Exodus - Commentaries by Edward B. Dennett

Typical Teachings of Exodus, Exodus 30:22-28: The Holy Anointing Oil and the Sweet Spices

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Exodus 30:22-38

The Tabernacle, with its sacred symbols, has now been completely detailed. Two things only are wanting—the anointing oil and the sweet spices. “Moreover, the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, and of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin: and thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil. And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony, and the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt-offering with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot. And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy. And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto Me in the priest’s office. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto Me throughout your generations. Upon man’s flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you. Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices, with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight: and thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy: and thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy. And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the Lord. Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people” (vss. 22-38).

The oil of holy ointment is given first. It was compounded, according to divine direction, from myrrh, cinnamon, sweet calamus, and cassia in their several proportions, mixed with an hin of olive oil (vss. 23-24). The Psalmist, speaking of the Messiah, says, “All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia;” (Psa. 45:8) and in the preceding verse he says, “God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy Fellows” (Psa. 45:7). This will help us to understand the typical meaning of the holy anointing oil. The spices, then, speak of the graces of Christ. His very garments smell of these sweet perfumes. But they were mingled with oil, and oil, as has been frequently stated, is a figure of the Holy Spirit. Combining, then, these two things together, we learn that the graces of Christ—the moral fragrance of His excellencies—were expressed in the power of the Holy Spirit.

This holy anointing oil was used to anoint the tabernacle, the ark, and all the sacred vessels, the priests (vss. 26-30). First, the tabernacle, were anointed. This is of great significance. For looking at the tabernacle as the house of God, the scene of His manifestation, and the place of priestly service and worship, the fact that everything was anointed with the holy oil teaches that everything connected with the house of God, its regulation and service, all the priestly work carried on in it (see 1 Peter 2:5), must be ordered in the power of the Holy Spirit, and that when so ordered it will be expressive of the sweet fragrance of Christ to God. For indeed it is in the power of the Spirit that God reveals Himself, and it is in the power of the Holy Spirit alone that worship and service can be rendered. If therefore everything connected with the house of God were arranged even according to His own word, and yet the holy anointing oil—the power of the Holy Spirit—were lacking, it could not be acceptable to Him. Notice also the effect—everything is sanctified, becomes through the anointing “most holy,” so that whatever touches anything on which the oil has been put should likewise be deemed holy (vs. 29). This is the effect of the action of the Spirit of God. Whatever His power rests upon is set apart for God, and everything that comes under His action, even by contact, is also claimed as holy. The whole sphere of His action is sanctified. (See 1 Cor. 7:14.)

Aaron and his sons were also anointed. The significance of this has been explained in the consecration of the priests. But there is a special reason for its being introduced here in connection with the tabernacle. It is to point out—to emphasize—that the essential qualification for priestly service is the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit. Every other qualification may be possessed—born again, robed, and under the value of the blood; but if there be not, in addition to these things, the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the priestly position cannot be truly occupied. Even our blessed Lord Himself is said to have been anointed with the Holy Spirit, and with power (Acts 10:38), and all who are His must be so likewise if they would enjoy the privileges into which they have been introduced. The lesson is needful in a day of incessant activity, and of legal service on every hand. Let it then be ever remembered that, though children of God, we can neither worship nor serve apart from the present power and action of the Holy Spirit. (See John 4:24; Phil. 3:3.)

There are two warnings. First, “Upon man’s flesh shall it not be poured” (vs. 32). This teaches that the Spirit of God cannot rest upon or dwell in the natural man. It is in direct violation of this truth that in ecclesiastical ordination unconverted men are professedly endowed with the gift of the Holy Spirit. The anointing is never received until after the new birth and known forgiveness of sins. When we are justified by faith, and have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, we are both anointed and sealed. (See Rom. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 1:21-22.) Secondly, no imitation of this anointing oil was to be made under the penalty of death (vs. 33). It is thus a heinous sin to imitate the action of the Spirit. Ananias and Sapphira did this when they professed to devote the whole proceeds of the property they had sold to the Lord’s service (Acts 5). The same penalty, observe, was attached to putting it upon a stranger, upon those who had no title to it. God is holy, and He jealously guards His sovereign rights, and cannot but visit any infringement of them with punishment. If He seems now to pass by such sins unnoticed, it is owing to the character of the present dispensation—being one of grace; but the sins themselves are no less in His sight.

The sweet spices were also made into a perfume by divine direction, and will mean, as in the former case, the graces, the moral fragrance of Christ to God. It appears from chapter 25:6 compared with 35:8, that these spices formed the sweet incense which was burnt upon the golden altar, as also indeed from the direction that it should be put “before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee” (vs. 36). This being the case, there is the additional thought that the graces of Christ were brought out through the action of the holy fire; that His exposure to the judgment of God’s holiness (fire) upon the cross, as there made sin, did but bring out all that was most precious and fragrant to God. He was indeed never more precious in His eyes, His perfections were never more fully displayed, than when He proved His obedience to the uttermost in the very place of sin. Hence He could say, “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again” (John 10:17). It was for God’s glory that He passed through the fire of judgment, and in doing so all the “sweet spices” of His moral graces and the perfection of His entire devotedness were brought out, and ascended up as a sweet savor to God. On this account—because of the preciousness of its typical significance—it was to be beaten very small (for the more it was beaten the more was its fragrance emitted), and put before the testimony of the tabernacle of the congregation, where Jehovah met with Moses. Moses as the mediator would thus be before God in all the acceptability of this holy perfume; and hence God could meet him in grace, and communicate to him His mind and will for His people.

There is also in connection with this a warning with a penalty. None was to be made like it. This perfume was “most holy,” “holy for the Lord” (vs. 37). Whosoever therefore should make any like it, to smell thereto, should be cut off from his people (vs. 38). Counterfeits of the graces of Christ, and finding satisfaction in these, are both an abomination before God. Just as we have seen that the Lord guards against any imitation of the action or the power of the Holy Spirit, so here He also warns against any imitation of the fragrance and preciousness of Christ. Man can neither do the one or the other—whatever his pretenses. But such is the subtlety of our hearts that we often deceive ourselves, as well as others, into the acceptance of the sweetnesses of nature, its grace and amiability, as the work of the Holy Spirit, as resemblances to Christ. There can be no likeness to Christ except as the result of the work of the Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit, as we have seen, is the gift of God. It would be, therefore, hypocrisy of the worst stamp to present knowingly to others any natural qualities, any human graces, the effect of training or cultivation, as the product of the Holy Spirit. Nothing can please God, and nothing should please us. which has not been wrought out by His Spirit for the glory of Christ.

Typical Teachings of Exodus, Exodus 30:17-21: The Laver

Exodus 30:17-21

The laver is the last of the sacred vessels enumerated. Together with this, the Tabernacle and its arrangements are completed. It was placed outside, in the court of the Tabernacle, between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar; that is, between the brazen altar which was inside the entrance into the court, and the entrance into the holy place. Thus, passing the altar of burnt-offering—on their way into the Tabernacle—the priests would encounter the laver on the road. The reason of this will be shown as we proceed.

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Thou shalt also 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” (vss. 17-21).

It will be observed that nothing is said as to the shape of the laver. All the illustrations that are given of it in works on the Tabernacle are without authority—in fact, they are purely imaginary. There is, without doubt, a divine reason for the concealment both of the shape and size, as it is the thing typified, rather than the vessel itself, to which the Spirit of God would direct our minds. The silence of Scripture is as instructive as its speech, and it is the happy privilege of the believer to bow to the one equally with the other. “The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law” (Deut. 29:29).

It was made entirely of brass—both the laver and its foot. The significance of this material has been frequently explained, but may again be recalled. It is divine righteousness testing man in responsibility, and consequently testing man in the place where he is. Brass on this account is always found outside of the Tabernacle, while gold, which is divine righteousness as suited to the nature of God, is found within—in the holy place, as well as in the holy of holies. But testing man, it of necessity condemns him because he is a sinner; and hence it will be found to have associated with it a certain judicial aspect. There is another element to be specified. The laver was made out of a special character of brass, out of the brazen mirrors (see margin) used by the women who assembled at the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation (38:8)—out of the very articles that revealed, in figure, their natural condition, and thereby showed their need of cleansing.1 If the brass therefore revealed and judged the condition of those it tested, the water was there to cleanse and purify. For the water is a symbol of the Word. It is so used in John 3:5, compared with James 1:18 and 1 Peter 1:23-25. It is also found in Ephesians 5:26—in the special sense of the water of the laver.

But this will be seen more fully as we consider the use of the laver. It was for Aaron and his sons to 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” (vs. 20). It was an imperative, as well as a perpetual, obligation upon the priests to wash their hands and their feet on the occasions specified. Now, before explaining the character of this washing, it will clear the way, and aid the reader, to make a few preliminary remarks. Remark then, first, that the washing of the bodies of the priests, as at their consecration, is never repeated. It is the hands and feet only that are repeatedly to be washed in the laver. The reason of this is obvious. Washing the whole body is a figure of being born again, and this cannot be repeated. Our Lord taught this truth in John 13. In reply to Peter He said, “He that is washed” (Lev. 13:55) (literally, bathed; that is, washed all over) “needeth not save to wash” (John 13:10) (another word) “his feet, but is clean every whit.” The feet, or, as in the case of the priests, the hands and the feet might be defiled and need to be cleansed again and again, but the body never, for that was cleansed once and for all in water at the new birth. Observe, secondly, that it is water and not blood in the laver. It has often been attempted to deduce from this ordinance for the priests, that the believer needs the repeated application of the blood of Christ. Such a thought is not only alien from the whole teaching of Scripture, but it also tends to undermine the efficacy of the one sacrifice of Christ. Yea, it impugns the completion of atonement, and consequently the true of

Christ to an abiding seat at the right hand of God. The blood of Christ has to do with guilt, and the moment the sinner comes under its value before God he is cleansed forever; for by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. The one object of the Spirit of God in Hebrews 9 and 10 is to enforce this precious and momentous truth. That it has been lost sight of in the whole of Christendom is only too true; but the guide of the believer is not to be found in the current teachings of men, but in the immutable word of God. Whoever therefore will read the two chapters indicated—and read them with a sincere desire to understand their teaching—will at once perceive that there is never a question of the imputation of guilt to the believer, but that he is entitled to rejoice in having no more conscience of sins, if he has been once cleansed by the precious blood of Christ.

What then, it may be distinctly asked, was the nature of the cleansing at the buyer? It was confined, as pointed out, to the hands and the feet. Comparing this with John 13, a difference will be observed. In the case of the disciples, the feet only were washed; in the case of Aaron and his sons, it was their hands and their feet. The difference springs from the character of the dispensations. The hands are indicated for the priests, as well as the feet, because with them work was in question: they were under law. But with the disciples the feet only are washed—because, though done before the Lord had left them, it was an action typical of the present position of believers—with whom it is no question of work, but one of walk. Let it then be repeated that the priests were never rewashed, or resprinkled with blood. They are looked upon as born again in figure, and as abidingly under the value of the blood. But thereafter comes the question of defilements in their service and walk. Now if there had been no provision for these, they would have been debarred from their priestly functions in the sanctuary; for how could they have gone in before God with defiled hands and feet—into the presence of Him of whom it is said, “Holiness becometh Thine house” (Psa. 93:5)? Hence this gracious provision of the water—symbol of the Word—that, ere they entered into the holy place, they might cleanse their hands and feet from the defilements which they had contracted.

Bearing in mind, then, the difference of the dispensations (as shown by the inclusion of the hands), the teaching of the laver corresponds entirely with that of John 13. That is, it is a question of cleansing from defilements. We find thus our Lord seated with His disciples, and it is said, “having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end” (John 13:1) (vs. 1) This statement is significant on two accounts; first, as showing that it was a dealing with those who belonged to Him; and secondly, as revealing the motive of the ministry which He was about to perform, that indeed it flowed from His unchanging heart of love. “During supper” (not “supper being ended” (John 13:2)), “the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray Him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself” (vss. 2-4). The meaning of this action was—that as He could not continue longer with them, for He was going to God, He would show them how they might have part with Him in the place to which He was going. They had been washed (vs. 10); but in their passage through the world their feet would be defiled, and thereby, unless, as in the case of the priests, provision were made for their cleansing, they would be unable to have part with Him (vs. 8)—they would be unable to enjoy communion either with the Father, or His Son Jesus Christ. Hence He reveals to them, by this symbolic act of washing their feet, how He by His ministry on their behalf would remove the defilements they might contract. There are three points in the act to be noticed. First, having laid aside His garments—emblematic of His departure from this world—He took a towel and girded Himself—an act expressive of His service on behalf of His own. Then, secondly, He poured water into a basin. Water is also here a symbol of the Word. Lastly, He began to wash His disciples’ feet—that is, to apply the Word so as to effect their cleansing. Bearing this in mind, we shall easily understand what answers to this in Christ’s present ministry for His people—the truth really set forth by the laver. The Apostle John says, “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1). The context shows that this is stated of those who have eternal life and are brought into fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. It is also clear that there is no necessity that such should sin, “These things write I unto you, that ye sin not;” (1 John 2:1) and then he adds, “If any man sin.” The advocacy of Christ with the Father is therefore for believers—and a provision for sin after conversion—God’s means of removing the defilements thus incurred. If, then, a believer sin? (there is never any question of the imputation of guilt, but) his communion is interrupted; and this can never inure be enjoyed until the sin is removed—forgiven. As soon as he sins, Christ as the Advocate undertakes his cause, intercedes for him. An illustration of this is found in Luke. “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not” (Luke 22:31-32) (Luke 22:31-32). It is so now—as soon as, not before, the sin is committed Christ intercedes; and the answer to His intercession is the application of the word through the Holy Spirit, sooner or later, to the conscience. An illustration of this point also is found in the same gospel. After Peter had denied His Lord as he had been forewarned, there was no sense of his sin, not even when he heard the cock crow, until the Lord looked upon him (Luke 22:61). This reached his conscience, broke his heart, as we may say, so that he went out and wept bitterly. In like manner, when the believer falls into sin, he would never repent if it were not for the intercession of the Advocate; and, as a matter of fact, he does not repent until, in response to the prayer of the Advocate, the word, like the look upon Peter, used by the Holy Spirit, reaches the conscience and lays bare the character of his sin before God. Then he is at once bowed in the place of self-judgment, and confesses his sin. This leads to the next and final stage. Confessing his sin, he finds that God “is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9); and, his soul restored, he is able once more to enter the tabernacle, or, in other words, to enjoy again fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

This truth—the truth really of the laver—is of all importance for the believer. It is essential, in the first place to know that we are cleansed once and forever as to guilt. But learning this, it is equally essential to understand that if sins after conversion are unconfessed and unjudged, we are shut out from communion with God, disqualified for priestly service and worship; and not only so, but that if we remain in this state, sooner or later God will deal with us, in answer to the intercession of Christ, to bring our sins to remembrance. The advocacy of Christ therefore meets the need of the believer—being, as it is, God’s gracious provision for our sins—for the removal of our defilements, so that we may be free to go in, without let or hindrance, into His immediate presence for worship and praise. One thing more may be added. Aaron and his sons were always to wash at the laver when they entered into the tabernacle. This may teach us our need of continual self-judgment. How often are we hindered in prayer, worship, and service from neglect of this. There has been some failure, and we have not recalled it, or carried it into God’s presence for confession and humiliation; and hence, even if unwittingly, we have been entering the tabernacle with defiled feet. As a consequence we have been made to realize our coldness and constraint, our inability to occupy our priestly position. May we never therefore forget the use of the laver—our constant need of having our feet washed by the loving ministry of our Advocate with the Father!

Typical Teachings of Exodus, Exodus 30:11-16: The Atonement Money

Exodus 30:11-16

The atonement money has been already referred to when treating of the sockets of silver under the boards of the Tabernacle. At first sight, the introduction of the subject in this place seems peculiar; but in truth it is another mark of the perfection of the design of the Spirit of God. The priests have been appointed and consecrated; the golden altar, with the manner of its service, has been described; but before Aaron can approach to burn incense, there must be a redeemed people on whose behalf he must act. For the very essence of the priesthood is that they were appointed on behalf of others. Hence, as soon as the golden altar has been given, the people are identified with the Tabernacle as represented by the atonement money. Every detail of the order of the subjects is therefore divinely arranged. “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them when thou numberest thorn. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs) an half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the Lord. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls. And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls” (Ex. 30:11-16).

Two things appear in the first verse of this direction—the occasion, and the object of the atonement money. The occasion was—“when thou numberest the people.” When they were numbered each man was brought, as it were, individually before God; and this was the precise moment chosen to remind them of their condition, and of their consequent need of redemption. As long as sin is not dealt with, if God is brought into contact with men as such, He must from the very holiness of His nature take cognizance of their guilt. Hence this gracious provision. Its typical significance is simply the truth which is found in every page of Scripture; viz., that all men need a ransom for their souls. The object is “that there be no plague” (vs. 12). For, as has been remarked, if God notices the sinner in his sins, it must be for judgment, unless he is under the protection of atonement. A striking illustration of this is found in the reign of David. The king was tempted, being proud of the strength of his armies, to have his people numbered. “Go,” said he to Joab, “and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people” (2 Sam. 24:2). But he neglected the ordinance as to every man giving a ransom for his soul, and “the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel, from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people, from Dan even to Beersheba, seventy thousand men” (2 Sam. 24:15) This was the more remarkable from the fact that David confessed his sin immediately after the people were numbered; but though the Lord dealt with him in tender grace and compassion, and gave him the choice of the nature of the punishment, judgment could not in righteousness be avoided. The Lord’s claims must be acknowledged. Every one of the people that was numbered was amenable to His righteous judgment, and this was to be acknowledged by the ransom money.

The sum to be given was half a shekel of silver (See chapter 38:25-28), after the shekel of the sanctuary—that is, as explained, ten gerahs. Ten is the number of responsibility God-wards; and the lesson consequently is that man’s responsibility to God as a sinner must be met. Now silver is a figure of the blood of Christ—that is, the silver of the ransom money. Peter alludes to this when he says, “Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:18-19). It will be observed that he speaks of gold as well as silver. There is a special reason for this. On one occasion, after a striking deliverance or preservation of the people from the perils of war, so that when they were numbered it was found that there was not one lacking, gold instead of silver was offered for the ransom money (Num. 31:49-54). The apostle, therefore, combines the two in contrast with, or as a type of, the blood of Christ. Our Lord Himself speaks of giving His life (and the life is in the blood) as a ransom for many. The half shekel of silver was thus a plain figure of the blood of Christ; and hence we learn that it is that precious blood alone that can meet our responsibility to God as sinners, and make atonement for our souls. It is in Christ that we have redemption—through His blood, and in no other way. This is a familiar truth, so familiar that it has become, as it were, a household word. But is there no danger of losing its significance through its very familiarity? Besides, it is against this most blessed and precious truth that all Satan’s art and subtlety and malice are directed. Hence it has come to pass that many, even of the professed teachers of Christianity, have either rejected it, or are occupied in insinuating doubts concerning it. It needs to he proclaimed therefore, and repeatedly proclaimed, with increasing earnestness. But it will never be received, unless it is first understood that man both by his nature and his practice needs redemption, that he is a lost, guilty sinner, and that he cannot redeem himself, that, as the Psalmist says, “None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him” (Psa. 49:7). If this be first accepted, then it may be received that there is no atonement for the soul excepting by the precious blood of Christ; that without the shedding of blood there is no remission; and that it is only by the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, that all sin can be cleansed away.

Another thing demands special notice. Every man, whether rich or poor, was of precisely the same value before God. “The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less” (vs. 15). When the question of sin is raised there is no difference between man and man in the sight of God. “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Some may have gone further in outward iniquity, in open crimes; but as to state before God, all—the outwardly moral as well as the immoral, the rich as well as the poor—are sinners under condemnation. Wealth, position, attainments, or even moral character, are of no avail before God. All alike have sinned, for there is none that doeth righteousness, no, not one, and all alike need the redemption that is to be found through the blood of Christ alone. Man’s heart rebels against this; but the question is, whether it is the truth of God. (See Rom. 1-3.)

Arising out of this truth, every man had to give for himself. They shall give every man a ransom for their souls. In this matter the rich could not give for the poor, but every man for himself was to be brought into distinct and personal relationship with God as to his ransom or redemption. Unless the money of each one numbered was represented in the silver sockets, he could not be regarded as redeemed. It is so now. Every one must have a personal interest in the blood of Christ or he cannot be saved. The prayers of another will not of themselves save him, unless he is thereby, in the grace of God, led to know for himself Christ as the Redeemer. It is my own guilt, my own sins, that need to be cleansed away, and hence, unless I am under the value of the blood of Christ for myself, I am still exposed to the just judgment of a holy God. Let the reader weigh this matter, and weigh it solemnly in the presence of God, and let him not cease to weigh it until he has ascertained whether he has a claim, through faith, upon the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ. It must be a personal transaction, a personal dealing with God, and a personal interest in the blood. Then, and then only, can redemption, through the blood of Christ, be known and enjoyed.

The last thing noticed is the use made of the atonement money (vs. 16). It was appointed for the service of the tabernacle. In fact, as already seen, it went to make the sockets of silver which formed the foundation of the sanctuary. The house of God was founded upon redemption, and the ransomed people were identified thus with it—every one of them being represented by the money which had been given, and represented therefore in all the value of that which the silver typified. The object indeed was, “that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls” (vs. 16). The silver therefore on which the tabernacle rested testified, on behalf of the children of Israel, that atonement had been made for their souls. They might but feebly enter into this blessed fact for themselves; but the memorial was ever before the Lord, and the question then, as now, is rather, Does He look upon us as redeemed Has He accepted our redemption price? For if He is satisfied, we also may surely rest in peace.

Thus in grace God linked the people with the tabernacle in which He Himself would dwell, and into which the priests should enter on their behalf. They might not be permitted themselves to enter, but they were all represented in the atonement money, and had therefore their memorial ever before the Lord.

Typical Teachings of Exodus, Exodus 30:1-10: The Altar of Incense

Exodus 30:1-10

The place which the altar of incense occupies in the directions which Moses received is most instructive. Up to the end of chapter 27 everything is arranged in respect of the manifestation of God—the symbols of display, as they are sometimes termed. Thereon it becomes the question of approaching God; and hence the next thing is the appointment and the consecration of the priests—these only having the privilege of entering the sanctuary. But before proceeding further, the perpetual burnt-offering is given, as considered in the last chapter; for until the people are before God in all the acceptance of its sweet savor, and God Himself is dwelling in their midst, sanctifying the tabernacle by His glory, and setting all apart for Himself, there could be no drawing nigh—no access into His presence in other words, there could be no worship apart from the savor of the sacrifice, and the presence of Jehovah. Everything thus being prepared, the symbols of approach follow—that is, those sacred vessels that were used in connection with coming into God’s presence; and the first of these is the golden altar—or the altar of incense.

“And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it. A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be: and two cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of the same. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make it; and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy-seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations. Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat-offering; neither shall ye pour drink-offering thereon. And Aaron shall make all atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin-offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the Lord” (vss. 1-10).

It was made of the two materials which characterized the ark, the table of shewbread—shittim wood and gold (vss. 1-5). The altar itself therefore—apart from its use—was a figure of the person of Christ—Christ as both God and man, God manifest in flesh. Connected with the altar this is significant—teaching, as it does, that there is no access to God but through Christ, that He indeed is the foundation both of our approach and worship. The priest (the worshipper) at the altar saw nothing but the gold, and God saw only the gold—that which was suited to Him, suited to His own nature. The remembrance of this gives boldness when bowing in His presence. It is indeed a wondrous mercy that Christ is before the eye of God, and before the eye of the worshipper—Himself the meeting place between God and His people, as well as the foundation of His people’s acceptance.

The position of this altar is given in the sixth verse. It was to be put before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony. The brazen altar, as has been pointed out, was outside, in the court of the tabernacle—the first thing that met the eye of one coming out of the camp to the entrance of the court. The lesson was, that the question of sin must be settled before admission could be obtained. The altar of incense was inside—in the holy place—and none but the priests have access to it. There was in fact the laver between; but this is not yet mentioned, because the value of the sacrifice on the brazen altar brings at once (in figure) to the golden altar. The brazen altar tested man in responsibility; and the claims of God’s righteousness having been met by the sacrifice, He could introduce the believer into His own immediate presence—give him priestly privileges, and consequently access, in the person of the priest, to the altar of incense. Once the claims of the brazen altar met, nothing could shut out the worshipper from the golden altar. His title was perfect. This is seen in the epistle to the Hebrews. The blood that was shed on the cross gives boldness of access into the holiest. (See Heb. 10.) There is, therefore, the most intimate connection between the two altars.

The use of the altar may now be considered. Aaron was to burn sweet incense (incense of spices) thereon morning and evening when he dressed the lamps (vss. 7-8). The materials of which the incense was composed are named in verse 34. It is there called a perfume. Remark that it was burnt on the altar. It was the action of fire that brought out its sweet fragrance; and the fire used for this purpose was taken from off the brazen altar. (See Lev. 16:12-13.) The same fire therefore that consumed the sacrifice brought out the fragrance of the incense. This explains its significance. The fire is a type of the searching judgment of God—of His holiness as applied in judgment, and it was through this that our blessed Lord passed when upon the cross. But the only effect of the action of the holy fire upon Him was to bring out a “cloud” of sweet perfume. The incense typifies this—the fragrance of Christ to God; and inasmuch as it was to be a perpetual incense (vs. 8), it shows that this fragrance is ever ascending before the throne. If the efficacy of His work is presented in the savor of the sacrifice, the acceptability of His person is denoted by the incense. The two things are distinguished on the day of atonement. Aaron went in with incense into the holy of holies before he sprinkled the blood upon and before the mercy-seat. So Christ himself entered with His own blood; but if it may be so said, where all is inseparably connected, He Himself takes the precedence even of His blood. It is indeed what He is in Himself that gives the blood

its unspeakable preciousness.

But what, it may be inquired, is the meaning of this action on the part of Aaron? First, Aaron is a type of Christ, and a type of Christ at the altar in the holy place. He is thus, in burning the incense, a figure of the prevailing intercession of Christ. Aaron, be it remembered, goes into the holy place in all the virtue of the sacrifice which has been consumed upon the brazen altar. The incense moreover that he burns with the holy fire is always acceptable to God. Hence it teaches that the intercession of Christ ascends to God acceptably through the efficacy of what He is, and what He has done. It cannot therefore fail. And as this incense was perpetual, so He ever lived to make intercession for us; and on this account He is able to save His people to the uttermost—all the way through—even to the end of their wilderness journey. What comfort this assurance gives to His people encompassed by the infirmities, difficulties, and trials of their desert path! Secondly, Aaron at the altar of incense is a figure of the believer, inasmuch as all believers are priests. This aspect is exceedingly instructive; for thus regarding the burning of the incense it is a type of worship. First, then, it should be observed again, that Aaron (and the believer as presented by him) is before the golden altar in all the sweet savor of the burnt-offering. For it is through the virtue of this sacrifice that access into the holy place is enjoyed. This is of great importance. It teaches that there can be really no worship until we know what it is to be brought into God's presence in all the acceptance of Christ—not only knowing that our sins are cleared away, but also apprehending that we are before God in all the acceptability of Christ Himself—in all his inexpressible fragrance. Secondly, it is Christ, in all that He is to God, which is presented to God in worship—not our own feelings, not our own thoughts, but that which delights the heart of God, and that is Christ Himself, Christ as the One who has glorified Him on the earth, and finished the work which He gave Him to do. Thirdly, we gather that the essence of all worship lies in communion with God in all that Christ is, and in all that He has done. For when we worship by the Holy Spirit, we present to God that in which He delights, and we delight in that which we present, and thus our thoughts, feelings, and affections are in unison with those of God Himself. Then worship—adoration of the highest character—is the result. Such is our priestly work at the altar—the perpetual presentation of the merits of Christ; and if we intercede there, our intercession also is according to the value of Christ. Hence He could say, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you" (John 16:23).

There is a connection, it will be observed, between the incense and the lamps. Aaron is directed to burn the incense when he dresseth the lamps morning and evening. The lamps, as explained when speaking of the candlestick, are the manifestation of God in the power of the Spirit. This was seen in perfection in Him who was the light of the world, and should be displayed likewise both in the Church and in the believer. But the point here is, that the light was maintained by priestly care. Aaron dressed the lamps. It is so now. The manifestation of God in the power of the Spirit is ever dependent upon the priestly action of Christ; and the burning of the incense—intercession or worship—will always be in proportion to the display of the Spirit's power. These three things, indeed, are inseparable—the priestly care of Christ, the manifestation of God in the power of the Spirit, and the worship of His people. In other words, if believers are not shining as lights in the world, they cannot burn incense at the golden altar, they are powerless for worship. Walk and worship are related; for if the believer is not in the presence of God in his ways throughout the week, he will not know what it is to be inside the rent veil when gathered around the Lord at His table to announce His death. Or, still to put another aspect, there will be no worship except as the result of the manifestation of God in the power of the Spirit. Hence the lamps must be dressed when the incense is burnt.

Warnings follow as to the use of the altar; and if Leviticus 10:1 be combined with this scripture, there are three things forbidden to be used upon this altar. First, there must be no strange incense. The incense offered must be divinely compounded, and no other could be accepted. If for a moment this be taken literally, what awful presumption is witnessed in many "churches" in Christendom in this day! Base imitations of this holy compound—the penalty of making which was death (see vs. 38)—are used in public services by those who claim to be priests, and for the worship of God. Even a Jew would regard it as abomination, and yet professing Christians can endorse its use! Surely an evidence both of the corruption of Christianity, as well as the power of Satan. Looking at it as an emblem, we are taught that nothing but the fragrance of Christ is acceptable to God in worship. Everything offered apart from Christ is "strange," and cannot be accepted. Secondly, no burnt sacrifice, no meat-offering, and no drink-offering, must be offered upon this altar. This would be to confound the golden with the brazen altar, and consequently to forget our true priestly position. It would be the same mistake now, if, when gathered for worship, we took our place at the cross, instead of inside the rent veil. This is an error into which many souls unwittingly fall. The consequence is, they never know the joy of being brought to God in virtue of the work of Christ, and hence they cannot occupy their true priestly position. Lastly, the scripture from Leviticus forbids the use of strange fire. It must be God's fire—fire kindled from heaven, from before the Lord (Lev. 9:24), and no other. Applying this to believers, the lesson is, that they can only worship by the Spirit of God. Natural fervor and natural emotions, however produced, would in this sense be "strange" fire. It was for this reason, doubtless, that the priests were forbidden to drink wine or strong drink when they entered into the tabernacle. The effects of wine simulate those produced by the Spirit of God. (See Acts 2:13-15.) The fire, equally with the incense, must be divine to be acceptable upon the golden altar—a lesson which Christians of this day would surely do well to lay to heart when the attempt is made on every hand, by sights and sounds, to work an the natural man, and to aid him in the worship of God. May they learn that all such things are really abominations in the sight of God!

Once a year atonement was to be made upon the horns of the altar with the blood of the sin-offering of atonements (vs. 10). The account of this is found in Leviticus 16. The reason of it was the imperfection of the priesthood. The true place of the priest was before the golden altar; and being what he was, he defiled the very place of his approach to God (compare Lev. 4:7); and hence the need of the continual application of the blood of atonement. This is instructive from its typical contrast. One sacrifice now avails forever. Christ has perfected forever by His one offering them that are sanctified; and consequently without interruption they enjoy perpetual access even into the holiest of all.

Finally, a remark may be made upon the provision for the carrying of the altar through the wilderness. The staves and the rings are given here, and need no observation, as they are of the same material as the altar. But in Numbers 4:11 we find that there were two coverings: first, a cloth of blue, and secondly, outside, the badgers' skins. The blue—emblematic of what is heavenly—the heavenly character, as flowing from priestly intercession, and indeed as connected with the priestly position—was concealed. It was for the eye of God alone. Then came the badgers' skins—signifying that holy vigilance by which Christ guarded Himself from evil. This is outside, because it is a question of passing through the wilderness—where evil abounds. It teaches therefore that if the heavenly character is to be maintained, there must be unwearied watchfulness, and incessant diligence to guard ourselves—through the use of the Word—from the contaminations and pollutions which beset us on every hand.

Typical Teachings of Exodus, Exodus 29:38-46: The Continual Burnt-Offering

Exodus 29:38-46

Following upon the consecration of the priests, we have directions for the continual burnt-offering—continual because it was to be offered morning by morning, and evening by evening, throughout the generations of the children of Israel. It was, in fact, a perpetual daily sacrifice.

“Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even: and with the one lamb a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil; and the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink-offering. And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereto according to the meat-offering of the morning, and according to the drink-offering thereof, for a sweet savor, an offering made by fire unto the Lord. This shall be a continual burnt-offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to Me in the priest’s office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the Lord their God” (vss. 38-46).

There are, it will be observed, three things in this scripture; namely, the burnt-offering and its accompaniments; the meeting place between God and His people; and Jehovah dwelling among them, and being their God.

The burnt-offering was composed of two lambs of the first year, one to be offered in the morning, and the other in the evening. It was never to cease being offered. (See Num. 28:3, 6, 10; Ezra 3:5.) Its meaning, as explained in the last chapter—that is, as an emblem of the sacrifice of Christ in this character—is His devotedness unto death, wherein He, in the place of sin and for God’s glory, proved His obedience to the uttermost, even to being made sin for His people. All therefore was consumed upon the altar, and went up as a sweet savor unto the Lord (see Lev. 1); and this sweet savor set forth the acceptability of His death to God, yea, the infinite delight which God found in the death of Christ in obedience to His will. Inasmuch, therefore, as the offering before us was perpetual, God laid a foundation thereby on which Israel could stand and be accepted in all its fragrance and savor. It thus becomes no mean type of the position of the believer, revealing the ground of his acceptance in the Beloved; for just as the sweet savor of the continual burnt-offering ever ascended to God on behalf of Israel, so Christ in all His acceptability is ever before His eyes on behalf of His own. We can therefore say,

“As He is, so are we in this world;” (1 John 4:17) for we are in the divine presence in all the savor of His sacrifice, and in rail the acceptance of His person.

The accompaniments of the burnt-offering were two; first, “a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil;” (vs. 40) and, secondly, “the fourth part of an hin of wine” (vs. 40). The first was a meat, and the second a drink-offering. The meat-offering, as was pointed out in connection with the consecration of the priests, is an emblem of the devotedness of Christ in life, His entire consecration to the will and glory of God. The fine flour was mingled with oil (see also Lev. 2), to shadow forth the mysterious truth that Christ as to His humanity was begotten of the Holy Spirit. It represented consequently the perfection of His life below—His life of perfect obedience, every energy of His soul flowing out in this channel, finding it His meat to do His Father’s will, and to finish His work. Israel was consequently before God in all the value and acceptance of His life and death—of all that He was to God, whether considered in the perfect consecration of His life, or in the highest expression of the perfection of His obedience as displayed when He was made sin on the cross. The drink-offering was composed of wine. Wine is a symbol of joy—“it cheereth God and man;” and since it is here offered to God, it speaks of His joy, His joy in the sacrifice presented. But it was offered by His people, by the priest on their behalf. It expressed on this account also their communion with the joy of God in the perfectness of the life, and the devotedness unto death, of His only begotten Son. Such is the heart of God. He would bring us into fellowship with Himself, have us feast on His own delights, that the joy of His own heart, flowing out, and filling also ours, might overflow in praise and adoration. Hence John says, “Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3).

The next point is the meeting place of God with His people. Moses was permitted in grace to meet Jehovah at the mercy-seat (Ex. 25:22; Num. 12:8); but the people could not pass beyond the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. It was here that the burnt-offering was presented on the brazen altar; and hence this was the meeting-place, on the ground of the sacrifice, between God and Israel. There could be no other possible place; just as now Christ forms the only meeting-place between God and the sinner. It is most important to see this truth—especially for those that are unsaved—that apart from Christ there can be no drawing nigh to God. “I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John 14:6). Mark well, moreover, that God cannot be approached except on the ground of the sacrifice of Christ. This is the truth foreshadowed in connection with the burnt-offering. If the cross, Christ crucified, be ignored, no relationships can be had with God, excepting those that may exist between a guilty sinner and a holy Judge. But the moment the sinner is led to take his stand upon “the sweet savor” of the sacrifice to God, upon the efficacy of what Christ accomplished by His death, God can meet with him in grace and love.

There is a further thing—the consequence of coming to meet and dwell with His people. God will sanctify the tabernacle by His glory; He will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar; and He will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons to minister unto Him in the priest’s office (vss. 43-44). In virtue of the sacrifice He claimed everything, and set all apart, to Himself. The tabernacle, the altar, and the priests are alike sanctified—claimed as belonging to, and for the service of, Jehovah. The expression “by My glory,” as applied to the tabernacle, is remarkable. There only in all the earth, in the holy of holies, was His glory manifested—in the bright cloud, the Shekinah, which was the symbol of His presence. Being thus displayed, it separated the tabernacle off from every other thing on the face of the earth, made it a holy place, sanctified it. But more. His glory being there became the standard of everything presented. The question—looked at in its higher aspects, in the light of the truth now possessed—for all who approached, and for everything that was offered, was accordingly that of suitability to God’s glory. Hence we read in the epistle to the Romans that “all have sinned and come short of His glory,” showing that unless we answer to its claims, could even stand before the immediate display of His glory, we are guilty sinners. It goes still further. The Tabernacle itself was on earth, and in the midst of God’s earthly people. As sanctified by His glory, therefore, it became also prophetic—prophetic of the day when the whole earth will be filled with His glory. It was thus a bright promise of millennial blessing.

This leads on to the third thing—God dwelling in the midst of His people. This was the declared object of the erection of a sanctuary (25:8); and the end of His dwelling with them was that they might be brought into relationship with, and know Him as the God of redemption, as the One who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. The ground indeed of His dwelling in their midst was accomplished redemption. Thus, as has been already said, He never dwelt with Adam, Noah, Abraham, or the patriarchs, however intimate the intercourse with Him which they were permitted to enjoy. Nor did He, nor could He, dwell with Israel while in the land of Egypt; but after He had brought them out of the house of their bondage, and across the Red Sea, He then desired to have His sanctuary in their midst. The sweet savor of the sacrifice—emblem of the acceptability of the sacrifice of Christ to God—made it possible for Him thus to surround Himself with those whom He had redeemed. But there is more than even dwelling with them: there is also relationship. “I will be their God” (vs. 45). It is not, be it remarked, what they shall be to Him, though they were His people by His grace, but what He will be to them. “Their God”—words fraught with unspeakable blessings; for when God undertakes to become the God of His people, deigns to enter into relationship with them, He assures them that everything they need, whether for guidance, sustenance, defense, succor—yea, everything, is secured for them by what He is to them as their God. It was in view of the blessing of such a wondrous relationship that the Psalmist exclaimed, “Happy is that people, whose God is the Lord” (Psa. 144:15). As, however, we have seen, if He dwelt among them it was that they might know Him—and know Him through redemption. This was the desire of His heart, and in pursuance of it He had visited them in Egypt, smitten Pharaoh and his land and people with judgments, brought them out with a high hand and an outstretched arm, brought them unto Himself, and now directed that His tabernacle should be erected. He would have His joy in the happiness and joy of His redeemed—in surrounding Himself with a happy, rejoicing people. Such was His thought, however little they entered into it; but a thought which, if postponed, will one day find its full and perfect embodiment. The Tabernacle in the wilderness, indeed, surrounded by the tribes of Israel, is figure of the eternal state. The purpose which God expresses here was repeated (Lev. 26:12) and reaffirmed as to the millennium (Ezek. 37:27-28). But these were but shadows of the full blessing that God designed for His people, and could not be more because of what they were; and hence it is not until the eternal state is reached that it is realized in perfection. Even now God dwells upon the earth, for the church is His habitation through the Spirit; and every believer, who has received the Spirit of adoption, is a temple of the Holy Spirit. But when all God’s purposes in Christ are accomplished, the redeemed of this dispensation will, as the new Jerusalem, form the eternal tabernacle and dwelling place of God (Rev. 21).

Typical Teachings of Exodus, Exodus 29:1-35: The Consecration of the Priests

Exodus 29:1-35

Having given the details concerning the priestly robes, the Lord instructs Moses, in the next place, as to the ceremonies to be observed at the consecration of the priests. For the moment the first three verses may be passed over, as the particulars of the general directions upon the subject of the sacrifices to be offered are found further on in the chapter.

“And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water. And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod: and thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre. Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him. And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them. And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them: and the priest’s office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons” (vss. 4-9).

The first part of the process was washing them with water, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation (vs. 4). This action is most significant, as water is a symbol of the word of God, as for example in John 3:5; Ephesians 5:26. Emblematically therefore this was the new birth, or sanctification by the Word, being thereby set apart for the service of God. Our Lord thus prayed: “For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might he sanctified through the truth” (John 17:19). Aaron was washed with water—if he be considered by himself—to make him in figure a type of the absolute purity of Christ. Christ was personally without spot; Aaron is rendered so typically by the application of the Word, through the sanctification of the Spirit, as it is termed by Peter (1 Peter 1:2). If Aaron is taken in association with his sons, the washing proclaims in type the truth that only those who are born again, separated unto God by the application of the Word to their souls, can occupy the place of priests, and enjoy the privilege of “ministering” in the holiest, Priests cannot be made by man, and the pretense of doing so is utterly to ignore the plainest and most fundamental teaching of the Scriptures. Priests can only be made by God, and every one who is born again, cleansed by the precious blood of Christ, and indwell by the Holy Spirit, is a priest. To arrogate the claim therefore of ordaining priests—and to do so apart even from the question of their condition before God—is to intrude into a region which borders upon profanity, as well as to deny the rights and privileges of all the people of God.

Aaron is now separated from his sons for the next action; he is robed and anointed alone. First, the priestly garments, described in the last chapter, are put upon him—the garments for glory and beauty. Thereon he is anointed with oil which is poured upon his head. It has already been explained, and must be here recalled to understand this action, that when Aaron is alone he stands before us as a type of Christ; but that when he is in company with his sons, the Church is shadowed forth as the priestly family. This gives the meaning of his being anointed with oil immediately after being arrayed in the sacerdotal robes. Afterward it will be seen that he, together with his sons, is sprinkled with blood before the anointing oil. It is as a figure of Christ, that he is anointed without blood. For Aaron’s great Antitype being absolutely holy needed not the blood, and hence it is recorded that, on His entering upon His mission to Israel, He was anointed by the Holy Spirit at His baptism (Matt. 3; Acts 10:38). He received the Holy Spirit, was anointed, on the ground of His absolute holiness, whereas His people (as will be seen) are sealed and anointed on the ground of their perfect cleansing by His precious blood. Aaron being anointed by himself without blood is a type of Christ—Christ in His full character as Priest, the Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Aaron and his sons present the Church as the priestly family, but as associated with Christ. First, as in the case of Aaron alone, they are all robed. These garments are not the same as those described in detail in the last chapter, but those briefly indicated at the close. They are said to be coats, girdles, and bonnets, and were of fine linen, and embroidered, and said also to be “for glory and for beauty” (ch. 28:40) (28:39-40; 28:9). The fine linen embroidered shows forth the purity of the nature of Christ adorned with every grace. The robing of Aaron’s sons is really the putting on of Christ; and this, in fact, brings them into association with Him; for the Church possesses nothing apart from Christ. If believers, for example, are brought, into the position of priests, and the enjoyment of priestly privileges, it is in virtue of their

connection with Him. He is the Priest, and He it is who makes them priests. (See Rev. 1:5-6.) Everything flows from Him. Thus, when Aaron is put into company with his sons, it is not so much that he becomes merged into the priestly family, but rather to teach that all the blessings and privileges of the priestly family are derived from Christ. But in order to this they must first be invested with robes for glory and for beauty—robes which adorn them with the glory and beauty of Christ.

The next step was the sacrifice of the sin-offering. Aaron and his sons were encompassed with infirmity, were sinful men, and needed to offer for themselves, as well as for the sins of the people. They must be brought, consequently, under the typical value of the blood before they could enter upon their sacred office and minister in the sanctuary. Hence the following direction:

“And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock. And thou shalt kill the bullock before the Lord, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar. And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul that is above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and burn them upon the altar. But the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung, shalt thou burn with fire without the camp: it is a sin-offering” (vss. 10-14).

The sin-offering is a type of Christ bearing the sins of His people. Remark then, first, that Aaron and his sons put their hands upon the head of the bullock. This action signified the identification of the offerers with the victim to be offered. (Compare Lev. 4:4.) After the laying on of their hands, therefore, the bullock which was about to be slain stood before God as the representative of Aaron and his sons in their sins. Their guilt was symbolically transferred, imputed to the victim, which is now looked upon as bearing their sins. Hence by the act they owned their guilt, their desert of death, and their need of a substitute. In the next place the bullock was to be killed before the Lord. As charged with the sins of Aaron and his sons, the stroke of justice fell upon the appointed victim, thereby proclaiming that death was the penalty of sin. If they at all entered into the meaning of what was being enacted, how solemn this transaction must have appeared in their eyes They must have had a glimpse of the real character of sin before God when the bullock was brought, and when, after silently laying their hands upon its head, it could not be spared, but must die. It is a shadow, if only a shadow, of the cross—of the death of the Lord Jesus, whose soul was made an offering for sin And it is as we stand there in spirit, and hear His cry, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Psa. 22:1). that we are made to comprehend the awful nature of sin—its hatefulness to God, inasmuch as it necessitated the death of His only begotten Son. Believers, as they look back upon that solemn scene, can say, “His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree;” (1 Peter 2:24) and at the same time learn something of the doom from which, by the grace of God, they have been delivered. Surely it was grace, and grace alone, that provided the sacrifice; and it was love, deathless, unquenchable love, on the part of Him who suffered Himself to be led as a lamb to the slaughter that He might redeem us to God.

After the victim was slain the blood was sprinkled. It was put upon the horns of the altar, and the rest was poured out beside the bottom of the altar (vs. 12). The blood was thus wholly for God. The life is in it (Lev. 17:11), and this action consequently signified that the life of the victim was offered up to God instead of that of Aaron and his sons. This was done on the principle of substitution—God in grace accepting the death of the sin-offering in the place of that of those for whom it was offered. Further, the fat that covered the inwards, and the caul, were burnt upon the altar. The fat was prohibited to the children of Israel equally with the blood. It is an emblem of inward energy, force of will. It is burnt upon the altar because the sin-offering was a type of Christ, and thus teaches that, while He was charged with the sins of His people, God found in Him, even as in the case of the burnt-offering, that which completely answered to His own mind—truth in the inward parts. His infinite acceptability to God was never more fully proved than when He bowed His head under the sins of His people, In grace He took our place; but in thus accepting the stroke of judgment that was our due, every thought of His heart, every movement of His will, every energy of His soul, were perfect before God. It was indeed in His death on the cross that He proved His obedience to the uttermost, that He showed that the glory of God was so completely the one motive of His giving Himself up to death, that not even the waves and billows of judgment could turn Him aside. Lastly, the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung, were burnt without the camp. It was a sin-offering, and as such must be cast out and consumed, inasmuch as it was looked upon as under the imputation of the guilt of Aaron and his sons. It was thus altogether it type of Christ—of Christ as suffering without the gate, rejected of men, forsaken by God, because He, in His grace and love, suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. This process completed, Aaron and his sons were now under all the efficacy and value of the sin-offering.

The burnt-offering follows the sin-offering. “Thou shalt also take one ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. And thou shalt stay the ram, and then shalt take his blood, and sprinkle it round about upon the altar. And thou shalt cut the ram in pieces, and wash the inwards of him, and his legs, and put them unto his pieces, and unto his head. And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a burnt-offering unto the Lord: it is a sweet savor, an offering made by fire unto the Lord” (vss. 15-18).

As in the case of the sin-offering, Aaron and his sons put their hands upon the head of the burnt-offering; but instead of the transference or the imputation of their guilt, they themselves are transferred, so to speak, so as to become identified with the ram about to be slain. In other words, while the actions are similar the effects are contrasted. The victim in the sin-offering is looked upon, after the laying on of hands, as laden with the guilt of those for whom it was about to be offered as a sacrifice; whereas in the burnt-offering Aaron and his sons are regarded by the same act as invested with all the acceptability of the sacrifice. Their sins were transferred in the first instance, and in the second their standing was changed on to the ground of the value of the offering. The ram was then slain, and the blood sprinkled round about upon the altar; the life was presented to God, This was not all; but the whole ram, having been cut in pieces, and its inwards having been washed, to make it a more fitting type of the spotlessness of Christ, was burnt upon the altar. “It is a burnt-offering unto the Lord: it is a sweet savor, an offering made by fire unto the Lord” (vs. 18). In the sin-offering the flesh of the bullock, were burnt with fire without the camp; but the whole ram of the burnt-offering was consumed upon the altar because the whole was acceptable to God. The burnt-offering is a type of the perfect devotedness of Christ unto death; and in this aspect it is not looked upon as bearing sins, but as wholly consecrated to the will and glory of God. As such, therefore, Christ on the cross, under the action of the holy fire—tested, that is, by the searching judgment of God’s holiness, was entirely a sweet savor to God. As bearing sins, God hid His face from Him; but as obedient unto the death of the cross, when through the Eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God, He furnished a new motive for love to the Father’s heart. “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again” (John 10:17). In this aspect “He was in the place of sin, and God glorified as no creation, no sinlessness could. All was a sweet savor in that place, and according to what God was as to it in righteousness and love.” The difference between the two offerings is shown by the words used. The word “burn” in the burnt-offering is not the same as that used in

connection with the sin-offering, but the one employed for burning incense. This of itself denotes the infinite fragrance and acceptance of Christ as the burnt-offering. But the point in our scripture is, that it was offered for Aaron and his sons; and accordingly as soon as it was consumed upon the altar they were brought also under all its efficacy. Their sins were cleared away by the sin-offering, but now they stand before God in all the positive acceptance and savor of the burnt-offering—both of these results being gained for the believer by the death of Christ, for these offerings do but present the varying aspects of His one sacrifice.

These offerings were in a measure preparatory, relating rather to their personal fitness. The ram of consecration is now added. Speaking generally, this sacrifice has the character of a peace-offering (see Lev. 3), and represents another aspect of the death of Christ—its value for us, the obligations under which we are brought, and the communion with God, with the Priest, and with the whole Church into which we are introduced. But here it has special relation to the office of Aaron and his sons, as will be seen from the scripture.

“And thou shalt take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons’ garments with him. Also thou shalt take of the ram the fat and the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and the right shoulder; for it is a ram of consecration: and one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer out of the basket of the unleavened bread that is before the Lord: and thou shalt put all in the hands of Aaron, and in the hands of his sons; and shalt wave them for a wave-offering before the Lord. And thou shalt receive them of their hands, and burn them upon the altar for a burnt-offering, for a sweet savor before the Lord: it is an offering made by fire unto the Lord. And thou shalt take the breast of the ram of Aaron’s consecration, and wave it for a wave-offering before the Lord: and it shall be thy part. And thou shalt sanctify the breast of the wave-offering, and the shoulder of the heave-offering, which is waved, and which is heaved up, of the ram of the consecration, even of that which is for Aaron, and of that which is for his sons: and it shall be Aaron’s and his sons’ by a statute forever from the children of Israel: for it is an heave-offering: and it shall be an heave-offering from the children of Israel of the sacrifice of their peace-offerings, even their heave-offering unto the Lord.

“And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons’ after him, to be anointed therein, and to be consecrated in them. And that son that is priest in his stead shall put them on seven days, when he cometh into the tabernacle of the congregation, to minister in the holy place.

“And thou shalt take the ram of the consecration, and seethe his flesh in the holy place. And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy. And if ought of the flesh of the consecrations, or of the bread, remain unto the morning, then thou shalt burn the remainder with fire: it shall not be eaten, because it is holy. And thus shalt thou do unto Aaron, and to his sons, according to all things which I have commanded thee: seven days shalt thou consecrate them” (vss. 19-35).

As in the two preceding offerings, so here, the hands of Aaron and his sons are laid upon the head of the ram of consecration, and thereby they are identified with its value before God. Thereon two distinct actions in respect of the blood are given. First, after the ram was killed, the blood was put upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron and of his sons, on the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot; and it was sprinkled at the same time upon the altar round about. They were thus brought under the value of the atoning blood; for the blood that was offered to God on their behalf, brought them also under His claims, so that henceforward they were not their own, but bought with a price. These several parts of their bodies were therefore sprinkled to signify, that from this moment they were to hearken alone, act alone, and walk atone, for the Lord as those who were redeemed by the precious blood. It is so, too, with believers of this dispensation. Inasmuch as they are redeemed, they belong to the Redeemer, and, set at liberty from the bondage and power of Satan, they enjoy the precious privilege of living unto Him who has died for them, and risen again. Their ears, hands, and feet are all to be used for Him, in His service. After this, a second thing was directed. Both they and their garments were to be sprinkled with the blood upon the altar, and with the anointing oil (vs. 21). They are thus set apart by the blood, and by the unction of the Holy Spirit. “And it is important to remark here that the seal of the Holy Spirit follows on the sprinkling with blood, not on the washing with the water. That was needed. We must be regenerate; but it is not that cleansing which puts us by itself in a state God can seal; the blood of Christ does. We are thereby perfectly cleansed as white as snow, and the Spirit comes as the witness of God’s estimate of the value of that blood-shedding. Hence, too, all were sprinkled with Aaron. The blood of Christ, and the Holy Spirit, have set us in association with Christ, where He is according to the acceptableness of that perfect sacrifice (it was the ram of consecration), and the presence, liberty, and power of the Holy Spirit.” The cross and Pentecost are in fact connected—the efficacy of the blood, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, and both are here enjoyed—at least in figure.1 These three steps lead to the Christian position. Washing with water comes first, then cleansing with blood, and lastly the unction of the Holy Spirit. “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Rom. 8:9).

In the next place, parts of the ram of consecration (vs. 22), “and one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer” (vs. 23), were put in the hands of Aaron and his sons to be waved for a wave-offering before the Lord. The loaf, the “oiled bread” (vs. 2 Compared with Lev. 2) was a meat-offering, representing Christ in the perfection of His humanity, or rather the holiness of His life in devotedness to God, the entire consecration of every faculty of His soul to the will and glory of God. Taken then in connection with the parts of the ram, their hands were, in fact, filled with Christ, with Christ in all that He was in life, and all that He was in death to God. Now the meaning of the word, which is translated in this chapter “consecrate,” as may be seen from the margin, is “to fill the hand” (Ezek. 10:2). This gives us the scriptural signification of consecration. The general thought is, that it lies in our yielding something to God, and hence the soul is thrown back upon itself to seek for strength to devote itself and all its energies to God’s service; and, indeed, with this view, it is often called upon to attain it by a solemn act of self-surrender. Scripture reveals a better way. It lies, as seen in this chapter, in being filled with Christ. It is Christ possessing, absorbing, and controlling, our souls. It requires no effort therefore on our part, though indeed it requires the maintenance of constant self-judgment, the abiding refusal of the flesh in every shape and form. For Christ is willing, yea, desires, to possess us wholly, and if the Spirit be ungrieved, He will dwell in our hearts by faith; and as then He becomes the alone object of our lives, so He alone will be expressed in our walk end conversation. This is consecration according to God—as prefigured by filling the hands of Aaron and his sons.

Having waved the contents of their hands before the Lord, Moses received them, and burnt them upon the altar for a burnt-offering, for a sweet savor before the Lord: it. is an offering made by fire unto the Lord. This teaches us both what is acceptable to God in worship, and

consequently what is true priestly work. It is the presentation of Christ—the Christ who has passed through the holy fire of judgment, as made sin for us on the cross—it is this which ascends up as a sweet savor to God. This, indeed, is having fellowship with God concerning the death of His Son; our souls entering, by the Spirit, both into what He is, and into the character of His death, and presenting Him and His work, as thus apprehended, before the eye of God. We delight in presenting, and He delights in receiving. And, blessed be His name, He first fills our hands, and He alone can first fill our hands, with that which He delights to accept. This, then, is our work as priests, our privilege as worshippers, ever to present Christ before God. It will therefore be easily understood, that the flesh can have no part in such work, that, in fact, worship can only be by, and in the power of, the Holy Spirit.

Finally, there are divers instructions concerning eating different parts of the ram of consecration. Moses was to have his part—the breast—after it had been waved for a wave-offering before the Lord (vs. 26). Aaron and his sons had their part (vss. 27-28, 31-32). Thus God, and Christ as Priest, and the whole Church, as symbolized by Aaron and his sons, feed alike upon the offered sacrifice. It was the fellowship of God, of Christ, and His people—all having their part—in accomplished atonement. We also learn that Christ, alone is the food of His people. Brought under the full value of His sacrifice whereby they are consecrated and sanctified, He becomes their sustenance and strength (vs. 33). Two prohibitions are added. First, no stranger should eat of this priestly food. It must be confined to those who are hallowed for the office of priests. Secondly, the flesh of the consecrations must be eaten the same day (vs. 34). Priestly food must be eaten in connection with the altar. In like manner you cannot feed upon Christ if you dissociate Him from the cross. It is as offered to God, and glorified by Him because of the work He accomplished, that He is our food, and is fed upon in fellowship with God.

Seven days these ceremonies were to be repeated; and seven days the altar was to be sanctified (vss. 36-37). The priests must have a perfect consecration, and the altar at which they were to serve must be perfectly sanctified. The consecration and the sanctification alike must be according to the perfection of the requirements of a holy God.

Typical Teachings of Exodus, Exodus 27:9-19: The Court of the Tabernacle

Exodus 27:9-19

The brazen altar having been prescribed, the court of the Tabernacle follows. This, it will be remembered, was the open space surrounding the Tabernacle, enclosed by hangings of fine twined linen, as detailed in this scripture. It formed the third division—when considered as a part of, or rather as connected with, the Tabernacle proper. In this, as shown before, there were the holy of holies, the innermost compartment; then, passing outward, the holy place; and then the court which is here given. This is also a manifestation of God—teaching how that Christ is ever before the mind of the Spirit in every part of the sanctuary; and that Christ is thus the only key to unlock its mysteries.

“And thou shalt make the court of the tabernacle: for the south side southward there shall be hangings for the court of fine twined linen of an hundred cubits long for one side: and the twenty pillars thereof and their twenty sockets shall be of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver. And likewise for the north side in length there shall be hangings of an hundred cubits long, and his twenty pillars and their twenty sockets of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver. And for the breadth of the court on the west side shall be hangings of fifty cubits: their pillars ten, and their sockets ten. And the breadth of the court on the east side eastward shall be fifty cubits. The hangings of one side of the gate shall be fifteen cubits: their pillars three, and their sockets three. And on the other side shall be hangings fifteen cubits: their pillars three, and their sockets three. 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. All the pillars round about the court shall be filleted with silver; their hooks shall be of silver, and their sockets of brass. The length of the court shall be an hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty every where, and the height five cubits of fine twined linen, and their sockets of brass. All the vessels of the tabernacle in all the service thereof, and all the pins thereof, and all the pins of the court, shall be of brass” (vss. 9-19).

It appears from this description that the court of the Tabernacle was one hundred cubits long, and fifty cubits broad (vss. 9-13). It was made as follows: first, there were twenty pillars on each of the two sides, north and south (vv, 10-11), and ten pillars at each of the two ends, east and west—the pillars on the east side, the side of entrance, being made up of three on each side of the entrance, and four for the hanging of the gate of the court (vss. 12-16). Altogether there were sixty pillars. On these pillars—or, to speak exactly, on fifty-six of them—excluding the four which were for the hanging of the gate—were suspended the fine twined linen which formed the court. Of this there were one hundred cubits on each side, fifty cubits at the west end, and thirty on the east (vss. 9-15)—altogether two hundred and eighty cubits.

The gateway, at the east end, was composed of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework—the same in every respect as the hanging for the entrance into the holy place—and was twenty cubits in length. The sockets of the pillars were all of brass, and the hooks and the fillets for the hanging were of silver (vs. 17). The typical teaching of these things will be perceived to spring from their twofold symbolical presentation of Christ and of the believer.

The fine twined linen, is an emblem, as shown more than once, of the spotless purity of Christ, of the positive purity of His nature. Here it may be seen in another way. The measurement of these hangings of fine twined linen was two hundred and eighty cubits. In the curtains of the Tabernacle (26:1-2) there were also two hundred and eighty cubits—there being ten curtains, and each curtain being twenty-eight cubits in length. The measurements of these two were therefore equal. The curtains of the Tabernacle present Christ, Christ in His nature and character, and Christ in His future glories and judicial authority; but as so presented He was for the eye of God, and for the eye of the priest. As such He could not be seen from without, only from within. The fine twined linen hangings present Christ also, but not so much to those within as to those without. They could be seen by all in the camp. It is therefore the presentation of Christ to the world, Christ in the purity of His nature. He could thus challenge His adversaries to convict Him of sin; Pilate had to confess again and again that there was no fault in Him; and the Jewish authorities, though they sought with eagle-eyed malice, failed to establish, or even to produce, a single proof of failure. Not a single speck could be detected upon the fine twined linen of His holy life, His life of practical righteousness which flowed from the purity of His being.

There is another thing. These hangings were five cubits high (vs. 18); and their lengths at the two sides one hundred cubits, and at the two ends fifty and thirty cubits. These latter numbers can all be divided by ten and five. Accepting then the power of these numbers as

responsibility towards God, and responsibility towards man, it follows that the spotless purity of His life sprang from His perfectly meeting this twofold responsibility. He loved God with all His heart, and His neighbor as, yea, more than, Himself. To those therefore whose eyes were opened these curtains proclaimed the coming of One who should perfectly answer in His life and walk to every claim of God.

The pillars, their sockets, fillets. The material of the pillars is not stated. It might seem, at first sight, from the tenth verse, as if they wore of brass; but on comparing chapter 38:10, it is most probable that the brass refers alone to the sockets. It might be inferred from analogy that they were of shittim wood overlaid with brass; but where Scripture is silent human inferences are, even if permissible, uncertain. Two things, however, are mentioned. They were socketed in brass, and capped with silver (Ex. 38:17). Brass is divine righteousness testing man in responsibility. Hence, indeed, brass is characteristic of the outside, as gold is of the inside, of the Tabernacle. Man's responsibility must be tested and met before he can be brought into God's presence. Christ in presenting Himself to the world, as symbolized by the fine twined linen hangings, stands upon the ground of having met every claim of divine righteousness. This is the foundation of His character as Savior. Silver speaks of redemption. The pillars were capped with it, and the curtains were suspended upon it. So Christ displays the efficacy of His work. It is His crown of glory even at the right hand of God. If therefore He searches the sinner by the sockets of brass, He declares to him at the same time the value of the blood as shown by the silver. Brass testing man discovers his need, and as soon as the need is known, the silver is there to meet it. The pillars were fifty-six in number—excluding those for the gateway—on which the hangings were suspended. Fifty-six are seven times eight. Seven is the perfect number; and eight is that of resurrection. The practical righteousness of Christ, perfectly displayed in His earthly life, is sealed as it were by His resurrection. He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4).

The hanging for the gate of the court is the same as the curtain forming the entrance into the holy place, and, as in that, adumbrates Christ in all that He is in connection with the earth, His heavenly character, His royal glories as Son of man and as Son of David, and His spotless purity. Once again there are no cherubim, and this is because He is here the Door, the Way, as presented to the world; for we are told that God sent not His Son to judge the world (that was not His mission then), but that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:17). There are now no cherubim and a flaming sword to keep the way of the tree of life, for that flaming sword has descended upon that holy victim which was offered up to God on Calvary, and thus having satisfied, and that forever, the claims of God's holiness, He can now present Himself in all the attractions of His person and grace to the world, as the way, the truth, and the life. There, before the eyes of all, this hanging for the gate was displayed, and while every color told of Christ, all together, in their harmony and beauty, united in the proclamation, "By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10:9). It may be observed also that Christ is the way into the holy place, and into the holy of holies as well as into the court. "He is the only doorway," one has remarked, "into the varied fields of glory which are yet to be displayed, whether on earth, in heaven, or the heaven of heavens."

But there is yet another aspect of the court of the Tabernacle. If, on the one hand, it presents Christ, it gives, on the other, and because it is Christ, the standard of the believer's responsibility. No lower one can be raised or accepted; for He has left us an example that we should walk in His steps. The measurements, considered in this aspect also, are significant. The curtains of the Tabernacle were, as stated, two hundred and eighty cubits. These display Christ before the eye of God. But as He is, so are we in this world (1 John 4:17). They are therefore the curtains of privilege—revealing, as they do, our perfect acceptance before God. The fine twined linen hangings were also two hundred and eighty cubits, and inasmuch as they display the practical righteousness of the life of Christ, His blameless walk, His spotless purity, they are the curtains of responsibility. In the Revelation it is said that the fine linen is the righteousnesses of saints (Rev. 19:8). The responsibility of the saint is measured by his privilege, by what he is before God. There is another thought. Our responsibility to walk as Christ walked (1 John 2:6) is our responsibility to God. But these curtains were five cubits high. Five, it will be recalled, is the number of responsibility towards man; and thereby it may be learned that we are responsible to man as well as to God—responsible to present Christ in our walk and conversation.

The pillars may also point to the believer. Socketed in brass, grounded in divine righteousness, whose claims have been met, and with the value of redemption, as typified by the silver upon our heads, are prerequisites for such a display of Christ. There were also pins and cords (27:19; 35:18). These were for stability—to keep the pillars with the fine twined linen hangings in their place. Interpreting this of the believer, it will teach that the source of his strength is not in himself, that he needs a power from without if he is to maintain the exhibition of practical righteousness before the world; and, indeed, the wider truth, that, though he is given a standing on the ground of divine righteousness, and is under the value of redemption, he could not maintain the position for a single moment if left to his own resources. The pins and cords therefore reveal that the believer is "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5). All is of God; all that the believer is, has, and enjoys, is the gift of His grace. His position as well as his responsibility can only be maintained in dependence on the Lord. All these pins, equally with the vessels of the Tabernacle in all the service thereof, and all the pins thereof, were of brass (Ex. 27:19). Thus everything outside the holy place and the holy of holies, was characterized by divine righteousness, but divine righteousness testing man in responsibility because it was the meeting place between God and the people. (See Ex. 29:42). Since, however, man cannot of himself meet its claims, the righteousness of God is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe. While therefore he is saved by grace, he stands, as so saved, upon the immovable foundation of divine righteousness before God. For grace reigns, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 5:21).

Typical Teachings of Exodus, Exodus 27:1-8: The Brazen Altar

Exodus 27:1-8

Passing outwards from the holy place, the first thing met, when the Tabernacle and all its arrangements were duly ordered, was the laver. But this is omitted here for the same reason that the altar of incense was not described in the last chapter. It was a symbol of approach, and not of display; and consequently the brazen altar is next given. This, as will be seen, had a peculiar character. It was a manifestation of God, and, at the same time, was the meeting place between Him and the sinner. It is in this aspect the boundary of His display; that is, He does not go out in manifestation beyond this limit; for, meeting the sinner here, the sinner (that is, the priest acting on his behalf), when everything is prepared, has the liberty from this point of passing in, and would thenceforward need the symbols of approach.

“And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits. And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns shall be of the same: and thou shalt overlay it with brass. And thou shalt make his pans to receive his ashes, and his shovels, and his basins, and his fleshhooks, and his firepans: all the vessels thereof thou shalt make of brass. And thou shalt make for it a grate of network of brass; and upon the net shalt thou make four brasen rings in the four corners thereof. And thou shalt put it under the compass of the altar beneath, that the net may be even to the midst of the altar. And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with brass. And the staves shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar, to bear it. Hollow with hoards shalt thou make it; as it was showed thee in the mount, so shall they make it” (vss. 1-8).

Before entering upon the uses of the altar, it will be necessary to explain its typical meaning. The shittim wood is found here equally with the ark, the table. But it was overlaid with brass instead of gold. Brass, indeed, is its characteristic. Now brass is divine righteousness, not like that symbolized by the gold according to what He is in Himself, suited, that is, to the divine nature, but as testing man in responsibility. It has always allied with it, on this account, a certain judicial aspect, inasmuch as, meeting man in responsibility, it of necessity judges him because he is a sinner. The altar as a whole, then, is God manifested in righteousness. Hence it formed the meeting place between God and the sinner; for as long as the sinner is in his sins, God can only meet him on that ground, where he is as under responsibility. The altar consequently was the first thing that met the sinner’s eyes when coming up out of the world into the court of the Tabernacle. But then it was an altar—and as such was a symbol of the cross of Christ. When the sinner therefore came to the altar, when he came believing in the efficacy of the sacrifice, though the altar tested him in responsibility, he found that all his sins were gone, and that he could stand before God in all the sweet savor of the sacrifice which had been consumed there. Its very position displays this character. It was just outside of the world, and just inside the court. So when Christ was rejected, He was cast out of the world—lifted up above it, when nailed to the shameful tree. But there on the cross, as on the altar in figure, He met and bore the whole of man’s responsibility—went down under all God’s holy judgment against sin, and so abundantly answered to every claim of His glory, that the fire fed gratefully upon the sacrifice, which, totally consumed upon the altar, went up as a sweet savor of acceptance to God. It was the burnt-offering, and not the sin-offering, which was placed upon the brazen altar. The sin-offering was burnt without the camp. The brazen altar teaches rather what God found—His part—in the death of Christ; and it is not until we have learned this truth that we can draw near with holy boldness into His presence.1

If we consider now the uses of the altar, further instruction upon this point will be gleaned. It was preeminently, as just stated, the altar of burnt-offering (Lev. 1). Besides this, parts of the meat-offering, of the peace-offering, and indeed of the sin-offering, were also burnt upon “the altar of burnt-offering” (ch. 30:28) (See Lev. 2:2; 3:5; 4:10.) Without entering at this time into the specific characteristics of these several sacrifices, it will be enough to say that they shadow forth different aspects of the death of Christ; and it is therefore in the combination of all, that we learn the infinite value, and the unspeakable preciousness of that one sacrifice which they typify. The brazen altar tells therefore of Christ, of that one sacrifice of Christ when He through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God. When the sinner (an Israelite) therefore brought a sacrifice, he owned by that very act that he could not of himself meet God’s righteous claims, that he was a sinner, and as such had forfeited his life; and hence it was that he brought another life to be offered up in his stead. Coming thus, He identified himself with the sacrifice, as shown by putting his hand upon its head (Lev. 1:4). If he brought a sin-offering, the fat only of the inwards, of which was burnt upon this altar (see Lev. 3), when he put his hand upon its head, his guilt was transferred (in figure) to the offering, and it was consequently burnt as an unclean thing—charged with the offerer’s sins—outside the camp. If it were a burnt-offering, by the same act of laying his hand upon the head of the victim he became transferred, as it were, into, completely identified with, all the acceptance of the sacrifice. Two things were thus effected. On the one hand, his sins were put out of God’s sight; on the other, he was brought before God in all the acceptance of Christ. Thus, if the altar tested man in righteousness, it revealed the grace that had provided a perfect sacrifice on his behalf; so that God could meet him in grace and love, as well as in righteousness, and give him a title to stand in perfect acceptance in His holy presence. The very size of the altar illustrates this truth. It was five cubits square. It was responsibility man-wards completely displayed and met in the cross of Christ.

How abundant then the encouragement which God gives to the sinner! The claims of His throne, His government, have been met by the altar; for the blood has been sprinkled upon it, and the sacrifice has been consumed. He can therefore receive in grace and in righteousness every one that in faith approaches the altar; and it is to announce these glad tidings that the gospel is sent forth into every land. The cross of Christ is the meeting place now between God and the sinner. It is on the foundation of what was accomplished there that He can be just and the Justifier of every one that believeth in Jesus. There is no other ground on which He can bring the sinner into His presence. If the Israelite rejected the brazen altar, he shut himself out forever from the mercy of God; and, in like manner, whoever rejects the cross of Christ, shuts himself out forever from the hope of salvation.

The horns of the altar may also be considered. There were four—one on each corner (vs. 2). In certain cases the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled upon these, as, for example, in the sin-offering for the ruler or for one of the common people (Lev. 4:25, 30). The horn is a symbol of strength. When therefore the blood was sprinkled upon the horns, the whole strength of the altar (and it was displayed in all its completeness) which had been against, is now exercised on behalf of the sinner. The horns of the altar became thus a place of refuge, an inviolable sanctuary, for all who were rightfully under their protection on the ground of the sprinkled blood. Joab sought this protection when he fled from Solomon (1 Kings 2:28); but inasmuch as he had no claim upon it, for he was a murderer, he was slain. This is like the sinner who, in his extremity, would fain claim the benefits of the death of Christ to escape the judgment, though he is still alienated in heart from Him But wherever there is trust in the value of the sacrifice which has been offered to God upon the altar, there is no power in earth or hell that can touch the soul that rests under its shelter and protection.

It will be interesting to look for a moment at the provision for the journey detailed in Numbers 4 “And they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth thereon: and they shall put upon it all the vessels thereof, wherewith they minister about it, even the censers, and the fleshhooks, and the shovels, and the basins, all the vessels of the altar; and they shall spread upon it a covering of badgers’ skins, and put to the staves of it” (vss. 13-14). The purple cloth was put immediately upon the altar. Purple is royalty, and this makes the interpretation evident. It is the sufferings of Christ—as seen in the altar—and the glories that should follow, as shown by the purple. The cross first, and then the crown. But the altar was in the wilderness, and hence the badgers’ skins were without, covering up the purple. The time for the assumption of the royal glory of Christ had not yet arrived. In the meantime the badgers’ skins—emblem of that holy vigilance which guarded Him from evil while passing on through the wilderness in rejection, and while waiting for the time of His kingdom, were alone seen.

The vessels of the altar were all made of brass, in harmony with its characteristic feature. The staves wherewith the altar was to be borne were of shittim wood and brass, as the altar itself. Finally, Moses is again reminded that the pattern shown him in the mount must be his guide. The wisdom of God alone could devise the altar which was to embody so many blessed truths. A king Ahaz, enamored by the beauty of the Syrian altar, may reject the altar of God (2 Kings 16); but it was the ruin of him and of all Israel (2 Chron. 28:23). So now men may refuse the preaching of the cross of Christ, finding in it, according to their thoughts, either a stumbling block or foolishness, and choose an altar for their worship which meets their own aesthetic tastes, and which will not therefore offend the prejudices of the natural man; but, as in the case of Ahaz, it can only end in their everlasting ruin. God only can prescribe the suited way and method of access to Himself.

Typical Teachings of Exodus, Exodus 26:31-37: The Beautiful Veil

Exodus 26:31-37

The framework of the Tabernacle, considered in the last chapter, comprised the Tabernacle proper; that is, the holy place, and the most holy. Outside of this, as will be seen in due course, there was the court of the Tabernacle, completing the threefold division. But inside the framework there were only these two—the holy place and the holy of holies. So far, however, this division has not been shown; but provision is now made for it in the direction given in the following scripture concerning the veil,

“And thou shalt make a vail of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made: and thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold: their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver.

“And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place. And thou shalt set the table without the vail, and the candlestick over against the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south: and thou shalt put the table on the north side. And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework. And thou shalt make for the hanging five pillars of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, and their hooks shall be of gold: and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them” (vss. 31-37).

(1) There are several distinct points in the description of the veil to be considered. As to its materials, it will be perceived that they correspond in every particular with those of the curtains forming the Tabernacle (26:1). As in these, therefore, so in the veil, it is Christ who is presented—Christ in what He is as to His nature and character, Christ in what He will be as Son of man and Son of David in the future glories of His millennial reign, and Christ, moreover, as Son of man invested with supreme judicial power. There is one difference to be noted. In the curtains of the Tabernacle the fine twined linen comes first; here the blue has the precedence, and the fine twined linen comes last. The reason is that the curtains display Christ in connection with the earth, and hence the absolute purity of His nature is the first thing declared; whereas the veil shows Christ rather in connection with heaven, and consequently the blue—His heavenly character—is prominent. The interpretation of the veil is found in the epistle to the Hebrews: “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh” (Heb. 10:19-20) (Heb. 10:19-20). From this two things may be gathered. First, that just as the veil in the Tabernacle concealed the scene of the immediate presence and manifestation of God, so the flesh of Christ, Christ in incarnation, concealed from the natural eye the presence-chamber of God. He was God manifest in flesh; but His flesh, at the same time, was calculated to blind the eyes of men to this astounding fact. The second is, that just as the veil was the only way into the most holy place, so Christ is the only way to God. He thus said to Thomas, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John 14:6).

The supports of the veil were threefold. There were, first, the pillars, then the hooks, and lastly, the sockets of silver (Ex. 26:32). The pillars were of shittim wood, overlaid with gold—as seen in the boards. This symbolizes, as shown more than once, the person of Christ in His two natures, human and divine—as the God-man. The lesson then is—inasmuch as the veil was supported by these pillars—that everything in redemption depends upon the person of Christ. If He had not been man, He could not have died for our sins; and if He had been only man, His sacrifice could not have availed for all His people. But being God and man, He could make propitiation for the sins of His people and for the whole world (1 John 2:2) The whole value of His work flows from His person; and hence the importance of holding fast the true Scriptural teaching on this point, and of guarding this most blessed doctrine on every hand. If the truth of the person of Christ could be undermined, the whole fabric and structure of redemption would be endangered. Hence the care and, it may be added, the delight of the Spirit of God to testify to it in every shape and form, in figure and type, as well as in distinct words. The hooks were of gold. Gold is divine righteousness. If thee, as shown, everything in redemption depends upon the person of Christ, it is equally true, as seen in the fact that the veil was suspended upon these hooks of gold, that everything likewise depends upon the display of God’s righteousness in Christ. Or it might be affirmed more directly still, that Christ holds the place of the way to God in divine righteousness. For since He glorified God on the earth, and finished the work which He gave Him to do, God’s righteousness was seen in raising Him from the dead, and setting Him at His own right hand. All that God is, is concerned, and righteously concerned, in placing and sustaining Him in the position He thus occupies. The sockets were of silver—figure of the blood of atonement. This carries us down to the foundation of all—the work which Christ wrought out on the cross. These two things—the blood and the veil—are conjoined in the passage already cited from the Hebrews. God will never have it forgotten that the cross is the foundation of everything, of the blessing both of the church and of Israel, as well as of the reconciliation of all things. And the delight of His own heart in what Christ is and has done, is sufficiently revealed in the fact, that every minute thing in connection with His sanctuary points to the one or the other—all alike revealing, if in different aspects, Christ and His work.

The position of the veil is most important. “And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy,” (vs. 33). It thus shut off, as before explained, the holiest of all, in which the ark of the testimony—the throne of God on earth—was placed, so that none might enter there, save Aaron once a year on the great day of atonement (Lev. 16). And what, it may be asked, was the meaning of this? The answer may be given in the words of Scripture: “The Holy Spirit this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing?” (Heb. 9:8). If then, on the one hand, as we have seen, the veil, as a figure of Christ, teaches the blessed truth that it is through Christ alone that access can be obtained to God, the veil in itself; on the other hand, speaks of distance and concealment.

God indeed could not fully reveal Himself, could not righteously go out to the sinner, or bring the sinner in to Himself, until the question of sin should be taken up and settled once and forever. This Christ did, and, as a consequence, immediately that He gave up the Spirit, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom (Matt. 27). The veil therefore in the Tabernacle showed that the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest, and by that, not only proved that the question of sin was not yet dealt with, but also that the people were sinners, and as such unfit for the presence of God. Both gifts and sacrifices were offered on their behalf, but these could not make them that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience, or they would have possessed an indefeasible title to enter the holiest. No; it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins; and hence, with guilt bound upon their consciences, they dared not come into the presence of a holy God; and He (be it said with all reverence) could not go out to them, for God in His holiness is a consuming fire.

The existence of the veil therefore reveals the contrast between the position of Israel and that of believers. Israel was shut out, never had access into the holiest; Moses, owned in grace as the mediator, and Aaron as the high priest, once a year, were alone permitted to enter. But now every believer enjoys this precious privilege. (See Heb. 10:19-22.) The veil is rent; for “Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:11-12). Inside the rent veil is therefore our only place of worship; and we can enter with all boldness, because Christ by one offering hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. Nor should another contrast be forgotten. Even when Aaron did enter the holiest, he was not in the presence of God as the believer now is. God was only revealed then as Jehovah; but now believers know Him as their God and Father. Hence the apostle says, “Through Him (Christ) we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Eph. 2:18) (Eph. 2:18; see also John 20:17). While therefore we are filled with admiration at the wisdom of God, as seen in the depicted glories and adumbrations of Christ in the Tabernacle, we are constrained to bow before Him with adoring praise as we learn, by contrast, the grace that has brought us into the full enjoyment of all here typified, and of even larger blessings than these.

(2) The arrangement of the holy furniture follows (vss. 33-35). It will be needful to remember once again that the altar of incense is not yet described, because it is a symbol of approach (and hence belongs to the last division of this section). The articles given are all symbols of display. Leaving on this account, for the present, any detailed exposition, a brief notice may be given of the arrangement in this scripture. The ark, first of all, was to be put into the holiest, and the mercy-seat upon the ark of the testimony—with “the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy-seat” (Heb. 9:5). Nothing else was found in the most holy place, because, as before explained, it was the scene of the presence and manifestation of God. There, dwelling between the cherubim, He was approached with the incense from off the golden altar, and with the blood of the sacrifices on the day of atonement; and there Moses stood to receive communications for the people. The beautiful veil shut it off from the holy place. It was therefore the inner compartment of the Tabernacle. Outside the veil, in the holy place, the table of shewbread and the candlestick were arranged; the former on the north, and the table on the south side. To borrow the language of another, “Outside the veil were the table with its twelve loaves and the golden candlestick. Twelve is administrative perfection in man; seven, spiritual completeness, whether in good or evil. The two are found outside the veil, inside which was the most immediate manifestation of God, the Supreme, but who hid Himself, as it were, in darkness. Here was light and nourishment; God in power in union with humanity; and God giving the light of the Holy Spirit. Therefore it is that we have twelve apostles attached to the Lord in the flesh, and seven churches for Him who has the seven Spirits of God. The twelve tribes were, for the time being, what answered externally to this manifestation. it is found in the new Jerusalem. The primary idea is the manifestation of God in man and by the Spirit.” And these two truths are connected—shown to be connected by the relative positions of the table and the candlestick; the light of the candlestick indeed ever testifying to the truth embodied in the table at shewbread.

(3) The last thing connected with this part of the subject is the “hanging for the door of the tent,” This “hanging” shut off the court of the Tabernacle from the holy place, and formed the doorway into it. It occupied the same position in reference to the holy place, as the beautiful veil did in respect of the holy of holies. When therefore the priests came from the court (not yet described), they passed through this “hanging” into the holy place to accomplish their service. Its materials correspond with those of the beautiful veil. But there is one important difference. There were no cherubim embroidered on the “hanging.” Otherwise it was the same; and hence the typical teaching of the one will apply to the other. What, then, is the significance of the omission of the cherubim? These, it will be remembered, set forth the Son of Aran in His judicial character. The “hanging,” then, equally with the veil, is a figure of Christ—with His judicial character carefully excluded. The reason is obvious. In the “hanging” He is presented in grace, to those that were without, as the way into the position and privileges of priests, as the way into the presence of God in this character. The pillars are also made of the same material, as well as the hooks; and point likewise to the person of Christ, and to divine righteousness, as accomplished and displayed in Him at the right hand of God. But there are five pillars instead of four. This may arise from what has been already stated—that the “hanging” is Christ in presentation to the world in grace, and thus brings with it the thought of responsibility man-wards. The sockets were of brass instead of silver. Brass, as ever, is divine righteousness testing man in responsibility. This will be more fully explained in the next chapter; but it is easily understood that Christ presented in grace, is Christ presented to, and hence a test of, responsible man. The moment, however, the question of his sins is settled, not only before God, but also for his own conscience, Christ is become for him the way into God’s presence. Thereafter everything is socketed in silver, for he stands now upon accomplished atonement; in Christ he has redemption through His blood.

Everything still portrays Christ. It may be, and undoubtedly is, difficult to interpret some of the minute details; if, however, Christ is before the soul, some ray of His glory will soon be discovered, Let there but be patience and conscious dependence, combined with watchfulness against the activity of the mind, and the Spirit of God will delight to unfold these shadows to the souls of His people.

Typical Teachings of Exodus, Exodus 26:25-30: The Framework of the Tabernacle

Exodus 26:15-30

There are several distinct things comprised in this section. First, the framework of the Tabernacle, with its foundations, is described.

“And thou shalt make boards for the tabernacle of shittim wood standing up. Ten cubits shall be the length of a board, and a cubit and a half shall be the breadth of one board. Two tenons shall there be in one board, set in order one against another: thus shalt thou make for all the

boards of the tabernacle. And thou shalt make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards on the south side southward. And thou shalt make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons. And for the second side of the tabernacle on the north side there shall be twenty boards: and their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. And for the sides of the tabernacle westward thou shalt make six boards. And two boards shalt thou make for the corners of the tabernacle in the two sides. And they shall be coupled together beneath, and they shall be coupled together above the head of it unto one ring: thus shall it be for them both; they shall be for the two corners. And they shall be eight boards, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board.

“And thou shalt make bars of shittim wood; five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle, for the two sides westward. And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall reach from end to end. And thou shalt overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings of gold for places for the bars: and thou shalt overlay the bars with gold. And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was showed thee in the mount” (vss. 15-30).

Attending carefully to the particulars given, it will be seen that the number of the boards constituting the tabernacle, was forty-eight. There were twenty for the south side (vs. 18); twenty for the north side (vs. 20); six for the sides of the tabernacle westward (vs. 22); and two for the corners of the tabernacle in the two sides (vs. 23)—making the total of forty-eight. Then observe that each of these boards had two tenons (vs. 17); and each tenon had for its base, or foundation, a socket of silver (vs. 19, 25). In addition there were four sockets of silver underneath the pillars for the beautiful veil (vs. 32); so that there were one hundred sockets of silver underneath and supporting the framework of the Tabernacle.

(1) Beginning then at the foundation, the typical teaching of the sockets of silver may be first considered. Leaving, however, their full exposition until the subject is reached in chapter 30, it will suffice now to indicate its outlines. We find, then, that when the people were numbered, every man was to give half a shekel of silver as a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, that the rich should give the same as the poor, and the poor the same as the rich; and that this “atonement” money was appointed for the service of the tabernacle (30:11-16). In another scripture, it is stated that the sum thus given amounted to one hundred talents, and one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels; and that the hundred talents were used for the sockets of the boards, and the rest for hooks for the pillars (38:28). It is thus evident that the silver sockets, being made up of the ransom money, are a figure of atonement, of the blood of Christ, which He gave as a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28). It is in allusion to this, and to Numbers 31:49-54, that Peter writes to Jewish believers, “Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold” (1 Peter 1:18). The blessed truth is therefore taught that God’s dwelling place is founded upon redemption, the redemption which has been effected through the precious blood of Christ. But God’s dwelling place is now composed of believers, and hence the church as such, and every individual believer as forming part of the church (for every Israelite of the required age was represented in the atonement money), are placed before God upon the sure and efficacious foundation of accomplished atonement. The ground of the standing of every believer is the precious blood of Christ, and hence he appears before God in all its unspeakable and infinite value.

Now, as explained, there were one hundred of these sockets—that is, ten times ten. Ten is the number of responsibility towards God. The blood of Christ therefore, as represented by the silver, has met the highest expression of our responsibility God-ward—has made an atonement adequate—fully adequate—to all God’s claims, and thereby cleared us completely and forever. Well might the soul, in the perception of this perfect work, joyfully exclaim—

(2) The boards; and first as to their material, form, and length. They were made of the same materials as the ark, and the table of shewbread—of shittim wood, overlaid with gold (vss. 15, 29). They therefore refer primarily to Christ; but also, as will be seen, to the believer. Each board had two tenons—which fitted in their respective sockets of silver. Two in Scripture is the number of adequate testimony: as, for example, “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established” (2 Cor. 13:1) (2 Cor. 13:1 Deut. 19:15). Each board contains therefore in itself an adequate testimony to the value and completeness of the atonement on which it rests. (Compare 1 John 5:6.) The length of each was ten cubits (vs. 16). This again points to responsibility God-wards—in this case applicable to believers. Having a standing before God on the ground of redemption, responsibility is never to be forgotten. The standing indeed is the measure of it; and accordingly each board was ten cubits in length.

Together, as we have seen, they were forty-eight in number—that is, twelve times four. Twelve is administrative perfection; and four is completeness on earth. The whole number therefore will be administrative perfection displayed in all its completeness in Christ, or, if the boards are taken in connection with the divine dwelling place, through the house of God. The former will be witnessed during the millennium; and, in one aspect, the latter too, as Christ will not reign apart from the church. The two numbers, twelve and four, are thus characteristic of the holy city, the New Jerusalem. It may be, that the Pentecostal church at Jerusalem, organized under the twelve apostles, was a passing shadow of this administrative perfection.

One thing more is noticeable—the provision made for their security when standing in their silver sockets. There were five bars of shittim wood on either aide, running through rings of gold (vss. 26-29); and the boards were in addition, coupled at the corners by rings (vs. 24). The ring is a symbol of security—there being no end to it; and consequently, since the bars were to strengthen and secure the framework, the two together may well signify eternal security. And this both the church and the individual believer enjoy. Concerning the former, the Lord Himself said, “Upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18); and of the latter, “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 pluck them out of My hand” (John 10:27-28).

The boards completed, they are then to be set in their places. And remark that, once again, Moses is admonished to do everything according to the pattern he had been shown in the mount. It was to be truly an “example and shadow of heavenly things,” (Heb. 8:5) and consequently there was no room for human thoughts or imaginations. Obedience was the part of Moses, and faithfulness in the execution of the heavenly design. So now fidelity to the word of God, obedience to every part of it, is what God requires from believers in connection with His church. Once admit human regulations, human authority, and the church ceases, in so far, to be a true witness for God. This is the third time that this injunction has been given—showing the importance of obedience in the eyes of God.

Typical Teachings of Exodus, Exodus 26:1-14: The Curtains of the Tabernacle

Exodus 26:1-14

The last chapter closes with an injunction to obedience. Man's thought or design must have no place in God's house. There His authority must be upheld and acknowledged as supreme. This is a principle of the last importance; and is accordingly assorted again and again in the course of these communications. Having then reminded Moses that the pattern shown him in the mount must be ever kept in view, the Lord proceeds to instruct him concerning the composition, size, of the curtains which were to form the tabernacle, the tent, and their coverings.

"Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubim of cunning work shalt thou make them. The length of one curtain shall be eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and every one of the curtains shall have one measure. The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; and other five curtains shall be coupled one to another. And thou shalt make loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling; and likewise shalt thou make in the uttermost edge of another curtain, in the coupling of the second, Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that is in the coupling of the second; that the loops may take hold one of another. And thou shalt make fifty taches of gold, and couple the curtains together with the taches: and it shall be one tabernacle.

"And thou shalt make curtains of goats' hair to be a covering upon time tabernacle: eleven curtains shalt thou make. The length of one curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and the eleven curtains shall be all of one measure. And thou shalt couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and shalt double the sixth curtain in the forefront of the tabernacle. And thou shalt make fifty loops on the edge of the one curtain that is outmost in the coupling, and fifty loops in the edge of the curtain which coupleth the second. And thou shalt make fifty taches of brass, and put the taches into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one. And the remnant that remaineth of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remaineth, shall hang over the backside of the tabernacle. And a cubit on the one side, and a cubit on the other side, of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent, it shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle on this side and on that side, to cover it. And thou shalt make a covering for the tent of rams' skins died red, and a covering above of badgers' skins" (vss. 1-14).

There are, it will be seen, four sets of curtains. The first is termed the tabernacle (vss. 1-6); the second—those made of goats' hair—is named the tent (vss. 11-12); and the remaining two are called simply "coverings." Three terms (and it is so also in the original) are applied to the four sets of curtains; namely, "the tabernacle" to the innermost of all, "the tent" to the second, and "coverings" to the outermost two—those made of rams' skins dyed red, and those made of badgers' skins.

Following the order of the scripture, the inner set—the tabernacle—may be first considered. These are made of four materials—fine twined linen, blue, purple, and scarlet. Besides this, there were cherubim embroidered (see margin) upon them. It is in these materials that their typical teaching lies. The fine twined linen is a symbol of spotless purity. The priests were on this account clothed with it (Ex. 28:39-43); and on the great day of atonement Aaron was dressed in this material (Lev. 16:4) that he might typify the absolute purity of the nature of the One of whom he was but the shadow. In the New Testament the fine linen is spoken of as the righteousnesses of saints (Rev. 19:8). The blue is always a symbol of what is heavenly—the very color pointing unmistakably to this significance. The purple is emblematical of Gentile royalty. The gospel of John, for example, records that when the soldiers, with coarse brutality, were mocking the claims of Jesus to be the King, they put on Him a purple robe (John 19:2). The scarlet sets forth human glory, and it may be at the same time, Jewish royalty. David thus speaks of Saul having clothed the daughters of Israel in scarlet with other delights (2 Sam. 1:24)—as expressive of the dignity he had put upon them; and in Matthew's gospel, where Christ is specially presented as the Messiah, He is said to have been clothed by the soldiers in scarlet, ere they bent their mocking knee before Him, and cried, "Hail, King of the Jews!" (Matt. 27:29). (Matt. 27:28-29). Applying all this to Christ the significance is most striking. It gives Christ in the absolute purity of His nature, Christ in His heavenly character, Christ as King of Israel (and, as King of Israel, invested with all human glory), and, last of all, Christ as reigning also over the Gentiles. The last two features coalesce, because when Christ shall sit upon the throne of His father David, it will be the period of His world—sovereignty, when all kings shall fall down before Him and all nations shall serve Him (Psa. 72:11). It is therefore Christ as He was as Man in this world, and Christ as He will be in the future display of His glory in this world, as Son of David, and as Son of man. But there is another thing. Cherubim were embroidered on these curtains. Cherubim have been explained to signify judicial authority. This gives an additional representation of Christ—of Christ as having authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man (John 5:27). It is thus a full display of what Christ was essentially as Man, and of His glories and dignities connected with the earth. Blessed were those who, admitted in the exercise of their priestly office within the precincts of the holy place, had the privilege of gazing upon these varied displays of the excellencies and glories of the Christ of God.

The dimensions of the curtains are not without meaning. "The length of one curtain shall be eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and every one of the curtains shall have one measure" (vs. 2). Now 28 =7 x 4; and consequently the length is seven times four; and the breadth, being also four cubits, divides the length into seven; that is, 28 divided by 4 gives 7. Seven and four are thus characteristic. Seven is the perfect number, being absolutely indivisible excepting by itself, and the highest prime number; and four is that of completeness on earth—as seen, for example, in the four corners of the earth, four winds, four-square, four gospels. The dimensions of the curtains will then betoken perfection displayed in completeness on earth; and such a meaning could only be applied to the life of our blessed Lord. The curtains of the tabernacle consequently speak of the complete unfolding of His perfections as Man when passing through this scene.

We have, next, their arrangement and number. Five curtains were "coupled together one to another," (vs. 3) so that there were two sets of five—as there were ten in number. Ten is the number of responsibility towards God, as, for example, in the ten commandments (see also Ex. 30:13), and five is responsibility towards man. (See Gen. 47:24; Num. 5:7) We are thus taught that Christ as Man met the whole of His responsibility both towards God and towards man, that He loved God with all His heart, and His neighbor as Himself—going as to this, we know, even infinitely beyond. And He was the only One by whom these responsibilities were fully and perfectly discharged.

Then the couplings have likewise a voice. There were fifty loops of blue and fifty taches of gold, by which the curtains were connected. Remembering that blue is the heavenly color, and that the gold is divine, and that the two numbers of ten and five, which have just been explained, enter into the composition of the fifty, we learn that the heavenly and divine character of our blessed Lord secured the perfect adjustment of His twofold responsibility as Man towards God and man; or that they were perfectly united by His divine and heavenly energy.

These meanings, the reader is cautioned, are suggestions, but suggestions which are worthy of devout consideration in the light of Scripture, and which, if examined in the presence of God, cannot fail both to be interesting and profitable.

(2) The curtains of goats' hair. These came next to, immediately above, those which are denominated the Tabernacle, and formed the tent. This covering points also to Christ—"to His positive purity, or rather to that severity of separation from the evil that was around Him, which gave Him the character of prophet—severity, not in His ways towards poor sinners, but in separation from sinners, the uncompromisingness, as to Himself, which kept Him apart and gave Him His moral authority, the moral cloth of hair which distinguished the prophet." In confirmation of this interpretation, Zechariah says, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment (margin, a garment of hair) to deceive" (Zech. 13:4) (13:4; compare Matt. 3:4). The dimensions of these differ from the curtains of the tabernacle of the same width, they were two cubits longer thirty cubits instead of twenty-eight—and there was one more curtain. While unable to suggest any typical value to the numbers, the reason of their larger size is yet evident. They were to extend beyond, on all sides, so as completely to protect the tabernacle curtains. "And the remnant that remaineth of the curtains of the tent (that is, the goats' hair curtains), the half curtain that remaineth, shall hang over the backside of the tabernacle. And a cubit on the one side, and a cubit on the other side, of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent, it shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle on this side and on that side, to cover it" (vss. 12-13). The meaning will be, then, that Christ in all that He was, as symbolized by the inner curtains, was guarded by that perfect separation from evil which sprang from His positive and absolute purity. He could therefore challenge His adversaries with the words, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (John 8:46).. Yea, He could say to His own, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me" (John 14:30). So complete was His moral separation from all evil that He could even touch the leper and not be defiled.

The couplings of the curtains were of brass instead of gold. The color of the loops is not mentioned. Brass in this connection would seem to signify divine righteousness, not, as seen in the gold, according to what God is in Himself, but as testing man in responsibility. This will be shown more fully when the brazen altar comes to be considered. The aptness of this significance in connection with goats' hair curtains will be at once apprehended. It brings before us Christ as morally separate from sinners, but tested by divine righteousness in His path all through His earthly sojourn—and tested, it need scarcely be added, only with the result of discovering that He answered perfectly its every claim.

(3) Above the "tent"—that is, the goats' hair curtains—were two coverings; first, one of rams' skins dyed red, and next, another of badgers' skins. The ram was chosen as the consecration offering in connection with the setting apart of the priests to their office. It is called "the ram of the consecration" (ch. 29:27). Dyed red will point very evidently to death. The meaning therefore is entire consecration, devotedness unto death; and where was that ever seen in its perfection except in the One who humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross? The badgers' skins are an emblem of that holy vigilance exhibited in His walk and ways, which preserved Him from all evil. Jerusalem is said to have been "shod with badgers' skins," the provision the Lord had made to protect her from evil in her walk. The vigilance so symbolized is often expressed in the Psalms: "By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer;" (Psa. 17:4) and again, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee" (Psa. 119:11). The coverings therefore likewise proclaim the perfectness of the One whom they typify. At the same time it must not be forgotten, that the features they portray ought to be seen in every believer. For in all that Christ was in His walk through the world He is our example. If therefore we admire the perfections and excellencies that were displayed in Him, we should remember that He is set before us as the standard of our responsibility.

If for a moment the Tabernacle is supposed to be complete, it will be seen that the badgers' skins only met the outward gaze. But the priest who enjoyed the privilege of entering the holy place, saw the full beauty of the fine twined linen, the blue, the purple, and the scarlet, and of the embroidered cherubim. It was Christ without and it was Christ within; but it was Christ without as seen by the natural eye—discovering no beauty that man should desire Him; and it was Christ within as seen by the eye opened by the Spirit of God; Christ, therefore as the chiefest among ten thousand, and as the altogether

Typical Teachings of Exodus, Exodus 25:31-40: The Candlestick of Pure Gold

Exodus 25:31-40

After the table of shewbread follows the candlestick. The altar of incense, though belonging to the holy place, is omitted here, because it was a vessel of approach, rather than of display; and, as already pointed out, everything connected with the manifestation of God is given before that which was needed to come into His presence is described. Unless this distinction is borne in mind, instead of order and method, all will seem to be confusion.

"And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same. And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side: three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower: so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick. And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers. And there shall be a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick. Their knops and their branches shall be of the same: all of it shall be one beaten work of pure gold. And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. And the tongs thereof, and the snuff dishes thereof, shall be of pure gold. Of a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels. And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount" (vss. 31-40).

First of all, we have the form of the candlestick. If the description be carefully read, it will be seen that the candlestick had seven branches; that is, a central shaft with three branches springing out from either side. (See vss. 31-32, also 37:17-18.) There were, therefore, seven lamps upon the one candlestick. The number seven also plays an important part in its ornamentation. There were "three bowls made like unto almonds" (vs. 33) in each of the six branches (vs. 33), and "four bowls made like unto almonds" (vs. 34) in the candlestick (vs. 34); that is, in the central stem from which the branches sprung. The number seven is thus a marked characteristic.

The next thing for consideration is the material of which it was made, and the character of its light. As in the mercy-seat, so in the candlestick, there was nothing but pure gold (vs. 31). No shittim wood is found in its structure, and hence nothing human is prefigured by it. All is divine. From chapter 27 we gather that the light was fed by “pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always” (ch. 27:20) (vs. 20). Oil in Scripture is ever a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The apostle thus says of believers, “Ye have an unction from the Holy One” (1 John 2:20); and Paul speaks of our having been “anointed” (2 Cor. 1:21). Putting therefore these three things together in their typical meanings—the number seven, the gold, and the oil—the result is that the significance of the candlestick is, Divine light in its perfection in the power of the Spirit. It is God giving the light of the Holy Spirit, and this is displayed in its sevenfold perfection. In addressing the Church in Sardis, the Lord speaks as having “the seven Spirits of God” (Rev. 3:1); that is, the Spirit in His perfection (as indicated by the number seven) and energy (Rev. 3:1); and we read also of “seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God” (Rev. 4:5).

What, then, it may now be inquired, was the purpose of the candlestick? This would seem to have been twofold. First, it was set in the holy place “over against the table” (ch. 25:27) (26:35; 40:24). It thus stood opposite to, and threw its light upon, the table of shewbread. This therefore it may be inferred was the object in its being thus placed. Now the table of shewbread symbolizes, as explained in the last chapter, the manifestation of God in man (Christ) in perfection of administrative government; and the twelve loaves on the table represent Israel, and also in principle believers of this dispensation, in association with Christ before God. The light of the candlestick shining, then, upon the table is the Holy Spirit bearing testimony to the future display of administrative perfection in Christ, when He shall have taken His power, and shall reign from the river unto the ends of the earth; likewise to Israel’s (as well as the believer’s) true place in connection with Christ before God. These truths may be obscured or forgotten on earth, but there in the holy place before the eye of God they are fully displayed, and exhibited by the perfect light of the Spirit. But secondly, the light was for the illumination of the candlestick itself. “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick. And Aaron did so; he lighted the lamps thereof over against the candlestick, as the Lord commanded Moses” (Num. 8:1-3). That is, giving out the light of the Holy Spirit, reveals the beauties of (or beautifies) the vessel through which it is displayed. A perfect illustration of this is seen in the transfiguration of our blessed Lord, when, as we read, “His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light” (Matt. 17:2). it was ever so throughout the whole of His blessed pathway for those whose eyes were opened (see John 1:4; 2:11); but on the mount His beauty was manifestly displayed. So also in the case of Stephen. We read that he was “a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit,” and that “all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel” (Acts 6:5, 15). It is so with every believer in the measure in which the light of the Holy Spirit—Christ, indeed, shines out through his walk and conversation.

But it may be further asked, What answers on earth to the perfect light of the Spirit as symbolized by the seven-branched candlestick in the holy place? Christ when here answered to it perfectly. He was thus the light of men, the light of the world. (John 1:4; 8:12). Never for one moment was the light of the Spirit obscured in Him; it shone purely and steadily, illuminating the darkness through which He passed with its blessed, life-giving radiance throughout the whole of His life. He was a perfect vessel. After His departure from this scene, and His ascension, the church was constituted the light-bearer. (Rev. 1:20). That is her character, however grievous her failure—a failure which will finally issue in her utter rejection as the vessel of testimony upon earth. (See Rev. 3:16.) The individual believer answers to it also in the measure in which he presents Christ in his walk and ways. Paul thus writes to the Philippians, “Do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation (generation), among whom, ye shine as lights in the world” (Phil. 2:14-15).

It is also interesting to observe how the light was maintained. “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive, beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually. Without the veil of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning, before the Lord continually: it shall be a statute forever in your generations. He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the Lord continually” (Lev. 24:1-4; also Ex. 27:20-21). First, the children of Israel were to bring the pure oil olive. This will point to the responsibility of God’s people on earth, the vessel in which it was to be displayed—Israel then, now the church. Aaron was to order the lamps. By this is taught that the light of the Spirit, in its display, can only be maintained by the priestly care and intercession of Christ. He alone could use “the tongs thereof, and the snuff dishes thereof,” (vs. 38) for both alike were made of pure gold (vs. 38). Every ray of light that shines out below, whether through the church or the individual believer, is but the answer to His priestly work. In this connection, it may be remarked that the oil olive was to be “beaten” for the light (Ex. 27:20), and that the candlestick itself was to be made of “beaten” work. This may point to the fact that the intercession of Christ is grounded upon the efficacy of His work on the cross, the term “beaten” shadowing forth the sufferings of Him, by whose stripes we are healed.

Lastly, notice the duration of the light. It was to be “from the evening unto the morning” (Lev. 24:3). The lamp is for the night; and all through the night of Israel’s unbelief, until the day dawn, and the shadows flee away, the golden candlestick is to be ordered before the Lord. The testimony to their true place is maintained all through the weary years of the darkness of their unbelief by the intercession of Him whom they have rejected and crucified. But at last He Himself shall be for them “as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain” (2 Sam. 23:4). The hope of the Christian is more immediate; for “the night is far spent and the day is at hand.” But while waiting, may our lamps—fed with the true oil, and ordered before the Lord continually—shine out ever more brightly until the Lord’s return!

Typical Teachings of Exodus, Exodus 25:23-30: The Table of the Shewbread

Exodus 25:23-30

The ark, with the mercy-seat and the cherubim, was the sole occupant of the holy of holies. Nothing else was to be found in the immediate dwelling place of God. But passing from without through the veil (supposing for a moment the erection of the tabernacle) the holy place is entered—the scene of the customary service of the priest. There were three vessels here—the table of shewbread, the candlestick of pure gold, and the altar of incense—though the last is not yet described. It is the first of these in order as here given—the table of shewbread—that we have now to consider.

“Thou shalt also make a table of shittim wood: two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt make unto it a border of an handbreadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about. And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them. And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal: of pure gold shalt thou make them. And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before Me alway” (vss. 23-30).

The composition of the table is the same as that of the ark. It was made of shittim wood, and overlaid with pure gold (vss. 23-25). The meaning therefore will be the same—the shittim wood presenting that which is human, and the gold that which is divine. It is then Christ, Christ in His human and divine natures as combined in His one person. This indeed is the beauty of everything connected with the tabernacle. It is Christ everywhere, Christ in Himself or in some of His varied perfections and glories.

The bread on the table. It is in the book of Leviticus that we find the particulars of the loaves—“And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the Lord. And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the Lord. Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the Lord continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. And it shall be Aaron’s and his sons’; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it is most holy unto Him of the offerings of the Lord made by fire by a perpetual statute” (Lev. 24:5-9). (1) The loaves or cakes were made of fine flour. This at once points to the meat-offering which, in like manner, was made of fine flour, with the addition of oil and frankincense. (See Lev. 2.) No leaven is mentioned, whereas in the two wave loaves (Lev. 23:17) leaven is expressly specified—for the obvious reason that, in this case, the loaves represent the church, and therefore leaven—emblem of evil—is found in them. But the fine flour is a type of the humanity of Christ, and hence the loaves of the shewbread are without leaven, He being holy, harmless, undefiled, absolutely without sin. (2) The loaves were baked. They set forth therefore Christ as having been exposed to the action of fire—the judgment of God’s holiness by which He was searched and tested when upon the cross, and found to answer, and to answer perfectly, its every claim. (3) They were twelve in number—six in a row. So on the shoulders of the high priest, there were the names of six tribes on the one, and the names of six tribes on the other. The loaves equally point to the twelve tribes of Israel. The number twelve signifies administrative perfection of government in man, and thus there were twelve tribes, twelve apostles, twelve gates, and twelve foundations in the holy city, new Jerusalem. (See for an illustration of this meaning Matt. 19:28.) The twelve loaves may then be taken to represent Israel in its twelve tribes; and this will give us, in connection with the significance of the number twelve, God revealed in Christ in association with Israel (for Christ was of the seed of David, and heir to his throne—Luke 1:32) in perfection of government. This will be displayed according to the predictions of the prophets (for example, Psa. 72) in the millennium. But the loaves were on the table, and hence, on the other hand, Israel is seen in association with Christ before God. (4) Another thing should be noticed. “And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the Lord” (Lev. 24:7). The frankincense typifies the sweet fragrance of Christ to God. Observe therefore that Israel in its twelve tribes is ever presented before God, covered with all the fragrance of Christ, and maintained there through all the night of their unbelief in virtue of what He is, and of what He has done—the sure promise of their future restoration and blessing. Hence the loaves were to be set in order “before the Lord continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant” (Lev. 24:8). They may be unfaithful, as they have been, but God cannot deny Himself; He abideth faithful, and as a consequence, though they have been scattered throughout the world because of their unbelief, He will yet perform His counsels of mercy and truth, and gather them from the four corners of the earth, and reinstate them in their own laud in fullness of blessing—blessing which will be established in and secured by Him who is symbolized by the shewbread table.

An illustration of this may be gathered from the border of the table: “And thou shalt make unto it a border of an handbreadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about” (vs. 25). It is very clear that the object of this border was to maintain the loaves in their position; and if the ornamental crown of gold be taken as an emblem of the divine glory of Christ, the lesson taught will be, that Israel is secured in its position through Christ before God by all that He is as divine; nay, that His divine glory is concerned in their maintenance in it, as well as in preserving them for all the blessing which He Himself has secured, and on which they will therefore one day surely enter. But there is more than Israel’s position in this symbol. It embraces in principle that of every believer. There in the holy place, ever before the eye of God, covered with the grateful fragrance of the frankincense, he is seen in Christ. It is indeed the perfect presentation of the believer to God. In other words, it is our acceptance in the Beloved.

We may now consider the bread as food for the priests: “And it shall be Aaron’s and his sons’; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it is most holy unto Him of the offerings of the Lord made by fire by a perpetual statute” (Lev. 24:9). Feeding indicates identification and communion with the thing fed upon. This is expressly brought out by the Apostle Paul in his teaching concerning the Lord’s table. “The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread, one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread” (1 Cor. 10:16-17). It was the same with the priests. For example, they ate also of the sin-offering in certain cases (Lev. 6:26), and thereby identified themselves with it. Feeding therefore upon the shewbread is a symbol of the fact that Christ, as the Priest, ever identifies Himself with Israel before God. It was only to be eaten, it will be remarked, in the holy place. It is, then, Christ, in communion with the thoughts of God, identifying Himself with the twelve tribes in the exercise of His priesthood. This brings before us a very blessed aspect of truth. That He is the High Priest of this dispensation all admit; but it is not sufficiently borne in mind that, notwithstanding Israel’s unbelief, He identities Himself with them before God in His priestly office, and that He will come out of the holiest, into which He has entered, as Melchizedek and be a Priest upon His throne over a willing people. “The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion: rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: Thou hast the dew of Thy youth. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek” (Psa. 110:2-4).

Then we have the provision for the journey: “And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them” (vss. 26-28). The children of Israel were pilgrims in the wilderness, and hence the tabernacle and all its furniture were made for them in this character, and accompanied them in all their wanderings. Christ is ever with His people; and the very rings and staves, equally with the table itself, composed of gold and shittim wood, point to Him as the God-man. But it is in the book of Numbers that the details for the transport of the table, when on the march, are given. “And upon the table of shewbread they shall spread a cloth of blue, and put thereon the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls, and covers to

cover withal: and the continual bread shall be thereon: and they shall spread upon them a cloth of scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put in the staves thereof" (Num. 4:7-8). The inner covering, it will be observed, is a cloth of blue—symbol of what is heavenly; next, a cloth of scarlet—scarlet being an emblem of human glory or Jewish royalty; and outside came the covering of badgers' skins—a type of protection from evil as a consequence of holy watchfulness. Regarding the whole, the table with its shewbread, as Christ in association with Israel, to be hereafter displayed in perfection of administrative government, the meaning of this arrangement will be apparent. The cloth of blue was immediately upon the gold; that is, the heavenly character of Christ was in intimate association with what He was as divine. The scarlet next—royalty, or human glory, because being in the wilderness the time for its manifestation had not yet arrived. That will be connected with the kingdom at His appearing. The badgers' skins are therefore outside, as concealing His human or royal glory, and as expressive of that holy vigilance which guarded Him on every hand from evil while in wilderness circumstances.

All the vessels connected with the table were made of gold (vs. 29), all significant of that which was divine, as befitted the service of the One who was really God manifest in flesh, and who will be confessed in the future day of Israel's blessing as their Lord and their God. It will thus be seen that every detail, as well the whole table, speaks of Christ. May our eyes be opened to perceive every aspect of His person and work as presented to us by the Spirit of God.

Typical Teachings of Exodus, Exodus 25:10-22: The Ark With the Mercy-Seat

Exodus 25:10-22

The ark and the mercy-seat are in one sense two distinct things, though in another they form a complete whole. They are described as distinct and separate, and it will thus be best to follow, in our exposition, the order of scripture:

"And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the skies of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them. The staves shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee. And thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy-seat, And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy-seat shalt the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel" (Ex. 25:10-22)

There are several things to be considered in connection with the typical significance of the ark. It was on the one hand a manifestation of God in Christ, and on the other the place of His throne and government in Israel.

First, then, the ark may be viewed as a figure of the person of Christ. This is seen from its composition. It was made of shittim wood, overlaid with pure gold. The shittim was a kind of acacia, a wood said by some to be imperishable. Be this as it may, it is a type of what is human; and if a wood, as some affirm, that would not rot, incorruptible, it was a most suitable emblem of the humanity of our Lord. The gold is always a symbol of what is divine. The structure of the ark, therefore, figures the union of the two natures in the person of Christ. He was "very God, and very man." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Thereafter we read, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). He was thus God and man, God manifest in flesh. The contents of the ark are also significant in this connection: "And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee" (vs. 16). That is, the two tables of stone, with the ten commandments written thereon, were deposited in the ark, and hence it is frequently termed the ark of the covenant (Num. 10:33; Deut. 31:26), because it contained the law on which the covenant was founded. But it points in a marked way to Christ. Speaking thus in the Spirit in the Psalms, He says, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy Law is within My heart" (Psa. 40:7-8). The testimony in the ark, therefore, exhibits the law of God in the heart of Christ; setting forth, first, that as born into this world, being of the seed of David according to the flesh, He was "made under the law" (Gal. 4:4); and secondly, that He obeyed it perfectly. The law within the heart, indeed, brings before us the perfection of His obedience—the fact that God found in Him, and in Him alone, truth in the inward parts, a full and complete answer to all the requirements of His holiness, so that he could ever rest in Him with perfect complacency, and, as he beheld Him always doing the things that pleased Him, expressing the delight of His own heart in the words, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17).

The rings and the staves (vss. 12-15) have also a voice. The object of these was "that the ark may be borne with them" (vs. 14). This shows that God's people were pilgrims in the wilderness, journeying on to the place which God had prepared for them. But the time would come when the inheritance should be possessed, and when the temple, suited in magnificence to the glory of the king of Israel, should be built. The staves, which in the desert were not to be taken from the rings of the ark (vs. 15), should then be withdrawn (2 Chron. 5:9), because, the pilgrimage past, the ark would, with the people, have entered into its rest (Psa. 132:8). The staves therefore in the rings speak of Christ, with His pilgrim host, as being Himself with them in wilderness circumstances. It is Christ in this world, Christ in all His own perfectness as man—Christ, in a word, in all that He was as the revealer of God; for in truth, He was the perfect presentation of God to man. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him" (Matt. 11:27).

Secondly, the ark, with the mercy-seat and its cherubim, farmed God's throne on earth, in the midst of Israel. "The ark of the covenant," (Num. 10:33) says one, "was the throne where God manifested Himself, if any could go in righteousness (not, I think, separate from holiness, or taking merely duty as the measure of what was accepted), and as the seat of His sovereignty over every living man—the God of the whole earth. The law—the testimony of what He required of men—was to be placed there. Over it was the mercy-seat, which covered it in, which

formed the throne, as the cherubim (formed of the same piece), which were its supporters, did its sides." God is thus spoken of in the Scriptures as dwelling between the cherubim. The cherubim are perhaps symbols of God's attributes; and hence the throne of God is sustained by all that He is. For this reason they are throughout the Old Testament connected with judicial power, because since God had to do with sinners His throne was ever judicial in its aspect. God may thus be viewed as sitting on His righteous throne between the cherubim. If it be asked, Why then, since Israel continually broke His law, were they not instantly destroyed? the answer is found (though we are anticipating the truth of the mercy-seat) in the attitude of the cherubim. As executors of the judicial power of God, they would necessarily demand the exaction of the penalty of transgression. But "their faces shall look one to another; towards the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubim be" (vs. 20). They thus saw the sprinkled blood on the mercy-seat, the blood that was annually put upon it on the great day of atonement (Lev. 16), whereby the claims of the throne were adequately met, and itself rendered favorable to the transgressor. Otherwise God, governing in righteousness, must have visited destruction upon His people.

It was also the place where God met and communed with Moses (vs. 22). The meeting place of Jehovah with His people was at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation (Chapter 29:42-43). Moses alone (save the high priest exceptionally on the day of atonement) enjoyed the privilege of meeting God, and receiving communications from Him at the mercy-seat. He was owned in grace as the mediator. All believers now enjoy this privilege in virtue of the efficacy of accomplished redemption. But of all Israel, Moses alone was free to go on all occasions into the very presence-chamber of God. It was there God spake with him (see Num. 7:89), and entrusted him with His commandments for the guidance of the children of Israel. It is only there that God's voice can be heard, and His mind apprehended; and whoever would become increasingly acquainted with His will must be found continually in retirement from the world, and even from believers, shut in alone with God.

If now we turn to the book of Numbers, we shall find the directions for the transport of the ark through the wilderness. "And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering vail, and cover the ark of the testimony with it; and shall put thereon the covering of badgers' skins, and shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof" (Num. 4:5-6). The veil, as will be explained in its place, is an emblem of the humanity of Christ—His flesh (Heb. 10:20). We have then, first, the ark; that is, Christ, covered with the veil of His humanity. Next, came the badgers' skins, expressive of that holy vigilance by which He absolutely protected Himself from evil, as is seen, for example, in the scripture, "By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer" (Psa. 17:4). Then came the cloth wholly of blue—symbol of what is heavenly. "The badger's skin was inside in this case, because Christ kept His perfection absolutely free of all evil, and so the heavenly came out manifestly." It is Christ therefore in the wilderness, and while passing through it He was ever characterized by that which is heavenly. As such, be it ever remembered, He is our example. "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1 John 2:6).

The Mercy-Seat

The mercy-seat, while forming the lid, and thus completing the structure of the ark, is in another sense complete in itself, and as such, from its importance, deserving special notice. It was placed "above upon the ark" (vs. 21), and was therefore in the holy of holies—the scene of the special manifestation of God, and indeed, as explained, the basis of His throne. God dwells there between the cherubim. It differed from the ark in that no shittim wood entered into its composition. It was made of pure gold, as also were the two cherubim, which were formed out of the same piece as the mercy-seat. Gold is the emblem of what is divine—of divine righteousness. If then it is considered for a moment in connection with the testimony in the ark, there is the combination of human and divine righteousness, the testimony pointing to the law—human righteousness—which was in the heart of Christ (Psa. 40), and the gold to God's righteousness which is displayed also in Him. The mercy-seat is therefore in a peculiar manner a type of Christ. The apostle indeed applies the term directly to Him. He says, "Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth a propitiation" (a mercy-seat, literally), "through faith in His blood" (Rom. 3:25).

This allusion will be at once understood if reference is made to the action of the priest on the great day of atonement. After putting the incense upon the fire before the Lord, it is said, And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood seven times (Lev. 16:14). So also he did with the blood of the goat of the sin-offering for the people. Two questions will elicit the meaning of this act. First, Why was the blood sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat? To make propitiation for the sins of the people. Being sinners they could not stand of themselves in the presence of a holy God. The blood therefore was carried in by divine direction, and sprinkled, in the manner described, on the mercy-seat to make propitiation for the people's sins; and also before the mercy-seat, but here seven times, that when the priest approached he might find a perfect testimony to the efficacy of the work. Once, as is often said, was enough for the eye of God, but in grace He vouchsafed that it should be sprinkled seven times, as a complete assurance for the eye and heart of man. What, then, secondly, did it accomplish? It accomplished atonement, satisfied all God's holy claims as against the people—yea, if we think of the blood of Christ, glorified Him fully in all that He is, and glorified Him forever concerning the question of sin, so that He who was against us because of our guilt, is now for us because of the blood. The mercy-seat therefore speaks preeminently of Christ; for, as John speaks, "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:2). The sins of believers are gone, and gone forever; and such is the value of the propitiation made that God can now righteously send out in His grace the gospel to the whole world, and beseech sinners to be reconciled to Him (2 Cor. 5:20). Christ, we repeat, is figured by the mercy-seat; and hence we learn that God is now only approached through Him, as in the wilderness He could only be approached at the mercy-seat. But, blessed be His name, whoever does now approach to Him through Christ will find the perfect testimony to the value of His atoning work in God's presence. But observe it well, that the blood is the only ground of access. He is set forth a propitiation through faith in His blood. Believing therefore in the value of His blood, according to God's testimony concerning it, whoever comes may come boldly, nothing doubting, in the full confidence that the way is thus opened for the guiltiest and the vilest into the immediate presence of God. For "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:11-12).

The cherubim formed part of the mercy-seat. These, as already said are symbols of the divine attributes, and, as such, of judicial power. But since God has been glorified by the blood on the mercy-seat, all His attributes are in harmony, and all are exercised on behalf of believers. In the cross mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other; and therefore justice is satisfied, the claims of righteousness met, so that the cherubim are favorable to the dispensation of mercy to all who approach trusting in the value of the blood. Blessed truth! All that God is, is against sin, and now all that God is, is for the believer. The blood upon the mercy-seat has wrought this

mighty change.

Typical Teachings of Exodus, Exodus 25:1-9: The Tabernacle

Exodus 25:1-9

With this chapter we enter upon a new subject—that of the Tabernacle. It is not finished until the close of chapter 30. But this again is divided into three parts. In the first place, in the directions for the construction of the Tabernacle and its vessels and furniture, those vessels are described which manifest God. This part reaches to chapter 27:19. Secondly, the dress and the consecration of the priests are given, in chapters 28 and 29. Then, lastly, the vessels of approach—that is, those that were necessary for drawing near to God, are detailed in chapter 30. It will be observed that some of those which manifested God—some part of His glory—are also used for approach; but if the chief design of each is remembered, confusion will be prevented, and the arrangement easily understood. Opportunity will be found, as the several parts of the Tabernacle pass under review, of indicating the meaning of each more precisely. In the mean time, the division given may help the reader to enter with more intelligence upon the study of this section of the book.

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take My offering. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats’ hair, and rams’ skins dyed red, and badgers’ skins, and shittim wood, oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate. And let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it” (vss. 1-9).

There are three things in these directions to be noticed. The first is their object—which is making a sanctuary. “Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them” (vs. 8). The primary idea of the Tabernacle therefore is, that it was the dwelling place of God. As remarked upon chapter 15:2, God never dwelt on earth with His people until after the Red Sea was crossed—until redemption in figure was accomplished. He visited Adam in the garden, appeared to and communicated with the patriarchs; but until He had redeemed His people out of Egypt, nothing is said of making a sanctuary in which He might dwell. The Tabernacle was thus a proof of redemption, and the sign that God had brought a redeemed people into relationship with Himself, He being the Center round whom they were gathered. Such is God’s thought in redemption. He will not only, according to His own purposes, save His people, but also, according to His own heart, He desires to have them in a place of nearness, gathered around Himself—Himself their God, and they His people. We know in result how imperfectly, through the people’s failure under responsibility, the desires of His heart were realized. Still He had His sanctuary in their midst, both in the wilderness and during the kingdom: in the Christian dispensation His people themselves form His house; in the millennium He will have another material sanctuary at Jerusalem; and finally, in the eternal state, the holy city, new Jerusalem, will come down from God out of heaven, and form upon the new earth the tabernacle of God with men (Rev. 21:2-3). Then the counsels of God’s heart will be displayed in their consummated perfection, and, inasmuch as the former things, with all the sorrows connected with them through man’s sin, will have passed away, there will be nothing to hinder the full, perfect, and blessed enjoyment arising out of the unhindered flow of God’s heart to His people, and their hearts to Him, and from His perfect manifestation, and their perfect worship and service. But the type of all this is found in this sanctuary, which Israel was instructed to make that God might dwell among them.

The tabernacle may, however, be viewed in another way. The house in which God dwelt must be of necessity the scene of the revelation of His glory. Hence, as will be seen when considering it in detail, every single part of it is fraught with some manifestation of Himself. As another writes, “The glories in every way of Christ the Mediator are presented in the tabernacle, not precisely, as yet, the unity of His people, considered as His body, but in every manner in which the ways and the perfections of God are manifested through Him, whether in the full extent of the creation, in His people, or in His person. The scene of the manifestation of the glory of God, His house, His domain, in which He displays His being (in so far as it can be seen), the ways of His grace, and His glory, and His relationship through Christ with us—poor and feeble creatures, but who draw nigh unto Him—are unfolded to us in it, but still with a veil over His presence, and with God, not the Father.” On this account the spiritual mind traces with delight the typical teaching of the minutiae of this sanctuary, learning therefrom the various measures and methods in which God has revealed Himself, and that they are only to be understood when the key of every secret they contain is possessed in the person of Christ. Remembering this will check on the one hand all flights of the imagination, and invest on the other our meditations with a new interest, inasmuch as Christ Himself will ever be before the soul.

There is yet a third aspect of the tabernacle. It is a figure of the heavens themselves. There were the court, the holy place, and the holy of holies. The priest thus passed through the first and second into the third heavens—the scene of the special presence of God. Paul speaks of being “caught up to the third heaven” (2 Cor. 12:2). There is an allusion to this significance of the tabernacle in the epistle to the Hebrews—“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into” (Heb. 4:14) (literally, through) “the heavens, Jesus the Son of God” (Heb. 4:14). Christ is looked at in this scripture as having passed, like the Jewish high priest on the day of atonement, through the court, the holy place, into the holy of holies (all of which are symbolical of the heavens), into the presence of God.

In this connection it may be mentioned, and this is the second point, that the tabernacle was made after the pattern shown to Moses in the mount (vss. 9, 40), and was therefore the type of heavenly things. This teaching is developed in the epistle to the Hebrews. We there read of Christ as “a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Heb. 8:2); and again it is said, “It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these” (Heb. 9:23) (the blood of animal sacrifices); “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” (Heb. 9:23-24). It is easily understood therefore that the tabernacle was the scene of priestly ministration; for since it was God’s dwelling place, it was also the place of the sinner’s approach to God (or rather of the approach of a people brought into relationship with Himself) in the person of the priest. As a matter of fact, the high priest only entered once a year into the holy of holies (see Lev. 16); but this was in consequence of the failure of the priesthood, and in no way marred its original design. All this, indeed, together with the veil, and the exclusion of all but the priests from the holy place, will but teach, even by the contrast, the fuller and more blessed privileges which believers of the present dispensation enjoy. They have liberty of

access at all times into the holiest of all, the veil being rent, inasmuch as they are perfected forever, having no more conscience of sins, through the one offering of Christ (Heb. 10), and they draw near, not to Jehovah, but to their God and Father in Christ Jesus.

The last point referred to is the invitation addressed to the people to bring offerings of materials of which the tabernacle was to be composed. It is a bright exhibition of grace on the part of God thus associating the people with Himself in His desire to have a sanctuary to dwell in their midst. Hence it was only of willing hearts that the offerings were to be taken. This is exceedingly beautiful. God first produced the willingness, and then ascribed to them the offering they rendered. He counted upon the fellowship of the people, expecting a response to the expressed desires of His heart. The people did respond, as will be seen later on in the book, and so fully that proclamation had to be made to stay the offerings. A fine example of this was seen also in David in regard to the temple: “He sware unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob; surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob” (Psa. 132:2-5). If in lesser measure than characterized the king of Israel, yet the required offerings flowed out in abundance from willing hearts, hearts made willing by the grace of God, which thus enjoyed the privilege of contributing materials which, when made up according to the directions given, would form Jehovah’s dwelling place, and which separately would be employed as an emblem, and a manifestation of some ray of His glory.

The typical significance of the several materials offered will be explained in connection with their special place in the tabernacle. It will suffice now to say that they all point to Christ.

Christian Truth: Volume 27, Scripture Notes: Exodus 24:17; Hebrews 12:29

Exod. 24:17; Heb. 12:29

It is more than probable that there is an allusion in the latter scripture to the former; and it is very evident that the two scriptures are morally connected. "The sight of the glory of the LORD was like the devouring [the word might be rendered `consuming'] fire." This was the glory of Jehovah as revealed in relation to Israel in connection with Sinai; in a word, it was the expression of His holiness as set forth in His righteous requirements. But His people were sinners, and could not, therefore, satisfy His just demand. The consequence was that this glory became in Jehovah's government, as based upon the law, a "consuming fire" in the judgment that was continually visited upon Israel because of their repeated transgressions. Moses thus said, "We are consumed [a kindred word] by Thine anger" (Psalm 90:7). In the passage in the Hebrews the Apostle says that "Our God is a consuming fire." It is to be distinctly observed that it is of "our" God, the God of Christians, that he thus speaks. After the declaration that God is about to shake not the earth only, but also heaven, he proceeds, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear," and this for the reason that the God whom we serve is a "consuming fire." Once more then the "consuming fire" is an expression of the holiness of God—in testing all our service, and in the necessary judgment of all that is evil in it. (Compare 1 Cor. 3:13.) Grace was unknown at Sinai; but while now God is known as the God of all grace, this in no wise weakens His holiness. He is light as well as love; and, whether in our worship or our service, it should never be forgotten that our God is holy, and consequently a "consuming fire" when He has to do with evil. In the holiness of God, indeed, lies our eternal security.

Typical Teachings of Exodus, Exodus 15:22-27: Marah and Elim

Exodus 15:22-27

From this point to the end of the eighteenth chapter is a distinct section of the book. To understand it aright, it must, be remembered that as yet Israel was not under law, but under grace; and hence this brief period closes, in figure, with the millennium. The careful reader will find in this statement the key of many of the events recorded. For example, the murmurings recorded in chapters 15, 16 and 17 are borne by the Lord with long-suffering and tenderness, and their needs are ministered to out of the fullness of His unwearied love. But after Sinai, murmurings of the same character are the occasion of judgment, for the simple reason that the people had been, at their own request, put under law. Being therefore under the reign of righteousness, transgressions and rebellion are instantly dealt with according to the requirements of the law which formed the basis of Jehovah’s righteous rule; whereas before Sinai, being under the reign of grace, they are borne with, and their sins and iniquities are covered.

The wilderness journey of Israel had now to be entered upon. The strains of their song had scarcely died away before they commenced their pilgrim journey.

“So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them, and said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee. And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters” (vss. 22-27).

This, then, was their first experience: “They went three days in the wilderness, and found no water” (vs. 22). The expression—“three days,” is always significant in Scripture. Numberless examples may be gleaned from a concordance; and it will be found that very frequently it is associated with death; and so here the three days will mean the distance of death. They had in figure passed through death, and now they must learn it practically. If God in His grace gives us a perfect standing before Him, if He associates us with Christ in His death and resurrection, the object of all His ways with us will as to bring us into practical conformity with our new position. The children of Israel must thus be taught that, as a consequence of deliverance from Egypt, the world had become desert to them, and that this must be entered into by

the acceptance of death. This is the fundamental necessity for every believer. There can be no progress, no real break with the past, until death is accepted, until he reckons himself dead to sin (Rom. 6), dead to the law (Rom. 7), and dead to the world (Gal. 6). Hence the character of God's dealings with souls. He will teach them experimentally—as in the case of Israel before us—and thus enable them to apprehend the true character of the path on which they have entered. And what was the first experience of Israel? They found no water. Like the Psalmist, they were in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is (Psalm 63). No; every spring of earth is dried up for those who have been redeemed from Egypt There is not a single source of life—nothing that can minister in any way to the life we have received in Christ, And how blessed it is for the soul to apprehend this truth. Starting on our pilgrimage, elated with the joy of salvation, how often are we surprised to find that the sources at which we had drunk before—and drunk with delight—have now run dry. We ought to expect this; but never is the lesson learned until we have gone the three days' journey in the wilderness. It is indeed a startling experience to discover that earth's resources are exhausted; but it is an indispensable requisite if we would know the blessedness of the truth that "all our springs are in Thee."

They passed onward and came to MARAH. Here there was water; but they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. This is the further application of the same principle. First, there was no water to drink; and, secondly, when it is found it is so bitter that it could not be drunk. This is the application to the soul of the power of that death by which they have been delivered. The flesh shrinks from it—and would refuse it altogether. But for those who have been delivered from Egypt, and are pilgrims journeying on to the inheritance, it is absolutely necessary. Truly it is Marah—bitterness; and accordingly it troubled the people, and they murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? What a contrast! A few days ago, as with one heart, they sang, with exultant joy, the praises of their Redeemer; and now the song is silent, and discordant murmurs take its place. So is it with the believer—now filled with praise, and immediately after the flesh complains and murmurs because of the trials of the wilderness. But Moses intercedes for them, and the Lord showed him a tree, which, when cast into the waters, made them sweet. This is a beautiful figure of the cross of Christ—which utterly changes the character of the bitter waters. "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness" (Judg. 14:14). Or, as Paul cries, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). Bring the cross into the bitterness of Marah waters, and at once they become sweet to the taste—are welcomed as the means of deliverance and blessing.

Thereon follows a most important principle—a principle ever applicable to the walk of the believer. It is one found throughout the Scriptures, and in every dispensation; namely, that blessing is dependent upon obedience; that is, the blessing of believers (for the children of Israel were now redeemed) is dependent upon their walk. They were to be guarded from the diseases of Egypt, if they would diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord their God, and would do that which was right in His sight, and so forth (vs. 26). In the same way our blessed Lord says, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make Our abode with him" (John 14:23). This principle cannot be too much insisted upon. There are many believers who have known the joy of salvation, and who are yet without the conscious enjoyment of a single blessing. The reason is that they are careless of their walk. They do not study the Word, or "give ear to His commandments," (vs. 26) and are consequently walking as seems right in their own eyes. What wonder is it, therefore, that they are cold and indifferent, that they are not in the conscious enjoyment of the love of God—of fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ? No; it is to the obedient ones that God comes, and delights to come, in the sweetest manifestations of His unchanging love; it is to those who have a conscience about every precept of the Word, and are seeking, in the power of the Spirit, to be found in obedience in every particular, to those whose delight it is to be doing the will of their Lord, and whose one aim it is to be at all times acceptable to Him, that He can draw near and bless according to His own mind and heart. Nothing can compensate for the lack of an obedient walk. All our blessing—as to its apprehension and enjoyment—is made dependent upon it. It is moreover the means of growth, and the condition of communion.

It is on this account that it is immediately added, "And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters" (vs. 27). That is, they at once found refreshment, rest, and shade—the wells and the palm trees being, as one has said, "types of those living springs, and of that shelter which had been provided, through instruments chosen of God, for the consolation of His people," How welcome the rest to the already weary pilgrims! and how tender of the Lord to provide such grateful refreshment for His people in the wilderness! As the Shepherd of Israel, He thus led them, as it were, into green pastures, and made them to lie down by the still waters, to comfort and strengthen their hearts.1

Typical Teachings of Exodus, Exodus 15:1-21: The Song of Redemption

Exodus 15:1-21

This chapter occupies a most important place—both as marking the new position into which the children of Israel were now brought, and as expressive of the feelings—begotten in them undoubtedly by the Holy Spirit—which were suited to it. It is really a song of redemption; and at the same time it is prophetic in its character, embracing as it does the purposes of God with respect to Israel until the millennium—"when the Lord shall reign forever and ever" (Ex. 15:18). It has therefore a twofold character, applying primarily to Israel, and then, inasmuch as the passage of the Red Sea was preeminently typical in its character, also to the position of the believer. Bearing this in mind, its interpretation will be the more easily apprehended.

"Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation;1 my father's God, and I will exalt Him. The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is His name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone. Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of Thine excellency Thou hast overthrown them that rose up against Thee: Thou sentest forth Thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. And with the blast of Thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with Thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou stretchedst out Thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed: Thou hast

guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation. The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of Thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till Thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over, which Thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign forever and ever. For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the Lord brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea" (vss. 1-19).

The first thing to be remarked upon this outburst of joy is, that we have no singing mentioned in Scripture, except in connection with redemption. Angels even are never said to sing. At the birth of our blessed Lord "there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:13-14). So in the Revelation John says, "I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5:11-12). It is only therefore redeemed ones who can sing, and we learn therefrom the true character of Christian song. It should express the joy of salvation, the accents of praise and gladness produced in the soul by the knowledge of redemption. "Is any merry?" says James, "let him sing psalms" (James 5:13). That is, if any one is overflowing with true joy—joy consequent upon known redemption, joy in the Lord as the Redeemer, it should be expressed in psalms—psalms of praise to God. "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord" (vs. 1). It was then, when they knew for the first time what redemption was, that they poured forth the gladness of their hearts in song. And there should be no other, indeed there is no other, song for the Christian. To take another into his lips is to forget his true character as well as the only source of his joy.

The song itself may be considered in two aspects—its general subject, and the truths it contains. As to its general subject, it is simply the Lord Himself, and what He has done. But this embraces a great deal. It is the Lord Himself as apprehended and known in redemption. "The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation" (vs. 2). For it is only in redemption that He can be known. Thus, until the cross of Christ He was not, could not be, fully revealed. He was revealed to the children of Israel in the character of the relationship into which they were brought, but it was not until the redemption was accomplished, of which this recorded here was but the type, that He made Himself fully known in all the attributes of His character. But whatever the measure of His manifestation in each succeeding dispensation, He could not be apprehended, even so far, except through redemption, typical or otherwise, and the consequent relationship into which the redeemed were brought. The children of Israel knew Him as Jehovah; we, by grace, know Him as our God and Father, because the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; but whatever the dispensation, He Himself, as so revealed, is ever the subject of song, for it is in Him alone that His people in every age rejoice. As, however, we have remarked, there is another thing, and that is, what He has done, and this is fully brought out in the song of Moses and the children of Israel. There are necessarily two aspects of this—the salvation of His people, and the destruction of their enemies. This is expressed in every variety of phrase, and with all the sublimity of expression which beseemed the majesty of Him who had thus wrought on their behalf. It is not what they had accomplished, but what the Lord has done. It was not their, but His triumph that they celebrated.

They have lost sight of themselves in the presence of such an astounding display of redemptive power. "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea" (vs. 1). They thus magnify the Lord, for they perceive, as divinely inspired, that the work which He had achieved redounded to His own exaltation and glory. "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power;" (vs. 6) and again, "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (vs. 11).. Surely believers of this dispensation might learn from this primal redemptive song, what should be the character of their praise when gathered for worship in the power of the Holy Spirit. As it is the first song of redemption, it contains the principles of praise for all future generations. It deserves, on this account, the prayerful consideration of every believer.

It is, however, when we consider the truths it contains, that we learn its fullness and variety. The first is that they were now redeemed—redemption being, as pointed out, the burden of their song. "The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation," (vs. 2) And again, Thou hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed. Until now they were not redeemed, they did not know salvation. They had been perfectly sheltered from the destroyer in Egypt, but they could not be said to be saved until they were brought out of Egypt, and delivered from Pharaoh—from Satan's power. There is the same difference observable now in the experience of souls. There are many who know the forgiveness of their sins through the blood of Christ; but afterward not knowing themselves—the nature of the flesh still in them—or the power of Satan to harass and disturb—they not only lose their joy consequent upon pardon, but sometimes fall, through the difficulties which surround them on every hand, into a state of despondency and alarm. Brought into the consciousness of their utter inability to do anything, or to resist the enemy, they are made to cry, as in Romans 7, "O wretched man that I am I who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (vs. 24). It is then they are taught that the Lord Jesus has not only provided cleansing for their sins through His precious blood, but that also, through His death and resurrection, He has brought them out of their old condition, and put them in a new place in Hint on the other side of death and judgment. Their eyes are now opened to see that in Him they have been completely delivered from all that was against them, and therefore that Satan has lost his rights over, and consequently has no further claim upon, them. They are thus set free; their evil nature has already been judged, and Satan's power has been vanquished, in the death of Christ, and hence, delivered, their hearts are filled with thanksgiving and praise. That many stop short of this full blessing is only too true, but it is, nevertheless, the portion of every believer. And there never can be full assurance of salvation—firm and solid peace—until this complete deliverance is known. No doubt it must be learned experimentally, but it depends entirely and alone upon what Christ is and has done; and accordingly the whole of this blessing is presented to sinners in the gospel of God's grace. It may be that the soul learns forgiveness of sins first; but it is no less the fact that a full redemption is provided for, and preached to, every one who will receive the message of the gospel. It is of the first importance that this truth should be known; for through ignorance of it, there are thousands who are a prey to doubts and fears, instead of rejoicing in the Lord as the God of their salvation. Souls in such a state have little freedom in prayer, or worship, or service; but when once the truth of redemption dawns upon them, like the children of Israel in the scene before us, they are constrained to give vent to their newfound joy in songs of praise.

But there is more. Their position is changed. "Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation" (vs. 13). They were brought to God as to the new standing they occupied. In the desert, just indeed entering upon it—this marked their character as pilgrims—they were yet brought unto God's holy habitation. This corresponds with our position as believers in the Lord Jesus. He once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. This is our place as His redeemed. That is, we are brought to God according to all that He is; His whole moral

nature, having been completely satisfied in the death of Christ, can now rest in us in perfect complacency. The hymn therefore does but express a scriptural thought, which says—

The place indeed is accorded to us in grace, but none the less in righteousness; so that not only are all the attributes of God's character concerned in bringing us there, but He Himself is also glorified by it. It is an immense thought, and one which, when held in power, imparts both strength and energy to our souls—that we are even now brought to God. The whole distance—measured by the death of Christ on the cross, when He was made sin for us—has been bridged over, and our position of nearness is marked by the place He now occupies as glorified at the right hand of God. In heaven itself we shall not be nearer—as to our position, because it is in Christ. It will not be forgotten that our enjoyment of this truth, indeed even our apprehension of it, will depend upon our practical condition. God looks for a state corresponding with our standing—that is, our responsibility is measured by our privilege. But until we know our place there cannot be an answering condition. We must first learn that we are brought to God, if we would in any measure walk in accordance with the position. State and walk must ever flow from a known relationship. Unless therefore we are taught the truth of our standing before God, we shall never answer to it in our souls, or in our walk and conversation.

The third thing to be observed is, that their present position was the pledge of the fulfillment of all the rest. "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in; in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign forever and ever" (vss. 17-18). The power God had displayed at the Red Sea was the guarantee; first, that He would accomplish all His purposes respecting Israel; and, secondly, that that power would finally be exhibited in His everlasting reign. Faith, begotten through the knowledge of redemption, lays hold of this—embracing the whole scope of the purposes of God, and looking upon them as if already accomplished. It is so in the epistle to the Romans. "Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. 8:30). If indeed the purposes of God could be frustrated, He were not God. There may be enemies in the way—and they may set themselves against the execution of His declared will. But faith says, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). Thus Israel could sing, "The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of Thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till Thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over, which Thou hast purchased" (vss. 14-16). In like manner, the apostle cries, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Rom. 8:35). No—nothing, for he is "persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39). The efficacy of the blood secures the completion of all God's counsels, brings in all that He is—His majesty, His truth, His mercy, His love, His almighty power—on behalf of His people. It is therefore not presumption, but simplicity of faith, to anticipate the consummation of our redemption. It is not to overlook the character and might of our foes; but, measuring these by what God is, the soul is immediately certified of being more than a conqueror through Him that loved us. It is to derive the full and blessed consolation of the truth, that God is acting by His own power outside of us, and for His own glory. The legions of Satan—the dukes of Edom, the mighty men of Moab, and the inhabitants of Canaan, may seek to bar the way to the inheritance, but when God arises in His strength on behalf of His blood-besprinkled host, they will be scattered as chaff before the wind. Thus the end is sure from the beginning, and hence our triumphant song of victory may be raised before a single step has been taken in the wilderness path. And the issue will be to the glory of the One who has redeemed us. The Lord shall reign forever and ever. So we read in the epistle to the Philippians, that it is according to God's purpose and decree, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11). What joy it should be to the heart of the believer to contemplate that while we are brought into unspeakable blessing, yet that the result of redemption will be the exaltation of the Redeemer. In this Scripture the reign spoken of has undoubtedly primary application to the earth. It is the everlasting kingdom of Jehovah—the millennial sway of the Messiah, who must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. But in principle it goes further—for He shall reign forever and ever; and this too will be the fruit of the cross. There He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and as a consequence He is now, and will be forever, exalted.

There is another thing demanding our notice. So far, everything that has been considered is connected with the purposes of God. But in the second verse there is an exception. No sooner can they say, "The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation," (vs. 2) than they add, "He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation;2 my father's God, and I will exalt Him." This is different from "The sanctuary which Thy hands have established" (vs. 17), in the seventeenth verse. That looks on to the accomplishment of the purposes of God in the establishment of the kingdom and the temple at Jerusalem. But this was to be a present thing: "I will prepare Him an habitation" (vs. 2). It is in fact the tabernacle. This will come more properly before us in subsequent chapters; but it may be noted here that this is the first time mention is made of a habitation for the Lord with His people. He had saints before this, but not a people; and until redemption was accomplished He never dwelt on earth. He visited His saints, and appeared to them in many ways, but He never had His dwelling place in their midst. But as soon as expiation for sin has been made by the blood of the Lamb, and His people have been brought forth out of Egypt, saved through death and resurrection, then He inspires their hearts to build Him a habitation.3 He led them by the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, as soon as they commenced their exodus; but He could not have a dwelling place in Egypt, in the territory of the enemy. But when they are brought on to new ground, He can identify Himself with them, dwell in their midst, and be their God, and they His people. It is so also in Christianity. Not until atonement had been made, and Christ had risen from the dead and ascended up on high, did God form His present habitation on earth through the Spirit (Acts 2; Eph. 2). It is so with the individual believer. It is not until he is cleansed by the blood of Christ that his body is made a temple of the Holy Spirit. The truth therefore is, that God's dwelling upon earth is founded upon a completed redemption. And what an immense privilege. Although the wilderness was no part of the purpose of God, yet, in His ways with His people, they wandered there forty years. How blessed, then, for these weary pilgrims, looking onward to the inheritance, to have the habitation of God in their midst; a place where they could approach Him, through the appointed priests, with sacrifices and incense; the center, too, of their encampment. How it would inspire the hearts of the godly with courage to behold that tabernacle, with the cloud resting upon it, the symbol of the divine presence. Hence the agonizing cry of Moses, after the people's failure, "If Thy presence go not, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not in that Thou goest with us?" (Ex. 33:15-16). Nor should it be forgotten that God has also now His dwelling place on earth. This truth is, amid the confusions of Christendom, in danger of being ignored. But, spite of our failure, God does dwell in the house which He has formed, and will dwell in it until the return of the Lord. This truth should inspire us also with strength and consolation; for it is no mean privilege to be brought out of the sphere, and from

under the power, of Satan into the scene of the presence and the power of God. It is the only place of blessing on earth, and happy are they who have been made sharers of it through the grace of God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

This was no common joy which found expression in this song of jubilant praise. It evidently pervaded the whole host; for “Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances” (vs. 20). And Miriam cried, as she led the chorus of their song, “Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea” (vs. 21). It is the first mention of Miriam by name, and it is exceedingly interesting to notice that she was a prophetess. It was she, most probably, who watched over the ark of bulrushes in which her infant brother Moses was laid, and who was the means of his restoration to his mother. Thus she also becomes prominent in Israel, not only from her connection with Moses, but also from her own distinct gift. It is the way of the Lord to bless all connected with the man of His counsels; and at the same time it reveals to us how sacred is the family tie in His sight, But in the scene before us it was her honor and privilege to be the leader and mouthpiece of the joy of the women of Israel. The hearts of all were filled with gladness, and found their utterance in music, dancing, and song. They were redeemed and they knew it on this happy morn; and laden with the joy of their salvation, they tell it out in these accents of gratitude and praise.

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"Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation." Exod. 15:13. The children of Israel were brought to God as to the new standing they occupied. In the desert, just indeed entering upon it—this marked their character as pilgrims—they were yet brought into God's holy habitation. This corresponds with our position as believers in the Lord Jesus. He once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. This is our place as His redeemed. That is, we are brought to God according to all that He is; His whole moral nature, having been completely satisfied in the death of Christ, can now rest in us in perfect complacency. The hymn therefore only expresses scriptural thought, when it says -

"So near, so very near to God, I cannot nearer be,For in the Person of His Son I am as near as He."

The place indeed is accorded to us in grace, but none the less in righteousness, so that not only are all the attributes of God's character concerned in bringing us there, but He Himself is also glorified by it. It is an immense thought and one which, when held in power, imparts both strength and energy to our souls—that we are even now brought to God. The whole distance—measured by the death of Christ on the cross when He was made sin for us—has been bridged over, and our position of nearness is marked by the place He now occupies as glorified at the right hand of God. In heaven itself we shall not be nearer, as to our position, because it is in Christ. It should not be forgotten that our enjoyment of the truth, indeed even our apprehension of it, will depend upon our practical condition. God looks for a state corresponding with our standing; that is, our responsibility is measured by our privilege. But until we know our place, there cannot be an answering condition. We must first learn that we are brought to God, if we would in any measure walk in accordance with the position. State and walk must ever flow from a known relationship. Unless therefore we are taught the truth of our standing before God, we shall never answer to it in our souls, or in our walk and conversation.

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