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(Concluded.)

ACTS OF GOD.

The acts of God are of two kinds, *internal* acts and *external* acts.

INTERNAL ACTS OF GOD.

The internal acts of God are again of two kinds, *personal* internal acts and *essential* internal acts.

The personal internal acts of God are those acts which terminate within the Godhead and pertain to the divine Person or Persons by whom they are performed as peculiar to such Person or Persons. Thus in Ps. 2, 7 we read: "*The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day HAVE I BEGOTTEN thee.*" Here the act of begetting is predicated of THE LORD, but of the Lord as distinguished from another divine person, whom he addresses by the personal pronoun, *thee*, and names *his Son*, which implies that the Person speaking is the *Father* of the Person spoken to. The act whereby the Father is personally the Father is the act of generation or begetting, an act which is not an act of the Son, nor an act of the Holy Ghost, but a definite act of the first Person in the Trinity. This act is truly an *act*,

Exegetical Theology.

THE PROOF TEXTS OF THE CATECHISM

WITH A

PRACTICAL COMMENTARY.

(Continued.)

Gen. 17, 1: *I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be thou perfect.*

This is a very remarkable text. Twenty-four years after God had led Abram from Haran to the land of Canaan and given him the promise that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed,¹⁾ these words were spoken. Abram was then a worshiper of the true God,²⁾ who had declared himself his shield and exceeding great reward.³⁾ Abram then stood justified by faith.⁴⁾ And this man it was to whom the words of our text were spoken. They consist of a statement and an injunction. The statement is, *I am the Almighty God.* The Hebrew אֱלֹהֵי שָׁמַיִם designates God as the *Almighty Mighty One*, the *God of transcendent power*. The injunction is, *Walk before me, and be thou perfect.* What God demands of Abram is nothing less than perfect holiness; and to render such holiness, he is to walk before God, to take every step, perform every act, both external and internal, in thought, word, or deed, as before, under the very eyes of, God; and all that constantly remembering that He, under whose watchful eyes he walks, is the Almighty God, before whom even the holy man must stand in awe and with bated breath, under whose mighty scepter the righteous may abide in peace and perfect security, but who is to the unrighteous a consuming fire.

1) Gen. 12, 1—3.

3) Gen. 15, 1.

2) Gen. 12, 7. 8; 13, 4. 18.

4) Gen. 15, 6. Rom. 4, 3. Gal. 3, 6.

There is, perhaps, in all the Scriptures no other text which in words as brief as these inculcates the true fear of God as an incentive to true holiness of life in those who are the children of God by faith and in whom the renewal of the image of God is in progress.

Ps. 33, 8: *Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.*

This text, taken in conjunction with its context, has this in common with the preceding text that it points out the omnipotence and sovereign majesty of God with a view of inculcating due reverence and fear of God. In the previous context the psalmist speaks of the exhibition of divine power in the creation of the world and the government of the universe, as *By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.*¹⁾ And in the subsequent context he continues, *FOR he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought, he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.*²⁾ And therefore, he says in our text, *let all the earth fear the Lord*, which, by a parallelism familiar in the psalms, he repeats, saying, *let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him*, the second member, as is frequently the case, dropping the figure of speech employed in the first member, substituting *the inhabitants of the world*, for *all the earth*, which stands for *the dwellers on the earth*.

But the argument of our text and context agrees with that of the text from Genesis 17 also in this that it makes the fear of God a mainspring of our obedience to the will of God as revealed in his commandments. Having called upon all men to fear God and stand in awe of him, he continues, *FOR he SPAKE, and it was done; he COMMANDED,*

1) Vv. 6. 7.

2) Vv. 9. 10.

and *it stood fast*; as if to say: Heaven and earth came into being in *obedience* to his *word* and in *compliance* with his *command*, as it was God, the Almighty One, who spoke and commanded. How much more should man, to whom God has revealed himself in many ways, be moved by the fear of God to obey him and perform his holy will.

Gen. 39, 9: *How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*

The sin which Joseph, then an inmate in the house of Potiphar, was here tempted to commit was the sin of adultery, by which Joseph would have violated the conjugal rights of his master and the trust which Potiphar had reposed in his Hebrew servant. This was in Joseph's mind when he said, *Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; there is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife.*¹⁾ Yet Joseph does not continue in words as these: "How then should I commit this great sin against my master?" or, "What would Potiphar, my master and thy husband, say and do if I were to commit this grave offense against him?" Joseph knows that the eye of One who is greater than Potiphar is upon him, that by yielding to the temptation of this adulterous woman he would offend against the holy will of God, and it is the fear of God that prevails in him and puts into his mouth the words recorded in our text. Thus here, again, the fear of God is shown to be a cardinal virtue, a safeguard against all manner of sins, and a source of true holiness according to all the commandments of God.

Ps. 73, 25. 26: *Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

1) Vv. 8. 9.

The love of God in a human heart is nowhere in the Scriptures uttered more forcibly than in this text. The love of God which is here described is so much a love of God above all things, that it is a love of God to the utter exclusion of all things. Aside of God heaven with all its host, its glory and bliss, is void and empty, and the earth with all its treasures and pleasures is vacant space to the psalmist, who in heaven and earth knows of but one object of his possession and desire, and that is God. Nor is this all. The psalmist loves God even with the exclusion of his own self. If his flesh and his heart, his body and soul should fail him, that is, if he should be deprived of that wherein he exists, then he would still cling to God and live in spite of death and destruction, since God is his strength and his portion for ever. This last sentiment is given by Paul Gerhardt in the words:—

Du sollst sein meines Herzens Licht,
Und wann mein Herz in Stücken bricht,
Sollst du mein Herze bleiben,

and the whole text is exquisitely versified in the following words of Martin Schalling's hymn, *Herzlich lieb hab ich dich, o Herr*:—

*I scorn the richest earthly lot,
E'en heaven and earth attract me not,
If only thou art near to me.
Yea, though my heart be like to break,
Thou shalt my trust that naught can shake,
My portion and my comfort be.*¹⁾

Ps. 42, 11: *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*

1) Die ganze Welt nicht freuet mich,
Nach Himmel und Erd nicht frag ich,
Wenn ich dich nur kann haben.
Und wenn mir gleich mein Herz zerbricht,
So bist du doch mein Zuversicht,
Mein Theil und meines Herzens Trost.

The psalm of which this text is the closing verse is a lamentation of an anguished soul, thirsting after God. The second section of the psalm begins with the words, *O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee.*¹⁾ Finding no strength within himself and no help about himself, he lifts up his thoughts to God. And now he argues with his soul. He does not deny the power of his enemies nor his own weakness. Neither does he behold the helping hand of God already turning away the oppression of the enemy. And yet he reproaches his soul for being bowed down and moaning in trepidation and thus troubling him without cause. For is not God still *God*, a mighty helper above all his enemies? And so firm is his reliance on Him who is the health of his countenance, and his *God*, under whose protecting care no harm can befall him, that in the midst of his tribulations, and while he is yet exhorting his soul to wait for future help, he is, as it were, already tuning his harp to songs of praise and thanksgiving; for he *trusts in God*.

Ps. 118, 8: *It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.*

Here, again, the power of the Lord is contrasted with the strength, or the weakness, of men. But the text is taken from a song of praise rising from the hearts and lips of those who have experienced the goodness and power of God. In v. 5, the psalmist points to a certain distress,²⁾ from the midst of which,³⁾ as in Ps. 42, the believer called upon the Lord; and the Lord answered him and helped him, so that from gladsome experience he could say, *The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? The Lord taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me.*⁴⁾ And now, as the psalmist contemplates the ways of men, who, when

1) V. 6.

3) וְיָדָה.

2) Note the article in וְיָדָה.

4) Vv. 6. 7.

threatened or assailed by enemies, will look about for allies among men and the princes of men, he takes comfort in knowing that the Lord is on his side and takes his part as his ally against all his enemies. For while confidence reposed in men, even in princes, is often misplaced, and human aid is often by sad experience shown to be of no avail, his experience has taught him that *it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man; it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.*¹⁾

But what is true as to men in general and princes in particular is also true as to physicians and their remedies, fathers and mothers, wealthy and influential friends and relatives, and whoever and whatever else may be looked upon as deserving of trust and confidence: it is better to trust in the Lord, and to confide in them instead of or above and before the Lord is idolatry.

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

Ps. 48, 10: *According to Thy name, O God, so is Thy praise unto the ends of the earth: Thy right hand is full of righteousness.*

The 48th psalm is a song of victory to celebrate a new manifestation of divine power and greatness in the protection of the city of God. *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised*, is the opening strain and the burden of the psalm. The name of God is that by which he is known, and we cannot know God unless he reveals or manifests himself. Again, to praise God is to voice forth his name by extolling his deeds. The fame of God is, according to our text, in accordance with his name: that which may be said of him is commensurate with what he has revealed of himself. And his right hand is full of righteousness. Our right hand is our chief organ of action, the fighting hand in war and the working hand in peace. Thus the right

1) Vv. 8. 9.

hand of God again stands for his activity, whereby he manifests himself as what he is, power, love, truth, or, what the text mentions, righteousness. And *righteousness* is a divine name; *this is his NAME whereby he SHALL BE CALLED, the Lord our righteousness.*¹⁾

Lev. 24, 15. 16: *Whosoever curseth his God, shall bear his sin. And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death.*

The sin here proscribed is that of speaking evil against God and impugning his name. A son of an Israelitish woman and an Egyptian father, in a quarrel with a man of Israel in the camp, had committed this offense and was stoned pursuant to a special order of God.²⁾ Before this sentence was executed,³⁾ God caused the injunction set forth in our text to be published to all the children of Israel with the express statement that it should apply to the stranger as well as to him that was born in the land.⁴⁾

Gal. 6, 7: *Be not deceived; God is not mocked.*

In the words preceding this text the apostle has enjoined upon the hearers of the word the duty of contributing from their temporal goods toward the support of their teachers. To render this commandment all the more impressive, the apostle adds the solemn warning, *Be not deceived; God is not mocked*, or, in other words, God will not allow this commandment to be set aside with impunity. The verb *μωχεύειν* signifies a contemptuous gesture, as an unruly inferior may turn up his nose and sneer at the command of a master whom he holds in contempt. Thus the apostle here teaches that wilful disregard of the manifest will of God is also a manner of blasphemy which will not go unpunished, and that he who neglects or refuses to heed this will but deceive himself.

1) Jer. 23, 6; 33, 16.
2) V. 23.

2) Vv. 10—14.
4) V. 16.

James 3, 9. 10: *By the tongue bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be.*

This text would, from two different points of view, teach all Christians to consider and comprehend the utter impropriety of cursing their fellow-men. In the first place, a Christian, whose duty and daily occupation is to bless God, would by cursing a fellow-man expose himself to such divine censure as this: "How canst thou, while praising me, the Creator, at the same time curse my creature, made after my own similitude, in my own image?¹⁾ Is not this gross inconsistency? Is not thy praise thereby turned into scoffing?" But cursing in a Christian is not only improper when the objects of his blessing and cursing are considered, but also, in the second place, in view of the subject which performs these contrary and contradictory acts, and the nature of these acts themselves. God has given us our mouths as all other organs that we should use them in his service, in obedience to his commandments. But what consistency is there in blessing God in obedience to this Second Commandment, and abusing his name by cursing in open violation of this same commandment? Is it not mockery that these two acts, so incompatible with one another, should proceed from the same mouth, the mouth of a Christian? The same argument is continued in the subsequent context: *Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs?²⁾* Thus, also, he would say, it is not in the true nature of a Christian, not compatible with his proper fruit, that he should curse. And hence, these things ought, surely, not to be.

1) Gen. 1, 26. 27.

2) Vv. 11. 12.

2 Cor. 1, 23: *Moreover, I call God for a record upon my soul.*

For *record* the Revised Version has substituted *witness*, the correct translation of the Greek *μάρτυρα*, Luth. *Zeuge*. That whereto he calls upon God to testify is the truth of his assertion, *that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.*¹⁾ The emphasis is on *φειδόμενος ὑμῶν*, *to spare you*, which states the motive whereby the apostle was prompted to delay his return to Corinth. But a man's motives, which reside in his soul, are known only to himself and God, and the apostle, as he is about to state his motive, calls upon God, who knows all things and is himself the Truth, to be his witness and testify to the truth of his statement. This is the very essence of an oath sworn by God's name. And as it is an apostle of Christ who, under inspiration of the Holy Ghost, makes this solemn appeal, we may know that it is not under all circumstances wrong to "call upon God as the witness of truth or the avenger of falsehood."

Matt. 5, 33—37: *Again, ye have heard that it hath been said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.*

To understand this text correctly, we must, in the first place, remember that it cannot be intended as an absolute prohibition of oaths, since lawful oaths are expressly sanctioned by divine commandment and example and by numerous appeals of the holy men of God, even under divine in-

1) V. 23.

spiration, to God as the witness and judge of the truth of their statements,¹⁾ and no interpretation of a text can be correct which conflicts with other clear texts of Scripture. In the second place we must consider the scope of this admonition. From the forms of oaths quoted by Christ, which were not judicial oaths, we see that the Lord here deals with the evil habit of irreverent swearing, of loading down commonplace conversations and assertions with all manner of oaths, a custom which to this day prevails among Jews and Mohammedans. In extenuation of this habit, the Jews distinguished between the solemn oaths by the holy name of God and such other oaths as, "By heaven," "By Jerusalem," "By my head," etc., and maintained that they kept within the law if they abstained from perjuring themselves by the Name expressly invoked. This attempted justification of an immoral practice is, together with the practice itself, discountenanced by the authentic Interpreter of the law, who in our text would lead the Jews to understand that their irreverent oaths were, in fact, no less abusive of the name of God than the forms which they avoided would have been under like circumstances, since those familiar oaths by heaven and earth and Jerusalem and their own heads were ultimately but so many invocations of Him who is the Ruler of the heavens, his throne, and of the earth, his footstool, and of Jerusalem, his own peculiar city, and holds dominion over every hair of our heads. Thus, then, the Pharisaical theory is shown to be utterly at variance with the law, which, while it does not prohibit, but enjoins, the proper use of the oath, condemns not only one form, but all forms of swearing besides and beyond that proper use, where *yea* should be simply *yea*, and *nay* should be simply *nay*, and what is more than these and partakes of the nature of an oath is a violation of the law and *cometh of evil*, just

1) Deut. 6, 13. Exod. 22, 11. Deut. 10, 20. Is. 19, 18; 45, 23; 65, 16. Jer. 4, 2; 5, 7; 12, 16. Ps. 63, 11.—Gen. 22, 16. Hebr. 6, 13. 16. 17. Luke 1, 73. Matt. 26, 63. 64.—Rom. 1, 9. Gal. 1, 20. Phil. 1, 8.

as killing in any form besides and beyond the proper use of the sword is murder, and carnal intercourse besides and beyond that which is proper in lawful marriage is lewdness, whether in the form of fornication, or of adultery, or of any other sin of uncleanness, though it be only that of looking at a woman to lust after her.¹⁾

Deut. 6, 13: *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve Him, and shalt swear by His name.*

This verse contains three injunctions, to fear God, to serve him, and to swear by his name; and it is just as truly the will of God that we should swear by his name as it is that we should fear and serve him. At the same time, the context shows that the oath is to be looked upon as an act of worship which must be performed to the true God only. For in the preceding verse we read, *Beware lest thou forget the Lord, etc.*, and in the following verse, *Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you.* Hence, in the light of our text, the oaths taken in societies which worship a man-made god instead of the Triune God are an idolatrous abomination as inconsistent with the Christian faith as an oath by or a prayer to the Mohammedan *Allah* or the heathen *Jupiter* would be in the mouth of a Christian.

Hebr. 6, 16: *For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.*

These words are a part of an argument beginning in v. 13 and ending in v. 18. The argument is this: an oath is an appeal to the highest authority and is final in settling the point which it is to confirm. God, having no authority above himself, swears by himself. Men, being under God, swear by the greater, by God. In both cases the oath is conclusive, and if even among men a truth confirmed by an oath is considered beyond dispute, then, surely, when God

1) Matt. 5, 28.

has confirmed the immutability of his counsel by an oath, we have a strong consolation. — This argument incidentally sanctions the proper use of oaths for the settlement of disputes or litigations, or the confirmation of the truth where such confirmation is necessary for God's sake or for the benefit of others. It should be noted that the holy writer does not speak of past ages, but of the present time, the time of New Testament Christianity, which this epistle in other respects places into sharp contrast with the past dispensation of the Old Covenant.¹⁾ And thus we learn that the commandment in Deut. 6, 13 is not revoked in the New Testament.

Deut. 18, 10—12: *There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out before thee.*

The law here enumerates the various forms of satanic art prevalent among the heathen nations. That the precise meaning of the various terms cannot now be ascertained is easily understood when we consider the occult character of these practices. Most of them seem to refer to the prediction of future events or the revelation of hidden things. But when at the head of the list we find those practices which were connected with the Canaanitic Moloch-worship, of which human sacrifices were a prominent feature,²⁾ we are led to understand that all these arts and practices were and are satanic in their nature. For of those who practiced these abominations we read, *They were mingled among the*

1) Chapters 8, 9, 10, 11.

2) Cf. Lev. 18, 12. 2 Kings 16, 3; 17, 17; 21, 26; 23, 10. Jer. 7, 31; 32, 35. Ezek. 16, 20. 21; 20, 31.

heathen, and learned their works, and they served their idols, which were a snare unto them. Yea they sacrificed their sons and their daughters UNTO DEVILS.¹⁾ Yet these sins, as appears from texts quoted below, became a deep-rooted evil among the Israelites, who learned them from their heathen neighbors, very much as similar satanic arts have found their way from heathen ancestors and oriental nations into the Christian communities of the present day and largely baffle all efforts to eradicate them.

Jer. 23, 31: *Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues and say, He saith.*

These words of God spoken through the prophet are a proscription of all manner of false doctrine as an abuse of God's name. A prophet is a man by whom God would reveal himself, his counsel and will, into whose mouth God gives *His* word, and whose tongue He makes *His* tongue. False prophets, however, *taking their own tongue,*²⁾ and speaking their own words, *oracle forth oracles,*³⁾ utter what they would have others receive and accept as the word of God. This is "lying and deceiving by God's name." And of such God says, *I am against them.* That there are conflicting doctrines in the world is not according to the will of God. He is the Truth and *shall destroy them that speak leasing.*⁴⁾ He is against false teachers and false doctrine at all times and everywhere; and this we should note and bear in mind. *Behold,* says our text; and the same word occurs twice more in the context,⁵⁾ to make sure of attracting the reader's and hearer's attention to these important words. And, furthermore, the Lord himself gives us a commentary to our text in the subsequent verse: *Behold, I am against them that*

1) Ps. 106, 35—37. Cf. 1 Cor. 10, 20. *The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice TO DEVILS.* See also Lev. 17, 7. Deut. 32, 17. Rev. 9, 20.

2) Hebr. לְקַחְתִּים לְשׁוֹנָם.

3) Hebr. אִנְיָאִים אִנְיָאִים.

4) Ps. 5, 6.

5) Vv. 30 and 32.

*prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and to tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord.*¹⁾

Matt. 15, 8: *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.*

These words are quoted from Is. 29, 13 and applied by Christ to the Jewish scribes and Pharisees who were, in doctrine and practice, religious hypocrites, substituting their traditions for the word of God and living ungodly lives under the pretense of surpassing sanctity.²⁾ He who pretends to be what he is not, is a liar everywhere, and he who professes godliness with his mouth and is ungodly at heart lies and deceives by God's name. And how grave this offense against the holy name of God really is, and how fearful its consequences have been in God's dealing with religious hypocrites, appears from the context in Isaiah, where God says in the previous context, *The Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered, and the vision of all is become as the words of a book that is sealed, etc.*,³⁾ and, after the words quoted, he continues, *Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid, etc.*⁴⁾ Such is the consequence and punishment of religious hypocrisy, a heart which has become callous and benumbed, spiritual stupidity and blindness to an extraordinary degree.

Matt. 7, 21: *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

1) V. 32. 2) Matt. 15, 1—6. 3) Is. 29, 10. 11. 4) Is. 29, 14.

The discourse from which these words are taken is the Sermon on the Mount, which is, in the main, an exposition of the law; and the special subject dealt with in the section preceding our text pertains to the Second Commandment. Here, too, the Savior speaks of such as take the name of the Lord our God in vain. He warns his hearers to *beware of false prophets, which come to them in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves,*¹⁾ who professing to be prophets, messengers of God proclaiming his truth, teach error and falsehood, and thus "lie and deceive by God's name." Having closed this special warning with the repeated advice, *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them,*²⁾ he now proceeds to take a more general view of the same sin, including the hearers as well as the teachers, and warning both not to take the name of the Lord in vain. To SAY *Lord, Lord*, and at the same time to neglect or refuse to DO the will of the Father in heaven is a sin which excludes the sinners from the kingdom of heaven. This is more explicitly set forth in the subsequent context.³⁾ That the text would not teach salvation by works is clear from the terms in opposition, which are not *faith* and *works*, but *saying* and *doing*, *professing* to be servants of the Lord, and *being in fact* what saying *Lord, Lord* should indicate, true servants of God, who do his will. That this is the import of the text, and that salvation by works is not thought of, appears from the subsequent context, which expressly rejects salvation by works, as it points out those who have performed external works, *wonderful works*, some of which they enumerate as having been done "in Christ's name."⁴⁾ But these works prove of no avail to them,⁵⁾ since their performance in Christ's name was again only taking the name of God in vain. These hypocrites had not in truth been what by their words and by their deeds they had pretended

1) V. 15.

2) V. 20. coll. v. 16.

3) Vv. 22. 23.

4) V. 22.

5) V. 23.

to be, true servants of the Lord by faith in Christ, walking in righteousness and *true holiness*.¹⁾

Ps. 50, 15: *Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*

The entire psalm from which these words are taken is a lesson on the worship and sacrifices acceptable to God. In the verses immediately preceding our text we read, *Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most high:*²⁾—*And,* continues the psalm, *CALL UPON ME in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and THOU SHALT GLORIFY ME.* Prayer and praise, then, are here pointed out as proper sacrifices to be offered up before God,³⁾ as acts of worship acceptable in his sight. This being so, it is clear that communion of prayer is communion of worship and religion and is admissible only where all other exercises of religion and acts of worship might be performed in common. Communion of prayer with those who adhere to and profess false doctrine is taking away with one hand what is offered with the other, the hallowing of God's name.⁴⁾

Matt. 7, 7: *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*

This text is also taken from the Sermon on the Mount, the Lawgiver's exposition of the law. In the subsequent context the Father in heaven, to whom we should pray, is compared with human fathers with a view of showing that we should pray to God with all confidence, knowing that he is able and willing to hear our prayers and give us what we ask.⁵⁾ Thus it appears that to pray in the right spirit of filial confidence and veneration is to glorify the name of our

1) Eph. 4, 24.

2) Vv. 13. 14.

3) Cf. v. 23. *Whoso OFFERETH praise glorifieth me.*

4) The text occurs again in the exposition of the Lord's prayer, where it must be considered from a different point of view.

5) Vv. 8—11.

Father which is in heaven, and thus to offer unto God an acceptable sacrifice and to worship him as he alone deserves to be worshiped by his children.¹⁾

Ps. 103, 3: *Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.*

To *bless*, בָּרַךְ, as εὐλογεῖν, when the object is God, is to *praise*, to acknowledge and extol the blessings which he has bestowed upon us. Thus, in the next verse, the psalmist says, *Bless the Lord, O my soul*, AND FORGET NOT ALL HIS BENEFITS, and in the subsequent verses he proceeds to enumerate a series of divine blessings which should induce his soul to *bless the Lord*.²⁾ All these divine blessings are manifestations of the goodness and power and wisdom and truth of God, and to extol them is to magnify the *name* of God. It is of peculiar significance that the psalmist, a holy man of God, should exhort *his soul* to bless the Lord, and *all that is within him* to bless His holy name: for thus he sets an example to every Christian and, at the same time, leads us to understand that the best among us are far from perfection and have ample reason to let our first note of praise be, *Who forgiveth all thine iniquities.*

Ps. 118, 1: *O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good; because his mercy endureth for ever.*

Thanking differs from *praising* inasmuch as the latter refers more to the praiseworthy qualities of the object of praise, while *thanking* is rather an acknowledgment of the subject's indebtedness to the giver of that for which thanks are rendered. Thus we may *praise* God also for blessings bestowed upon others, but we *thank* him for blessings which in some way concern ourselves. But both terms have this in common, that they imply a recognition of something that

1) The consideration of the climax in *ask*, *seek*, and *knock*, and of the promises embodied in the text, should also be reserved for the exposition of the Lord's prayer, where the text recurs.

2) Vv. 3—7.

is good and estimable in the object of praise and thanksgiving. Thus, in our text, the goodness of God and his everlasting grace are mentioned as the motives for giving thanks unto the Lord. The Hebrew טוב also stands for what the Greek *χρηστός*, Engl. *kind*, Germ. *gütig*, *freundlich*, express, goodness in manifestation, the disposition to do good to others, and חַסֵּד, *חסד*, *grace*, *Grade*, is the goodness that blesses of its own accord, freely gives what it gives, regardless of merits or demerits in those whom it blesses. Thus the goodness and grace of God, whereby God is an everlasting fountain of blessings freely given to sinful man, is most eminently a cause of thanks, unceasing thanks, the sacrifices of human hearts and lips, and offering thanks, especially for the goodness and grace of God, is most pertinently a work of the Second Commandment.

A. G.

A CRITICAL VIEW OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Two Presbyterian professors,—Briggs and McGiffert, the former now domiciled with the Episcopalians, the latter still holding a chair in Union Theological Seminary,—have published their dissent from the accepted doctrine of the Church on the Lord's Supper, viz., that our Lord, in the night in which He was betrayed, instituted the second sacrament of the New Covenant for an abiding memorial of His death until His second advent. The professors reject this doctrine on grounds of textual criticism, and also on exegetical grounds.

Prof. Briggs, who has lately presented his view of the matter in popular form, holds that there are two distinct acts of our Lord recorded in the New Testament, which have hitherto been understood to treat of the same event, but which refer to two separate events. The one occurred in connection with the passover and is recorded by Matthew,