

SERMONS OF C D MAYNARD

by C.D. Maynard

Maynard's sermons addressing three grounds for receiving God's blessings: mercy as God's sovereign grace, righteousness as reward for the faithful, and faith as the means by which God's provision is received.

6 Chapters

Table of Contents

1. 00.00. Maynard, C. D. - Articles
2. S. Mercy, Righteousness, and Faith.
3. S. The Firstborn.
4. S. The Forgiveness of Sins by the Church.
5. S. The Peace Offering.
6. S. Works of Faith and Good Works.

00.00. Maynard, C. D. - Articles

Maynard, C. D. - Articles Mercy, Righteousness, and Faith. The Firstborn. The Forgiveness of Sins by the Church. The Peace Offering.

Works of Faith and Good Works.

S. Mercy, Righteousness, and Faith.

Mercy, Righteousness, and Faith.

C. D. Maynard.

Christian Friend vol. 15, 1888, p. 259.

I notice that there are three grounds on which blessing comes from God to men.

First, there is the fountain of grace in His own blessed nature. He gives as He will even to the most undeserving. Thus "the Dayspring from on high hath visited us." And we read, "I was found of them that sought Me not." This is mercy. God falls back, so to speak, on His sovereign prerogative of mercy when the creature has utterly failed, as after the golden calf at Sinai. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." And the feeble creature can fall back on this too, be he a sinner crying, like the publican, for mercy, or the saint "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life;" that is, not that we have not, as regards the soul, eternal life now, for "he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life," but we look that the grace that has visited us with salvation should rise above all our failures and demerits and land us safe in the glory. The mercy of God is the first great ground of our blessing, and abides when every other fails; but there are other grounds on which God blesses. There is the blessing on the righteous man. "Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth." Now, as regards our relation with God as children of Adam, the law proposed blessing purely on this ground, but neither man innocent nor man fallen secured blessing thus. Jesus alone can claim the blessing of the righteous Man. Still it is the governmental law of God, and most important for us to keep constantly in mind as saints. "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous." "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil," etc. (1 Peter 3:1-22) But there is a third ground of blessing, and that is faith. Through faith they escaped the edge of the sword; quenched the violence of fire. Women received their dead raised to life again. The history of faith is extremely interesting to us who in some feeble measure are on the ground of faith. It characterizes the Christian that he walks "by faith, not by sight." You could not say this of the Jew as such. One thing that interests one is this, that while faith lasts it gets the blessing; but that when it fails, as, alas! it often does under prolonged and severe pressure, God falls back on His own prerogative of blessing the undeserving in pure mercy; so that the blessing comes, and it may be the very looked-for blessing comes, although the failure of faith may also entail some loss. This, I think, is well illustrated in the history of Moses's infancy.

Here is the story. His parents recognize that he is THE proper child. They had, it appears, the sense that he was God's man for Israel's deliverance. Faith comes in now and gives them power, perhaps to hush the child's cries, or in some way to hide him from the murderous emissaries of the king. Their faith lasted three months. While they had faith they hid him - they kept their beautiful child. At the end of three months they cast him out (Acts 7:21); they "could not longer hide him." (Exodus 2:1-25) Had they not come to the end of their faith? Perhaps the child was strong and

loud. At all events they put him by the brink of the dangerous river, with probably some lingering hope that, if they "cast him out," God would take him up. Was the proper child to be drowned in the Nile? Better that than Pharaoh's sword. What a day it must have been for the mother! Then God's hand comes in. The thing desired was the child's life. It is preserved. Protection comes from the least-expected quarter - the palace. But a home in Pharaoh's house is not presented to us as an answer to faith. I think it could not be looked at thus. One sees the desire of the heart given - the child's life; but see what the mother loses. She is a hireling - nurse to Pharaoh's daughter; and when the child is grown she loses him, and another woman names her child, and has him for her son. Looking at the mother's side, I see faith was powerful as long as faith was there; and when faith was not there God's mercy was, and was more conspicuously displayed than in the day of faith. The same principle is displayed in David's history. For long - nine years I believe - he endured the hunting of Saul, in confidence that the anointing oil of Jehovah was on his head, and that therefore the crown would be his. In fact and for faith he was invulnerable. At the end his faith breaks down; and he, fearing he shall one day fall by the sword of Saul, falls away to the Philistines. (1 Samuel 27:1-12.) He joins the ranks of the open enemies of Jehovah and his people. Faith has gone. What then? We might expect some rebuke or dreadful chastisement. "But He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." A battle happens; and while David is yet on the side of the Philistines, but providentially and most happily far from the battle-field, Saul is slain, and the crown comes to David. This is very striking. The blessing comes in the moment of failure. It displays the infirmity of the vessel and the gracious faithfulness of God. There could not have been a greater rebuke to David's doubt, nor, I think, a greater encouragement to our faith; for faith is the expression of the amount of confidence we have in God. In Jesus this confidence was perfect. There was no question as to the power; so He said, "Thou wilt show Me the path of life," though the road lay through the grave. (Psalms 16:1-11) This is what faith wants - a greater power than all that can be against us, and that power for us. The pledge of both we find respectively in the resurrection and death of our Lord. "God raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope may be in God." May our hearts respond to the encouragement the Lord gives to our faith. C. D. M.

S. The Firstborn.

The Firstborn.

C. D. Maynard.

Christian Friend, vol. 13, 1886, p. 225. The righteousness of God was witnessed by the law and the prophets, although only manifested by the cross, resurrection, and glorification of our Lord. The witnessing was to the manifestation what the shadow is to the substance - a resemblance and a contrast. The outline may be simpler, but the fulness is wanting. Now the shadows are left by the Lord doubtless to help us to understand better the reality. One of the most interesting of these shadows is found in the relative position and fate of the firstborn of the clean and unclean animals. In them we have a wonderful picture of the Saviour, the sinner, and the atonement.

If I think of the relative status in nature and under the law of the clean and unclean beasts, clearly the clean have the advantage. Noah shows us this when he takes seven to one into the ark. When I remember this I am struck with the fact that the firstling of the unclean creature has greatly the advantage over that of the clean; for it may freely enjoy life, though only on the ground of redemption; but the other is absolutely doomed to death. Thus we read, "The firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem." (Numbers 18:15.) But the firstling of a cow, a sheep, a goat, that is, of clean animals, "thou shalt not redeem; they are holy: thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar," etc. These two classes of animals represent two men - the unclean or sinful man, and the holy man. Man looked at as the race, including of course every individual save One, stands side by side with the unclean animal, and this not from any act of our own which made us guilty, but from our birth, from which, through the first man's sin, we were constituted sinners, and by nature children of wrath. So we find coupled with the redemption of the unclean firstling - "The firstborn of man shalt thou surely redeem." This teaches the unholy nature of man. In a similar way we find man associated with the ass in Exodus 13:1-22, reminding us of Zophar's word, "Though man be born like a wild ass's colt," giving man the thought of the naturally insubordinate character of our hearts - They are "not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." So we see man away from God, under condemnation, and needing a Saviour from his birth. This corresponds with the end of Romans 5:1-21 : "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." But also we see redemption as large as the ruin - "The firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem." There stands the open door of salvation for all. "By one righteousness the free gift was towards all to justification of life."

Now in the midst of redemption-mercy there was One for whom there was none. For the firstling of the clean beast there was no escape from death. Strange may seem the reason: it was holy. The unclean might find an escape, the holy never. What a riddle this presents to the natural mind! It seems subversive of all justice, and it would be of all human and legal righteousness. But what a vivid picture it is of God's righteousness in saving the sinner! Here was the will of God, our sanctification. This must be by sacrifice; namely, by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once. (Hebrews 10:10.) Our Lord comes to do that will. He takes the place in infinite grace of the clean

animal, being Himself the firstborn of every creature, and "that holy thing," as Luke declares. Now the absolute doom of the firstborn of the sheep, etc., pictures His awful position as thus come, shut up without escape to judgment. True He looked beyond it to that right-hand place where there are pleasures for evermore; and He could say, "Thou wilt shew me the path of life;" and, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places." But it was nevertheless true that the weight of that judgment into which He had to go was on His spirit. His enemies, ignorant of the truth, correctly expressed it in the bitter and cruel taunt, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." As the end draws near we find Him fully alive to the situation, but absolutely undeterred by it. So we read, "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?" As indeed in the garden the terror of it was upon His holy spirit - "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." It is not possible - "Thou shalt not redeem." There is the type - "Thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar." So too the, for the time, unanswered prayers for deliverance in Psalms 22:1-31 - "I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not" Now in all this depth of suffering, shut in to judgment, "deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts," we see the wonderful perfection of the Lord. He justifies God in the midst of all - "Thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." The depth of His trial proved how truly He was holy. There was no answer of evil to be wrung from His heart. There was a Man in whom only good was, and only good could come forth; thus He was a sweet savour to God. All men much tested had utterly failed - Job and others - and must range themselves, as we must, side by side with the unclean beast. In Christ we find the only antitype of the clean animal, and (consequence to Him of His grace and love to us) He was the only One for whom there was no escape; so that through the grace of God there might be for the sinner who believes in Him.

If we carry on further the history of the firstborn, it is full of interest and instruction. The firstborn of Israel were saved by the blood at the passover; but those so redeemed were specially and peculiarly God's. "Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb . . . is mine." (Exodus 13:2.) Thus the firstborn was not merely redeemed from death, it was bought for God - "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your bodies . . . which are God's."

Now the history of the firstborn was this: God had His tabernacle, with its varied and multiplied services, to perform which required an immense number of men. Now this service belonged to the firstborn, but their places were taken by the tribe of Levi. Each Levite represented a firstborn man in Israel. The number of eldest children that exceeded the number of that tribe were redeemed by five shekels of silver each. (Numbers 3:46-48; Numbers 3:8.) Thus the Levites were in a special way a redeemed company. Clearly they are thus typical of Christians, both in our redemption and in the claim God has upon us for service as redeemed. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God" (redemption-mercies here) "that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." The firstborn thus viewed has, so to speak, a double history from his redemption, and so have we. First, he dies in his substitute, then he lives as a servant in the Levite. And this finds its antitype in the believer now - We are dead with Christ. (Romans 6:8.) That is the end of our history as responsible children of Adam - "I am crucified with Christ." So the Israelitish father might say, "My son has died in that lamb." Then that history ends. But "nevertheless I live." Now we have a new life - "Christ liveth in me." At this point we have the Levite before us, saved from death, but devoted to God. The individuality remains the same, of course; but I am dead as a child of Adam, I live as a child of God - redeemed and born of

Him. Thus we get our double privilege and responsibility, both to reckon ourselves dead to sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Christ is not only the firstborn who dies, but also the firstborn who lives. He is the first from the dead. Thus it is blessed to think of Him in triumph over all His enemies, and in grace associating us with Himself. "He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." We are through grace the church of the firstborn ones whose names are written in heaven, also "a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." When we see our association with Christ - and may we know it better - we would thankfully own that all our blessings flow from grace through His being shut up without escape to death. Thus only could the purposes of God towards us be accomplished. Now if we are firstborn with Christ, so to speak, still God's counsel secures for Him as always the pre-eminence - "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." C. D. Maynard.

S. The Forgiveness of Sins by the Church.

The Forgiveness of Sins by the Church. When the forgiveness of sins by the Church is spoken of some get alarmed, and think it is Popery. They say, Who can forgive sins, but God only?"

Now in a sense no doubt this is true. Eternal forgiveness belongs only to God. And in one very real sense all sins are against Him, and against Him only, as David said by the Spirit (Psalms 51:4); and who but He can forgive them? And here I would wish to say a word about the Christian doctrine of the forgiveness of sins. This is set forth in the epistle to the Hebrews, in the entire putting away from God's memory of all the believer's sins. Whether past, present, or future is not the question; all are gone. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (Hebrews 10:17.) The judicial ground of this is the sacrifice of the cross, where all were expiated. The Jew knew forgiveness in a sense. The sin he had committed was forgiven when the appointed victim was brought and offered. Not that the blood of bulls and goats could ever take away sin; but it was the picture of one whose conscience was cleansed up to a certain date, not purged for ever. Now Christians are apt to get a thought of forgiveness like this, and to run in their minds to the blood for fresh cleansing from fresh sins. The truth is, that the cross has already answered for that fresh sin. The moral character of the sin is aggravated by the fact that it is done against the Holy One, who has died that it might not be imputed. Now although sins are never imputed to the believer, yet sin interrupts communion with the Father, and the one who sins has to be restored in his soul. How is this done? Not by faith in the blood, but by his confession, as far as he is concerned. The confession is the fruit of Christ's advocacy on high, and the action of the Word on the conscience of the sinner. But the moral ground on which such a person is restored to communion is his repentance and confession, on which his sin is forgiven. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9.) But besides divine forgiveness, Scripture distinctly recognizes, a forgiveness which is vested in the hands of men while Christ is away in heaven. A Scripture which plainly shows this is John 20:23 : "Whosoever, sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." All must admit, therefore, that there was once a company on earth who, having received the Holy Spirit, were empowered by the Lord Jesus to forgive or retain sins. But it is said, "That was apostolic." Let us admit it for the moment, the fact remains that it was men who acted thus. No doubt they acted for God, but still men remitted sins. But if we look at the chapter we see that there is no ground for saying it was apostolic. It says the disciples were assembled, not apostles. And that disciples in these last chapters of John does not mean exclusively apostles John 21:2 shows; for there Nathaniel is said to be one of the disciples, and we know he was not an apostle. The only Scriptures I know for saying that the forgiveness of sins was apostolic are Matthew 16:1-28 and 2 Corinthians 2:1-17. In the first we find the Lord giving to Peter authority to bind and loose on earth, and stating that it would be ratified in heaven. But this authority is not given to the apostles as such, but to Peter in particular. Then in 2 Corinthians 2:1-17 we find Paul saying that he has forgiven on behalf of the assembly at Corinth. It appears that he had anticipated the action of the Church towards the wicked person whom, in the first epistle, he had directed the

assembly to put out. But this apostolic forgiveness was not independent of the assembly ("for your sakes forgive him"), nor did it render Church forgiveness needless; for he says of this person, "Ye ought to forgive him." (2 Corinthians 2:7) We do not, I think, know of any other apostles binding or loosing sins. But whatever the apostolic power was, it is not of practical importance to us now, for the apostles have gone. The Church however remains; and we have to see what scriptures authorize the Church or assembly to remit sins. The first is Matthew 18:18-20. At the time the Lord Jesus uttered these words the Church was a future thing; for in Matthew 16:1-28 the Lord speaks of it as a building which He would build. The constitution of the Church is described in Matthew 16:20 - two or three gathered to His name, and Himself with them in their midst. Now it is in direct connection with such a gathering that the Lord says, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Thus the power that was given to Peter in Matthew 16:1-28 was given to the Church in Matthew 18:18-20. Peter has passed away, but the assembly remains, and the Lord is with those gathered to His name. And it is His presence and word which gives authority to their acts. We must notice that the Lord does not say that those so gathered are infallible in acting, but that they have authority. Their acts are ratified in heaven. The next Scripture we come to is John 20:1-31. Here we find the power of remitting sins given to a company of men. This company is characterized by two things - first, that they stand in the known place of an accomplished redemption; and, secondly, that they possess the Holy Spirit. Now there is such a company, through grace, still on earth, and it is the Church. These people are called in John 15:1-27 disciples, and these characteristics are those of all who are such, and are not in any sense peculiar to apostles and elders, or pastors or teachers.

If now we turn to find in the historical record illustrations of the exercise of this power of forgiving and retaining sins, we have a distinct case in the epistle to the Corinthians. In the first epistle we read that there was a wicked person in the assembly; and the saints are commanded to put him away from amongst themselves. He was put outside, and he was there among the unrighteous, not now recognized as a saint, but as a wicked person. "His sin was retained." Then grace worked in his soul, and he repented. The assembly, which had been slow to judge him, was now slow to forgive him; and their slackness becomes the occasion of the apostle's word in 2 Corinthians 2:1-17, "Ye ought rather to forgive him, and to comfort him." Here we see an assembly forgiving sins. This clearly has nothing to do with the eternal forgiveness of Hebrews 10:1-39, which no sin in the saints can, thank God, disturb. Nor does it have anything to do with the restoration of the soul to communion with the Father. (1 John 1:1-10) But it has to do with bringing back the erring one into the communion of the saints on earth. He has been put out as a fornicator, and now he was forgiven; and he was no longer recognized as a wicked person, but as a saint - one of "ours." His sin was gone from the mind of the assembly by the act of the assembly. It is interesting to notice that the word used here is, freely or heartily forgiven,* the same as in Ephesians. Does not this speak of the perfect restoration of the poor sinner back amongst the company of those who themselves are but blood-washed sinners.

* charizomai. The ordinary word translated forgive or remit is aphemi.

Now we see from this case at Corinth that in every act of restoration, as we commonly call it, there is the thought of the forgiveness of the sin for which the person has been put away. Restoration, in our ordinary sense, means that the assembly forgives the sin and receives back into its midst the repentant saint. In Scripture the word "restoration" is not used in this sense. We find it in Galatians

6:1. The spiritual saints are told to restore in a spirit of meekness a man who is overtaken in some offence. They are to bring him back into communion with God, and into happy working with the saints. This, I believe, is the force of the word (katartizo) here used. It is a word applied to mending nets. (Matthew 4:21.) The broken ends are joined and restored to their proper place and function in the whole. So with the failing saint as a member of the body of Christ. Excommunication is severance from that which on earth expresses the body of Christ. The one who has been "put out" needs to be brought in again, not merely readjusted, so to speak.

Finally we may notice that the thought of human forgiveness is really familiar to us all, and owned of God in the common relationships of life. "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." (Luke 17:3.) So, on the other hand, if I sin against my brother, I am bound to obtain his forgiveness; it is a point of godliness to do so. (Matthew 5:24.) The case stands, I believe, thus: First, if I have sinned against God only, I have to confess to Him and be forgiven, and He also practically cleanses in grace. Second, if my sin has been also against my brother, I must confess to him, and get his forgiveness, as well as confessing to God. Third, if my sin has been of such a character that it has been open wickedness, and brought what Scripture calls "leaven" into the loaf or assembly, I must get the forgiveness of the assembly as well as God's forgiveness. Discipline and excommunication most commonly precede this forgiveness by the assembly, and are the means used of God to produce that true self-judgment upon which forgiveness both from the Lord and His people depends. This we see strikingly illustrated in the case at Corinth. (Compare 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 and 2 Corinthians 2:1-17) But there is no reason why repentance should not precede excommunication, in which case forgiveness might be granted without the putting away of the one who has sinned and repented.*

C. D. Maynard.

*The doctrine of this paper will scarcely be disputed; but there might be a difference of judgment as to the mode in which "administrative" forgiveness should be exercised. While the authority may indeed be vested in, and exercised in humility by, those gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the assertion, or the proclamation of the possession of the authority, in the broken condition of the Church, might well raise many solemn questions. - [ED.]

S. The Peace Offering.

The Peace Offering.

C. D. Maynard.

Christian Friend vol. 14, 1887, p. 206. The offerings are divided into four leading classes, if we count the sin and trespass offerings together as one. They are as follows: The burnt-offering, the meat-offering, the peace-offering, and the sin and trespass-offering. It will, I think, be found that each is a complete picture of Christ or His work; so that there are points which several, or it may be all, of them have in common; but that each offering emphasizes, or brings into prominence, some special aspect of the person or work of the Lord. That appears the object for which they are distinguished. It is not until the giving of the law that their differences are fully brought out. In illustration of what is meant I would point out that the blood is mentioned in the burnt-offering, the sin-offering, and the peace-offering, but it is dealt with more specially in, and so may be said to characterise, the sin-offering. Again, burning as producing a sweet savour to God, is common to all the offerings, but in the smallest degree to the sin-offering, so that the other three have been rightly classed together as sweet savour offerings in distinction from the sin-offering; but still the fat of the sin-offering was burnt upon the altar for a sweet savour to Jehovah. (Leviticus 4:31.) But of all the offerings that which was most characteristically a sweet savour, and all the Lord's, was the burnt-offering. "He shall burn all upon the altar a burnt sacrifice of a, sweet savour unto Jehovah." It set forth Christ in death wholly devoted to God and glorifying Him about sin in His death. Yet the blood was there, and the burnt-offering made atonement for the offerer. In this respect it may be said to overlap the sin-offering. Now the peace-offering has an element in common with the burnt-offering, for the fat is burnt as a sweet savour to Jehovah, and it was burnt upon the altar, upon the burnt-offering. That is to say, that which was characteristic of the burnt-offering was found in the peace-offering, although it is not the most prominent feature of it. The same is true of the relationship of the peace-offering to the sin-offering. The blood, which is characteristic of the sin-offering, is found in the peace-offering. But the peace-offering, while it has points in common with the other offerings, has its own special peculiarities, which I wish to point out. If one word might give a key to its leading feature, it would be, I think, communion. It is communion over the work of the Lord in death, and hence inseparable from worship. This, I think, the study of details will bring out. The name peace-offering is apt perhaps to mislead. But attention to the sacrifice will readily show that the thought is not to present Christ as meeting the guilt of the sinner, and so making peace with God, which is the sin-offering, but it is enjoyed in peace. There are two varieties of peace-offerings. The one for thanksgiving, and the other a vow, or voluntary offering. These show us the character of the offering. A man prospering in his herds brings a beast as a thanksgiving to Jehovah. So some have called it a prosperity-offering. Or again, a man like Jonah makes a vow in the day of his trouble, and when he is delivered he pays his vows, and this sacrifice would probably be a peace-offering. Jephthah's vow was, I suppose, of this character. It is an offering sacrificed in peace - not to make peace.

Communion characterized it, and this is expressed in eating. Eating is the expression of communion or fellowship. This is understood in religion and in nature all the world over. No one asks any but a friend to eat with him, though he may feed his enemy. So in religion the Jews, the heathens, and the Christians, all have their altars, or tables, at which eating and drinking take place, and are expressive of fellowship with the religious system which each table represents. This 1 Corinthians 10:1-33 insists upon. You cannot be a partaker of the Lord's table and of the table of devils. These things show us the symbolical force of eating. Now eating is not peculiar to the peace-offering, but it characterizes it as it does no other. We find the ordinary meat-offering was eaten by Aaron and his sons, that is, by all the priests. (Leviticus 6:14-18.) And the ordinary sin-offering was eaten by the priest that offered it. Eating is absent in the burnt-offering, which was peculiarly Jehovah's - God glorified in the cross. But in the peace-offering the eating was more general than in any other, for every Israelite might eat of it.

If we refer to Leviticus 3:1-17, we find that the blood of the victim was sprinkled round the altar. Then the inward fat, with the kidneys and their fat, and the caul, etc., were all taken away and burnt upon the burnt-offering (Leviticus 3:5), to be a sweet savour. This use of the fat characterizes the peace-offering; so that when the same thing is done in the sin-offering, it is said, "As it was taken off from the . . . sacrifice of the peace-offerings." (Leviticus 4:10.) Now the burning of the fat is noted in Abel's offering, where the blood is not mentioned. Still, that offering was not a peace-offering. Indeed, the only distinctive offering noted, as far as I know, before the law is the burnt-offering, which both Noah's and Abraham's were. (Genesis 8:1-22, Genesis 22:1-24.) And, we might add, the drink-offering. (Genesis 35:14.)

Another thing to be noticed is, that there is, in one sense, more liberty in selecting a victim for a peace-offering than in any other. For example, a burnt-offering must be a male, a peace-offering male or female. Again, in the sin-offering the character of the victim was more exactly defined than in any other. The peace-offering probably gives, in common in some measure with the burnt-offering, rather our appreciation of Christ than God's demand.

Returning to the thought of the peace-offering as food, we find that Leviticus 3:1-17, in two places, calls the fat which was burned on the altar "the food of the offering made by fire unto Jehovah" in Leviticus 3:11, and "for a sweet savour" in Leviticus 3:16. And in keeping with this, the law of the offering (Leviticus 7:1-38) shows us that the whole body of the animal was used as food. In this point this offering is unique. The Lord first has His portion in the fat; a figure surely of God's delight in the sacrifice of Christ. All the excellency and beauty of Christ, in His inward perfection, devoted to God in that death which made expiation for sin. Then the breast, which had first been waved before Jehovah, is for the whole priestly family - for Aaron and his sons. (Leviticus 7:31.) This, I believe, represents Christ in association with the Church: for we are, Peter teaches, a royal priesthood. And we know that the Church has, through grace, a special place in the affections of the Father and of Christ. We are loved as Christ was by the Father. (John 17:1-26.) And the Church is loved and cherished as the bride by Christ. (Ephesians 5:1-33.) This, I think, is pictured in the breast belonging to Aaron and his house.

Next we come to the priest who offers the sacrifice; for no man could offer his own. He has the right shoulder. How clearly we have the Lord Himself; for it was He who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God. (Hebrews 9:14.) Christ is both victim and priest. He shares in

the fruit of His sacrifice, as it is said, "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." (Isaiah 53:11.) But further than this, we find that every one might eat of this sacrifice, provided he was ceremonially clean. This represents Israel, and perhaps the Gentiles, or, generally speaking, all who will enter into the joy and blessing that flows from the sacrifice of Christ, in fellowship with God and with Christ. It is one communion. "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." Eating pictures communion, and the sweet savour sets forth worship; for it is impossible to have communion with God about the death of Christ and not to worship. The thought of His death without worship is more the aspect of the relief brought to the burdened conscience by the sin-offering. But sharp lines of demarcation do not seem encouraged in Scripture. One thought passes rapidly into the other. It is probable that ordinary meat in the wilderness was a peace-offering. In presenting Christ to us as food, we have Him as that which sustains life, and satisfies desire. First of all there is the satisfaction of the heart of God in His Son. He found in that perfect divine Man, dead in His obedience, that which the universe could nowhere else supply. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again." He needs the blood that He may be the Saviour-God, but His own personal delight is in Christ. So with us. The blood relieves the conscience. It removes the fear of death and judgment, but Christ becomes the satisfaction of the heart. This is a most important principle. Christ is not merely a shelter, but a present portion for His people. He is the food spiritually of the saved. New affections are formed, developed, and satisfied in connection with the Saviour. It is a simple principle: "We love Him because He first loved us." Every renewed heart understands it, however feebly. The believer is a new creature. Christ is all then; He is life and food. This principle is brought out in the Song of Solomon. There it is the heart. The conscience is at rest; and this even when the heart is failing. The joy of God is the joy of the saint. The fat was burnt, the flesh eaten. In heaven this will be complete; but it is true now. We are not saved to enjoy the world, but to have our happiness in a new circle. May the Lord bring us more into it. This thought figured in eating is touched upon in the Lord's table; also it is in the passover. Again we have it in the manna, and this is taken up in connection with Christ's death in John 6:1-71 and elsewhere. As saints God would have us peaceful, happy, and satisfied through and in Christ.

Now we have noticed that defilement disqualified an Israelite from partaking of the sacrifice. So it is with the believer. Our fellowship is the Father and the Son: yet sin committed, even in thought, destroys communion at once. "If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." And the same thing is true of the table, where we have the outward picture of communion. The table is the place of every child of God. But sin, if indulged, disqualifies him from coming to or remaining at it. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat." This also applies to worship. We cannot burn the fat to God as priests unless we are ourselves clean. It is impossible to be spiritual unless we are righteous. Cornelius was a just man, and a devout man. Then supposing one was an Israelite, and clean, one peace-offering would be eaten on the first day, another on the first and second, but to eat on the third day was abomination. Thus, if we are in relationship with God through faith in Christ Jesus, and our hearts do not condemn us, 1:e., we are like clean Israelites; yet the energy of spirituality may vary in different people, or at different times. The power for sustained worship or communion varies. Whatever be the cause, whether bodily infirmity, as the disciples sleeping when the Lord was praying in the garden, the fact all must allow, and the Lord's grace towards us in it too we see. The vow appears to set forth a greater degree of piety and energy, than simply the thanksgiving for mercies received. It is well for us to

bring to God what we have, and the chapter seems to teach us not to prolong anything beyond the spiritual energy that we possess. This would apply to prayer drawn out beyond what the Spirit leads to, and to long and frequent hymns, if not the expression of real worship in the Spirit. But again we see the acceptability of that which is small if it be real. So a prayer of five words may be most acceptable to God, as the publican's was, and most edifying to the assembly, though our pride makes it hard to contribute so small a thing. We need to keep in the sense of having to do with God and the cross in all. The eating of three days removed was no religious act, but as it assumed to be such, became iniquity. This would apply to bringing ostensibly to God that which is really for the satisfaction of the flesh, such as attempted eloquence in prayer, cultivated music, the architecture of Christendom, and so on. It is not that an eloquent man like Apollos might not pray with eloquence, forgetting himself he naturally would, so a good singer would sing well; but it is the affecting to have God before us when it is really the flesh. It was good to eat and enjoy the peace-offering, but not on the third day. We all know that it is only by watching and praying we can avoid falling into these things, as self and man are so constantly before us. Only the Spirit's power can put us above it. Still, the only worship God accepts is that which is in the Spirit and in truth. Worship in the flesh is abomination now; that is, now that the Spirit has come. This is the teaching of Christianity. The connection of worship with the peace-offering is referred to, I believe, in Hosea 14:2 : "Take away all iniquity [sin-offering], and receive us graciously; so will we offer the calves of our lips" [peace-offering]. And it appears to be this same thought that we have in Hebrews 13:15 : "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name." May the Lord lead us to find in Christ not only that which purges the conscience, but that which satisfies the desires of the heart. "He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." C. D. Maynard.

S. Works of Faith and Good Works.

Works of Faith and Good Works.

C. D. Maynard.

Christian Friend vol. 15, 1888, p. 127.

I wish to point out the difference between good works and what we might call more properly works of faith; that is, acts which in themselves prove that the doer of them has faith. To deeds of this sort James refers. "Show us thy faith," he says, "by thy works." Feeding the hungry would not necessarily show I had faith. But here is a man about to slay his son. "Dreadful," says natural conscience; but God has bidden him do it. - The doing it against nature showed that Abraham believed God. It was the obedience of faith - faith in the God of resurrection. But there is nothing in this act which the natural man could approve. It has nothing of the character of a good work commonly and properly so called. Again, here is a woman (Rahab) who sides with the destroyers of her city. By it she saves herself - nothing noble in that - and at the same time is enrolled among the worthies of faith. But her conduct was disgraceful among men on earth. Her justification was, that earth had revolted from the God of heaven and earth. This, however dimly, her faith recognized; for she says, "Jehovah your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath;" and she reverted to her (and our) true allegiance, thereby becoming a traitor in Jericho, but seeking and finding mercy with God. But there is nothing good, in the ordinary sense of the word, in her action. So if you read down the famous list in Hebrews 11:1-40, among the heroes and sufferers of faith I do not think you will find one marked by good works. Not a Dorcas who clothed the naked, or one who gave her substance to feed the poor. That is to say, that those actions which demonstrate that a man has faith are not usually or necessarily good works in the ordinary sense, but are actions which, without faith, might be even bad actions, or would often be mad or foolish ones. For instance, for a father to slay his son; for a people to march into the sea, as Israel (Exodus 14:15); for soldiers to attempt to take a city by marching round it seven days. (Joshua 6:1-27.) Works of faith can only be appreciated by faith until God vindicates them. Then Abraham's dwelling in a tent as a stranger and pilgrim, instead of building a city, will not be vindicated until the resurrection. Nor the reason that dying Joseph should be anxious about the burial place of his bones, which was a finer act of faith than forgiving his brothers. The natural man cannot appreciate faith. Not so with good works. These the natural man can appreciate fully, for man is benefited by them in his temporal interests. The present day is a day for good works in many quarters, for which we are thankful; but it is not a day for faith. It is a day of unbelief, of prudence, of sight. Combinations, like clubs and insurance societies, whereby men fortify themselves against the chances and changes of this mortal life - all this is sight. Now, how important it is to remember that what is pleasing to God is faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." Faith believes that He is, and therefore relies on Him. Nature cannot help us here. A tender heart may sympathize with, and, where there are resources, succour the distressed. All beautiful, but it cannot help us to do a work of faith. Happily faith is not always being tested, though it ought

always to be present. It may be tested sharply only a few times in our life. These are golden opportunities which we so often shrink from and so often, alas! fail in, but in which some win immortal honours. The great justification of faith - that is, what makes it right and rational to walk by faith - is the fact that God has raised up Jesus Christ from among the dead. He "raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." (1 Peter 1:21.) Now, if God brought up that blessed Man of faith from the grave, there are no circumstances out of which He cannot bring us, and there is no pathway of obedience which we are not justified in treading. But we may notice that we are not responsible to do works of faith. I mean, that we have not to seek in any way to display our faith. David does not seek a bear to slay. The gold does not seek the furnace. But when we come to good works it is quite different, for we are to be diligent to maintain them. It is responsibility. While some are very active at the present time in good works, I think there is a tendency in others rather to neglect them. This may be from the selfish slothfulness which is common to us; and also in part from the evil connections in which good works are often found, and the various motives from which they may flow. So far from good works proving the existence of faith, they may be the fruit of unbelief itself, as when the Romanist, or Pharisee, rests on them as a ground of salvation, or a help towards it, instead of resting entirely upon the precious blood of Christ. Again, they may be the fruit of natural kindness of heart, though this is probably very rare, apart from the direct or indirect influences of Christianity. But let us remember that grace cannot exist in the heart and good works be absent. For instance, the very hour of the night in which the jailor is converted, and before he is baptized, he washes the stripes of Paul and Silas. What God looks for in the saints - that is, in justified sinners - is, that they should be good people. Of old He planted a vineyard to get fruit. That was Israel. We now are branches in the true vine in order to bear fruit. So in John 5:1-47, those who rise to life are those "that have done good." This of course shows that none can truly do good apart from faith and the new birth; but it makes manifest God's delight in those that do good. So again, in the judgment of Matthew 25:1-46 (where we know that the Church does not appear), only those are saved whose faith found practical expression in good works. "I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink," etc. See how the apostle presses good works on us in Titus 3:1-15 : "Put them in mind . . . to be ready to every good work . . . I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." And again, "Let our's also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful." Would it not be much for the health of our souls if, when we had a little time, or strength, or money that we could spare, we looked round to see what good we could do? This kind of a soul Dorcas was. Her death was such a loss that she was given back again. People of this kind also adorned the corrupt church of Thyatira. See, too, what is said of the widow in 1 Timothy 5:1-25, "Well reported of for good works;" and "if she have diligently followed every good work;" and this woman had brought up children as well. Now we happily see people around us bearing this character. Here is one sitting up a night with a sick person. Another running in in a spare hour to make a dying saint's bed. Another taking charge of the little children to let a mother get to the meeting. There are numbers of such things to be done that would relieve many an honest groan, but could we be enrolled among those who have diligently followed every good work?

If we turn to the life of our Lord, both good works and acts of faith abound. "He went about doing good." Blessed story! And He was "the author and finisher of faith." He ran the whole race. The invisible joy of the glory was the crown before the eye of His faith, and for that "He endured the

cross, despising the shame." This was faith. May the Lord grant us the grace to seek His footsteps, and to win His praise. C. D. M.

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
 - 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net