

Tabernacle Types and Shadows

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Foreword

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Foreword

The studies on the Tabernacle contained in the following pages were first given as a series of addresses in Troost Avenue Gospel Hall, Kansas City, Mo., early in the year 1946. These studies were illustrated by a large model and appreciated by the many who attended the meetings. The first chapter was an introductory address given over Radio station KCKN of Kansas City, Kansas. The studies are now sent forth in book form with the hope that they may be of some help to the Lord's people who were unable to attend the meetings. We believe that young believers will find them interesting and instructive, and that those who endeavor to teach those who are young in the faith will also find them useful. May our glorious Lord be pleased to add His own blessing to this humble work.

The Publishers

Tabernacle Types and Shadows

“And the Word was made flesh and dwelt (Gr. Tabernacled) among us, (and we beheld his glory)” Jno. 1:14 The most wonderful structure ever erected by man on this earth was not the Taj Mahal of India that is sometimes called a dream in white marble; nor was it the Temple of Diana in Ephesus called one of the seven wonders of the world because of its gigantic pillars; neither was it St. Peter’s at Rome with its magnificent dome; not even the Temple Solomon built at Jerusalem which was entirely covered with gold, but the Tabernacle which Moses built in the wilderness) when the children of Israel were out of Egypt and were on their way to the Land of Promise. The wonder of this building is judged by the place the God of Heaven gives it and its teaching in His Word. God is the Architect of the heavens the glory of which is beyond man’s highest conception, but He tells us much more of the Tabernacle which He calls “the pattern of things in the heavens” than He does of the stars which are the glory of the universe.

To look at it from the outside the Tabernacle had neither form nor comeliness; it was just a heap covered with badgers’ skins. There was nothing whatever to make that structure highly esteemed of men. There was no architecture no coloring, no adornment, not even a single window to let in the light of the sun. Who could have conceived that that shapeless tent was God’s ordained and erected meeting place between Himself and His people, and that it contained the most precious treasures this world had ever seen? But so it was; the

glory was all on the inside. Like the New Jerusalem that building had no need of the sun nor of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of the Lord did lighten it and the Lamb was the Light thereof.

What was the peculiar glory of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness? In the first place every detail of the structure was given to Moses by God Himself. How many curtains and their color and size; how many loops and how many cords and how they were fastened together, all was dictated to Moses and all is written in the Scriptures. The number of upright boards standing in silver sockets with the number of bars holding them together is also given. God did not even leave the selection of the pegs to Moses. The materials used in the making of the curtains and how they were to be embroidered with cherubims and wreathen work was told in detail. There was not the slightest detail of material or construction left to the choice of Moses. Then the furniture of the holy and of the most holy places was described in the minutest way possible. The candlestick had seven branches constructed with described adornments and was of pure gold all beaten out of one solid talent of the precious metal. This was characteristic throughout, every single part was the subject of God's most particular commandment how it should be made and who should make it. This then is the first remarkable fact of the Tabernacle: it was God's building; He designed it, He described it; He told by whom and how it should be put together, and the structure was for Himself.

Another great and most important wonder of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness was this: it was God's great shadow lesson of Christ. The whole Tent and every

part of it revealed precious things of the Person and work of Christ. The Old Testament abounds with types of the Lord Jesus and of His work for us both on earth and in heaven. The word “tabernacle” is used of our Lord in His life in John’s Gospel, chapter one and verse fourteen. This one reference reveals what is found to be true everywhere that the Tabernacle Moses made was a type of our Lord, without form or comeliness among men, but filled with the glory of God, His honored dwelling place on earth. Look at that “Carpenter of Nazareth,” that “Stranger of Galilee”: how He was cradled in a manger at His birth; how He lived unnoticed and unknown in a village without a reputation for thirty years; how He was “despised and rejected of men” because He did not cater to the world in any of its ways of wisdom or power and yet remember that He was divinely acknowledged as God’s beloved Son in whom He was well pleased: then look at the tabernacle in the wilderness with its common exterior and hidden glory and remember that God said to Moses, “There will I meet with thee” (Ex. 25:22), and see how perfectly they fit each other as the shadow and the substance.

The third peculiar glory of the Tabernacle is this: it shewed in type the only way of approach to God; the only ground upon which a guilty sinner could be accepted by God. The mercy seat in the most holy place of the Tabernacle was sprinkled with the blood of a sin offering before the Lord. All the way in to that dwelling place of God was sprinkled with blood. This seemed to repeat again and again, “Without shedding of blood (there) is no remission” (Heb. 9:22). Here are the inspired words of the epistle to the Hebrews in the New Testament speaking of this fact: “Moreover he (Moses)

sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood (there) is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the pattern of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others: for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time with-sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:21-28).

The Court And The Gate

Exodus 27:9-17

“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.” (John 14:6).

Where God And Men Begin

Entering the Tabernacle from the outside, the very last object to be reached would be the ark which was located in the most holy place. This piece of furniture was the first that God describes and commands to be made; it was evidently the most important. But before any of the holy articles of the inside were seen, the Israelite approaching the tabernacle would be confronted with the linen curtains of the court that completely surrounded the Tent except for the door at the east end. This was first with man, but the ark was first with God. God begins with that which was His perfect provision for man's deepest need. It is not my purpose here to give what seems to me to be the teaching of the ark and its construction in detail, but merely to point out its place in the commandment of God to Moses when the instructions for the building of the tabernacle were given. The ark has the first and the foremost place. That ark has been called “a life-sized portrait of Christ.” The whole building and every part was typical of Christ in some way or other, but the ark speaks so plainly of our Saviour and Advocate that its message cannot be mistaken. The Cloud of God's presence that covered the whole camp by night and by day, like a spreading umbrella had its central resting place on the lid of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holiest of all. Between the

cherubims the cloud rested. On the mercy seat where the blood was sprinkled, it had its abiding place. Thus the ark was the center and the blood stained mercy seat that covered it was the foundation of Israel's hope and salvation. Later, we hope to show in what marvelous ways the details of this ark and its ministries foreshadow our Lord and His work;

The Curtains Of The Court

In considering the Tabernacle, I want to begin where every man has to begin who would see the Kingdom of God; with the curtains of the court and with what they represent. That white linen fence completely hid the view of the dwelling place of God from man on the outside. It was five cubits or eight and a half feet high. This was too high for a man to see over. There was only one place where a view or an entrance could be obtained and that was at the door at the east end. The linen curtain every place else seemed to drive the enquirer to the door. There only had God provided an opening to enter and to see the glory of the interior.

The pure linen curtain hiding the building from the eyes of all seemed to speak the same language that our Lord used to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"; or the striking message of the Shepherd and the sheep, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 3:3; 10:9).

The curtains of the court of the Tabernacle were made of "fine twined linen." White usually represents holiness or righteousness (Rev. 19:8). Linen in the garments of the High Priest had the same significance (Lev. 16:4). The type thus would picture the fact that righteousness prohibited the sinner, who was too short, to see the

glorious dwelling place of God unless he came to the door where God had provided a way.

No Man Able To Keep The Law

This is the teaching of the Word of God everywhere. A man by taking thought could not add one cubit to his stature physically, neither by thoughts nor deeds could he add one cubit to its spiritual nature. No man is tall enough to see over; "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). That fence, too high for men and women, is like the law itself whose demands were beyond the obedience of any of the sons of Adam. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). "What things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19).

The Numbers Used

Let me call attention to the numbers used in the measuring and numbering of the curtains, pillars, door, and spaces of the court. They are all multiples of five. The numbers are five, ten, fifteen, twenty, fifty, sixty and a hundred. Numbers everywhere in the Tabernacle have their meaning. In the Numerical Bible Mr. Grant gives the meaning of the numeral five, as "The creature in relation to the almighty Creator"; or, "Five stands thus as the number of man, exercised and responsible under the government of God."

Five is stamped everywhere on the body of man. We have five senses; we have five fingers on each hand, and

five toes on each foot. By these five senses we have what the scientists call our “correspondence with environment.” All the experience of joy or sorrow of our entire lives is through those avenues to the soul. Our hands are the emblems of our work and activities, while our feet speak of our ways and wanderings. Thus the number five is stamped on all that makes up our lives in this world.

The court was five cubits high; it was too high for man to see over, for every man is ruined in every one of his senses; he has sinned and come short of the glory of God. Both hands and feet have been swift to shed blood (Rom. 3:15). Man has spoken with his feet and taught with his fingers (Prov. 6:13). God gave the true verdict when He said, “All flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth” (Gen. 6:12); and “Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5). So the five cubits high curtain fence surrounded God in His dwelling place, shutting out the entrance to, and even the seeing of the kingdom of God. Nicodemus was a respected Pharisee, a moral, religious, educated ruler of the Jews; but the Lord Jesus said even to him, “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again” (John 3:7). Without that new birth, Nicodemus could not see the kingdom of God. Morally, he was like King Saul, head and shoulders above the rest of the people, but he was not tall enough to see over the pure linen curtain; he, too, had sinned and came short of the kingdom of God.

The Gate

But for the entrance on the east end, there would have been no hope. Most idolators like those of Jerusalem

(Ezek. 8:16) worshiped toward the east. He who would enter the door and pass the altar into the presence of God must turn his back upon the sun. God's way of worship was ever opposed to man's way. The door of the Tabernacle was on the east end, where a man must turn his face in the opposite direction if he would enter where God could be known. This is a lesson difficult to learn, but absolutely necessary if you would know God. Is not my way as good as yours? we are often asked. Probably it is, but God's way is never the way of man; twice in one book we read, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death (Prov. 14:12; 16:25).

The Way Was A Lovely Way

There was something beautiful about the entrance to the court of the Tabernacle. "And for the gate of the court shall be an hanging of twenty cubits, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework; and their pillars shall be four, and their sockets four" (Exod. 27:16). The rest of the court was pure white unadorned linen, but the entrance was hung with curtains that were lovely to behold and marvelous in their working. The white linen all around spoke of God's righteousness, His holy prohibition, but the curtains at the gate, and the gate itself, spoke of Christ. The width of the entrance was over thirty feet. What an ample door that was! Thus you could say the door was altogether lovely and altogether sufficient. Is that not true of Christ? It is true of none other but Him. He was lovely in His person and lovely in His ways; He is able to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by Him (Song of Songs 5:16; Heb. 7:25). A door, without steps,

and through beautiful hanging curtains, seemed to say, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," or "I am the door,, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (Matt. 11:28; John 10:9). Had this door been narrow there might have been a thought of exclusion of some, but when it was so very wide it seemed to say, "Whosoever will, may come".

In the description of the gate, its curtains and its pillars, the number four is apparent. There are four colors in the curtains, four pillars to support them and four sockets beneath the pillars. The gate or door representing our Lord, the number four is suggestive. There are four Gospels in the opening of the New Testament, giving us four perfect yet distinct views of God's Christ.

Matthew's is the Royal Gospel, presenting Christ as King; the purple of the gate would suit this presentation. Mark is the Gospel of the obedient servant; the scarlet extracted from a worm suits this second evangelistic record of Christ. Luke writes the story of Christ as the perfect Man; this is the Gospel of the fine twined linen that was "curiously wrought" (Ps. 139:15). The fourth Gospel was written by John, who presents our Lord as the Son of God from Heaven; the Word made flesh. The heavenly blue suits the record of Christ in the Gospel of John.

There were four living creatures around the throne of God when John had his vision in Patmos (Rev. 4:6). These cherubim were always near the presence of the Lord when prophets of old saw "visions of God" (Ezek. 1:1). They seem to me to represent the way our God has manifested Himself always and only through Christ. It took four colors in the curtains of the gate to give the thought of varied loveliness and blended beauty, in the

Way into God's presence. The linen of the wall that kept men out, was white only, speaking of perfect righteousness; but the curtains that provided a way of access, were white, wrought with the colors that were the most strikingly beautiful. God's salvation through the Lord Jesus is not mercy at the expense of righteousness, nor grace without justice; it is justice as pure as that of the law, together with mercy and love, that are as beautiful as the brightness of the colors of the gate. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe ... Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:21-24). The grace and the righteousness are the fine linen of the gate of the Tabernacle. In Christ, and in salvation, "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace kissed each other" (Ps. 85:10). This is suggested in God's lovely way in the beauty of color and of working in the curtains of the gate. Through a spacious entrance, under the most lovely drapery, the poorest priest that ever was consecrated by precious blood, entered Jehovah's dwelling place.

The Pillars

The pillars that supported the curtain of the court and the pillars that supported the curtains of the gate, all stood upon sockets of brass (Exod. 27:17). Beneath these strong pillars, was not the silver of redemption, as in the case of the boards of the building, which boards seem to represent believers, but the fire resisting brass, that speaks so often of the judgment of God (Ezek. 1:7;

Daniel 10:6). The pillars of the gate on. sockets of brass, or bright copper, speak of Christ who went through the judgment for us, and who rose again, only brightened by the action of the fire. John, seeing Christ in resurrection, describes his feet as “like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace” (Rev. 1:15). Here is a most enduring foundation for all our hope in Him. It establishes a covenant of peace that can never be removed. In the fine linen was holiness manifested; in the brass of the pillars and sockets was intimated, judgment endured; while in the beauties of the lovely curtains, we see grace manifested and declared. This is God’s way into His tabernacle; Christ alone could possibly answer to it all. Man’s sinful shortness hinders him seeing in any other way; God’s declared righteousness, like the circling fence of linen, hinders any from entering, but by the door.

Man’s religion, whether it names the name of Christ, or hates it, is a vain attempt to climb up some other way. It is not by works of righteousness that we have done, but by His mercy that He saves us. Christ is not one Saviour among others, neither is His work one of the items of our salvation; Christ is the only Saviour, and He saves by Himself alone (Eph. 2:8-9; Acts 4:12).

The Silver Of The Pillars

It is said of all the pillars of the court that they were filleted with silver (Exod. 38:17). The same verse says that the chapters of the pillars were overlaid with silver. If the pillars were inside the curtain, as is probable, then all that could have been seen of those pillars would be the ornamental chapters above. This part of the pillars was overlaid with silver. The silver speaks of

redemption. Above the prohibiting linen fence appeared the artistic crown of the pillars of sparkling silver. This seemed to say, "There is redemption." That line of silver-capped pillars pointed the way all around the court to the door. This again is the Gospel in picture, giving no place to the thief who would climb up some other way, but leading the way to the door where there was room for any man to enter. The hooks of the pillars also were of silver. Any part of the pillars or fastenings that might be seen from the outside were of silver. This was God's invitation to the outsider to seek the way redemption had provided for those who would find God.

At Evening Time it Shall be Light

In a home near Goderich forty years ago, an old man lay dying. He lived alone with his wife, and had been taken suddenly ill. An only daughter was teaching school, a number of miles distant.

A saved man and his daughter, a girl about twelve years had come to see him. The sick man's daughter was the little girl's Sunday school teacher. She was saved and on her way to glory, but her father had been engrossed with the world and indifferent to his soul's need.

This day when he was so low, lying with his face to the wall and his eyes closed, little Sadie was in the room with his wife. Although she had professed to have been saved at some meetings not long previous, the girl knew little of God's way of salvation.

As the old man laid there with the appearance of quickly nearing eternity, his wife said to the child, "You stay here, dear, while I run and telegraph for our daughter." The girl was afraid but what could she do? She thought,

"What ever would I do if he should die and I alone here with him!" The wife had no sooner gone than he turned his head in the bed and looked at the child with wild staring eyes, "Sadie, my child," said he, "Come here." She dare not move. Again he requested, "Come here, my child." Then she drew a little closer. He fastened his eyes so intently upon her and said in a tone of deep concern, "My child, I have been a very wicked man, more wicked than you could ever imagine, no one knows how wicked I have been. Do you think God could forgive me and save my soul?"

The poor girl was totally perplexed, and did not know what to say. She thought, "If he really is as wicked as he says he is, God surely will not forgive him," but she was afraid to tell him so. He repeated his all absorbing question, "Do you really think God could forgive a wicked sinner like me?" She said, "I will run and get my father, he will tell you." "No my child," he said, "I do not want any man, do not bring any man here; you tell me child; would God save and pardon a great transgressor like me?" Having caught sight of the Bible on the table, she said, "I will read a chapter for you from the Bible." "Very well," said he.

Taking the Book, it fell open at the tenth of John. Slowly and distinctly she commenced to read, that he might take it in. When she came to verse seven, he was all attention: "Verily, verily I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep." When she came to verse nine, his question was answered, "I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." The scalding tears coursed down his cheeks, "That is enough my child," said he. God Himself had answered his question and given him "joy and peace in believing." He just lived a few hours after

and died in perfect peace, resting on the value of the precious blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin.

The Altar Of Burnt Offering

Exodus 27:1-8; 38:1-7.

“Christ...an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.” (Eph. 5:2).

The antitype of this altar and its continual sacrifice upon it, is Christ upon the cross. As the fire of that altar never went out (Lev. 6:13) so the memorial and worth of the work of Christ abides perpetually (Heb. 10:12-14).

The Place Of The Altar

The place of the altar of burnt-offering was at the door of the tabernacle (Lev. 1:3). The door and the altar were associated; you could not approach one without approaching the other. To enter the door you must at the same time pass the altar on which the sacrifice was being consumed. The truth of this is everywhere in the Scripture; there is no door for a sinner into blessing, no way for any man to God, but by way of the Cross of Calvary. Christ is not a Way into the Kingdom of God apart from His death. You cannot separate the door from the altar. You cannot have a way in, without passing that place where the blood of the burnt-offering was sprinkled and poured out. This is most important to see and to know. “Without the shedding of blood, [there] is no remission” (Heb. 9:22) and, without the shedding of blood, there is no access into the presence of God. This is the truth that is emphasized by the presence of the altar right at the door of the tabernacle. The door is not Christ in His life, but Christ in His death. The proud religionist who trusts his own works calls this way by Christ’s Cross the “religion of the shambles,” but there

is no other way for a sinner into the presence of God but by the death, the Cross, the blood of Christ.

The Form Of The Altar

The altar of burnt-offering was foursquare. The four sides were of equal length. It was five cubits toward the east, five toward the west, five cubits toward the north and five toward the south. The height was three cubits. Thus the numbers five, four and three were in the altar. Four is Christ's number in manifestation; the four Gospels perfectly told the story of what He was. Five is the number that stands for the manifestation of what I am through my senses and actions. Three is the number of Deity—of the triune God. The altar with four equal sides is five cubits everywhere, thus suggesting that it is adequate to meet my need. The four sides and four horns pointing in every direction of the compass seem to suggest that that altar is sufficient for all. The three cubits of the height remind us that the One who was manifested in the Gospels was God in the fullness of Deity. (See 1 Tim. 3:16; Col. 2:3-9, etc.).

The Material Of The Altar

The altar of burnt-offering is called the brazen altar, for it was all brass or copper on the outside. Under the brass was shittim wood. The brass made the shittim wood able to stand the fire. This shittim wood was the wood of the wilderness; it was probably the only wood available, but it was nevertheless the most suited in every way. There are different varieties of acacia or shittim wood; one tree yields gum, used as a medicine for healing; another yields a medicine good for a tonic; and another seems, when it grows, to have leaves

peculiarly sensitive to outward influences. The wood of all these acacia trees was noted for its durability; it typified incorruptibility. This makes the shittim wood a striking symbol of the humanity of our Lord. As a man He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil (Acts 10:38); He was wonderfully sensitive to all that He passed through (Heb. 4:15); but at the same time He was the only One in Whom was no sin (2 Cor. 5:21).

The brass or copper of the altar speaks of Christ as the one who could endure the fiery judgment of God (Rev. 1:15; Dan. 10:6). He endured the Cross, despising the shame (Heb. 12:1-3). Even the shittim wood of the wilderness stood all the fire of the altar because of the brass that covered it. Our Lord was crucified in weakness, for He felt every pain; He looked for some to take pity; He cried, "I thirst"; but He was mighty throughout. The brass of His intrinsic perfection made the love and faith of His human heart unswervingly strong, even in the hour of abandonment and death. This, then, is the altar upon which the fire was never to go out. From the coals of this altar, the incense was kindled to make such pleasant fragrance, when once a year the high priest went into the holiest of all to make reconciliation for sins (Lev. 16:12). On this altar a sacrifice was placed every morning and another every evening of every day of Israel's history (Exod. 29:38-42). Probably that in the morning was specially for God, while that in the evening, when man's work was done, was especially for him. Every sacrifice on that altar was a sweet savour unto the Lord. Burning flesh would not be a sweet savour to a man, but when God considered

what that represented, it was a sweet savour of Christ to Him.

The Altar And Christ

“Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar” (Ps. 118:27). This is what the four horns of the altar of burnt-offering were for. There the sacrifice was bound when it was slain. The bullock strong to labour; or the sheep silent and submissive to suffer; or the goat, noble as a leader; were bound with cords to that altar to die. They did not need to have bound our Lord in Gethsemane, for He went as it was ordained of Him. The cords that bound Him to the Cross were not iron nails, but bands no eye of man could see. Christ was the true Hebrew servant who could say, “I love...I will not go out free” (Exod. 21:5). “Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end” (John 13:1). This was the first cord that bound Him to the altar; His love.

Another cord was His obedience. He “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:8). It was to do God’s will that He came from heaven (Ps. 40:7-8). That will was His very meat: “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work” (John 4:34). God not only commanded the Lord Jesus to speak His words (John 12:49), and to do His works (John 5:36), but He actually commanded Him to lay down His life (John 10:18).

A third cord that held our Lord to His Cross was His zeal for God. “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon me” (Ps. 69:9). This zeal was manifested from the commencement of our Lord’s ministry when He drove the money-changers out of the temple the first time

(John 2:17). The great dishonor that was done to God by the sins of men and by their neglect of His honour and glory, fired His heart to take away the reproach brought by others. David felt something of the same, when he said, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the Living God?" (1 Sam. 17:26).

The fourth cord that held the Lord Jesus to Calvary was the joy that was set before Him. "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2). There was the joy of resurrection and ascension into the presence of God (Ps. 16:11). There was the joy of seeing the whole pleasure of the Lord prosper in His hand to the satisfying of His soul (Isa. 53:11). There was the joy before Him of presenting us faultless before the presence of God (Jude 24). There was before Him the joy of His return for His bride (1 Thess. 4:16). The joy expected over Israel's restoration (Zeph. 3:17, Isa. 62:5), and no doubt many other sources of gladness and joy.

It is remarkable that this command to bind the sacrifice with cords to the altar in Psalm 118 is together with the song of the children when the Lord rode into Jerusalem (Ps. 118:25-26) and our Lord's own words at the same time about the stone rejected becoming the head stone of the corner (Ps. 118:22). So the fact that the triumphal entry of Jesus our Lord into Jerusalem would end with the cross, rather than with the kingdom, was here in the Old Testament Scriptures.

The Altar And The Sinner

“And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13). This happened in the temple as the poor publican had his face toward the floor but also toward the altar of burnt-offering. He did not understand much, but he knew that he was a sinner and needed mercy and he vaguely knew that mercy only came through God’s altar and God’s appointed sacrifice. Our Lord testified that this man went down to his house justified. Mercy reached him, not through the altar in the temple and its smoking offering, but through that coming sacrifice of the cross so plainly shadowed there. Through the altar of Golgotha the guilty can find mercy. The vilest sinner in the world may enter that door by the altar of burnt offering.

The Altar And The Saint

“Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God” (Ps. 84:3).

David did not mean that these birds were actually making their nests in God’s altars; that was absolutely impossible. Only the altar of burnt offering was open to the heavens and there was no place in that structure where any bird could make a nest for itself, even if the place were utterly neglected. The meaning of the passage is just this: the sparrow, the most common and the most worthless of birds has found a house, a place that is everything to it; and the swallow, the most restless of birds, has a nest for herself where she may

lay her young and to which she loves to come again and again; and so I, David, who am worthless like the sparrow and restless like the swallow, have a place for myself where I love to come and where I love to make my home; even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.

What the sparrow's house was to that little common bird; and what the swallow's nest was to that restless bird of wandering wing, just that, thine altars are to me, my God. Each little bird feels that its nest belongs exclusively to itself, and so it does. The trembling heart finds there a resting place. How many times a day a birdie returns to its nest! Its whole life and interest is there. David felt that way about the altars of God. If only we felt so about the. One whom those altars typified, even our blessed Lord Jesus. If our restless days only had Christ for the center of their activity; if only our commonplace little worth found its joy in Him; what a rest and what an honor that would be!

Not Jewish Altars, but Christ

Some time ago a young Jewess was passing the door of a building where the Gospel was preached. She was attracted by the sound of singing and went into the porch to listen. The people were singing these lines:

Not all the blood of beasts,
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away one stain.

She was surprised to hear mention made of "Jewish altars" in such a place, so waited while the next verse

was read and sung, But Christ the heavenly Lamb, Took
all our sins away;

A sacrifice of nobler name

And richer blood than they.

These words made a very deep impression on her heart; here was hope of deliverance and peace of which she was so much in need, and about which she was burdened. For months she had tried every known or suggested way of relief, only to find there was no salvation in Judaism. She could not tear herself away from the entry of that building, but listened while all the verses were sung.

She returned home. But the truth of the words of that Gospel hymn had found its way into her heart and conscience; she trusted Christ as her own Saviour and was born of God. The light that had entered her soul could not be hidden; she confessed the Man of Calvary as her Saviour and Lord. The persecution and reproach that resulted was too much for her enfeebled health and hastened her end from that dread disease—consumption.

One day she sent a message to a Christian lady who, she thought, would sympathize with her. The lady came; she heard her story, and they talked together of the Lord Jesus. When the lady asked her what gave her soul rest, the dying Jewess replied in the words of the hymn which she had heard that memorable night in the entry of the Gospel building:

My soul looks back to see

The burden He did bear,

When hanging on the accursed tree,

And knows its guilt was there.

They still talked together, but her strength was fast giving way. She made a further effort to repeat another verse:

Believing we rejoice

To see the curse remove;

We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice,

And sing...

Her voice failed; in a few minutes she breathed her last. She had gone to complete in the presence of the Lord the song she had begun, to ...sing His dying love.

The Laver In The Tabernacle

(Exodus 30:17-21)

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Thou shalt make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: when they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord: so they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute forever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations.”

This laver for washing was one of the very first vessels of the tabernacle as one entered the linen enclosure for sacrifice was first of all, and then it was the laver. Both the altar and the laver are repeatedly said to be at the door of the tabernacle (Exod. 29:4; Lev. 17:6, etc.).

Thus to enter the building where God had His dwelling place, one had to enter the door by the altar and by the laver. This was arranged to teach us spiritual lessons. There is a door, an altar, and a laver, still in the way to God. The Lord Jesus teaching in Jerusalem, said to the Jews, “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved” (John 10:9). Then He said to His disciples, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). The door of the tabernacle, being a picture of Christ, the way to God, was made very wide. This seemed to say, there is room for all. But, by the door was, first, the altar and, then,

the laver. The altar said. You must come by way of the sacrifice for sins; you must trust the precious blood that alone cleanseth from all sin. Then the laver said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). In the New Testament that laver is called "the laver of regeneration" (Titus 3:5; margin).

The Water Was Most Important

The laver was about the only vessel of the tabernacle of which no measurements are given. What is important in the laver is the water it contained and the use to be made of that water. It meant death to the priest to enter the presence of God without first washing at the laver. At his consecration the priest was bathed by Moses at the laver (Lev. 8:6); then every time after that on entering the holy place the priest must wash his hands and his feet (Exod. 30:19-20). The bathing by another had to be done but once; the washing of his hands and feet must be done often. It is so also with us. There must first be the bath of regeneration as our Lord said to Nicodemus, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). This is a complete cleansing by the new birth. Peter speaks of this when he writes, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (1 Pet. 1:23). Paul also refers to this washing when he wrote, "Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:25-26). It is not by literal water that we are regenerated, but by washing of water by the Word. The Holy Spirit uses the Word to accomplish this

regeneration. The Apostle James writes in his epistle, "Of his own will begat He us with the word of truth" (Jas. 1:18). The regeneration of the idolatrous Thessalonians is written of in these words: "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost...ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from Heaven" (1 Thess. 1:5, 9-10). It was the Gospel that wrought this mighty and radical change in these people; the Gospel in the power of the Holy Ghost. These people, when they heard the Gospel and believed it, were cleansed from all their old ways; it was the bath of regeneration. As Moses bathed Aaron at the door of the tabernacle, so these heathen on believing the Gospel were cleansed all over. At the first great conference of the Church at Jerusalem, the Apostle Peter acknowledged that God had purified the hearts of the heathen by faith (Acts 15:9). This is the laver at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. It teaches the absolute necessity of the bath of regeneration on entering the Kingdom of God.

The New Birth A Necessity

It is to be regretted that thousands, like Nicodemus, are trying to serve God without having had this new birth at all. They are sincere souls like him; the pity is, no one has ever told them of this needed preparation and the great enemy of souls wants to keep them blinded. The foolish virgins of the parable wondered why their lamps were going out instead of continuing to burn; they said to the wise, "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out"; but the wise answered, "Go ye rather to those that sell and buy for yourselves." In their late exercise about

this matter the Bridegroom came and they were left outside. Their cry, "Lord, Lord, open to us," was too late (Matt. 25:8-10). The matter of obtaining the oil, like this matter of regeneration, should not be left till the door is shut. The water of the laver as well as the blood of the altar was of the utmost importance; both were at the door of the tabernacle and it was death to the priest who entered without attending to each.

Christ Is The Door

The truth of these types is easy to read. There is a door to be entered and that door is Christ. There are no difficult steps to climb, the door is on the level of the wilderness. The door is wide enough for you and it is hung with curtains of lovely colors that speak of the moral perfections of our Saviour. There is no excuse for mistaking it. Our Lord said plainly, "I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10:9). By that door stands the altar of the cross. The entrance to God's favor and to His home is a blood sprinkled way. "Without the shedding of blood, [there] is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). If you despise the blood, you will perish. The greatest sin of the catalogue is said to be counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing and doing despite to the Spirit of grace" (Heb. 10:29). It was death for the priest to pass the laver of the tabernacle without washing at it; and it will be judgment to you, should you attempt to enter heaven without being born again.

David prayed, "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Ps. 51:7). David knew there was a washing that could accomplish what no earthly washing could do. There is

no water or soap of earth that can make that which was filthy whiter than the snow. David said to God, "You wash me." Job lamented that if he washed himself in snow water, it would not make him permanently clean (Job 9:30-31). Only the washing by God Himself will prepare the soul of a man for communion with Him.

Material Of The Laver

The laver of the tabernacle was made of brass. This was the metal of the tabernacle that stood for the judgment of God upon sin. Brass was that metal best suited to stand the fire. Our Lord went through the fire of God's judgment to provide a laver of regeneration for us. Brass was in the altar of burnt-offering, and brass was the metal of the laver. The brass of the laver seemed to say, now that a sacrifice has been offered by Christ and accepted by God, there is a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness and water to wash the foulest clean.

This is the very soul of the Gospel. "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3); the price of redemption is already paid. "We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7). The God who provided the door, the altar, and the laver for Israel, has provided a Saviour for us, and He answers to all three. If you know your guilt and sin, come now to this Saviour who is so willing as well as mighty to save.

Continuous Washing

The priests were bathed by Moses at the laver on the day of their consecration (Exod. 29:4). This work was done but once. Our Lord referred to this when He said to Peter, "He that is washed (bathed) needeth not save

to wash his feet” (John 13:10). Although the bathing was but once, there was a continuous washing at the laver that has its counterpart with us also. The daily washing was done by the person himself; the bathing was done by another. (Compare Exod. 29:4 with Exod. 30:19-21).

The washing or bathing of regeneration (Tit. 3:5) was done for us by the spirit of God; the cleansing daily from the filthiness of the flesh and spirit, we do for ourselves (2 Cor. 7:1; Ps. 119:9).

When our Lord washed the feet of Peter, He said, “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me” (John 13:8). This was having part with the Lord in testimony and service. Peter had part in the Lord by the grace that had saved him; but if he would now serve with the Lord he needed his feet washed. This is the constant cleansing by the washing of water by the Word. Our Lord prayed to God for us, “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth” (John 17:17). The things of God are holy and to handle them we need continuous self-judgment. “If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged” (1 Cor. 11:31). The hand of God’s discipline will surely be upon us if we minister about holy things without washing at the laver.

Where The Brass For The Laver Was Obtained

“And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it brass, of the looking-glasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation” (Exod. 38:8). This was evidently a special kind of brass; it carried a high degree of polish and brightness. This brass that acted as a mirror for the maidens of Israel, was voluntarily surrendered to make the laver of cleansing, a mirror to the priest, who bent

over it, as he prepared to minister for them, in the presence of the Lord. Thus, instead of reflecting the beauty of the women to satisfy their vanity, this brass now reflected the brilliant stones of the priest's breastplate, where the names of the tribes of Israel were inscribed. As you look into a glass, if any earthly beauty be there, it is fairness that will soon pass away. "Fairest flowers soon decay; youth and beauty pass away." All that seems to be lovely in the countenances of youth is but grace and fashion that will perish. How great a change to repulsiveness a few years make in faces where malice and guile are cherished in the heart; even when those faces were once thought to be lovely! The story of beauty that is only told by a mirror is short lived. The women who gave their looking-glasses to Moses for the laver had a memorial of beauty, in the stones of the priest's breastplate, reflected in the bright brass of the laver, as those names shone in the sparkling colors of the precious stones on which they were written, when Aaron bent over the laver for them in the tabernacle! That memorial in the garments of the high priest was an abiding memorial. There the beauty did not fade. As long as Israel had a priest at all that priest wore the ephod and the breastplate, and there the names of the tribes were carried before the Lord continually. This beauty the brass of the laver reflected.

What Is Better?

Instead of looking in a glass now to see if youthful fairness be withering, it is better to look up to Him upon the throne who carries our names in a beauty that can never decay. Let us look also in that glass where the glory of the Lord is beheld, for that continuous looking

will make a practical and noticeable difference in our own countenances. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18).

The Bible is the only looking-glass that will make anybody beautiful. The use of God's laver is far more important for a merry heart and cheerful countenance than any invention of men. The Lord Jesus, wearing a crown of thorns, is more lovely to His people than any king arrayed like Solomon in all his glory. Lips of truth and eyes of sympathy are more beautiful than those whose only loveliness is created by art and man's device. "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us" (Ps. 90:17), then there will be that comeliness of David that made those who had observed him say, "The Lord is with him" (1 Sam. 16:18).

Baptism not the New Birth

A lady of Devonshire, who married a converted Par-see, or fire-worshiper, and was for some time serving Christ with him in Bombay, returned to England and fell asleep in Christ. During her illness she said she would like these words put on her tombstone, to tell of God's grace to her:

BORN AGAIN AT HIGH BARNET, 21st JUNE, 1863

"Happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away." To these words the clergyman in whose churchyard the tombstone was placed objected, but the husband, desirous of carrying out his wife's wish, appealed to the Consistory Court at Exeter. Before this court, the preacher produced a certificate to prove that the lady

was baptised at West Leigh on April 19, 1847, and his objection to the statement on the tombstone was that it contradicted the declaration that she was regenerated or, born again, in her baptism as an infant. The learned Chancellor of the diocese held that the words need not be so understood, giving the late Archbishop Sumner and the present Bishop of Exeter as his authority for concluding that there was no erroneous doctrine in them, and he therefore decided that the stone might be erected. It will appear to many that the lady's distinct statement that she was "born again" sixteen years after her baptism as an infant, is a clear expression of her conviction that she was not, "born from above" by that ceremony. She evidently meant that on "21st June, 1863," she was led to receive Christ as her own Saviour, and to believe in Him for the forgiveness of her sins, according to Acts 10:43, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." This she expressed in the words of the well-known hymn: "Happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away."

The Vail And The Hanging For The Door

(Exodus 26:31-33, 36-37)

“Curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth”.
(Pa. 139:15-16).

The Word translated “curiously wrought” in Psalm 139 is the very same word that is translated “needlework” and “embroiderer” in Exodus 35:35; 38:23, etc.

“Needlework” is literally “the work of an embroiderer.”

The beautiful curtains of the tabernacle with their “blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen” are all typical of the body and lowly humanity of our Lord. This is true of the lovely curtain of the gate of the court; it is true of the hanging for the door of the tent; it is beautifully true of the vail hiding the most holy place; it was also true of the curtains overhead in the holy place, the inner covering of the tabernacle. The “fine twined linen” was the work of the “weaver” (Exod. 35:35); the “needlework” was the work of the “embroiderer” (Exod. 38:23); the “cunning work” was the work of the “cunning workman” (Exod. 35:35). Bezaleel was all three, and so was Aholiab. Both these men are typical of the Holy Spirit of God, It is quite striking that when the Spirit of God would speak of the preparation of the body of our Lord in Psalm 139 He should use the very word exclusively selected to express the making of these beautifully woven and embroidered curtains of the tabernacle! It is very suggestive. It is a coincidental witness to the unity of the Scriptures. It confirms that “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev.

19:10). It illustrates this revelation “the Word was made flesh, and [‘tabernacled’] among us” (John 1:14).

We have already spoken of the curtains of the gate, and also of the covering curtains of the tabernacle, so now we consider the hanging of the door of the tent and the vail.

Comparisons And Differences

“The vail” and “the hanging for the tabernacle door” are mentioned consecutively (Exod. 36:35-38). They are associated undoubtedly because of the similar teaching of them both. The vail is distinctly said to be “His flesh” (Heb. 10:20). When the actual flesh of Christ was rent upon the cross, the typical vail was rent in the temple (Matt. 27:51). The priest in Israel once a year entered the most holy place around the vail, now the people of God enter the most holy place “through the vail” (Heb. 10:20).

There are many similarities between the vail and the curtains of the tabernacle door. Both hung on pillars and both were made of blue purple and scarlet and fine twined linen. There were however these and other differences: the door curtains hung on five pillars with brass sockets; while the vail hung on four pillars with silver sockets. The vail was wrought with cherubim; but in the curtain of the door the cherubim were omitted.

In contrasting the curtains of the door with the curtains of the gate, it could be stated that the curtains of the gate on their four pillars typify Christ as He is presented as a Saviour in the Gospels; while the curtains of the door to the holy place present Christ to us in the Epistles of Paul, Peter, James, John and Jude. The

curtains of the gate present Christ as the way to the altar, and to the laver; but the curtains of the door present Christ to us as the way to the place of testimony, of fellowship, and of prayer.

Contrasting the vail with these other curtains there is this outstanding difference; the other curtains invited Aaron and his sons to draw near, but the vail separated the most holy place and forbade entrance (Exod. 26:33). The lovely curtains drew attention to what was beyond them, but the vail covered what was beyond it (35:12).

Like the colors of the curtains of the door and gate, when our Lord was here in the days of His flesh; His lovely ways, His gracious words, and His mighty works, attracted sinners to Him as a Saviour. His gracious hand was laid upon the little children, upon the bier of the dead, upon the fever victim, and upon the filthy leper. His sympathetic eyes wept at the grave of His friend, and over the city of His enemies. His "lips were most sweet," for "never man spake like this man." All that was lovely about Him drew the needy to Him as a Saviour. This was the antitype of the curtains attracting the attention to the altar and to the holy place.

The vail covered the glory of the most holy place. How true this was of the flesh of our Lord! When He became a man He did not leave His glory, though many of our hymns seem to say He did; neither did He lay His glory by, but He covered His glory. His flesh was a "vail of the covering" (Exod. 35:12).

The mention of the cherubim in the vail suggests something that is very lovely. Those cherubim are called in one place, "cherubims of glory" (Heb. 9:5). They were glorious beings and glory seems to be their dwelling

place. Thus the vail that covered the glory revealed the glory in another way. The cherubim of glory beyond the vail could not be seen, but the lovely forms of cherubim in the vail could be seen.

When our Lord was here the outshining glory of Hebrews 1:1-3 was hidden from men, but the glory of grace and truth was seen (John 1:14). The glory above the brightness of the sun was covered, but the glory of the “rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys” was seen. Our Lord covered His essential glory but revealed His moral glory.

While the vail was intact the way into the holiest was not made manifest (Heb. 9:8). It was the death of Christ that rent the vail of the temple (Matt. 27:51). It was the cross and the blood shedding of Christ that opened the way for us to God. How great the sin of the priests to sew that vail up again! This is what Judaism and every system of works does; it sews again the vail that the hand of God has rent. To put Christians under law makes the cross of Christ of none effect (Gal. 2:21).

The Pillars Of The Vail

The number of these pillars was four. Christ in Matthew, in Mark, in Luke, and in John, is the One these pillars represent. Like all the wood of the tabernacle this wood of the pillars is shittim wood. It was the strong incorruptible wood of the wilderness. It represented the incorruptible humanity of our Lord. The gold that covered the pillars is His Deity.

There is no mention of “chapters” above these pillars of the vail. This is peculiar to these pillars. They seem to be unfinished above. The foundation of silver (redemption)

is complete beneath; for the work of redemption was finished when our Lord died (John 19:30). What is the significance of these pillars, cut off and unfinished at the top? Daniel 9:26 may shed some light on this question. The marginal reading and that preferred by the Revisers is: "Messiah shall be cut off, and shall have nothing." As far as the kingdom was concerned, our Lord when He died had nothing. Israel was not gathered (Isa. 49:5).

The enemies of our Lord rejoiced for they thought that His death meant the complete failure of all He came to do. What a triumph His resurrection was! Those uncrowned pillars that held up the veil seem to suggest that there was something incomplete about all the institutions of the tabernacle. When Christ died and the veil was rent; when He rose again and ascended to glory; then those provisional institutions passed away. The uncapped pillars of the veil seemed to say, There is something more coming, there is a higher ministry to be finished above, that cannot be perfectly represented here.

Now that we have the substance, we thank God for the shadows. Now that that which is perfect has come, we learn by the pictures the preciousness of the realities we are privileged to handle.

When at last the veil was rent and it hung there in two pieces torn from the top to the bottom, then perhaps the uncrowned pillars that supported it told their story more perceptibly. Those pillars pointed upward to an unfinished work in Heaven when the rent veil attested to a finished work on earth (Heb. 7:25).

The sockets of the pillars of the door were of brass. This indicates strength to bear the judgment of God. The

sockets of the vail were of silver as said before to intimate redemption for us. When the vail was rent and the worshiper passed through the vail, he passed over the foundation of silver (Heb. 10:20).

These pictures are inexhaustible in their varied teaching. Like a diamond in the light you may turn them round and round and no matter how you look at them, new beauties will appear. It is possible to reach the end of all the works of men, but it is not possible to reach the end of any of the works of God. "And still new beauties may we see; and still increasing light."

A Testimony to Christ

"Jesus Christ is the most sacred, the most glorious, the most certain of all facts; arrayed in a beauty and majesty which throws the 'starry heavens above us and the moral law within us' into obscurity, and fills us truly with ever growing reverence and awe. He shines forth with the self-evidencing light of the noonday sun. He is too great, too pure, too perfect, to have been invented by sinful and erring men. His character and claims are confirmed by the sublimest doctrine, the purest ethics, the mightiest miracles, the grandest spiritual kingdom, and are daily and hourly exhibited in the virtues and graces of all who yield to the regenerating and sanctifying power of His spirit and example. The historical Christ meets and satisfies all moral and religious aspirations. The soul, if left to its noblest impulses and aspirations, instinctively turns to Him as the needle to the magnet, as the flower to the sun, as the panting heart to the fresh mountain. We are made for Him, and 'our heart is without rest until it rests in Him.' He commands our assent, He wins our affections

and adoration. We cannot look upon Him without spiritual benefit. We cannot think of Him without being elevated above all that is low and mean, and encouraged toward all that is good and noble. The very hem of His garment is healing to the touch. One hour spent in His communion outweighs all the pleasures of sin. He is the most precious gift of God to a perishing world. In Him are the treasures of wisdom, in Him the fountain of pardon and peace, in Him the only hope and comfort in this world and that which is to come. Christ is the glory of the past, the life of the present, the hope of the future. He alone can solve the mystery of our being, and fulfill our intellectual desires after truth, our moral aspirations after holiness, and the longings of our feelings after happiness and peace.”

Now none but Christ can satisfy,

None other name for me.

There’s love and life and lasting joy,

Lord Jesus, found in Thee.

The Boards, Their Sockets, And Their Bars

(Exodus 26:15-30)

“Builted together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22).

The boards of the tabernacle standing upright on their silver sockets, and fastened right into those sockets by the tenons beneath the boards, are like believers who stand upright upon redemption in Christ. “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:7).

Each board was seventeen and one-half feet high, two and one-half feet wide and ten inches thick. They were made of shittim wood overlaid with gold. The incorruptible wood is Christ in His humanity; while the gold is Christ in His essential Deity. The silver for the sockets was obtained from the people as atonement money; it was the price of redemption (Exod. 30:11-16). Thus the silver of atonement was between the boards and the earth, and was the solid foundation on which the boards stood.

If each of these boards were cut out of one tree, then those must have been the noblest trees of the wilderness. The sharp axe laid the strong tree low. It would not be the work of a few minutes, but probably a good while would be needed to sever the trunk of that hard resisting wood. Finally the last blow is given and with a crash, down comes the stately tree that is destined to be made into a board for Jehovah’s dwelling place. The tree is stripped of all its natural beauty,

sawed and fashioned where it fell, and prepared to be completely covered with the precious gold. In this way the servants of Moses prepared the boards that were to stand upright, by first cutting them down to lie prostrate on the earth. This is the very way our Lord is even now felling and fashioning the boards for His dwelling. Saul of Tarsus was a big tree, but he crashed on the Damascus road. Who would have thought that that basket being let over the wall of the city, like a container of refuse, had in it the person of Gamaliel's student, who had been a Pharisee of the Pharisees? But so it was; like a shittim tree with its leaves and branches gone, Paul had lost his glory and his reputation in being Christ's. The shittim wood in its incorruptibility is Christ in us the hope of glory. The shittim wood coming from the desert is also a picture of sinners in their natural state undisciplined and untrimmed.

The One Act Of Regeneration

With the boards the fashioning and the covering with the gold would be a double process; with sinners being made saints the Lord performs it all in one act. It is expressed in these words, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). All things are just as new to the converted sinner as all things were become new for that log of a shittim tree, now covered with gold, standing upright in the tabernacle of God. You could say that in type that board had Christ on the inside, and Christ on the outside. This is actually true of the Christian: Christ is on the inside for the apostle wrote to the Colossians, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). In the very next verse

Paul writes by the Spirit, "That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." So Christ was on the outside as truly as He was on the inside.

The Tenons Of The Boards

There were two tenons under each board that fitted into mortises in the silver sockets. This word "tenon" is literally "hand." There is another word for a hand that is closed; this word seems to indicate an open hand, ready to grasp what is needed for strength; so the word is defined as "to be able." The word "socket" has also the meaning of strength. The fitting of the boards to the sockets has the thought of ability to hold by a mighty hand. The two tenons doubles the thought of this security. How strikingly this thought is revealed in these words, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:27-29).

The boards of the tabernacle stood side by side; each of them had its own tenons that held it steadfastly on the sockets, and yet the boards were bound together into one united structure. The building was distinctly said to be "one tabernacle" (Exod. 26:6). Now each true believer on the Lord Jesus has his own story of grace to tell; each one of us has obtained "like precious faith" (2 Pet. 1:1) to that of every other Christian, and yet we are all so joined to each other that "there is one body" (Eph. 4:4). This glorious mystery will only be fully revealed and manifested in Heaven. It is our privilege as God's children to walk and act in the power of this truth now,

by keeping this word: "And walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour" (Eph. 5:2).

The Bars

Like the boards and the holy vessels of the tabernacle the bars were made of shittim wood overlaid with gold. This is Christ in His perfect manhood completely covered with His Deity. There was not a place where the shittim wood was, without the gold in the bars. Some have separated the incidents of our Lord's life into two classes; those of His humanity, and those of His Deity. This is a great mistake. Where our Lord was manifestly a man, He was ever True God. His Deity could never be separated from His lowly Manhood. The shittim wood was never without its metallic covering.

There were five bars holding the boards together making the tabernacle one. The middle bar of the five is said to have shot through from end to end (Exod. 36:33). This may mean that this central bar passed through the boards themselves, instead of merely through the rings like the others. Otherwise the four bars could not have reached the complete length of the tabernacle; the middle one differing from the others in that it reached from end to end. The reader may judge for himself; the typical teaching is the only reason why in my opinion the middle bar was inside the boards and so invisible.

In our Lord's prayer for His own in John 17 there are five petitions that may answer to these five bars of the tabernacle. The whole prayer is an intercession for the unity of the people of God. The men God had given to Christ were like the standing boards of the tabernacle

encased in precious gold. Their foundation was the silver of redemption, and the shittim wood of their wilderness origin was completely covered with the preciousness of Christ Himself. As the boards of the Tabernacle were held together by bars, so the men God gave to Christ were held together and made one by His grace and provisions for them.

The Central Bar

“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (John 17:23).

This represents the middle hidden bar; this is the fundamental organic oneness of God’s people with each other through their union with Christ. This union with Him is not an outward joining, but expressed in the words “I in them.” This is the way believers are made “perfect in one.”

What a marvelous joining this is! “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Christ in each individual Christian joins that one to every other Christian by the actual indwelling of Christ in His saints.

Men join societies and unions which are held together by rules and regulations with penalties for violations, and these dead federations are the best this present evil world knows. In them all there is no vital union and no common life. In the true Church of God there is a living link between the members that is as true and sympathetic as the union of the members of our bodies. This union is so real that if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it (1 Cor. 12:26). The central

uniting bar was not external; it did not unite as a creed or a religion unites persons; the bar ran through the midst of all the boards. Christ is actually in the hearts of all His people (Eph. 3:17). This makes us one.

The Other Four Bars

In this prayer chapter of our Lord, John 17, there are four other things mentioned that are uniting bonds to the Lord's people. The first of these that I would call attention to is, God's name. "Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one" (John 17:11-12).

God's Name Unites

God's name assures the keeping of His saints. He is the faithful God; His word cannot fail. When God plainly says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36) and "They shall never perish" (John 10:28), His name is the guarantee that these words cannot fail.

Joshua pleaded with the Lord when destruction seemed to threaten the Lord's people: "And what wilt thou do unto thy great name?" (Joshua 7:9). There is not a safer hiding place than the name of God; and not a surer pledge of the oneness of His people.

Our Lord's Intercession Unites

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (John 17:20-21).

How much we owe to the intercession of our Lord in Heaven! He ever lives to make intercession, so that

blessed ministry never fails (Heb. 7:25). When He died for us and rose again, He would not allow any enemy to hinder His intercession (Rom. 8:34).

The Prospect of Glory Unites

“And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one” (John 17:22).

“Being justified by faith, we...rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:1-2). The coming of our Lord will translate all saints to glory (1 Thess. 4:16-17). Even now the blessed hope unites the hearts of all who truly love the Lord Jesus.

The Love of the Saints Makes Them, One

“That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them” (John 17:26).

Saints are taught of God to love one another (1 Thess. 4:9). The love in this last verse of our Lord’s prayer is a love that is in us. It is the very love that the Father had for the Son which was cherished so deeply by Him. The consciousness of the Father’s love was the source of continual strength to the Lord Jesus. This love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost (Rom. 5:5); it ascends to our Lord in Heaven, and radiates toward all the people of God. It is a grand uniting bond.

A Manifest Union

There is a practical union of believers seen in the Acts of the Apostles which constitutes those united believers a dwelling place for God. The four bars that could be seen are “The Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). The fellowship of these saints was happy indeed; it was

created by the apostles' doctrine. It was not merely a common creed, a teaching that pleased them all and to which they could all subscribe; it was the word of God in its fullness as declared by the apostles. This created a fellowship where all could speak the same thing. This fellowship was expressed in the breaking of bread together, and it was maintained by the prayers. They all continued steadfastly together. The union and the unity were of God.

The bar in the midst that could not be seen was Christ. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). A Narrow Path but not a Narrow Spirit John Wesley once wrote: "The thing which I was greatly afraid of, and which I resolved to use every possible method of preventing, was a narrowness of spirit, a party zeal, being straitened in our own bowels; that miserable bigotry which makes many so unready to believe that there is any work of God but among ourselves. I thought it might be a help against this, frequently to read to all who were willing to hear, the accounts I received from time to time of the work which God is carrying on in the earth, both in our own and other countries, not among us alone, but among those of various opinions and denominations. For this I allotted one evening in every month, and I find no cause to repent of my labor. It is generally a time of strong consolation to those who love God and all mankind for His sake; as well as of breaking down the partition walls which either the craft of the devil or the folly of men hath built up; and of encouraging every child of God to say, 'Whosoever doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother.'" Let us remember the

words of the Master when His disciples forbade one who followed not with them, “Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us.”

The Coverings Of The Tabernacle

(Exodus 26:1-14; 36:8-19)

The Badgers' Skins

"Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" (Matt. 16:13).

The outside covering of the tabernacle is said in the common version to be "badgers' skins." There is the greatest difference of opinion as to what these coverings were. The Revised Version says, "seal skins." Authorities do not agree at all as to what animal is intended. They talk about a weasel, a wolf, a porpoise, a sea cow, and many other animals including an antelope. All agree on the color being ash grey. In the end, most admit that it cannot be clearly known what the Hebrew word translated, "badgers' skins" indicates. Even this is suggestive. It is like the diverse opinions among men, of the One whom Bruce Barton styled, "The Man whom nobody knows." His people know Him; but when here, the world knew Him not. Even those who accepted Him as a "teacher come from God," differed in their opinions; "Some say that Thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets" (Matt. 16:14). "If He were a prophet, [he] would have known" said Simon in his heart (Luke 7:39). Like the world, Simon "knew him not" (John 1:10). They said, "Is not this the carpenter?" (Mark 6:3) and, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" (John 7:15). The Pharisees called Him a "deceiver" Matt. 27:63) and a "malefactor" (John 18:20) and a disturber of the people (Luke 23:5). They called Him a "gluttonous" man and a

“winebibber,” “a friend of publicans and sinners” (Matt. 11:19).

What Men Saw

All the world saw was the badger skin covering, and there was no beauty that they should desire Him (Isa. 53:2). Some saw the Grace and the Glory beneath, but not many. Nathaniel joyfully confessed, “Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel” (John 1:49) and Thomas, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). Peter expressed the faith of the eleven when he said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God” (Matt. 16:16); John and others saw not only the rams’ skins dyed red, and the curtains of goats’ hair, but the under curtains of glory and beauty. He wrote, “We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth” (John 1:14). John the Baptist saw the rams’ skins dyed red (John 1:29) and the curtains of goats’ hair, while Nathaniel saw the glory beneath (John 1:49-51).

All the coverings of the tabernacle can be seen in Isaiah 53. In verses 2 and 3, you have the outside covering of ash grey, “no form nor comeliness”; “no beauty that we should desire Him”; “despised and rejected of men.” From verses 4 to 7, are the rams’ skins dyed red; “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities.” Verses 9 and 10 are the goats’ hair curtain: “Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin.” The goat was the sin offering. That which carried the sin of the people away on the day of atonement (Lev. 16:21) was a hairy goat, upon whose head the sins of the people were confessed. Our sins were laid on Christ. His soul was made an offering for our sins (Isa. 53:10). The

last two verses of Isaiah 53 contain a description of the resurrection triumph and glory of the Lord Jesus, answering to the curtains of glory the priest saw as he looked upward from the holy place by the light of the golden candlestick. "He made intercession for the transgressors" (v. 12). Thus all the coverings are seen in that remarkable chapter; from that which was outside and seen by all, to that which was inside and seen only from the holy place.

The Rams' Skins

"A ram caught in a thicket by his horns" (Gen. 22:13).

One of the first great Calvary chapters of the Bible is Genesis 22. In that chapter the Lamb of God is pictured as "a ram caught in a thicket by his horns" (Gen. 22:13). In verse 8 of the same chapter, Abraham calls the coming One "a lamb." "My Son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering." The lamb suggests innocence, submission, and perfection to meet the need of men. A ram suggests fullness of strength, while the horns of the ram are the symbols of its power and might. A thicket is a growth of wild thorns and briars, the result of indolent neglect (Prov. 24:30-31). "A ram caught in a thicket by his horns"! This is Calvary. God can say so much with a few words. A brief description of a picture and the reverent heart can see weakness and might combined on that middle cross outside Jerusalem, where the wild souls of men did what the determinate counsel of God afore determined to be done. The might of Christ held Him in that place of weakness. Jerusalem was a place of neglected ground where thorns abounded. There the mighty One was caught and held by his own inherent strength that He might die.

This was the source of the dyed rams' skins; Calvary, where in voluntary submission and unwavering endurance, the Mighty One was held in a place of weakness and death; there the rams' skins were dyed red.

The Covenant Ram

Before the ram was offered for Isaac on Mt. Moriah, Abraham offered a ram with other sacrifices when God made that everlasting covenant with him (Gen. 15:9). It was between the divided pieces of a ram that the smoking furnace and the burning lamp passed when God made the promise to Abraham; a promise that waits even yet for its final fulfillment.

In connection with the consecration of the priests, both in Exodus 29 and in Leviticus 8, it is a ram that is used and that is called "the ram of consecration." Thus, the ram stands for God's unconditional promise, for substitution, and for the High Priestly consecration of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Goats' Hair

"And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities" (Lev. 16:22).

The hair of the goat became the covering of the tabernacle. Where the sins of the people were laid, the covering of hair was woven into a curtain to cover the glory of the tabernacle. What is this but the transference of our sins to Christ! He was a prophet, a faithful witness; He became our substitute, our sin-bearer.

Thus, the curtains tell the story of the One the world did not know, becoming obedient unto death, and bearing

our sins with the sins of all His people, to bring us to those curtains that so beautifully display the glory of God. Yes, to bring us as priests, beneath those expressions of wonder and loveliness, in the holy place; where we can look up, and see the fine linen, the blue, the scarlet, the purple, with cherubim of cunning work. This was God's lovely picture of the Person of Christ when He was made flesh, and tabernacled amongst us (John 1:14). By men of the world He was despised; in His heart was willing obedience to death. "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished" (Luke 12:50). He ever thought of the cross. This was the red covering.

He was a prophet for God. He wore the goats' hair coverings which was the ordinary garb of a prophet. He spoke the Word of God in truth and cared not for the person of men (Matt. 22:16). He was a faithful witness (Rev. 1:5). He glorified God (John 17:4). This was the goats' hair covering.

The Beautiful Covering Above The Holy Place

"He ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Heb. 7:25).

Beneath the glory men saw, was the glory of what He was in Himself. This could only be represented by a combination of all that was lovely and pure, wrought with cherubim of glory. This weaving of gold wire into the fabric was something that Bezaleel alone could do. The forming of the glorious cherubim was his work alone. Bezaleel was an embroiderer; the Hebrew word for embroiderer is the very word used in Psalm 139:15, and translated "curiously wrought," when in this Psalm the Spirit is speaking of the preparation of the body of our Lord.

No matter how one approached the most holy place, the story was the same. It was Christ all the way: Christ in the gate and the altar, or Christ in the curtains. Should you approach from the outside, it must be through the lovely door, by the altar of sacrifice and by the laver of regeneration; then through the inner door that was Christ again. Or should you examine this mystery from above by removing the curtains one by one, the revelation is the very same: Christ all the way and Christ the goal at last.

Fine Linen First

A word could be said about the fine linen being mentioned first, instead of last, in the over curtains of the tabernacle. (Compare Exod. 26:1 with Exod. 26:31, etc.) When Aaron looked onward as he entered the Tabernacle, whether it were the gate, the door, or the veil, the fine linen is mentioned last and the blue first in the curtains (Exod. 27:16; 26:36; 26:31). All these curtains typified our Lord in His life down here. He was God manifest in the flesh. Down here the reverent heart first thought of His exaltation and of His title of honor. He was Lord Jesus. The Word was made flesh.

But in resurrection on the throne, Ezekiel sees “a Man,” and then describes His glory. John in Patmos hears of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, before he is told of His glory and sees it manifested. Daniel also says, “One like unto the Son of Man,” before he tells the story of His surroundings. It is the fine linen first.

When we see our Lord, we shall see a Man. His face, His hands, His feet, His side: this will fill us with joy as we contemplate the revelation of His glory. The angels from heaven who would comfort the hearts of His disciples

with the assurance of His coming again said, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Our Lord Himself, giving His last message to His waiting people said, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star" (Rev. 22:16). The angels said "Jesus"; and our Lord said, "I Jesus"; it is His human name, the name of Bethlehem and of Calvary; the name of Sychar's well, and of the upper room. This was the name Mary Magdalene knew; and the name Peter loved. It was the name of the fine linen of His pure and lovely humanity. As the priest looked up, he mentions the linen first, though when he looked onward, the fine linen is mentioned last. Down here, God emphasized His deity; that will not be necessary up there. His face, His hands, His side will draw us to Him where, "The Lamb is all the glory of Immanuel's land."

The Prince At The Door.

"There was no room...in the inn" (Luke 2:27).

When George V was crowned king, his eldest son went to the old Welsh castle of Carnarvon to be received as Prince of Wales. Accompanied by David Lloyd George, greatest of living Welshmen he approached the castle door. All within was still. The door was closed and barred. He knocked, but there was no answer. He knocked the third time and the bar was drawn, the door was flung wide, and, as he entered, the castle was glorious with light and the hall vocal with song. The prince had come unto his own, and his own received him with singing welcome. It was not so with the Prince of

Peace. He came unto His own and His own received Him not. He was in the world and the world was made by him, but the world knew Him not. To dream such a thing is absurd. It is too wonderful, too strange, too humanly impossible not to be true. It is incredible, but it is history. It belongs to faith, but it is fact. There was no room for Him. (From The King's Business).

“Chiefest Among Ten Thousand”

Oh! He's stronger than the strongest,
He's far better than the best,
And His love has lasted longest—
It has stood the hardest test.
The sinfulness may trust Him,
Nor their welcome ever doubt,
For He's pledged His word of promise
That He'll never cast them out.
He's the tenderest of the tender,
He's the fairest of the fair,
He will be your soul's defender—
You may rest in safety there.
Though fierce enemies surround you,
You are safe from all alarms,
For in love He'll put around you
His strong, everlasting arms.
He the winds of trouble hushes
When the storm is raging high,

And each foe for us He crushes
When to Him for strength we fly.
He's a refuge from the billows
When by storm's we're sore oppressed,
And the softest of all pillows
Is His tender, loving breast.
He's the Lord of life and glory,
Now exalted far on high;
But we love to tell the story
Of His coming down to die.
And He's coming, quickly coming,
All His glories to display;
And we'll see Him and be like Him
Through that bright, eternal day.

The Table Of Shewbread

(Exodus 25:23-30; Leviticus 24:5-9)

“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies” (Ps. 23:5).

The Materials

The materials of the table were shittim-wood overlaid with gold. The wood suggests the incorruptible humanity of our Lord; the gold is typical of His deity. Shittim, or acacia wood, was the wood of the wilderness; this tree grew extensively in the mountains of Sinai, overhanging the Red Sea. There are a number of kinds of this tree. Some of them have medicinal value and others are good as stimulants. The kind from which the boards of the tabernacle were made, and which is also in the table and other vessels of the sanctuary, yielded the well known gum-arabic of commerce. In the spring, the tree was covered with yellow blossoms that had a very pleasant perfume. The Arabs sometimes use the gum of the shittim tree as food; they also say the gum allays thirst. One kind of acacia or shittim tree is said to be peculiarly sensitive to outside influences when its leaves are on its branches. The wood of the shittim tree was hard and very strong; it was the most incorruptible wood known. The fact that the shittah (shittim) tree is mentioned with the cedar, the myrtle and the oil tree, in Isaiah 41:19, as trees to be planted in the wilderness in the coming day of Israel's glory, shews it to be one of the beautiful and useful trees.

All these characteristics make the shittim tree, and its wood, a striking type of our Lord Jesus, The world was a

wilderness to Him. He was fresh and green when all around was dry and withered. The fragrance of His lovely life was refreshing to God and to men (Luke 2:52). There was healing from His hands as He went about doing good (Acts 10:38). His words were the strength of His disciples (John 6:68). Like the shittim wood, there was a strength in Him that was not found in any other (Ps. 89:19; Heb. 12:2). Our Lord was the food of His people, and quenched their thirst (John 6:35). With all this ability to bear strain without breaking, like the shittim wood, our Lord was most sensitive to all the reproaches and insults that were heaped upon Him (Heb. 4:15). He felt all, but like charity, or love, He bore all things and never failed (1 Cor. 13:7).

The gold of the table, as elsewhere, speaks of the absolute deity of our Lord. Gold never rusts nor tarnishes; it maintains its lustre when iron, the strongest of metals, would corrode and break down. Every other man but Christ has been a disappointment. Moses sinned when he spake unadvisably with his lips; Elijah failed when he ran away from Jezebel; Abraham could not wait for Isaac and got Ishmael; David and Solomon and all the kings failed in one way or another. Christ exhibited everywhere and in every circumstance the pure refined gold of the glory of God, for He was Himself the Son of God.

It is remarkable to observe the union of the gold and the shittim wood in many of the recorded incidents of our Lord's life. See Him worn and weary from ceaseless toil with His head on a pillow, asleep in the boat on the sea of Galilee, when the storm was raging; He was the Man Christ Jesus. See Him then when the fearful disciples awaken Him with their words, "Master, carest thou not

that we perish?" He arose and rebuked the winds with His words, "Peace be still!" and there was a great calm; He was the Mighty God. 4-gain see Him weep with the bereaved at Bethany at the grave of Lazarus, and then hear Him cry with a loud voice, "Lazarus come forth!" and "he that was dead came forth bound hand and foot with grave clothes"; He was a tender man to weep, He was "the resurrection and the life" to call the dead from the grave. So at Calvary where He died; He was forsaken, spit upon, scorned and crucified, and yet He was the Mighty One to bear the accumulated sins of His people. There was the shittim wood everywhere, but it was covered with the precious gold.

The Measurements

The ratio of the measurements of the table are two, three and four. The height of the table is the same as that of the ark of the covenant and of the mercy seat. The numbers suggest fellowship in the number two: "How can two walk together except they be agreed?"; and Trinity in manifestation in the number three; and the revelation of Christ in the number four.

The height of the table being on a level with the mercy-seat suggests among other things, that fellowship is on the same level as atonement. Had the table been lower than the mercy seat, there would have been the suggestion that fellowship could have been enjoyed by sinners without redemption. Had the table been higher than the mercy seat, it would have suggested that the precious sprinkled blood was not sufficient to bring the prodigal sinner into fellowship with God and with His people. The height being exactly the same, the inference

is, that when the sinner reaches the mercy seat, he is on the very level where he can enjoy communion with God.

The Shewbread

There were twelve loaves of bread on the table, and this bread is called "shewbread." The name "shewbread" is used because those twelve loaves stood there before the Lord for seven days before they became the food of the priests. They were made of fine flour unleavened, and with frankincense upon them (Lev. 24:5-7). These loaves being the food of the priests, speak of Christ who is "the Bread of God" come down from heaven (John 6:33).

There being twelve always arranged before God, they speak also of God's people. The number of the tribes of Israel was twelve and there was one loaf for each of the tribes. All the loaves were together on the top of the table and held together by the golden crown that none could slip off or be separated from his fellow; so the truth of the unity of the people of God is plainly intended.

This precious truth was witnessed to as long as the number of loaves was not diminished on the table. There came a sad day in the history of Israel when the twelve tribes became divided; ten followed Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and only two tribes stayed with the house of David and recognized Rehoboam as their rightful sovereign (1 Kings 12:1-33). Only Judah and Benjamin remained to the king at Jerusalem. Ten tribes associated with Jeroboam and his false worship in Dan and in Bethel. When there were only two tribes gathering together where the Lord had chosen to place His name, did God change the number of the loaves on the table from twelve to two? No, He did not. The twelve loaves

were still set in order on the table of shewbread, for the nation was still one before Him. The people did not always recognize this. There was war between the two kingdoms and either would gladly have exterminated the other; God only recognized Jerusalem as His place of worship, but He did not cast away the tribes that were disobedient to His arrangement, although they reaped the sad results of their folly and sin. Elijah, in a day of great apostasy and idolatry, when he thought that he alone was left as a testimony against Baal worship, constructed the altar of the Lord of twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob" (1 Kings 18:30-32). The people of God had revolted against Him, but they were still His people and Elijah recognized their unity when he made his altar of twelve stones.

Those twelve loaves of bread before the Lord told the story of the twelve tribes all preserved before God. The frankincense on the loaves told of the sweet savour of Christ upon His people, making them accepted in His acceptance. Every Sabbath, when Israel rested, new loaves fresh from the oven were placed on the table, so that what God had gazed upon for a complete week might become the food of the priests. Thus the bread was called the continual shewbread (2 Chron. 2:4). Of the offerings, the burnt-offering is called "the continual burnt offering" because it burnt continually to tell of the abiding excellency of the Person and work of Christ on behalf of His people. The shewbread is called "the continual shewbread" because it was continually before the Lord to show how the people were forever accepted of Him.

The Crown Of Gold

This crown of gold round about the top of the table was a kind of battlement. This ledge of crowns of gold seemed to say, none of the loaves can fall off the table; this ledge made of crowns makes every one safe. That which secured the loaves is called a crown. It was a crown of gold. When God tells us of our Great High Priest in heaven for us, He does not say robed with glory and honor, but “crowned with glory and honour” (Heb. 2:9). The priest in Israel had garments of “glory and beauty,” but our Priest is “crowned with glory and honour.” This is because our Lord is in heaven. This is the crown that secures us before God; it is the crown of glory and honor upon the head of our Lord Jesus Christ. His high priestly crown secures all the people of God forever (Heb. 7:25).

In verse 25 of Exodus 25, there is mention of a border of a hand breadth to the table, with a crown of gold to this border. The table, thus had two crowns of gold: one above the border, and the other below it; or if the border was not perpendicular, one crown inside the border, and the other outside it. One crown was for the table, and the other was for the border. This word “border” has the meaning of “margin for protection.” It is translated “close place” in 2 Samuel 22:46. This word suggests separation for fortification or for protection of that which is precious. The crown of gold was on this border as well as being on the table itself. It would seem to suggest that the separation connected with this table was just as precious as the preservation of the loaves themselves.

It would be good in this connection to read the whole of the tenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. The great subject there is separation from idolatry. "Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils" (1 Cor. 10:21). This border of separation must be between the table of the Lord and the worship of the Gentiles. Read also the verses in 2 Corinthians 6 preceding this one, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:17-18).

This border is measured by God's hand; it is called "a handbreadth." It is not a cold mechanical measurement; the gracious hand of God has appointed this space between His table and all that might defile it. (Compare 2 John 10-11).

In Psalm 23 David said, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies" (v. 5). This was a table the Lord prepared for him. In John chapter 12, there is a table our Lord's friends prepared for Him. Lazarus sat with Him at this table (John 12:2). Both these thoughts are true of the table of our Lord; it is a table He prepares for us, and it is at the same time a table we prepare for Him. What a privilege to be "Lazaruses," raised from the dead to sit with Him at His own table! May we ever remember the crown of gold that has secured our eternal blessing, and also the border of separation with its crown of gold between us and all that is contrary to Him in this world.

The Candlestick

Exodus 37:17-24

“One beaten work of pure gold” (Exod. 37:22). “Christ and the church” (Eph. 5:32).

The Light

Where the commandment to make the candlestick is given in Exodus 25 there are these words added, “And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it” (Exod. 25:37). For the words “over against it,” the margin reads, “over against the face of it.” This seems to suggest that the first purpose of the light of the candlestick is to display its own perfection and glory. When we consider that these vessels of the tabernacle are “patterns of things in the heavens” (Heb. 9:23), we can readily understand why the candlestick should be made to display its own glory. The candlestick and its branches is not Christ and His Church on earth, but Christ and His Church in heaven. “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him” (Eph. 1:10). “That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:7). “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God” (Eph. 3:10). “When he shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe...in that day” (2 Thess. 1:10).

These verses show the unity of Christ and His people in glory, being the masterpiece of revelation to admiring multitudes. Grace, wisdom and power will then be seen to have wrought a monument to God's glory such as creation could never have produced. This, I take it, is the first application of the teaching of the lighted seven branch candlestick in the tabernacle of God. Its light is over the face of it. The lighted lamps in the holy place reveal the lovely perfection of that candlestick which resembled an almond tree and which was "beaten out of one piece of pure gold."

Testimony Now

When the symbol of testimony by the people of God is given for this present time, the figure is seven golden lampstands (Rev. 1:12). These candlesticks represent individual local churches where the Lord Jesus and His Word still have a place. The expression of unity now is in each company of Gods' saints, not in a unity of assemblies. The unity of all the people of God is a blessed fact, and this is a fact that should cause us to be united where we have the opportunity of coming together and caring for one another now; but the place of the glorious manifestation of this oneness between our Lord and all who are His, is the glory when we are with Him. Then the light of the candlestick will be over against the face of it; now the light of our testimony is like a beacon light shining into the darkness, to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide their feet into the way of peace.

The Material Of The Candlestick

The whole candlestick was pure gold. There was no shittim wood in this vessel. The reason of this may be because when the type of the candlestick is fulfilled and the Church of Christ are glorified together, it will be those ranks of heavenly beings around the throne to whom the outshining of grace and wisdom in the Church will be made known. Redeemed saints love to see Christ as a man. God over all, but God manifest in the flesh. The King of kings and Lord of lords; but my blessed Saviour. When the angels see the Church and the Lord manifested as one, it will be only glory everywhere. To them there will be no memorial of His love and lovely lowliness. However the treelike form of the candlestick, and the almond form of buds and flowers, will plainly tell the story of His resurrection. So the lighted candlestick was all of gold.

The Workmanship

Then the whole candlestick was “one beaten work of pure gold.” It was literally beaten out of one piece. One talent of pure gold was taken, and with the hammer alone, little by little, the whole magnificent masterpiece was fashioned. Had branches been made separately, and welded to the stem, one might easily have noticed the evidence of this joining. When it was all carefully hammered out of one piece the unity was so complete that thought of separation was utterly impossible. It was the candlestick everywhere, one place as much as another. “We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones” (Eph. 5:30). The Church is as united to Christ as Eve was to her husband when God called their name Adam (Gen. 5:2). Eve was formed out of Adam, she

was taken out of the man; Adam's name was Ish, so Eve's name was Ishi. However, this oneness of Adam and his wife, is only one of those types that are "not the very image of the things" (Heb. 10:1), for there is no one picture that can truly show this great mystery of Christ and the Church.

Predestination

When Bezaleel looked at that one talent of pure gold he could see in it the perfect candlestick. It was all complete and perfect in his mind. So before the ages God's great purpose of Christ and His Church was in His mind. These purposes were all in Christ Jesus before the world began. They are even now revealed in His Word so we can know the secrets of His heart. How wonderfully they are illustrated in the tabernacle and its vessels! As the hammer in the wise and able hand of Bezaleel patiently formed the golden masterpiece, so the Holy Spirit of God is now forming by His faultless working: the Church of Christ, which is formed out of Him, as well as for Him. What a glorious mystery this is! "How unsearchable are [God's] judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33).

The Form Of The Candlestick

There were seven lamps on the candlestick at the extremities of the seven branches. These seven branches were six and one — six branches out of the central branch. The shaft is evidently the foundation. The word "branch" is used of the stem, and the word "branches" of the six on the two sides. So even the same word is used for each. Seven is the number of perfection; six is man's number. The candlestick, thus,

has our number as well as having God's number, the number of absolute perfection.

The bowls in the decorations of the candlestick everywhere were made after the fashion of almonds, with a knob and a flower, a knob and a flower; the three repeated again and again. In each branch there were three sets of these decorations, while in the central branch there were four.

The knobs were likely almond buds; so the arrangement was a bud of the almond, then a flower of the almond, and then the almond itself, the fruit. Aaron's rod in the tabernacle budded and bore almonds (Num. 17:8), which was God's own evidence of his priesthood. The almond, being the first tree to bud in the spring, is a type of resurrection. The candlestick thus bore the evidences of resurrection, and also of the priesthood of our Lord. The bud, the flower, and the almond suggest life, beauty, and blessing. How true these are of Christ on earth or in heaven!

The Oil For The Light

(Exodus 27:20-21)

This beating was a slower process than the crushing of the olive berries. With a rod, the workman struck the olives one by one, to extract what was best of the oil. There was a more concentrated attack upon our Lord at Gethsemane and Calvary; He was the selected object of the hate of both Jew and Gentile. The malefactors were not spit upon, or ridiculed, when they were condemned and crucified. The crowd did not pass the cross and shoot out the lip and wag the head at them. The scorn and derision were reserved for the Christ of God. Every

scornful eye looked at Him. Every jeer was hurled at Him. Jewish envy and Gentile scorn had the Son of God for a mark for their arrows. As the attention is riveted when one beats out olives, so the attention of all Christ's enemies was centered upon Him when He came to that place called Calvary. Some had pushed their way through to pluck the hairs from His cheeks. Others had crowded in to smite the "judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek." Hardened Roman soldiers buffeted Him and smote Him with the palm of their hands. Barabbas was well nigh forgotten, for Christ was the target for floods of ungodly men. It was a beating of the olives. What was the result? Not threatening and anger, but oil for light. "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pet. 2:23). In the same place it is said, "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example,, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). This example is oil for our light. If we would let our light so shine before men it will be by manifesting the same spirit and following His example.

Oil A Type

Oil is a type of the Holy Spirit, and it is only by the Spirit of God that we can bring forth this fruit of the Spirit to His glory and praise. There is a striking verse about dressing the lamps in Exod. 30:7: "And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it." Lest any might suppose there was a trimming away of something wrong in the life of our Lord in His witness for God, it is distinctly said here that incense is put on the altar when this dressing took place. So there was ascending to God

that which was precious and fragrant when Aaron dressed the lamps. With us the snuff-dishes are needed to take away that which accumulates during burning, lest the lamps make a disagreeable odor. With Him, all was fragrant and well pleasing to God. Usually after we have been used of the Lord in testimony, there is charred wick to be removed, lest we be exalted above measure. Unless this charred and burned wick be removed, the lamp will not burn again without smoking. With our Lord, the incense altar is associated with the dressing of the lamps as well as with their burning. Burning continually without smoking, the type of our Lord's witnessing is preserved. There is continual light from the candlestick and perpetual incense from the golden altar, mingling light and fragrance forever in the presence of God.

Removing Hindrances

If we would let our light shine in this dark world, it must be by the removing of hindrances. Beds and bushels hide and hinder the light (Mark 4:21). "Let your light so shine before men" (Matt. 5:16). It will shine if you do not hinder it. Give it a chance; put it on a candlestick. Hold it up where people can see it. It is the very nature of light to shine out. If God has shined in (2 Cor. 4:6), you let the light shine out. Beds and bushels are still the greatest hindrance. Too much sleeping and idleness in the things of God; too much care and anxiety to use the bushel in the things of worldly prosperity. Take away that which makes the lamps smoke; put into the soul that which makes the lamps burn, and the testimony will soon be bright again.

His Grace Sufficient

“It is about fifteen years since I last saw you, so I appreciated your letter all the more. I have had a heavy cross to carry, but I am glad to tell you that His grace has been sufficient for me at every step of the way. At first I was somewhat rebellious, for I had great plans for the future. Many souls were turning to the Lord in all parts of the field, and I looked forward to the time when I should have the privilege of baptising thousands.

“I had said, ‘Lord, let me be Thy servant, filled with Thy Spirit, giving all my thought, all my energy and my life for Thee.’ And He answered me. But instead of letting me serve Him as I had planned to do, He suddenly took me away from the work forever. As I lay in the hospital in England, when the first horror of the final outcome was upon me, I thought sometimes that the Lord has forgotten and forsaken me, that He had hidden His face from me, but it was not so. The more sorrow I have had to bear, the easier it has become, and now I am rejoicing in my Saviour every hour. I know the time cannot now be long before I shall be with Him, but while I am in the body I cannot keep still. I must testify; I must tell of His great love for me, and I have written a paper to be read at the Missionary Conference in India, on ‘Filling full our place in life.’

“You ask how I am. I have lost my eyesight now and my voice; I have no feet or ankles; no arms; but my heart is far from dead. I still feel, and long, and sympathize. I still yearn for the extension of Christ’s kingdom on earth as much as I ever did. I cannot read or write, but the kind sisters in charge of the hospital come and read to me and write for me, as I can find means to dictate to

them. I have everything I need, and could not be more comfortable were I in my own home. While I live I expect to prepare others for India... And though I am slowly dying, I must keep on doing something to help on the Redeemer's kingdom when I have passed beyond.

"I know you will remember me in your prayers, that I may be humble and patient, and faithful to the end. I have no doubts in these days, and if I had my voice I should be singing all the day long. Sometimes I feel so happy that I long to go to my heavenly home and be with 'my Beloved' forever.¹ "May the God of all comfort you, and grant you His grace, filling you with the sunshine of His presence, so that day by day you will be transformed into His likeness from glory to glory, is the prayer of "Your brother in Christ's Kingdom, "John E. Davis, (Missionary to the Telugas)."

A missionary writing from Manchuria tells of seeing displayed, by a Standard Oil depot away up there, the ambitious slogan: "Get the Light to Every Dark Corner of the World." Is there not in this a rebuke and challenge to the people of God? The fact confronts us that throughout Asia and Africa are found multitudes of towns and villages lighted with the kerosene oil of the West, but without the light of the saving Gospel of Christ. May we all "let our light shine."

1 He died with leprosy and is now with his Beloved.

The Golden Altar

Exodus 30:1-5; 37:25-28

“Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth” (Song of Solomon 1:3).

“And there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angels hand (Rev. 8:3-4).

This golden altar in the holy place was for incense, not for sacrifice. The brazen altar of the court of the tabernacle was for “atonement” sacrifices (Lev. 1:4), and represented Christ our “burnt-offering” at Calvary. The golden altar was for the fragrant incense and represented Christ in Heaven where He ever lives to make intercession for us (Heb. 7:25).

The Measurements

The height of this altar was two cubits; while its length and breadth were equal, and measured one cubit each. Being two cubits high the incense altar was higher than the mercy seat. This would signify that the intercession of our Lord for us with the Father (1 John 2:1-2) was above His work of propitiation. There was not only a mercy seat, there was intercession and acceptance above it. The mercy seat and this altar of sweet incense were united, for the blood of the sin-offering was put upon the horns of it to sanctify it. (Exod. 30:10; Lev. 16:18-19). Thus the blood of the sin-offering was the

ground upon which the sweet fragrance could ascend up before God. To have an intercessor we must first have an offering for sin. To know the Lord Jesus as an Advocate we must first know Him as a Saviour. When we do know the meaning of the mercy seat and of the precious blood upon it, then we also have an incense altar of precious gold that is even higher than the seat of mercy, for Christ in heaven for us provides an acceptance that is far beyond the showing of mercy to the sinful and the vile. There is acceptance for us in glory in all the fragrant preciousness of "the Beloved." Thus the incense altar was higher than the mercy seat.

The altar is said to be "four-square" (Exod. 30:2), the four sides are of equal length. There is again the thought of four and of equality in the four ingredients of the incense which were also of equal weight. That which was more difficult to obtain of the spices could not be less in quantity than the more common, all must be equal in weight (Ex. 30, 34-38). This might suggest that the acceptance of those for whom the Lord Jesus was an intercessor was all the same. "They shall come from the east, from the west, from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God" (Luke 13:29); those from the east who heard the Gospel first will not have a more perfect acceptance than those who came later from the west. The four might also imply that from which of the Gospel standpoints you look at the Lord Jesus, He is just as needful and just as perfect. Mark's presentation of the Servant is just as necessary and just as fragrant as John's presentation of the Son of God. All sides of the altar were equal, and the weights of the four blended spices were equal also.

Linked With The Altar Of Burnt Offering

The altar of incense was linked with the altar of burnt-offering every morning and every evening when the priests took coals from the brazen altar to burn the incense on this golden altar (Exod. 30:7). The sweet savour of the incense was directly connected with the sweet savour of the burnt-offering (Lev. 1:9); the coals of the one caused the burning and the fragrance of the other. The savour of what our Lord was in His life ascended in all its fullness before God in His death. The fire of God at Calvary together with all the wickedness of men only increased the fragrance of all the lovely characteristics of grace and truth, of mercy and love, from our Lord in the hours of His deepest agony.

Linked With The Ark

The altar of incense was linked with the ark of the covenant when on the great day of atonement the high priest carried coals and incense from the golden altar into the most holy place, placing it beside the ark of the covenant (Lev. 16:12-13; Heb. 9:4). It has already been shown how the incense altar was linked with the sin-offering also on the day of atonement (Lev. 16:18-19). In this way all the vessels of the tabernacle, and all the ministries connected with those vessels, are united into one great whole. These are all parts of one great revelation of the Saviour and His salvation.

The Materials

The two materials of the altar of incense were the same as the materials of the ark and of the table, etc. They were shittim wood and gold. The wood of the wilderness was completely covered with precious gold. This

“shittim wood” is said to be translated uniformly in the Septuagint “incorruptible wood.” It represents the holy humanity of our Lord Jesus; the gold suggests His deity.

The bars that carried the altar of incense in its wilderness wanderings with the people of God were made of the same materials. These bars were part of the altar and not to be forgotten in the consideration of the typical meaning of it. The bars to carry the vessel plainly associated it with the earthly pilgrimage of God’s people. It is in this wilderness we need the ministrations of an intercessor, and it is here that our God has provided Him for us. All through our life of failure and sin we have “an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous” (1 John 2:1); this Advocate is not only the Righteous One, He is also the Beloved One (Eph. 1:6). Our Lord’s ministry answering to the incense altar is performed in Heaven (Rom. 8:34); its duration is forever (Heb. 7:25), and it is “with the Father” (1 John 2:1). Thus we are not only secured before God in perfect righteousness, we are represented “with the Father” in all the fragrance of the Son of His love.

The Crown Of The Altar

In common with the ark of the covenant and with the table of shewbread, the incense altar had its “crown of gold round about” (Exod. 30:3). This “crown” suggests the royal authority in which these typical provisions of the incense altar are preserved. It was “a crown of gold” that kept the coals and incense from being scattered or falling from the altar. The directions for the march of the camp of Israel are contained in Numbers, chapter four: there is no mention there of removing the coals or incense from this altar. While the incense altar was

carried over the rough and sandy desert on the shoulders of the priests, the fragrant incense continued to burn and its smoke to ascend toward heaven. Then the crown was specially needed to keep the coals and the incense together on the altar. No matter how rough our way, and no matter how our feet may stumble in the path, all the children of God have, continually, an unbroken and unwavering memorial before God, in the incense held together by the crown of purest gold. It simply means that no discouragements or murmurings “because of the way” ever affect the fragrance of that people before God; though they may affect the governmental dealings of God with them in discipline and love.

One has suggested that the crown on the ark might suggest, “His; mercy endureth forever”; on the crown which held the shewbread on the table might have been inscribed, “Now in the presence of God for us”; and on that around the incense altars, “He ever liveth to make intercession for us.”

The Incense

Exodus 30:34-38

“Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each there shall be like weight:... tempered together.” The only clue to the identification of these first three of the spices is the meaning of the words.

Stacte. This word means “to distill.” The speaker in Deuteronomy 32, says, “My speech shall distill as the dew” (v. 2). In the Song of Solomon the bridegroom says of the bride, “Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the

honeycomb" (4:11). This was pre-eminently true of the Lord Himself; His words were as refreshing as the dew, and as sweet as the honey and the honey-comb.

Onycha. This word indicates a "finger nail," and seems to be a shell fish that resembled a finger nail in appearance. These shells were crushed and made into a powder that had a most precious fragrance. Out of the great depths these shells came; out of the deep waters. Nails may be the beauty of fingers; the beauty of the fingers of our Lord was the kindness and love He showed out of His deep sympathy and mercy in His deeds of faithfulness and grace.

Galbanum. This was a "gum" from a tree said to be of bitter taste and rather disagreeable odor by itself, but when compounded with the others gave strength to the fragrance. The truth of our Lord's words was often bitter to scribes and Pharisees; sometimes even to His own. His words seemed severe or hard to understand. Truth as well as grace was mingled in all the words and deeds of our Lord. Even His enemies said, "Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men" (Matt. 22:16).

Frankincense. The trees that yielded the frankincense are said often to grow on almost a bare rock. This tree yielded so much where there seemed so little to support it. This was like Him who was as "a root out of a dry ground." The color of the frankincense was white; this again suggested holiness. When the frankincense was burned it was specially fragrant. The Son of God was the One in whom the Father was ever well pleased during His life; but in His death when those fires descended

into His bones (Lam. 1:13). He was in a special way “a sweet savour unto the Lord.”

It is easy to see how infinitely God is absorbed with Christ when all these manifold parts of the tabernacle and its services speak so beautifully of Him. May our hearts be so devoted to His person that like Mary, we betake ourselves often to His feet to hear His words, that we may taste even now the joy and the refreshing of learning of Him.

The Ark

Exodus 25:10-22; 37:1-9.

“And there I will meet with thee” (Exod. 25:22). “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

Its Construction

The same two materials that were used in the making of the incense altar and the table were used in the ark of the covenant. It was shittim wood covered inside and outside with fine gold. It was the wood that did not corrupt, covered with the precious metal that would not rust. The gold in its unchanged beauty spoke of the deity of Christ; the wood that once grew in the shittim tree tells us of the unstained humanity of our Lord. Our Redeemer was He “Whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2); and yet it was He who “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:52).

The dimensions of the ark were: two and a half cubits long, one and a half cubits wide, and one and a half cubits high. Thus the ratio of the numbers are five, three, and three. Five as said before is the number that is written on us because of our five senses.

Righteousness in the linen fence of the court was against us, that fence was five cubits high.

Righteousness was between us and God because of what we were in our members. But the altar of burnt offering was five cubits in length and five cubits in breadth, suggesting that the sacrifice there was God’s provision

to meet our need. The three half cubits in the height and breadth of the ark of the covenant speak of the triune God who Himself provided the ark and mercy seat. In the altar of burnt offering also, the numbers are five and three. Three, the revelation of what God is; five, the revelation of what I am. These two vessels of the tabernacle, the altar of burnt offering with its sacrifice, and the ark of the covenant, with its mercy seat, combine the thought of me and my need, with the thought of God and His provision.

Staves And Rings

The very explicit instructions that the staves were to be in the rings of the ark and not taken from it, shows the continuous identification of the ark with Israel in all their wanderings. It was a pilgrim ark while they were a pilgrim people. The staves must never be withdrawn.

It was in the wilderness with its trials and its failures that the mercy seat was needed by the people of God; those staves to bear the ark were the assurance that the mercy seat would ever be with them. What a gracious provision that was! Some people today who do not know themselves blindly imagine that they do not need a mercy seat. Strangers do not have to penetrate into the secret imaginations of the hearts of these people to know they need a mercy seat; it is apparent to others in their daily lives, but they themselves have so deceived themselves that they profess to believe that now they never sin at all. God who knew His people knew that they needed a mercy seat, always, wherever they might be, and so He provided an ark with staves and rings that the “propitiation” might ever be with them. The candlestick had no staves; the candlestick will have its

perfect fulfillment when the wilderness is over and Christ and His saints are manifest as one in glory. But the ark was for a wilderness people.

The Crown And The Cherubim

The precious blood sprinkled on the mercy seat spoke of the death of Christ, but the crown of gold at the top of the ark spoke of His resurrection. The only crown our Lord wore when here was the crown of thorns (John 19:2); in resurrection God His Father has crowned Him with “glory and honour” (Heb. 2:9).

The first place in the Bible that cherubim are mentioned is in Genesis 3:24. The cherubim there have a flaming sword between them; on the mercy seat they have the precious blood between them. This is what redemption has wrought. The flaming sword that kept the way of the tree of life pierced the heart of the Shepherd of the sheep (Zech. 13:7), and made a way of peace and life for us (Heb. 10:19-22). It may have been a suggestion of all this when in the empty sepulchre of our Lord, Mary Magdalene saw “two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain” (John 20:12). Between these two heavenly beings the blood stained garments of our Lord were lying. These two holy angels with the precious blood between them in an empty grave seemed to say, Now the antitype of the mercy seat has come; here the ark of the covenant with its mercy seat above is fulfilled.

The cherubim or seraphim are seen in Isaiah 6:1-7 in the presence of God; in the presence also of an altar and of an accepted sacrifice. When the prophet cries, “Woe is me for I am undone,” immediately one of the seraphim flies with a live coal, which he had taken with the tongs

from the altar, and with it touched the lips of Isaiah, saying, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged" (Isa. 6:7). If cherubim are the guardians of God's throne as so many think, then it is striking that these heavenly beings applied mercy and cleansing to the humiliated prophet. Grace is in the light of the throne of God (Rom. 5:21). Salvation is according to the righteousness of God (Rom. 3:21).

In Revelation 5:8-9 the cherubim or "living creatures" are seen again in proximity to the throne of God. There with the redeemed they worship. It is the presence of "the Lamb" in the midst of the throne that causes these exalted beings to bend in glad exultation before God. The cherubim belong to God's throne and they delight in redemption by blood.

In Revelation 20:11, the throne of God is seen without cherubim and without a mercy seat; then the wicked dead are arraigned before the dread tribunal of justice; the books are opened, and "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15).

Why Was The Ark Of The Covenant Made?

Read Deuteronomy 10:1-5.

These verses show that the special reason the ark was constructed was to receive the second two tables of stone on which were written the ten commandments. The first two tables were broken by Moses because the first and great commandment was broken by the people when they made the golden calf and worshipped it. The ark of the covenant with its blood sprinkled mercy seat was the way in type that a holy God could still show grace to a sinful and unreliable people. As soon as the ten commandments were written the second time Moses hurriedly put them into that gold covered, blood sprinkled vessel, called the ark of the covenant. In that holy retainer the law was safe; under the blood sprinkled mercy seat, the curse of the law did not smite the people who looked to the blood for peace. Christ is our propitiation, our mercy seat (1 John 2:1-2); the law of God was in His heart (Ps. 40:8), there it was magnified and kept. The One who kept the law has become a mercy seat for us. Our Lord not only kept the law perfectly, as the tables were preserved unbroken in the ark, He actually redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us (Gal. 3:13). This is part of the picture story of the tables of stone in the ark of the covenant covered by a blood sprinkled mercy seat. These foreshadowings are referred to continuously in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Looking Into The Ark

1 Samuel 6:19

The men of Bethshemesh who looked into the ark were not enemies but friends of the ark. Why then did this most severe judgment fall upon them? To look into the ark these men removed the mercy seat. The ark was like a box covered with gold; the lid of the box was the mercy seat. Always between the law on the tables of stone and the people that mercy seat stood. The mercy seat kept the people from coming into direct contact with the holy law. Since all have sinned (Rom. 3:21), there is no one who can endure to come face to face with God's holy law. The law is a "ministration of death" and a "ministration of condemnation" (2 Cor. 3:7, 9); and it showed itself to be this when the mercy seat was removed. This is a solemn parable to all who boast of their own works, and who despise the blood of propitiation.

What Was In The Ark?

Hebrews 9:4

Each of the three things spoken of as in the ark in the verse above carried with it a memorial of Israel's sin.

(1) "The tables of the covenant." It was Israel's sin of idolatry in the golden calf that necessitated these second tables, the first having been broken (Exod. 32:19).

(2) "The golden pot that had manna." Before the manna came the people murmured in unbelief about dying in the wilderness and about graves in Egypt. They thought God would starve them in the desert (Exod. 16:3).

(3) "Aaron's rod that budded." The downright rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram caused the testing by the rods as to whom the services of the priesthood belonged. God had chosen Aaron to be priest, and the opposition of these princes was rebellion against God (Num. 17:1-13). The buds, the blossoms and the almonds on Aaron's rod were the witnesses of God that the priesthood was his. The rod in the ark was a memorial of the rebellion of Korah as well as a memorial of the priesthood of Aaron. In the ark there was a testimony to the fact of the people's unbelief and murmuring, of their idolatry and shame, and also of their rebellion against His authority. Thank God the mercy seat covered all.

It is a striking commentary upon the grace of our God, and what it can do, to notice that the sons of the rebel Korah became the singers of the Psalms in the temple of the Lord. (See the titles to Psalms 42-49).

The Movements Of The Ark

The first time the ark of the Lord is seen journeying is in Numbers 10:33-36, when it goes before them in the three days' journey to search out a resting place for them. It was another three days' journey in figure when the ark led the way through the waters of Jordan (Josh. 3:2; 3:15-17). This was the completion of the three days' journey. On the other side of Jordan the ark found a resting place for Israel.

The picture of the ark with its mercy seat on the shoulders of the priests in the very depths of the river Jordan, together with the words that are written of this great work, "firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan," "in the midst of Jordan till everything was finished" (Josh. 3:17; 4:10), certainly in a most

remarkable way looks on to Calvary. It was at Calvary that God's testimony reached the depths, but there it stood firm. Lower the ark could not go, it was in the midst of Jordan. The word "Jordan" means judgment. The river Jordan empties into the Dead Sea. In that place of judgment and death the ark of God on the shoulders of the living priests stood firm. It stood there till "everything was finished." So He who is the antitype of the ark stood firm in the midst of the seas, unshaken in the depths of death till all was finished for us (John 19:30).

It would take too long to follow the ark of the testimony to Gilgal, to Shiloh, to Ashdod, to Beth-Shemesh, to Kirjath-Jearim, to the house of Obed-Edom and to Jerusalem.

After the days of David, Solomon built God a house; then the ark of God found its resting place. "And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place, to the oracle of the house, into the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims... And they drew out the staves of the ark, that the ends of the staves were seen from the ark before the oracle; but they were not seen without. And there it is unto this day" (2 Chron. 5:7, 9).

Thus shall it be with us when wilderness wanderings are all over, and when the rest of God shall have come. The staves will be drawn out, for glorified saints will never need a mercy seat again. Even then the ends of the staves will be seen "from the ark"; God's wilderness provision will never be forgotten even when it is needed no longer.

With the light of resurrection,

When our changed bodies glow,
And we gain the full perfection
Of the bliss begun below;
When the life the flesh obscureth,
In each radiant form shall shine,
And the joy that aye endureth
Flashes forth in beams divine.
Shall the memory be banished
Of His kindness and His care,
When the wants and woes are vanished,
Which He loved to soothe and share?
All the way by which He led us,
All the grievings which He bore,
All the patient love He taught us,
Shall we think of them no more?
We shall read the tender meaning
Of the sorrows and alarms,
As we trod the desert leaning
On His everlasting arms;
And His rest will be the dearer
When we think of weary ways,
And His light will shine the clearer
As we muse on cloudy days.