Hebrews - Commentaries by James Lampden Harris

Jewish Bondage and Christian Freedom: Jewish and Christian Worship, No More Conscience of Sin* (10:2)

The grace in which we stand is, that we are Sons of God, and priests to God. The true worshipers, as we are taught by our Lord in the fourth chapter of John, are those who in the spirit of sonship worship the Father. But there is another relation, besides that of sons, in which we stand to God -an official relation as being His constituted worshipers; taking up the place which Israel once occupied as the only worshiping people in the whole earth, but after an entirely different order. We could not indeed be priests unto God unless we were sons. To be sons of God is our real proper dignity, because we have thereby relationship with God in the highest sense; but this does not hinder our having an official standing before Him; and it is this which we would now consider. The common standing of all saints is to be once purged worshipers before God {Heb. 10:2}.

The peculiar privilege of Israel was nearness unto God: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself" (Ex. 19:4). This placed Israel, comparatively with all the nations around them, in a priestly standing before God. Hence it is said, And came and preached peace to you which were afar off [the Gentiles], and to them that were nigh (Eph. 2:17).

In the time of Israel's declension, when they had become as the nations around them, both in their government and their worship, instead of standing in their original separateness, -the Lord says to them, My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hos. 4:6).

The grace of God had brought Israel unto Himself, having led them all the way from Egypt to Sinai. But there they undertook to stand on their own obedience; and, on condition of doing so, were to be unto God "a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Ex. 19:5, 6). They, however, failed immediately in obedience; and although relatively, as a nation, they still had nearness to God; yet immediately on their failure under the law, a certain number are taken from among the nation to stand in peculiar nearness to God, and the people themselves were consequently thrown at a distance. Thus it was ordered of the Lord unto Moses: "And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons" (Ex. 28:1).

They were to "come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place" (v. 43). It was the privilege of one only to come nearer still, and that was the high priest, to go within the veil. But after the sin of Nadab and Abihu, this privilege was curtailed so far as the frequency of entering it was concerned.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the Lord and died; and the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil, before the mercyseat, which is upon the ark" {Lev. 16:1, 2}.

To Israel indeed pertained the service of God (worship), but it was a worship of relative nearness to God. The high priest the nearest, the priests next -these were inside worshipers; the Levites next to them -they were attendants on the priests, and employed about the tabernacle; and then the people, who were outside worshipers, as it is said, "the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense" (Luke 1:10). But ever there, even in the outer court, no Gentile could approach (Acts 21:28).

Sacrifice and priesthood are essential prerequisites to worship. How fully was this taught to Jews under the law. They were habitually reminded that there was no acceptable worship but on the ground of the accepted sacrifice; and that they needed the intervention of the priest authoratively to pronounce them cleansed for worship. Hence a Jew under the law rightly connected justification with worship. He could not worship, because guilt attached to him which needed the expiation, or uncleanness which needed the intervention of the priest. The great act, however, which put Israel in the place of a worshiping people, was the sacrifice of the great day of atonement. This was an annual solemnity. "On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord... This shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year" (Lev. 16:30, 34). Israel then stood on that day as the worshiping people of the Lord. But they stood not with a purged conscience. That was what their sacrifices never could give; for it is impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins {Heb. 10:4}. It required other blood to do that, the blood of Him who is presented to us in the epistle to the Hebrews as the Son.

But here comes in the great contrast between worship then and now. We need sacrifice and priesthood in order to worship as much as Israel of old; but though worshiping thus on the same ground as they, our worship is of an entirely different order. I say different in its order, as well as essentially different in the dignity both of the sacrifice and the priest.

Of this most important contrast between the worship of Israel under the law, and that of the Church now, we are not left to conjecture or inference. Blessed for us, we have the comment of the Holy Ghost in the tenth chapter of Hebrews, on the remarkable solemnity of the great day of atonement, given for the express purpose of showing that the standing of the true worshiper now is the very REVERSE of that of Israel under the law. Let us meditate awhile on it.

First, the sacrifices offered under the law never could put those who came to them in the place of constant worshipers (for so "perfect" clearly means in this passage); and this not only because of their intrinsic inefficiency, but also because of their repetition; for had they effected this, they need not be yearly offered, "because the worshipers once purged should have no more conscience of sins." Now mark, to be perfected

as a worshiper is to have no more conscience of sins. This is, according to the aspect in which we are now considering worship, to be a true worshiper. Surely this exalts worship very highly. Because thus it is not in any wise the means of our justification, but that for which we are already justified. And how blessedly does the apostle show here, by way of contrast, that the comers unto Christ are made perfect: "By one offering be hath perfected forever them that are sanctified {Heb. 10:14}." Israel were perfected for a moment on the day of atonement; but even then not "as pertaining to the conscience"; the blood of their sacrifice could not touch that (Heb. 9:9). Their worship, therefore, must have been in "the spirit of bondage unto fear" (Rom. 8:15). There could have been no boldness (liberty), as we have by the blood of Jesus (Heb. 10:19). The unceasing repetition of the sacrifice had only the effect of as unceasingly bringing sin to remembrance. But Christ, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever {for sins, forever sat down}, sat down on the right hand of God -not as one expecting to offer sacrifice again, but waiting for His enemies to be made His footstool. And to this we have to add the blessed testimony of the Holy Ghost, in the special promise of the New Covenant -"their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." And therefore there needs no more sacrifice for sin.

The one finished and accepted sacrifice of Christ is therefore of permanent efficacy. There is in it remission {forgiveness} of sins to every one that believeth; and he that believeth has not to look for any further sacrifice for sin (v. 17); for if he had, it would bring sin to remembrance, and charge the conscience with guilt. And this is always the case where there is not simple repose of soul on the one finished sacrifice of Christ. Faith sees that the one thing has been done in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness" {Dan. 9}. And hence, the moment a Jew believed in "the precious blood of Christ," he was in a condition to assert that these were his privileges; as it is written, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

Thus praise, the highest part of worship, can now be entered on:

"I will extol thee, my God, O king, and I will bless thy name forever and ever. Every day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy name forever and ever" (Psa. 145).

While praise is silent for God in Zion, the mouth of the sinner, redeemed to God through the precious blood of the Lamb, is opened to show forth His praises. God Himself has created the fruit of the lips, speaking peace to him that is far off, and to him that is nigh.

But to return to our chapter. Liberty of conscience is the very essence of true worship. Not what men call liberty of conscience, but the ability to approach God without any sense of guilt upon the conscience. This, be it observed, is not presuming on innocence; neither is it the profession of unconsciousness of sin -for if "I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified," -but it is the fullest consciousness of and acknowledgment of sin, with the profession (let us hold it fast) that it has been forever put away by the one sacrifice of Christ offered once for all.

All the gifts and sacrifices offered by a worshiper under the law "could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience" (Heb. 9:9). He might have approached God strictly according to the ritual prescribed, but it must have been a burdened conscience. No conscience can be at ease before God where anything depends on what the person himself is doing or has to do. Yea, I would say, not if it had now to depend on what Christ has to do, instead of resting on that which He has already done. The worshiper must be once and forever purged, or he must have conscience of sin (sins -Heb. 10:4}. But only let him by faith follow Christ through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, by which He hath entered into the holy place: only let him see that it is "not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, that he hath entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" {Heb. 9:12}; and where can be the conscience of sin? Christ has not to enter in again, He has no more sacrifice for sin to offer -no other blood to carry in; for where could any be found of like preciousness? All is done once, and once for all; hence the worshiper once purged, and purged by such blood (Heb. 9:14), has no more conscience of sin {sins}. He can serve the living God. Nothing now depends on what the worshiper has to do; all hangs on the accomplished sacrifice, the precious blood and permanent priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But again. When God had to do with Israel, even before He could speak to them to bring them under the covenant, the injunction to Moses was, "Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes: and Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God" (Ex. 19).

The people must be sanctified in order to meet God, and sanctified in His own way; as God said when those came near to offer strange fire before Him, "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me" (Lev. 10:3). Who, after that dread example, would dare to approach God, if he was not sanctified in the way of God's appointment, so that God might be sanctified in him?

Now what do we learn concerning the true worshiper's sanctification now? What concerning God's appointment now for the once purged worshiper's approach to him? "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt-offerings and offerings for sin thou lust had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God... By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" {Heb. 10:4-10}.

Thus it is by God's own ordinance that we are sanctified. God's own will in this matter has been done; and therefore are we able to meet him as once purged and sanctified worshipers, put in the place of the holy nation. Those alone who by faith rest in the one accepted, and never to be repeated, offering of the body of Jesus Christ, are constituted God's worshiping people. This unchangeable place of blessing is given them by the express will of God.

Once more to look at the priest. How busy was Aaron! He had not only the yearly sacrifices on the great day of atonement but he had likewise much to do even daily, that the constituted worshipers might engage in worship. He had the morning and evening sacrifices, besides those which were occasional. He might be called on at any time to offer a trespass-offering, so that he never could have sat down as one who had finished his work, and could look on it with satisfaction.

But what a blessed contrast is here."Every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God" {Heb. 10:11, 12}. This is the position of one who had finished His work, and could look on it with satisfaction, and could present it before God continually. Not like Aaron, expecting to be called on to offer another sacrifice; but, that having been done once for all, expecting till his enemies be made his footstool: for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" {Heb. 10:14}.

Lastly. The new covenant not only promises the same high privileges as the old, but it secures the attainment of them by the grace of God, when it had been proved they could not be attained by the obedience of the people. "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation" {Ex. 19:5}. This was the tenor of the old covenant -its promises being conditional on their obedience. But "the better covenant," based upon "better promises," speaks thus:

"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them" {Heb. 10:6}.

Here all is done by God Himself -and therefore the promises necessarily follow -they become a kingdom of priests and an holy nation. And there is added to that above, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. " Thus, therefore, we have the testimony of the Holy Ghost to the truth, that "by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified"; because, "where remission of sin is, there is no more offering for sin."

What amazing knowledge immediately results from the recognition of the one completed sacrifice of Christ; the dignity of His person giving to it its amazing value. Our blessed standing is as a spiritual house, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, privileged in this, to the exclusion of all others, to be the worshiping people of God on the earth. The place in which God by His own will, Christ by His own work, and the Holy Ghost by His distinct testimony, have set us, is that of worshipers once and forever purged. Without any conscience of sin {sins}; able to approach the very God who can read our hearts without any suspicious fear, lest anything of guilt should yet be found on us, -any charge of sin not thoroughly purged away.

"Blessed indeed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile" {Psa. 32:2}.

Could an Israelite, coming to God according to the law, be without guile before him? I judge not. Lurking suspicion that God saw in him deeper sin than his offering could atone for, or that he himself might have neglected some prescribed duty, would make him anything but guileless. One, indeed, who came to God by faith, not in the ordered place, but under a figtree, might be found in holy confidence with God -an Israelite indeed in whom was no guile. Such was Nathanael, under the divine teaching, immediately recognizing Jesus as Son of God and King of Israel (John 1 }. Surely he is a sample of Israel by and by, under the covenant, taking the place of nearness to God, as a kingdom of priests and an holy nation, by their recognition of Jesus as the Son -the sacrifice and the priest.

The worshiper once purged is a guileless worshiper. Be it known as our portion now as it will be in glory. Amen.

Jewish Bondage and Christian Freedom: Jewish and Christian Worship, New and Living Way, The (10:19-20)

In the former paper we have found that all believers in {the Lord} Jesus are constituted perpetual worshipers, by the will of God, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. We have now to consider the sphere of their worship.

In Israel, under the law, the high priest being nearer to God than the priests, the priests nearer than the Levites, and the Levites nearer than the people, the sphere of worship was the tabernacle on the earth. But now, not only is all this relative nearness to God done away with, but the once-purged worshipers are introduced into "the sanctuary and true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" {Heb. 8:2}, because it is there that {the Lord} Jesus now ministers.

Consequently the pattern of our worship, and of the sphere of it, is not found in the people's worship under the law, but in the priest's service (Heb. 8:4, 5). We have properly no people's worship -all is priestly now. Even in the holy city itself, we have prophetically presented to us the outer court, where the people worshiped as cast out -those alone being owned by God who worshiped as priests in the holy or heavenly places (Heb. 11:2, (sic, 8:2?}). We are, indeed, a peculiar people -God's own special treasure; and our privilege as such is, that we worship not in the distance of the people, but in the nearness of the priests; not in the outer court, but in the temple itself.

We know, indeed, that there are in the church those who teach, and those who are taught -those who minister, and those ministered unto -those who rule, and those who obey -those who feed, and those who are fed; all this is most true, but this does not in the least degree interfere with the blessing, common to one as well as the other, that they are priests unto God. "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father" (Rev. 1:6). "Ye are a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9).

The apostle Paul was a priest unto God, but not more so than any of the individuals he salutes in his epistles, or than the most uninstructed believer in the whole church. The diversities among the members {of the body of Christ}, formed by the diverse gifts of the Spirit, must be carefully distinguished from their priestly equality. Our worship, then, is priestly worship, and consequently the heavenly courts are its sphere.

The fearful warning given by the apostle, which at one time or another has made every awakened soul tremble (Heb. 10:28, 29), is a warning against the fatal consequences of turning back to the old order of worship, as if it were to be a pattern of our worship, instead of the contrast unto it. To return, therefore, to the order of worship under the law, is to reject the heavenly order for a copy of the earthly. It marks the

apostasy of worship. And is not this the peculiar mark of the professing church? It has followed the old pattern of the law, instead of the heavenly pattern. It has made again the difference in its priests and people, -a distinction unknown to the New Testament. Thus has the professing church put its priests in a place of comparative nearness to God, and the people at a distance.

And what is this but to trample under foot the Son of God? As if, after all that He has suffered and done, we were at as great a distance as before; and as if with His priestly ministration, we still needed the intervention of others in our approaches to God? God has cast out the outer court, and will not regard worship offered therein; but men have profanely sought to sanctify it, and in so doing have trodden under foot the Son of God. We have already noticed the command given to Moses, to sanctify the people to meet God, and also that we, by the will of God, are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all; but this return to the old form is characterized by the Apostle as accounting the blood of the covenant wherewith we have been sanctified as an unholy thing, -as that which would still keep us without, instead of that which entitles us to enter into the holiest of all. And what an insult to the Spirit of grace, who witnesses to the soul of the wondrous grace of God and of Christ, and who is Himself in the once-purged worshiper the power of nearness of worship: for God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit. What an insult to that blessed Spirit to put ourselves back to the distance in which the flesh must ever stand before God. Hence, therefore, this solemn warning, take heed lest, after having received the knowledge of the truth with respect to your priestly standing and nearness to God, ye willfullya sin. For to worship God as we think fit is the very essence of wilfulness. God leaves nothing to our choice in the matter of worship; it is not allowed us to choose whether we will go back to the old pattern. God has set it aside, and to return to it is to choose the place of judgment. For nothing can await the outside worshipers but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin to bring you nearer, or to make you accepted. Jesus is not waiting to offer that; for He has done it once for all, but waiting till His enemies be made His footstool. But even the priest's service in the holy place, near as it was, is but partially the pattern of the service of the saints now. For now all relative nearness is done away with, and we must take the sphere of the ministry of the high priest Himself to complete the pattern of our standing now.

While the first tabernacle was standing, the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest; i.e., laid open (Heb. 9:8). The priests, though able always to enter into the holy place, could proceed no further. The beautiful veil concealed from their eye the most holy place. The veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, with its cunning work of cherubim, all open to their view, might indeed tell them of the glories concealed behind it; but the golden altar, the ark of the covenant overlaid with gold, with the golden pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant, were concealed from their sight. The immediate presence of Him who dwelt between the cherubim on the mercy-seat was inapproachable by them. That was accessible to the high priest alone, and to him but once a year, and then not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people. Mark: the high priest could not enter into the holiest of all at all times, as the priests could into the holy place; he could not enter there as a once purged worshiper, for he went there on the very ground of sin not being put away forever.

But now all is laid open. By the blood of Christ the way is opened into the holiest of all. How significantly was this marked by the veil of the temple being rent in two when Jesus hung upon the cross. Yea, Jesus Himself is the way, the living way. If there be a veil, He is that veil; not to conceal anything of God behind it, but to bring out all that may be known of God to view. And here the worshipers once purged have constant liberty to enter.

"Having, therefore, brethren." The Apostle does not take the stand of one in pre-eminent nearness himself to God, inviting others to draw nigh, as though he had been the priest and they the people -he on the inside and they without; but he classes himself with those whom he addresses, calling them brethren, and three times repeating, "Let us." How different this to the order of old. Moses alone was to come near, and others were to worship afar off; but now it was equal nearness, equal liberty of access into the holiest of all.

What has the blood of Jesus left unaccomplished? In the shedding of it we have remission of sins. By the sprinkling of it we are pronounced clean, and sanctified as worshipers. It is ever on the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat; for by it Christ has entered in, having obtained eternal redemption. His thus entering in is not an annual solemnity, nor one ever to be repeated. The blood of the sin-offering was carried within the veil by Aaron on the great day of atonement, that he might "make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins (Lev. 16:16). This has now been done once and forever. The atonement for the holy place is unto continuance -it is as much once and forever purged as is the worshiper himself. Yea, no worshiper entering there need fear lest he should bring defilement there, because that blood that cleanseth all sin away is there {in its effect} forever before God. Why are we so distant in our hearts from God? Is it not because we have so little sense of the real power of the blood within the veil, as the gracious provision of God Himself for our holy and unhindered communion with him? "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" {Heb. 10:19}. "But mark the way of access. At Mount Sinai all was distance." Thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourself, that ye go not up into the mount, nor touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death (Exodus 19).

This distance ever characterized the worship under the law; there were constant bounds set, to pass which would have been death. Even Aaron himself could not pass the bounds of the veil at all times, "lest he die. " The outside worshiping Israelite could not pass the bounds of the curtains which hung at the door of the tabernacle, "lest he die." To see God and live was impossible under the law; but now Jesus is the way, the living way, into God's presence. To see him is to see God, and live. He is not the barrier between us and God, but the way to God. All the distance, and every bound, is done away by Jesus. Did an Israelite on the outside gaze on the beautiful curtain, and long to pass it -but death would have been his portion had he attempted it -let him look to Jesus, who says, "I am the door: by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved." Yes, the death of {the Lord} Jesus is become to us the living way into the holiest of all. But if, having proceeded within the curtains of the door, the veil seemed to forbid further entrance, let him again look to Jesus, and the veil, says the apostle, is His flesh {Heb. 10:20}. The very God with whom we have to do is thus brought before us as full of grace and truth. And if he perceived it rent, again let him look to Jesus and Him crucified, and the holiness of God invited instead of forbid an entrance. What words of blessing to the once purged worshiper!

"By a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" {Heb. 10:20}.

But farther. Not only the work of {the Lord} Jesus and His character inspire confidence, but He Himself is the High Priest over the house of God. His ministry is never for a moment interrupted. He is in the holiest of all, on the very ground of atonement having been made both for the people and the place, and therefore the present is to us one continued season of worship. How needful is this promise to give us confidence in entering into the holiest! The High Priest has not to go into the house; He is there constantly, and has taken a place which Aaron never could take in the tabernacle; He is over the house as His own; He is master of it; He openeth, and no man shutteth.

It is literally a great Priest over the house of God, or "great High Priest," as we have it in the fourth chapter. The worshipers themselves now enter into the privileged place of the High Priest, themselves taking the standing of high priests in this respect, not simply of priests entering into the holy place. Hence they need a great Priest—one who is over the house, even over them (Heb. 3:6). This must not be forgotten. We are not priests in our own right, neither are we free of the house in our own right—all hangs on the great Priest; and our entrance into the holiest of all, now by faith, and in due time actually, is that which declares to us how much we are debtors to His grace.

May we indeed, by these meditations, find fresh virtue in the blood of Jesus, and learn what its preciousness must be before God, when it can give us liberty to enter into the holiest of all!

And now pause for a moment to contemplate what has been done for us,—what has been done for every one whose eye has been turned away from the things which are visible, and with which he himself is conversant, to see {the Lord} Jesus, now hidden in the heavens from the sight of the world, but revealed to faith as at the right hand of the throne of the majesty of heaven.

The worshipers have been once and forever purged by His sacrifice once offered. By the will of God they have been sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. A living way has been opened for them through the blood of Jesus into the holiest of all. The place of worship is as much prepared for them to worship in by the blood, as they by the same blood are prepared to worship in it. The great Priest is abidingly in that place of worship; no ministration is wanting; He is the minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. He, too, is over the house; and its gates are always open—entrance is always to be had,—all things are ready without our having done anything. What then remains but for us to use our high privileges, and to listen to the word—"Let us draw near": but this, the Lord permitting, shall be the subject of the next paper.

But is there not reason for deep humiliation on the part of Christians, who own assuredly the preciousness of the blood of Jesus for remission {i.e., for forgiveness} of sins, but who do not regard its preciousness as having purged the place of worship for those whose sins are forgiven? An Israelite was taught two things by the blood of the sacrifice. "Almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission." Many a soul which has been taught the value of the blood in the latter sense has never regarded it in the former. Many a Christian, who would be alarmed at anything which would imply that something was yet to be done by {the Lord} Jesus for justification, is quite unconscious of nullifying a most important part of the work of Jesus, that affecting worship, by the ritual to which he is subjected. The truth preached cheers his soul and leads into happy liberty -the ritual is submitted to as a point of decency, and in many instances tolerated only for the sake of the sermon. But what a fearful degradation of worship is this! What an undervaluing of the blood of Jesus! What a forgetfulness of our priestly place as worshipers once purged for the heavenly courts themselves!

The Lord pardon His saints for having so insulted His grace in the mode and character of their worship, and lead them by His Spirit into the only place of acceptable worship—the holiest of all.

Jewish Bondage and Christian Freedom: Jewish and Christian Worship, Let Us Draw Near (10:22)

It is indeed very blessed to be enabled to tell a poor awakened sinner, that in (the Lord} Jesus all things are ready which he needs for remission of sins, righteousness, and life. And it is not less blessed to be enabled to tell those who have so come to Jesus, that all things are ready for their worship in the holiest of all; that everything is there ordered by the blessed Jesus Himself for their entrance therein, and that He Himself has consecrated the way for their approach.

The time is coming when "many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3).

But now is the time for believers to encourage one another to enter into the holiest of all -even into heaven itself, because (the Lord} Jesus is there. Come ye, say they, and let us draw near with a true heart.

Under the law, much of the priestly ministry was outside the tabernacle, and open to the view therefore of the worshiper. If he brought a burnt sacrifice, he was to bring it to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, where he was to kill it, and then the priests sprinkled the blood in his sight upon the altar that was by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. This part of the priest's work was visible to the outside worshipers. But he who could approach thus far was never satisfied as to his conscience. He came indeed to these sacrifices -he saw them offered; but they were utterly inefficacious as to the purging of the conscience.

"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" {Heb. 10:4}.

But now all on the outside has been once and for all accomplished; the priestly ministry is all within and invisible, and therefore only known to faith by the revelation of God.

Let us put ourselves in the place of a Hebrew worshiper, by God's grace taught to know Jesus as the one sacrifice for sin, and as the ever-abiding High Priest in the holiest of all. What a struggle must there often have been in his mind when approaching God, because he had no sacrifice to offer -nothing visible on which to lean -no victim to lay his hand upon. It must indeed have required real trueheartedness to

(the Lord} Jesus to enable him to draw near -and to look at everything with which he had been formerly conversant as taken up in Jesus, so that all that he had seen before was now to be discerned by faith as fulfilled in Christ. And are we not often false to (the Lord} Jesus in this matter? Do we not often harbor the thought that something yet remains to be done -either by ourselves or by Him -in order to our drawing near? Do we not often thus become occupied with the circumstantials of worship rather than with (the Lord} Jesus -the substance? Are we not often false to Him in questioning our title to draw near, because we find distance in our own hearts, as if it was the warmth of our affections, instead of the blood of Jesus, which brought near?

But oh, beloved, how false to (the Lord] Jesus has the Church been! The worshipers are often pressed down by a burdensome ritual, and allowed neither to know that they are once and forever purged, nor that all is prepared for their entrance into the holiest. They are turned back again to that which is visible, and go through the daily routine of service, never getting farther than the door of the tabernacle! They are set in the place of distant Jews, instead of that of priests sanctified for heavenly ministrations and worship!

And how continually do we see souls led to put the act of worship in the place of Jesus. Surely this is not to draw near with a true heart. A doubt harbored as to the all-sufficiency of His sacrifice, or the perfect efficiency of His priesthood, or His tender sympathy and compassion, is not to draw near with a true heart. If we shrink back into a distant place after all He has done, are we true-hearted to (the Lord} Jesus? But what positive treachery to Jesus is it to set up an order of men as in greater nearness to God than others -virtually putting them within, and virtually putting others without. To lean on priests, or ministers, in worship, as if they were needed to that end, is absolutely denying the virtue and the person and work of Christ. But such things are the necessary offspring of departure from the truth of a sinner's justification before God, by the one sacrifice of Christ. Distant worship necessarily follows imperfect justification. And if a sinner's justification before God by the blood of Jesus be not seen, much less will entrance into the holiest of all by the same blood for worship be allowed as the common portion of the saints. But even where the truth as to justification has been recovered and is preached, we still see a form and a ritual of worship altogether subversive of the truth. The access proclaimed in the gospel preached is not permitted to those who have believed that preaching. Thus the saints are practically kept in a place of distance, and thus taught to be false-hearted to (the Lord} Jesus. Surely we might say, if every church and chapel in the kingdom were closed, and all the ministers of the gospel shut up in prison, that true-heartedness to Jesus would lead His saints to assemble themselves together to worship, by faith, in the holiest of all -knowing that there the ministry of the Great High Priest can never for a moment be suspended.

"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" {Heb. 10:22).

As to this expression, "full assurance of faith," it by no means conveys the idea of a certain standard measure of faith as a matter of attainment. The reference is not to the measure of faith, but to its bearing on the right object. The faith may be the weakest possible, but let that, weak as it is, be in full bearing on its own proper object.

We have another form of the same word in the New Testament. It is said of Abraham, "he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform" {Rom. 4:21 }.

So again -"Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." The moment the soul has laid hold on (the Lord} Jesus it is delivered from itself, and ought to be fully persuaded that all it needs is presented to it in the object before it -even Jesus.

It is this single eye to (the Lord} Jesus which we need in worship. The very things which man in his wisdom has thought to be helps to devotion are really its hindrances. Which of the senses do not men seek to gratify in the circumstantials of worship? Now the very object of the apostle here is to turn away the worshiper from the things of sight and sense, to which he had been accustomed, in order to concentrate his soul on one single object, in which he was to find everything that he needed.

We can never look at our title to worship God, but we see our salvation. How blessedly has God linked these things together, and how perversely does man rend them asunder, either by calling on all to worship, believers and unbelievers, or by binding believers to a form which negatives the sense of complete justification. What we need in order to happier and holier worship is more simple faith in (the Lord} Jesus. Are we fully persuaded that Jesus has done all that is needed to make an acceptable meeting place between ourselves and God? -then let us draw near.

And what holy freedom and liberty attends this -"having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." The leper to be cleansed, in order to restore him to the privilege of worship, needed to be sprinkled with blood (Lev. 14:7). The Israelite, who had touched anything which made him unclean, needed to have the water of purification sprinkled on him, but it only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh (Heb. 9:13). The priests at their consecration had the blood applied to them, that they might so draw near and minister before God. But what is all this compared with a heart sprinkled from an evil conscience by the blood of Jesus? It is no longer a purifying of the flesh, but a purifying of the heart by faith. The flesh purified for worship might co-exist with an evil conscience, but a sprinkled heart never could. How entirely is a good conscience alone maintained by that which is not of sight, even by the purging power of the blood of Jesus.

Before Aaron could put on the holy linen coat he must wash his flesh in water (Lev. 14:4) and so it is now -our bodies washed with pure water" {Heb. 10:22}. We cannot put on our white robe unless we know what communion with the death of Jesus really is. How needful for us in our approach to our place of worship, even the holiest of all, habitually to remember that we have died {Rom. 6:12}, and that we are alive in Jesus {alive in Christ Jesus}. We have to do with the living God -and He too a consuming fire. All that is contrary to life has been set aside by the death of Jesus. "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" {Col. 3:3}. And it is as alive from the dead that we alone can approach him. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith {"confession of our hope" } without wavering" {Heb. 10:23).

It is literally "of our hope," not faith, and has reference to the sixth chapter "that we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil" {Heb. 6:19}.

Our hope is that we shall be there actually, the holiest of all being our own proper place as priests unto God: but by faith we now worship there in spirit.

But it is hard indeed to maintain a profession contradicted, so far as sight goes, by everything in us and around us. Jesus witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that He was a king, without any mark of royalty about Him. His confession seemed contradicted by his appearance. Timothy had confessed a good confession before many witnesses (1 Tim. 6:12), and he needed to be reminded of it. And so do we. For how constantly do we forget that we are what we are in hope. We could not give satisfactory proof to another that we are what we confess to be. We can indeed give the soundest reason of the hope that is in us, because the forerunner is for us already entered within the veil; but we cannot satisfy the restlessness of our minds, or the minds of others, by evidence. No; blessed be God, He has provided for our hope on surer ground than any evidence we could produce, even on the ground of its own immutability and faithfulness; for He is faithful that hath promised.

The word is of great force, "let us hold fast," -let us tenaciously grasp. And why? Because our hope is that which Satan would try by all means to wrest from us. And has He not effectually done this in the Church at large by making that their hope, which is, in fact, the ground of their hope-even their justification. Present righteousness is the ground of Christian hope. The holiest of all is alone open to those who have been once and forever purged. If our hope springs not from that within the veil, where is our steadfastness? Everything short of that may be shaken -and will be shaken. If therefore we know not accomplished righteousness, fitting us now for the holiest of all, the peace of our souls must be unsteady. An Israelite might approach the door of the tabernacle with a sacrifice to be offered, but that sacrifice had yet to be pronounced acceptable and to be accepted; but it was on the ground of an already offered and accepted sacrifice that the holiest of all was entered by the high priest. Thus it is with our title to enter within the veil -the one offering of Jesus has forever given us liberty to enter there. How amazing is the craft of Satan in his devices against the truth! When he could no longer keep out of sight the doctrine of justification by faith, he contrived to rob it of its real power, even where received, by practically putting it as the object of hope, instead of the present possession of all who have come to Jesus. The peace of the gospel is thus practically unknown, although the gospel itself is truly stated. And this hope of justification by faith always opens the door for distant worship. In how many real believers is the peace of the gospel hindered by their very acts of worship.

Let us therefore, beloved brethren, grasp and maintain this confession as our best treasure -Having present righteousness by faith, our hope is nothing short of the holiest of all; and there we worship in Spirit now. Our hope is independent of ourselves -it hangs on the immutable faithfulness of God -it is secured by the blood of Jesus, and it is already made fast within the veil; for {the Lord} Jesus is there, and there for us. Beware of mock humility, which is only the cover of unbelief and self-dependence. Look at yourselves and you are hopeless; yea, nothing is before you but a fearful looking for of judgment. Look at Jesus and know your hope; for where is He? In the holiest of all as the forerunner! Let this check all wavering, and answer every doubt and every difficulty. In spite of all appearances, hold fast the profession of the hope without wavering. "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works" {Heb. 10:24). Here we are reminded that we have also to perform our priestly work. The priest had to consider, in cases of leprosy, -and so, as priests, we have to consider one another, not whether we are cleansed or not, for it has been authoritatively pronounced of us by the Great High Priest Himself "Now ye are clean" {John 13:10} -but we are to consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. The expression is remarkable -"consider one another." There is but one, even the Lord Himself, who stands in the authoritative place of the priest to the church, therefore we are to consider one another. How entirely is this exercise of our common priestly function nullified by again setting up an order of priesthood to prescribe to us. What is the Confessional? What the Absolution? -but the priest again pronouncing the leper clean! And how effectually does such a thought hinder our considering one another. We can only do this as standing in grace ourselves, and recognizing others as standing in the same grace and the same nearness to God. It is as together standing in the holiest of all that we are to consider one another. There we are thus to help each other to detect what is inconsistent with that our high and blessed standing. There is no room for rivalry now -all are priests; but abundant room for love; and our love for each other is to be measured by the love that has brought us where we stand. And as to good works, they also are to be judged by the same standard.

No lower standard than the sanctuary itself must now be taken to determine what are good works. What becomes {is suitable to} the holiest itself alone becomes those sanctified to worship therein. It is not what men call good works, but what God estimates as such, to which we have to provoke one another. The costly ointment poured on the feet of Jesus, wasteful and extravagant in the eyes of an ancient or modern utilitarian, was a good work in the eyes of Jesus; the two mites of the widow more costly than the splendid offering of the rich. How little of what men think good is really so before God; and how entirely what God esteems as precious is despised among men. Hence Christ was despised and rejected of men; and hence really Christian works are now despised of them. How needful then is it for us to be in spirit in the holiest of all, to prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

But not only is there to be this constant provocation to love and to good works, it is also added, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is"{Heb. 10:25). When Israel came into the land, they were not to offer their sacrifices, or to worship, at any place they might select, but at the place where the Lord should put His name only {Deut. 12:5, 6}.

Jerusalem was the place whither the tribes went up. Put yourself in the position of a believing Hebrew on a solemn feast day in Jerusalem -one of the three thousand converted by the first sermon of Peter. Multitudes from all quarters might be assembled around him -Jerusalem filled with worshipers -while he would be apart from all that which attracted them. But would not his soul have many a struggle in keeping away from the festive and religious throng? Would he not have almost appeared an enemy to his country and to the temple? But was it really so7 Think farther of the contrast he must in his own soul have seen between the upper chamber, or any other unpretending locality, and the splendid temple. Must it not have needed much simple faith in {the Lord} Jesus, to meet together to break bread and worship with a number as unaccredited as himself, without any visible priest to order their worship, any sacrifice, any incense, any altar, any laver? Would not the multitude keeping holy-day give as it were the lie to the worship he had been engaged in, as if it had been no worship at all? Surely there is great force in the words, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is."

Yes; some drew back from acknowledging that as worship, which was without the outward form -some even who believed in {the Lord} Jesus. It cost too much to own Jesus as everything by disowning all the shadows {Heb. 8:5}. The assembling of themselves together thus was the great testimony against the religion of the world, and that Jesus was all. It was the profession that He was the substance of worship, and that

worship must now be according to the place and power of His priesthood. The despised company in the upper chamber were feeding on the substance, while the religious world in their gorgeous temple were bowing before the shadows. That despised company had by faith access into the holiest of all; they knew that Jesus as the forerunner had entered there for them {Heb. 6:20}; and in this knowledge of Him, they could meet at any time and at any place, for the name of the Lord was recorded in the place of their meeting. They were worshipers in the sanctuary, let the scene of their gathering on earth be where it may.

Hence we find that "on the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread" (Acts 20:7). They might or might not have some one to minister the word unto them -that was accidental; their coming together was for a positive and specific object. Paul came in among them and preached, but that was by the way. They came together as disciples. And if man puts a hindrance in the way of disciples coming together, is it not treading under foot the Son of God, who has not only given them the liberty, but who has made their doing so the point of collective confession of His name? There is need of our exhorting one another as to this, for the danger is imminent of turning back to the old order. And the Spirit of God clearly saw the tendency of things that way, and that this would increase. That as the day approached when the Lord Jesus would be revealed, worship would become more and more worldly -more and more after the ancient distant Jewish pattern. Hence the exhortation would in the progress of things be increasingly needed, to stand fast as disciples in the simplicity of grace. Nothing can be more gracious than the provision which the Lord has made against the increasing evil. Just in proportion as the thought in the minds of Christians has prevailed of a progression unto blessing in the world has worship adapted itself to the world. But when it has pleased God to open the eyes of any of His saints to see the steady progress in evil, and the great assumptions of the flesh, He has thrown them back more on Christian simplicity. And our exhortation the one to the other, as we see the day approaching, is to test everything by the light of that day, and to see that nothing will then really stand which is not of Christ. Surely the Lord intends to make His saints sensible of all that they have lost; but in doing so to make them as sensible of the value of what remains If He had to say to His people of old, "Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing'?" {Hag. 2:3}.

This was not said to enfeeble, but to strengthen them. All the outward glory was gone, but still the Lord was there. And therefore it is said, "Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, and work; for 1 am with you, saith the Lord of hosts: according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not" {Hag. 2:4, 5}. God remains unchangeably the same, and His original power in deliverance was real strength in the midst of weakness; so that out of weakness they became strong. And this is God's provision for the comfort and strength of the saints, as they see the day approaching, and everything unprepared to meet it, to exhort one another to the use of what remains unto them; and while Jesus abideth in the holiest of all, and now appears in the presence of God for them, they can always draw near.

Yes, it is our privilege to do so, now that the dispensation has well nigh run its course, equally as much as in the apostle's days. Men indeed have, by their perverseness, put many thing between themselves and God, but that which gives nearness still remains, even the blood of Jesus. Let us then draw near.

Beloved, how much is this exhortation needed at this day! Simple worship, although our high privilege, is despised! Believers need something more than the presence of the Lord to induce them to come together. {The Lord} Jesus is not really to them the great substantial ordinance of God. They are not glad when they assemble themselves together. Let us not forsake this, for if we do we are in danger of forgetting that we are once and forever purged worshipers, and that our place of worship is the golden sanctuary itself, also once and forever purged (Heb. 10:2, 14). There we have such an High Priest, one who can bring us in at once to the throne of the majesty on high, to us a throne of grace, although He who sits thereon is holy, holy, holy.

Beloved, it is your place of confession to contradict all assumptions of priesthood, all repetition of sacrifice, and all repeated absolutions, by drawing near. Your worship is to be characterized no less by confident nearness to God than by reverence to His name The day is approaching. Its approach is marked by a return to ordinances. Hold fast your profession, and let it be Jesus against every pretension. For be assured that whatever is not of Him is nothing better than a carnal ordinance, to be utterly disowned by the Lord when He appears.

If we look forward {to the eternal state} as to worship, what do we see there? All the shadows passed away, and only the substance presented.

"I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it {Rev. 21:22}.

So again, The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him [worship him]: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever" {Rev. 21:5}.

They shall serve and they shall reign at the same time They shall then be manifestly priests and kings. But now in the acknowledgment that grace has already made them so, it is their privilege to approach by faith that glorious place in which they will in due time actually stand. Our best instruction is gathered by looking forward. It is the reality which is to be our pattern now. Not things on earth the patterns of the heavenly, but the substance known by faith stamping its impress on that which is present. Let us draw near "unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" {Rev. 1:5, 6}.

Believe and Live, So Great Salvation: Hebrews 2:3 (2:3)

Hebrews 2:3

We may safely say there never was such a time as the present for the preaching of the Gospel. Young and old, rich and poor, learned and illiterate, every grade and rank of society in Christendom, have heard in some way or another of this “great salvation.” Great, indeed, is our

responsibility, and terrible the judgment of those who can afford to make light of it—who, busy with their merchandise or their money, their science or their pleasure, eager to please the world, or governed by the lusts of their own evil hearts, “neglect so great salvation.”

Some there are who, with the bold indifference of their skeptical minds, make light of God’s proffered mercy, think their own thoughts, and shut out God altogether.

Others, again, are fascinated by the gaudy tinsel of this “Vanity Fair,” the excitement of the “cup” or the billiard-room — “the pleasures of sin for a season.”

Others, educated and cultivated, are seeking the advancement of commerce and science. But, dear reader, to whatever class you belong, pause, for you may be neglecting — what? the eternal interests of your soul: despising — what? the goodness of God, that would lead thee even now to repentance; braving — what? “the wrath to come; “and all, that you may carry out your own desires, or satisfy your own ambition. Remember, friend! remember that the end of these things is death, and after death the judgment. What things? you say. Well, anything whatsoever that leads you to reject the Lord Jesus Christ, that keeps you from receiving “so great salvation.”

You will tell me that you are not a rejector of Christ, you do not like such strong expressions; you do sometimes think seriously, and attend to the ordinances of religion. Yes, dear soul; but, alas! your very religion may leave you where it found you — if not a rejector, at least a, neglecter of this “great salvation.”

But why press this one thing so much? Because it is “so great,” and of such eternal importance, that it demands your immediate interest, it claims your whole attention. It is that which your soul needs. God wants now to make it yours; and if you neglect it, how shall you escape? The Apostle includes himself it this question, which defies all answer; yet surely he, if any, might have escaped by his own doings or efforts.

Why is it that Paul, by the Spirit, so qualifies this salvation? You have but to read the preceding chapter to get the answer: “God hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son” (Heb. 1:2). Measure the cross by Christ, and thus learn its meaning; consider the greatness of the Savior, and thus know what a salvation it must be.

With God from all eternity, higher far than the angels, co-equal with the Father, “the heir of all things,” “by whom also he made thy worlds” — witness Him taking the place of a man, and then humbling Himself unto death, “even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:7, 8). Hear the Son, “which is in the bosom of the Father” (John 1:18), crying out as the Sin-bearer, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46), and as Psa. 22:15 expresses it, “Thou hast brought me into the dust of death.” See Him, in the language of Isa. 53:12, “pouring out his soul Unto death.” Or again, Jonah, as a figure of Christ in death, could say, “Thou hast cast me into the deep: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me” (Jonah 2:3).

Remember who it is that now bears, at God’s right hand, the marks of His shame and death on Calvary. Was it not the Lamb, of God’s providing, that went from the heights of glory to the depths of woe? And why? That He might secure for us salvation—”so great,” because none less than the Son of God could work it out — “the salvation of God,” for God Himself wrought it by His Son. Well may the Apostle say,” If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard it.” There is no escape; for” he that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Heb. 10:28-29) — this same Spirit which now is pressing upon your acceptance this “great salvation.”

Oh, friend! will you trifle longer, and will you still delay or make excuse? God forbid! What will your business, your science, or your pleasure do for you before “the great white throne”? Awful is your guilt for so long neglecting; but now believe, even now decide for so great a Savior; and when “the great day of His wrath has come,” you shall be able to stand (Rev. 6:17).

On the other hand, you may have been awakened, and now you are feeling the greatness of your sins, your unfitness for God. Perhaps, moreover, you have been trying to improve your condition, to give up your sins. What a relief, then, for you to “stand still!” if now you are willing, and “see the salvation of the Lord” (Ex. 14:13), to hear that shout of victory, “It is finished!” (John 21:30); to believe in Him who, by the shedding of His own blood, “obtained eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:12). What must the love be that gives you “so great salvation?” what the grace that invites you, where and as you are, to receive such a Savior? Fear not, then, dear soul! but learn that Christ is “the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey (or receive) him” (Heb. 5:9).

T. E. P.

Jewish Bondage and Christian Freedom: Jewish and Christian Worship, Priesthood and the Law Changed, The (8:12)

Among the various aspects in which the Lord Jesus is presented to us, it is well oftentimes to distinguish between that which He is properly in His own Person, and that which He is as constituted of God.

It is most legitimate to trace Him from the manger of Bethlehem, to His coming in the clouds of heaven in fully manifested glory. The Holy Spirit delights in this theme -in tracing the lowly rod of the stem of Jesse, growing up before the Lord as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground, to the stately BRANCH in manifested beauty (Isa. 11:1; 53:2; Jer. 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12; Luke 1:78). So, again, it is now the special office of the Holy Ghost to glorify {the Lord} Jesus by testifying to us what He is, and is owned to be in heaven, while He is rejected on earth. In the reception of this testimony is found the great strength of the Church in its militant state here in the world.

But there is something before all this. There is the tracing Him down from heaven to earth, as well as tracing Him up from earth to heaven, to return thence in manifested glory. It is this character of testimony to {the Lord} Jesus which the Holy Ghost presents to us in the commencement of the epistle to the Hebrews. It is true that the prominent subject is the official dignity of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Apostle, Captain, and High Priest of our profession, -elevated far beyond Moses, or Aaron, or Joshua. But this elevation, while true of him officially, is far more true by reason of the essential dignity of His own person. God hath in these last days spoken to us by the SON. This is not an official title, it is His own real, proper, native standing, -belonging to Him in a sense in which it belongs to no other.

And herein is the grand characteristic difference between the Lord Jesus and all others. Many indeed are those of old upon whom the Lord hath put honor, who would have been nothing but for the honor thus put upon them. They are constituted and appointed to various offices, and not to own them in those offices would be to reject God. So also God has made Jesus both Christ and Lord {Acts 2:36}. But who is He who is thus constituted, or made, of God? He is the SON. These constituted dignities cannot excel His own real glory, that which He had with the Father before the world was {John 17:5}. His offices, dignified though they be, cannot in this sense exalt him. But He can give, and does give, the power and character of His own divine person unto every office which He sustains -unto every work which He has done. If He could be stripped of all His official glories, His own personal excellency and glory must remain untouched and undiminished. It is this which makes Him alone the fit one "to bear the glory" {Zech. 6:13} which God may put upon him. When God put various glories on others, as on Moses or Aaron, or David, or Solomon, their failure to sustain the glory was marked in them all. And why? They were but men, having no power in themselves to stand at all But Jesus is the SON, and "in him was LIFE." And let it be remembered, in passing, that the only security for the saints bearing the glory which grace has made theirs, is that they are in union with Him who is thus in His own person above all glory. "He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one" {Heb. 2:11}. To have office conferred by God is indeed a solemn responsibility, both as it respects him who is so honored, and as it respects others to acknowledge the honor conferred of God. It is thus our responsibility to acknowledge office in magistrates {Rom. 13}, and not to speak evil of dignities {Jude 8}. To resist the power is to resist God. Those who bear the dignity may be nothing, the vilest of men, but the honor is put on them of God, and is to be acknowledged by us. If this be so, how fearful in the sight of God must it be to refuse to acknowledge any of the offices, styles, dignities, which God has conferred on His own Son. How fearful in any wise to trench on them by arrogating them to ourselves. This is the last form of manifested evil under the present dispensation, and that which will bring down the terrible judgment of God. It is the denial of "Jesus Christ, the only Lord God, and our Lord" (Jude); that is, the denial of Him both in His own essential glory, and His conferred mediatorial glory. Let us then beware of anything which derogates from the honor due to Jesus, the Son of God. For how infinitely elevated is He above all others on whom official dignity has been conferred by God. God will strip men of all the glories He has conferred on them, and then what are they? Nothing. Man being in honor is like the beasts that perish. But when man is thus abased, in that day the Lord Jesus Christ alone shall be exalted (Isa. 2).

I desire, because of the importance of the subject, to refer to the eighty-second Psalm for illustration of the truth, that any honor conferred by God on men brings them out of obscurity, taken away it sinks them into their own proper nothingness. On the other hand, honor conferred on the Son adds nothing really to Him: if it be taken from Him or disowned by man, it only leads to His exaltation by God to every office in which man has failed, "that in all things He might have the preeminence" {Col. 1:18}. "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty he judgeth among the gods. How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked. They know not, neither will they understand: they walk on in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are out of course. I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you children of the Most High: but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. Arise, O God, judge the earth; for thou shalt inherit all nations" {Psa. 82}. The reference of the Lord Jesus to this Psalm, in the tenth chapter of John, is very remarkable. He had asserted, in the most unequivocal manner, His own proper divinity, "I and my Father are one" (v. 30). This, they said, was making Himself God (v. 33). Afterward in v. 38, Jesus again asserts this, and again they sought to take Him (v. 39). But He had previously (vv. 34, 35) referred to this Psalm, to prove that they ought at least to have owned Him in His official authority and power. His works testified of Him that He was the sent one of the Father. Not one "unto whom the word of God came" merely, but Him whom the Father had sanctified and sent into the world, He could say, "I am the Son of God." They should have believed Him for His works' sake, for He did the works of His Father, and He and the Father were one. To others the word of God has only come -"I have said, Ye are gods." They had no dignity at all in themselves; they were of the earth, earthy, raised in official dignity by God. But He was the SON; He had been "sanctified and sent into the world"; He was "the Lord from heaven." How infinitely contrasted is Jesus the Son of God to all those of whom God has said, "Ye are gods. " The moment their conferred dignity was taken from them, they would die like the common herd of men. They had no essential, inherent power or dignity. But He was one with the Father, He was in the beginning with God; nothing therefore could really touch His dignity, for it was intrinsically divine. It was not the word coming to Him which made Him what He was -though He had indeed been sanctified and sent into the world -it was what He ever was in Himself which enabled Him to be so sent, and to sustain and give efficiency to all that was laid upon Him. Hence, though in His humiliation His judgment was taken away, yet God would divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong {Isa. 53:12}. This shall be manifestly true when all official and delegated power shall be taken out of the hands to which God has entrusted it, and actually assumed by Jesus. Then shall that word be proved true of him "Arise, O God, judge the earth; for thou shalt inherit all nations" {Psa. 82:8}.

The connection between the personal and the official glories of the Lord Jesus Christ is indeed the prominent subject of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In the first chapter the Son is presented to us as both in person and office far above angels. And it is the Son who is also the apostle of our profession. In the second chapter He is presented to us as our High Priest; and then we are exhorted, in the third chapter, to "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." Moses indeed was great. God had magnified him before Pharaoh, yet he was but a servant -one to whom the word of God had come -although God humbled Miriam and Aaron before him. But, mark, {the Lord} Jesus was not only officially greater than Moses, but it was His personal greatness which gave Him the infinite superiority. He was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He that hath builded the house hath more honor than the house; and every house is builded by some man, but He that built all things is God. Moses was faithful as a servant in another's house, but Christ as a Son over His own house {Heb. 3:6}. So again as concerning the high priesthood. Aaron was the high priest, but Jesus was the Great High Priest, -higher thus indeed than Aaron even officially. But this is not all; it is "Jesus the Son of God," infmitely higher personally than He is officially.

"Seeing then that we have a Great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God" (Heb. 4).

But yet further. It pleased God to constitute one individual a perfect type of the Lord Jesus Christ; that individual was Melchizedec. He stands before us typical of Jesus, both in person and office. The mystery with which God has so remarkably surrounded Melchizedec makes him a fit

type of the Person of the Son; for "no man knoweth the Son, but the Father"; and so, no man knoweth Melchizedec, but God. And his being thus presented to us without genealogy, "having neither beginning of days, nor end of life," shows us also how truly He is "made like unto the Son of God." Thus, Melchizedec is so brought before us in the word of God, as to be made a most wonderful type of the divine and eternal Son of God -he is thus the personal type. "Abideth a priest continually"; for we know not when Melchizedec's priesthood began or ended; he had not as Aaron an official life -"beginning of days and end of life," -in this he is the official type. Melchizedec is indeed the only individual mentioned in the Scriptures, as one whose own person qualifies him for office, And in this respect how apt a type is he of Jesus.

With this general opening, let us meditate on the contrasts presented to us in the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews; that we may be able to draw the character of the worship from the order of the priesthood.

Most prominently do we here find the Person of the Priest set before us -"the Son of God" (Heb. 7:3), in contrast with every office-bearing person. This might have been enough; but there are contrasts immediately resulting from the Person of the Priest, which must also be noticed. After the order of Aaron, they were men that die; but after the order of Melchizedec, it is He that liveth -liveth because He is the Son -because He has life in Himself. True, He has laid it down and taken it again, that He might enter on His priesthood, having first by Himself purged our sins.

Again. The order of Aaron was continued by succession. It was necessarily so. Aaron was a man in the flesh, and provision was made in case of his death for his son, that should minister in his stead; as it is written, "And the priest whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments" (Lev. 16:32).

This was the "carnal commandment, " by which the priesthood of the Aaronic order was to be perpetuated. Succession is the only mode which man knows of perpetuating anything; this is necessary human order. The king cannot die, we are told. Why? Because his last breath is the placing his successor on the throne; so that the functions of royalty may never for a moment be suspended. Succession is necessarily after the law of a carnal commandment. We need not wonder, therefore, that men should have turned back to this order, as being that which is most natural and human. But God has made other provision for His Church; His Church knows no successional priesthood. The Son is made Priest, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. It is still what He is in Himself that gives the character to His priesthood. And that which is characteristic of this priesthood is equally so of the whole order of priesthood in the Church -it is unsuccessional. The Church's position in this dispensation is in life and in power. There is no room for a carnal commandment in the matter of priesthood or worship either, because Christ's Priesthood in heaven is perpetuated in Himself. No one succeeds to Him there; He is "a High Priest forever"; and none is needed to succeed the Holy Ghost in the Church on earth; "he shall abide with you forever" {John 14:16}. If man were to succeed man as the head of authority in the Church, a carnal commandment is necessitated -the order cannot be maintained without it. And this is what man has introduced into the Church; this putting the Church under human headship and carnally appointed authority. But how awful is this, when God's order for His Church is the presence of the Holy Ghost dispensing gifts according to His will. Where, under this divine order, is there room for a carnal commandment?

I no longer marvel at the strength of the language of the preceding chapter, relative to the certain consequences of turning back from the proper order and hope of the Church. It must be subversive of the whole order of the dispensation. It must be virtually putting Jesus out of His priesthood, crucifying Him afresh, and putting Him to an open shame Once admit succession, and, as a necessary consequence, union with Jesus {union with Christ} in the power of an endless life is denied; for such union must be utterly incompatible with the law of a carnal commandment.

And let the contrast be distinctly marked; it is not after the law of an endless life, but after the power of an endless life. The kingdom of God is in power; the Spirit we have received is the Spirit of power; the peril against which we are warned is the form of godliness, but the denial of its power. It is not now form against form, carnal order against carnal order, place against place; but it is power, that is life, against everything.

"We

Such are the Israel of God,□ who have power with God and man, and prevail.

But to pursue the contrast. The priests after the order of Aaron were called indeed of God; but Jesus was constituted by an oath.

The Lord sware and will not repent, thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melehizedec {Heb. 7:21}.

The priesthood in Israel under the law, like all with which it was connected, stood on the ground of the competence of the priests to maintain their place in faithfulness to God. It was based upon a carnal commandment -it was conditional. The word of the Lord to Eli was, "I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me forever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honor me I will honor, and those that despise me shall be lightly esteemed" {1 Sam. 2:30}.

And the oath to Eli was an oath of irreversible judgment on his house (1 Sam. 3:14). And this setting aside of the house of Eli was to raise up a faithful Priest (1 Sam. 2:35; Heb. 2:17), to do according to all that was in the heart and mind of God, even the Priest who is made with an oath.

And how blessedly in keeping is the New Covenant {Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8} with this new order of priesthood. It is a covenant of promise, of promise made sure by God's having engaged His own power to render it effectual; and, therefore, to show the immutability of His counsel, He has confirmed it with an oath. (Heb. 6:17). The New Covenant, therefore, belongs to the Melchizedec priesthood, and both are with an oath. And it is here written, "And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made Priest... by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better covenant" {Heb. 7:22}.

Once more; although it has been somewhat anticipated. Under the order of Aaron there were "many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death" {Heb. 7:23}.

The high priesthood passed from one to another; there was succession. God in judgment had indeed set aside one family of Aaron, and brought in another; still there was a succession of men through whom the high priesthood descended. This alone was enough to destroy all dependence on that priesthood; for though there might be a merciful and faithful priest, still he would die, and he might be succeeded by one who would make the offering of the Lord to be abhorred, as did Eli's sons, using their office for exaction of their dues, and more than dues, but not aiding the worshiper. This must always attend the connection of office with a succession of men appointed after a carnal commandment.

"But Jesus, because he continueth ever, hath a priesthood that passeth not from one to another. Wherefore he is able to save to the uttermost [i.e., from the beginning of their career unto the end] those who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" {Heb. 7:23, 24}

This necessarily, and most simply, perpetuates the perfectness of High Priesthood after the order of Melchisedec; one divinely perfect is for evermore consecrated thereunto.

How marked is it, that in everything which came under the law of a carnal commandment, there wanted perpetuity; it was so, whether we look at the persons, the sacrifice, or the intercession. But now that there is perpetuity in the Person, the like character attaches to the priesthood, the sacrifice, and the intercession.

Surely, the priesthood being changed, there must of necessity be a change in the whole law and order of worship. To go back to the old pattern now, what is it but virtually to deny the personal glory of the Son, as giving efficacy to His work and office? It is, as has been before noticed, to tread under foot the Son of God. It must necessarily transfer the thought from His order of priesthood to another order. It must introduce human copies of patterns and shadows once given by God, claiming for such things the value due only to the heavenly things themselves. It must sink the place of worship from heaven to earth. It must consecrate that which God has left out as profane {i.e., common}. It must establish form, instead of leaving room for power: producing uniformity, to which the flesh can bend, but to the utter denial of unity in the Spirit, of which the flesh must be ignorant.

Let us then most seriously consider what Christian worship really is. Whether we look at our own standing or at the change which has taken place in priesthood, there is necessitated an entire change in the order of worship. We have seen Aaron's priesthood adapted to the law, and Christ's to the new covenant. Aaron's priesthood was intercessional, so also is Christ's. The Church is alone sustained by the constant intercession of Christ. It is what our necessities require, beautifully and graciously adapted to them. But while this is most blessedly true, is there not another and very different sense in which it is said, "such an High Priest became us." The intercession of the Great High Priest for us is only for us while the Church needs it, -it has, so far as the Church is in question, a termination, and it may well be said to be an Aaronic service carried on after the Melchizedec order. But if we take a larger thought of the priesthood of Jesus, comprehending His Person and the whole Melchizedec order, do we not find His priesthood adapted to us, not only because of our infirmities and necessities, but likewise because of that high standing which we by His grace have received -that we might hold fast our profession?

Surely when the Church needs not a priesthood of intercession, as it will not in glory, it will enjoy all the peculiar privileges proper to the Melchizedec order -a constant reciprocation of blessing and praise. But our standing is really as high now as then -"now are we the sons of God"; and the saints are now to know the High Priest suitable to their greatness. We are "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling {Heb. 3:1}. To such Aaron's priesthood is not suitable. "For such an High Priest became us." What is it that has constituted us holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling?

Surely these two things -that the Son has by Himself purged our sins {Heb. 1:3}, and that He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren {Heb. 2:11}. If there is not the same life in them as in Himself, He could not call them brethren. "Because I live," says He, "ye shall live also" {John 14:19}. Is He anointed with the Holy Ghost {Acts 10:38}? They too, in virtue of having been cleansed by His blood, and united with Him as risen, are anointed with the same. He indeed above His fellows, but they with the same blessed Spirit; for he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit {1 Cor. 6:17}. Now the High Priest suitable to such a standing as this must not only be holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, but also "made higher than the heavens."

The old order would necessarily keep the holy brethren out of the holy place, making those who are partakers of the heavenly calling mere earthly worshipers. And is not this a present fact? Worship should so elevate the soul of the worshiper that nothing should be known between him and God, save the Great High Priest; but instead of this the ritual to which many saints are subjected causes them to bow the head like a bulrush.

But to proceed. Such an High Priest became us, "who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath which was since the law -the Son, who is consecrated for evermore" {Heb. 7:28}.

How unlike Aaron is Jesus our Great High Priest! All His present priestly ministration is based upon the one accomplished sacrifice of himself. This entirely affects the order of worship, and changes it; for our worship is just as truly based upon the already accomplished sacrifice as is His Priesthood. It is our starting-point as worshipers. We are only in the profane place, if we approach not God on the ground of our sins having been forever purged by Jesus; we cannot avail ourselves of His priesthood until this be acknowledged. The Great Priesthood is alone suitable for those who have come to God through Him. Into what an elevated place then has that one sacrifice brought us! No place under heaven is suitable for His ministry or our worship. Both are properly heavenly. Worship therefore should ever lift us up to where Jesus is -the Great High Priest who is passed into the heavens. Aaron was called of God to his priesthood in the tabernacle made with hands, but Jesus has been called of God to His priesthood in the heavens, the true tabernacle, and we are made partakers of the heavenly calling. The dignity of His Person, the groundwork of His priestly ministry, and the place of its exercise, all alike proclaim the necessity of a change in the law and order of worship. The law with its ritual and worship all hang consistently together, but it made nothing perfect -it bore on its front plain

marks of infirmity. There is great strength of contrast in the last verse; it is not merely men contrasted with the Son, but men having infirmity. And so the word of the oath has its priesthood and order in beautiful harmony; but to attempt to blend the two, as the Church has done and is doing, is to introduce the worst confusion. {The Lord} Jesus has not His honor, and the saints have not their privilege.

Let us remember that under the Levitical priesthood there was no provision made for any, either priest or people, to follow Aaron within the veil. Aaron in this respect had no fellows {i.e., companions}. Now the Son also takes this place of Aaron's. He has no fellows in any of His sacrificial work, or in offering the incense. But He has fellows within the place of His ministry. Under the Levitical priesthood there was no fellowship even as to place between the people and the priests; they worshiped in distinct places: but now all is changed, for that order is now introduced of which it is said, "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." We are one in life, and therefore, identified as to position with Christ Jesus. He can say in heaven itself, "Behold I and the children which God hath given me" {Heb. 2:13}. There was indeed the great principle of representation in the Levitical priesthood, -Aaron bore the names of the tribes of Israel on his shoulders and on his heart,-but there was not the truth of union. There could not be; or even on the supposition that there could have been, what would it have availed -union with a man having infirmity. But now that we have such an High Priest as the Son, in the power of an endless life; and that He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; to have such an one not only as our representative, but as Him with whom we are united, what an entire change must this effect as to the whole order of worship.

Aaron bore the names of the tribes as something apart from himself, but our High Priest as completely identified with Himself. How far all typical representation falls short of the reality! Just as in the sacrifices, one might see the innocent suffering for the guilty; but the reality -the Holy Lamb of God suffering for sin, feeling the shame of it as His own, and enduring the wrath of God -was incapable of being represented. So there might be some faint shadow of identity between the priest and the people; but the reality of living union with the Son was incapable of being typically expressed. It is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus {Rom. 8:2} which is now the great order of God. It is not only through Him that we come, but now in Christ Jesus ye who were far off are brought nigh by the blood of Jesus. There is now therefore the anointed High Priest, even Jesus, but He has fellows anointed also; those who worship through Him are not the people who stand without {i.e., outside}, but priests sanctified for the immediate presence of God. The law of worship now is entirely priestly. "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" {Heb. 13:15}. Can we find language so suitable to describe the danger of returning to ordinances, or the setting up again a priesthood on the earth between the Great High Priest and His fellows, as that found in the sixth and tenth chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews? May not these passages well make the ear that hears them in these our days to tingle? And can we find any occupation so blessed, while journeying through the wilderness, -any so fitted to raise our souls out of the dust, and make us tread in spirit the heavenly courts, -as to consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus?

Holy brethren, does it appear to you that this paper is not strictly on the subject of worship? You will find it only so in appearance; for our power of real acceptable worship is in allowing nothing to come in between our souls and our Great High Priest. It is what He is, not what we are, that we have to consider. Are we ever so truly exalted as when magnifying Him? Is it not most practically true in this sense also, that he who humbles himself shall be exalted?

Jewish Bondage and Christian Freedom: Jewish and Christian Worship, Minister of the Sanctuary, A (8:1-3)

It is profitable to seek to place ourselves in the circumstances of those to whom the New Testament scriptures were immediately addressed. Not that the same scriptures are not immediately applicable to ourselves; they are so because applying to that which is essential and characteristic; but by placing ourselves among those first addressed, we shall the better discern the way in which the Holy Ghost regards and uses the circumstances of the saints in communicating truth unto them. Indeed when circumstances are thus duly regarded, we shall find perspicuity given to many statements which otherwise might be general or vague; and this will be found especially the case, when any direct contrast with the habit of thought and tone of feeling of those addressed is intended.

A Hebrew under the law moved in a religious atmosphere. From his childhood he had been accustomed to look with veneration on the goodly buildings of the temple. He was instructed concerning sacrifice and incense. He was brought up to revere the consecrated priesthood. The priest in his consecrated garments, coming forth to bless the worshiping people, must have been an impressive though familiar object to him. He must necessarily have attached the most solemn importance to the unseen work of that priest within the holy place.

Now suppose such an one as this, taught of God, and so receiving His testimony concerning Christ; -he believes on {the Lord} Jesus, owning him as the Son of God, the Christ of God, and the Lamb of God. He finds peace in his soul unknown before; and he has confidence with God through Jesus Christ, by whom he has now received the reconciliation {2 Cor. 5:18, 19}.

We know that thousands of Hebrews were thus brought into light and peace through faith in Jesus; to such was the Epistle to the Hebrews primarily addressed.

But how would such believers stand in relation to their former associations? Having personal peace of conscience through the blood of Jesus, would they continue worshipers according to the order of that economy in which they had been brought up? No. That which gave them peace would destroy every old association. Having learned the preciousness of the blood, by finding through it remission {i.e., forgiveness} of sins, they would have to learn it as equally precious, because by it they were redeemed from the "vain conversation {i.e., manner of life} received by tradition from their fathers" {1 Peter 1:18}. They would have access as worshipers to heaven itself -and that too as a holy priesthood, there to "worship the Father in spirit and in truth" {John 4:23}.

The consequence must be that in the city of solemnities itself {i.e., Jerusalem} such an one finds himself in the wilderness. He can no longer have fellowship with the multitude who keep holy-day. His temple and his High Priest are now in heaven; and if he went up to the temple in Jerusalem at the hour of prayer, he there has to testify that Israel are blindly groping amidst the shadows {Heb. 8:5}, and that all the promises of God are yea and amen {2 Cor. 1:20} in Him whom they had slain, but whom God had exalted to His own right hand. But though

thus full of heavenly communion and intelligence, such an one would appear to the eyes of those around him as though he had been cut off from Israel; yea, he might actually have been put out of the synagogue (John 16:2). If he would speak of worshiping God, he would have it cast in his teeth that he had neither sanctuary, nor altar, nor sacrifice, nor priest! Hard indeed must it have been to have maintained that he had all these, when apparently he could not point to one of them. Hard indeed to hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope steadfast unto the end {Heb. 3:6}. But with a single eye to JESUS all this was possible. Yea; there ought to have been a confidence and rejoicing in the assertion of what he had found, far superior to all that he had left. All he had left was visible and present indeed -things which were palpable to sense -and all he had found was known only to faith; but still he could say what he had. He could testify that the only value of all that God once established amidst Israel was found in its representing that which he now in substance knew in heaven. And he could therefore say, "Taste and see that the Lord is gracious."

But how strange and irregular must it have appeared to such to assemble for worship without any single visible essential of worship; no prescribed or consecrated place; no sacrifice; no ministering priest. But here came in the profession -that all these they had. "We have," says the apostle, "such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" {Heb. 8:2}.

Throughout this Epistle, the apostle takes most lofty ground. He takes his place as one with us -i.e. one of the Church -and tells out what we have. He will not allow any pretension to interfere with ours. And he seeks to stir us up to the holding fast of our profession. But has there not been sad declension here? We have been false witnesses of the grace of God; as though He had not blessed us already so abundantly that we can, to the glory of His grace, challenge every pretension, and assert our profession to be yet higher. Oh that the Lord would lead our souls consciously to take this standing, that by it we might be able to contradict every pretension of the world and of the flesh, whether religious or otherwise!

"We have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens" {Heb. 4:14}.

"We have an hope as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil" {Heb. 6:19}.

"We have an altar, whereof those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat" {Heb. 13:10).

"And, we have "a minister of the sanctuary" {Heb. 8:2}.

Let us now turn to the consideration. of the Lord Jesus, as this "Minister of the Sanctuary."

The apostle Paul was not a minister of the sanctuary; he worshiped there through the ministry of another. He had as much need of this ministry as any of his converts. He stood on the same level with them, in relation to ministry in the sanctuary. He had indeed a most blessed ministry, in a peculiar sense his own, the ministry of reconciliation among the Gentiles. He had received the reconciliation through Jesus Christ Himself, and by his preaching others likewise received it; he could speak of it as special grace, that he should have been put in the ministry: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious" {1 Tim. 1:13}. But he was not called out from the multitude of believers, as the priest was from the multitude of Israel, to minister for them before the Lord (Heb. 5); though he surely was a chosen vessel to bear the Lord's name to the Gentiles, and though he had a certain place of authority and eminence in the Church itself. But however distinct may have been his ministry, or even ministries, he was one of a common priesthood. He well knew that there were but two ranks in Christian priesthood; the Great High Priest and the priests. He was one of the priests; and therefore, though he could magnify his office as an apostle of the Gentiles {Rom. 11:13}, he could not magnify his priesthood. Hence he writes authoritatively as the apostle, while before the Great High Priest he is but brother among brethren. The great subject of priesthood, which he so largely discusses in the Epistle to the Hebrews, demanded that the apostle should himself take the place of a worshiper; that thus his own peculiar office might sink into nothing before the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus...

The apostle Paul then was a minister of the Gospel to every creature under heaven, and a minister too of Christ's body, the Church, on earth (Col. 1:23-25); but it was not by the intervention of his ministry that any worshiped. The disciples needed his instruction and guidance, and were to know that he had authority; but they were enabled to worship as well in the absence as in the presence of the apostle. He might have led their worship, or he might have followed others in it. His office was lost, so to speak, when they stood together in the attitude of worshipers before the Great High Priest: he might have prayed with the disciples (as Acts 20:36), or they with him (as Acts 21:5). It is indeed most important clearly to distinguish between the common standing of all regenerate persons as priests unto God, and diversities of ministry. Paul and Barnabas were set apart (Acts 13) for a distinct ministry to the Gentiles; but this was not setting them apart as ministers of the sanctuary. They could be ministers of the sanctuary in no other sense than that in which all saints minister there. If they presume to more than this, they must deny either the proper standing of the saints of God, or the alone place of the Son of God. For in the sense of being "ordained for men in things pertaining to God" {Heb. 5:1}, Jesus is the ONLY minister of the sanctuary. It is therefore no light matter to set up such a pretension as that which an ordered priesthood certainly does. It interferes with the prerogative of {the Lord} Jesus. It is a fearful instance therefore of human presumption or ignorance.

The sanctuary in which Jesus ministers is not on earth, as that was in which Aaron ministered, but in heaven itself. Even there He is pre-eminent; "anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows"; but all the redeemed saints of God worship there, through Him, as equal one with another. But it is nevertheless true that God has now a ministry on earth, as well as a ministry in heaven. But these ministries differ most essentially. The ministry on earth goes forth from God to bring sinners to Himself, upon the ground of His manifested love in the gift and sacrifice of His Son. The ministry of the sanctuary is a ministry on behalf of those already brought nigh unto God by the blood of Jesus. In the former there is nothing positively priestly. The minister of the Gospel does nothing for the sinner -for we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord {2 Cor. 4:5} -but he proclaims what the Son of God has done; what God has wrought, and what God declares. On the other hand, the minister of the sanctuary is actually occupied with doing something for the worshiper; for those who have come to God through Jesus, and who have free access into the holiest of all. The minister of the Gospel has to tell sinners of the work of sacrifice; a work done on earth, a finished work, never to be repeated: but the work of the priest is continuous; it is a work on behalf of believers alone; a work for the true worshipers, and which they still need. To confound these ministries is sad confusion indeed. To make the ministry of the Gospel priestly

in its character is to deceive sinners into the thought that they are worshipers; and it is at the same time entirely to obscure the blessed ministry of reconciliation. Nor is that error less dangerous which has confounded the ministry of the Spirit, by gift in the Church, with the true service of the one minister of the sanctuary. It is an awful invasion of His office to suppose that any in the Church are peculiarly priests.

Now if this great truth has been sufficiently cleared, that there may be many ministers of the gospel, and many specially gifted to minister in the Church, but only one minister of the sanctuary, it remains for us to consider the Lord Jesus in this office. And there are three points on which I would rest. 1st. -The minister Himself. 2nd. -The place of His ministry. 3rd. -The character of His service and our special interest in it.

1. "We have such an High Priest." The person of our Great High Priest, and the connection between His person and His office, having been already rested on in a previous paper, I would now say, that this language is in its character boasting. And it is rightly so; for we may glory in the Lord. It is right to challenge any comparison with Him; and to leave who will to draw the conclusion. But this is not all said of Him here: it is added, "who is set down at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens" {Heb. 1:3}. It has been noticed already, that the attitude of sitting down, contrasted with the standing of Aaron, shows that the one has completed the work of sacrifice {Heb. 10:11, 12}, which the other never did. But there is this also to be noticed -the place in which He is seated, "on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens." How every expression of honor and dignity seems to be collected together here. What a seat is this! There is our High Priest seated! And there is this other blessed truth; -He has taken His seat there at the call of God."The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand till I make thy enemies thy footstool" {Psa. 110:1}. Aaron was called of God, but he was never called upon to sit down even in the worldly sanctuary. He was never even spoken with as Moses, face to face by God. He was not up in the Mount with God in the glory as was Moses, he was below with the people. But what a value was stamped by God on the sacrificial work of Christ when He was thus called of Him. The exaltation of Jesus to the seat on which He now sits proves most abundantly the value of the blood He has shed.

How precious that blood must be to God -how perfect its efficacy in His sight! Let us often meditate on the dignity of our High Priest as shown, not only by His person, but also by the seat unto which He has been called of God; remembering that He has taken that seat in consequence of His having "by himself purged our sins" {Heb. 1:3}.

The word here rendered "minister" {Heb. 8:2} is not the word ordinarily applied to the ministry of the Gospel. The apostle Paul does indeed once apply it to himself (Rom. 15) -"the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles"; but in that instance the apostle is not speaking of ordinary Gospel ministry, but of his own special ministry as the apostle of the uncircumcision. This instance therefore only serves to mark the peculiar force of the term. It properly means one who sustains some distinct and onerous office for the public good; and, in some instances, at his own cost: such, for example, as the sheriff □ among ourselves.

The word has been transferred to our language in liturgy; the public service of God. It might therefore be rendered -"as soon as the days of his ministration [liturgy] were accomplished" (Luke 1:23). Zacharias, as a priest, performed divine service for the people.

So it is said of the Lord a little below in this eighth chapter, "but now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry" [liturgy]; more excellent than that of Zacharias or the Jewish priests. He alone performs divine service for others. He does this as the great public minister of the Church in heaven. Any number among the saints might minister and fast before the Lord on earth (Acts 13), but they did not stand in such a relation to God as is involved in performing a service for others which they could not undertake. No saint stands towards God in such a relation to any other saint; -if any assume it, they in this assume the exclusive prerogative of the Son of God.

I believe that our souls are little aware of the deadening effect of looking to any set of men to perform public service for us to God. It must necessarily take away the soul from immediate dependence on the great public minister, and His divine service in heaven. It is not that every one is qualified to lead the public worship of the saints, any more than that every one is qualified to teach the saints or to preach the gospel; but there are none who stand in the same relation to the Church that Zacharias did to the Jews (Luke 1). None who are called to perform service for them, so that if such a person was wanting, the saints could not worship. Let the saints ever remember this, and guard against any intrusion on that office solely belonging to the Great High Priest. Divine service is now performed in heaven by the one Great High Priest, and He is jealous of the intrusion of any into this His office; as He was when Korah and His company intruded into the office of those whom He once ordained to perform divine service on the earth.

Divine service, then, is only performed for us in heaven. We may, i.e. all Christians may, perform it on earth before the Lord, as did they of Antioch (Acts 13). I do not at all doubt the antiquity of liturgies, nor raise any question as to their spirituality; but this I may safely affirm, that not a vestige is there found in the New Testament of an ordered ritual; and that a liturgy could have had no place in the Church, till it had lost the sense of the One who performs divine service in heaven, by going back to the pattern of an earthly priesthood; and how all the systems, with which we now see liturgies connected, show that such declension there has been. That such was the tendency even in the apostles' days, the epistle to the Hebrews abundantly proves. That some had drawn back and neglected the assembling of themselves together is distinctly stated. And as the Spirit of God in this epistle expressly meets such a condition of things, this epistle becomes of peculiar value to the saints in days like the present, when Satan is so plainly working in the same way.

Remember, it is no question between the comparative advantage of one ritual above another; or whether there may not be evangelical truth and spiritual breathing in a liturgy; it is a much more solemn question. It is a question concerning the assumption by men of an office belonging alone to the Son of God. Korah and his company might have intended to adhere ever so strictly to the directions for priestly service; but that was not the question; it was one of personal intrusion into an office unto which God had not called them. Indeed, they perished with censers and incense in their hands; the controversy of God was with them. And just so is it of all false assumption of office in the Church. It is not a question of what may or may not be done in the office; it is the intrusion into it which is so fearful a sin; for is not reproach cast upon the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven -is He not trodden under foot, if the thought is allowed of the necessity of any one person, or any order of persons, to perform divine service for us on earth? "WE HAVE" -blessed be His name! -"a minister of the sanctuary" always performing divine service for us above. Be it our soul's joy to know it more and more.

2. We must now glance at the place of His ministry; His "more excellent ministry." "A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" {Heb. 8:2}.

Moses was indeed faithful; he did everything, "as the Lord commanded Moses," unto the most minute detail. Everything was made according to the direction of God; all the vessels of ministry were arranged in the order prescribed.

"And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle, and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle; and Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" {Ex. 40:33, 34}.

This was the tabernacle which man had pitched; beautiful indeed and glorious, yet not the true tabernacle; it was only the shadow of that. And now the shadow is past; as it is said, "a shadow of good things to come, but the body is of Christ" {Heb. 10:1}. But still, do not our minds linger around the earthly shadows, and become occupied with the things made with hands, instead of those which are made without hands?

In the true tabernacle there is no human instrumentality whatever; all is of God. The furniture and the vessels, all so curiously wrought, are now only to be found in the various graces and several offices of the Lord Jesus Christ -"the body is of Christ." And all these are now displayed and exercised in heaven for us; He can stand in the immediate presence of God, there presenting for us His own fitness of excellency. Moses, the servant, could not bear the glory conferred on the tabernacle he had pitched; he was much inferior to that which his own hands had reared; but Christ as a Son is over his own house {Heb. 3:6}, and is Himself its furniture and its glory.

What a solemn lesson are we taught here concerning earthly and human things. Human instrumentality -that which is "made with hands" -"of this building" (creation) -whether respect to place, persons, or things, ever fails, and is all disowned of God. Nothing will stand but that which is "made without hands," i.e., of God. Men may think they honor God by rearing magnificent buildings, and dignifying them with the name of temple, or house of God; but they cannot be the true, because man and not God has founded them. Their device and their order all show them to be of the earth. It is well indeed if the very appearance of our worship here testifies that it is not of the worldly order and pattern. And this will be so, the more we realize that the place of worship is now changed from earth to heaven. There it is that the minister of the sanctuary exercises His most blessed office. The Lord Jesus Christ exercised no such ministry on earth; "for if he were on earth, he should not be a priest" {Heb. 8:4}; and therefore our place of worship must be heaven, because there are no accredited priests of God on earth to offer gifts or to perform divine service (v. 4).

3. And now briefly as to the ministry itself. For the Lord Jesus Christ ministers unto God in the priest's office; ministering for us in it, "we have such an High Priest."

The ministry of Aaron before God was in one of its parts representative; he bore the names of the children of Israel on His shoulders and on His heart, "when he went into the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually." This blessed ministry the Lord Jesus sustains for us. But not occasionally, as Aaron when he went in, but constantly; He appears in the presence of God for us. He ever presents the saints before God as associated with all His own fullness of excellency and glory. And this in the presence of God within the veil, as it is said, "whither the forerunner is for us entered." And again, for Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" {Heb. 9:24}.

How blessed is this: our names written in heaven, not in precious stones, but as "a seal upon his heart, and as a seal upon his arm." In manifesting His own perfectness and glory in the presence of God, Jesus appears for us! The real identification of the Church with Christ was but faintly shadowed by the garments of glory and beauty worn by Aaron.

Then there was also the ministry of incense. This was a most precious ministry, because it was the medium of the worship of the people. But the offering of incense -all variously compounded as it was -was only occasional, and it might be interrupted. The fragrance of it was not perpetually before God. The plague had begun among the people, destructive judgment had come forth, when Moses bid Aaron take "a censer and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense"; all this had to be done before Aaron could run into the congregation and stand between the dead and the living.

"Behold, the plague was begun among the people; and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people and the plague was stayed" (Num. 16).

But now the ministry of incense is perpetual: "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." Hence He is able to save right through, from the beginning to the end. No plague of destructive judgment can come forth against the Church because of this. It is constantly upheld in perfectness by the power of the intercession of Jesus. It is this which ever keeps it in its right place before God, however infirm or erring here.

The blessedness of the ministry of Him who ministers for us in the true tabernacle is, that it is entirely independent of us. It is by Him for us. Our conscious enjoyment of it will depend indeed on our walk, on our humbleness, on our selfjudgment, on many things; but the ministry itself depends alone on our unfailing High Priest. He is a faithful minister, ever performing His functions in a rummer well-pleasing to God; whether our souls are realizing the value of what He is doing or not. Every saint is upheld by the intercession of Jesus even in his most thoughtless mood. Priesthood is part of the work of grace -grace that provides for the putting away our every sin, and aiding our every infirmity, and bearing our every waywardness, in order that we may never be out of the presence of God. Hence, the moment the conscience of a careless saint is reawakened, he may find full and instant access to God, because, though he has failed, the minister of the sanctuary has not. Long before he is alive to his failure, he is debtor to the ministry of Jesus for having been kept from falling. Little did Simon think of the sifting power of Satan, but the Lord, who had prayed that his faith might not fail, could point out to him his danger. And so with us oftentimes We see our failures, or the might and craft of our enemies, and then how precious is the thought that the intercession of Jesus for us has been over all. We are led to value the intercession of Jesus -after failure or danger is discovered -as surely Peter was; but its real value is, that it is perpetually offered, and perpetually prevalent. However we may fail, therefore, the resources of faith can never fail; for faith reaches out to God, and God's provisions of grace in Jesus, over every failure. If there be one deeper anguish of soul than another, it surely must be for a saint to become conscious of sin, but to be without faith to look to God's gracious provision to meet it; but {the Lord} Jesus prays that our faith may not fail.

We are apt to regard the intercession of Christ only as occasionally exercised on our behalf, and, exercised because we have applied to it; yea, we know that men have gone so far as to make it appear that the intercession of Jesus was only to be called out by a secondary intercession of others, such as the Virgin, or departed saints, or the Church. But how false is all this! No; His ministry is marked by the same grace now as when on earth. "I have prayed for thee" was His word to Simon Peter. And so when He saw the multitudes fainting, He well knew what He would do, and do without being asked. And so now, His intercession is of the same grace; it is according to His own divine and gracious estimate of our many needs. He knows how, in our practical danger, weakness, and foolishness, we look in the eye of God, and He ever makes intercession for us accordingly; maintaining us thus in His own fragrant perfectness. In the challenge of the apostle as to where a charge can be brought against God's elect, he winds up all with this, as though he could go no higher, "who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" {Rom. 8:34}.

In another aspect the present ministry of {the Lord} Jesus is one of offering; as it is said "wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer" {Heb. 8:3}. Or, as it is subsequently said, "in which were offered gifts that could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience" {Heb. 9:9}.

Under the law, the worshiper might bring his offering to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, but then the priestly ministration began. The priest must lay it on the altar, where alone it could be accepted of the Lord. The worshiper himself could not offer immediately to the Lord. It was only through the priestly ministration that it was an offering made by fire, a sweet savor unto the Lord. But now it is by the offering of Jesus Himself, once for all, that we are sanctified as worshipers. Jesus gave Himself an offering and a sacrifice unto God of a sweet-smelling savor; and now whatever comes up to God through Him has the value of His own offering attached to it, and is of a sweet-smelling savor also. Thus God perpetually attests His own value of the offering of Jesus; even by accepting as precious, through Him, all done or offered in His name To ask in the name of Jesus is therefore of unfailing efficacy, because God is always well-pleased in Him. We know, as priests, the divine estimate of Him through whom we draw near to offer. What a comfort then it is to be assured that our persons, our prayers, our thanksgivings, and our services, have all of them, before God, the sweet savor of the name of Jesus set upon them. Everything we desire or do, as having the Spirit of Christ Jesus, however mingled, or however feeble, is thus accepted for Jesus' sake.

And remember He is a perpetual offerer, as well as a perpetual interceder. He Himself says of those who know not God in him and through him, "Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips" {Pisa. 16:4}.

But to us, because of this His ministry for us, the word is, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks [making confession] in his name" (Heb. 13:15}.

It was the priest alone who knew how to appropriate the sacrifice; he only knew what was for God, what for himself, what for the worshiper, and what was refuse. It is indeed most blessed for us that there is a minister for us which separates the precious from the vile; and which orders all according to God. Our Great High Priest thus ministers for us. He takes up that which seems to us so clogged with infirmity and so mingled with impurity, that we can discern no preciousness in it; and, separating the precious from the vile, He offers what is really of the Spirit in the full value of His own offering. If any soul is awakened to the desire of serving the Lord, what sorrow have they found in having to learn the wretched imperfectness of all that which they attempt. But if thus we are oftentimes dispirited and ready to grow weary in well-doing, let us remember this present ministration of Jesus for us; such should know its value, for their labor is not in vain in the Lord. How will "Well done, good and faithful servant," glad-

den the heart of many by and by, who here have only deplored their constant failures. Think you, dear brethren, that the Philippians thought their trifling remembrance of the apostle Paul would have found its way before God as an offering made by fire of a sweet-smelling savor unto God? But it did. The apostle, in communion with the Great High Priest, could see Him take it up and present it in His own name (Phil. 4:18). Thus they were producing fruit, through Jesus {Christ}, precious unto God; even as just before the apostle had said to them, "being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God" (Phil. 1:11).

Yes, let the saints as priests judge themselves and their works, and if they find, as they assuredly will find, but little of the precious, let them know the one who judges above, and who delights to take out the precious and present it to God in His own perfectness. Oh! if it were not for this ministry on high, how could we read the word, "To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

A High Priest of Good Things to Come, High Priest of Good Things to Come - 2, A (9:11-28)

Now, mark the contrast to all this. “But Christ, being come a High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in ONCE into the holies, having obtained eternal redemption.”

The Holy Ghost evidently delights to glorify the Lord Jesus. Others might have been anointed, but He is THE Christ—the Anointed One. That appellation belongs to the Son, as it belongs to no other. It is “Christ,” then, who is now present1 in his own place of ministry, as, “the High Priest of good things to come.” To enter into His place of ministry, He has passed through a far greater and more perfect tabernacle than that through which Aaron passed into his peculiar place of service. Christ has passed through the heavens. Man’s hands were not employed to make these; they are the handy-work of God Himself. Christ is gone into heaven itself; there, in the immediate presence of God, He appears for us. On earth He was not a priest; no tabernacle ever existed on earth suited to so great a High Priest as Jesus the Son of God. Man’s hands may not rear a place of ministry for this High Priest. His person and His sacrifice demand a sphere of ministry suited to their value, and hence His tabernacle is “not of this creation.” The attempt to honor Him with costly things made with hands is to forget the dignity of our High Priest, and the heavenly order of His priesthood.

Let us remember that He has passed through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not in His own individual right as divine and as perfect, but as a priest in connection with others. Had He entered simply in His own right, He might have demanded entrance, saying, “Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.” But He entered by His own blood, for He passed through as a priest. Aaron, on the great day of atonement, passed through the court and the holy place into the holiest with the basin of blood in his hands: this was the title on which he entered there—even the blood of the sin-offering. Aaron was taught that in this blood there was atonement for the sins of the people for the past year. Now Christ also entered through blood into the true tabernacle; but what says the Holy Ghost of Him whom He delights to honor? “Neither by the blood of bulls and goats, but by His own blood.” The blood of balls was suited to the tabernacle “of this building;” but such blood never could give title to worship in the tabernacle “not made with hands:” the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God, is required for that, and He himself also, as high priest, to carry it in. How constantly do we find that our highest blessings rest on the simplest truths! Our happy liberty of worship as saints, and our nearness unto God forever, hinge on the value before God of the blood of His Son. If we keep at a distance from God, if our consciences are unpurged in His presence, it is because we underrate the value of that blood, or forget what its once-offering has accomplished.

It is not to be wondered at that men should be ready to turn back to sanctification by ordinances; the flesh would, as it were, naturally cling to any order of things which seemed in any wise to sanction and to sanctify it. A system for the purification of the flesh would be tenaciously retained by the flesh. But God has no such system now. He has tried man under it, and, his utter ruin having been there proved, He has forever set the flesh aside. Its claims and efforts spring therefore from its ignorance of itself, and of God’s ways concerning it. God now has provided not for the flesh but for the conscience. He has no ordinance now by which the flesh may draw, in any degree, nigh: all these ordinances are gone forever; but He has given His own Son to bring in eternal redemption, and to give present peace and confidence in His presence. Hence God’s grand object now is to glorify Jesus. He presents Him to us as the One in whom we shall find everything we need. And hence Christ must be all or nothing. He must be exalted, and man abased; for if man is set up, Christ has died in vain.

There is not only great power, but also great comprehensiveness in that word ONCE. It shows us that the offering of Jesus once comprised the fulfillment of all the typical sacrifices. Not only that His one sacrifice does this; but that the once offering of that one sacrifice did it. This is often forgotten, and hence many souls lack peace. They trust only the one sacrifice, and so have salvation; but they do not clearly see the effectual power its once offering had to “perfect forever them that are sanctified,” and so have not peace. It is very humbling and very sorrowful that it should be so, because this is the especial testimony of God concerning that once-offered sacrifice; but so it is, nevertheless. Gradual declension in the church opened the door for this practical unbelief, and bad teaching perpetuates it.

But let the saints of God remember, that as surely as there is but one Lamb of God, so surely the Lamb can be but once offered; and that, this one sacrifice having been once offered, “there remaineth no more offering for sin.”

Aaron, then, had to make many offerings; but Christ, by His once offering of Himself, has put away sin. He has consequently no more priestly work to do as the offerer of sacrifice for sin. To say that He has is to say that He has the cross to go through again as the victim, and that He has again to enter into the holiest by His own blood. And this would instantly nullify God’s testimony as to the preciousness of that blood, and the work it has already done. For, I must repeat, His testimony is not merely that Christ’s blood alone cleanses from sin, but that the once shedding of that blood has so entirely put away sin, that God now says to all who believe therein, “your sins and iniquities I will remember no more.”

That the one and once-offered sacrifice of Christ did, because of the preciousness of His blood, fulfill all the typical sacrifices, is indeed plainly seen in verse 14 of this chapter; for we here have that He is set as the fulfillment, not only of the type of the blood offered on the day of atonement, but also as the fulfillment of the ashes of the red heifer. The law had its numberless forms of purification of the flesh, but all these combine to enhance the value of Christ’s blood as once shed and once carried in by Him to God. By that one shedding, and one presentation, we have had accomplished for our consciences forever, what any or all the shadows effected for the flesh for a time. “If,” says the Holy Ghost, “the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, Who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

What a ransom, then, has Christ found! By that blood which He once shed on the cross, He has put away sin: that blood He has once, and once for all, carried into the true holiest. And must He repeat His work, as did Aaron, as though that blood had, after a little while, lost its efficacy? No. When He comes out again, it will not be to continue or repeat any work for sin, but “unto salvation.” He has found eternal redemption, and has entered into the presence of God as a consequence of His having done so. What a blessed alteration in the statute! What Aaron did every year for Israel, and yet never did effectually, Christ has done once for all for us. The saints of God, therefore, stand on the ground of accomplished purification. Just as truly as the ordinances of old did bring a people in the flesh into a certain kind of purification before God, so truly, yea, “much more” so, has that one sacrifice of Christ brought all who believe into the unspeakable and eternal blessing of having “no more conscience of sins.” They may realize this, or they may not; but this is what Christ has obtained for them by His one offering.

And just, therefore, as it would have been sinful unbelief for an Israelite of old who had touched a dead body, to doubt that the uncleanness was gone when the ordinance of the sprinkled ashes had been observed by him, so is it nothing else than sinful unbelief, for one of God’s children now to doubt, that all his sin and guilt has been forever atoned for and put away by the once offered sacrifice of Christ. Full faith in that sacrifice banishes conscience of sins. God delights in having provided this for us. He would have us serve Him in freedom, not in bondage. He never took pleasure in any sacrifice for sins until one was offered which put sins away forever, and gave to the consciences of His worshippers peace in His presence.

In that holy presence, therefore, we stand realizing the everlasting results of Christ’s great day of atonement. The question of sin has been met by Him on our behalf—met and settled forever; and, having put it away, He is now unto us the blessed minister of unmingled and eternal blessing. Christ’s present position, and our present blessings, are thus alike the consequences of our sins having been purged. Can anything be more blessed than this! That we should, through faith, have already entered on our everlasting nearness to God, and are now privileged to know the peace proper to the heavenly sanctuary! The true tabernacle is free to us—as free now as it will be when we stand personally

amidst its glories. We belong to that priestly family anointed for its holies; not limited to a holy place, nor serving before a veiled mercy-seat, nor having brief access into the holiest, but made meet for heaven itself, and worshipping with pare consciences in the immediate presence of God!

And do we prize as we should this blessing of a purged conscience? Do we discern the peculiar grace marking its bestowment? It was entirely unknown to worshippers under the law; not only unknown to the congregation who worshipped without, but equally so to the priests who served within. That first tabernacle must ever have been a house of bondage to conscience. Conscience can never be purged by what fails to bring nigh unto God. As long as full reconciliation was not known—as long as sin was found more effectual to exclude from God, than sacrifice for sin was to bring nigh to God—so long conscience could have known no purification. And not only people but priests, yea, not only priests but even the high priest, must have had sin, not salvation, brought to remembrance by their constantly recurring sacrifices. Expiation, full and entire expiation, there was not; for had there been, the demand for expiation would have ceased. This thought must have continually forced itself on all worshipping under the shadows; and in proportion as conscience was tender and exercised, so would it be sensible of its unpurgedness. Such might fully understand that the flesh was purified for admission into that tabernacle by the appointed blood of bulls and of goats, while at the same time their consciences might be carrying a load of guilt, for which, in such blood, they found no remedy. But now it is not merely the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. A purged conscience is, therefore, the distinctive blessing of the saints in this dispensation. A saint who has it not has forgotten, or (it may be through carelessness) has lost what became his, when, by faith, he passed beneath the blood-sprinkled lintel. “No more conscience of sins” is one of the very first good things bestowed on us by our blessed High Priest; and God has provided through Him for its maintenance; for if that be not maintained, God well knows that we cannot worship Him in spirit and in truth. It is the everlasting efficacy of Christ’s own blood, once carried in by Himself unto God, which secures this. All we need in order to its constant enjoyment is simple faith in that presented blood.

But though all we need in order to a purged conscience is simple faith in what Christ’s blood has effected, we are to exercise ourselves to maintain a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man; and the saint of God, who, walking in the Spirit, seeks to maintain this good conscience, will be the most sensible of his many defects and failures, and so will most realize the blessedness of the purged conscience provided for him by the blood of Jesus. Such a saint will be quick of sense to detect defilement; he will feel a soil that others are insensible to. Everything around us is tainted with death. Nature itself is defiled. The very charities of life have power to defile and deaden the soul. And to all this the Holy Ghost, Who dwelleth in us, seeks to make us sensitive. If, therefore, there was not this ever effective provision for purgedness of conscience, the saint walking most in the Spirit would be bowing his head like a bulrush, and in terror before God, because conscious of so many defilements; though to others all would appear so fair and so devoted. Blessed indeed, therefore, to such is the High Priest of good things to come. Blessed lessons, both concerning holiness and concerning sin, does His work for them enable them to learn; for all that they are learning of the purity of God, and of the more subtle and refined deceitfulness of their own hearts, only serves to prove to them the necessity, and to confirm to them the value, of that blood by which they are redeemed and sanctified unto God. These are lessons of which the careless or unexercised soul is ignorant.

Let it be remembered, therefore, that every type of cleansing finds its fulfillment in the death and resurrection of Christ. It is not the work of the Spirit to purify, but to testify to the blood of Christ as purifying. The Holy Ghost comes to the saints as the witness of their cleanness, not as the producer of it. That Christ has already and forever effected that, is the burden of the Spirit’s testimony to conscience: in this the Holy Ghost delights to declare the honor of Jesus. Just, therefore, as we simply receive His testimony, will our consciences be really purged.

I would add that it is not to the great and blessed doctrines of election and the like, or to the unfailingness of God’s purposes, that the Holy Ghost specifically points the conscience in order to its purging, but expressly to God’s estimate of the blood of Christ. For other precious purposes He does discourse to the saints on those blessed doctrines; but for the especial purpose of giving and of maintaining a purged conscience, He invariably directs the soul to Christ’s blood, as provided by God’s infinite love for that very end.

The present portion, therefore, of the saints is to be ever in the true tabernacle, and to be there with a purged conscience. He is never an outside worshipper, nor an uncleansed one. Man’s best efforts at worship only keep him at a distance from the living God: ordinances, however precious in their place, have the like tendency, just as they are, used to bring nigh. This accounts for the ceaseless and restless labor of those who trust to them; for they heap burdens on conscience in the vain effort to relieve it, and entangle themselves but the more in the trammels from which they straggle to be free. It is the blood of Christ alone which frees from every fetter, and gives, at the same moment, liberty and an everlasting home in the happy presence of God.

Here, then, we have two marvelous blessings connected with the priesthood of Christ: the first, access into the true holies, and abiding there as our ordinary place of worship; the other, perpetual purification of conscience through the blood of Jesus, even on the mercy-seat itself. It is on these two established privileges of the household of faith that our worship depends.

But there are other of the good things to come, made present to us through the priesthood of Jesus, mentioned in this chapter. For example: we have a house of worship everlastingly purified. Atonement was made of old for the holy sanctuary, and for the tabernacle of the congregation, as well as for the priests; and we are here told that, as it was necessary that those patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with the then appointed sacrifice, so was it necessary that the heavenly things themselves should be purified with better sacrifices than those; “for Christ is not entered into holies made with hand, which are figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

Now it is His having gone to appear for us there, which has rendered this purification of the heavenlies necessary. God is not only jealous of His own personal holiness, and so provides for the personal cleanness of those whom He brings into His presence; but He is also jealous of the purity of heaven, His dwelling place; and hence heaven also is purified by blood, that the entrance of sinners into it may in no wise defile it. And it greatly assures the priestly worshippers to find that they themselves are purified by that same blood, which thus preserves the purity of God’s own dwelling-place and throne. One purification avails for all—God’s throne, God’s temple, God’s High Priest, and God’s priests! For can we really think of heaven itself being our proper place of worship, without fearing that we may carry defilement into it? Do we not feel that we should tarnish and soil those pure and heavenly courts? Well, God has met this fear too’: the true holies cannot be defiled, for they have been purified forever by the blood of Jesus. Thus has God prepared us for His presence, and His presence for us. All is done. Every

plea that unbelief can put forth, for shrinking into the darkness which it loves, is disposed of forever by this all-effectual blood!

“Having therefore, brethren, liberty to enter into the holies by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He dedicated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and (having) a great 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!” J. L. H.

(Concluded from page 95.)

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Jewish Bondage and Christian Freedom: Jewish and Christian Worship, Worldly Sanctuary, A (9:1)

We are often in danger of coming short of the truth of God, by attaching to the words of Scripture the technical meaning which they may have in the theology of our own days. The words "carnal, " "flesh, " "world," and "worldly," are known to us as expressive of that which is corrupt in itself, and which is disowned of God. But if we do not see that God has had long patience both with the flesh and the world, dealing with them both in a way of probation, previously to His finally giving them up, we shall fall greatly short in apprehending the truth of God. And not only so, but we shall also fail to perceive, that every effort which man is making now is but the repetition of that which has been previously attempted under far more favorable circumstances, and which has issued in lamentable failure.

"Is it not of the Lord of hosts that the people shall labor in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity" {Hab. 2:13}.

Let us, then, remember that the time was when God said to the children of Israel, "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" {Ex. 25:8}. This was "a worldly sanctuary. " A sanctuary suited for God's dwelling-place in the world, and suitable also for the worship of a people of the world. God had constituted Israel to be His worldly {i.e., earthly} people. He had fenced them off from the nations round about them by statutes, and judgments, and ordinances; and He had prescribed likewise "ordinances of divine service" adapted to their sanctuary and to their standing. All here was consistent -all was worldly {i.e., earthly}. Worldly worship, therefore, was then a holy thing in itself; for God had then appointed it. And it would be so now also, if God had a worldly people and a worldly sanctuary; but seeing He now has neither the one nor the other, the attempt to approach God, even by ordinances of divine service which He Himself originally prescribed, is most sinful.

"He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that offereth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not" {Isa. 66:3, 4}.

This is a solemn word. The very act, which was once a religious act, acceptable to God, as the killing an ox for a sinoffering or a burnt-offering, is, when God delights not in it—

but man chooses to do it -of moral guilt, it is as murder before God! The incense which God Himself so minutely directed to be compounded, and without which Aaron himself could not appear before the Lord, lest he die; for one to burn that incense is as if he blessed an idol!

Now, if such was God's estimate of His own ordinances of worldly {i.e., earthly} worship, when those to whom they were given used them corruptly and willfullya, what must be the iniquity of introducing an order of things distinctly set aside by God? But has not this been done in the history of the Church, and is it not with renewed zeal being attempted in our own day? Forms and rituals of worship, suited only to a worldly sanctuary and a worldly people, are sanctioned and established on every hand. And this is most fearful sin. The prophet of old was commissioned to rebuke Israel for their corruption and abuse of the worldly sanctuary and its worldly ordinances; but the apostle rebukes the saints of God when tending to turn back to worldly elements. God was dishonored of old by any neglect of the worldly sanctuary; He is dishonored now by any attempt to copy or re-establish it. This enables us to determine the character of things now done in the professing Church. Such things, for example, as an altar on the earth, repeated sacrifice, the burning of incense, the consecrating of buildings and of ground, and of persons also, by outward ceremonial. Such like rites and ceremonies were so early borrowed from the Jewish worldly ritual, and transferred into the Christian Church, as to have become almost universal shortly after the apostles' days. But where is their warrant in the New Testament? Nay, how can any read therein, and not see the introduction of such things prophesied of, and solemnly warned against? How searching, then, is such a word as this—

"I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I spake, they did not hear!" {Isa. 66:4}.

How needful is that recall to the only source of authority found in the word, "He that hath an ear let him hear"; "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches." This marks at once the place from whence our wisdom and guidance must be sought. Not in antiquity, or in the examples of Judaized Churches; but in the unquestioned teaching of the Holy Spirit Himself to the Churches. This leads us away from all whose wisdom or authority can for a moment be questioned; it places the word of God itself before the conscience of every saint. Errors, however ancient, or venerable, or attractive, are thus detected, and the child of faith is forbidden to countenance them. This makes the path of faith at all times sure, though oftentimes very difficult; for nothing can be more sure than the steps of one guided by the Spirit of God and the word of God, and yet nothing more difficult than to have to walk in separation from all that exists around. It is, indeed, difficult to have to wind one's way through things so perplexing and so different as the religious systems of our own day. We have to avoid, on one hand, systems formed in imitation of things past; and on the other, systems more characterized by anticipations of things future. We have to allow that such things were once given by God, and that they will yet again be introduced by Him, while invariably contending that they are positively opposed to His present workings.

There was a worldly sanctuary; -there is yet, in the coming dispensation {i.e., the millennium}, to be a worldly {i.e., earthly} sanctuary {Ezek. 40-48}; but now there is none. Existing systems are variously compounded of things proper to these three distinct periods. Some have drawn most from the past, some from the future, some, it may be, most from the present; but all involve sad confusion in the things of God. How many, who may in some measure have been emancipated from the ordinances of the ancient worldly sanctuary of the past dispensation, do not allow that there is a worldly sanctuary yet to come, have consequently chosen and instituted that in which God delighteth not, as much as others who are professedly imitating the ancient ordinances. Thus, while denouncing worldly elements, they themselves have invested themselves with that which can only properly belong to the worldly part of the dispensation to come. Thus they are involved in the sin of mingling things heavenly and things earthly. And is not all this a work of the flesh? Is it not an admission of worldly principles into the Church of God? Do we not see this in the fond desire for official distinction, dedicated buildings, permanent institutions and ordinances, and attempts to attract worldly repute, so common to the systems around? For all this is not confined to the Church of Rome, or the Protestant establishments of Europe, but, with scarcely less prominence, characterizes the systems of Dissenters also. And surely all these things, under whatever form seen, must be alike offensive to God. We may go back to some ancient institutions of God, or forward to something He intends yet to introduce, or we may assert our own right to worship according to a pattern of our own devising; but in each and all these cases we subject ourselves to that word, "When I spake, they did not hear. "

It is important therefore to show that there yet will be a worldly {i.e., earthly} sanctuary and worldly {i.e., earthly} worship This is very largely revealed in the prophets (Ezek. 40-48). Their subject of hope is the restored nation, restored polity, and restored worship of Israel; but all, when so restored, under and in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ. Now the Christian Church has in a great measure applied these predictions to itself, and hence we have the thought of a Christian nation, instead of the holy nation now to be gathered from out of all nations; hence too the thought of the union of the Church and the State -a thought to be most blessedly fulfilled when Christ as a King and Priest shall sit upon His throne {Zech. 6:13}; -hence too the antedating of the day when the kings of the earth are to bring their glory and honor unto the holy city -hence the constant invitations which are given to the world to contribute its aid and patronage to the work of the Church. All this has secularized Christianity, and given a worldly character to its position and its worship.

In the prophet Isaiah we read, "Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people." That is, God would have an house on earth, a worldly sanctuary, but it should be open to all, it should not be confined to Israel. The Israel of that future day {i.e., the millennium} would have a standing higher than that which belonged to them as the natural seed of Abraham, and in that standing others should be associated with them, even those who were naturally sons of the stranger. Joined to the Lord, these should be brought to His holy mountains and made joyful in His house of prayer. The Lord Jesus, the Master of the heavenly house now, and in due time the builder also of the earthly house and worldly {i.e., earthly} sanctuary, adverts to this Scripture in the sequel of His ministry. Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, "Is it not written, My house shall be called an house of prayer for all nations?" (Mark 11:17).

It never was this in its first standing {under the Mosaic System}. But when it is of another building, then many nations will come and say, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" {Mic. 4:2}.

Here we have most clearly a worldly sanctuary, a metropolitan temple on the earth -the fountain of legislation and instruction for all who fear the Lord. Christians may perhaps think that to establish a cathedral on Mount Zion would be an approximation towards the fulfillment of this word. But if that were done the word would still be, "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me, and where is the place of my rest? For all these things hath mine hand made, and all these things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" {Isa. 66:2}.

Ezekiel in his vision witnessed the departure of the glory of the Lord, first from the house and then from the earth (Ezek. 10; 11); but in the forty-third chapter he says, "And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east... and behold the glory of the Lord filled the house... And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever, and my holy name shall the house of Israel no more defile" {Ezek. 43:7}.

Here again we read of that worldly sanctuary yet to be set up.

But not to multiply quotations, let us only revert to two more, both of which lead us onward from the time of the rebuilding of the temple of Zerubbabel.

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land, and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with my glory, saith the Lord of hosts... The glory of this house shall be greater, the latter than the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts" {Hag. 2:6, 7}.

Here we must note that this worldly sanctuary is set up after the heavens and the earth have been shaken, which, according to the testimony of the apostle in the twelfth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, has not yet taken place.

Again: we read in the prophet Zechariah (ch. 6:12), "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord; even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a Priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

Now all these testimonies, and they might be greatly multiplied, tell us of a worldly sanctuary yet to be set up; but not after the old order. There God will be known as the God of peace, even where the real glory will be, where {the Lord} Jesus will sit as a Priest upon His throne. There will be ordinances of divine service there, and ministering priests, and a worshiping multitude. One of those ordinances is mentioned in the last prophet referred to: "All the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year, to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles" {Zech. 14:16}.

The conclusion therefore from these Scriptures is, that there was a worldly sanctuary suited to a worshiping people in the flesh on the earth -and that there is yet to be a worldly sanctuary in connection with the new covenant, suitable for the true circumcision, the true spiritual seed, on the earth (Isa. 57). But there is no such sanctuary now. Now there is the heavenly sanctuary only. And this is the contrast so carefully drawn by the Holy Spirit in the ninth chapter of the Hebrews.

The first tabernacle in connection with the worldly sanctuary had its place for a while. During its continuance the way into the holiest of all was not yet laid open, nor could there be any purging of the conscience. Now the contrast to this first tabernacle is not a second, set up like that on the earth, and in which the worshipers are to be kept at a distance from the holiest, but one set up by God Himself in heaven, in which those only can enter who are cleansed by the blood of Jesus and anointed with the Holy Spirit; but into which all such do now in spirit enter as alike accepted and equally priests. The first tabernacle is therefore in this chapter looked at in contrast with "the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building," in which the Church now worships.

Such a sanctuary as this heavenly sanctuary alone befits the "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling. " Man, as man, can recognize the propriety of splendid buildings for the worship of God, and he has ever acted accordingly. But the spiritual house has nothing tangible in it. It is not adapted to the world, nor does it present attractions to the flesh. To one who only judged by appearances there might be some ground for the slander, that Christians were Atheists; for there was no visible or imposing attraction in their worship Their worship was in the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands. They did not attempt in their places of assembly to vie with the imposing architecture either of the temple at Jerusalem or the heathen temples around them. They had not then heard of "Christian ecclesiastical architecture," nor was the Church then the patron of the arts. Their temple was not of this building.

And the ministry in the heavenly sanctuary corresponds with all this. It is complete and perfect, because performed by one who is divine and who is beyond the range of this world's cognizance. Christ is entered once into the holiest, having obtained eternal redemption. The eye of man could scan the beautiful proportions of an earthly sanctuary, and mark the service of an earthly priesthood, but faith alone can enter into the heavenly sanctuary or delight in its glories. No one of its beauties or glories is displayed to the senses -it is the soul alone which has learned the preciousness of Jesus which is now able to say, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts." The Lamb is the light and the glory of it. If He be not the object of faith, no wonder that men should again make the sanctuary worldly. But even when God had His worldly sanctuary here, how little of its beauty was displayed to the ordinary worshiper. He saw not the golden sanctuary, nor the cherubim and vessels of gold, -these things were most carefully hidden from his sight. The priests were charged to cover up the vessels of ministry, even from the sight of the Levites, who were to carry them (Num. 4:20). The eyes of the priests alone were to rest on these holy things. Now it is the anti-types of those veiled and precious types with which we have to do. All believers now are priests unto God, and hence now all is open to faith; but open to faith alone. What eye hath not seen, God hath revealed to us by His Spirit {1 Cor. 2}. The Holy Ghost is specially come down from heaven in testimony of what He knows to be there. He could not witness of a heavenly temple and a heavenly priesthood, until the builder and sustainer of the temple, and the perpetual Priest, was in heaven.

All attempts to establish a worldly sanctuary now are therefore in direct opposition to the present testimony of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost by His coming was the conviction of the world's sin in having rejected Jesus, because testifying that God had exalted him; but that blessed Spirit is also, by His very presence in the Church, the conviction of the sin of every attempt now to set up a worldly sanctuary. He has to testify only of a High Priest now ministering in the heavens, "Jesus, the Son of God, who is passed into the heavens," and consequently He can only lead the soul to Him He glorifies. All who worship "in Spirit" must therefore worship in the heavenly sanctuary, for there alone does the Spirit lead.

But man, as man, knows not the Spirit of God; the world cannot receive him (John 14). It is no part of His ministry to guide the flesh into the presence of God, or to teach it to worship. His very presence here is God's most emphatic and solemn testimony of the entire ruin of man, and His utter incompetency for any good thing. Regeneration must therefore precede worship The only true worshipers now are those who are separated unto God through "sanctification of the Spirit" {Pet. 1:2}. These are now, "the holy priesthood," "the royal nation" {1 Peter 2} And it is well for the saints themselves to bear constantly in mind this elementary truth. For it will enable them to test all that assumes to be worship. We may have the senses gratified, the imagination exercised, sentiment and feeling kindled, and we may mistake such things for worship; but they are fleshly things, and when found in saints they sadly grieve the Spirit of God. These are things against which the saints have to watch, and which they have to mortify; but these are the things which must be fostered and gratified by the willful introduction of a worldly sanctuary. What more fearful then than to confound such a work with the present work of the Spirit of God. Is not this to confound darkness with light, flesh with Spirit? The whole order of a worldly sanctuary must hinder the present testimony of the Spirit of God. Now to do despite to the Spirit of grace, to insult the Spirit of God, is indeed fearful sin. But what has the Spirit of grace to do in the worldly sanctuary? There the great points are the service of the ministering priest, and the duties of the suppliant people. Grace is excluded in the whole order. Grace establishes the heart, but the worldly sanctuary leads it back again to meats.

Hence, then, we worship God in the Spirit. Not in sentiment, not in refinement of the imagination, not in fleshly wisdom or in fleshly power, but in the Spirit. And this we are able to do, because the resurrection of Jesus has set aside the order of the flesh and of the world, and introduced us into the heavenly things themselves, and because the Holy Ghost has come to dwell in the Church on earth, from Jesus its Head, exalted in heaven. Any return, therefore, to a worldly sanctuary now must be as insulting to the Holy Spirit, as it is contradictory of the finished work of Jesus.

But consider a moment longer how truly the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of grace. What is His blessed witness to us? Is it not to grace accomplished in glory in heaven? Jesus by His own blood has entered in once into the holy place "having obtained eternal redemption. " This it is which the Holy Ghost has revealed to us. Christ is there -and there "having obtained eternal redemption"; and He "there appears in the presence of God for us. " What need we more than this? Can we not by faith see here the witness of our own present acceptance, and the pledge of our own glory? There then is the scene of our worship; there is our sanctuary -our only sanctuary. And it is into this scene of accomplished and abundant blessedness that the Spirit of God has come to lead our souls. "Set your affection on things above" {Col. 3:2} is His unceasing exhortation to us. May our hearts know more of the peace and glory of that heavenly sanctuary.

And what should be the characteristic of the worship of the heavenly sanctuary? Surely praise; praise for accomplished redemption. And this sacrifice will not be wanting, if our souls realize our heavenly portion. None, indeed, can withhold their tribute of praise, who really worship in that sanctuary. Fullness of joy, and pleasures for evermore, are at God's right hand; and every heart, led of the Spirit there, declares, "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever. " Eternal redemption is the solid basis on which all such joy rests. Eternal redemption found in the perfect work of {the Lord} Jesus, that work which He Himself ever presents on our behalf in heaven. "Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart. "

The worldly sanctuary knew nothing properly of praise. There was no ministry of song prescribed by Moses. He could sing with the children of Israel the song of redemption after passing the Red Sea (Ex. 15); but it was grace which had brought them over; they sung the triumph of grace. The worldly sanctuary had not then been ordered. In it there was nothing ever accomplished, and therefore no ground-work of praise. There was the constant repetition of the same services; the worshiper's conscience was unpurged, and hence he could never raise the voice of praise and thanksgiving. We speak of the tabernacle in the wilderness. But few even of the strains of the sweet Psalmist of Israel were adapted to the temple service -that temple was a worldly {i.e., earthly} sanctuary, and its blessings earthly; but the ministry of song went beyond all this, anticipating the full and accomplished blessing. Faith could sing then, only because reaching beyond the then present sanctuary; but faith sings now because in its present sanctuary it finds the themes of everlasting praises. Grace and glory, deliverance and victory, the wondrous salvation of God Himself, are there the subjects of unceasing praise, for their accomplishment is witnessed by the presence there in glory of our Forerunner Himself.

Can that heart be tuned to praise which is taught its need of a daily absolution from the lips of another? Can such a soul sing, in the Spirit and with the understanding, psalms and hymns and spiritual songs {Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16}}? Can an unpurged conscience praise? Such things are impossible. For is not the very act of worship regarded as a duty required by God, and so rendered under a sense of law, instead of a blessed privilege arising from the perception and enjoyment of mercy from everlasting to everlasting? The apostle teaches us to give "thanks to him who hath made us meet {i.e., fit} for the inheritance of the saints in light (Col. 1). This shows the true ground of thanksgiving and praise to be what grace has accomplished for us in Christ. But if this is not seen and remembered, worship must become a burden instead of our highest privilege. And do we not see that Christians regard the teaching and preaching with which God blesses them far more highly than worship? This is a sure consequence of not remembering the sanctuary in which we worship Let the soul realize this, and it will instantly perceive what are its grounds of praise, and what the character of its worship. But if a worldly sanctuary is established, or the order of a worldly {i.e., earthly} sanctuary is introduced, our worship must be degraded, and our souls become lean. Such results must ensue if we take for our pattern the worldly sanctuary, instead of by faith, and as led of the Spirit, entering into that which is heavenly. There all is done -there we have subject for praise only.

Jewish Bondage and Christian Freedom: Jewish and Christian Worship, High Priest of Good Things to Come, A (9:11-28)

It would indeed tend greatly both to comfort and elevate our souls, if we realized the unclouded prospect before us. That which before us is alone proper to us as redeemed to God by the blood of the Lamb, and as born of God. The present, whether sorrowful or pleasant, is only to be regarded as the times that pass over us, or through which we have go as we are on the way to our entering into our rest. The present good things and evil things are alike to faith old things which have passed away, because faith is the substance things hoped for {Heb. 11:1}. And the things hoped for are alone substantial, permanent, unshaken, and satisfying. Every desire of good which man seeking to realize now, the saint knows can alone be realized when {the Lord} Jesus is manifested in glory with His saints. He has to calculate disappointment in all circumstances, while he most blessedly learns that hope in the Lord in the midst of all circumstances never disappoints. Often indeed, in his pilgrimage through present things, will he have to say, Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? But still, he knows in whom he has believed, and can say, "hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance and my God." But while there is the cheering thought of God's commanding His loving-kindness in the day-time, yet the soul is stayed by the prospect of the uninterrupted light of God's countenance -by the prospect, not of occasional, but of uninterrupted, praise.

The true spirit of worship would lead us into this holy scene. Our present privileges are only ours now, because of what the grace of God has made us to be before Him. God calleth things that are not as though they were. Sons before Him in Christ, and predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ, we have the spirit of sons now. Kings and priests unto God, because washed already in the blood of Jesus, we have the spirit of praise given to us now. Hence it is the things which are to come with which we have to do. If we speak of the world, it is the world to come of which we speak {i.e., the millennium}; that is, our world, the world subjected to us, and blessed by us. We know the present world as being given into other hands, and therefore it is only the scene of our trial, if we speak of man, and of God being well-pleased in men, we speak of Him that is to come, of whom Adam was a type (Rom. 5:14). If we speak of "good things," they are not the good things in this life, but good things to come. There is "the evil to come," out of which the righteous are taken; there are the good things to come, which the righteous enjoy. The rich man might remember, that he in his lifetime had his good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things. And there might have been even thankfulness for the good things; but there was no enjoyment of God -no real worship of Him as far above all the blessings He had given. This is the real spirit of worship, even when in the actual possession of all that God can give; yea, when glorified ourselves, to be able to see in God, and own in Him, something far more blessed than anything that we have can have, and to find the knowledge of Him and the enjoyment of Him, to be indeed the pleasures which are at His right hand for evermore.

We find the worship of Israel based upon God's accomplished faithfulness in their enjoyment of present good things. This was prescribed for them of God in the wilderness, but only took effect in the land. Israel, as God's constituted worshiping people, had to do with the priest in questions of sin, both in the wilderness and in the land; but the joy of worship was not known by them while they were in the wilderness. It was thus the ordinance ran:

"And it shall be when thou art come in unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein, that thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the Lord thy God give thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the lord thy God shall choose to place his name there. And thou shalt go unto the

priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day, unto the Lord thy God, that I am come unto the country which the Lord sware unto our fathers for to give us. And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of the Lord thy God" {Deut. 26:1-4}.

Here we have Israel's profession -the profession of the grace which had brought him into the present possession of the land, and of the enjoyment of the fruits of it. We have also the priest of Israel's profession, not occupied about details of sin, but more happily occupied in presenting the thanksgiving of the worshiper in the basket of first-fruits, before the altar of the Lord. This must have been the priest's most blessed service. Next comes the confession of the worshiper:

"And thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt... and the Lord hath brought us into this place, and given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God, and worship before the Lord my God: and thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given thee" (Deut. 26:5-11).

How blessedly was the soul led of God to worship and joy. There was no element of law here, but only the thought of grace. The sense of personal unworthiness only tending to the magnifying the grace of God which had regarded the affliction and oppression of the poor destitute. Redemption ascribed solely to the power of God, and not only known as deliverance from present misery, but as introduction into present blessing. And then the blessings actually enjoyed leading on still to the acknowledgment of God who had given them. "And now I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me." This is the true spirit of worship. The soul is led from the blessings enjoyed, to Him who is blessed for evermore; from the gift to the Giver. The joy will not be less in the gift, because there is the acknowledgment of the Giver. "Thou shalt worship before the Lord thy God" -this is the first thing; and thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given thee. The spirit of false worship is to rejoice in the work of hands -"They made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the work of their own hands." But in true worship, God Himself is the glory of the worshiper; it is in Him that the soul makes her boast. There could not be an ordinance of more joy to Israel than this of the basket of first-fruits: this profession was indeed a blessed one, and the coming to the priest on such an occasion must have expanded their hearts with thankfulness.

But now the Great High Priest is passed into the heavens. And while His service there meets all our present necessities, His priesthood connects our souls with good things to come. And we coming to Him by faith now are enabled to make our profession, and to present our basket of first-fruits, and to worship before the Lord, and to rejoice. It was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob, to sing aloud unto God their strength; and is it not equally our statute and the law of our God unto us, to "rejoice evermore"? But then we must worship before the Lord first. We must be in the attitude of worshipers, in order to be able to rejoice before the Lord, and rejoice in His own blessings.

First, we have our profession connected with priesthood. Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus {Heb. 3:1 }. Our worship is based on our profession, and our profession is maintained by the priesthood of Jesus."Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession" {Heb. 10:23}.It is indeed a lofty profession that we make."Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" {Rev. 1:5, 6}.

This is our profession now. Glory will be the actual exercise of that which grace has made us to be. "By grace we are saved." Before God we stand as His own grace has made us; not as we know ourselves to be in our actual circumstances.

We are even now blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. It is the Spirit alone which makes us to know, and gives us to enjoy, these blessings here, which are freely given us of God. We are not in the inheritance which God has made ours, but we have the Holy Spirit of promise as the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession {Eph. 1:14}. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of promise, and {the Lord} Jesus is the High Priest of good things to come. The Holy Spirit comforts now by showing "things to come," such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive {1 Cor. 2:9}. But when we look to {the Lord} Jesus, we see Him already entered into the good things, and entered there for us. It is one of the good things to come, that the world to come {i.e., the millennium} is to be subject to Christ and His saints. We do not yet see all things subject to him, but we do see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, on account of suffering death, crowned with glory and honor {Heb. 2}. It is thus that His exaltation maintains us in the profession that we shall judge the world. "God commands all men to repent," upon the ground that He is "about to judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" {Acts 17:31}. As risen, He is to judge the world in righteousness; but He has tasted death for us, and as risen too, we shall reign with Him, and order this world in righteousness. What a solemn joy would the spirit of real worship afford to the soul, if it were thus connected with coming good things! It would exalt, it would sanctify, at the very time the soul was owning its absolute dependence on grace. "A Syrian ready to perish" would be the real expression of that soul. A sinner dead in trespasses and sins, quickened by God's grace, and brought into union with Christ, would never forget his own previous condition, and would gladly remember it, to ascribe worthiness to Him alone to whom it is due. "Thou art worthy; for thou wast slain, and lust redeemed us to God by thy blood, and made us kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth" {Rev. 5:9}

To be actually in the sanctuary before God is one of the good things to come. But hope carries us there now, because Jesus the forerunner is there for us already entered. We are exhorted to hold fast "the profession of our hope without wavering." Our hope is actually to be where Jesus is for us now. But in spirit we can worship as being there, because Jesus is there for us; He is a High Priest of good things to come. It is that which we hope for which stamps our character on us. It is so in man -the object He aims at gives the mold to His character. And this is most blessedly true of the saint.

"It hath not been yet manifested what we shall be, but this we know, that when he [Jesus] shall be manifested, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; and every one that hath this hope in him [i.e. Jesus] purifieth himself, even as he is pure" {1 John 3:2, 3}.

If there be hesitation in our souls as to the accomplished work of Christ, that He has by Himself purged our sins; if we consider not the High Priest of our profession as exercising His ministry for us as already brought nigh to God by the blood He has shed, so that our hope be pardon and acquittal rather than glory, it will stamp its character on our worship, and make it cold and distant. Neither shall we see the purification of

the sanctuary as our purification, but shall be content with the standard of conventional righteousness. How deeply important is it to recognize our profession as a profession of hope, and to own the priesthood of Jesus, not only as meeting all present failure, but as enabling us to maintain our profession of things hoped for! We can, and we ought to, come before God as those who can now say, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places: yea, I have a goodly heritage" {Psa. 16:6}.

This is our basket of first-fruits; for faith is the substance of things hoped for. Jesus, as risen and ascended now, knows the path of life; He knows that in God's presence there is fullness of joy; He already knows the pleasures at God's right hand for evermore; for it is there He is exalted. But He knows them for us.

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(By him therefore let us offer [the] sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is, [the] fruit of [the] lips confessing his name (Heb. 13:15; JND tr.). }

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