

## **Exodus 15 - 40**, Section 2 of 2.

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### **Exodus 15**

This chapter opens with Israel's magnificent song of triumph on the shore of the Red Sea, when they had seen "that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians." They had seen God's salvation, and they, therefore, sing His praise and recount His mighty acts. "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord." Up to this moment, we have not heard so much as a single note of praise. We have heard their cry of deep sorrow, as they toiled amid the brick-kilns of Egypt; we have hearkened to their cry of unbelief, when surrounded by what they deemed insuperable difficulties; but, until now, we have heard no song of praise. It was not until, as a saved people, they found themselves surrounded by the fruits of God's salvation, that the triumphal hymn burst forth from the whole redeemed assembly. It was when they emerged from their significant baptism "in the cloud and in the sea," and were able to gaze upon the rich spoils of victory, which lay scattered around them, that six hundred thousand voices were heard chanting the song of victory. The waters of the Red Sea rolled between them and Egypt, and they stood on the shore as a fully delivered people, and, therefore, they were able to praise Jehovah.

In this, as in everything else, they were our types. We, too, must know ourselves as saved, in the power of death and resurrection, before ever we can present clear and intelligent worship. There will always be reserve and hesitancy in the soul, proceeding, no doubt, from positive inability to enter into the accomplished redemption which is in Christ Jesus. There may be the acknowledgement of the fact that there is salvation in Christ, and in none other; but this is a very different thing from apprehending, by faith, the true character and ground of that salvation, and realising it as ours. The Spirit of God reveals, with unmistakable clearness, in the Word, that the Church is united to Christ in death and resurrection; and, moreover, that a risen Christ, at God's right hand, is the measure and pledge of the Church's acceptance. When this is believed, it conducts the soul entirely beyond the region of doubt and uncertainty. How can the Christian doubt when he knows that he is continually represented before the throne of God by an Advocate, even "Jesus Christ the righteous?" It is the privilege of the very feeblest member of the Church of God to know that he was represented by Christ on the cross; that *all* his sins were confessed, borne, judged, and atoned for there. This is a divine reality, and, when laid hold of by faith, must give peace. But nothing short of it ever can give peace. There may be earnest, anxious, and most sincere desires after God. There may be the most pious and devout attendance upon all the ordinances, offices, and forms of religion. But there is no other possible way in which to get the sense of sin entirely removed from the conscience, but seeing it judged in the Person of Christ, as a sin-offering on the cursed tree. If it was judged there, once for all, it is now by the believer to be regarded as a divinely and, therefore, eternally-settled question. And that it was so judged is proved by the resurrection of the Surety. "I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it that men should fear before him." (Ecc. 3: 14)

However, while it is generally admitted that all this is, true in reference to the Church collectively, many find considerable difficulty in making a personal application thereof. They are ready to say, with the psalmist, "Truly, God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. *But as for me,*" &c. (Ps. 73: 1, 2) They are looking at themselves instead of at Christ, in death, and Christ, in resurrection. They are occupied rather with their appropriation of Christ than with Christ Himself. They

are thinking of their capacity rather than their title. Thus they are kept in a state of the most distressing uncertainty; and, as a consequence, they are never able to take the place of happy, intelligent worshippers. They are praying for salvation instead of rejoicing in the conscious possession of it. They are looking at their imperfect fruits instead of Christ's perfect atonement.

Now, in looking through the various notes of this song, in Exodus 15, we do not find a single note about *self*, its doings, its sayings, its feelings, or its fruits. It is all about Jehovah from beginning to end. It begins with, "I will sing unto the Lord, for *he* hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath *he* thrown into the sea." This is a specimen of the entire song. It is a simple record of the attributes and actings of Jehovah. In Ex. 14 the hearts of the people had, as it were, been pent up, by the excessive pressure of their circumstances: but in Ex. 15 the pressure is removed, and their hearts find full vent in a sweet song of praise. Self is forgotten. Circumstances are lost sight of. One object, and but one, fills their vision, and that object is the Lord Himself in His character and ways. They were able to say, "Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work; I will triumph in the works of thy hands." (Ps. 92: 4) This is true worship. It is when poor worthless self, with all its belongings, is lost sight of, and Christ alone fills the heart, that we present proper worship. There is no need for the efforts of a fleshly pietism to awaken in the soul feelings of devotion. Nor is there any demand whatever for the adventitious appliances of religion, so called, to kindle in the soul the flame of acceptable worship. Oh! no; let but the heart be occupied with the Person of Christ, and "songs of praise" will be the natural result. It is impossible for the eye to rest on Him and the spirit not be bowed in holy worship. If we contemplate the worship of the hosts which surround the throne of God and the Lamb, we shall find that it is ever evoked by the presentation of some special feature of divine excellence or divine acting. Thus should it be with the Church on earth; and when it is not so, it is because we allow things to intrude upon us which have no place in the regions of unclouded light and unalloyed blessedness. In all true worship, God Himself is at once the object of worship, the subject of worship, and the power of worship.

Hence Exodus 15 is a fine specimen of a song of praise. It is the language of a redeemed people celebrating the worthy praise of Him who had redeemed them. "The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my fathers God, and I will exalt him. The Lord is a man of war, the Lord is his name, . . . thy right hand, O Lord is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy ....who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? . . . 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 Lord shall reign for ever and ever." How comprehensive is the range of this song. It begins with redemption and ends with the glory. It begins with the cross, and ends with the kingdom. It is like a beautiful rainbow, of which one end dips in "the sufferings," and the other in "the glory which should follow." It is all about Jehovah. It is an outpouring of soul produced by a view of God and His gracious and glorious actings.

Moreover, it does not stop short of the actual accomplishment of the divine purpose; as we read, "Thou *hast guided* them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation." The people were able to say this, though they had but just planted their foot on the margin of the desert. It was not the expression of a vague hope. It was not feeding upon poor blind chance. Oh! no; when the soul is wholly occupied with God, it is enabled to launch out into all the fullness of His grace, to bask in the sunshine of His countenance, and delight itself in the rich abundance of His mercy and loving-kindness. There is not a cloud upon the prospect, when the believing soul, taking its stand upon the eternal rock on which redeeming love has set it in association with a risen Christ, looks up into the spacious vault of God's infinite plans and purposes, and dwells upon the effulgence of that glory which God has prepared for

all those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

This will account for the peculiarly brilliant, elevated, and unqualified character of all those bursts of praise which we find throughout sacred Scripture, The creature is set aside; God is the object. He fills the entire sphere of the soul's vision. There is nothing of man, his feelings, or his experiences, and, therefore, the stream of praise flows copiously and uninterruptedly forth. How different is this from some of the hymns which we so often hear sung in Christian assemblies, so full of our failings, our feebleness, our shortcomings. The fact is, we can never sing with real, spiritual intelligence and power when we are looking at ourselves. We shall ever be discovering something within which will act as a drawback to our worship. Indeed, with many, it seems to be accounted a Christian grace to be in a continual state of doubt and hesitation; and, as a consequence, their hymns are quite in character with their condition. Such persons, however sincere and pious, have never yet, in the actual experience of their souls, entered upon the proper ground of worship. They have not yet got done with themselves. They have not passed through the sea; and, as a spiritually baptised people, taken their stand on the shore, in the power of resurrection. They are still, in some way or another, occupied with self. They do not regard self as a crucified thing, with which God is for ever done.

May the Holy Ghost lead all God's people into fuller, clearer, and worthier apprehensions of their place and privilege as those who, being washed from their sins in the blood of Christ, are presented before God in all that infinite and unclouded acceptance in which He stands, as the risen and glorified Head of His Church. Doubts and fears do not become them, for their divine Surety has not left a shadow of a foundation on which to build a doubt or a fear. Their place is within the veil. They "have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." (Heb. 10: 19) Are there any doubts or fears in the holiest? Is it not evident that a doubting spirit virtually calls in question the perfectness of Christ's work — a work which has been attested, in the view of all created intelligence, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead? That blessed one could not have left the tomb unless all ground of doubting and fearing had been perfectly removed on behalf of His people. Wherefore, it is the Christians sweet privilege ever to triumph in a full salvation. The Lord Himself has become his salvation; and he has only to enjoy the fruits of that which God has wrought for him, and to walk to His praise while waiting for that time, when "Jehovah shall reign for ever and ever."

But there is one note in this song, to which I shall just invite my reader's attention. "He is my God and I will prepare him an habitation." It is worthy of note that when the heart was full to overflowing with the joy of redemption, it gives expression to its devoted purpose in reference to "a habitation for God." Let the Christian reader ponder this. God dwelling with man is a grand thought pervading Scripture from Exodus 15 to Revelation. Hearken to the following utterance of a devoted heart: "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: 3-5) Again, "For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." (Ps. 49: 9; John 2: 17.) I do not attempt to pursue this subject here; but I would fain awaken such an interest concerning it in the breast of my reader, as shall lead him to pursue it, prayerfully, for himself, from the earliest notice of it in the Word until he arrives at that soul-stirring announcement, "Behold 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. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Rev. 21: 3, 4)

"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." (ver. 22) It is when we get into wilderness experience, that we are put to the test as to the real measure of our acquaintance with God and with our own hearts. There is a freshness and an exuberance of joy connected with the opening of our Christian

career, which very soon receives a check from the keen blast of the desert; and then, unless there is a deep sense of what God is to us, above and beyond everything else, we are apt to break down, and, "in our hearts, turn back again into Egypt." The discipline of the wilderness is needful, not to furnish us with a title to Canaan, but to make us acquainted with God and with our own hearts; to enable us to enter into the power of our relationship, and to enlarge our capacity for the enjoyment of Canaan when we actually get there. (See Deut. 8: 2-5.)

The greenness, freshness, and luxuriance of spring have peculiar charms, which will pass away before the scorching heat of summer; but then, with proper care, that very heat which removes the fair traces of spring, produces the mellowed and matured fruits of autumn. Thus it is also in the Christian life; for there is, as we know, a striking and deeply instructive analogy between the principles which obtain in the kingdom of nature and those which characterise the kingdom of grace, seeing it is the same God whose handiwork meets our view in both.

There are three distinct positions in which we may contemplate Israel, namely, in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan. In all these, they are "our types;" but we are in all three together. This may seem paradoxical, but it is true. As a matter of actual fact, we are in Egypt, surrounded by natural things, which are entirely adapted to the natural heart. But, inasmuch as we have been called by God's grace into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ, we, according to the affections and desires of the new nature, necessarily find our place outside of all that which belongs to Egypt, (i.e., the world in its natural state),\* and this causes us to taste of wilderness experience, or, in other words, it places us, as a matter of experience, in the wilderness. The divine nature earnestly breathes after a different order of things — after a purer atmosphere than that with which we find ourselves surrounded, and thus it causes us to feel Egypt to be a moral desert.

{\*There is a wide moral difference between Egypt and Babylon, which it is important to understand. Egypt was that out of which Israel came; Babylon was that into which they were afterwards carried. (Comp. Amos 5: 25-27 with Acts 7: 42, 43) Egypt expresses what man has made of the world; Babylon expresses what Satan has made, is making, or will make, of the professing Church. Hence, we are not only surrounded with the *circumstances* of Egypt, but also by the moral *principles* of Babylon.

This renders our "days" what the Holy Ghost has termed "perilous." (*calepoi* — "difficult".) It demands a special energy of the Spirit of God, and complete subjection to the authority of the Word, to enable one to meet the combined influence of the realities of Egypt and the spirit and principles of Babylon. The former meet the natural desires of the heart; while the latter connect themselves with, and address themselves to, the *religiousness* of nature, which gives them a peculiar hold upon the heart. Man is a religious being, and peculiarly susceptible of the influences which arise from music, sculpture, painting, and pompous rites and ceremonies. When these things stand connected with the full supply of all his natural wants — yes, with all the ease and luxury of life, nothing but the mighty power of God's Word and Spirit can keep one true to Christ.

We should also remark that there is a vast difference between the destinies of Egypt and those of Babylon. Isaiah 19 sets before us the blessing that are in store for Egypt. It concludes thus: "And the Lord shall smite Egypt; he shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even unto the Lord, and he shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them. . . . in that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the Lord of Hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance."(ver. 22-25)

Very different is the close of Babylon's history, whether viewed as a literal city or a spiritual

system. "I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water; and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts." (Isaiah 14: 23) "It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation." (Isaiah 13: 20) So much for Babylon literally; and looking at it from a mystic or spiritual point of view, we read its destiny in Revelation 18. The entire chapter is a description of Babylon, and it concludes thus: " A strong angel took up a stone, like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, "Thus, with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." (Verse 21)

With what immense solemnity should those words fall upon the ears of all who are in any wise connected with Babylon — that is to say, with the false, professing church. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues!" (Rev. 18: 5) The "power" of the Holy Ghost will necessarily produce, or express itself in a certain " form, and the enemy's aim has ever been to rob the professing church of the power, while he leads her to cling to, and perpetuate the form — to stereotype the form when all the spirit and life has passed away. Thus he builds the spiritual Babylon. The stones of which this city is built are lifeless professors; and the slime or mortar which binds these stones together is a, form of godliness without the power."

Oh my beloved reader, let us see to it that we fully, clearly and influentially understand these things. }

But then, inasmuch as we are, in God's view, eternally associated with Him who is passed right through into the heavenlies, and taken His seat there in triumph and majesty, it is our happy privilege to know ourselves, by faith, as "sitting together with him" there. (Eph. 2) So that although we are, as to our bodies, in Egypt, we are, as to our experience, in the wilderness, while at the same time, faith conducts us, in spirit, into Canaan, and enables us to feed upon "the old corn of the land," i.e., upon Christ, not as One come down to earth merely, but as One gone back to heaven and seated there in glory.

The concluding verses of this 15th chapter show us Israel in the wilderness. Up to this point it seemed to them to be all fair sailing. Heavy judgements poured upon Egypt, but Israel perfectly exempt — the army of Egypt dead upon the sea shore, but Israel in triumph. All this was well enough; but alas! the aspect of things speedily changed. The notes of praise were soon exchanged for the accents of discontent. "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?" Again, "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."

Here were the trials of the wilderness. What shall we eat?" and "What shall we drink?" The waters of Marah tested the heart of Israel and developed their murmuring spirit; but the Lord showed them that there was no bitterness which He could not sweeten with the provision of His own grace. "And the Lord showed them 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." Beautiful figure this of Him who was, in infinite grace, cast into the bitter waters of death, in order that those waters might yield nought but sweetness to us for ever. We can truly say, "the bitterness of death is past," and nothing remains for us but the eternal sweets of resurrection.

Verse 26 sets before us the momentous character of this first stage of Gods redeemed in the

wilderness. We are in great danger, at this point, of falling into a fretful, impatient, murmuring spirit. The only remedy for this is to keep the eye steadily fixed on Jesus — "looking unto Jesus." He, blessed be His name, ever unfolds himself according to the need of His people; and they, instead of complaining of their circumstances, should only make their circumstances an occasion of drawing afresh upon Him. Thus it is that the wilderness ministers to our experience of what God is. It is a school in which we learn His patient grace and ample resources. "Forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness." (Acts 13: 18) The spiritual mind will ever own that it is worth having bitter waters for God to sweeten. "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Rom. 5: 3-5)

However, the wilderness has its Elims as well as its Marahs; its wells and palm trees, as well as its bitter waters. "And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped thereby the waters." (Ver. 27) The Lord graciously and tenderly provides green spots in the desert for His journeying people; and though they are, at best, but oases, yet are they refreshing to the spirit and encouraging to the heart. The sojourn at Elim was eminently calculated to soothe the hearts of the people, and hush their murmurings. The grateful shade of its palm trees, and the refreshing of its wells, came in, sweetly and seasonably, after the trial of Marah, and significantly set forth, in our view, the precious virtues of that spiritual ministry which God provides for his people down here. "The twelve and "the seventy " are numbers intimately associated with ministry.

But Elim was not Canaan. Its wells and palm trees were but foretastes of that happy land which lay beyond the bounds of the sterile desert on which the redeemed had just entered. It furnished refreshment, no doubt, but it was wilderness refreshment. It was but for passing moment, designed, in grace, to encourage their depressed spirits, and nerve them for their onward march to Canaan. Thus it is as we know, with ministry in the Church. It is a gracious provision for our need, designed to refresh, strengthen, and encourage our hearts, "until we all come to the fullness of the measure of the stature of Christ." (Eph. 4)

### **Exodus 16**

"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 departure out of the land of Egypt." (Chap. 16: 1) Here we find Israel in a very marked and interesting position. It is still the wilderness, no doubt, but it is a most important and significant stage thereof, namely, "between Elim and Sinai." The former was the place where they had so recently experienced the refreshing springs of divine ministry; the latter was the place where they entirely got off the ground of free and sovereign grace, and placed themselves under a covenant of works. These facts render "the wilderness of Sin" a singularly interesting portion of Israel's journey. Its features and influences are as strongly marked as those of any point in their whole career. They are here seen as the subjects of the same grace which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, and, therefore, all their murmurings are instantly met by divine supplies. When God acts in the display of His grace, there is no hindrance. The streams of blessing which emanate from Him, flow onward without interruption. It is only when man puts himself under law that he forfeits everything; for then God must allow him to prove how much he can claim on the ground of his own works.

When God visited and redeemed His people, and brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, it assuredly was not for the purpose of suffering them to die of hunger and thirst in the wilderness. They

should have known this. They ought to have trusted Him, and walked in the confidence of that love which had so gloriously delivered them from the horrors of Egyptian bondage. They should have remembered that it was infinitely better to be in the desert with God, than in the brick-kilns with Pharaoh. But no; the human heart finds it immensely difficult to give God credit for pure and perfect love. It has far more confidence in Satan than God. Look, for a moment, at all the sorrow and suffering, the misery and degradation which man has endured by reason of his having hearkened to the voice of Satan, and yet he never gives utterance to a word of complaint of his service, or of desire to escape from under his hand. He is not discontented with Satan, or weary of serving him. Again and again, he reaps bitter fruits in those fields which Satan has thrown open to him; and yet, again and again, he may be seen sowing the self-same seed, and undergoing the self-same labours.

How different it is in reference to God! When we have set out to walk in His ways, we are ready, at the earliest appearance of pressure or trial, to murmur and rebel. Indeed, there is nothing in which we so signally fail as in the cultivation of a confiding and thankful spirit. Ten thousand mercies are forgotten in the presence of one single trying privation. We have been frankly forgiven all our sins, "accepted in the Beloved," made heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, the expectants of eternal glory; and, in addition to all, our path through the desert is strewn with countless mercies; and yet let but a cloud, the size of a man's hand, appear on the horizon, and we at once forget the rich mercies of the past in view of this single cloud, which, after all, may only "break in blessings on our head." The thought of this should humble us deeply in the presence of God. How unlike we are in this, as in every other respect, to our blessed Exemplar! Look at Him — the true Israel in the wilderness — surrounded by wild beasts, and fasting for forty days. How did He carry Himself? Did He murmur? Did He complain of His lot? Did He wish Himself in other circumstances? Ah! no. God was the portion of His cup and the lot of His inheritance. (Ps. 16) And, therefore, when the tempter approached and offered Him the necessaries, the glories, the distinctions, and the honours of this life, He refused them all, and tenaciously held fast the position of absolute dependence upon God and implicit obedience to His word. He would only take bread from God and glory from Him likewise.

Very different was it with Israel after the flesh! No sooner did they feel the pressure of hunger than "they murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness." They seemed to have actually lost the sense of having been delivered by the hand of Jehovah, for they said, "Ye have brought us forth into this wilderness." And, again, in Ex. 17, "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?" Thus did they, on every occasion, evince a fretful, murmuring spirit, and prove how little they realised the presence and the hand of their Almighty and infinitely gracious Deliverer.

Now, nothing is more dishonouring to God than the manifestation of a complaining spirit on the part of those that belong to Him. The apostle gives it as a special mark of Gentile corruption that, "when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, *neither were thankful.*" Then follows the practical result of this unthankful spirit. "They became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." (Rom. 1: 2) The heart that ceases to retain a thankful sense of God's goodness will speedily become "dark." Thus Israel lost the sense of being in God's hands; and this led, as might be expected, to still thicker darkness, for we find them, further on in their history, saying, "Wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land, *to fall by the sword*, that our wives and our children shall be a prey?" (Num. 14: 3) Such is the line along which a soul out of communion will travel. It first loses the sense of being in God's hands for good, and, finally, begins to deem itself in His hands for evil.

Melancholy progress this! However, the people being so far the subjects of grace, are provided for; and our chapter furnishes the marvellous account of this provision. "Then said the Lord unto

Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you." They, when enveloped in the chilling cloud of their unbelief, had said, "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." But now the word is, "bread from heaven." Blessed contrast! How amazing the difference between the Flesh-pots, the leeks, onions, and garlic of Egypt, and this heavenly manna — "angels' food!" The former belonged to earth, the latter to heaven.

But, then, this heavenly food was, of necessity, a test of Israel's condition, as we read, "That I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law or no." It needed a heart weaned from Egypt's influences, to be satisfied with, or enjoy "bread from heaven." In point of fact, we know that the people were not satisfied with it, but despised it, pronounced it "light food," and lusted for flesh. Thus they proved how little their hearts were delivered from Egypt, or disposed to walk in God's law. "In their hearts they turned back again into Egypt." (Acts 7: 39) But, instead of getting back thither, they were, ultimately, carried away beyond Babylon. (Acts 7: 43) This is a solemn and salutary lesson for Christians. If those who are redeemed from this present world, do not walk with God in thankfulness of heart, satisfied with His provision for the redeemed in the wilderness, they are in danger of falling into the snare of Babylonish influence. This is a serious consideration. It demands a heavenly taste to feed on bread from heaven. Nature cannot relish such food. It will ever yearn after Egypt, and, therefore, it must be kept down. It is our privilege, as those who have been baptised into Christ's death, and "risen again through the faith of the operation of God," to feed upon Christ as "the bread of life which came down from heaven." This is our wilderness food — Christ as ministered by the Holy Ghost, through the written word; while, for our spiritual refreshment, the Holy Ghost has come down, as the precious fruit of the smitten Rock — Christ, as smitten for us. Such is our rare portion, in this desert world.

Now, it is obvious that, in order to enjoy such a portion as this, our hearts must be weaned from everything in this present evil world — from all that would address itself to us as natural men — as men alive in the flesh. A worldly heart — a carnal mind, would neither find Christ in the Word, nor enjoy Him if found. The manna was so pure and delicate that it could not bear contact with earth. It fell upon the dew, (see Num. 11: 9) and had to be gathered ere the sun was up. Each one, therefore, had to rise early and seek his daily portion. So it is with the people of God now. The heavenly manna must be gathered fresh every morning. Yesterdays manna will not do for today, nor today's for tomorrow. We must feed upon Christ every day, with fresh energy of the Spirit, else we shall cease to grow. Moreover, we must make Christ our primary object. We must seek Him "early," before "other things" have had time to take possession of our poor susceptible hearts. Many of us, alas! fail in this. We give Christ a secondary place, and the consequence is, we are left feeble and barren. The enemy, ever watchful, takes advantage of our excessive spiritual indolence to rob us of the blessedness and strength which flow from feeding upon Christ. The new life in the believer can only be nourished and sustained by Christ. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." (John 6: 57)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the One who came down from heaven, to be His people's food is ineffably precious to the renewed soul; but, in order to enjoy Him thus, we need to realise ourselves, as in the wilderness, separated to God, in the power of accomplished redemption. If I am walking with God through the desert, I shall be satisfied with the food which He provides, and that is, Christ as come down from heaven. "The old corn of the land of Canaan" has its antitype in *Christ ascended up* on high, and seated in the glory. As such, He is the proper food of those who by faith, know themselves as raised up together and seated together with Him in the heavenlies. But the manna, that is, *Christ as come down* from heaven, is for the people of God, in their wilderness life and



experience. As a people journeying down here, we need a Christ who also journeyed down here; as a people seated in spirit up there, we have a Christ who is seated up there. This may help to explain the difference between the manna and the old corn of the land. It is not a question of redemption; that we have in the blood of the cross, and there alone. It is simply the provision which God has made for His people, according to their varied attitudes, whether as actually toiling in the desert, or in spirit taking possession of the heavenly inheritance.

What a striking picture is presented by Israel in the wilderness! Egypt was behind them, Canaan before them, and the sand of the desert around them; while they themselves were called to look up to heaven for their daily supply. The wilderness afforded not one blade of grass nor one drop of water for the Israel of God. In Jehovah alone was their portion. Most touching illustration of God's pilgrim people in this wilderness world! They have nothing here. Their life, being heavenly, can only be sustained by heavenly things. Though *in* the world, they are not *of* it, for Christ has chosen them out of it. As a heaven-born people, they are on their way to their birth-place, and sustained by food sent from thence. Theirs is an upward and an onward course. The glory leads *only* thus. It is utterly vain to cast the eye backward in the direction of Egypt; not a ray of the glory can there be discerned. "They looked *toward the wilderness*, and behold the glory of the Lord appeared in the clouds." Jehovah's chariot was in the wilderness, and all who desired companionship with Him should be there likewise; and, if there, the heavenly manna should be their food, and that alone.

True, this manna was strange sustenance, such as an Egyptian could never understand, appreciate, or live upon; but those who had been "baptised in the cloud and in the sea," could, if walking in consistency with that significant baptism, enjoy and be nourished by it. Thus is it now in the case of the true believer. The worldling cannot understand how he lives. Both his life and that which sustains it lie entirely beyond the range of nature's keenest vision. Christ is his life, and on Christ he lives. He feeds, by faith, upon the powerful attractions of one who, though being "God over all, blessed for ever," "took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." (Phil. 2: 7) He traces Him from the bosom of the Father to the cross, and from the cross to the throne, and finds Him, in every stage of His journey, and in every attitude of His life, to be most precious food for his new man. All around, though, in fact, Egypt, is morally a waste howling wilderness, affording nothing for the renewed mind; and, just in proportion as the Christian finds any material to feed upon, must his spiritual man be hindered in his progress. The only provision which God has made is the heavenly manna, and on this the true believer should ever feed.

It is truly deplorable to find Christians seeking after the things of this world. It proves, very distinctly, that they are "loathing" the heavenly manna, and esteeming it "light food." They are ministering to that which they ought to mortify. The activities of the new life will ever show themselves in connection with the subjugation of "the old man with his deeds;" and the more that is accomplished, the more will we desire to feed upon the "bread which strengthens man's heart." As in nature, the more we exercise, the better the appetite, so in grace, the more our renewed faculties are called into play, the more we feel the need of feeding, each day, upon Christ. It is one thing to know that we have life in Christ, together with full forgiveness and acceptance before God, and it is quite another to be in habitual communion with Him — feeding upon Him by faith — making Him the exclusive food of our souls. Very many profess to have found pardon and peace in Jesus, who, in reality, are feeding upon a variety of things which have no connection with Him. They feed their minds with the newspapers and the varied frivolous and vapid literature of the day. Will they find Christ there? Is it by such instrumentality that the Holy Ghost ministers Christ to the soul? Are these the pure dew-drops on which the heavenly manna descends for the sustenance of God's redeemed in the desert? Alas! no; they are the

gross materials in which the carnal mind delights. How then can a true Christian live upon such? We know, by the teaching of God's word, that he carries about with him two natures; and it may be asked, Which of the two is it that feeds upon the world's news and the world's literature? Is it the old or the new? There can be but the one reply. Well, then, which of the two am I desirous of cherishing? Assuredly my conduct will afford the truest answer to this enquiry. If I sincerely desire to grow in the divine Life — if my one grand object is to be assimilated and devoted to Christ — if I am earnestly breathing after an extension of God's kingdom within, I shall, without doubt, seek continually that character of nourishment which is designed of God to promote my spiritual growth. This is plain. A man's acts are always the truest index of his desires and purposes. Hence, if I find a professing Christian neglecting his Bible, yet finding abundance of time — yea, some of his choicest hours — for the newspaper, I can be at no loss to decide as to the true condition of his soul. I am sure he cannot be spiritual — cannot be feeding upon, living for, or witnessing to, Christ.

If an Israelite neglected to gather, in the freshness of the morning hour, his daily portion of the divinely appointed food, he would speedily have become lacking in strength for his journey. Thus is it with us. We must make Christ the paramount object of our souls' pursuit, else our spiritual life will inevitably decline. We cannot even feed upon feelings and experiences connected with Christ, for they, inasmuch as they are fluctuating, cannot form our spiritual nourishment. It was Christ yesterday, and it must be Christ today, and Christ for ever. Moreover, it will not do to feed partly on Christ and partly on other things. As, in the matter of *life*, it is Christ *alone*; so, in the matter of living, it must be Christ alone. As we cannot mingle anything with that which *imparts* life; so neither can we mingle anything with that which *sustains* it.

It is quite true that, in spirit, and by faith, we can, even now, feed upon a risen and gloried Christ, ascended up to heaven in virtue of accomplished redemption, as prefigured by "the old corn of the land." (See Joshua 5) And not only so, but we know that when God's redeemed shall have entered upon those fields of glory, rest, and immortality, which lie beyond the Jordan, they shall, in actual fact, be done with wilderness food; but they will not be done with Christ. nor with the remembrance of that which constitutes the specific nourishment of their desert life.

Israel were never to forget, amid the milk and honey of the land of Canaan, that which had sustained them during their forty years' sojourn in the wilderness. "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..... As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the testimony, to be kept." (Ver. 32) Most precious memorial of the faithfulness of God! He did not suffer them to die of hunger, as their foolish hearts had unbelievably anticipated. He rained bread from heaven for them, fed them with angels' food, watched over them with all the tenderness of a nurse, bore with them, carried them on eagles' wings; and, had they only continued on the proper ground of grace, He would have put them in eternal possession of all the promises made to their fathers. The pot of manna, therefore, containing, as it did, a man's daily portion, and laid up before the Lord, furnishes a volume of truth. There was no worm therein nor ought of taint. It was the record of Jehovah's faithfulness, in providing for those whom He had redeemed out of the hand of the enemy.

Not so, however, when man hoarded it up for himself. Then the symptoms of corruptibility soon made their appearance. We cannot, if entering into the truth and reality of our position, hoard up. It is our privilege, day by day, to enter into the preciousness of Christ, as the One who came down from heaven to give life unto the world. But if any, in forgetfulness of this, should be found hoarding up for tomorrow, that is, laying up truth beyond his present need, instead of turning it to profit in the way of

renewing strength it will surely become corrupt. This is a salutary lesson for us. It is a deeply solemn thing to learn truth; for there is not a principle which we profess to have learnt which we shall not have to prove practically. God will not have us theorists. One often trembles to hear persons make high professions and use expressions of intense devotedness, whether, in prayer or otherwise, lest, when the hour of trial comes, there may not be the needed spiritual power to carry out what the lips have uttered.

There is a great danger of the intellect's outstripping the conscience and the affections. Hence it is that so many seem, at first, to make such rapid progress up to a certain point; but there they stop short and appear to retrograde. Like an Israelite gathering up more manna than he required for one day's food. He might appear to be accumulating the heavenly food far more diligently than others; yet every particle beyond the day's supply was not only useless, but far worse than useless, inasmuch as it "bred worms." Thus is it with the Christian. He must use what he gets. He must feed upon Christ as a matter of actual need, and the need is brought out in actual service. The character and ways of God, the preciousness and beauty of Christ, and the living depths of the Word are only unfolded to faith and need. It is as we use what we receive that more will be given. The path of the believer is to be a practical one; and here it is that so many of us come short. It will often be found that those who get on most rapidly in theory are the slowest in the practical and experimental elements, because it is word a work of intellect than of heart and conscience. We should ever remember that Christianity is not a set of opinions, a system of dogmas, or a number of views. It is pre-eminently a living reality — a personal, practical, powerful thing, telling itself out in all the scenes and circumstances of daily life, shedding its hallowed influence over the entire character and course, and imparting its heavenly tone to every relationship which one may be called of God to fill. In a word, it is that which flows from being associated and occupied with Christ. This is Christianity. There may be clear views, correct notions, sound principles, without any fellowship with Jesus; but an orthodox creed without Christ will prove a cold, barren, dead thing.

Christian reader, see carefully to it that you are not only saved by Christ, but also living on Him. Make Him the daily portion of your soul. Seek Him "early," seek Him "only." When anything solicits your attention, ask the question, "Will this bring Christ to my heart! Will it unfold Him to my affections or draw me near to His Person?" If not, reject it at once: yes, reject it, though it present itself under the most specious appearance and with the most commanding authority. If your honest purpose be to get on in the divine life, to progress in spirituality, to cultivate personal acquaintance with Christ, then challenge your heart solemnly and faithfully as to this. Make Christ your habitual food. Go, gather the manna that falls on the dew-drops, and feed upon it with an appetite sharpened by a diligent walk with God through the desert. May the rich grace of God the Holy Ghost abundantly Strengthen you in all this!\* {\*My reader will find it profitable to turn to John 6, and prayerfully meditate upon it, in connection with the subject of the manna. The Passover being near, Jesus feeds the multitude, and then takes His departure to a mountain, there to be alone. From thence He comes to the relief of His distressed people, tossed upon the troubled waters. After this He unfolds the doctrine of His Person and work, God declares how He was to give His flesh for the life of the world, and that none could have life save by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. Finally, He speaks of Himself as ascending up where He was before and of the quickening power of the Holy Ghost. It is, indeed, a rich and copious chapter, in which the spiritual reader will find a vast fund of truth for the comfort and edification of his soul. }

There is one point more in our chapter which we shall notice, namely the instigation of the Sabbath, in its connection with the manna and Israel's position, as here set forth. From Genesis 2 down to the chapter now before us, we find no mention made of this institution. This is remarkable. Abel's sacrifice, Enoch's walk with God, Noah's preaching, Abraham's call, together with the detailed history

of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, are all presented; but there is no allusion to the Sabbath until we find Israel recognised as a people in relationship and consequent responsibility to Jehovah. The Sabbath was interrupted in Eden; and here we find it again instituted for Israel in the wilderness. But alas! man has no heart for Gods rest. And it came to pass that " There went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, 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." (Ver. 27-29) God would have His people enjoying sweet repose with Himself. He would give them rest, food, and refreshment, even in the wilderness. But man's heart is not disposed to rest with God. The people could remember and speak of the time when they "*sat* by the flesh pots" in Egypt; but they could not appreciate the blessedness of sitting in their tents, enjoying with God "the rest of the holy Sabbath," feeding upon the heavenly manna.

And, be it remarked, that the Sabbath is here presented as a matter of gift. "The Lord hath given you the Sabbath." Further on, in this book, we shall find it put in the form of a law, with a curse and a judgement attached to it, in the case of disobedience; but whether fallen man gets a privilege or a law, a blessing or a curse, it is all alike. His *nature* is bad. He can neither rest with, nor work for, God, If God works and makes a rest for him, he will not keep it; and if God tells him to work, he will not do it. Such is man. He has no heart for God. He can make use of the name of the Sabbath as a something to exalt himself, or as the badge of his own religiousness; but when we turn to Exodus 16 we find that he cannot prize *God's* Sabbath as a *gift*; and when we turn to Numbers 15: 32-38, we find he cannot keep it as a *Law*.

Now, we know that the Sabbath, as well as the manna, was a type. In itself, it was a real blessing—a sweet mercy from the hand of a loving and gracious God, who would relieve the toil and travail of a sin stricken earth by the refreshment of one day of rest out of the seven. Whatever way we look at the institution of the Sabbath, we must see it to be pregnant with richest mercy, whether we view it in reference to man or to the animal creation. And, albeit, that Christians observe the first day of the week — the Lord's day, and attach to it its proper principles, yet is the gracious providence equally observable, nor would any mind at all governed by right feelings, seek, for a moment, to interfere with such a signal mercy. "The Sabbath was made for man;" and although man never has kept it, according to the divine thought about it, that does not detract from the grace which shines in the appointment of it, nor divest it of its deep significancy as a type of that eternal rest which remains for the people of God, or as a shadow of that substance which faith now enjoys in the Person and work of a risen Christ.

Let not the reader, therefore, suppose that in anything which has been, or may be, stated, in these pages, the object is to touch, in the slightest degree, the merciful provision of one day's rest for man and the animal creation, much less to interfere with the distinct place which the Lord's day occupies in the New Testament. Nothing is further from the writer's thoughts. As a man he values the former, and as a Christian he rejoices in the latter, far too deeply to admit of his penning or uttering a single syllable which would interfere with either the one or the other. He would only ask the reader to weigh, with a dispassionate mind, in the balance of Holy Scripture, every line and every statement, and not form any harsh judgement beforehand.

This subject will come before us again, in our further meditations, if the Lord will. May we learn to value more the rest which our God has provided for us in Christ, and while enjoying Him as our rest, may we feed upon Him as the "hidden manna," laid up, in the power of resurrection, in the inner sanctuary — the record of what God has accomplished, on our behalf, by coming down into this world, in His infinite grace, in order that we might be before Him, according to the perfectness of Christ, and

feed on His unsearchable riches for ever.

### **Exodus 17**

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?"(Ex. 17: 1, 2) Did we not know something of the humiliating evil of our own hearts, we should be quite at a loss to account for Israel's marvellous insensibility to all the Lord's goodness, faithfulness, and mighty acts. They had just seen bread descending from heaven to feed six hundred thousand people in the wilderness: and now they are " ready to stone" Moses for bringing them out into the wilderness to kill them with thirst. Nothing can exceed the desperate unbelief and wickedness of the human heart, save the superabounding grace of God. In that grace alone can any one find relief under the growing sense of his evil nature which circumstances tend to make manifest. Had Israel been transported directly from Egypt to Canaan, they would not have made such sad exhibitions of what the human heart is; and, as a consequence, they would not have proved such admirable ensamples or types for us; but their forty years' wandering in the desert furnishes us with a volume of warning, admonition, and instruction, fruitful beyond conception. From it we learn, amongst many other things, the unvarying tendency of the heart to distrust God. Anything, in short, for it but God. It would rather lean upon a cobweb of human resources than upon the arm of an Omnipotent, all-wise, and infinitely gracious God; and the smallest cloud is more than sufficient to hide from its view the light of His blessed countenance. Well, therefore, may it be termed "An evil heart of unbelief" which will ever show itself ready to "depart from the living God."

It is interesting to note the two great questions raised by unbelief, in this and the preceding chapter. They are precisely similar to those which spring up, within and around us, every day, namely, "what shall we eat? and what shall we drink?" We do not find the people raising the third question in the category, wherewithal shall we be clothed?" But here are the questions of the wilderness, "*What!*" "*Where!*" "*How?*" Faith has a brief but comprehensive answer to all the three, namely, GOD! Precious, perfect, answer! Oh! that the writer and the reader were more thoroughly acquainted with its force and fullness! We assuredly need to remember, when placed in a position of trial, that "there hath no temptation taken us but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, (or an "*issue*" *ekbasin*,) that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. 10: 13) Whenever we get into trial, we may feel confident that, with the trial, there is an issue, and all we need is a broken will and a single eye to see it.

"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." (Ver. 4-6.) Thus all is met by the most perfect grace. Every murmur brings out a fresh display. Here we have the refreshing stream gushing from the smitten rock — beauteous type of the Spirit given as the fruit of Christ's accomplished sacrifice. In Ex. 16 we have a type of Christ coming down from heaven to give life to the world. In Ex. 17 we have a type of the Holy Ghost "shed forth," in virtue of Christ's finished work. "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that, Rock was Christ." (1 Cor. 10: 4) But who could drink till the Rock was smitten? Israel might have gazed on that rock and died of thirst while gazing; but, until smitten by the rod of God, it could yield no refreshment. This is plain enough.

The Lord Jesus Christ was the centre and foundation of all God's counsels of love and mercy. Through Him all blessing was to flow to man. The streams of grace were designed to gush forth from "the Lamb of God;" but then it was needful that the Lamb should be slain — that the work of the cross should be an accomplished fact, ere any of these things could be actualised. It was when the Rock of ages was cleft by the hand of Jehovah, that the flood-gates of eternal love were thrown wide open, and perishing sinners invited by the testimony of the Holy Ghost to "drink abundantly," drink deeply, drink freely. "The gift of the Holy Ghost" is the result of the Son's accomplished work upon the cross. "The promise of the Father" could not be fulfilled until Christ had taken His seat at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens, having wrought out perfect righteousness, answered all the claims of holiness, magnified the law and made it honourable, borne the unmitigated wrath of God against sin, exhausted the power of death, and deprived the grave of its victory. He, having done all this, "ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that He ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." (Eph. 4: 8-10.)

This is the true foundation of the Church's peace, blessedness, and glory, for ever. Until the rock was smitten, the stream was pent up, and man could do nothing. What human hand could bring forth water from a flinty rock? And so, we may ask, what human righteousness could afford a warrant for opening the flood-gates of divine love? This is the true way in which to test man's competency. He could not, by his doings, his sayings, or his feelings, furnish a ground for the mission of the Holy Ghost. Let him be or do what he may, he could not do this. But thank God, it is done; Christ has finished the work; the true Rock has been smitten, and the refreshing stream has issued forth, so that thirsty souls may drink. "The water that I shall give him," says Christ, "shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." (John 4: 14) Again; "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But 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. (John 7: 37-39; compare, also, Acts 19: 2)

Thus, as in the manna, we have a type of Christ, so in the stream gushing from the rock we have a type of the Holy Ghost. "If thou knewest the gift of God, (i.e., Christ) . . . thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water," — i.e., the Spirit.

Such, then, is the teaching conveyed to the spiritual mind by the smitten rock; but the name of the place in which this significant type was presented is a standing memorial of man's unbelief. "He called the name of the place Massah (i.e., temptation,) and Meribah, (i.e., chiding,) because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not?" (Ver. 7) After such repeated assurances and evidences of Jehovah's presence, to raise such an enquiry proves the deep-seated unbelief of the human heart. It was? in point of fact, tempting Him. Thus did the Jews, in the day of Christ's presence amongst them, seek of Him a sign from heaven, tempting Him. Faith never acts thus; it believes in, and enjoys, the divine presence, not by a sign, but by the knowledge of Himself. It knows He is there to be enjoyed, and it enjoys Him. Lord, grant us a more artless spirit of confidence.

The next point suggested by our chapter is one of special interest to us. "Then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in mine hand." (Ver. 8, 9) The gift of the Holy Ghost leads to conflict. The light rebukes and conflicts with the darkness. Where all is dark there is no struggle; but the very feeblest struggle bespeaks the presence of light. "The flesh

lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye should not do the things that ye would." (Gal. 5: 17) Thus it is in the chapter before us; we have the rock smitten and the water flowing forth, and immediately we read, "then came Amalek and fought with Israel."

This is the first time that Israel are seen in conflict with an external foe. Up to this point, the Lord had fought for them, as we read in Ex. 14. "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." But now the word is, "choose us out *men*." True, God must now fight in Israel, as, before, He had fought *for* them. This marks the difference, as to the type; and as to the antitype, we know that there is an immense difference between Christ's battles *for* us, and the Holy Ghost's battles *in* us. The former, blessed be God, are all over, the victory gained, and a glorious and an everlasting peace secured. The latter, on the contrary, are still going on.

Pharaoh and Amalek represent two different powers or influences; Pharaoh represents the hindrance to Israel's deliverance from Egypt; Amalek represents the hindrance to their walk with God through the wilderness. Pharaoh used the things of Egypt to keep Israel from serving the Lord; he, therefore, prefigures Satan, who uses "this present evil world" against the people of God. Amalek, on the other hand, stands before us as the type of the flesh. He was the grandson of Esau, who preferred a mess of pottage to the birthright. (See Gen. 36: 12) He was the first who opposed Israel, after their baptism "in the cloud and in the sea." These facts serve to fix his character with great distinctness; and, in addition to these, we know that Saul was set aside from the kingdom of Israel, in consequence of his failing to destroy Amalek. (1 Sam. 15) And, further, we find that Haman is the last of the Amalekites of whom we find any notice in scripture. He was hanged on a gallows, in consequence of his wicked attempt against the seed of Israel. (See Esther) No Amalekite could obtain entrance into the congregation of the Lord. And, finally, in the chapter now before us, the Lord declares perpetual war with Amalek.

All these circumstances may be regarded as furnishing conclusive evidence of the fact that Amalek is a type of the flesh. The connection between his conflict with Israel and the water flowing out of the rock is most marked and instructive, and in full keeping with the believer's conflict with his evil nature, which conflict is, as we know, consequent upon his having the new nature, and the Holy Ghost dwelling therein. Israel's conflict began when they stood in the full power of redemption, and had tasted "that spiritual meat and drunk of that spiritual Rock." Until they met Amalek, they had nothing to do. They did not cope with Pharaoh. They did not break the power of Egypt nor snap asunder the chains of its thralldom. They did not divide the sea or submerge Pharaoh's hosts beneath its waves. They did not bring down bread from heaven, or draw forth water out of the flinty rock. They neither had done, nor could they do, any of these things ; but now they are called to fight with Amalek. All the previous conflict had been between Jehovah and the enemy. They had but to "stand still" and gaze upon the mighty triumphs of Jehovah's outstretched arm and enjoy the fruits of victory. The Lord had fought *for* them; but now He fights *in* or *by* them.

Thus is it also with the Church of God. The victories on which her eternal peace and blessedness are founded were gained, single-handed, by Christ *for* her. He was alone on the cross, alone in the tomb. The Church had to stand aside, for how could she be there? How could she vanquish Satan, endure the wrath of God, or rob death of its sting? Impossible. These things lay far beyond the reach of sinners, but not beyond the reach of Him who came to save them, and who alone was able to bear upon his shoulder the ponderous weight of all their sins, and roll the burden away for ever, by His infinite sacrifice, so that God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from God the Father, in virtue of the perfect atonement of God the Son, can take up His abode in the Church collectively, and in each member

thereof individually.

Now it is when the Holy Ghost thus takes up His abode in us, consequent upon Christ's death and resurrection, that our conflict begins. Christ has fought *for* us; the Holy Ghost fights *in* us. The very fact of our enjoying this first rich spoil of victory, puts us into direct conflict with the foe. But the comfort is that we are victors ere we enter upon the field of conflict at all. The believer approaches to the battle singing, "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15: 57) We do not, therefore, fight uncertainly or as those that beat the air, while we seek to keep under the body and bring it into subjection. (1 Cor. 9: 26, 27) "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. (Rom. 8: 37) The grace in which we stand renders the flesh utterly void of power to lord it over us. (See Rom. 6 *passim*.) If the law is "the strength of sin," grace is the weakness thereof. The former gives sin power over us; the latter gives us power over sin.

"And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said unto 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." (Verses 9-13)

We have, here, two distinct things, namely, conflict and intercession. Christ is on high *for* us, while the Holy Ghost carries on the mighty struggle *in* us. The two things go together. It is as we enter, by faith, into the prevalency of Christ's intercession on our behalf, that we make head against our evil nature. Some there are who seek to overlook the fact of the Christian's conflict with the flesh. They look upon regeneration as a total change or renewal of the old nature. Upon this principle, it would, necessarily, follow that the believer has nothing to struggle with. If my nature is renewed, what have I to contend with? Nothing. There is nothing within, inasmuch as my old nature is made new; and nothing without can affect me, inasmuch as there is no response from within. The world has no charms for one whose flesh is entirely changed; and Satan has nothing by or on which to act. To all who maintain such a theory, it may be said that they seem to forget the place which Amalek occupies in the history of the people of God. Had Israel conceived the idea that, when Pharaoh's hosts were gone, their conflict was at an end, they would have been sadly put about when Amalek came upon them. The fact is, *theirs* only then began. Thus it is with the believer, for "all these things happened unto Israel for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition," (1 Cor. 10: 11) But there could be no "type," no "ensample," no admonition" in "these things," for one whose old nature is made new. Indeed, such an one can have but little need of any of those gracious provisions which God has made in His kingdom for those who are the subjects thereof.

We are distinctly taught in the Word that the believer carries about with him that which answers to Amalek, that is, "the flesh" — "the old man" — "the carnal mind." (Rom. 6: 6; Rom. 8: 7; Gal. 5: 17) Now, if the Christian, upon perceiving the stirrings of his evil nature, begins to doubt his being a Christian, he will not only render himself exceedingly unhappy, but also deprive himself of his vantage ground against the enemy. The flesh exists in the believer and will be there to the end of the chapter. The Holy Ghost fully recognises it as existing, as we may easily see, from various parts of the New Testament. In Romans 6 we read, "Let not sin therefore *reign* in your mortal bodies." Such a precept would be entirely uncalled for if the flesh were not existing in the believer. It would be out of character to tell us not to let sin reign, if it were not actually dwelling in us. There is a great difference between



dwelling and reigning. It dwells in a believer, but it reigns in an unbeliever.

However, though it dwells in us, we have, thank God, a principle of power over it. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace." The grace which, by the blood of the cross, has put away sin, insures us the victory, and gives us present power over its indwelling principle.

We have died to sin, and hence it has no claim over us. "He that has died is justified from sin." "Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified together, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Rom. 6: 6) "And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword." All was victory; and Jehovah's banner floated over the triumphant host, bearing the sweet and heart-sustaining inscription, "Jehovah-nissi" (the Lord my banner). The assurance of victory should be as complete as the sense of forgiveness, seeing both alike are founded upon the great fact that Jesus died and rose again. It is in the power of this that the believer enjoys a purged conscience and subdues indwelling sin. The death of Christ having answered all the claims of God in reference to our sins, His resurrection becomes the spring of power, in all the details of conflict, afterwards. He died *for* us, and now He lives *in* us. The former gives us peace, the latter gives us power.

It is edifying to remark the contrast between Moses on the hill and Christ on the throne. The hands of our great Intercessor can never hang down. His intercession never fluctuates. "He *ever* liveth to make intercession for us." (Heb. 7) His intercession is never-ceasing and all-prevailing. Having taken His place on high, in the power of divine righteousness, He acts for us, according to what He is, and according to the infinite perfectness of what He has done. His hands can never hang down, nor can He need any one to hold them up. His perfect advocacy is founded upon His perfect sacrifice. He presents us before God, clothed in His own perfections, so that though we may ever have to keep our faces in the dust in the sense of what we are, yet the Spirit can only testify to us of what He is before God for us, and of what we are in Him." "We are not in the flesh but in the Spirit." (Rom. 8) We are in *the body*, as to the fact of our condition; but we are not in *the flesh*, as to the principle of our standing. Moreover, the flesh is in us, though we are dead to it; but we are not in the flesh, because we are alive with Christ.

We may further remark, on this chapter, that Moses had the rod of God with him on the hill — the rod with which he had smitten the rock. This rod was the expression or symbol of the power of God, which is seen alike in atonement and intercession. When the work of atonement was accomplished, Christ took His seat in heaven, and sent down the Holy Ghost to take up His abode in the Church; so that there is an inseparable connection between the work of Christ and the work of the Spirit. There is the application of the power of God in each.

### **Exodus 18**

We here arrive at the close of a very marked division of the book of Exodus. We have seen God, in the exercise of His perfect grace, visiting and redeeming His people; bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt; delivering them, first, from the hand of Pharaoh and then from the hand of Amalek. Furthermore, we have seen, in the manna, a type of Christ come down from heaven; in the rock, a type of Christ smitten for His people; and in the gushing stream, a type of the Spirit given. Then follows, in striking and beautiful order, a picture of the future glory, divided into its three grand departments, namely, the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God.

"During the period of Moses' rejection by his brethren he was taken apart and presented with a bride — the companion of his rejection. We were led to see, at the opening of this book, the character

of Moses' relationship with this bride. He was "a husband by blood" to her. This is precisely what Christ is to the Church Her connection with Him is founded upon death and resurrection; and she is called to fellowship with His sufferings. It is, as we know, during the period of Israel's unbelief, and of Christ's rejection, that the Church is called out; and when the Church is complete, according to the divine counsels, when the "fullness of the Gentiles is come in," Israel shall again be brought into notice.

Thus it was with Zipporah and Israel of old. Moses had sent her back, during the period of his mission to Israel; and when the latter were brought forth as a fully delivered people, we read that "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 fathers, 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 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 from 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." (Ex. 18: 2-12)

This is a deeply interesting scene. The whole congregation assembled, in triumph before the Lord — the Gentile presenting sacrifice — and in addition, to complete the picture, the bride of the deliverer, together with the children whom God had given him, are all introduced. It is, in short, a singularly striking foreshadowing of the coming kingdom. "The Lord will give grace and glory." We have already seen, in what we have travelled over of this book, very much of the actings of "grace;" and here we have, From the pencil of the Holy Ghost, a beautiful picture of "glory," — a picture which must be regarded as peculiarly important, as exhibiting the varied fields in which that glory shall be manifested.

"The Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God" are scriptural distinctions which can never be overlooked without marring that perfect range of truth which God has revealed in His holy Word. They have existed ever since the mystery of the Church was fully developed by the ministry of the Apostle Paul, and they shall exist throughout the millennial age. Hence, every spiritual student of Scripture will give them their due place in his mind.

The apostle expressly teaches us, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, that the mystery of the Church had not been made known, in other ages, to the sons of men, as it was revealed to him. But, though not directly revealed, it had been shadowed forth in one way or another; as, for example, in Joseph's marriage with an Egyptian, and in Moses' marriage with an Ethiopian. The type or shadow of a truth is a very different thing from a direct and positive revelation of it. The great mystery of the Church was not revealed until Christ, in heavenly glory, revealed it to Saul of Tarsus. Hence, all who look for the full unfolding of this mystery in the law, the prophets, or the psalms, will find themselves engaged in unintelligent labour. When, however, they find it distinctly revealed in the Epistle to the Ephesians, they will be able, with interest and profit, to trace its foreshadowing in Old Testament Scripture.

Thus we have, in the opening of our chapter, a millennial scene. All the fields of glory lie open in vision before us. "*The Jew*" stands forth as the great earthly witness of Jehovah's faithfulness, His mercy, and His power. This is what the Jew has been in bygone ages, it is what he is now, and what he will be, world without end. "The Gentile" reads, in the book of God's dealings with the Jew, his deepest lessons. He traces the marvellous history of that peculiar and elect people — "a people terrible from their beginning hitherto." He sees thrones and empires overturned — nations shaken to their centre — every one and everything compelled to give way, in order to establish the supremacy of that people on whom Jehovah has set His love. "Now I know," he says, "that the Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them." (Ver. 11) Such is the confession of "the Gentile," when the wondrous page of Jewish history lies open before him.

Lastly, "*The Church of God*" collectively, as prefigured by Zipporah, and the members thereof individually, as seen in Zipporah's sons, are presented as occupying the most intimate relationship with the deliverer. All this is perfect in its way. We may be asked for our proofs. The answer is, "I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say." We can never build a doctrine upon a type; but when a doctrine is revealed a type thereof may be discerned with accuracy and studied with profit. In every case, a spiritual mind is essentially necessary, either to understand the doctrine or discern the type. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. 2: 14)

From verse 13 to the end of our chapter, we have the appointment of rulers, who were to assist Moses in the management of the affairs of the congregation. This was the suggestion of Jethro, who feared that Moses would "wear away" in consequence of his labours. In connection with this, it may be profitable to look at the appointment of the seventy elders in Numbers 11. Here we find the spirit of Moses crushed beneath the ponderous responsibility which devolved upon him, and he gives utterance to the anguish of his heart in the following accents. "And Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? And wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them that thou shouldst say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers. . . . I am not able to bear all this people alone because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness." (Num. 11: 11-15)

In all this we see Moses evidently retiring from a post of honour. If God were pleased to make him the sole instrument in managing the assembly, it was only so much the more dignity and privilege conferred upon him. True, the responsibility was immense; but faith would own that God was amply sufficient for that. Here, however, the heart of Moses failed him (blessed servant as he was), and he says, "I am not able to bear all this people *alone*, because it is too heavy for *me*." But he was not asked to bear them alone; for God was with him. They were not too heavy for God. It was He that was bearing them; Moses was but the instrument. He might just as well have spoken of his rod as bearing the people; for what was he but a mere instrument in God's hand, as the rod was in his? It is here the servants of Christ constantly fail; and the failure is all the more dangerous because it wears the appearance of humility. It seems like distrust of ones self and deep lowliness of spirit, to shrink from heavy responsibility; but all we need to inquire is, has God imposed that responsibility? If so, He will assuredly be with me in sustaining it; and having Him with me, I can sustain anything. With Him, the weight of a mountain is nothing; without Him, the weight of a feather is overwhelming. It is a totally different thing if a man, in the vanity of his mind, thrust himself forward and take a burden upon his shoulder which God never intended him to bear, and, therefore, never fitted him to bear it; we may

then, surely, expect to see him crushed beneath the weight; but if God lays it upon him, He will qualify and strengthen him to carry it.

It is never the fruit of humility to depart from a divinely-appointed post. On the contrary, the deepest humility will express itself by remaining there in simple dependence upon God. It is a sure evidence of being occupied about *self* when we shrink from service on the ground of inability. God does not call us unto service on the ground of our ability, but of His own; hence, unless I am filled with thoughts about myself, or with positive distrust of Him, I need not relinquish any position of service or testimony because of the heavy responsibilities attaching thereto. all power belongs to God, and it is quite the same whether that power acts through one agent or through seventy; the power is still the same: but if one agent refuse the dignity, it is only so much the worse for him. God will not force people to abide in a place of honour, if they cannot trust Him to sustain them there. The way lies always open to them to step down from their dignity, and sink into the place where base unbelief is sure to put us.

Thus it was with Moses. He complained of the burden, and the burden was speedily removed; but with it the high honour of being allowed to carry it. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come down and talk with thee there; and 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." (Num. 11: 16, 17) There was no fresh power introduced. It was the same Spirit, whether in one or in seventy. There was no more value or virtue in the flesh of seventy men than in the flesh of one man. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." (John 6: 63) There was nothing, in the way of power, gained; but a great deal, in the way of dignity, lost by this movement on the part of Moses.

In the after part of Numbers 11 we find Moses giving utterance to accents of unbelief, which called forth from the Lord a sharp rebuke. "Is the Lord's hand waxed short? Thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not." If my reader will compare Num. 11-15 with Num. 21, 22, he will see a marked and solemn connection. The man who shrinks from responsibility, on the ground of his own feebleness, is in great danger of calling in question the fullness and sufficiency of God's resources. This entire scene teaches a most valuable lesson to every servant of Christ who may be tempted to feel himself alone or overburdened in his work. Let such an one bear in mind that, where the Holy Ghost is working, one instrument is as good and as efficient as seventy; and where He is not working seventy are of no more value than one. It all depends upon the energy of the Holy Ghost. With Him, one man can do all, endure all, sustain all. Without Him, seventy men can do nothing. Let the lonely servant remember, for the comfort and encouragement of his sinking heart, that, provided he has the presence and power of the Holy Ghost with him, he need not complain of his burden, nor sigh for a division of labour. If God honour a man by giving him a great deal of work to do, let him rejoice therein and not murmur; for if he murmur, he can very speedily lose his honour. God is at no loss for instruments. He could, from the stones, raise up children unto Abraham; and He can raise up, from the same, the needed agents to carry on His glorious work.

Oh! for a heart to serve Him! A patient, humble, self-emptied, devoted heart! A heart ready to serve in company, ready to serve alone, a heart so filled with love to Christ that it will find its joy — its chief joy — in serving Him, let the sphere or character of service be what it may. This assuredly is the special need of the day in which our lot is cast. May the Holy Ghost stir up our hearts to a deeper sense of the exceeding preciousness of the name of Jesus, and enable us to yield a fuller, clearer, more unequivocal response to the changeless love of His heart!

## Exodus 19

We have now arrived at a most momentous point in Israel's history. We are called to behold them standing at the foot of "the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire." The fair millennial scene which opened before us in the preceding chapter has passed away. It was but a brief moment of sunshine in which a very vivid picture of the kingdom was afforded; but the sunshine was speedily followed by the heavy clouds which gathered around that "palpable mount," where Israel, in a spirit of dark and senseless legality, abandoned Jehovah's covenant of pure grace for man's covenant of works. Disastrous movement! A movement fraught with the most dismal results. Hitherto, as we have seen, no enemy could stand before Israel — no obstacle was suffered to interrupt their onward and victorious march. Pharaoh's hosts were overthrown — Amalek and his people were discomfited with the edge of the sword — all was victory, because God was acting on behalf of His people, in pursuance of His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In the opening verses of the chapter now before us, the Lord recapitulates His actings toward Israel in the following touching and beautiful language: "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." (Ver. 3-6) Observe, it is "*my voice*" and "*my covenant*." What was the utterance of that "voice?" and what did that "covenant" involve? Had Jehovah's voice made itself heard for the purpose of laying down the rules and regulations of a severe and unbending law-giver? By no means. It had spoken to demand freedom for the captivity provide a refuge from the sword of the destroyer — to make a way for the ransomed to pass over — to bring down bread from heaven, to draw forth water out of the flinty rock. Such had been the gracious and intelligible utterances of Jehovah's "voice," up to the moment at which "Israel camped before the mount."

And as to His "covenant," it was one of unmingled grace. It proposed no condition — it made no demands — it put no yoke on the neck — no burden on the shoulder. When "the God of glory appeared unto Abraham," in Ur of the Chaldees, He certainly did not address him in such words as, "thou shalt do this," and "thou shalt not do that." Ah! no; such language was not according to the heart of God. It suits Him far better to place "a fair mitre" upon a sinner's head, than to "put a yoke upon his neck." His word to Abraham was, "I WILL GIVE." The land of Canaan was not to be purchased by man's doings, but to be given by God's grace. Thus it stood; and, in the opening of the book of Exodus, we see God coming down in grace to make good His promise to Abraham's seed. The condition in which He found that seed made no difference, inasmuch as the blood of the lamb furnished Him with a perfectly righteous ground on which to make good His promise. He evidently had not promised the land of Canaan to Abraham's seed on the ground of ought that He foresaw in them, for this would have totally destroyed the real nature of a promise. It would have made it a compact and not a promise; "but God gave it to Abraham by promise," and not by compact. (Read Gal. 3)

Hence, in the opening of this 19th chapter, the people are reminded of the grace in which Jehovah had hitherto dealt with them; and they are also assured of what they should yet be, provided they continued to hearken to mercy's heavenly "voice," and to abide in the "covenant" of free and absolute grace. "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people." How could they be this? Was it by stumbling up the ladder of self-righteousness and legalism? Would they be "a peculiar treasure" when blasted by the curses of a broken law — a law which they had broken before ever they received it? Surely not. How then were they to be this "peculiar treasure?" By standing in that position in which

Jehovah surveyed them when He compelled the covetous prophet to exclaim, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters. He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn." (Num. 24: 5-8)

However, Israel was not disposed to occupy this blessed position. Instead of rejoicing in God's "holy promise," they undertook to make the most presumptuous vow that mortal lips could utter. "All the people answered together, and said, *"All that the Lord hath, spoken we will do."* (Ex. 19: 8) This was bold language. They did not even say, "we hope to do" or "we will endeavour to do." This would have expressed a measure of self-distrust. But no; they took the most absolute ground. "We will do." Nor was this the language of a few vain, self-confident spirits who presumed to single themselves out from the whole congregation. No; *"all the people answered together."* They were unanimous in the abandonment of the holy promise" — the "holy covenant."

And now, observe the result. The moment Israel uttered their "singular vow," the moment they undertook to "do," there was a total alteration in the aspect of things. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee *in a thick cloud*. . . . 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." This was a very marked change; the One who had just said, "I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself," now envelopes Himself "in a thick cloud," and says, "set bounds unto the people round about." The sweet accents of grace and mercy are exchanged for the "thunderings and lightnings" of the fiery mount. Man had presumed to talk of his miserable doings in the presence of God's magnificent grace. Israel had said, "we will do," and they must be put at a distance in order that it may be fully seen what they are able to do. God takes the place of moral distance; and the people are but too well disposed to have it so, for they are filled with fear and trembling; and no marvel, for the sight was "terrible," — "so terrible that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake." Who could endure the sight of that "devouring fire," which was the apt expression of divine holiness? "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints; from his right hand went a fiery law for them." (Deut. 33: 2) The term "fiery," as applied to the law, is expressive of its holiness: "Our God is a consuming fire," — perfectly intolerant of evil, in thought, word, and deed.

Thus, then, Israel made a fatal mistake in saying, "we will do." It was taking upon themselves a vow which they were not able, even were they willing, to pay; and we know who has said, "better that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay." It is of the very essence of a vow that it assumes the competency to fulfil; and where is man's competency? As well might a bankrupt draw a cheque on the bank, as a helpless sinner make a vow. A man who makes a vow, denies the truth, as to his nature and condition. He is ruined, what can he do? He is utterly without strength, and can neither will nor do anything good. Did Israel keep their vow Did they do "all that the Lord commanded?" Witness the golden calf, the broken tables, the desecrated Sabbath, the despised and neglected ordinances, the stoned messengers, the rejected and crucified Christ, the resisted Spirit. Such are the overwhelming evidences of mans dishonoured vows. Thus must it ever be when fallen humanity undertakes to vow.

Christian reader, do you not rejoice in the fact that your eternal salvation rests not an your poor shadowy vows and resolutions, but on "the one offering of Jesus Christ once?" Oh, yes, "this is our joy, which never can fail." Christ has taken all our vows upon Himself, and gloriously discharged them for

ever. His resurrection-life flows through His members and produces in them results which legal vows and legal claims never could effect. He is our life, and He is our righteousness. May his name be precious to our hearts. May His cause ever command our energies. May it be our meat and our drink to spend and be spent in His dear service.

I cannot close this chapter without noticing, in connection, a passage in the Book of Deuteronomy, which may present a difficulty to some minds. It has direct reference to the subject on which we have been dwelling. "And the Lord heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: *they have well said all that they have spoken.* (Deut. 5: 28) From this passage it might seem as though the Lord approved of their making a vow; but if my reader will take the trouble of reading the entire context, from ver. 24-27, he will see at once that it has nothing whatever to say to the vow, but that it contains the expression of their terror at the consequences of their vow. They were not able to endure that which was commanded. "If," said they, "we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die. For who is there of all flesh that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived! Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it and do it." It was the confession of their own inability to encounter Jehovah in that awful aspect which their proud legality had led Him to assume. It is impossible that the Lord could ever commend an abandonment of free and changeless grace for a sandy foundation of "works of law."

## **Exodus 20**

It is of the utmost importance to understand the true character and object of the moral law, as set forth in this chapter. There is a tendency in the mind to confound the principles of law and grace, so that neither the one nor the other can be rightly understood. Law is shorn of its stern and unbending majesty; and grace is robbed of all its divine attractions. God's holy claims remain unanswered, and the sinner's deep and manifold necessities remain unreached by the anomalous system framed by those who attempt to mingle law and grace. In point of fact, they can never be made to coalesce, for they are as distinct as any two things can be. Law sets forth what man ought to be; grace exhibits what God is. How can these ever be wrought up into one system? How can the sinner ever be saved by a system made up of half law, half grace? Impossible. It must be either the one or the other.

The law has sometimes been termed "the transcript of the mind of God." This definition is entirely defective. Were we to term it a transcript of the mind of God as to what man ought to be, we should be nearer the truth. If I am to regard the ten commandments as the transcript of the mind of God, then, I ask, is there nothing in the mind of God save "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not?" Is there no grace? No mercy? No loving kindness? Is God not to manifest what He is? Is He not to tell out the deep secrets of that love which dwells in His bosom? Is there nought in the divine character but stern requirement and prohibition? Were this so, we should have to say, "God is law" instead of "God is love." But, blessed be His name, there is more in His heart than could ever be wrapped up in the "ten words" uttered on the fiery mount. If I want to see what God is, I must look at Christ; "for in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily." (Col. 2: 9) "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1: 17) Assuredly there was a measure of truth in the law. It contained the truth as to what man ought to be. Like everything else emanating from God, it was perfect so far as it went — perfect for the object for which it was administered; but that object was not, by any means, to unfold, in the view of guilty sinners, the nature and character of God. There was no grace — no mercy. "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy." (Heb. 10.28.) "The man that doeth these things shall live by them." (Lev. 18: 5; Rom. 10: 5) "Cursed is every one that continueth not

in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." (Deut. 27: 26; Gal 3: 10) This was not grace. Indeed, mount Sinai was not the place to look for any such thing. There Jehovah revealed Himself in awful majesty, amid blackness, darkness, tempest, thunderings, and lightnings. These were not the attendant circumstances of an economy of grace and mercy; but they were well suited to one of truth and righteousness; and the law was that and nothing else.

In the law God sets forth what a man ought to be, and pronounces a curse upon him if he is not that. But then a man finds, when he looks at himself in the light of the law, that he actually is the very thing which the law condemns. How then is he to get life by it? It proposes life and righteousness as the ends to be attained, by keeping it; but it proves, at the very outset, that we are in a state of death and unrighteousness. We want the very things at the beginning which the law proposes to be gained at the end. How, therefore, are we to gain them? In order to do what the law requires, I must have life; and in order to be what the law requires, I must have righteousness; and if I have not both the one and the other, I am "cursed." But the fact is, I have neither. What am I to do? This is the question. Let those who "desire to be teachers of the law" furnish an answer. Let them furnish a satisfactory reply to an upright conscience, bowed down under the double sense of the spirituality and inflexibility of the law and its own hopeless carnality.

The truth is, as the apostle teaches us, "the law entered that the offence might abound." (Rom. 5: 20) This shows us, very distinctly, the real object of the law. It came in by the way in order to set forth the exceeding sinfulness of sin. (1 Cor. 7: 13) It was, in a certain sense, like a perfect mirror let down from heaven to reveal to man his moral derangement. If I present myself, with deranged hair, before a mirror, it shows me the derangement, but does not set it right. If I measure a crooked wall, with a perfect plumb-line, it reveals the crookedness, but does not remove it. If I take out a lamp on a dark night, it reveals to me all the hindrances and disagreeables in the way, but it does not remove them. Moreover, the mirror, the plumb-line, and the lamp, do not *create* the evils which they severally point out; they neither *create* nor *remove*, but simply *reveal*. Thus is it with the law; it does not create the evil in man's heart, neither does it remove it; but, with unerring accuracy, it reveals it.

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Yea, I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." (Rom. 7: 7) He does not say that he would not have had "lust." No; but merely that "he had not known it." The "lust" was there; but he was in the dark about it until the law, as "the candle of the Almighty," shone in upon the dark chambers of his heart and revealed the evil that was there. Like a man in a dark room, who may be surrounded with dust and confusion, but he cannot see ought thereof by reason of the darkness. Let the beams of the sun dart in upon him, and he quickly perceives all. Do the sunbeams create the dust? Surely not. The dust is there, and they only detect and reveal it. This is a simple illustration of the effect of the law. It judges man's character and condition. It proves him to be a sinner and shuts him up under the curse. It comes to judge what he is, and curses him if he is not what it tells him he ought to be.

It is, therefore, a manifest impossibility that any one can get life and righteousness by that which can only curse him; and unless the condition of the sinner, and the character of the law are totally changed, it can do nought else but curse him. It makes no allowance for infirmities, and knows nothing of sincere, though imperfect, obedience. Were it to do so, it would not be what it is, "holy, just, and good." It is just because the law is what it is, that the sinner cannot get life by it. If he could get life by it, it would not be perfect, or else he would not be a sinner. It is impossible that a sinner can get life by a perfect law, for inasmuch as it is perfect, it must needs condemn him. Its absolute perfectness makes manifest and seals man's absolute ruin and condemnation. "Therefore by deeds of law shall no flesh living be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom. 3: 20) He does not say,



"by the law is sin," but only "the knowledge of sin." "For until the law, sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law." (Rom. 5: 13) Sin was there, and it only needed law to develop it in the form of "transgression." It is as if I say to my child, "you must not touch that knife." My very prohibition reveals the tendency in his heart to do his own will. It does not create the tendency, but only reveals it.

The apostle John says that "sin is lawlessness." (1 John 3: 4) The word "transgression" does not develop the true idea of the Spirit in this passage. In order to have "transgression" I must have a definite rule or line laid down. Transgression means a passing across a prohibited line; such a line I have in the law. I take any one of its prohibitions, such as, "thou shalt not kill," "thou shalt not commit adultery," "thou shalt not steal." Here, I have a rule or line set before me; but I find I have within me the very principles against which these prohibitions are expressly directed. Yea, the very fact of my being told not to commit murder, shows that I have murder in my nature. There would be no necessity to tell me not to do a thing which I had no tendency to do; but the exhibition of God's will, as to what I ought to be, makes manifest the tendency of my will to be what I ought not. This is plain enough, and is in full keeping with the whole of the apostolic reasoning on the point.

Many, however, will admit that we cannot get life by the law; but they maintain, at the same time, that the law is our rule of life. Now, the apostle declares that "as many as are of works of law are under the curse." (Gal 3: 10) It matters not who they are, if they occupy the ground of law, they are, of necessity, under the curse. A man may say, "I am regenerate, and, therefore, not exposed to the curse." This will not do. If regeneration does not take one off the ground of law, it cannot take him beyond the range of the curse of the law. If the Christian be under the former, he is, of necessity, exposed to the latter. But what has the law to do with regeneration? Where do we find anything about it in Exodus 20: 8 The law has but one question to put to a man — a brief, solemn, pointed question, namely, "Are you what you ought to be?" If he answer in the negative, it can but hurl its terrible anathema at him and slay him. And who will so readily and emphatically admit that, in himself, he is anything but what he ought to be, as the really regenerate man? Wherefore, if he is under the law, he must, inevitably, be under the curse. The law cannot possibly lower its standard: nor yet amalgamate with grace. Men do constantly seek to lower its standard; they feel that they cannot get up to it, and they, therefore, seek to bring it down to them; but the effort is in vain: it stands forth in all its purity, majesty, and stern inflexibility, and will not accept a single hair's breadth short of perfect obedience; and where is the man, regenerate or unregenerate, that can undertake to produce that? It will be said, "We have perfection in Christ." True; but that is not by the law, but by grace; and we cannot possibly confound the two economies. Scripture largely and distinctly teaches that we are not justified by the law; nor is the law our rule of life. That which can only curse can never justify; and that which can only kill can never be a rule of life. As well might a man attempt to make a fortune by a deed of bankruptcy filed against him.

If my reader will turn to Acts 15, he will see how the attempt to put Gentile believers under the law, as a rule of life, was met by the Holy Ghost. "There rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses." This was nothing else than the hiss of the old serpent, making itself heard in the dark and depressing suggestion of those early legalists. But let us see how it was met by the mighty energy of the Holy Ghost, and the unanimous voice of the twelve apostles and the whole Church. "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago, God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear," — what? Was it the requirements and the curses of the law of Moses? No: blessed be God, these are not what He would have falling on the ears of helpless sinners. Hear what then? "SHOULD HEAR THE WORD OF

THE GOSPEL, AND BELIEVE." This was what suited the nature and character of God. He never would have troubled men with the dismal accents of requirement and prohibition. These Pharisees were not His messengers; far from it. They were not the bearers of glad tidings, nor the publishers of peace, and therefore, their "feet" were ought but "beautiful" in the eyes of One who only delights in mercy.

"Now, therefore," continues the apostle, "why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" This was strong, earnest language. God did not want "to put a yoke upon the neck" of those whose hearts had been set free by the gospel of peace. He would rather exhort them to stand fast in the liberty of Christ, and not be "entangled again with the yoke of bondage." He would not send those whom He had received to His bosom of love, to be terrified by the "blackness, and darkness, and tempest," of "the mount that might be touched." How could we ever admit the thought that those whom God had received in grace He would rule by law? Impossible. "We believe," says Peter, "that through the GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST we shall be saved even as they." Both the Jews, who had received the law, and the Gentiles, who never had, were now to be "saved through grace." And not only were they to be "saved" by grace, but they were to "stand" in grace, (Rom 5: 2) and to "grow in grace." (2 Peter 3: 18.) To teach anything else was to "tempt God." Those Pharisees were subverting the very foundations of the Christian faith; and so are all those who seek to put believers under the law. There is no evil or error more abominable in the sight of the Lord than legalism. Hearken to the strong language — the accents of righteous indignation — which fell from the Holy Ghost, in reference to those teachers of the law: "I would they were even cut off which trouble you." (Gal, 5: 12)

And, let me ask, are the thoughts of the Holy Ghost changed, in reference to this question? Has it ceased to be a tempting of God to place the yoke of legality upon a sinner's neck? Is it now in accordance with His gracious will that the law should be read out in the ears of sinners? Let my reader reply to these enquiries in the light of the fifteenth of Acts and the Epistle to the Galatians. These scriptures, were there no other, are amply sufficient to prove that God never intended that the "Gentiles should hear the word" of the law. Had He so intended, He would, assuredly, have "made choice" of some one to proclaim it in their ears. But no; when He sent forth His "fiery law," He spoke only in *one* tongue; but when He proclaimed the glad tidings of salvation, through the blood of the Lamb, He spoke in the language "of *every nation under heaven.*" He spoke in such a way as that "*every man in his own tongue wherein he was Born,*" might hear the sweet story of grace. (Acts 2: 1-11)

Further, when He was giving forth, from mount Sinai, the stern requirements of the covenant of works, He addressed Himself exclusively to *one* people. His voice was only heard within the narrow enclosures of the Jewish nation; but when, on the plains of Bethlehem, "the angel of the Lord" declared "good tidings of great joy," he added those characteristic words, "which shall be *to all people.*" And, again, when the risen Christ was sending forth His heralds of salvation, His commission ran thus, "Go ye into *all the world* and preach the gospel to *every creature.*" (Mark 16: 15; Luke 2: 10) The mighty tide of grace which had its source in the bosom of God, and its channel in the blood of the Lamb, was designed to rise, in the resistless energy of the Holy Ghost, far above the narrow enclosures of Israel, and roll through the length and breadth of a sin-stained world. "Every creature" must hear, "in his own tongue," the message of peace, the word of the gospel, the record of salvation, through the blood of the cross.

Finally, that nothing might be lacking to prove to our poor legal hearts that mount Sinai was not, by any means, the spot where the deep secrets of the bosom of God were told out, the Holy Ghost has said, both by the mouth of a prophet and an apostle, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Isa. 3: 7; Rom. 10: 15) But of those who

sought to be teachers of the law the same Holy Ghost has said, "I would they were even cut off that trouble you."

Thus, then, it is obvious that the law is neither the ground of life to the sinner nor the rule of life to the Christian. Christ is both the one and the other. He is our life and He is our rule of life. The law can only curse and slay. Christ is our life and righteousness. He became a curse for us by hanging on a tree. He went down into the place where the sinner lay — into the place of death and judgement — and having, by His death, entirely discharged all that was or could be against us, He became, in resurrection, the source of life and the ground of righteousness to all who believe in His name. Having thus life and righteousness in Him, we are called to walk, not merely as the law directs, but to "walk even as he walked." It will hardly be deemed needful to assert that it is directly contrary to Christian ethics to kill, commit adultery, or steal. But were a Christian to shape his way according to these commands, or according to the entire decalogue, would he yield the rare and delicate fruits which the Epistle to the Ephesians sets forth? Would the ten commandment ever cause a thief to give up, stealing, and go to work that he might have to give? Would they ever transform a thief into a laborious and liberal man? Assuredly not. The law says, "thou shalt not steal;" but does it say, "go and give to him that needeth" — go feed, clothe, and bless your enemy" — "go gladden by your benevolent feelings and your beneficent acts the heart of him who only and always seeks your hurt?" By no means; and yet, were I under the law, as a rule, it could only curse me and slay me. How is this, when the standard in the New Testament is so much higher? Because am weak, and the law gives me no strength and shows me no mercy. The law *demand*s strength from one that has none, and *curse*s him if he cannot display it. The gospel *gives* strength to one that has none, and *blesses* him in the exhibition of it. The law proposes life as the *end* of obedience. The gospel gives life as the only proper *ground* of obedience.

But that I may not weary the reader with arguments, let me ask if the law be, indeed, the rule of a believer's life, where are we to find it so presented in the New Testament? The inspired apostle evidently had no thought of its being the rule when he penned the following words: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to *this rule*, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." (Gal. 6: 15, 16) What "rule?" The law? No, but the "new creation." Where shall we find this in Exodus 20? It speaks not a word about "new creation." On the contrary, it addresses itself to man as he is, in his natural or old-creation state, and puts him to the test as to what he is really able to do. Now if the law were the rule by which believers are to walk, why does the apostle pronounce his benediction on those who walk by another rule altogether? Why does he not say, "as many as walk according to the rule of the ten commandments?" Is it not evident, from this one passage, that the Church of God has a higher rule by which to walk? Unquestionably. The ten commandments, though forming, as all true Christians admit, a part of the canon of inspiration, could never be the rule of life to one who has, through infinite grace, been introduced into the new creation — one who has received new life, in Christ.

But some may ask, "Is not the law perfect? And, if perfect, what more would you have?" The law is divinely perfect. Yea, it is the very perfection of the law which causes it to curse and slay those who are not perfect -if they attempt to stand before it. "The law is spiritual, but I am carnal.' It is utterly impossible to form an adequate idea of the infinite perfectness and spirituality of the law. But then this perfect law coming in contact with fallen humanity — this spiritual law coming in contact with "the carnal mind," could only "work wrath" and "enmity." (Rom. 4: 15; Rom. 8: 7) Why? Is it because the law is not perfect? No, but because it is, and man is a sinner. If man were perfect, he would carry out the law in all its spiritual perfectness; and even in the case of true believers, though they still carry about with them an evil nature, the apostle teaches us "that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us

who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. 8: 4) "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law" — "love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." (Rom, 13: 8-10) If I love a man, I shall not steal his property — nay, I shall seek to do him all the good I can. All this is plain and easily understood by the spiritual mind; but it leaves entirely untouched the question of the law, whether as the ground of life to a sinner or the rule of life to the believer.

If we look at the law, in its two grand divisions, it tells a man to love God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind; and to love his neighbour as himself. This is the sum of the law. This, and not a tittle less, is what the law demands. But where has this demand ever been responded to by any member of Adam's fallen posterity? Where is the man who could say he loves God after such a fashion? "The carnal mind (i.e., the mind which we have by nature) is enmity against God." Man hates God and His ways. God came, in the Person of Christ, and showed Himself to man — showed Himself, not in the overwhelming brightness of His majesty, but in all the charm and sweetness of perfect grace and condescension. What was the result? Man hated God. "Now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." (John 15: 24.) But, it must be said, "Man ought to love God." No doubt, and he deserves death and eternal perdition if he does not. But can the law produce this love in man's heart? Was that its design? By no means, "for the law worketh wrath." The law finds man in a state of enmity against God; and without ever altering that state — for that was not its province — it commands him to love God with all his heart, and curses him if he does not. It was not the province of the law to alter or improve man's nature; nor yet could it impart any power to carry out its righteous demands. It said "This do, and thou shalt live." It commanded man to love God. It did not reveal what God was to man, even in his guilt and ruin; but it told man what he ought to be toward God. This was dismal work. It was not the unfolding of the powerful attractions of the divine character, producing in man true repentance toward God, melting his icy heart, and elevating his soul in genuine affection and worship. No: it was an inflexible command to love God; and, instead of producing love, it "worked wrath;" not because God ought not to be loved, but because man was a sinner.

Again, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Can "the natural man" do this? Does he love his neighbour as himself? Is this the principle which obtains in the chambers of commerce, the exchanges, the banks, the marts, the fairs, and the markets of this world? Alas! no. Man does not love his neighbour as he loves himself. No doubt he ought: and if he were right, he would. But, then, he is all wrong — totally wrong — and unless he is "born again" of the word and the Spirit of God, he cannot "see nor enter the kingdom of God." The law cannot produce this new birth. It kills "the old man," but does not, and cannot, create "the new." As an actual fact we know that the Lord Jesus Christ embodied, in His glorious Person, both God and our neighbour, inasmuch as He was, according to the foundation-truth of the Christian religion, "God manifest in the flesh." How did man treat Him? Did he love Him with all his heart, or as himself? The very reverse. He crucified Him between two thieves, having previously preferred a murderer and a robber to that blessed One who had gone about doing good — who had come forth from the eternal dwelling-place of light and love — Himself the very living personification of that light and love — whose bosom had ever heaved with purest sympathy with human need — whose hand had ever been ready to dry the sinner's tears and alleviate his sorrows. Thus we stand and gaze upon the cross of Christ, and behold in it an unanswerable demonstration of the fact that it is not within the range of man's nature or capacity to keep the law.\*

{\*For further exposition of the law, and also of the doctrine of the Sabbath, the reader is referred to a tract, entitled "A Scriptural Inquiry into the True Nature of the Sabbath, the Law, and the Christian Ministry."}

It is peculiarly interesting to the spiritual mind, after all that has passed before us, to observe the

relative position of God and the sinner at the close of this memorable chapter. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel . . . an altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name, I WILL COME UNTO THEE, and I WILL BLESS THEE. And if thou wilt make an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it 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. " (Ver. 22, 26)

Here we find man not in the position of *a doer*, but of *a worshipper*; and this, too, at the close of Exodus 20. How plainly this teaches us that the atmosphere of Mount Sinai is not that which God would have the sinner breathing; that it is not the proper meeting place between God and man. "In all places where I record *my name*, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." How unlike the terrors of the fiery mount is that spot where Jehovah records *His name*, whither He "comes" to "bless" His worshipping people!

But, further, God will meet the sinner at an altar without a hewn stone or a step — a place of worship which requires no human workmanship to erect, or human effort to approach. The former could only pollute, and the latter could only display human "nakedness." Admirable type of the meeting-place where God meets the sinner now, even the Person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ, where all the claims of law, of justice, and of conscience, are perfectly answered! Man has, in every age, and in every clime, been prone, in one way or another, to "lift up his tool in the erection of his altar, or to approach thereto by steps of his own making. But the issue of all such attempts has been "pollution" and "nakedness." "We all do fade as a leaf, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags?" Who will presume to approach God clad in a garment of "filthy rags?" or who will stand to worship with a revealed "nakedness?" What can be more preposterous than to think of approaching God in a way which necessarily involves either pollution or nakedness? And yet thus it is in every case in which human effort is put forth to open the sinner's way to God. Not only is there no need of such effort, but defilement and nakedness are stamped upon it. God has come down so very near to the sinner, even in the very depths of his ruin, that there is no need for his lifting up the tool of legality, or ascending the steps of self-righteousness yea, to do so, is but to expose his uncleanness and his nakedness.

Such are the principles with which the Holy Ghost closes this most remarkable section of inspiration. May they be indelibly written upon our hearts, that so we may more clearly and fully understand the essential difference between LAW and GRACE.

### **Exodus 21-23**

The study of this section of our book is eminently calculated to impress the heart with a sense of God's unsearchable wisdom and infinite goodness. It enables one to form some idea of the character of a kingdom governed by laws of divine appointment. Here, too, we may see the amazing condescension of Him who, though He is the great God of heaven and earth, can, nevertheless, stoop to adjudicate between man and man in reference to the death of an ox, the loan of a garment, or the loss of a servant's tooth. "Who is like unto the Lord our God, who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and on earth?" He governs the universe, and yet He can occupy Himself with the provision of a covering for one of His creatures. He guides the angel's flight and takes notice of a crawling worm. He humbles Himself to regulate the movements of those countless orbs that roll through infinite space and to record the fall of a sparrow.

As to the character of the judgement set forth in the chapters before us, we may learn a double lesson. These judgements and ordinances bear a twofold witness: they convey to the ear a twofold

message, and present to the eye two sides of a picture. They tell of God and they tell of man.

In the first place, on God's part, we find Him enacting laws which exhibit strict, even-handed, perfect justice. "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." Such was the character of the laws, the statutes, and the judgements by which God governed His earthly kingdom of Israel. Everything was provided for, every interest was maintained, and every claim was met. There was no partiality — no distinction made between the rich and the poor. The balance in which each man's claim was weighed was adjusted with divine accuracy, so that no one could justly complain of a decision. The pure robe of justice was not to be tarnished with the foul stains of bribery, corruption and partiality. The eye and the hand of a divine Legislator provided for everything; and a divine Executive inflexibly dealt with every defaulter. The stroke of justice fell only on the head of the guilty, while every obedient soul was protected in the enjoyment of all his rights and privileges.

Then, as regards man, it is impossible to read over these laws and not be struck with the disclosure which they indirectly, but really, make of his desperate depravity. The fact of Jehovah's having to enact laws against certain crimes, proves the capability, on man's part, of committing those crimes. Were the capability and the tendency not there, there would be no need of the enactments. Now, there are many who, if the gross Abominations forbidden in these chapters were named to them, might feel disposed to adopt the language of Hazeel and say, "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?" Such persons have not yet travelled down into the deep abyss of their own hearts. For albeit there are crimes here forbidden which would seem to place man, as regards his habits and tendencies, below the level of a "dog," yet do those very statutes prove, beyond all question, that the most refined and cultivated member of the human family carries above, in his bosom, the seeds of the very darkest and most horrifying abominations. For whom were those statutes enacted? For man. Were they needful? Unquestionably. But they would have been quite superfluous if man were incapable of committing the sins referred to. But man is capable; and hence we see that man is sunk to the very lowest possible level — that his nature is wholly corrupt — that, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, there is not so much as a speck of moral soundness.

How can such a being ever stand, without an emotion of fear, in the full blaze of the throne of God? How can he stand within the holiest? How can he stand on the sea of glass? How can he enter in by the pearly gates and tread the golden streets? The reply to these inquiries unfolds the amazing depths of redeeming love and the eternal efficacy of the blood of the Lamb. Deep as is man's ruin, the love of God is deeper still. Black as is his guilt, the blood of Jesus can wash it all away. Wide as is the chasm separating man from God, the cross has bridged it. God has come down to the very lowest point of the sinner's condition, in order that He might lift him up into a position of infinite favour, in eternal association with His own Son. Well may we exclaim, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God." (1 John 3: 1) Nothing could fathom man's ruin but God's love, and nothing could equal man's guilt but the blood of Christ. But now the very depth of the ruin only magnifies the love that has fathomed it, and the intensity of the guilt only celebrates the efficacy of the blood that can cleanse it. The very vilest sinner who believes in Jesus can rejoice in the assurance that God sees him and pronounces him "*clean every whit.*"

Such, then, is the double character of instruction to be gleaned from the laws and ordinances in this section, looked at as a whole; and the more minutely we look at them, in detail, the more impressed we shall be with a sense of their fullness and beauty. Take, for instance, the very first ordinance that presents itself, namely, that of the Hebrew Servant.

"Now these are the judgements which thou shalt set before them. 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 borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall he 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." (Ex. 21: 1-6) The servant was perfectly free to go out, so far as he was personally concerned. He had discharged every claim, and could, therefore, walk abroad in unquestioned freedom; but because of his love to his master, his wife, and his children, he voluntarily bound himself to perpetual servitude; and not only so, but he was also willing to bear, in his own person, the marks of that servitude.

The application of this to the Lord Jesus Christ will be obvious to the intelligent reader. In Him we behold the One who dwelt in the bosom of the Father before all worlds — the object of His eternal delight — who might have occupied, throughout eternity, this His personal and entirely peculiar place, inasmuch as there lay upon Him no obligation (save that which ineffable love created and ineffable love incurred) to abandon that place. Such, however, was His love to the Father whose counsels were involved, and for the Church collectively, and each individual member thereof, whose salvation was involved, that He, voluntarily, came down to earth, emptied Himself, and made Himself of no reputation, took upon Him the form of a servant and the marks of perpetual service. To these marks we probably have a striking allusion in the Psalms. "Mine ears hast thou digged." (Ps. 40: 6, marg.) This psalm is the expression of Christ's devotedness to God. "Then said I, 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." He came to do the will of God, whatever that will might be. He never once did His own will, not even in the reception and salvation of sinners, though surely His loving heart, with all its affections, was most fully in that glorious work. Still He receives and saves only as the servant of the Father's counsels. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." (John 6: 37-39)

Here we have a most interesting view of the servant character of the Lord Jesus Christ. He, in perfect grace, holds Himself responsible to receive all who come within the range of the divine counsels; and not only to receive them, but to preserve them through all the difficulties and trials of their devious path down here, yea, in the article of death itself, should it come, and to raise them all up in the last day. Oh! how secure is the very feeblest member of the Church of God! He is the subject of God's eternal counsels, which counsels the Lord Jesus Christ is pledged to carry out. Jesus loves the Father, and, in proportion to the intensity of that love, is the security of each member of the redeemed family. The salvation of any sinner who believes on the name of the Son of God is, in one aspect of it, but the expression of Christ's love to the Father. If one such could perish, through any cause whatsoever, it would argue that the Lord Jesus Christ was unable to carry out the will of God, which were nothing short of positive blasphemy against His sacred name, to whom be all honour and majesty throughout the everlasting ages.

Thus we have, in the Hebrew servant, a type of Christ in His pure devotedness to the Father. But there is more than this: "I love my wife and my children." "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present

it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5: 25-27) There are various other passages of Scripture presenting Christ as the antitype of the Hebrew servant, both in His love for the Church, as a body, and for all believers personally. In Matthew 13, John 10 and 13, and Hebrews 2, my reader will find special teaching on the point.

The apprehension of this love of the heart of Jesus cannot fail to produce a spirit of fervent devotedness to the One who could exhibit such pure, such perfect, such disinterested love. How could the wife and children of the Hebrew servant fail to love one who had voluntarily surrendered his liberty in order that he and they might be together? And what is the love presented in the type, when compared with that which shines in the antitype? It is as nothing. "The love of Christ passeth knowledge." It led Him to think of us before all worlds — to visit us in the fullness of time — to walk deliberately to the door post — to suffer for us on the cross, in order that He might raise us to companionship with himself, in His everlasting kingdom and glory.

Were I to enter into a full exposition of the remaining statutes and judgements of this portion of the Book of Exodus, it would carry me much further than I feel, at present, led to go.\* I will merely observe, in conclusion, that it is impossible to read the section and not have the heart drawn out in adoration of the profound wisdom, well-balanced justice, and yet tender considerateness which breathe throughout the whole. We rise up from the study of it with this conviction deeply wrought into the soul, that the One who speaks here is "the only true," "the only wise," and the infinitely gracious God.

{\*I would here observe, once for all, that the feasts referred to in Ex. 23: 14-19 and the offerings in Ex. 29 being brought out in all their fullness and detail, in the book of Leviticus, I shall reserve them until we come to dwell upon the contents of that singularly rich and interesting book.}

May all our meditations on His eternal word have the effect of prostrating our souls in worship before Him whose perfect ways and glorious attributes shine there, in all their blessedness and brightness, for the refreshment, the delight, and the edification of His blood-bought people.

### **Exodus 24**

This chapter opens with an expression remarkably characteristic of the entire Mosaic economy. "And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the Lord, thou and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye *afar off*. . . . *they shall not come nigh*, neither shall the people go up with him." We may search from end to end of the legal ritual, and not find those two precious words, "*draw nigh*." Ah! no; such words could never be heard from the top of Sinai, nor from amid the shadows of the law. They could only be uttered at heaven's side of the empty tomb of Jesus, where the blood of the cross has opened a perfectly cloudless prospect to the vision of faith. The words, "*afar off*," are as characteristic of the law, as "*draw nigh*" are of the gospel. Under the law, the work was never done, which could entitle a sinner to draw nigh. Man had not fulfilled his promised obedience; and the "blood of calves and goats" could not atone for the failure, or give his guilty conscience peace. Hence, therefore, he had to stand "*afar off*." Man's vows were broken and his sin unpurged; how, then, could he draw nigh The blood of ten thousand bullocks could not wipe away one stain from the conscience, or give the peaceful sense of nearness to God.

However, the "first covenant" is here dedicated with blood. An altar is erected at the foot of the hill, with "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 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 although, as the apostle teaches us, it was "impossible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin," yet did it "sanctify to the purifying of the flesh," and, as "a shadow of good things to come," it availed to maintain the people in relationship with Jehovah.

"Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; 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 clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God and did eat and drink." This was the manifestation of "the God of Israel," in light and purity, majesty and holiness. It was not the unfolding of the affections of a Father's bosom, or the sweet accents of a Father's voice, breathing peace and inspiring confidence into the heart. No; the "paved work of a sapphire stone " told out that unapproachable purity and light which could only tell a sinner to keep off Still, "they saw God and did eat and drink." Touching proof of divine forbearance and mercy, as also of the power of the blood!

Looking at this entire scene as a mere illustration, there is much to interest the heart. There is the defiled camp *below* and the sapphire pavement *above*; but the altar, at the foot of the hill, tells us of that way by which the sinner can make his escape from the defilement of his own condition, and mount up to the presence of God, there to feast and worship in perfect peace. The blood which flowed around the altar furnished man's only title to stand in the presence of that glory which "was like a devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel."

"And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount; and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights." This was truly a high and holy position for Moses. He was called away from earth and earthly things. abstracted from natural influences, he is shut in with God, to hear from his mouth the deep mysteries of the Person and work of Christ; for such, in point of fact, we have unfolded in the tabernacle and all its significant furniture! the patterns of things in the heavens." The blessed One knew full well what was about to be the end of man's covenant of works; but He unfolds to Moses, in types and shadows, His own precious thoughts of love and counsels of grace, manifested in, and secured by, Christ.

Blessed, for evermore, be the grace which has not left us under a covenant of works. Blessed be He who has "hushed the law's loud thunders and quenched mount Sinai's flame" by "the blood of the everlasting covenant," and given us a peace which no power of earth or hell can shake. " Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

## **Exodus 25**

This chapter forms the commencement of one of the richest veins in Inspiration's exhaustless mine — a vein in which every stroke of the mattock brings to light untold wealth. We know the mattock with which alone we can work in such a mine, namely, the distinct ministry of the Holy Ghost. Nature can do nothing here. Reason is blind — imagination utterly vain — the most gigantic intellect, instead of being able to interpret the sacred symbols, appears like a bat in the sunshine, blindly dashing itself against the objects which it is utterly unable to discern. We must compel reason and imagination to stand without, while, with a chastened heart, a single eye, and a spiritual mind, we enter the hallowed precincts and gaze upon the deeply significant furniture. God the Holy Ghost is the only One who can conduct us through the courts of the Lord's house, and expound to our souls the true meaning of all that there meets our view. To attempt the exposition, by the aid of intellect's unsanctified powers, would be infinitely more absurd than to set about the repairs of a watch with a blacksmith's tongs and

hammer. "The patterns of things in the heavens" cannot be interpreted by the natural mind, in its most cultivated form. They must all be read in the light of heaven. Earth has no light which could at all develop their beauties. The One who furnished the patterns can alone explain what the patterns mean. The One who furnished the beautiful symbols can alone interpret them.

To the human eye there would seem to be a desultoriness in the mode in which the Holy Ghost has presented the furniture of the tabernacle; but, in reality, as might be expected, there is the most perfect order, the most remarkable precision, the most studious accuracy. From Ex. 25 to Ex. 30, inclusive, we have a distinct section of the Book of Exodus. This section is divided into two parts, the first terminating at Ex. 27: 19, and the second as the close of Ex. 30. The former begins with the ark of the covenant, inside the veil, and ends with the brazen altar and the court in which that altar stood. That is, it gives us, in the first place, Jehovah's throne of judgement, whereon He sat as Lord of all the earth; and it conducts us to that place where He met the sinner, in the credit and virtue of accomplished atonement. Then, in the latter, we have the mode of man's approach to God — the privileges, dignities, and responsibilities of those who, as priests, were permitted to draw nigh to the Divine Presence and enjoy worship and communion there. Thus the arrangement is perfect and beautiful. How could it be otherwise, seeing that it is divine? The ark and the brazen altar present, as it were, two extremes. The former was the throne of God established in "justice and judgement." (Ps. 89: 19) The latter was the place of approach for the sinner where "mercy and truth" went before Jehovah's face. Man, in himself, dared not to approach the ark to meet God, for "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest." (Heb. 9: 8) But God could approach the altar of brass, to meet man as a sinner. "Justice and judgement" could not admit the sinner in; but "mercy and truth" could bring God out; not, indeed, in that overwhelming brightness and majesty in which He was wont to shine forth from between those mystic supporters of His throne — "the cherubim of glory" — but in that gracious ministry which is symbolically presented to us in the furniture and ordinances of the tabernacle.

All this may well remind us of the path trodden by that blessed One, who is the antitype of all these types — the substance of all these shadows. He travelled from the eternal throne of God in heaven, down to the depths of Calvary's cross. He came from all the glory of the former down into all the shame of the latter, in order that He might conduct His redeemed, forgiven, and accepted people back with Himself, and present them faultless before that very throne which He had left on their account. The Lord Jesus fills up, in His own person and work, every point between the throne of God and the dust of death, and every point between the dust of death and the throne of God. In Him God has come down, in perfect grace, to the sinner; in Him the sinner is brought up, in perfect righteousness, to God. All the way, from the ark to the brazen altar, was marked with the footprints of love; and all the way from the brazen altar to the ark of God was sprinkled with the blood of atonement; and as the ransomed worshipper passes along that wondrous path, he beholds the name of Jesus stamped on all that meets his view. May that name be dearer to our hearts! Let us now proceed to examine the chapters consecutively.

It is most interesting to note here, that the first thing which the Lord communicated to Moses is His gracious purpose to have a sanctuary or holy dwelling place in the midst of His people — a sanctuary composed of materials, which directly point to Christ, His Person, His work, and the precious fruit of that work, as seen in the light, the power, and the varied graces of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, these materials were the fragrant fruit of the grace of God — the voluntary offerings of devoted hearts. Jehovah, whose majesty, "the heaven of heavens could not contain," was graciously pleased to dwell in a boarded and curtained tent, erected for Him by those who cherished the fond desire to hail His presence amongst them. This tabernacle may be viewed in two ways: first, as furnishing "a pattern of

things in the heavens;" and, secondly, as presenting a deeply significant type of the body of Christ. The various materials of which the tabernacle was composed will come before us, as we pass along; we shall, therefore, consider the three comprehensive subjects put before us in this chapter, namely, the ark; the table; and the candlestick.

The ark of the covenant occupies the leading place in the divine communications to Moses. Its position, too, in the tabernacle was most marked. Shut in within the veil, in the holiest of all, it formed the base of Jehovah's throne. Its very name conveys to the mind its import. An ark, so far as the word instructs us, is designed to preserve *intact* whatever is put therein. An ark carried Noah and his family, together with all the orders of creation, in safety over the billows of judgement which covered the earth. An ark, at the opening of this book, was faith's vessel for preserving "a proper child" from the waters of death. When, therefore, we read of "the ark of the covenant," we are led to believe that it was designed of God to preserve His covenant unbroken, in the midst of an erring people. In it, as we know, the second set of tables were deposited. As to the first set, they were broken in pieces, beneath the mount, showing that man's covenant was wholly abolished — that his work could never, by any possibility, form the basis of Jehovah's throne of government. "Justice and judgement are the habitation of that throne," whether in its earthly or heavenly aspect. The ark could not contain within its hallowed enclosure, broken tables. Man might fail to fulfil his self-chosen vow; but God's law must be preserved in its divine integrity and perfectness. If God was to set up His throne in the midst of His people, He could only do so in a way worthy of Himself. His standard of judgement and government must be perfect.

"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 ark of the covenant was to accompany the people in all their wanderings. It never rested while they were a travelling or a conflicting host. It moved from place to place in the wilderness. It went before them into the midst of Jordan; it was their grand rallying Point in all the wars of Canaan; it was the sure and certain earnest of power wherever it went. No power of the enemy could stand before that which was the well-known expression of the divine presence and power. The ark was to be Israel's companion in travel, in the desert; and "the staves" and "the rings" were the apt expression of its travelling character.

However, it was not always to be a traveller. "The afflictions of David," as well as the wars of Israel, were to have an end. The prayer was yet to be breathed and answered, "Arise, O Lord, into *thy rest*: thou and *the Ark of thy strength*." (Ps. 132: 8) This most sublime petition had its partial accomplishment in the palmy days of Solomon, when "the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims. For the cherubims spread forth their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark, and the staves thereof above. *And they drew out the staves*, that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day." (1 Kings 8:6-8) The sand of the desert was to be exchanged for the golden floor of the temple. (1 Kings 6: 30) The wanderings of the ark were to have an end; there was "neither enemy nor evil occurrent," and therefore, "the staves were drawn out."

Nor was this the only difference between the ark in the tabernacle and in the temple. The apostle, speaking of the ark in its wilderness habitation, describes it as "the ark of the covenant, overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant." (Heb. 9: 4) Such were the contents of the ark in its wilderness journeyings — the pot of manna, the record of Jehovah's faithfulness, in providing for His redeemed in the desert, and Aaron's rod, "a token against the rebels," to "take away their murmurings." (Compare Ex. 16: 32-39;

and Num. 17: 10) But when the moment arrived in which "the staves" were to be "drawn out," when the wanderings and wars of Israel were over, the "exceeding magnificent" house was completed, when the sun of Israel's glory had reached, in type, its meridian, as marked by the wealth and splendour of Solomon's reign, then the records of wilderness need and wilderness failure were unnoticed, and nothing remained save that which constituted the eternal foundation of the throne of the God of Israel, and of all the earth. "*There was nothing in the ark, save the two tables of stone*, which Moses put there at Horeb." (1 Kings 8: 9)

But all this brightness was soon to be overcast by the heavy clouds of human failure and divine displeasure. The rude foot of the uncircumcised was yet to walk across the ruins of that beautiful house, and as faded light and departed glory were yet to elicit the contemptuous "hiss" of the stranger. This would not be the place to follow out these things in detail; I shall only refer my reader to the last notice which the Word of God affords us of "the ark of the covenant," — a notice which carries us forward to a time when human folly and sin shall no more disturb the resting-place of that ark, and when neither a curtained tent, nor yet a temple made with hands, shall contain it. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou has taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple *the ark of His covenant*: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." (Rev. 11: 15-19)

The mercy-seat comes next in order. "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 shalt thou 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."

Here Jehovah gives utterance to His gracious intention of coming down from the fiery mount to take His place upon the mercy seat. This He could do, inasmuch as the tables of testimony were preserved unbroken beneath, and the symbols of his power, whether in creation or providence, rose on the right hand and on the left — the inseparable adjuncts of that throne on which Jehovah had seated himself — a throne of grace founded upon divine righteousness and supported by justice and judgement. Here the glory of the God of Israel shone forth. From hence He issued His commands, softened and sweetened by the gracious source from whence they emanated, and the medium through which they came — like the beams of the mid-day sun, passing through a cloud, we can enjoy their genial and enlivening influence without being dazzled by their brightness. "His commandments are not grievous," when received from off the mercy-seat, because they come in connection with grace, which gives the ears to hear and the power to obey.

Looking at the ark and mercy-seat together, we may see in them a striking figure of Christ, in His Person and work. He having, in His life, magnified the law and made it honourable, became, through death, a propitiation or mercy-seat. for every one that believeth. God's mercy could only repose on a pedestal of perfect righteousness. "Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 5: 21) The only proper meeting place between God and man is the point where grace and righteousness meet and perfectly harmonise. Nothing but perfect righteousness could suit God; and nothing but perfect grace could suit the sinner. But where could these attributes meet in one point? Only in the cross. There it is that "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." (Ps. 85: 10) Thus it is that the soul of the believing sinner finds peace. He sees that God's righteousness and his justification rest upon precisely the same basis, namely, Christ's accomplished work. When man, under the powerful action of the truth of God, takes his place as a sinner, God can, in the exercise of Grace, take His place as a Saviour, and then every question is settled, for the cross having answered all the claims of divine justice, mercy's copious streams can flow unhindered. When a righteous God and a ruined sinner meet, on a blood-sprinkled platform, all is settled for ever — settled in such a way as perfectly glorifies God, and eternally saves the sinner. God must be true, though every man he proved a liar; and when man is so thoroughly brought down to the lowest point of his own moral condition before God as to be willing to take the place which God's truth assigns him, he then learns that God has revealed Himself as the righteous Justifier of such an one. This must give settled peace to the conscience; and not only so, but impart a capacity to commune with God, and hearken to His holy precepts in the intelligence of that relationship into which divine grace has introduced us.

Hence, therefore, "the holiest of all" unfolds a truly wondrous scene. The ark, the mercy seat, the cherubim, the glory! What a sight for the high-priest of Israel to behold as, once a year, he went in within the veil! May the Spirit of God open the eyes of our understandings, that we may understand more fully the deep meaning of those precious types.

Moses is next instructed about "the table of showbread," or bread of presentation. On this table stood the food of the priests of God. For seven days those twelve loaves of "fine flour with frankincense" were presented before the Lord, after which, being replaced by others, they became the food of the priests who fed upon them in the holy place. (See Lev. 24: 5-9) It is needless to say that those twelve loaves typify "the man Christ Jesus." The "fine flour," of which they were composed, mark His perfect manhood, while the "frankincense" points out the entire devotion of that manhood to God. If God has His priests ministering in the holy place, He will assuredly have a table for them, and a well-furnished table too. Christ is the table and Christ is the bread thereon. The pure table and the twelve loaves shadow forth Christ, as presented before God unceasingly, in all the excellency of His spotless humanity, and administered as food to the priestly family. The "seven days" set forth the perfection of the divine enjoyment of Christ ; and the "twelve loaves" the administration of that enjoyment in and by man. There is also, I should venture to suggest, the idea, of Christ's connection with the twelve tribes of Israel, and the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The candlestick of pure gold comes next in order, for God's priests need *light* as well as *food*: and they have both the one and the other in Christ. In this candlestick there is no mention of anything but pure gold. "All of it shall be one *beaten* work of pure gold." "The seven lamps" which "gave light over against the candlestick," express the perfection of the light and energy of the Spirit, founded upon and connected with the perfect efficacy of the work of Christ. The work of the Holy Ghost can never be separated from the work of Christ. This is set forth, in a double way, in this beautiful figure of the golden candle stick. "The seven lamps" being connected with "the shaft" of "beaten gold," points us to

Christ's finished work as the sole basis of the manifestation of the Spirit in the Church. The Holy Ghost was not given until Jesus was glorified. (Comp. John 7: 39 with Acts 19: 2-6) In Revelation 3, Christ is presented to the Church of Sardis as "having the seven spirits." It was as "exalted to the right hand of God" that the Lord Jesus "shed forth" the Holy Ghost upon His church, in order that she might shine according to the power and perfection of her position, in the holy place, her proper sphere of being, of action, and of worship.

Then, again, we find it was one of Aaron's specific functions to light and trim those seven lamps. "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) Thus we may see how the work of the Holy Ghost in the Church is linked with Christ's work on earth and His work in heaven. "The seven lamps" were there, no doubt; but priestly energy and diligence were needed in order to keep them trimmed and lighted. The priest would continually need "the tongs and snuff-dishes" for the purpose of removing ought that would not be a fit vehicle for the "pure beaten oil." Those tongs and snuff-dishes were of "beaten gold" likewise, for the whole matter was the direct result of divine operation. If the Church shine, it is only by the energy of the Spirit, and that energy is founded upon Christ, who, in pursuance of God's eternal counsel, became in His sacrifice and Priesthood, the spring and power of everything to His Church. All is of God. Whether we look within that mysterious veil, and behold the ark with its cover, and the two significant figures attached thereto; or if we gaze on that which lay without the veil, the pure table and the pure candlestick, with their distinctive vessels and instruments — all speak to us of God, whether as revealed to us in connection with the Son or the Holy Ghost.

Christian reader, your high calling places you in the very midst of all these precious realities. Your place is not merely amid "the patterns of things in the heavens," but amid "the heavenly things themselves." You have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." You are a Priest unto God. "The showbread" is yours. Your place is at "the pure table," to feed on the priestly food, in the light of the Holy Ghost. Nothing can ever deprive you of those divine privileges. They are yours for ever. Let it be your care to watch against everything that might rob you of the *enjoyment* of them. Beware of all unhallowed tempers, lusts, feelings, and imaginations. Keep nature down — keep the world out keep Satan off. May the Holy Ghost fill your whole soul with Christ. Then you will be practically holy and abidingly happy. You will bear fruit, and the Father will be glorified, and your joy shall be full.

## **Exodus 26**

The section of our book which now opens before us contains the instructive description of the curtains and coverings of the tabernacle, wherein the spiritual eye discerns the shadows of the various features and phases of Christ's manifested character. "Moreover, thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet : with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them." Here we have the different aspects of "the man Christ Jesus." The "fine twined linen" prefigures the spotless purity of His walk and character; while the "blue, the purple, and the scarlet" present Him to us as "the Lord from heaven," who is to *reign* according to the divine counsels, but whose royalty is to be the result of His *sufferings*. Thus we have a spotless man, a heavenly man, a royal man, a suffering man. These materials were not confined to the "curtains" of the tabernacle, but were also used in making "the veil," (ver. 31,) "the hanging for the door of the tent," (ver. 36,) "the

hanging for the gate of the court," (Ex. 27: 16,) "the cloths of service and the holy garments of Aaron." (Ex. 39: 1.) In a word, it was Christ everywhere, Christ in all, Christ alone.\*

{\*The expression, "white and clean," gives peculiar force and beauty to the type which the Holy Ghost has presented in the "fine twined linen." Indeed, there could not be a more appropriate emblem of spotless manhood.}

"The fine twined linen," as expressive of Christ's spotless manhood, opens a most precious and copious spring of thought to the spiritual mind; it furnishes a theme on which we cannot meditate too profoundly. The truth respecting Christ's humanity must be received with scriptural accuracy, held with spiritual energy, guarded with holy jealousy, and confessed with heavenly power. If we are wrong as to this, we cannot be right as to anything. It is a grand, vital, fundamental truth, and if it be not received, held, guarded, and confessed, as God has revealed it in His holy word, the entire superstructure must be unsound. Nothing can be more deplorable than the looseness of thought and expression which seems to prevail in reference to this all-important doctrine. Were there more reverence for the word of God, there would be more accurate acquaintance with it; and, in this way, we should happily avoid all those erroneous and unguarded statements which surely must grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whose province it is to testify of Jesus.

When the angel had announced to Mary the glad tidings of the Saviour's birth, she said unto him, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" Her feeble mind was utterly incompetent to enter into, much less to fathom, the stupendous mystery of "God manifest in the flesh." But mark carefully the angelic reply — a reply, not to a sceptic mind, but to a pious, though ignorant, heart. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; wherefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1: 39, 35) Mary, doubtless, imagined that this birth was to be according to the principles of ordinary generation. But the angel corrects her mistake, and, in correcting it, enunciates one of the grandest truths of revelation. He declares to her that divine power was about to form A REAL MAN — "the second man the Lord from heaven" — one whose nature was divinely pure, utterly incapable of receiving or communicating any taint. This Holy One was made "*in, the likeness* of sinful flesh," without sin in the flesh. He partook of real *bona fide* flesh and blood without a particle or shadow of the evil thereto attaching.

This is a cardinal truth which cannot be too accurately laid hold of or too tenaciously held. The incarnation of the Son — His mysterious entrance into pure and spotless flesh, formed, by the power of the Highest, in the virgin's womb, is the foundation of the "great mystery of godliness" of which the topstone is a glorified God-man in heaven, the Head, Representative, and Model of the redeemed Church of God. The essential purity of His manhood perfectly met the claims of God; the reality thereof met the necessities of man. He was a man, for none else would do to meet man's ruin. But He was such a man as could satisfy all the claims of the throne of God. He was a spotless, real man, in whom God could perfectly delight, and on whom man could unreservedly lean.

I need not remind the enlightened reader that all this, if taken apart from death and resurrection, is perfectly unavailable to us. He needed not only an incarnate, but a crucified and risen Christ. True, He should be incarnate to be crucified; but it is death and resurrection which render incarnation available to us. It is nothing short of a deadly error to suppose that, in incarnation, Christ was taking man into union with Himself. This could not be. He Himself expressly teaches the contrary. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and *die*, it abideth *alone*: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John 12: 24) There could be no union between sinful and holy flesh, pure and impure, corruptible and incorruptible, mortal and immortal. Accomplished death is the only base of a

unity between Christ and His elect members. It is in beautiful connection with the words, "Rise, let us go hence," that He says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." "We have been planted together in the likeness of his death." "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." "In whom also are ye 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." I would refer my reader to Romans 6 and Colossians 2 as a full and comprehensive statement of the truth on this important subject. It was only as dead and risen that Christ and His people could become one. The true corn of wheat had to fall into the ground and die ere a full ear could spring up and be gathered into the heavenly garner.

But while this is a plainly revealed truth of Scripture, it is equally plain that incarnation formed, as it were, the first layer of the glorious superstructure; and the curtains of "fine twined Linen" prefigure the moral purity of "the man Christ Jesus." We have already seen the manner of His conception; and, as we pass along the current of His life here below, we meet with instance after instance of the same spotless purity. He was forty days in the wilderness, tempted of the devil, but there was no response in His pure nature to the tempter's foul suggestions. He could touch the leper and receive no taint. He could touch the bier and not contract the smell of death. He could pass unscathed through the most polluted atmosphere. He was, as to His manhood, like a sunbeam emanating from the fountain of light, which can pass, without a soil, through the most defiling medium. He was perfectly unique in nature, constitution, and character. None but He could say, "Thou wilt not suffer thine holy One to see corruption." This was in reference to His humanity, which, as being perfectly holy and perfectly pure, was capable of being a sin-bearer. "His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." Not *to* the tree, as some would teach us; but *on* the tree." It was on the cross that Christ was our sin-bearer, and only there. "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5: 21)

"*Blue*" is the ethereal colour, and marks the heavenly character of Christ, who, though He had come down into all the circumstances of actual and true humanity — sin excepted — yet was He "the Lord from heaven." Though He was "very man," yet He ever walked in the uninterrupted consciousness of His proper dignity, as a heavenly stranger. He never once forgot whence He had come, where He was, or whither He was going. The spring of all His joys was on high. Earth could neither make Him richer nor poorer. He found this world to be "a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;" and, hence, His spirit could only find its refreshment above. It was entirely heavenly. "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the son of man *who is in heaven.*" (John 3: 13)

"*Purple*" denotes royalty, and points us to Him who "Was born King of the Jews;" who offered Himself as such to the Jewish nation, and was rejected; who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, avowing Himself a king, when, to mortal vision, there was not so much as a single trace of royalty. "Thou sayest that I am a king." And "hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." And, finally, the inscription upon His cross, "in letters of Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin" — the language of religion, of science, and of government declared Him, to the whole known world, to be "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Earth disowned His claims — so much the worse for it but not so heaven; there His claim was fully recognised. He was received as a conqueror into the eternal mansions of light, crowned with glory and honour, and seated, amid the acclamations of angelic hosts, on the throne of the majesty in the heavens, there to wait until His enemies be made His footstool. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people



imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set *my king* upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise, now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. BLESSED ARE ALL THEY THAT PUT THEIR TRUST IN HIM." (Ps. 2)

"*Scarlet*," when genuine, is produced by death; and this makes its application to a suffering Christ safe and appropriate. "Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh." Without death, all would have been unavailing. We can admire "the blue" and "the purple" but without "the scarlet" the tabernacle would have lacked an all-important feature. It was by death that Christ destroyed him that had the power of death. The Holy Ghost, in setting before us a striking figure of Christ — the true tabernacle—could not possibly omit that phase of His character which constituted the groundwork of His connection with His body the Church, of His claim to the throne of David, and the headship of all creation. In a word, He not only unfolds the Lord Jesus to our view, in these significant curtains, as a spotless man, a royal man, but also a suffering man; one who, by death, should make good His claims to all that to which, as man, He was entitled, in the divine counsels.

But we have much more in the curtains of the tabernacle than the varied and perfect phases of the character of Christ. We have also the unity and consistency of that character. Each phase is displayed in its own proper perfectness; and one never interferes with, or mars the exquisite beauty of, another. All was in perfect harmony beneath the eye of God, and was so displayed in "the pattern which was showed to Moses on the mount," and in the copy which was exhibited below. "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." Such was the fair proportion and consistency in all the ways of Christ, as a perfect man, walking on the earth, in whatever aspect or relationship we view Him. When acting in one character, we never find ought that is, in the very least degree, inconsistent with the divine integrity of another. He was, at all times, in all places, under all circumstances, the perfect man. There was nothing out of that fair and lovely proportion which belonged to Him, in all His ways. "Every one of the curtains shall have one measure."

The two sets of five curtains each may symbolise the two grand aspects of Christ's character, as acting toward God and toward man. We have the same two aspects in the law, namely, what was due to God, and what was due to man; so that, as to Christ, if we look in, we find "thy law is within my heart;" and if we look at His outward character and walk, we see those two elements adjusted with perfect accuracy, and not only adjusted, but inseparably linked together by the heavenly grace and divine energy which dwelt in His most glorious Person.

"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.... And thou shalt make fifty *taches of gold*, and couple the curtains together with the taches; and *it shall be one tabernacle.*" We have here displayed to us, in the "loops of *blue*," and "taches of *gold*," that *heavenly* grace and *divine* energy in Christ which enabled Him to combine and perfectly adjust the claims of God and man; so that in responding to both the one and the other, He never, for a

moment, marred the unity of His character. When crafty and hypocritical men tempted Him with the enquiry, "Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?" His wise reply was, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Nor was it merely Caesar, but man in every relation that had all his claims perfectly met in Christ. As He united in His perfect Person the nature of God and man, so He met in His, perfect ways the claims of God and man. Most interesting would it be to trace, through the gospel narrative, the exemplification of the principle suggested by the "loops of blue," and "taches of gold;" but I must leave my reader to pursue this study under the immediate guidance of the Holy Ghost, who delights to expatiate upon every feature and every phase of that perfect One whom it is His unvarying purpose and undivided object to exalt.

The curtains on which we have been dwelling were covered with other "curtains of goats' hair;" (Ver. 7-14) Their beauty was hidden from those without by that which bespoke roughness and severity. This latter did not meet the view of those within. To all who were privileged to enter the hallowed enclosure nothing was visible save "the blue, the purple, the scarlet, and fine twined linen," the varied yet combined exhibition of the virtues and excellencies of that divine Tabernacle in which God dwelt within the veil — that is, of Christ, through whose flesh, the antitype of all these, the beams of the divine nature shone so delicately, that the sinner could behold without being overwhelmed by their dazzling brightness.

As the Lord Jesus passed along this earth, how few really knew Him! How few had eyes anointed with heavenly eyesalve to penetrate and appreciate the deep mystery of His character! How few saw "the blue, the purple, the scarlet, and the twined linen!" It was only when faith brought man into His presence that He ever allowed the brightness of what He was to shine forth — ever allowed the glory to break through the cloud. To nature's eye there would seem to have been a reserve and a severity about Him which were aptly prefigured by the "covering of goats' hair." All this was the result of His profound separation and estrangement, not from sinners personally, but from the thoughts and maxims of men. He had nothing in common with man as such, nor was it within the compass of mere nature to comprehend or enjoy Him. "No man," said He, "can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him;" and when one of those "drawn" ones confessed His name, He declared that "flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." (Comp. John 6: 44; Matt. 6: 17) He was "a root out of a dry ground," having neither "form nor comeliness" to attract the eye or gratify the heart of man. The popular current could never flow in the direction of One who, as he passed rapidly across the stage of this vain world, wrapped Himself up in a "covering of goats' hair." Jesus was not popular. The multitude might follow Him for a moment, because His ministry stood connected, in their judgement, with "the loaves and fishes" which met their need; but they were just as ready to cry, "Away with him!" as "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Oh! let Christians remember this! Let the servants of Christ remember it! Let all preachers of the gospel remember it! Let one and all of us ever seek to bear in mind the "*covering of goats' hair!*"

But if the goats' skins expressed the severity of Christ's separation from earth, "the rams' skins dyed red" exhibit His intense consecration and devotedness to God, which was carried out even unto *death*. He was the only perfect Servant that ever stood in God's vineyard. He had one object which He pursued, with an undeviating course, from the manger to the cross, and that was to glorify the Father and finish His work. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business" was the language of His youth, and the accomplishment of that "business" was the design of His life. "His meat was to do the will of him that sent him and to finish his work." "The rams' skins dyed red" formed as distinct a part of His ordinary habit as the "goats' hair." His perfect devotion to God separated Him from the habits of

men.

"The badgers' skins" may exhibit to us the holy vigilance with which the Lord Jesus guarded against the approach of everything hostile to the purpose which engrossed His whole soul. He took up His position for God, and held it with a tenacity which no influence of men or devils, earth or hell, could overcome. The covering of badgers' skins was "above," (ver. 14,) teaching us that the most prominent feature in the character of "the man Christ Jesus" was an invincible determination to stand as a witness for God on the earth. He was the true Naboth, who gave up His life rather than surrender the truth of God, or give up that for which He had taken His place in this world.

The goat, the ram, and the badger, must be regarded as exhibiting certain natural features, and also as symbolising certain moral qualities; and we must take both into account in our application of these figures to the character of Christ. The human eye could only discern the former. It could see none of the moral grace, beauty, and dignity, which lay beneath the outward form of the despised and humble Jesus of Nazareth. When the treasures of heavenly wisdom flowed from His lips, the inquiry was, "Is not this the carpenter?" or "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" When He asserted His eternal Sonship and Godhead, the word was, "Thou art not yet fifty years old," or "They took up stones to cast at him." In short, the acknowledgement of the Pharisees, in John 9, was true in reference to men in general. "as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is."

It would be utterly impossible, in the compass of a volume like this, to trace the unfoldings of those precious features of Christ's character through the gospel narratives. Sufficient has been said to open up springs of spiritual thought to my reader, and to furnish some faint idea of the rich treasures which are wrapped up in the curtains and coverings of the tabernacle. Christ's hidden being, secret springs and inherent excellencies — His outward and unattractive form — what He was in Himself, what He was to Godward, and what He was to manward — what he was in the judgement of faith, and what in the judgement of nature — all is sweetly and impressively told out to the circumcised ear, in the "curtains of blue, purple, scarlet, and the twined linen:" and the "coverings of skins."

"The boards for the tabernacle" were made of the same wood as was used in constructing "the ark of the covenant." Moreover, they were upheld by the sockets of silver formed out of the atonement; their hooks and chapiters being of the same. (Compare attentively Ex. 30: 11-16, with Ex. 38: 25-28) The whole framework of the tent of the tabernacle was based on that which spoke of atonement or ransom, while the "hooks and chapiters" at the top set forth the same. The sockets were buried in the sand, and the hooks and chapiters were above. It matters not how deep you penetrate, or how high you rise, that glorious and eternal truth is emblazoned before you, "I HAVE FOUND A RANSOM." Blessed be God, "we are 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."

The tabernacle was divided into three distinct parts, namely, "the holy of holies," "the holy place," and the court of the tabernacle. The entrance into each of these was of the same materials, "blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen." (Compare Ex. 24: 31, 36; Ex. 27: 16.) The interpretation of which is simply this: Christ forms the only doorway into the varied fields of glory which are yet to be displayed, whether on earth, in heaven, or in the heaven of heavens. "Every family, in heaven and earth," will be ranged under His headship, as all will be brought into everlasting felicity and glory, on the ground of His accomplished atonement. This is plain enough, and needs, no stretch of the imagination to grasp it. We know it to be true: and when we know the truth which is shadowed forth, the shadow is easily understood. If only our hearts be filled with Christ, we shall not go far astray in our interpretations of the tabernacle and its furniture. It is not a head full of learned criticism that will

avail us much here, but a heart full of affection for Jesus, and a conscience at rest in the blood of His cross.

May the Spirit of God enable us to study these things with more interest and intelligence! May He "open our eyes that we may behold wondrous things out of his law."

### **Exodus 27**

We have now arrived at the brazen altar which stood at the door of the tabernacle; and I would call my reader's most particular attention to the order of the Holy Ghost in this portion of our book. We have already remarked that from Ex. 25 to Ex. 27: 19, forms a distinct division, in which we are furnished with a description of the ark and mercy-seat, the table and candlestick, the curtains and the veil; and, lastly, the brazen altar and the court in which that altar stood. If my reader will turn to Ex. 35: 15; Ex. 37: 25; Ex. 40: 26, he will remark that the golden altar of incense is noticed, in each of the three instances, between the candlestick and the brazen altar. Whereas, when Jehovah is giving directions to Moses, the brazen altar is introduced immediately after the candlestick and the curtains of the tabernacle. Now, inasmuch as there must be a divine reason for this difference, it is the privilege of every diligent and intelligent student of the word to inquire what that reason is.

Why, then, does the Lord, when giving directions about the furniture of the "holy place," omit the altar of incense and pass out to the brazen altar which stood at the door of the tabernacle? The reason, I believe, is simply this. He first describes the mode in which He would manifest Himself to man : and then He describes the mode of man's approach to Him. He took His seat upon the throne, as " the Lord of all the earth." The beams of His glory were hidden behind the veil — type of Christ's flesh (Heb. 10: 20); but there was the manifestation of Himself, in connection with man, as in "the pure table," and by the light and power of the Holy Ghost, as in the candlestick. Then we have the manifested character of Christ as a man down here on this earth, as seen in the curtains and coverings of the tabernacle. And, finally, we have the brazen altar as the grand exhibition of the meeting-place between a holy God and a sinner. This conducts us, as it were, to the extreme point, from which we return, in company with Aaron and his sons, back to the holy place, the ordinary priestly position, where stood the golden altar of incense. Thus the order is strikingly beautiful. The golden altar is not spoken of until there is a priest to burn incense thereon, for Jehovah showed Moses the patterns of things in the heavens according to the order in which these things are to be apprehended by faith. On the other hand, when Moses gives directions to the congregations (Ex. 35), when he records the labours of "Bezaleel and Aholiab," (Ex. 37 and Ex. 38), and when he sets up the tabernacle (Ex. 40), he follows the simple order in which the furniture was placed.

The prayerful investigation of this interesting subject, and a comparison of the passages above referred to, will amply repay my reader. We shall now examine the brazen altar.

This altar was the place where the sinner approached God, in the power and efficacy of the blood of atonement. It stood "at the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation," and on it all the blood was shed. It was composed of "shittim wood and brass." The wood was the same as that of the golden altar of incense; but the metal was different, and the reason of this difference is obvious. The altar of brass was the place where sin was dealt with according to the divine judgement concerning it. The altar of gold was the place from whence the precious fragrance of Christ's acceptableness ascended to the throne of God. The shittim Wood" as the figure of Christ's humanity, must be the same in each case; but in the brazen altar we see Christ meeting the fire of divine justice; in the golden altar, we behold Him feeding the divine affections. At the former, the fire of divine wrath was quenched, at the latter, the fire of priestly worship, is kindled. The soul delights to find Christ in both; but the altar of

brass is what meets the need of a guilty conscience. It is the very first thing for a poor, helpless, needy, convicted sinner. There cannot be settled peace, in reference to the question of sin, until the eye of faith rests on Christ as the antitype of the brazen altar. I must see my sin reduced to ashes in the pan of the altar, ere I can enjoy rest of conscience in the presence of God. It is when I know, by faith in the record of God, that He Himself has dealt with my sin in the Person of Christ, at the brazen altar — that He has satisfied all His own righteous claims — that He has put away my sin out of His holy presence, so that it can never come back again — it is then, but not until then, that I can enjoy divine and everlasting peace.

I would here offer a remark as to the real meaning of the "gold" and "brass" in the furniture of the tabernacle. "Gold" is the symbol of divine righteousness, or the divine nature in "the man Christ Jesus." "Brass" is the symbol of righteousness, demanding judgement of sin, as in the brazen altar; or the judgement of uncleanness, as in the brazen laver. This will account for the fact that *inside* the tent of the tabernacle, all was gold — the ark, the mercy-seat, the table, the candlestick, the altar of incense. All these were the symbols of the divine nature — the inherent personal excellence of the Lord Jesus Christ, On the other hand, *outside* the tent of the tabernacle, — all was brass — the brazen altar and its vessels, the laver and its foot.

The claims of righteousness, as to sin and uncleanness, must be divinely met ere there can be any enjoyment of the precious mysteries of Christ's Person, as unfolded in the inner sanctuary of God. It is when I see all sin and all uncleanness perfectly judged and washed away, that I can, as a priest, draw nigh and worship in the holy place, and enjoy the full display of all the beauty and excellency of the God-man, Christ Jesus.

The reader can, with much profit, follow out the application of this thought in detail, not merely in the study of the tabernacle and the temple, but also in various passages of the word; for example, in the first chapter of Revelation, Christ is seen "girt about the paps with a *golden* girdle," and having "his feet like unto fine *brass*, as if they burned in a furnace." "The golden girdle" is the symbol of His intrinsic righteousness. The "feet like unto the brass," express the unmitigated judgement of evil — He cannot tolerate evil, but must crush it beneath His feet.

Such is the Christ with whom we have to do. He judges sin, but He saves the sinner. Faith sees sin reduced to ashes at the brazen altar; it sees all uncleanness washed away at the brazen laver: and, finally, is enjoys Christ, as He is unfolded, in the secret of the divine presence, by the light and power of the Holy Ghost. It finds Him at the golden altar, in all the value of His intercession. It feeds on Him at the pure table. It recognises Him in the ark and mercy-seat as the One who answers all the claims of justice, and, at the same time, meets all human need. It beholds Him in the veil, with all its mystic figures. It reads His precious name on everything. Oh! for a heart to prize and praise this matchless, glorious Christ!

Nothing can be of more vital importance than a clear understanding of the doctrine of the brazen altar; that is to say, of the doctrine taught there. It is from the want of clearness as to this, that so many souls go mourning all their days. They have never had a clean, thorough settlement of the whole matter of their guilt at the brazen altar. They have never really beheld, by faith, God Himself settling on the cross, the entire question of their sins. They are seeking peace for their uneasy consciences in regeneration and its evidences, — the fruits of the Spirit, frames, feelings, experiences, — things quite right and most valuable in themselves, but they are not the ground of peace. What fills the soul with perfect peace is the knowledge of what God hath wrought at the brazen altar. The ashes in yonder pan tell me the peace-giving story that ALL IS DONE The believer's sins were all put away by God's own

hand of redeeming love. "He hath made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5) All sin must be judged: but the believer's sins have been already judged in the cross ; hence, he is perfectly justified. To suppose that there could be anything against the very feeblest believer, is to deny the entire work of the cross. His sins and iniquities have been all put away by God Himself, and therefore they must needs be perfectly put away. They all went with the outpoured life of the Lamb of God.

Dear Christian reader, see that your heart is thoroughly established in the peace which Jesus has made "by the blood of His cross."

The priesthood being instituted, as in the two preceding chapters, we are here introduced to the position of true priestly worship and communion. The order is marked and instructive; and, moreover, precisely corresponds with the order of the believer's experience At the brazen altar, he sees the ashes of his sins; he then sees himself linked with One who, though personally pure and spotless, so that He could be anointed without blood, has, nevertheless, associated us with Himself in life, righteousness, and favour; and, finally, he beholds, in the golden altar, the preciousness of Christ, as the material on which the divine affections feed.

Thus it is ever; there must be a brazen altar and a priest before there can be a golden altar and incense. Very many of the children of God have never passed the brazen altar. They have never yet, in spirit, entered into the power and reality of true priestly worship. They do not rejoice in a full, clear, divine sense of pardon and righteousness; they have never reached the golden altar. They hope to reach it when they die; but it is their privilege to be at it now. The work of the cross has removed out of the way everything which could act as a barrier to their free and intelligent worship. The present position of all true believers is at the golden altar of incense.

This altar typifies a position of wondrous blessedness. There we enjoy the reality and efficacy of Christ's intercession. For ever done with self and all pertaining thereto, so far as any expectation of good is concerned, we are to be occupied with what He is before God. We shall find nothing in self but defilement. Every exhibition of it is defiling; it has been condemned and set aside in the judgement of God, and not a shred or particle thereof is to be found in the pure incense and pure fire, on the altar of pure gold: it could not be. We have been introduced, "by the blood of Jesus," into the sanctuary — a sanctuary of priestly service and worship, in which there is not so much as a trace of sin. We see the pure table, the pure candlestick, and the pure altar; but there is nothing to remind us of self and its wretchedness. Were it possible for ought of that to meet our view, it could but prove the death knell of our worship, mar our priestly food, and dim our light. Nature can have no place in the sanctuary of God. It, together with all its belongings, has been consumed to ashes; and we are now to have before our souls the fragrant odour of Christ, ascending in grateful incense to God: this is what God delights in. Everything that presents Christ in His own proper excellence, is sweet and acceptable to God. Even the feeblest expression or exhibition of Him, in the life or worship of a saint, is an odour of a sweet smell, in which God is well pleased.

Too often, alas! we have to be occupied with our failures and infirmities. If ever the workings of indwelling sin be suffered to rise to the surface, we must deal with our God about them, for He cannot go on with sin. He can forgive it, and cleanse us from it; He can restore our souls by the gracious ministry of our great High Priest; but He cannot go on in company with a single sinful thought. a light or foolish thought as well as an unclean or covetous one, is amply sufficient to mar a Christian's communion, and interrupt his worship. Should any such thought spring up, it must be judged and confessed, ere the elevated joys of the sanctuary can be known afresh. A heart in which lust is working,

is not enjoying the proper occupations of the sanctuary. When we are in our proper priestly condition, nature is as though it had no existence; then we can feed upon Christ. We can taste the divine luxury of being wholly at leisure from ourselves, and wholly engrossed with Christ.

All this can only be produced by the power of the Spirit. There is no need of seeking to work up nature's devotional feelings, by the various appliances of systematic religion. There must be pure fire as well as pure incense. (Compare Lev. 10: 1, with Lev. 16: 12) All efforts at worshipping God, by the unhallowed powers of nature, come under the head of "strange fire." God is the object of worship; Christ the ground and the material of worship; and the Holy Ghost the power of worship.

Properly speaking, then, as in the brazen altar, we have Christ in the value of His sacrifice, so in the golden altar, we have Christ in the value of His intercession. This will furnish my reader with a still clearer sense of the reason why the priestly office is introduced between the two altars. There is, as might be expected, an intimate connection between the two, for Christ's intercession is founded upon His sacrifice. "And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it, once in a year, with the blood of the sin-offering of atonement: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the Lord." All rests upon the immovable foundation of SHED BLOOD. "Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the pattern of things in the heavens should be purified with these; 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: 22-24)

From verse 11-16 we have the atonement money for the congregation. All were to pay alike. "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." In the matter of atonement, all must stand on one common platform. There may be a vast difference in knowledge, in experience, in capacity, in attainment, in zeal, in devotedness, but the ground of atonement is alike to all. The great apostle of the Gentiles, and the feeblest lamb in all the flock of Christ, stand on the same level, as regards atonement. This is a very simple and a very blessed truth. All may not be alike devoted and fruitful; but "the precious blood of Christ," and not devotedness or fruitfulness, is the solid and everlasting ground of the believer's rest. The more we enter into the truth and power of this, the more fruitful shall we be.

In Leviticus 27, we find another kind of valuation. When any one made "a singular vow," Moses valued him according to his age. In other words, when any one ventured to assume the ground of capacity, Moses, as the representative of *the claims* of God, estimated him "after the shekel of the sanctuary" If he were "poorer" than Moses' estimation, then he was to "present himself before the priest," the representative of *the grace* of God, who was to value him "according to his ability that vowed."

Blessed be God, we know that all His claims have been answered, and all our vows discharged by One who was at once the Representative of His claims and the Exponent of His grace, who finished the work of atonement upon the cross, and is now at the right hand of God. Here is sweet rest for the heart and conscience. Atonement is the first thing we get hold of, and we shall never lose sight of it. Let our range of intelligence be ever so wide, our fund of experience ever so rich, our tone of devotion ever so elevated, we shall always have to fall back upon the one simple, divine, unalterable, soul-sustaining doctrine of THE BLOOD. Thus it has ever been in the history of God's people, Thus it is, and thus it ever will be. The most deeply-taught and gifted servants of Christ have always rejoiced to come back to "that one well-spring of delight," at which their thirsty spirits drank when first they knew the Lord; and

the eternal song of the Church in glory will be, "Unto Him that; loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood." The courts of heaven will for ever resound with the glorious doctrine of the blood.

From ver. 17-21 we are presented with "the brazen laver and its foot" — the vessel of washing and the basis thereof. These two are always presented together. (See Ex. 30: 28; Ex. 38: 8; Ex. 40: 11) In this laver the priests washed their hands and feet, and thus maintained that purity which was essential to the proper discharge of their priestly functions. It was not, by any means, a question of a fresh presentation of blood; but simply that action by which they were preserved in fitness for priestly service and worship. "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."

There can be no true communion with God, save as personal holiness is diligently maintained. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." (1 John 1: 6) This personal holiness can only flow from the action of the word of God on our works and ways. "By the words of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." Our constant failure in priestly ministry may be accounted for by our neglecting the due use of the laver. If our ways are not submitted to the purgative action of the word — if we continue in the pursuit or practice of that which, according to the testimony of our own consciences, the word distinctly condemns, the energy of our priestly character will, assuredly, be lacking. Deliberate continuance in evil and true priestly worship are wholly incompatible. "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth." If we have any uncleanness upon us, we cannot enjoy the presence of God. The effect of His presence would then be to convict us by its holy light. But when we are enabled, through grace, to cleanse our way, by taking heed thereto according to God's word, we are then morally capacitated for the enjoyment of His presence.

My reader will at once perceive what a vast field of practical truth is here laid open to him, and also how largely the doctrine of the brazen laver is brought out in the New Testament. Oh! that all those who are privileged to tread the courts of the sanctuary, in priestly robes, and to approach the altar of God, in priestly worship, may keep their hands and feet clean by the use of the true laver.

It may be interesting to note that the laver, with its foot, was made "of the looking-glasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." (See Ex. 38: 8) This fact is full of meaning. We are ever prone to be "like a man beholding his natural face in a glass; for he beholdeth himself and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." Nature's looking-glass can never furnish a clear and permanent view of our true condition. "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed." (James 1: 23-25) The man who has constant recourse to the word of God, and who allows that word to tell upon his heart and conscience, will be maintained in the holy activities of the divine life.

Intimately connected with the searching and cleaning action of the word is the efficacy of the priestly ministry of Christ. "For the word of God is quick and powerful, (i.e., *living and energetic*,) and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Then the inspired apostle immediately adds, "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities; but was in all



points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find Grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4: 12-16)

The more keenly we feel the edge of the word, the more we shall prize the merciful and gracious ministry of our High Priest. The two things go together. They are the inseparable companions of the Christian's path. The High Priest sympathises with the infirmities which the word detects and exposes. He is "a faithful" as well as "a merciful High Priest." Hence, it is only as I am making use of the laver that I can approach the altar. Worship must ever be presented in the power of holiness. We must lose sight of nature, as reflected in a looking-glass, and be wholly occupied with Christ, as presented in the word. In this way only shall the "hands and feet," the works and ways be cleansed, according to the purification of the sanctuary.

Prom ver. 22 - 23 we have the "holy anointing oil," with which the priests, together with all the furniture of the tabernacle, were anointed. In this we discern a type of the varied graces of the Holy Ghost, which were found, in all their divine fullness, in Christ. "All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad." (Ps. 45: 8) "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." (Acts 10: 38) All the graces of the Spirit, in their perfect fragrance, centred in Christ; and it is from Him alone they can flow. He, as to His humanity, was conceived of the Holy Ghost; and, ere He entered upon His public ministry, He was anointed with the Holy Ghost; and, finally, when He had taken His seat on high, in token of an accomplished redemption, He shed forth upon His body, the Church, the precious gift of the Holy Ghost. (See Matt. 1: 20; Matt. 3: 16, 17; Luke 4: 18, 19; Acts 2: 33; Acts 10: 45, 46; Eph. 4: 8-13)

It is as those who are associated with this ever blessed and highly-exalted Christ that believers are partakers of the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost; and, moreover, it is as they walk in habitual nearness to Him, that they either enjoy or emit the fragrance thereof. The unrenewed man knows nothing of this. "[Upon man's flesh it shall not be poured." The graces of the Spirit can never be connected with man's flesh, for the Holy Ghost cannot own nature. Not one of the fruits of the Spirit was ever yet produced "in nature's barren soil." "We must, be born again." It is only as connected with the new man, as being part of "the new creation," that we can know anything of the fruits of the Holy Ghost. It is of no possible value to seek to imitate those fruits and graces. The fairest fruits that ever grew in nature's fields, in their highest state of cultivation — the most amiable traits which nature can exhibit, must be utterly disowned in the sanctuary of God. "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." There must be no counterfeit of the Spirit's work; all must be of the Spirit — wholly, really of the Spirit. Moreover, that which is of the Spirit must not be attributed to man. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. 2: 14)

There is a very beautiful allusion to this "holy anointing oil" in one of the "songs of degrees." "Behold," says the Psalmist, "how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments." (Ps. 133: 1, 2.) The head of the priestly house being anointed with the holy oil, the very "skirts of his garments" must exhibit the precious effects. May my reader experience the power of this anointing! May he know the value of having "an unction from the Holy One," and of being "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise!" Nothing is of any value, in the divine estimation, save that which connects itself immediately with Christ, and whatever is so connected can receive the holy anointing.

In the concluding paragraph of this most comprehensive chapter, we have the "sweet spices tempered together, pure and holy." This surpassingly precious perfume presents to us the unmeasured and Immeasurable perfections of Christ. There was no special quantity of each ingredient prescribed, because the graces that dwell in Christ, the beauties and excellencies that are concentrated in His adorable Person, are without limit. Nought save the infinite mind of Deity could scan the infinite perfections of Him in whom all the fullness of Deity dwelleth; and as eternity rolls along its course of everlasting ages, those glorious perfections will ever be unfolding themselves in the view of worshipping saints and angels. Ever and anon, as some fresh beams of light shall burst forth from that central Sun of divine glory, the courts of heaven above, and the wide fields of creation beneath, shall resound with thrilling Alleluias to Him who was, who is, and who ever shall be the object of praise to all the ranks of created intelligence.

But not only was there no prescribed quantity of the ingredients; we also read, "of each there shall be a like weight." Every feature of moral excellence found its due place and proper proportion in Christ. No one quality ever displaced or interfered with another; all was "tempered together, pure and holy," and emitted an odour so fragrant that none but God could appreciate it.

"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." There is uncommon depth and power in the expression "very small" It teaches us that every little movement in the life of Christ, every minute circumstance, every act, every word, every look, every feature, every trait, every lineament, emits an odour produced by an equal proportion — "a like weight" of all the divine graces that compose His character. The smaller the perfume was beaten, the more its rare and exquisite temper was manifested.

"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." This fragrant perfume was designed, exclusively, for Jehovah. Its place was "before the testimony." There is that in Jesus which only God could appreciate. True, every believing heart can draw nigh to His matchless Person, and more than satisfy its deepest and most intense longings; still, after all God's redeemed have drunk, to the utmost of their capacity; after angels have gazed on the peerless glories of the man Christ Jesus, as earnestly as their vision is capable of; after all, there will be that in Him which God alone can fathom and enjoy. No human or angelic eye could duly trace the exquisitely minute parts of that holy perfume "beaten very small." Nor could earth afford a proper sphere in which to emit its divine and heavenly odour.

Thus, then, we have, in our rapid sketch, reached the close of a clearly marked division of our book. We began at "the ark of the covenant," and travelled out to "the altar of brass;" we returned from "the altar of brass," and have come to the "holy perfume;" and, oh! what a journey is this, if only it be travelled, not in company with the false and flickering light of human imagination, but by the infallible lamp of the Holy Ghost! What a journey if only it be travelled, not amid the shadows of a bygone dispensation, but amid the personal glories and powerful attractions of the Son, which are there portrayed! If my reader has so travelled it, he will find his affections more drawn to Christ than ever; he will have a loftier conception of His glory, His beauty, His preciousness, His excellency, His ability to heal a wounded conscience, and satisfy a longing heart; he will have his eyes more thoroughly closed to all earth's attractions, and his ears closed to all earth's pretensions and promises. In one word, he will be prepared to utter a deeper and more fervent amen to the words of the inspired apostle, when he says, "IF ANY MAN LOVE NOT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, LET HIM: BE ANATHEMA, MARANATHA."\* (1 Cor. 16: 22)

{\*It is interesting to note the position of this most Solemn and startling denunciation. It occurs at the close of a long epistle, in the progress of which the apostle had to rebuke some of the grossest practical evils and doctrinal errors. How solemn, therefore, how full of meaning the fact, that when he comes to pronounce his anathema, it is not hurled at those who had introduced those errors and evils, but at the man who loves not the Lord Jesus Christ. Why is this? Is it because the Spirit of God makes little of errors and evils? Surely not; the entire epistle unfolds His thoughts as to these. But the truth is, when the heart is filled with love to the Lord Jesus Christ, there is an effectual safeguard against all manner of false doctrine and malpractice. If a man does not love Christ, there is no accounting for the notions he may adopt, or the course he may pursue Hence the form and the position of the apostolic anathema.}

### **Exodus 31**

The opening of this brief chapter records the divine call and the divine qualification of "Bezaleel and Aholiab" to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation. "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..... 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*." Whether for "the work of the tabernacle" of old, or "the work of the ministry" now, there should be the divine selection, the divine call, the divine qualification, the divine appointment; and all must be done according to the divine commandment. Man could not select, call, qualify, or appoint to do the work of the tabernacle; neither can he, to do the work of the ministry. Furthermore, no man could presume to appoint himself to do the work of the tabernacle; neither can he to do the work of the ministry. It was, it is, it must be, wholly and absolutely divine. Men may run as sent of their fellow, or men may run of themselves; but let it be remembered that all who run, without being sent of God, shall, one day or other, be covered with shame and confusion of face. Such is the plain and wholesome doctrine suggested by the words, "I have called" "I have filled," "I have given," "I have put," "I have commanded." The words of the Baptist must ever hold good, "a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven." (John 3: 27) He can, therefore, have but little room to boast of himself; and just as little to be jealous of his fellow.

There is a profitable lesson to be learnt from a comparison of this chapter with Genesis 6. "Tubalcain was an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron." The descendants of Cain were endowed with unhallowed skill to make a cursed and groaning earth a delectable spot, without the presence of God. "Bezaleel and Aholiab," on the contrary, were endowed with divine skill to beautify a sanctuary which was to be hallowed and blessed by the presence and glory of the God of Israel.

Reader, let me ask you just to pause and put this solemn question to your conscience, "Whether am I devoting whatever of skill or energy I possess to the interests of the Church, which is God's dwelling place, or to beautify an ungodly, Christless world?" Say not, in thine heart, "I am not divinely called or divinely qualified for the work of the ministry." Remember that though all Israel were not Bezaleels or Aholiabs, yet all could serve the interests of the sanctuary. There was an open door for all to communicate. Thus it is now. Each one has a place to occupy, a ministry to fulfil, a responsibility to discharge; and you and I are, at this moment, either promoting the interests of the house of God — the body of Christ — the Church, or helping on the godless schemes of a world, yet stained with the blood of Christ and the blood of all His martyred saints. Oh! let us deeply ponder this, as in the presence of the great Searcher of hearts, whom none can deceive — to whom all are known.

Our chapter closes with a special reference to the institution of the Sabbath. It was referred to in Ex. 16 in connection with the manna; it was distinctly enjoined in Ex. 20, when the people were formally put under law; and here we have it again in connection with the setting up of the tabernacle. Whenever the nation of Israel is presented in some special position, or recognised as a people in special responsibility, then the Sabbath is introduced. And let my reader carefully note both the day and the mode in which it was to be observed, and also the object for which it was instituted in Israel. "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*." This is as explicit and absolute as anything can be. It fixes "the seventh day" and none other; and it positively forbids, on pain of death, all manner of work. There can be no avoiding the plain sense of this. And, be it remembered, that there is not so much as a single line of Scripture to prove that the Sabbath has been changed, or the strict principles of its observance, in the smallest degree, relaxed. If there be any Scripture proof, let my reader look it out for his own satisfaction.

Now, let us inquire if indeed professing Christians do keep God's Sabbath on the day and after the manner which He commanded. It were idle to lose time in proving that they do not. Well, what are the consequences of a single breach of the Sabbath? "*Cut off*" — "*Put to death*."

But, it will be said, "we are not under law, but under grace." Blessed be God for the sweet assurance! Were we under law, there is not one throughout the wide range of Christendom who should not, long since, have fallen beneath the stone of judgement, even upon the one solitary point of the Sabbath. But, if we are under grace, what is the day which belongs to us? Assuredly, "the first day of the week," "the Lord's day." This is the Church's day, the resurrection day of Jesus, who, having spent the Sabbath in the tomb, rose triumphant over all the powers of darkness, thus leading His people out of the old creation, and all that pertains thereto, into the new creation, of which He is the Head, and of which the first day of the week is the apt expression.

This distinction is worthy of the serious attention of the reader. Let him examine it prayerfully in the light of Scripture. There may be nothing and there may be a great deal in a mere name. In the present instance, there is a great deal more involved in the distinction between "the Sabbath" and "the Lord's day" than many Christians seem to be aware of. It is very evident that the first day of the week gets a place, in the Word of God, which no other day gets. No other day is ever called by that majestic and elevated title, "the Lord's day." Some, I am aware, deny that Rev. 1: 10 refers to the first day of the week; but I feel most fully assured that sound criticism and sound exegesis do both warrant, yea, demand the application of that passage, not to the day of Christ's advent in glory, but to the day of his resurrection from the dead.

But, most assuredly, the Lord's day is never once called the Sabbath. So far from this, the two days are, again and again, spoken of in their proper distinctness. Hence, therefore, my reader will have to keep clear of two extremes. In the first place, he will have to avoid the legalism which one finds so much linked with the term "Sabbath;" and, in the second place, he will need to bear a very decided testimony against every attempt to dishonour the Lord's day, or lower it to the level of an ordinary day. The believer is delivered, most completely, from the observance of "days and months, and times and years." Association with a risen Christ has taken him clean out of all such superstitious observances. But, while this is most blessedly true, we see that "the first day of the week" has a place assigned to it in the New Testament which no other has. Let the Christian give it that place. It is a sweet and happy privilege, not a grievous yoke.

Space forbids my further entrance upon this interesting subject. It has been gone into, elsewhere, as already intimated, in the earlier pages of this volume. I shall close these remarks by pointing out, in one or two particulars, the contrast between "the Sabbath" and "the Lord's day."

1. The Sabbath was the *seventh* day; the Lord's day is the *First*.

2. The Sabbath was a *test* of Israel's condition; the Lord's day is the *proof* of the Church's acceptance, on wholly unconditional grounds.

3. The Sabbath belonged to the old creation; the Lord's day belongs to the new.

4. The Sabbath was a day of *bodily* rest for the Jew; the Lord's day is a day of *spiritual* rest for the Christian.

5. If the Jew worked on the Sabbath, he was to be put to *death* : if the Christian does not work on the Lord's day, he gives little proof of *life*. That is to say, if he does not work for the benefit of the souls of men, the extension of Christ's glory, and the spread of His truth. In point of fact, the devoted Christian, who possesses any gift, is generally more fatigued on the evening of the Lord's day than on any other in the week, for how can he rest while souls are perishing around him ?

6. The Jew was *commanded* by the *law* to abide in his tent; the Christian is *led* by the spirit of the *gospel* to go forth, whether it be to attend the public assembly, or to minister to the souls of perishing sinners. The Lord enable us, beloved reader, to rest more artlessly *in*, and labour more vigorously *for*, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ! We should *rest* in the spirit of a *Child*; and *labour* with the energy of a *man*.

### **Exodus 32**

We have now to contemplate something very different from that Which has hitherto engaged our attention. "The pattern of things in the heavens," has been before us — Christ in His glorious Person, gracious offices, and perfect work, as set forth in the tabernacle and all its mystic furniture. We have been, in spirit, on the mount, hearkening to God's own words — the sweet utterances of Heaven's thoughts, affections, and counsels, of which Jesus is "the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last."

Now, however, we are called down to earth, to behold the melancholy wreck which man makes of everything to which he puts his hand. "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." What degradation is here! *Make us gods!* They were abandoning Jehovah, and placing themselves under the conduct of manufactured gods — gods of man's making. Dark clouds and heavy mists had gathered round the mount. They grew weary of waiting for the absent one, and of hanging on an unseen but real arm. They imagined that a god formed by "graving tool" was better than Jehovah; that a calf which they could see was better than the invisible, yet everywhere present, God; a visible counterfeit, than an invisible reality.

Alas! alas! it has ever been thus in man's history. The human heart loves something that can be seen; it loves that which meets and gratifies the senses. It is only faith that can "endure, as seeing him who is invisible." Hence, in every age, men have been forward to set up and lean upon human imitations of divine realities. Thus it is we see the counterfeits of corrupt religion multiplied before our eyes. Those things which we know, upon the authority of God's Word, to be divine and heavenly realities, the professing Church has transformed into human and earthly imitations. Having become

weariness of hanging upon an invisible arm, of trusting in an invisible sacrifice, of having recourse to an invisible priest, of committing herself to the guidance of an invisible head, she has set about "making" these things; and thus, from age to age, she has been busily at work, with "graving tool" in hand, graving and fashioning one thing after another, until we can, at length, recognise as little similarity between much that we see around us, and what we read in the word, as between "a molten calf" and the God of Israel.

*"Make us gods!"* What a thought! Man called upon to make gods, and people willing to put their trust in such! My reader, let us look within, and look around, and see if we cannot detect something of all this. We read, in 1 Cor. 10, in reference to Israel's history, that "all these things happened unto them for ensamples, (or types,) and they are written *for our admonition*, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (ver. 11) Let us, then, seek to profit by the "admonition." Let us remember that, although we may not just form and bow down before a molten calf" yet, that Israel's sin is a "type" of something into which we are in danger of falling. Whenever we turn away in heart from leaning exclusively upon God Himself, whether in the matter of salvation or the necessities of the path, we are, in principle, saying, "up, make us gods." It is needless to say we are not, in ourselves, a whit better than Aaron or the children of Israel; and if they acknowledge a calf instead of Jehovah, we are in danger of acting on the same principle, and manifesting the same spirit. Our only safeguard is to be much in the presence of God. Moses knew that the "molten calf was not Jehovah, and therefore he did not acknowledge it. But when we get out of the divine presence, there is no accounting for the gross errors and evils into which we may be betrayed.

We are called to live by faith; we can see nothing with the eye of sense. Jesus is gone up on high, and we are told to wait patiently for His appearing. God's word carried home to the heart, in the energy of the Holy Ghost, is the ground of confidence in all things, temporal and spiritual, present and future. He tells us of Christ's completed sacrifice; we, by grace, believe, and commit our souls to the efficacy thereof, and know we shall never be confounded. He tells us of a great High Priest, passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, whose intercession is all-prevailing; we, by grace, believe, and lean confidently upon His ability, and know we shall be saved to the uttermost. He tells us of the living Head to whom we are linked, in the power of the Holy Ghost, and from whom we can never be severed by any influence, angelic, human, or diabolical; we, by grace, believe, and cling to that blessed Head, in simple faith, and know we shall never perish. He tells us of the glorious appearing of the Son from heaven; we, through grace, believe, and seek to prove the purifying and elevating power of "that blessed hope," and know we shall not be disappointed. He tells us of "an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, who are kept by the power of God," for entrance thereinto in due time; we, through grace, believe and know we shall never be confounded. He tells us the hairs of our head are all numbered, and that we shall never want any good thing; we, through grace, believe, and enjoy a sweetly tranquillised heart.

Thus it is, or, as least, thus our God would have it. But then the enemy is ever active in seeking to make us cast away these divine realities, take up the "graving tool" of unbelief, and "make gods" for ourselves. Let us watch against him, pray against him, believe against him, testify against him, act against him: thus he shall be confounded, God glorified, and we ourselves abundantly blessed.

As to Israel, in the chapter before us, their rejection of God was most complete. "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 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 unto the Lord.*" This was entirely setting aside God, and putting a calf in His stead. When they could say that a calf had brought them up out of Egypt, they had, evidently, abandoned all idea of the presence and character of the true God. How "*quickly*" they must "have turned aside out of the Way," to have made such a gross and terrible mistake! And Aaron, the brother and yoke-fellow of Moses, led them on in this; and, with a calf before him, he could say, "Tomorrow is a feast unto Jehovah!" How sad! how deeply humbling! God was displaced by an idol. A thing, "graven by art and man's device," was set in the place of "the Lord of all the earth."

All this involved, on Israel's part, a deliberate abandonment of their connection with Jehovah. They had given Him up; and, accordingly, we find Him, as it were, taking them on their own ground. "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.... I have seen this people, 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 greater nation." Here was an open door for Moses; and here he displays uncommon grace and similarity of spirit to that Prophet whom the Lord was to raise up like unto him. He refuses to be or to have anything without the people. He pleads with God on the ground of His own glory, and puts the people back upon Him in these touching words, "Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth. Turn from thy fierce wrath and repent of this evil against *thy* people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swearest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever." This was powerful pleading. The glory of God, the vindication of His holy name. the accomplishment of His oath. These are the grounds on which Moses entreats the Lord to turn from His fierce wrath. He could not find, in Israel's conduct or character, any plea or ground to go upon. He found it all in God Himself.

The Lord had said unto Moses, "*Thy* people which *thou* broughtest up;" but Moses replies to the Lord, "*Thy* people which *thou* hast brought up." They were the Lord's people notwithstanding all; and His name, His glory, His oath were all involved in their destiny. The moment the Lord links Himself with a people, His character is involved, and faith will ever look at Him upon this solid ground. Moses loses sight of himself entirely. His whole soul is engrossed with thoughts of the Lord's glory and the Lord's people. Blessed servant! How few like him! And yet when we contemplate him in all this scene, we perceive how infinitely he is below the blessed Master. He came down from the mount, and when he saw the calf and the dancing, "his anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands and brake them beneath the mount." The covenant was broken and the memorials thereof shattered to pieces; and then, having executed judgement in righteous indignation, "he 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."

How different is this from what we see in Christ! He came down from the bosom of the Father, not with the tables in His hands, but with the law in his heart. He came down, not to be made acquainted with the condition of the people, but with a perfect knowledge of what that condition was. Moreover, instead of destroying the memorials of the covenant and executing judgement, He magnified the law and made it honourable, and bore the judgement of His people, in His own blessed Person, on the cross; and, having done all, He went back to heaven, not with a "*peradventure* I shall make an atonement for your sin," but to lay upon the throne of the Majesty in the highest, the imperishable memorials of an atonement already accomplished. This makes a vast and truly glorious difference.

Thank God, we need not anxiously gaze after our Mediator to know if haply He shall accomplish redemption for us, and reconcile offended Justice. No, He has done it all. His presence on high declares that the whole work is finished. He could stand upon the confines of this world, ready to take His departure, and, in all the calmness of a conscious victor — though He had yet to encounter the darkest scene of all — say, "I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the work which thou gravest me to do." (John 17) Blessed Saviour! we may well adore thee, and well exalt in the place of dignity and glory in which eternal justice has set thee. The highest place in heaven belongs to thee; and thy saints only wait for the time when "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." May that time speedily arrive!

At the close of this chapter Jehovah asserts His rights, in moral government, in the following words: "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." This is God *in government*, not God *in the gospel*. Here He speaks of blotting out the *sinner*; in the gospel He is seen blotting out *sin*. a wide difference!

The people are to be sent forward, under the mediatorship of Moses, by the hand of an angel. This was very unlike the condition of things which obtained from Egypt to Sinai. They had forfeited all claim on the ground of law, and hence it only remained for God to fallback upon His own sovereignty and say, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."

### **Exodus 33-34**

Jehovah refuses to accompany Israel to the land of promise. "I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiff-necked people; lest I consume thee in the way." At the opening of this book, when the people were in the furnace of Egypt, the Lord could say, "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." But now He has to say, "I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people." An afflicted people is an object of grace; but a stiff-necked people must be humbled. The cry of oppressed Israel had been answered by the exhibition of grace; but the song of idolatrous Israel must be answered by the voice of stern rebuke.

"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," It is only when we are really stripped of all nature's ornaments that God can deal with us. A naked sinner can be clothed; but a sinner decked in ornaments must be stripped. This is always true. We must be stripped of all that pertains to self, ere we can be clothed with that which pertains to God.

"And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb." There they stood beneath that memorable mount, their feasting and singing changed into bitter lamentations, their ornaments gone, the tables of testimony in fragments. Such was their condition, and Moses as once proceeds to act according to it. He could no longer own the people in their corporate character. The assembly had become entirely defiled, having set up an idol of their own making, in the place of God — a calf instead of Jehovah. "And Moses took the tabernacle and pitched it *without the camp*, afar off from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation." Thus the camp was disowned as the place of the divine presence. God was not — could not — be there. He had been displaced by a human invention. a new gathering point was, therefore, set up. "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."



There is here a fine principle of truth, which the spiritual mind will readily apprehend. The place which Christ now occupies is "without the camp," and we are called upon to "go forth unto him." It demands much subjection to the word to be able, with accuracy, to know what "the camp" really is, and much spiritual power to be able to go forth from it; and still more to be able, while "far off from it," to act towards those in it, in the combined power of holiness and grace — holiness, which separates from the defilement of the camp; grace, which enables us to act toward those who are involved therein.

"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. Moses exhibits a higher degree of spiritual energy than his servant Joshua. It is much easier to assume a position of separation from the camp, than to act aright towards those within.

"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." Moses entreats the accompanying presence of Jehovah as a proof of their having found *grace* in His sight. Were it a question of mere *justice*, He could only consume them by coming in their midst, because they were "a stiff-necked people." But directly He speaks of grace, in connection with the mediator, the very stiff-neckedness of the people is made a plea for demanding His presence. "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." This is touchingly beautiful. a "stiff-necked people demanded the boundless grace and exhaustless patience of God. None but He could bear with them.

"And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Precious portion! Precious hope! The presence of God with us, all the desert through, and everlasting rest at the end! Grace to meet our present need, and glory as our future portion! Well may our satisfied hearts exclaim, "It is enough, my precious Lord."

In Ex. 34 the second set of tables is given, not to be broken, like the first, but to be hidden in the ark, above which, as already noticed, Jehovah was to take His place, as the Lord of all the earth, in moral government. "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 them 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." This, be it remembered, is God, as seen in His moral government of the world, and not as He is seen in the cross — not as He shines in the face of Jesus Christ — not as He is proclaimed in the gospel of His grace. The following is an exhibition of God in the gospel: "And all things are of God, *who hath reconciled us to himself, by Jesus Christ*, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, *reconciling the world unto Himself*; NOT IMPUTING their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the *word of reconciliation*." (2 Cor. 5: 18, 19) "Not clearing" and "not imputing" present two totally different ideas of God. "Visiting iniquities" and cancelling them are not the same thing. The former is God in government, the latter is God in the gospel. In 2 Cor. 3 the apostle contrasts the "ministration" recorded in Exodus 34 with "the ministration" of the gospel. My reader would do well to study that chapter with care. From it he will learn that any one who regards the view of God's character given to Moses, on Mount Horeb, as unfolding the gospel, must have a very defective apprehension, indeed, of what the gospel is. Neither in

creation, nor yet in moral government, do I, or can I, read the deep secrets of the Father's bosom. Could the prodigal have found his place in the arms of the One revealed on Mount Sinai? Could John have leaned his head on the bosom of that One? Surely not. But God has revealed Himself in the face of Jesus Christ. He has told out, in divine harmony, all His attributes in the work of the cross. There "mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Sin is perfectly put away, and the believing sinner perfectly justified "BY THE BLOOD OF THE CROSS." When we get a view of God, as thus unfolded, we have only, like Moses, to bow our head toward the earth and worship," — suited attitude for a pardoned and accepted sinner in the presence of God!

### **Exodus 35-40**

These chapters contain a recapitulation of the various parts of the tabernacle and its furniture; and inasmuch as, I have already given what I believe to be the import of the more prominent parts, it were needless to add more. There are, however, two things in this section from which we may deduce most profitable instruction, and these are, first, the *voluntary devotedness*; and, secondly, the *implicit obedience* of the people with respect to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation. And first, as to their voluntary devotedness, we read, "And all the consecration of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. 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. And they came, both men and women, *as many as were willing-hearted*, and brought bracelets and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold : and every man that offered offered an offering of gold unto the Lord. And every man with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought them. Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass, brought the Lord's offering: and every man with whom was found shittim wood? for any work of the service, brought it. And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. And all the women *whose heart stirred them up* in wisdom spun goats' hair. And the rulers brought onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod, and for the breastplate: and spice and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense. 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." (Ex. 35: 20-29.) And, again, we read, "And all the wise men that; wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made; and they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring *much more than enough* for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make, . . . for the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much." (Ver. 4-7.)

A lovely picture this of devotedness to the work of the sanctuary! It needed no effort to move the hearts of the people to give, no earnest appeals, no impressive arguments. Oh! no; their "*hearts stirred them up*." This was the true way. The streams of voluntary devotedness flowed from within. "Rulers," "men," "women" — all felt it to be their sweet privilege to give to the Lord, not with a narrow heart or niggard hand, but after such a princely fashion that they had "*enough and too much*."

Then, as to their *implicit obedience*, we read, "*according to all that the Lord commanded Moses*, so the children of Israel made all the work. And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, *they had done it as the Lord had commanded, even so had they done it*: and Moses blessed them." (Ex. 39: 42, 43) The Lord had given the most minute instructions concerning the entire work of the tabernacle. Every pin, every socket, every loop, every tach, was accurately set forth. There was no room left for man's expediency, his reason, or his common sense. Jehovah did not give a great outline and leave man

to fill it up He left no margin whatever in which man might enter his regulations. By no means. "See, saith he, that thou make *all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.* (Ex. 25: 40; Ex. 26: 30; Heb. 8: 5) This left no room for human device. If man had been allowed to make a single pin, that pin would, most assuredly, have been out of place in the judgement of God. We can see what man's "graving tool" produces in Ex. 32. Thank God, it had no place in the tabernacle. They did, in this matter, just what they were told — nothing more — nothing less. Salutory lesson this for the professing church! There are many things in the history of Israel which we should earnestly seek to avoid — their impatient murmurings, their legal vows, and their idolatry; but in those two things may we imitate them. May our devotedness be more whole hearted, and our obedience more implicit. We may safely assert, that if all had not been done "according to the pattern showed in the mount," we should not have to read, "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." (Ex. 40: 34, 35) The tabernacle was, in all respects, according to the *divine pattern*, and, therefore, it could be filled with the *divine glory*. There is a volume of instruction in this. We are too prone to regard the Word of God as insufficient for the most minute details connected with His worship, and service. This is a great mistake, a mistake which has proved the fruitful source of evils and errors, in the professing Church. The word of God is amply sufficient for everything, whether as regards personal salvation and walk, or the order and rule of the assembly. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be *perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17) This settles the question. If the Word of God furnishes a man *thoroughly* unto "*all good works,*" it follows, as a necessary consequence, that whatever I find not in its pages, cannot possibly be a good work. and, further, be it remembered, that the divine glory cannot connect itself with ought that is not according to the divine pattern.

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Beloved reader, we have now travelled together through this most precious book. We have, I fondly hope, reaped some profit from our study. I trust we have gathered up some refreshing thoughts of Jesus and His sacrifice as we passed along. Feeble, indeed, must be our most vigorous thoughts, and shallow our deepest apprehensions, as to the mind of God in all that this Book contains. It is happy to remember that through grace, we are on our way to that glory where we shall know, even as we are known; and where we shall bask in the sunshine of His countenance who is the beginning and ending of all the ways of God, whether in creation, in providence, or redemption. To Him I do most affectionately commend you, in body, soul, and spirit. May you know the deep blessedness of having your portion in Christ, and be kept in patient waiting for His glorious advent. Amen.

C. H. M.