

NOTES
ON
THE BOOK OF NUMBERS

by

Charles H. MacIntosh

"Things new and old."

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by

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Numbers 3 - Numbers 4

What a marvellous spectacle was the camp of Israel, in that waste howling wilderness! What a spectacle to angels, to men, and to devils! GOD's eye ever rested upon it. His presence was there. He dwelt in the midst of His militant people. It was there He found His habitation. He did not, He could not, find His abode amid the splendours of Egypt, of Assyria, or of Babylon. No doubt those nations presented much that was attractive to nature's eye. The arts and sciences were cultivated amongst them. Civilization had reached a far loftier point amongst those ancient nations than we moderns are disposed to admit. Refinement and luxury were probably carried to as great an extent there as amongst those who put forth very lofty pretensions.

But, be it remembered, the Lord was not known among those nations. His name had never been revealed to them. He did not dwell in their midst. True, there, were the ten thousand testimonies to His creative power. And moreover, His superintending providence was over them. He gave them rain and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness. The blessings and benefits of His liberal hand were showered upon them, from day to day, and year to year. His showers fertilized their fields, His sunbeams gladdened their hearts. But they knew Him not, and cared not for Him. His dwelling was not there. Not one of those nations could say, "**The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare will an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt Him**" (Exodus 15:2).

The Lord found His abode in the bosom of His redeemed people, and nowhere else. Redemption

was the necessary basis of GOD's habitation amongst men. Apart from redemption the divine presence could only prove the destruction of men; but, redemption being known, that presence secures man's highest privilege and brightest glory.

GOD dwelt in the midst of His people Israel. He came down from Heaven, not only to redeem them out of the land of Egypt, but to be their travelling companion through the wilderness. What a thought! The most High GOD taking up His abode on the sand of the desert, and in the very bosom of His redeemed congregation! Truly there was nothing like that throughout the wide, wide world. There was that host of six hundred thousand men, beside women and children, in a sterile desert, where there was not a blade of grass, not a drop of water - no visible source of subsistence.

- how were they to be fed? GOD was there!
- how were they to be kept in order? GOD was there!
- how were they to track their way through a howling wilderness where there was no way? GOD was there!

In a word, GOD's presence secured everything. Unbelief might say, "What! are three millions of people to be fed on air? Who has charge of the commissariat? Where are the military stores? Where is the baggage? Who is to attend to the clothing?" Faith alone could answer, and its answer brief, and conclusive: "GOD was there!" And that was quite sufficient. All is comprehended in that one sentence. In faith's arithmetic, GOD is the only significant figure, and, having Him, you may add as many ciphers as you please. If all your springs are in the living GOD, it ceases to be a question of your need, and resolves itself into a question of His sufficiency.

What were six hundred thousand footmen to the Almighty GOD? What the varied necessities of their wives and children? In man's estimation, these things might seem overwhelming. England has just sent out ten thousand troops to Abyssinia; but only think of the enormous expense and labour; think of the number of transports required to convey provisions and other necessaries for that small army. But imagine an army sixty times the size, together with the women and children. Conceive this enormous host entering upon a march that was to extend over the space of forty years, through "**a great and terrible wilderness,**" in which there was no corn, no grass, no water-spring. How were they to be sustained? No supplies with them - no arrangements entered into with friendly nations to forward supplies - no transports dispatched to meet them at various points along their route - in short, not a single visible source of supply - nothing that nature would consider available.

All this is something worth pondering. But we must ponder it in the divine presence. It is of no possible use for reason to sit down and try to solve this mighty problem by human arithmetic. No, reader; it is only faith that can solve it, and that, moreover, by the word of the living GOD. Here lies the precious solution. Bring GOD in, and you want no other factors to work out your answer. Leave Him out, and the more powerful your reason, and the more profound your arithmetic, the more hopeless must be your perplexity.

Thus it is that faith settles the question. GOD was in the midst of His people. He was there in all the fullness of His grace and mercy - there in His perfect knowledge of His people's wants, and

of the difficulties of their path - there in His almighty power and boundless resources, to meet these difficulties and supply these wants. And so fully did He enter into all these things, that He was able, at the close of their long wilderness wanderings, to appeal to their hearts in the following touching accents, "**for the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand; he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing.**" And again, "**Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years**" (Deuteronomy 2:7; 8:4).

Now, in all these things, the camp of Israel was a type - a vivid, striking type. A type of what? A type of the Church of GOD passing through this world. The testimony of Scripture is so distinct on this point, as to leave no room and no demand for the exercise of imagination. "**all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come**" (I Corinthians 10:11).

Hence, therefore, we may draw near and gaze, with intense interest upon that marvellous spectacle, and seek to gather up the precious lessons which it is so eminently fitted to teach, and, oh, what lessons! Who can duly estimate them?

Look at that mysterious camp in the desert, composed, as we have said, of warriors, workers, and worshippers! what separation from all the nations of the world! What utter helplessness! What exposure! What absolute dependence upon GOD! They had nothing - could do nothing - could know nothing. They had not a morsel of food, nor a drop of water, but as they received it day by day from the immediate hand of GOD. When they retired to rest at night, there was not a single atom of provision for the morrow. There was no storehouse, no larder, no visible source of supply, nothing that nature could take any account of.

But GOD was there, and that, in the judgment of faith, was quite enough. They were shut up to GOD. This is the one grand reality. Faith owns nothing real, nothing solid, nothing true, but the one true, living, eternal GOD. Nature might cast a longing look at the granaries of Egypt, and see something tangible, something substantial there. Faith looks up to Heaven and finds all its springs there.

Thus it was with the camp in the desert; and thus it is with the Church in the world.

There was not a single exigency, not a single contingency, not a single need of any sort whatsoever, for which the Divine Presence was not an all-sufficient answer. The nations of the uncircumcised might look on and marvel. They might, in the bewilderment of blind unbelief, raise many a question as to how such a host could ever be fed, clothed, and kept in order. Most certainly they had no eyes to see how it could be done. They knew not the Lord, the Lord GOD of the Hebrews; and therefore to tell them that He was going to undertake for that vast assembly would indeed seem like idle tales.

And so it is now, in reference to the assembly of GOD, in this world, which may truly be termed a moral wilderness. Looked at from GOD's point of view, that assembly is not of the world; it is in complete separation. It is as thoroughly apart from the world, as the camp of Israel was apart from Egypt. The waters of the Red Sea rolled between that camp and Egypt; and the deeper and darker waters of the death of CHRIST roll between the Church of GOD and this present evil

world. It is impossible to conceive separation more complete. "**They,**" says our Lord CHRIST, "**are not of the world, even as I am not of the world**" (John 17).

Then, as to entire dependence; what can be more dependent than the church of GOD in this world? She has nothing in or of herself. She is set down in the midst of a moral desert, a dreary waste, a vast howling wilderness, in the which there is literally nothing on which she can live. There is not one drop of water, not a single morsel of suited food for the Church of GOD, throughout the entire compass of this world.

So also as to the matter of exposure to all sorts of hostile influences. Nothing can exceed it. There is not so much as one friendly influence. All is against her. She is in the midst of this world like an exotic plant belonging to a foreign clime, and set down in a sphere where both the soil and the atmosphere are uncongenial.

Such is the Church of GOD in the world - a separated - dependent - defenseless thing, wholly cast upon the living GOD. It is calculated to give great vividness, force, and clearness to our thoughts about the Church, to view it as the antitype of the camp in the desert; and that it is in no wise fanciful or far-fetched to view it thus, I Corinthians 10:11 does most clearly show. We are fully warranted in saying that what the camp of Israel was literally, that the Church is morally and spiritually. And, farther, that what the wilderness was literally to Israel, that the world is, morally and spiritually, to the Church of GOD. The wilderness was the sphere of Israel's toil and danger, not of their supplies or their enjoyment; and the world is the sphere of the Church's toil and danger, not of its supplies or its enjoyment.

It is well to seize this fact, in all its moral power. The assembly of GOD in the world, like "**the congregation in the wilderness,**" is wholly cast upon the living GOD. we speak, be it remembered, from the divine standpoint - of what the Church is in GOD's sight. Looked at from man's point of view - looked at as she is, in her own actual practical state, it is, alas! another thing. We are now only occupied with the normal, the true, the divine idea of GOD's assembly is this world.

And let it not be forgotten, for one moment, that, as truly as there was a camp in the desert of old - a congregation in the wilderness - so truly is there the Church of GOD, the body of CHRIST, in the world now. Doubtless, the nations of the world knew little, and cared less, about that congregation of old; but that did not weaken or touch the great living fact. So now, the men of the world know little and care less about the assembly of GOD - the Body of CHRIST; but that, in no wise, touches the grand living truth that there is such a thing actually existing in this world, and has been ever since the Holy Ghost descended on the day of Pentecost. True, the congregation, of old, had its trials, its conflicts, its sorrows, its temptations, its strifes, its controversies - its internal commotions - its numberless and nameless difficulties, calling for the varied resources that were in GOD - the precious ministrations of prophet, priest, and king which GOD had provided; for, as we know, Moses was there as "**king in Jeshurun,**" and as the prophet raised up of GOD; and Aaron was there to exercise all the priestly functions.

But, in spite of all these things that we have named - in spite of the weakness, the failure, the sin, the rebellion, the strife - still there was the striking fact, to be taken cognizance of by men, by devils, and by angels, namely, a vast congregation, amounting to something like three millions of

people (according to the usual mode of computation) journeying through a wilderness, wholly dependent upon an unseen arm, guided and cared for by the eternal GOD, whose eye was never for one moment withdrawn from that mysterious typical host; yea, He dwelt in their midst, and never left them, in all their unbelief, their forgetfulness, their ingratitude, and rebellion. GOD was there to sustain and guide, to guard and keep them day and night. He fed them with bread from Heaven, day by day; and He brought them forth water out of the flinty rock.

This, assuredly, was a stupendous fact - a profound mystery. GOD had a congregation in the wilderness - apart from the nations around, shut up to Himself. It may be the nations of the world knew nothing, cared nothing, thought nothing, about this assembly. It is certain the desert yielded nothing in the way of sustenance or refreshment. There were serpents and scorpions - there were snares and dangers - drought, barrenness, and desolation. But there was that wonderful assembly maintained in a manner that baffled and confounded human reason.

And, reader, remember this was a type. A type of what? a type of something that has been in existence for over eighteen centuries; is in existence still; and shall be in existence until the moment that our Lord CHRIST rises from His present position, and descends into the air. In one word, a type of the Church of GOD in the world. How important to recognize this fact! How sadly it has been lost sight of! How little understood even now! and yet every Christian is solemnly responsible to recognize, and practically to confess it. There is no escaping it. Is it true that there is something in this world, at this very moment, answering to the camp in the desert? Yes, verily; there is, in very truth, the Church in the wilderness. There is an assembly passing through this world, just as the literal Israel passed through the literal desert and, moreover, the world is, morally and spiritually, to that Church what the desert was, literally and practically, to Israel of old. Israel found no springs in the desert; and the Church of GOD should find no springs in the world. If she does, she proves false to her Lord. Israel was not of the desert, but passing through it; and the Church of GOD is not of the world, but passing through it.

If this be thoroughly entered into by the reader, it will show him the place of complete separation which belongs to the Church of GOD as a whole, and to each individual member thereof. The Church, in GOD's view of her, is as thoroughly marked off from this present world, as the camp of Israel was marked off from the surrounding desert. There is as little in common between the Church and the world, as there was between Israel and the sand of the desert. The most brilliant attractions and bewitching fascinations of the world are to the Church of GOD what the serpents and scorpions, and the ten thousand other dangers of the wilderness, were to Israel.

Such is the divine idea of the Church; and it is with this idea that we are now occupied. Alas! alas! how different it is with that which calls itself the Church! But we want the reader to dwell, for the present, on the true thing. We want him to place himself, by faith, at GOD's standpoint, and view the Church from thence. It is only by so doing that he can have anything like a true idea of what the Church is, or of his own personal responsibility with respect to it. GOD has a Church in the world. There is a body now on the earth, indwelt by GOD the Spirit, and united to CHRIST the Head. This Church - this body - is composed of all those who truly believe on the Son of GOD, and who are united by the grand fact of the presence of the Holy Ghost.

And, be it observed, this is not a matter of opinion - a certain thing which we may take up or lay down at pleasure. It is a divine fact. It is a grand truth, whether we will hear or whether we will forbear. The Church is an existing thing, and we, if believers, are members thereof. We cannot

avoid this. We cannot ignore it. We are actually in the relationship - baptized into it by the Holy Ghost. It is as real and as positive a thing as the birth of a child into a family. The birth has taken place, the relationship is formed, and we have only to recognize it, and walk in the sense of it, from day to day. The very moment in the which a soul is born again - born from above, and sealed by the Holy Ghost - he is incorporated into the body of CHRIST. He can no longer view himself as a solitary individual - an independent person - an isolated atom; he is a member of a body, just as the hand or the foot is a member of the human body. He is a member of the Church of GOD, and cannot, properly or truly, be a member of anything else. How could my arm be a member of any other body? And, on the same principle, we may ask, how could a member of the body of CHRIST be a member of any other body?

What a glorious truth is this respecting the Church of GOD - the antitype of the camp in the desert, "**the congregation in the wilderness!**"

What a fact to be governed by! There is such a thing as the Church of GOD, amid all the ruin and the wreck, the strife and the discord, the confusion and division, the sects and parties. This surely is a most precious truth. But not only is it most precious, it is also most practical and formative. We are as bound to recognize, by faith, this Church in the world, as the Israelite was bound to recognize, by sight, the camp in the desert. There was one camp, one congregation, and the true Israelite belonged thereto; there is one Church - one body, and the true Christian belongs to it.

But how is this body organized? By the Holy Ghost, as it is written, "**By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body**" (I Corinthians 12:13). How is it maintained? By its living Head, through the Spirit, and by the word, as it is written, "**No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church**" (Ephesians 5:29). Is not this enough? Is not the Lord CHRIST sufficient? Doth not the Holy Ghost suffice? Do we want anything more than the varied virtues that are lodged in the name of JESUS? Are not the gifts of the eternal Spirit quite sufficient for the growth and maintenance of the Church of GOD? Doth not the fact of the Divine presence in the Church secure all that the Church can possibly need? Is it not sufficient for the exigence of every hour? Faith says, and says it with emphasis and decision - "Yes!" Unbelief - human reason, says, "No! we want a great many things as well." What is our brief reply! Simply this, "If GOD be not sufficient, we know not whither to turn. If the name of JESUS doth not suffice, we know not what to do. If the Holy Ghost cannot meet all our need, in communion, in ministry, and in worship, we know not what to say."

It may, however, be said that things are not as they were in apostolic times. The professing church has failed; Pentecostal gifts have ceased; the palmy days of the Church's first love have passed away; and therefore we must adopt the best means in our power for the organization and maintenance of our churches. To all this we reply, GOD has not failed. CHRIST the Head of the Church has not failed. The Holy Spirit has not failed. Not one jot or tittle of GOD's Word has failed. This is the true ground of faith. "**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.**" He has said, "**Lo, I am with you.**" How long! During the days of first love? during apostolic times? so long as the Church shall continue faithful? No; "**I am with you always, even unto the end of the age**" (Matthew 28). So also, at an earlier moment when, for the first time in the whole canon of Scripture, the Church, properly so called, is named, we have those memorable words, "**On this rock [the Son of the living GOD] I will build my church, and the**

gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16).

Now, the question is, "Is that Church on the earth at this moment?" Most assuredly. It is as true that there is a Church now on this earth, as that there was a camp in the desert of old. Yes; and as truly as GOD was in that camp to meet every exigence, so truly is He, now, in the Church to order and guide in everything, as we read, "**Ye are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit**" (Ephesians 2). This is quite sufficient. All we want is to lay hold, by a simple faith, of this grand reality.

The name of JESUS is as sufficient for all the exigencies of the Church of GOD as it is for the soul's salvation. The one is as true as the other. "**Where two or three are gathered together in (or, unto) my name, there am I in the midst**" (Matthew 18). Has this ceased to be true? And if not, is not CHRIST's presence quite enough for His Church? Do we need to set about planning or working for ourselves in church matters? No more than in the matter of the soul's salvation.

- what do we say to the sinner? Trust CHRIST.
- what do we say to the saint? Trust CHRIST.
- what do we say to an assembly of saints, few or many! Trust CHRIST.

Is there anything that He cannot manage? "**Is there a thing too hard for Him?**" Has His treasury of gift and grace become exhausted? Is He not able to supply ministerial gifts? Can He not furnish evangelists, pastors, and teachers? Can He not perfectly meet all the manifold necessities of His Church in the wilderness? If not, where are we? What shall we do: Whither shall we turn? What had the congregation of old to do? To look to the Lord. For everything? Yes, for everything; for food, for water, for clothing, for guidance, for protection, for all. All their springs were in Him. Must we turn to some one else? Never. Our Lord CHRIST is amply sufficient, in spite of all our failure and ruin, our sin and unfaithfulness.

He has sent down the Holy Ghost, the blessed Paraclete, to dwell with and in His people - to form them into one body, and unite them to their living Head in Heaven. He is the power of unity, of communion, of ministry, and of worship. He has not left us, and He never will. Only let us trust Him; let us use Him; let us give Him room to act. Let us carefully guard against everything that might tend to quench, to hinder, or to grieve Him. Let us acknowledge Him, in His own proper place in the assembly, and yield ourselves, in all things, to His guidance and authority.

Here, we are persuaded, lies the true secret of power and blessing. Do we deny the ruin? How could we? Alas! alas! it stands forth as a fact too palpable and glaring to admit of denial. Do we seek to deny our share in the ruin - our folly and sin? Would to GOD we felt it more deeply! But shall we add to our sin by denying our Lord's grace and power to meet us in our folly and ruin? Shall we forsake Him, the fountain of living waters, and hew out for ourselves broken cisterns that can hold no water? Shall we turn from the Rock of Ages and lean upon the broken reeds of our own devising? GOD forbid! Rather let the language of our hearts be, as we think of the name of JESUS,

"Salvation in that name is found,
Cure for my grief and care;

A healing balm for every wound,
all, all I want is There."

But let not the reader suppose that we want to lend the smallest countenance to ecclesiastical pretension. We perfectly abhor any such thing. We look upon it as utterly contemptible. We believe we cannot possibly take too low a place. A low place and a lowly spirit are what alone become us in view of our common sin and shame.

All we seek to maintain is this, the all sufficiency of the name of JESUS for all the exigencies of the Church of GOD, at all times, and under all circumstances. There was all power in that name in apostolic times; and why not now? Has any change passed over that glorious name? No, blessed be GOD! Well then it is sufficient for us, at this moment, and all we want is to confide in it fully, and to show that we so confide by discarding thoroughly every other ground of confidence, and coming out, with bold decision, to that peerless and precious name. He has, blessed be His name, come down to the smallest congregation - the smallest plurality, inasmuch as He has said, "**Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I.**" Does this still hold good? Has it lost its power? Does it no longer apply? Where has it been repealed?

Oh! Christian reader, we call upon you, by every argument which ought to weigh with your heart, to give your cordial assent and consent to this one eternal truth, namely, The all-sufficiency of the name of the Lord JESUS CHRIST for the assembly of GOD, in every possible condition in which it can be found, throughout its entire history. *

* In using the expression, "The all-sufficiency of the name of the Lord JESUS CHRIST," we understand by it all that is secured to His people in that name - life; righteousness; acceptance; the presence of the Holy Ghost with all His varied gifts: a divine center or gathering point. In a word, we believe that everything that the Church can possibly need, for time or eternity, is comprehended in that one glorious name, The Lord JESUS CHRIST.

We call upon you not merely to hold this as a true theory, but, to confess it practically and then, assuredly, you will taste the deep blessedness of the presence of JESUS in the outside place - a blessedness which must be tasted in order to be known; But, when once really tasted, it can never be forgotten or surrendered for anything beside.

But we had no intention of pursuing the foregoing line of thought so far, or of penning such a lengthened introduction to the section of our book which lies open before us, and to which we shall now invite the reader's particular attention.

On looking attentively at "**the congregation in the wilderness**" (Acts 7:38), we find it composed of three distinct elements, namely:

- warriors - a nation of warriors,
- workers - a tribe of workers, and
- worshippers - a family of worshippers or priests.

We have glanced at the first of these and seen each one according to his "**pedigree**," taking up

his position by his "**standard**," according to the direct appointment of the Lord; and we shall now dwell for a few moments on the second, and see each one at his work and service, according to the same appointment. we have considered the warriors; let us meditate on the workers.

The Levites were distinctly marked off from all the other tribes, and called to a very specific place and service. Thus we read of them, "**But the Levites after the tribe of their fathers were not numbered among them. For the Lord had spoken unto Moses, saying, Only thou shalt not number the tribe of Levi, neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel. But thou shalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that belong to it: they shall bear the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof; and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle. And when the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death, and the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard, throughout their hosts. But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel: and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony**" (Numbers 1:47-53). And again we read, "**But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel, as the Lord commanded Moses**" (Numbers 2:33).

But why the Levites? why was this tribe specially marked off from all the others, and set apart for so holy and elevated a service? Was there any special sanctity or goodness about them to account for their being so distinguished? Not by nature, certainly, nor yet by practice, as we may see by the following words "**Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O, my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel**" (Genesis 49). Such was Levi by nature and by practice - self-willed, fierce, and cruel.

How remarkable that such an one should be singled out and brought into a place of such high and holy privilege! Surely we may say it was grace from first to last. It is the way of grace to take up the very worst cases. It stoops to the lowest depths and gathers up its brightest trophies from thence.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (II Timothy 1:16). "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3).

But how striking the language, "**O, my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united.**"

"God is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity." GOD could not come into Levi's secret, or be united unto his assembly. That was impossible. GOD could have nought to do with self-will, fierceness, and cruelty. But yet He could bring Levi into His secret, and unite him to His assembly. He could take him out of his habitation, wherein were instruments of

cruelty, and bring him into the tabernacle to be occupied with the holy instruments and vessels that were there. This was grace - free, sovereign grace; and herein must be sought the basis of all Levi's blessed and elevated service. So far as he was personally concerned there was an immeasurable distance between him and a holy GOD - a chasm which no human art or power could bridge. A holy GOD could have nothing to do with self-will fierceness, and cruelty; but a GOD of grace could have to do with Levi. He could visit such an one in sovereign mercy, and raise him up from the depths of his moral degradation, and bring him into a place of nearness to Himself.

And oh! what a marvellous contrast between Levi's position by nature, and his position by grace! between the instruments of cruelty and the vessels of the sanctuary! between Levi in Genesis 34 and Levi in Numbers 3 and 4.

But let us look at the mode of GOD's dealing with Levi - the ground on which he was brought into such a place of blessing.

In doing this, it will be needful for us to refer to Numbers 8, and there we are let into the secret of the whole matter. We shall see that there was, and could be, no allowance of anything that belonged to Levi, no sanction of any of his ways; and yet there was the most perfect display of grace - grace reigning through righteousness. We speak of the type and its significance. We do so in view of that statement already referred to: "**Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples [types].**" It is not a question of how far the Levites saw through these things. This is not at all the point. We are not to ask, What did the Levites see in GOD's dealings with them? But, What do we learn?

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them. And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean" (Numbers 8:5-7).

Here we have, in type, the only divine principle of cleansing.

It is the application of death to nature and all its habits. It is the Word of GOD brought to bear upon the heart and conscience, in a living way. Nothing can be more expressive than the double action presented in the above passage. Moses was to sprinkle water of purifying upon them; and then they were to shave off all their hair, and wash their garments. There is great beauty and precision here. Moses, as representing the claims of GOD, cleanses the Levites according to those claims; and they, being cleansed, are able to bring the sharp razor to bear upon all that was the mere growth of nature, and to wash their garments, which expresses, in typical form, the cleansing their habits according to the Word of GOD. This was GOD's way of meeting all that appertained to Levi's natural state - the self-will, the fierceness, and the cruelty. The pure water and the sharp razor were called into action - the washing and shaving had to go on, ere Levi was fit to approach the vessels of the sanctuary.

Thus it is in every case. There is, there can be, no allowance of nature among GOD's workers. There never was a more fatal mistake than to attempt to enlist nature in the service of GOD. It matters not how you may endeavour to improve or regulate it. It is not improvement, but death

that will avail. It is of the very last possible importance for the reader to lay hold, with clearness and force, of this great practical truth. Man has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. The plummet has been applied to him, and he has been found crooked. It is of no possible use seeking to reform. Nothing will do save the water and the razor. GOD has closed up man's history. He has brought to an end in the death of CHRIST.

The first grand fact that the Holy Ghost presses upon the human conscience is, that GOD has delivered His solemn verdict upon human nature, and that each one must accept that verdict against himself personally. It is not a matter of opinion, or a matter of feeling. A person may say, "I do not see, or I do not feel, that I am so bad as you seem to make out." We reply, That does not affect the question in the least. GOD has declared His judgment about us, and it is man's first duty to fall in with, and bow to that. Of what use would it have been for Levi to say that he did not agree with what GOD's Word had said about him Would that - could that, have altered the question as to him? In no wise. The divine record remained the same whether Levi felt it or not; but clearly, it was the first step in wisdom's pathway to bow down under the weight of that record.

All this is expressed, in type, in the "**water**" and the "**razor**" the "**washing**" and the "**shaving**." Nothing could be more significant or impressive. These acts set forth the solemn truth of the sentence of death upon nature, and the execution of judgment upon all that nature produces.

And what, let us ask, is the meaning of the initiatory act of Christianity - the act of baptism?

Does it not set forth the blessed fact that "**our old man**" - our fallen nature - is completely set aside, and that we are introduced into an entirely new position Truly so. And how do we use the razor? By rigid self-judgment, day by day; by the stern disallowance of all that is of nature's growth. This is the true path for all GOD's workers in the wilderness. When we look at Levi's conduct at Shechem, in Genesis 34, and the record concerning him in Genesis 49, we may ask, How can such an one ever be allowed to carry the vessels of the sanctuary? The answer is,

Grace shines in Levi's call;
and holiness shines in Levi's cleansing.

He was called to the work, according to the riches of divine grace; but he was fitted for the work according to the claims of divine holiness.

Thus it must be with all GOD's workers.

We are most thoroughly convinced that we are fit for GOD's work just so far as nature is brought under the power of the Cross, and the sharp razor of self-judgment. Self-will can never be made available in the service of GOD; nay, it must be set aside, if we would know what true service is. There is, alas! A large amount of what which passes for service which, if judged in the light of the divine presence, would be seen to be but the fruit of a restless will. This is most solemn, and demands our most earnest attention. We cannot exercise too severe a censorship over ourselves, in this very thing. The heart is so deceitful that we may be led to imagine that we are doing the Lord's work, when, in reality, we are only pleasing ourselves. But, if we would tread the path of true service, we must seek to be, more and more, apart from nature. The self-willed Levi must

pass through the typical process of washing and shaving, ere he can be employed in that elevated service assigned him by the direct appointment of the GOD of Israel.

But, ere proceeding to examine particularly the work and service of the Levites, we must look for a moment at a scene in Exodus 32, in which they act a very prominent and a very remarkable part. We allude, as the reader will at once perceive, to the golden calf. During the absence of Moses, the people so completely lost sight of GOD and His claims as to set up a molten calf and bow down thereto. This terrible act called for summary judgment.

"And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked to their shame among their enemies:) then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him, and he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day" (Exodus 32:25-29).

This was a testing moment. It could not be otherwise, when this great question was pressed home upon the heart and conscience, **"Who is on the Lord's side?"** nothing could be more searching.

The question was not, "Who is willing to work?" No! it was a far deeper and more searching question. It was not who will go here or there - do this or that? There might be a vast amount of doing and going, and, all the while, it might be but the impulse of an unbroken will which, acting upon religious nature, gave an appearance of devotedness and piety imminently calculated to deceive oneself and others.

But to be **"on the Lord's side"** implies the surrender of one's own will - yea, the surrender of oneself, and this is essential to the true servant - the real workman. Saul of Tarsus was on this ground when he exclaimed, **"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"** What words, from the self-willed, fierce, and cruel persecutor of the Church of GOD!

"Who is on the Lord's side?" Reader, art thou? Search and see. Examine thyself closely. Remember, the question is not at all "What art thou doing?" No; it is far deeper. If thou art on the Lord's side, thou art ready for anything and everything. Thou art ready to stand still, or ready to go forward; ready to go to the right or to the left; ready to be active, and ready to be quiet; ready to stand on thy feet, and ready to lie on thy back. The grand point is this, namely, the surrender of thyself to the claims of another, and that other the Lord CHRIST.

This is an immense point. Indeed we know of nothing more important, at the present moment, than this searching question, **"Who is on the Lord's side?"**

We live in days of immense self-will. Man exults in his liberty. And this comes out, very prominently, in religious matters. Just as it was in the camp of Israel, in the days of the thirty-second of Exodus - the days of The golden calf. Moses was out of sight, and the human will was

at work; the graving tool was called into operation. And what was the result? The molten calf; and when Moses returned, he found the people in idolatry and nakedness.

Then came forth the solemn and testing question, "**Who is on the Lord's side?**" This brought things to an issue, or rather it put people to the test. Nor is it other wise now. Man's will is rampant, and that too in matters of religion. Man boasts of his lights, of the freedom of his will, the freedom of his judgment. There is the denial of the Lordship of CHRIST; and therefore it behooves us to look well to it, and see that we really are taking sides with the Lord against ourselves; that we are in the attitude of simple subjection to His authority. Then we shall not be occupied with the amount or character of our service; it will be our one object to do the will of our Lord.

Now, to act thus under the Lord may often give an appearance of narrowness to our sphere of action; but with this we have nothing whatever to do. If a master tells his servant to stand in the hall, and not to stir until he rings the bell, what is the servant's duty? Clearly to stand still; nor should he be moved from this position or this attitude, even though his fellow-servants should find fault with his apparent inactivity and good-for-nothingness; he may rest assured his Master will approve and vindicate. This is enough for any true-hearted servant, whose one desire will ever be not so much to do a great deal, as to do the will of his Lord.

In a word, then, the question for the camp of Israel, in the day of the golden calf, and the question for the Church, in this day of human will, is this, "**Who is on the Lord's side?**" Momentous question! It is not?

Who is on the side of religiousness, philanthropy, or moral reform? There may be a large amount of any or all of these things, and yet the will be thoroughly unbroken. Let us not forget this; nay, rather we should say, let us continually bear it in mind. We may be very zealous in promoting all the various schemes of philanthropy, religiousness, and moral reform, and, all the while, be ministering to self, and feeding self-will. This is a most solemn and weighty consideration; and it behooves us to give earnest heed to it. We are passing through a moment in the which man's will is being pampered with unparalleled diligence. We believe, most assuredly, that the true remedy for this evil will be found wrapped up in this one weighty question, "**Who is on the Lord's side?**"

There is immense practical power in this question. To be really on the Lord's side is to be ready for anything to which He may see fit to call us, no matter what. If the soul is brought to say, in real truth, "**Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?**" "**Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth,**" then we are ready for everything.

Hence, in the case of the Levites, they were called to "**slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.**"

This was terrible work for flesh and blood. But the moment demanded it. GOD's claims had been openly and grossly dishonoured. Human invention had been at work, with the graving tool, and a calf had been set up. The glory of GOD had been changed into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass; and therefore all who were on the Lord's side were called to gird on the sword. Nature might say, "No; let us be tender, and gentle, and gracious. We shall accomplish more by

kindness than by severity. It can do no good to wound people. There is far more power in love than in harshness. Let us love one another." Thus might nature throw out its suggestions - thus it might reason and argue. But the command was distinct and decisive: "**Put every man his sword by his side.**"

The sword was the only thing when the golden calf was there. To talk of love at such a moment, would be to fling over-board the just claims of the GOD of Israel. It belongs to the true spirit of obedience to render the very service which suits the occasion. A servant has no business to reason, he is simply to do as he is bid. To raise a question, or put forth a demur, is to abandon our place as a servant. It might seem most dreadful work to have to slay a brother, a companion, or a neighbour; but the Word of the Lord was imperative. It left no room for evasion; and the Levites, through grace, yielded a full and ready obedience. "**The children of Levi did according to the word of Moses.**"

This is the only true path for those who will be GOD's workers, and CHRIST's servants in this world where self-will is dominant. It is immensely important to have the truth of the Lordship of CHRIST deeply engraved upon the heart. It is the only regulator of the course and conduct. It settles a thousand questions. If the heart be really subject to the authority of CHRIST, it is in readiness for anything and everything to which He calls us, be it to stand still or to go forward, to do little or much, to be active or passive. To a really obedient heart, the question is not at all, "What am I doing? or where am I going?" It is simply, "am I doing the will of my Lord?"

Such was the ground occupied by Levi.

And mark: the divine comment on this, as given in Malachi. "**And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the Lord of hosts. My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity**" (Malachi 2:4-6).

Mark also the blessing pronounced by the lips of Moses, "**And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children; for they have observed thy word and kept thy covenant. They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law; they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar. Bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again**" (Deuteronomy 33:8-11).

It might have appeared unwarrantably harsh and severe in Levi not to have seen his parents or known or acknowledged his brethren. But GOD's claims are paramount; and our Lord CHRIST hath declared these solemn words, "**If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple**" (Luke 14:26).

These are plain words; and they let us into the secret of what it is which lies at the bottom of all true service.

Let no one imagine that we are to be without natural affection. Far be the thought. To be so would be to connect us, morally, with the apostasy of the last days (See II Timothy 3:3). But when the claims of natural affection are allowed to stand in the way of our whole-hearted service to CHRIST, and when the so-called love of our brethren receives a higher place than faithfulness to CHRIST, then are we unfit for His service and unworthy of the name of His servants. Let it be carefully noted that what formed the moral ground of Levi's title to be employed in the Lord's service was the fact that he did not see his parents, acknowledge his brethren, or know his children. In a word, he was enabled to set the claims of nature completely aside, and to give the claims of the Lord the paramount place in his heart. This, we repeat, is the only true basis of the servant's character.

This is a most weighty consideration, and one which demands the most serious attention of the Christian reader.

There may be a vast amount of what looks like service - a great deal of activity, of coming and going, of doing and saying - and, all the while, there may not be a single atom of true Levite service, yea, it may, in GOD's estimation, be only the restless activity of the will.

"What," it may be said, "can the will show itself in the service of GOD - in matters of religion?" Alas, alas, it can and does. And very often the apparent energy and fruitfulness in work and service is just in proportion to the energy of the will. This is peculiarly solemn. It calls for the most rigid self-judgment, in the light of the divine presence. True service doth not consist in great activity, but in profound subjection to the will of our Lord, and where this exists there will be the readiness to sink the claims of parents, brethren, and children, in order to carry out the will of Him whom we own as Lord.

True, we should love our parents, our brethren, and our children. It is not that we should love these less, but we should love CHRIST more. He and His claims must ever have the paramount place in the heart, if we would be true workers for GOD, true servants of CHRIST, true Levites in the wilderness. It was this that marked the actings of Levi, on the occasion to which we are referring. GOD's claims were in question, and hence the claims of nature were not to be entertained for a moment. Parents, brethren, and children, how dear soever these might be, were not to stand in the way when the glory of the GOD of Israel had been changed into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.

Here lies the whole question, in all its weight and magnitude. The ties of natural relationship, with all the claims, duties, and responsibilities arising out of such ties, will ever get their proper place, their due respect, from those whose hearts, and minds, and consciences have been brought under the adjusting power of the truth of GOD.

Nought save what is really due to GOD and His CHRIST should ever be suffered to infringe those rights which are founded upon natural relationship.

This is a most necessary and wholesome consideration, and one which we would particularly press upon the young Christian reader. We have ever to be on our guard against a spirit of self-

will and self-pleasing which is never so dangerous as when it clothes itself in the garb of religious service, and work so called. It behooves us to be very sure indeed that we are directly and simply governed by the claims of GOD when we disregard the claims of natural relationship. In Levi's case, the matter was as clear as a sunbeam, and hence the "sword" of judgment, not the kiss of affection, befitted the critical moment. So, also, in our history, there are moments in which it would be open disloyalty to our Lord CHRIST to hearken, for one instant, to the voice of natural relationship.

The above remarks may help the reader to understand the actings of the Levites to Exodus 32, and the words of our Lord in Luke 14:26. May GOD's Spirit enable us to realize and exhibit the adjusting power of truth!

We shall now dwell, for a few moments, on the consecration of the Levites, in Numbers 8, in order that we may have the whole subject before our minds. Truly it is a theme full of instruction for all who desire to be workers for GOD.

After the ceremonial acts of "washing" and "shaving" already referred to, we read, "**Then let them (i.e., the Levites) take a young bullock with his meat offering, even fine flour mingled with oil, and another young bullock shalt thou take for a sin offering. And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt gather the whole assembly or the children of Israel together. And thou shalt bring the Levites before the Lord: and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites. And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the Lord for an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the Lord. And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks; and thou shalt offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, unto the Lord, to make an atonement for the Levites.**"

Here we have presented to us, in type, the two grand aspects of the death of CHRIST.

The sin offering furnishes the one; the burnt offering furnishes the other.

Into the details of those offerings we do not enter here, having sought to do so in the opening chapters of our "*Notes on Leviticus*." We would merely observe here, that, in the sin offering, we see CHRIST bearing sin in His own body on the tree, and enduring the wrath of GOD against sin. In the burnt offering, we see CHRIST glorifying GOD even in the very matter of making atonement for sin. Atonement is made in both; but in the former, it is atonement according to the depth of the sinner's need; in the latter, it is atonement according to the measure of CHRIST's devotedness to GOD. In that, we see the hatefulness of sin; in this, the preciousness of CHRIST. It is, we need hardly say, the same atoning death of CHRIST, but presented in two distinct aspects. *

* For further instruction on the doctrine of the sin offering and the burnt offering, the reader is referred to "*Notes on Leviticus*," Leviticus 1:4, posted on this web site.

Now, the Levites laid their hands on both the sin offering and the burnt offering; and this act of the imposition of hands expressed the simple fact of identification.

But how different the result in each case

When Levi laid his hands on the head of the sin offering, it involved the transfer of all his sins, of all his guilt, of all his fierceness, cruelty, and self-will to the victim. And on the other hand, when he laid his hands on the head of the burnt offering, it involved the transfer of all the acceptableness of the sacrifice, of all its perfectness, to Levi. Of course, we speak of what the type set forth. We do not undertake to state anything as to Levi's intelligent entrance into these things; we merely seek to unfold the meaning of the ceremonial figure; and, most assuredly, no figure could be more expressive than the imposition of hands, whether we view it in the case of the sin offering, or in the case of the burnt offering.

The doctrine of all this is embodied in that most weighty passage at the close of II Corinthians 5, "**He hath made him [CHRIST] to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in him.**"

"And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer them for an offering unto the Lord. Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel; and the Levites shall be mine, and after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them for an offering. For they are wholly given unto ME from among the children of Israel; instead of such as open every womb, even instead of the firstborn of all the children of Israel, have I taken them unto me. For all the firstborn of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast: on the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them For myself. And I have taken the Levites for all the firstborn of the children of Israel. And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make an atonement for the children of Israel: that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary. And Moses, and Aaron, and all the congregation of the children of Israel, did to the Levites according unto all that the Lord commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did the children of Israel unto them" (Numbers 8:13-20).

How forcibly are we reminded, by the foregoing lines, of the words of our Lord in John 17, "**I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word . . . I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them"** (Verses 6-10).

The Levites were a separated people - GOD's special possession. They took the place of all the firstborn in Israel - of those who were saved from the sword of the destroyer by the blood of the lamb. They were, typically, a dead and risen people, set apart to GOD, and by Him presented as a gift to Aaron the high priest, to do the service of the tabernacle.

What a place for the self-willed, fierce, and cruel Levi! What a triumph of grace! What an illustration of the efficacy of the blood of atonement and the water of purification! They were, by nature and by practice, far off from GOD; but the "**blood**" of atonement, and the "**water**" of

cleansing, and the "**razor**" of self-judgment had done their blessed work, and hence the Levites were in a condition to be presented as a gift to Aaron and to his sons, to be associated with them in the hallowed services of the tabernacle of the congregation.

In all this the Levites were a striking type of GOD's people now.

These latter have been lifted from the depths of their degradation and ruin as sinners. They are washed in the precious Blood of CHRIST, purified by the application of the Word, and called to the exercise of habitual and rigid self-judgment, Thus are they fitted for that holy service to the which they are called. GOD has given them to His Son in order that they may be His workers in this world. "**Thine they were and thou gavest them me.**" Wondrous thought! To think that such as we could be thus spoken of! To think of our being GOD's property and GOD's gift to His Son! Well may we say it surpasses all human thought. It is not merely that we are saved from hell; that is true. It is not, merely that we are pardoned, justified, and accepted; all this is true; but we are called to the high and holy work of bearing through this world the Name, the testimony, the glory of our Lord JESUS CHRIST. This is our work as true Levites.

- as men of war, we are called to fight;
- as priests, we are privileged to worship; but
- as Levites, we are responsible to serve, and our service is to carry through this dreary desert scene the antitype of the tabernacle, and that tabernacle was the figure of CHRIST.

This is our distinct line of service. To this we are called - to this we are set apart.

The reader will, we doubt not, notice, with interest, the fact that it is in this book of Numbers, and here alone, that we are furnished with all the precious and deeply instructive details respecting the Levites. In this we have a fresh illustration of the character of our book. It is from a wilderness standpoint that we get a full and proper view of GOD's workers as well as of GOD's warriors.

And, now, let us examine for a few moments, the service of the Levites, as detailed in Numbers 3 and 4.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle. And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons: they are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel" (Numbers 3:5-9).

The Levites represented the whole congregation of Israel, and acted on their behalf. This appears from the fact that the children of Israel laid their hands on the heads of the Levites, just as the Levites laid their hands on the heads of the sacrifices (See Numbers 8:10). The act of imposition expressed identification, so that, according to this, the Levites furnish a distinct view of the people of GOD in the wilderness. They present them to us as a company of earnest workers, and that too, be it noted, not as mere desultory labourers, running to and fro, and doing each one

what seemed right in his own eyes. Nothing of the sort. If the men of war had their pedigree to show and their standard to adhere to, so had the Levites their center to gather round and their work to do. All was as clear, distinct, and defined as GOD could make it; and, moreover, all was under the immediate authority and direction of the high priest.

It is most needful for all who would be true Levites, proper workmen, intelligent servants, to weigh, with all seriousness, this point.

Levite service was to be regulated by the appointment of the priest. There was no more room for the exercise of self-will in the service of the Levites, that there was the position of the men of war. All was divinely settled; and this was a signal mercy to all whose hearts were in a right condition. To one whose will was unbroken it might seem a hardship and a most irksome task to be obliged to occupy the same position, or to be engaged in precisely the same line of work. Such an one might sigh for something fresh - some variety in his work. But, on the contrary, where the will was subdued, and the heart adjusted, each one would say, "my path is perfectly plain; I have only to obey."

This is ever the business of the true servant. It was pre-eminently so with Him Who was the only perfect servant that ever trod the earth. He could say, "**I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me.**" And again, "**My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.**"

But there is another fact which claims our attention, in reference to the Levites; and that is, their service had exclusively to do with the tabernacle and its belongings. They had nothing else to do. For a Levite to think of putting his hand to anything beside would have been to deny his calling, to abandon his divinely appointed work, and to fly in the face of GOD's commandments.

Just so is it with Christians now. Their exclusive business - their one grand work - their absorbing service, is CHRIST and His belongings. They have nothing else to do. For a Christian to think of putting his hand to anything beside is to deny his calling, to abandon his divinely-appointed work, and fly in the face of the divine commandments. A true Levite of old could say, "To me to live is the tabernacle;" and a true Christian, now, can say, "**To me to live is Christ.**" The grand question, in every matter which may present itself before the Christian, is this, "Can I connect CHRIST with it?" If not, I have nothing whatsoever to do with it.

This is the true way to look at things. It is not a question as to the right or wrong of this or that. No; it is simply a question as to how far it concerns the name and glory of CHRIST. This simplifies everything amazingly. It answers a thousand questions, solves a thousand difficulties, and makes the path of the true and earnest Christian as clear as a sunbeam. A Levite had no difficulty as to his work. It was all settled for him with divine precision. The burden that each had to carry, and the work that each had to do, was laid down with a clearness which left no room for the questionings of the heart. Each man could know his own work and do it; and let us add the work was done by each one discharging his own specific functions. It was not by running hither and thither, and doing this or that; but by each man sedulously adhering to his own particular calling, that the service of the tabernacle was duly discharged.

It is well to bear this in mind. We, as Christians, are very apt to jostle one another; indeed we are

sure to do so if we do not each one pursue his own divinely appointed line of work.

We say "divinely appointed," and would press the word. We have no right to choose our own work. If the Lord has made one man an evangelist, another a teacher, another a pastor, and another an exhorter, how is the work to go on? surely it is not by the evangelist trying to teach, and the teacher to exhort, or one who is not fitted for either trying to do both. No; it is by each one exercising his own divinely-imparted gift.

No doubt it may please the Lord to endow one individual with a variety of gifts; but this does not, in the smallest degree, touch the principle on which we are dwelling, which is simply this, every one of us is responsible to know his own special line and pursue it. If this be lost sight of we shall get into hopeless confusion. GOD has His quarrymen, His stone-squarers, and His masons. The work progresses by each man attending diligently to his own work. If all were quarry-men, where were the stone-squarers? if all were stone-squarers, where were the masons? The greatest possible damage is done to the cause of CHRIST, and to the cause of CHRIST, and to GOD's work in the world, by one man aiming at another's line of things, or seeking to imitate another's gift. It is a grievous mistake, against which we would solemnly warn the reader.

Nothing can be more senseless. GOD never repeats Himself. There are not two faces alike, not two leaves in the forest alike, not two blades of grass alike. Why then should any one aim at another's line of work, or affect to possess another's gift? Let each one be satisfied to be just what His Master has made him. This is the secret of real peace and progress.

All this finds a very vivid illustration in the inspired record concerning the service of the three distinct classes of the Levites, which we shall now proceed to quote at length for the reader. There is nothing, after all, to be compared with the veritable language of Holy Scripture.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying, number the children of Levi after the house of their fathers, by their families: every male from a month old and upward shalt thou number them. And Moses numbered them according to the Word of the Lord, as He was commanded. And these were the sons of Levi by their names, Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari. And these are the names of the sons of Gershon by their families; Libni, and Shimei. And the sons of Kohath by their families; Amram, and Izehar, Hebron, and Uzziel. And the sons of Merari by their families; Mahli, and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to the house of their fathers. Of Gershon was the family of the Libnites, and the family of the Shimites: these are the families of the Gershonites. Those that were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, even those that were numbered of them were seven thousand and five hundred. The families of the Gershonites shall pitch behind the tabernacle westward. And the chief of the house of the father of the Gershonites shall be Eliasaph the son of Lael. And the charge of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of the congregation shall be the tabernacle, and the tent, the covering thereof, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the hangings of the court, and the curtain for the door of the court, which is by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about, and the cords of it for all the service thereof" (Numbers 3:14-26). And again, we read, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take also the sum of the sons of Gershon, throughout the houses of their fathers, by their families; from thirty years old and upward until fifty years old shalt thou

number them; all that enter in to perform the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation. This is the service of the families of the Gershonites, to serve, and for burdens: and they shall bear the curtains of the tabernacle, and the tabernacle of the congregation, his covering, and the covering of the badgers' skins that is above upon it, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the hangings of the court, and the hanging for the door of the gate of the court, which is by the tabernacle and by the altar round about, and their cords, and all the instruments of their service, and all that is made for them: so shall they serve. At the appointment of Aaron and his sons shall be all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their burdens, and in all their service: and ye shall appoint unto them in charge all their burdens. This is the service of the families of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of the congregation: and their charge shall be under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest" (Numbers 4:21-28).

Thus much as to Gershon and his work. He, with his brother Merari, had to carry "**the tabernacle**" whereas Kohath was called to bear "**the sanctuary**," as we read in Numbers 10 "**And the tabernacle was taken down; and the sons of Gershon, and the sons of Merari set forward, bearing the tabernacle . . . And the Kohathites set forward, bearing the sanctuary: and the other** (i.e., the Gershonites and the Merarites) **did set up the tabernacle against they came**" (Ver. 17, 21). There was a strong moral link connecting Gershon and Merari in their service, although their work was perfectly distinct, as we shall see from the following passage.

"As for the sons of Merari, thou shalt number them after their families, by the house of their fathers; from thirty years old and upward, even unto fifty years old, shalt thou number them, every one that entereth into the service, to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation. And this is the charge of their burden, according to all their service in the tabernacle of the congregation; the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and sockets thereof, and the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords, with all their instruments, and with all their service: and by name ye shall reckon the instruments of the charge of their burden. This is the service of the families of the sons of Merari, according to all their service to the tabernacle of the congregation, under the hand of Ithamar, the son of Aaron the priest" (Numbers 4:29-33).

All this was clear and distinct. Gershon had nothing to do with the boards and pins; and Merari had nothing to do with the curtains or the coverings. And yet they were very intimately connected, as they were mutually dependent. "**The boards and sockets**" would not do without "**the curtains**;" and the curtains would not do without the boards and sockets. And as to "**the pins**," though apparently so insignificant, who could estimate their importance in keeping things together, and maintaining the visible unity of the whole? Thus all worked together to one common end, and that end was gained by each attending to his own special line. If a Gershonite had taken it into his head to abandon "**the curtains**" and address himself to "**the pins**," he would have left his own work undone and interfered with the work; of the Merarite. This would never do. It would have thrown everything into hopeless confusion; whereas by adhering to the divine rule, all was maintained in the most exquisite order.

It must have been perfectly beautiful to mark GOD's workers in the wilderness. Each one was at

his post, and each moved in his divinely appointed sphere. Hence, the moment the cloud was lifted up, and the order issued to strike, every man knew what he had to do, and he addressed himself to that and to nothing else. No man had any right to think for himself. The Lord thought for all.

The Levites had declared themselves "**on the Lord's side**;" they had yielded themselves to His authority; and this fact lay at the very base of all their wilderness work and service. looked at in this light it would be deemed a matter of total indifference whether a man had to carry a pin, a curtain, or a golden candlestick. The grand question for each and for all was simply, "Is this my work? Is his what the Lord has given we to do?"

This settled everything. Had it been left to human thinking or human choosing, one man might like this; another might like that; and a third might like something else. How then could the tabernacle ever be borne along through the wilderness, or set up in its place? Impossible! There could be but one supreme authority, namely the Lord Himself. He arranged for all, and all had to submit to Him. There was no room at all for the exercise of the human will. This was a signal mercy. It prevented a world of strife and confusion. There must be subjection - there must be a broken will - there must be a cordial yielding to divine authority, otherwise it will turn out to be like the book of Judges, "**Every man doing that which is right in his own eyes.**"

A Merarite might say, or think if he did not say it, "what! am I to spend the very best portion of my life upon earth - the days of my prime and vigour - in looking after a few pins? Was this the end for which I was born? Am I to have nothing higher before me as an object in life? Is this to be my occupation from the age of thirty to fifty?"

To such questions there was a twofold reply.

In the first place, it was enough for the Merarite to know that the Lord had assigned him his work. This was sufficient to impart dignity to what nature might esteem the smallest and meanest matter. It does not matter what we are doing, provided always we are doing our divinely appointed work, a man may pursue what his fellows would deem a most brilliant career he may spend his energies, his time, his talents, his fortune, in pursuits which the men of this world esteem grand and glorious, and, all the while, his life may prove to be but a splendid bubble. But, on the other hand, the man that simply does the will of GOD. whatever that may be - the man who executes his Lord's commands, whatever such commands may enjoin - that is the man whose path is illuminated by the beams of divine approbation, and whose work shall be remembered! when the most splendid schemes of the children of this world have sunk in eternal oblivion.

But, besides the moral worth attaching always to the act of doing what we are told to do, there was also a special dignity belonging to the work of a Merarite, even though that work was merely attending to a few "**pins**" or "**sockets**."

Everything connected with the tabernacle was of the very deepest interest and highest value. There was not, in the whole world, anything to be compared with that boarded tent with all its mystic belongings. It was a holy dignity and privilege to be allowed to touch the smallest pin that formed a part of that wonderful tabernacle in the wilderness. It was more glorious, by far, to be a

Merarite looking after the pins of the tabernacle, than to wield the sceptre of Egypt or Assyria. True, that Merarite, according to the import of his name, might seem a poor sorrowful, labouring man; but oh! his labour stood connected with the dwelling-place of the Most High GOD, the possessor of Heaven and earth. His hands handled the things which were the patterns of things in the heavens. Every pin, every socket; every curtain, and every covering was a shadow of good things to come - a foreshadowing of CHRIST.

We do not mean to assert that the poor labouring Merarite or Gershonite understood these things. This is not, by any means, the point. We can understand them. It is our privilege to bring all these things - the tabernacle and its mystic furniture - under the brilliant light of the New Testament, and there read CHRIST in all.

While, therefore, we predicate nothing as to the measure of intelligence possessed by the Levites, in their respective work; we at the same time, may say, with confidence, that it was a very precious privilege to be allowed to touch and handle, and bear through the wilderness, the earthly shadows of heavenly realities.

Moreover, it was a special mercy to have the authority of a "**Thus saith the Lord**" for everything they put their hand to.

Who can estimate such a mercy - such a privilege? Each member of that marvellous tribe of workers had his own particular line of things marked out by GOD's hand, and superintended by GOD's priest. It was not each doing what he liked himself, nor one man running in the wake of another, but all bowing to the authority of GOD, and doing precisely what they were told to do. This was the secret of order throughout the eight thousand five hundred and eighty workers (Numbers 4:48) and, we may say, with all possible confidence, it is the only true secret of order still.

Why is it that we have so much confusion in the professing church? Why such conflicting thoughts, feelings, and opinions? why such clashing one with another? Why such crossing of each other's path? Simply from the lack of entire and absolute submission to the Word of GOD. Our will is at work, we choose our own ways, instead of allowing GOD to choose for us. We want that attitude and temper of soul in the which all human thoughts, our own amongst them, shall be put down at what they are really worth; and GOD's thoughts shall rise into full unqualified dominion.

This, we feel persuaded, is the grand desideratum - the crying want of the day in which our lot is cast Man's will is everywhere gaining the ascendant. It is rising like a mighty tide and bearing away those ancient barriers which have, in some measure, kept it in check. Many an old and time-honoured institution is, at this moment, giving way before the rushing torrent. Many an edifice, whose foundations, as we supposed, were laid deep down in the fond and reverent affections of the people, is giving way beneath the battering ram of popular feeling. "**Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.**"

Such is, pre-eminently, the spirit of the age. What is the antidote? Subjection! Subjection to what?

- is it to what is called the authority of the Church?
- is it to the voice of tradition?
- is it to the commandments and doctrines of men?

No; blessed be GOD, it is not to any of these things, nor to all of them put together. To what then?

To the voice of the living GOD - the voice of Holy Scripture. This is the grand remedy for self-will, on the one hand, and submission to human authority, on the other. "**We must obey.**" This is the answer to self-will. "**We must obey God.**" This is the answer to mere bowing down to human authority. we see these two elements all around us. The former, self-will, resolves itself into infidelity. The latter, subjection to man, resolves itself into superstition. These two will bear sway over the whole civilized world. They will carry away all save those who are divinely taught to say, and feel, and act upon, that immortal sentence, "**We must obey God rather than man.**"

It was this that enabled the Gershonite, in the wilderness, to look after those rough unattractive looking "**badger skins;**" and that enabled the Merarite to look after these, apparently, insignificant "**pins.**" Yes, and it is this which will enable the Christian, now, to address himself to that special line of service to which his Lord may see fit to call him.

What, though, to human eyes, it seems rough and unattractive, mean and insignificant: it is enough for us that our Lord has assigned us our post, and given us our work; and that our work has direct reference to the Person and glory of Him who is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.

We, too, may have to confine ourselves to the antitype of the rough unsightly badger skin, or the insignificant pin. But let us remember that whatever has reference to CHRIST - His name - His Person - His cause, in the world, is unspeakably precious to GOD. It may be very small, in man's account; but what of that? we must look at things from GOD's point of view, we must measure them by His standard, and that is CHRIST.

GOD measures everything by CHRIST. Whatever has even the very smallest reference to CHRIST is interesting and important in GOD's account. Whereas the most splendid undertakings, the most gigantic schemes, the most astonishing enterprises of the men of this world, all pass away like the morning cloud and the early dew. Man makes self his center, his object, his standard. He values things according to the measure in which they exalt himself, and further his interests. Even religion itself, so called, is taken up in the same way, and made a pedestal on which to display himself. Everything, in short, is marked up as capital for self, and used as a reflector to throw light upon, and call attention to, that one object. Thus there is a mighty gulf between GOD's thoughts: and man's thoughts; and the shores of that gulf are as far apart as CHRIST and self.

All that belongs to CHRIST is of eternal interest and moment. All that belongs to self shall pass away and be forgotten. Hence, therefore, the most fatal mistake into which any man can fall is to make self his object. It must issue in everlasting disappointment. But, on the other hand, the very wisest, safest, best thing that any man can do, is to make CHRIST his one absorbing object. This must, infallibly, issue in everlasting blessedness and glory.

Beloved reader. pause here a moment and commune with thine own heart and conscience.

It seems to us, at this point, that we have a sacred responsibility to discharge in reference to thy soul. We are penning these lines in the solitude of our chamber at Bristol, and you may, perchance, read them in the solitude of thy chamber in New Zealand, Australia, or some other distant spot. we would therefore remember that our object is not to write a book, nor yet, merely, to expound Scripture. We desire to be used of GOD in the blessed work of dealing with thy very inmost soul. Permit us, therefore, to put this solemn and pointed question home to thee, What is thy object? Is it CHRIST or self?

Be honest with thyself before the almighty and all-seeing Searcher of hearts. Sit in stern judgment upon thyself, as in the very light of the divine presence. Be not deceived by any gilding or false colouring. GOD sees below the surface of things, and He would have thee do so likewise. he presents CHRIST to thee in contrast with all beside. Hast thou accepted Him? Is He thy wisdom, thy righteousness, thy sanctification, and thy redemption? Canst thou say, without hesitation, "**My Beloved is mine, and I am his?**" Search and see. Is this a thoroughly settled point, deep down in the very depths of thy soul? If so, art thou making CHRIST thy exclusive object? Art thou measuring everything by Him?

Ah! dear friend, these are searching questions. Be assured we do not put them to thee without feeling their edge and power for ourselves. As GOD is our witness, we do feel, though in a very small degree, their weight and seriousness. We are deeply and thoroughly convinced that nothing will stand save that which is connected with CHRIST; and, moreover, that the very smallest matter which refers, however remotely, to Him is of commanding interest in the judgment of Heaven. If we may be permitted to awaken a sense of this in any heart, or to deepen the sense where it has been awakened, we shall feel we have not penned this volume in vain.

We must now, ere closing this lengthened section, glance, for a few moments, at the Kohathites and their work.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, after their families, by the house of their fathers, from thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host, to do the work; in the tabernacle of the congregation. This shall be the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation, about the most holy things: and when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering veil, and cover the ark of testimony with it: and shall put thereon the covering of badgers' skins, and shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof, and upon the table of showbread they shall spread a cloth of blue, and put thereon the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls, and covers to cover withal: and the continual bread shall be thereon: and they shall spread upon them a cloth of scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put in the staves thereof. And they shall take a cloth of blue, and cover the candlestick of the light, and his lamps, and his tongs, and his snuff dishes, and all the oil vessels thereof, wherewith they minister unto it; and they shall put it and all the vessels thereof within a covering of badgers skins, and shall put it upon a bar. And upon the golden altar they shall spread a cloth of blue, and cover it with a

covering of badgers' skins, and shall put to the staves thereof: and they shall take all the instruments of ministry, wherewith they minister in the sanctuary, and put them in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put them on a bar: and they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth thereon: and they shall put upon it all the vessels thereof, wherewith they minister about it, even the censers, the flesh-hooks, and the shovels, and the basons, all the vessels of the altar; and they shall spread upon it a covering of badgers' skins, and put to the staves of it. And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These things are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation" (Numbers 4:1-15).

Here we see what precious mysteries were committed to the charge of the Kohathites.

The ark, the golden table, the golden candlestick, the golden altar, and the altar of burnt offering - all these were shadows of good things to come - the patterns of things in the heavens - the figures of the true - the types of CHRIST, is His Person, His work, and His offices, as we have sought to show in our "*Notes on Exodus*" (Exodus 24-30). They are here presented in the wilderness, and, if we may be allowed the expression, in their travelling dress. With the exception of the ark of the covenant, all these things presented the one unvarying appearance to the human eye, namely, the rough covering of the badgers skins.

With the ark there was this difference, that above the badgers' skins there was "**a cloth wholly of blue,**" setting forth, doubtless, the entirely heavenly character of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, in His own divine Person. That which was essentially heavenly in Him lay upon the very surface of His blessed life here below. He was ever the entirely heavenly man - "**the Lord from heaven.**" Underneath this covering of blue were the badger' skins, which may be viewed as the expression of that which protects from all evil. The ark was the only thing that was covered in this peculiar manner.

With regard to "**the table of showbread,**" which was a type of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, in His connection with the twelve tribes of Israel, there was first "**a cloth of blue,**" and then "**a cloth of scarlet;**" and over all, the badgers' skins.

In other words, there was that which is essentially heavenly; then that which expresses human splendour; and above all, that which protects from evil. It is the purpose of GOD that Israel's twelve tribes shall be pre-eminent in the earth - that in them the very highest type of human splendour shall be exhibited. Hence the appropriateness of the "**scarlet**" covering on the table of showbread. The twelve loaves evidently point to the twelve tribes; and as to the scarlet colour, the reader has only to look through Scripture in order to see that it sets forth that which man considers splendid.

The coverings of the golden candlestick and of the golden altar were identical, namely, first the heavenly covering; and then the external badgers' skin.

In the candlestick we see our Lord CHRIST, in connection with the work of the Holy Ghost in light and testimony. The golden altar shows us CHRIST and the preciousness of His intercession

- the fragrance and value of what He is before GOD. Both these, when passing along the sand of the desert, were wrapped up in that which was heavenly, and protected above by the badgers' skins.

Finally, in reference to the brazen altar, we observe marked distinction.

It was covered with "**purple**" instead of "**blue**," or "**scarlet**." Why was this? Doubtless because the brazen altar prefigured CHRIST as the one who "**suffered for sins**," and who shall therefore wield the sceptre of royalty.

"**Purple**" is the royal colour. The One who suffered in this world, shall reign. The One who wore the crown of thorns, shall wear the crown of glory. Hence the moral fitness of the "**purple**" covering on the brazen altar - for on that altar the victim was offered. We know there is nothing in Scripture without its own divine meaning, and it is our privilege as well as our duty to seek to know the meaning of all that our GOD has graciously written for our learning. This, we believe, can only be reached by humble, patient, prayerful waiting upon Him. The One who has penned the Book knows perfectly the scope and object of the book as a whole, and of each division of the book in particular. This will have the effect of checking the unhallowed flights of the imagination. The Spirit of GOD alone can open Scripture to our souls.

"GOD is His own interpreter" in revelation, as well as in providence, and the more we lean on Him, in true self-emptiness, the deeper insight we shall have both into His Word and His ways.

We would therefore say to the Christian reader, Take the first fifteen verses of Numbers 4 and read them in the presence of GOD. Ask Him to explain to thee the meaning of each clause - the meaning of the ark, and why it alone was covered with "**a cloth wholly of blue**." And so of all the rest. We have ventured, we trust in humility of mind, to suggest the meaning, but we earnestly desire that thou shouldst get it directly from GOD, for thyself, and not accept it merely from man. We confess we are terribly afraid of imagination; and we know not that we have ever sat down to write on sacred Scripture with a deeper sense of this that none but the Holy Ghost can really explain it.

Thou wilt say, then, "Why sit down to write at all?"

Well, it is with the fond hope of being permitted, in some feeble manner, to help the earnest student of Scripture to catch sight of the rare and exquisite gems that lie scattered along the inspired page, so that he may pick them up for Himself. Thousands of readers might read, again and again, the fourth of Numbers, and not even perceive the fact that the ark was the only part of the mystic furniture of the tabernacle that did not exhibit the badger skin. And if the simple fact be not laid hold of, how can its import be seen? So also, as to the brazen altar, how many have failed to notice that it alone put on the "**purple**?"

Now, we may rest assured that both these facts are full of spiritual meaning.

The ark was the very highest manifestation of GOD, and, therefore, we may understand why it should exhibit, at first sight, that which was purely heavenly. The brazen altar was the place where sin was judged - it typified CHRIST in His work as a sin bearer it set forth that most

distant place to which He travelled for us; and yet that brazen altar was the only thing that was wrapped in royal covering. Can anything be more exquisite than the teaching here? What infinite wisdom in all these fine distinctions!

- the ark conducts us to the very highest point in Heaven.
- the brazen altar conducts us to the lowest point on earth.

They stood at extreme points in the tabernacle. In the former, we see the One who magnified the law; in the latter, we see the One who was made sin. In the one, that which was heavenly was seen at the first sight; and it was only when you looked deeper, you saw the badger skin; and deeper still, that mysterious veil, the type of CHRIST's flesh. But, in the other, the first thing you saw was the badger skin, and deeper down we see the royal covering. CHRIST in each, though in a different aspect.

- in the ark, we have CHRIST maintaining the glory of GOD.
- in the brazen altar, we have CHRIST meeting the sinner's need. blessed combination for us!

But, further, has the reader noticed that in the entire of this marvellous passage to which we have been calling his particular attention, there is no mention of a certain piece of furniture which we know, from Exodus 30 and other Scriptures, occupied a, very important place in the tabernacle?

We allude to the brazen laver.

Why is this omitted in Numbers 4? It is more than probable that some of our keen-eyed rationalists would find here what they would pronounce an error - a defect - a discrepancy. But is it so? No, thank GOD! The devout Christian student knows full well that such things are wholly incompatible with the volume of GOD. He knows and confesses this, even though he may not be able to account for the absence of this or the presence of that particular thing in any given passage. But just in so far as we are enabled, through the mercy of GOD, to see the spiritual reason of things, do we always find that where the rationalist, sees, or affects to see flaws, the pious student sees brilliant gems.

Thus it is, we doubt not, in reference to the omission of the brazen laver from the catalogue in Numbers 4. It is only one of the ten thousand illustrations of the beauty and perfectness of the inspired volume.

But, the reader may enquire, "Why is the laver omitted?"

The reason may be found in the double fact of what that laver was made from, and what it was made for. This double fact we have noticed in Exodus. The laver was made of the looking-glasses of the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation (Exodus 38:8). This was its material. And, as to its object, it was provided as a means of purification for man. Now, in all those things which formed the special burden and charge of the Kohathites, we see only the varied manifestations of GOD in CHRIST, from the ark in the holiest of all, to the brazen altar in the court of the tabernacle; and, inasmuch as the laver was not a manifestation of GOD, But a purification for man, it is therefore not found in the custody and charge of the Kohathites.

But we must now leave the reader to meditate alone on this most profound section of our book (Numbers 3 - 4). It is really inexhaustible. We might go on expatiating upon it until we had filled volumes instead of pages, and, after all, we should feel as though we had barely penetrated the surface of a mine whose depth never can be sounded - whose treasures never can be exhausted.

What human pen can bring out the marvellous instruction contained in the inspired account of the tribe of Levi? who can attempt to unfold that sovereign grace which shines in the fact that the self-willed Levi should be the very first to respond to that soul-stirring call, "**Who is on the Lord's side?**" Who can speak aright of that rich, abounding, distinguishing mercy illustrated in the fact that those whose hands had been embued in blood should be permitted to handle the vessels of the sanctuary; and that those into whose assembly GOD's Spirit could not enter should be brought into the very bosom of the congregation of GOD, there to be occupied with that which was so precious to Him?

And then those three divisions of workers, Merarites, Gershonites, and Kohathites! What instruction is here! what a type of the various members of the Church of GOD, in their various service! What depth of mysterious wisdom in all this?

Is it speaking too strongly - is it too much to say that nothing, at this moment, so deeply impresses us as the sense of the utter feebleness and poverty of all that we have advanced on one of the very richest sections of the inspired volume! Still we have conducted the reader to a mine of infinite depth and richness, and we must leave him to penetrate therein by the gracious aid of Him to whom the mine belongs and who alone is able to evolve its wealth.

All that man can write or say on any portion of GOD's Word can, at best, be but suggestive; to speak of it as exhaustive would be to cast a slight upon the sacred canon. may we tread the holy place with unshod feet, and be as those who inquire in the temple, and whose studies are perfumed by the spirit of worship. *

* For further suggestions on the subjects touched upon in the foregoing section, the reader is referred to "*Notes on Exodus*" (Exodus 24 - 30). Also to a small pamphlet entitled, "*the History of the Tribe of Levi Considered*," which has been included as Appendix 1.

~ end of chapter 3, 4 ~

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