

"THE THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF"

Part 1.

The writings of our brother Percy W. Heward are well-known and have been a blessing to many.

But for many years (from 1911 onwards) the notes of some of his addresses were available, under the title of "Typewritten Notes". These 220 addresses were loaned for a fortnight, on request. Most of them still exist, but some in poor condition.

It has been suggested to me more than once that this ministry from the past, would be a source of help now, and with this I agree, but the amount of work involved in publishing them, has always made me feel that the task was impossible.

However, just lately I have looked again at these parcels of 'typed addresses, and thought what a pity it is that they should be lying there, collecting dust and doing no good.

I have therefore, sorted the titles into subjects, and now offer, to begin with, five of our brother's addresses concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. Whether the Lord will enable to do more later I do not know.

But may these words spoken so many years ago (some indeed before I was born), by a brother whom the Lord has used among us to our great spiritual profit, be used again to the blessing of another generation, and be to God's glory.

S.C.Bown.

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THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE LORD JESUS

Outline:-

1. Parallels and contrasts with that of Aaron.
2. "After the order of Melchisedec"
3. The heavenly sanctuary.
4. Human counterfeits.
5. Believers and their priestly position.

6. Have I an Advocate with the Father? A personal question.

I want, dear friends to talk tonight about the Lord Jesus Christ as a Priest. We often think about Him as God, We often think about Him as Man; that wonderful Man Who always did what was right, Who said what was right, Who thought what was right, and never did or said, or thought, one thing that was wrong. We often think of the Lord Jesus Christ as the One Who died, Who died for sinners that He might take away their sins, that He might bear their sins in His own body on the tree. We often think of the Lord Jesus Christ as the One Who is our Lord, if we are those who have come to Him, the One Who is our Lord, and Who lives, always lives, lives for ever, and with Whom His people will be for ever, for He is soon coming back to take His people unto Himself. We love to think of the Coming back of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He Who came to die will come back, and His people will be caught up in the clouds to meet Him in the air, and so will they be ever with the Lord. Then shall He come down on to this earth where men killed Him, and He will reign over men, - a King, and more than A king, - THE King, - the King Who will reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. We like to think of the Lord Jesus Christ in a number of ways; we like to think of our Lord Jesus Christ and a number of His Names. All His Names tell what He is, but He is beyond what we know of all His Names, He is such a wonderful Saviour, and it is our hearts' longing that not only may we talk about Him, but that like those on the road to Emmaus hundreds of years ago, we may feel while talking of Him that in some way He Himself draws near and talks with us. But this evening I want to speak about one special Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and one special work, a great work, a work which has a number of other works inside it, yet one special Name, and one special work. The Name is the Name Priest; the work is what one may call Priesthood, that is to say, doing the work of a Priest.

Our first point reminds us that there was a priest, Aaron. You remember how that when God brought up Israel out from Egypt and brought them into the wilderness, He said, Let them make Me a Holy Place, that I may live among them. You remember how that God asked for their gold and for their silver and their other things to be brought together that the tent, or tabernacle as it was called, might be built; And you remember at the same time that God said Aaron, Moses' brother was to be the priest, the one to go into that tent, and tabernacle, and to see to the killing of the sacrifices which died in the place of the sinners. Thus Aaron and his sons were made the priests. It is wonderful to see

God's love, for Aaron was the one who made the golden calf, yet God made Aaron His priest. Again, in Aaron's family Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire unto the Lord which He had not told them. They died, but there was Eleazar and Ithamar the two other sons of Aaron's family and so Aaron's two sons went on with his work afterwards, and then their sons went on with the same work afterwards. The family of Aaron was a family of priests. The whole of the larger family, or tribe, of Levi was specially picked out to do many things for God, but beyond all, the family of Aaron was the family to draw near to God, as a priestly family. Now in what way was the Lord Jesus Christ like Aaron the priest? And in what way was He not like Aaron the priest? First, in what way was the Lord Jesus Christ like Aaron? Rather, may we not say, In what ways, for in many ways Christ was a priest like Aaron! Aaron was one whom God picked out to be His priest, and the Lord Jesus is called the picked out One, the Chosen One, the Elect One. Aaron did not lift himself up to make himself a priest, and the Lord Jesus Christ was the One Who came down, Who made Himself low, so we cannot say He lifted Himself up, for He was the Humble One. But not only so, Aaron was the ONE High priest, and Christ is the One alone. Aaron, again, was the one on whom the oil was put, to anoint him, and the Lord Jesus Christ is the One Who is marked out not merely with oil, but by the work of the Holy Spirit, marked out to be that Great Only Priest, the Only One Who can go near unto God the Father, for it is only in Him that anyone else can dare to go near unto a Holy God. Again, Aaron was the high priest who went into the presence of God with the blood of that perfect animal which had died as a sacrifice. The Lord Jesus went into the presence of God with blood, not the blood of an animal, but His Own Blood, Which He had in love to poor lost sinners poured out, and thus He made a way, that way which is said to be a newly slain way, into the presence of God. A way by His blood into the Holiest of all, as Scripture puts it in the letter to the Hebrew Christians. Mark the words, "Having boldness to go into the way in of the Holiest, in the blood of Jesus". Yes, Christ like Aaron was a Priest Who had a sacrifice that died. And again, Aaron brought blessings to his family; and Christ - Oh what blessings He has brought to His family! Not that His family belong to Him merely in the same way as Aaron's sons belonged to him. They belong in a far, far closer way, for Aaron's sons were his by ordinary birth, but Christ's people are His by heavenly birth. They are so close unto Him they are said to be in Him, counted with Him, joined to Him, and never to be taken away from Him. If Eleazar was blessed because of Aaron, much more are Christ's people blessed because of Him, as Hebrews 2 beautifully

puts it, where the Lord Jesus Himself speaks, "Behold I and the children which God hath given Me". But if the Lord Jesus Christ was a Priest like Aaron in these ways, there are many ways in which He was not like Aaron, because He was ever so much greater than Aaron. Shall we think of a few contrasts? Ah, you say, I know one. He was God, and Aaron was a man. That is quite true, and, dear friends, if we are to think of the ways in which Christ was different from Aaron we shall find many things. But I want to-night rather to speak of the ways in which Christ AS A PRIEST was not like Aaron. The first point is that which we have been shown in Hebrews 7. You remember the words, the Holy Spirit says in verse 21, that those priests were made without an oath. God is pleased more than once to speak of His oath, that is to say not only His firm word, but also His firm word made manifest as doubly sure. Now as to Aaron we are not told there was an oath; but as to Melchisedec, another priest, we are told of an oath, and Christ is said to be like him. The word 'oath' comes to show how much more sure Christ's priesthood is than Aaron's. Again, Hebrews 7 tells us that those priests were not able to continue because they died. We read how Aaron went up a mountain and he died. We are told how Eleazar the son of Aaron died and was buried in a hill that belonged to Phinehas his son. Again we go on, and we find a high priest Eli, - he fell over to the ground and he died. All the priests of Aaron's family died. Not so Christ, He ever lives. He is a Priest Who is everlasting. These priests were not able to keep on their work, but He lives to keep on His work. Never will He be constrained to give it up, never will He be tired of the work that He took in hand. He ever lives. But perhaps someone will say, "What do you mean, Christ does not die? Why the great thing about which we hear is that He did die, and if He had not died He would not have been a Priest, for there would have been no sacrifice"? Let me make it clear that Christ AS A PRIEST He did not die. Christ was fulfilling more than one office at once. He was God, yet He was Man. He was Sacrifice, yet He was Priest. As Priest He did not die, for we read that HE OFFERED Himself without spot to God. As Sacrifice He died, as Priest He did not die. Do not misunderstand me. The Lord Jesus the glorious perfect ONE died, really died, died in the place of sinners for without the pouring out of blood there is no forgiveness of sins, but as to His priestly work there was no death. We do not look upon Him as a Priest when lying in the grave, I mean when His body was lying in the grave. The special thought there brought out is that He had died for sinners. We look upon Him as manifestly a Priest when He laid down His life, and yet more manifestly when He went up into heaven. He was the Same Lord Jesus when He walked this earth, and when He died and when He rose, but at one time one part of

His work is brought out and at another time another part of His work is more brought in front of us. And perhaps I shall make it clear if I put it a little differently and so instead of putting it that He as a Priest did not die, His priesthood did not die. You will follow what I mean by the words. "He as a Priest did not die". He died, but not as a Priest. Not showing forth His priesthood by dying, nor did His priesthood die; in fact His very dying led on to showing that Priesthood more than ever before, for then He was able to take into heaven itself that wonderful finished work, and before the throne, yes, and on the throne of God to be the One Whose work was done and so He could sit down as a Priest Who ever liveth to pray for those for whom He died. This One continueth ever. He goes on always. Aaron passes away, and Eleazar too, Christ goes on, He is better than Aaron. Further Aaron's priesthood counts from the book of Exodus; the priesthood of Melchisedec is in the book of Genesis. Genesis is before Exodus; Abraham was before Moses. The priest who came to Abraham was Melchisedec, and Christ is said to be a Priest like Melchisedec, - then He is counted before Abraham, and thus is greater than Aaron once more. May we not add, God has shown us in Hebrews 7, that Aaron was one who came from the family of Abraham. Abraham therefore can be said to have all his family counted with him, and that as he pays the tithes to Melchisedec he really says that the priesthood of Melchisedec is greater, and that Melchisedec is greater than Aaron, who was only one of Abraham's own family! The Lord Jesus belongs to the Melchisedec priesthood, as Psalm 110 puts it, "Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec".

Again, Aaron was a priest on earth, the Lord Jesus is still a Priest in heaven, and heaven is above earth. He is greater than Aaron. Yet more, Aaron always had Moses with him, and Moses was greater than Aaron. After Moses died, and Aaron died, there were two together, Joshua and Eleazar. Eleazar was not left alone, he had someone with him who was as great as himself. But the Lord Jesus Christ stands alone. I might express it this way, Joshua was a kind of king to Israel, I say 'a kind of king' for he was not a king, inasmuch as God did not want Israel then to have a king since He Himself was their King; but Joshua looked after the ruling of the people, and looked after the people going into the land, so that Joshua took the place of a king as far as God meant anybody to take it. Now Aaron and Eleazar were not kings even in that sense. But Melchisedec was. Melchisedec was a king, as well as a priest, and Christ is said to be a Priest not like Aaron but like to Melchisedec, a King-priest. Ah.

He is King more than Moses, a King more than Joshua, a King more than all others, for is He not called King of Kings, and Lord of Lords? Yet, further, Aaron's priesthood never took away sin, for in the offerings the priest stood daily offering oftentimes the SAME sacrifices which could never take away sins, but THIS ONE when He had made one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God. There were no seats in Moses' tabernacle, the priests always stood, their work was never done, but Christ having done His work went up into heaven, and He sat down to show His work was done, and sin was taken away; that the sin was blotted out. He had made one sacrifice for sins for ever, and now a great number of people whom no man can number are able to say that their sins are gone, and gone for ever, because He took their sins in His own body on the tree, and was wounded because of those sins. So we see that in every way Christ is better than Aaron. As it says in the chapter we have just read (Hebrews 7), the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God. - Many other things could we mention. Aaron had to offer FOR himself because he was a sinner. Christ offered Himself, because He was not a sinner. Aaron made mistakes because of which he died earlier than he would have died, had he been faithful. Christ made no mistakes. Why, dear friends, we could go on speaking about the wonderful ways in which Christ is better than Aaron, better than Moses, better than everyone, - we could go on speaking of this till the end of our meeting, but I want to come to our second point where we have the words from Psalm 110, "after the order of Melchisedec".

The word "Melchisedec" means a king of righteousness. God is so wonderful, He knows everything and can do everything as He pleases. When Melchisedec was named Melchisedec, God had a lesson to teach. It was not just a 'chance' that Melchisedec was called by that name. God was giving a picture of the Lord Jesus, for the Lord Jesus is the real Melchi - King, Zedek - of righteousness, the real King of Righteousness. Furthermore, we are told that Melchisedec was a king of (JERU)SALEM, and that is the first mention of Jerusalem in the Bible, and the Lord Jesus Christ is the One of Whom we read in connection with the heavenly Jerusalem, and the earthly Jerusalem alike, and Jerusalem means 'peace'. Yes, He, Who is the King of Righteousness has made peace by the blood of His cross. "After the order of Melchisedec", these words stand out in Psalm 110. You do not read in Genesis of a priest before Melchisedec, or a priest after Melchisedec. You do not read of Melchisedec offering sacrifices. You read of Mel-

chisedec just coming forward as the high priest of the Most High God and blessing Abraham, coming forward at the right time, and bringing Abraham those things which spoke of a sacrifice done. So the Lord Jesus, after the order of Melchisedec, is the precious Priest Who comes forward at the right time, and gives His people the blessings because of a sacrifice done. Melchisedec is not a priest to the king of Sodom, he is a priest to Abraham, and the Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ is for His people, those who are brought near unto Him, after whom He looks with such wonderful care.

This leads us on to think of the heavenly Holy Place or Sanotuary. You remember how when God told Moses to make a tabernacle He said, "See that thou dost make it after (or according to) the pattern (or picture) which was shown to thee in the mount". So there was a PICTURE, or type, shown Moses in the mount. A picture of what? Of what Moses was to make? Yes, but more. A picture of something real in heaven. So we have a real tabernacle in heaven; then the picture on the mount; then the tabernacle Moses made on earth. Three things. Do not think it strange to speak of a heavenly tabernacle. Do we not read in the last Book of Scripture of that which shows there is a heavenly tabernacle? Does not the letter to the Hebrew Christians make it clear that there is a heavenly Holiest of all, a heavenly Tabernacle. Now if that be so, if the earthly was a picture of the heavenly, in what way was it a picture? Let us think of the earthly, first of all. A piece of ground is marked off from that which surrounds, a piece of ground not so very long, simply 100 cubits long, a cubit being about 18-21 inches. This piece of land is half as wide, - that is the court round about the Tabernacle. In the middle of it there are simply three things. First of all there is the tent, a building about 18 feet high, and three times as long. Apart from that there is one large box about 5 feet high, and about 8 feet long, and 8 feet broad, near the gate. In between that large box, with its brass or copper glory, and the tent there is simply the 'laver' as it is called, the place from which the priests wash when they go into God's tent. Thus we find a court, with the altar, the laver and the tent. What is there in heaven to do with those? Let us think, where was the sacrifice offered? In the tent? NEVER! It was always offered near the door of the court on that square covered with the copper, the altar, called the altar of burnt offering. But where did the Lord Jesus die? On earth, - then on earth is the court of the tabernacle. The court, I mean, of the heavenly tabernacle. For all these things were "pictures" of something else. I believe that the altar which stood the same length and the same

breadth, and would not fall over, was a picture of the perfect life of the Lord Jesus; for on top the sacrifice was put, and on top of Christ's life there was His death to finish it. It was from that altar of burnt offering that the smoke went up to God, to show God received the sacrifice. And so we have a picture of the life and death of the Lord Jesus. The laver too was in the court. There was no laver in the tabernacle. The laver speaks of washing, because there is dirt. No laver is needed in the tabernacle, there is no dirt within. Now I think we can see at once that the court is a picture of earth. The tent which is inside that courtyard is a picture of heaven. There is no sacrifice in heaven. There is no need of washing in heaven. There is cleanness within. The altar is a picture of the Lord Jesus dying. The laver is a picture of God's Truth, and shows God's people on earth feeling their need of washing. The tabernacle is a picture of that which is heavenly, and it has two rooms. Into one room no one must go except the High Priest, and he only once a year. Of what can that be a picture in heaven? For all these things that Moses made were pictures of much with respect to the heavenly tabernacle. The inner room with the throne in it, was surely a picture of God's throne in heaven. Only one could go there, the high priest. Thus we have a picture of the Lord Jesus going into the presence of God as the One Who had done the work that He came to do, and Who went back again to the glory where God was. But what about that first room? It was the room into which the priests went every day. The room where there was food, the room where there was the lampstand, the room where there was the incense going up before God, the incense being a picture of prayer. Surely here we have God's people, for they are not an earthly people, but a heavenly people! Are they not sitting in heavenly places in Christ, and are not their minds to be on things above? Here is God's people's room, and for those who are God's people, and who have died a picture of paradise, - God's garden, - where they quietly rest until the Lord Jesus Christ shall come back again. The Lord Jesus Christ, we know died upon earth, yet He went up into heaven. If you had been asked about Aaron's priesthood in the court, and one had said Aaron was the high priest and therefore went into the tabernacle, what would you have replied? He was a priest there but his special priestly work, presenting to God, was inside the Holiest of all. So with the Lord Jesus. He was not one of Aaron's priests on earth, for He belonged to the family of Judah, from which tribe no man gave any attendance at the altar. But though He was not one of Aaron's priests on earth, He offered Himself without spot to God. He died, not only as the Sacrifice, but as the One Who gave Himself up, and He

was, therefore, the priest. So we can understand the words of Hebrews 8.4. "If He were on earth He would not be a Priest seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law, who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things". There were earthly priests on earth when God's servant wrote this letter, and the apostle says, If Christ were on earth He could not, ordinarily, go into the temple, men would not let Him in, not into the room where the priests went. But where Scripture says, "If He were on earth He would not be a Priest", it does not say that when He was on earth He was not a Priest of a heavenly tabernacle. He was. He was the Priest of the heavenly tabernacle, Who on earth offered up gifts and made THE sacrifice to God in the 'court'. For we read in Hebrews 5 that He offered up something while on earth, then He was a Priest on earth, but not a Priest of Aaron's line, nor of Aaron's tabernacle or temple. He was a Priest Who offered up on earth prayers, which are pictured by the altar of incense, for He was with His Father and could speak of Himself as, the Son of man Who is in heaven, while on earth. Through His life, He offered up gifts, and when He died He offered up Himself, and then went into heaven, raised up from the dead, to show that His work was done, and His blood was welcome in heaven, the Great Sacrifice Who had died for sinners, Who had gladly given up Himself for those who were lost.

Our next point reminds us that people have made up their own imitations of the Priesthood of the Lord Jesus. In the days of Moses there were Korah, Dathan and Abiram, three men who set themselves against God, and Korah wanted to go to God his own way. He virtually said he could do without Aaron, he dared to go himself. Now at the present time there are a number of people like Korah, and the strange part about it is that those who are like Korah often say that other people are like Korah. Perhaps some of you have come across those who have said they are priests, and they have implied that if anyone has not received power from them, or from others like them, there is a likeness to Korah, but Korah's work was that he wanted to take the position of the ONE high priest, and every man who calls himself a priest on earth is carrying out in some measure the sin of Korah by attempting to take away the Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ! We read in Hebrews 7 that the Lord Jesus has a Priesthood which is not passed ON TO ANOTHER. It is a priesthood He has Himself; He offered ONE Sacrifice, and no man can offer sacrifices for sins. Christ stands alone, and if anyone tries to come in between the sinner and the Saviour, that one is guilty of the sin of Korah. It is an awful sin to dare to go to God one's own way. It is an awful sin to stop those who

would go to God God's own way. It is an awful sin to try and alter God's own way to Himself by the precious blood and Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. So we are sadly reminded that man always had his wicked imitations.

But you say, how about the passage that speaks of God's people as a royal priesthood. Yes, dear friends, we praise God for that verse. 1 Peter 2 puts it clearly, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation", and again Revelation 1 says God's people have been made a kingdom of priests. But there^{is} speaking of those who are ALL priests, not simply of one class of men, saints are ALL priests in several ways. Let us think of them. They are all priests for they can all come near to God. They are all priests. (I mean all who are born again) for they are of the High Priest's family, - "Behold I and the children whom God hath given Me". They are all priests because in the words of Scripture they offer up SPIRITUAL sacrifices, and that 'spiritual' must not have the first three letters taken off. They offer up SPIRITUAL sacrifices which are welcome to God by Jesus Christ. That very term "spiritual sacrifices" shows they do not bring the offerings which are not spiritual, but they bring the fruit of their lips, the calves of their lips, as it is beautifully written in Hosea 14. All God's people are priests in this sense, not that they would take Christ's position, but because they are made His people and therefore the love that God has to Christ, He has to them, and they can come near and they are always welcome; for God will not love His beloved Son and then turn away from those who are in His beloved Son. Having loved He keeps on loving them with a love that cannot be counted up, a love that will not change, a love that draws them unto Himself, that they can come boldly unto the Throne of grace, for they are royal priests and there they obtain mercy, and there they find grace to help in time of need.

But, oh, dear friends, I want in closing, to ask a question, and I do want that each one should ask himself or herself this question; The question is on the paper in front of us, but I want it to be in the minds that are inside us, - "Have I an Advocate with the Father?" The word 'Advocate' means 'one called to'. Have I One Who has gone into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for me? I know, surely you know, that we are all sinners. If I have no one at God's right hand Who has met my sins, then I must feel afraid of God. If there is no one Who is up there in the glory to plead for me, I do not know how I can go on another day, for God Who is so great and so holy

will one day drive me away from His presence for ever, - unless I have Some One up there Who in God's law-court has answered for me, and answers still. If He loses His position I must lose mine, but if I have an Advocate with the Father, Who ever lives to plead for me because He took my punishment; if I have this, God will not bring up my sins again, which He has drowned in the depths of the sea. God will not bring back upon me the sins that are blotted out, or give me back the debt that is cancelled. If Christ has taken my place, and if He so lives to plead for me, then I can be at rest, I can be at peace, I know that my Redeemer liveth. There is not simply a chance about it, it is not only a may-be, I am SURE that I have passed out of death into life, and that God having loved will keep on loving, for His love is everlasting, and no one can stay His hand, or change His will. Beloved friends, I ask you in God's Name, not simply if you know something about the letter to the Hebrews, not simply if you agree with what has been said about the Lord Jesus being a Priest Who offered a perfect sacrifice, but I ask you, did He offer that for you, and is He now at the right hand of God for you? Perhaps you say, How can I tell? If you have been brought to feel your sins, if you have been brought to the deep trouble over sin that makes one at the end of oneself, if you have been brought to rest upon Him as Saviour, Who took YOUR place, then you may KNOW that He welcomed you, as much, yea more than you welcomed Him. When a sinner comes to the Saviour with longing desires, there are longing desires greater than his, - the Saviour's desires to the sinner. God's wonderful grace is always more reaching out than the sinner's reaching out toward God's grace. Indeed if we have gone to God because we have felt our need of Him, if we have, as it were, leaped forward toward Him, it was because we were brought to have that within us, by His grace, which His magnet power drew to Himself. The iron filings leap toward the magnet, it is not their leaping, and yet it is their leaping, but there is a power that cannot be seen. The leaping can be seen, but the power that draws cannot be seen, but it is the cause of the leaping, and if you and I are brought to feel our sins and our need of the Lord, it is His drawing grace, and He does not draw to send away again. He does not take in hand to drop out of His hand, He does not save to lose, He has paid too great a cost, and His love is too real to change that which is His wonderful everlasting plan. If you have been brought to feel yours sins against a Holy God, and if you see that punishment for thousands of years would be too good for you, that you deserved to be punished for ever, if you have been brought to such a view of self, and then as a poor helpless sinner just to rest upon the Lord Jesus, then you have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous.

Not that you will want to go on sinning, for all things in your life now are of God Who brought you from one place to another, that you might belong to Him through Jesus Christ, Who has drawn you with His love, and given you a new life that you might have new wishes. But, Oh, dear friends, it is blessed as one goes through the world with its trials and with its difficulties, and as one feels one's own failures, it is blessed to say, not only was Christ a Priest for me in the past, but He is a Priest for me in the glory now. He ever lives to plead for those for whom He died, as the words of Isaiah 53 beautifully put it with a certain parallel, "He bare the sin of many, AND made intercession(a meeting place) for the transgressors". His wonderful finished work has led to a work that is going on, and because of that work that is going on, we, if believing in the Lord Jesus shall see Him, and be glorified with Him. The things of God are blessed indeed. All the things of earth are as nothing to be compared with them. May we, if saved by the Lord Jesus, live rejoicing in His fear, rejoicing in Him, but if we cannot say He is ours, oh that we may be troubled till at our wit's end, we are brought to rest on Him.

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