

LECTURES ON LEVITICUS.

GOD SPEAKING OUT OF THE TABERNACLE, AND INVITING APPROACH.

(Lev. i. 1-9.)

I do not read more, for although there are some trifling differences in the offerings in this chapter, the one I have read will suffice to bring before you what I have to say.

What I desire is to bring the sacrifices of Christ before you at this time, and first I would like to point out the contrast between that which was ordained for Israel, and that which we have as Christians. While the sacrifice is the same for both, for it is the one offering of our Lord Jesus Christ, yet our approach is different from that of Israel. I have no doubt that all this early part of Leviticus refers specially to Israel, a people upon earth, and that what was typified will yet be fulfilled in their worship. I say "will be" because, as has been said by another, it does not appear that besides

the sacrifices offered at the inauguration of the tabernacle and priesthood, as if any others were offered during the wilderness journey. In point of fact, all the ritual that was ordained has never been carried out in the history of Israel, but it will be in the age to come.

Now I want to make two or three preliminary remarks, which I trust will enable you to understand the ground taken in Leviticus. First, the ground here taken is not that of redemption; the burnt sacrifice was not exactly for the forgiveness of sin, but for approach to God of one already redeemed. Even when you come to the sin-offering, it is not a type of the way the sinner first comes to God, but the means of meeting the errors and failure of one already brought to God by redemption. The sacrifice which put Israel in relation with God was the passover.

If you notice the opening verse of this book, you will see that God does not speak here from Sinai, though they had not yet left the mount; but He speaks out of the tabernacle. It is important for us to see that God had seated Himself in the tabernacle. He had come down on Mount Sinai to speak from thence, but we come now to a further thing—He has taken His place in the midst of His people in a tabernacle. The subject, then, of Leviticus is access and approach to Him in the tabernacle, and though Israel is here in question, yet, blessed be God! we have

access also. I would like that each one should have the sense of the grace of this, God desiring to have a place where He could be in communication with His people through the Mediator, and where they could approach to Him. For us, it is the assembly; not only have we been redeemed out of the world, but God has a place to which we come—His assembly.

Notice another thing: the chapter supposes that a man desired to draw near to God as a worshipper, to come to His tabernacle, and God had seated Himself there that He might be approached, and then shews them the way of approach. It was great grace which was proposed to Israel, "If any man of you bring an offering to the Lord." The word "bring" has the sense of "cause to draw near." He drew near with his offering to the Lord in the courts of the Lord's house. God has now a place in the world which refused Him and cast out His Son. It is the assembly which to us takes the place of the tabernacle. People may say, "Where is it?" Well, it is not the great ecclesiastical system which has the name of church before men, but is there nothing that God can own as His? Yes, for faith He has a spiritual house, where His people can offer up spiritual sacrifices. Two or three can realise the presence of the Lord, as being in the truth of a spiritual house. Each one must ask himself, "Do I know this spiritual

house, which I may call God's place?" Do not let us suppose that because we may be free of the great ecclesiastical system, and meet with saints in our various meeting rooms, that, therefore, we have in our souls found God's place. And yet it is an immense privilege amid the wreck and ruin of things here to find the presence of the Lord.

Now any man drawing near with his offering would respond to the privilege proposed to him. This is supposed. He offered it of his voluntary will, or, rather, for his acceptance. Drawing near and acceptance are thus proposed to him. I press these thoughts, so that they may have a great place in our minds—*God's place*, and then the privilege of drawing near and being in acceptance.

In order to shew the importance of the tabernacle, I will mention the leading points in the history of Israel, and so bring you to the tabernacle. The first thing to notice is that they were sheltered by blood in Egypt. God came down to deliver them, and He must deliver them in righteousness, therefore He sheltered them by blood, and in that He laid a righteous ground for their deliverance through the Red Sea, and for the destruction of their enemies. Thus He brought them out of the land of Egypt, delivering them from the place where all were under the dominion of sin and death, and where Satan's

power was. He thus became their deliverer, so that they could sing, "He is become my salvation, he is my God." That is the second stage of their history, when they knew Him as a deliverer. Then they entered, or should have entered, into the grace of God. I dare say you have noticed that from the Red Sea up to Mount Sinai everything was grace. Their needs only brought out the largeness of the grace that was in the heart of God towards them. Did they want food? He gave them manna. He gave them the sabbath, the smitten rock, as well as the twelve wells and seventy palm-trees. All was grace. They did not learn it, but still God acted in grace towards them. Then they came to Sinai, the mount of God, and then God speaks to them in this way: "Ye have seen . . . how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." He brought them to Himself, that they might find their blessing in Himself, and we can add for the satisfaction of His own love. (Jer. xxxi. 3.) Let me stay a moment. Do we understand that God has saved us by the blood-shedding and death of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring us *to Himself*? Do you think it is to let us live happily in this world, as those delivered from judgment, and that now we can get on here looking to God to help us in regard of present things? Oh! no; that is a mistake. God did not come down to save Israel and leave them in Egypt.

Perhaps you say, no Christian wants to live in the Egypt character of the world, but the thought of God was to bring them to His own habitation. God led them out of Egypt into the wilderness. What is the wilderness? It is a place where they had no resource but in God Himself. The difficulty with us in apprehending the character of the wilderness is, because we are actually in the same place where we were before we were converted. A mighty deliverance on God's part has been effected, but it is apprehended spiritually, but actually we are in the same place, and hence there is a tendency with us to revert to the things God has delivered us from, because they are all around us, and, moreover, the world has been christianised, and the name of Christ put upon things, so that they should not appear offensive, but they are all of the god of this world. God's deliverance is from the whole course of this world. It is quite true that we have to attend to our daily business, but the great point is that we have been brought to God in the wilderness. It is the place of death, and there are no pomegranates or figs, nor is there any water. Not a single thing for me there as a Christian but God and His blessed grace.

Now, after God had said, "I have brought you to myself," then comes the question of law; it is raised at the mount of God, and, looked at in its principle, it was God's will for the people,

holy, and just, and good. In its principle a Christian delights in God's will. Do I not accept it as good and acceptable and perfect? It is made known in Christ so that we should be under law to Christ, and surely we like to have His commandments to direct us. To the flesh the law is a ministry of condemnation and death. If we do not know the flesh condemned in the cross, then to us the very principle of law must be condemnation, for the flesh is not subject to the law of God; but when looked at in connection with the obedience of Christ, then we are transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Now, God never gives up what He brings in, and though the law proved to be a ministration of death to Israel, yet God has not given it up. It will yet be written on Israel's heart, only it will be presented to them in Christ, and not written on tables of stone. Now the will of God is made known to us in Christ, but it goes beyond the tables of law; it is the will of God known in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Israel were brought to that point of going on with the blessed God, learning what His will was for them. Their blessing was dependent upon it. I am speaking of the principle; this we see in Deut. v. 29, Ps. lxxxi. 13, 16. So it is with us; the more subject and dependent we are, the more blessing we enter into. The blessed God could not command us anything which is not according to Him-

self, so that it must be good and acceptable and perfect. The expression of His will is presented to us in the Lord Jesus Christ, who did always those things which pleased His Father.

There is another point in their history leading up to the tabernacle. Israel were sanctified to the obedience of law by the sprinkling of the blood of calves and goats, while we are sanctified to the obedience of Christ and the sprinkling of His blood. The next thing is that Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel go up into the mount, and they saw the God of Israel, and a pavement of sapphire under His feet, and as the body of heaven in clearness. They saw God and did eat and drink. This indicates a marvellous thing. It is that God would bring a people so near that they should behold His glory, and eat and drink in His presence. Truly, it was but for a moment, and it is added "upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand," for as yet there had been no actual breach of the law. But it seems to me to be clearly indicated that on the ground of bloodshedding God would bring a people into intimacy and communion, the moral basis of which would be His will made known to them. But then there was no transforming power in the glory of the law, it could not transform flesh; we are given to behold the glory in the face of Jesus Christ, and to be transformed by it.

All through the way we have travelled, you do not read of anything connected with this redeemed people but their new history as the people of God. I know they murmured as to their daily wants, but God took care of them; their chief business was with Him and His things, until they reach the point I will now refer to. "Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." The blessed God came out to deliver them in righteousness and according to His favour, and it culminates in the elders going up into the mount of God, and then He seats Himself in a tabernacle and says, "Now you can approach me." And God has come out to us in grace and righteousness to relieve us of judgment, and to make a way to Himself by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. He would not have us satisfied with relief, but because righteousness is now ministered to us by the Spirit from the glory, so would He have us behold His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, and know its transforming power. That is what is for us, and when actually brought to glory the Lord will make His own sit down to meat and serve them.

It is wonderful to think of the Lord bringing His people to have an interest in His interests. Now, what is the chief interest for us here? Look how God had led them up to this point, and then every willing-hearted man is given the oppor-

nity of being interested in the great centre of God's interests, His tabernacle. Every willing-hearted one was permitted to offer, not one that might not contribute, and every wise-hearted one wrought. All were to have an interest in God's place where He would dwell.

I mention one thing more with regard to the tabernacle, that every Israelite had to pitch his tent in reference to it. We read in the end of Exodus of the setting up of the tabernacle, and in the beginning of Numbers, which is about the same time as Leviticus, God arranges through Moses and Aaron the dwelling-place of the various tribes around the tabernacle. The history of the people was thus connected with God and His tabernacle. Do you feel that your history now is bound up with His chief interest in this earth—that is, that your private history, your business, and social relations are subservient to the assembly, which is now God's place, or are our own interests put first? Sometimes the dwelling-place or business has the first consideration, and a meeting to go to is an accessory. There is nothing more blessed for us here upon earth, before we go to heaven, than to have a place where Christ makes Himself known to His own, where they have fellowship together in His death, and are thus in touch with Himself as the heavenly One. He is separated by death from this present scene, and through the appropriation

of His death we are connected with the scene into which He has entered. As in His presence, He acquaints us with that scene. We know it by knowing Him. (Jno. xiv. 4.) Do you not realise heaven in His presence? How completely are we outside the world in His presence. Oh ! it is a great thing that where two or three are gathered together they can know the presence of the Lord as the heavenly One. It gives a heavenly character to the assembly. A few poor saints, who are nothing in this world, may be gathered together in assembly, but heaven rests upon their spirits as they sit down under the shadow of Christ. They answer to His mind thus, and He can communicate heavenly things, making the heart acquainted with heaven, with the Father's love and the grace that flows in His dear Son. How often does the Lord's day get the character of a seventh day, rather than a first day, when the assembly is merely looked at as a place to get help and refreshment after the toil of the week. It is on the first day of the week that we are in fellowship with the death of Christ, which has closed up everything here that we are glad to be outside of, so that heaven may rest upon our spirits, as we are in company with the heavenly One.

What I have desired to do in speaking of so much that is not in this chapter, is to shew the importance of the Lord calling to Moses out of the

tabernacle and speaking from thence. It was the place of approach for Israel, but they could only go into the *courts* of the Lord. In the Psalms there is often a reference to entering into the courts of the Lord. A day there was better than a thousand. But for us there is entrance into the holiest by a new and living way. The brazen altar stood in the court, and that was the place of approach for Israel, but they really lost it; the fact is, the flesh cannot approach God. You see that when an Israelite brought his burnt offering, a great deal depended upon the priesthood. The worshipper could only do so much, and then Aaron's sons, the priests, did everything at the altar; they sprinkled the blood and laid the burnt offering on the wood, and they caused the sweet savour to ascend. Figuratively, the priests had no standing in flesh, for the blood had been sprinkled upon them, and oil. Yet actually they were after the flesh, and the priesthood broke down. On the first day that they exercised the priesthood for Israel, Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire and died. This led to the great day of atonement; but that did not give the people a standing within, but the blood went into the holiest, in order that the tabernacle might abide among the people in the midst of their uncleanness.

In Numbers you get a step further; the people kept on sinning, until it culminates in the open

rebellion and apostasy of Korah and his company. So little sense have they of what is due to the Lord that they say, "All the congregation are holy, every one of them," and they reject Moses and Aaron. Thereupon God vindicated His holiness, and what is made clear is that not only must death come in to annul flesh, as when the priests were sprinkled with blood, but that priesthood is established in resurrection. Aaron's rod blossomed and budded and brought forth fruit. From that moment the people must not come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation. (Num. xviii. 22.) Aaron and his sons minister before the tabernacle of witness, and the Levites were joined with them in the service (see 2 Chron. xxix. 34), but the people must not come nigh. But in the goodness of God a new and remarkable provision is made for them, that of the red heifer. All this will shew you the difference between their approach and our approach. It is as priests that we approach. Hence in a certain way we have to do with the altar, though we have access to the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

This leads me to speak of another point: that it was at the brazen altar that God met the people, but to speak to Moses. (Ex. xxix. 43.) But the mercy seat was the great place of communication. Thus there were two places, one inside and the other outside, from whence God spoke to Moses. (Ex. xxv. 22.) As the altar was

the place where God met the people, so was it the place where through the Mediator an earthly people received communications as to the goodness and favour of God. But it was after the dedication of the altar where all the tribes laid their gifts, that Moses went in and heard the voice of one speaking to him from off the mercy seat. I think John xvii. gives to us the idea of these inner communications. The Lord there says to the Father, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." That is not the brazen altar, nor the question of acceptance. The Lord brings them within, where He can make known to them the communications that belong to within. Though the disciples did not then understand them, yet in anticipation they must have for the moment enjoyed the holiest in the Lord's company.

Now, at the brazen altar, though called to draw near, the worshipper came as an individual, it was not as belonging to a consecrated company. He brought the bullock for his acceptance as one who would draw near. The blood was shed and sprinkled round about the altar—that is, the altar was fully identified with the death of the victim. It was not put upon the horns of the altar, as in the case of the sin offering—that was for the eye of God—but here the place of approach is identified fully with the death of the offering, the man approaches by death. It may help here

if I anticipate a little, and notice the difference between the burnt offering and the meat offering. They were very closely connected, for every burnt offering had its meat offering. There was no blood-shedding in the meat offering, that had taken place in the burnt offering; but in the burnt offering nothing was eaten, all was burnt but the skin, there was nothing of the outer character of Christ, as seen by men, laid upon the altar. All that was internal was laid there, and here is the great difference between that and the meat offering. Everything in Christ as the burnt offering had come out of heaven, while the meat offering figured that blessed humanity in which He grew up here on earth. In the burnt offering we see the perfection of devotedness to the will of God, but that was His mind before He took a body. In the volume of the book it was written "Lo, I come to do thy will." The fine flour was that which grew upon the earth. The meekness and gentleness and graciousness of the Lord as among men were not seen in the burnt offering, but the will of Christ in perfect devotedness and love, and full accord with the will of God. Every element of devoted love to His God and Father was found in Him as the one who offered Himself through the eternal Spirit without spot to God; but all this He brought with Him out of heaven. Besides that, He grew up here as the tender plant out of the dry ground in every grace

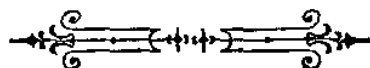
and beauty as a man ; but that is not the burnt sacrifice. There we have perfect devoted love to God, obedience to death, even the death of the cross. All that was inward was laid upon the altar by Aaron's sons, the head and the fat together—I suppose the mind of Christ and the energy of His perfect devotedness—then the inwards and the legs—the love and the way He took as directed by love. “But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.” And again we read, “He bearing His cross *went forth* into a place called the place of a skull.” Now, whether for Israel or ourselves, it is blessed for us to contemplate these elements in the burnt offering. Would to God that we all had a deeper sense, not only that the Lord Jesus Christ suffered for our sins, but that He came out of heaven with that great thought of accomplishing the will of God in the devoted obedience of love. The result will be found in eternal ages, and when everything is brought into blessing what will it be for us to know the One who came here to be the Sufferer, and so to accomplish the will of God ! It will result in a new heaven and new earth, where righteousness will dwell. In the millennium also God's will will be done on earth as in heaven. If every one of us in this room could only think of what Christ was to God, as laid upon the altar, we should have the blessed

sense of acceptance, and of being connected with the altar, that we might be happily and freely before Him as yielding ourselves to Him.

I have one more remark to make, though it may come in also with the meat offering. It is that we approach by death, and death becomes the way of liberty. I confess that when I think of this devotedness of Christ, or looking at the meat offering, if I think of the perfection of His humanity, having in it every trait of grace and loveliness, and then look at the utter contrast I find in myself, I should be utterly cast down. How could I bear to look at the contrast? How could I enjoy every grace that I see in Christ, when I see everything that is inconsistent with Him in myself? I am not speaking now of the needs of a guilty conscience being met, but of the tremendous contrast that I find between myself and Him. Here death comes in for my help. I approach by death. Not only has sin been atoned for, but the man approaches by that death which ends the man that is such a contrast to Christ. Thus there is liberty to behold the fair beauty of the Lord in His tabernacle. I find myself a total contrast to Christ; but, standing by the altar, death has come in to set me free, in order that I should not be staggered at the contrast, but should, the man being gone that was such a contrast, be able in peace to enjoy the devotedness of Christ to God as the Sufferer laid

upon the altar. Death has become a friend. As the soul enters into it, it finds liberty. You get the appropriation of death in John vi.: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Then, further, you get another thing, "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me." You could not have the second without the first. We must be in the realisation of His death to enjoy Himself. Christ has not only died for your sins, but His death excludes all that is of yourself, so that you might be free to enjoy His devotedness to God, which lays the basis for the full accomplishment of His will.

May the Lord give to each one the sense of God's desire to have a people who should approach Him in His own dwelling-place, to realise there what Christ is to God, only now we are given in the assembly to enter upon resurrection ground, as those who know the new and living way which brings us into the enjoyment of the love of God as it rests upon Christ.



THE BURNT AND MEAT OFFERINGS.

(Lev. ii., iii. 5.)

It is evident that the three first chapters of this book go together; they come under the one communication indicated by the sentence so often repeated, "And the Lord spake unto Moses." This occurs again in chapter iv. 1. It is another subject, though closely connected with what had preceded. The three first chapters are one communication made by the Lord when He called to Moses out of the tabernacle, and spake unto him, and they shew the way in which His people might approach Him in worship. As I said last time, it was for Israel, and the typical system will be made good in that nation when they have turned to the Lord in the last days. You will remember also that I sought to shew you that while we can enter into the value of what is here typified, yet the place of our worship as Christians is not at the brazen altar. It stood in the court of the tabernacle, but the courts of the Lord's house are not the place of approach now, but through God's wonderful and sovereign love, He has given us a place within the veil where Christ has entered. I say this lest, in considering what

took place at the altar, any one's apprehension of the true Christian place of approach should be weakened. There is no other place than where Christ has entered in. Hebrews ix. 8 shews that entrance into the holiest was debarred while the first tabernacle was standing. The first tabernacle was connected with priestly service for Israel, and while Judaism existed as a system there was no entrance into that system which we call Christianity—*i.e.*, into the holiest. But now that the way in is inaugurated, the first tabernacle has no standing.

The first thought in the tabernacle was that God approached His people; it was, so far as it went, a revelation of righteousness and holiness, and of His ways of mercy and goodness, while He remained hidden behind the veil. Israel could approach to His altar and courts, and, besides, He provided a company who could go into the first tabernacle, but now neither the court or first tabernacle are standing. There is only the holiest.

With regard to the tabernacle there is another important point in its construction. You will find that the ten linen curtains which covered it are called the tabernacle (Ex. xxvi. 6), while the eleven curtains of goats' hair are called the tent (ver. 13, xxxvi. 14), the tent over the tabernacle. They set forth the inside and the outside. The rams' skins dyed red and the badgers' skins were

properly neither the tabernacle nor the tent; they were simply coverings expressive of certain characteristics which were put on. The rams' skins expressed devotedness, and the badgers' skins separation. There again we have what was inward and outward. The tabernacle was, strictly speaking, the habitation, the dwelling-place, of God. The word for tabernacle in Hebrew is "Mishkhan," and signifies a habitation. It is a cognate word to "Shekinah," which is used for "the cloud of glory." In Ex. xl. 21, the holy of holies is looked at as the tabernacle, and the holy place as the tent of the congregation (ver. 22). The tabernacle, or habitation, was of the same material as the veil, and sets before us the Word made flesh and tabernacling among us. He tabernacled behind the veil of His flesh, and it was when He died the veil was rent and God was fully manifested. The goats'-hair curtains were connected with the idea of the tent of the congregation, there was sustenance and light, and this came out in the Lord Jesus when here. Among men He was the truth and testimony of God, and the vessel of His grace. The one is set forth specially in Mark's gospel and the other in Luke's. The priestly company should have been the channel of divine communications to Israel, who only had access to the court, and the altar. But now the first tabernacle has no standing because Christ was rejected when He came in grace to

Israel, and now the approach is to the holiest, God having been fully manifested in light.

There was an important thing connected with the altar: the fire was always to be burning upon it, and never to go out. Of course I could not say that it did not go out, but that was the ordinance. I think it sets forth this, that the question of sin was not settled, and that while man was under the testing of the law, there must always be the altar with the fire of testing upon it. In the court there was an altar ever burning, the judgment of God maintaining righteousness there, for the question of good and evil was not yet solved. Yet what was burnt upon the altar was acceptable to the righteous Lord who loveth righteousness. Israel could approach on the ground of this perpetual maintenance of righteousness on the altar (Ex. xxix. 38-46), and the Lord could dwell among them, though behind a veil. For us, through God's grace, the question of righteousness is settled. We know the one righteousness which is towards all men for justification of life.

I may here notice another point with regard to the worshipping Israelite. I refer to the peace offering; it sets forth the soul's enjoyment of Christ. But the fat of the sin offering was burnt upon the altar in exactly the same way as the fat of the peace offering. It was invariably the case. This is remarkable, and shews us that

what we call communion—that is, enjoyment and apprehension of Christ's excellency—having been interrupted by sin, it could only be restored by the sin offering; but in this case the sin offering is not looked at as dealing with sin as a whole, as figured on the day of atonement, but as applied to a fault in one who already had liberty to approach on the ground of redemption. If he had sinned, he could not go to the altar of God for the enjoyment of the peace offering; he must bring his sin offering, and the fat was burnt on the altar while the priest ate the flesh. He had sinned, and that sin must be confessed; so he put his hand on the head of the victim, and the sin was forgiven, and he could go away with the sense of the priest having estimated his fault and taken it up before God. Instead of the worshipper eating the peace offering, the priest ate his sin offering. On the day of atonement it was not a question of an individual's sin, and though there is the same element in the sin offering for the individual—that is, God's holy judgment of sin—yet in this case it was a question of a blot upon the worshipper. The Israelite was blotted, and the blot must be removed. But there was a deeper question on the day of atonement. Sin is a blot upon the character of God, an insult to Him. Sin has blotted His universe, so that it becomes a question of His glory. But of this I hope to speak at a future time.

I greatly desire that every one here may not merely understand something as to these types, but may get some point for their own soul, and I am sure that no one can have real enjoyment of Christ till the question of sin and righteousness is known to be settled. You must know the putting away of sin, and that God has been glorified in righteousness. Even for the enjoyment of what is figured here on the altar, you must have the sense of God's satisfaction in what Christ has done. He has been perfectly glorified, so that we can approach Him. In the passage John xiii. 31, 32, there is not a word about our sins, but about God's glory. "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." You get side by side the greatest insult to God in Judas, the iniquity of man's heart rising up to the full in betraying Christ, and God glorified in man. God was glorified in the work of Christ, and He, the Son of man was glorified in glorifying God.

When we look at the burnt offering, necessarily death had to take place before the victim was laid upon the altar. The man of Israel who wanted to approach brought the victim for his acceptance, and he had to kill it because he must approach by death. Then he stood beside the altar and witnessed the fire test the victim, but only to produce a sweet savour. But with the blessed Lord it was otherwise; the victim was,

so to speak, laid upon the altar first. The testing all took place before He died, before the blood was shed. There is one type in the Old Testament which in a small way sets this forth. Isaac was laid upon the altar, and then Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son. It is wonderful to see the victim passively laid upon the altar in the case of Isaac, the only and beloved son, but what is it to see the Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator of heaven and earth, stooping down to take the place of obedience to death? We speak of it as a mighty work, and so it is; but when looked at in another way, it was doing nothing. It was a Victim bound by devoted love and laid upon the altar. He loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and He loved the Father, and gave Himself up according to the Father's commandment. All was tested, and He was obedient unto death, and nothing but a sweet savour was there. I recall a remark made last week that in the burnt offering it was not the question of the grace of Christ in His life as man down here, but that devotedness to God in which He came out of heaven. It was in His heart in eternal ages, written of Him in the volume of the book before He came, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." In the victim laid upon the altar, the one who draws near gets the sense of the one whole of devoted love, from eternal counsel right on to the com-

pletion of the one righteousness when good fully overcame evil. All blessing is founded upon it. The cross will never be forgotten in the history of eternity, nor the sweet savour to God when His Son was laid upon the altar.

We could not have the sense of what is portrayed in the meat offering, apart from the burnt offering. In killing the victim the offerer took home death to himself, he became identified with its death. It is when death has set us free that we are able to stand by the altar and adore and enter into the devoted love of Christ, and know Him as the Righteous One, now in the presence of God, for the sweet savour to God and resurrection *must* go together. Then, too, we are able to enter into the meat offering.

Here I would call your attention to what I said in the previous lecture, that the soul enjoys these things in God's place. It is in the assembly that you really get the setting forth of Christ, for Christ Himself is brought before us in these offerings. People sometimes say, "Cannot I worship at home?" Ah! but when you are in the assembly you are in a place where your own interests have no place; properly everything is excluded there but Christ, and this frees from selfishness. Christ can thus be the object of your heart, and divine affections flow. All there are in the fellowship of the death of Christ, the death which sets us free to enjoy that which is of God.

As I said, the meat offering is that which grew upon the earth. It was of fine flour. The Lord grew up here in lovely grace. He was here in manhood, and increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man. It is not here that energy of devotedness which characterised the burnt offering, and though He was the heavenly One, yet the blessed traits of grace in Him, such as meekness, graciousness, longsuffering, lowliness, are those qualities in which He grew up on earth. The simple elements of the meat offering were fine flour, oil poured upon it—the Holy Spirit, and frankincense which figured the fragrance of that life of grace to God. The priest filled his hand with flour, and that handful, with the oil thereof and all the frankincense, was burnt as a memorial upon the altar. The remainder was eaten by Aaron and his sons, for none but priests could eat the meat offering. Thus you have what was offered to the Lord for a sweet savour, and what *we* as priests can eat. I do not say that John vi. is the meat offering, but it runs on somewhat the same lines. The Lord Jesus was the true bread of God out of heaven; out of heaven, yet found here in fashion as man, the Son of man whom God the Father sealed. The place where the meat offering was eaten was in the sanctuary, in the holy place, and it was eaten by those who had their place in the sanctuary, as separated

from the life of flesh. So in John vi. there must be first the feeding upon the Lord in death, as here the burnt offering, with its blood shedding, must come before the meat offering. Then in John vi., having eaten of His flesh and drunk His blood, it is said, "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me." There is the sense of being nourished by heavenly food, the food of the sanctuary, as those who through His death are separated from the world. If you are looked at as a priest, you are looked at as not in the flesh, but in the power of the Spirit. The priest in Israel was washed, and the blood put upon him (the water and blood were a figure of death), and then anointed. The meat offering was not the manna; that was heavenly grace for the wilderness, but this was sanctuary food, the enjoyment and apprehension of heavenly bread which leaves the impress of the new man upon the eater.

We need grace for our daily life. There are our daily occupations, as well as many things of which people may say there is no harm in them; but do you not think that our souls need to be withdrawn from these things, in order to enjoy that wonderful life of Christ? Do you think that I, a poor, selfish creature as I am, could delight in the perfect life of Jesus, whether as living to God or before men, unless as separated from the life of flesh? What sort of lives do we live every day in the week? How many stupid and foolish

things do we admit into our hearts day by day? You and I do not enjoy Christ then. All that He was is a total contrast to the life of flesh. Thank God we can live with reference to Christ in our daily life in the flesh, but that is manna. It is as apart from what we are in flesh that we enter into what He was as fragrance and delight to God in every action and word. If I see Him touch a leper, it is not a mere question of power to drive away the leprosy, but who touched like He did? There was the divine perfection of doing the will of God and of human sympathy in that touch. There was a breathing of grace in every word He spoke. "Never man spake like this man." You see Him sighing over His people's woes, and His tenderness to His disciples; but in all these things everything was so exquisitely perfect that there was fragrance for God in it all. When I get near the blessed Lord, it makes me feel the total contrast that I am to what there was in Him; but, as I said, death comes in to help me. The burnt offering was before the meat offering. I realise in the blood sprinkled round the altar that the man after the flesh is gone, and apart from that man the meat offering becomes the food of the soul. The result is that the traits of the new man are assimilated as our affections are engaged with Him.

There are different ways in which the meat

offering is presented to us. First, there are the simple elements of His gracious, blessed, holy humanity, all in the power of the Spirit and all well pleasing and fragrant to God. But these elements were all embodied in an actual man who lived and walked in this world. I think that is the meaning of the cakes or wafers of fine flour, as distinguished from the simple elements of fine flour and oil and frankincense. There may be a little difference between being baked in a pan or frying-pan, but the point is the actuality of these elements being formed into a cake. We have the same idea in the oblation of the first fruits at the feast of weeks; this consisted of two loaves. The great point of the cake baked in the frying-pan seems to be that it was parted in pieces. I think this has somewhat of the same character as the burnt offering being cut into his pieces. It is the bringing into view of every detail of the life of the Lord as a man down here, and no doubt this took place specially in the sufferings of the cross. He had affections for His disciples, whom He had drawn to Himself. He could say, "Our friend Lazarus." There was His tender care for His mother, and His love to John, to whom He committed her. He wept over Jerusalem, and He had tender care over His poor feeble disciples. All these details are brought into view, and shine out in fragrance and perfectness—all a sweet savour—though the rude hands

of men were those by which, so to speak, the cake was parted in pieces. Every feeling was rudely broken in upon. Lover and friend put far from Him, He was poured out like water. They looked and stared on Him. Breach upon breach was made, but only to reveal the perfection in every detail of a humanity that was in the power of the Spirit, and all a sweet savour to God.

It is wonderful when we think that God has found His delight in man, and it is an eternal delight. I think the meat offering shews us that man is for God. Alas! he has only been for self and Satan, but that is the fall, and not God's intention. It was indicated in the creation of Adam, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." He was the creature of God's predilection. Later on you get it set forth in Enoch, he walked with God, and that pleased God, and God took him. That shewed that man was for God. Is it not wonderful that a being should be formed in whom, according to God's mind, there should be these holy and divine affections, and the grace which we have seen to be in the blessed Lord? All in Him was sweet savour for God, and yet it was the priestly food of the sanctuary. Even the feeblest believer has Christ to feed upon; you are privileged to see all that you are as a man of the old order gone in His death. There was not in the heart of that man one thing

for God, but only what was a disgrace and dishonour; that man could descend to every motive of sin; but that man has been removed from God's eye, and is gone, too, in the apprehension of the soul that takes home to itself the death of Christ. It is a wonderful thing that *we* should feed upon Him, when the heart of man gratifies itself with the world. When I look around, there is nothing more shocking than to see what men feed upon. One feature of the day is the multiplication of comic newspapers, and the way in which everything is turned into a joke. Nearly every boy who gets into a train has a comic paper in his hand. Nothing can be more debasing. The Lord Jesus was the "Man of Sorrows," and felt everything with God, and when all in Him came under the test of the fire of God all was perfect, every feeling was divinely right. And you and I are to be for ever with Him. But now it is our privilege to feed upon Him, and so to live by Him and enjoy Him. He is the tree of life, which, indeed, grew up down here, and bore its fruits, but which we shall feed upon for ever, and yet we feed upon Him here.

No leaven and no honey were allowed in the meat offering; there must be nothing of the human element of the first man, either in its sweetness or its evil-working. In the *new* meat offering of the first fruits leaven was present; it represents the church as offered to God on the

day of Pentecost, and leaven was there; but it was not burnt on the altar for a sweet savour. Thank God, while the church is accepted, yet it is Christ we feed upon and grow up into. Then further, salt must not be lacking. There seem to be two things connected with it: it preserves from every tendency to corruption, and it gives savour. "Let your speech be alway with grace seasoned with salt." (Col. iv. 6.) There is not only to be the grace of the new man; not mere graciousness, but the sense of the holy fear of God, "the salt of the covenant of thy God." All this was found in Christ.

The peace offering had this in common with the meat offering, that it was fed upon; but it had this in it, that every animal killed for food partook of the character of a peace offering, the blood was to be sprinkled upon the altar and the fat burnt. (Lev. xvii. 1-7.) Hence the peace offering enables us to connect our every-day life with the apprehension in our souls of what Christ is to God. "Whatever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

I close with one word more. Every Christian has two great blessings, and they are intimately connected. You have Christ and you have the Spirit. You have Christ instead of yourself; you have been called into the grace of Christ, and though you have, or will have, to find out

the utter contrast that there is between yourself and Him, yet it is your privilege to see that God has removed in death from His sight that self of yours which is such a contrast. Don't try to amend it, as the Galatians were doing. They wanted to keep Ishmael in the house on good behaviour, and to correct conduct by law; but to do this is to be deprived of the grace of Christ. He has not only died for us, but He is ours to feed upon and live by. You see Him laid upon the altar, and know how He loved us and gave Himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour. Then it is that we feed upon Him, as the food of the sanctuary of God. May the Lord make it a reality to our souls.



THE PRIESTHOOD.

(Lev. viii.)

THE point which I desire to bring before you to-night is the priesthood. It is brought out here in connection with the created scene, for the tabernacle, as we learn in Hebrews iii., was really figurative of the universe; but there is a point which is connected with the priesthood in the New Testament which you could not get in the Old Testament—that is, sonship. Through grace, Christians are before the Father as sons, and it is an important point as to our place. You can be in the apprehension of what Christ was down here as Man towards God, and of what He was as Son with the Father. He offered Himself in the power of the eternal Spirit to God, and as priests we are brought into the sense of the delight of God in His deep perfections as the blessed Man who so offered Himself, divine fulness being in Him. It is this which we have figuratively in Leviticus.

The first thing which I would point out is the great blessedness of the fact brought before us here of the desire of God to have a company,

represented by Aaron and his sons, who should as to their privilege belong entirely to His sanctuary. If you remember, when the priesthood is first mentioned in Exodus xxviii. 1 and 41, the great thought is that they might *minister to the Lord* in the priest's office. We are accustomed far more to look at priesthood as being exercised for the people, and, indeed, that was the form which it chiefly took, for in Israel the priest's work in offering sacrifice for the people was never finished; and, moreover, on the first day that Aaron and his sons began their ministry for Israel, the priesthood broke down, and Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire and died. That is in chapter ix. In this chapter we have their true priestly character, to minister to the Lord; they are brought nigh and their hands are filled *to wave before Him*, and they abide a full dispensational period, seven days, in the tabernacle, and there is no ministry for Israel. It is their priestly character in itself, God bringing a company to belong to His own sanctuary; and though we cannot here get the great thoughts of the New Testament in regard to the priestly company, yet we get very blessed intimation.

You can see at once that such a company are brought to an elevation that did not belong to Israel even as a redeemed people, and I would like each one to get an idea of the exceeding favour of God in so doing. They are brought

to such an elevation that they can be associated with God's dwelling-place, and be before Him there; then they are those who are privileged to enter into the mind and thoughts of God, for us, it is to have the mind of Christ and know what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man. I will give you an illustration from the Book of Revelation. The elders in that book come before us in chapter iv. as a priestly company. They fall down and worship; but what you find in them is that they are in the mind of God, they understand that all things were created for His pleasure. In chapter vii. 14, the elder understands about the great multitude, and in chapter xi. 17 we have the same intelligence.

Of late the difference between looking at things from God's side and from man's side has been much pressed upon us. It has been very much with us, as with the great mass of Christendom, that the truth of God has been lowered to our own point of view; but the real place of the priesthood was to look at everything according to God, as those brought to enter into His thoughts. A great point of their service was to communicate to the people the mind of God. The Urim and Thummim was with the high priest, and his sons were associated with him. Only you must remember that now all Christians belong to the holy priesthood. That is their

privilege, to enter as associated with Christ into the counsels and pleasure of God.

You get the elevation of the priestly company, spoken of in Hebrews ii. : “ Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one : for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.” You see the spirit of the last clause set forth in Aaron and his sons ; the same consecrations that were on the hands of Aaron were on the hands of his sons. They are all of one. Again, look at the blessedness of the Lord owning a company as His brethren ; He has brought them to His own elevation. He has sanctified them in His own sanctification. To them He declares the Father’s name ; in their midst He sings praises. They are so attuned to His mind by the communications He has made to them, that He can lead them in praise to His God and Father. They can sing with Him. How could we sing with Him if we were not brought in the spirit of our minds into concert with His mind and thoughts ?

We see here how sonship is connected with priesthood. I have no doubt that “ I will declare thy name to my brethren ” is closely connected with priestly service—that is, it is now carried out in the assembly in priestly ministry rather than by Levitical ministry. I do not think that

a brother speaking in the assembly on the Lord's day morning should take the place of a Levite. He does not minister as a servant then, but as in the grace of the Head. He is, so to speak, a priest among priests, ministering according to the grace of the Head. To stand at a desk would be to falsify his position. It would be right in Levitical service. I mention it to shew the character of the priestly company. They are in touch with the Head, and the ministry from the Head carries their souls into the apprehension of all the Father's love, of which the Head is the fountain and well-spring to us, as well as the leader of the responsive praise to the Father.

I think there is a double character in worship—our being able to draw near in the sense of what Christ is to God, as the blessed Man in whom all His glory was made good, and the question of good and evil solved for ever, so that the created scene will be filled with glory. We have that in Leviticus viii. Then there is what He was as Son with the Father. There we have eternal relationships before ever there was a created scene. Glory which the Son had with the Father before the world was, even as He was loved before the foundation of the world. Yet this wonderful love has been and is to be told out for ever in the created scene, for sonship has been brought into manhood. So that there is not only the worship connected with the per-

fections of Christ as man, but affections rising up to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We get this line in regard of worship in John iv. The Lord knew that the Father was seeking worshippers, and He came to provide them for the Father. But how would He provide them? By His own Spirit becoming a well of water in the believer, so that the affections of the believer might be formed according to His own heart, and spring up into eternal life; and eternal life is the knowledge of the Father, and of Jesus Christ, whom the Father sent.

I want to impress you with the sense of the grace of God in providing for Himself a company who should be in the deepest thoughts of His own love, and consequently that from them in the power of His Spirit there should flow to Him the worship of those who can not only enter into what Christ is to God as having perfectly glorified Him as Man, so that there will be a universe filled with His glory, but who also worship in the Spirit of sonship as able to say Abba, Father!

Now, in providing the priestly company who of old were to minister to the Lord and be in His mind, I would direct your attention to two points. First, they were washed with water, and also blood was put upon their ears, thumbs, and toes. Secondly, they were sanctified by the anointing oil and blood which was upon the altar. We have these things in John's first epistle (chap.

v. 6), where the water and blood go together, and the Spirit is witness. "This is he [the Son of God] that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness because the Spirit is truth." Then is brought out that these three, the Spirit and the water and the blood, are the witness of God which He has testified concerning His Son, and we are conducted to the point "He that hath the Son hath life." Now, though you do not get the word "priesthood" in this portion, yet you do get a company who are in the life of His Son, and what we have to learn through the light of the New Testament is that the priesthood is a company who are to be descriptive of Christ as those who enter into the mind and thoughts of God as set forth in Him. All the glories, as well as the lights and perfections set forth in Aaron, were to be well known by his sons as associated with him. Now, how were they brought into this place of privilege, the fruit of God's gift? By water and blood—that is, by death, for us the death of Christ. No doubt the water signifies the word. The Lord says in John xv. 3: "Now ye are clean through the word which *I* have spoken unto you." He had spoken to them the words of God, and given them the words which the Father gave to Him, the words of the Father's love to Him, and therefore His word became a

cleansing word to them, connecting their souls with the sphere of the Father's love and glory, and separating them from the world. Such was the positive character of His word, but if it was to be effectual in them and in us, it must be through His going into death. Hence you find how closely the water is connected with blood. "Not by water only, but by water and blood"—that is, water is connected with death; the water and blood both flowed from the side of Christ when dead. Blood is the witness of death. Water brings with it the cleansing power of communications from another fountain, from the love of God, from the heart of the Father; it is the word of life which puts us in closest association with Him who is the life. Yet to be effectual in us there must be the witness of death, the witness that the old man is removed in death; therefore in the type you get the blood put upon the ear and thumb and toe of both Aaron and his sons. So we have: "This is he that came by water and blood;" and again, with reference to the day of atonement, "By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place"—that is, by death. He came in that way. He has gone in in that way, in order that a company might be associated with Him on that ground where all flesh is excluded by His death, and, according to Hebrews ii., attuned to Him, because He has declared to them the Father's name.

Thus the first great point of the priesthood is founded on death, and, indeed, to enter into things on God's side you must know the water and blood, and the Spirit as witness of what is true in the second Man, God's Son. The priests were taken, so to speak, out from the ordinary life of flesh, separated by death, and then sanctified with oil. A priest could not have been anointed with the holy oil if connected with the flesh; it says distinctly, "Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured," and yet the priests were anointed with it. The Spirit does not recognise nor help my flesh; it is consequent upon death having come in upon the life of flesh that the Spirit is given. Figuratively here the priests were separated from the life of flesh, and then were anointed with oil. The first man has gone, and there is another man before God, the man of His purpose and counsel. What a blessed thing to be one of that company who are associated with Him! You may approach God as an individual in the sense of your acceptance in Christ's sacrifice, but what a privilege to be of the priestly company who are companions of Him in whom all God's counsels and deepest thoughts of love are set forth. Aaron was clothed; that was necessary in order that what was intrinsic in Christ might be set forth in the garments of Aaron, as the high priest who was to minister in the sanctuary of God.

With regard to the anointing oil, the first thing which Moses anointed was the tabernacle; not Aaron first, but the tabernacle. Then he anointed the altar, and then Aaron. In anointing the tabernacle, which was a figure of the universe, it was evidently sanctified to be the sphere of the ministry of the anointed priest. In Genesis i. we have the Spirit of God brooding upon the face of the waters. You feel that not merely was a world formed by creative power, but that the Spirit of God is there. Let any one read that chapter, and you will become conscious that it was not merely natural laws which had been set in motion by the Creator, and which were operating, as they might do to form millions of worlds, but that God Himself was present and His word—"And God said," "And God said"—and the Spirit of God brooding on the face of the waters. There is something wonderful as to purpose which is to come out of the chaos, and, indeed, it was the universe of which Christ is the appointed heir, and which is yet to be filled by Him. Then the altar is anointed. It stood in the court, and was the place of approach on earth. It is here, in this scene of evil, and yet morally separated from this place, that righteousness has been maintained. The altar was sanctified for this, and good and evil have now been brought to a full issue in the sacrifice of Christ; but it was in the power of the eternal Spirit that He

offered Himself without spot to God. Christ, ever the Holy One, perfectly maintained righteousness and died for the iniquity which He hated. God's people will approach upon earth in the sense of righteousness having been thoroughly established; the judgment of evil is witnessed in the blood, but the great point is the approval of the perfect good; the righteous Lord loveth righteousness. Hence the blood of the sin-offering is afterwards sprinkled on the altar to make atonement for it. There was the utter condemnation of sin and the approval of what was excellent. This laid the basis for Israel's approach. I hope to see another time how the heavenly company get their place in the holiest, as those who are in association with the great Priest. They are brought to His elevation that they might be in the mind and thoughts of God.

Do you not think that it is a wonderful thing that out of this earth God should take a people to bring them near to Himself, and communicate to them His own thoughts? So far as I see, the angels have not been the depositaries of the thoughts and counsels of God. They do His bidding, but what a Christian knows an angel desires to look into; and when we look at the church it is that of which Paul writes, "That now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." The church is to

be descriptive of Christ as having the full assurance of understanding. If you follow out the teaching of Ephesians iii. you will see that God has got for Himself a company in nearness to Himself in Christ that enter into the deepest and fullest thoughts of His own glory and love. Ephesians brings before us specially the plan and counsel of God in the glorified Son of man. God makes known the mystery of His will for the heading up of all things in Christ in Chapter i. Then in chapter iii. the apostle bows his knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He would grant them, according to the wealth of the Father's glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man. It is the inner man that is brought into touch with the mind of God, with the Father's love, "that the Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith;" that blessed Christ in whom all the wealth of the Father's glory is expressed. He is to have the place in the heart, "being rooted and founded in love, so that ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height." What a wonderful company! Christ, the sum of the wealth of the Father's glory, the Object of the Father's love, gets a place in the hearts of that company. They are rooted and founded in love to comprehend breadth and length and depth and height—of what? Of the deepest thoughts of eternal love and glory in

Christ. Look what an elevation the priestly company is brought to. I dare say many of you remember the original form of the hymn beginning—

“Hark ! ten thousand voices crying
Lamb of God with one accord.”

It first describes the burst of praise in heaven :

“Long with free and glad devotion
Universal praise prevails,
Till, blest fruit of deep emotion,
Voice by voice in silence fails.”

The hymn then speaks of the heavenly company dwelling on the matchless love of Christ, and the glories that shine in His face :

“Then their richest thoughts unfolding
Each to each with joy divine,
Heavenly converse, blissful holding,
Tells how bright His glories shine.”

I quote the hymn because it tells of the heavenly saints speaking together of the richest thoughts of God's counsel and love in Christ, and not only praising for redemption. The hymn speaks of all that company *dwelling on surpassing love*.

“Till from a heart divinely pressed
Burst forth at length the loud exclaim :
Praise the Lamb ! at once awaking,
The gathered hosts their voices throng :

Loud and wide, each tongue partaking,
Rolls renewed the endless song."

The hymn is human language, but in spirit it expresses the idea of a company brought into the richest thoughts of God, and who speak together of all the wealth of glory and the surpassing love that is made known in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you not see that what was in the thought of God as figured in the priestly company is now carried out in a fuller way in those who are in association with Him who came by water and blood? They are brought nigh through death, and the Spirit is the witness of the glory of Christ, and of the richest unfoldings of love. Perhaps we must say to one another, "How little have we known it;" but if I could impress each one, even the youngest believer here, with the grace of God in desiring to have such a company, and the way He has taken to accomplish it, it would be a help to us. The priests belonged to the sanctuary; they were separated from the life of flesh to God. The ground on which we stand is death and resurrection, and Christ is our life, so that we belong to the scene where Christ is. But how is it brought about that we who are actually in the life of flesh down here can enjoy the priestly nearness? Look again at the woman of Samaria. She came to the well of Sychar with her heart filled with the things of this life, but

the words of Christ had such an effect upon her that she left her water-pot and went her way to speak of Him. Christ and living water had got a place in her thoughts and heart, and the water-pot with which she drew water for this life is forgotten. A new affection had sprung up in her soul, and the Lord communicates to her the Father's desire for worshippers; and that is the way it works with us. In John vi. the soul is nourished and satisfied with heavenly bread, which has been given to us in death—the deep expression of His love to us.

I feel I cannot press upon you too much the wonderful thought of a company for God, who enter into His thoughts, and in whom there is to be glory to Him in Christ Jesus through all ages. But some might say to me, “We cannot go and sit on the well with the Lord. He is not here.” No; but He has sent down the Holy Spirit to form that company who are for His glory in Christ Jesus, and the ministry of Christ by the Spirit abides. Take the Corinthians; they had got worldly, and were gratifying the flesh, so that the apostle has to blame them in the first epistle, but in the second he seeks to build them up by the ministry of the grace of God in Christ. He carries them on to resurrection ground, and says, “O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open to you, our heart is enlarged.” He was anxious that they should be in all the largeness of the

ministry of grace committed to him. If there was any straightening, it was with them, and he begs them to be enlarged, and he wants to have them separated, as a holy company should be, from all unholy associations for God. "Come out from among them . . . and I will receive you."

It is as separated by water and blood from the old life of flesh that we realise the grace of the Head in the assembly. The anointing oil on Aaron's head flowed down to the skirts of his garments, and priestly service in the assembly is dependent upon the grace of the Head flowing to the members, whether we look at the worship which rises up to our God and Father, or ministering to one another, as we speak of the rich unfoldings of divine love. Or, again, as it says, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." A spiritual song is the response of the saints by the Spirit to the divine communications of love in Christ. It is wonderful that we should be able to dwell upon the glories of the Lord Jesus Christ and speak of them to the Father as those in the place of sons.

A great point in the consecration of the priests was that their hands were filled. If you remember, the priest took a handful of the flour from the meat offering. He filled his hand, and, as here, what filled the hand of the priest was burnt for God. When Aaron enters upon his service

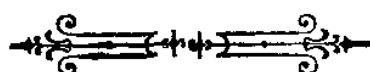
(chap. ix.) he filled his hand with the meat offering and burnt it. So here the word consecration means filling the hands. The ram of consecration was connected with the burnt offering, only that in the burnt offering all was burnt upon the altar for God, but in the ram of consecration the fat and heave shoulder, together with an unleavened cake, a cake of oiled bread, and a wafer, were all put on Aaron's hands and on the hands of his sons, and waved before the Lord, and then burnt upon the altar upon the burnt offering for a sweet savour. That shews us how Aaron's sons are in the same appreciation of the sweet savour to God as Aaron. They worship in his company. It is Christ who has provided this company for God, as Moses did figuratively here ; but then He is also the leader of the company as Aaron. It is a great thing in the meeting on the Lord's day morning to worship in the company of Christ. In the sense of the presence of the Lord in all His greatness, one would shrink out of sight, but we get His support as the High Priest with whom we are associated. It might be thought that the support of the Priest is for those who take part ; but no, it is for every one. Each heart is sustained by Christ in the sense of the place of worship and blessing it is brought into. He brings us into it as the Mediator, and sustains us as the Priest. Thus we are able to enter into all that Christ was to God in devoted

love, and into His perfections as being brought into the same elevation as the Priest. And it is in the company of Christ that we enter also into what He was to the Father as the Son of His love, and enjoy the love which belongs to sons. A response of love is thus provided from our poor hearts to His blessed love. The consecrations were burnt upon the altar, which means that all was for God.

Finally, the priests fed upon the flesh, with the cakes that were in the basket of consecrations, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. They could not go farther, but still it was a holy place, and there they are nourished, and were in the enjoyment of the same food which had been offered to God. That is our place, to be nourished by that which we see is set forth in Christ; in beholding the glory of the Lord we are occupied with the fullest, deepest, richest thoughts of God which are set forth in Him. The priests were not to leave the tabernacle for seven days, and so I believe the Lord's day morning meeting spreads its character over us for the week. It is true we have to be in our daily work, but the sense of being brought into the thoughts of God and nearness to Him in love would greatly affect us. In spirit we need not leave the tabernacle. The sense of the place which we have with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ would affect us in every way through feeding

upon Christ. We see this in the epistle to the Ephesians. Every relationship of life is affected by the access given to believers. Feeding upon the consecrations is something like the peace offering; it is the soul's enjoyment of Christ, only here it is the privilege of the company. It is not exactly worship, but enjoyment, and we are nourished by that which we feed upon.

Well, beloved friends, is it our enjoyment? Much more might be said, but I look to the Lord to make effectual in all our souls what I have brought before you to-night. There is the priestly company who were brought into such a position that they might be for God, and respond to the thoughts of His heart. May we know these thoughts as revealed in Christ, and so be descriptive of Him. Aaron's sons were clothed, and our clothing, so to speak, is to be descriptive of Christ, as those who are of His sanctified company.



THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.

(Lev. xvi.)

I WILL recall for a moment what we have had before us of late. You will remember that the first point I brought before you was the Lord seating Himself in the tabernacle, and calling to Moses from thence, the object being to give to the people of Israel the opportunity and privilege of approaching Him in His own dwelling-place. Then, secondly, we saw what engaged them when they did draw near—that is, the perfections of Christ, whether in His glorifying God in devoted love, as in the burnt offering, or whether we look at the perfections of the heavenly Man, though here upon earth, as in the meat offering. We saw also the soul's apprehension and enjoyment of Christ in the peace offering. Then last week I brought before you the priesthood, God bringing a company into nearness to Himself, that they might minister to Him and be in the intelligence of His mind, as those to whom special communications were made. If you remember, we went to the New Testament for the height both of worship and

apprehension. This we saw in Ephesians iii, where the apostle prays that they might "be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height." God would have a company who have access through Jesus Christ by one Spirit to the Father, and who are in the apprehension of His deepest thoughts of glory in Christ, and know the surpassing love of Christ. The result is, that there is glory to God, according to this wonderful working of divine love, in the assembly through all ages.

Now I want to bring before you in a practical way that of which I have been speaking, for we realise in the assembly in a special way what is the privilege of this priestly company. The assembly is God's dwelling-place now; the saints are builded together for a habitation of God by the Spirit. What I would desire, then, is that every believer should have the sense that it is God's pleasure to have us near to Himself. Not merely that He looked upon you in pity and compassion to redeem you from the guilt and dominion of sin, but that, having redeemed you, He has a pleasure in you. In reality it is the day of atonement which lays the ground for God to open out to us the good pleasure of His will.

This comes out in Hebrews x. You may not be conversant with the good pleasure of His will, but at least you can understand that what He willed and purposed is His pleasure. In Revelation iv. 11 the elders speak of the Lord's worthiness to receive glory and honour, "for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." The word for "pleasure" in the original is "thy will." God's will is His pleasure. It is not that God wills a thing, and that will is purely arbitrary, as Job thought when he said, "He is of one mind, and who can turn him?" but God's will is His good pleasure. That is a great point for the soul to lay hold of; it will have the effect of drawing you to Himself. It is all expressed in Christ, and the more you think of it the more it will make you ask, "What is God's good pleasure as to me?"

We have seen that it was God's pleasure that His people should approach Him in His own dwelling-place. It was His pleasure to dwell among them. They were to know this. "They shall know that I am the Lord their God that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them." (Ex. xxix. 46.) I know that all broke down because they were a people in the flesh, so that in their sacrifices God had no pleasure; but the time will come when He will be pleased with their sacrifices of righteousness. Now, Christians are those to

whom God has made known His great love ; they have come under the power of that love in Christ, and hence they are drawn to His dwelling-place. Supposing each one came to the meeting on Sunday morning in the thought of God's pleasure in having them near to Himself. But how will you realise this? If I think of the love of God, it is a boundless ocean—as we say, “too vast to comprehend ;” but God's love has come to us in Christ—that is how we realise it ; and it is in Him also that each one learns a peculiarity of love. It is not merely that we know that “God is love,” but in the Lord Jesus Christ I know a blessed person who came down from heaven, “who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Now you cannot speak in that way of the love of God, though it is in that way that it reaches you ; but the youngest believer can have the sense of the peculiarity of the love of the Lord—He loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*. What will be the effect of that upon you? Why, it draws your heart to Himself. Thus it is that you respond to the Lord's call out of the tabernacle ; you become conscious of His good pleasure. It is Christ who gains our hearts by His own peculiar love to us, and it is He who conducts us into the consciousness of God's good pleasure. We could not approach apart from Him.

Now, when you have reached His presence in the assembly, what next? You would feel that

you had come to the place where Christ is all. When an Israelite went into the tabernacle, though they were only figures, there was nothing but Christ before him ; whether it was the daily lamb, or the burnt sacrifice, or meat or peace offerings, all was Christ. We sing sometimes, "The merits of the Lord appear ; they fill the holy place." You come where Christ engages the affections and worship of the saints. It is not your need and how it is met which is before you, but Himself, His perfections, and what He is to God, who has been glorified in Him. The breaking of bread brings Himself before us in a peculiar manner, and hence, though I do not pretend to lay down any rule, it should come early in our assemblies. It is in the supper that we are conscious of the peculiarity of His love to us, and thus our souls are on the platform of His love and fulness, and not of our need.

Now, having come on to this platform, perhaps the thought in your mind would be, how feeble you are in yourself to apprehend the preciousness of Christ, to enter into all that He is for God, to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge. In a certain sense I can understand His dying for me, but when I think of His perfections under the eye of God, of what the Son is to the Father, I feel how little able I am to enter into it, and here comes in the good and blessing of what it is to be priests in the company of

Christ. I am not merely like an Israelite who could stand by the altar while the sweet savour ascended to God, but I have the support of the great Priest. I feel in my weakness the blessedness of being associated with the High Priest. If it is only to speak a few words of worship in the sense of Christ's love to us, and of what He is to God, how I want to be in His company and to be conscious of His support—that is, of His Spirit. It is wonderful to be priests in the company of Christ. The same things were put on the hands of his sons as on Aaron's hands. You worship in Christ's company. Thus you get supported, and in realising that support by His Spirit you have the sense of being very close to His heart. The names of the tribes were upon the breastplate as well as on the shoulders of Aaron. Thus you taste love; you are bound to the heart of Christ, as the breastplate was bound to the Ephod. It is there really that you are conscious of sonship. You are so near to Christ that you know His love, and are thus prepared for the greatest love that ever could be told out, not merely that you are a forgiven prodigal, but that love brings you into the same relationship as Christ: "that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them."

I have put what has been before us of late into a practical form, and now I come to the day of atonement. In it we see set forth the ground on

which God could accomplish the good pleasure of His will. The more you enter into what the thoughts of God are as to His people, the deeper, I believe, will be your sense of the atonement wrought upon the cross, that there God was glorified in respect of sin. It is like a tree: if the branches grow the roots must grow, in order to sustain them. The more you enter into the preciousness of God's thoughts, the more your hearts will turn back to that work which set God free to bless according to His own purpose. It was there that He removed out of His sight all that was offensive to Him. It is not that I want so much to expound the day of atonement in all its bearings as to put before you something that may help each soul. And here I would notice a great point in Paul's writings, which seems to me to bring out a special result for us of the day of atonement. There can be no question of his allusion to it in the Epistle to the Hebrews (see chap. ii. 17, ix. 26, x. 1), and again in Romans iii. 25, where the word for "propitiation" is really "mercy-seat." With Paul, God coming out is a great point. Look at a few verses. There is the one just alluded to, "whom *God* hath set forth, a propitiation [or mercy-seat], through faith, in his blood." Paul does not there begin from our side, but from God's. So again, "*God* commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" and

again, “*God* sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh,” “*He* (God) hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Peter more takes up our side, “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring *us to God* ;” and again, “who his own self bare *our* sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins should live unto righteousness : by whose stripes ye were healed.” It is a most blessed line, but it is in Paul’s teaching that we find the great result of the day of atonement as set forth in the New Testament : God is free to come out, and to accomplish His will. This is seen in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is true that the doctrine does not reach up to what we have looked at in Ephesians, for the apostle is seeking to lead the Jews away from Judaism altogether into the great result of the day of atonement. God can now bring many sons to glory, and as a present blessing they have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, they have liberty to be in a scene of holy love. The apostle brings them to it, shews them the new and living way, but does not develop this place of nearness. He does not speak of sonship, nor of being made to sit in the heavenly places in Christ, but he shews the putting away of sin as on the day of atonement,

so that the ground is laid for the accomplishment of God's will through the one offering of Christ. He goes farther in the epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians. He looks at the saints as over Jordan in Colossians, but that point is hardly reached in Hebrews. The great point of Colossians is association with Christ, as risen with Him; but, as I said, he shews the Hebrews the new and living way, and exhorts them to take it. It is a wonderful thing to be in association with Christ. God has come out to reconcile, and it was the putting away of sin which enabled Him to come out and reconcile by the death of His Son. I suppose, though the veil could not then be rent, yet there was a kind of figure in Aaron coming out and reconciling the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar where Israel approached. This is referred to in Col. i. 20. All things are to be reconciled to the fulness, because peace has been made by the blood of the cross; every disturbing element has been removed, the old things are passed away, the new have come, and God has been perfectly glorified. This is known by the Spirit.

Now, if we look a little more closely at the day of atonement, we shall see that the great point was meeting the holiness of God, not so much the needs of men. There was the question of God's glory. In the case of the two goats it is very evident, lots were cast and one goat was

the *Lord's* lot. It was to reconcile in the holy place; the blood went in where God dwelt; it was sprinkled on the mercy-seat, not on the altar where the people approached. It was not a question of righteousness only—that is, of the settlement of good and evil by the fire upon the altar (though the question never was settled, for the testing was always going on), but on the day of atonement it was the removal of sin from God's sight. We certainly gather that from Hebrews ix.: “Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” That is not merely dealing in the righteous government of God with men as sinners, though they are under judgment through that righteous government, as we read, “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment,” and “so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;” but on the day of atonement it was the putting away of sin. The holiness of God was met. He was glorified in the putting away of sin, and hence He could come out and declare His righteousness in His past ways of forbearance and in His present ways of grace, and carry out the purpose of His love, so that finally there will be a whole universe of bliss. We see in the reconciling of the tabernacle a figure of the millennium, when things will be brought into blessing by Christ coming from the holy place. “Unto them who look for him shall

he appear the second time without sin unto salvation ;” but it finally leads into the new heavens and new earth, the whole universe of bliss.*

It is an important point for us to see this putting away of sin, in order that God might reveal His good pleasure and bring us into it, because actually we see so much evil around, but before God sin has been dealt with and put away. You have the same truth told out in John i. : “ Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” The ground of the taking away of sin out of God’s universe is that the Lamb of God has died. Sin has been dealt with in that God made Him to be sin, and instead of evil being prevalent in God’s universe, all will be filled with the Spirit. But as a present result of the putting away of sin, and of the perfection through Christ’s offering, the Spirit has come *to us*. As it says in Hebrews x., “ Whereof the Holy Ghost also is witness *to us* ”—that is, to Christians. By-and-by, the witness will be that Christ will come out. “ He will appear the

* The full result of reconciliation is that no trace of the former state remains before God—sin having been put away. God wipes away all tears, and there is no more death, neither sorrow nor crying—there is no more pain, for the *former things have passed away*. There is nothing but what is of God, “ I make all things new.” But now it can be said of Christians, “ Of him are ye in Christ Jesus.” The prodigal has passed into a new sphere of divine love, where no trace of the old remains, where all is pervaded by the Spirit.

second time without sin unto salvation"; but now the Holy Ghost is witness *to us*. The remnant of Israel will look for Him to come out, and the apostle doubtless speaks according to Jewish hopes, though we can look for Christ also according to our hope; but, then, to us the Spirit is witness, and thus we can say—

“That gives us now as heavenly light,
What soon shall be our part.”

He is the witness of the settlement of the question of sin according to God's holiness, and nothing now stands in the way to hinder the accomplishment of God's pleasure. God is free, because the blood has gone within, to make known the deepest riches of His grace, and shed His love abroad in our hearts by the Spirit, so that we might dwell in love.

If we look at the day of atonement a little more closely, we find that it was instituted in consequence of the breakdown of the priesthood who were actually according to the flesh. Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before the Lord on the first day that they took up their office in respect of Israel. It was a witness that the flesh cannot have any place in the presence of God. It will help us if we consider this point in connection with our own privileges. Some of us may not be quite

clear as to the flesh. Many of us in the assembly may have been looking to our own fervent feelings, instead of being conscious of the support of the great Priest in the holy place. The danger is in allowing religious flesh to have a place in the things of God, and even if our fervent feelings have been spiritually produced, we have to take care that they are not mixed up with excitement of the flesh, instead of our hearts being associated with Christ in the sanctuary in the power of the Spirit. Our feelings very often betray us, and the flesh spoils what should be spiritual. I commend this to you, that you do not rely upon having a spiritual position (that belongs to all Christians), apart from being consciously in the company of Christ. He has entered in by death, and in His company you will feel that all that you are as in the flesh has been obliterated; knowledge will not serve you, though you may know the truth of the church very correctly. The soul has to be kept in the sense of the death of Christ, separated thus from the flesh, and brought on to His ground, for it is "in Him we stand, a heavenly band." There, in all our feebleness, we know His greatness and His support, and we realise what it is to be close to His heart.

In connection with the breakdown of the priesthood, I would here notice another point, and that is, the breakdown of Israel themselves

with regard to their privileges in the tabernacle. I mentioned before that they really never did offer sacrifices beyond the inauguration offerings; we read that they “took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan,” instead of offering to God (Acts vii. 42, 43), and finally, in the gainsaying of Korah, they maintained that all the congregation were holy, and rebelled against the King and Priest in Jeshurun. Henceforth the people must not come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin and die. (Numb. xviii. 22.) It was on the day of atonement that God vindicated *His own* holiness, in that His tabernacle remained among them; but a new provision was made for the people who must not come near the tabernacle, in the red heifer and the water of separation, for they were now in a wilderness condition in the place of defilement and death. God’s grace made a provision for such, but it is not the same thing as being the consecrated company in the sanctuary. How often it is so; the people of God are more often found in the position where they can stumble over a grave than in the consciousness of their priestly character, and brought to have part with Christ. It would affect us in every detail if we were more conscious of this.

I mention this to shew what the character of the flesh is in every way, and that it cannot have

to do with the things of God. It has been often said that consequent on the breakdown of the priesthood according to the flesh, Aaron never went into the holiest in his garments of glory and beauty—that is, as the great administrative priest over the house of God. He had to take other ground, and put on holy linen garments, and enter in with the blood of atonement. For himself and his house he takes a bullock for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering; besides, his hands are filled with sweet incense—I suppose the perfections of Christ—which he has to put upon a censer full of burning coals from the altar—how different from the censers of Nadab and Abihu!—so that the cloud of incense covered the mercy-seat. Aaron is not seen; the incense filled the holy place. Had it not been so, Aaron would have died as Nadab and Abihu did. Thus hidden, and only the perfections of Christ covering the mercy-seat, Aaron sprinkles the blood once on the mercy-seat where God dwelt between the cherubim, and seven times before it, the perfect witness of death having come in for the putting away of sin from before God, and that the sins of many had been borne, though perhaps this is more connected with the goat whose blood went in for the people. Thus propitiation is effected for two companies, for Aaron and his sons and for the people. The people do not get their place within, but propi-

tiation went in for them, so that Aaron might come out, and confess their sins on the head of the scapegoat. The effect of the blood going within is that on Aaron coming out the holy place and the altar are reconciled. Christ has tasted death for every thing, and all things consequently will be reconciled to the fulness. But it is a great thing for our souls to know how the blood has gone into the presence of God, so that there is the witness of the putting away of sin, and God has been glorified in respect of that which has been a blot upon His glory. Christ has entered in by His own blood, having found eternal redemption. A priesthood after the flesh broke down, and could have no place before God in the holiest; but now, sin having been put away, He has come out in the most blessed way to reconcile through the death of His son, and as reconciled we get a place within according to the purpose of love. Hence we give thanks to the Father, who has made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. I do not doubt that it is having on the best robe (Christ) which makes us meet for the inheritance, but in the light we learn how completely sin has been put away to God's glory, and Christ is our righteousness in the presence of God.

I call to your minds a passage which I have before alluded to in these lectures. "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.

If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." (John xiii. 31, 32.) Now, there is not a word about our sins in that verse; it is all about God's glory. Judas had gone out into the dark night of death and judgment, and God's glory is made good in the Son of Man; the result is that He is glorified in the glory of God. Man has gone out, but the little company inside are instructed in the glory of the Son of man in glorifying God. God's glory has been made good in the universe, where it had been blotted. Nadab and Abihu in their day dishonoured the Lord. Hence Moses says: "This is that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people will I be glorified." Nadab and Abihu went out. The flesh had dishonoured God in the place of nearness, and it was this led to the day of atonement, the putting away sin before Him, and glorifying Him according to His own holiness.

There is a point in verse 17: "There shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place until he come out." It would seem to be the same subject as that taught in Hebrews ix., that the first tabernacle has no standing now that Christ has entered in. The first tabernacle was connected with Israel, and they have no place until He comes out and they know the value of

the day of atonement. But for those who have believed in Christ—"the pretrusters in Christ," as Paul calls them (Eph. i. 12)—those who believe now He has gone in, and before He comes out, God can now unfold His deepest purposes of love. God has come out in love by the Spirit to bring us in. The great purpose of His love is that we should be before Him in love, as Christ is. There is no straightening now, but love can be fully made known. "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." This is based upon what He had said before: "I have glorified thee upon the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Not only is there shelter from judgment by the blood, but God is free to come out in love and have a company inside, those predestinated to sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, and the Spirit is given that we may respond to this love.

I finish with what I began the good pleasure of God. He has removed everything that stood in the way of His good pleasure being carried out. What I desire is that each one may be conscious of it. We have seen in Nadab and Abihu that the flesh can have no place with God, it cannot enter into the things of God; but the Spirit has been given that we may know the things which are freely given to us of God—

what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man. Is it not wonderful? It is the inner man which the Spirit strengthens, that that blessed Christ, and all God's glory in Him, should have a place in our hearts, and that we should be able to respond to the communications of love. It is so blessed to know that on the ground of the day of atonement the fullest blessing can come out, and we go in to the fullest blessing. The Spirit is given to us as the witness of the glory of God in Christ, and of the good pleasure of the purpose of His love. May the Lord give us to enter into it for His name's sake.

