foot of the mount; and, zealous on high for the people towards God because of His glory, he is below on earth zealous for God because of that same glory. For faith does more than see that God is

glorious (every reasonable person would own that); it connects the glory of God and His people, and hence counts on God to bless them in every state of things, as in the interest of His glory, and insists on holiness in them at all cost, in conformity with that glory, that it may not be blasphemed in those who are identified with it." These are true and weighty words, and should sink deep into the hearts of the Lord's people in a day like this — when the "camp" of professing Christianity presents an appearance not unlike that which Moses beheld when he came down from the mount; and they should be much pondered over by those of the Lord's servants who have it laid upon them to act for Him in any difficulties, and indeed by all who would be truly identified with the interests of Christ, in the church. For unless we are first zealous before God on behalf of His people, we cannot be zealous for His glory when dealing with His people below.

Moses in the next place deals with Aaron — charges him with bringing so great a sin upon the people. An additional circumstance, which may help us to understand this, is found in Deuteronomy. There Moses says, "And the Lord was very angry with Aaron, to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time." (Deut. 9: 20.) He is undoubtedly looked upon as the responsible head of the people during the absence of Moses, hence the special guilt with which he is charged; and it is evident from the narrative that he was not slow to fall in with the people's desires. As with Israel so with Aaron — both are spared through the intercession of Moses from the governmental consequences of their sin, but the guilt of the sin as toward God remained. This distinction must be carefully borne in mind, or the judgment afterward executed might seem inconsistent with the statement that "the Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people." The nation would have been destroyed but for the intercession of Moses, as the result of God's government on the basis of the law of Sinai. Delivered from this consequence, God was still free to deal with them — as we find, at the close of the chapter, that "the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made." Aaron is distinguished in these words; for, occupying the position he did, he is regarded as specially criminal. His answer to Moses reveals the heart of a convicted sinner. As Adam threw the blame upon Eve, and Eve upon the serpent, so Aaron shelters himself behind the people. It was true that they were "set on mischief;" but his sin lay in helping them to their object. He should have died rather than have yielded to their desires. His weakness — often exhibited, spite of the favour and grace of the Lord — was his shame and guilt.

Moses, seeing that the people were naked (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies), turns from the excuses of his brother, and burning with a holy zeal for the Lord, stood in the gate of the camp, and cried, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me." It was no time for concealment of the evil or for compromise. When there is open apostasy there can be no neutrality. Neutrality when the question is between God and Satan is itself apostasy. He that is not with the Lord, at such a time, is against Him. And mark, moreover, that this cry is raised in the midst of those who were the Lord's professing people. They were all Israelites. But now there must be a separation, and the challenge of Moses, "Who is on the Lord's side?" makes all manifest. He became the Lord's centre; and hence to gather to Him was to be *for*, to refuse his call was to be *against*, the Lord. What was the effect of his summons? Why that of all the

tribes of Israel, Levi only was found faithful. "The sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him." Theirs was the distinguished honour — through the grace of God — of being on the Lord's side when the whole camp was in utter rebellion. How precious the fidelity of Levi must have been in the eyes of the Lord. It would seem indeed from Deuteronomy that the Lord claimed them for the special service of the Tabernacle in connection with their conduct at this time. Moses says, "At that time the Lord separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord, to minister unto Him, and to bless in His name, unto this day. Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren: the Lord is his inheritance, according as the Lord thy God promised him." (Deut. 10: 8, 9.) It was indeed no common fidelity; for no sooner had they responded to the call of Moses than they were commanded, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves today to the Lord, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that He may bestow upon you a blessing this day." (vv. 27, 28.)

Thus Levi alone responded to the divine call, separating themselves from their idolatrous brethren, and unhesitatingly taking part with God against the iniquity of His people. It was a searching trial — a trial which demanded that Levi should put aside every claim of the flesh, yea, that he should, in the words of Moses, say to "his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed Thy word, and kept Thy covenant." (Deut. 33: 9.) It was obedience at all costs to the divine call, and hence complete separation from the evil into which Israel had fallen. God often tests His people in the same way; and whenever confusion and declension have begun, the only path for the godly is that which is marked out by the course of Levi — that of full-hearted, unquestioning obedience. Such a path must be painful — involving for those who take it the surrender of some of the most intimate associations of their lives, and breaking many a tie of nature — of kindred and relationship; but it is the only path of blessing. Well may all challenge their hearts, and inquire, if in this evil day they are found apart from all that dishonours the Lord's name in subjection to His word.

Moses on the next day returned to the Lord in the mount.

"And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold; yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin -; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written. And the lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, Mine angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them." (vv. 30-34.)

First, he charges the people with their sin, and then, in his love for the people, proposes to go on their behalf into the Lord's presence, saying, "*Peradventure* I shall make an atonement for your sin." The contrast between Moses and the Lord Jesus in this respect has been beautifully drawn by another. He says, "What a contrast do we here remark, in passing, with the work of our precious Saviour! He, coming down from above — from His dwelling-place in the glory of the Father — to do His will; and, while keeping the law (instead of destroying the tables, the signs of this covenant, the requirements of which man was unable to meet), He Himself bears the penalty of its infringement; and having accomplished the atonement before returning above, instead of going up with a cheerless 'peradventure' in His mouth, which the holiness of God instantly nullified, He ascends with the sign of the accomplishment of the atonement, and of the confirmation of the new covenant with His precious blood, the value of which was anything but doubtful to that God before whom He presented it." True, Moses was a mediator, but as such it is in the contrast rather that he typifies Christ in this character.

But he returned, confessed his people's sin, and pleaded in the intensity of his affection for their forgiveness. Even more — he could not go farther — he added, "If not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written." So fully had he identified himself with the people — source of all strength in intercession when produced by the Spirit of God — that if they were unforgiven he desired to perish with them. It was the overflowing of his intense love for guilty Israel, as in the not dissimilar case of the apostle Paul, who said, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." (Rom. 9: 3.) God did not accede to the request of His servant, for he had no accomplished atonement on which to take his stand, nor had he wherewith to make atonement — the only basis on which a holy God could righteously forgive His people. But his intercession prevailed so far as to secure the people from the governmental consequences of their sin — their destruction as the penalty of their transgression. While however they were spared in the long-suffering of the Lord, He put them back individually under responsibility with the words, "Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book." (v. 33.) Thereon He commanded Moses to go, and to lead the people to the place He had promised, saying, "Mine angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them. And the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made." It is not now Jehovah dwelling in their midst, but an angel to go before them, and the people still under just judgment because of their sin. This change, producing a new action and intercession on the part of Moses, is developed as to its consequences in the next chapter.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it., and I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people; lest I consume thee in the way. And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned; and no man did put on him his ornaments. For the Lord had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiff-necked people: I will

come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb." (vv. 1-6.)

Several points in this statement should be noticed, as indicative of the position which the people now occupied. In the first place, the Lord did not yet take back the people into that relationship with Himself which they had forfeited through their transgression. They had rejected Him, and He keeps them as it were on that footing. He thus still says to Moses, "Thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt." Secondly, He promises them the land notwithstanding; this had been secured by the first intercession of Moses, when he appealed to the absolute and unconditional promises made to the patriarchs. (32: 13.) But, thirdly, He announces that He will not go up in their midst: "For," said He, "thou art a stiff-necked people; lest I consume thee in the way." A holy God, to speak after the manner of men, knew not how He could now dwell in the midst of a nation of transgressors. Lastly, He threatens judgment, and commands the people to strip off their ornaments that He might know what to do with them. God weighs, as it were, the condition of His poor people, and pauses before He smites, seeing that they mourned — humbled by their sin — at the tidings they had received. It is a striking if solemn, scene — the people stripped of their adornments, awaiting the judgment pronounced in bitterness and sorrow of heart; and the Lord pausing before the blow is struck.

But He who pronounced judgment upon the people for their sins, provided a way for their escape through a new action on the part of Moses. First of all, he pitched the tabernacle outside the camp.

"And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp. And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the tabernacle, that all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle. And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and [the Lord] talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door. And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle." (vv. 7-11.)

It does not appear that Moses, in pitching the tabernacle <sup>18</sup> outside the camp, was acting under any direct commandment from the Lord. It was rather spiritual discernment,

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<sup>18</sup> The reader will understand that this was not *the* Tabernacle, the pattern and details of which had been prescribed to Moses in the mount, but a tent which was now to be a tabernacle — a meeting-place between

entering into both the character of God and the state of the people. Taught of God, he feels that Jehovah could no longer dwell in the midst of a camp which had been defiled by the presence of the golden calf. He therefore made a place outside, afar off from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation. This was a totally different thing from what the Lord had said unto Moses: "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." They were no longer to be the Lord's people — grouped round about Himself as their centre; but He being outside, "every one who sought the Lord *went out* unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp." It thus became an individual thing; and the true worshippers were in the place of separation — they took the ground of separation from the camp which had acknowledged a false god. This gives a principle of the utmost value and importance. For it must be remembered that Israel professedly were the Lord's people; but their condition had become such that the Lord could no longer be in their midst. So it was in a later day, as we gather from the epistle to the Hebrews; and hence the exhortation which is there given, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." (Heb. 13: 13.) Whenever the Lord's name is dishonoured, and His authority is rejected, and another authority is substituted, there is no resource for the godly but to go outside of all that answers to the camp, if they would worship God in spirit and in truth. And it should be carefully remarked that, as in the case of Moses, the need for such separation is a matter of spiritual discernment. There are times and seasons — and those who have a single eye will not fail to apprehend them — when it becomes a high and holy privilege, as in the case of Levi at the end of the previous chapter, to take part with the Lord against His people, at least in testimony against their ways; and, as in the case of Moses, to take a place outside of all the declension, rejection of the Lord's authority, and idolatrous practices of His people. In taking such a step there must undoubtedly be the authority of the word of God — the only light to our feet in the darkness around, as it is our only resource in the evil day. But the application of the word to any given state of things must be a matter of spiritual wisdom and discernment through the Spirit of God.

The tabernacle having been pitched, Moses, in the sight of all the people, went out and entered into it; and, as he entered, the Lord immediately endorsed his act of faith, for the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and He talked with Moses. (v. 9.) Being in separation from the camp, the Lord revealed Himself as He had not done before, and so strikingly that the people "rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door. And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." This was a totally new thing, altogether different from the sublime communications of Sinai. It was an intimacy of approach and communion which Moses had never before enjoyed. The Lord Himself alludes to this as the distinguishing privilege of His servant, when vindicating him from the aspersions of Aaron and Miriam. (Num. 12: 5-8.) This fact is full of consolation — teaching as it does that, though ruin, and even apostasy, may characterize the professing people of God, a way into His presence may still be found by those who can enter into His mind, and are enabled by His grace to take a place outside of the corruptions by which they are surrounded; and that the Lord will reveal Himself to such, in response to their faith and faithfulness, in a most special and

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God and those who sought Him, pitched to meet the present need outside the camp in consequence of the people's sin.

gracious way. The fact is, identified with the corruptions of an apostate people, we of necessity share their condition and even judgment; but apart according to the mind of the Lord, the barrier to the manifestation of Himself is removed. We are on a different footing — on the footing of individual faith and individual condition of soul. But then it must be remembered, that all who so act will find themselves together gathered individually around a new centre. The act of Moses indeed is, in some sort, the anticipation of that word, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18: 20.) And this assurance is the resource of the godly in this day of confusion and corruption, as the tabernacle of the congregation without the camp was that of those who sought the Lord in the midst of Israel's idolatry; and those who, in simplicity and faith, have recourse to it will receive, as Moses did, special manifestations of the Lord's favour and presence.

The act of Moses having been accepted, he returned to the camp — now the recognised mediator; but Joshua, type of Christ in spirit, as the leader of His people, remains in the tabernacle. Thereon Moses as mediator commences his intercession. He accepts the place into which the Lord had put him — as the one appointed to conduct the people to the promised inheritance. (v. 1.) He takes this ground as the basis of his plea.

"And Moses said unto the Lord, See, Thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and Thou hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me. Yet Thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in My sight. Now therefore, I pray Thee, if I have found grace in Thy sight, show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight; and consider that this nation is Thy people." (vv. 12, 13.)

He makes supplication in the first place for himself. He desires first to know whom the Lord would send with him. God had said that He would send an angel (v. 2); but Moses would know more; and he pleads for this knowledge on the ground that the Lord had said to him, "I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in My sight." Furthermore, he would know *God's* way, that he might know Him, that he might find grace in His sight. And then he brings the people before God. As everything now depended on Moses, as mediator, he presents his own cause first; and then he introduces the people. "Consider," he touchingly prays, "that this nation is Thy people." All this is exceedingly beautiful, as it is also full of interest and instruction. It was not enough for Moses that he had been divinely appointed to lead Israel, and that an angel should go before him in the path, but he desired to know, not his but *God's* way through the wilderness, that he might also know *Him*. He could not be satisfied short of knowing God and God's way — if he were to lead up the people. This is what every believer needs, and there is nothing beyond while in the wilderness.

The Lord graciously accepted the prayer of His servant. He said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." This was a full response to the cry of the mediator, and all that he needed to carry him and the people through their desert path. This comforted and emboldened his heart — and he replied, "If Thy presence go not, carry us not up hence." (v. 15.) Now he identifies himself with the people. This is no

mean adumbration of the heart of Christ — this intense love of Moses for Israel, linking them with himself in his place of favour before God. And not only so, but, rising higher, he now links them again with God. We have remarked that God took Israel on their own ground, and since they had rejected Him, He had said to Moses, "thy" people. But now — now that Moses, acting as mediator, has gained the ear of God, he says again "*Thy*" people. "For wherein," he proceeds, "shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? is it not in that Thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth." (v. 16.) He thus claims, as it were, as proof of divine favour — restoration of favour — God's own presence with His people. It could not be otherwise known; and the fact of His presence would separate them off from all other people. It is the same in principle during this dispensation. The presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, building His people into an habitation for God, separates from all else, and so completely, that there are but the two spheres — sphere of the presence and action of the Holy Ghost, and sphere of the action and power of Satan.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in My sight, and I know thee by name." (v. 17.)

The success of the mediation of Moses was thus complete, complete for the restoration of the people. They are once again the Lord's people — to be put under a new covenant, as will be seen in the next chapter, a covenant of law indeed, but law mingled with grace, according to the character of God as now revealed. The effect on Moses of the divine favour is remarkable. Every successive display of grace does but elicit larger desires; and Moses therefore now longs for himself that he may see God's glory.

"And he said, I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory." (v. 18.)

Such is ever the action of grace upon the soul. The more we know of God, the more we desire to know. But this very petition of Moses affords a contrast with the place of the believer. Now we behold with unveiled face the glory of the Lord; here Moses prays that he may see it. The holy longing, however, which he thus expresses, shows the effect of intimacy with God, and the consequent energetic action on the soul of the Holy Ghost.

"And He said, I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And He said, Thou canst not see My face; for there shall no man see Me, and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand while I pass by: and I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts; but My face shall not be seen." (vv. 19-23.)

The Lord hears, and grants as far as was possible for Moses to receive, the request he had made. He would make all His goodness pass before him, and proclaim the name of Jehovah. Then He lays down the principle of His sovereignty, on which He must act in

order to spare Israel; for had He dealt with them on the basis of righteous law, the whole nation must have perished. It is this very scripture that the apostle Paul cites to enforce the same truth — that Israel was spared on the one hand, and Pharaoh destroyed on the other, in the exercise of God's sovereign rights. His object is to reconcile the bestowal of grace on the Gentiles with the special promises made to Israel, and he thus leads them back to their sin in connection with the golden calf, to remind them that they were at that time equally indebted to the sovereign grace of God as were now the Gentiles — that, both the one, therefore, and the other, were alike the objects of sovereign mercy and grace. This word of the Lord to Moses is the fountain-head — so to speak — of this truth, though God had acted on the principle all down the line of Israel's history. (See Rom. 9: 7-13.) It is affirmed now as the foundation on which, in answer to the intercession of Moses, He could spare the people. But notwithstanding this favour accorded to Moses — this privilege of beholding the goodness of the Lord and bearing His name, he could not behold His face and live. The Lord would put him "in a clift of the rock" while He passed by. "And I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts; but My face shall not be seen." No, God was not yet fully revealed; the work was not accomplished through the efficacy of which God could bring the sinner into His immediate presence, and without a cloud between. Distinguished therefore as was the place which Moses occupied, the humblest believer of this dispensation is brought nearer to God. The Christian may behold all the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; but Moses must be hidden in a "clift of the rock" — type, it may be, of the believer in Christ — while that glory passed by. As another has said, "He will hide him while He passes by, and Moses shall see His back parts. We cannot meet God on His way as independent of Him. After He has passed by, one sees all the beauty of His ways." This is exemplified in the next chapter — on the re-establishment of the covenant with Israel.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first; and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest. And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to Me in the top of the mount. And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount. And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first: and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone. And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." (Ex. 34: 1-7.)

Moses presented himself in obedience to the divine command, with the two tables of stone, to receive again the law under which Israel was to be placed. Sinai is therefore once more the scene of his interview with the Lord. The Lord, faithful to His promise, descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord.

Name in Scripture, in connection at least with God, is expressive of nature; and hence here it is significant of what God was as JEHOVAH. It is essential to remember that it is not the Father, but Jehovah in His relationship with Israel, who is thus revealed. It is therefore not a complete revelation of God. This could not be until after the cross; but it is the name of Jehovah — expression of what God was in this character — that is proclaimed. "It is not at all the name of His relationship with the sinner for his justification, but with Israel for His government. Mercy, holiness, and patience mark His ways with them, but He does not clear the guilty." The reader must study for himself this unfolding of what God was to Israel — each word employed being in this aspect the declaration of His immutable character. Mercy and truth are seen in combination, though it was not until the cross that they met together, and were harmonized in their activities, when also righteousness and peace kissed each other. Goodness and grace are also here, as well as long-suffering; but there is also holiness, and hence, while keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, Jehovah would by no means clear the guilty. There was indeed a heart of love for His people, but this heart of love was pent up, if it may be so expressed, until atonement should have been completed, when God could righteously justify the ungodly. But whoever traces down the line of God's dealings with Israel, from this moment until their expulsion from the land, and indeed until the cross, will find every one of these attributes in constant exercise. All that God is, as here declared, is revealed in His ways with His ancient people. The proclamation of His name is, in fact, the summary of His government from Sinai until the death of Christ. But while admitting to the full the wondrous character of the revelation thus made to Moses, let it be again observed that it is not that which Christians now enjoy. If it is compared with the words of our blessed Lord, "I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17: 26), the immensity of the difference cannot fail to be apprehended. The difference is between what God was as Jehovah to Israel, and what God is as the Father to His children.

One other remark should be made. Satan had come in, and for the moment seemed as if he had succeeded in frustrating the purposes of God with respect to His people. But Satan is never so completely defeated as in his apparent victories. This is nowhere so fully illustrated as in the cross; but the same thing is perceived in connection with the golden calf. This was Satan's work; but the failure of Israel becomes the occasion, through the mediation of Moses, which God in His grace had provided, of the fuller revelation of God, and of His mingling grace with law. The activity of Satan does but work out the purposes of God, and his wrath is made to praise Him against whom all his malice and enmity are directed.

We may now consider the effect on Moses of the proclamation of the name of Jehovah.

"And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. And he said, If now I have found grace in Thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray Thee, go among us; for it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for Thine inheritance." (vv. 8, 9.)

The first effect is personal. It bows Moses to the ground in worship before the Lord. Every revelation of God to the heart of His people produces this result. This is remarkably illustrated in the experience of the patriarchs. Such records as this are common: "And the Lord appeared unto Abram . . . and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him." (Genesis 12: 7.) So with Moses. Overwhelmed by the revelation made in grace to his soul, he is constrained to worship. But he immediately takes up his position of mediator. Made to feel his own acceptance by the favour into which he had been brought, and his acceptance, too, as mediator for Israel, he commences his intercession; and he prays that the Lord would go among them, and for the very reason that had led the Lord to say He would not dwell in their midst. (Cp. v. 3.) Moreover, he besought the forgiveness of their sin; and that He would take them for His inheritance. It is exceedingly beautiful to note, now that Moses has obtained the full place of an accepted mediator, how entirely he identifies himself with those whose cause he pleads. He says, "among us;" "our iniquity and our sin, and take us for Thine inheritance." This is a principle of the highest importance. It was exemplified perfectly in Him of whom Moses was but a type. And it will apply to every kind of intercession for the people of God. Indeed, whenever any of the Lord's servants have occupied the place of intercessors, this feature has been distinctly marked. (See Daniel 9; Nehemiah 1, etc.) So now. We can never have power with God on behalf of others, unless by grace we are enabled to enter into the condition of, and identify ourselves with, those whom we would bear on our hearts before the Lord. Moses was enabled to do this, and his prayer was accepted, and, in response, the Lord established a new covenant with the people.

"And He said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the Lord; for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee. Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: but ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: for thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice: and thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods. Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.

"The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt. All that openeth the matrix is Mine; and every firstling among thy cattle, whether ox or sheep, that is male. But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem him not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before Me empty. Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest. And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the

year's end. Thrice in the year shall all your men-children appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year. Thou shalt not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning. The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk. And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." vv. 10-28.)

The terms of this covenant are not new, though they are newly enjoined. Almost every one of them has been already under consideration. (See Ex. 13 and Ex. 23) A brief notice of their character will therefore suffice. The foundation of all is laid in what God would do for His people. (v. 10. ) Thereon He commands complete separation from the nations around, after they should have been put into possession of the land — separation from the people themselves, from their ways, and from their worship. They must worship the Lord alone; for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. (vv. 11 - 16.) But if, on the one hand, there must be separation from evil, there must be, on the other, separation to God. Hence the least of unleavened bread should be kept.<sup>19</sup> Seven days — a complete period, typical of their whole lives, they were to eat unleavened bread — the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (1 Cor. 5: 8.) They should, moreover, recognize God's claims both upon themselves and upon their cattle. "All that openeth the matrix is mine." (v. 19.) Thereon follows a remarkable provision — that both the firstling of an ass, and the firstborn of their sons, should be redeemed. Man in nature is thus associated with the unclean (see Exodus 13: 13) — teaching both his lost condition as born into this world, and his need of redemption, as well as his doom if unredeemed. The sabbath, the feasts of Pentecost and of Tabernacles, are again commanded — with the provision that three times in the year "all your men-children appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel."<sup>20</sup>

"After the tenor of these words," the Lord made a covenant with Moses and with Israel. (v. 27.) The words "with thee" are significant. It shows how that the place of Israel had been made dependent upon the mediator, and indicates consequently the position into which Moses had been brought. For the second time he had been forty days and forty nights — in a state above nature — in the presence of God. He did neither eat bread, nor drink water. God thus sustained His servant in His own presence, and enabled him to listen to His voice and receive His words. In fine, he received once again two tables of testimony on which God had written the ten commandments, and descending from the mount, returned to the people.

Such was the covenant into which God in grace entered with His people after their failure and apostasy. "It is important to remark that Israel never entered the land under

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<sup>19</sup> See Ex. 13 for the exposition of this feast.

<sup>20</sup> These statutes have been considered in Ex. 23: 14-19.

the Sinai covenant, that is, under simple law (for all this passed under mount Sinai); it had been immediately broken. It is under the mediation of Moses that they were able to find the way of entering into it. However, they are placed again under the law, but the government of patience and grace is added to it." Israel had indeed forfeited everything, and become amenable to destruction, through the sin of the golden calf. They had lost thereby all title to blessing or the inheritance. The mediation of Moses availed, for governmental forgiveness, to restore them to their position as the people of God, and to secure for them the possession of the land. Moreover, God proclaimed the name of Jehovah — the revelation of His character in relation with Israel — and thereafter put them back under law. Israel therefore was never actually under the covenant of Sinai. It was broken before its terms — written on the tables of stone — reached the camp. The terms of the second covenant are indeed the same, but these were mingled with the grace and goodness and long-suffering which had been proclaimed in the name of Jehovah. In fact Israel, after their sin, were saved by grace through the intercession of Moses; and then they are put back under the law, with the additional elements named. Their position thenceforward was not unlike that of those believers who, not knowing the new place into which they are brought through the death and resurrection of Christ, put themselves under the law as the rule of their conduct and life. What wonder, then, if the path of both alike is marked by continual failure and transgression?

This section closes with a striking account of the effect on Moses of being in the presence of God on the mount.

"And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone: and they were afraid to come nigh him. And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them. And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him in mount Sinai. And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. But when Moses went in before the Lord, to speak with Him, he took the veil off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with Him." (vv. 29-35.)

There are three things in this description to be considered. First, the fact that the skin of the face of Moses shone as the consequence of being in the mount with God. brought, into the immediate presence of the glory of Jehovah, his face caught, and retained, some of the beams of that glory — though he "wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him." The contrast with our Lord on the mount of transfiguration cannot fail to be noted. He "was transfigured before them; and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." (Matt. 17: 2.) But this was the outshining of His own glory — a glory which transfused and irradiated His whole

body before the eyes of the disciples, so that He appeared to them as a Being of light. The glory that shone from the face of Moses was but external, the reflection of that of Jehovah, the effect of his communion with God. Moses, absorbed in the communications he was receiving, and in contemplation of the One whose words he heard, knew not that his face had become irradiated with light. No; the believer never knows the outward effect of his being alone with God. Others may see — they cannot fail to see; but he himself will be unconscious that he is reflecting the light of Him in whose presence he has been. For indeed it is ever true -

"The more Thy glory strikes mine eye,  
The humbler I shall lie."

But Aaron and all the children of Israel beheld the glory shining from the face of Moses; and this brings us to the second point; viz., the effect it produced on them. They were afraid to come nigh him; and hence, while Moses was talking with them, giving them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him in mount Sinai, he put a veil upon his face. It is this incident which the apostle Paul adduces to show the contrast between "the ministration of death," and "the ministration of the Spirit;" or "the ministration of condemnation," and "the ministration of righteousness;" i.e. between the dispensation of law, and the dispensation of grace. The face of Moses, it should be remarked, did not shine when he came down from Sinai the first time; not until his return from his successful mediation on behalf of the people on account of their sin. Why, then, were they afraid to come near him? Because the very glory that shone on his face searched their hearts and consciences — being what they were, sinners, and unable of themselves to meet even the smallest requirement of the covenant which had now been inaugurated. It was of necessity a "ministration" of condemnation and death, for it required a righteousness from them which they could not render, and, inasmuch as they must fail in rendering it, would pronounce their condemnation, and bring them under the penalty of transgression, which was death. The glory which they thus beheld upon the face of Moses was the expression to them of the holiness of God — that holiness which sought from them conformity to its own standards — and which would vindicate the breaches of that covenant which had now been established. They were therefore afraid, because they knew in their inmost souls that they could not stand before Him from whose presence Moses had come. But in the "ministration" of righteousness and of the Spirit all is changed. This requires no righteousness from man, but reveals God's righteousness as a divine gift in Christ to every believer, and seals its bestowal by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Instead therefore of fearing, we rejoice as we behold the glory in the face of Jesus Christ at the right hand of God; for every ray of that glory speaks of accomplished atonement, and of the complete putting away of our sins if we are believers. For He who was delivered for our offences has been raised again for our justification; He who Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree, has been raised by God Himself, and exalted at His own right hand. God has glorified Him in Himself. That is, He has come in, and raised up the One that bore our sins, went down into death under them, and in token of His satisfaction with His work, He has put Him in the glory, so that the glory of God now shines forth in the face of Jesus Christ. It is this fact that gives confidence to our souls, enables us to draw near in peace, because the very glory that we behold is the evidence to

us that all that was against us is cleared away. Hence, instead of putting a veil on His face, as Moses did, because the children of Israel were afraid to draw nigh, He is at God's right hand with unveiled face, and we delightedly contemplate the glory that is there displayed, and as we gaze we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Cor. 3, 4) The effect therefore on the children of Israel of the glory in the face of Moses forms a perfect contrast to that produced upon the believer as he beholds the glory of the Lord. It is quite true that Israel was no longer under pure law, that goodness and grace had now been mingled with it; but this very fact would make their sin the more heinous if they broke the covenant a second time. In that case, it would not only be sin against righteousness, but also against the goodness and grace which had spared them, and restored them to relationship with God. This enhances, instead of diminishing the contrast, and should lead out our hearts in adoring gratitude in that we are brought into such a place — a place where we behold, with unveiled face, the glory of the Lord — knowing by the very fact of the glory we behold that our sins are gone from the sight of God for ever.

The last action must also be noted. When Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him he took the veil off, until he came out. (v. 34.) He unveils his face to speak to the Lord, while he covers his face to speak to the people. In this respect he becomes rather a type of the present position of the believer, to which reference has already been made. Moses was brought into the very presence of God without a veil, even as the believer is set down in the light as He is in the light. There is still the difference already noted. However intimate the access Moses enjoyed, it was as Jehovah that God spake with him; but the believer is before God according to all that God is, according to that full and perfect revelation of Himself which He has made in Christ as our God and Father. While, moreover, Moses was permitted thus to come before Jehovah to commune with Him, the believer is brought into God's presence as his abiding position. He is ever before God in Christ.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### DEVOTEDNESS AND OBEDIENCE.

EXODUS xxxv - xl.

WE have now reached the concluding section of the book. Ex. 32 - 34 are parenthetical. The beginning of chapter 35 is consequently a continuation of Ex. 31; but if a continuation, it is only of God's grace. Had He dealt with Israel for their sin, according to the terms of the covenant into which they had voluntarily entered, their history as a nation, and the narrative of God's dealings with them, would have terminated after chapter 31. But we have seen how, notwithstanding their grievous fall, they were spared through the Lord's tender mercy at the mediation and intercession of Moses, and were brought back again into relationship with Himself as His people. Having therefore propounded the terms of His second covenant, He is free in grace to continue His presence with them, and hence we find, in these closing chapters, the actual execution of the commands Moses had received in the mount concerning the erection of the Tabernacle. But, as preparatory to this, the Sabbath is again enjoined.

"And Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said unto them, These are the words which the Lord hath commanded, that ye should do them. Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the Lord: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day." (Ex. 35: 1-3.)

The Lord, as has been stated before, always reminds the people of the end and object of all His ways with them; viz., entering into His rest. This was the end proposed, however impossible it became for them to attain it because of their unbelief. Hence the Sabbath is found again in this place, as it always is whenever any new relationship is formed between God and the people. It becomes thus a kind of preface to the account of the construction of the sanctuary.

Moses thereon makes proclamation of the Lord's desire to receive an offering from His people — an offering of the several materials needed for the making of the Tabernacle. (vv. 5-19) God would have His people to enter into His own thoughts and desires for their blessing, and He permits them in His grace and mercy to bring these materials as an offering. He directs what they should bring, although everything they possessed was His own gift (see 1 Chr. 29: 14), and then He would reckon it as their offering. It is ever so. Believers cannot do a single good thing of themselves. Every good work is the product of the Spirit of God, and prepared before of God Eph. 2: 10), and yet when done, God in His grace calls it theirs, and clothes them with the fine linen which is the righteousnesses of saints.

The willingness of God to receive from His people is thus proclaimed. The grace of God in this particular touched and opened their hearts; "and they came, every one whose

heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments." (v. 21.) And again we read, "The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord, every man and woman; whose heart made them willing to bring, for all manner of work which the Lord had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses." (v. 29.) There are principles involved in these statements which are applicable to all dispensations. The apostle Paul enforces the same when he says, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Cor. 9: 7; read the whole chapter.) It is therefore of the first importance to remember that everything offered to God must proceed from hearts made willing by His Spirit, that it must be spontaneous, not the result of persuasion or of external pressure, but from the heart. The church of God would have been in a very different state today if this had been remembered. What has wrought more ruin than the many worldly schemes for raising money? and what more humbling than the fact that solicitations of all kinds are used to induce the Lord's people to offer their gifts? Moses was content with announcing that the Lord was willing to receive, and he left this gracious communication to produce its suited effect upon the hearts of the children of Israel. He needed not to do more; and if saints now were in the current of God's thoughts they would imitate the example of Moses, and would shun the very thought of obtaining even the smallest gift, except it were presented willingly, and from the heart, as the effect of the working of the Spirit of God. And let it be remarked, that there was no lack; for in the next chapter we find that the wise men who wrought came to Moses and said, "The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much." (Ex. 36: 5-7.) If the first Pentecostal days be excepted, there has probably never been seen anything answering, to this even in the history of the church. The chronic complaint now is concerning the insufficiency of means to carry on the Lord's work. But it cannot be too often recalled — first, that the church of God is never held responsible to obtain means; secondly, that if the Lord gives work to do, He Himself will lay it upon the hearts of His people to contribute what is necessary; thirdly, that we are travelling off the ground of dependence, and acting according, to our own thoughts, if we undertake anything for which the needful provision has not already been made; and lastly, that gifts procured by human means can seldom be used for blessing.

Moreover if liberality was the fruit of the action of the Spirit of God, so also was wisdom. Liberality provided the necessary materials, and wisdom used them according to the divine mind. The Lord filled Bezaleel with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; and He also put in his heart that he may teach, both he and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. (Ex. 35: 31-35.) The workmen were the gift of God, and the wisdom and understanding needed for their work proceeded also from Him through the action of His Spirit; and He also endowed them with the capacity to teach others; and there were thus associated with them "every wise-hearted man in whom the Lord put wisdom and

understanding, to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the Lord had commanded." (Ex. 36: 1.) We may surely behold in these workers the pattern of all true servants in every dispensation. They themselves called of God, as was pointed out in Exodus 31, all their activity was the fruit of the Spirit of God. They were not sufficient of themselves to think anything as of themselves, but their sufficiency was of God. (2 Cor. 3: 5.) Human skill, human wisdom or inventions, would but have marred the perfection of the divine design; and hence the workmen were to be but vessels — vessels for the display of divine wisdom and understanding and teaching. Well is it for the workman when he remembers that, like Bezaleel and Aholiab, he is but a vessel; for then it is that the Lord can use him to His own glory in the execution of His own mind and will.

Passing on to Exodus 39, we learn that all the work was done as the Lord had commanded Moses. The essence of all service is obedience, and the test of everything done is its conformity or otherwise with the revealed mind of God. The Lord had given certain directions to Moses, and had instructed His servants for the work; and, as a consequence, the only question concerning their work, when completed, was, Did it correspond in every particular with the pattern given? The Spirit of God has answered this question, affirming in this chapter no less than ten times, that the work was executed as the Lord commanded Moses. (vv. 1, 5, 7, 21, 26, 29, 31, 32, 42, 43.) They therefore met their responsibility towards God, and accordingly received His approval and commendation in this repeated and significant statement: that all their work was characterized by obedience. This affords the important principle that everything which claims to be of God must submit to be tested by God's word. The same principle is affirmed by our blessed Lord in His message to the seven churches. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." (Rev. 2: 11, etc.) And there was never more need than in this day for its application. It cannot be conceived that Moses would have accepted, much less the Lord, any single thing, however innocent, or even beautiful, in itself, that did not correspond with the pattern showed him in the mount. Why then should it be expected now, that believers should accept and endorse anything in connection with the church of God which does not answer to the Scriptures? No; everything must be unsparingly rejected, however enshrined in the affections, or commended by its hoar antiquity, which does not bear the stamp and the sanction of the word of God. For is it for one moment to be supposed that the Lord is less jealous concerning His church — the church which He loved, and for which He gave Himself — than concerning the Tabernacle? Or that He permits man's wisdom, and man's order, to be introduced in the one when He so entirely excluded it from the other? The supposition is monstrous. Let it never be forgotten therefore that the Lord measures everything, and hence that it is also our responsibility to measure everything, by His own word.

In the last chapter we have the actual erection of the Tabernacle, and the Lord taking possession of it as His dwelling-place in the midst of Israel. There are several points to be indicated. It will be observed, in the first place, that the Tabernacle was to be set up on the anniversary of their departure from Egypt (Ex. 12: 2) — on the first day of the first month. (Ex. 40: 2.) As their deliverance from the house of their bondage constituted the commencement of their spiritual history, so the dwelling of Jehovah in

their midst formed morally a new period of time. The two things are brought together in Christianity. When the soul is brought out from under condemnation, and apprehends peace with God, the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ, God seals it by the gift of His indwelling Spirit. The commencement of spiritual life — spiritual life known and enjoyed — and becoming a temple of the Holy Ghost coincide.

The order enjoined in the arrangement of the sacred vessels differs both from that found in the directions given in the mount, and from that of their construction. The ark of the testimony, after the setting up of the Tabernacle, is first put into its place — that which specially distinguished the Tabernacle as God's sanctuary, seeing that the ark was His throne on the earth. Then the ark was covered with the veil; i.e. shut off from view. This formed the holy of holies. The table of showbread, was next brought into the holy place — the next compartment to the most holy — and the bread was set in order upon it; afterwards, the candlestick of pure gold was put into its place, and the lamps lighted before the Lord; then, the altar of gold, the altar of incense, was put "before the veil," before the ark of the testimony, and incense was burnt thereon; and finally, the hanging was set up at the door of the Tabernacle. This completed the arrangement of the holy place. The altar of burnt-offering came next before the door of the Tabernacle of the tent of the congregation — and the burnt-offering and the meat-offering were offered upon it; then the laver was brought and set between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and water put therein, and Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat, etc. (vv. 30, 31.) Thereupon the court round about the Tabernacle and the altar were reared up, and the hanging of the court-gate put in its place — and this completed the Tabernacle with all its arrangements. Moreover the Tabernacle was to be anointed with the anointing oil, and all that was therein, and hallowed with all the vessels thereof. It was to be holy. So also with the altar of burnt-offering — with all its vessels — that the altar might be sanctified. It was to be an altar most holy. The laver and its foot were also to be anointed to be sanctified. Lastly, Aaron and his sons were to be consecrated and robed, that they might minister unto the Lord in the priest's office; "for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations." (vv. 9-15.)

As in the case of Bezaleel and Aholiab, together with their co-workers, so with Moses, the Spirit of God set His seal of commendation upon the manner in which he performed the work entrusted to him. And what is the meed of praise which He bestows? It is that everything was done in obedience — "as the Lord commanded Moses." Eight times it is repeated that everything was done according to the instructions he had received. (vv. 16, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32.) Again, therefore, we learn the value of obedience in the eyes of the Lord. As Samuel said to Saul, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." As indeed our blessed Lord Himself said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." (John 14) If obedience be wanting, whatever there may be of real devotedness and zeal, no service offered can be acceptable to God. And it is precisely here that so many Christians fail. There never was a time of greater energy and activity, nor when larger crowds gather together professedly for worship; but when these things are measured by the test which is supplied in the words, "as the Lord commanded Moses," then it is discovered that man's will, and not the Lord's, is often the paramount spring of all. Observe, again, what has been enforced more than once, that this

commendation is given to Moses by the Spirit concerning his action in respect of God's house. The church is now the house of God — the habitation of God through the Spirit. Eph. 2: 22.) If therefore it was above all necessary that Moses should strictly and carefully carry out the instructions he had received concerning the Tabernacle, it is equally important that the word of God should be our only guide in all matters affecting the church. We find accordingly that, in the message which the risen Lord sent to the church at Philadelphia, the fact that they had kept His word was a special ground of His approval. (Rev. 3: 8.) No higher praise could be bestowed. "So Moses finished the work" — finished all in obedience to the word of the Lord.

Finally, the Lord takes possession of the sanctuary which had been made that He might dwell among them. The connection is most significant. "So Moses finished the work. *Then* a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." (vv. 34, 35.) It was not only Jehovah's public endorsement of the work which had been executed, but it was also His taking possession of His house in the sight of all Israel; for the cloud, the symbol of His presence, covered the tent of the congregation without, and His glory filled the Tabernacle within. It was so — in a still more striking way — when the temple was built. "It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." (2 Chr. 5: 13, 14.) Both alike are surely typical of that Pentecostal scene recorded in the Acts: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2: 1-4.) Here the two things are combined. The house of God was formed and filled by the descent of the Holy Ghost. In both cases, however, it was God taking possession of the house already made for Him; for from this time all the believers, who together composed the habitation of God through the Spirit, became also severally His temple, because indwelt by the Holy Ghost. We have already spoken on the significance of God's dwelling-place on earth (chapter 25: 8); and we then pointed out that His house in every dispensation points onward to the eternal state when the tabernacle of God will be with men, and His glory will fill the whole scene. (Rev. 21)

Moreover, the cloud of Jehovah's presence became also the guide of His people through the wilderness. "The cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys." (v. 38; see also Num. 9) They needed only therefore to keep their eyes upon the cloud; for "when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not

till the day that it was taken up." (vv. 36, 37.) The Lord thus undertook for His people. He had visited them in their affliction in Egypt; He had brought them out with a high hand and an outstretched arm; and had led them forth through the Red Sea into the wilderness. But He Himself would lead them "by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation." "Happy," we might also exclaim, "is that people that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord." For surely there was nothing now wanting to the blessing of Israel. Jehovah was in their midst. The cloud of His presence rested upon, and His glory filled, the Tabernacle. It was indeed a brief period of unmingled blessing — the accomplishment of God's own desires in surrounding Himself with His redeemed people. How soon this bright and beautiful scene was marred is related in other books; but the very fact that Exodus thus ends is prophetic of the time when "the tabernacle of God" shall be "with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, their God. And 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." (Rev. 21: 3, 4.)