Exodus - Commentaries by Henry Allan Ironside

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, January 8

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“I have surely seen the affliction of My people... and have heard their cry... for I know their sorrows”—Exod. 3:7.

GOD is no indifferent spectator of human suffering. He feels for His people in all the sorrows and trials they are called upon to endure. It is written, “In all their affliction He was afflicted and the angel of His presence saved them.” His great Father-heart enters into all the griefs and wretchedness that we have to go through, and His ear is ever open to our cry. We wrong our own souls when we fail to turn to Him in our distress and restrain prayer before Him.

Daily Sacrifice, January 23

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.”— Exodus 34:27, 28.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS embrace all man’s responsibilities toward God and toward his fellows, and are summed up by our Lord in the two great commandments—to love God wholeheartedly and one’s neighbor as himself. What man, thus tested, can claim to be guiltless? Christ has magnified the law by His life of perfect obedience and His holy teaching, and on the cross met the full penalty for its violation, and this on our behalf, as He was the sinless One. Now, when we trust in Him, we are born of God and indwelt by His Spirit, and as we walk in the Spirit every righteous demand of the law is fulfilled in us without any legal threatening. Because of love for Christ we are glad to do the will of God.

—Horatius Sonar.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, January 13

“My presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest”— Exodus 33:14.

IT was God’s promise to Israel after failure had come in, and, from their side, all covenant-blessing had been forfeited. But His love would not allow Him to forsake them, even as His grace demands that He never leave His people today. When distressed by a sense of unworthiness, how blessed to realize that He knew all we would ever he and do before He saved us at all, and His presence will go with us to the end and bring us into rest at last, for He has said, “I will never leave thee nor forsake,” and we know that He is faithful that promised. He cannot deny Himself.

Daily Sacrifice, January 18

“And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river’s brink.” — Exodus 2:3.

THIS was an act of real faith. The child had to be exposed to danger and possible death. The ark was, in a sense, a little picture of Christ, as was the ark of Noah. Jochebed, in type, entrusted her baby boy to the care of the Lord, when no longer able to protect him in the home. The king had commanded that all male children of the Hebrews be cast into the river. This mother put her baby in the river—but in the ark of safety first. So we may trust our children to the care of the loving Lord as they are thrust forth upon the current of life.

—Geo. Neumark.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, January 12

“They shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof because they are holy” —Exodus 29:33.

THE food of the priests was the offering of the Lord. In this they pictured believers, the priesthood of the new dispensation who, after having been justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, now are to feed their souls upon Him who died for them and rose again. It is as we meditate upon what the Word reveals concerning our blessed Lord that we feast upon His body and drink His blood. The worldling cannot enter into this. It is only for God’s anointed priests.

—Bernard of Clairvaux.

Daily Sacrifice, January 22

“Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness ... Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked”— Exodus 23:1, 7.

It is so easy to do this. Sometimes just an unkind suggestion, which is taken up by others, will be exaggerated as it is spread abroad, until one who is utterly innocent will be blackened beyond the possibility of clearing himself. This, in God’s sight, is wickedness. To be “an unrighteous witness” is abhorrent to Him who is the God of truth. Our Lord Himself suffered in this way, when false witnesses rose up against Him, perverting His words and charging Him with offenses of which He was guiltless (Psa. 35:11; Mark 14:55, 56).

“Keep thee far from a false matter.” This is the only path of safety. Avoid all fellowship with those who indulge in the evil habits of slander and misrepresentation. God’s ear is ever open and He hears every false accusation, and will, in His righteous government, cause all such falsehoods to react against those who are guilty of promulgating them.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, January 11

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy” —Exodus 20:8.

THE Sabbath was given to Israel not only as a memorial of God’s creation-rest, but as a reminder of their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt in order that they might enjoy the rest of Canaan (Deut. 5:12-15). In giving them one day out of every seven for physical rest and spiritual upbuilding, God had their needs in view. His Sabbath was made for man. He designed it for His people’s blessing. It is a sad commentary on the perversity of the human heart that many of them saw in this gracious provision a restriction upon their liberty, against which they rebelled, saying, “When will the... sabbath... be gone?” (Amos 8:5), because of their desire to indulge in trade and the acquisition of wealth.

On the other hand, long ere our Lord appeared on earth, they had hedged the Sabbath about with so many of their own rules and regulations that what God intended to be a joy and a delight had become a heavy burden and an oppression of their spirits.

Similarly do men treat the Christian day of rest and worship, which for intelligent believers has displaced the Sabbath of the law. But how we would miss them were our Lord’s Days taken from us and if we were forced to labor seven days a week with no respite for spiritual, cultural or physical upbuilding!

—C. Wordsworth.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, January 10

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain”— Exodus 20:7.

GOD has said He “will be sanctified in them that come nigh” Him (Lev. 10:3). “Holy and reverend is His name” (Psa. 111:9). As we approach Him we should do so in reverence and godly fear (Heb. 12:28). The name of God tells of what and who He is. It speaks of the divine character. Believers take His name upon them when they are identified with Him by profession of their faith in Him. The careless use of divine names and titles betrays a grossly irreverent state of mind, and is itself a grave sin against Him who is Creator of all men and Father of all who believe. We are called to “walk worthy of God” (1 Thess. 2:12) because He is our Father and we are His children. Irreverence on the part of those who profess this high and holy calling is most deplorable, and is, in effect, to take the name of the Lord our God in vain.

Profanity is an abhorrent vice of which all decent people are ashamed, hence very few men are low enough to curse and swear in the presence of ladies or of persons of superior position and culture. But it is possible to profane the name of the Lord even though foul language is never used. To profess to love God and yet to dishonor Him by a godless and worldly life is to take that Holy Name in vain just as much as to be guilty of the irreverent use of holy expressions. In all our ways we are called upon to sanctify the Lord and thus to honor His Holy Name.

—R. Heber.

Daily Sacrifice, January 17

“And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor: and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigor.”— Exodus 1:13, 14.

THE sufferings of the Israelites under a cruel government that hated them and spurned the God they worshipped, proved to be the very opportunity Jehovah desired to display His grace to the one and His righteous judgment upon the other. Israel was chosen in the furnace of affliction that they might know the loving-kindness of the Lord and might become His peculiar treasure, a nation living under His direct protection and special care. As we think of the beginnings of our own nation, we cannot but be reminded of similar circumstances. Persecution because of hatred of their conscientious, religious convictions, drove the fathers of the republic, the early colonists, from Europe to America, where, in a most marked way, the divine providence watched over them and gave them a home in a new world. No one can be familiar with

the philosophy of history without realizing the large part that oppression had in preparing a people for new and better things under the fostering care of God. The God of Israel is the God of our fathers and is still our sure resource. People learn in affliction what they often fail to learn in more favorable circumstances—their own helplessness and God's omnipotence.

—Mrs. Edgar F. Johnston.

Daily Sacrifice, January 21

"And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord." —Exodus 19:8.

AT the moment, they doubtless meant every word that they said, but they little realized the incorrigible evil of their own hearts and the resulting untrustworthiness of their best intentions. It was not long before the people who promised such implicit obedience were dancing around the golden calf, and from that time on theirs was a history of alternate failure and partial revival, until, at last, God disowned them and cast them away from their land. Never will they be restored as a nation until they acknowledge their sin and seek His face (Hos. 5:15). Then they will realize that it is not in man's unaided power to keep God's holy commandments. Man can Live victoriously only through the might of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

—Anon.

Daily Sacrifice, January 20

TO obey meant, so far as the natural eye could see, certain death. But He who gave the command, opened up a dry way through the bed of the sea, as soon as they set forward. He never asks of us impossibilities, nor does He command us to do what is unreasonable. Augustine of Hippo wrote long ago, "God's commandments are God's enabling's," and this is ever blessedly true. What seem to us to be insurmountable difficulties or insoluble problems are simple enough to Him whose power is omnipotent and whose understanding is infinite. When He says, Go forward, all barriers give way as we obey His voice!

—Annie Johnson Flint.

Daily Sacrifice, January 19

"God led them not through the way... that was near.... But God led the people about."—Exodus 13:17,18.

WE may not always understand why God leads us roundabout through the wilderness of this world instead of taking us by what might seem to us a more direct and more agreeable way. But He is working out a plan in our lives that calls for the very experiences we are passing through. He has designed to teach us lessons we could not learn otherwise.

Had Israel missed these varied desert scenes they would never have known what God could be to a needy people in the way they proved Him to be. He led them by the right way, although it must often have seemed to them a strange way.

—Anon

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, January 9

"When I see the blood, I will pass over you"—Exodus 12:13.

THIS was God's word to Israel and He could not deny Himself. All who were sheltered by the blood of the lamb, sprinkled on the doorposts and lintels of their houses, were as safe from judgment that night as God could make them. No angel of destruction could enter. The blood stood between the first-born and the condemnation of death, and so it is today for all who have taken their place in faith beneath the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Lamb, shed for the redemption of sinners. Judgment cannot reach them for it has fallen upon their Substitute already.

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