

Articles

Restoration	1
Holy Spirit's Work to the World	1
Attitude Seen in Attendance and Attire	4
Prophetic Preaching	6
The Use of Song	7
Consecration of Christians, pt 1	8

Restoration

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us". 1 John 1: 8

Carlos Fariñas

Possibly one of the hardest things for anyone to admit is that we have made mistakes. It is even harder to recognize that at some point we have consciously made mistakes. The result of this attitude in a believer only brings personal dissatisfaction and a bad conscience before God. In the case of the unconverted, the heart will harden more and more, until it becomes insensitive to God's call.

It should not surprise us then when we see a true brother suffering sadness because of his estrangement from God and His people; on the contrary, it should serve as a warning to examine our ways that we don't reach the miserable condition of insensitivity to the Word of God. The Apostle John himself tells us the following: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.... if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: (1 John 1:9; 2:1)".

Although the possibility of defrauding the Lord is real, the way of restoration is also certain if we confess our sins to the Lord. The sins of the past life have been forgiven, we have been cleansed and redeemed; "that old man was crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that we should no longer serve sin" (Romans 6:6). So there are no more sacrifices for sin, Christ's death completely satisfied God's demands, but when we fail after we are saved we have the Lord as an efficient defense attorney before the Father. The word used by John in chapter 2 quoted above and translated as advocate, is "parakletos", which means "one at our side", one who sympathizes with our weaknesses because he knows what temptation means (Hebrews 4:15).

So we have no reason to sin, but neither do we have reason to remain prostrate because of a bad conscience. The Lord Himself invites us to go to Him to find

rest (Matthew 11:28-30), and to go forward with the joy of the first day of our salvation.

Holy Spirit's Work in Salvation

Joel Portman

It's possible to underestimate the importance of the Holy Spirit's work to deal with sinful men and affect their attitude toward God and Christ. However, no strategy of men, no device of modern methods, no manipulations of emotions, or promotions of great evangelistic campaigns can substitute for the essentiality of His work to bring souls to Christ. We face the normal tendency, as there is a spiritual decline and lessening of Divine power in our lives and efforts, to substitute organization, planning, modern devices, and other methods to move souls and cause professions of faith in Christ.

Such activities only reflect our lack of willingness to depend on the Holy Spirit to accomplish that work. They indicate a lessened recognition that our own spiritual state is what will determine the Spirit's liberty to accomplish this work. I never can forget what I read in the book by E. M. Bounds, "Power through Prayer", that "God doesn't need new methods; He needs new men". Those words have embedded themselves in my mind even as I confess failure to measure up to the truth. In our days, there is an increasing dependence on methods that the world uses, such a power-point presentations that have been prepared months in advance so that the gospel preaching proceeds along a predetermined pathway according to what has been devised by a man. Where is the Holy Spirit in this format? Where is any need to depend on His presence and power to accomplish the work? And how does this conform to what the great apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:1-4, when he spoke of coming in Corinth with a sense of great dependence on the Spirit of God and a strong realization of his own weakness and fear? Under those intimidating circumstances, he determined not to resort to the accepted methods that would normally appeal to the Corinthians, but he labored with absolute dependence on God to work. We need more of the same in our day! If there were more spiritual power among us there would be more spiritual results seen through us!

The Lord Jesus spoke often of the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room ministry to His disciples. He was leaving them but His work was going to continue. He had supplied what they needed during His earthly sojourn with them. But now He was leaving, and in order to

continue that work, He promised to send a Comforter like Him to meet their need and to enable their work toward the unsaved.

We find His presence and work especially emphasized in John 16:8-11. But it is also clear that He has always done His work in this ungodly, perishing world. Even in Genesis 6, we learn that the Spirit "shall not always strive with man", so that it is clear that He was doing so in those days prior to the flood. Peter affirms that as a reality in 1 Peter 3:18-20, (even though many expositors differ on the meaning of this passage, it seems clear to me that Peter is writing to encourage believers who were in a minority by assuring them that the same Spirit was also work in their day). The same Spirit who was working in the physical resurrection of Christ was the One who was preaching to these departed spirits when they were living in the days prior to the flood. Also for their encouragement, Peter compares

their small number with the few, the eight souls, that were "saved by (through) water."

The Holy Spirit had been promised by the Father (Acts 1:4) and would be sent to accomplish His purposes and fulfill that precious promise. We look at two of those functions for which He was sent.

His Work to Convict Men

(I'm quoting mainly from the book, "The Holy Spirit, with You and in You", by this writer). The Spirit's work of conviction, according to John 16:8-11, is seen in a three-fold way. Not only is His purpose to work in the lost to convict of sin, righteousness, and judgment, but His presence in the world provides unanswerable proof, demonstrating those three things to the world. The Lord Jesus, in the character of His life and through His ministry on earth, convicted men of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He convicted men by His life as well as His words. The Holy Spirit, being on earth now, continues that work through which men are brought without excuse before God, either to be saved now or to be judged in a coming day. His present ministry deals with man's nature and character as an unbeliever, man's deeds that are proven to be unrighteous, and man's state as being under judgment in which he has been condemned already.

With regard to convicting the world of sin, the presence of the Holy Spirit in the world attests to the abject unbelief of the world. The Perfect Man has been on earth, the One Who manifested the works of God and spoke the truth to men. Men, through their unbelief, rejected that Person and the truth that He presented. In John 15:22-25, the Lord shows that men have no excuse for their continued rebellion and hatred toward God, since His coming, works, and words gave ample basis for them to believe. Their unbelief has left them with no covering for their sin. They hated Him without a cause. Since men rejected the Lord Jesus through their unbelief, He was crucified and now has gone back to heaven; however, because of that unbelief, the Holy Spirit has come into the world. He is here because of that rejection, and His work is to bring conviction of sin in a way that man cannot answer or argue against. That work of conviction began with Peter's preaching at Pentecost in Acts 2. Notice carefully the content of His message given in the power of the Holy Spirit. This was part of the witnessing and power that the Holy Spirit would give upon His coming (John 15:26-27, Acts 1:8). Peter preached with powerful words and wonderful results. He charged those men that they had deliberately rejected the Lord Jesus despite the abundant evidence that should have provided grounds for them to believe (v.22). They had "taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" the One Whom they should have received. The Spirit of Truth drove home their awful guilt along with

"Truths for our Day"

A monthly publication that is freely available on the Internet and is intended to help believers who appreciate the timeless truths of God's Word and who recognize the unchanging principles of God's will for His people. It is primarily intended to strengthen those who enjoy fellowship in local assemblies of believers who are gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Editors: Joel Portman & Jim Brown

Publisher: Joel Portman

1200 Forest Glen Ct. SE,
Cedar Rapids, IA, 52403

All Correspondence to: mail@truthsforourday.com

All issues of "Truths for our Day" are available by clicking on the link below. This will take you to the index for Truths For Our Day

Please read this notice:

We permit and encourage you to reprint any issue of "Truths for our Day" that you desire, either for yourself, or to share with other believers. However, if you wish to copy an individual article, we will forward your request to the copyright owner of the article to request his permission. For this reason, the format of the publication is locked to prevent unauthorized publication of articles that the author would prefer to reserve. Please do not copy them in any other way. We want to respect the ownership of all those who have written articles.

We also hope you will let others know about "Truths for our Day" and encourage them to subscribe as well. They may do so by simply sending an e-mail to this email address:

mail@truthsforourday.com

Thank you

the testimony that "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (v.36). The reality of their unbelief was forced upon them, causing a sense of the resultant terrible consequences; this produced the cry that came from their hearts, "What shall we do?" (v.37). The blessed result of that conviction was that about 3,000 souls were saved that day. We believe the Spirit's conviction of sin will produce similar results today, though not necessarily in the same numbers.

Men are convicted of sin, and particularly that of unbelief, when the Spirit brings His convicting power to bear upon them. Some have said that in their experience of being convicted, God impressed them that they were refusing to believe the truth that He was showing them concerning their condition, need, and salvation in Christ. The result was that they were overwhelmed to realize that they were refusing to believe God. This conviction made them realize that in God's sight they were indeed the worst of sinners.

We next read that the Holy Spirit, by His coming, would convict the world of Righteousness. This seems to link itself with the fact that the world crucified the Lord Jesus as a sinner. They labeled Him as an outcast, a malefactor (evildoer) and One Who deservedly was dying under God's judgment. Isaiah prophesied this in Isaiah 53:4, "... we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted". His perfect righteousness was maligned and rejected when men said "Away with Him, crucify Him." They said to Pilate, "If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up unto thee" (John 18:30). The Holy Spirit has been sent into the world to vindicate Christ. He has been sent because God has highly exalted Him, having raised Him from the dead and given Him a place at His own right hand (Acts 2:33-35). He continues to demonstrate God's complete approval in His Son. Even now, in His work that commenced on Pentecost, He convicts men clearly and with certain proofs to show Christ's perfectly holy, sinless, and righteous life. His purpose is to draw men to Christ, and to cause them to realize that the death He died was not for His unrighteousness but for their salvation. Those who are never convicted and persuaded of this great fact in this life will realize it when the Lord comes and sits upon His throne in His glory. Christ will be exalted by the Spirit of God now in the hearts of believers or be exalted then in His judgment on sinners.

In the third place, the Spirit convicts of Judgment. Some quote this as "judgment to come," but that expression is found in Acts 24:25 when Paul was reasoning with Felix. This is a convicting work of a judgment that has already taken place, "the prince of this world is (has been) judged" (John 16:11). The one who represents and controls the world system and was motivating men to reject and crucify the Savior has been judged at the cross. What appeared to be a defeat for the Lord was

actually a victory over Satan. In John 12:31-32 He said, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all (men) unto me." In the impending conflict of Calvary the Lord saw beyond it to the ultimate downfall and defeat of Satan. This was because it would be a judgment executed on this strong one who was keeping his subjects bound through fear of death (Hebrews 2:15). The occasion when the world rejected their Savior was used by God to defeat His enemy. We see some results of this victory when we recognize that the Spirit in the world gives evidence that this enemy has been defeated and that this judgment will one day be carried out. His being in the world shows that it is a world under judgment, since it is linked with a defeated head; He is moving in this scene to carry out the purposes of the Victor. These conditions are similar to those we read of in Genesis 6:3 when, in the days of Noah, the Spirit was striving with men in a world already under judgment. Christ defeated and judged Satan by entering into the sphere of death and seemingly becoming subject to its power; but in being raised up from among dead ones, He cast off death's power and through it He showed His superiority over the tool by which Satan has kept his subjects in bondage. He now holds the keys of hell and death (Revelation 1:18) as the victorious, risen, exalted Christ. The Spirit of God seeks to draw men to Him as their only Deliverer from the judgment which they also are identified with in a world headed by a rebellious leader.

The wise and careful preacher of the gospel will seek to use these three avenues to reach the will and conscience of the sinner. We do not need emotionalism, human reasoning, or modern devices, nor are those the means the Holy Spirit desires to use to bring conviction. What we need is to consciously wait on God to work, being exercised to maintain the conditions He requires so that we can be used of Him. As a result, the powerful, convicting work of the Spirit will bring men to realize their need and deliver them through the grace of God in Christ. Natural means may produce professions and outward, apparent results, but we must labor with a sense of our responsibility toward God and a care for souls so that real deliverance might result through the work of the Holy Spirit.

He Restrains Evil in the World

We read of a restraining work which is presently being done with relation to the world in 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7. There are diverse opinions concerning the identity of the restrainer in this passage. All who identify this restrainer as anything less than a Person of the Godhead do not realize what is necessary to restrain Satan and the rising tide of evil in the world. The natural bent of the human heart expresses itself in evil. Increasing rebellion against

Attitude Seen in Attendance and Attire

James Brown

God and Christ would be more evident were it not for this One Who restrains its activity. It seems clear that the Restrainer working in the world is the Holy Spirit. In this present period there is One through whom God is carrying out His work. He is the One Who is on earth to accomplish the purposes of God and bring them to fulfillment.

It could be suggested that this does not refer to the Holy Spirit alone, but the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believers and the assemblies in their testimony on earth. Perhaps Lot in Genesis 19 is an example of this. God's judgment could not fall on Sodom until that moment Lot was out of harm's way and delivered into safety (Genesis 19:22). In like manner, the Spirit was striving with men on the earth up to the day when Noah entered the ark, and until He entered the ark, the judgment of God could not fall. The presence of the Holy Spirit now is not only holding back the inevitable judgment ahead. He is also restraining the development of evil in an environment where the mystery of iniquity (lawlessness) is already working (2 Thessalonians 2:7-8). Until He is taken out of the way, removed from the scene, that Wicked One cannot be revealed who will come under the judgment of God and be destroyed. That one is identified with the coming apostasy (v.3), and he will surely represent the attitude of men toward God in that he will ascribe to himself the prerogatives of Deity, presenting himself as God before men (2 Thessalonians 2:4). Certainly, humanism and new age concepts are promoting a way of thinking in men's minds so that they will readily accept the idea of a man rising to and presenting himself as God. This is the old lie of the devil from Genesis 3:5 reaching its consummation and expression in the man of sin being revealed. He is the lawless one who represents the spirit of the age embodied in a person and is the culmination of a spirit that began in the days of the apostles (1 John 2:18). What took place on Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came into the world will be reversed. When the church is removed, the Spirit will be removed as well, and the evil one will be revealed.

We see that the Holy Spirit is working to restrain evil on the one hand and to convict men on the other. In the one case, He holds back what is contrary to God; in the other, He attracts and draws men toward what is according to God and is for their blessing. We are convinced that without these two activities, we would be in a most dreadful scene and state. But because of His powerful ministry, we have the most blessed privilege of moving in this world, representing our risen Lord, and enjoying power to witness for Him. We need to use every opportunity with wisdom, for while we have this privilege, we also have a responsibility before God and will have to give account of our service in a coming day. As well, the day of our service will shortly come to an end, so let us redeem the time, for the days are few.

A growing assertion among the Lord's people today is that matters of assembly meeting attendance and meeting attire are too trivial to address, therefore, ought not to be. To take up a subject such as this, a careful blend of scriptural assertiveness with conditional grace is needed as there may be rare legitimate medical or situational cases where neither of these observances are possible, however, emphasizing *rare* as opposed to *frequent* or even *systematic*.

As to meeting attendance, there will always be some who "forsake the assembling of themselves together" (Hebrews 10:25b) quite frequently, possibly not aware of the manifold spiritual setback this can bring: **1)** to one's self, like Thomas, who missed the first appearance of the Lord after his resurrection, which, in turn, fostered his doubts and **2)** to the assembly which functions better when all of its members are on board and moving together in the same direction with a unified joy and a God-honoring sense of warranted responsibility and commitment.

Over recent decades, having conversed with many full-time workers and elders in other assemblies, a sad trend has developed whereby Sunday morning meetings have become increasingly easier to absent and the prayer and bible study meetings are even more easily preempted for the lightest time-slot replacements, i.e., recreational pursuits, concerts, ballgames, business ventures, birthday parties, even a mental rut routine of "I really don't feel like going so it won't take much of an alternate activity to keep me away".

Recently, I had the distinct privilege of listening to a dear woman who voiced a very legitimate reason why she could not be at a particular meeting, nearly in tears due to the depth of her desire to be present. I thought to myself, "Lord, give us all a double portion of her spirit as to our attitude regarding assembly meeting attendance!" Did we catch that? Can we be honest in admitting that as my attitude toward the Lord Jesus waxes or wanes, so will my desire to be where He promises to be, even affecting what activities I am repeatedly willing to schedule right over the top of my obligation to Him?

When meeting attendance is discussed, much defensive emphasis tends to be placed on a certain scolding "report card" aspect rather than upon genuine concern for all the good an individual might be forfeiting when meetings are frequently missed. Paul writes to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 1:10) that the saints there were to "be of the same mind, same judgment and to speak the same thing, perfectly joined together". Much of what is taught from the Bible (as an assembly) takes place in the mid-week meeting. When everyone learns

together, the Holy Spirit brings the Word of God into a simple, mutual level of understanding and agreement. For those who are habitually absent, this unifying work suffers and leaves that individual on the outside of what God had intended to teach everyone in the assembly. It would be difficult to trace backward in time just when, where, why or how the unspoken, yet clearly advocated idea that the prayer and bible study meeting for assembly Christians has become casual/optional, but the fact of the matter is that for many, such has become the case, perhaps no longer even contested in the conscience. In view of this trend, a stern precaution and exhortation for assembly elders is seen in those words in Hebrews 10:25, "...as the manner of some is". Assembly leaders need to set the example for the flock as there is a natural tendency for sheep to follow their leaders. God forbid that it should ever be those responsible to shape the flock's spiritual direction who are setting forth a pattern of such nonchalance. Jeremiah 23:1-3, of course, refers to the spiritual leaders in Israel not tending the flock (nation), however, great carefulness is also needed today in the same regard. Sheep need tending and it stands to reason, brethren, that it's not possible to tend sheep properly from a cool distance.

A casual attitude about assembly meeting attendance nearly guarantees casualness in other areas as well. We could speak of reading and prayer habits, and other proactive matters in the home, or even the ongoing "can't wait to tell you this great news" chatter which is getting louder prior to and following the meetings. But for the sake of brevity and staying within the confines of this article's subject, we now come to "the dress code" so-called. Unfortunately, such a term immediately registers a defensive rallying cry, "Legalism!". Yet, how we dress is not a legal matter at all, but rather, a heart matter. Meeting attire will reflect the importance one ascribes to each meeting. Rarely do we see our brethren on Sunday mornings around the table of remembrance without a suit and tie and when asked the reason for such dress, answers usually center upon the fact of the Lord's promise to be in the midst of His people (Matthew 18:20), hence, one's attire ought to match the dignity of His presence. That reasoning is sound and reminds us of the priestly garments worn by the Levites in Exodus 28 for their holy consecration to minister unto the Lord (v3). While we do not wear a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a brodered coat, a mitre or a girdle at our gatherings, we may take note that when Aaron and his sons came into the Lord's presence to minister, their attire was distinctly different from their everyday casual clothing. And each item carried a special significance for the Lord. Under law, the Levites had no choice about what they wore when coming into the holy place; however, some may say that since we are now living in the day of grace, the Lord places no importance on what we wear, just so long as our heart is in the right place. We've no scriptural basis for that assertion.

Just as a suggestion, brethren, if the reason for wearing my best on the Lord's Day morning is "because the Lord is there", would it not be inversely true that my reason for *not* wearing my best to the mid-week meeting is because the Lord is *not* there? Think about that for a moment. Now reflect on that idea of one's heart being "in the right place" rendering attire unimportant (as some say), when in fact, I've just removed the Lord from His rightful place by reason of my dressing down. "There am I in the midst of them" should carry equal weight in *all* the assembly meetings upon that simple premise. Do we see the contradiction? If I can wear casual dress to the mid-week meeting, what is my deterrent for doing the same on the Lord's Day? Do we not "discern the Lord's body" (I Corinthians 11:29) whenever He promises to be at all meetings? Norman Crawford once wrote, (Assembly Testimony, 1981) "A meeting is a meeting with the Lord. There should be reverence and awe at His presence". Brings Psalm 89:7 to mind, doesn't it? "The way that I dress at any assembly meeting is a barometer as to my respect for God and my fellow believers. It is a barometer as to my respect for God's assembly" (Robert Surgenor, The Christian's Dress Code booklet).

Do we now see the seriousness of what we communicate to the Lord and to each other when we consciously treat one meeting differently than another based on the importance we place on each meeting rather than upon the One with Whom we are meeting? That huge difference should cause me to get before God and see that both matters of meeting attendance and meeting attire should be shaped from *His* perspective, not mine. May we cultivate daily an attitude that tells the Lord and is clearly seen by others, through our assembly meeting attendance and attire, that we understand that every time we come together, we come to a place of dignity where the name of Christ is revered, but more than that, we come to Him so the level of our reverence ought not to vacillate between meetings as to their relative importance.

To suggest one meeting is more important than another is to entirely miss the reason we meet at all. The Lord's promised presence in each meeting is enough to make all meetings equally important, thereby establishing and expressing the proper attitude toward them.

Prophetic Preaching

Excerpted from "Of God and Men"
A. W. Tozer

A prophet is one who knows his times and what God is trying to say to the people of his times.

What God says to His church at any given period depends altogether upon her moral and spiritual condition and upon the spiritual need of the hour. Religious leaders who continue mechanically to expound the Scriptures without regard to the current religious situation are no better than the scribes and lawyers of Jesus' day who faithfully parroted the Law without the remotest notion of what was going on around them spiritually. They fed the same diet to all and seemed wholly unaware that there was such a thing as meat in due season. The prophets never made that mistake nor wasted their efforts in that manner. They invariably spoke to the condition of the people of their times.

Today we need prophetic preachers; not preachers of prophecy merely, but preachers with a gift of prophecy. The word of wisdom is missing. We need the gift of discernment again in our pulpits. It is not ability to predict that we need, but the anointed eye, the power of spiritual penetration and interpretation, the ability to appraise the religious scene as viewed from God's position, and to tell us what is actually going on.

There has probably never been another time in the history of the world when so many people knew so much about religious happenings as they do today. The newspapers are eager to print religious news; the secular news magazines devote several pages of each issue to the doings of the church and the synagogue; a number of press associations gather church news and make it available to the religious journals at a small cost. Even the hiring of professional publicity men to plug one or another preacher or religious movement is no longer uncommon; the mails are stuffed with circulars and "releases," while radio and television join to tell the listening public what religious people are doing throughout the world.

Greater publicity for religion may be well and I have no fault to find with it. Surely religion should be the most newsworthy thing on earth, and there may be some small encouragement in the thought that vast numbers of persons want to read about it. What disturbs me is that amidst all the religious hubbub hardly a voice is raised to tell us what God thinks about the whole thing.

Where is the man who can see through the ticker tape and confetti to discover which way the parade is headed, why it started in the first place and, particularly, who is riding up front in the seat of honor?

Not the fact that the churches are unusually active these days, not what religious people are doing, should engage our attention, but why these things are so. The big question is Why? And no one seems to have an answer for it. Not only is there no answer, but scarcely is there anyone to ask the question. It just never occurs to us that such a question remains to be asked. Christian people continue to gossip religious shoptalk with scarcely as much as a puzzled look. The soundness of current Christianity is assumed by the religious masses as was the soundness of Judaism when Christ

appeared. People know they are seeing certain activity, but just what it means they do not know, nor have they the faintest idea of where God is or what relation He has toward the whole thing.

What is needed desperately today is prophetic insight. Scholars can interpret the past; it takes prophets to interpret the present. Learning will enable a man to pass judgment on our yesterdays, but it requires a gift of clear seeing to pass sentence on our own day. One hundred years from now historians will know what was taking place religiously in this year of our Lord; but that will be too late for us. We should know right now.

If Christianity is to receive a rejuvenation it must be by other means than any now being used. If the church in the second half of this century is to recover from the injuries she suffered in the first half, there must appear a new type of preacher. The proper, ruler-of-the-synagogue type will never do. Neither will the priestly type of man who carries out his duties, takes his pay and asks no questions, nor the smooth-talking pastoral type who knows how to make the Christian religion acceptable to everyone. All these have been tried and found wanting.

Another kind of religious leader must arise among us. He must be of the old prophet type, a man who has seen visions of God and has heard a voice from the Throne. When he comes (and I pray God there will be not one but many) he will stand in flat contradiction to everything our smirking, smooth civilization holds dear. He will contradict, denounce and protest in the name of God and will earn the hatred and opposition of a large segment of Christendom. Such a man is likely to be lean, rugged, blunt-spoken and a little bit angry with the world. He will love Christ and the souls of men to the point of willingness to die for the glory of the one and the salvation of the other. But he will fear nothing that breathes with mortal breath.

The Use of Song

David McKinley

"The righteous doth sing and rejoice" Proverbs 29:6.

1. Seraphic Song. (At Creation's Dawn.)

Job 38:7 "Where was thou when I laid the foundations of the earth --- When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

Of Christ the "Word" we read, "All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made." (John 1:3). When the work was complete in all its perfection and "God saw everything

that He had made and behold it was very good", did not the serried ranks of angelic hosts burst forth in adoring praise?

*"When God the earth's foundation laid,
And at their bounds the proud waves stayed,
With angel's shout the heavens rang,
The morning stars together sang" (Wm. Blaine.)*

The wonders of creation should cause us to burst forth in praise, as will the twenty four elders in Revelation say "Thou are worthy O Lord to receive glory and honour and power; for thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure the are and were created." (Revelation 4:11)

2. Sacred Song: (On Redemption Ground.)

Exodus 15:1 "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord saying, 'I will sing unto the Lord for He hath triumphed gloriously'"

The nation of slaves, freed to serve the Lord and instructed, "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.". They had left the lash of the taskmaster behind as well as the flesh-pots of Egypt and the dark polluted water of the Nile. Henceforth their diet was changed to manna from heaven, ("they did eat angel's food" Psalm.78:25) and fresh pure water out of the smitten rock. With the taste of the roast lamb still lingering in their mouths, they longed for more of their share of the offerings of the Lord, which were all "without spot and without blemish."

Ours is a far greater privilege, to praise the Lamb of God, a more excellent sacrifice, for an infinitely greater deliverance from Satanic slavery!

*"And we have known redemption Lord
From bondage worse than theirs by far
Sin held us by a stronger cord,
Yet by thy mercy free we are." (Mary B. Peters)*

3. Sensual Song: (In Backsliding into Egypt's Ways.)

Exodus 32. v1 "Up make us gods" v4 "a molten calf" v6 "the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play" v17 "noise of war" v18 "the noise of them that sing do I hear" v25 "Moses saw that the people were naked"

Are we attracted by the world's music? Is it downloaded on your smart phone? What of the so called "Christian radio" or "Christian" performers, who look like the world with their outlandish clothing and makeup? Is this the diet we want? Is this not the "Food, Fellowship, and Fun" of a superficial, carnal Christendom? (Remember that Psalm 69:12 speaks of "the song of the drunkards!")

The purpose of good scriptural hymns is to ingrain in the memory sound doctrine: if we listen to songs and music which copies the world of secular entertainment, are we not allowing worldly ideas to be entrenched in our minds? **We must get our theology from our Bible** and ensure that what we sing is in accord with the mind of God. As an example, the hymn, "*We'll sing of the Shepherd that died*", leads us to think on the

steadfast care of our Good Shepherd, whose sacrifice in our place, has given us infinite material for praise, which will never cease in the full glory of his eternal presence.

*"We'll sing of such subjects alone,
None other our tongues shall employ,
'Till fully His love becomes known,
In yonder bright regions of Joy".*

Thomas Kelly (NBHB 656)

4. Silenced Song: (The Loss of Song.)

Psalm.137:1-4 "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"

Israel's disregard for the principles and precepts of the Law and the preaching of the prophets had resulted in their captivity to Babylon. They felt their sad condition and felt that the "Songs of Zion" were totally out of keeping with their plight. There had no heart to sing. Departure from divine principles and drifting into religious Babylon today will cause us to lose our song! What was the course of action back then? It was prayer for recovery! Daniel was a man of prayer: See Daniel. Ch.10:2 "I Daniel was mourning three full weeks" and v12 "Thy words were heard". God moved in gracious recovery and we learn that when restoration was experienced under the guidance of Nehemiah and Ezra, at the dedication of the completed wall "They sought out the Levites out of all their places ---to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgiving and with singing etc." Nehemiah12:27. We learn that two companies traversed the wall in opposite directions and when they met and came to the temple "The singers sang loud!" (12:42) What a contrast to the mute captives sitting weeping by the rivers of Babylon!

5.The Savior's Submissive Song. (The Lord's Song.)

Matthew 26:30. "And when they had sung an hymn they went out into the Mount of Olives"

We are often told that the "hymn" would have been all or part of the Psalms 113 – 118. How full of pathos as our Lord submissively sung, "Bind the sacrifice with cords even to the horns of the altar" (Psalm 118:27), while thinking of his hands and feet being nailed to that tree to bear the curse for us!

How willingly did He go to the cross in light of the "joy set before Him" as they had sung "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner." (Psalm 118:22)

How consoling to His burdened spirit was the text "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. O Lord truly I am thy servant and the son of thine handmaid" (Psalm 116:15 & 16). The perfect "Servant of Jehovah" was thinking of His mother Mary, the "handmaid of the Lord" (Luke 1.38), who, with "a sword piercing through her own souls also" (Luke 2:35) would stand by the cross of Jesus. (John 19.25)

Would it not have moved His soul to sing "I will take the cup of salvation" (Psalm 116.13), while knowing

that "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11) It is because He drank that awful bitter cup that we can take the sweet cup of salvation and never thirst again.

6. Spirit-stirred Song (The Saint's Songs.)

Colossians 3:16 "In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

1 Corinthians 14:15 "I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also."

Singing is obviously part of congregational worship. Let us think of

What we sing: we have variety –

1. "Psalms"; compositions of **experience**, e.g. "I bow me to Thy will O God" (NBHB 196).

2. Hymns; outbursts of **praise** e.g. "Praise Him, Praise Him Jesus our blessed Redeemer" (NBHB 482).

3. "Spiritual songs"; verses that teach **doctrine**, e.g. "Grace 'tis a charming sound" (NBHB 139).

How we sing;

1. "With the spirit". Our spirit, responding to the stirring of the Holy Spirit is engaged and uplifted in appreciation of the spiritual content of the song. If it is to God's glory and the edification of the company it must be "with grace in our hearts" (Colossians 3:16) and "making melody in our heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19)

2. "With the understanding also". This involves the **mind**, thinking on the meaning of the words we express and honestly desiring to fulfill what we profess in song. Sometimes we are convicted that we are singing well above our experience. For instance, singing Frances R. Havergal's hymn of consecration "Take my life and let it be, consecrated Lord to Thee", may seem to be too lofty for our poor devotion? Let it then be sung as our **sincere desire** to be more holy.

3. Without musical accompaniment! Let us remember that there is not a shred of scripture to support the introduction of instrumental music in assembly meetings. Where it is brought in, it usually results in less hearty singing and a decline in spiritual power and enjoyment.

4. Practically, let the brother who announces the hymn, do so in a clearly audible voice and let the brother who leads the singing choose a suitable tune and tempo in keeping with the subject.

7. The Everlasting Song. (Endless Anthems of Adoration.)

Revelation 5:9 "And they sung a new song saying 'Thou art worthy --- for thou was slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation.'"

Admittedly, this is sung in heaven by the saints as the Lord begins to unseal the seven sealed roll of the title deeds to the universe, but surely that theme will never, never end!

Post Script: The Book of Psalms is Israel's Hymn Book consisting of 150 separate pieces suitable for all the varied circumstances of life:

The Condition: Psalm 1 The Blessed man – "Bringeth forth his fruit in his season" – (Hebrews 13:15 "Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually that is **the fruit of our lips**")

The Conversion Psalm 40:1-3 Salvation, eliciting praise as the result of a great deliverance out of a fearful plight, putting a "new song" in the mouth.

The Crescendo Psalm 145-150 "Hallelujah" comes at start and the end of each of these final Psalms, ending with the exhortation "Let everything that hath breath, praise the Lord."

Our prospect is that from the four corners of the earth, we will join in the four-fold "Alleluia" at the completion of Christ's conquest, crowning and celebration of his union with His Bride (Revelation 19:1,3,4,6)

Consecration of Christians

Exodus 29

Robert Surgenor, dec.

We read that, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4). "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect (fully developed), thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, refers them to Old Testament incidences and then writes, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come (1 Corinthians 10:11). If a Christian wants to learn New Testament truths, understanding the Old Testament writings will offer him a tremendous help in rightly dividing the word of truth, which means, "to teach the truth directly and correctly" (2 Timothy 2:15). You will never be fully developed in the knowledge of Christ if you are unfamiliar with the types and shadows of Him portrayed in the Old Testament writings. The details of His Person and His sacrifice for sin are more graphic in the Old Testament than you will find in the New Testament. If you are surprised at this statement, it's because you are not familiar with the Old Testament.

The words consecration and consecrate are not found in the New Testament. Consecrate means, "to set apart as sacred, to dedicate." It is the thought of one having his hands full in serving and waiting upon God. However, that truth permeates the New Testament writ-

ings, and so linking up Old and New, I want to bring before you what the Lord expects from all of us in this dispensation.

Notice our new position upon receiving Christ. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). God did not save you to live a self-centered life. Far be the thought. He not only saved you from eternal fire, but He saved you to be a bondservant, glorifying Him, body, soul, and spirit. This is an impossible task for any unconverted man, but it is expected from Christians, for He has indwelt such with His Holy Spirit, Who supplies all the needed power to accomplish a consecrated life for God. The Christian is called upon to "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). These thoughts were on the mind of Fanny Crosby when she penned these words;

*Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord,
By the power of grace divine;
Let my soul look up with a steadfast hope,
And my will be lost in Thine.*

*Frances Havergal penned the same thoughts.
Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days;
Let them flow in endless praise,*

*Take my will and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart it is thine own;
It shall be Thy royal throne.*

Come with me now as we go back 3,600 years in search of some precious jewels from God through the inspired writings of Moses. His books are five, each one with a definite subject. Exodus tells us of the going out of Israel from Egypt, while Leviticus tells us of the going in to minister to Jehovah. It was, if I may term it, God's handbook for the priests in ministering unto Him. It was God's intention for all those redeemed from Egyptian slavery to be priests, but that was forfeited when they sinned grievously soon after their exodus from Egypt. Instead, only the tribe of Levi obtained that privilege. Three thousand of Israel were slain on that occasion. In contrast, we find on the day of Pentecost three were thousand saved which was the birth of the dispensational Church, of which every member is a priest.

A careful reading of Exodus 25:1 to 27:21 reveals the construction of the Tabernacle, the place where the priests were to function. Chapter 28 shows us the garments that were to be worn by Aaron, the high priest, and those of his sons. Exodus 29 climaxes this with instruc-

tions of the ritual connected with their consecration into the priestly office. This most interesting chapter contains a wealth of New Testament truths for priests of our dispensation who are members of His body, the Church.

God was very particular, and demanding, that the ritual be carried out exactly as He said. There was to be no deviation whatsoever, thus, in this chapter, we find the word "thou shalt" 34 times. Nothing was left for man's intellect or imagination. What you or I may think doesn't matter. What God says is what matters. You will find the expression, "thus saith the Lord," at least 815 times in your Bible. God says what He means, and means what He says. Paul obeyed God's pattern, revealing his convictions in witnessing to King Agrippa. "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come" (Acts 26:22).

It's not a matter of "Let your conscience be your guide;" or, "Everybody's doing it," or, "What's wrong with it?" No, No. It's "What saith the Lord" that matters! In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths (Proverbs 3:6).

Exodus chapter 29 opens with these words; "And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto Me in the priest's office: Take one young bullock, and two rams without blemish, and unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened tempered with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil: of wheaten flour shalt thou make them. And thou shalt put them into one basket, and bring them in the basket, with the bullock and the two rams. And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water" (vs. 1-4).

They were to be hallowed, meaning "set apart," or, "sanctified."

Regarding the Roman Catholic priesthood, it usually takes about eight years after high school, four years of college and four years studying theology to become a priest. Today, many men enter the seminary at the college level. A priest needs to have a good, solid Catholic education, with a special emphasis on philosophy and theology.

I knew a friend who came from the Far East to become a Catholic priest. However, coming to this country, he had a Christian aunt who contacted him, and persuaded him to go with her to hear the gospel. Convinced by the Spirit, he trusted Christ as His Savior, and was saved. Later, he remarked that it would have taken years for him to become a Catholic priest, but God intervened and he became a real priest in less than an hour.

Isn't it wonderful, my fellow believer, that the instant we trusted Christ, we were made holy and royal priests to serve the true God? (1 Peter 2:5, 9). The moment we were saved, we were juxtaposed with the world. Physically, we remained in the world, (its inhabit-

ants) but not of the world (its system and ways). The Lord Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. ... If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 18:36; 15:1). Paul exclaimed; "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14).

Aaron and his sons were separated men, and God's elect today are separated people. Consequently, we are warned: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17).

Godly Christians can truthfully sing Fanny Crosby's hymn;

*Take the world, but give me Jesus
All its joys are but a name;
But His love abideth ever
Through eternal years the same*

*Take the world, but give me Jesus
Sweetest comfort of my soul;
With my Savior watching over me
I can sing though billows roll*

*Take the world, but give me Jesus
Let me view His constant smile;
Then throughout this life's long journey
He will lead me all the while*

*Take the world, but give me Jesus
In His cross my trust shall be
Till, with clearer, brighter vision
Face to face my Lord I see!*

To Aaron and his four sons, it was a solemn and honoring day. It was the birthday of the first God-instituted priesthood on earth. In Acts 2 we find a far superior true priesthood initiated on the day of Pentecost, 50 days after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, when the Holy Spirit was given by the Lord. Unlearned and ignorant fishermen were suddenly made ambassadors for Christ, to herald forth the wondrous works of God, the crucifixion, resurrection, and exaltation of Christ.

Considering the first priesthood, notice the first thing we read: And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying ... "And Moses said unto the congregation, This is the thing which the LORD commanded to be done" (Leviticus 8:1, 5). This is intensely important. This consecration was to be done under the authority of the word of God. He did

not say, "This is the thing which is suitable, or suggested by the fathers, or the opinion of those of importance among us." No, no! That would never do. Moses' source of authority was God, the Lord, and God alone. The Word of Jehovah was his only source of authority. The plan was very clear, flowing from God's throne, like a river, into the heart of Moses, leaving no room for man's ideas. Strict adherence to God's word guaranteed that the glory of the Lord would appear unto them. If there was any deviation from the divine plan, no matter how slight, the glory would not appear. Should not we, of this dispensation, solemnly consider our ways, lest we deviate from God's divine plan regarding our priesthood, and lose His power and blessings?

Two Orders

The second thing we notice is there were going to be two orders. One was Aaron, who was to be Israel's high priest. The other was to be his four sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. Aaron's garments were different, as was his functioning. Aaron is a picture of our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, and his four sons represent every believer in Christ of this dispensation. Notice: We have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God (Heb. 4:14). The common priests were sons of the High Priest. As the Captain of our salvation, we read of the Lord in Hebrews 2:11-12 For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of (from) one (Adam): for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee. John 1:12 states; But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name. Thus being made a priest. In other words, sinners must be transformed into the Lord's sons before they can become priests.

The believer's priesthood does not rest on a person's intellect, education, or by being elected by men. As Joseph Seiss boldly states, "No rites of human make, no decrees of councils, or commands of earthly sovereigns, in Church or State; no liturgies; no manual impositions; no services, however solemn or dignified; nothing, can avail one feather's weight toward making anyone a priest of God. His [God's] own clear and specific appointments can alone do this. It must be done by means of God's own unmutated prescriptions, or it cannot be done at all."

(Continued)