John - Commentaries by Henry Allan Ironside

Daily Sacrifice, July 21

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“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world”— John 9:5.

WHILE our Lord ministered among men He was the visible manifestation of light—His holy life casting light on every man with whom He came in contact (John 1:9). All are shown up, in the light of His perfection, as being sinful and unrighteous. The true Light casts light upon every man. When our Lord looked on to the testimony to be carried on after His return to heaven, He said, “Ye are the light of the world” (Matt. 5:14). This tells of our responsibility to shine as lights in a dark scene (Phil. 2:15).

—Alice E. Sherwood. Sel.

Daily Sacrifice, July 20

“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” —John 8:44.

MANY otherwise seemingly orthodox Christians are inclined to reject the doctrine of the personality of the Evil One. To them he appears to be but a personification of evil. The only devil there is, according to some, is the devil of one’s own evil thoughts and desires. Such evidently overlook the fact that our Lord was tempted of the Devil. He who was absolutely holy, who never knew a desire contrary to His Father’s will, was, nevertheless, tempted by Satan—a definite, wicked, personal spirit. Moreover, it is Christ Himself who tells us positively that the Devil is. He describes him as a murderer, and as the father of lies. He shows that he is an apostate being—one who once was different from what he is now— “he abode not in the truth.” The testimony of Scripture throughout coincides with this. Satan is the accuser, as in Job’s case; the tempter, as in the case of Eve; the adversary of God and man, as Peter and other apostles tell us.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 9

“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)” — John 7:37-39.

THE gift of the Holy Spirit, indwelling each believer, was dependent upon the glorification of the Lord Jesus, following His sacrificial death and His triumph and resurrection. The Spirit has come to witness to these great truths. He has taken up His abode in all who have believed the gospel, and henceforth He is the power of the new life and the One who leads us out in testimony to the world. On our part we need to be very careful to deal with anything that would grieve Him or dishonor the Lord Jesus whom He delights to glorify. For it is only when He is unhindered by hidden or overt sin that He is free to do the work in which He delights—revealing the precious things of Christ to the soul that they may be shared with others.

—Barbara E. Cornet.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 8

“I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” — John 6:51.

JUST as physical life is sustained by bread, so we live spiritually as we feed upon the Lord Jesus Christ. This involves personal faith in Him and daily meditation upon what God has revealed concerning Him. In this way the soul feeds on the Living Bread. The manna of old typified Him who came down from heaven and took the lowest place on earth that He might give life and strength to all who would receive and feed upon Him. But it is not only Christ in incarnation who is thus presented. He had to die in order that He might give His flesh for the life of the world. When He is appropriated by faith the believer receives divine life and stands before God justified from all things. Henceforth the new nature delights in Him, and finds its highest occupation in the contemplation of His perfections.

—Mary Bowley.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 7

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” — John 5:24.

THERE is perhaps no clearer word in all the Bible than this as to how one may know he has eternal life. Note the five great pillars on which assurance rests. First, “He that heareth My Word.” Have you heard God’s Voice in the Word? Has it spoken to your inner ear—the ear of your soul? Second, “And believeth on Him that sent Me.” To believe on Him is to trust in Him. Do you confide in God as the One who sent His Son to die for you? Third, “Hath everlasting life.” Note there is no peradventure here. All who believe have God’s great gift of life eternal. Fourth, “Shall not come into condemnation.” That is, “judgment” for all that our sins deserved was borne by Jesus, so no believer will ever have to meet God in judgment about the guilt of the past, Fifth, “Is passed from death unto life.” All who have thus come to God as revealed in Christ are born again:

Daily Sacrifice, July 19

“Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work”— {vi 26227-26228}John 5:16, 17.

WITH terrible malignancy, these men, who made their boast in the Law, would have destroyed Him who came to fulfill the Law and the prophets, had they been per witted to do so.

The legalist cannot understand the grace of God. To him there is nothing so important as the observance of rules and regulations. Spiritual realities are an unsolved mystery to him, and even distressed mankind are of small moment compared with the performance of religious rites and ceremonies. But the heart of God, as expressed in the life of Jesus, puts the emphasis, not on some sacramental system, but upon faith in the Word of the Lord and devotion to the Person of Christ. God’s rest, after the work of creation was finished, had soon been broken because of man’s sin, and He had never kept a sabbath of perfect freedom from service to mankind since. As the Father thus wrought, so the Son was constantly occupied in repairing sin’s ravages. For Him there could be no sabbath rest from toil and labor until the work of redemption was accomplished.

—J. C. Deck

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 6

“God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” — John 4:24.

IN considering the subject of Worship, the highest exercise of which the spirit of man is capable, it is important to remember that there is a great difference between the way it is presented in the two Testaments. In former dispensations God was hidden in large measure. His wisdom and His providence were displayed in creation. His love was seen in His care of those who confided in Him. His grace was declared by the prophets as something yet to be manifested. Consequently there was no immediate access into the presence of God. The veil was unrent. His Word to Israel was, “Draw not nigh hither” (Ex. 3:5); “Worship ye afar off” (24:1). But since the advent of Christ, all is changed. Grace and truth are now revealed. The veil is rent. The way into the holiest is now made manifest. In spirit every believer is invited to “draw near... in full assurance of faith” (Heb. 10:19-22). The worship of the new creation is based upon the finished work of our blessed Lord. In spirit we enter the immediate presence of the Father in full consciousness of our sonship. Worship is far more than prayer, or the enjoyment of helpful ministry. It is the spirit’s adoring occupation with God Himself, not merely in gratitude for His gifts, but because of what He is. It is this that the Father seeks. Worship is lowered as we become occupied with the externals even of Christianity. It reaches its highest point as our spirits are absorbed in contemplation of the matchless perfections of the eternal God, in the light of the cross and the empty tomb.

—Tregelles.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 5

“Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drink, eth of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him well of water springing up into everlasting life” —John 4:13,14.

WHAT Jesus said of the water of Jacob’s well is true of everything that earth can offer. There is nothing in this scene that can effectually quench the thirst of a human soul. Man is made for Eternity, and the things of Time can never satisfy. Augustine spoke truly when he cried, “O God, Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our souls can never find rest until they rest in Thee.” But he who drinks the living water of the gospel finds that which quenches his thirst forever. Christ fully satisfies the heart that learns to confide in Him. The word received in the power of the Holy Spirit produces the new birth, thus giving everlasting life. This is the present possession of all who put their trust in the Lord Jesus.

—H. Bonar.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 4

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” — John 3:16.

LUTHER called this verse, “The Miniature Bible.” Others have designated it, “The Gospel in a nutshell.” It tells of the infinite love of God to a ruined world, manifested by the supreme gift of His Only Begotten Son, who in grace became Man and gave Himself for our sins upon the cross in order that He might make expiation for our iniquities, that thus God might be able in righteousness to bestow the gift of life eternal on those who deserved eternal death. It is when we believe the message that we receive the benefits of the gospel. To believe is to trust. He who trusts alone in Christ Jesus for salvation shall never perish, but even now is the possessor of eternal life—a life that can never be forfeited.

— Barbara C. Ryberg.

Daily Sacrifice, July 18

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him”— John 3:36.

THERE are many truths which we may or may not believe or understand. But if we are to be saved, there is one thing that is all-important, and that is a personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as our very own Saviour. Let us be certain about this. To believe in Him spells eternal life. To turn away from Him means eternal judgment (John 3:36). Faith honors God, for it receives His testimony concerning His Son, and rests upon it, knowing that it is the word of One who cannot lie.

Daily Sacrifice, July 17

He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man”—John 2:24, 25.

THIS was not knowledge acquired by personal experience of the sins and errors of fallen humanity, for He was ever “the Holy One of God” (Luke 4:34). Neither was it an understanding that resulted from the study of some form of philosophy or psychology, for He was not a product of the schools or a disciple of some adept in scientific lore (John 7:15). He knew what was in the hearts and minds of men because He was God manifest in flesh, He who of old could say, “I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins” (Jer. 17:10).

Therefore He spoke with absolute authority (Matt. 7:29), recognizing man as the highest of God’s creation (Matt. 6:26; 12:12), yet marred and blighted by sin so that his very heart is now a nest of every unclean thing (Matt. 15:19) until cleansed by the regenerating power of God, which lifts him from the natural to the spiritual plane (John 3:6).

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 24

“So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lowest thou Me more than these? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, Feed My lambs” — John 21:15.

SOMETIME on the day of the resurrection the Lord had a private interview with Peter. He sent him a special message by the women early in the morning (Mark 16:7), but He appeared personally to him later (Luke 24:34). A veil has been drawn over the scene of that sacred interview, but we cannot doubt it was the means of restoring his soul and of reassuring the failing disciple’s heart. Now we learn of his public restoration and his confirmation in the office of the apostolate. That experience by the lakeside was one that Peter would never be able to forget in after-years. It revealed, as nothing else could, the tender consideration of the Lord whom he had denied thrice, who now led him on step by step to a three-fold confession of his faith and love, and assured him that some day he should indeed go, for His name’s sake, both to prison and to death. Never again would Peter be ashamed to own his connection with the Lord Jesus. On the contrary, he was yet to drive home with telling effect the fact that all blessing, for time and eternity, was to be found in Him (Acts 4:12), and that even the great sin of denying and crucifying the Holy One and Just (Acts 3:14, 15) might be fully forgiven if the guilty offender would but turn to God in repentance and seek remission of sins in His name (Acts 2:38; 3:19). By this experience, too, the rest of the apostles would realize that there was no further reason to treat their erring brother with any degree of reserve; for if the Christ, whom he had denied, thus openly expressed His confidence in him, they, too, might consider him as fully restored to the office he seemed to have forfeited.

Daily Sacrifice, August 3

“If I will that he tarry till I come”— John 21:22.

TILL I come.” This expression refers clearly to our Lord’s promised, personal return from heaven. The same words are used in Luke 19:13, where the nobleman, going into a far country, commits treasure to his servants, saying, “Occupy till I come”; and again in Revelation 2:25, where the risen and glorified Lord says to the faithful remnant in the corrupt Thyatiran church, “That which ye have already hold fast till I come.” In 1 Corinthians 11:26, after giving instruction concerning the Communion service, or the Lord’s Supper, the Holy Spirit says, “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till He come.” This is the blessed hope set before the Christian. Some generation of believers (who can say it may not be ours?) will be living on the earth when this glorious event takes place (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). Meantime, generation after generation have been called to pass through death, thus going to be with Christ. But this is a very different thing to His coming for us. At death the spirit and body are separated, the one going to heaven and the other to the grave. At the Lord’s return death will be swallowed up in victory and the body raised and reunited to the spirit, to be forever with the Lord (1 Cor. 15:51-54).

—Bickiersteth.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 23

“Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulcher, and he saw, and believed” —John 20:8.

NEITHER John nor Peter knew that Jesus was to rise from the dead. Although He had told His disciples very definitely that He would thus be brought back to life on the third day, their minds were unable to grasp it. But the evidence of the grave-cloths (not “clothes,” as in our version) was too convincing to be doubted. They lay in that crypt not folded up, as many have thought, but “wrapped together,” just as they had enswathed His body, but like a cocoon from which the butterfly had emerged. The disciples knew that no power on earth could have removed that body and left its cerements undisturbed. It was the resurrection power of God which alone had wrought this stupendous miracle. So they could not but believe.

—T. Kelly.

Daily Sacrifice, August 2

“The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher” —John 20:1.

Is there, in all history, a more thrilling incident recorded than that of the amazed followers of Jesus Christ when they found the tomb empty, where, only a few days before, they had reverently and sorrowfully laid away the body of their Lord? The imperial seal and the Roman guard guaranteed no human interference, no possibility of rifling that sepulcher. Yet, in spite of every precaution, the great stone that covered the entrance was rolled back, and the crypt was found to be vacant. No wonder the disciples themselves, who had forgotten or failed to understand the promise of the Lord Jesus that He would rise again the third day, were in a quandary as to what had taken place until the evidence of His resurrection became so overwhelming that they could no longer doubt. They ate and drank “with Him after He rose from the dead” (Acts 10:41), and had absolute proof that He was indeed the very same Jesus they had known during the years of His ministry among them (John 20:27). With them it was not merely faith accepting the testimony of others—even of God Himself, or His Holy Word. It was actual sight, verifying what the Scriptures, divinely inspired, had predicted.

M. Warner.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 3

“This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a Man which is preferred before me: for He was before me” —John 1:30.

FEW preachers have equaled John the Baptist in self-depreciation and Christ-exaltation. He sought to turn the attention of his hearers from himself to Jesus, and if he made disciples, it was only that they might be persuaded to leave him and follow Christ, the One who was preferred before him (John 1:15), because pre-existent, John was happy and content to be esteemed the Bridegroom’s friend, and rejoiced as he entered into His joy (John 3:29).

—A. A. F.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 2

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made”—John 1:1-3.

IT is well known that the term “Word” translates the Greek word “Logos,” This was an expression already well-known to thinking people when our Lord appeared on earth. Everywhere in the Greek-speaking world the writings of Plato were circulated. He had spoken of the insolubility of many mysteries, but had expressed the hope that some day there would come forth a “Word” (Logos) from God that would make everything clear. John might even have had this in mind when, directed by the Holy Spirit, he penned the wonderful sentences with which this Gospel begins. It is as though God is saying: “The ‘Word’ has now been spoken. In Christ the mind of God is fully revealed. He who hears Him hears Gad, for in Him ‘are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge’.” The Word never had a beginning. The Son is as truly eternal as the Father is. To teach otherwise is to deny the very foundations of our faith. He could not have a beginning, for He Himself is the beginning and the end (Rev. 22:13).

—J. Conder.

The Unchanging Christ and Other Sermons, 9. How Pontius Pilate Lost His Soul

Text: “Then said Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee? Jesus answered. Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivereth me unto thee hath the greater sin. And from thence forth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend; whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. When Pilate heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out. Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led him away.” (John 19:10-16).

FOUR times in the New Testament outside of the Gospels, Pontius Pilate is mentioned by name. When Peter was preaching, after the healing of the lame man, as recorded in Acts 3:13: “The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.” In chapter 4, verse 27, we read, “For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together.” In chapter 13, verse 28, Paul, when preaching in the synagogue at Antioch, retold the story of the rejection of Christ and he says, “And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.” Again in 1 Timothy 6:13 and 14, the apostle says to this young preacher, “I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This man, Pontius Pilate, occupies a large place in the Word of God, and strikingly enough, there is perhaps no name better known next to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ than that of Pontius Pilate. Throughout all the Christian centuries, ever since the beginning of the second century, when the so-called Apostles’ Creed was compiled, thousands and at times millions of professed Christian people have recited Sunday after Sunday, “I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ His Son who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate.” And that man’s name is going down to eternal infamy because of the stand he took when our Lord Jesus was brought before him for judgment.

Another name is intimately linked with that of Pilate in connection with the mock trial of our blessed Savior. It is that of Herod. He was a grossly carnal, depraved and immoral wretch whose vile life disgraced the title he bore. He lost his soul because of the sin of impurity, that same damning sin that is ruining so many today. It “has cast down many thousands; yea, many strong men have been slain by it.” Everywhere it is prevalent, and until men judge the sin of impurity, until they come to the place where they are ready to be delivered from it, it is absolutely impossible to exercise saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:9 and 10).

Men cannot be saved in their sins; they can be saved only when they are ready to judge their sins and to be delivered from them. Herod is the outstanding example of a man ruined for time and eternity through the sin of impurity No such stain as that seems to be upon the life of Pontius Pilate. There is no intimation in Scripture nor yet in what has come down to us in secular history concerning this man, that he was an immoral or licentious man, but it is very evident that the sin that kept him from getting right with God was another one altogether, and yet one that is very common among us today. The sin that ruined Pilate was that of selfish ambition. This man was procurator of Judea and as such was vice-king and represented the authority of Rome in Judea from about 26 A. D. until 37 A, D. He was characterized by an overweening pride and ambition, and because of this he lost his soul.

If you are unsaved what is the sin that is keeping you from Christ? Is it that you dread what men might think of you if you came to God as a poor sinner, put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and confessed Him as your Saviour? This was what destroyed Pilate. He went contrary to his conscience because he felt if he did not do so, he would lose his opportunities for advancement in the Roman Empire. The threat of the Jewish hierarchy, “If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend: whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Caesar,” was too much for Pilate.

It is very interesting to go back and read in the four gospels the different accounts of what took place that morning when the Lord of Life and Glory stood before Pilate’s judgment seat. During the previous night, He had passed through His mock trial before Caiaphas and Caiaphas’ father-in-law, Annas, and very early in the morning, about 7 o’clock our time, He was dragged into the presence of Pilate. The Roman governor had hardly finished his breakfast when the clamoring mob appeared in the door of the judgment hall. Not one of them was ready to

put his foot across the threshold because it was the Passover time and they were so religious, so punctilious about ritual ceremonies, that they would not dare step into the house of a Gentile lest they should be defiled. Yet they were deliberately rejecting the Saviour that God had provided for them. How many there are today who just like these people are very careful about religious observances, but still refuse to own themselves sinners and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

Pilate, hastily summoned, took his place upon the judgment seat. The Lord Jesus Christ was placed bore him. Historians, theologians, and artists have tried to picture Him standing there. We read that the people led Him bound to Pilate, and generally the artists take it for granted that it was His wrists that were bound, but some tell us that the word in the original implies that it was a hang man's rope that was placed around His neck! They led Him ignominiously along with the murderer's halter around His neck! They dragged Him in that way into the presence of Pilate. Our friends of the Episcopal church and different branches of the Catholic church are accustomed to place around the neck of a clergyman what is called, "the stole," and this has come down from ancient times as a reminder of the rope that was around the neck of the Son of God as He was dragged before Pilate. There He stood; He had made Himself a little lower than the angels with a view to the suffering of death; He had become a man, and now He takes the lowest place. He stands there condemned as a blasphemer by those He loved so tenderly, and they demand that Pilate pronounce the death sentence upon Him.

Conditions were such then that in order to placate the Jews, it had been decreed that they might have the right of judgment in all cases having to do with the violation of their own laws; but the power of life and death rested with the Roman procurator. They had declared Jesus a blasphemer but had no authority to carry out their own judgment and so came to Pilate that he might confirm it and put the Lord Jesus Christ to death. Pilate naturally asked the question, "What accusation bring ye against this man?" They had no accusation which would stand in a Roman court; no accusation which would be of any value toward the condemnation of the prisoner. They answered, "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee," as much as to say, "You insult us when you ask for an accusation. We would not have delivered him into you if we were not confident of his being malefactor."

Pilate looked upon them with that contempt which the Romans always felt for the Hebrews, and said, "Very well then, if you have no accusation, you take Him and judge Him according to your law." But they said, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." And Pilate looked on in wonder. He gazed on the face of the prisoner before him. What should he do with Him? He would have been as insensate as the marble images in his court, if his heart had not been moved by the plight of the prisoner, and so he entered the judgment hall again and called Jesus to him personally, and said, quietly, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered by putting a question to him, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" In other words, "Are you asking me this because of a real desire to know or did somebody tell you that I am the King of the Jews?" Then Pilate said, "Am I a Jew?" And you can see the look of contempt on his face. "Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?" In other words, "They say you claim to be the King of the Jews; is this true?" Now, convinced that up to this point he is really an honest man in complexity, Jesus makes that good confession of which Saint John speaks, "My kingdom is not of this world — that is, not of this present order — if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence." Pilate looked up quickly and said, "Art thou a King then?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." Here is a challenge.

When Jesus stood before Caiaphas, He answered not a word until Caiaphas put Him on oath and said, "I adjure thee by the living God." Then Jesus said, "Thou hast said; nevertheless I say unto you, Here after shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Then Caiaphas rent his garments and exclaimed, "He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy." It was contrary to the law for the high priest to rend his garments and the moment he did that, the priesthood passed away from Israel. But Jesus did not answer Caiaphas until he put Him on oath. He knee there was no honesty, no desire to know what was true but He gave to Pilate the benefit of the doubt.

Pilate seemed to be sincere; it seemed as though he would really like to know and so Jesus explained very carefully, and then closed with the challenging word. "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." Let me bring that home to you. "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." Do not say to me do not say to the Spirit of God, do not say to your own soul, "I cannot believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; I cannot believe that Jesus Christ is the rightful head of a spiritual kingdom." To say that implies that you are not an honest man or woman for Jesus Christ says, "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." If you are determined to be true, if you are determined to be real, if you are going to be honest to the deepest convictions of your own soul, you will know who He is. He says elsewhere, "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17). If a man says, "I would like to believe but some way I cannot," the reason is not difficult to find. If you say you would like to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, but you cannot; if you would like to believe that the Bible is truly the Word of God but you cannot, it is because you are living in some sin that the Bible condemns. That is why you cannot believe.

When somebody said to Sir Isaac Newton, "I would like to believe but cannot," he said, "Sometimes in my absent-mindedness I come into my study and try to light my candle without taking the snuffer off and of course I cannot light it, but when it is off, then I can light the candle." The snuffer is a hidden sin in your life from which you do not want to be delivered. If you honestly desire to be delivered from all iniquity, depend upon it you will have no trouble believing the Gospel message if you come to God in repentance, acknowledging your guilt. "Every one that is of the truth 1earetlpice." This was a challenge to Pilate. He stopped a moment, looked at the prisoner before him and then asked the question in a weary kind of voice, "What is truth?" As much as to say, "Who can know what truth is?" Lord Bacon wrote:

It was Truth incarnate stood before him, yet Pilate had no eyes to see because he was blinded by worldly ambition.

If Pilate had said, "What is it, explain it, make it clear to me," Jesus would have unfolded the truth to him, but he put the question, "What is truth?" and turned away. Yet he was convinced that Jesus was not guilty of any crime against the government. He said to the people, "I find in him no fault at all." And then as they accused him vehemently, somebody mentioned the fact that he was a Galilean and Pilate immediately took it up and said, "Is he from Galilee? Well, Herod is the tetrarch of Galilee and is here at the present time. I will let him pass upon the case." This seemed to Pilate a convenient way of getting out of taking a definite stand far or against the Lord Jesus Christ. We know what happened when Jesus went to Herod. Herod, hard and cruel, with a conscience seared as with a hot iron, allowed those soldiers of his to

mock the blessed Christ of God, and then sent Him again to Pilate. And Pilate said to himself, “How shall I get out of this? Here is Jesus; I must do something about Him. I do not believe He is guilty but these Jews insist that He is. How can I get out of it?” Then he remembered that in order to curry favor with the Jews, an edict had been pronounced that at the Passover time the Roman government would set free one Jewish prisoner, whosoever the Jews desired.

At that time, there was a great Jewish patriot, Barabbas by name, in prison. Barabbas means, “son of the father.” Jesus was the true “Son of the Father.” Now Pilate says, “I am going to give you the opportunity of setting, a prisoner free; you shall enjoy the prerogative and say who shall be free.” “Will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?” But they all cried out, “Not this man, but Barabbas.” Though Barabbas was a, patriot he was a robber. Pilate hesitated and thought, “They have put me in a tight place, whatever shall I do now? If I let Barabbas go free, I do not know what to do with Jesus.”

Just then a page came in and attracted his attention. He had come with a note for Pilate. It was a message from his own wife and it said, “Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.” It was probably signed by her. We know her name, for it has come down in history. Her name was Claudia Procula. The early Christians said she died a Christian. As Pilate looked at that his hand trembled. He loved his wife so tenderly and now she was pleading for the life of this prisoner and the people were still crying, “Barabbas. Barabbas, release unto us Barabbas.”

Pilate stood before them and presented Jesus as he said. “Behold the Man!” Surely as they gaze upon Him as they look upon that innocent and vet marred face their hard hearts will be softened; they will realize that He is no criminal. But they cried out the more vehemently, “Not this man but Barabbas,” and then He put the question that has come ringing down the ages, the question that comes to every man or woman today, “What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?” “If I use the prerogative of releasing one man and that one is Barabbas, what shall I do with this Man?” That is the question that you must decide — what will you do with Jesus?

There was no hesitation on their part. Stirred up by the chief priests they cried with one voice, “Crucify him, crucify him!” Pilate stood there again in perplexity. He went back to the judgment seat and summoned Jesus once more and put the question, “Whence art thou?” In other words, “Where do you come from, and what is your origin? You are different from other men; who are you really? Whose case is it upon which I am called to pronounce judgment today?” But Jesus gave him no answer. It was evident that Pilate was no toner the honest inquirer. He was determined to placate the Jews and yet hold favor with Caesar no matter what it might mean. However, he would like to release Jesus. But there is no reply. And Pilate says, “Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?” In other words, “Don’t you know that the issues of life and death are in my hands?” Then Jesus spoke and He put the judge in the place of the prisoner, when He said: “Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the grin.” Now Pilate uses every effort in his power to move the hearts of these people to pity, to sympathy, but the answer comes, “If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend: whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Caesar.” There is an accusation at last! This man is setting himself up as a king in rebellion against Caesar and now, Pontius Pilate, if you let Him go, we will send the charge to Rome that we found this man teaching sedition and that instead of pronouncing sentence upon Him you let Him go free, and you will lose your position!

The governor had taken a basin of water and ostentatiously washed his hands in it, saying, “I find no fault in him.” He brought Jesus forth once more with a crown of thorns pressed upon His brow and said, “Behold your King!” but again they cried, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him!” Pilate asked but one more question, “Shall I crucify your king?” Again they exclaim, “We have no king but Caesar.” And weary with the struggle, Pilate gave up. What difference does it make? He will sacrifice one almost unknown Galilean Jew and save his own good name with Caesar; so He delivered Jesus to be crucified and they took Him and led Him away.

Pilate had every opportunity to be saved, but that overweening sin of ambition, that desire to be thought well of by Caesar, that desire to be looked up to by the people was to much for him. He gave Jesus to the death of the cross in order to save himself from shame and what was the result? The centuries since have fixed upon him eternal infamy, “Crucified under Pontius Pilate.” All his life long he had the memory of this miscarriage of judgment resting in his mind and on his life. This dreadful thing was upon his conscience and when some four or five years later he went out into eternity as a suicide, he went to face forever the charge, “Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate.” He is facing it today and he shall face it for all eternity. This man had the opportunity of siding with Christ in the hour of the Saviour’s great distress, but he delivered Jesus to the will of the people.

My friend, I bring the question home to you, “What will you do with Jesus which is called Christ?” Jesus is on trial here today; the Spirit of God is saying to you, “What are you going to do with Him?” You must do one of two things. Will you accept Him as your Saviour, own Him as Lord, or will you reject and spurn Him? You may say, “But I am not going to do anything about it now. I am going to think it through.” The very fact that you do not decide to receive Him as Saviour and Lord is your decision to reject Him, at least at the present moment. Pontius Pilate tried to be neutral and found that it was an impossibility. You cannot be neutral. It is not enough to say that you recognize in Him the greatest and best of the sons of men; it is not enough to admit that no other ever taught as Jesus taught; it must be more than that. You must see in Him the sinner’s Saviour; you must come to Him in all your guilt and trust Him for yourself.

A few years ago a Jewish merchant died. He had a Christian friend who was in the same business and they would often without any prejudice talk of the claims of Jesus Christ. The Jewish merchant had never accepted Christ as Saviour, and when he was dying, the family did not want to allow any Gentile to get near him; but the Christian associate was eager to see him, and they felt that they could not refuse him because he had been a close friend. But they said, “You must not talk religion to him, you must not excite him.” He went in and sat for a moment by the bedside, touched the hand of his friend, and then knelt by the bed and silently lifted his heart to God. Soon there was a movement on the bed. The old man opened his eyes, tried to sit up, lifted his hand, and struggling to speak, said “Not Barabbas but this Man” and he fell back dead. Do you see what he had done? He had reversed the sentence of his nation. His nation had said, “Not this Man but Barabbas,” but he said, “Not Barabbas but this Man.”

What are you saying? Do you prefer the robbers of earth, those who would rob you of everything good and pure and holy? Or will you definitely decide to take Jesus Christ to be your own personal Saviour? “What shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ?” Pontius Pilate made a fearful mistake which is now irrevocable. It can never be changed; never shall he get away from that awful sentence of the Creed,

“Crucified under Pontius Pilate.”

O my friend, be careful that you make not the same mistake by rejecting Christ. Will you receive Him? Will you take Him as your Saviour? “Whosoever confesseth me before men him will I confess before my Father and his holy angels.” Will you make this good confession? Will you take Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour? The very moment you come to the place where you are ready to receive Him, that moment He receives you. “Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.” Never mind what sin has been holding you back, Do you desire to be saved from it? Then come to Him, come to Jesus. “Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.”

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 22

“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost” — John 19:30.

IT is finished!” It was only one word of the Greek that Jesus uttered but it told of a completed work to which nothing now can be added. There on the cross He bore the full penalty for sin. He paid the utmost farthing. The anxious sinner seeking salvation has nothing to do but believe the message in order to enter into peace. Nothing can be added to a finished work. To attempt to add to it is but to spoil it. The debt is paid, sin is atoned for. The guilty soul is instantly cleansed from every stain, and justified freely by His grace, when he puts his trust in Jesus, and rests upon that finished work.

Daily Sacrifice, August 1

“If thou let this Man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend”— John 19:12.

CRAFTY, self-seeking, and relentlessly cruel, Pilate was a scheming politician, who regarded the rights of no man if to maintain them might prove an embarrassment to himself. Thoroughly convinced, both of the innocence of Jesus and the enmity behind the accusation of the leaders in Israel, Pilate quailed before the threat embodied in the words, “If thou let this Man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend.” Fearing that his political enemies might misrepresent him before the emperor, he chose to sacrifice the Lord Jesus, who in his eyes was an unimportant Galilean artisan, turned teacher, in order that He might retain the favor of Rome. Consequently, his name has gone down in infamy throughout the centuries, as embodied in the words of the creed, “Suffered under Pontius Pilate.”

—Horatius Sonar.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 21

“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence” — John 18:36.

JESUS did not deny that He would have a kingdom in this world. The prophets from of old predicted the triumph of the kingdom of God, administered by the Son of Man (Dan. 7:13, 14) in this lower universe. But when that day dawns it will not be a dominion of the present world order. It will be a heavenly kingdom set up on earth. Not by man’s power, as through armies and carnal weapons, will His authority be set up and maintained. God the Father will give Him the throne of David when the appointed hour shall strike. Then He will rule the nations with the inflexible rod of righteousness, and His saints will reign with Him, thus sharing His glory.

—C. Wesley.

Daily Sacrifice, July 31

“To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth”— John 18:37.

THE crucifixion of our Lord Jesus was far more than a martyrdom for truth, though it was that. A witness is a martyr. But the cross was the display of God’s hatred against sin and His infinite love for lost mankind. We should never think of Calvary as though it simply involved an innocent man dying for guilty men. It was God giving Himself in the Person of His Son to bear the judgment which His righteous law declared to be the penalty of sin. There “the Offended died to set the offender free.”

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 20

“Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” — John 17:17-19.

SANCTIFICATION is two-fold, positional and practical. All believers are sanctified (that is, set apart to God) by the one Offering of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in this sense, “perfected forever” (Heb. 10:10,14). But we are called to walk in conformity with our place in Christ. This is practical sanctification and by the Word of truth ministered to the heart in the power of the Holy Spirit. In our Lord’s high-priestly prayer in John 17 He stresses the importance of this. He set Himself apart to go to the cross and to the throne that our hearts might be occupied with Him where He now is, in order that we might be separated from all that is of the world.

Daily Sacrifice, July 30

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me” —John 17:20, 21.

IT is sometimes said that it is a pity this prayer has never been answered. But that is a mistake. However much outward schisms have rent the professing Church, the glorious fact remains that “there is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling” (Eph. 4:4). The more our souls enter into this, the greater will be the power of our testimony to the world. Manifested unity is the strength of the Church of God, and strikes terror to the forces of evil (Phil. 1:27, 28).

Christian fellowship is something far deeper and more precious than mere companionship of like-minded persons or a confederation of societies or local assemblies. It is a spiritual reality that is manifested by communion with the redeemed of the Lord everywhere, “the communion of the Holy Ghost” (2 Cor. 13:14). Elsewhere it is called “the communion of the Body of the Christ” (1 Cor. 10:16), and “the fellowship of His [that is, God’s] Son” (1 Cor. 1:9). Into this fellowship all believers are introduced by the Spirit’s baptism, which makes them members of that mystical Body, of which the exalted Christ is the Head (Eph. 5:30).

Daily Sacrifice, July 29

“I have glorified Thee on the earth. I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do” — John 17:4.

IN the cross He finished the work of redemption, and now He lives to save eternally all who believe in His name. It is important to see that we are not saved by faith in Him plus anything else, but by faith alone. This is the testimony of the Epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews particularly, all of which are based upon the text, “The just shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38). These words are quoted from Habakkuk 2:4. A by-faith righteousness is altogether different from a by-works righteousness.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 19

“At that day ye shall ask in My name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God” —John 16:26, 27.

HOW terribly do they dishonor God who tell us that angels, apostles, the mother of Jesus, or other eminent saints, are necessary as go-betweens in order that we may receive of the Father! Even our Lord Jesus himself tells us the Father gives out of the love of His own heart. It is not necessary to have some one as a special pleader on our behalf. “The Father Himself loveth you.” How blessed to realize this, and so to go to Him with implicit confidence, assured that He delights to do for us everything that is consistent with His holy purpose and therefore which will be for our good.

—M. Colley.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 18

“Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain”— John 16:16.

MEN talk of choosing a career, selecting a profession, or deciding what gainful trade to follow; and often the ministry of the Word is put on the same level as what are commonly called the learned professions. But actually, it is not the servant of God who chooses his path. It is Christ who calls by His grace and who fits His servants by divinely-bestowed gifts for the work of ministering His truth to others.

Jesus selected and called the twelve. Why Judas was included must remain, in large part, a mystery beyond human ken, though we know it was that Scripture might be fulfilled (John 6:70; 17:12).

It has often been said that the disciples were not college or seminary trained men, but what school could offer so rich a curriculum today as these men enjoyed during three-an-half years of intimate association and holy fellowship with Him who was both Jehovah’s Servant and their Lord?

A disciple is a learner: an apostle is a sent one, a missionary. The twelve were both. They learned of Jesus. They were sent forth by Him to carry the message to others. During the days of His flesh, that ministry was confined to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, the chosen nation. In resurrection our Lord extended its scope to embrace “all the world.”

—H. Henan

Daily Sacrifice, July 28

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace”— John 16:33.

IT took many of us a long time to learn that true peace is found alone in Christ Jesus. We sought it nearly everywhere else before we came to Him, but we never found that which could give rest to the conscience or assurance to the heart. But in Him we found both, We have peace with God through the blood of His cross. We enjoy the peace of God as we lay every burden at His feet.

—Howard T. N. Ussher

Daily Sacrifice, July 27

“They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me”— John 16:2, 3.

TERRIBLE are the scenes depicted in these verses; yet in them all we may see a devoted company to whom Christ is precious, who for His name’s sake endure grief and suffer reproach. God will never overlook the trials and afflictions of His people. He values aright the patience of His saints who manifest their love for Him by obedience to His commands and by their steadfast faith in His sure testimonies. “Ye have need of patience,” we read, “that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise” (Heb. 10:36). And again we are told, “If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it” (Rom. 8:25). As our hearts are fixed on Christ and we look on in faith to the fulfillment of His promise to return and take us to be with Himself in the Father’s house, we are enabled to endure as seeing Him who is invisible. He, Himself, is the Man of patience waiting expectantly at the Father’s right hand until His enemies shall be made His footstool and the appointed hour will come when He is to descend to the air to call His redeemed to meet Him there. May we then be patient unto the coming of the Lord.

Miss Wigram.

Daily Sacrifice, July 26

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends”— John 15:13.

OUR Lord was speaking of man as such, the natural man. For such an one voluntarily to lay down his life to save his friends from disaster is the highest expression of love known to mankind. But we see a love that transcends this in Christ. He laid down His life for His enemies, for that is what we all are by nature (Rom. 5:10). There was in us nothing that warranted such love. But He looked upon us in our deep need, and in His infinite grace He gave Himself to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10). Since He has thus given Himself for us, the least we can do in return is to be ready to lay down our lives for the brethren (1 John 3:16). When the love of Christ constrains us, no sacrifice will be considered too great on behalf of others (2 Cor. 5:14).

Daily Sacrifice, July 25

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me”— John 15:1-4.

CHRIST, as the true vine, supersedes Israel, the empty vine (Hos. 10:1), which brought forth no fruit for Jehovah. He had nurtured and cared for this vine, which should have been a testimony for Himself (Isa. 5:1-7), but it brought forth wild grapes, unpalatable and obnoxious to God. He brought this vine out of Egypt (Psa. 80:8), and at one time it bade fair to bring forth fruit to His glory (9-11), but, alas, sin and selfishness blighted it and it was cast away as a worthless thing. In its place a new testimony is introduced. Christ Himself takes the place of Israel to bear fruit for the Father through His people here on earth. As we live in hallowed fellowship with Him, we produce that fruit in which the Father delights.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 17

“I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by Me”— John 14:6.

IT is all-important that we recognize in Jesus not simply a great teacher or a religious leader who, having found God for himself, could now point out the right way to others. He was far more than a Wayshower. He is Himself the Way, the Truth, the Life. The authority with which He spoke was the very voice of God, who had become incarnate in Jesus. He who subsisted in the form of God from eternity had divested Himself of His glory and taken the Servant’s form that He might become the propitiation for our sins and that we might live through Him (1 John 4:9, 10). He spoke with authority because He had come to reveal the mind of God; and though in humiliation He chose to be subject in all things to the Father’s will, the very words He uttered were those the Father gave Him. All His works, too, were in the power of the Holy Spirit, to whom He yielded Himself for service, choosing to learn obedience by the things which He suffered. He who had always commanded became the obedient Servant in order to carry out the counsels of the Godhead in all perfection.

—Mary Bowley.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 16

“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that whore I am, there ye may be also” — John 14:3.

THIS is the Lord’s word to His own redeemed ones. Such are destined to share with Him the joy and gladness of the Father’s house which is the eternal Home of all the heavenly saints. He who has gone to prepare this place of rest and unbroken fellowship is coming again in person to receive those purchased by His blood to Himself. Centuries have elapsed since the promise was given, “I will come again,” but He has not forgotten. Soon He will descend from heaven with an awakening shout and we who know Him as our Saviour and Lord shall be caught up to meet Him in the air.

—B. M.

Daily Sacrifice, July 24

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father”— John 14:12.

CHRIST promised His disciples that if they believed, they should do even greater works than He had done—after He returned to the Father; and the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, came to abide with them forever (John 14:16). Pentecost was itself the first fulfillment of this, and, as the days went on, the truth of the promise was demonstrated more and more, as scores, hundreds, and even thousands (Acts 4:4), turned to the Lord through the ministry of Peter and John and the other apostles. Miracles were comparatively few, though they were wrought as occasion seemed to demand, but the greater works consisted in bringing the multitudes to repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In this mighty work Peter and John had, during the earlier years of Christian testimony, the first place.

—Charles Wesley.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 15

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another” —John 13:34, 35.

THE new commandment, “That ye love one another,” is all-embracive. “Love,” we are told, “is the fulfilling of the law” (Rom. 13:10). No one who truly loves his neighbor will ever be guilty of willfully breaking any of the commandments that set forth man’s duty to his fellow. We do not disobey parents when love is in exercise. We will not steal from those we love, nor will we lie about or defame them. To kill or corrupt by uncleanness would be unthink able, and covetousness, too, is ruled out, for if I love my brother I do not want his goods, but rather rejoice in his possessions. But such love is not human. It is divine, and is only imparted by the Holy Spirit; so it is as we love God, the unseen, that we love our brothers also (1 John 4:20). Therefore where love rules, we are not under the law. We do not love in order to obtain merit, or to win the divine favor, but because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the indwelling Spirit, after we are justified by faith (Rom. 5:1-5) and regenerated by the Word of the gospel (1 Peter 1:23-25). God is love. It is His very nature, and the man who is born again has become a partaker of that nature (2 Peter 1:4). Hence love is as characteristic of the real Christian as apples are characteristic of an apple-tree.

—J. Fawcett.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 14

“Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For He knew who should betray Him; therefore said He, Ye are not all clean” —John 13:10,11.

THE washing of the disciples’ feet by the Lord was more than a lesson in humility, though it was that. It was a wondrous picture of what He has been doing for His own ever since He went back to heaven. It was written of Him, “He will keep the feet of His saints.” His present service is just that. He is keeping our feet clean by “the washing of water by the Word” (Eph. 5:26), while we are exposed to the defiling things of this world. We have been bathed once for all by the washing of regeneration. We need daily to be cleansed as to our ways that we may enjoy fellowship with Him who has redeemed us to Himself. As the girded Servant He undertakes to do this for us. Let us not seek to thwart Him by saying, as Peter did in his ignorance “Thou shalt never wash my feet.”

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 13

“If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honor” — John 12:26.

PREFERMENT in the kingdom of Christ depends not on self-seeking, nor is it achieved by worldly methods. He who would be honored of God in the day when His Son will be acknowledged as King of kings and Lord of lords must be willing to follow Him in His lowly path of unrequited service for the blessing of a needy world. Following Jesus is not following Him into His heavenly Home. It is following Him, if one may so say, out of His Heaven, down into a world of sin and wretchedness, taking the path of self-abnegation and readiness to be rejected by men, in order to manifest the spirit of Christ to those who know Him not. It is only thus we can represent our Master, the Servant-Prophet, aright. And in order to do this we must first yield ourselves to Him. We cannot live a Christian life until we have a Christian life to live. There is a life by which we live. And there is a life we are called upon to live. We obtain life only by faith in Him who gave Himself a ransom for all. We manifest that life as we yield ourselves to Him as Lord.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 12

“Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment” — John 12:3.

THE highest exercise of which the human spirit, touched by divine grace and regenerated by omnipotent power, is capable is that of worship, which involves adoration, praise, and implicit devotion. Men may attempt to exalt love of mankind above love to God. But actually the second table of the law finds its basis in the first. He who loves God supremely will love his neighbor unselfishly. The breaking of the alabaster box released the pungent spikenard whose ravishing odor filled all the house. When the best is lavished on the Lord Jesus, forces are freed which make fragrant every department of human life.

The natural heart cannot understand the apparent prodigality of love for Christ. It was Judas who began complaining and so infected the other disciples with the same spirit of faultfinding (John 12:4). But the Lord Jesus understood the love that prompted Mary’s act and He valued it accordingly. He delights in a heart wholly devoted to Himself.

—Margaret E. Barber.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 11

“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?” — John 11:25, 26.

TWO very precious truths are unfolded in these words of our Lord to Martha, the sister of Lazarus. Death does not end all. When Jesus returns as the Resurrection and the Life all who have died in Christ will live again, raised up from the dead in the likeness of Him who died for them and rose again and all who still abide in the body in that day shall never die, but will be changed in a moment and caught up to meet the descending Saviour in company with all the risen saints. This is our blessed Hope. Do we believe it? When faith lays hold of this glorious revelation all things become new.

Daily Sacrifice, July 23

“Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again”— John 11:20-22.

IN the case of Lazarus, Jesus purposely delayed returning to Bethany until after death had come in. His delay was not because of indifference or lack of love, either for the sick man or his grieving sisters, but God had something to work out for His own glory and their blessing which

could not be reached until death had ensued. It takes a living faith to wait for God, as well as to wait on Him. He will not be hurried. Seeing the end from the beginning, He is never thwarted nor taken by surprise. He can be depended on to work out every circumstance for the blessing of those who rely upon His unerring wisdom and confide in His unchanging love.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, August 10

“I am the Good Shepherd” — John 10:11,14.

THE shepherd-character of our Lord Jesus Christ is delightful to contemplate. We were all as sheep going astray, until through grace we returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls (1 Peter 2:25). But we would never have returned at all unless He in His love had sought and found us (Luke 15:4-7). Now having made us His own He undertakes to carry us safely home. He makes Himself responsible to supply all our needs; to guide us through this desert scene and to see that we have everything our souls require in order that we may grow in grace and glorify Him in all our ways. Surely the least we can do is to rely upon His love and wisdom and thus be able to say with happy confidence, “I shall not want.”

—Mrs. Wellesley.

Daily Sacrifice, July 22

“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly”— John 10:10.

THE abundant life, of which our Lord spoke to His disciples, is life in the energy of the Holy Spirit. It is that eternal life which we receive at new birth, and which, therefore, all Christians possess (1 John 5:12). But it is more than that. It is life controlled by the indwelling Holy Spirit, whom God has given to all who obey Him (Acts 5:32). This refers to the obedience of faith (Rom. 1:5) by which we appropriate the promises of God. As we yield ourselves to the Spirit’s guidance we enter into and lay hold of that which is really life (1 Tim. 6:12, lit. trans.). Apart from the new birth, this is impossible. There must be a life communicated, by which we are to live, before we can live the life. But when truly regenerated (Titus 3:5) we are rewed by the Holy Spirit day by day as we reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 6:11).

—G. W. F.

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