

**WORSHIP GOD: AN
ARGUMENT AND AN
APPEAL ON REVERENCE
FOR THE SANCTUARY**

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Worship God: an argument and an appeal on reverence for the sanctuary by E. W. Shalders

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E. W. SHALDERS

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WORSHIP GOD:

AN ARGUMENT AND AN APPEAL

ON

Reverence for the Sanctuary.

BY THE

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"LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place
where thine honour dwelleth."—PSALM xxvi, 8.

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P R E F A C E .

THE general design of these pages will be sufficiently clear to the reader, when he has perused the introductory chapter. In writing them, the Author has had principally in view those persons who, from various causes, have come to think slightly of the claims of public worship, and to be negligent in their attendance at the House of God. These form, it is feared, a large and increasing class among all denominations of christians; and to such these pages will be found specially adapted.

A desire to extend the usefulness of what he has written, has led him to introduce, here and there, allusions which will be best appreciated by members of another communion than that to which he belongs. But whatever other defects belong to his work, he trusts that it is not marred by a single observation that can give pain to any "who hold the Head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment, ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

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CHAPTER I.

IS INTRODUCTORY.

"Of making many books," says the Preacher, "there is no end: and much study is a weariness of the flesh. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Eccles. xii, 12, 13. So long ago, when the writer of a book was a man of rare wisdom, regarded with awe by his fellow-men, and when the ability to read was no common accomplishment, had both writing and reading upon the subject of man's duty, outstript the practice of what was already known. In these days of multifarious authorship, and of reading without application, the distance between what is known and what is done of the whole duty of man has become immeasurably greater; and were it possible to arrest the attention of men to these solemn words, that to fear God and to keep his commandments is the whole duty of man—to make them feel that in the practice of this precept they would soonest become the men they ought to be, and soonest attain the happiness God desires for them; the result would be cheaply purchased at the cost of all the books that will be written and read for many a year to come; though the writers should be tenfold more conscientious, and their readers many times more thoughtful than there is any reason to expect they will be.

But the course of this world runs not thus; nor does it appear to be the plan of Him who directs it, to favour those summary processes by which we sometimes fondly imagine men might be made good. There is nothing for

us but the old din of contending voices, appealing to man's passions, tastes, or interests; in which, at times, the still small voice that speaks to his spirit, will make itself heard, distinct from all the rest, like the melody of a solemn psalm raised by God-fearing mariners amidst the fury of a storm. To listen for this voice, and to call attention to its utterances, is the part of those who would do something towards bringing men out of confusion and strife into order and peace. And, therefore, amongst the multitude of books now soliciting men's attention, this puts in its claim for notice, as giving forth an echo of an old voice, now but little heeded—that men should Reverence the Sanctuary.

It will afford the reader a distinct view of the design of these pages, and at the same time clear the way for the course of argument, by which it is hoped that design will be found sustained, to state what that is we designate as the Sanctuary, and what in general is the kind of conduct and feeling in regard to it which we aim to inculcate.

A Sanctuary, in the proper sense of the word, is a place set apart from common use, and held sacred by men as the appointed place of meeting between the Deity and his worshippers. In former times it was a place respected by the civil power, as belonging to a region in which it had no jurisdiction; and those who took refuge in it were regarded as making their appeal from Cæsar to Cæsar's God; and were suffered to remain unmolested, in the belief that the ends of human justice would be equally served, whether to that appeal the response should be one of judgment or of mercy. Under the Old Testament dispensation, particular spots were pointed out by God as the chosen seats of his Sanctuary; but since the hour has come when neither in this mountain, nor in that—neither in Jerusalem, nor elsewhere—is the place where men ought exclusively to worship, any locality is eligible for such a Sanctuary. Wherever, then, men agree to meet for worship, whether in some secluded glen, or in caves and dens of the earth, or in catacombs surrounded by the

dust of the departed, or in the ordinary guest chamber, or in the stateliest and most gorgeous edifice that human hands have ever reared, there is a Sanctuary. What is essential to a Sanctuary is that it enshrine a temple made up of living stones, who have sanctified the Lord God in their hearts, and worship him in spirit and in truth. Yet the feeling which invests with sacredness the place where such worshippers meet, which looks upon it as consecrated by the Name invoked there, as well as by the praises of the grateful, the sighs of the sorrowful, and the aspirations of the prisoners of hope, is a right feeling; and, as we shall see, to be distinguished from the common and superstitious abuse of it. By the Sanctuary then, is meant the place where men meet for praise and prayer, where the name of that one living Temple, in whom God and man hold perpetual communion, is continually invoked, and where the ordinances appointed for the light and life of men may freely be enjoyed. Wherever, reader, your fathers have worshipped, or wherever your convictions may lead you in your search for that Sanctuary in which God's worship is celebrated in the manner most agreeable to His will; or, wherever you find those ministrations of the Word of Life which are most profitable to your soul; or, wherever they meet for worship who through nearness of kin, or proximity of dwelling, or from any other cause have the greatest hold upon your sympathies and affections—there is your Sanctuary. It is the design of this book to inspire you with love for that place, as one among the dearest and most sacred spots on earth; to persuade you to guard it from any use that may profane it with degrading associations; to set before you the obligation and advantage of early and regular attendance upon its ordinances of worship and instruction; and to urge you to sustain its services with such devoutness and attention as are necessary in order to their leaving any salutary or abiding impressions on your soul.

In absolute importance, this subject may not bear comparison with some others that might be named, for Rever-

ence for the Sanctuary is not directly the one thing needful to man's well-being here, or to his happiness hereafter ; but its relative importance can scarcely be exaggerated. As leading to something higher and far more valuable than itself ; and, as indicating, by the manner in which it is regarded, our present character and probable destiny, it well deserves our most serious attention. The mountain passes, which afford the readiest access to a populous and fertile land, may be worthless enough for all they are capable of affording to the support of man or beast ; but, to the peaceful inhabitants, or to the general of an invading host, they are worth all that they command ; and a broken branch drifted out upon the ocean, or a little bird, falling wearied with its flight upon the deck of a ship that has been driven from her track, may indicate to the anxious mariner where he is, and whither he should steer for the desired haven.

This subject has so much of importance at all times ; but it has the more now that the indolent and effeminate habits of these days of ours, call for special rebuke. Christian England, half a century, or a century ago, if many of her sons were, as now, in heathen ignorance of the gospel, did not exhibit the strange anomaly of christian people slighting the ordinances of God's house. Men and women in those days walked miles, and in all weathers too, to listen to the same gospel which now has no attraction, unless it be set forth with an eloquence which few men possess, or be made as sparkling as an essay full of epigrams, or as melo-dramatic as a romance. Nor is it difficult to see the cause of their constancy. They went to the house of God not to pass an hour with a favourite preacher, but to fulfil a duty—they went to worship God. So for the most part they felt delight in the Sanctuary for its own sake, they were glad when the day returned that they could say one to another, " Come let us go into the house of the Lord ;" and when delight they had none, and to go to the house of God was a trouble to the flesh, then they had a healthy conscience to urge the claims of