

Our Daily Homily

By

F.B. Meyer

VOLUME Four

Preface

With the issue of this volume of “Our Daily Homily,” the top stone is placed on a structure which has occupied many of my brightest hours for more than three years.

Amid the pressure of a busy life, and the inevitable demands of a considerable church-organization, it has been an untold refreshment to turn to the devout study of successive chapters of the Bible, with the view of obtaining a message for oneself, and to pass on to others.

We must all have our “Temple of Peace”; and if this may not be a spacious and well-stocked library, it may at least be that collection of sacred literature which contains the noblest thoughts of the holiest men, inbreathed and borne along by the Spirit of God. Here is the secret of serenity, the treasure of tranquillity, the clue to perennial comfort.

It has been impossible altogether to exclude the personal element from these pages, because the sheets have been printed from the types of my own daily experience, set up by the many altering circumstances of joy and grief, conflict and peace, which befall each of us. But the one refrain has been the reality of the unseen; the nearness of God; the vindication of the Christian, as the only true policy of life; the duty and blessedness of doing all God commands, and bearing all He permits; the uplifting and light-bringing power of simple trust in Him who liveth, and was dead, and who is alive forevermore.

None of my books is dearer to me than this, or seems to contain more of my innermost thought; but at best it is only a handful of meal in the barrel, which may God multiply till He send rain on the earth.

Note: This devotional can be accessed at: www.lifebpc.com/devotions
It is also available for downloading on to Palm handheld devices.

FREDERICK BROTHERTON MEYER (1847–1929)

*British preacher, author, and
spokesman for public righteousness*



Meyer's ministry was worldwide, but his base was London. He was born and educated there, held pastorates at some of London's largest free churches, and conducted his moral crusades from that city.

An ardent Baptist and premillennialist, Meyer applied Christian principles to social ills such as drunkenness, prostitution, unmarried mothers, and unwanted children. One of his best crusades occurred in 1911 when he

successfully stopped a prize fight that was to be held at Earl's Court between Jack Johnson of the United States and a British contender. Meyer endured scorn for his efforts: a London newspaper called him "Meddling, Maudlin Meyer."

Meyer was involved in the Blue Ribbon movement (prohibition); the Purity, Rescue, and Temperance work of the Central South London Free Church Council (which closed brothels and counseled prostitutes); and the Homeless Children's Aid and Adoption Society. He served as president of the National and World Sunday School Unions, president of the National Union of Christian Endeavor, and founder of South London Missionary Training College. He was also the author of more than seventy books. He preached around the world. Melbourne Hall (Leicester), a center of social and evangelistic activity, was built in 1881 under his leadership.

- *Who's Who In Christian History* - Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

Genesis 15:17

“And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.”

FIRE is the chosen emblem of God; and as these fire-emblems passed slowly between the divided carcasses it was as though God accommodated Himself to the methods of human oath-taking, and solemnly bound Himself. But in all His dealings with us He is prepared to be both a furnace and a torch.

God as a Furnace. — Take up a piece of iron ore, and see how the metal is scattered amid commoner substances. How can it be disintegrated? The chisel cannot do it, but fire will. Plunge it now into the fire; let it fall in the heart of the glowing furnace, and presently the stream of liquid metal will issue forth, pure and beautiful. It is thus that God deals with human hearts; the blood makes propitiation, but the fire cleanses. The love of God, the purity of God, the spirituality of God brought home to us by the Holy Ghost, search and try us to the innermost fiber of our being, and burn out of us the evils which had long held empire.

*Refining Fire, go through my heart,
Illuminate my soul;
Scatter thy life through every part,
And sanctify the whole.*

God as a flaming Torch. — The torch guides the footsteps through the dark; and God’s Spirit waits to shed light on many dark and hidden things, and to *guide* us into all the truth. It is one thing to comprehend by the intellect; it is altogether another to apprehend by the heart. There is no such teacher as God; and the mistake of our modern religious life is to receive so much from man, instead of waiting in rapt silence until God Himself communicates his truth to us. The conditions are purity of desire, cleanness of heart, and willingness to obey.

Genesis 16:9

“And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.”

POOOR Hagar! No wonder that she fled. Her proud Arab independence and the sense of coming motherhood made her rebel against Sarah’s hard dealings. We have often meditated flight, if we have not actually fled from intolerable conditions. Of course, when God opens the door out of a dungeon we need not hesitate, as Peter did, to rise and follow. But this is very different to flight from the post of duty.

Our Cross. — For Hagar, Sarah; for Hannah, Penninah; for David, Joab; for Jesus, Judas; for Paul, Alexander the coppersmith. Life assumes hard and forbidding aspects. Sometimes the cross is not a person, but a trial — the pressure of a slow and lingering disease; the demand for grinding and persistent toil; the weight of over-mastering anxiety for those dearer than life, who have no knowledge of God.

Our Demeanor. — Return and submit. We are apt to suppose that we shall get rest and peace elsewhere. It is not so, however. Nowhere else shall we find the path less rugged, or the pillow less hard. To evade the yoke will not give us heart’s ease. The Master’s advice is that we shall take His yoke, and bear it as He did; remain where God has put us, till He shows us another place; and bear what He ordains and permits, even though it comes through the means of others.

Our Faith. — We cannot patiently submit to our lot unless we believe that what God permits is as much His will as what He appoints. Behind Sarah’s hard dealings we must behold His permissive providence. Through all the discipline of life we must believe that God has a purpose of unfailing love and wisdom. Then our submission is not stoicism, but loving acquiescence in our Father’s will.

Genesis 17:1

“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.”

GOD precedes his commands with such revelations of Himself, that obedience is rendered easily possible. Before calling Abram to perfection, He described himself as El Shaddai, the Almighty. What may we not do if we learn to avail ourselves of the all might of God? Oh to know the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe! Our lack is that we do not know our God, and therefore fail to perform exploits. “Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me.” Lie on thy face, and let God talk with thee, and tell thee the conditions on which He will make thee exceeding fruitful. First — *Walk before Me*: Second — *Be thou whole-hearted*.

There must be wholeness in our surrender. — No part of our nature barred or curtained off from God. Every chamber must be freely placed at His disposal; every relationship placed under His direction; every power devoted to His service. All we have and are must be entirely His.

There must be wholeness in our intention. — The one aim of our Lord was to bring glory to His Father; and we should never be satisfied till we are so absolutely eager for the glory of Christ that we would seek it though at the cost of infamy to ourselves; and be as glad for another to bring it to Him, as we should be in bringing it ourselves.

There must be wholeness in our obedience. — It was clearly so with Abram. As soon as God left talking with His servant, He took Isaac and performed the rite which had just been enjoined.

Genesis 18:23

“And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?”

THE patriarch’s attitudes are well worthy of note: he sat (Genesis 18:1), bowed (Genesis 18:2), ran (Genesis 18:7), stood by (Genesis 18:8), went with them (Genesis 18:16), stood before the Lord (Genesis 18:22); here, he drew near.

He drew near with awful reverence. — “I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.” The place whereon he stood was holy ground; and if he trod or crossed it, in the intensity of his desire, he never forgot that the most intimate fellowship of man with God must be mingled with the reverence of godly fear, which remembers that He is a consuming fire.

He drew near in faith. — He had enjoyed a blessed prevision of the day of Christ. There had been revealed to him that one perfect and sufficient Sacrifice, in virtue of which sinners are welcome to draw near to God. They have boldness to enter the holiest, and draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, who know the new and living way which Jesus has opened for us.

He drew near as intercessor. — We never get so near God as when we plead for others. At such times we enter the holiest and innermost chamber, and talk to Him with an urgency which we dare not use for ourselves. Whilst the Syrophenician pleaded for her daughter, she came to the very feet of Jesus. Wouldst thou know the inner chamber? Go thither on errands for others.

He drew near in intensity. — When Haman pleaded for his life, he fell on the Queen’s couch in the anguish of his soul. Sometimes God appears to hesitate; it is only to draw us on, ever further and deeper, till we awake to find ourselves alone in His presence.

Genesis 19:27

“And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD:”

THERE was not much sleep that night for this loyal heart! With the spring of day he was where, probably, Lot, years before, had looked on the face of the country, and beheld it as a garden of the Lord. But how great the contrast! The smoke of the land went up as the smoke of a furnace!

Have a place where you stand before God. — It may not always be to speak to Him, but to be spoken to, to be judged, to have the motives and intentions of the heart winnowed and sifted. Well is it to stand each day before the judgment-seat of Christ, and to receive His verdict on our innermost life. Oh that the grass of that trysting-place may be well worn through our frequent intercourse with our beloved Lord!

Follow up your prayers. — Abraham was not content with shooting arrows into the air; he followed them to see how they sped, and where they fell. We do not need to reiterate our petitions with unbelieving monotony, as though they were not safe in God's keeping; but we should remind Him by our upward look that our expectation is from Him.

View the fate of the ungodly from God's standpoint. — We are apt to consider it from that of our own pity, or commiseration, or tolerance of shortcoming. We judge lightly, because we dread too searching a judgment on ourselves. But we need sometimes to see sin as God sees it. Stand on Calvary and learn what sin is, and how much it has cost the Savior. There, too, you will learn that God goes further than his servants' prayers. Though He may not be able to discover the ten, yet He will deliver the one righteous man. “His countenance doth behold the upright.”

Genesis 20:6

“And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.”

AS we review our lives, we can see many occasions on which our feet had well-nigh gone — our steps were on the very brink of the precipice. Another inch, and we should have brought shame on Christ and lasting remorse to ourselves. To what can we attribute our escape but to the grace of God, which withheld us, even though we failed to recognize it?

He does not withhold us from temptation. — He could not do so without serious and permanent loss. The waves of ink will surge up against the white marble palace of the soul. To us, as to our Lord, fresh from under the opened heavens, the tempter will come. What the fire is in fixing the color on the porcelain vase, that temptation is in rendering permanent the lessons and impressions made by God’s providence and grace.

He does not withhold us from occasions in which it would be easy to transgress. — Abimelech was not hindered from taking Sarah into his palace. The door of occasion and opportunity stood open before him; but he was withheld from the fatal act. We must never infer that occasion confers license. The fact of an opportunity being present does not warrant indulgence in wrong-doing.

If God withheld Abimelech, who did not seek His special help, how much more those that seek Him! — You are not insensible of the perils of your life; but wait earnestly and persistently on God. Are you more eager to be kept than He to keep? Did He not implant that desire? Will He not do exceeding abundantly above what we ask or think? Is not the good Shepherd strong enough to keep one poor trembling sheep? Begone, unbelief! My God whom I serve is able to deliver, and He will! (Daniel 3:17).

Genesis 21:19

“And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.”

POOOR Hagar! There was no help for it; and she, who a little before had thought she was giving Abraham his heir, found herself and her boy homeless wayfarers on the desert sands. Their one need was water; they little deemed it was so near. No need to create a new fountain, but to open their eyes. We need the opened eye to see:—

The finished work of Christ. — The work of propitiation for sin is complete. We are not required to add to it one tear, or prayer, or vow. “It is finished.” To go to heaven to bring Christ down, or to the deep to bring Him up, is alike superfluous. All we need is the opened eye to see what Jesus has done, and recognize that it is all that was demanded to meet the claims of God’s holy law.

The things freely given to us of God. — God hath given us in Jesus all things that pertain to life and godliness. There is no possible gift or grace, in which we are deficient, that is not stored in Him, in whom the fullness of God abides. But we are blind; the eyes of our heart have not been opened to see the hope of our calling, the riches of our inheritance, the greatness of God’s power. Did we know these things, surely not a moment would elapse without our availing ourselves of God’s rich provision.

The alleviations which God provides against excessive sorrow. — Hagar’s anguish, as Mary’s at the sepulcher in after years, blinded her to available comfort. So grief puts a bandage over our eyes. Life is sad, and lonely, and dark, but God is near and if you ask, He will show springs of consolation of which you may drink. There is no desert without its spring; no dying child without the angel of the Lord.

 Genesis 22:14

“And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.”

ABRAM knew it would be. Probably he never told Sarah what God had asked of him till he and the lad were safely back in the tent. What need to trouble her? Her weak faith could not have stood the ordeal. It was with an unfaltering tone that the patriarch told his young men that they two would presently return. Even though he should actually take Isaac’s life, he was sure that he would receive him again from the altar in health. It was only at the very last moment that God indicated the ram as the sufficient substitute. So God’s deliverances always come; they are provided in the mount of trial and sacrifice.

When the foe seems secure of victory. — So it was with Israel. Pharaoh, with his hosts, counted on an easy victory, the precipices around, the sea in front. To the eye of sense it seemed impossible to escape: all hope died. It was just *then* that the Almighty cleft a path through the mighty deep.

“In the fourth hour of the night.” — Strength was well-nigh exhausted in long battling with the waves. For hours the disciples with difficulty had kept themselves afloat. It seemed as if they must give in through physical collapse. It was *then* that the form of Jesus drew nigh unto the ship.

On the night before execution. — Thus Peter lies sleeping whilst the Church is gathered in prayer. Tomorrow he will be a corpse. But the angel comes *then* to open the prison doors.

So you may have come to an end of your own strength, and wisdom, and energy. The altar, wood, and fire are ready, the knife upraised, your Isaac on the point to die: but even now God will provide. Trust Him to indicate the way of escape.

Genesis 23:4

“I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a buryingplace with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.”

THE minute details of this purchase are recorded to emphasize the fact that, though the whole land was Abraham’s by the Divine gift, he would not enter on its possession until God’s time was come. We may be sure of certain blessings — ours in God’s safe keeping — though they are withheld until the moment that His wisdom sees best. It was a touching confession. The aged patriarch had for long years owned no settled dwelling-place. After years in the land of promise he was still without land enough for a grave.

Faith cannot be satisfied with the things of this world. — The sons of Heth had goods and lands, but Abraham did not envy them; he had caught a glimpse of the city which hath foundations, and this so satisfied and attracted him that he had no desire for aught that Palestine could yield.

Faith detaches us from the present. — We are content to dwell in tents, because here we have no abiding place. The shows and vanities of the world, in comparison with the vision of eternal realities, are as the glare of the streets compared with the steady glory of the constellations of the night.

Faith prompts to confession. — It bewrayeth itself. We should be careful and orderly in our business arrangements; but, in our dealings with our fellows, in our justice, fairness, honor, the lightness of our hold on the present world, we should make it manifest that we are seeking a country not our own.

Faith cannot be ashamed. — The God who prompted it must satisfy it, else He would have reason to be ashamed of having failed the souls that trusted Him. But now He is not ashamed to be called our God, because He has prepared for us a city.

Genesis 24:12

“And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.”

THIS worthy man, Eliezer, the steward of Abraham’s house, was almost garrulous about his master. Count up the number of times in which he contrives to bring in the two words, “my master.” We may learn from him how to speak of our Master, whenever we get the opportunity. “Rabboni, which being interpreted is, My Master.”

We too can speak of the Lord God as our Master. — The servant did not know Jehovah directly; it was enough that he had seen and heard Abraham pray to Him. This encouraged him to draw near for himself. So we are emboldened to draw near, because God is the God and Father of our Master Jesus. We love Him that was begotten, and are attracted to Him of whom Jesus said, “I ascend to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God.”

We, too, can plead for our Master’s sake. — When asking for good speed to be sent to himself, he alleged as his plea that it would be showing kindness to his master Abraham. So when we ask great things from God, we can plead in the name of Jesus, and urge that in answering our petition God will be showing kindness to his Well-beloved.

We, too, should bless in our Master’s name. — When the answer was given, this reverent soul gave thanks as though the favor had been shown to his master. Indeed, all through his intercourse with Bethuel and Laban he seems to have lost his identity in Abraham. He could talk of nothing else but that one scheme; was only eager to carry his point for his master’s sake; and when the errand was done, longed only to get back to his master’s side. It is a beautiful lesson for those who call Jesus Master and Lord.

Genesis 25:33

*“And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swore unto him:
and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.”*

EVERY one is born with a birthright, which the devil tries hard to make him barter away for a mess of pottage. In that birthright are included:—

Innocence and purity. — The child of the vilest ancestry enters this world unsullied by the filthy touch of unclean habit. But how eager Satan is to induce us to part with this for his unsatisfying pleasure.

The love of our kind. — Few are the children, of all the myriads of our race, that are not loved by some fond heart. In some cases the infant life is cradled in love. But Satan is glad when he can get the soul to break away from all earthly affection, which might possibly soften and refine it, and to renounce mother, sister, wife, child, for the drunkard’s cup, the wanton’s kiss.

The redemption of Jesus Christ. — Every one is born into a redeemed world; the propitiation of the blessed Lord, the blood that flowed on Calvary, the canceling of the effects of Adam’s sin, are for all. As all the world was affected by Adam’s sin, so all are included in God’s love in Jesus. But again Satan is eager to induce men to abjure and cast away these benefits; he blinds the eyes of those that believe not, so that they refuse to “behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

The grace of the Spirit. — Every one may build up a strong and beautiful character by yielding to the Holy Ghost’s gracious promptings. That grace knocks, like sunshine, at the windows of every soul; but how often it is sold for a mess of pottage! The choice between these two is constantly being presented to us. God help us always to choose the divine, the spiritual, the eternal!

Genesis 26:5

“Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.”

IT is awful to realize how our sins may repeat themselves in our children. Here is Isaac following in the precise steps of Abraham, who had acted in a similar manner towards Sarah when entering Egypt. In each case there was a sad lapse of faith; but it was even worse for Isaac, with Abraham’s example to warn him. But a man may pass blessings on to his children, as well as the sad entail of evil habits.

He leaves the blessing of the divine covenant. — God had entered into covenant with Abraham, and was prepared to fulfill its provisions to his son. “I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee.” So a godly ancestor may be able to secure for all his seed a share in the divine grace and favor. The spirit that is put on him does not depart from his seed, or his seed’s seed for ever.

The blessing of his prayer. — It is impossible to over-estimate the effect of a good man’s prayers; they are as streams or trees, which go on flowing and bearing fruit long after they were originated. The legacy of a good man’s prayers is of priceless worth. He may have long since passed to his rest; but God remembers them, and answers them in blessings to the next generation. How often in this chapter we read that “God blessed Isaac.”

The blessing of a noble name. — We may all leave that, if we can transmit nothing else. To have had a father that knew God, walked with God, pleased God; who was on intimate terms with Him, and could speak to Him, as a man with his friend — illumined the ordinary nature and existence of Isaac with unearthly beauty. Let us live so that our children may be ranked as nobles, because they bear our name.

Genesis 27:34

“And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.”

ON this incident the writer to the Hebrews found the impressive lesson, that the choices of the past may cast a bitter and irrevocable shadow on all our future. When he afterward desired to inherit blessing he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears (Hebrews 12:16–17).

Beware of the cravings of appetite. — In an evil moment Esau yielded to these, and sold his birthright to secure their gratification; he found afterwards that the choice made in that hour was irrevocable. How needful that we watch and pray, lest we fall into temptation!

There are four facts which, when borne in mind, guard us against the sudden oversetting of passionate appetite.

We were once dead in sins. — Surely we do not want to go back again to the charnel-house with its corruption.

We died for sins in the person of Christ our Representative. — In Him we have met the demands of God’s holy law; but surely that must be an awful thing which cost our Savior so dearly.

We died to sin with the Lord Jesus. — We have passed with Him on to Resurrection ground; so that we belong to the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

We are called on to reckon ourselves dead to sin. — The nearer we live to God, the more sensitive we shall be to the most distant suggestion of evil, closing doors and windows against its entrance, reckoning ourselves “not at home” to it, and yielding our members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Genesis 28:12

“And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.”

ALL men feel that earth and heaven touch at the horizons of the distant past and future; but we ought to feel that the present moment of time and *this* bit of the world’s surface are linked with heaven. This is what the ladder meant for Jacob. The moorland waste, where he lay, and Laban’s home, whither he journeyed, were as near God as his father’s tent. Earth is linked with heaven:—

By God’s daily providence. — His loving eye is ever upon us, his ears always open to our cry, and his angels go to and fro on our world performing ceaseless ministries.

By our Savior’s mediation. — As He intimated to Nathanael, His own nature as uniting God with man, and especially His Ascension glory as the man Christ Jesus, is the one great connecting link. “Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

By daily fellowship and holy thought. — We should practice the sense of God’s presence, often stopping ourselves amid our ordinary avocations and interests to say, aloud when possible, “God is near, God is here.” In all likelihood we are daily living amid the glories of the eternal world; but our eyes are blinded. Oh that by humility and purity we may become more sensitive, and awake to the things that are unseen and eternal! Lord, open our eyes, that we may see! (2 Kings 6:17).

By holy yearning. — When Jesus ascended, He unrolled a path behind Him, along which we shall one day travel to meet Him. Hope treads that glorious Ascension ladder; and as she does so, again we see the heaven opened, and our destiny unfolded at Christ’s right hand.

Genesis 29:20

“And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.”

THAT touch is enough! We can fill in all the rest. This old-world love was of the same quality as our own. Oh, blessed God! what a priceless inheritance this is! Time itself never tedious, but always too short; labor never hard; distance never long; sacrifice unheard of, the word almost in disuse — where Love is queen. This is how we would feel to our dear Lord: so that the missionary away from home and friends, as well as the invalid suffering for Jesus, might feel years of loneliness and pain but a few days, for love of the beloved Master. We may acquire such love thus:—

Meditate much on the love of Jesus. — Sit with the Apostle beneath his cross, and say, each time with deeper appreciation: He loved *me*, He gave Himself for *me*. Do not think of your love to Him, but of His. It is well to take the Lord’s Supper frequently, as affording opportunities for remembering His dying love.

Be on the alert to detect His love in daily providence and trifles. — It is amazing how much is ever being arranged by His tender thoughtfulness to alleviate and brighten our lot. If you cannot detect it, dare still to believe it.

Ask the Holy Spirit to breathe His love into your heart. — He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit; and when the doors are open between Christ and the soul, the aroma of His love freely enters.

Show His love to every one. — Whether you like people or not, do to them as He would do; let His love flow through you to them; what we manifest to others for His sake, we shall come to feel towards Him, and them also. “This commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.”

Genesis 30:27

“And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake.”

LABAN requested the longer stay of Jacob because he felt sure that the Divine blessings had been brought by him into his home. It was a selfish, low, motive for desiring the postponement of his departure; and Laban was destined, alas! to be terribly undeceived. He would wake up one day, to find that during his sojourn with him, and under the cloak of religion, Jacob had been ruthlessly plundering his property. It was a shameful betrayal of trust on Jacob's part; and it conveys a searching warning to those who, because of their religious professions, are trusted by their relatives or others:—

With their property. — Always do the best possible for your employer or friend, who has entrusted his interests to you, acting towards him as the servant and steward of God. Bear in mind that God has bidden you undertake the office for Himself, and accepts your fidelity as rendered to Him: He will recompense.

With their friendship. — Be very careful here. God puts us into one another's lives, that we may be the medium through which His love and tenderness may enter them; but there is such danger of our monopolizing for ourselves the place that He would fill. Sometimes we almost unconsciously deteriorate rather than elevate our friends by the intrusion of our own personality.

With their Christian instruction and training. — Ministers of God's holy gospel must specially guard against the tendency to make name, fame, money, out of a position which they should occupy only as God's stewards. There is such subtleness in the temptation to attract men to ourselves, instead of attaching them to Christ.

Genesis 31:24

“And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.”

THIS visitation of God made a deep impression on Laban. He refers to it afterwards as restraining him from injuring his runaway son-in-law. Jacob, too, was struck by it. It is very wonderful to find the Holy God casting the mantle of His protection around this crafty and deceitful soul. No doubt it was due to His covenant relationship with the family and race, of which Jacob was a most unworthy member (Genesis 31:13, 42). But if God thus interposed for Jacob, will He not much more interpose for those who desire to be His obedient children?

God will lay an arrest on your persecutors. — Israel was rebuked because the exiles in Babylon thought they would perish before a man that could die, and the son of man who was as grass, and forgot their Maker, the Lord of heaven and earth. All around you the fire may rage; but you shall walk amid it unscathed, if only you trust. No weapon formed against you shall prosper.

God will lay an arrest on trial. — His finger is always on our pulse; and the moment the pain becomes more than we can bear, He will stay it. His eye is ever upon His own.

God will lay an arrest on the power of the evil one. — We shall not be tempted beyond that we are able to bear. There is always a *thus far and no farther*. “The Lord maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters.” The Only-begotten of the Father keeps the sheep whom his Father has entrusted to Him. Not one of them can be devoured by the lion of hell. If only we believed this, we should be calmer, happier, even though circumstanced as Jacob. No need to altercation with Laban, but to look beyond him to the “Fear of Isaac.”

Genesis 32:25

“And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.”

OUR greatest victories are wrought out through pain, and purchased at the cost of the humbling of the flesh. Jacob learned that the secret of prevailing with God and man was not in the strength, but in the weakness and suffering of the flesh. It must ever be so. The victor Lamb bears still the scars of Calvary, and appears as one who had been slain.

Had Laban met Jacob that morning, he would have pointed to that limp as an indication of God’s wrath and displeasure; but if he had looked into his face, he would have seen all its hardness and cunning gone, and would have been arrested by the unwonted tenderness in his voice.

The shrunken sinew counteracts pride. — So high a spiritual achievement as to prevail with God might have tempted Jacob to arrogance and self-esteem. But God anticipated the possible temptation by this physical infirmity, which was constantly present to Jacob’s consciousness.

The shrunken sinew was the secret of victory. — Had it not been shriveled by the angel’s touch, Jacob would have continued to resist in the pride of his strength, and would never have clung convulsively to the angel, crying, “I will not let thee go.” It was only in that act that he became Israel, the Prince.

The shrunken sinew makes us think little of this world and much of the next. — From this moment Jacob takes up more of the pilgrim attitude. He finds that for him, at least, the pace will have to be slower; but it is well, for he relaxes his hold on the seen to entwine more tenaciously about the unseen. “The days of the years of my pilgrimage” — such is his epitome of his life.

Genesis 33:14

“Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure, until I come unto my lord unto Seir.”

THIS was rather unworthy of the man who, the night before, had seen the face of God, and learned to prevail. The man who had seen God, and prevailed, was doubtful of his newly-given blessing! He did not realize that it would carry him through the difficulty that threatened him. He had not as yet learned to apply it to *every* emergency. It is a solemn lesson to those who have passed through some rapturous experience.

After blessing, often trial. — When the fair colors have been laid on, the vessel is plunged into the furnace, that they may be burnt in.

The trial frequently presents itself in the home or ordinary life. — Some are led into the wilderness to be tempted; but more often it is the contact with our Esau that furnishes us with the supreme test of the worth of what we have received.

Failure comes from not reckoning on God. — Jacob looked at Esau’s four hundred armed men, and compared his own following with despair. So Peter looked at the winds and waves. At such times we must fail, if we rely on schemes or plans, instead of saying, God is.

*Oh for the peace that floweth as a river,
Making life’s desert places bloom and smile;
Oh for the faith to grasp Heaven’s bright “for ever”
And the shadow of earth’s “little while.”*

We must act in faith. — If Jacob had refused to use this subterfuge, and had spoken simply and manfully, he would have found that Esau would have acquiesced and left him. The angels who had gone forward to deal with him (Genesis 32:2) had done their work effectively, and God had changed his purpose.

Genesis 34:30

“And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.”

THE Bible does not hesitate to hold the mirror up to our fallen nature, or show us what we are. Here is Israel, the prince with God, who had power with man, in a very sorry plight. His children had involved him in it; but first, he had involved them.

Dinah. — Little did she realize all the evil which that visit of hers would bring on her people and on those whose guest she was. What took her there? Had her upbringing been unnecessarily strict, and did she want a little more freedom? There is an inevitable rebound with young people to the other extreme, if needless severity has been brought to bear on them in their early days.

The probability, however, is that the laxity of her father's home, and the effect of her mother's gods, had made the line of separation a very faint one, and she felt no difficulty in overstepping it.

Simeon and Levi. — “Ye have made me to stink.” On his dying bed Jacob remembered this treacherous cruelty and pronounced their scattering in Israel; though Levi undid the effect of that bitter curse by his obedience and devotion. In after days it was said, “My covenant was with him of life and peace,” and though scattered, he was as salt. In Simeon's case the curse was not cancelled by any subsequent manifestation of obedience and devotion, and ran out its course. There is encouragement and warning here.

Jacob. — The real mistake of it all was that Jacob bought that land, and settled too near the city (Genesis 33:18). As a pilgrim he had no right to do this. If Christian parents will settle down in fellowship with the world, they have themselves to thank for all the misery which accrues to themselves and children, and the dishonor to God.

Genesis 35:1

“And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.”

GOD had set His hand to make Jacob a saint. He had given him a glimpse of his ideal at the Jabbok ford, but his nature was not then capable of taking in the Divine conception; and, as we have seen, both in his subterfuge to Esau and his settling outside Shechem, he had fallen back into the schemer and money-maker. In this chapter God uses several methods of awakening and renewal.

The Divine summons. — “Arise, go up to Bethel.” He had been in the lowlands too long; too long had he “lain among the pots.” The voice of God spoke words of resurrection life into his grave, as afterwards into that of Lazarus.

The power of old association. — What memories clustered around that name and place of Bethel! It recalled his distress and fear; the angel-ladder, and the comforting assurance which had inspired him with new hope. Directly he heard it, he seemed to have felt the incongruity of the life that was being lived in his camp, and he said to his people, “Put away the strange gods ... Arise, let us go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God.”

A fresh revelation. — God appeared to him again. For long there had been no vision of God; but now that the idols were put away, his eyes were opened to see Him who had been beside him amid all his backslidings.

Death. — Deborah, the beloved Rachel, the old father — one after another were taken from him; and there came the far-away look into his eyes which showed that he had imbibed the pilgrim-spirit and had become Israel the Prince. So God stripped him that he might be better able to run the race set before him.

Genesis 36:31

“And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.”

APPARENTLY Esau had the best and happiest lot.

What he escaped. — For him there were no few and evil days of pilgrimage; nor the pressure of famine; nor the going down into Egypt; nor the forty years of wanderings in the desert; nor the vicissitudes of the Judges. All these he escaped — and must have congratulated himself merrily. But he had no vision of God; no communion with Jehovah; no contact with the messengers of heaven.

What he enjoyed. — A line of dukes; a royal dynasty, which was old when Israel’s first king ascended the throne; a rich and fertile territory; peace and comfort. He reminds us of the Psalmist’s picture of the man of this world, whose portion is in this life, and who is filled with hid treasure. But Esau never awoke satisfied with God’s likeness; nor ever enjoyed the blessedness of the man who is “a prince with God.”

How he bore himself. — His heart was generous, full of good nature, jovial, and free-handed. When the land could not bear both Jacob and himself, he went off into another, and settled down in Mount Seir. It was no hardship with him to leave the land of promise. Most would, doubtless, have preferred his society to Jacob’s; but God did not (Malachi 1:2–3).

What made the lot of these brothers so different. — The one lived for the world; the other was a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, a pilgrim to the City of God. The one was an ordinary man of the world; the other had been selected of God as the channel of blessing to mankind. The flower and fruit which are to be propagated require the special attention of the gardener’s knife. What solemn words! (Amos 3:2).

Genesis 37:24

“And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.”

IT is impossible to read this inimitable story without detecting in the water-mark of the paper on which it is written the name **JESUS**. Indeed, we lose much of the beauty and force of these early Scriptures if we fail to observe the references to the life, character, and work of the blessed Redeemer. Notice some of these precious analogies:—

Our Savior’s shepherd-heart (Genesis 37:2).

The love of the Father before the worlds were made (Genesis 37:3).

The dreams of empire, which are so certainly to be realized, when we shall see Him acknowledged as King of kings and Lord of lords (Genesis 37:7).

Envied by his brethren, to whom he came, though they received Him not (Genesis 37:11).

His alacrity to do his Father’s will, and to finish his work, in which will we too have been sanctified (Genesis 37:13).

Cast into the pit of the grave, as a seed-corn into the ground to die, that He might not abide alone, but bear much fruit (Genesis 37:24).

The thirty pieces of silver for which He was betrayed (Genesis 37:28).

The indifference of the Jewish people to their great Brother’s fate (Genesis 37:25).

Rejected of the Jew, and turning to the Gentile (Genesis 37:28).

The bitter grief which his rejection has brought on the Jewish people (Genesis 37:35).

It is as though the Holy Ghost, eager to glorify the Lord, could not wait for the slow unfolding of history, but must anticipate the story of that precious life and death which were to make the world new again.

Genesis 38:1

“And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.”

THIS was the destined heir of the birthright of which Reuben had shown himself unworthy; and yet this chapter is a dark story of his unbridled passion. O my soul, remember that the possibilities of all these sins are latent in thee! Thou mightest have been as one of these men or women but for the grace of God.

There is nothing so absolutely priceless as the white flower of a pure and blameless life. The pure in heart are the children of the presence-chamber — entrusted with secrets hidden from the wise and prudent — vessels by which God does not hesitate to quench the thirst of men, because the water of the crystal river will not be diluted or contaminated by contact with their natures. Above all other gifts, covet that of a cleansed heart. You may be very conscious of temptation, and that naturally you are no better than others, and yet if you will constantly live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, you will be kept absolutely pure; and the sea of ink that is sweeping through the world will leave no stain on you.

The blood cleanseth: “The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

The Savior keepeth: “The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil” (2 Thessalonians 3:3).

The Spirit filleth: “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (1 Corinthians 6:19).

God can take in hand the Judahs amongst us, and so deal with them as to produce such a character as is forth shadowed in Genesis 49:8.

Genesis 39:9

“There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”

WHAT a contrast between this chapter and the former: that, like a Rembrandt background, throws up the bright colors of this. Where the older brother fell, the younger stood victoriously; and the light of God shone on the young heart, so that even the dungeon gloom could not extinguish it. Who does not know what it is to be misunderstood, misrepresented, accused falsely, and punished wrongfully! Yet God reigns: and in his own time “He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day.”

God allows strength to be tested. — We do not know what we are, or where we stand, till we are compelled to choose. Insensibly character is ever forming — unconsciously we are taking sides; but the testing-hour that compels us to declare ourselves causes the solution suddenly to crystallize, and we know ourselves in our choice. The man who has chosen the pure and good once, will choose them more easily next time; and at each choice will become stronger.

God allows virtue to be Maligned. — In all Egypt there was not a purer soul, and yet Joseph lay under a terrible imputation; but he committed his cause to God, sure that He would not leave him in Hades; and the time came when the King’s word cleared him, and he stood forth vindicated. “Fret not thyself. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.”

God allows conscientiousness to be ill-repaid. — Of what avail that he had so well cared for his master’s goods? Ah, but that dungeon was the subterranean passage to a throne; and through those fetters iron entered into that young soul. We all need more iron in our blood!

Genesis 40:7

“And he asked Pharaoh’s officers that were with him in the ward of his lord’s house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to day?”

WE may learn from Joseph the true method of bearing grief. Joseph might have become moody and sullen, absorbed in his own misfortunes, and pessimistic about the course of human life. How far removed from all this was his behavior!

He filled his time with ministry. — The captain of the guard charged him with two state-prisoners, and he ministered unto them. A new interest came into his life, and he almost forgot the heavy pressure of his own troubles amid the interest of listening to the tales of those who were more unfortunate than himself. Do not nurse your grief in lonely brooding arise and minister to some one; do something in the world; exert yourself to alleviate the sufferings of those close by your side, who have not so clear a conscience or so bright a trust in God.

He was quick to sympathize and comfort. — Quick to notice traces of sorrow, because he had sorrowed; able to sympathize, because he had wept; adept at comforting, because he had been comforted of God. We gain comfort when we attempt to comfort. Out of such intercourse we get what Joseph got — the key which will unlock the heavy doors by which we have been shut in. Light a fire in another’s heart, and your own heart will be warmed.

He kept his faith in God. — Depression, captivity, loneliness, separation from those he loved, could not quench his faith in God. Still God was near and precious to him. The stifling darkness and oppression of the prison were irksome to the free child of the camp; but God was as near as in Jacob’s tent. There is no evil to them that love God; and the believer loses sight of second causes in the contemplation of the unfolding of the mystery of his Father’s will.

Genesis 41:16

“And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.”

IT is beautiful to notice Joseph’s reverent references to God in his first interview with Pharaoh. When the heart is full of God, the tongue will be almost obliged to speak of Him; and all such references will be easy and natural as flowers in May.

These words might have been uttered by the *Lord Jesus*. They are so perfectly in harmony with the tenor of His life. He loved to say that His words, and works, and plans, were not His own, but the Father’s. Once, when a ruler called Him good, He reminded him that only One was good, and that all goodness was derived from God. Men knew little enough of Jesus, because He sought ever to be a reflecting mirror for His Father, and to glorify Him on the earth. But the Spirit reveals Him to those that love.

These words might have been *the Apostle Paul’s*. He delighted to say that he worked, yet not he, but the grace of God in him; that he lived, yet not he, but Christ in him; that he knew and spake the mysteries of God, yet not he, but the Spirit of God.

Thus *we* should speak. Our light must so shine that men may turn from us to Him from whom we have derived it. Whenever the temptation arises to revert on ourselves, to attract men to ourselves, to lead them to think that we can meet their need, let us count ourselves dead to the suggestion, saying, “It is not in me; God shall give” (Acts 3:12). What strength and comfort come into our hearts, in view of demands which are too great for our weak nature to meet. “It is not in me; God shall give.” If our hearts were indicting a good matter, they would boil over, and we should speak more frequently of the things that touch our King.

Genesis 42:30

“The man, who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country.”

HE *spake roughly, but he did not feel so.* — When he had spoken in these harsh tones, he restored their money; turned aside to weep (Genesis 42:24); and did his best to alleviate the toils of travel. So sometimes God seems to deal harshly, and speak roughly; but there is no change in the tender love of his heart. It costs Him immeasurably more than it does us. Often when some unusual severity has been evinced, if we could but see his face, it would be full of pity, pain, and pleading on our behalf. He feels yearnings over use which He restrains, and dares not betray till the work of conviction is complete.

He spake roughly to awaken conscience. — It had slept for twenty years. They had almost forgotten that scene at the pit’s mouth; but as he repeated their tones, and words, and treatment, it all came back again, and they cried, “We are verily guilty concerning our brother.” There must be repentance and confession before God can take us to His heart. We must confess the wrongs done to our Brother in heaven and our brothers on earth; and many of the roughness of God’s Providence are intended to awaken us, and bring our sin to remembrance.

He spake roughly to test them. — How did they feel toward each other: was there rivalry, or bitterness, or angry feeling? Beneath his biting words, Joseph would mark their behavior! Would they disown each other, or cling to one another? There was an opportunity for their doing one or the other; and he was glad to notice how their love approved itself. So we are led over stony roads, that God may know what is in our hearts. He gives us opportunities of showing our real feeling towards our brothers, that He may test our love towards Himself.

Genesis 43:21

“And it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man’s money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand.”

JOSEPH, who gave corn to save his own brethren and the Gentiles from starvation, is a type of Him who gives the bread of life to Jew and Greek — to all that hunger and come to Him for supplies. And in this return of the full money in the sack’s mouth, we are reminded that salvation and satisfaction are all of grace. They are without money and without price. Whatever we yield to Him, He returns in full weight.

We bring Him works of merit as a price of our pardon; but they are not noticed.

We bring Him emotion, tears, anguish of soul; but He will have none of them.

We bring Him our faith as a price, instead of as a hand that accepts; and He refuses it.

How many are our mistakes and misunderstandings! Yet He does not for that reason withhold His blessed gift. We get the corn as an act of His free grace; and afterwards He explains why it was that our careful dues were not accepted.

There is bread enough in God to supply every mouth of desire and hunger in your soul. You may have it for the seeking. The law is — ask, and have. What if you have no money with which to purchase, no earnestness, no merit? Nevertheless the best wheat of heaven may be yours. Our Father’s love is constantly devising means of expressing itself. It puts money into our sacks; it invites us to its home, and spreads banquets before us; it inclines stewards to meet us peacefully; it washes our feet; it takes a tender interest in those we love; it wishes us grace from God; it adjusts itself to our temperaments and puts us at our ease, go to that gleam of light as to the love of Jesus strike into our hearts!

Genesis 44:28

“And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since:”

THESSE are words caught from his father’s mouth by Judah; and here repeated, in his most pathetic intercession, with the hope of softening the Governor’s heart, and moving him to spare Benjamin at least. They are very sad, and, without doubt, justified by the vision of that blood-stained coat. Yet there was another interpretation to the sad and dark suggestion which it made: Joseph was alive, and they were soon to know that it was he with whom they were dealing, and that he was conducting them through these strange experiences.

We are often tempted to judge hastily, and by appearances; by our own despondent, sorrowful hearts; or by the reports of others. We may say that certain things are against us, when, if we would only look beyond appearances and circumstances to God, we should find that He had been working, and was working, mightily on our behalf — that all was for our lasting good.

Do not say that you have lost your Joseph; he lives, and will yet be a comfort to you. He was taken from you for a little, to bring blessing to your whole family, but to be given back to you, more yours than ever.

Do not look on the sad, but on the bright side of God’s Providence. All things are working for the best. “In all these things is the life of the spirit.” Do not judge Him, or try to understand; be still and trust. You will some day be ashamed of your little faith.

*Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain,
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.*

Genesis 45:5

“Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.”

THERE was great delicacy in Joseph’s command, “Cause every man to go out from me.” He did not want to expose his brethren; yet he wanted to say words which could not be understood by the curious courtiers. Then he made himself known, and said, “Be not grieved, nor angry, for God did send me before you.” This was not only a kind way of alleviating their remorse and sorrow, but was the standpoint from which *Joseph* was wont to review his life-course. It was his habit to trace the working-out of God’s plan, and the interposition of his Providence amid and through the malevolence and treachery of men (Genesis 50:20).

This was also *David’s* habit, who, in the cursing of Shimei and the revolt of Absalom, saw the evolution of God’s permissive purposes.

Thus also *Jesus* spoke, when anticipating the coming of Judas to betray Him. “The Son of Man goeth, as it was written of Him.” “The cup that my Father giveth Me to drink.”

It is one of the inexplicable mysteries of Providence that bad men subserve God’s purposes and unwittingly execute His plans. It is not for us to explain it, but to consider the perplexities and disaster which we suffer at the hands of evil men as being permitted by God for the furtherance of some Divine and hidden purpose. Paul’s prayer that he might preach the Gospel at Rome was fulfilled through the hatred of the Jews; and he went to Rome at the Emperor’s expense. We may comfort ourselves whenever the storm is high, that God, is at the helm, and is making the wrath of man praise Him, whilst the remainder of it shall be restrained. Yes, Joseph, God is sending you through that pit and prison: but there is a way out into sunlight.

Genesis 46:3

“And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation:”

PROBABLY the old man, remembering the experiences of Abraham, was very fearful to adventure himself into Egypt. Besides, was it not as though, in going thither, he renounced the Land of Promise? Therefore this special bidding and assurance were the more necessary.

When our heart misgives us, let us look out for one of God's fears. — His eye is ever upon the righteous, and his ear open to their cry. One upward glance or tremulous prayer will make Him ride on a cherub to our side, and whisper, “Be not afraid; fear not, I am with thee.”

God's promises are fulfilled in most unexpected ways. — He had always foretold that the seed of Abraham should outnumber stars and sands; but who would have supposed that the promise would be realized amid the pressure and persecution of Egypt? Yet so it happened. “I will *there* make of thee a great nation.” We must not judge after the sight of our eyes, nor act on what is known as our common sense; faith is led by very uncommon paths. Trust and obey!

God's presence in Egypt acted as an antidote to its evil, and delivered from its tyrant's grasp. — Ah, my soul, thou mightest descend without fear into hell itself if God said, “I will go down with thee, and will surely bring thee up again.” The Divine Presence is strength to the fearful — security and consolation in life, peace in death. It was probably thus that the Father spake to the Son by the lips of the Angel in Gethsemane: “Fear not to go down into the grave: I will surely bring thee up again.” Thus He speaks to us. He is with us, and will deliver.

Genesis 47:25

“And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh’s servants.”

NOTHING less would have extorted such an acknowledgment from those proud Egyptians. They were willing to serve their savior. No doubt, had there been no provision made by Joseph, the streets would have been filled by emaciated skeletons picking their way feebly amid the heaps of the dying and the dead. Gratitude brought them into the dust before him who held the keys of the granaries.

The kingdom of Christ is a matter of supreme importance to individuals and the world. — He is not ambitious of power for its own sake; but that He may be able to exercise it more fully for our benefit, and that He may finally render up the kingdom to God, even his Father, that God may be all in all. He will never, therefore, be perfectly satisfied till He has triumphantly entered all closed gates, as King.

His kingdom is given Him by the glad choice of those whom He had blessed and saved. — The song of heaven reflects this thought: “Thou art worthy... for thou wast slain.” His empire depends on the sacrifice by which He has saved a multitude whom no man can number. Meditate much on the love of Calvary, and you too will feel that His empire should begin within your heart, and hasten to subdue the kingdoms of the world.

When He becomes king, He still further blesses us. — The first hour of Joseph’s supreme power was the beginning of Egypt’s brightest days. The Egyptians could not do so well for themselves as he for them. We shall never know the real blessedness of living, its peace and joy and strength, till we have utterly surrendered to Christ’s supremacy. To serve such a Master utterly is to drink of the river of perfect blessedness.

Genesis 48:2

“And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed.”

HOW needful Joseph was to Jacob! The aged patriarch could not die without seeing him. His presence lit the dark valley. His hands closed the tired eyes of the aged pilgrim. And Joseph was as quick to come at the first intimation of his father's desire to see him. There was a perfect sympathy and reciprocity between them, just as there may be between Christ and those who owe all to Him.

Jesus is ever leading us on to new and deeper experiences. — In no true life is stagnation admissible. So the nest is constantly being stirred up, and the trumpets sounded for the striking of our tents. But there is a Divine motive in it all. Jesus cannot rest satisfied with less than the best for those He loves, as Joseph could not permit Jacob to remain in Canaan whilst Goshen with its plenty awaited him.

In all the new experiences Jesus meets us. — When his father entered Egypt, Joseph was waiting for him. When he was summoned to stand before Pharaoh, Joseph brought him. When he lay a-dying, Joseph was at his side to receive his last commissions. So, trembling soul, if Jesus presses you into the unknown, He does not leave you there, but keeps coming again, meeting you at every point of anxiety and distress. Yea, He does what Joseph could not do. He stands, not on this side only, but on the other side, of death. Here to calm with his benediction; there to receive into his glory.

Jesus is careful for body as well as soul. — The dying man was anxious about the disposal of his body, and Joseph readily undertook to see it buried in Machpelah's cave. So Jesus cares for us. He is the Savior of the body in this life and in the resurrection.

Genesis 49:10

“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”

OLD experience is said to attain to something of prophetic strain; but there is more than old experience here. From these aged lips the Holy Ghost is speaking.

The mission and work of Jesus are designated. — He is Shiloh — the Maker, Giver, and Bringer of Peace. The troubled conscience, smitten with conviction, finds peace when He reveals His all-sufficient sacrifice and atonement. The discordant elements within us settle into a great calm when He enters to reign, bringing every thought into captivity to His rule. Nor is His work for individuals only; it is for man, for the world, the universe. Peace was made at His cross; it is proclaimed by His Spirit; and it will be consummated when God is All in all.

The time of His advent predicted. — Not till the Romans came and annexed Palestine as one of the provinces of the empire, did the semblance of the Hebrew monarchy expire. And it was then that the Shiloh came. Surely these words must often have been quoted by the pious Jews, with whom Simeon and Anna consorted, as pointing to the near advent of the Messiah. Let us be wise to discern the symptoms of His second advent.

The inevitableness of his dominion. — Ah, Savior, it is predicted that all peoples shall obey Thee; and we know well that it is only through obedience that men can enter into Thy peace. Teach us to obey, to do all thy commands, to bear all thy burdens, to wait before Thee. That thus we may know the peace that passeth all understanding.

Ponder this well, O my soul; the Peace-giver must be obeyed. Only so can He give thee peace that floweth as a river.

Genesis 50:20

“But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.”

GOD’S deeper meanings! We are apt to see a malicious meaning; are we equally apt to detect the Divine and benevolent one? Our enemies are many, and they hate us with perfect hatred; they are ever laying their plots, and working their unholy purposes. But there is a greater and wiser than they, who, through all these plottings, is prosecuting His Divine purpose. There is another and deeper meaning than appears to the short sight of sense.

Let us believe that there is a Divine and deeper meaning in the adversities of our lives. — Joseph might be forgiven for not doing so; but with his history and that of many others before us, we have no excuse for despair in the face of crushing sorrow. Whether it comes from man or devil, all creatures are under the Divine control, holding to our lips cups which the Father’s hand has mixed. He has no complicity with their evil, but they unconsciously perform His will. Even if you cannot see the Divine meaning, dare to believe that it is there.

Await the disclosures of time. — Even here we sometimes reach an eminence from which we detect the meaning of the path by which we have been conducted. It may have been rough and circuitous, but there was a reason in it all. Often God rewards patient trust by allowing us to see and know.

And for the full revelation of eternity. — One day God will call us to His side in the clear light of eternity, and will explain His meanings in life’s most sorrowful experiences; and we shall learn that we suffered, not for ourselves only, but for others, and, as part of His great remedial scheme, “to save much people alive.”

Exodus 1:12

“But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel.”

IT was a very unequal struggle on which Pharaoh had entered; for he opposed not the Hebrews, but Jehovah. It is thus that the great ones of this world have ever spoken and acted. “Let us build us a city and a tower;” “Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.” “Against thy holy child Jesus, ... both Herod and Pontius Pilate ... were gathered together.” In every case, He that sits in the heavens has laughed at the boast of human pride. His cause and His people’s are one. *Yet times of affliction have always been on times of multiplication.*

In the history of the Church. — When has she made her greatest number of adherents? When her pulpits have been filled with eloquent preachers, and her aisles crowded with fashion and wealth? No; but when she has been driven to the dens and caves of the earth, and her sons have been proscribed outcasts. The real triumphs of the early Church were in the first centuries of opprobrium and persecution; her decline began when Constantine made Christianity the religion of the State.

In the history of each earnest soul. — It is rarely the case that we make much spiritual headway when winds and currents favor us. We do best when all is against us. We grow quickest in the dark. In times of persecution we realize the security, and comfort, and joy, which are in Christ Jesus our Lord; and as God goes the round of the world, it is in chambers of pain, sickness, and bereavement; that He beholds the multiplication of the choice graces of holy character and temper. The affliction, which is for the moment, is working out an exceeding weight of glory.

Exodus 2:12

“And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.”

THIS was creature-strength, wrought on by creature-passion, and ending in creature-failure. Moses stood on an eminence, and reached down to these poor brethren of his with a passing spasm of pity. He was very careful to look this way and that, go as not to invalidate his own position at court. And fear for himself carried him swiftly from the scene of his people's woes. It was a brief effort to do the Divine work of redemption in his own energy. Long years must pass, during which God would drain away drop by drop his strength, his resolution, and his very desire to be an emancipator; that when he had become nothing, God through him might effect His almighty will.

We sometimes smite the Egyptian within. — We rise up against some tyrant passion, and strike two or three vigorous blows. Our efforts to rid ourselves of its thrall originate and are prosecuted in our own resolve. At first the conflict seems easily our own; finally the dead weight of all the Egyptians within is more than a match for us.

We often smite the Egyptian without. — We make an assault on some giant evil — drink, gambling, impurity. It seems at first as though we should carry the position by our sudden and impetuous rush. But Egypt conquers in the end, and we flee.

No: we need to learn for the inward and outward conflict the lesson that forty years in Midian taught Moses, that only the Spirit of God in man can overcome the spirit of the world. By disappointment and repeated failure, by the silence of the desert, we are taught that we are nothing — then God becomes our all in all: and all things become possible to us as we believe.

Exodus 3:13

“And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?”

THIS is a marvelous chapter, because it is so full of God. If the previous one, in its story of human striving, reminds us of Romans 7, this as surely recalls Romans 8. There is little mention of the part that Moses was to play, but much is said of what God was about to do. “I am come down.” “I will bring you up.” “I will stretch out my hand.” O weary soul, bitter with weary bondage, groaning beneath cruel taskmasters, afflicted and tossed with tempest, the I AM has come down!

God comes down to our lowest to lift us to His highest. — This is the theme of the magnificent, and of Hannah’s song. God comes down to the dust for the poor, and to the dunghill for the needy. You cannot be too lonely or broken in spirit for Him to notice and help. In proportion to your humiliation will be your exaltation.

He comes down to our saddest to lift us to His joy fullest. — How great the contrast between the cry of the Hebrews, because of their taskmasters, and the exultant note that smote on the rocks of the Red Sea! Such shall be your experience also. If you suffer in the line of God’s will and providence, you are sowing the seeds of light and gladness. Oh, anticipate the harvest!

He comes down to our helplessness to succor with His great might. — Israel could not help herself; but the resources of I AM were sufficient for every need, and they will be for yours and mine. This is God’s blank check; fill it in! Insert after these majestic words, wisdom, or courage, or love, or whatever you need most. And He will be all this, and more also not for a moment, but always; not spasmodically, but unchangeably.

Exodus 4:10

“And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.”

THIS is what we all say. We think more of the words than of the message; more of our eloquence or slowness of speech than of the King's seal and signature. Moses had learned many wholesome lessons through his long sojourn in Midian; but he had to learn this last one, that God does not want excellency of speech or of language in His messengers, but the unction and power which come on those who speak after direct audience with the Eternal. Aaron, who came to meet Moses, could speak well; but he was a weak man, whose alliance with Moses caused his nobler younger brother much anxiety and pain. However, God determined to send Aaron with him, to be his colleague and spokesman. Better a thousand times had it been for Moses to trust God for speech, than be thus deposed of his premiership.

Be sure to get thy message from the King. — Wait before Him in the inner shrine, till He says the word which thou shalt speak. This will give thee the real eloquence of the heart.

Look up for the right words. — The Apostle said that the Corinthians were enriched in all utterance; and he said that he spoke the Divine mysteries in words which the Holy Spirit taught. Ask for these, and you will not be disappointed.

Rely on the Divine co-operation. — There is another force at work, more subtle and penetrating than the most eloquent words of man — the power of the Holy Ghost. Seek for His Divine demonstration and co-witness. And it shall come to pass, that mysterious influences shall move over the hearts of those that listen to thy words, which shall attest the mighty fellowship and co-operation of One whom the natural man cannot detect.

Exodus 5:22

“And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me?”

BEFORE God can use us, He must bring us to an end of ourselves. When Paul was summoned to the greatest epistles and labors of his life, his strength was drained to utter weakness, and he despaired even of life. So in the case of Moses and Israel.

Moses, for forty years, had been undergoing the emptying process; but perhaps when God called him to this great enterprise, there may have been a slight revival of confidence in himself, in his mission, his miracles, the eloquence of Aaron's speech. So in the rebuff he received from Pharaoh, in the bitter remonstrance of the elders of his people, in the sad consciousness that his efforts had aggravated their condition, the lesson was still further taught him — that of himself he could do absolutely nothing.

Israel also had begun to hope something from his mission. Through the brickfields the story ran of his early years, his uncompromising speech to Pharaoh, of his miracles; and the wretched slaves cherished faith in him and Aaron as their heaven-sent deliverers. They had, however, to learn that all such hopes were vain, and to see that the brothers, at the best, were as weak as themselves. Then the way was prepared to lean only on God.

Ourselves. — By repeated failures all along our life-course God is teaching us the same lesson. We fail to justify and then to sanctify ourselves. Our efforts to serve and please Him only end in increasing perplexity. The tale of bricks is doubled; the burdens augment; the strength of our purpose is broken; we are utterly discouraged; and then, when the soul is utterly desolate, the heavenly Bridegroom draws near and says, “I will do all; I am Alpha and Omega; I am thy salvation.”

Exodus 6:6

“Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments:”

WHEN all human help has failed, and the soul, exhausted and despairing, has given up hope from man, God draws near, and says, I AM. It is as though He said, “All that can really help you resides in my nature as in its native home. I have weaned you from all beside, that you might seek in Me what you had been wont to seek in men and things and self-help.”

Thus God with Israel. The people had come to relish the dainties of Egypt — the leeks and onions, the fleshpots and sensual delights; therefore the need for this cruel bondage to wean them, and prepare them for marriage union with Himself. Moreover, they placed great hopes in Moses, and such appeals as might be made to move Pharaoh’s pity; from these too it was necessary to withdraw the people’s heart, that they might look for all to their heavenly Lover, and find in Jehovah their infinite supply.

Affliction is always needful in the first stage of the Christian’s deepening experience. The world, with its vainglory, pride, and envy; the delights of the flesh; the praise and good opinion of our fellows — these take the place of Christ in his disciples. We must be taught to despise these things, and feel their vanity and insufficiency to satisfy.

Failure is often necessary to teach humility and patience; so that we may have no confidence in anything we can call our own, and be prepared to find all our satisfaction and delight in Jesus only.

Revelation then becomes possible, of all that God can be and do. He draws near with His sevenfold “I will.” He looks on us with infinite delight, and commences to bring us into such blessedness that we forget all else, and behold our Bridegroom only.

Exodus 7:5

“And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.”

IN God’s dealings with His people He purposed to reveal Himself to Egypt: so that when He led forth Israel’s hosts, in redemption power, from the brickfields of slavery on to resurrection ground, there might be afforded such a display of His love, and pity, and power, as the world had never before witnessed. Egypt and all surrounding nations should know the character of God in the Exodus, as the Lover and Redeemer of His own.

So with the Church. — The Apostle tells us that redeemed men are to be the subjects of angelic contemplation and wonder. In the Church, principalities and powers shall discern the manifold wisdom and grace of God. When God has brought all the ransomed hosts up from the Egyptian bondage of the world to stand in the radiance of the eternal morning, then the universe shall ring with the ascription, “Great and marvellous are thy works. ... just and true are thy ways.”

So with each individual believer. — Each one of us has been formed for Jesus Himself, that we might show forth His praise. In growing purity and sweetness, in our deliverance from the clinging corruptions of the world and flesh, in our patience under tribulation, our submission and steadfast hope, in our willingness to sacrifice ourselves for others, let us be revelations of what Christ is, and of what He can make sinful men become.

Believers are the world’s Bibles, by studying which men may come to know the Lord Himself. Let us see to it that we be clear in type, unmistakable in our testimony, pleasant to behold, thoughtful and helpful towards all, commending the blessed Bridegroom whom the world sees not.

Exodus 8:23

“And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be.”

T*HIS division is as old as eternity.* — In the council chamber of the Godhead the Father chose Jesus and all who should believe in Him unto eternal life. We cannot understand the reason of that Divine choice; we can only affirm it, that in those ages of the unfathomed past, Christ and His seed stood out from the rest of mankind, the people of God’s own possession and inheritance.

It was effected by the Cross of Jesus. — By it we are crucified to the world, and the world to us. The cross, with its outstretched arms, stands sentinel between the Church and the world which cast out her Lord. The grave, like a great gulf, yawns between those who gather round the risen Master on resurrection ground, and all men else. From the moment that Jesus ascended, the rallying center of the Church was removed from earth to heaven, from the cross to the throne.

It is wrought out by the daily grace of the Holy Ghost. It is right, of course, to come out and be separate in our outward walk and behavior. But, deeper than this, if only we will let the Spirit of God work unhindered, He will effect an inward division. Our tastes and desires, our hopes and aims, will become different, and we shall be aware of a growing dissimilarity between ourselves and the world.

Then to the separate soul the Bridegroom comes. He says tender and loving words. In one hour He teaches more than all human teachers could; and sheds forth by the Holy Ghost the torrent of Divine Love. There may be darkness without, but there is light in the dwellings of Goshen: there may be plague and pestilence in the world, but there is peace, joy, and bliss, in the separated soul.

Exodus 9:26

“Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail.”

THOSE who are included in the provisions of the covenant are sealed. The storm may sweep around them, but the great angel, who ascends from the east, cries with a great voice to the angels to whom it is given to hurt the earth, and the sea, and the trees, saying, Hurt them not till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads (Revelation 7:3).

The only spot in which the soul is safe is within the encircling provisions of the covenant. Israel stood there, and was safe — not only from the hail, but from the destroying sword. The invulnerable walls of that sacred enclosure were the oath and promise of God to Abraham. God had bound Himself by the most solemn sanctions to be a God to this people, and deliver them; it was necessary, therefore, that He should be their pavilion and canopy, catching the hailstones on His outstretched wings and securing them from hurt.

The covenant is entered, not by merit nor by works. There was neither the one nor the other in that race of slaves; but they stood there simply because of their relationship to the Friend of God. So we enter the blessed safety of the better covenant, through our relationship with the Lord Jesus, who is the Beloved of the Father, the one glorious and blessed Man. Without beauty or merit, the soul attaches itself by faith to Him, and discovers that it was loved before the worlds were made.

Ah, blessed Lover of souls, we see how the storm swept thy heart, that it might never touch us. Thou art our hiding-place, our shield, our deliverer, our strong tower. Without dismay we can anticipate the storms of death, judgment, and eternity, sure that wherever Thou art there can be no hail.

Exodus 10:23

“They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.”

WITHOUT, darkness that might be felt; within, light. This should be the condition of each believing heart. The sun may have gone down, and the moon withdrawn herself in the firmament of the world; the darkness of perplexity and trouble may envelop Pharaoh and all his chosen counselors; all things may wear the aspect of approaching dissolution: but with the Lord as our everlasting Light we walk in the light of life.

Light is purity. — The soul which is exposed to the indwelling of God, purifies itself even as He is pure; and walks as Jesus did, with white and stainless robes. He that says he has fellowship with the Holy God, and walks in the darkness of his own lusts, lies. Where God is really hidden in the heart, the beams of his lovely purity must irradiate and beautify the life.

Light is knowledge. — There is a wisdom, an insight, an understanding of the Divine mysteries, which the mere intellect could never give, but are the product of the Divine indwelling in the holy soul. All around men may be groping aimlessly after truth, trying to discover the secret of the Universe, whilst to the loving, childlike soul, in which God has taken up his abode, these things, which are hidden from the wise and prudent, are unveiled.

Light is love. — It steals so gently over the world, blessing flowers and birds, little children and invalids. Everywhere it is the symbol of the beneficent work of its Creator. His eldest daughter! Thus amid the selfishness of the world, let Jesus dwell deep in thee, that thou mayest be rooted and grounded in the love of God, which shall illumine thy dwelling, and ray out to the world.

Exodus 11:2

“Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold.”

THE Egyptians knew very well that they would never see their jewels again; and the people of Israel were thus, to some extent, compensated for their unpaid toils. The Lord gave them such favor with the Egyptians that they gave them whatever they asked; so that “they spoiled the Egyptians.”

These jewels were employed afterwards in the adornment and enrichment of the Sanctuary. They flashed in the breastplate of the High Priest, and shone in the sacred vessels. In this they remind us of the treasures which David gathered by his conquests from neighboring nations, and which were afterwards incorporated in the Temple of Solomon. They recall also the glowing predictions of the prophet, that the kings of the earth shall bring their treasures into the New Jerusalem.

The jewels of the Church, whether they stand for her graces or her choice children, have often been obtained from the midst of Egypt. Was not Saul of Tarsus just such a jewel? The world counted him one of her rarest sons; but God set him as a jewel in the breastplate of Immanuel.

Let us ever seek jewels from the land of our captivity and suffering. It will not do to come away empty. It is not enough merely to bear what God permits to fall on us for our chastisement; but to go further, and extract from all trials, jewels. Let every trial and temptation enrich you with the opposite grace. There are Egyptians in your life, which have grievously tormented you with their heavy whips, yet even these shall yield wealth “jewels of silver and jewels of gold”; which you shall consecrate to holy service, and which shall shine in the fabric and worship of the New Jerusalem.

Exodus 12:8

“And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.”

THE Paschal feast is the emblem of the Christian life. The Blood is ever speaking to God for us; though we see it not, God sees it, and hears its prevalent plea. We in the meanwhile are called upon to feed in faith daily, hourly, on the flesh of the Son of Man, according to His own command. In all Christian life, even in its hours of greatest rapture, there must be a touch of the bitter herb.

We can never forget the cost of our redemption. — Even in heaven, in the full realization of its bliss, whenever we catch sight of the print of the nails in His hand, we shall remember the agony and bloody sweat, the cross and passion, and eat the feast with the flavor of the bitter herb. How much more on earth, where we are so constantly requiring the efficacy of His precious death!

There will always be the memory of our sinner-ship. — We cannot forget our unworthiness and sin. He has forgiven; but we cannot forget. Ah, those years of rebellion and perverseness before we yielded to Him; and those years of self-will and pride since we knew His love! They will sometimes come back to us and give us to eat of the bitter herb.

Moreover, there must be the constant crucifixion of the self-life. — We can only properly feed on Jesus, the Lamb of God, when we are animated by the spirit of self-surrender and humiliation, of death to the world and to the will of the flesh, which were the characteristics of His cross. Deep down in our hearts, the drinking of His cup and being baptized with His baptism, will be the touch of the bitter herbs in the feast. But “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

Exodus 13:14

“And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage:”

FOUR times over in this chapter Moses lays stress on the strong hand with which God redeemed his people from the bondage of Egypt; and we are reminded of “the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe” (Ephesians 1:12–20).

God’s strong hand reaches down to where we are. — It would have been useless if Israel had been bidden to help itself up to a certain point, whilst God would do the rest. The people were so broken that they could only lie at the bottom of the pit, and moan. God’s hand reached down to touch and grasp them at their lowest. So God’s help is not conditional on our doing something, whilst He will do the rest. When we are without strength, when we have expended our all in vain, when heart and flesh fail then God comes where we are, and becomes the strength of our heart and our portion for ever.

God’s strong hand is mightier than our mightiest adversaries. — Pharaoh was strong, and held the people as a child may hold a moth in its clenched fist. But a man’s hand is stronger than a child’s, and God’s than Pharaoh’s. So Satan may have held you in bondage; but do not fear him any more, look away to the strength of God’s hand. What can it not do for you?

We must appropriate and reckon on God’s strong hand. — It is there towards them who believe, as a locomotive may be next a line of carriages; yet there must be a coupling-iron connecting them. So you must trust God’s strength, and avail yourself of it, and yield to it. Remember that His arm is not shortened, nor His hand paralyzed, except our unbelief and sin intercept and hinder the mighty working of His Power.

Exodus 14:30

“Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.”

WHAT a relief that morning brought from the anxieties of the previous night! Then, as they lifted up their eyes, they saw Pharaoh and the dreaded Egyptian taskmaster in full pursuit; now they beheld the sea-shore strewn with their bodies, stark and cold. They would never see them again, nor hear the crack of their whips.

So in life we are permitted to see the dreaded temptations and evils of earlier days suddenly deprived of all power to hurt us. The Egyptians are dead upon the shore; and we see the great work of the Lord. Let us take comfort in this—

In the pressure of trial. — You are suffering keenly; yet remember that no trial is allowed to come from any source in which there is not a Divine meaning. Nothing can enter your life, of which God is not cognizant, and which He does not permit. Though the pressure of your trial is almost unbearable, you will one day see your Egyptians dead.

Amid the temptations of the great adversary of souls. — They may seem at this moment more than you can bear; but God is about to deliver you. He can so absolutely free you from the habits of self-indulgence which you have contracted, and from the perpetual yielding to temptation to which you have been prone, that some day you will look with amazement and thankfulness on these things, as Egyptians dead on the sea-shore.

So also in the presence of death. — Many believers dread, not the after-death, but the act of dying. But as the morning of eternity breaks, they will awake with songs of joy to see death and the grave and all the evils that they dreaded, like Egyptians, strewn on the shores of the sea of glass.

Exodus 15:25

“And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,”

OUR joys and sorrows, like the varied products of nature, lie very close together. One moment we are singing the joyous song of victory on the shores of the Red Sea, and vow we will never again mistrust our God; and then, by a sudden transition, we find ourselves standing beside the Marsh waters of pain and disappointment, inclined to murmur at our lot.

There is, however, a tree, which, when cast into the waters, makes them sweet. It is the tree of the cross. “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” The cross means the yielding up of the will. Now, it is in proportion as we see God’s will in the various events of life, and surrender ourselves either to bear or do it, that we shall find earth’s bitter things becoming sweet, and its hard things easy.

We must yield our will to God. — The secret of blessedness is in saying “Yes” to the will of God, as it is shown in the circumstances of our lot or the revelations of His Word. It is the will of a Father whose love and wisdom are beyond question.

We must accept what He permits. — It may be that our pains emanate from the malevolence or negligence of others; still, if He has permitted them, they are His will for us. By the time they reach us they have become minted with His die, and we must patiently submit.

We must do all He bids. — The thread of obedience must always be running through our hands. At all costs to our choice and feeling we must not only have His commands, but keep them. Our Lord perpetually lays stress on obeying His words. This is the spirit of the Cross, and the properties of this tree sweeten earth’s bitterest sorrows. “Disappointments become His appointments.”

Exodus 16:4

“Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.”

IT is said that the twenty-four hours should be divided thus: Eight hours for work, eight for rest, eight for recreation, food, etc. There should be a counterpart of this in Christian living. Each day there should be a portion for work, a portion for restful meditation and sitting before the Lord, and a portion for the gathering of God's manna.

Each day brings its own work. — God has created us for good works, and has prepared our pathway, so that we may come to them one by one. He has apportioned to each one some office to fulfill, some service to render, some function in the mystical body of our Lord. It is comforting to know that we have not to scheme for ourselves, but to look up for guidance into the Divine plan.

Each day brings its own difficulties. — God spreads them over our days, giving each day only what we can sustain. The servant girl might be startled were she told that she would have to carry the coals, which it has taken two horses and a great cart to brim to her master's door; but she will be comforted by being reminded that they will be borne upstairs only a coal — scuttle full at a time.

Each day brings its own supply. — No Israelite could point to his store of manna and congratulate himself that he was proof against any famine that might befall. The lesson of daily trust for daily bread was constantly being enforced; for as the day came the manna fell. Those who followed the cloud were always certain of their sustenance. Where the cloud brooded the manna fell. Whatever any day may bring there always will be within reach of you, lying ready prepared on the sands of the desert, just what you require. Go forth and carry it; there will be no lack.

Exodus 17:6

“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.”

HERE is a beautiful example of the co-operation between God and His servants in providing for the needs of His people. Clearly the smiting of the rock was a very small item in this incident, the main consideration was what God was doing in the heart of the earth. But the two wrought together: Moses in the eyes of the people, God in hidden depths. Similarly we are fellow-workers with God.

One of the greatest revelations that can come to any Christian worker is the realization that in every act of Christian ministry there are two agents, God and man: that God does not need to be implored to help us, but wants us to help Him; that our part is the very unimportant and subsidiary one of smiting the rock, whilst His is the Divine and all important part of making the waters flow.

Did Moses go to the rock that day weighted with care, his brow furrowed with the anxiety of furnishing a river of which his people might drink? Certainly not; he had only to smite: God would do all the rest, and had pledged Himself to it. So, Christian worker, you have been worrying as though the whole weight of God's inheritance were upon you, but you are greatly mistaken; smiting is very easy work.

In every congregation and religious gathering the Holy Spirit is present, eager to glorify Christ, and to pour out rivers of living water for thirsty men; believe this. See that you are spiritually in a right condition, that He may be able to ally you with Himself. Keep reckoning on Him to do His share; and when the river is flowing, be sure not to take the praise.

Exodus 18:23

“If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace.”

IT was good and sound advice that Jethro gave his son-in-law. It could hardly have been better. It is always better to set one hundred men to work than attempt to do the work of one hundred men. There is no greater art in the world than to develop the latent capacities of those around us by yoking them to useful service. But good though the advice obviously was, Jethro carefully guarded Moses against adopting it, unless the Lord had been consulted, and had commanded it.

Let us test human advice. — There are plenty of voices that advise us, and each has some nostrum for our health, some direction for our path. Some are true guides, whom God has sent to us, as Jethro to Moses. Often an onlooker can see mistakes we are making, and can suggest something better. But we are wise to get alone into the holy presence of God, and ask what He commands, what is His will.

Let us test human teachings — So full is the world of voices, so bewildering the din of religious schools and sects! The Apostle was justified in advising us to prove all things, and to try the spirits, whether they were of God. There are four tests for truth what glorifies Christ; what humbles the flesh; what is in accord with the Word of God; and what has stood the trial of Christian experience in the past.

There is no teacher like God, and we may always detect His voice. It is small and still; it casts down imagination, and brings our thoughts into the captivity of Jesus; it is definite and distinct. When there is an indistinct murmur of many sounds along the wire, you may be sure that you are not in communication with your Father's person. When He speaks, there is no mistaking His voice or His will.

Exodus 19:5

“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:”

OUR Savior told of a man who, in plowing his field, heard his plough-share chink against buried treasure, and hastened to sell all that he had in order to buy it. In speaking thus, He pictured Himself as well as us. He found us before we found Him. The treasure is His people, In purchase whom He gave up all that He had, even to his throne (Matthew 13:44). “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” (1 Peter 2:9).

Where his treasure is, there is a man’s heart. If it is in ships on the treacherous sea, he tosses restlessly on his bed, solicitous for its safety. If it is in fabrics, he guards against moth; if in metal, against rust and thieves. And is Christ less careful for His own? Does He not guard with equal care against all that would deteriorate our value in His esteem? Need we fear the thief? Will not the Only-begotten keep us, so that the evil one shall not touch us (Matthew 6:19–20)?

God’s treasure is His for ever. “And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels;” He will hold his own, as men cling to their treasure, binding it about their loins, in a storm at sea (Malachi 3:17).

Let us mind the conditions: to obey His voice, and keep His covenant; then on eagles’ wings He will bring us to Himself. Compliance with these is blessed in its results. God regards us with the ecstasy of a love that rejoices over us with singing; and counts on us as a mother on her child, a miser on his gold.

Exodus 20:21

“And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.”

GOD is light, and dwells in light, but it is mercifully veiled to the weak eye of man. This is why Christ spake in parables — that seeing, they might not see. As Moses veiled his face when he spake to the people, so God veils Himself in the flesh of Jesus, in which He tabernacles; and in the mysteries of His providence, beneath which He conceals a smiling face. The Sun of Righteousness in whose beams we rejoice must needs hide beneath the cloud, else we should fall at His feet as dead. It may be that His light seems to us darkness, because of its excessive brilliance; but God dwells in the thick darkness — clouds and darkness are round about Him.

The darkness of mystery. — God has still His hidden secrets, hidden from the wise and prudent. Do not fear them; be content to accept things you cannot understand; wait patiently. Presently He will reveal to you the treasures of darkness, the riches of the glory of the mystery. Mystery is only the veil on God’s face.

The darkness of trial. — Do not be afraid to enter the cloud that is settling down on your life. God is in it. The other side is radiant with His glory. “Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings.”

The darkness of desertion. — When you seem loneliest and most forsaken, God is nighest. Jesus once cried “Forsaken,” and immediately after, “Father.” God is in the dark cloud. Plunge into the blackness of its darkness without flinching — under the shrouding curtain of His pavilion you will find God awaiting you.

Exodus 21:6

“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.”

THE Hebrew slave who meant perpetual consecration of service had to lose a little blood. It was a disagreeable and not wholly painless process, by which his vows were ratified and rendered permanent. But not otherwise could he serve for ever. That awl represents the nail that affixed Christ to the cross, and we must expect it in every true act of consecration. For want of it so many seem to go through that supreme act, and shortly after go back from it, bringing discredit and shame upon the teaching they had eagerly welcomed. There are two stages in the Christian life: that in which we serve with the spirit of a slave, and that in which we freely yield ourselves to serve our Master for ever. This is the service represented by the pierced ear.

The awl spiritually means the humiliation and pain with which we surrender the self-life. We are tempted to consecrate ourselves in our own energy; to resolve on the devout life in the strength of our own resolution; to say, “I *will* serve Christ utterly.” We avoid the awl which deprives us of our own energy, which is applied to us by the hand of another, and which makes us helpless and self-emptied, that God may become all in all. In your case the awl may be the daily fret of some uncongenial associate; the pressure of loss and anxiety for the salve of Jesus; the humiliation of your pride by perpetual sense of failure. Whatever it be, welcome all that binds you to His cross, because through death you live.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

Exodus 22:5

“If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man’s field; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution.”

THIS chapter is full of restitution, of which there is far too little in ordinary Christian life. We try to make amends for injury done to another by an extraordinary amount of civility; but we are reluctant in so many words to frankly confess that we have done wrong, and make proper reparation for the act or speech. We often excuse ourselves by the thought that we were fully justified in speaking or acting as we did, whereas we may behave ourselves wrongly in courses of conduct which are themselves legitimate.

Loosing a beast into another man’s field (Exodus 22:5). — We may through our carelessness allow another to suffer detriment. The beast ought not to have been thus allowed to stray; and, as we let it loose, we should make amends for our carelessness in respect to our brother’s interests. We wrong another not only by what we do, or permit to be done, but in what we carelessly fail to do.

Kindling a Fire (Exodus 22:6). — The tongue is a spark that kindles a great matter. If we drop firebrands and lighted matches in the inflammable material of a circle of gossip, we should make amends to the person whose character may have been thereby injured.

Borrowed goods (Exodus 22:14). — To return a house, a book, a horse, in the state in which we received it, fair wear and tear excepted, or to make good any injury, should be a commonplace of Christian morality. Trustees are responsible for not making due inquiry into risky investments. Each is his brother’s keeper. If we remember at the prayer-hour that he has aught against us, let us seek him, and confess, and restore.

Exodus 23:22

“But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.”

It is a most helpful thought that the angel of the covenant in whom is God’s name, always precedes us. In our march through the wilderness we perceive His form, which is viewless to others, and realize that His strong hand prepares our path. Let us be very careful not to grieve or disobey Him, lest we lose His mighty championship. Strict obedience to His slightest whisper secures the certainty of His vindication of us from the wrongs we suffer at the hands of our foes. A little further on the same voice promises to send a hornet before the chosen host (Exodus 23:28). He who is an angel to the saint is a hornet to his foes. A swarm of bonnets is the most relentless and irresistible foe that man can face.

Have you enemies? Be sure that they hate you only for the truth’s sake, and because darkness must always be in antagonism to light. “Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled.” But see to it that you cherish no spirit of hatred or retaliation towards them. Think of the misery of their heart, which is full of jealousy, envy, and bitterness. Pity and pray for them.

When we are right with God we shall have many new enemies. All who hate Him will hate us. But this is rather to our credit than otherwise. Those who have defamed the master of the household will be hostile to his servants. But when our cause is one with God’s, and His foes ours, our foes are His, and He deals with them; He stands between us and their hate. He will not leave us in their hands; He will give us vindication and deliverance.

Exodus 24:11

“And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.”

IT is a beautiful combination, which we should do well to emulate.

Some eat and drink, and do not behold God. — They are taken up with the delights of sense. Their one cry, as the children of this world, is, What shall we eat, what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed? But the God in whose hand their breath is and whose are all their ways, they do not glorify. Let us beware; it was of Christian professors that the Apostle said, Their god is their belly.

Some behold God, and do not eat and drink. — They look on God with such awful fear that they isolate Him from the common duties of life. They draw a strict line between the sacred and secular, between Sunday and weekday, between God’s and their own. This divorce between religion and daily life is fatal to true religion, which was meant to be the bond between the commonest details of life and the service of God.

Some behold God, and eat and drink. — They turn from the commonest avocations to look up into His face. They glorify God in their body as well as in their spirit. They obey the apostle’s injunction, “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” Oh for the grace to be able to combine the vision of God with every common incident — to live always beneath His eye in the unrestrained gladness of little children in their Father’s presence!

*Never a trial that He to not there,
Never a burden that He doth not bear;
Never a sorrow that He doth not share—
Moment by moment I’m under his care.*

Exodus 25:9

“According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.”

IT was clear that God would only be responsible for the material that was needed for *His* plan. If Moses, or the people, insisted on putting in more than was in His original plan, they would have to bear the anxiety of securing the stuff. This is our mistake. We incur responsibilities that God does not put on us; we burden our hearts with anxiety and care because we insist on introducing so many items into our daily life, which would not have been there if we had but been content with God’s pattern, and acquiesced in His program.

This injunction is repeated in four different passages, showing the importance with which God regards it. Indeed, to be on God’s plan is the only place of rightness, safety, and joy.

God’s plan in our character. — It is presented in the human life of Jesus. We are to walk as He walked. Having been called according to His purpose, let us never rest content with anything less than being conformed to the image of God’s Son.

God’s plan in our Christian service. — Not seeking to resemble some other devoted life; but endeavoring to be as God would have us, the embodiment of His thought, the expression of His conception. Then our efforts will be crowned with success, and we shall bear much fruit to the glory of God.

God’s plan for every day. — He has prepared a scheme for the employment of every hour, and will show it to us by the indication of His Spirit, or by the trend of circumstances. Let us abide in Him, doing nothing that He does not teach, doing all He does. So life will become a tabernacle, in which the Shechinah will shine and sacrifices be offered.

Exodus 26:33

“And thou shalt hang up the veil under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the veil the ark of the testimony: and the veil shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy.”

THAT veil was rent when Jesus died, the Holy Ghost signifying that from that moment access was free into the Holiest. All believers are now welcome to draw near and live in the perpetual presence of God, their Father, even as Jesus did in His earthly life, and as He does in the Heaven of Heavens. This is the clear teaching of Hebrews 10:19–22:— “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”

But there is a deeper significance still. The new and living way was opened through the rending of the flesh of Jesus Christ. As His flesh was rent on the Cross, the Temple veil was rent from the top to the bottom. And it is only when we have chosen the cross, with its shame and death, as the lot of our self-life, that we can enter into that immediate fellowship with God, which is described as “within the veil.”

How many there are who never get beyond that dividing veil! They know the brazen altar of Atonement, the laver of daily washing, the golden altar of intercession; but they are never admitted to that blessed intimacy of communion which sees the Shechinah glory between the cherubim and blood-sprinkled mercy seat.

O Spirit of God, apply the blood to sprinkle our consciences, and the water to cleanse the habits of our daily life; and lead us where our Forerunner and Priest awaits us.

Exodus 27:20

“And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always.”

THE saintly McCheyne used to say, when urging his brother ministers to diligent preparation for the pulpit: “Beaten oil for the sanctuary.” And he strove never to present to his people truth which had not been beaten out by careful devout meditation.

But there is yet another thought. That lamp in the Holy Place was an emblem of the testimony of the Church, that is, of believers. As the incense table was a type of their aspect towards God, as intercessors, so the seven-branched candlestick was a type of their aspect towards the world, as luminaries. In the Book of Revelation the Lord compares His churches to candlesticks: “the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.”

The oil is, of course, as always in Scripture, a type of the Holy Spirit. He in us is the only source of light-bearing. But the *beaten* oil reminds us of the chastisement and discipline through which alone our best testimony can be given. The *persecutions* of the Church have always been the times when she has given her fairest, brightest witness to the Redeemer. The *sufferings* of believers have ever led to the tenderest, strongest words for the Master, whether by the sick bed or in the hospital ward. That *brokenness* of spirit, which is the surest mark of the mature work of God in the heart, is also a rare condition of light-giving. The more beaten and broken you are, in poverty of spirit, the purer will be the heavenly ray of love and light which will shine forth from your life; and it is the purpose of God that you should be “blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.” (Philippians 2:15).

Exodus 28:34

“A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about.”

THE robe of the high priest’s ephod was of blue, the color of heaven, of deep lakes, of the glacier-crevasse, of the gentian and forget-me-not. On the hem of the robe were these alternate bells and pomegranates.

Those skirts may illustrate our own position. — We dare not take a high place near the head or arm; but, thank God, there is a place for each of us at the skirt, near the foot; and the holy oil will reach us there, for the Psalmist tells us that it descended even to the skirts of the high priest’s robe. It is a blessed thought, that we may receive the droppings of each anointing that falls on the head of Jesus.

But the anointing of the Holy Ghost always shows itself in sweetness and fruitfulness; the sweetness of the golden bell, tinkling with every movement, and the fruitfulness of the pomegranate.

We must be sweet, as well as fruitful. — Too many Christian workers are over-tired and over-wrought; they are peevish and, fretful. When they come back from meetings on which they have bestowed their last energies, they are neither sweet nor gentle to the home-circle, which has been so lonesome during their absence.

We must be fruitful, as well as sweet. — True religion is not a mere sentimentality; it is strong, healthy, helpful, fruit-bearing. Some seem to think that to attend moving meetings, to be profuse in emotional tears and smiles, to make profuse use of the word *dear*, is to touch the high-water mark; let them learn that the worth of our life is measured by its influence on others, and its bearing fruit, which has in it the seed of reproduction. “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.”

Exodus 29:4

“And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water.”

THIS chapter tells of the consecration to their high office of Aaron and his sons. The entire family is constantly joined thus together as one in God’s sight. Similarly, Christ and His house — which is ourselves, who believe — are one. We too must be sprinkled by the blood on ear and thumb and toe, as those who have been redeemed. We too must be consecrated and anointed; and there must be the cleanliness of which these words speak.

This is where so many have erred; they have sought consecration, anointing, and the priestly office; but have not remembered that their bodies must first be washed with pure water.

We must be clean in our habits. — If there is anything in our daily behavior which is not quite clean, it must be put away. There seems some incongruity between the anointing of the Holy Ghost and the smell of spirits or fumes of tobacco. Any excessive indulgence of the flesh, even in legitimate directions, and all indulgence in wrong ones, are inconsistent with the life of consecration.

We must be cleansed in our thoughts. — Whenever temptation is suggested, even though it is still in the far distance, we must turn from it with loathing, and ask that the blood of Jesus may go on cleansing hour by hour. “Cleans the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee.”

We must be cleansed in our intentions. — The self-life recedes as it is driven from the outworks of our nature, and goes deeper into the motives and springs of action. We discover that self is the spring of so much of our religious activity. Everywhere we need the laver, the hourly washing of John 13.

Exodus 30:32

“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.”

WHAT perpetual references to the work of the Holy Spirit, under the symbol of the Anointing Oil, meet us in these chapters. It becomes us to ask ourselves very seriously whether we lay an equal stress on it in our daily experience. Is it true of us, as of those to whom the Beloved Apostle wrote, that the anointing which we received abideth in us? It is not enough to have the Spirit *in* us for sanctification; He must be *on* us for service and ministry.

But He cannot come on the flesh of the natural man; He descends only to those who are washed, consecrated, set apart for God. Many claim the Holy Spirit’s anointing, and try to reckon they have received it; but they find it fail, because they desire it for the flesh.

There must be no yielding to fleshly appetite. — When we were in the flesh, sinful passions wrought in our members. But there must be no permission given in these directions. A calm reverent, self-disciplined nature is alone fitted to be the seat of the Holy Ghost, his nest and home.

There must be no gratification to worldly pride and ambition. — Too many are eager for the Holy Ghost, that they may be able to make a name, or gather an audience; but God is not likely to give us His river of throne-water to turn the mill-wheels of personal ambition.

There must be no fleshly striving after it. — We wrestle and struggle to win the Spirit, and miss Him. It is only when our hope of attaining this blessing by our own efforts dies down, and we are humbled and broken before God; when we cry out to Him to give what we cannot *win*, that He draws near and gives the heat of all His donations.

Exodus 31:2

“See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah:”

WE lightly speak of a man’s occupation as his *calling*, and fail to realize the profound significance of the phrase. One man is *called* to the ministry; another to the bar; others, like Bezaleel and Aholiab, to work in all manner of workmanship. Each should realize, therefore, that faculty, desire, circumstance, constitute a Divine call, and that there may be as distinct a vocation in the merchant’s office, the tradesman’s shop, or in the work of a domestic servant, as in the Church itself.

The morning bell that summons us to daily duty is the call of our Father, bidding us to engage in the toils to which He has assigned us. He, who gave Moses the plan, gave the artificers the power to work it in gold, silver, brass, and wood. Let this be your faith; and each morning, as you go to your work, however distasteful it may be, say, “God has called me to this; and He will fill me with all the strength, wisdom, and grace, that I need for its right doing.”

Abide in your calling. — Unless it is a wrong or dishonorable one, it is better to stay in it than to become restless and changeable; and if you must leave it, wait for God to open another door.

Find in God the makeweight to all the deficiencies of your life. — If you are enslaved by daily duty, remember that in Christ you are free; if free from daily toil, in Christ you are a slave. The supply of every deficiency, the rectification of every hardship, is to be found in Jesus.

Mind to do all for God. — To do all in God and for Him, remembering that He sees and accepts all, not according to the results accomplished, but to the heavenly and holy motives that prompt the worker — this is to be blessed.

Exodus 32:30

“And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.”

THE heart of Moses was full of that great, wonderful new word, *Atonement*. For many days God had been telling him about it, and speaking it over and over to his heart. He seemed, however, to feel that no ordinary sacrifices would avail: the blood of goats and bulls would surely be insufficient to put away the black transgression into which Israel had fallen. But there was rising in his heart a resolve, to which he gave expression when he returned to God: “Blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which Thou hast written.” He did not realize that his blood would not avail, but that the blood of Christ, who should, in the fulness of times, offer Himself without spot to God, alone could put away sin.

In every heart there is a deep conviction of the necessity of an Atonement. — This is the source of the temples, altars, and sacrifices, which have marked the history of every nation under heaven. Man has felt as by a natural instinct that some reparation was necessary to the broken law.

The insufficiency of animal sacrifice. — In the Levitical system there was a remembrance of sin made year by year; but the sin itself could not be purged by such rites. The fact that the worshippers so constantly came back to offer their sacrifices shows that they were not assured. The priests always stood their attitude was an emblem of an unfinished work.

The sufficiency of Christ's Atonement. — He was willing to be cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of His people; and because He died, there is no longer the “Blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which Thou hast written.” which in Moses' prayer speaks of uncertainty; but a blessed assurance that we are at one with God, with each other, and with all holy beings.

Exodus 33:22

“And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by:”

THAT rock was Christ. In the Divine thought the position of Moses, first on the rock, and afterwards in its cleft, was a moving emblem of the position in which alone we can dare to look out on the sublime progress of God’s glory.

God is always passing by. — In the great movements of history which evolve His plans, and are leading to Christ’s advent; in the passage of the ages, which are His swift chariots; in storm and catastrophe, which break up old forces and forms of evil; in the goodness of His daily mercy; in the revelation of His character — we are always living in the very midst of God’s presence and power.

In our condition of weakness and sinfulness we need a position of stability and shelter from which to look on God. — No man can see that face of awful holiness and love and live. Sir John Herschel says that when sweeping the heavens with his telescope the brilliant Sirius suddenly burst on his view, he nearly fainted. Who then could behold God! But in Jesus, we are stable, established in Him, accepted in the Beloved; and in Him we are covered. The full blaze of the Divine glory is tempered to our gaze; it comes to us through the medium of the pierced hand. We stand on the rock; we are hidden under the covering hand.

Our Rock was cleft. — How scarred are the great Alps! Their sides have been split by the action of tempest, avalanche, earthquake, frost, and glacier. Hence their clefts. But who shall enumerate all that has been borne by our dear Lord for us! What storms have pelted on Him, that we might have a safe hiding. On Calvary, a niche was hollowed to which a world of signers may take shelter!

Exodus 34:29

“And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses’ hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him.”

UNCONSCIOUSNESS of goodness is always a main element in the highest forms of goodness: in the same way that unconsciousness is characteristic of the worst forms of depravity. “Samson *wist not* that the Lord had departed from him.”

Directly people become conscious of their superiority to others, and boast of it, it is certain that they have never really seen the beauty of God’s holiness, and have no clear knowledge of the condition of their own hearts. They see that they have been cleansed from their old sins; but they do not perceive that the spirit of selfishness has retreated into the springs of motive and intention.

We are all tempted to this terrible self-consciousness. We are proud of being humble, complacent for being lowly, self-congratulatory because we take back-seats. In all this we betray the vanity of our pretensions. This sort of goodness is like a thin veneer of mahogany on very common deal.

The real goodness is more conscious of the remaining evil than of the acquired good; of the lingering darkness than of the hill-tops smitten with the dawn; of that which has not been attained. But we can only attain this blessed condition by intimate and prolonged fellowship with God, in solitudes where human voices and interests cease to distract. The brightness of which Moses was unconscious was caught from the Presence-chamber of the Divine Loveliness. Ah, what patterns are seen on the Mount! What cries are uttered there! What visions are seen there! What revelations are made there! What injunctions are received there! Oh for the closer access, the nearer view, the more intimate face to face intercourse, such as is open still to the friends of God!

Exodus 35:35

“Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work.”

THERE was an infinite variety in the contributions made to the Tabernacle, from the precious jewels of the rulers to the acacia wood of the poor, and the goats' hair of the women. The completed structure was a monument of the united gifts, handicrafts, and gems of the entire people. But in all there was the unity of the spirit, and plan, and devotion.

In the Church and the world there is a work far each of us to do. — It may be a very humble part in the great factory — like minding the loom, or stoking the furnace, or fetching materials for the more skilled operatives; but there is a berth for each willing worker, if only the will and way of God are diligently sought and followed.

This work is suited to our special powers. — He who prepares the work for the worker, prepares the worker for the work. Whenever God gives us a task to fulfil, it is because He sees in us faculties for its successful and happy accomplishment, in co-operation with Himself. It is a mistake then to turn back daunted by difficulty and opposition. As Caleb and Joshua said of the possessors of Canaan, “We be well able to overcome them.”

We must bring our resources and powers to God. — Willing hearts were summoned to bring their offerings to the Lord. The maker of a musical instrument knows best how to develop its waiting music, and He who created and endowed us can make the most of us. Let us not work for Him; but yield ourselves to His hand, and our members as instruments of righteousness for His service. We may differ from all others in the special character of our work; but it matters not, so long as God effects through us His purpose in our creation.

Exodus 36:5

“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.”

THIS is always God’s way. No words could better express the Imperial measure and standard of His dealings with His people. When He calls us out, as He did Moses, Bezaleel, and Aholiab, and entrusts us with His plan; and when we are careful to work out His specifications; He always makes more than enough provision for all our need.

The redemption in Christ Jesus. — Where sin abounded grace did much more abound. The topmost hills were covered by the waters of the deluge, and the Alpine heights of human rebellion were more than atoned for when Jesus died. Grace over-tops sin.

God’s ability to answer prayer. — He does exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. We ask great things, and secretly think that if God were to give only a fraction, we would be thankful. How we straiten Him! He cannot do much because of our unbelief! He yearns to do not only enough, but much more than enough for us. See His prodigality in nature: its enameled shells, its profusion of flowers, its swarming life.

In daily provision for spirit, soul, and body. — Give, and it shall be given to you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over. God is not niggard. If He withholds, it is that we may cling to the Giver rather than the gift. But for the most part, He gives all things *richly* to enjoy. He opens His hand, and satisfies. Whatever thy need, God has much more than enough to meet it. He has riches of grace and of glory. Trust Him, obey Him, appropriate thy share in thy Father’s rich provision. Weak and needy as thou art, there is much more than enough strength in God to perfect what concerns thee.

Exodus 37:6

“And he made the mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half was the length thereof, and one cubit and a half the breadth thereof.”

THIS was the Propitiatory. Beneath it lay the tables of the law, which even Moses had broken, almost as soon as they came into his hands, but which had been renewed. Concealing and covering them lay this golden lid, encrusted with the blood which successive generations of priests sprinkled there on the Great Day of Atonement.

There can be no doubt that this golden slab sets forth our Savior's obedience unto death. God set Him forth to be “the Propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

Our Lord's obedience is priceless in the Divine esteem. — What pure gold is among metals, that is His advent to do God's will, in comparison with all other endeavors to do it. It takes the first place, and is of peerless beauty and excellence. “Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.”

His obedience was to blood. — His wounds tell the story. He held nothing back; but yielded all to blood-shedding. Blood is life, and life is in the Blood: this He freely poured out to meet the claims of justice, and herein gave the sublimest token of His love.

His person and work are the medium of our approach. — In Jesus the Shechinah of God's presence awaits us. On this priceless mercy-seat the Divine Fire trembles, and we may draw near with boldness. We are beloved children: but let us never forget that we are redeemed sinners.

*There is a place where Jesus sheds
The oil of gladness on our heads;
A place than all beside more sweet—
It is the blood-stained Mercy-seat.*

Exodus 38:8

“And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the lookingglasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.”

THIS was a good use to put these mirrors to. The women were so deeply interested in the work which was afoot, that they counted no sacrifice too great. But the main suggestion for ourselves is the wisdom of renouncing self-inspection.

The mirror speaks of self-scrutiny. — We are constantly holding up the mirror to our inner life, studying its mechanism and operations. Our fingers often on our pulse; the attention of the soul turned back on itself; the study of symptoms carried to the grievous extent of inducing the diseases which we dread. Of course, where there is evident mischief at work, we do well to take heed; but we must guard against a morbid self-anatomy, a perpetual analysis of motive and intention, an inwardness which diverts our attention from the person of Christ and the performance of duty.

The evils of self-scrutiny. — If we look down into the depths of our own nature, we miss the face of Jesus. To consider self is to become involved in a maze of perplexities and disappointments. The disease cannot be cured by ceaselessly pondering its symptoms. The soul cannot lift the soul. Self can never expel the spirit of self.

Its cure. — These women became so interested in the service of the Tabernacle that they were weaned from their mirrors. The better expelled the worse; the higher cast out the lower. Go out of yourself, find some work to do for God and man; seek in the laver the removal of the stains of human sin; find your center in God and His plans; and you will abandon the habit of morbid self-scrutiny. For every look at self, take ten at Christ: He “healeth all thy diseases.”

Exodus 39:30

“And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, like to the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.”

ZECHARIAH tells us that these words were to be written on the bells of the horses. The sacred inscription, which stood on the brow of Aaron, designating his separation to his sublime office, was to become incorporated with the business of the farm and city, where burdens were borne and heavy weights drawn with difficulty. The inscription befits all bells that ring in the home, the shop, the factory. We are to be God’s priests everywhere.

The priest was separated from all impurity. — We must be in the world, but separate from its sin. When evil threatens us from a distance, we must be sensitive to its approach, and quick to put the covering presence of Christ between.

The priest was separated to holy service. — He was keenly sensitive to the honour of Jehovah, and to the demands of his service. Rather be cut down at his altar, like Zechariah the son of Berachiah, than prove a delinquent. We cannot all do the inner service of offering incense and of blessing men, but we can render every act as a sacred service to God; always treading the holy floor, and within sight of the holy presence, and within earshot of the Divine voice; eating, drinking, doing everything for the glory of God. Throughout this chapter we are reminded that all was made as the Lord commanded Moses; this should be the law of our life.

The priest bore holiness written where all could read it; so should we. — It should not be necessary for us to be labelled. For men to need telling that we are Christians, is a sign that we are far from what we should be. But so to live that the first and slightest glance at us should betray our heavenly calling, is to adorn the Gospel and please our Master.

Exodus 40:38

“For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.”

THIS was the cloud of the Shechinah, in the heart of which was fire, the symbol of the presence of God. Probably this fire was always present, but only visible against the background of the surrounding darkness. In the New Testament fire is always associated with the ministry of the Holy Spirit; and in Isaiah (Isaiah 4:5) we learn that in the coming time God would give, on every dwelling-place in Mount Zion, and in all her assemblies, the same cloud of smoke by day, and flaming fire by night, as had been vouchsafed to the Tabernacle where God dwelt. What a glorious revelation is this!

The Holy Spirit brooding over each individual believer. — It is a symptom of the highest life, when God spreads his tabernacle over the soul. We should march only when He lifts up His enfolding presence, rest under His canopy, and recognize the sanctity of all life.

The Holy Spirit resting on each home. — “Every dwelling-place in Zion” must stand for the homes of God’s people. How blessed it is when the home is a temple, and each inmate of the beloved circle a priest! Such homes are rare, but they are possible. Let those who are founding a new family make this their ideal.

The Holy Spirit directing and filling each assembly and believer — As of old the movements of the cloud determined those of the tent and people, so in the Pentecostal Church the Spirit was Guide, Director, Executor. “Separate Me ... to the work to which I have called them.” We must rely most absolutely on Him, waiting for His initiation, His teaching, the settling down of His infinite benediction. Then there will be glory and defence.

Leviticus 1:9,13,17

“But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. ... But he shall wash the inwards and the legs with water: and the priest shall bring it all, and burn it upon the altar: it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. ... And he shall cleave it with the wings thereof, but shall not divide it asunder: and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that is upon the fire: it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.”

HOW sweet the offering up of the Son was to the Father! “Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour” (Eph 5:2). The burnt-offering was an imperfect type of His entire devotion to His Father’s will. When Jesus saw the inability of man to keep the holy law, and volunteered to magnify it, and make it honourable; when He laid aside His glory, and stepped down from His throne, saying, “I delight to do Thy will, O my God” (Ps 40:8); when He became obedient even to the death of the cross — it was as sweet to God as the fragrance of a garden of flowers to us.

Let us never forget the God-ward aspect of the cross. The sacrificial fire fed on every part of the sacrifice, on the inwards as well as the carcase; so did the Holy God delight to witness the spotless and entire devotion of the Son to the great work in which the entire Godhead was most deeply interested. The fragrant graces of Christ were made manifest on the cross, and are perpetuated in his intercession.

There is a sense also in which our consecration to God is fragrant and precious. When we see His claims, and yield to them; when we submit to His will, and commit our lives wholly to His direction; when we offer and present ourselves to Him, a living sacrifice, keeping nothing back — His heart is gladdened, and His fire of complacency feeds on our act. Always count on this; you may feel no thrill, and see no light, but reckon on God, believe that He accepts what you give, and will crown your sacrifice with the fire of Pentecost. Who today will surrender to God, and become an offering of a sweet savour?

Leviticus 2:1

“And when any will offer a meat offering unto the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon.”

THIS type is only true in its fullest extent of the blessed Master; but as we are to be conformed to His image, we may humbly take the ingredients of the meat offering as indicating various qualities in our personal character and behaviour.

Fine flour. — There should be nothing coarse-grained or rough to the touch; but all even and tender. So that however great the pressure brought to bear on us, we should meet it with perfect grace and gentleness. Jesus reviled not again, but was led as a lamb to the slaughter. David Livingstone said that the promise of Christ was the word of a perfect gentleman. This should be our character.

Oil upon it. — We must be mingled with oil — that is, the Holy Spirit must have access into the secret places of the inner life, and we must have the anointing of the Holy Ghost for service. In Christian work nothing is of any value or permanence, useful to man or pleasing to God, in which the Holy Spirit is not first.

Frankincense. — Every act of our life should emit sweet fragrance towards God. Always moving forward in Christ’s triumphant procession, bearing aloft the incense-bowls of thought, action, word, filled with love and praise.

Salt. — “Let your conversation be always with grace, seasoned with salt.” (Col 4:6) The words of Jesus were full of grace, and also of truth. There was a pungency and purity and uncorruptness in His speech, which have in every age arrested the progress of the world’s evil. Let us give Him our lips.

No leaven — the symbol of the rising of pride and self.

No honey — that which is merely attractive and sensuous.

Leviticus 3:1

“And if his oblation be a sacrifice of peace offering, if he offer it of the herd; whether it be a male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the LORD.”

IN the burnt-offering the priest burnt *all*; but in the peace-offering a part only was burnt, “the fat, kidneys, and caul.” The inner parts were consumed as God’s portion, whilst Aaron and his sons fed on the breast and the shoulder. In that feast God and the priests participated; and it is an emblem of our participation in the joy of God, over the person and work of Jesus.

Think of this blessed feast with God. We who were once far off in the wicked and hostile imaginings, are now made nigh; we sit at God’s table as His children, and hear Him say, Let *us* make merry and be glad; this my son was dead, and is alive again.

We have Peace with God. — We are justified by faith in Jesus. In Him we stand before God, accepted and beloved. The curse is exchanged for blessing; distance for presence; the husks of the swine for the fatted calf. The past is forever under the blood; above us is the clear heaven of God’s love.

We have the Peace of God. — The very peace that fills our Father’s heart, undisturbed by the storms of care and strife which sweeps this lower world, is ours also. We sit in heavenly places; His peace, like a sentry, keeps our hearts and minds against molestation; the peace of God rules in us, bringing every thought into subjection to itself. We have perfect peace because our mind is stayed on Him. (Isa 26:3)

We have the God of Peace. — According to the Apostle’s fervent hope and prayer, He is with us. Not the gift, but the Giver; not I, but He; not the river only, but the source. We may well open our doors to admit such a guest, in having whom we receive the Author and Giver of concord, unity, and unbroken rest.

Leviticus 4:2

“Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them:”

SIN is something more than that of which our conscience convicts us. Our conscience may excuse or palliate our sins, or may fail to detect them for want of proper enlightenment, or may be misled by the practices and sentiments of those around. Therefore we may do things which are grievously wrong in God’s sight without realizing their evil or bemoaning it.

All such sin must be met and atoned for ere God can admit us into His holy presence. Sin must be dealt with and put away, not only as it appears to us, but as it is in itself and in the sight of the All-Holy. So, in the types of Leviticus, provision was made for sins of ignorance; and the blood of Jesus cleanseth from *all* sin, whether known to us or not.

There is more sin in us than any of us know. If we think we have passed a day without conscious sin, we have only to wait till an intenser light is flashed on our motives and intentions — for firelight to be exchanged for electric light — and we shall see specks and flaws. If we do not actually violate known commands, there may be a grievous coming short of the infinite standard of the Divine perfection. Who shall dare to say that he has loved God with all his heart, and soul, and strength? Besides, there is always the liability to sinfulness; and this needs to be perpetually met and atoned for.

It is very needful, then, for us to be perpetually cleansed in the precious blood of Christ. We must ask to be forgiven for the many sins which we know not, as well as for those we know. The work of confession and forgiveness must therefore go on to life’s end, applied to each heart and conscience by the Holy Spirit.

Leviticus 5:5-6

“And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing: And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin.”

IT is said that sometimes a soldier will come from the battle bleeding from a hidden wound which he has received without knowing it. So in the rush of life we may contract defilement by touching uncleanness, or speaking rashly, which in the sight of God will leave a foul stain upon the white robe of the soul.

The presence of unconscious sin with us is the reason why we are often unable to pray or read the Word of God at night. We are aware of a certain distance, a veil, a cloud, which has settled down between us and the beatific vision. At such times we do well to examine ourselves and the past more critically; for probably we shall be able to detect the hidden cause, which, when we know it, must be confessed and placed on the head of our guilt-offering, whilst we yield ourselves to God as a whole burnt-offering, in a new act of self-surrender.

But confession is all important. We must confess our sins, if the faithful Lord is to forgive them. Confession is taking God's side against ourselves. It is the act of judging evil in the light of the Throne. It is like the unpacking of a box, in which one begins with the lighter things at the top, and works steadily down to the heavy articles underneath. It is the repetition in the heart of Joshua's calling the roll of Israel until Achan, the son of Carmi, was taken.

When the atonement has been made as touching sin “in any of these things,” there is forgiveness. Dare to believe that this is so, O penitent soul, who hast made Christ's soul an offering for thy sin. He says: “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins.” Go thy way, and sin no more.

Leviticus 6:13

“The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.”

THIS is an emblem of the perpetual work of God for man.

The Love of God. — There never was a time when God did not love. The bush that Moses saw gave no fuel to maintain the holy flame that trembled around it, because the love of God to Israel and to the human race demands no sustenance. Through the ages it burns and will burn; however much indifference and neglect and rejection are heaped upon it, or poured over it, like barrels of water over Elijah’s sacrifice, it never goes out. It is as fresh and vigorous today as ever, and waits to consume your sin and mine; for God is a consuming fire.

The Intercession of Christ. — As the ages pass, this sacrifice retains its merit. What He did as Priest on the cross, He does as Priest on the throne. It is always “this same Jesus.” What He was, He is, and will be; and as generations of saints bring their gifts to the altar, He takes them, and lifts them up to God, as the fire bears up the substances which are submitted to it. He ever liveth to make intercession; and the fire that burnt through the long night in the Tabernacle bore witness to the undimming, unwaning virtue of our Saviour’s work.

The Ministry of the Holy Ghost. — The fire that was lit on the Day of Pentecost burns still in the Church. There has been no intermission to its presence from the first day till now. Multitudes of unknown sects and persecuted saints have kept that fire burning in the world. On the perpetuity of its existence in our midst depends the constancy of our own love and purity and prayer. If the fire shall never go out in our hearts; if the life in our spirits is indeed everlasting — it is because He lives and loves always.

Leviticus 7:19

“And the flesh that toucheth any unclean thing shall not be eaten; it shall be burnt with fire: and as for the flesh, all that be clean shall eat thereof.”

IN Leviticus 7:13, it is admitted that leaven must be present in this holy feast, inasmuch as it stands for the essential principle of evil, which intrudes into our holiest worship. The self-life is an all-pervasive leaven. We may not be conscious of it; there may be no sufficient recognition of its distastefulness to the holy God: but it follows us even into the Holy place.

The worshipper was not allowed, however, to be knowingly unclean. There must be no stain on the conscience, which he might remove by confession and repentance. If there were, he must be cut off; that is, he must be debarred from all participation in holy rites, and suspended from entering the sacred enclosure of the Tabernacle.

This cutting off answers to the suspension of a believer's communion with God, because of unconfessed sin. The presence of the leaven of the self-life is no barrier to the enjoyment of the Divine fellowship, for we meet God in Jesus. But permitted sin makes such fellowship impossible, because we have not availed ourselves of the gracious arrangements made by God for the perpetual cleansing of the soul in the precious blood of Jesus Christ. For “it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”

How many excommunicate Christians there are! You can easily see that they have been cut off; their joyless faces and powerless prayers, their inability to bear testimony for God — all tell the sad story. If you have been cut off, search your past history to discover the cause. Put away your sin, and seek the blessed cleansing of John 13; then come to feast with God, in holy communion, as at a common table.

Leviticus 8:33

“And ye shall not go out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation in seven days, until the days of your consecration be at an end: for seven days shall he consecrate you.”

FOR seven days Aaron and his sons, newly consecrated by the blood and oil, waited together in the Holy Place. They were prohibited from going beyond the door, but fed on the consecrated food till the eighth day summoned them to begin their priestly duties. Similarly we are shut in with our Great Aaron, the High Priest of our profession. We are in Christ in the purposes of God, for we were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. We are in Him, as Noah was in the ark, and as the child is in the home; as the member is in the body, and the branch in the vine; as the sponge in the ocean, or the jewel in the sunbeam. We are in Him as a strong enclosure, through which the malice and strength of our foes cannot break — a fortress, a strong tower, a castle keep. We are in Him, as a banqueting-hall, a Tabernacle with its shew-bread, an upper room with its descending fire.

It is highly necessary that we should maintain our walk and experience on this blessed elevation. The great enemy of our souls is perpetually tempting us to leave our abiding-place, and to try issues with him in the plains beneath. What is temptation but his subtle solicitation to come out from the secret place of the Most High. Beware! the bait may be very attractive, but the end is death. Keep the charge of the Lord, and abide day and night in the company of the Great High Priest. “He shall dwell among them.”

On what viands do such happy souls feast with Christ! A table is provided before them by the Lord Himself, and they feast on all that pertains to Him in blessed partnership. “Son, thou art ever with Me, and all that I have is thine.”

Leviticus 9:22

“And Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them, and came down from offering of the sin offering, and the burnt offering, and peace offerings.”

THE eighth day is evidently the type of the bright millennial morning. During the present age we are hidden with Christ in God; the world knoweth us not, as it knew Him not; our hopes, and joys, and aims, are largely secret. But the day is not far distant when He shall be manifested, and then we shall be manifested with Him in glory. That group of priests, following the high priest out from the recesses of the Holy Place, is a picture of the Second Advent, when Christ and His own shall come forth to bless the world. When Jesus was parted in the Ascension from His disciples, He was in the act of blessing them; and in that attitude He will return. Who can doubt that all through the intervening ages those blessed hands have still been outstretched, that heart ever going forth, in blessing.

What a Savior is ours! In Him are combined *meekness* that bears all insult and hatred, and *mercy* that retaliates on wrong-doing in ministries of love. He fulfils His own idea of blessing those that hate, and praying for those that despitefully use. How truly can it be said of Him, as of Archbishop Ussher, that to do Him a wrong is to make Him your friend for ever!

Let us imitate Him in this, and let the going forth of our lives be one incessant stream of benediction to men, until they shall fall on their faces and acknowledge the overwhelming power of love. But in order to do this we must be much in company with our blessed Lord; gazing on His face we shall reflect His likeness; the lineaments of the Divine beauty shall pass into our life, and light it up with a loveliness which is not of earth. Thus shall we bring glory to our God.

Leviticus 10:3

“Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.”

HIS heart must have been rent with paroxysms of grief, as he beheld the bodies of his beloved sons on the floor of the Tabernacle, stretched out in death. He repressed the cry, choked back the sob, staunched the flowing tear, and continued to perform the holy duties with which he was charged. He was no stoic, and tears are not wrong for our dead; but his relationship to God was so overmastering as to still the expressions of nature.

He saw the wrong from God's standpoint. — It was of great importance that the Divine regulations and enactments should be maintained, and that the ministering priests should always prefer God's work and service above their own ideas. Aaron was able to appreciate that position, and saw the sin of which his children were guilty. They had forgotten the voice which said, Sanctify thou Me. Obedience is the foundation of reverence, honour, and service; and if it were relaxed with the priests, how for the people! How careful they should be who bear the vessels of the Lord! With what fear and trembling must they work, who work with God!

He acquiesced in the Divine dealings. — To take the yoke, and meekly bear it; to put the hand on the mouth, and bow in the dust — this is rest and peace. In this way we drink Christ's cup and become partakers of His sufferings.

He felt that his work as priest must take precedence. — It was a solemn and awful thing to be God's anointed priest, and the office must come first, even to the denial of the dues of nature, if that were necessary: so always with us, there must be the subordination of everything to our service and work for God.

Leviticus 11:3

“Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat.”

THE animals, in which these two characteristics met, were reckoned clean, and therefore fit for food. It is certain that the minute particularity of these words has some further reference than to the diet of Israel, important though that was, or to accentuate with every meal the necessity of their being a separate people. We, at least, may gather this lesson, that in our daily experience we must combine meditation and separation.

Meditation. — The cattle do not simply browse on the pastures, but they lie down to chew the cud. It is not enough to peruse our allotted Scripture portion; we must ruminate upon it, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and scripture with scripture. The Holy Ghost will take of the things of Christ and show them unto us, and He will bring all things to our remembrance.

Separation. — “Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God.” “The Word of God is quick, and powerful, 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.” We have not meditated to good purpose unless we have felt its keen edge. Detachment from the world must follow on true attachment to Christ. Love to Naomi will draw Ruth from Moab across the Jordan.

The two must be combined. — The swine divideth the hoof, but cheweth not the cud, and was therefore unclean. A man may profess to love his Bible, but the supreme test is his daily separation from evil. On the other hand, our daily life ought to emanate, not from without, which is Pharisaism, but from within, where we chew the cud of holy meditation.

Leviticus 12:8

“And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean.”

THESE were the offerings of the poor, of those whose means did not suffice to buy a lamb. All these offerings pointed to the one great Sacrifice which was to be offered on Calvary.

The blood of Christ is within the reach of the poorest and feeblest. — None can say that it is beyond them, that they cannot afford to procure it, that they are too poor. To the poor the Gospel is preached. The Divine call is to those who have no money. Salvation is to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly. “It is nigh thee.”

The faith that apprehends but a part of the Savior’s work saves. — The pigeon may stand for the meagre apprehension of Christ that is the portion of the faltering and timid; but it saves equally with that fuller conception of His saving work, which might be compared to the bullock of the priest. The question is not as to the quantity but the object of faith. Is it fixed on Jesus? All faith directed to Him cannot but be genuine. It may but touch His garment’s hem, yet it saves.

The beneficence of God’s law. — What tender touches there are through this strong ancient code! There is such a one here, framed partly in anticipation of the mother of our Lord, who gladly availed herself of its provision. What a glimpse into our Master’s humiliation! He owned the cattle on a thousand hills, yet He so emptied Himself that his parents were compelled to bring the poorest offering the law allowed. He stooped that we might rise; emptied Himself that we might be full; became poor that we might be made rich; was made human that we might be made Divine.

Leviticus 13:13

“Then the priest shall consider: and, behold, if the leprosy have covered all his flesh, he shall pronounce him clean that hath the plague: it is all turned white: he is clean.”

AT first sight this seems a very extraordinary provision. When the leprosy was beginning to show itself, and whilst the marks were hardly distinguishable, the poor patient was treated as unclean; but, when it was fully developed, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, the priest pronounced the leper clean.

As long as we palliate and excuse our sins, and dream that there is much in us which is noble and lovely, we are not fit subjects for God’s saving grace. But when we take our place as helpless and undone, without one plea or one redeeming trait, we are in the position in which the free grace of God can have its blessed way with us.

We must come to an end of ourselves, and fall prostrate, in the very helplessness of our despair, in the very dust at our Saviour’s feet; we must confess that from the crown of our head to the sole of our foot we are full of need and sin — then we are nearest Christ, and in a fit condition to be richly blest, and made the channel of blessing to others.

Would you rise? then you must humble yourself before God. God’s thrones are approached, not by steps up to them, but by steps down to them. It is the publican who beats his breast, saying, “God be merciful to me the sinner,” that goes down justified to his house. It is when sin abounds, that grace much more abounds. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isaiah 57:15).

Leviticus 14:7

“And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field.”

THAT is thou, O trembling soul. Thine iniquities have come between thee and freedom, like the bars of a cage to a bird caught from its native woods and imprisoned. See the quickly-palpating breast, beaten against the bars, pining for the open field — is not that an apt symbol of thy deep yearning for deliverance from the tyranny and thrall of besetting sin?

We are made free from the penalty of sin through the blood of Him who died. — One of the birds was killed in an earthen vessel over running water — here is symbolized the precious death of thy Saviour, in the earthen vessel of His human nature, and in connection with the living power of the Holy Spirit, which bore forth the tidings into all the world. We have been dipped into the crimson tide and are freed — as the leper was — from the taint of our disease. He might go freely among men, and join the congregation of worshippers: and we may mingle with the saints, and enter the very presence-chamber of God.

We are made free from the power of sin through the grace of Him who rose. — He has passed into the resurrection life, and we in Him. When He rose through all the heavens to His native home, we ascended too. We are made free from the thralldom of evil by identification with the risen Lord; and the Holy Spirit, entering our hearts from our exalted Head, makes us possessors of all the privileges which are ours in the Divine purpose (Romans 8:3-4). Fly away, happy soul, to thy nest in the heart of God! Seek those things which are above! It is your privilege to live in the heavenlies with Christ. *Sursum Corda!*

Leviticus 15:7

“And he that toucheth the flesh of him that hath the issue shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.”

THERE were doubtless great sanitary reasons for many of these enactments. This book is one of the greatest sanitary codes in existence. God made religious duty enforce regulations essential to the physical health and well-being of His people. But there were deeper reasons yet. The whole of these arrangements were contrived to teach profound lessons to us all of the nature and evil of sin, and of the need of being continually cleansed in the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

The unclean soul spreads uncleanness. — Whatever the ceremonially unclean touched, used, or sat on, was polluted. Even those who came into contact with him were defiled. How wary all true Israelites must have been of their associates, lest they should contract pollution! Let us adopt similar precautions, and not voluntarily associate with the unholy or unclean. And if our business calls us into their daily company, let us seek cleansing for ourselves as we return to our homes, that any adhering germs of evil may be removed.

The urgent demand for holiness. — The ordinary processes of life are not necessarily clean because they are natural. The foul heart may vitiate the most natural functions. We must bring the thought of God into the simplest, the commonest, and the most secret acts. Nothing is outside His jurisdiction. Though hid from sight, yet He is ever near the child of God. His grace, and blood, and cleansing, are always requisite, and ever ready. Amidst and after every act, incident, and episode of life, we should be quiet before God, considering if we have aught to confess, and asking to be ever kept from staining our white robes.

Leviticus 16:22

“And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.”

THIS chapter is full of Christ in His most precious death for men. Its various aspects are set forth under these diverse sacrifices, as light reflected from the many facets of a diamond. We think now only of the *live* goat which was led away into the wilderness. We see in it:—

Christ made sin. — With both hands Aaron, in symbol, transferred all the iniquities, sins, and transgressions of the people to the head of the goat, which became so identified with them that it was accounted an unclean thing; and even he who led it away must needs wash his clothes and bathe. This is what the apostle means when he says that Jesus was made sin for us. Our sins met in Him; were assumed by Him; He stood before God as though, in some mysterious sense, they were His own.

Christ bearing sin away. — As the goat went away, the eyes of the people followed it, and they were taught to believe that sin was no longer reckoned to them. Aaron put off his linen garments and arrayed himself in festal robes, and came forth to bless the congregation. What rejoicing must have broken from the crowds! So Jesus, in His matchless grace, has borne away the sin of the world into a land of forgetfulness. “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” (Heb 8:12)

Christ’s loneliness. — He was alone in His mediatorial work. None could bear Him company. Loved ones might stand beside His cross, or in after ages suffer, as He did, deaths of martyrdom; but none could do what He did as the sacrifice for sin. Ah, how lonely He was! Even the Father seemed to have forsaken Him! Before the universe, in that dread hour, the Savior stood in awful, unapproachable solitude!

INFORMATION ON THE SCRIPTURE TEXTS USED IN THIS DEVOTIONAL

GENESIS: Book of Beginnings

Writer: Moses

Key Passage: “And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” (Genesis 12:2-3)

Remarks: Its name means “Origin” and it provides the foundation for the rest of the books of the Bible. Genesis has been called the “seed-bed” of every important doctrine taught in the Bible.

Outline:

1. The Beginning of God’s Perfect Creation (ch. 1-2)
2. The Beginning of Man’s Persistent Rebellion (ch. 3-11)
3. The Beginning of God’s Gracious Redemption (ch. 12-50)

EXODUS: Book of Redemption

Writer: Moses

Key Passage: “Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.” (Exodus 6:6-7)

Remarks: Its name means “The Way Out.” It is an account of God’s raising up His servant Moses to liberate His people from Egyptian bondage. The first great period of biblical miracles begins in this book – the burning bush, plagues of Egypt, parting the Red Sea, provision of water and manna in the wilderness, etc.

Outline:

1. Redemption of a People in Bondage (ch. 1-14)
2. Provisions for a People in Need (ch. 15-18)
3. Regulations for a People in Sin (ch. 19-40)

LEVITICUS: ‘Ye Shall Be Holy’

Writer: Moses

Key Passage: “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.” (Leviticus 17:11)

Remarks: Its name means “Pertaining to the Levites.” The Levites were the tribe from which the priesthood of Israel came. The book teaches us that the basis of our relationship with a holy God is personal holiness. Spiritual holiness is symbolized by physical perfection.

Outline:

1. Sacrifice for Sins – The Way to God (ch. 1-17)
2. Separation from Sins – The Walk with God (ch. 18-27)

Scripture Memory Programme 2008 - The Growing Christian

July 6 & 13 – God’s Holiness

1 John 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

July 20 & 27 – God’s Holiness

Hebrews 12:28-29 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.

August 3 & 10 – God’s Judgment

Proverbs 14:34 Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.

August 17 & 24 – Witnessing

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

August 31 – Gospel

John 11:25-26 - Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

September 7 & 14 – God’s Judgment

Hebrews 13:4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

September 21 & 28 – God’s Judgment

Matthew 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

October 5 & 12 – God’s Power

Jeremiah 32:27 Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?

October 19 & 26 – God’s Faithfulness

Lamentations 3:22-23 It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.

November 2 & 9 – God’s Unchangeability

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

November 16 & 23 – The Word of God

Isaiah 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

November 30 – Gospel

John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

December 7 & 14 – God’s Love

1 John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

December 21 & 28 – Christ’s Birth

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

