Exodus - Commentaries by Samuel Ridout

Lectures on the Tabernacle: A Full Exposition Examining the Types and Their Doctrinal Applications — Fully Illustrated, Court, The

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Exodus 38:9-20

The court was that enclosure, formed by the linen curtains which surrounded the tabernacle. Its length, running east and west, was too cubits, and its breadth 50 cubits. On the east side was an opening, or “gate,” of 20 cubits, in the middle, leaving 15 cubits of linen curtains on either side.

These hangings, which formed the court, were of fine linen, 5 cubits high, and the total length 280 cubits, not counting the gate, which was of a special pattern. These hangings were suspended from silver “fillets” and hooks, as they are called in our version. The word for “fillets” is also rendered “connecting rods,” which is probably correct; that is, each of these pillars had a “chapiter,” or capital, of silver upon it and a rod passing from one to the other, uniting them steadfastly together.

As to the pillars, there is no distinct mention of their material, unless it be of copper. In the direction given in chapter 27: to, it says the pillars and their sockets were to be of brass.1

This has been objected to, as rendering the pillars extremely heavy; and, from the fact also that 70 talents—the amount spoken of in chapter 38:29 for things of copper—would be insufficient to make such pillars. But we have not sufficient data to form a conclusion. There is significance, however, in the fact that no mention is made of the acacia wood, as is usual wherever it is unquestionably used. Therefore, whether the pillars were made of the wood which is unmentioned, or, of copper, hollow, as such pillars are made, the copper of their foundations, or sockets, alone is that which is before us: the pillars themselves are lost sight of, except as resting upon the sockets.

Mention also is made, without detailed description, of pins of copper, both for the tabernacle and the court; these were doubtless for bracing the pillars, as the “stakes” in a tent.

The spiritual significance of these things now claims our attention. We have, then, an enclosure, the “court,” for the house of God: His dwelling-place is thus separated from the world around. I think we shall have no difficulty in seeing that this enclosure is formed by the Lord’s people, who are practically the line of demarcation in this world between all which is of God and that which is not of Him. First, we will look at the material of the hangings, the fine linen. We have already had its significance in the description of the inner curtain of the tabernacle.

Therefore, we need not go again into minute detail. It is sufficient to remember that the linen speaks to us of the spotless purity of the life, including the thoughts as well as the acts and words.

The length of these hangings was the same as that of the curtains in the inner covering of the tabernacle. There were 10 curtains, each of them 28 cubits in length, or 280 cubits in all. This would remind us that God’s standard for practical holiness is always one. He has not two standards, as we oftentimes have: one for ourselves, perhaps, and another for others. God abhors divers weights and measures. When He measures human righteousness, He does so by one standard, absolute perfection, which we find expressed in the Ten Commandments, a number of frequent occurrence in the description of the court. Ten is the number of responsibility, both Godward and manward. Who has met such responsibility as this? We read in Rev. 19:8 that fine linen is the righteousnesses of saints—their righteous acts. The linen in this way speaks of a perfect, spotless, human righteousness. The time is coming, thank God, when His saints will be manifested absolutely and perfectly in spotless linen. Their actions, of faith and love, the fruit of divine grace, will be manifested in glory, and we shall be like Christ. But if we speak of ourselves, of our righteousness, even of saved men, is it such as that I have described, that fully measures up to the standard of divine requirement? Speaking for the nation at large, as well as for himself, Isaiah says: “Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember Thee in Thy ways:” that is, God meets man if He can meet him in righteousness. “Behold, Thou art wroth; for we have sinned.” That is how He finds man. “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” (chap. 64:5, 6). Here is a confession of what man is in himself, a confession that each one of us could join in absolutely if we look at what we are apart from Christ. The very best that we have is unfit for the presence of God.

But turning from self we find in our Lord the full measure of God’s standard of righteousness. In 1 John 3:5 we read: “Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him is no sin.” Very strikingly we have the two things thus put side by side. The passage we had from Isaiah bears witness to our sin: our best things being “as filthy rags” before God; or, we are like Joshua the high priest, clothed with filthy garments unfit for priestly service in the presence of God. But here is One who was manifested to take away our sins, “and in Him is no sin.” That is the first great truth as to these hangings—the spotless, absolute holiness of our Lord. There is the fine linen, 280 cubits (7 x 40, perfection manifested by testing), the full measure of God’s requirement, which forms the most effectual witness, and the perfect barrier between all the sin of the world and the sacred enclosure where God manifests Himself.

But we have something more than that. Righteousness is God’s standard for His saints, and in this very epistle of John we pass from the spotless purity of Christ to what is imparted at new birth as well: “As He is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17). This is sometimes taken as our absolute acceptance in Christ as our Representative; but it is something more than that. John’s epistle is not occupied largely with the work of Christ for us, but rather with the work of grace in us by new birth which produces moral likeness to Christ. Knowing His love, believing it, having received it, we have been born of God, and thus the very nature, the very holiness of Christ, is wrought in us by the power of the Holy Spirit: “As He is, so are we in this world.”

In 1 John 3:2 we have the future, unquestionably: “When He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” We could not expect to see Him unless we were morally fit for such a vision, as we read in John’s Gospel: “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” There must be a moral likeness to God if we are to see Him; as we read in Heb. 12 “Follow peace... and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.” “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God.” That is what we are in this world, children of God. Now we are that, though it does not yet appear what we shall be, only when Christ in glory is manifested in all the spotless purity of His human nature, “we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

Notice what directly connects with this, in the 3rd verse: “And every man that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself even as He is pure.” We look at the spotless, linen curtains, and we say, “In Him is no sin.” Then we say, “As He is, so are we in this world.” We have a nature which is capable of holiness even here. We look further and see the time is coming when we who are now the children of God shall be like Him, “for we shall see Him as He is.” Lastly, if we have this hope in Christ, it produces practical righteousness now; we seek to keep our garments unspotted from the world, in this present life.

In this same epistle (chap. 2:6), we have the measure of this present effect: “He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.” How often persons say: “I know we are to be holy, but you cannot expect us to be perfectly holy.” For instance, when that verse is quoted: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me,” some one replies, “But that was Paul,” as though we could not possibly expect to be like Paul. But this scripture goes even further. We are not only to be as Paul, but we are left here to be like Christ Himself; and if you look at this verse you will see there is no limitation short of that. The measure for our walk is what Christ was here. God abhors divers measures. He does not measure His blessed Son’s walk by one standard and His people’s walk by another. He has pity and compassion upon us; He has grace to pardon our sins, mercy to succor us in our weakness; but His holiness will not allow Him to abate one single iota of the full measure of the perfect standard of holiness which has been marked out for us in the walk of our blessed Lord Jesus.

Does this seem hard? Does it appall us? Do we shrink from it? Would you dare to wish any lower standard than this?—that God should make a standard for us to walk less holily, less devotedly than Christ? Would you like some measure of sin, of selfishness to be spared? If you came to an expression, as from God’s word, saying, as unbelief often says in the heart, It makes not so much difference if you are not perfectly holy, would there not be a shock in your bosom? Would you not say, This surely is the work of the enemy sowing some wretched poison in the midst of divine truth! We know there can be only one standard—Christ; and He has left us an example that we should follow in His steps, or as we have it here: “He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.” Thus the full measure of the curtains is measured for us by Christ; He is God’s only standard.

We have been looking at the length of these curtains. Suppose God had given a shorter measure than 280 cubits, what would it have resulted in? A court without sufficient protection. There would have been gaps, and God’s holy presence would not have been isolated from the outside world. So now; if there were not this full standard of perfect holiness, as seen in Christ, and to be manifested in His people, God would be thought of as less holy, less separate from sinful man. The same truth is brought out in the height of the curtains. They were five cubits high, the number of responsibility, particularly manward, as Christ measured up fully to God’s requirement of man, and is the standard He has set for us.

Having seen, I trust to our full conviction, the fact that we must have in our walk that which corresponds to Christ’s walk if we are to answer to God’s thought, we will look at a few scriptures which bring out this holiness in the believer.

In the 6th chapter of Daniel we see him in the midst of a hostile court, surrounded by persons who, envious of his position, desired to taint his character before the king, and thus bring him into disgrace. Here, we may say, is the spotless linen curtain, God’s character expressed in Daniel, and against him a world at enmity with God. They desire to bring him into disgrace. How are they going to do it? Of dishonesty, of injustice, or neglect of duty, they can bring no charge against the man who stood out in his white, spotless character. He is the object of their enmity; yet, no doubt, with silent admiration of envy which can find no occasion of fault in him. So they turn to the law of his God, which militates against the king’s will, as the only way they can find accusation against him. Oh that it were true of us as it was of Daniel, that it were impossible to put the finger upon a single inconsistency in our walk or lives; that the only points in which we come in collision with the world were in our loyalty and devotedness to Christ, which stirs enmity in the heart that is un-reconciled to God.

In Daniel, then, we see God’s measure hanging between the world outside and a blameless and spotless life; or, as we have it in Phil. 2:14-16, a testimony before the world to which there can be no gainsaying. How good it is when the world can see nothing but the white linen as it looks upon the children of God—see the image of Christ reflected in their daily life!

We have an added thought to this in James 1:27. It is not just what the fine linen is in itself that we see there, but as guarding from defilement. We have our outward connections with the world; our various responsibilities and labor bring us into connection with it, and our garments are to be kept unspotted from it; as Jude says: “Hating even the garment spotted by the flesh,” and as we are advised in Ecclesiastes: “Let thy garments be always white.” The Lord’s word to Sardis also, where lethargy in general prevailed, was: “Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy.”

White linen, then, is to be the character of our walk in our relation to the world. Sometimes people say: It is a good thing when men speak evil against you. The Lord Jesus said: “Blessed are ye when men shall say all manner of evil against you.” Yes, He did, with the added word, “falsely, for My sake.” If it is for Christ’s sake and falsely, we can bless God for it; but let us see to it that it is not because the garment is spotted by the flesh—to our shame, and misrepresentation of our blessed Lord. How we should shrink from the very thought of misrepresenting Him in a world which already hates Him so much!

In the same line with this is 1 Pet. 4:14: “If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified.” How good it is when Christians can be so described! God spoken evil of by His enemies, but by His people, in their walk and conversation, glorified! The next verse shows how there is to be nothing of soil upon the garment. “But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters.” The perfect standard of holiness has been set for us by Christ in His life. Let us make no other standard. Not a day passes, surely, but that we need to go in confession to our God and wash at the laver; but let nothing lower the standard for us. Let us not make provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof. Our standard is Christ; let us walk in His steps.

We come next to a very precious line of truth suggested in the hooks and capitals, and “fillets,” or connecting rods. The curtains were suspended from the silver hocks and connecting rods. The pillars themselves stood upon the solid copper foundation, but the top of the pillar was encircled with a silver crown. Silver points to redemption, the great truth of our having been purchased by the precious blood of Christ. Let us remember there can be no holy walk apart from redemption. The pillars with silver capitals point us to Christ crowned with the redemption which He has wrought for us; and the hooks with the connecting rods passing from one to another, holding all firm, speak of redemption, from which depends the holy walk which is to glorify God. To stand in our own strength and walk as Christ walked is as impossible for us as to create a world. Our walk must depend, not upon our strength or character, but upon the redemption of Christ, as absolutely as the curtains hung from the silver hooks and connecting rods. Those curtains were dependent from silver, and our walk is dependent on the redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A few scriptures will bring this out very clearly. In 1 Pet. 1:2 we read: “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience” (there is the fine linen) “and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (here are the silver hooks from which the fine linen is suspended). Obedience is connected with the sprinkled blood of Jesus Christ. It can flow from nothing else.

A familiar passage in Titus declares this clearly: “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:11, 12). The apostle, in exhorting servants to be obedient, to be respectful, not to use their liberty in the house to purloin or steal little trifles, makes it an occasion to speak of this salvation of God and its effects. It is a word to us all, for we are all servants to God, and are to walk here in a way that will glorify God, or, as He says: “Adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.” For the grace of God that brings salvation also teaches. It cannot teach us what holiness means until it has taught us what salvation is; but when salvation is known, then that grace teaches us to live here soberly as to ourselves, righteously in our relations with others, and godly in our relations with God, and to be looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior. Then, in verse 14, he reminds us of this truth at which we are looking: “Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity” (there are the silver rods), and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” How beautifully the linen curtains thus are suspended from the hooks and rods of silver—from redemption.

The epistles to the Colossians and to the Ephesians markedly set this forth. First, they give the great basis of divine truth in connection with redemption, then dependent upon this the word as to our walk and testimony in the world.

One passage, in Rom. 8:3, 4, shows this strikingly also. It is especially significant because we are shown there how impossible it is to have these linen curtains without their silver hooks and rods: “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh,” etc. The law was powerless to produce a holy life in us; powerless to produce the walk which marked Christ down here. But “God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin” (as a sacrifice for it, in which we see the silver-gleam of redemption) “condemned sin in the flesh”—has set it aside; that, in result, “the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Divine righteousness, which could not secure anything from us by the law, has been so perfectly met by the sacrifice of Christ, that not only are we forgiven and saved, but also given power for the righteousness of life which God desires from His people.

I will ask you for a moment to look at the pillars of the court. We have seen the material and the measurements of the hangings, which speak to us of the spotless purity of Christ as the standard for His people’s walk and testimony in this world. The pillars rested upon the sockets of copper. The full emphasis is upon their foundation, on copper.

As we have seen before, the copper speaks to us of stability in the divine character and purpose. He is Jehovah; He changes not. His justice and truth, when applied to sinful man, means judgment; but in connection with our Lord, it meant that He perfectly manifested this in His whole walk and testimony down here. If I may use such an expression, our Lord took a firm stand for God on every side, like the pillars on the four sides of the court, which rested upon their copper bases. In His whole life, in every action, unswerving devotedness and divine righteousness was exhibited in our Lord, from whatever side we may look at Him.

The south, as the south wind which blows softly, speaks of what is attractive in nature, of prosperity in the world. The north, of the dark, cold and cheerless side, of adversity; as we have it in the Song of Solomon: “Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.” That is, we have the varied experiences, of comfort on one hand, of affliction on the other; but all is to cause the spices, the fragrance of Christ, to flow forth in our lives.

Look at our Lord Jesus on every side, in every circumstance of His life here; how absolutely firm and unyielding He stood for God! With us, alas, when prosperity comes in, or pleasure, or the smiles of this world, how the pillars of our testimony seem to be set upon the shifting sand! How often the people of God fail on the south side, on the prosperous side of life. On the other hand, if adversity comes in, tribulation, reproach for the truth, for Christ’s sake, how often the saints of God faint when a faithful testimony should be maintained. Look at our Lord at the feast of Cana, or in the Pharisee’s house, or in any other contact with men (He was no recluse, refusing to go where He was invited), what testimony for God was borne in every place! How absolutely unyielding in every particular! When the dark clouds (as from the north) of desertion, of persecution, yea, of the cross itself came over Him, how He ever maintained the same stand for God. When His sun was, as it were, declining in the west, when the time was nearing for Him to leave this world, not one iota does He yield, “He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.” And as He looked forward to the certainty of coming glory, as the sun rising, He maintained absolutely His testimony for divine truth and holiness. Thus, on every side, our Lord stood unswerving and firm as the pillars about the court. And this steadfastness is still maintained for us by Him, through His Word and Spirit; the dimensions of the court remain the same.

I have spoken of Christ in His unswerving faithfulness and steadfastness as represented by the pillars around the court, and also as maintaining His people here. I would now recall a quotation we have had already, how we are to “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.” The pillars are around the court, but where is the linen which is to adorn them? God has an absolutely perfect standard in Christ, but do we set forth what these linen curtains represent? Do we “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things?”

Let us look at a few scriptures that show how absolutely we must hang upon Him if we are to be sustained in this world, as the linen curtains for God’s court.

“Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). That is true for all of us. We are not to think of ourselves as incapable of falling. Peter’s history, and the history of thousands of God’s people would show, alas, that when self-confidence comes in, “Pride

goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Let us beware of self-confidence. Let us rather, as 1 Peter 17 exhorts us, "Pass the time of our sojourning here in fear." Sooner than we dream Satan will use our very confidence to trip us to our fall. How many of us, yea, can any of us be sure to stand a single hour without falling? Where shall we find human steadfastness sufficient to maintain us from dishonor to our Lord? God alone is "able to make us stand." Oh, to realize more and more that we have not strength to hold ourselves up a single moment, any more than those linen curtains, apart from the pillars. We must hang in faith upon our blessed Lord to be holden up. Thank God, we shall be holden up, for He is able to make us stand.

Many of the passages we might look at in this connection have to do with our wilderness life rather than with our standing before God. Perhaps, as we have been dwelling upon the testimony in our life, some may feel the heart sinking, and say: "Who is sufficient for these things?"

Let me ring out this precious assurance, then: "Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time"

(1 Pet. 1:5); kept for the incorruptible inheritance reserved for us in heaven; kept not by our own strength but by His power; kept from yielding to temptation through the power of the enemy; kept through faith; laying hold of the silver hook and rod of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ; and we may be sure that He who has given us this word will perform it. May we be kept from dishonoring Him through unbelief.

Look at that faithful servant of Christ, Paul in Rome, upheld by the unyielding Pillar when all had forsaken him (2 Tim. 4:16, 17). It is upon Christ we are to lean, not on an arm of flesh. If we lean upon our brethren, upon any human arm, no matter how strong it may seem, the time of testing will come. We must learn to stand leaning upon the Lord alone. We may counsel with one another, pray for one another, set an example to one another, but let us not depend upon man. It will surely prove a broken reed that will pierce the hand. The Lord stood with Paul, and He will stand with us; no matter what the circumstances, the pillar with its brazen socket (the sure word of God) will be there to uphold us. Those everlasting arms of redeeming love will maintain us in our walk and testimony in this world. If we look back with sorrow and shame to some season when we dishonored the Lord, when we did not maintain the spotless linen garment, was it when conscious of our weakness, when leaning on His arm? Or was it not when we thought of our sufficiency, or leaned upon some human prop? I am sure we never dishonor Him when we are trusting Him.

Let us now look at the enclosure as a whole. It represents the people of God as answering to the walk of Christ, forming a practical enclosure in the world, where the people of God can be in happy fellowship and testimony for Him. How are they separated from the world? They are not shut up in monasteries; no walls of stone are between them and the world, but like Enoch, their walk with God is their separation, while performing the duties of every-day life. Directions for every relationship of life are given in the Epistles, but never a single word as to withdrawal from the ordinary vocations and employments of life. So far from this, idleness or selfish isolation is condemned by the word of God. We are to live in the world, while not of it. The walk of believers, therefore, is what the linen curtains point to that which separates them from the world.

The apostle James brings this out in effect when he says: You talk of faith without works; you say you are resting upon the blood of Christ for salvation, and you stand before God in all the value of Christ's perfection. Then show it by your works, by your life. The world will justly say, Give me a proof of it. Indeed, the salvation of God has a two-fold seal. The Godward side is: "The Lord knoweth them that are His;" He may see faith where the world cannot. But there is something the world can see—the white linen curtains; so the other side of the seal is: "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." This is what the world can see. So James does not contradict Paul for a moment. Paul speaks of our entrance into the presence of God, and how God sees us complete in Christ; but James speaks of our walk and testimony in the world, and he says: "Show me thy faith without thy works" if you can; "I will show thee my faith by my works." We are justified before God by faith without works; before the world we are justified by works which manifest that faith. Our relation to the world is shown by our walk and testimony.

But this forms a complete barrier, so that the world cannot pass into the company of God's people. How is it then that false professors are in Christendom to-day? It is while men slept that the enemy came and sowed tares. It was while there was carelessness or indifference as to the honor of the Lord that Satan got false professors into the court. It is ever carelessness or indifference which allows mere professors to intrude amongst the people of God.

In Acts, chap. 5, the holiness which is to surround the house of God, as the white curtains around the tabernacle, is exemplified in the dealings with Ananias' and Sapphira's dreadful sin. The court of the Lord was purged of what had defiled it. The fine linen was cleansed, as it were, and the barrier which shut in the people of God from the outside world was made manifest. "Of the rest durst no man join himself to them." Great fear fell upon all. They realized that they dare not intrude in such a holy Presence for fear of divine judgment falling upon them. The reality of the testimony in the Church was unmistakable; it excluded evil.

What will maintain the purity of the Church of Christ? We are not to be surmising evil where it is not manifest; but if there is a godly life and testimony, the world will not dare join itself to such a company.

Lastly, we come to the gate. Thank God, there is only one gate. But it is not a company, amongst whom it may be difficult to enter. The materials of the gate are the same as those of the curtain—they speak of Christ. He is the Door; by Him "if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture."

This hanging, forming the gate or entrance, was also suspended upon silver hooks, showing us that it is the gospel of Christ which we are to hold up in our testimony as the way for people to come in from the world among the professed people of God. Enter in by Christ, and you are saved. No one dare to enter the court of the tabernacle in any other way than by the gate. "I am the Door," not a door, as if there were others; but "I am the Door;" " I am the Way,'' the only way. Conceive for a moment of one daring to lift up the curtain on the side and slit, into the court. He would be a thief and a robber and dealt with as such, put outside of the court in judgment. No one can rightly enter amongst the company of God's people unless by Christ. One may say, "I am a child of Christian parents; have not I a right to be amongst God's people?" Well, the Pharisees said: "We have Abraham to our father"—as a title to being God's people; but the faith and works of their father were not in them; and their claims are refused. "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" says the Baptist to them, "and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our Father," etc. (Matt. 3:7-10)

The blessing of being a child of Christian parents is an inestimable one. The privilege of a Christian home is a precious one. The teaching and example of a godly parent to his child is a precious heritage, but it does not save. The parent can point the way of salvation, but the child must come in through the gateway, which is Christ. Have you entered by the Door? Have you come in by Christ? Are you amongst God's people, not by mere profession, but have you come as a poor sinner, with nothing of your own, and accepted Christ Jesus and entered by the wide open Way?

The gate was twenty cubits wide—wide open for every one who would come in. God's invitation to every one is to enter in now, by faith in the Lord Jesus, to be welcomed not only among the company of God's people, but to find salvation, eternal life now, and glory in a little while. As we tarry at the gate, we would echo the invitation: "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

Jesus Christ says:

"Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

Lectures on the Tabernacle: A Full Exposition Examining the Types and Their Doctrinal Applications — Fully Illustrated, Laver, The

Exodus 38:8

In the order of construction, "the laver and its foot" is given after the altar of burnt-offering, and in a single verse. In the directions for its construction and use (chap. 30:17-21), there is but little actual description, which has, no doubt, its significance; for silence in Scripture is not meaningless.

The word kiyor, translated "laver," is literally a "pot," used for boiling, or as a receptacle for water. Connected with this was the "foot ' or stand, and of both it is said," to wash withal. "This base or" foot ' seems to have been directly connected with purifying. This has led to the supposition that it was more than a mere support to the laver—that it was a smaller vessel at the foot of the large one, into which some of the water was taken for cleansing.

We have already noticed that the "foot" as well as the laver was "to wash withal" (30:18). The next verse suggests that the laver was a reservoir and not a basin: "Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet from it" (not "thereat," as in our Version). This suggests that water was taken from the laver for the purposes of washing. "The laver and his foot" were anointed (Levs. 8:11). This would be peculiar, unless the "foot" had a distinctive use.

On the other hand, in the detailed description of the "bases" (a word from the same root as "foot"), for the temple of Solomon, their purpose was evidently to support the lavers (1 Kings 7:27-39). In connection with the brazen "sea," which is also fully described, no mention is made of smaller vessels into which the water was poured for actual use (1 Kings 7:23-26).

Nor are we left to conjecture that the ten lavers were used for this purpose, for we are told, "He made also ten lavers, and put five on the right hand and five on the left, to wash in them; such things as they offered for the burnt-offering they washed (or," cleansed ") in them; but the sea was for the priests to wash in" (2 Chr. 4:6).

We may not, therefore, dogmatize about the use of the "foot," but confine ourselves to what is obvious. The word would suggest a solid basis for the laver. This must be our primary thought. From being spoken of separately, we can at least see that our attention is drawn to it. We are certainly clear in referring to it as the support or foundation for the laver; and in addition, we may gather that either it, or some other vessel was used to take water from the laver for the various washings. The dimensions or form of the laver and its foot are not given; nothing but the material and the position it was to occupy in the court are mentioned—between the tabernacle and the altar. Explicit directions for its use were given. Aaron and his sons were to wash their hands and feet from it when they went into the tabernacle to minister, or when they came to the altar of burnt-offering in connection with sacrifice. They could not neglect this under penalty of death.

Another striking omission regarding the laver is that it was not specially committed to any of the Levite families, nor was any provision made for carrying it through the wilderness. Indeed it is only mentioned once after the account of its construction and placing, when Moses anointed it (Levs. 8:11). The laver is never mentioned again, and Solomon's "sea" is the first we hear of anything taking its place. This absence of detail is in marked contrast with the elaborate description of the "brazen sea" and the lavers in connection with the temple. Is not our attention all the more drawn to what is mentioned, and may we not thus also learn the meaning of the absence of detail?

The directions given as to the laver and its use in chap. 30, being after the altar of incense and in the same general connection, suggest that both altar of incense and laver, were intimately connected with priestly work.

The laver's only material was copper; it was made from the mirrors of the women engaged in the manufacture of the curtains of the tabernacle. They willingly offered their mirrors for the construction of the laver—willingly offered what might gratify vanity to provide for that vessel of cleansing, that God's service and worship might not be hindered.

In the consecration of the priests, Aaron and his sons were first taken and washed completely—bathed all over. That washing was once for all. It settled the whole question of their fitness for the service of God. In their daily ministry, the priests had to wash their hands and their feet at the brazen laver. Whenever they entered the tabernacle, whether it were to arrange the showbread, trim the lamps, or offer sweet incense, they first of all washed at the brazen laver; and when they came out and ministered at the altar of burnt-offering, the same action was repeated, so that the priests were continually washing.

In looking at the laver's spiritual significance, we will take it up somewhat in the order I have suggested: First, its material, copper, as we have previously seen, is symbolic of that attribute of God which represents His unyielding character in judgment, and in testing all things by His holiness. It is singularly appropriate that, in the court outside of the tabernacle, the chief metal should be copper; while inside the tabernacle it is gold. Gold, as we saw, represents divine righteousness manifested in glory, and therefore its full display is within the sanctuary where

God makes Himself known. Heaven is the true sphere in which the glory of divine righteousness will be perfectly displayed. But here in the world, it is fittingly appropriate that copper should have been the metal to exhibit the character of God in relation to His creatures.

It is God's inflexible holiness and justice manifested in His dealings with His creatures. It means that if they are sinful creatures, He must deal with them in judgment; or, if not with them, with One who, comes under judgment as their substitute; this is where His grace put our blessed Lord, who submitted Himself to the action of God's righteous dealings with man because of sin.

In the laver we are reminded of this inflexible righteousness and justice, in Him who has manifested God in His true character: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God "(John 1:1). I quote this passage in connection with the laver, because it is singularly appropriate that the living, personal Word should be the embodiment of those attributes of God which come out in connection with the written Word, which the laver represents. That is, as we shall see later on, the laver filled with water is symbolic of the word of God. Christ Himself is the living Word, and through Him is the word of God given to us. The action of the blessed Spirit is not excluded, of course; but if God had not seen fit to speak to us of the personal Word, He would not have given us His written Word. In connection with John 1:1, showing us Christ as the Word, we have in John 5:22-27, judgment committed to the Son. All are to honor the Son, the living Word, as they honor the Father; and thus, the divine characteristics of righteousness and judgment are associated with the Son, who has all authority bestowed upon Him for the execution of judgment according to God's unchanging character.

If we turn to 2 Cor. 5:10, 11, we see the time is coming when this judgment, committed to the Son, will be executed by Him. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" primarily speaks of the time when the believer's works shall come in review, when the Lord will manifest just what grace did for us. He will show what we were by nature and practice. He will show how His grace led us; how He bore with us; how He delivered us from many a snare. He will show also where self-will was at work, and the bitter fruits of it; everything at the judgment-seat of Christ for His saints will be to display the glory of His grace in connection with His people's ways.

Later on, the unbeliever must stand before this judgment-seat also, as we know (Rev. 20:11-16), but the time and character of it are entirely different.

As we think of the judgment-seat of Christ, of the solemnity and holiness of the scene, of the majesty of Him who sits there, surely solemn awe and reverence fill the heart; yet, not slavish dread, nor calling upon the mountains and hills to cover us; no, thank God, nor desire to flee from that Presence. But if the judgment-seat of Christ is a solemn place for true believers, what will it be for unbelievers? "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men," says the apostle. The very thought of the judgment-seat should redouble our earnestness to urge sinners to "flee from the wrath to come," of which Scripture speaks as "the wrath of the Lamb."

The Lord in the midst of the candlesticks, which represent His assemblies on earth (Rev. chaps. 2 and 3), is now looking with eyes like a piercing flame of fire, and with heart searching words, among those who are in the place of responsible testimony for Him. Solemn and searching scene it is! While singling out everything He can approve, He equally singles out what He must judge and condemn—He is executing judgment in the midst of the assemblies. These scriptures will be sufficient to show the appropriateness of the copper in connection with the laver. It is not the execution of judgment upon our Substitute, nor is it the infliction of judgment upon us; but it is the testing and trying of our ways by the Son of God according to the authority given Him to judge among His people, before He judges all the earth at a later day.

The laver's material was copper, but of the mirrors which the women offered. It is a beautiful indication of what the sense of God's goodness will produce in the heart. Attraction to Him ever produces holiness. It is the only way that holiness is produced. The mirror may speak to us of the vanity and self-occupation which beget pride. In Isa. 3:23 we find, amongst an enumeration of articles by which the daughters of Israel fostered their pride, is the mention of "glasses"—which may be rendered "mirrors." What a fruit of divine grace it is, willingly to sacrifice that which naturally ministers to pride to obtain what fits us for communion with God. God's grace alone can do this—convert the mirror into a laver.

We have a striking illustration of the natural use of the mirror in the man of the 18th of Luke. Holding the glass before himself, he contemplates his excellences and beauties: "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are." He looks again and says: "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." How satisfied with himself!—and that is what we naturally do.

Look at the contrast to this. See now one to whom the Lord holds up the divine mirror—the woman of Samaria in the 4th of John. The Lord is going to show her Himself; to give her the knowledge of salvation, and through her to the town in which she lives. He holds up the mirror to her. She sees her true condition, but she also sees Himself, the Sent One, the Messiah.

What is the effect? She leaves her water-pot and goes into the city saying, " Come, see a Man, which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" The mirror of human pride is exchanged for the mirror of divine reflection—it is the word of God, showing what we are and who Christ is. Wherever Christ is permitted thus to hold up the mirror before our gaze, the Pharisee joins the Publican in saying: "God, be merciful to me the sinner!"

Look at another illustration of the mirror. In Phil. 3:4-7, Paul tells us how in former days he used to look in the looking-glass: "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law a Pharisee," etc. How he used to delight to look at each feature and boast in his excellence! But a view of Christ in glory broke him to pieces, and the things that were gain to him, he then counted loss for Christ.

Thus he discarded the mirror of self-complacency.

But in Rom. 7, he takes it up, we might say, not now to prove his righteousness, but in longing after holiness. He takes up the law of God, and says, Surely if I am to answer to God's thoughts of holiness, I must keep this law. So he turned to the law, which had once condemned him as a sinner, turns to it now as a saint for holiness. He begins to look at himself again for fruits of holiness. Notice how the Spirit of God uses the law. He gets a view of his own heart, and forty times in that chapter he says "I," "me," "my"—it is all himself; and what is the result of it all? "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

The apostle James (chap. 1:23) uses this figure of the mirror, as we have been doing, in a somewhat different connection. A man who hears the Word without its entering into his soul, is like one who looks into a mirror indeed, but who does not remember what is revealed to him there. On the other hand, the one who hears and bows to the Word and allows it to act, looks into the perfect law of liberty; not into the law for salvation, nor to produce holiness, but into “the law of liberty,” the word of God, which has set us free. He looks into that and continues therein, and is blest in his doing. It is the use of the mirror, very closely connected with what we shall see applies to the laver.

Let us gather from the Old and New Testament scriptures what will show us the spiritual significance of these washings.

There are four words in the Old Testament translated “wash;” two of these are used only a very few times.

Quak (to put away), is used twice in reference to cleansing the sacrifice (2 Chron. 4:6; Ezek. 40:38). Its only other use for cleansing is in Isa. 4:4.

Shataph means primarily to “gush,” “overflow,” and to “rinse,” by letting the water flow over, as over the hands. It is used thus in Levs. 15:11, 12; 6:28. It also occurs in Ezek. 16:9. All of these suggest the thorough removal or sweeping away of defilement, as by a flowing stream.

Ahab’s chariot was washed—sluiced out—in the pool of Samaria, where the dogs licked his blood. Rahzatz (one of the two words remaining for “wash”) occurs in the same verse, “They washed his armor” (1 Kings 22:38). It means primarily to “bathe,” and is the word most frequently used. With this single exception1 the word is used for bathing the person or the sacrifice. We will look at a few characteristic passages.

“And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water (Ex. 29:4;40:12)—from its immediately following the anointing of the laver, it might be gathered that it was from that vessel that they were washed. “And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat” (at the laver, Ex. 40:31).

The cleansed leper washed before he could have his place in the camp (Levs. 14:8, 9).

The person who was unclean from various causes had to bathe (Levs. 15:5, 6 etc.)

On the Day of Atonement Aaron was obliged to bathe both before and after making atonement (Levs. 16:4, 24); so also the person who took the scapegoat away, and the one who burned the sin-offering outside the camp, were to bathe (Levs. 16:26, 28). The same was true in preparing the ashes of the red heifer (Num. 19:7). Naaman was to wash seven times in Jordan (2 Kings 5:10). It was used also in reference to parts of the body, as washing the feet (Gen. 43:24), the face (Gen. 43:31), hands and feet (Ex. 40:31, 32).

In the sacrifice the same word was used, bathing the parts so that they were absolutely clean (Levs. 1:9, etc.)

We have then an evident unity in the use of this word. It was used to express the cleansing’ of the person in whole or in part. The sacrifice here comes under the same category as being a substitute for the person, and also a type of One who needed no cleansing but who submitted Himself to every test, and whose inherent holiness, was thus perfectly manifested.

“Kabas” is the last word for “wash,” the use of which is fully as distinctive as the one we have, just examined. The word means to “tread,” and so to wash by treading, and is applied only to the washing of clothes and other articles, or in describing the spiritual effect of cleansing, as in psalm 51:2, 7; Jer. 2:22; 4:14. We find a number of times these two words used side by side in the same verse; the one always applied to the person and the other to the clothing (Levs. 15:7, etc.) In one passage we have three words used each in its characteristic way: rinsing the hands, washing the clothes, and bathing the person (Levs. 15:11).

These words then may well suggest to us three views of cleansing: (1) The cleansing of the person, or his members. (2) The effect secured by washing, as of clothes—the habits. (3) The uncleanness being swept away, removed.

Let us now consider the New Testament passages, and with their light as to the spiritual meaning, return to the Old Testament to gather their import there.

It is significant that in that book where the substance takes the place of the shadow, the frequency of the words for “washing” is greatly reduced. Thus the word rahatz occurs nearly as many times in Leviticus as all the words for “washing” in the New Testament; while those words which speak of the divine work of grace, such as “holiness,” “peace,” “love,” etc., are abundantly present.

The several words for “washing” in the New Testament, are:

Luo: “Whom, when they had washed” (Acts 9:37).

“Our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb. 10:22).

“Unto Him that loveth us and washed us from our sins” (Rev. 1:5).

“Washed their stripes”-more literally,

“Washed them from their stripes” (Acts 16:33).

“The sow that was washed” (2 Peter 2:22).

Apoluo: “Arise... and wash away thy sins” (Acts 22:16).

“Ye are washed, ye are sanctified” (1 Cor. 6:11).

Brecho: “Began to wash His feet” (Luke 7:38, 44).

Nipto: “Wash thy face” (Matt. 6:17).

“They wash not their hands” (Matt. 15:2).

“Except they wash their hands” (Mark 7:3).

“Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (John 9:7; also vers. 11, 15).

“Began to wash the disciples’ feet” (John 13:5); also vers. 6, 8, 10, 12, 14.

“If she have washed the saints’ feet” (1 Tim. 5:10).

Aponipto: “Washed his hands” (Matt. 27:24).

Pluno: “Have washed their robes” (Rev. 7:14); also Rev. 22:14 (R. V.)

Apopluno, “Washing their nets” (Luke 5:2).

The word brecho has a special and tender meaning in the only passage where it is trans-slated “wash.” It means literally to “rain;” the tear-drops of the penitent are more than ordinary washing; they were as a refreshing shower, true drops from heaven.

The regular words luo and apoluo, refer to general washing of the person.

Nipto and aponipto refer to the washing of some part of the body, as hands, face, feet.

Pluno and apopluno refer to the washing of articles, such as clothing.

The use of luo and nipto are illustrated in the same verse: “He that is washed (bathed, from luo), needeth not save to wash (from nipto) his feet, but is clean every whit “ (John 13:10 these two expressions evidently point to two different spiritual cleansings.

Let us now look at the significance of “water” as the means used for this cleansing: “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God “(John 3:5). The expression “born of water,” in connection with new birth, is taken by ritualists as teaching regeneration by baptism, so that thanks are given after the baptism of a child that it has been regenerated; that by it he is “made a member of Christ and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.” But water cannot do this. The Baptist said:” I baptize you with water unto repentance; “but the Mightier than John was coming,” He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. “There is the reality.” Born of water,” in John 3, no more means baptismal regeneration than the eating Christ’s flesh and drinking His blood in the 6th chapter means transubstantiation in the Lord’s Supper.

What does “water” mean? In Titus 3:4, 5 we read: “But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing (layer is the word) of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” It is in contrast to the old nature, of which the Lord speaks in the 3rd of John: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh.” The passage in John speaks of new birth, and so does that in Titus. In 1 Peter 1:22, 23, the instrument used in new birth is mentioned: “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.” The word of God then is the instrument used in new birth. It brings conviction to the sinner and points him to Christ. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God “(Rom. 10:17). In James 1:8 we find the same truth reiterated:” Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.” The sovereign will of God has wrought in our new birth; but how? By “the word of truth.”

Cleansing with water is shown us in 1 Cor. where an awful enumeration of sins is given—an awful picture of what man is. Then he goes on to say: And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. “These once defiled Corinthians had been born again. There had been a twofold action, both parts of which are spoken of in this verse:” Ye are washed... ye are sanctified ... by the Spirit of our God. “These are by the new birth, in which a clean nature is imparted, produced by the Holy Spirit using the word of God. Then, to show the two things are not separated from each other, we have,” But ye are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” Sanctification or cleansing is thus indissolubly connected with the justification which is through the name of our Lord Jesus.

These scriptures prepare us to look at what should leave no question as to what the water in the laver means. We have it in Eph. 5:25-27. Profound truths are often brought out in apparently very common-place though important connections. In connection with the love of husbands to their wives is declared a most wondrous mystery: Christ giving Himself for the Church in order that He might cleanse it. Notice how He does it. It is not here the cleansing by the blood which gives title to stand before God in removing all guilt between the conscience and God—but the cleansing spoken of here is the inherent cleansing: “That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word.” He loved the Church; He gave Himself for it, now to sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word. Water, then, is the Word as the instrument used by the Lord.

Gathering up these several scriptures, we find, first, in John 3, that new birth is a necessity; second, in Titus 3, that this new birth is “by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost;” third, in 1 Peter 1, the new birth is by the word of God as the instrumentality; fourth, in James 1, the same truth is repeated in connection with the sovereign will of God. Then, in Cor. 6, we learn that those who once were defiled, and in corruption, were cleansed and sanctified by the Spirit of God in connection with justification, through the name of Jesus; and, lastly, that our blessed Savior died for this very purpose, to sanctify and cleanse His Church “with the washing of water by the Word.” Therefore, the laver speaks to us unquestionably of Christ as the Cleanser of His people through His Word, used by His Spirit.

There was a twofold use for the laver. First, for cleansing at consecration-a complete washing, once for all. That answers to the new birth, of which we have been speaking. Then it was used for the daily cleansing of the priests in their ministration at the tabernacle and altar.

Hebrews 10:19-22 strikingly connects the cleansing by blood and the washing by water together. First the conscience is purged by the blood; then he adds, “our bodies washed with pure water”—that is washed all over, as the priests—typically, born again by the word of God. The whole man being cleansed, a new nature given, we can draw near to God with the confidence of children.

We have been looking at the laver in connection with new birth; let us now look at the daily cleansing which is necessary for communion. It is the privilege of the believer not to sin, as John 2:1 teaches. But if a believer, through carelessness or self-sufficiency, has fallen into sin, what recovery is there for him? To be born again, he needs not. New birth is only once, never repeated. But “If any man sin”—note the occasion —

“ we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. “No sin in Him, He is righteous; and” with the Father,” maintaining that blessed relationship in our behalf. We may need His correction; but, thank God, He maintains our place as children with the Fattier.

A beautiful unfolding of this action of washing —washing by the Word—we have in the 13th chapter of John’s Gospel, where our Lord washes His disciples’ feet. In chapter 15, speaking to His disciples, He says “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” —they had been cleansed by receiving His word. Then in chap. 17 He prays: “Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth.” This sanctifying from the evil that is in the world, then, is by the Spirit of God applying the Word to us and keeping us day by day.

At the last supper with His disciples, that He might maintain them in communion with Himself, as is typified in the table, our Lord lays aside His garment, just as He laid aside His glory that He might serve His people; then He girds Himself with the linen towel, takes a basin with water and goes to each of the disciples to wash his feet. What a lowly act of grace!

This washing of the feet is for the cleansing from any defilement that we may have gathered in our walk through this world. There may be no outward failure: it may be only inward, or even the lack of that spiritual vigor that would keep us in spirit unspotted from the world. The priest was not supposed to have failed exactly when he washed his hands and feet before offering the sacrifices or entering the tabernacle. But it reminded him that he was in a scene where the dust and defilement gathered imperceptibly and so he had constantly to apply the water. Thus the scene in John 13 does not mean some glaring failure— mud, if I may use the expression—but that which comes in to hinder full communion with our Lord. Just as the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, or the lust of other things can choke the Word, so, in the believer, household cares, daily duties, business affairs, yea, even Christian service, may be allowed to practically mar communion with the Lord. Let anyone beware how he takes for granted that communion goes on undisturbed without submission to this action of our Lord—washing the feet constantly! One may have been preaching the gospel or ministering to his brethren, yet if he has not gone to the Lord for the practical cleansing as—from pride, self-sufficiency, self-complacency, etc.—he will find some iniquity connected with his holy things, that he has gathered defilement even in Christian service.

What a world it is, where we can gather defilement even in service: rather may we say, what hearts are ours that they need this action of the holy Word even in connection with the Lord’s service! Peter knew not this need. He thought himself especially devoted to his Lord, though he was about to deny Him. “Lord,” he says (and he thinks of the dignity of the Lord whom he loved), “dost Thou wash my feet?” —such as Thou to take the servant’s place and cleanse my feet: The Lord says: “What I do Thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.” How true that is in many ways, “Thou shalt know hereafter.” To Peter’s objection the Lord answers: “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me”—not, no part in salvation, but in communion, in fellowship.

Going to the other extreme, Peter answers: “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head”-as if he needed cleansing throughout. Our Lord’s answer is most significant: “He that is washed” (literally, “He that is bathed,” as the priest was washed all over at the laver in the day of his consecration, which answers to new birth) — “He that is bathed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit” —clean every whit by new birth, and fit for the presence of God; but the feet, which come in contact with the earth, need the daily cleansing. And this cleansing is carried on, as we see in the last chapter of John’s Gospel, after the resurrection, when three times the Lord brings up the memory of Peter’s denial, thoroughly to deliver him from his vain boast: “Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.” The Lord cleanses away all that pride and self-confidence, and Peter, a cleansed man, casts himself on the Lord with these words: “Lord. Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee; “and Jesus saith to him:” Feed My sheep.”

Who is it that can minister to the saints, that can wash his brother’s feet, that can minister as Christ ministered? It is he who knows the action of the Word in practical cleansing for himself, as the Lord said to Peter: “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”

There is one contrast between the cleansing at the laver and the action of John 13. The priests were to wash their hands as well as their feet at the laver, but our Lord washed only the disciples’ feet. The hands are suggestive of working, as works are the law’s demand. But our place as Christians is “not by works of righteousness which we have done.” It is the feet, our ways, which need constantly to be cleansed by the word of God, through the advocacy of Christ our Lord and the ministry of the Holy Ghost. But the walk includes the entire earthly life of the believer. There must be no distinction made between our service and our path. This is perfectly clear. The only thought is to guard against any idea of legal obedience, which would be suggested by the washing of the hands. The entire life, even to thoughts and desires, is to come under the cleansing of the Word.

In 1 Cor. 11:28 we read: “Let a man examine (or judge) himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.” And again He says (vss. 31, 32): If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” That is, if we are to partake aright of the Lord’s Supper, it must be in self-judgment; we must let the light of His Word search and cleanse our ways. How constantly we should be before the Lord that He may search us, that nothing of a defiling character may be clinging to us as we come to His table, nor hinder His favor and blessing in our daily life.

In Gal. 6:1 This is applied to our mutual relationships: “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Here we have to do with one another in brotherly love and care. Our business is not to talk to others about his fault, nor in self-satisfaction to thank God that we have not fallen into it; but in the spirit of lowliness, realizing that we too may be tempted, and if in his position might have done the same thing, go and seek to restore him to his Lord—that he may have it all out between his soul and the Lord; then we may be sure that communion is restored. This is true washing of one another’s feet.

There is a beautiful example of this washing of the saints’ feet in James. He says: “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed” (James 5:16). This is not to be busybodies in other men’s matters, nor to take up things which do not concern us, but a godly concern to secure communion with the Lord for His people. It is not demanding confession, as the priest, that others confess to him; but in brotherly and mutual confidence, confessing your faults one to another, and praying one for another that ye may be healed.

If the laver as a whole suggests the person of Christ, and the water in it the whole word of God, what would the smaller vessel at the foot of the laver suggest? I believe Eph. 6:17 tells us: “Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word (literally, the saying) of God: “not the word of God generally, but” the saying of God;” that is, the word that applies, the word spoken in due season. It is not the whole Bible we are to bring to the brother, but the needed word applying to his actual condition. This needs wisdom and the Spirit’s

guidance to bring the right word, that it may cleanse and help.

And in this connection, how important it is that we should read the Word and feed upon it. How shall the Spirit of God use it for our cleansing and upbuilding, or how can we use it to the help and blessing of others, if we are not really acquainted with it? If we are to know the word of God, there must be something like system in the way we read it, just as there is in the way we take our ordinary food. Mere desultory reading of favorite passages, skipping from point to point, while helpful in some ways, will not thoroughly furnish us. Let not a day pass without careful, prayerful reading of our regular portion. This may be long or short, as time permits, but it should be consecutive. Nor should we ignore those portions which to us may be more obscure —as the prophets, for instance. Let us become thoroughly acquainted with the entire contents of Scripture.

Does this seem like an impossible task? Let us then remember the encouragement: “To him that hath shall more be given.” A habit formed of utilizing, if it be but a few moments of the morning and evening, will give us, during the course of a year, a fairly general knowledge of God’s word. More than that, it will beget in us an appetite for more. We shall find increasing capacity to enter into the large and blessed fields that will open before us. That which we have gathered in the morning hour will be food for mind and heart during the day; and how much of the flesh, which still lurks unsuspected in our ways, will gradually be disclosed, as we are able to bear it. Thus, we shall have put at the disposal of the Lord an abundance of “water” to cleanse our ways.

We have been speaking of practical sanctification—of cleansing; let us now look at another passage which at one glance gives us the blessed truth of sanctification in a somewhat different way, and yet closely connected with all that we have been dwelling upon. It is in 2 Cor. 3:18: “Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image.” The word, “Beholding as in a glass,” is taking a full length view, we might say, not of our own image in the mirror, but beholding the glory of the Lord. The veil has been taken away; the glory of God is shining in the blessed face of Christ on high as our precursor there. Gaze upon that; take a full length view of Christ in glory, and as you are occupied with Him there, what shall be the effect of it? Oh, blessed effect: human pride gives place for the glories of Christ; and as we behold Him, we are “changed into the same image, from glory to glory.”

Lastly, in Rev. 15:2, 3 we read: “And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the Beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.”

Here we are permitted to look into the glory. There, in the heavenly sanctuary, is the throne of God and of the Lamb, as the ark was in the tabernacle. The hidden manna is there, answering to the table of showbread. The seven Spirits of God are before the throne, answering to the candlestick; and the sea of glass, answering to that in Solomon’s temple. Notice it is not now the laver filled with water—no need to remove defilement there; it is a sea of transparent glass, reminding us of the laver which has accomplished its work here. When all the redeemed of God are gathered there, the day of cleansing from defilement is over: no more need to wash one another’s feet; no more need for the Lord’s washing our feet, but there we stand with harps of God in our hands, nothing to hinder praise and worship. But the sea of glass, the witness and perpetual reminder of our cleansing, will flash forth there a continual remembrance of our Lord’s gracious and humble service throughout our journey here.

Lectures on the Tabernacle: A Full Exposition Examining the Types and Their Doctrinal Applications — Fully Illustrated, Altar of Burnt-offering, The

Exodus 38:1-7

We have now completed our survey of the tabernacle itself and its furniture, both of the most holy and the holy places. We pass next to the court which was about it, and following the order of actual construction, we come first to the altar of burnt-offering. This was indeed the most prominent article in the court, meeting the one who would draw near to God immediately upon entering the court. We shall find its importance equal to the prominence of its position.

We have already become familiar with the materials of which this altar was made—the acacia wood, and the copper with which it was overlaid. Copper was the characteristic metal outside the tabernacle, as gold was within. The dimensions of this altar were five cubits square and three cubits high. Its proportions thus differed from those of the altar of incense, which was twice as high as it was wide. On the four corners of this altar were the horns, “of the same,” that is, an integral part of the altar. All its vessels were of copper: pots for the ashes —literally, “the fat” [ashes]—shovels for removing ashes or fire; bowls for catching the blood to be sprinkled; flesh hooks or forks for handling the meat; and fire-pans for holding the fire. There was also a grate of network “unto the midst of the altar,” and upon this were four rings for the staves by which it was to be borne; these staves were of acacia wood overlaid with copper. The whole altar was made “hollow” with boards, and the direction had been given to make it as it had been shown to Moses in the mount.

Much of this description needs but little comment in the way of elucidation, but there is some question regarding the “grate of network,” its form, place and use. The translation is generally accepted as correct, though the word for “grate” occurs only in this connection. It is derived from a word meaning to “plait,” and from the same root we have the word “sieve” in Amos 9:9 The “network” which describes it is manifest. This grating was under the “compass” of the altar. Here, too, we have a word nowhere else used, and whose derivation is not absolutely clear. It is said to be derived from a word meaning to “surround:” hence “border” or “compass” would be the proper rendering.

Regarding this “border” there have been various thoughts; some have regarded it as a shelf or ledge, placed at right angles to the altar, midway between top and bottom. Its purpose was then said to be for the priest to stand upon while offering sacrifice. Some consider that the “grating of network” hung under this ledge, reaching to the ground, and making a sort of enlarged base or ornament to the altar, but do not explain in a satisfactory way the rings which were attached to the four corners of the grate. There would have to be four of these grates, and this carries us beyond the directions of Scripture.

Others again would have the grate as a sort of rim reaching out horizontally from the altar to catch the fire that might fall off the altar. Still others have considered the “compass” to be inside the top of the altar, filling up part of the space, and under it the grate filling up the hollow

square which remained much as a picture, surrounded by a frame, the compass. But this, while giving use for the grate and for the rings, gives a somewhat forced meaning to “the midst of the altar,” as though it meant half the area of the open top, the other half being filled by the “border.”

Another possible thought is that the grating of network was a large square, like a square net set under the altar, and so much larger that when the staves were put in the rings, and the altar thus lifted, the network reached to the midst, or half-way up the sides. The objection to this view is that it seems a cumbersome and needless way of carrying the altar, giving no definite use to the net except the unusual one of being a sort of sack to carry the altar.

We return then to the primary and natural thought of the “grate.” It was for fire; therefore it must have been within the compass of the altar, not outside of it. But here we have a suggestion as to the “compass,” that it was not something made, but simply the rim. The grating was under this, that is, not level with the rim, but below it; in fact, midway between the top and bottom of the altar. The only difficulty of a mechanical character would be the rings. If the grate was inside the altar and halfway down, how could they receive the staves by which the altar was carried? It is confessed that here is a question, and we can only suggest that these rings might have been passed through holes in the corners of the altar, and thus reached the outside, where they would serve for their intended purpose. This would give security to the altar as it was being carried.

These suggestions will be seen also to be in accord with the spiritual significance of the altar, which we will now seek to examine.

The acacia wood, of which it was made, need occupy us but briefly, as we have already learned its meaning. It speaks of the incorruptible, sinless humanity of our Lord, and therefore not subject to death. How fitting, then, that it should be connected with what is the constant witness of death—the altar. Our Lord need not lie, therefore He could lay down His life; on all others judgment had a claim; none, therefore, could make atonement even for themselves, much less for others. We see then our Lord as “the Altar that sanctifieth the gift” (Matt. 23:19).

But how necessary was this humanity if there was to be an atonement. The very word for altar is connected with “slaughter”—the shedding of blood. Therefore one who was to be the true altar, must be capable of dying, and at the same time One upon whom death had no claim. This was our Lord’s perfect, sinless humanity, as we have repeatedly seen in connection with the acacia wood. Here the emphasis is specially laid upon His sacrificial death, and we need not say how clearly this is connected with His humanity. If “the wages of sin”—death, with the accompanying judgment coming after it, were ever to be lifted from man, it must be on the righteous basis which God has made and accepted. A sacrifice must be made of infinite value and of spotless purity. This is the need for the incarnation: “The Word was made flesh” (John 1:14).

Scripture again and again witnesses to this blessed foundation truth: from Genesis to Revelation—in type, history, psalm and prophecy, as well as from the Gospel narratives, the preaching of Christ’s witnesses and the unfolding of the doctrine in the Epistles. We will refer to a few passages, and leave the reader to pursue this blessed theme for himself.

This great truth of incarnation for sacrifice and redemption is seen in the promise of the woman’s Seed (Gen. 3:15), who was to be bruised in bruising Satan. All the sacrifices set this forth too; never did blood flow from a sacrificial animal that was not divinely intended to show the atoning death of the Lamb of God, who was “foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest (in flesh and blood) in these last times for you” (1 Peter 1:20). Thus the lamb for the Passover was not taken at random, but selected on the tenth day and kept up until the fourteenth day (Ex. 12:3, 6), to show how, Christ personally, as Man, met the full responsibility and requirement before the eye of God before He was manifested in His public ministry.

In typical history we have again and again these types of our Lord and His redeeming work: Joseph in his blameless life, and the special object of his father’s love; Isaac, the son of promise, in figure offered up in sacrifice. The whole narrative of Israel’s redemption abounds with these types. These very things we are now considering have this as the basis of their significance. In Israel’s subsequent history, leaders, judges and kings, spoke of God’s thought of a deliverer, often by prior rejection, as in Moses and David. The Psalms echo with the praises of Him who was the Leader and Perfecter of faith (Ps. 16), but who went down into the horrible pit to do God’s will by the offering of His body unto death (Ps. 40). Indeed we might get from these psalms a full conception of our Lord’s perfect humanity and of His sacrificial death.

The light of this great truth is intensified in the Prophets, where we have the promise of the Son of the Virgin, of God’s Servant (Isa. 7:14; 42:1), and the cross most clearly foretold (chap. 53) Jeremiah speaks of the righteous Branch of the house of David (chap. 23:5, 6), and Zechariah of the smiting of the Shepherd (chap. 13:7). But besides the direct prophecies and allusions to this great truth, we find it beneath the surface like the veins of gold in the earth.

The New Testament, of course, is full of this. Its great theme is Christ incarnate and crucified. Take this divine fact from the word of God and we should have nothing left. It is in the very warp and woof of the Scriptures. If this great truth could be eliminated from it, the Bible is destroyed.

But the witness of Scripture as to the deity of our Lord is as full and explicit as to His human nature, typified in the acacia wood. We have already seen how His deity was typified in the gold, and doubtless the same truth is set forth in the brass or copper, at which we will now look, and the special reason for the change of metal. We have already seen that silver, of which the sockets were made, sets forth redemption, the price paid by each one as a ransom for his soul (Ex. 30:11-16). While thus this precious metal emphasizes the work of our Lord Jesus, yet we are reminded that His work had its value because of what He was; so no doubt the silver too, as a precious metal, suggested His deity. The gold pre-eminently did that, in connection with His glory—fittingly, as the most precious metal, setting forth the eternal form of its display.

Similarly the silver by its whiteness would remind us of His divine holiness, which is fittingly connected with that work which “washes whiter than snow.” But the silver more prominently called attention to His work than to His deity, and we may expect this to be the case with the metal to which we have now come.

The word translated “brass” in our version, with but few exceptions, seems rather to be copper. Brass, as we know it, is a compound of copper with other metals, but this is probably not the case with the metal as spoken of in Scripture.

Copper is spoken of very early in the Scriptures (Gen. 4:22), where Tubal-cain is described as an instructor to those who worked in brass (copper, as we shall hereafter call it). Suggestively, gold is mentioned first and before the fall: “The gold of that land is good” (Gen. 2:11, 12).

God’s glory is first. It may be suggestive also that copper is mentioned in connection with the family of Cain. It is quite striking that copper seems to have been the earlier and more widely used metal, as compared with iron. The “Bronze Age” preceded, we are told, that of Iron. At any rate, implements were made of copper, and by being subjected to hardening preserved their edge, or elasticity, almost as well as iron or steel.

In this connection we may briefly speak of the characteristics of copper, and later on we shall find how suitably they set forth the spiritual truths appropriate to its use in the altar and laver. Copper is found in many parts of the world; perhaps it is more widely spread than any other metal; it is frequently found united with gold and silver, as well as many other substances, one of the chief of which is sulfur or brimstone. To secure the metal pure from all these foreign elements requires a number of processes in which the action of fire is prominent. Finally the pure metal is secured. Copper also found in large quantities in a pure state.

This metal is of a reddish color, very ductile and malleable; particularly suited, therefore, to beating out into pots and other vessels, or into sheets, to overlay various articles, as the altar. It is susceptible of a high polish. Perhaps its chief characteristic is its toughness or tenacity, in which it exceeds both gold and silver.

Our word `copper” is derived from the Island of Cyprus, where the main supply was obtained for the Romans. But the word in the Hebrew, “nehosheth,” is of uncertain origin. A conjecture has been made that it is derived from a word meaning to be bright, allied possibly with a root meaning “to adorn”—all too uncertain, however, for more than mention here. A much closer resemblance, indeed identity of root, is in the word for “serpent.” This can be seen in the “brazen serpent “—nehash nehosketk (Num. 21:9). It would almost seem that Hezekiah, when he gave the name “Nehushtan” to the brazen serpent (“a piece of brass”) was combining the double significance of the words.

The word for “serpent” is given as derived from a word meaning to “hiss,” then to “divine.” A connection between this word “serpent” and that for “copper” may possibly be found more satisfactory than the conjecture mentioned above. But we find in Scripture a wealth of use of copper which will supply us with clear suggestions as to its spiritual significance. At these we will now look, dividing them into that which speaks of good, and that which sets forth evil characteristics.

“Out of whose hills thou mayest dig copper” (Deut. 8:9). That goodly inheritance was to yield not only food, but metals needed for many utensils. It has been thought that thence is an allusion to the mines of copper and iron in the blessing of Asher: “Thy shoes shall be iron and copper”—as though beneath their feet, in Asher’s territory; but a more simple meaning seems to be suggested by the remainder of the verse, “As thy days so shall thy strength be.” Although the word here rendered “strength” means “rest,” the evident thought is enduring security and protection. (See also Mic. 4:13.).

Samson was bound with “fetters of brass,” (“copper”—Judg. 16:21; 2 Kings 25:7). Copper seems to have been the recognized material for bonds. In his lament over Abner, David says: “Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters” (literally, “in copper,” 2 Sam. 3:34; see also Lain. 3:7). The cities of Bashan were well protected “with walls and copper bars” (1 Kings 4:13). The prison house of the Lord’s people is strong, but “He hath broken the gates of copper” (Psa. 107:16; see also Isa. 45:2). Of behemoth it is said: “His bones are as strong as pieces of copper” (Job 40:18). David says, “He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel (literally,” copper,” is broken by mine arms” (2 Sam. 22:35). Goliath’s helmet and armor were of the same material (1 Sam. 17:5, 6). Saul also armed David with a helmet of copper and a coat of mail to meet Goliath, but they were discarded by the man of faith (1 Sam. 17:38).

Copper is spoken of as a symbol of complete defense. Thus God promises Jeremiah: “I have made thee this day a defensed city, and an iron pillar and brazen walls against the whole land “(Jer. 1:18; 15: 20). The unyielding character of this metal is also suggestive of judgment: “I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as copper” (Levs. 26:19). This order is reversed in Deut. 28:23.

These scriptures and others which could be cited make clear the symbolic meaning of the copper durability, strength, unyieldingness, whether in protection, bondage, or warfare. Applied to the nature of God, it would declare His unchanging character, His strength, and the impossibility of escape from His judgment; on the other hand, the security of those beneath His protection.

These very traits, when applied to sinful men, speak of stubbornness and hardness of heart: “I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew and thy brow copper” (Isa. 48:4). “Brazen effrontery” is a mark of Satan, and this may give a hint of the connection, as already noticed, between the “serpent” and copper.

Speaking of the “serpent of copper,” we may inquire, Why should that metal have been chosen? We have already had the suggestion of judicial dealing in the brazen fetters and prison bars. May this not be the thought in the serpent? God’s judgment, unchanging and strong, must be visited upon sin. So on the cross, God’s judgment of sin, in the likeness of the serpent, is of copper. God’s immutable nature, by its very perfection, must judge sin absolutely. “The Son of Man must be lifted up “(John 3:14). Our Lord was” made sin” for us (2 Cor. 5:21), bearing God’s unchanging judgment against sin, to bring life and healing, instead of judgment, to those who flee to Him for shelter.

This brings us back to the altar of burnt-offering, which was covered with copper, and is in perfect accord with the whole truth set forth in the altar: God’s unchanging judgment of sin, which must visit wrath upon the ungodly; but in the cross of Christ it finds expression not in the punishment of the sinner, but in the outpouring of judgment upon the sinless Substitute. As we look upon the altar glowing with its “red and lowering” copper, we are thus reminded that righteousness and judgment are the foundation of God’s throne. He must judge sin: He would not be the God that He is if this were not the case. Therefore any presentation of God which leaves out this unchanging character of judgment, presents a false, not the true God.

But in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, this unyielding character is seen in association with an equally perfect love and pity for the sinner. There is justice, so stern and inflexible that the sword falls upon the sinless One, who takes His stand in the place of judgment; and there is love so full, so strong, so free, that God’s eternal and unchanging nature goes out in tenderest care—forgiving, justifying, saving the lost sinner coming in Christ’s name. Christ went into the prison and was bound in our place: the bars of copper are no longer between the soul and liberty. Those heavens, which were once as copper to Him as He cried, “O My God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not, and in the night season, and am not silent” (Psa. 22:2), now drop down refreshing showers, and are opened wide for faith to behold the Son of Man upon the

throne, for He has magnified God’s character in our salvation.1

The language of God to Abraham, “Take now thy son, thine only son “(Gen. 22:2), tells of a love and a sacrifice infinitely greater than Abraham’s, and infinitely more efficacious—of God’s only begotten Son. Joseph is sent from Hebron, the place of communion, by his father to his brethren; he is taken by them and cast into the pit, and sold (Gen. 37:14, etc.). Here we have the foreshadowing of One who came from the Father’s bosom, and was rejected even unto death. In the sacrifices there is a suggestion, in the bird of heaven (Levs. 1), of Him who came down from heaven to be slain in the vessel of earth (Levs. 14:5, 6). The Psalms bear unequivocal testimony, particularly the 102d, which we have already quoted; the lowly Sufferer is there addressed as God, the One who eternally abides (vss. 25-27).” I clothe the heavens with blackness “is said by the same One who also declares,” I gave my back to the smiters” Isa. 50:3, 6). “Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the Man that is my Fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts” (Zech. 13:7).

The New Testament adds abundant testimony of the same kind: “Therefore doth my Father love Me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself” (John 10:17, 18). The relation of Son with the Father was not only as Man, hut as divine: “Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins “(Heb. 1:3).” Who is the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15); this verse is just preceded by one which speaks of His atoning death: “In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (vs. 14).)

The materials of the altar then bear their witness to the great fact of atonement; let us gather similar lessons from its dimensions. These were five cubits square and three cubits high. The cubit was, as we have already seen, the Hebrew unit of linear measure, as the hin was for liquids, and the shekel for weight. It would suggest human capacity, much as the five fingers of the hand, and therefore responsibility. We have in the length and breadth (five cubits), a double witness of responsibility. The cross of Christ is the declaration of this responsibility, of our having utterly failed in it, and of Christ’s having met the judgment for that failure.2 The altar was foursquare, reminding us of the absolute righteousness of God, the equality of all His ways. How perfectly that was displayed in the cross! There was no abatement of penalty because of the dignity of the wondrous Substitute—all was foursquare; “There is no respect of persons with God” (Rom. 2:11).

But from each corner of this foursquare altar rose a horn, an integral part of the altar, while also distinct. One beautiful and obvious meaning of these horns is connected with the verse just quoted: inflexible, even-handed justice marked all God’s ways, and nowhere more perfectly than here. None could hope for any mitigation of justice in his case. Nothing but even-handed justice would be meted out here. The rich man would find his wealth worthless here, and the poor man could excite no false pity by his poverty; wise and unwise, old and young, bond and free-all here met even-handed justice.

These horns, however, pointed toward the four quarters of the world. Their message was worldwide; and if they declared “all the world guilty before God “ (Rom. 3:19), they equally proclaimed the gospel message of sins borne by the Substitute, for “whosoever” in the whole world. The guilt is world-wide, the remedy is worldwide too. All classes, all sorts of men meet here upon one common ground of being “sinners,” and claim a common salvation.

Horns in Scripture symbolize strength: “My horn shalt Thou exalt like the horn of a unicorn” (Psa. 92:10). They were the badge or symbol of power: “My horn is exalted in the Lord” (1 Sam. 2:1). It was also a symbol of Messiah’s kingdom: “I will make the horn of David to bud”

(Psa. 132:17). The horns of the altar suggest that here were focused and intensified the thoughts set forth in the altar; here they were brought to a point. This would explain why the blood of the sin-offering for one of the common people was put upon these horns (Levs. 4:30). It also gives significance to the guilty one coming here for refuge and laying hold upon them. Adonijah sought safety there and found it (1 Kings 1:50). Joab at the same asylum met with the just recompense of his sins (1 Kings 2:28-34), for “if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbor to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from Mine altar that he may die (Ex. 21:14).3 It would almost seem that the following language suggested this taking hold of the horns of the altar:” Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me, and he shall make peace with Me “ (Isa. 27:5). See also Isa. 25:4.

But the very place where divine mercy was displayed for those who in repentance sought the Lord, was the witness of their abiding sin in the departure from Him: Judah’s sin was written upon the horns of their altars to false gods (Jer. 17: I). They might put the blood of sacrifice to idols upon the horns of their altars; they would but witness against them, and would themselves be cut off, as showing there was no strength for mercy in the idol, or his altar (Amos 3:14).4

The altar was three cubits high, which would again remind us of the manifestation suggested by that number. The Cross exhibits God’s character. In it we see His righteousness, His holiness and His love; His wisdom too and all His attributes find their display here in one form or another. His power is shown in the resurrection of our Lord, of which the three also speaks. How blessed that in what speaks of death, of sacrifice, there should be also in the height of the altar the pledge of resurrection. So, in speaking of His death, our Lord did not stop there, but foretold also His resurrection (Matt. 16:21).

We come next to the brazen or copper grate, with its four rings and its position beneath the compass, or rim, of the altar, and reaching unto the midst. We have seen this to mean that the grate was probably set down below the rim, in the very center of the altar. Its purpose would be to bear the sacrifice and the fire which consumed it. If we are right in this thought, we have here a type of the nature of our Lord’s sufferings, which should magnify His grace, and fill the heart with praise.

Fire is the constant emblem of wrath and judgment, not of an arbitrary character, but that which is necessary and essential. All life is based upon heat, and all heat is in its last analysis a form of fire. “Our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29). Fire speaks of intense energy, of which God is the only source. As fire, it must burn up all that does not abide its test. Thus God must consume in judgment all that is opposed to His righteous and perfect will. Of this there will be eternal witness in the “lake of fire,” where His wrath will necessarily burn against those who have made it necessary for that wrath thus to act.

But there could be no life without heat; so there could be no moral, spiritual life without God’s judgment. Those who plead for the elimination of this character from our God, would plunge all creation into absolute death. It cannot and will not be. The fire must do its work, which even in judgment will display God’s goodness as well as His righteousness. But we will gather up a few scripture statements as to fire.

The principal world for fire is a primitive root, as we might expect from its being a common need from the beginning. We find similar words in other languages. It was considered by the ancients as one of the elements, and frequently worshiped as God. We see in this how Satan uses God's gifts, which manifest His goodness and power, as means of blinding men to Himself. And when anything is put in God's place it becomes an idol, and is debased from its proper beneficent use into that which misrepresents Him, and degrades and debauches man. Thus evil ever works in a circle—a descending spiral, which but for the arresting power of God's grace, will go on until eternity stops it in the confines of the lake of fire.

As all error is a perversion or distortion of truth, or a wrong application of it, we may be sure that fire does speak of God, and shows His character, if we but search the word of God to learn as to it. In itself fire is, like everything else in God's creation, but a manifestation of His power and wisdom; from this fact, it becomes a symbol of His energy in a spiritual way.

Upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire were rained by the Lord out of heaven (Gen. 19:24). Whether God made use of natural means to bring about this judgment, is not our care. It is sufficient for us to know that He did it. The future doom of the wicked He has described in the same way: "Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup" (Psa. 2:6). See also Psa. 21:9; Isa. 30: 33; 66:15, 15, 16. These and many other solemn passages declare the inevitable and necessary doom of the ungodly.

If it be objected that these passages are all from the Old Testament, and must therefore be taken in a figurative sense, we need but turn to the pages of the New to find the same testimony from the lips of our Savior Himself: "Where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:48; Luke 16:23, 24). And the closing book of God's word is full of references to the awful judgment of fire, closing with: "This is the second death... the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:14, 15). Whoever denies this solemn and necessary truth denies Christ and His word.

Fire, then, is a symbol of God's judgment. But we have abundant allusions to it in other scriptures, which give us varied though related views. The angel of the Lord appeared to Moses "in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush" (Ex. 3:2). The presence of God was manifest thus, suggesting at once the afflictions through which His people (the bush) were passing in Egypt, and that He had permitted and was using these. Because of His presence the bush was not consumed. On the other hand, in the plague upon the Egyptians, "the fire ran along the ground" in destructive power (Ex. 9:23). When the blood-sheltered people were passing their last night in Egypt, they were to feed upon the lamb "roast with fire" (Ex. 12:8). And all their nights throughout their wilderness journey were lighted by the "pillar of fire" (Ex. 13:21). When God gave them the law, He descended upon Sinai in fire (Ex. 19:18). When Nadab and Abihu sinned by offering "strange fire," the judgment fell upon them in the form of fire (Levs. 10:2). In Ezekiel, the prophet saw the glory of the Lord in connection with the fire (Ezek. 1:4, 27). "The Lord thy God is a consuming fire" (Deut. 4:24).

The fire thus is typical of God's judgment which must fall upon all sin. It also shows His essential holiness and righteousness, both in connection with His enemies and His own people. The former, if they do not repent, must endure that unutterable wrath which is forever and ever; the latter must have all their dross burned away, and at the judgment-seat of Christ all their works must stand the test of that discriminating holiness. We will now apply these thoughts to the fire of the altar of burnt-offering.

The tabernacle speaks of God manifest in grace, and therefore, as we have seen, every part is in some way or other typical of Him through whom "grace and truth" were manifested (John 1:17). It is not grace apart from truth—which would not be grace at all—but grace and truth; grace manifested in and by the truth. God is absolute truth, and so is the revelation of Himself. Apart from Him, all is the blackest night of error, the lie of Satan. The only One therefore who could perfectly reveal Him was He who could say, " I am the Way, the Truth and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me " (John 14:6).

In the composition and form of the altar we have seen these truths presented in relation to man's actual condition. A spotless and incorruptible humanity linked with absolute Godhead (the shittim wood and the copper) expresses the person of Christ. The copper suggesting, as we have seen, the unyielding, unchanging character of God, which must abide and be maintained in the face of all else. For disobedience and sin this means inflexible and eternal judgment. We might say that the copper, with its fire-like glow, leads us to the fire which burned upon it. Indeed we have the two combined where the Lord is seen walking as Judge amidst the seven golden candlesticks: "His feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace" (Rev. 1:15).

Grace, then, facing guilty man, can only be displayed in accord with the "truth" of God's immutable nature; the unyielding demands of His nature, as copper, must be met. This is why the first article we meet in our approach to God is an altar—a place of sacrifice, where life is given up—life for life, we may say, and the fire of divine holiness consumes the Victim.

In its last analysis, therefore, the altar was the place where the fire could burn; and this was upon the grating of copper. On this one spot alone, typically speaking, could the fire of divine holiness and judgment burn without eternal destruction upon its objects. The mountains would "flow down," and the hills melt like wax" (Isa. 64:1, 2; Psa. 97:5). When at last He does thus take up His creation to purge it according to His nature, "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10). This, of course, is in necessary judgment — "the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning" (Isa. 4:4), a preparatory and anticipative judgment just before the millennium, which shall be literally and completely inflicted at its close, prior to the eternal state.

Who could for one moment abide that awful day of the wrath of God? There was one Person, only one place, where that fire could burn and find all abiding, because all was according to His holy nature. The grate-work, where the fire of divine judgment could burn, was the bosom of the Son of God. Here was One who could righteously be the Substitute for guilty sinners. His holy person enabled Him to be the bearer of wrath. The fire of the thrice-holy God could and did burn there, and found nothing to be consumed save the sins which our Lord in grace had taken upon Himself—sins so great, so many, that one doom awaited our whole race. The Cross!—here were sins judged and put away, Satan's power annulled, the world crucified, and divine righteousness found an eternal foundation for blessing toward creation, with the display of inflexible justice and divine love combined.

The grate of copper we can see would fittingly set forth the nature of our Lord's atoning work; and the thoughts we have been dwelling upon would justify the opinion that the grate was inside the altar, in its very midst.

For our Lord did not bear the fire of divine judgment in any external, superficial way. It is but a feeble and partial view of those sufferings which would enlarge upon the persecution of ungodly men, or even the malice of Satan who urged them on. These might explain the bodily anguish to which our holy Lord permitted Himself to be subjected; but the fire of divine holiness, heart-searching judgment against sin went down into the utmost center of His being. Reverently may we tread upon such holy ground. Sin is not an external thing, though it mars the outward man. Its source is the heart, the center of man's being; and therefore in the sinless Substitute the flame searched down into His holy soul. Atoning suffering, like the sin of man, was in the heart. The piercing of the nails, the crown of thorns, the jeers of the people, the spear-thrust, did not set forth the deep essence of His sufferings. God only, who searcheth the heart, knows what it meant. The Son, who bore this judgment, knows the intensity of that fire which burned down into His soul when made "an offering for sin." The Holy Spirit, through whom He offered Himself without spot unto God, knows what those sufferings meant. For ourselves, may we with chastened, adoring hearts remember,

In view of all this, how low is the view that our Lord's sufferings were abated penalty, as some would have it—something less than what the sinner will have to endure. Scripture is perfectly plain, that our Lord bore the full penalty of sin—the wrath, the forsaking of God in the "outer darkness" (God having withdrawn in forsaking judgment) and death. If it be asked, Was the cross the same as the eternal lake of fire? and if not, did the Lord bear the exact penalty which the sinner must bear? We answer, The essence of the judgment is in the wrath and the forsaking of God. It does not change the sinner's heart who, spurning God's grace, would rather be anywhere than in the light of His infinite holiness. The doom is eternal, because the sinner's character remains unchanged, it remains fixed—a great gulf fixed (Luke 16:26), and "he that is unjust, let him be unjust still" (Rev. 22:11), with no desire for God or heaven.

But how was it with our Lord? His heart remained as just, as pure, as true, when He was forsaken upon the cross as when He took counsel with the Father before the worlds were made, or when He was displayed in the unsullied light of the "holy mount" (2 Peter 1:18). His sole object there was the Father's will, His one motive to glorify Him, to manifest His love in righteousness. The smiting, the forsaking, the darkness, made no change whatever in that spotless, holy One—praise His name forever!

It was not possible, therefore, that He should be holden of death (Acts 2:24), as all that righteousness required had been done. One answer alone could be given to such a work and piety -to be "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father," and to the throne in heaven. That infinite value attached to the Person is true, but full judgment having been visited and the heart remaining true and absolutely devoted to God, the righteous answer to it could only be to cease the infliction. But man's heart, alas, is unchanged by judgment; nothing but divine grace can do that; and if man will not have grace, he must have judgment.

In one sense we are taking the altar as a figure of the full atoning work of the Lord, to the exclusion of the burning of the sin-offering "without the camp" (Levs. 16:27; Heb. 13:11, 12). That would show the eject of wrath-bearing, the forsaking and judgment of God. But do we not have in the fire the essential elements of that? including, as we shall see, much else. Thus the burnt-offering was the normal offering, and gave its name to the altar, because it included the essential elements of all the sacrifices.

It is true, as has been shown,5 that the word for the burning without the camp means to consume, to burn up (similar to the word for seraphim, Isa. 6:2, 6), while that for the burning of the fat of the sin-offering upon the altar is the word used for burning incense (Levs. 16:25, 27). But does not the very fact that the fat of that offering, which was consumed outside the camp, was burned as a sweet savor upon the brazen altar, show that while the two thoughts were to be distinguished, they were not to be separated? Otherwise, the altar of burnt-offering and its sacrifice would not signify full atonement.

The grate, then, in the midst of the altar, teaches that in the atoning work of our Lord Jesus God's righteous judgment was borne in His inmost soul. It is to be expected therefore that in the experience book, the Psalms, we will find those utterances of our Lord which express the inward experiences through which He passed when on the cross.

"My heart is like wax; it is incited in the midst of my bowels" (Psa. 22:14). "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon Me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head: therefore my heart faileth Me" (Psa. 40:12). "Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness... for they persecute Him whom Thou hast smitten" (Psa. 69:20, 26). "My days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned like a hearth. My heart is smitten and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread... For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping, because of thine indignation and thy wrath" (Ps. 102:3, 4, 9, 10).

These and similar expressions indicate the inward nature of that anguish which our holy Lord endured in love for us. Thus we see what the "grate" points to. Could we conceive of any heart but His, answering in absolute subjection to God, divinely perfect, bearing the fire of that holiness? The grate must be of copper, or it could not stand the fire put upon it.

And does not this thought of the grate show the propriety of the rings, by which the whole altar was carried, being placed at its corners? What was it that brought our Lord down in the first place? It was His heart of love to God and to man. And what carried Him through His life of lowly suffering and rejection, even up to Calvary? It was the same. Those copper rings tell of a purpose which nothing could turn aside. And according to that devotedness to God and man our Lord accompanies His people every step of their journey through this wilderness scene, bearing witness to the value of His cross. Every blessing, every care, every mercy is linked by these "rings" with that Heart which bore the judgment we deserved. Is the saint ever tempted to doubt the love of God or of Christ? "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32). Every blessing is pledged by the cross. Let us take in the preciousness of this, and count upon that fullness of grace which suffices for "all things that pertain unto life and godliness "(2 Pet. 1: 3). The four rings, the number of the earth and of need, may well emphasize these thoughts.

The altar was three cubits high, and the grate in the midst would therefore be one and a half cubits above the ground, or the height of the mercy-seat. Redemption at the cross and acceptance before God are on one plane. God received His beloved Son into glory as our Representative on the basis of His atoning work upon the cross. The Great Shepherd of the sheep was brought again from the dead in the value of the blood of the everlasting covenant (Heb. 13:20). So too, as we shall see in another connection, He entered in by His own blood into the holiest, having obtained eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12).

It remains to speak a little of the utensils which were used in connection with the altar. These were: pans to receive the ashes, shovels, basins, flesh-hooks, and fire-pans. They were all made of copper.

The pans or pots (siroth, from a word meaning “to boil”) were to receive and remove the ashes. This may come more fully before us in considering the sacrifices; but we may gather here a few thoughts which are suggested. There are two words for “ashes:” one is the general term, largely used in the language of mourning (Esther 4:1, 3; Job 2:8; 42:6; Isa. 61: 3, etc.), also as showing the emptiness and vanity of things: “He feedeth on ashes” (Isa. 44:20). The other word is only used in connection with the sacrifices, and literally means “fat.” This has been thought to be because of the burning of the fat on the altar, which would thus saturate the ashes. Be that as it may, the word is significant and suggestive. Ashes are the witness that the fire has done its work, the witness of an accomplished and accepted sacrifice. So we read in the margin of psalm 20:3, “The Lord turn to ashes thy burnt sacrifice,” translated “accept,” in explanation of the text. This witness of an accepted sacrifice is not a sign of sorrow, for which the other word is used; nor of worthlessness and vanity. There is nothing worthless in connection with the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The ashes of the sacrifice were first put on the east side of the altar, toward the sunrise; they were then removed to a clean place outside the camp (Levs. 4:1; 2:6:10, 11). Our blessed Lord’s body, after He had yielded up His life to God on the cross, was kept absolutely inviolate. The piercing of the spear was in fulfillment of Scripture, and furnished the evidence that He had actually died. But “a bone of Him shall not be broken” (John 19:33—37). So that precious body (“A body hast Thou prepared Me,” Heb. 10:5) was not suffered to be treated as that of a criminal, but was judicially handed over to those who loved Him, wrapped in fragrant and costly perfume, and laid in a new grave hewn out of the rock (John 19:38-42; Luke 23:52, 53). Does not all this show in reality what was suggested in the “fat ashes?” No wonder that the pan in which they were carried to the clean place, and the shovel (yak, from a root meaning to snatch or sweep away), which put them into the pan, were of copper. The same unyielding judgment which had dealt with Him upon the cross now demanded the fullest honor to Him, in judicial testimony to the acceptance of His sacrifice. The east side of the altar, the side of the sunrise, where the ashes were placed, is not only the witness of accepted sacrifice, but the pledge of resurrection.

All this was ever before the Lord. He always linked His resurrection with His death (Matt. 16:21). The ashes thus would speak of God’s acceptance of Christ’s sacrifice, giving full assurance to the believer of his acceptance.

But few words need be said as to the other utensils, which were also of copper. The judicial righteousness of God was engaged in every act, and the whole dealing, both in our Lord’s death and what followed, was on the basis of that unswerving, unyielding character. Thus the basins (mizrekoth, from a word meaning “to sprinkle”) which received the blood, and from which it was poured or sprinkled upon the altar, were of copper. The full measure of judgment had been poured out. The use of the basins or bowls is seen in a passage in Zechariah (9:15). The blood of the Lord’s enemies, who refuse to yield to Him, is fully shed, and those who are used by Him for this will be “filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar,” where the blood was poured out. The use of the flesh-hooks (mizlegoth, from a root meaning to “draw up”) is not stated. They were apparently for handling the various parts of the sacrifice, at different stages. All was in accord with divine justice, to which the Holy One willingly submitted. Oh, the suffering!

May we love and worship Him, and abhor the sin which made such suffering necessary.

One other class of utensils remains—the fire-pans (mahathoth, from a root meaning to “take up”—as fire). These were receptacles for coals of fire, and were used probably to carry the fire from the altar of burnt-offering to the altar of incense, or possibly to contain the fire when rearranging the wood or the sacrifice upon the altar. The same word is also used for censers, the pans which contained fire upon which incense was sprinkled. The two uses were so related to each other that the same word is used to describe both. It is also the word translated “snuff-dishes” (Ex. 25:38), which were used to contain the charred ends of the wicks of the lamps upon the golden candlestick. These fire-pans, in connection with the altar of burnt-offering, were to be of copper—all the utensils uniting in one voice with the materials of the grate and the covering to declare that God’s judgment is, like all His attributes, inflexible; and that the One who alone could bear that judgment, is the divine-human Son.

We see the solemn and inevitable result of approaching God in any other way than through the divinely-appointed priest and sacrifice, in the destruction of Korah and his company (Num. 16), who despised the priest of God, Aaron, on the plea that all the congregation were holy. God manifested there could be no possible standing or acceptance before Him, save on the ground of sacrifice, through the divinely-appointed priest. Korah and his company were commanded to bring each a brazen censer with Aaron also, and God would declare whom He owned as priest. Fire from God having devoured the blasphemers, Aaron alone remained to represent the people before God. As mediator between God and the rebellious people in that solemn scene, he stood between the living and the dead (Num. 16:46-50), thus setting forth Christ as Mediator and Intercessor, linked with His sacrifice, as the only way to God.

This lesson is impressed by making the brazen censers into plates for a covering to the brazen altar, to keep before their eyes the certainty of judgment for any that despise the sacrifice and priest of God; but it was linked with the altar, as though God would not merely give warning, but turn the eye to the effectual shelter from that judgment which He must execute upon those who refuse His grace.

Lectures on the Tabernacle: A Full Exposition Examining the Types and Their Doctrinal Applications — Fully Illustrated, Candlestick, The

Exodus 37:17-24

The next article in the holy place, the golden candlestick, or lamp-stand, is now to occupy us. Like the mercy-seat, it was beaten out of pure gold—with no acacia wood in any part of it. Minute and elaborate directions were given as to its form. As to its size, conjectures have been made, some thinking it must have been about the height of the table; but where Scripture is silent, we are wise to remain so too, while gathering, if we may, some lesson as to the reason of its silence; this we may do, if the Lord enables, after we have learned the significance of the candlestick.

It was made of one talent of gold, said to be equivalent to $27,000; which would seem to allow for a large and magnificent article. Its general shape is easily gathered from the description given. There was a base (as the word “shaft” probably means), which served as the solid foundation; the “branch” coming out of that would be the shaft, or central stem. Branching out from this central, upright shaft, at regular intervals, were three pairs of side branches, opposite to each other, making six branches in all. These branches, and the central shaft as well,

were ornamented with “bowls, knops and flowers,” “made like to almonds.” The “bowl” is said to have been like an almond; the “flower speaks for itself, and the” knop “or” knob “might suggest the rounded unopened bud. Others, as the R. V., translate the first word” almond-flower,” in which case the rounded “knop” might suggest the fruit, and the “flower” would be the bud. In either case we may have the three parts of the almond-its bud, flower and ripened fruit, clustering together on the branches.

The central shaft had four bowls or almonds, with knops and flowers: one cluster (bowl, knop and flower) separated between each of the three pairs of branches, being under it, while the fourth cluster may have been at the top, to serve as a resting-place for the lamp. In the same way each branch had three clusters, one probably at the end corresponding to the central shaft, and the other two arranged somewhere along its length. Upon the end of each branch was set a golden lamp. The general appearance of the candlestick would thus be a golden almond bush, with buds, flowers and fruit; and from the tip of each of the branches and central stem burst forth she light. Seven lamps were thus giving their light in the holy place. In the vision of Zechariah, we have two olive trees; one on either side of the golden candlestick, which furnished the oil for it (Zech. 4:1, etc.) Here, however, the only thought of the tree would be in the branching figure, with its flower and fruit.

While it was to give light throughout the entire holy place, the candlestick is mentioned in connection with each article in the room. It was set “over against the table” (Ex. 40:24, 25), which would thus be completely illumined by it. It is also spoken of in connection with the burning of the incense on the golden altar (Ex. 30:7, 8); and its seven lamps were to give light over against the candlestick,” to illumine it, and bring out the beauty of its construction. Thus each article of furniture stood out clearly in the light of the candlestick, and service could be rendered from each in connection with its light.

The oil to be used was specially provided for (Ex. 27: 20, 21). It was the purest part, “beaten” from the olive, leaving what might be secured in other ways for other uses. It was brought by the children of Israel, God delighting to use His people for this as for all other service for which they were fitted.

Lastly, we must speak of the snuffers and snuff-dishes, to trim the lamps and to carry off the burnt portions of wick. These, as well as the lamps, were all made of pure gold. This trimming was to be done morning by morning, so that there was no dimming of the light in the sanctuary. It was in connection with the trimming of the lamps in the morning, and their lighting at even, that incense was to be burned, as already noted. We pass now to the spiritual meaning of these various features.

We are already familiar with the fact that gold is a symbol of divine glory, in distinction from the acacia wood, which speaks of our Lord’s perfect and incorruptible humanity. The deity of our Lord, therefore, seems to be emphasized here. We have however in the almond buds, flower and fruit, a suggestion of His resurrection, which would pre-suppose His humanity and His death. But it is as risen and glorified in the place which was His with the Father “before the world was” that we see Him here.

We will anticipate for a little the significance of the lamps, which would naturally occupy us later, to gather their significance from Scripture, and see the connection between them and the golden lamp-stand which bore them.

Oil was one of the most useful of the products of the land of Israel, both for domestic and sacred purposes. There were three general uses to which it was put: for food, for light, and for anointing. Thus the widow of Zarephath had “but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse” (1 Kings 17:12); the virtuous woman was well supplied with oil-”her candle goeth not out by night” (Prov. 31:18); David, after the death of his child, washed and anointed himself (2 Sam. 12:20). These are examples of the domestic uses to which the oil was put, and the sacred uses were similar. Thus the meat-offering, when baked, was made of “fine flour mingled with oil,” or anointed with it (Levs. 2:4). Its use for light we are now considering in the lamps of the sanctuary; and it was constantly used in anointing or consecrating persons, places and articles. So priests were anointed (Ex. 28:41); the tabernacle and its various articles of furniture (Ex. 40:9); David and all the kings of Judah were anointed (2 Sam. 2:7; 1 Kings 1:34); Elisha the prophet was to be anointed (1 Kings 19:16). A striking case is that anointing of the pillar at Bethel by Jacob (Gen. 28:18; 31:13), where he set apart the place as “the house of God,” a kind of anticipation of the tabernacle. As is well known, Messiah means “the Anointed,” and the “Lord’s anointed” is constantly used as designating the king, and was the recognized title of our Lord; “Christ” being but the Greek equivalent for Messiah, “the Anointed” (Psa. 2:2; Ps. 18:50; Psa. 84:9; Dan. 9:25, 26).

In sacred uses, anointing seems to have been the primary use of oil, and, may we not say, is the final thought also. Jacob’s anointing the pillar at Bethel is the first mention in Scripture of the use of oil for any purpose, and the thought of consecrating or setting apart to God is there suggested, which finds its full meaning, as all the thoughts of God do, in His beloved Son, the Anointed. The significance of the oil from this point is clear, and a few scriptures will give it to us. “Lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him” (Matt. 3:16). An inspired comment upon this is given in Peter’s address to the company in Cornelius’ house, where he shows that, from His baptism, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38). The same Spirit in the disciples at Pentecost witnessed to the risen and ascended Christ. The anointing of David by Samuel connects closely his setting apart to the kingly office and the Spirit’s power for that exalted position (1 Sam. 16:13).

Setting apart then by anointing was largely for service and divine use, both of tabernacle, priests, prophets, and kings. This enduement for service was two-fold-direct worship to God, and in government and testimony to man. It is this last which we connect especially with our Lord’s ministry. And do we not pass at this point to the added thought of light? “And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and There went out a fame of Him through all the region round about. And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all” (Luke 4:14, is). The same Evangelist goes on at once to the account of His visit to Nazareth, where He read from the prophet Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor” (vs. 16-22). Here is the shining out of the lamp of testimony in the power of the Holy Spirit. The same may be said of the manifestation of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost: “There appeared unto them cloven (or parted) tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them” (Acts 2:3). The thoughts of light and testimony seem to be connected here, as they do in another passage, where indeed the Spirit is not mentioned, but testimony: “The sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life” (Phil. 2:15, 16).

Returning to the Old Testament, we have the suggestion of anointing and the lamp together: “There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for Mine Anointed” (Psa. 132:17); “That David My servant may have a light alway before Me” (1 Kings 11:36). David himself was spoken of as “the light of Israel” (2 Sam. 21:17); and, in a far higher sense, our Lord Jesus declares Himself “the Light of the world” (John 8:12). We see, then, that oil is a type of the Holy Spirit, and that anointing was by Him, as well as the power for light or

testimony.

We come next to direct scripture interpretation of the meaning of the lamps in the presence of God: “And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God” (Rev. 4:5). The similarity to the golden candlestick and its seven lamps is so plain here that the interpretation seems to apply as clearly to that as to the symbol in Revelation, where the imagery of the throne and altar of incense reminds us of the tabernacle and temple.

We return now to the significance of the candlestick, having learned that the lights were typical of the light of the Holy Spirit, through whom the sanctuary of God is illuminated. We may look at this more fully a little later on, but will now ask: What does the candlestick which holds the lights set forth? We have already anticipated this, as Christ is presented to us in each article of furniture; the candlestick, therefore, is no exception. Its material being all gold sets forth His deity, as we have seen, with but a minor thought of His humanity; we will look more fully at this now. The gold was in the form of an almond tree, with seven branches, having buds, flowers and fruit upon them. The seven would speak of the perfection of our Lord as the Light-bearer and Giver; the flowers and fruit of the almond also have their special significance.

It will be remembered that when God would show that Aaron was the divinely-designated priest, to silence the murmurings of the children of Israel, each tribe brought a rod which was laid up before the Lord (Num. 17): “And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds” (vs. 8). The three stages of life are thus mentioned—bud, flower and fruit. Two of these words are the same as those used in the description of the candlestick — “buds” and “almonds,” which would go to confirm the thought that all spoke of the nature of the almond tree.

The rods for each tribe would show the complete severance from the root, their original life. Any life they might now manifest would be apart from the root. It would mean a re-impartation of life; in other words, the work of God. The rods of the tribes remain lifeless; but that of Aaron not only exhibits signs of life, but produces the full results of it, in bud, flower and fruit. Here was a work of God which would forever silence all claims of others to the place of honor and service which God had given to Aaron. “No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron “(Heb. 5:4).

But God was teaching not only Israel, but giving lessons of mercy and truth for all time. He would show to man who alone is the true Priest whom He has exalted. Here, as in all else that God does, nothing but absolute righteousness and truth mark all His acts. There could be but one Priest; for the Son of God alone, become incarnate, was qualified to draw near to God and open the way of approach for a guilty and sinful people. This may come before us more fully when we speak of the whole subject of the Priesthood. It will suffice us now to see the nature of God’s proof that Christ is indeed His Priest.

As the rods were cut off, so our Lord was “cut off out of the land of the living”(Isa. 53:8). That spotless and perfect life, which was not under sentence of death, as was the whole human family, was willingly laid down in sacrifice. But beyond the tomb God permits us to look within the sanctuary, and to see there the blessed Lord risen from the dead. His disciples had watched that cross, had lingered at the tomb, and brooded over all the wondrous life of which they said, “We trusted that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel” (Luke 24:21). But just where faith reaches its lowest point, light out of the grave begins to appear in the words, “Beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher; and when they found not His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that He was alive” (Luke 24:21-23). Thus already, all unknown to themselves, there was a dawning toward resurrection faith, which needed but the confirmation of the Word to make their hearts burn, and to fit them for the direct manifestation of the risen Lord.

“The Lord is risen indeed” (Luke 24:34). But how much that means! It is God’s seal upon every word He had uttered and all He had done during His life, and it was the complete reversal of the judgment of the world, civil and religious, which had rejected and cast Him out as a malefactor and blasphemer. More, it was the declaration by God of His acceptance of that sacrifice for sin which our Lord had offered upon the cross; further, it declared that death had no power over Him, that Satan’s power had been forever crushed, and that God’s Holy One could not see corruption (Acts 2:27, 31): “Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more” (Rom. 6:9).

Death indeed cut short the priestly service of all the house of Aaron, “ Because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood “(Heb. 7:23, 24). This Priest is” made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life “(Heb. 7:16). While He ever had this life in Himself, yet it was in resurrection that it was declared in power. It was after He had passed through the anguish of Calvary, and had been” made perfect “ — “ the third day I shall be perfected” (Luke 13:32)—in resurrection He was “saluted of God a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek” (Heb. 5:10, Greek).

Resurrection, then, is God’s proof of the eternal priesthood of His beloved Son. And this seems to be what is set forth in the buds, flowers and fruit of the almond upon the branches of the golden candlestick. The Hebrew word for almond means “wakeful,” or “hastener;” said to have been given to it because it is the earliest of trees to awaken after the winter, putting forth its buds in January. This would fittingly suggest Him who is “the First-fruits of them that slept” (1 Cor. 15:20). The buds would emphasize this, for they are the manifestation of the life of which flower and fruit are the full display. Thus our Lord’s resurrection was not, if we may so speak, a mere beginning of a life which would go on to fruition, but it was divinely perfect and complete as He took His seat upon His Father’s throne.

It is perhaps difficult to express the thought, but may we not have an illustration of this gradation in the evidences of the resurrection? The stone rolled away, the empty tomb, the linen clothes lying in quiet order, and the napkin lying by itself—no sign of a struggle, but the witness that the Prince of Life had risen from His sleep of death; these may be called the “buds,” the first signs of His resurrection. The angel who rolled away the stone and sat upon it (Matt. 28:2), the “young man sitting on the right side” of the tomb (Mark 16:5, 6), the “vision of angels,” seen by the women who came early to the sepulcher (Luke 24:23); the “two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain” (John 20:12)—these may be called the “flowers” of the almond rod, more advanced witnesses of His resurrection. Lastly, His own personal manifestation to Mary Magdalene, to Peter, to the women, to the two disciples at Emmaus, to the gathered disciples in the upper room, to them again when Thomas was present; again at the Sea of Tiberias, and at a mountain in Galilee—these and other “infallible proofs,” might be called the full almond fruit. The empty tomb would have been a precious boon to faith, and was enough for John (John 20:8); the testimony of the angels would have been stronger testimony, but the crown of all was to behold Him, to handle Him, to see Him eat, hear Him speak, this was indeed the full fruit. Truly the almond rod had borne.

We may be sure that God has recorded all this for the joy and strength of faith, and would have us dwell upon it, not satisfied with a single" bud" or "flower," but to feast the eyes upon the sevenfold beauty and the abounding witness of the Lord's resurrection. Thus in that great chapter of the resurrection, the apostle counts over some of the "almonds" of the Lord's appearances to His beloved people "That He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that, He was seen of above 500 brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (1 Cor. 15:4-8). We need not suppose that the apostle, or any one of the Evangelists, is attempting to give a complete list of these appearing's, but each gives that for which there was special reason in his own narrative, as guided by the Spirit, and all were exactly true.

We may further look at the buds, flowers and fruit of the almond as various stages in the apprehension of divine truth as exhibited in the risen Lord, answering to the three-fold condition of the saints, as "babes," "young men" and "fathers" (1 John 2:13)—a fullness of mercy which suits every one, and all centering in Himself, It seems to remind us also that divine glory has not changed the blessed One who is "the same yesterday and to-day and forever" (Heb. 13:8). Could aught of the freshness and vigor which marked each stage of our Lord's life here be lost in glory? They surely remain in that glory, eternally the same. In connection with His Melchizedek priesthood, it was said of Him: "Thou hast the dew of Thy youth" (Psa. 110:3). Those who worshiped Him as the Babe at Bethlehem, who marveled as the flower of His perfect child hood developed, and later saw the rich fruit of His maturity, will find all that preserved in divine freshness on high. How, we know not; but with the Lord one thing does not displace another. He passes on from one to another, and in that sense there is progress, whilst in another all abides. The manna—the food of the desert—laid up in the golden pot suggests a similar thought. It is not that with Him, the divinely perfect One, maturity would suggest previous immaturity as its opposite. With us, immaturity suggests something lacking, for which we must wait; with Him each stage was perfect, and nothing lacking; therefore all is displayed in heavenly glory.

But in the material, as we have said, emphasis seems to be laid upon His deity, though the form clearly speaks of His humanity and resurrection. The reason for this may be seen in the two following scriptures: "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16, 17); "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you" (John 16:7).

In the first of these scriptures we are told that the Holy Spirit was to come as given by the Father, in answer to the prayer of the Son. A divine Person, the Spirit, is given by the divine Father. But this might be interpreted to mean, as the heart of the natural man is so prone to degrade the Son of God, a denial of the essential deity and co-equality of the Son with the Father. The second scripture therefore is the refutation of this: "I will send Him unto you;" or, as Peter declares at Pentecost, "Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:33). Is it not specially fitting that this mission of the Spirit should be from the Son as divine And this would account for the absence of the acacia wood from the material of the candlestick, though the fashion of it is all the more exuberant with witnesses of the resurrection of Him who took a servant's form. Nor can we ever really separate the two natures of our Savior, for He has voluntarily declared His purpose to be "a servant forever" (Ex. 21:1-6). Another passage shows us how completely the Son is identified with the Father in connection with the Holy Spirit. "But 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. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you "(Rom. 8:9-11). Here there can be no mistake; the Spirit of God is also the Spirit of Christ; He is also the Spirit of Him who raised up" Jesus "from the dead, and" Christ." Here, then, we have abundant evidence that the Spirit was sent by our Lord after His resurrection, as well as the fact that He was given by the Father. This will suffice as to the material of the candlestick.

We come next to a scripture which affords a beautiful comment upon the meaning of the seven branches: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked " (Isa. 11:1-4).

In this scripture the Lord is set forth as the true Ruler and Judge, who shall vindicate His feeble and needy ones and execute judgment upon the wicked. He is the true Son of Jesse, of whom David was a type. His qualifications for this supreme place are given in the sevenfold enduement of the Spirit. It will be remarked that we have here first the Spirit of Jehovah spoken of alone, answering to the central shaft—the one divine Being. Next we have three pairs of designations, which would correspond strikingly with the three pairs of branches which, with the central shaft, form the lamp-stand. The first pair is "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding." "Wisdom" is knowledge coupled with sound judgment; the word is found in Job and Ecclesiastes, where indeed it is largely human wisdom; and in Proverbs, where it speaks of what is needed for the path through this world, and also of that divine Wisdom who was the Companion and Co-worker with Jehovah from the beginning—the Eternal Son of God. "Understanding" is derived from a word meaning to "separate," "distinguish," which suggests that discrimination which is the necessary accompaniment of wisdom.

How truly did these two attributes of the Spirit characterize the Lord. From childhood He was marked by "wisdom," and when He went forth upon His ministry, all that He did and said was marked by the wisdom and understanding of the Spirit. Not only did He know what to do and say, but how, when and where.

"Counsel" is thought to be derived from a word meaning to be strong, then to command; and hence, advice. And does not this suggest what all true counsel is—authoritative and binding? Thus our Lord's teaching was "as one having authority." How full was His life of that divinely perfect counsel. A fit accompaniment of this was the Spirit of "might," which, while seemingly in contrast, was really associated with and complementary to the other, giving an evenly balanced display of the Spirit's working. When we think of all His mighty works in mercy upon the helpless and needy, we see how fully the Spirit of might rested upon Him as through the Spirit He wrought His miracles (Luke 4:14).

The last two attributes of the Spirit mentioned are "knowledge and the fear of the Lord." Knowledge is what the world craves, seeking it in order to display itself in independence of God. Thus sin first came into the world; knowledge was craved, knowledge apart from God, and in disobedience. The result has been a ruined world, under the righteous judgment of God. Knowledge can be of real value only as it comes from

God, His gift. The wisdom and knowledge of the world have been used to shut out the knowledge of God: “The world by wisdom knew not God” (1 Cor. 1:21). The reason is simple and plain: man’s pride casts off the fear of God, but the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge “(Prov. 1:7). If knowledge is used to puff up, to lead men to think they are like God (Gen. 3:5), it can only produce more disastrous results than ignorance. Education, apart from the fear of God, tends to infidelity. It is not true, as Rome has taught, that” ignorance is the mother of devotion” (unless it be the devotion of worshiping images and relics), but neither is knowledge the parent of worship; something from above is needed for that.

But in our Lord how perfectly was blended knowledge with the fear of the Lord. He knew all things; He knew what was in man; He could have told all the secrets of nature, the wonders and glories of heaven. But we search in vain for one word to gratify mere curiosity. How truly did He reverence His God and Father. Obedience marked every motion of His being; the fear of the Lord controlled all the treasures of knowledge which He unfolded. Hence, what wondrous knowledge He manifested— knowledge of the heart of God, of His character and of His will; it characterized all His teaching and all His works. And what was so manifest in all the record of His life is characteristic of Scripture, for it is all “the word of Christ” (Col. 3:16)

The Bible is a treasure-house of divine knowledge, but the one key to open it is “the fear of the Lord.” It is a book for the conscience, and not for mere intellect. Heights and depths of knowledge there are in it indeed, but only the lowly-hearted who serve the Lord “with all humility of mind” (Acts 20:19) can apprehend them. These six characteristics then are the varied manifestations of that one Spirit of Jehovah that rested upon our Lord. All was divinely perfect.

The candlestick was all of gold. It will be remembered that the Spirit’s work is ever to glorify Christ (John 16:14). As the light was to shine upon the candlestick (Ex. 25:37), so the Spirit displays the glories and perfections of the Lord Jesus. It was by the light on the candlestick that the table was seen with its loaves of showbread, so it is by the Holy Spirit that the perfections of Christ as the Bread of God to sustain His people in communion is manifested; only through Him can acceptable worship be offered; and only through Him therefore can we apprehend the character and perfections of Christ, who has sent down the Holy Spirit. The Spirit’s ministry is not to occupy us with Himself-divine Being as He is, one with the Father and the Son-but with the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the proof of new birth is not gained by looking within at the Spirit’s work in our souls, but at Him who “died for the ungodly, “who” was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification” (Rom. 5:6; 4:25). Fruits of grace are for the eye of God, not for self. The fruits to be looked at are those wondrous buds, flowers and almonds of the risen Lord. He is the fruitful tree, and the full light of the Spirit is shed upon His perfections.

So sanctification is not some culture of the flesh, but the capacity for apprehending to the heart’s joy what Christ is, and true subjection to Him. The Spirit does not tell a saint that he has attained to something in himself, but turns his eyes to the One who fills the heart of God with delight. Thus only is true sanctification produced. “We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord,” or “the Lord the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18). For the sinner it is,” Look,” and for the saint it is still,” Look.”

Returning to the passage from which we have already quoted, we see the perfect character of the light which streams from the golden Candlestick (John 16:7-15): “It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you” (ver. 7). The Lord must needs, in infinite grace, depart out of the world by way of the cross, in order that He might send the Holy Spirit. Christ is thus the Light-giver, as risen from the dead and entered into His glory. The Holy Spirit has come, and we have the nature of His light first in relation to the world, next in relation to the saints, and also in relation to the Lord Himself. His testimony in relation to the world is threefold: “He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (ver. 8). The light must reprove and make manifest all that is contrary to itself; so we have a trinity of conviction, the full manifestation of sin, its contrast, and the judgment which awaits it.

But it will be seen that this light of the Spirit in the world is in connection with Christ: “Of sin, because they believe not on Me” (ver. 9). The world is full of sin of every form and character—from the deep and fearful crimes which strike horror into the heart, to the “little sins,” of which men speak so lightly—there are none such in the sight of God. But the Holy Spirit is not merely occupied in throwing the light upon all this ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, He sheds His beams upon the perfections of Christ, and tests the world thereby. Thus all alike are convicted-rich and poor, moral and criminal, intelligent and ignorant they have one thing in common, they have not believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. The pleasure-seeking worldling, the man of affairs absorbed in trade, the profligate, and the man whose hands are red with blood, have this in common. That which was the cause of all sin was breaking loose from God, independence of Him; and that which the Holy Spirit witnesses against the world is its rejection of the remedy which divine mercy has provided.

So, too, the Spirit witnesses of righteousness: “Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more” (vs. 10). The law was a declaration of righteousness which God justly required of man. If we examine it, we must own that its claims are righteous. But man is fallen, and the law can only prove his unrighteousness. Alas, had he been but willing to own his unrighteousness, and with the publican cried; “God be merciful to me the sinner,” he would then have no sin, for the Son of God came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Instead of that, man put the spotless Son of God on trial, and blasphemously accused Him; and sin therefore remains upon him. Here was One who always did those things which pleased His Father (John 8:29), whom no one could convict of sin, yet sinners condemned Him to a murderer’s cross! And God remained silent; man had his way; his seal was put upon the great stone at the door of the tomb.

Shall such wickedness succeed? What witness does the Holy Spirit give as to this? He declares God’s righteousness in the fact that “God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). God is not unrighteous to suffer the righteous One to lie under the imputation of sin. He is put upon the throne of glory: the highest place in heaven is His answer to the world for what it has done. And again we see how all testimony to righteousness is a testimony to Christ.

The Spirit further bears witness of judgment: “Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” (vs. 11). The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ was seemingly Satan’s triumph; it was “Your hour and the power of darkness” (Luke 22:53). But a lie can never finally triumph over the truth, nor the liar over Him that is the Truth. Satan’s malice overreached itself, and his unutterable rebellion against God, in which he had involved the human race, met its doom in the very act which seemed to secure the world for him. The Cross, the death of Christ, is that by which He destroyed “him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14). Satan is judged, and his self-chosen place is fixed for all eternity.

But this settles the question for the world. It is no longer under probation; there is no longer a question as to its guilt and the character of its judgment. Its prince has been judged, and in his judgment that of his kingdom is also pronounced. The Spirit thus bears testimony to judgment in connection with Christ and His cross.

In His own grace, which expresses His amazing love, God has connected this testimony of the Spirit to the world with the grace of the gospel in salvation. If the world is guilty because it believed not on Christ, let men now believe on Him, and eternal life is theirs; that righteousness witnessed by a glorified Savior declares that God is just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Satan's judgment will never come upon the man who, lost and helpless, casts himself on the Savior. To such an one who believes, the Spirit bears witness that he is a child of God.

This brings us to see the nature of the Spirit's testimony to the believer. To the world it is a witness of Christ; to the saint it is the same. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of (or from) Himself: but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come" (vss. 12, 13). Until the Lord was glorified He reserved much which the disciples could not understand. In spite even of His frequent declaration that He would be rejected and would rise again, they did not understand it. But this was all changed when He rose and ascended to heaven. Reading Peter's words on the day of Pentecost, we hear no uncertain sound as to man's guilt, as to forgiveness and salvation; they were borne witness to in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. And all centered about the person of our Lord, His death, His resurrection and glory, and His coming again. Truly the "cloven tongues as of fire" were the symbol of the Spirit's presence as the light of testimony—all shining upon Christ.

And Pentecost was but the beginning of that dispensation of the Spirit in which we are now living. It has been marked by the presence, power, revelation of the Spirit, whose work has been to glorify Christ. First of all, there has been the full revelation of truth: "He shall guide you into all truth." Christ is the Truth; He alone has shown what God is and what man is. We have seen what is the Spirit's testimony to the world. His testimony to the saints is to guide them into a knowledge of the fullness of Christ. This we see historically in the book of Acts, where the risen and ascended Lord is the source of all power and testimony, gradually leading the Church out of Judaism into the fullness of Christian liberty. In the Epistles, notably of Paul, what inexhaustible treasures of truth are unfolded: "the unsearchable riches of Christ." That "chosen vessel" was called, we may say, by the light of the golden Candlestick. He saw "a light above the brightness of the sun," and that light revealed Jesus, whom he had despised and hated, the lowly Nazarene upon the throne of glory. In this light Paul saw himself a lost sinner, saw all his "gain" of Judaism to be filthy rags; but the Object which absorbed his soul was Christ (Phil. 3:4-7). God had revealed His Son in him (Gal. 1:16), and his eyes were blinded to all else. Thus his very first testimony at Damascus was as to the deity of Christ: "Straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20). Here was both a revelation of the glories of the golden Candlestick and a testimony to it.

Need we do more than refer to the epistles of Paul to show how this one theme, the glories of Christ, governed his entire ministry? In Romans, it is justification by faith in Christ; in Galatians, it is deliverance from the law through Christ; in Ephesians, he shows us in Christ in the heavenlies; in Colossians, the glories of the risen Lord are set forth; and in Philippians He is the life, example, object and power—all. The full light of the Spirit fell upon the golden Candlestick, showing all its beauties: "He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:14).

The writings of Peter, James and John, and of Jude, are the Spirit's light glorifying Christ. Even when the theme seems to be different it will be found that it is to shut up the saints to Christ. Thus the book of Revelation, that book of judgment is the light of the seven lamps before the throne, which shows how Christ must reign until He has put all enemies beneath His feet. All evil is banished, all His persistent enemies are forever shut up with him whom they have chosen instead of Christ, and then through heaven's eternal day there is no need of the sun or moon to lighten, neither is there night, "for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light (or lamp) thereof" (Rev. 21:23).

The last thought we will speak of in connection with the candlestick is the trimming of the lamps. The oil and the light we have seen to speak of the Holy Spirit; while the beautiful candlestick sets forth the glories of our divine Lord and Savior; but for the actual light to be given either in the world or among the people of God, human vehicles are used. This indeed is grace; and in this we see His people, not as in all the perfections of Christ before God, but as wicks, which are not even named, save by implication. And if a wick is to be of use, it must be burned; if burned, it must be trimmed. Here are valuable and suggestive lessons.

Trimming was the work of the priest. No hand but his could remove the burned portion of the wick, to enable it to burn brightly. And so no hand but that of our Lord Jesus can cause the light of His people to burn clearly and brightly. Whomsoever He may use, unless it is Himself who is seen doing the work, it will not be effectual. This does not relieve the priestly family of their responsibility. We are to "wash one an-other's feet" (John 13:14). But how careful we should be to let Him control us, if we are to serve Him in ministering to one another. The beam must be taken out of our own eye, if a single mote is to be taken out of our brother's eye (Matt. 7:3-5).

Trimming the lamp did not imply that it had failed to give light; the priest would not let it reach that stage, but removed the charred part of the wick in order that there might be a fresh portion for the oil to pass through unhindered and to supply fuel for the lamp. The wick was not the fuel, but the channel for the fuel, though from immediate contact with the flame it would be consumed. So with the child of God: he is the channel through whom the Spirit flows to shed abroad that light which glorifies Christ. How much, alas, hinders this shining both in the world and in the house of God. It were blasphemy to think the dimness were due to the slightest failure in the divine Spirit. With us, and with us alone, is all the blame that we are not absolutely yielded up to the priestly hand of Him who in love would trim, not quench, the "smoking flax" of our testimony, that an un-grieved Spirit might pour forth the holy beams of His truth.

It is needless to go into details as to the trimming of the lamps. He who knows the need alone can do the work, making use of such instruments as He sees can be used. So completely is the work of these "snuffers" divine, that they are seen to be all of gold; the human instrument is entirely out of sight.

One thought is suggestive: the part of the wick that is removed is that which had been used to give forth the light. So it is that part of the believer's life which but lately shone so brightly in the power of the Spirit, which if dwelt upon, boasted in, rested in, would mar all the brightness. Past experience—of service, communion, worship—is but a burned wick; it cannot be a channel for to-day's flame. To occupied with that is like gazing upon a charred wick instead of the glories and beauties of the candlestick, Christ Himself. The word is ever, "Forgetting those things which are behind" (Phil. 3:13). There is a subtle snare in self-complacent occupation with even the fruits of the Spirit in us, which mars the brightest usefulness. So Paul did not glory in all his faithful service, in suffering and ministry in which the Lord had used him. If

compelled to speak of these, it was with a measure of shame: " I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me " (2 Cor. 12:11) He had a better object, and gloried in himself only as "a man in Christ." So too he submitted gladly to the trimming of the wick, knowing who it was that was doing it. Messenger of Satan though the outward circumstances might be, he saw the Priest's hand and the golden snuffers: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9).

And yet there would be a time when all the record of this faithfulness could be looked upon and occasion nothing but praise to God. "In that day," of which he loved to think, the apostle knew he would receive "a crown of righteousness," the Master's "Well done, good and faithful servant," and for that day he was content to wait—misunderstood, suffering, despised as he might be. There, not a single pang would be forgotten; every stripe and abuse he had received, and all his watchings, fastings, cold and nakedness. Ah, the Lord has gathered those up and put them in the "golden snuff dishes," where they are effectually hidden from view in His own glory, to be displayed as His glory "in that day." Then we can look upon all service and suffering, be it great or small, and see it to have been the fruit alone of His grace. There will be no self-complacency in heaven, for "the flesh" will be forever a thing of the past. At the judgment-seat of Christ all will be manifested; the skill and care of the great High Priest will be seen, and "then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4:5). A crown will be given, not to be worn in pride, but to be cast at His feet who alone is worthy.

The dimensions of the candlestick are not, given, the whole interest being centered upon its material, form and use. All was perfect. Number, ordinarily suggested by measured size, is given here in the perfect number, seven. This is the Spirit's witness to a glorified Christ—He is perfect, divine. Christ is all.

Lectures on the Tabernacle: A Full Exposition Examining the Types and Their Doctrinal Applications — Fully Illustrated, Table, The

Exodus 37:10-16

We pass now to the furniture of the holy place. In the Holiest, the ark with its mercy-seat stood alone, except on the Day of Atonement, when the high-priest brought in the golden censer. But in the holy place was the table of show-bread, the altar of incense and the golden candlestick. We now turn to the first of these.1

There are four features of the table, the significance of which will give us largely the meaning of the whole: the materials of which it was made, its dimensions, its form and its uses.

The materials were acacia wood overlaid with pure gold. The dimensions were two cubits in length, one cubit in breadth, one and a half cubits in height: this was also the height of the ark, whose other two dimensions were greater than those of the table by half a cubit.

The table had a crown of gold of a handbreadth about it, next to an offset or border; then another crown of gold. So there were two crowns, separated by the border. There were also four golden rings "upon the four corners that were in the four feet (legs?) thereof; over against (close by) the border were the rings." Into these, two staves of acacia wood overlaid with gold were passed, for carrying the table through the wilderness.

The purpose of the table is given in connection with the directions for preparing the weekly "showbread" which was to be placed upon it (Levs. 24:5-9). Twelve loaves made each of two tenth deals of fine flour, were placed in two rows upon the "pure table" overlaid with pure gold. Pure frankincense was put upon these, and this presentation was renewed each week. It was this use which gave it its name: "the table of showbread" (Num. 4:7).

In connection with the table, for use upon it, were the various vessels of pure gold — "his dishes and his spoons, and his bowls, and his covers to cover withal" (vs. 16). It is thought that this last clause would be more correctly translated, "flagons to pour out withal." The "dishes" may have been to contain the bread; the "spoons" to contain the frankincense (such were offered by the princes at the dedication of the altar, Num. 7:14, etc.). The "bowls" were perhaps for receiving the drink offerings poured out of the "flagons." At these we may look later.

The significance of the materials of which the table was made—acacia wood overlaid with gold—have already been before us in the ark and the boards, but we will look briefly at them again in connection with the uses of the table. The natural suggestion of a "table" is a place for food, and the food upon it. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies" (Psa. 23:5). We will find this thought of food linked with our Lord's person in the 6th chapter of John: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world" (John 6:32, 33). The One who "came down from heaven" reminds us of the deity of our Lord; this is the gold.

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6:51-53). Evidently our Lord here is speaking of His death. But His death presupposes His incarnation. He must become man that He may die. We have in this way the twofold truth of our Lord's deity and His humanity linked together and put before us in this chapter, where He is presented as the Bread of life. We have thus the gold and the acacia wood which form the table.

As to the dimensions of the table, its height was one and a half cubits—the same as that of the ark. This would suggest that the bread of communion is on the same level as the propitiatory, or mercy-seat. Fellowship with God is with Christy and must therefore be on the same plane as the value of His redemption.

But what a thought is this! God has come down in the person of His Son, "reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. 5:19). To fully effect the work needed for this reconciliation the blessed Lord came down as the Bread from heaven, and lower than the manger at Bethlehem—unmeasured distance as that was; lower than the humble abode at Nazareth, or the homeless walk where He did not have where to lay His head; lower than the place where they put Him, who branded Him as a Samaritan or one possessed of a demon (John 8:48); lower even than a human malefactor; for He descended to the place of distance from God, forsaken of Him — "made sin

for us," He who knew no sin (2 Cor. 5:21)!

But the response of Almighty God to all this was in raising Him up from the dead, and giving Him glory (1 Peter 1:21); yea, He has taken His place at the right hand of the majesty on high " (Heb. 1:3). This answers to His place above the mercy-seat, the throne of God, where is also the witness of the blood of the everlasting covenant.

But in this exalted place, He is not there for Himself alone; He is the representative of His people. Unto such heights of acceptance has He raised His blood-bought people, who are before God according to all the value of Christ Himself and His finished work. Speaking of this acceptance in Christ the apostle says: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:4-6). The table of acceptance is as high as the Ark. This is the basis of our communion.

Such is the perfection of the work, as measured by the position of our blessed Lord and of God's mercy in the quickening of souls. May we be enabled to respond in a practical way to His thoughts, entering into them by faith, and enjoying on His own plane "fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3). This means, indeed, "no confidence in the flesh." We may go more fully into the practical features of communion when we have learned some further lessons as to the table.

We have already suggested these dimensions may be looked at not only singly, but in their relation with each other. Taken singly, the two cubits of length might suggest fellowship, communion; and the one in breadth, of the unity which is the characteristic of all true fellowship, a divine unity in the truth. This indeed cuts away all false ideas of what fellowship is.

But if we look at the proportions of the table we find them stated thus: 2 x 1 x 1½ or, by enlarging the scale, 4 x 2 x 3. Thus we have the factors 2 in width, 3 in height, and 4 in length. The two, we have already seen, speaks of fellowship: "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). Three is the number of divine fullness and manifestation, and has its place at the table where God is manifested in Christ, "in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all" (2 Cor. 13:14): here we have the Trinity of God connected with the thought of communion. Four is the number of the creature, and thus recalls the fact that the basis of fellowship is the Man Christ Jesus. Four also speaks of this world, the wilderness, with its trials and sorrows, manifesting often the weakness and failure of the saints; but even here God spreads a table in the wilderness. Thus two speaks of communion, three of the Persons with whom we have communion, and four of the place where (outwardly) the communion is had.

As to the form of the table, there were certain characteristics in the two crowns and the border that demand our attention. We saw that the "crown" upon the ark not only beautified it, but furnished a secure framework in which the mercy-seat rested, and by which it was held in perfect safety in its place. In a similar way the crown around the table might serve not only as an adornment, but to guard the showbread from slipping off it. The crown, we have said, typified "Jesus, crowned with glory and honor" (Heb. 2:9). It is Christ in the place which He has won by His work upon the earth: "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." He therefore continues in perfect confidence to address His Father: "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John 17:4, 5).

That suggests the reason why the crown was all of gold. It is the divine glory which He ever had with the Father, but into which He enters, as it were, upon a new ground, that of the Substitute of His blood-bought people, whose redemption He had accomplished according to the Father's will. This was the work given Him to do, and thus to manifest God's Name in a world which had rebelled against Him, by setting forth His holiness, truth, righteousness, mercy and love—all combined in the redemption of sinners.

Thus the divine glory, after His humiliation unto death, has a new meaning, shining for the universe in a new luster. The character of God was ever the same, but it had been maligned by Satan, and by men, his willing dupes, so that man, created in the image of God, had fallen immeasurably below even the beast, for he used his God-given intellect for purposes of sin. There is no degradation upon earth like that of fallen man. And so the glory of God could not shine in His own world, save where His pre-determining grace manifested itself partially in the seed of faith. (See Heb. 1.) These were, however, but partial glimpses of that which could only be fully displayed in the Son.

"Then said He, Lo, I am come to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:9). This "coming" may be said to include His incarnation, His perfect life and service, leading on to the accomplishment of God's blessed will by "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once" (vs. 10). "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him the name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11). Thus the witness of God's glory, throughout the universe, rests upon the brow of One who sought no glory for Himself.

But it is "the glory of His grace" that is suggested by the loaves of bread held in their place by the crown. It is a glorified Christ who maintains His own, according to all that He is. That glory is directly and eternally connected, as we have seen, with His redeeming work upon the cross. In the light of that glory we read: "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand" (John 10:28); "Because I live, ye shall live also" (14:19); "Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. 5:10). It is His life as risen and glorified that is here meant. Everything is now connected with the glory of the Lord Jesus—a glory upon which He has entered after, and because of, having passed through His sufferings unto death. At Pentecost the Spirit was given because He was glorified (Acts 2:33; see also John 7:39). The healing of the lame man at the gate of the temple, Peter ascribes to the power of Jesus glorified: "The God of our fathers hath glorified His Son Jesus" (Acts 3:13). This is what characterizes the entire apostolic teaching: a glorified Christ is the source of every blessing, and of the power which manifests it, through the Holy Spirit.

But we shall find further justification of connecting the table and its crown with the security of the people of God, if we look at the show-bread which was kept constantly upon the table. It was called showbread, or "bread of face," as suggesting that it was set before the face of God, perfectly acceptable to Him. It was also called "the continual bread" (Num. 4:7), reminding us that it was ever before God; and the "hallowed bread," speaking of the holiness connected with this presentation. It was that which was presented before God, as is suggested by the expression, "Bread of ordering" (1 Chr. 9:32, marg.), and "Bread of setting forth, or presentation" (Heb. 9:2, Gk.)

The word rendered “cakes” of showbread, is challoth, literally “pierced cakes”—the usual word; so called because they were pierced or perforated, perhaps to allow quick and thorough baking. As these cakes speak of Christ, the “piercing” is specially appropriate, not primarily His piercing at death—though all pointed forward to that—but the constant subjection of His whole being—His heart, to the heated fire of trial here, as well as the searching of God’s holy word.

These loaves were made of fine flour, which speaks of the perfection of the humanity of our Lord, the consistency and uniformity of His character. At this we may look a little more in detail when we come to examine the meat-offering. Each cake or loaf was made of two tenth deals of flour. This was the amount of the meat-offering that accompanied the offering of a ram; that with the bullock being three tenth deals, and with a lamb but one. The ram, as we saw in the covering for the tabernacle, signifies the consecration or devotedness of our Lord even unto death. Thus the fine flour, which speaks of His person, fittingly reminds us of Him who was absolutely devoted to God, and who now represents His people before Him in all the value and energy of that devotedness.

There were twelve of these loaves, which at once reminds us of the twelve tribes, composing the whole nation of Israel. It was the number of national unity, combining with it the thought of divine government which was exercised over them, and through them (had they been faithful) over the world. The number reappears in the twelve apostles, to whom was entrusted God’s government in Christianity, and over Israel in the millennium (Matt. 19:28); and in the heavenly city it is a prominent number: twelve gates with the names of the twelve tribes; the city was of twelve thousand furlongs each way, a perfect cube; the wall was 144—twelve times twelve cubits; there were twelve foundations of precious stones; the tree of life bore twelve manner of fruits. We are thus reminded that Israel’s blessings are eternal, and that divine government is the essential feature and condition of that kingdom which “cannot be moved”

(Heb. 12:28); and in which creation will be taken up and acted upon by God to manifest Himself in His perfect holiness and love (4 x 3).

These facts give emphasis to the significance of the twelve loaves. They represent Israel under the control of divine government, and therefore marked for eternal blessing. The loaves being arranged in two rows, seems to suggest the perfect order of all God’s government, and the true witness to that which is taught in the loaves. They set forth Christ in the perfection of His person, and the frankincense upon them tells of His fragrance and sweet savor to God; but they also show Christ’s people in Him, ever before God according to the value and fragrance of what the Lord is. They are not seen in what they are in themselves, which could not be a sweet savor to God, but as in Christ, and thus acceptable according to what He is before God. Thus in the twelve loaves we see not only the perfections of Christ, but of His people in Him.

In the New Testament we have a similar thought in the loaf which is upon 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).

Here, while the one loaf speaks of the body of our Lord, it reminds us of His people who are one loaf, one body also, for they partake of the one loaf. Thus His people are seen in Him, complete and a perfect whole.

This truth of the unity of the people before God is seen to be prominently before the mind of God, both in Old and New Testaments. In Elijah’s day, Israel’s national unity had been sadly broken outwardly: the ten tribes had revolted from the house of David, and the mass were apostate. And yet God’s thought of the unity of Israel had not changed. Elijah, who is seeking to restore the people to God, rebuilds the altar of Jehovah which had fallen down: “And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord” (1 Kings 18:31, 32)

This was similar in spirit to the act of Joshua in an earlier day, when, at the command of the Lord, he set up twelve stones in Jordan where Israel passed over, and brought up twelve stones from the bed of the river and set them up in the camp at Gilgal (Josh. 4:3-9). These stones represent the identification of God’s people with Christ. The stones in the bed of Jordan were a reminder not only that the Lord arrested the stream, but that all Israel passed over; in like manner the stones set up in Gilgal were a reminder that all Israel had entered into their inheritance. So the death of our Lord Jesus has arrested the river of death and judgment, and provided a way for His people to pass over into their eternal inheritance. His death is typified in the twelve stones, but His people are seen in Him; so also in His resurrection they are represented, and are joint heirs with Him. Every believer can say, “I am crucified with Christ” (Gal. 2:20); “Buried with Him” (Rom. 6:4); “Risen with Christ” (Col. 3:1); and made to sit “in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6). And this is true not for some special class of believers, but for every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. The full number of the saints is provided for, and each one is represented before God as identified and associated with Christ. This is true, whether the responsible testimony is unbroken, as in Joshua’s day, or if failure has come in, as in the time of Elijah. The Israel of God were ever before Him an unbroken whole: and so it is with the Church of God, whether in the unbroken outward unity of their first love in the days of the apostles, or in the “perilous times” of the present, when to outward appearance the Church has been broken in fragments.

The golden Table (Christ) abides, in all the peerless perfection of His person; and He, the risen and glorified One presents His blood-bought people before God as one with, and in, Him. Thus His prayer in the 17th chapter of John has its answer from the divine side, though, alas, outwardly sad failure has brought havoc to what should have been a testimony before the world. The common life remains, and with it that unity before God which is its accompaniment (John 17:21).

So faith always goes back to the thoughts of God, even in days of ruin. Elijah’s altar of twelve stones ignores the fact that there are two kingdoms. It is one Israel before God. The apostle Paul, in a day of even more complete dispersion when the ten tribes were lost sight of, buried among the nations for their idolatry, and the Jews settled down into complacent self-righteousness or blank unbelief, having rejected and cast out the Lord of glory, heaping to themselves “wrath to the uttermost” (1 Thess. 2:16)—Paul still has the thoughts of God toward them, knowing that “they are not all Israel which are of Israel” (Rom. 9:6); he recalls the very times of Elijah, how God had reserved seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal, and adds, “Even so then at the present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace” (Rom. 2:4, 5).

So also, when making his defense before king Agrippa, in speaking of the promise of a resurrection, made to the fathers, he says: “Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come” (Acts 26:7). God’s eye and faith see the whole elect nation. So also when the prophets foretold the day of Israel’s future glory, the divisions and dispersions intervening were ignored, or triumphed over. By the union of two sticks into one, Ezekiel was to show the future reunion of Israel and Judah into one nation (Ezek. 37:16-22); and the same

prophet makes the fullest provision for the partition of the land among the twelve tribes of the united nation (Ezek. 48). Thus twelve has an unmistakable meaning not only temporarily, but in the gifts and calling of God which are “without repentance” (Rom. 11:29).

Thus the golden crown about the table, and the twelve loaves of showbread upon it, suggest the completeness in which all God’s beloved people are presented to Him in Christ, and maintained before God by the fact that Christ is before Him crowned with glory, as their representative, thus held fast, so that they can never perish. We might imagine some over-zealous Levite suggesting to the priest the danger of the loaves slipping off the table, and devising some plan to hold them down more securely. The priest might well have replied, “That has already been divinely provided for: do you not see that crown?

They cannot slip by that.” And so to a trembling believer who fears he may not hold out to the end, the reply may well be made,” Do you not see that crown?—’ Jesus crowned with glory and honor? ‘“

We come next to consider the meaning of the border of a handbreadth. It has been thought by some that this border was outside the first crown already described, as a ledge upon which the vessels of service could be set; others have thought of it as merely an ornamental border set perpendicularly to, and upon which the top of the table would rest, while it would also act as a brace to the whole frame, and to which the feet would be attached, with the rings and staves.

We may not be able to decide as to the exact form and position of this border, but suggest certain thoughts as to its general meaning. The word means, primarily, an enclosure; so a fortress or “close place,” as Psa. 18:45; Mic. 7:17, where the word is “hole.” An enclosure is to keep out intruders, as by a wall or some other barricade. An enclosure about the table would therefore suggest that which would keep off what did not belong there. The crown about the table has already suggested what would hold the loaves securely in their place; this border, or “fortress” (also adorned with a crown), would suggest the exclusion from the table of all that was not consistent with the glory of Christ. Such a border would give firmness and stability to the table, both as it stood in the sanctuary, or as it was carried through the wilderness. The measure of the border being a “handbreadth,” has been thought to refer to the divine Hand that is upon the table, to mark out and define all according to the glory of God. That divine Hand about His table may well speak of almighty power, and yet of infinite grace, as having given His own Son for us who is now exalted by His right hand as Prince and Savior (Acts 5:31).

We may get the suggestion of the “border” in the following passage: “Now when he had, made an end of measuring the inner house, he brought me forth toward the gate whose prospect is toward the east, and measured it round about. He measured the east side with the measuring reed, 500 reeds, with the measuring reed round about. He measured the north side, 500 reeds, with the measuring reed round about. He measured the south side, 500 reeds, with the measuring reed. He turned about to the west side, and measured 500 reeds, with the measuring reed. He measured it by the four sides: it had a wall round about, 500 reeds long, and 500 broad, to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place” (Ezek. 42:15-20).

The prophet, in the previous chapters, is describing the sanctuary, the new temple, and from that passes without the gate and sees a distinct separation between holy and common made by the measurements about the sanctuary. Whether this was a space, 500 reeds square, as some, have thought, or simply a wall 500 cubits square surrounding the temple court, the evident meaning is to make a complete separation between that which is holy and that which is not. This would answer to the thought suggested by the “border” around the table. The same glory which fences about the bread upon the table, makes also a separation between that and all that is inconsistent with His glory. How jealously God guards the person of His beloved Son from all dishonoring mingling with aught else. As at Jordan, in Joshua’s day, there was a space of about 2000 cubits between the ark and the people (Josh. 3:4), so here the Bread is fenced off from all other. Christ in His unique and perfect humanity is guarded from being confounded with any other, even the best of men.

For instance, when our Lord was transfigured; and “there appeared unto them Moses and Elias: and they were talking with Jesus,” Peter, in the excitement of fear, and not knowing what to say, proposed that they make three tabernacles, “one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias.” How quickly is the “border” seen, as God from heaven proclaims. “This is My beloved. Son; hear Him “ (Mark 9:2-8) But a little while before indeed Peter bad himself declared the pre-eminence of the Lord above “Elias or one of the prophets... Thou art the Christ” (Mark 8:27-29). A large part of the epistle to the Hebrews manifests this same jealous guarding of the person of our Lord. The “border of a handbreadth” and the golden crown separates Him from angels (chap. I), from Moses (chap. 3), from Joshua (chap. 4), from Aaron (chaps. 5, 7), and from the whole line of men of faith (chap. 11); for Jesus, the “Author and finisher of faith,” is above them all.

In like manner, if we look at the loaves, suggesting Christ’s people as seen in Him, they are separated from all the world. This is illustrated in our Lord’s Prayer in John 17, which is largely taken up, we might say, with these two crowns. The words glory, glorify occur throughout the whole chapter. His great solicitude for His beloved ones who are in the world is that they may be kept, not only saved, but kept from the evil that is in the world. “I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil” (John 17:15). The measure of their separation from the world is as complete as His, in His mind and purpose: “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (vs. 14).

The reality of this, and the intense separation which holiness in grace wrought, is seen in the early chapters of Acts, where evil is judged according to the divine standard, and so intruders are kept away from very fear: “And of the rest durst no man join himself unto them” (Acts 5:13). So in 1 Cor. 5 the wicked person is to be put away; and for the children of God the word is, “Let a man examine himself” (approve or set himself right), “and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup” (1 Cor. 11:28); thus the very glory of grace guards the holiness of the Lord’s table from that which would dishonor it.

This separation, so far from being a contradiction of grace, is the fruit of it; for all holy separation is in the power of the risen Lord, and not by legal or ascetic efforts. For His people there is a constraint of love: “For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” (John 17:19). Only in grace for us could He do this. Being in the world as Surety for His people, it is for their sakes that He separates Himself from the world, by death and resurrection. Being “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” our Lord needed no moral separation from the evil that was in the world, but “His own, which were in the world,” needed the practical sanctification which nothing but His grace could give; and by going down into death, He has severed the ties which bound His own to a sinful world; and now in resurrection-glory He “ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25). Of this High-priestly service, John 17 is the example. This practical separation of heart and walk is effected by “the truth;” or, as illustrated in John 13, by the washing of the feet. All this would be suggested by the crown about the border, which would also remind us of the eternal security of His people as seen passing through an evil

world, where they need to learn heart-separation unto a glorified Christ. His glory is pledged to bring them through, and to manifest them at last completely sanctified unto God. Even now it is but the unbelief and weakness of the flesh which prevents it from being a full practical reality. We are not straitened in Him.

We have already spoken of the exclusion of moral evil, as seen in 1 Corinthians 5. There is perhaps a tendency to forget that the glory of Christ as jealously guards His table from defilement with doctrinal evil, or from carelessness as to it. A passage from 2 John will illustrate this: “And this is love, that we walk after His commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not Jesus Christ come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds “(2 John 6-11).

This passage needs not explanation, but rather prayerful obedience. In John, as indeed in the entire word of God, Christ is all, and men are tested by their attitude toward Him. To worship, trust, obey Him, shows one to be a member of the family of God. That which is not of Christ, and he who does not bring the doctrine of Christ, is to be absolutely refused. “The doctrine of Christ” would include all that is connected with Him—all the truth of God. Any of it knowingly and willfully a refused would constitute a person “wicked,” and anything dishonoring to His person or work could not be knowingly allowed for a moment. Thus while there is to be forbearance and patience, there can be no indifference to evil doctrine. Such indifference would make one a partaker of the evil deeds of the man who did not bring the doctrine of Christ. This is the divinely-set barrier about the table of the Lord.

It remains to speak of the various vessels used in connection with the table, and which it has been thought stood upon this border. If the table suggests not only that which is God’s food and delight, but that which He provides also for His people to enjoy with Him, then the vessels of service may well speak of the divine provision for ministry.

The material of these vessels was pure gold; all here is divine. The provision of God for the service of communion is all of Himself; human expedients here are absolutely out of place. It may be said that some regular order and provision must be made for ministry, which is perfectly true, only the provision is not human but divine. All efforts to provide by human appointment for the ministry of God’s table is an insult, however unintended, to the love, grace, and holiness of God. Alas, not one company of God’s people can say it is free from failure in this respect; but there should be, surely, an honest purpose to have and use none but divinely-appointed and prepared vessels.

These vessels were: “dishes,” “spoons,” “covers” (or “flagons”) and “bowls.” The dishes may have been to hold the showbread; the spoon would serve for the frankincense, to put it upon the bread; the flagons and bowls would be used for the wine of the drink-offerings. Thus not only food is prepared, but the means of its orderly presentation, with its accompaniments of joy and delight. For surely God has His delight in Christ (the frankincense), and a joy which human hearts cannot fathom—a joy which the “blood of the grape” expresses, and which carries us back to the outpouring of that precious Life upon the cross. All this is surely presented to Him by the divine Son; and yet, in infinite grace, God delights to have His people about Him presenting the praises of Christ, so acceptable to Him.

But if this privilege is unspeakably great, how great also is the responsibility to be “vessels unto honor” (2 Tim. 2:21), sanctified and meet for the Master’s use. But only that which divine grace has wrought can be suitable for the Master’s use: that grace which teaches us to deny “ungodliness and worldly lusts” (Titus 2:12), or causes one to “purge himself from these.” Who can estimate the fullness of divine ministry, were all the vessels in the Lord’s house as they should be — “Holiness unto the Lord; and the pots in the Lord’s house... like the bowls before the altar” (Zech. 14:20)? Such is it on high, where no abomination can enter; but the “great house” (2 Tim. 2:20) has taken the place of the house of God upon earth, and amid the defilement and ruin, the path of faith is marked by lowliness and a spirit of mourning, rather than the exhibition of great gifts.

As with the ark and altar of incense, there were upon the golden table, near the border, golden rings, for the staves of acacia wood overlaid with gold, to carry it through the wilderness. May there not be a suggestion, in the rings being near to the border, that the holiness of God’s table was not to debar His people from the enjoyment of communion with Him even in the wilderness?

Wherever He led them, His table should accompany them—for it is only defilement which debars from communion, not trial. All the paths over which the weary feet of the Lord’s saints may have to tread, have been already trodden by our Lord Jesus, of whom the table speaks. There may be danger, scorn and hatred of the world, persecution, affliction—He has passed through all these “apart from sin” (Heb. 4:15).

Not only has He thus passed through this world, but His promise is, “Lo, I am with you alway” (Matt. 28:20). The rings might well suggest the abiding character of His presence. So the believer can boldly say: “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies”

(Psa. 23:5).

The table, then, as we have seen, speaks of the food of God—Christ’s person—and that in which He has communion with His people. Man could never provide God with what His soul delights in; it would be but Cain’s offering, the fruit of earth cursed for man’s sin. But Christ has set forth a table at which God finds all suited to His holiness, of which He can say, This is My food, “the bread of Mine offerings.” But this blessed One, our Lord Jesus, having borne our judgment, for everyone who believes upon Him there is now a place at the table of God; and a welcome to partake with Him of His delights in Christ. This is the wonder of grace: “Fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3).

In this same chapter, from which we have just quoted, we have the statement that Christ and His work are the basis of our fellowship one with another: “If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” This is the tie that, by the Holy Spirit, unites the saints in communion one with another. They have a common life, which gives them common desires and tastes for Christ. Here is a fellowship of which the world knows nothing.

As we view this fellowship, and see the divided state of Christendom and ask the cause, we can but say that Christ has not been, is not the one object of the soul. It is this which lets in a mere profession with a fellowship of the world rather than of God. May our blessed Lord and Savior be so the object of our souls—yours and mine—that real and practical communion about Him than be the result.

Exodus 37:6-9

The mercy-seat, as already briefly described, was a cover upon the ark, of the same length and breadth; it was of pure gold, and at either end were cherubim beaten out of one piece with it; they were thus a part of the mercy-seat. These symbolic figures had their wings overshadowing the mercy-seat, and their faces looking down upon it.

We are told that the heathen had something similar to the ark and mercy-seat with the cherubim—of grotesque and repulsive character. But what is very significant in these heathen arks is, that upon the lid rested an idol—man's work and god—upon which the cherubim gazed in worship. "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands," says the psalmist (Ps. 115:4); with hands, eyes, lips, but neither power, knowledge nor words—man's miserable creature. How ignoble in contrast to the true God, the Creator and Lord of all! With Him is power, knowledge, wisdom; and "He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?" (Psa. 94:8, 9).

But upon the mercy-seat was no representation of God. "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). How divinely in accord with all His truth it is that, in those days of partial revelation, of type and shadow, God should have most jealously guarded the conception of His infinitely glorious being from any semblance of representation so universal among the heathen.

We are told that the Israelites represented a stage in the natural development of the human race in their upward progress. But who taught them to cast away all idols? How could they, or Moses, have conceived the thought that God was infinitely great and almighty, but not corporeal? There is but one true answer—God was pleased to make Himself known. And how constantly, patiently, and carefully, did He reiterate that lesson.

They tell us that Jehovah was understood to be one of many tribal deities, each nation having one or more. How does that consist with such words as these: "Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is" (Deut. 10:14). There is no possible room left for any other god, save indeed the demons who, under Satan's leadership and guidance, preside in the heathen deities' worship. "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God" (Cor. 10:20).

Where could a man or people, surrounded by the idolatries of Egypt, have received such instructions as these: "Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire; lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, the likeness of anything that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth; and lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven" (Deut. 4:15-19).

The last clause of the passage just quoted has been perverted by "higher criticism" to teach that Moses thought God gave the host of heaven to all nations to be their gods, while un-perverted minds readily understand that as luminaries they were the common portion of all, God's creation, witnessing of His power and care to all mankind. What blindness it is to see otherwise!

The ark, then, and the mercy-seat, with the attendant cherubim, were not idols, but they emphasized the spirituality of that all-glorious Being who fills heaven and earth, and yet had come to dwell among His people and manifest Himself to them, where there was faith to apprehend Him.

Upon the top of the ark, as we have seen, was a crown of gold, which seems to have answered a two-fold purpose; of beauty for the ark, and for securely holding the mercy-seat in its place. This crown of gold fittingly represents our Lord now glorified. "We see Jesus... crowned with glory and honor" (Heb. 2:9). With divine delight has His God and Father glorified Him who for His sake suffered reproach (Psa. 69:7), and now faith sees Him whose "visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men," in all the beauty, majesty and glory of heaven. It is God's declaration that He has accepted the work of redemption so graciously undertaken and so perfectly accomplished by our Lord. He who offered Himself as a propitiatory sacrifice for sinners upon the cross, who was as the sin-offering forsaken of God, and left, as it were, in the outer darkness, has been placed upon the throne of glory. Thus the crown leads us to the significance of the mercy-seat.

The mercy-seat was of pure gold. The word "pure" (used of metals, and of moral purity as well—Prov. 15:26; Jer. 33:8) is to show that there was no alloy in it; nothing is mingled with what must meet the demands of divine glory. It reminds us that no human thoughts can intrude where "all things are of God" (2 Cor. 5:18)—His word, His will, His glory alone can prevail, though in His infinite patience it may seem otherwise for a time. Whatever the mercy-seat stands for, it must be divine and eternal.

The word is not literally "mercy-seat," but "covering." In the ark, it will be remembered, we had no mention of a covering. Our ever-blessed Lord needed none; all was open to His Father's eyes, and He delighted to have it so. Into the pure depths of that perfect heart Omniscience could look and see nothing but what responded to the divine will; fit abode indeed for the law of a holy God. Only such an One could be the basis of a divine "covering" for those who needed it.

"Covering," however, would not be a fair rendering of the word kapporeth without further explanation. It is derived from the third voice, or intensive form, of the Hebrew verb "to cover." It thus suggests the thought of an intensive or complete, effectual, eternal covering; and this, coupled with the gold of which it was made, declares it to be a divine covering. Man's thought of a covering is concealment; God's is by atonement: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper" (Prov. 28:13). "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old... I acknowledged my in unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid" (Psa. 32:3, 5). For such an one God provides a perfect and eternal covering. To the returning prodigal saying, "I have sinned," the Father replies, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him" (Luke 15:21, 22). This thought of covering is very full, and requires further, careful attention.

The law, as we have seen, was put into the ark. Its principles of absolute righteousness, Godward and manward, were the characteristics of the throne of God. “The righteous Lord loveth righteousness;” and this righteousness must act in absolute impartiality toward every son of Adam. Thus, “His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men”—He “trieth the righteous,” and “upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone” (Psa. 11:4-7). The law can only declare that which is true and right. Thus it pronounces upon the guilt of all men: “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:20). Having proved man to be a sinner, the law can only proceed to pronounce the sentence upon him: “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal. 3:10). Thus guilty, and under the curse, man but waits for the just sentence of the law to be executed: “Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:15).

Such is the inevitable doom of all men according to the sentence of God’s holy law. The only One who could stand before God on the basis of having perfectly kept His law was our Lord Jesus. He could have been justified by the law absolutely, and, enthroned upon it, could have pronounced the just doom of all the human race. Did He do this? No, blessed be His name! Instead of being the executioner of the law, He bared His spotless bosom to the sword of justice. Without blemish and spot, thus qualified to be the Substitute, with infinite value, for our guilty race, He lets the law do all its righteous work upon Himself instead of upon the guilty: “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal. 3:13). He not only had the law in His heart, but He opened His heart also for the sword of righteousness: “For the transgression of My people was He stricken” (Isa. 53:8). Marvel of love divine!—the same Bosom holds the law unbroken, and receives the penalty for its having been broken by man. The storm of wrath having spent itself upon Him, the law can no longer curse the sinner who takes refuge in Jesus.

Here then we have the true Mercy-seat—a divine, righteous, and eternal covering for the law of God and for the guilty but believing sinner. “God hath set Him forth to be a propitiation (literally, mercy-seat) through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past (of a past dispensation) through the forbearance of God: to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus “ (Rom. 3:25, 26). It will be noticed that this passage is in close connection with the one showing how impossible it is for man to be justified by the law (ver. 20). Thus we have the tables of the law covered by the divine mercy-seat.

These truths are emphasized by the dimensions of the mercy-seat—2½ x 1½ cubits; or, as we have already seen (page 242), in the proportion of 5 and 3. Five speaks of responsibility as perfectly met by our Lord Jesus, and three of divine fullness and manifestation. How perfectly is every divine requirement met in this propitiatory, and how the glory of the triune God is revealed in it! So that God is now for the believer, instead of being against him, and this according to all His attributes.

The mercy-seat being of the same measure as the ark, covered it exactly. There was no part uncovered; the law was completely hidden from view. In a very real sense it could not act against the people, although they had broken it. Is there not a suggestion of the need of this covering in the account of the return of the ark from the Philistines’ land, already briefly alluded to? The men of Bethshemesh irreverently looked into the ark, doubtless by lifting the mercy-seat (1 Sam. 6:19), and the Lord smote them for it. They removed the divine covering and, so to speak, the law acted directly upon them. It is sometimes taught that, though not under the law as a ground of justification, believers are under it as a rule of life. This holy action of God at Bethshemesh is against this, and shows that “as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse” (Gal. 3:10). The law knows no distinction among men. It is God’s righteous demand for a perfect obedience in man; if that is not rendered, it can only pronounce a curse.

Nor does this mean the slightest provision for the flesh, or a careless walk. “Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace” (Rom. 6:14). As the apostle declares, “I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God” (Gal. 2:19). To live unto God is surely not Unholiness. “What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness (literally, righteous requirements, JND Version) of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:3, 4). Thus the righteousness contemplated by the law, but which the flesh would not render, is now secured by the Spirit, through grace. This is a subject of great importance, and we have only touched upon it, but we pass on to our more immediate theme.

We have already had occasion to refer briefly to the cherubim, both upon the curtains and the veil, and on the mercy-seat, but have deferred taking up their significance as shown in Scripture until this point.

As already seen, the cherubim were beaten out of one piece with the mercy-seat. That would suggest that they embody the same truths as are presented in that covering, looked at however from a different point of view. We will first look at a number of passages where the cherubim are spoken of.1

“He placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life” (Gen. 3:24). Here, then, the cherubim were guardians to keep man from that which he had forfeited, the right to the tree of life. While it is not said that the sword was in the hand of the cherubim, their being mentioned so closely together would identify their purpose. The angel of the Lord with the drawn sword who withstood Balaam (Num. 22:23), and the bringer of the pestilence upon Israel for David’s sin in numbering the people (1 Chron. 21:16), are both suggestive of this work of the cherubim at the gate of Eden, and may furnish a further clue to their interpretation, “And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him, then he heard the voice of One speaking unto him from off the mercy-seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubim “ (Num. 7:89). This was in accord with the promise, “And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony” (Ex. 25:22). Thus the two cherubim formed the sides or supports of the throne of God, who is described as “dwelling between the cherubim” (2 Sam. 6:2). God was addressed there by Hezekiah when he prayed for deliverance from the Assyrians (2 Kings 19:15). See also Psa. 99:1, “The Lord reigneth: let the people tremble: He sitteth between the cherubim; let the earth be moved.” We seem to have this translated for us in Psa. 97:1, 2: “The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation (more literally, foundation) of His throne.” The cherubim seem clearly to represent the divine attributes of righteousness and its execution in judgment, which is the basis of all true government, human or divine, the only guarantee of the stability of that which is beneath its sway. The throne of iniquity can have no fellowship with the God of righteous judgment (Psa. 94:20). Therefore God will overturn until the righteous Ruler comes who loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity (Ezek. 21:27; Psa. 45:6, 7). Such a throne alone can be “forever and ever;” and this Ruler is the Melchizedek, “King of righteousness and King of peace,” David’s Son and yet his Lord, who sits at God’s right hand till His enemies are made

His footstool (Ps. 100:1, 2). In view of such a Ruler the people may well tremble and bow in heart to Him in the day of His grace ere His judgment falls; and yet when He takes His power to reign, the earth shall rejoice and be glad. For Him His whole creation waits in hope, for then will the children of God be manifested in their liberty of glory, and creation be delivered from its present bondage (Rom. 8: 21 22).

The primary thought of the cherubim conveyed by these scriptures, then, is that of supports or guardians of the throne of God in His absolute righteousness and judgment. We get the same thought in a different connection in the 18th psalm, where David celebrates his deliverance from all his enemies, particularly from Saul. From His holy temple, where David's prayer was heard, God appeared for his deliverance. The earth trembled as its Maker came forth for His beloved one's deliverance—type of the true King, who was subjected to all the hatred of ungodly men. "And He rode upon a cherub and did fly: yea, He did fly upon the wings of the wind" (Psa. 18:10). It is as though the King eternal left for the time His place in His sanctuary, and appeared for the judgment of His enemies. The expression, "He rode upon a cherub and did fly," seems to explain a phrase used of the mercy-seat: "And gold for the pattern of the chariot of the cherubim, that spread out their wings, and covered the ark of the covenant of the Lord" (1 Chron. 28:18). Here the throne suggests the chariot upon which Jehovah rides in connection with the cherubim, who bear Him on, as it were, in resistless power throughout His creation.

This brings us to a similar passage where this thought is enlarged, in Ezek. 1:4-28. The terrible majesty of God is seen in the cloud and the devouring fire, and the brightness of His glory (vs. 4). In connection with this the "living creatures" appear—four of them, not two. These are described with considerable minuteness; they had the likeness of a man (ver. 5), which suggests intelligence, but with four faces—of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle. These four faces suggest: intelligence in the human face; fearless authority in the lion; strength in the ox; and swift, heavenly flight in the eagle. The feet, "like the soles of a calf's foot," would suggest stability, and the hands of a man and the eyes upon the wheels show the predominance of intelligence rather than mere power. The wings suggest their heavenly character, and in that way would remind us of the angels "that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word" (Psa. 103:20). "The living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning" (vs. 14) — "His ministers a flame of fire"— instantaneous and swift obedience to the control of the Spirit (vs. 12). Then the wheels are described—those awful symbols of the resistless power of God rolling on in their course—high unto heaven, and bearing upon them the throne and Him who sat upon it, "the likeness as of the appearance of a Man above upon it" (vs. 26).2

Here we have in divine detail "the chariot of the cherubim," the chariot on which the almighty Jehovah goes forth in His government and judgment. Here the throne is in motion, passing with resistless majesty from place to place of His wide creation. Closely linked with this is the transfer of the throne from His temple (defiled by sinful men to whom its honor had been committed) to the chariot, and its removal from Jerusalem and the chosen people. Its removal is like when the ark went into captivity in the days of Eli, but here on a grander scale and a more solemn way.

This vision is again described in the tenth chapter of Ezekiel, and there the "living creatures" are called cherubim; we see the action of judgment also in the "coals of fire" given by one of the cherubim to be cast over the city of Jerusalem. "Then the glory of the Lord departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim" (Ezek. 10:18), and "Ichabod" was written upon that house where the God of Israel had recorded His name. Alas, that the heart of man should forsake the fountain of living waters!

There may be a suggestion in the fact that in the description of the cherubim, in this tenth chapter, instead of mentioning "the face of an ox," as in chapter 1, it is called "the face of a cherub" (ver. 14). The ox, as the chief of the creatures in the service of man, would emphasize the fact that these cherubim are creatures, not divine.

We pass next to the solemn passage in the prophet Isaiah (chap. 6:1-8). Here we have seraphim3 and not cherubim; their employment is worship rather than judgment: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory" (vs. 3). In the presence of this unutterable glory, the prophet is abased to the very dust; he cries, "Woe is me, for I am undone." But it is the holiness of love, whose judgment for sin has already been visited upon Another; for the live coal from off the altar speaks of a fire which has fed upon the sacrifice and the incense upon it; the live coal touches the unclean lips (as of a leper, see Levs. 13:45) and purges away all iniquity.

In the book of the New Testament symbols (Rev. 4:6-8), we have the characteristic features of the cherubim and seraphim combined. Like the former, they are described severally as lion, calf, man and eagle, and like the latter, they ascribe worship to the triune God. Like the cherubim too they are connected with the judgments to be inflicted upon the earth (Rev. 6:1, etc.).

From the scriptures we have considered we conclude that these figures are symbols of God's intelligent creatures, for they give Him worship; that they are endowed with untold powers, for they go and return with the speed of the lightning; that they are closely connected with His governmental throne, and with the judicial execution of the righteous judgment of that throne. But let us look a little more closely at these facts.

We cannot think of them as being symbolic figures merely of divine attributes, for we could not conceive of God being worshiped by His own attributes, or of their being veiled with wings in His presence. It is only conscious personal beings who could thus present their adoration to Him. And yet these beings are identified in their office with the execution of divine righteousness. We must beware of intruding into those things which we have not seen among which is a "religion of angels" (Col. 2:18); but this does not debar us from gathering all that God has been pleased to reveal to us.

Both Old and New Testaments abound with passages referring to the existence, personality and ministry of angels. They are called literally "messengers"—for this is the significance of the word both in Hebrew and Greek—and no doubt is left that they are heavenly messengers. Their estate is heavenly (see Gal. 1:8; 2 Thess. 1:7); and they are there as worshipers and servants of God (Job 1:6; 38:7; 1 Kings 22:19). This last passage would almost suggest the position of the cherubim: "I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left"—they are grouped about His throne, ready to do His will. Angels were particularly used in connection with errands of mercy and of judgment: to announce to Abraham the birth of Isaac, in due time (Gen. 18:2 with Heb. 13:2); for the rescue of Lot out of Sodom (Gen. 19:1); in ministry upon Jacob as he slept (Gen. 28:12). They were present in great multitudes at Sinai, and gave character to the ministration of the law (Psa. 68:17 with Acts 7:53; Heb. 2:2).

We have a higher thought in "the Angel of the Lord," spoken of frequently (Gen. 16:7-13; 22:11, 15; Ex. 3:2; 23:20; Judg. 2:1, etc.), and who in a number of cases seems to be identical with the Lord Himself, who appears in this form, and at other times His representative. This is

suggestive, and brings us back to the thought we have been gathering of the cherubim.

The cherubim then seem to have been well known as symbolic figures, setting forth in their composite forms the blending of all creature powers, and in their wings and close relationship with the throne of God, their heavenly, angelic character. They were thus symbols of the host of heaven, the angels, ministers of divine judgment and justice, associated with God as His servants in His government of the world. As such, they are His representatives, vested with His authority and, so far as needed, with His power. (See Matt. 13:39, 41; 25:31; Mark 8:38, etc.) They are not the objects of worship, but are themselves worshipers. But, as engaged in His service, they are His representatives, and therefore accompanied with the majesty which is part of the display of the presence of God Himself.4

That there were upon the mercy-seat two of these figures would suggest competent witness to God's holiness, righteousness and goodness. We see them here with their faces turned toward the mercy-seat, and their wings hovering over it, We are reminded of this attitude by a passage in 1 Peter 1:12, "Which things the angels desire to look into." It is as though they were gazing in wonder and worship upon the cover of the ark, the mercy-seat. This, as we have seen, covered the tables of the law; so it was not at these the cherubim were gazing. They had been associated with the promulgation of the law amid the thick darkness, lightnings and thunderings of Sinai, ready to take vengeance for "every transgression and disobedience." But it is the blood upon the mercy-seat that fixes the gaze of these ministers of justice and judgment—the blood of the sacrifice sprinkled there on the great Day of Atonement (Levs. 16:14). The blood speaks of judgment already visited upon the Substitute, and it arrests the adoring gaze of these holy servants of God. Instead of flying with the speed of the wind or like the lightning flash upon the enemies of God, they bend with adoring worship upon that which speaks of "righteousness and peace having kissed each other" (Psa. 85:10).

And well may the angels gaze upon that Sacrifice! There every attribute of God's character shines forth: His righteousness, for He has meted out the full penalty for man's sin; His love, for here is His gift to a lost world; His wisdom, for none but God could have devised the wondrous plan.

Like the cherubim, we adoringly gaze upon this wondrous sight. We remember that "the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin; are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13:11-13). The place of greatest distance, where the victim was consumed, brings us in greatest nearness to the throne of God:—the blood of the victim which was burned outside the camp is brought into the sanctuary of God. Christ "suffered without the gate" —not merely without the city of Jerusalem, nor as rejected by the Jews alone—but upon the shameful cross as upon a gallows, cast out by the whole world, suffering a malefactor's death—Himself the only perfect and sinless Man who ever walked this earth. But even this does not give the full depth of the meaning of that outside place. He was there forsaken of God (Matt. 27:46); the wrath of God was poured out upon Him when He was made a "curse:" the "cup" of wrath was emptied! Oh, the depth of love and mercy to man in that cross—the Sinless goes without the gate!

The blood upon the mercy-seat declares that God has accepted the sacrifice of the Substitute. The value of that blood is linked eternally with the throne, with its righteousness and judgment.

Thus the material of the mercy-seat, and the crown about the ark, speaking of divine glory and Christ enthroned there, agree with the significance of the blood upon the mercy-seat and the adoring gaze of the ministers of justice and judgment. All unites to declare the value of that "eternal redemption" which Christ has found (Heb. 9:12). It also shows the consistency of the type and its divine truth, It gives us a glimpse too of the preeminent thought of redemption in God's mind from the beginning, which shall be the center of the redeemed heavenly throng, for "in the midst of the throne" stands the "Lamb as it had been slain" (Rev. 5:6).

Here indeed is the "propitiatory," the everlasting meeting-place between God and His creation. How otherwise could a guilty sinner approach Him who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil?" Yet by faith in Christ, whose blood has made propitiation for sin, the repentant sinner can draw near and claim with grateful heart that which divine love indeed presses upon him. No fear on the sinner's part; no wrath on God's part! The law, with its two-fold witness against man, is magnified and made honorable, its righteous judgment having been borne by the Lamb of sacrifice. Thus God dwells, and will forever dwell, amid the praises of His blood-bought people (Psa. 22:3).

Pursuing this thought of the ark as coffer a little further, we can think of it as the treasury of God, with boundless stores of wealth for His people. It speaks of Christ in whom "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily "(Col. 2:9). To Him "who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not," we can come for all that is included in that unmeasured expression, "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge" (Eph. 3:19). And this supply is for the need of the way, as the epistle of the sanctuary tells us: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16). And does it not elevate and sanctify all God's mercies when the heart realizes that all is the purchase of and connected with the precious blood of Christ? Thus God teaches us to reason: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32).

The mercy-seat was, and is, the place of communion. "There will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat" (Ex. 25:22). Here then He makes known by His Word and Spirit His will—the revelation of His love and grace, His holiness and majesty. Of the divine holiness of this place Scripture gives unequivocal testimony. The awful majesty of God and His perfect holiness have not changed since He bade Moses and Joshua remove their shoes from off their feet (Ex. 3:5; Josh. 5:15). May the same grace which has provided such a meeting-place control our whole being, and keep us from the blasphemy of linking that holy name and place with a careless, un-judged state. It is thus that Satan would corrupt the most priceless blessings, and turn the very grace of God into a means to work his ends; his judgment will come, and so will that of all who willfully abuse the mercy of God (Heb. 10:26). "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:28, 29).

But this is not to deter the lowly soul, no matter how great its sense of unworthiness, from this throne of grace. It is ever that; and even the power truly to judge our own state and ways comes from God. And this throne of grace is a safe place — "that no flesh should glory in His presence." Satan meets One there who silences every charge—our "Advocate with the Father"

John 2:1; Zech. 3:1-4); and there the world and its lusts are estimated at their true value, where the joy of the Father's love is the known portion of the soul forever.

Exodus 37:1-9

We have now before us the completed building, with the hanging at the entrance and the veil before the holy of holies. We come next to consider the ark and the mercy-seat upon it, whose place was in the inmost sanctuary.

It was a chest or coffer of acacia wood, two and a half cubits long, one and a half cubits broad, and one and a half cubits high. It was overlaid with gold, within and without, so that nothing but gold was visible. Around the top was a crown of gold, and on the four corners were placed four rings of gold, two on a side, through which were passed two staves of acacia wood, overlaid with gold, which were never to be removed from the ark. Upon the ark was a cover of pure gold, with a cherub at each end beaten out of one piece with it. This was called the mercy-seat, which will occupy us later.

Into the ark was put “the testimony,” or two tables of the law, and in addition also, as we learn from Heb. 9:4, “the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded.”

We are already familiar with the significance [an illustration] of the acacia and the gold—the perfect humanity and deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will therefore see what we can learn from the dimensions of the ark; and may we approach the subject, not in the spirit of Uzzah who thought the ark needed his hand to steady it (2 Sam. 6:6, 7), nor of those at Beth-shemesh who looked within and were judged for their irreverence (1 Sam. 6:19), but in something of what is suggested in the attitude of the cherubim—reverence, godly fear and worship.

May not these half cubits remind us, as we have already suggested (page 193), that the knowledge of Christ given to us now is but partial; “we know in part” (1 Cor. 13:9). None but the Father can fully know the Son (Matt. 11:27). Those who have the deepest knowledge of Him are the first to say, in the language of the Queen of Sheba, “It was a true report that I heard ... and, behold, the half was not told me” (1 Kings 10:6, 7). So with our all-glorious Lord, the scale is reduced—may we say?—that our finite minds may grasp something of the wondrous fullness of that which passeth knowledge.

But if the scale be thus reduced, in one sense, in another the same truths are preserved, for we seem to gather from the proportion of these dimensions just the lessons that we should gather were they double what they are. The height of the tabernacle boards was ten cubits, which, as we have seen, taught a special lesson-ten being the number of responsibility, fully met in Christ.

This measure seems to govern the height of the tabernacle. Now if the ark had been double the size given, it would have been too large, out of proportion for the tabernacle. But if all the dimensions are reduced one half, the scale is simply reduced, but the relative proportions remain the same. Thus if we double these dimensions we have, instead of 5/2 x 3/2 x 3/2, 5 x 3 x 3. Let us then look at the significance of these numbers.

Five, as we have seen, is composed of 4 + 1; four being the number of the creature, and one of the Creator. Christ our Lord has brought these together and united them in His own person. He is Man and He is God. Were we to look at the five as composed of three and two, we reach a similar thought, from a different point of view. Three is the number of full, divine manifestation. It is therefore the number which speaks of the Trinity—the three divine persons in the Deity. Our Lord was the embodiment of Deity: “In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9). Two on the other hand speaks of redemption, through His death. Thus in His blessed and perfect person we have the fullness of Deity and redemption forever united. In whichever way we take it, therefore, the five would speak of the Son of God and Son of Man in the one person.

The ark was the same in breadth and height; so there was divine equality in our Lord in the perfect manifestation of all that God is. Every attribute was fully and consistently exhibited-justice and love; holiness and grace; wisdom and power.

And these divine characteristics were connected with those which speak of Him incarnate. Three is also the number of resurrection, and thus is a reminder that He in whom all this perfection exists is the risen One — “alive forevermore,” and thus “declared to be the Son of God with power” (Rom. 1:4). We have therefore in these two numbers the reminder that it is with God manifest in the flesh we have to do.

We notice next that this ark was overlaid with gold within and without. While the acacia boards gave form and dimensions to the ark, the appearance was all gold—no wood was visible. Thus our Lord’s humanity gives Him the form in which He was and is. Light of light, the Creator and Upholder of all things, He became a Man, and was and is eternally “the Man Christ Jesus.” But how God guards us from having a single low view of this most lowly One. The gold covers all. Look at Him! Gaze, as far as finite minds and hearts can, upon the majesty of His being, and all is divine! The divine nature is displayed over the “form of a servant,” and wherever the all-seeing eye of God rests, within that pure and holy mind, affections and will, as well as without upon that blameless walk, meekness and obedience, He owns Him as His equal, His co-eternal Son. It is all gold, though the form of the Servant was there, with perfect human faculties and dependence-everything that belongs to man, sin apart. But spread all over this is the glory of His deity. And does not faith see the same?

This leads us to inquire what was the primary purpose of the ark? The answer to this will bring us to two great truths, which we shall take in the order in which they would naturally come; though, unquestionably, in God’s mind they might come in the reverse order.

“At that time the Lord said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto Me into the Mount and make thee an ark of wood: and I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them into the ark. And I made an ark of shittim wood... and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the Lord commanded me (Deut. 10: 1-5).

This is interesting as showing the character of the narrative in Deuteronomy, and illustrating the perfection of Scripture, the exactness of inspiration, and how lines of divine truth converge. In reading this passage we would not have thought of a tabernacle, nor of a gold-covered ark with a mercy-seat and cherubim of gold, and yet there can be no question that this is “the ark of the testimony,” which we are now studying. Moses, through the Spirit of God, here in Deuteronomy, was going over the people’s past ways and God’s ways with them. Scripture

is never a mere repetition, even where the same passage is quoted. This will account for the freedom with which words and clauses are sometimes changed when quoted in the New Testament from the Old. The Spirit has a purpose in view, and without violence to the former meaning of the passage, may give new light in connection with it; or He may omit all except that which in divine wisdom is to be laid before us in the present connection.

Here in Deuteronomy, Moses was recounting to the people, in much the same way as psalms 78, 105 and 106, how God had led them and cared for them, and how they had utterly failed. The object of this was to magnify God, beget in them real humility, and thus induce a true dependence and obedience. The chapter preceding had recounted their sin in making the golden calf, and how the first tables of the law had consequently been broken. A second set of tables was provided in divine mercy, but how were these, with the same holy requirements and prohibitions as the first, to be aught but a curse to the stiff-necked and rebellious people? Alas, these tables should have been safe, “unbroken,” in the tent of any Israelite. But such was not the case: a special coffer must be prepared for them; and thus Moses speaks of the ark of shittim wood. Every Israelite would know something of this ark, its overlaying gold, its mercy-seat and cherubim, so none would be misled by the omission of all these. The one thing Moses would remind them of was the need for a coffer for the law’s safety and of a special guard to bear this coffer (chap. 10:8). All this would bring home to them the sanctity of the law and the absolute need of obedience to it—may we not say, of their guilt too, and helplessness? God had to provide a shrine for that which should have been enshrined in their hearts.

All this beautifully accords with the significance of the shittim wood, and its mention apart from the gold. Here was a disobedient and rebellious people who could not be entrusted with God’s perfect law. He must either judge them, or provide in mercy that which, typically, could be entrusted with it. Where could such an one be found? In the very wilderness scene where His people had failed, where even the leader Moses can only acknowledge the hand of God upon them all for sin—a sin which ran back to Adam— God raises up the Second Man (see Psa. 90, 91). Of Him the shittim wood speaks: One who, in all the circumstances in which the people failed, is subjected to greater trials far than they ever passed through; One who perfectly kept the law of God in His heart. A Man, but infinitely more than a man. He was tempted, tried, subjected to all that could possibly come upon men, and in it all never swerved in heart from absolute delight in God’s law, nor in act from perfect obedience to it; therefore, in view of the utter inability of Levitical sacrifices to take away sin, 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” (Ps. 40:7, 8). Man may, from habit, example, self-interest, or even from some inclination, outwardly keep some of the commandments, but no unregenerate man could ever say he delighted to do the will of God. As soon as his own will is opposed it rebels against God. “The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. 8:7). There was no shrine therefore for the law of God except in the Ark of God—in Him who could say: “I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will but the will of Him that sent Me” (John 6:38); “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me” (John 4:34)

We are sometimes taught that Christ’s obedience to the law was imputed to us instead of our obedience to it. This is contradicted by Gal. 4:5, which tells us that His incarnation and obedience to the law was “to redeem them that were under the law; “and how that was done we learn in the preceding chapter:” Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree “ (Gal. 3:13). He could not have been a substitute to bear the judgment of a broken law, unless He perfectly kept it in His own heart. But His keeping the law did not undo man’s breaking it. It was necessary therefore that He bear upon the cross the curse deserved by us.

We return for a moment to the thought of the law enshrined in His heart. Under His divine control it was carried out for Him as a Babe; the only One who never needed sacrifice for purification was brought to the temple by the parents “to do for Him after the custom of the law” (Luke 2:27); and twelve years later, according to the custom of the Jews, He was again brought to the temple to be presented to God. How far beyond all that He goes, as He tells them, “Wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business?” And so it was throughout His entire life. They might accuse Him impliedly of violating “the tradition of the elders” (Matt. 15:2), but never truly of the slightest violation of a command of God; so in all the consciousness of perfect rectitude, He answers: “Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?” (Matt. 15:3). He could ask, “Which of you convinceth Me of sin?” (John 8:46) and declare, “I do always those things that please Him” (John 8:29). The Jews had so mingled their traditions with the law of the Sabbath that they mistook the one for the other. This brought our Lord into frequent collision with them regarding alleged violations of the command. But He showed how their so-called Sabbath-keeping was but an empty, lifeless thing, which violated the first principle of the divine rest, “I will have mercy and not sacrifice” (Matt. 12:7). Neither Satan’s nor man’s malignity could ever find in Him a single violation of that holy law. His heart was the chosen shrine for it.

The time is coining when, under the terms of the new covenant of grace, sealed by “the blood of the everlasting covenant” (Heb. 13:20), God will at last have a resting-place for His law in the hearts of His people: “I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people” (Heb. 8:10). Then the law will be their delight, and their whole language be used to set forth its perfections: “Oh how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day” (Psa. 119:97). But this is the fruit of grace through redemption, enjoyed now too by every regenerate heart, for to all such have the blessings of the new covenant been ministered. But even though it may be truly said of all such, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin “(1 John 3:9), yet of such it is also said,” If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1). So that in the believer there are two principles, two natures, the old and the new: “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other” (Gal. 5:17).

Here then, even in those who are partakers of divine grace, there is a contrast with our Lord. He is the only One who in Himself had absolutely nothing contrary to the law of God. He stands alone, the theme of praise and worship by all who have through the Spirit partaken of His perfect nature. He is the true, the only Ark.

But beside the tables of the law within the ark, was also the golden pot of manna. The manna was the daily food for the people throughout their wilderness journey. “When the dew that lay was gone up, behold upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoarfrost on the ground… and when the sun waxed hot, it melted” (Ex. 16:14, 21). They were distinctly forbidden to lay up any of it; it was to be daily gathered for their daily need. Spite of this, some left of it till the morning, and it turned to corruption: “It bred worms and stank” (Ex. 16:20). On the day before the Sabbath, however, they gathered a double portion, and it preserved its purity and sweetness on the day of rest.

All this is beautifully clear. In John 6:32, 33, our Lord declares Himself to be the true manna: The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.” Christ come down into the world, and giving Himself unto death, is life for the believer and the

sustenance of that life, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, whose one work is to glorify Christ. The dew fell, and when it had passed the manna was visible. The Spirit, suggested by the dew, does not manifest Himself, but presents Christ, and then withdraws from view: He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:14).

But this heavenly food is most sensitive; it does not tarry after the sun has risen, when this world's attractions or cares absorb the mind. If Christ is to be the food of our souls there must be the "early rising," of which Scripture is full (Gen. 22:3, etc.)—that purpose of heart which overcomes nature's indolence — "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Heb. 6:12). "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt. 6:33)—it is to have preeminence. Where Christ's things are given the first place, there will always be food and sustenance for the soul. But when "the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches" (Matt. 13:22) come in, the heavenly manna melts away.

If spiritual sloth fails to gather the manna, spiritual parsimony cannot keep it. There is no such thing as a hoard of spirituality. Daily must we feed upon Christ. The grace of yesterday will not do for to-day. How this strikes at the root of "attainments in holiness." We have practically only so much of Christ as we enjoy at the present moment. We are never to look back with complacency upon our past experiences: if we do, the corruption of spiritual pride soon manifests itself. God knows that our only happiness and holiness is in constant, present communion with the Lord, and He will not permit a dwelling upon the past in the way of excluding the present.

There will come a time, however, when we can safely remember the past, and feed upon Him who was our stay here below: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years... and He humbled thee and fed thee with manna which thou knewest not" (Deut. 8:2, 3). In glory, past experiences will be food for praise, with no possibility for pride to be developed. This is suggested in the preservation of the manna to be used on the Sabbath, God's rest, and emphasized in the golden pot filled with an omer of manna—the portion for one man—and "laid up before the testimony, to be kept" (Ex. 16:32-34). This is referred to in the promise to the overcomer in Pergamos, and is particularly appropriate in view of the nature of the evil there to be overcome—the seductions of the world. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna" (Rev. 2:17). Those who have turned from the world here, to feed upon Christ, will find all the blessedness enjoyed here day by day laid up and kept there in a glorified Lord.

The golden pot seems to emphasize the divine glory of Him who humbled Himself here to be the food of His people. In that very lowliness He was still "God over all"(Rom. 9:5, J.N.D.) But God has enshrined that lowliness in the glory of deity: He has reversed, we may say, the form in which He appeared here.

The thought of the manna laid up seems to be that it is "reserved for heaven's delights," rather than while our Lord was here. But we must remember it was here that He became the manna, and here also that the excellence of that character was manifest to God who saw it ever as in the golden pot. This perfect grace of Christ causes faith to worship Him now; while, in the day of His glory, "every knee shall bow" (Phil. 2:10)

We need not fear that anything truly of Christ can ever be really lost. What our hearts have treasured of Him here, we shall find and enjoy with Him there. Like the apostle, then, let us be "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, press toward the mark for the prize of of the calling on high of God, in Christ Jesus "(Phil. 3:13, 14; and when we reach" the land," as we gaze upon that divine One who in lowliness fed us in this desert scene with the" bread of the mighty "(Psa. 78:25), we shall exclaim, with Joshua of old," Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you" (Josh. 23:14).

One thing more was laid up in the ark: "Aaron's rod that budded," which recalls a solemn epoch in the history of the people. In Num. 16:1, etc., we read of Dathan and Abiram, of the tribe of Reuben, and Korah, of the tribe of Levi, who rebelled against divinely appointed authority—in Moses as leader and in Aaron as priest. The rebellion was formidable; two hundred and fifty princes of the people being connected with it.

Dathan and Abiram belonged to the tribe of Reuben, which would naturally have had the leadership, being the first-born. But here, as so constantly in Scripture, the natural, the first-born, must give place to the spiritual—the new-born. Though to Reuben, the first-born, belonged "the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power," of him it is said, "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel" (Gen. 49:3, 4). The first Adam is an example of this, quickly followed by Cain, Esau and others—all pointing to this, that the fallen, unstable first man must give place to the Second Man, the only One who could stand before God, and who stands for the feeblest of those who put their trust in Him.

Dathan and Abiram seem to have reasserted their claim to the first-born prerogatives, and their rebellion was primarily against Moses as leader. But Moses and Aaron cannot be separated here, for Christ, of whom they were types, is both King and Priest. So we find Korah, of the tribe of Levi, associated with the sons of Reuben, and Korah's rebellion was chiefly against the priesthood of Aaron. As a Levite he had special privileges in connection with the tabernacle and holy vessels; envious of Aaron, he desired to intrude into the priesthood. Typically it answers to that refusal of the sacrificial work of Christ and His exclusive place of nearness to God; the only One by whom any can approach to Him. It was not rebellion against man. "What is Aaron that ye murmur against him?" (Num. 16:11). It was the authority of God, and His provision in mercy whereby the guilty nation had been spared.

Men speak lightly of the Son of God, of His sacrificial work; they deny the need of His precious blood which alone cleanseth from all sin. It is a repetition of the rebellion of Korah, the culmination of all evil: beginning with Cain's denial of sin, going on to Balaam's mingling of God's people with His enemies, and reaching its last development in Korah. Thus does the Spirit of God summarize the rise, growth and culmination of apostasy from divine truth: "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah" (Jude 11). In the sight of God it is as already accomplished. Our Lord beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven (Luke 10:18); and the seer has narrated the end of the Beast and false prophet, so closely answering to the sons of Reuben on the one hand, and to Korah, as the Antichrist, on the other. "These both were cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone" (Rev. 19:20).

But these awful judgments inflicted upon the leaders and "sinners against their own souls" (Num. 16: 38), were meant to turn the people from such madness and folly. It is divine love which withdraws the veil from the future, and warns men to "flee from the wrath to come" (Matt. 3:7). The plague which fell upon the people in connection with this rebellion was stayed by the censer of Aaron, the very one against whom in their blindness they had rebelled. Typically, how like Him it is who in mercy, though rejected by the multitudes, stands "between the dead and the

living," and arrests the infliction of wrath (Num. 16:47, 48).

God would, however, give a manifest proof in grace, of the priestly position of Aaron, as well as of His power. In the following chapter (Num. 17), He shows this therefore in Aaron's rod. Each tribe was to bring a rod with the name of its prince upon it, and Aaron's name for Levi. The rod of him whom God had chosen would blossom, and thus the whole question of priestly rule was to be finally settled. Aaron's rod having budded, blossomed and brought forth almonds, is thereby divinely designated. In his rod alone was the power of resurrection manifested. God had answered.

All this speaks in an unmistakable way of the true Priest, divinely set forth as the only one having right and power, which always go together in the things of God. The rod is the emblem of rule and authority, which has its source in God, to be exercised in the power of life. All possible claimants may present their rods-lifeless things, upon which already the sentence of death has passed. Along with these is His rod who also takes His place with the rest in death-"cut off out of the land of the living" (Isa. 53:8); in His case, however, not under penalty for Himself, but in grace, as the representative of His people. Who among the sons of men has received back his rod with marks of life? Who among all those in death has been "raised from the dead by the glory" of God? None save Him in whom alone was life, in whom alone there was no sin, therefore death had no claim upon Him; "It was not possible that He should be holden of it" (Acts 2:24). He alone then has competence to be the Priest before God. This is emphasized in Heb. 7, where our Lord is seen as the One who "abideth a Priest continually" (vs. 3), "after the order of Melchizedek;" "of whom it is witnessed that He liveth" (vs. 8). He is thus a Priest after the power of an endless life (vs. 16), of which we are reminded by the flowering, budding and fruitage of the rod. The rod should also remind us of that rule in righteousness and peace seen in the Melchizedek priesthood of our Lord, as "King of righteousness" and "King of peace."

But there is more in connection with this wondrous "rod that budded." It was from the almond, which in Hebrew means "the hastener," being the first to bloom in the Spring; as Christ is not only risen, but "the First-fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 75:20). This implies other fruits of His resurrection: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 72:24). God is "bringing many sons unto glory" through Him, and there is a suggestion of this divine fruitage in the almonds. So after His resurrection our Lord sends a message to His disciples, for the first time calling them "brethren" (John 20:17) — "not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. 2:11). This indeed is the fruit He desired, fulfilling the word of the prophet, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied"

(Isa. 53:11) Thus we see His people forever united with Himself—one day to reign as priests with Him to the glory of His grace (Rev. 5:9, 10).

What a divine reply this is, in infinite grace, to the unbelief which would murmur at His preeminence! He alone is worthy, who for us was slain and is now "alive forevermore;" and we, by purest grace, shall live with Him.

Thus we have the purpose of the ark—an abiding repository for the law, then also for the pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded. In close connection with these, we find also that the book of the law was laid up (Deut. 31:26), to be a witness against them in the day of their departure from God. God's word is but the enlargement of His law, the one unchanging expression of His will. The word law is frequently used for the entire Word, as in Psa. 7:2. It was enshrined in the heart of our Lord. He ever put honor upon the whole word of God, and said of it all, "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35).

It has been well suggested1 that each of the articles contained in the ark was a reminder and a witness of failure on the part of the people: the tables of the law were a reminder of the golden calf apostasy, the first tables having been broken on that occasion: the manna reminded them of their murmuring and unbelief; and the rod that budded recalled the awful rebellion of Korah against the priest of God. For us, too, how all this speaks aloud—a broken law, unbelief and murmuring, and of pride that would rise against Christ!

Yet, blessed be His name, these reminders of sin are closely and eternally linked with the blessed One who has secured pardon and blessing on the very occasion of all this evil. A law broken by us has found an eternal home in His heart who magnified the law and made it honorable (Isa. 42:21). The manna tells of His grace in our unbelief, and the budding rod, the symbol of a yoke that is easy and a burden that is light. Soon, in the day of glory, will all this be fully seen.

Well may there be a crown about the top of the ark! He for whom man had nothing but the crown of thorns is now "crowned with glory and honor" (Heb. 2:9). Upon the ark of acacia wood — "Jesus"—is placed the crown of divine glory, for He is also divine.

This, then, was the coffer, or casket, containing Israel's chief treasures—the covenant of their relationship with God and the witness of His love and care; the realities of which are for us in Christ, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3)2 —in whom these "unsearchable riches" are safely kept against all the cunning of Satan and the weakness of the believer. Complete justification, divine grace for every step of the way, and a union in life with Him, these are the treasures, with all the spiritual blessings which accompany them, safely kept for us "in Christ." It is now hidden from the eye of the world: "The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not" (1 John 3:1). Our life is "hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). What a day it will be when God displays "the exceeding riches of His grace" (Eph. 2:7)!

There was another purpose, we may almost say the primary purpose, for which the ark was intended, distinct from and yet closely connected with what we have been dwelling upon. We merely mention it here, as it will form the subject of the next chapter. This was the golden mercy-seat or covering to the ark, with the golden cherubim beaten out of the same piece of precious metal.

It remains to say a word as to the staves which were to be put into the rings on the two sides (or, feet) of the ark, to carry it through the desert. Emphasis has been laid upon the "feet," 3as suggesting that the ark, when carried upon the shoulders of the priests, would thus be above their heads, a conspicuous object for the people to behold. It is clear that the staves in the rings remind us that our Lord ever journeys with His people. If they are pilgrims, He will be a pilgrim too, and fulfill His own word, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5).

The use of these staves was notable in the wilderness. The people were never to march without the ark. It was to go before them and mark out the way. When Moses, apparently forgetting this, asked Hobab to accompany them, "And thou mayest be to us instead of eyes" (Num. 10:29-33), there seems to be a rebuke as well as gracious response by God. The ark went before them in the three days' journey after leaving Horeb, to search out a resting-place for them. Thus Christ, in the power of resurrection, ever leads His beloved ones through the track less waste. What need have we of "eyes," when such an One leads us on?

We have the opposite of this when the people refused to go up into the land after the spies had brought back an evil report of it. The people, with their eyes on themselves and on the giants in the land, deliberately turned back, except Caleb and Joshua, and the solemn word of God declared that the unbelieving people should never enter that good land; they should die in the wilderness. Then with strange inconsistency they insist upon entering the land to take possession of it. But God is not a man that He should repent. The people go up, but it is significantly added, “The ark of the covenant of the Lord, and Moses, departed not out of the camp” (Num. 14:40-45). The result was utter discomfiture. So will it ever be with those who turn away from God in unbelief and who, without Christ, presume to lay claim to blessing.

Another notable instance of the ark going before the people was at the crossing of Jordan. This indeed was a new and untried way for them: “Ye have not passed this way heretofore.” The ark, borne by the priests, led the way, and the people, at an interval of two thousand cubits, followed. When the feet of the priests bearing the ark touched the Jordan, its waters fled back; the ark in the midst of Jordan stayed the waters till all the people had passed over dry shod into the land of their inheritance (Josh. 3:14-17). The history of Jericho’s downfall after being compassed by the ark seven days is of the same character. It is Christ who alone can lead His people to victory. And there must ever be the “space” between Him and the most faithful. Aaron and Moses fall in the wilderness, but the ark abides.

Our blessed Lord is thus manifestly set forth as the only sufficient Leader of His people. This is particularly marked in the passage of Jordan, the river of death and judgment. What man, the most faithful and devoted, could face that awful stream, unless Christ had been there before, that His people might pass on after Him dry shod? Moses, not allowed to enter the land, illustrates for us the fact that one violation of the, law would exclude from the inheritance: “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10). One sin would shut us out of heaven as it shut Moses out of Canaan. But thanks be to God, He had heavenly blessings for Moses, though he had to be an example of God’s governmental faithfulness.

It is Christ, then, who through the sacrifice of Himself, has opened the way into the heavenly inheritance—both as to the future glory and its present spiritual enjoyment, as in Eph. 1:3. He alone could arrest the power of death and judgment, and open up the way of blessing into the inheritance which grace has provided. He also is the Victor over Jericho, having “overcome the world.” He has not left His beloved ones who are still in the conflict and weariness of the way.

But we see an abuse of these staves when, in the days of the Judges, the people bring out the ark to meet the Philistines (1 Sam. 4:3). Israel was in a wretched condition, and that of the priests was fearful. The holy things of God were despised; open sin was flaunted before the eyes of God and man. Will a holy God link His name with such? Impossible. Rather must He forsake His dwelling-place and deliver His ark into the hands of the enemy. So the holy Christ of God is never, never can be, “the minister of sin” (Gal. 2:17). Need we wonder that when sin is not judged, “Thou goest not forth with our armies?” (Psa. 44:9).

There is a merciful limit to the Lord’s chastenings however, so He causes the ark to be brought back. The Philistines can make no use of the staves, which are only for priestly hands, so the ark is set upon a cart and drawn back by unwilling kine to the land of Israel. In the days of David it finds a resting-place in Mount Zion, and finally when the temple was built by Solomon, the ark found a permanent abode. Its typical journeys were over; so we read, “They drew out the staves, that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day “(1 Kings 8:8). Now the longing of David,” the man after God’s heart,” is fulfilled. That on account of which he would “not give sleep to his eyes” is now, after all his afflictions, granted him, and in the fullness of his joy he anticipatively says, “Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest; Thou, and the ark of Thy strength” (Psa. 132:8). God cannot enter into His rest till He brings His people also into it; so all waits till the conflict with sin is over forever—all divinely and eternally settled. Then, and not till then, will the staves be withdrawn, when our Lord’s companying with His blood-bought people through the wilderness will be over: “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God” (Heb. 4:9). Even then the “staves” will be visible, in memory of the past, and be the cause of fresh and eternal outbursts of praise. “In all their affliction, He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old” (Isa. 63:9).

May Christ, the Ark of the Covenant, be increasingly dear, as the One who in Himself contains all our treasures, and who will keep them and us safe till the day of glory and of joy, to the praise of His grace!

Lectures on the Tabernacle: A Full Exposition Examining the Types and Their Doctrinal Applications — Fully Illustrated, Veil and The Entrance Hanging, The

Exodus 36:35-38

Following the order in which the tabernacle was constructed, we come now to the veil and the hanging at the door of the tabernacle, and the pillars from which these were suspended.

The inner veil separated the tabernacle into two rooms, the holy and the most holy place (Ex. 26:33). The inner sanctuary was peculiarly sacred, as it contained the ark and mercy-seat whereon God’s glory manifested itself and where He met with Moses (Ex. 25:22). The veil which hung before this holiest of all earthly places was therefore of special importance. It was made of the same materials as the ten beautiful curtains—blue, purple, scarlet and fine twined linen, with cherubim; but for some reason the blue is mentioned first, instead of the fine linen, which may suggest that as the cherubim for the curtains were embroidered upon a groundwork of white linen, those for the veil were put upon a ground of blue, and the remaining colors were used in forming the figures.

There were four pillars of shittim wood over laid with gold, each resting upon one socket of silver; their hooks were of gold, and from these the veil was suspended.1 It seems that the veil was hung up directly under the golden clasps which united the two sets of curtains (chap. 26:33). This shows a close connection at least between the veil and the clasps, of which we have spoken in pages 84 and 93.

Several characteristic uses of the veil, as separating, are seen in the following passages: “The veil shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy”(Ex. 26:33); “Within the veil” (Ex. 26:33); “Without the veil” (Ex. 26:35); “Before the veil” (Ex. 40:26).

From these passages and others we gather that the veil formed the sanctuary, or holiest, a secret chamber for the ark. The veil was therefore said to be a covering for the ark.

The pillars and sockets also belonged to the veil; hence the expression, the sockets of the veil")

Having previously spoken at length of the materials, we shall only take a brief review of them here.

Blue is the heavenly color, and speaks of that character of our Lord: "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the Second Man is the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. 15:47). Even in his un-fallen state man's place of abode was the earth, he knew nothing else; and after the fall, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19) was the sentence upon him as morally away from God. Our Lord belonged to heaven:

He was ever and only perfectly in accord with the mind of heaven, and from the fact that He came down from heaven, He absolutely belonged there. Though His perfect humanity was born upon earth, the stamp of a heavenly nature and a heavenly destiny was upon it. This is the blue, set forth in John.

Purple is the royal color that speaks of Him as King of Israel. He was the true Son of David, who should sit upon his throne. He was the Messiah, the King anointed with the "holy oil," the Holy Spirit, thus set apart to the throne for God's glory and the blessing of His people. His title they put upon the cross—where they crucified Him. "We have no king but Cesar," they shouted, and they have felt the crushing heel of Caesar ever since. The purple is the theme of Matthew, the Gospel of the kingdom.

Scarlet speaks of a wider glory than the purple, reaching out to the world, when all the nations of the earth shall be subject to Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords. But its red color reminds us that the glory of the world was won at the cost of His precious blood. Every delegated glory and every blessing that will come to the world will be seen to be the fruit of His atonement for reconciliation to God. The Gospel of Mark dwells upon this.

The White of the fine twined linen tells us of the sinless purity of "the Man Christ Jesus," in all His life and inward thoughts and desires. The eye of God, who is light, could rest upon that Holy One, and find every ray of His holy, perfect Being reflected in this lowly Son of Man. The Gospel of Luke brings this into beautiful prominence.

These four colors were blended together "with cunning work," and they tell us of the four-fold character of our holy Lord blended together in the Gospel narratives by the "cunning workmanship" of the divine Workman, the Holy Spirit. A passage of Scripture (Heb. 10:19, 20) would dispel all doubt as to the significance of the veil, as well as of the colors: "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." This has all the conciseness of a definition—the veil is His flesh—Christ as incarnate, as He was here, manifest in the flesh.

This veil hung from the golden hooks upon the four pillars of acacia wood overlaid with gold and resting upon the silver sockets. We have already learned the meaning of these various materials: the gold is a symbol of divine glory and nature, and thus of our Lord's deity; while the acacia wood tells of His unique humanity, and the silver sockets of redemption. The fact that these four pillars rest upon silver shows us that, like the boards, they speak of Christ's people as seen in Him.2

But how can the people of God in any sense be represented in His house as holding up Christ? It can only be perfect grace that will put them into such a place of unspeakable and transcendent privilege. But looking at the house of God in its final state, His eternal abode, does not our Lord promise that, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out" (Rev. 3:12)? And what will be the heavenly and eternal occupation of the redeemed but to hold up in praise and adoration the perfections of their Savior and Lord?

The tabernacle, however was distinctively God's abode in the wilderness, and it is as connected with this place of pilgrim-separation, testimony and responsibility, that the believer is seen in connection with the person of the Lord, just as we learned in connection with the boards: "That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground (or support) of the truth. And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory "(1 Tim. 3:15,16). In this wonderful scripture we have two great facts presented to us, which we may call the casket and the jewel which the casket contains. The apostle is showing Timothy, in this epistle of assembly order, how he should conduct himself in the house of God. As we have already seen, the boards form the house of God; believers resting upon the redemption of Christ and complete in Him, are" builded together as an habitation of God through the Spirit "(Eph. 2:22). That is what" the Church of the living God "is. We have a similar thought, as showing the house of God, in 1 Peter:" To whom coming, as unto a living Stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (chap. 2:4, 5). While the primary reference here may be to the temple, the thought is similar: there is a living Stone at the foundation; living stones are built upon Him to be a living house for the living God. Nothing but life can suit the living God. Therefore those who are truly His are born again; they have a life which is from God, eternal life, never to perish. This then is the characteristic of the Church of the living God.

But the next expression is a remarkable one: "The pillar and ground (or support) of the truth." The Church is left in the world to uphold the truth of God, to exhibit it. After His resurrection our Lord gives His disciples assured peace first, showing them His hands and His side—the reminder of His death, the proof of His atoning work. This is the silver sockets. Then He says: "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:19-23). He had spoken of them previously as His "brethren," and had said, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to My God and your God," which reminds us of the golden-covered boards, and of our standing before God in all the value of what Christ is.

We see how our Lord put the disciples in a representative position. His breathing upon them seems to be an anticipative and symbolic act, suggesting the gift of the Holy Spirit, sent at Pentecost, in whose power they were to hold up Christ before men and to administer the order of the house of God, both in the gospel and in the discipline of the assembly.

We arrive thus at a simple, scriptural interpretation of these pillars, which are the support of the truth: they are the Lord's redeemed people left here by Him to uphold that truth. But Christ says, "I am the Truth" (John 14:6). The Church is, as we have said, but the casket to contain

the jewel, which, without the jewel, would be valueless.

We need not be surprised therefore to find enshrined in this very passage the precious jewel of the person of the Lord, “the Mystery of godliness,” or piety. Here is the true piety and the secret of its display. It is not a condition in us; it is not self-culture or self-occupation in any form. The Spirit of God never turns the eye in upon ourselves and the progress we are making.

The Mystery of godliness is that which alone will produce godliness in God’s people—it is Christ. As the soul is occupied and controlled by Him His likeness is produced, and “Christ liveth in” us (Gal. 2:20). Holiness is never se-cared by law-keeping, or asceticism, or by pharisaic externalism.

Let us examine this great Mystery of godliness: “God was manifest in the flesh.”3

Here are the golden hooks, the deity of Christ, from which the veil was suspended. All depends upon that. Deny His deity, and the veil, the wondrous Mystery, falls to earth. But the invisible God is now declared in this holy, heavenly, royal Man. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him” (John 1:18). In the manger, in Simeon’s arms, carried to Egypt, at Nazareth and at Jordan’s banks—all through His life, it was God manifest in the flesh. This is the great truth which is held up by the Church. In one sense, though the two can never be separated, it is more “the doctrine of a standing or falling Church” than the truth of justification by faith. It is a wondrous privilege to hold up Him by whom alone we are upheld—et teneo et teneor, “I both hold and am held.”

“Justified in the Spirit.” This was publicly done at our Lord’s baptism. At John’s preaching of repentance all who feared God came and owned in his baptism the truth about themselves: they were but sinners deserving of death and judgment. Our Lord, in perfect grace, takes His place among these; His baptism suggesting the great truth of His substitutionary death for them. Instinctively John shrinks from associating the Holy One with self-confessed sinners, but he is reassured by the word, “Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” God’s righteousness could only be maintained, in connection with a guilty people, by the death of their Surety. And as our Lord emerges from His symbolic grave, the heavens are opened, and the Spirit descends in bodily form as a dove and “abode upon Him.” Thus is He justified in the Spirit.

And so all through His life of love and obedience; “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil” (Acts 10:38). The witness and power of the Spirit was in every word and act, sealing and justifying all that He did. Hence the awful “blasphemy against the Holy Ghost” which ascribed to Satan these manifest works of the Spirit. By the power of the Spirit also He was raised from the dead.

“Seen of angels.” With what delight we may conceive the angels engaged in such ministry connected with the incarnation! — announcing to Zechariah the birth of Messiah’s forerunner; to Mary, the wondrous honor that she was to be the mother of One to be called “Son of the Highest; and later to the shepherds, that” Christ the Lord “had come! And how the hosts flocked out of heaven to celebrate this wondrous Mystery:” God manifest in the flesh.” Later, they are privileged to minister to Him after His temptation, and to one was the high honor given of strengthening the holy Man in the garden. An angel rolls away the stone from the sepulcher; two of them have the honor to sit in the empty tomb to declare His resurrection; two of them witness to His disciples of His return; and with what acclaim must the hosts in heaven have received the “King of glory” as He entered “the everlasting doors” (Psa. 24). And when He shall be brought to the millennial earth, “Rightful heir and Lord of all,” the word is, “Let all the angels of God worship Him” (Heb. 1:6).

“Preached unto the Gentiles.” No narrow limits of Judaism could hold the mighty gospel of divine love and grace “concerning His Son Jesus Christ.” It begins at Jerusalem, and under the guidance of the Spirit, the good news is soon carried to Samaria, to Cæsarea, to Antioch, and “the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Persecution but scattered the flame: ` They went everywhere, preaching the Word,” and even the unbelief and opposition of Israel but forced out the glad tidings to the Gentiles.

“Believed on in the world.” Here are the blessed world-wide results: multitudes are brought to repentance, and receive with humble joy the remission of sins through Him that was crucified. Assailed by Satan using fire and sword against Christ’s flock, or as an angel of light creeping in to destroy them, Christ with His saints has always stood. Infidelity and superstition have torn at the very vitals of the Church, yet the gospel is to-day what it ever was,” The power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth “(Rom. 1:16). Rejected by the mass, apostasy growing, the end very near, Christ is and will be the object of His people’s joy and faith. He is believed on in the world.

“Received up into glory.” This last clause seems almost out of place, as out of chronological order; for our Lord was received in glory prior to the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles and therefore to the faith in Him which followed. But it is in beautiful moral order; His glory closes all, for all ends there. His own ascension and reception into the glory was the pledge of all the triumphs of grace in His people, in bringing “many sons” there too; for in this finale of the Mystery the redeemed are also associated with Him whose alone the glory is; as in the “Man child” caught up in Rev. 12:15, we see Him as His people’s representative. But who can declare that glory upon which Christ has entered? No eye of man has seen, nor heart conceived what God has given to His only Son. Words, strongest and best that man’s lips can frame, and the noblest and wisest thoughts of earth, would fail to express that glory which He had with the Father before the world was, into which as Man He has entered, and of which, so far as is possible for the creature, every blood-bought child of God shall partake. But His own personal glory is, and ever shall be, unique and eternal.

Beloved saints of God, it is this great Mystery of godliness which His redeemed people are to hold up in the house of God in the wilderness. What care and jealousy should mark us in keeping inviolate the glories of this blessed One who has thus entrusted them to His people here. While hiding in Him, may we so hold Him up that all may see His beauty, heavenly character, holiness, royal dignity and glory, that all may honor the Son even as they honor the Father.

We have thus in a partial way seen what is suggested by the pillars upholding the veil. Let us now look at the veil in another aspect of the truth which it presents. As has been said, it was used to separate between the holy place and the most holy where God’s presence was manifested. Beyond this veil no one could pass except the high priest once a year, and that “ not without blood... the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest “ (Heb. 9:7, 8). The veil then, in this way speaks of the access to God being barred. This would seem to be suggested not only by its hanging there, but by the cherubim which were embroidered upon it.

When God turned our first parents out of Eden for their sin, He placed cherubim at the entrance to the garden, with a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life. There was both mercy and judgment in this. It was mercy that he might know his

feebleness and frailty, and learn so to number his days as to apply his heart unto wisdom. This is the burden of the “psalm of life,” the 90th psalm: his days are as a shadow; “We spend our years as a tale that is told.” How can such a feeble creature fail to turn with true repentance to the only One in whom help and mercy can be found? Such at least was the evident purpose of God, and such the effect upon those who bow to the sentence of vanity upon the fallen creature: “O satisfy us early with Thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.”

But mercy to the fallen creature does not conceal the fact of judgment also. “Righteousness and judgment” are the foundation of God’s throne, and this is suggested by the cherubim, the executors of divine judgment, who upon the veil seem to be barring the way to the presence of God as those did at the entrance to Eden. Man, sinful and fallen, has forfeited all right to that holy Presence. The cherubim in Ezekiel seem to speak of this judicial distance of God, all the more emphasized there as He was about to leave His house and the nation. In connection with God’s throne, the cherubim speak of judgment, barring the way to His presence.

But, lest we seem to be introducing contradictory thoughts, let us pause a moment to connect this thought of the veil with that which we have previously learned. The veil was Christ in the flesh, of whom we rightly sing:

How then can the veil be the barrier to the presence of God, when it speaks of Him who never turned a needy soul away? Unquestionably we have here two aspects of the veil, which however are not so far apart as we might think. God is infinitely merciful and compassionate beyond our comprehension, yet in His holy, consuming presence none dare enter save as divinely entitled. In a certain sense we have here a paradox, illustrated in the person of our Lord, but which admits of a most blessed explanation.

In a very real sense, God, manifest in His beloved Son, was never more apart from man than when He was here, save in view of the redemption He was about to accomplish. Here was manifested holiness, truth and love placed side by side with its opposite—a world of false, self-seeking mankind. Of necessity the Lord’s presence made man feel his distance from God. So when He caused the great draft of fishes, Peter’s first and just impulse was to say, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord” (Luke 5:8). True, our Lord reassured him, and drew him to Himself, but that was grace acting in love; a foreshadowing, we might say, of the rending of the veil for our sins, when the sinful could draw near.

In His interview with Nicodemus, our Lord shows that two things, never separated, are necessary before a man can draw near to God. One is a work in him, and the other is for him. The work in him is new birth; before a man can see, much less enter, the kingdom of God, he must be born again. There stood the Lord in unclouded communion with His Father, witnessed by His every act and word, but Nicodemus had never lifted the veil between himself and a holy God. But our Lord does not stop here— He never stops short of the full revelation of the glory and love of God: the Son of Man must be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. The veil thus is rent and the way into the presence of God manifest.

Could we leave out the thought of salvation through Christ, and read the four Gospels as unfolding what is required of us, we should find the teachings and the example of our Lord Jesus only a hopeless barrier between our souls and God, for they would, by contrast, show our unfitness for His presence. But not “truth” only, but “grace” came by Jesus Christ, divinely wrought together in such a way that every needy soul knew that He was a Friend and Savior of sinners. Thus if the holy teaching of the Sermon on the Mount shows our sin, the cleansing of the leper at the foot of the mount shows the grace that meets the sinner; and the glories of the mount of transfiguration are followed by the mercy to the demoniac when our Lord came down (Matt. 8:1-3; 17:14-18).

As we look up into the blue sky, there is often an involuntary sigh; it seems so far above us, utterly beyond our reach, and so as we gaze upon the heavenly character of Christ—the blue of the veil—we feel our distance from Him. Our whitest linen beside the newly fallen snow is tarnished by comparison; so when the best among men is set beside the spotless purity of our Lord, we realize indeed that our very righteousnesses are “as filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6).

Whom shall we compare with Him? Select the best of those who have worn the purple—a David, a Solomon, a Hezekiah or a Josiah: how puny and un-kingly they are beside this King who never wore a crown save that of thorns; whose palace was the Mount of Olives or seine retired place—not a home. “where to lay His head;” whose riches were the little ministry of a few devoted women; whose retinue was a little band of Galileans. Poor! but all for our sakes!

And as for the scarlet—though it was not the glory of the world for Him then, surely, yet it was His by right, and will one day be His indeed. But then it spoke of His death rather; of His pathway of the cross. Thus the veil as representing our Lord, in each of its colors declares that He alone of all the sons of men could draw near to God.

But what it involved for Him to bring men to God is strikingly illustrated in our Lord’s reply to the Greeks’ request, “We would see Jesus” (John 12:21). The Old Testament had foretold that the Gentiles would come and bow down before Him. Here was an occasion for displaying the scarlet, His glory. Instead, while speaking of His glory, our Lord shows that it must come through the cross: “The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:23, 24). In peerless perfection, Christ in life abode alone; if He were to bring sinners to God, it must be through His death, bearing the penalty for their sin. So He goes on to say, “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me “(John 12:32). The veil must be rent—His flesh given up in death that the way into God’s presence might be manifest and the repenting sinner be able to draw near. Apart from the cross, Christ’s perfection would have kept man away from God. So we read that when He gave up His spirit,” the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.” Now all the love of God flows forth freely, in abundant grace to man.

This then is the veil held up by the four pillars: redeemed men holding up the precious truth, the mystery of the person of the Son of God delivered up to death, His “flesh” rent, opening the way to the presence of God—to pardon and holiness and heaven.

And we may well ask, What is the Church of Christ here for except to hold forth the truth as to the person and work of our Lord? Therefore no disloyalty to that person or work can be permitted. Suppose that what professes to be the Church teaches that a spot is upon the white of the veil; that the blue does not mark Him especially—that our Lord was as others of the earth, earthy; that He is not the King of kings, the Lord of lords; that the veil has not been rent; that He has not by His death opened the way into the presence of God; in such case, it ceases to be the pillar and ground of the truth; “it could not be owned as” the house of God, the Church of the living God,” no matter by what name it be

called, or what historical claims it may make. A living, risen Christ makes a living Church, and only He: all else but forms that great house of Christendom, with its vessels to dishonor, from which the man of God is to purge himself (2 Tim. 2:16-21).

In keeping with the thought that the four pillars for the veil suggest the redeemed holding up the testimony of Christ, no capitals are mentioned. Capitals might suggest the “crowning” of the saints which is reserved for heaven. There the four and twenty elders are crowned (Rev. 4:4), but so long as their feet are upon the desert sands they are in the place of weakness.

We pass next to the hanging at the entrance of the tabernacle, with its five pillars; they need not detain us long as we have already learned the significance of most of the materials, which are the same as those of the veil. The function of each however was distinct, and in some sense contrasted. The veil barred the way into the presence of God, while the hanging was for the constant entrance of the priests into the holy place.

The five pillars were of shittim wood, overlaid with gold, with hooks of gold, and “chapiters,” or capitals, and fillets of gold. They rested, however, upon sockets of brass, not silver. Brass, as we shall see in more detail when we come to the court, is figurative of the immutable word of God and of unyielding judgment. From the fact that the pillars do not stand upon silver, they do not seem to suggest believers. Their number is that of responsibility, and they speak of Him who, as the shittim wood and gold also remind us, was God and Man alone able to meet it, standing firmly upon the immutable word of God.

The five pillars and their hanging are thus closely connected, both pointing to the person of our Lord. If we may speak of the inner veil as the testimony of the Church to Christ, we may speak of the outer hanging as our Lord’s own testimony to what He is. The four colors are here, but not embroidered in the form of cherubim; for, looking outward, He is inviting men to enter, and He “came not to judge the world, but to save the world” (John 12:47). “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself” (2 Cor. 5:19). But if the cherubim of judgment were not present, all rested upon the fact of God’s judgment of all things by His word, and from this our Lord never for a moment swerved. There was no toning down of divine truth to meet man. In infinite love He meets man, but at no sacrifice of the truth—rather at the sacrifice of Himself.

Thus He says. “Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfill”—give full force to their teaching. “ For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled “ (Matt. 5:17,18). He then goes on to enforce the law in its inmost spirituality, searching down into the hearts of scribes and Pharisees, and showing their guiltiness. He magnifies the law, but in doing so, proves all to be under sin. Then, in infinite love, He goes to the cross and bears the penalty of a broken law for all who believe on Him.

No thoughtful reader can fail to be impressed with our Lord’s absolute dependence upon the whole word of God throughout His entire life.

Even in the circumstances attending His birth, all was done “that the Scriptures might be fulfilled,” and at His death it was the same. We would search in vain for the slightest uncertainty on His part as to the truth and authority of the Scriptures. With Him it was ever and only the word of God.” The Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). It was Moses who wrote of Him, and David who, by the Holy Ghost, foretold His glory. How does the awful unbelief of men who profess to be His followers compare with this? It is as if our Lord declared He stood or fell with the word of God; that if that were not true, neither was He. And so indeed it must be. He who is holy and true has given His sanction to all Scripture as true. By it He met Satan and vanquished him; to it He appealed in His teaching; from it He quoted constantly in all His conflicts with the unbelieving Pharisees and others. Its history, its psalms and its prophecy are declared by Him to be the word of God. The truth of the history of Jonah stands or falls with the truth of His own death and resurrection: to deny one is to deny the other also (Matt. 12:39, 40). All Scripture pointed to Himself, and He expounded it so (Luke 24:27, 44). Thus our Lord fully and perfectly identified Himself with the word of God.

Christ then, “according to the Scriptures,” is the door, the only way of approach to God: “No man cometh unto the Father but by Me” (John 14:6). He has fully magnified God’s word and carried out its every provision and requirement.

That holy Word, which would have condemned us forever, is now to us the vehicle of divine and eternal love in Christ. Like the hanging at the entrance of the tabernacle, He is the door of entrance to God, and welcomes every soul to draw near in assurance of a divine and permanent welcome. “By Me if any man enter in he shall be saved.”

We must not omit a reference to the capitals upon these five pillars at the entrance to the tabernacle. They were of, gold, which seems to refer to the blessed fact that our Lord, having finished His blessed work, is now crowned with divine glory. “We see Jesus... crowned with glory and honor” (Heb. 2:9). And is it not fitting that the brass foundations should thus be connected with the golden crowns? “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” (Luke 24:26). As between the brass at the foot and the gold at the head hung the door, so now between the sufferings of Christ and the glory which is soon to follow is suspended the precious gospel of grace and love through Him: “He, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Isa. 55:1).

Lectures on the Tabernacle: A Full Exposition Examining the Types and Their Doctrinal Applications — Fully Illustrated, Gold Upon the Wood, The

Exodus 36:34

We pass now to the gold which completely covered these boards. Doubtless there is a divine lesson to be gathered here. The boards, the ark and all the furniture in the tabernacle were hidden from outside view. It was therefore only visible to the priests and to the eye of God. To the eye of man the divine glory of our Lord’s humanity was hidden, veiled, save as faith saw beneath the cover of humiliation. But to God this is reversed. The acacia wood is covered over with gold. He beholds His co-equal Son in the depths of His humiliation; even on the cross it is His “Fellow” who was smitten (Zech. 13:7). But let us see the scriptural basis for believing gold to be typical of divine glory. 1

(But its chief use seems to have been i apart from the all-prevailing idolatry, and with which it was connected) for making adornments. Rebekah was adorned thus by Abraham's servant (Gen. 24:22). Joseph Lad a gold chain put upon him in token of his authority (Gen. 41:42). Jewels of gold were demanded (not "borrowed," as in A.V.) from the Egyptians (Ex. 12:35. In the spoil taken from the Midianites were "jewels of gold, chains and bracelets, rings, earrings and tablets" (Num. 31:50-54). The Ishmaelites, whom Gideon spoiled, had earrings of gold (Judg. 8:22-26) The Philistines made golden images of their plagues (1 Sam. 6:4, 8) Saul adorned the daughters of Israel with gold (2 Sam. 1:24). The clothing of the king's daughter was of wrought gold (Psa. 45:13), and probably in the same way as the ephod of the high priest (Ex. 39:2, 3). Job's friends each brought him a present of an earring of gold (Job 42:11). Apostate Israel was to be cast off oven by her lovers, though adorned with gold (Jer. 4:30) which were the very adornments which, typically, God had put upon her (Ezek. 16:13, 17.)

Its brightness and beauty, resistance to rust and tarnish, the ease with which it could be worked, and other properties, made it a standard of value. It is significant that these very properties are given to the divine realities in contrast to it.

"Your gold and silver is cankered" (James 5:3). Silver and gold are "corruptible things," compared with "hthe precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18, 19). "Gold that perisheth"

(1 Peter 1:7). So the "adornment" of women was not to be with literal gold, but with that which is in the sight of God of great price, the incorruptible ornament of "a meek and quiet spirit" (1 Peter 3:3,4). In its typical meaning, it is "gold tried in the fire" which the Lord values, and is obtained from Him alone— all dross purged from what He values.)

Gold stands for all that is valuable to man. In this way Scripture speaks of it in contrast with the precious things of God. Of God's judgments (His righteous ways and commandments as seen in His law), the psalmist says: "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold" (Psa. 19:10). Knowledge (of God) is to be received "rather than choice gold" (Prov. 8:10). Gold is that for which men labor, for which they will barter strength and health. For it they will give up ease and the happiness of home, and endanger life itself. Therefore, Scripture speaks of covetousness (the lust of gold) as idolatry this object of man's desire put in place of the Creator. We find therefore that images to be worshiped were often made of gold, representing what was most precious in human estimation. In the very book from which we learn how God was making use of gold to set forth His glory, we read of the golden calf, made and worshiped as a representation of Jehovah, linking God's holy name with the idolatrous worship. The golden calf is to the people not only an emblem of deity, but they worship it as their god (Ex. 32:3-4).

The same idolatry in another form is repeated by Gideon, one of the deliverers of Israel. Out of the golden earrings of the Midianites he had overcome, he makes an ephod, which becomes a center of idolatrous worship, apparently linking God's holy name with it (Judg. 8:24-27). At the division of the kingdom of Israel, Jeroboam, foreseeing the danger that his people might return to the house of David if allowed to go to worship at Jerusalem, set up golden calves for worship at Bethel and at Dan (1 Kings 12:26-33). Of gold too was the great image which Nebuchadnezzar set up to be worshiped (Dan. 3:1)—a type, no doubt, of that final apostasy when the "image of the Beast" is worshiped, and God is openly disowned in His world.

"Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands," says the psalmist (Psa. 115:4). "Their land also is full of silver and gold...their land also is full of idols," says the prophet (Isa. 2:7, 8). That which man considers most precious, which his heart craves and which ministers to his glory, he deifies; that is the root of idolatry. God is displaced and man exalted, in the exaltation of his idol. An awful degradation is the result, as the first chapter of Romans tells us (Rom. 1:25).

But "the gold of that land is good" (Gen. 2:12). It is only when prostituted to evil uses that any of God's creatures become a source of evil; and gold, as the most precious thing man has, is fittingly an emblem of the divine prerogatives, which he falsely gives to his idol. Gold, then, is a figure of the glory of God, of His attributes of righteousness, holiness, wisdom, power, goodness and truth—everything that is suggested by the purity, brightness and value of the metal. That this is not guess-work is seen not merely in the negative way we have been looking at it, but from the fact that, under God's direction, gold was used where these great facts were to be brought out. Solomon's temple, as God's earthly abode, was overlaid with gold, even its floor (1 Kings 6:21, 22, 30). And in the book of Revelation the heavenly city is described as "having the glory of God;" "and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass;" "and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass" (Rev. 21:11, 18, 21). Thus where God is fully manifest in all His glory the figure used to express that majesty, which none can fully know, is gold. We are thus justified in the thought that gold is a figure of the divine glory of the Son of God, just as the acacia wood tells us of His perfect humanity.

Let us then meditate upon His deity for a little, and gather from the word of God that which it declares so plainly: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1-3). Here is the gold shining forth. It is the Creator, for "all things were made by Him." It is Deity, for "the Word was God." We cannot escape that, and need not fear to use it in the fullest way. More than that, "the Word was with God." The Son is seen as distinct from the Father, but in blessed association with Him: "I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him" (Prov. 8:22-31). "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich (in divine glory), yet for your sakes He became poor" (2 Cor. 8:9). "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery (a thing to be grasped) to be equal with God" in the outward glory or display of His deity (Phil. 2:6). Divine honor is rendered to God by all His own; but the same is to be rendered to His Son: "That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him" (John 5:23); and it is at the name of the once humbled Jesus, now "highly exalted," that every knee, even of His foes, shall bow. The gold shines brightly here, though closely blended with the acacia wood.

As is well known, the word most frequently used in the Old Testament for "God" is a plural, "Elohim," but it always takes a verb in the singular number. This has been explained as "the plural of majesty." But in the light of passages quoted, and others to follow, do we not see in it a foreshadowing of the divine Persons in the Godhead? In the first chapter of Genesis the Spirit of God is spoken of as brooding upon the face of the waters. We know from John 1 and other scriptures that "the Word," the only begotten Son, was the Creator of all things. We already can see the three divine persons—one God—in connection with creation. And this also in the divine counsel together: "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness" (Gen. 1:26). With whom could He take counsel as an equal, but with the One who—with the eternal Spirit—was ever with Him and His delight, and who, blessed be His name, had His delights with the sons of men?

The Old Testament was the time of infancy, so far as the revelation and knowledge of God were concerned; but all through, now that we have the full light of revelation in the New Testament, we can see the golden gleam of the divine Son. It was Christ, who by the Spirit, went and preached, through Noah, to the men before the flood, and whose spirits are now in prison—solemn thought! (1 Pet. 3:18, 19). Who can fail to see the suggestion of the infinite love of God in the gift of His only begotten Son, in those words to Abraham, " Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lowest " (Gen. 22:2)? Doubtless it was on this very occasion that Abraham saw our Lord's Day, and was glad. And when the Jews expressed their unbelief that the Man before them could have seen Abraham, our Lord declares His absolute deity, "Before Abraham was, I am"—the eternal, self-existing Jehovah (John 8:56-58).

It was the reproach of Christ which Moses esteemed as "greater riches than the treasures in Egypt" (Heb. 11:26). It was Christ who followed, as the Rock, His redeemed people in the wilderness, and whom they tempted by their unbelief (1 Chr. 10:4, 9). It was the holy Person whom we know as the Christ of God, who was there with them in Egypt and during all their wanderings. It was God, God the Son, who was there with them—not excluding the presence of the Father and Spirit, indeed, but giving prominence in this connection to the Eternal Son. And so throughout the Old Testament history we have not only types and prophecies of the coming One, but intimations of the Son in that divine Presence.

In the Psalms we have His deity clearly and distinctly taught. "The King of glory" in Ps. 24:7-10 is declared to be "Jehovah of hosts."

But this King of glory is also "mighty in battle," and is identical with the Victor who is seen in Psa. 45 with sword girt upon His thigh, and He is none other than "the Word of God" (Rev. 19:11-16). In Psa. 45 He is addressed by the divine title: "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever" (vs. 6).

We have, then, direct testimony to the deity of the Son. But it will be noticed that it is the Messiah who is seen here-a Man as well as God. It is most wonderful to see how, as we might say, the gold takes the form of the acacia wood which it overlays. Truly the "form of a servant" was never in the Father's eyes a veil to the divine glory which was ever before Him. Perhaps this is more vividly seen in our next quotation than in almost any other portion of Scripture: "He weakened My strength in the way; He shortened My days. I said, O My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days" (Psa. 102:23, 24). There is no question to whom these words, and indeed the entire psalm, refer. The first chapter of Hebrews quotes directly from the words following those already quoted. It is the "prayer of the afflicted, when He is overwhelmed"—the Lord pouring out His soul with strong crying and tears, as in Gethsemane. He is alone, suffering the reproach of His enemies, but above all anticipating the terror of divine wrath—all undeserved—for the sins of others. We may say the shadow of the cross is heavily thrown over the lonely Sufferer. His days are numbered, and for Him upon whom death had no claim how dark it was, as linked with penalty for sin not His own!

And was it not perfectly right that He should cling to life? Was it not a mark of His human perfection that He did so in looking at that side? So He addresses the Eternal, "O My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days;" or, as in the Gospel narrative, though no doubt including more, " My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me" (Matt. 26:39). He waits for the answer, we may say, and we have it from God in the next verses. What reply can be given to such devotedness which, in the face of such a death can say, "Not My will, but Thine be done?" "Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end" (Psa. 102:25-27).

What more absolute statement could there be of the deity of this Holy One? He is the Eternal, the Unchanging, the Creator of all things, which shall pass away while He shall abide. This passage shows how the Spirit of God speaks of Christ in places where we would little suspect it. But the quotation of this passage in the first chapter of Hebrews leaves no doubt that it is the Son who is here addressed (Heb. 1:10-12).

The same divine truth—the deity in connection with the humanity of our Lord—is seen in the Prophets: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son and shall call His name Immanuel," "which being interpreted is, God with us" (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23). Here again it is Jesus—the acacia wood, with which this divine title is connected.

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called, Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the Father of Eternity, the Prince of Peace "(Isa. 9:6)." I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering. The Lord God hath opened Mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back "(Isa. 50:3, 5). The whole chapter is a wonderful presentation of Him who is God, who could lay His hands upon the heavens, and yet who as the obedient One yielded Himself up to God, and suffered shame and spitting and death.

"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch... and this is His name whereby He shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness" (Jer. 23:6). "And above the firmament that was over their (the cherubim's) heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a Man above it" (Ezek. 1:26). God alone can sit upon the throne of God; so in Dan. 7:9, He (Christ) is called "the Ancient of Days."

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Mic. 5:2). And in Zech. 13:7, as we have already seen, He is called Jehovah's Fellow.

Thus there can be no question from the Old Testament that the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, is in the fullest sense divine—God. How foolish then the attempt to separate the divine and human natures in the One holy Person! He is Man, but He is absolutely and always God. The mystery is there, but faith will bow to that, and own there are depths of light which the creature mind cannot fathom, and which rests happily in its dependence upon a love, a wisdom, a power and a mercy which passeth knowledge.

We quote a few passages further from the New Testament: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the First-born of all creation. For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Col. 1:15-17). This is a wonderful passage, in which our Lord, as Man, is presented before us as the image of the invisible God. In a way in which the first man was not, even in his innocency, Christ was the reflection of the moral character of God. He is also the Head of all creation—First-born, not in time,

but in position, and by right. And then the reason for this is given: He is Creator of it all. If the Creator takes His place as Man, in infinite grace, in His own creation, He must be its Head from the very fact that He is its Creator. He may not display His full divine glories, but “He cannot deny Himself,” He cannot cease to be God. In this is seen the blasphemy of “Kenosis”—the doctrine that our Lord laid aside His deity, or that it was, at His birth, practically reduced to nothing. What an evil thing is the mind of man when not subject to God, and when led on by Satan; and what an awful lie that “knowledge of good and evil” could make man as God! And disobedience thus becomes actual blasphemy by putting man in the place of God! But here is the infinite grace of God to ruined rebels, that He, God the Son, came down into the place of man, a real Man, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

But to return. It is in connection with His incarnation that we have this strong declaration of His deity. Not only is the material universe His creation, but the orders of spiritual beings, to the very highest, are inferior to Him by the immeasurable distance of infinity. “All things were created by Him”—He is the Author of their being; and “for Him”—they exist for His glory. The creature can never be for itself without absolute ruin. God alone is perfect love; and the Son is the Center and Object of all things. Only thus can creation be brought into true blessing. Here then is the amazing work of redemption. Need we wonder then that God has woven together in divine life and oneness of Person the deity and the humanity of the all-glorious One who came to effect this stupendous work? We have redemption in Him who is God and Man; through His blood, who is God and Man. He has reconciled all things to Himself, for He is God and Man; through His death, who is God and Man. And you, once enemies, hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh, who is God and Man. He who is Head of His Church is God and Man. The link with His creation is His humanity, His incarnation; and with sinful man it is by His death. But His deity gives the value to this, without which, reverently may we say it, redemption could not have been effected.

Turn again to the epistle to the Hebrews, first chapter: “Who being the brightness of His glory” — there is the gold; and” the very impress of His substance “—there is the stamp of that which makes the coin; “ and upholding all things by the Word of His power “—He is the God of providence: “By Him all things consist,” as in Colossians 1. All these are divine attributes; they could be ascribed to none but God. Could we conceive of an absolutely perfect man, we could ascribe no such attributes to him. It would be blasphemy to speak of such a one as “the brightness of God’s glory, the express image of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power.”

The next clause brings us face to face with the mystery of His death: “When He had by Him. self purged our sins.” This was by the shedding of His blood. But whose blood? Is there a change of persons? Who and what is He but the eternal Son of God, who thus became Man that He might make purification for sins? His deity identified with a sinless and perfect humanity gave infinite value to that sacrifice. It was “by Himself.” He, in the fullness of His divine being and spotless humanity, was the “altar that sanctifieth the gift” (Matt. 23:19). Of what value would any other sacrifice be?

All these passages show how this truth of the gold, the deity of the Son, permeates all Scripture. We have merely touched upon a few prominent passages which speak of “God manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3:16). Even in speaking of His atoning death the apostle John says, “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). This is the Eternal Son of God with whom the apostle says our fellowship truly is. And the same apostle closes his first epistle after speaking of the Son of God who has come by saying: “This [One] is the true God and Eternal Life” (1 John 5:20), No idolatry, then, in addressing Him as God.

It is the remedy and preventative of idolatry to have the heart truly thus in subjection to Him; the only way “little children” can keep themselves from idols (1 John 5:21). He is “over all, God blessed forever” (Rom. 9:5). He is “the First and the Last, the living One who became dead, and lives for evermore” (Rev. 1:17, 18, R. V.).

It is not however upon “proof texts” alone, no matter how numerous or clear, that we rely for our knowledge of the deity of the Son; that truth is in the warp and woof of Scripture. The incidental references to it are beyond computation; it forms the basic tone of all the harmonies of that Word-from which all starts, to which all returns, without which there could be no divine harmony. We can better conceive of day without the sun, than of the word of God without the divine Son.

But we must leave this holy subject to be pursued by the humble believer, and notice one other thought suggested by the gold. We have seen that it is prominent in the symbolism of heaven, where He manifests Himself. Earth, where sin is, could not be the place for the display of divine glory, save in judgment. Therefore the Son of God veiled His glory when He came on His errand of love. After His resurrection He appeared to none but His own. The world will never see Him till the day of His appearing in power and glory as Judge of the living and the dead. But faith even now sees “Jesus crowned with glory and honor” (Heb. 2:9). Thus the place for the display of the gold is in the glory. So it fittingly adorns only the interior of the sanctuary. But faith enters with boldness and sees Him on the throne, and everyone who is born of God believes “that Jesus is the Son of God” (1 John 5:5). Such truly love “the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (Tit. 2:13, J. N. D. Version). The time will come when the veil will be forever removed, and the glory of the Son will shine in heaven, and on earth too, even to the uttermost bounds: “For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” Hallelujah!

Thus we have sought to indicate the meaning of the acacia wood and the overlaying gold-the incorruptible humanity and the absolute deity of the Son of God. May it be a theme of precious meditation and worship here, as it will be throughout eternity, where the glories of Christ are displayed in all that is perfectly human and all that is absolutely divine, in one Person. There we shall see and joy in the Man who lived, who loved, who suffered, who died; and oh, holy mystery! we gaze with veiled faces, owning Him as the Word, who is and was and ever shall be, God!

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God “(Ex. 20:4, 5). God is jealous of giving His glory to another, but that only emphasizes the fact that the Son is one with the Father. All images that man might make can but provoke to jealousy; but here is “the image of the invisible God.” He is jealous for His Son, “that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father.”

Exodus 36:20-34

We pass on now to the framework of the tabernacle, the boards of acacia wood overlaid with gold, standing on a foundation of silver. These boards were of one measure—ten cubits in length and one and a-half cubits in breadth; they had two tenons, which fitted into the silver sockets—twenty boards to each side of the tabernacle, whose length was thirty cubits. In the back, or west end, there were six boards of the same width, making nine cubits, and the remaining cubit (to complete the probable ten cubits of width) was made up by two boards, one at each corner. There is some question as to the manner in which these two corner boards were placed. We must leave such questions for further prayerful consideration: nothing in Scripture is unimportant, and the architecture of the tabernacle has lessons to yield. We may be able to glean some of these as we go on.

We have said that the probable width of the tabernacle was ten cubits. This can be gathered from the fact that five and its multiples are common throughout, as in the court which was one hundred cubits long by fifty broad; the length of the boards would suggest the same. In Solomon's temple the most holy place was twenty cubits long and the same in breadth. The heavenly city, God's dwelling-place, of which these were types, is also a cube. But this must suffice as to the form of the sanctuary; at its spiritual meaning we may look later.

The boards of acacia wood, overlaid with gold, were placed side by side; each having golden rings through which five bars of acacia wood overlaid with gold were passed, holding the boards firmly together; the middle bar extending from end to end of the boards. This suggests that the other four may have been of half that length; two of them end to end uniting the boards above and the other two below the central bar which extended the entire length. If this were the case, we should have three golden rings on each board for the bars to pass through; and this well accords, when we come to look at the scriptural significance.

Though but a tabernacle, a tent, we can see the structure had much firmness. Two heavy sockets of silver under each board afforded a solid foundation, and the five bars running through rings would hold all firmly together.

We shall look now at the spiritual significance of each of the materials used, gathering what we can from the various scripture passages where each is mentioned.

The boards1 were of shittim or acacia wood. Apart from the tabernacle there is but one passage which refers directly to this wood, but it gives us a suggestion as to the spiritual meaning. "I will plant in the wilderness the cedar the shittim tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree... that they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it" (Isa. 41:19, 20). In the future day of Israel's blessing God will make the wilderness and solitary place to rejoice. The nation was a moral waste in which nothing grew for God, and this continues until the full time for blessing comes, when God's grace will make glad even the desert. Then the high and fragrant cedar, and the beautiful acacia and the evergreen myrtle, and the fruitful olive will flourish, and the desert shall blossom as the rose. The tree is the reminder of the vigor of life in the midst of that which at present is dead and barren.

The thought of preparation is suggestive, as applied to our Lord's humanity: "A body hast Thou prepared Me" (Heb. 10:5)—specially and perfectly adapted for Him.

But, as we shall see, the boards primarily refer to the redeemed people of God, who are fitted and formed by His grape to be His abode. So the cutting and preparing of the boards would answer to the hewing of the stones for the temple, and both refer to the "living stones" of the true temple of God (1 Peter 2:5).)

But there is peculiar appropriateness in the choice of the shittim wood for the tabernacle boards, rather than the cedar or olive. These latter two were used in the construction of Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6:15, 31-33), which prefigured millennial glory and the habitation of God among the restored nation, the very time referred to in the passage we have quoted. Perhaps the myrtle, used in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles (Neh. 8:15), may have been significant for its fragrance and foliage.

The acacia, or shittim, however, was the only tree which grew in the desert—the only one practically available for the purpose intended—a habitation in the desert, made of the wood of the desert.

But there is special beauty in this when we look at the spiritual significance and remember that Christ is the key to all. Israel was, as we have said, a moral waste, and never more so than when, after their return from the captivity in Babylon, our Lord came to them. True, idolatry had outwardly ceased, and tombs of prophets were built to honor those slain in the evil days for their faithful testimony for God and against sin. But this could not deceive the eyes of the Holy One who searches the heart. Much outward religion there was, a diligent round of fasting, of tithing, and of holy days; but in all this there was nothing for God, no fruit of divine life. Not without cause were the Pharisees, the religious and orthodox leaders, called "whited sepulchers" (Matt. 23:27), and "graves which appear not" (Luke 2:44)—abodes of death, like the body when the spirit has departed. True, a little remnant was there, the seed by grace of the new nation, but these were marked by their confessions of sin and barrenness.

And so when our Lord came, He was to the nation "as a root out of a dry ground." They saw nothing in Him to desire. But how different to the eye of God! Here was a "tender plant" growing in the midst of abounding dearth and desolation; life and vigor manifesting themselves in Him in the scene of death.

So when God bears witness to man's true condition he is described, not merely as one who has committed sins and is liable to punishment, which is perfectly true; nor as one who needs assistance to do that which is right; but he is declared to be dead—dead toward God. And this is a responsible condition, for his will is against God and opposed to grace. The Pelagians taught that man only needed guidance to live for God; the semi-Pelagians admitted that he was sick, and needed help if he was to please God; while those who knew the truth contended that man's condition was dead toward God, needing the life-giving grace of God in Christ.

This then was, and is, the world in which the wondrous Plant grew up "before Him:" planted in the wilderness, for "the Word became flesh" (John 1:14), and as "the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same" (Heb. 2:14). But this root had life in itself, and from His birth the eye of God saw nothing but perfection in Him. As the tender plant grew "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:5), it bore all that was appropriate to the stage of its life. Had there been nothing resulting for man from this Life, it was a perfect refreshment and glory for God.

There are certain characteristics about the acacia tree which made it particularly suitable as a type of our Lord upon earth. It is the tree of the desert, as we have seen; and there are many varieties, which might suggest the varied characteristics of our blessed Lord. One yields a gum which has a healing effect; from another is obtained a tonic medicine; the leaves of another are peculiarly sensitive to outward Influences; and the wood, by its durability, particularly points to the incorruptibility of His humanity. Upon this last we must dwell in some detail, for it is the prominent material, not only in the framework of the tabernacle, but in all its furniture, except the laver and the candlestick.

We have already dwelt upon the passage in Hebrews 5, but will recur to it because of one clause: “Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me.” The quotation is from the 40th psalm, where, instead of “A body hast Thou prepared Me,” we have, “Mine ears hast Thou opened,” or “Jigged.” This illustrates the freedom with which the Spirit of God enlarges upon the thought originally given under His inspiration. In the psalm, as appropriate to its prophetic character, we have the opening or forming of the ears, suggesting the obedience of our Lord, as the ear is to receive the instruction to be obeyed. But in the New Testament passage, where His holy person has been fully revealed, the Spirit teaches us that His body was a specially prepared one for this obedience.

We are on holy ground here, but we need not refuse to draw nigh, if it be in reverence and godly fear. The person of the Son of God is a mystery which only God can fully comprehend, but we remember that He came to reveal, not to conceal, God; that the beloved apostle rested unreproved upon His bosom, and the sinful woman could kiss His feet. He invited His disciples to “handle Me and see.” May we with Thomas do so; as with him we also say, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:27, 28).

There are dangers on every hand here: we may deny His true humanity, or unduly emphasize that and lose the thought of His perfect and absolute deity. We are distinctly told that He was, and is, Man: “There is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). He is the ideal, the only perfect Man that ever walked the earth—infinitely more so than the first man. But He was the perfect Man because He was also infinitely more. The Creator has come down into His creation and taken His place as its Head (Col. 1:15). The Son of God became also the Son of Man. It was upon earth that the body was prepared Him. He was “made of a woman” (Gal. 4:4), in fulfillment of the first word of gospel spoken by God, in the bruising of the serpent’s head by the Seed of the woman. Some, in the true spirit of worship, have shrunk from speaking of our Lord as absolutely human; but the word of God must always direct intelligent worship. This assures us that He is in the fullest sense a Man, who was born and lived His life here.

“Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same” (Heb. 2:14). Here we have One who participated in humanity. The word which speaks of this participation is, however, different from that applied to “the children.” Theirs is a complete identification with all that humanity is, now alas, as fallen. Therefore they were subject to death at the hand of him that had the power of death, and as a consequence, were all their lifetime subject to bondage through fear of death. He, on the contrary, in coming into the world voluntarily took a sinless, perfect human nature—a body, soul and spirit. The difference is expressed in the two words—identification and participation—so carefully does the Spirit guard against connecting our holy Lord’s humanity with the slightest taint of the fall. As a result, His death is absolutely voluntary and divinely efficacious “That through death He might destroy (or annul) him that had the power of death,” and deliver His beloved ones. This deliverance is not merely from Satan’s power and death, but it brings into the presence of the living God, for as a merciful and faithful High Priest, our Lord made propitiation for the sins of the people (Heb. 2:17). Thus the Person and the work are divinely perfect; yet we are assured of the tender heart of sympathy and succor of a Man who suffered being tempted, but in whose holy heart there was no response to those temptations.

Thus, in the narrative of His incarnation, we are assured both of His absolute humanity and yet of the unique and sinless perfection of it.

When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman “(Gal. 4:4). By the overshadowing power of the Highest the “Seed of the woman” has come, a reminder of her who “being deceived was in the transgression” (1 Tim. 2:14). “Therefore that Holy Thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

There is absolutely no taint in that “Son of Man.” It is not said “that innocent thing,” but “that Holy Thing.” The first man before the fall was innocent, guiltless, but the condition was a negative and unstable one. He was of the earth, earthy—made of dust; with a spirit, but a creature, and nothing more. The Second Man is out of heaven (1 Cor. 15:47). He was “holy,” and had a positive, inherent, abiding character, utterly incapable of sin. He was a partaker of the divine nature as incarnate, with nothing of “the flesh” in any part of His person. His positive holiness was because of the direct, divine work of the Spirit in His incarnation—absolutely apart from fallen nature. We would veil our faces as we speak or think of this divine mystery, and adore the grace of Him who thus humbled Himself to be found in fashion as a man.

In the world He was, then, but absolutely free from the taint of sin. A type of this we have in the red heifer, in Num. 19, which had never borne yoke; from which we gather that nothing applied to Him that was the result or due of sin. Ever dwelling in perfect communion with God, there could be no sense of distance, of divine displeasure, or aught that spoke of the consequences of sin. Into the poverty, trials, sorrows, and all that in which man was found, He could enter; hut, though surrounded by darkness, He was ever light and in the light. The very nature of God therefore—His goodness and righteousness—must give witness to His constant approval of and delight in this righteous One. The only reason why God has withdrawn the light of His countenance from man is because of sin—divine righteousness could not go on with that, and wicked man had no desire for Him. “Men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19). But here was One whose whole being desired and delighted in God alone, and therefore the Voice from the excellent glory but expressed the constant attitude of the righteous and holy God toward Him: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). This fact sets aside the thought of His being a substitute during His life: that was only upon the cross; there He was forsaken of God, when He was “made sin for us” (2 Cor. 5:21).

It also follows that death had not the slightest claim upon Him. “The wages of sin is death.” “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom. 6:23; 5:12). Death is the precursor of judgment for man; the two cannot be separated. “As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). How impossible then that our holy Lord should be subject to death.

It has been taught that our Lord’s humanity was of such a character that He was subject to the ills of life—to sickness or the decrepitude of age; that had He lived the appointed threescore years and ten, He would have been cut off like the rest of humanity. Let our inmost spirits revolt from such thoughts, though compelled to examine them. As we have just seen, death in Scripture is the universal witness of sin. Go into the dwellings of the poor or the palaces of the great, and we find the dark sign of death. It has reigned everywhere. It is the sentence of God upon man: “In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:17). Shall we take that which is a witness of corrupt, fallen

nature, a witness that man has forfeited the right which he had as a creature to live in God's world, and attach it to our Lord?—to Him "who knew no sin?" Did death pass upon Him then—we speak as fools—in that He had sinned?

It has been said, "Had He drank poison it would have killed Him." In the first place, He would not have done this, for His every act was in obedience to His Father; He would not cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple. But, for the moment granting the act, shall we say that what He promised to His servants would not have been true of Him: "If they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them" (Mark 16:18)?

The truth is that all such thoughts are unholy, unprofitable speculations. Scripture does not suggest them nor afford the shadow of support to them. We look upon the One "made flesh," as One on whom no sentence of death rests; no subjection to sickness. If the men before the flood lived well-nigh a thousand years, shall we contract the age of the Unfallen to the "labor and sorrow" of those whose years are as a "tale that is told," because all their days are passed away in His wrath? (Psa. 90:9, 10). Can we think of His manhood reaching its zenith and declining toward the shadows of evening and the night of death? Ah no! Had He so chosen, or had there been need for it, He could have remained here until the present time, for death had no claim upon Him.

Here we take our stand, by God's grace, to, confess the blessed truth and to reject with abhorrence the thought that the icy hand of death could have been laid upon Him in any way, save as He voluntarily laid down His life: " I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again " (John 10:18).

And is it not just this entire immunity from death or any of the consequences of sin which fitted Him to be the Substitute for us upon the cross? We would be robbed of our Savior if He were personally, as a Man, a debtor to death. Reverently speaking, He would have needed a Savior Himself, one to pay the debt which every son of fallen Adam owed. But the opposite of all this is true: "As it is appointed unto men once to die... so Christ was once offered" (Heb. 9:27, 28)—not as a natural appointment, but in perfect grace as a willing Substitute "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law," not to die because He had broken it, but as the Substitute "made a curse for us," "to redeem them that were under the law" (Gal. 4:5; 3:13). The entire truth of substitution, of atonement, rests upon this, whether it be in the Old Testament types which constantly emphasize the fact that "your lamb shall be without blemish" (Ex. 12:5), or in the direct statements of the New, "In Him is no sin" (1 John 3:5).

Upon the truth of this God set His seal in raising up the body of our Lord from the grave. Let us remember it was the very body prepared by God for Him, which had been laid in the manger, had thirsted and hungered, slept in the storm, and wept at the grave. Did not God ever behold in Him "that Holy Thing," even as to the body? — though man spits upon it and crowns it with thorns; scourges Him; pierces His hands and feet; even in death pierces His side! But at last, "having fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a sepulcher" (Acts 13:29). His work being finished, not one thing more (which divine patience had permitted before) could man do to insult that body. It is taken down from the cross, wrapped in spices (suggestive of the sweetness and fragrance of that death to God), and laid in a new sepulcher, which had never been tainted with death. The ashes of the sacrifice were poured out in a clean place; and no corruption is suffered to touch that Holy One (Acts 13:37). "Raised from the dead by the glory of the Father" in that same body in which He served God, and died and rose and will retain forever, He appeared to His disciples, and now sits upon the throne of God.

But in opposing the irreverence of unbelief, let us beware of an opposite error. The body prepared was a perfectly natural body, capable of dying. Indeed, it was for this very purpose He became incarnate. To say that He was mortal, in the sense of being subject, or liable, to death, would be blasphemy; to say that He took a body that was capable of dying is to declare the foundation of truth for our blessing.

Without descending into speculation about "secret things," which "belong to God," and which always tend to a degradation of Christ and the puffing up of the flesh (Col. 2:18), we may say that Scripture does not state that had man remained unfallen he would have remained permanently dependent upon food to have maintained life. In other words, the state in Eden is not declared to have been the eternal state. The possession of bodies similar to those of "the beasts that perish" would suggest that, had human righteousness been a possibility, God would have brought in the eternal state by a divine change, analogous to the changing of the bodies of saints at the coming of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:51, 52), though without the taint of sin. In like manner, had the cross not been a necessity for our salvation, our Lord could have passed without dying from the condition of bodily existence suited to earth to that glorified body which He now has. He never saw corruption, and in that sense His resurrection would answer to that "change," though as His incarnation was voluntary, so would the change have been—no question of infirmity in any case. We also gather from Scripture that the resurrection-body is one which does not depend upon earthly conditions, but at the same time can come into them. He ate the broiled fish and honeycomb to show them His body was truly material, and yet it was no longer a body for the earth (Luke 24:42, 43).

We turn again briefly to another subject suggested by the acacia wood—the temptibility of our Lord. Just as error has made the incarnation to include liability to bodily infirmities and death, so it has taught that our Lord was capable of yielding to temptation. Let us stamp that at once as absolute untruth. How could One who was positively and only righteous, with a moral nature absolutely and only divine, to whom obedience to God was therefore His life, be capable of yielding to sin? "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me" (John 14:30).

But it will be said that while He did not yield to sin, He could have done so; and if not, of what use was the temptation? We might well ask, If He could have yielded to it, what need for the temptation? Perhaps an illustration may be helpful. There are tests to detect metals which look like gold, and are not. These tests are applied to true metal as well as the counterfeits, not to show it is capable of yielding to the test and becoming brass, but just the reverse, to show it to be absolutely incapable. In like manner the believer in Christ has "eternal life" and can never perish, yet the tests of profession are applied to him, and they bring out the reality of the life he has. It is impossible for gold to respond to a test for brass, impossible for a true believer to fall away as a mere professor, and how much more impossible for our Lord to have yielded to temptation. But it will be said that the true child of God may yield to temptation, and why not our Lord? What is it that makes it possible for the child of God to yield to temptation? The presence of the fallen nature, the flesh. Did our Lord have that? "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9). This is said of the believer, as born of God; is less to be said of that Holy One?

It may be further objected that unfallen Adam was capable of yielding to temptation, and in fact did. Quite true; and is the Last Adam the same? As we have already said, our Lord's humanity was not precisely like that of unfallen man. He had as Man the nature, and only that, which man gets from God in new birth. It was not new in His case, save as distinguished from the birth of all other men. He was only born once, and had no need to be born again.

We have purposely refrained from introducing the other great truth of our Lord's deity and the union of the divine and human natures in one person. This will come before us presently when we consider the gold, and will be seen to confirm more fully what we have been dwelling upon. But we should be clear even without dwelling upon that side of His person, as to our Lord's absolute incapability of yielding to temptation.

Have we lost anything in thus seeing that our Savior could not sin as well as did not? Is anything of "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" missed in learning that it was, and ever is, "sin apart" (Heb. 4:15)? Is He for this less "able to succor them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18)? Let us then see in what sense He "suffered being tempted," and in that we will find the answer to these questions.

We have those special temptations by Satan recorded, doubtless as giving us the principle of all temptations that are "common to man." There may be a closer correspondence than we have thought between those three forms of temptation and that to which our first parents yielded. (See Matt. 4:1-11.) There was much in the way of contrast too. Instead of a paradise, our Lord had a wilderness; instead of every need met, He was without food. The devil first appeals to Him as Son of God, or perhaps raises also the question whether He be that. He is hungry, yet able to make stones into bread; for had He not created all things? But our Lord was there as Man, and would not use His divine power. He will suffer hunger rather than yield to the temptation to use His divine power. Could one of us have made stones into bread? Then He will not do aught that man cannot do.

The question raised by Satan is, impliedly at least, whether God really cares for Him. He has left Him to suffer—why not take His case in His own hands? This was the question raised with the woman: "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden" (Gen. 3:1)? He insinuated the doubt of God's goodness and love; and she took her case into her own hands—deceived, but responsibly deceived, for she turned from the word of God and listened to Satan. She did not suffer, if suffering it could possibly be called when God had met every need, and so she fell, and Adam fell with her. That ended the trial of the first man, eternally. He can never stand before God save as a guilty, lost sinner.

But the people of God, who have been brought to Him through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His infinite grace, are left in this world, and the malignity of the vanquished foe assails them in every possible way, to mar their communion and lead them to dishonor God. Again, therefore, he presents his specious lie, suggesting that God does not care, that we had better see to our own case and provide for ourselves. Forgetting those words of love that will abide forever, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32), we know not how to answer the tempter. But we turn to our Lord, and cry to Him for aid. Would it help us if we thought that He had had desires, feelings, wishes to yield to this temptation—that His" feet had well-nigh slipped "(Psa. 73:2)? If it did help us, whose help would it be but that of Satan, leading us to think lightly of sin and lightly of the Holy One of God. The work of Satan is always seen in making us think sin is a little thing: the fear of God and the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ ever show it in all its awful reality.

It may be said that the sympathy of those who have fallen into sin is more helpful to those tempted than of one who has never failed in that particular respect. It is not the sympathy of such persons necessarily that is helpful, but rather their counsel and testimony to the power of Christ to deliver. But apart from that, connecting our Lord with sin, save as the One who put it away by His atoning work. and as our Advocate on high, is blasphemy, and only a cloak to make Him the minister of sin. Would we dare think of Him as on the same level with our fellow-sinner?

After all, it is not sympathy with sin that is needed. Sin is not to be spared or condoned. We might as well nurse a viper and not expect to be bitten as to crave sympathy for our sin. Sin is not a misfortune or an infirmity; it is that abominable thing which God hates, which murdered Christ. It would, if allowed, cast God from His throne and put Satan there. Oh, may God deepen in our hearts the abhorrence of disobedience to Him, which is sin.

The next form of temptation which Satan set before the Lord, to cast Himself down from a pinnacle of the temple, would have been to abuse the goodness of God—the opposite of the former temptation. The very inducement, in Satan's mind, may have been to presume on the written Word. There may have been too in his mind the thought that our Lord would thus approve Himself to the people as Messiah. But not a thought of this kind was in Christ's holy mind. Messiah of His people He was, and longed that they should truly recognize Him as such, but it must be by true conviction of sin and turning to God, and not by some dazzling display of supernatural power. Miracles our Lord did, freely and constantly, as evidences of who He was, and as ministering to man's need never to display Himself to the natural man. He walked upon the water to reach His disciples and to confirm their faith. After His resurrection also, He showed them how in His new relationship there was no longer limitation of material things. He was giving them, may we not say? illustrations of what was to be theirs too, as well as establishing the fact in their hearts of His mastery over all things.

But what was the element of suffering in our Lord in thus refusing the temptation? Most certainly not that His will or desire was to presume on God, but in refusing the wrong means to reach a desired end. The means were absolutely repulsive to Him, even though coated over with a misquoted scripture (Psa. 91:11, 12)—though the end, to reach His beloved people, to awaken them, He could and did desire. And was it not pain to Him still to wait? — as the sorrow which later led Him to weep over Jerusalem? We use an illustration. The son of a godly father is justly imprisoned. The father's heart yearns over his son; he would love to pay his fine and set him at liberty, but has not the means: there is an opportunity to steal the money. How does it appeal to the father? Does it make him want to steal? No, but it pains him to turn away from his son, and the temptation has added to his pain by showing him that he cannot help his child. This is but a feeble illustration, and our poor hearts have been so accustomed to thoughts of self-will that we but feebly apprehend the absolute revulsion which our holy Lord felt at any suggestion of disobedience to His Father.

This comes out more plainly still in the last temptation; all the more clearly to us, perhaps, because the issues are so sharply drawn. It is to worship someone (Satan has not declared himself) beside God, and the bait is the kingdoms and glory of the world. Our Lord at once discloses Satan and bids him depart; God, God alone, is to be worshiped and served—anything else was abominable to His holy soul.

But, again, what was the element of suffering in thus being tempted? We have already alluded to the pain it gives a pure soul to be brought in any way in contact with evil. Where the purity was absolute and perfect the pain must have been intense. We steel ourselves more than we think by indifference. There was none of that in Him. The suggestion of evil was not merely an insult to Him, but it outraged every faculty of a holy nature zealous for the glory of God. To Him the mere presence of sin was deep pain; to be in company with a being capable of making

such suggestions was torture. Is it not pain for a pure person to be thrown in the company of a foul blasphemer and to be approached with suggestions of similar sin? Would it not be still more painful were the person outwardly pleasing in manner? Satan is none the less Satan when he is transformed into an angel of light.

The kingdoms of the world and their glory—to whom did they belong? Were they not rightly His? Could He not appreciate all that was attractive and beautiful, apart from sin? Did He not read on many a bright page of prophecy that all was one day to be His? In a very real sense He could think of all that was there—the beauty of nature, the power of rule—as one day to be subject to Himself. But even that could have no attraction for Him save to subdue all things to His Father's authority. And He would remember, never could for a moment forget, that it was to be the Father's gift to Him: "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession" (Psa. 2:8). They would then be put in His hands by His Father, and in His time and way. He will not anticipate, like Jacob, nor accept a lie, whatever show of power and glory there might be in it. He knew, as alas man refuses to know, that if God be turned from there is absolutely nothing left.

So He would go on in the path of suffering rather than yield for one moment to the tempter: for faithfulness to God means suffering in a world where all is against Him. Our Lord abides in that path, and thus He suffered being tempted, while not one motion is produced toward a relief proposed by Satan.

We have thus dwelt at some length, and yet how imperfectly, upon the incorruptibility of our Lord's humanity—a unique, a holy one; subjected to every form of temptation, to body, to soul, and to spirit—as perhaps suggested in the threefold attack of Satan—but perfect in it all.

It may be well to call attention to two aspects of temptation spoken of in the first chapter of James: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:2-3); "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed" (vss. 13-14). The first of these passages speaks of temptation or trial assailing from without; the second, of desire or lust within. The first was that to which our Lord was subjected throughout His whole life; the second, He was absolutely incapable of. Perish the thought that would link His holy name with it.

Lectures on the Tabernacle: A Full Exposition Examining the Types and Their Doctrinal Applications — Fully Illustrated, Ram's Skins and Badger' Skins Coverings, The

Exodus 36:19

We have the last two coverings of the tabernacle very briefly described, in a single verse, whereas the details of the first covering, or tabernacle proper, occupied a considerable space; and the tent or covering of goats' hair was also dwelt upon at some length. Remembering that each of these coverings speaks of our Lord Jesus, it is suggestive that the more deeply we learn of Him, the more of beauty and divine fullness we behold. Truly it is "the unsearchable riches of Christ" that are set before us.

In these coverings we have quite an absence of detail—not that they do not exhibit perfection in Him, but the attention is directed to but a few features in each. The skins of the animals would suggest an impervious covering, not to be penetrated by sun or rain. No dimensions are given, nor divisions indicated.

We will look first at the rams' skins dyed red. These words give us the three features to be dwelt upon: the animals were rams; their skins were used; and these were dyed red. We turn to God's word for instruction upon these features.

There is a passage in the 114th psalm which gives us a suggestion of the significance of the ram. When God led Israel out of Egypt, the victorious march is described as bringing all nature in subjection and sympathy with that wondrous deliverance: "The sea saw it and fled: Jordan was driven back. The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs" (vss. 3, 4). The word for "rain" means "the strong one," and the skipping and leaping of the mighty mountains shows the divine majesty of God, before whom the strongest and mightiest must quail.

When Abraham went to offer up Isaac as a burnt-offering and God stayed his hand, He provided not a lamb for a burnt-offering, but a ram, "caught in a thicket by his horns." This is all-significant as we look for the meaning. The thicket may well suggest the condition of Israel according to the flesh when our Lord "came unto His own." God had brought a vine out of Egypt, cast out the nations, and planted it in the mountain of His inheritance. He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes (Ps. 80:8-11; Isa. 5). The vineyard had become a thicket, filled with thorns and brambles, the curse of barrenness, and the mark of the "sons of Belial" (2 Sam. 23:6, 7). The horns of the ram suggest the kingly authority of our Lord (Psa. 92:10), which furnished, we may say—though the enmity was deeper-the occasion for the Jews having delivered Him up to death. The superscription upon the cross was "The King of the Jews" (Matt. 27:37). The ram was caught by his horns in the thicket. But how perfectly is the will of God shown in all this—His counsel was to be fulfilled, and the wickedness of the Jews was but the occasion (while it showed their enmity against God) for Him to show the Sacrifice He had provided. Christ in the full energy and vigor of a perfect manhood offered Himself as the true Sacrifice, which Isaac could never be.

When we come to the Levitical ordinances, we find the ram occupying perhaps the most conspicuous place. It was very frequently used for a burnt-offering (Levs. 8:18; 9:2; 16:3, 5), also for a peace-offering (Levs. 9:18; Num. 6:14; 7:88). It was almost the distinctive trespass-offering (Levs. 5:16; 6:6; 19:21).

But perhaps its fullest significance is seen in the offering for the consecration of the priests (Ex. 29:15-26). Here a bullock and two rams were taken; the bullock was for a sin-offering, one of the rams for a burnt-offering, and the other was called the ram of consecration." The priests laid their hand upon this ram, as showing their identification with it; then it was slain, and its blood sprinkled not only upon the altar, as showing God's acceptance of the sacrifice, but put upon the ear, thumb, and great toe of the priest, as snowing that he now was specifically and completely set apart to God, who had an absolute claim upon the obedience, as shown by the ear; upon the service, as suggested by the hand; and upon the walk, of which the foot speaks. Thus the ram of consecration was the measure of full, complete devotedness unto God,

measured not by the life merely, but unto death.

The right shoulder was then taken, with the fat and the inwards and unleavened bread, and again identified with the offerer by being placed in their hands, waved before the Lord, then burnt upon the altar as a sweet savor unto God. Moses, acting as the priest, had the breast; and upon the remainder of the sacrifice the priests fed, abiding in the tabernacle area seven days, the full period of their consecration.

How perfectly all this speaks of Christ in His devotedness to God is seen as we examine the details, both in contrast and resemblance. The contrast is seen in the fact that the priests needed something outside themselves to express their consecration, while Christ was absolutely devoted to God, with never a desire apart from or contrary to Him. Man's sin made it necessary that Christ should die for atonement, but it furnished fresh occasion to display the perfection of that obedience which was unto death. In this supreme test all the fullness of His consecration was displayed, and in divine grace is accepted for His people.

Coming to details for a moment, let us see the inward springs of devotedness laid bare. His obedience, His work, His walk were all unto death, as suggested in the blood-touched ear, hand and foot. Never an act that was not the expression of this throughout His entire life. The shadow of the cross was upon Him from the manger to Gethsemane, but it was a shadow in which His perfect and holy soul found the light of His Father's will. When He came into the world He said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 10: 5-7). He could say as to His death, "This commandment have I received of My Father" (John 10:18); and in the anguish of Gethsemane it was still, "Not My will but Thine be done" (Luke 22:42).

Thus when the hour came for which He had come into the world (John 12:27) and He yielded Himself up to death, all the hidden springs of His life were laid bare, and all was seen to be for God. The shoulder, which speaks of strength; the fat within and without, which speaks of the energy of the will-in man, that which fills him with pride and rebellion; and the vitals, His thoughts, motives and desires: all that He was, went up in death in the sweet savor to God that perfect holiness could desire. And the wonder is that it was sin in man that made such a display necessary if infinite love was to express itself.

This then is the thought suggested by the ram—Christ in the full vigor of a perfect life, living only for God, and yielding Himself up to Him absolutely in a devotion that was only measured by His death on the cross.

We have really anticipated the significance of the skin, which we shall now consider. It is very striking that the first intimation of salvation by substitution is seen in the clothing of our first parents with garments of skin. The very first promise is that the woman's Seed would bruise the serpent's head. In that we see Christ's victory over Satan, through death destroying him that had the power of death. But in the clothing with skins we have the application of the benefits of that death to His people.

How striking it all is! The ignorance of innocence had gone forever. Man had awakened to the awful fact that he was naked. Disobedience to God had destroyed the beauty of the first creation; the shame of a fallen life replaced it—a corrupted life now, with death attaching to it. So he must hide, even from his most intimate companion; and how much more when the still small voice of infinite holiness is heard. For themselves the aprons of fig leaves—garments of their own making—may suffice, but such could not avail before the all-searching eye of divine Truth.

Leaves speak of profession without fruit, and temporary at the best. "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf" (Isa. 64:6). Man may gather the best and brightest leaves of human worthiness and righteousness; he may stitch them together with cunning workmanship—religious, social, moral, intellectual—but it all leaves him naked when the living God draws near. No covering that man has devised can give a moment's boldness in the presence of a holy God. His shame appears in that heart-searching Presence.

But thanks be to Him who is Love, He has provided a covering which suits Himself, and which effectually covers the believing sinner, bringing peace and rest to his conscience in view of the judgment of God. God makes coats of skin and clothes them. Life must be given up to provide these skins; so from Eden we may hear the gospel preached: "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him" (Luke 15:22). The best, the most costly robe is through the Lord Jesus Christ giving up His life. So believers are "in Christ," covered by Christ, of whom they can say, "The Lord our righteousness" (Jer. 23:6; 1 Cor. 1:30).

We find in Leviticus that the skin of the sacrifice was to be the priest's. There was a special exception to this in the case of the sin-offering on the Day of Atonement (Levs. 16:27), where the skin along with the flesh of the entire animal was to be burned outside the camp. This was to emphasize the depth of the judgment which must be visited upon sin, but the effect of it was that the blood was carried into the holiest and sprinkled upon the mercy-seat, giving the believer "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. 10:19). Thus the same truth is illustrated from a different side.

In the directions as to the burnt-offering, the animal was to be flayed (the skin removed); then it was divided into its parts (Levs. 1:6) and burnt upon the altar. The skin was to belong to the priest who presented the offering (Levs. 7:8). So Christ in offering up Himself upon the cross secured a covering for His beloved people. This is suggested—may we not say?—in the seamless robe of our Lord, for which the lot was cast by divine appointment. It is one perfect, consistent whole-not to be rent. The one to whom God allots it must have it whole or none (John 19:23, 24). In sovereign grace, this robe of a perfect righteousness is provided for every one that will receive it. This robe is Christ Himself. In the wisdom of God He is made unto us "righteousness" Cor. 1:30)—the righteousness which is of God by faith (Phil. 3:9).

Here we must guard against a thought which has obtained with many, that Christ's active obedience in His life is imputed to the believer.

According to this teaching, man, who owed perfect obedience to the law, could not enter heaven without having fulfilled the word, "do and live."

Having failed utterly to do this, the law-keeping of Christ is imputed to him, so that God accepts Christ's obedience in place of the sinner's. Now when we see that it is the skin of the animal which is given for a covering, the thought of mere obedience in life being imputed is set aside. The life had to be given up, death had to come in, and thus the perfect robe of righteousness was secured, even Christ Himself, which includes His perfect obedience in life, His death, and what He now is, as the measure of the believer's acceptance and standing before God.

We suggest one more thought connected with the skin. In the burnt-offering, all was divided into the appropriate parts—legs, shoulder, head, inwards. What had been covered from view was laid bare by the removal of the skin. Man could see but the outside of Christ's life, but in His death the hidden springs and motives were all laid bare, even to the eye of man in some measure, but how perfectly to God, to whom all was offered as a sweet savor.

Thus, as we have already seen in another connection, the shoulder of strength, the breast of love, the inward motives or thoughts of His heart, were seen to be absolutely devoted to God. He breathed out His entire being, in death, to God—all was offered upon the altar. Every detail was perfect in itself: the skin could be removed.

There is scarcely need to dwell now upon the significance of the red color of the rams' skins, for already we have had it emphasized again and again that the Lord's devotedness unto death is the thought here, which is made conspicuous in the blood-red color. The ordinance of the red heifer in the 19th chapter of Numbers suggests the same thing.

Our Lord's entire life was indeed a foreshadowing of His death. Around the manger were the shadows of the cross; for as the manger contained food for the beasts, a food of plants cut down, sacrificed to become life for others, so our Lord was "cut off out of the land of the living" (Isa. 53:8), that He might be the food for His people. Ever and anon did the shadows of the cross fall across His path; as doubtless it was ever in His mind.

In the 63rd chapter of Isaiah our Lord comes from the judgment of His enemies "with dyed garments from Bozrah" (ver. 1). The same thought is suggested in the red horse of the second sea], death and carnage (Rev. 6:4). Thus the red in the covering before us seems clearly to speak of our Lord's death.

We have thus in three convergent lines found the significance of this third covering of rams' skins dyed red. In it we see Christ in all the energy of a perfect life yielding it up in death in absolute devotedness to God, and this marked His entire course down here.

Let us recall a few familiar scriptures which illustrate this truth. "When the time was come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51). He was to be received up to glory; He was going to His Father; but how was He going? He seemed to be nearest heaven on the Mount of Transfiguration, so far as outward glory was concerned, yet upon that very Mount we know the conversation was not the glory to which He had drawn so near, but "the decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31). He would go back to the glory by way of the cross. We may explain the familiar passage in John 14 in the light of that truth, "I go to prepare a place for you." Had He gone at that very instant, we may reverently say He would not have prepared the place for us. Oh, how much was involved in those two brief words, "I go." They meant Gethsemane and Calvary—the judgment of God first, and then the glory. Thus the place was prepared. He who was cut off from the presence of God for our sins has won the title to enter eternal glory and claim it for every sinner who trusts in Him.

But this place in glory was won in perfect obedience to His Father's will. At Gethsemane, when they came to take Him, instead of using His divine power to smite His enemies, He quietly yielded Himself into their hands, saying, "The cup which My Father path given Me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11). So the death on the cross which manifested the desert of our sin and disobedience in its fullest measure, was the crowning act of a life of perfect obedience. This is dwelt upon in the Epistles: "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19). This was not our Lord's law-keeping during life, as has been thought by many, but His obedience "unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8).

In Hebrews 10 we have the familiar quotation from the 40th psalm. The psalmist, speaking prophetically of and for our Lord Jesus, says: "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God... He taketh away the first (the offerings under the law) that He may establish the second" (His own work, in which He did the will of God) — "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once" (Heb. 10:5-10). Here, then, is the devotedness of which we have been speaking—the antitype of all the sacrifices. In His death, who came to do His Father's will, we see what God had in mind in this covering of rams' skins dyed red.

But as we have been seeing, this devotedness characterized His entire life. He goes into the temple, which is for Him His Father's house, but He finds it polluted by men who, under the plea of caring for God's things, are really seeking their own. Our Lord with a scourge of small cords drives them out, and casts out all their traffic. "Make not My Father's house a house of merchandise," He says, and His disciples remember the words of the 69th psalm (ver. 9)—one of the sacrificial psalms — "The zeal of Thy house hath eaten Me up." This very zeal and devotedness to His Father's glory was a pledge of His death. So when asked by the Pharisees by what authority He did these things, His reply shows that He knew full well where such zeal was leading Him: "Destroy this temple"—take My life — "and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:13-22).

How good it is to dwell upon such devotedness!-let us also put it alongside of that which we may well be ashamed to call by the same name. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished" (Luke 12:50)—His footsteps quickening as He drew nearer to that hour when His last breath was unto His Father. Must we not believe, can we doubt for a moment, that the Father's eye was upon the dye of the rams' skins throughout our Lord's entire life?—that His eye marked it in every act and word, in all His prayers and miracles, in His thoughts and inmost desires, in the energy of One whose only object was to do the Father's will, and whose whole perfect life went out in ardent desire to lay itself upon the altar—a complete gift in love to the Father who had sent Him upon such a service?

We go back again to that word, "By the which will we are sanctified." Blessed be God, all our poor obedience is covered up, swallowed up in this obedience, in the value of which we are set apart to God, and made as perfectly the objects of His delight as the One who did it for us and for God! And so, while ashamed of ourselves, we are not ashamed of Him. This covering is for us the "best robe," as it was for Him the mark of that which only the Father's heart can appreciate in all its fullness.

We come now to the covering of the badgers' skins, or seal skins, and here the details are still more meager, though doubtless the significance is to be clearly found if we use the divinely-given key. There is some question whether the word is to be rendered "sealskin," but students agree that it is the skin of some animal that lived in the water. Seals, we are told, abounded on the shores of the Red Sea, so there is

no geographical difficulty in the way.

Apart from this covering of the tabernacle, and the coverings upon the various tabernacle furniture when journeying (Num. 4), we have but one mention of sealskin, as we will call it. It is in Ezekiel 16, where God is recounting to Israel His grace and provision for her, His bride. He had found her lying in her blood and had given her life; and He had clothed her with a beauty not her own—broidered work and jewels and a beautiful crown upon her head. In connection with all this adornment, He had shod her with badgers' skin (chap. 16:10). Alas, Israel abused all this love, and put to shameful uses the beauty which had been put upon her. But the significance seems plain: shoes of sealskin were an appropriate and effectual covering for the feet of a bride, typical of ample provision for Israel for all her journeying here. We remember that the prodigal also was clothed not only with the best robe, but had a ring, pledge of eternal love, and "shoes on his feet," full provision for the walk.

Recurring now to the seal, it is an amphibious animal, properly belonging to the land, yet living in the water. Its skin is impervious to the element in which it lives; its covering thus maintains it in the midst of unnatural surroundings.

When we think of our Lord coming down into this world from the light and joy and blessedness of His heavenly home, what a foreign element it must have been for Him to live in! But, by virtue of His absolutely holy nature, our blessed Lord kept everything of Satan's world out of His heart. Nothing in it appealed to Him. The prince of this world could spread before Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, his seductions were absolutely echoless in that shrine of God, His holy heart.

This then is the first thought we gather from sealskin—perfect protection in a hostile element.

And here too it is well to remember that the life must be given up to furnish the skins; so this separation was unto death. "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin" (Heb. 12:4), but He did.

The next thought as to the sealskin is closely connected with what we have just been seeing, and grows out of the use of sealskin in the passage we have referred to in Ezekiel. Shoes are to protect the feet from injury and defilement. The feet are our point of contact with the earth, and how important it is that they should be protected alike from its thorns and its soil. The shoes were removed in the presence of God, for the ground was holy. Earth must not defile in that holy Presence, and it was in that Presence our Lord lived every moment: this was the preparation with which He was shod.

Look at Him as He walked. How were His feet shod? "Beautiful" indeed they were, as bringing good tidings and publishing peace (Isa. 52-7), for His was the ministry of reconciliation, not imputing men's trespasses unto them. His feet bore Him on many an errand of love and mercy—to Sychar's well and to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon; to Cæsarea Philippi, and to Jerusalem—everywhere He went, "about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 4:23).

No sacrifice with the slightest blemish or bruise could be offered to God. A bullock might be incapacitated from being a sacrifice by striking its foot against a stone and being bruised. Suppose, if it had been possible, that our Lord had been tempted to murmur at the trials and privations of the way, for He had not where to lay His head, or that He had lost control of Himself as He walked in and out amongst the stony-hearted men by whom He was surrounded; such dashing of His foot against a stone would have produced a bruise, would have been an imperfection, would have been a blemished offering, unsuited for God. Rightly do we say, "if it were possible," for that could not be. The very occasions when the stones lay thickest about Him, when all would be calculated to stir the spirit to absolute fury by the hardness of heart, envy, unbelief of those who sought to "entangle Him in His talk," only served to exhibit the perfect equipoise of His soul. (See Luke 11:53, 54.)

Grief there was at the sin and hardness of heart, holy indignation too, and scathing rebuke, but never one single word that could defile; never a moment to mar His unclouded communion with the Father. Let us "consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself," and compare this undefiled walk with that of the best of His own in this world: can we conceive of one going through it without gathering a particle of defilement? How we gather the dust of the world upon our feet as we go about our necessary business, in meeting the responsibilities and duties of life. We do not excuse ourselves for it; we know it is because of our feebleness of faith and lack of spiritual energy; but all was perfect with our holy Lord. Was there a particle of dust upon His holy feet at the end of the journey? He never deviated one hair's-breadth from the path of perfect obedience to God; and when those feet of His who "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him," were nailed to the cross, there was no stain upon them.

But we gather another thought from the sealskin covering. It was probably of a brown or dark hue, not repulsive in appearance, but not particularly attractive. For faith, the characteristics which we have been dwelling upon in our Lord are blessedly attractive, but to the natural man, there was "no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isa. 53:2). As they looked upon Him walking in lowly separation from the world and its spirit, they said, "Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet" (John 7:52). Even His wondrous teachings and miracles failed to overcome the pride of unbelief in many: "Is not this the carpenter?" was the incredulous and scornful question asked. Nor did it stop there: that which put Him at a moral distance from all hypocrisy and religiousness of the natural man was no barrier to conscious need, which ever found a tender welcome in Him. The outcast, the wretched and the lost came freely to Him; but unbelief still stumbles and says, "A Friend of publicans and sinners" (Luke 7:34).

And yet who that needs the word of God can fail to see that it was a humbled Lord who was to be expected? He "made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant,... and being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself" (Phil. 2:7, 8). This faith sees in the covering of sealskin, the lowly garb of One who came to serve. Think of the Lord of glory, the Creator and the Upholder of all things, coming into the world in such lowly form as this! And think of all this condescension awakening in the heart of man only scorn and mockery!

Be it so if, alas, it must be. To behold no beauty in the Lord Jesus is to prove one truly blind to what is of true worth: not to have the heart stirred by a love which "passeth knowledge" is to prove it cold and dead. But faith beholds beauties where the world sees uncomeliness; and faith follows with adoring heart the footsteps of Him who was separate from sinners, and remembers with joy that beneath this apparently somber exterior are hidden the glories we have dwelt upon in the other coverings. When the world turns away, faith cries aloud, "He is altogether lovely" (SoS. 5:9-16). "This is my Beloved and this is my Friend." If asked: "What is thy Beloved more than another beloved?" faith gladly, like the bride in the Song of Solomon, answers by describing Him from the head to the feet. Every feature has its own beauty and attractiveness; every step, word and act of our Lord has a beauty all its own. And after we have exhausted all our little knowledge of Him, we

can truly say, “the half has not been told.”

This gives significance to the fact that these last two coverings have no dimensions given. They covered, doubtless, all the tabernacle. So in the burnt-offering, there was no limit to the number offered. One kid of the goats would suffice for a sin-offering, but the burnt-offerings were multiplied by thousands in the time of the kings, until the whole temple court was turned into an altar (1 Kings 8:64)—worship has no limit.

In these coverings without measure we have the infinite fullness of Christ suggested. Let the thoughts go, under the guidance of Scripture, as far as the finite capacity permits, and still there is more beyond— the fullness of Christ, which is only measured by the fullness of God; and, blessed thought, each believer can say: “He is mine and I am His.”

Lectures on the Tabernacle: A Full Exposition Examining the Types and Their Doctrinal Applications — Fully Illustrated, Covering of Goats" Hair, The

Exodus 36:14-18

WE have now reached the second covering of the Tabernacle, or “the tent over the tabernacle,” as it is called. The first covering, already examined, was the tabernacle proper, to which all the other coverings were accessory.

This second covering was made of goats’ hair—probably spun, as we read, “All the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats’ hair” (Ex. 35:26). This was woven into a coarse, dark-colored cloth, quite common to this day in the East for making tents. The dark color of these tents is suggested in the words of the bride in the Song of Solomon: “I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon” (chap. 1:5)—black as the tents of Kedar, comely as the curtains of Solomon. The dark color of the goats’ hair is also seen in the same book: “Thy hair is as a flock of goats” (chap. 6: 5). Thus the goats’ hair was evidently dark or black.

This is doubtless the proper rendering, though the word for hair is omitted. This is the case, however, in passages where there could be no question that the hair is intended, as in chapter 35:26, “The women... spun goats’ [hair]. The previous verse, 25, would show that this was used in connection with the curtains. Indeed no other use for goats’ hair is given. Had the “skins” of goats been intended, that word would doubtless have been used, as in the description of the two outer coverings of rams’ and badgers’ skins (chap. 26:14).

The reason why the word hair is omitted may be, first, that our attention is thus more closely called to the goats—the significance of the animal; secondly, the chief word for “hair” is from the same root as, and closely allied with, the word for goat; though there are two words for “goat,” one meaning a hairy one and the other, used here, meaning a strong one. Where these are used together they mean a buck of the goats. (Gen. 37:31; Levs. 4:23, etc.). A third reason, closely allied with the first, may be that the living goat is thus prominently put before us, as though we might say the hair was upon it.

In addition to its use for tents, this cloth of goats’ hair was also, probably, what is called sackcloth: “The sun became black as sackcloth of hair” (Rev. 6:12). This was used in mourning and afflicting the soul, as in repentance: “They would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes” (Matt. 11:21). The raiment of John the Baptist was of camels’ hair, similar to this (Matt. 3:4), and Elijah was described as being a “hairy man” with a leathern girdle (2 Kings 1:8); the hairy garment giving him, perhaps, that appearance. The “two witnesses” gave their prophetic testimony “clothed in sackcloth” (Rev. 11:3). And in Zechariah, speaking of the prophets, it was said, “Neither shall they wear a rough garment [margin, garment of hair] to deceive” (Zech. 13:4)

From these passages, we see that sackcloth was the badge of mourning, used at times of bereavement, calamity, or individual and national repentance. It was worn by the prophets, doubtless as in keeping with their own mourning and the call to the people to repent.

Recurring now to the curtains, and remembering that they speak of our Lord’s person, we gather that in these goats’ hair coverings we have Him presented as the Prophet.

He was frequently spoken of as a prophet When He disclosed to the woman of Samaria her sin, she said, “Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet” (John 4:19). He had spoken for and from God. When He had fed the five thousand, the people said, “This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world” (John 6:14). Moses had predicted that God would send such a Prophet: “A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you like unto me; Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you.

And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people “(Acts 3:22, 23). The man in John 9, whose eyes had been opened by our Lord, when asked what he had to say of Him, answered,” He is a prophet” (ver. 17). As we have noticed, these coverings were made, not of the skin, but of the hair of goats.

We will get later the significance of the skin, in connection with the next covering, of rams’ skins dyed red. May we, without being fanciful, suggest a few thoughts in connection with the animals’ hair?

It is the outermost covering of all, over the skin, and is the point of contact between the animal and the outer world; it is also the point of separation. The hair shields the animal from the rain, and protects it from extremes of cold and heat. Thus it indicates separation. So the Nazarite let his hair grow long in token of his separation from everything that would defile (Num. 6:5). If defilement came in, he had to shave off his hair in token that he had lost his separation. One of the signs of leprosy was the hair turning its color, or sometimes its falling out was the precursor of this disease (Levs. 13:30, 42). The vigor of separation not being maintained, defilement and sin resulted.

And was it not this intense spirit of separation from surrounding evil which characterized the prophets of the Old Testament? Samuel, the first of the prophets, was thus marked out by the promise to his mother before his birth: “I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head” (1 Sam. 1:11). His long hair of Nazariteship was to mark his relationship to God, and be a witness to the nation of their alienation from Him. How nobly his life answered to this badge of office can be seen from the subsequent chapters of the book we have quoted.

Passing from the badge to that of which it speaks, we find this separation strongly marked in the writings of all the prophets, in none perhaps more strongly than in Jeremiah: " I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of Thy hand: for Thou past filled me with indignation " (Jer. 15:17). Nor was this a misanthropic aloofness from his fellows by one self-occupied or morbid. He had a spring of joy which kept his own soul fresh in the midst of the moral desert about him, as the previous verse shows: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (vs. 16). As is well known, the ministry of the prophets did not begin till the failure of the people and of the priesthood made it necessary. Thus Samuel began his work after the failure of Eli and his sons. We find that the primary work of the prophet was not to predict future events, but to speak for God, and to call back the people to a true judgment of their ways. We do indeed get most wonderful and glorious predictions: the destiny of the nations, the recovery of Israel and its future glory; above all, the kingdom of Christ our Lord—we shall find these themes dwelt upon on many a bright page of the Prophets. But the dark, somber background upon which all these pictures of glory are projected is the abundant witness to the people of their sin, and solemn threats of coming judgment. These predominate: "Cry aloud, spare not... show My people their transgression" (Isa. 58:1).

So, as we have seen, our Lord was frequently spoken of as a prophet. He Himself spoke of John the Baptist as "a prophet, and more than a prophet" (Matt. 2:9). And after John's imprisonment He took up the same prophetic work, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15).

He was indeed more—how much more! —than a prophet; but His ministry of mercy and grace was ever connected with the solemn witness of the sin of the people to whom He had come. Particularly did His constant witness to the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and leaders of the people show the garment of goats' hair. For Him, too, it was the garment of sorrow, for the stern rebukes of sin and warnings of judgment came from the tenderest and strongest heart that ever beat, if we may compare the Lord and Master with even His most faithful servants. Jerusalem, which had heard His warnings, was also the subject of tears and lamentations: "He beheld the city and wept over it"; " O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not" (Luke 13:34). Thus both characteristics of the prophet are manifest in Him-the faithful and complete rebuke of sin and the spirit of mourning. In how many cases is this manifest: grace, purest grace, is seen in dealing with the woman of Samaria, but her sin was not condoned in the slightest degree.

There is no such thing, in dealing with God, as covering up sin. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper" (Prow. 28:13), and God only deals with men on the basis of what they are. If a man comes to God claiming to be righteous, God must refuse him: "The proud He knoweth afar off" (Psa. 138:6). The Pharisee and publican teach us this. He will only meet in grace those whom His holiness has already convicted of sin. So our Lord, the bearer of God's message of love to the world, was ever the Prophet; the garment of goats' hair did not misbecome Him who in divine grace came to seek and to save the lost.

We need hardly add that in Him this prophetic service was accompanied by the true prophet's separation from all evil. While not in dress or manner holding aloof from men, he was absolutely in heart separate unto God, the true Nazarite, set apart to God alone, "separate from sinners" (Heb. 7:26). He came "eating and drinking" (Matt. 11:19). He sat at table with publicans and sinners (Luke 5:30)—with Pharisees too (Luke 7:36)—but He was ever separate; none could for a moment confound Him with those among whom He walked. If He attended the marriage feast, He never forgot His "hour" and the message He had to give (John 2:4); and when He took little children in His arms to bless them, it was with words of invitation to come to Himself, the true way into the kingdom (Luke 18:16).

This is the true separation, the true garment of goats' hair, which He wore with perfect consistency as He moved in and out among men. Let lying lips call Him "a gluttonous man and a winebibber," in their souls they knew He was in very deed separate from it all.

We read also of goats' hair used in an opposite way from what we have been learning, yet connected with it. We have already quoted the passage in Zechariah, "Neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive"; and we read, in Genesis, of Jacob seeking to defraud Esau out of the blessing by the same means. There is a strange commingling of faith and unbelief in Rebekah and Jacob. Both had faith enough to value the blessing, but not enough to trust God for it. So they seek to secure it by deceit. Jacob thus makes good his name of "supplanter." Bitterly does he reap all his sowing, and is himself deceived in much the same way, and in connection with a favorite son, as he had deceived his father Isaac. Esau was "a hairy man," and Rebekah took a kid of the goats, and covered Jacob's hands with it that it might seem to be Esau (Gen. 27:16). So when Joseph's brethren sell him into Egypt, they take his coat of many colors, slay a kid of the goats and dip the garment into the blood, and show it to their father who thinks that his beloved son has been slain by an evil beast (Gen. 37:31-36). In both these cases a kid of the goats, not a lamb, was used for the purposes of deception. We find the goats' hair used for a similar purpose when Michal, Saul's daughter, sought to deceive her father, from whom David had fled.

In the parable of the judgment of the nations, our Lord speaks of those who have shown enmity to Him and His people, as the goats; and the sheep stand for His own, to whom He gives life eternal (Matt. 25:32). The dark color of the goat might also suggest this connection with sin, which we cannot call fanciful in the light of the scriptures at which we have been looking. This is also in accord with the garment of the prophet being of goats' hair. It was a confession of the people's sin and a witness against it.

The goat suggests sin, but its remedy also. In the sacrificial ordinances we find very frequent references made to the sin-offering, and in the majority of cases the goat, or "a kid of the goats," is the animal used for that sacrifice. Thus, if a ruler sinned, he was to bring a male kid of the goats. In the case of one of the common people, it was a female kid. With the trespass-offering it could be a lamb, or a kid of the goats (Levs. 5:6). So, too, in the consecration of the priests, the people were to offer a kid for a sin-offering (Levs. 9:3, 15). On the great day of atonement we know the prominent place occupied by the two goats; one for a sin-offering and the other for the scapegoat (Levs. 16:7-10): one being slain as a sin-offering, its blood taken into the holiest and sprinkled upon the mercy-seat; upon the head of the other, Aaron laid his hands confessing all the sins of the nation, "putting them upon the head of the goat," who would thus bear them away to "a land not inhabited" (literally, "a land cut off"). Here we have a two-fold type of Christ bearing the penalty of our sins, and thus giving us a title to enter the presence of the Holy God; and also taking them away so that they shall be remembered against us no more.

In like manner, at the dedication of the altar, the offerings of the princes of Israel included "one kid of the goats for a sin-offering" (Num. 7:16). We have the same mention in the prescription for the offerings at the feast of tabernacles (Num. 29:16, etc.)

We remember, too, that the words for "sin" and "sin-offering" are the same. So it is said of our blessed Lord, "He hath made Him to be sin (or sin-offering) for us, who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21).

The scriptures we have mentioned show that the goat suggested the sin, the witness of it, and the offering to put it away. We have seen the hair of the goat used for purposes of deception; the goats themselves spoken of by our Lord as contrasted with the sheep. Secondly, we have the garment of hair as the prophets' garb, connected with the witness against sin; and thirdly, the goat as the ordinary animal for the sin-offering. Thus the goat reminds us of our Lord as sin-bearer, who came " in the likeness of sinful flesh (Himself ever sinless), and for sin " (Rom. 8:3). But the covering was of the hair of the goat, not of the skin, suggesting that the sacrifice had not yet been offered, but pointing on to it.

This covering, then, tells of that Prophet who uncovered all the sin of man, who showed him in his true character. He was the witness of man's sin, for "He knew what was in man," and who knew also what the perfect nature of God required. Amidst abounding evil, His own soul was in perfect peace. He could denounce hypocrisy, bear solemn witness against the rich of this world, weep over poor fallen man, while the inmost depths of His holy soul were ever set upon His Father and His will. Thus He never repined at His lot, never was overwhelmed by the tumult of self-will which surged about Him, and never for a moment was bitter or misanthropic. Jeremiah was so overwhelmed by the burden of being God's witness in a sinful and adulterous age that he cursed the day of his birth (Jer. 20:14). But there were no such hours of discouragement in our Lord's life: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (Matt. 11:26) was enough for Him. Thus He wore the prophet's garment of goats' hair as none other has. In this, as in all things else, He must have the preeminence.

But more than this, no prophet could do more than witness against the sin, and point forward to the coming One who would deliver from it. But with our Lord, the very rebuke of sin was a reminder that He was to be the sin-bearer. His call to repentance was also a call to faith in Himself-He was the giver of repentance. After having disclosed the evil in all its blackness, and having denounced it with unsparing faithfulness, He goes to Calvary and bears the punishment which is its due. Thus He is a prophet—, but how much more than a prophet!

We come now to the dimensions of the curtails. There were eleven of these, as we have seen, divided into two sets of five and six respectively. The width of each curtain was four cubits, the same as those of the inner covering, but the length was thirty cubits instead of twenty-eight. Four, as we saw, is the number of the creature, of weakness, dependence and testing, and in relation to our Lord, refers to His human nature, in weakness and dependence, in which He was fully tested and His perfection fully brought out, as suggested by the twenty-eight cubits of the inner covering. But here we have a length of thirty cubits, which, no doubt, has a significance too. Have we not a suggestion in the number of these goats' hair curtains?-eleven curtains, separated into two sets of five and six, which are the factors of thirty.

Five is the number of responsibility, as we have already seen, and appropriately used in connection with our Lord's taking full responsibility in showing to man his sin. The prophet surely emphasized this in all his ministry; and how blessedly has the Sin-offering met our responsibility in salvation by taking the consequences of our sins and bearing them upon the cross. As we shall see later on five is the number which speaks of God with man—of incarnation.

Six has its meaning suggested by its use in Scripture. The six days speak of toil and its limit: "Six days shalt thou labor"; they also suggest the dominion of the man, created on the sixth day, over the creature. The number is frequently associated with the effort of men to be independent of God. It entered into the height of Goliath, the defier of Israel, and the weight of his spear (1 Sam. 17:4-7). It was a factor in both the width and height of the idolatrous image set up by Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 3:1), a foreshadow of that "Beast" who gathers to himself all that is great in manhood to oppose God, and whose number, that of a man, is 666 (Rev. 13:18). But Goliath was overthrown, in the name of the living God, by David; the great image of Nebuchadnezzar was despised and insulted by the men of faith who went into the fiery furnace rather than bow to it; and the Beast is to be cast into the lake of fire. So God has put His limit upon man's day, and will triumph over him when he reaches his highest point.

The sixth division of Isaiah contains that wondrous 53rd chapter, which brings out both the evil of the natural heart and God's victory over it in the death of the Lord Jesus: not only a victory in grace over souls who bow and receive Him in faith—blessed and glorious triumph that is—but a pledge of the full and final triumph over all evil. "Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet"; "That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:8, 14); "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Phil. 2:10). This triumph comes at the millennial age, the sixth age or dispensation of God's ways with man. The heavens have been purged by this blessed Sacrifice, and ere long will be purged by the power of Him whose obedience to death has given Him the right to reign and to subdue all things unto Himself. Thus Satan will be cast out of heaven (Rev. 12:9), and he and all who choose their portion with him, will be eternally confined in the lake of fire. The Lamb will execute this judgment; the redemption by His death gives Him this place of victory over all evil. It is by virtue of His death that He takes and opens the seven-sealed book of judgment and of divine counsels: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood" (Rev. 5:9).

But let us not forget that judgment is His "strange work," and that His victory upon the cross is for salvation primarily, "to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). It was for this He came: "not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17). Thus the element of six in the curtains speaks of the victory of Him who came to be the sin-offering.

We apply this factor also to His life here as the Prophet of God. Evil met Him on every hand, but never overcame Him for a moment. We do not allude to His personal spotlessness, which could not be contaminated, but to the efforts of men to overthrow Him. In vain they laid snares to entangle Him, to involve Him in a denial of Caesar's claims to tribute, or the infinitely higher claims of God to the heart (Matt. 22:21). Neither divine holiness nor divine love could be compromised by Him. He was not to be cajoled by flattery, nor browbeaten by threats; nor could He for one moment be turned from His testimony and the object of His mission. And all this was in the spirit of simple dependence and obedience. The width of the curtain—four cubits, the number of weakness and of the creature—was ever manifest in Him. But this note of victory over evil was ever present too; there were no hours of discouragement or repining. He might and did upbraid the cities which neglected and despised His message, but His resource was to turn to His Father (Matt. 2:20-28), and from that Presence to again utter sweetest words of love and mercy in the invitation enshrined by grace in the hearts of countless saved ones.

Let us emphasize this perfect life and work of the prophet, by contrasting it with that of His people—none of whom can measure up to the full standard. What is signified by the number four is but too plainly seen in us; for, in the place of dependence and trial, in which we are, we too often are in contrast to the unfailing One. We have also the number five, which recalls our responsibility to render full obedience; but where is the other factor seen which speaks of victory in the place of responsibility?—only where, and in the measure in which, we are held and controlled by Him.

But our Lord, “slain in His victory” on the cross, has gained the victory for His beloved people. He has triumphed over sin and over Satan and his power. The “strong man” has been bound and deprived of his armor and spoiled of his goods. Sin has been robbed of its mastery, and, wonder of wonders, the hard rebellious hearts of believing sinners have been won, conquered by love divine. What precious themes are these! What cause for exultation and worship as we ponder them!

The sixth curtain of the goats’ hair insured the complete covering of the inner curtains of varied colors; half hung over the back of the tabernacle, and the other half was doubled or turned back in front (Ex. 26:9, 12). It has been thought that thus it would be more prominent, and visible to all who approached the tabernacle, and this view certainly seems beautifully in accord with the significance of the curtain. It acted thus, as we might say, as a sign or badge for the whole house of God. It served to designate the blessed object for which God had established a dwelling-place with man. As every poor, weary, sin-laden Israelite would cast his eye toward the tabernacle he would see, not the gleam of the gold or the gorgeous hues within, but the goats’ hair, reminding him that the One who knew his sins was ready to forgive them.

And as we read through the Gospels, whether it be the miracles, the teaching, or the ways of our holy Lord, do we not see this sixth curtain, telling of victory over sin for sin-sick souls? As we see Him cleansing lepers, healing the sick, raising the dead; or as we hear the words of grace and truth falling from lips which spake “as never man spake,” we see stamped upon it all the blessed legend, “This Man receiveth sinners” (Luke 15:2); we hear Him saying, “ Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest “(Matt. 11:28); and lest any might think their sins too great or too many to hope for pardon or favor from God, this badge of the Sin-bearer waves like a banner of victory over evil, beckoning them all to come and hear these blessed words,” Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out “ (John 6:37).

Is not this attractive grace? Can men shrink from One who, while reproving sin, provides the remedy? Can we shrink from the hand which was pierced for our sins? Can we perish with thirst, when He calls, saying, “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink?”

One last feature must be noted: the two sets of goats’ hair curtains were fastened together by fifty taches of brass, as the inner curtains were by golden ones. When we come to see the significance of the brass, we will find it a symbol of the unyielding truth of God and of judgment. It was the metal which covered the altar of burnt-offering, which speaks of atonement by sin-bearing. So here again, we have the two great thoughts of sin and sin-bearing reiterated in these brazen clasps, and giving consistency to the whole covering—victory over evil in the place of responsibility.

We may close our contemplation of this covering of goats’ hair with the words of John the Baptist—himself a man with the hairy garment —saying, as in effect he did, “I am but a reprover of sin; I only partly illustrate the garment I wear; you must look away from me to see its full meaning in the One whose way I have come to prepare: ‘ Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world ‘“ (John 1:20)

Lectures on the Tabernacle: A Full Exposition Examining the Types and Their Doctrinal Applications — Fully Illustrated, Linen Curtains - Their Dimensions and So Forth, The

Exodus 36:8-13

Having looked at the colors and materials of the curtains, we will now seek to gather something of the meaning of their dimensions and arrangement.

Ten curtains composed the inner covering, each 4 cubits wide and 28 cubits long. These ten were united into two sets of five each, and these again linked together to form one complete covering. No specific mention, apparently, is made of the manner in which the five curtains were united to each other (it has been conjectured that it was by needle-work), but the directions for uniting the two sets are very clear. Fifty loops of blue were made in the edge of each curtain, and fifty taches or clasps of gold were used to unite all into one tabernacle. This first covering of ten curtains was the tabernacle proper, or “dwelling-place,” as the word literally means (Ex. 36:14, and frequently). The other coverings seem to have been for special use in connection with the primary one, as protection (see Ex. 36:14, where the goats’ hair covering is called “the tent over the tabernacle, and 36:19, where the two others are designated simply as coverings). There is doubtless significance in this use of words. The” tabernacle,” with its varied colors, cherubic figures and embroidery, was far more elaborate than any of the others, and as we have partly seen, spoke in a very complete way of our Lord. This first covering, the tabernacle proper, represented Him in a way to which the other coverings were subsidiary. This will appear as we take them up.

The word for “curtains” is Yerioth, from a root meaning to tremble or wave—as suspended curtains do. A similar root with a similar primary meaning is the word for “fear.” How suggestively do these thoughts describe the Lord Jesus as He was here. He was the dependent One, not relying upon His own inherent strength, but cleaving ever to His Father. He was perfectly obedient because perfectly dependent upon the will of God. Thus the true “fear” of the Lord characterized Him. He was ever moved by the slightest breath of the Spirit. There was thus, in the eye of man, entire weakness, for He had no will apart from perfect subjection to God; therefore the whole character of God with reference to sin, the world and Satan was manifested. So also He gave fullest expression to God’s thoughts and ways of mercy or of judgment with reference to man.

The word “curtain” is a feminine, and in speaking of their being joined “one to another,” it is “a woman to her sister.” This too is in keeping with the lowly place of dependence and subjection taken and kept by our Lord.

Returning now to the various dimensions of the inner covering, let us glean their meaning. In all structures, if there is to be symmetry, there must be accuracy of measurement, and for this there must be a standard. In Scripture this standard was the cubit, or Ammah, from a word meaning “mother.” It was the length of the “mother-arm,” the fore-arm, as the chief and prominent part of the arm, from the elbow to the tip of the finger; that which is used in all work. It was thus a standard taken from man, not above him. God’s requirements are absolutely reasonable and righteous, not going beyond human capacity. And yet how true it is that not one of the fallen sons of Adam could measure up to that perfect human standard: “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” But God delights in man, and even the measurement of the heavenly city is by the human standard. It is the measure of a man (Rev. 21:17). If God is to be in any measure apprehended by His creatures, it must be, not in that unutterable glory and infinity which no one knoweth but the Son, but rather in the One who humbled Himself

and was found in fashion as a man. How amazing! God is manifested in the flesh, and we are invited to apply the standard of measurement (which is in our hands and by which we have been condemned as having fallen short of God's glory) to Him, and to see how perfectly He has measured up to the fullest requirements of God.

Thus in the very unit of measurement to be applied to the curtains, we are reminded of our Lord's incarnation. He was and is God, but He is that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us, so that John could say, "Which we have seen with our eyes and our hands have handled "(1 John 1:1).

All thorough measurement takes in every dimension. Thus the curtains were measured both in length and breadth.

"Length" is the extension, and may well stand for the whole course of life. It is used in this way in Scripture-"Length of days" is a familiar expression.

"Breadth" is from the root meaning "spacious," "roomy." It is used constantly in speaking of the dimensions of the tabernacle and temple, both in Solomon's day and the yet future structure described in Ezekiel. It has, however, a metaphorical use with which we are familiar. Thus Solomon had great largeness (breadth) of heart (1 Kings 4:29): "I will walk at liberty (or broadness)"—Psa. 119:45 Isa. 60:5; Psa. 81:10; Ps. 119:32.

In an evil sense it is used for pride — "A high look and a proud (broad) heart" (Ps. 101:5; Prov. 21:4; 28:25).

"Breadth" thus suggests the character of the life and its attendant circumstances. In speaking then of our Lord's life, "length" would suggest its whole course, and "breadth" its character and the circumstances in which this was displayed.

What then were the dimensions of these curtains? They were four cubits wide and twenty-eight long. Four is the number of the earth. Scripture speaks of the "four corners of the earth" (Isa. 11:12). The fourth book of the Bible, Numbers, speaks of the wilderness journey and trial of the Lord's people. We have been seeing how the four Gospels present our Lord in His perfect human character, tested in every way. This is gone into at large in other places,1 and it will suffice us here to say that four is the number which speaks of the earth, of the creature, of trial and of weakness. The creature when tested manifests weakness and, too often, failure. Let us now apply the significance of this number to our Lord, and see wherein it corresponds to His life, and wherein it does not.

First of all, it is the number of the earth, of the creature. It suggests, as we have already seen, our Lord's human nature and not His deity. It speaks of Him as He walked the earth—that is the breadth of the curtain.

But four also speaks of weakness; and how our Lord illustrated weakness here! Who would have thought of the Son of God coming to earth as a Man in the way He did? Look for the Son of the Highest whom the angels are celebrating, and what do you find?—a "babe," the weakest of beings, wrapped in swaddling clothes," badge of helplessness, for One who had clothed Himself with light as with a garment," lying in a manger," in company with the beasts! O Lord of glory, let all the universe worship before Thee, who didst thus humble Thyself!

Trace our Lord throughout His life, and we find the characteristics of this weakness—this earth number. "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (Matt. 8:20). We never read of His performing a miracle to help Himself—freely and lavishly as He spent Himself and used His power in behalf of others, He was the dependent One. He feeds 5000 men with a few loaves, but will not turn one stone into bread for Himself.

Four also speaks of temptation, of trial and testing. The earth is the place where man is cried; what weakness and failure it brings out'

No one was ever so fully tested as our blessed Lord, not only in the forty days, and the special temptations of Satan which closed it, but throughout His entire life He endured the "contradiction of sinners against Himself" (Heb. 12:3).

Thus this measure of four cubits broad speaks of man, weak, tempted, tried—of Him, surely, who can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," and "who was in all points tempted as we are, apart from sin" (Heb. 4:15).

The length of these curtains was twenty-eight cubits. Resolving this number into two factors, we have 4x7. The four, as we have just been seeing, is the number of the earth and of weakness. Seven is the familiar number (perhaps the most familiar of all) which speaks of completeness and perfection. Seven days make a complete week; the seven fat and lean trine of Pharaoh's dream (Gen. 41:1-8), and the various series of seven in the book of Revelation, are illustrations of this. Seven times four would suggest then that testing, trial and weakness in our Lord which were only the occasion of manifesting His perfection.

Notice that the seven is not added to the four, as though something distinct from it, but multiplies the four; weakness and dependence perfectly exhibited what He was. He was not perfect in spite of temptation merely, but perfect in it. See how Satan tries to move Him from the place of dependence by urging Him to make bread from stones. It might have been adding 7 to 4 to have wrought a miracle under such circumstances; it would at least have shown His power. But instead, we see perfection in weakness and dependence. So also to have cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple might have shown supernatural agency, but the perfection of obedience is seen in His refusal to tempt the Lord His God. When He refused to bow to Satan, though offered all the kingdoms of this world and their glory, we can conceive Him as compelling that enemy of God and man to own Him as Creator and Lord, for such He was; but we see the perfection still in the way of lowliness—He Himself will worship, and thus lead the homage of all creation: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4: 10).

And wherever we consider our Lord in His life upon earth we find this same characteristic manifested. Wearied with His journey and resting Himself at the well of Sychar, He asks drink of the woman who came thither to draw (John 4). Here is the number four, weakness and dependence; but in the heart-searching conversation He shows her all her sin and Himself as the Christ; we see the seven (the perfection) in connection with the lowly place He had taken. It is striking that throughout John's Gospel our Lord dwells constantly upon His subjection to His Father, and nowhere do we see His perfection more clearly.

Again, see Him sleeping in the stern of the boat, as they are crossing the lake (Matt. 8:24-26); but, awakened by His affrighted disciples, He rises and quiets their fears, and for their sakes hushes the storm; for Himself He could rest in His Father's care, and sleep while the storm

raged. All through the Gospels He is thus seen, dependent, obedient, tempted, but perfect in it all.

The constant habit of prayer illustrates this same truth. What could be more beautiful than to see our Lord at every stage pouring out His heart to the Father? The very agony of Gethsemane-may we tread softly as we speak of it-shows a perfection which is perfectly human, yet possessed by no one else. “Crucified through weakness” (2 Cor. 13:4) what perfection in each part of that awful suffering! Truly the curtain is twenty-eight cubits long: the whole “length “of His life manifested absolute perfection in entire dependence.

These curtains were united into two sets of five each, making ten in all. Five is the number of human capacity, as the four fingers and thumb upon the hand; the two hands making ten in all. The ten reminds us of the Ten Commandments, the measure of man’s full responsibility. The Ten Commandments were upon two tables, showing responsibility, Godward and manward.2 The two sets of curtains would suggest this two-fold responsibility met by our Lord. Look at His relation to God; what was there lacking in every moment of His life? We have the witness of our Lord as to this: “I do always those things that please Him” (John 8:29); of the Father who spoke from the excellent glory, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17), and of the Holy Spirit who anointed and abode upon Him.

We may apply each of the first four commandments to Him, and even with our imperfect apprehension, cannot fail to see the four and the twenty-eight cubits. “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.” Well did every act of the lowly Man show this. God’s thought in that command was exhibited in Him. God was in all His thoughts. So there never was the slightest approach to that idolatry forbidden in the second commandment, which in some form has been practiced by all men. Covetousness is idolatry.

Here was One who could say in all the energy of His holy soul, “The lines are fallen unto Me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.”

It was in this connection that He said: “Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god; their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into My lips” (Psa. 16:4-6). How opposite was all this to Israel, who had been commanded: “ Make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth “ (Ex. 23:13). Who for a moment would think of connecting the name of our Lord Jesus with the slightest act of disloyalty to His God and Father?

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” Alas, from the heart of man, among other evils, comes profanity. The Father’s name was ever on our Lord’s lips, but never in a light way. He taught and practiced in absolute perfection that petition, “Hallowed be Thy name.” So also in the performance of vows: none had ever fulfilled their obligations and promises to God. Therefore our Lord warned them against taking oaths which they could not keep (Matt. 5:33-37). But He could say, Thy vows are upon Me, C God “(Psa. 56:12);” I will pay My vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all His people “(Psa. 116:14). What vows they were!—to glorify God about sin; to seek and to save the lost; to lay deep, firm and broad the eternal foundations of redemption; to bring many to glory. As we contemplate the cost of performing these vows, may we adore Him who never made a rash vow, nor broke a single engagement entered into with His God and Father.

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” The Pharisees were constantly accusing Him of breaking the Sabbath because He healed the sick on that day. He not only convicted them of hypocrisy, for they would lift an ox out of a pit on the Sabbath, but showed what the true rest of God is—to deliver men from the consequences of sin. These so-called violations of the Sabbath were, morally, the most beautiful and perfect keeping of the obligation.

Let us take up each of these commands of the first table, and as we go fully into detail we will only see more clearly His absolute perfection as Man. Glorifying God in every relation, His heart ever breathed, “I delight to do Thy will, O God.” Here indeed was a fitting abode for the glory of God—the holy of holies of the heart and life of Christ.

We are told that the veil was to be hung up under the taches that united the two sets of the covering (Ex. 26:33), so that one set of five covered the holy of holies (probably hanging over the back of the tabernacle) and the other the holy place. It is not fanciful to suggest that the part which covered the holy of holies typifies our Lord’s perfection in all responsibilities Godward, and the part which covered the holy place refers to the responsibilities manward. Let us look at this last also for a moment.

The foundation of all right human relationships is obedience to the first command of the second able: “Honor thy father and thy mother.” So our Lord perfectly manifested that subjection: “He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them” (Luke 2:51). How much is involved in those simple words, and how perfect was He in this primary responsibility. It is little wonder that as He grew in stature, He “increased in favor with God and man.” That is, all His growth was good, no disappointing characteristics appeared, for none were there: all was well-pleasing both to God and man.

It was therefore perfectly fitting that He should rebuke the hypocrisy of those who under the plea of dedicating a thing to God, neglected their parents (Matt. 15:3-9). None was devoted to God as was He, yet none showed such honor and obedience to those who were over Him in earthly relationships. It is beautiful to see in the extremity of death that He forgot nothing of this: “Behold thy mother” (John 19:26, 27) shows that in going to His Father in heaven, He did not ignore the lowly earthly tie which in perfect grace He had assumed.

And so, as we look at each of these commands of the second table, we find the righteousness required most perfectly fulfilled, and more, in the life of our Lord. Man lustfully desires what is not his own, and gets it even if it be by theft; He could say, “Then I restored that which I took not away” (Psa. 69:4). Himself spotless and pure, He speaks peace and pardon to poor children of sin and shame. Men bore false witness, but He declared the solemn truth no matter how dreadful it was, and bore faithful testimony to the love and mercy of God. Maker and possessor of all things, He had not where to lay His head, yet never murmured.

Indeed, we might well shrink from applying these prohibitions to Him, as if He needed to be checked. What in man must be kept under, did not exist in Him. The law was in His heart; the law, therefore, so far as it went, was a copy of His perfect character, not in its external requirements merely, but in its inner and most spiritual application.

But He more than fulfilled the law’s second table. It said, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,” but He loved His enemies, even to laying down His life for them. He was indeed the neighbor to all the world of need—a “Friend of sinners.” Every responsibility toward God and man thus fully met in Him showed His perfection. When we remember that this same law, which was adorned and beautified by Him, is the instrument of convicting of sin the best of mankind, His sinless perfection is only the more apparent. That which is “the strength of sin” (1 Cor. 15:56) in us, was the proof of righteousness in Him. Let us he reminded again that all this perfection was human; it was a multiple of

four. Weakness, dependence, subjection, were the background upon which all the beauties of His peerless character were displayed.

The ten curtains had one “measure;” the word means to extend, to stretch, and thus to apply the standard. This is a striking picture of the Lord’s life; every part of it was according to an unvarying standard. Nothing was out of proportion. In each act and in connection with every person there was the exhibition of the same perfection in weakness.

Looking at each of the Ten Commandments we cannot say that one was more fully kept than another. It is this unevenness of character which shows the unfitness of man for God, and his need for new birth. Though one might seem to obey one or another of the commandments—though coming short of God’s glory in all — “ whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10). So we must turn from self completely, either for salvation or sanctification. Christ is the only resource. Here was the one measure for each act. God’s glory was the test, and that was manifested in perfection everywhere. He was not more perfect in rebuking sin and hypocrisy than in pardoning and healing the sin-sick soul. Grace did not eclipse righteousness, nor righteousness grace. Patience was ever coupled with promptness; firmness with gentleness.

This brings us lastly to look at the way in which these two sets of curtains were connected. The word for coupling together is a suggestive one; it is from the same root as “Hebron,” which means friendship, companionship. This, too, shows absolute unity of character in our Lord. The aspiration of the psalmist, “Unite my heart to fear Thy name” (Psa. 86:11), found perfect realization in Him. The “curtains,” as we have seen, are closely allied with the word “to fear,” and thus illustrate the unity in the fear of God exemplified in our Lord.

It is also well to note that the curtains were joined side by side, and not end to end. Thus they were parallel to each other, and co extensive. There were no successive periods when His life entered into new or hitherto unknown claims of the will of God. The path opened up before Him, new experiences of the wilderness world were entered into, but the full responsibility of perfect love to God and man was with Him from the beginning to the end. If we may use the language, He walked according to the whole Ten Commandments throughout His life.

As to the manner of uniting each of the curtains to the others, while they may have been united by needlework or some other way, Scripture is silent; yet there seems to be an evident purpose of the Spirit to draw our attention especially to the union of the two sets of five each. Doubtless the lesson which they emphasize will be found in good measure in all the others. May we not find one reason in the fact that man so easily separates between his responsibilities Godward and manward? In all natural religion this is the case. God is excluded from the realm of daily life; duties to one’s neighbor, the responsibilities of the home and business, are things which we must care for ourselves; neither God’s will nor His help are to be greatly considered, beyond the general claims of honesty, morality and unselfishness.

Our Lord’s reply to the lawyer (Luke 10:25, etc.) brings out this thought in man’s heart. Rightly the lawyer had answered that the law demanded perfect love to God and to one’s neighbor. Alas that with this knowledge, he should think he could inherit eternal life by doing what he never had clone and never could do, for “by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:20)—but not the power to keep the law. Instead of owning his sin and casting himself upon the mercy of God, he, “willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?” Notice that he omits entirely all reference to God— the claims of the first table. God is so far away, unseen and unknown, may it not be taken for granted that he loves and serves Him? Now, if he can reduce his neighbors to a few congenial friends, may he not hope by doing his duty to them to deserve the reward of life eternal? Thus in the lawyer’s mind there was apparently but little connection between the two sets of curtains.

And this is but the common thought of men. If a man loves his fellow-men he loves God; it is accepted as true gospel, and the “golden rule” readily taken for granted as quite practicable; thus is God robbed of His claim upon His creatures. But Scripture says, “This commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God, love his brother also” (1 John 4:20. This reverses man’s thought, and gives God His rightful place of supremacy and control, or, rather, recognizes these as His, But with our Lord there was no such sundering of responsibilities, nor ignoring for one moment the fact that He had “come down from heaven not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me” (John 6:38). This we shall see illustrated in the manner in which the two sets of curtains were joined together.

“Looloth” (loops) is from a root meaning to roll. There can be no question as to the meaning and object of these. Possibly the word may suggest the idea of roundness answering to the “eye” through which the hook passed without entering into the material of the curtains themselves. These were entire, and each was perfect. The “loop” which was put upon them was an addition in the sense that the vehicle for uniting the one set to the other did not interfere with the pattern of the curtain.

How our Lord illustrated this! His love for man was as complete as though that were the whole of His life. So that even unbelief has been constrained to acknowledge the beauty of His human character. There it was, and He is the ideal Man in relation to men—but how much more! In like manner, His love to God was as absolute as though there was not a man in existence. He stands out as the Second Man, for whom God was all. But in the “outermost edge” of each set were put the loops of blue, as reminding us that God would show there is a divinely-formed link between responsibilities to Him and to His creature, man. We cannot conceive of our Lord as thinking of man and leaving out God, nor the reverse. He was neither a recluse nor a mere philanthropist.

The loops were blue, we have seen—the color of heaven. Thus the fact that He was from heaven, lived in heaven, and was to return to heaven characterized His whole life of obedience. The mark of heaven was upon it all. Upon that which spoke of His perfect love and obedience to God were the loops of blue, to show that such love and obedience were to be united to a life upon earth in which its responsibilities were to be made one with His service to God. So the blue loops upon the second set of curtains show that all was of one with His devotedness to God.

No life ever was so perfectly given up to God as was His: heart, soul, mind and strength were all and always for God. Yet this devotedness did not make of Him a recluse. There is not the slightest thought of that selfish monasticism with which human self-righteousness has linked the name of Christianity. He loved His Father perfectly, but that was the pledge of His perfect love to man. No hands or heart, on the other hand, were ever so filled with love and labor for men; but there was nothing of the sentimental nor merely philanthropic in this. The loops of blue were upon all, linking all with His Father’s will. He wrought many miracles: blind received their sight, lepers were cleansed, the lame walked, the dead were raised; but we cannot think of these works of love and power toward men as ending there. He was manifesting the works which the Father gave Him to do: “I must work the works of Him that sent Me”; “The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works” (John 9:4; 14:10).

Here is the true Neighbor," whose love to man was ever in obedience to His love to God. This thought is further enhanced by the number of loops and the taches of gold which united them each to each. There were fifty, which is 5 x 5 x 2, or full responsibility—intensified responsibility, may we not say? in the multiplication of the two fives—and this doubled, as though suggesting again the two sides, the human and divine; and thus a perfect witness to His fulfillment of every requirement. Or should we say 10 x 5, we have really the same thought, for the factors are the same. In His devotedness to God there breathed the love to man which ever marked Him whose "delights were with the sons of men." Thus no command obeyed stood alone, but was linked with all the others. It was a seamless robe.

And is not this the only obedience which can be acceptable with God? "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). To have any true righteousness it must be complete; all else is partial and but "filthy rags," even though it be to bestow all one's goods to feed the poor, or to give one's body to be burned. Here, as everywhere, all calls aloud for Christ, the only One who could undertake such an obedience and glorify God.

This last thought is illustrated by the fifty golden taches or hooks which united the loops together.3 Gold, as we shall see later on, typifies divine glory. It was this which was ever before our Lord: "Father, glorify Thy name" (John 12:28) was His one desire. "I honor My Father" (John 8:49). "I have glorified Thee on the earth" (John 17:4). What perfect absence of self-seeking or self-consciousness does all this tell! But are we not further reminded that such obedience while human needed more than human power to render it? No mere creature alone could render it—certainly no fallen creature. The golden taches remind us that the perfect character at which we have been looking is not only human but divine. A divine person, yet truly a Man, united in Himself all obedience, all love to God and man; and upon this fact hangs —may we not say?—that mystery shown in the veil, of "God manifest in the flesh."

So to deny the deity of Christ is to break the bond that made His life a perfect unity, and to leave but a fragment behind, itself stained and marred by false claims, were He not really the Son of God. Men who talk about the loveliness of Jesus, His kindness, His beneficence, His blameless life, and yet who deny that He is the eternal Son of God, are but self-deceived and deceiving others. These clasps of gold were essential for uniting the coverings into one perfect whole; were they omitted all would be marred. Where there is a deliberate, intentional rejection of His deity, it is defiling the temple of God; and such are truly His enemies. But even where this is not the case, the people of God may lose the true proportion of truth as to our Lord's blessed person, if they fail to keep prominently before them the great and glorious fact, "The Word was God." May the Holy Spirit keep His blessed, peerless, person not only before our minds. but enshrined in our hearts, the Object of our worship, love and willing obedience.

Lectures on the Tabernacle: A Full Exposition Examining the Types and Their Doctrinal Applications — Fully Illustrated, Linen Curtains and Colors, The

Exodus 36:8-13

We come now to the actual construction of the Tabernacle—not only the divine instructions given to Moses when God showed him the pattern in Mount Sinai. Between those two periods occurred Israel's apostasy. For scarce had the words of the commands and the people's solemn engagements to keep them been uttered, when they violated the first three by making the golden calf, and rejoiced in the work of their own hands.

Coming down from the mountain and finding them dancing about this idolatrous image, Moses broke the tables of the law, in token that the covenant on the basis of law was at an end. God in mercy, in connection with the intercession of Moses, intervened and resumed His relationship with the people, no longer on the basis of pure law, but of mingled mercy and law, which, while it enabled Him to bear with them as a stiff-necked people, still kept them at a distance. The actual building of the Tabernacle was in connection with this restored relation with the people (Ex. 32:33-35).

The difference in the order in which the various parts are mentioned is in accordance with this relation. At the first, God began with the Holy of holies and the Ark of the Covenant, which was His throne, and from this point passed outward till the structure of the Tabernacle was reached. He was speaking from the point of view of the law, the righteous demands of His throne, which was fittingly the first thing described. But the people have sinned, have violated and dishonored that throne, and unless mercy had intervened, there would have been no possible way by which God could have gone on with them. Most fittingly, therefore, the narrative of the structure begins with the curtains which formed the Tabernacle proper; the fitness of this will appear when we see their significance.

There are at least four ways in which we can look at the Tabernacle. First, it is a figure of God's great creation, the universe. In that case, the court would represent the earth, the Holy place would represent heaven, and the inner, most sanctuary the Heaven of heavens, the place of His throne.

In close connection with this, we can look upon it as setting forth the means of approach to God.

Here again the court would represent the earth, the abode of sinful man; and the inner sanctuary, heaven, with the throne of God hidden from His guilty creatures. The way of approach is by means of the altar of burnt offering and the mercy-seat.

The third view of the Tabernacle is of the structure as made of the gold-covered boards resting upon the silver sockets. These represent Christ's people complete in Him and resting upon His accomplished redemption, and thus "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22).

The fourth view is that which is now to occupy us, in which the curtains, which typify Christ, are the theme. They are not primarily typical of heaven, or the means of access to God, or of His people individually or collectively, but in them we have a blessed and precious type of "the Man Christ Jesus," who was God's dwelling-place while He was upon earth.

The proof of this is found in the first scripture to be considered; for our views of the teachings of the Tabernacle are not to be based upon fancy, but upon the simple and clear application of the perfect word of God. "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). The word for "dwelt" is correctly given in the margin of the Revised Version as "tabernacled" —dwelt in a tabernacle. The Eternal Word, the divine Son, by whom all things were made and are upheld, became flesh, and tabernacled here as a Man. He veiled His glory (though faith exultantly cries out, "We beheld His glory") and was "found in fashion as a man," taking the form of a servant (Phil. 2:6-8).

Let it be ever remembered that it was not God dwelling in a human body—which is one of the many heresies as to the person of our Lord. Nor is it even God dwelling in a perfect man—with body, soul and spirit—as though He could or would finally be separated from this manhood. But it is "the Word became flesh." He became identified with perfect humanity (may God give us to tread with bowed hearts and unshod feet in the presence of this holy truth), took up humanity so absolutely that there was but one person, the blessed Son of God. All the perfection of His humanity was so absolutely associated with the dignity of His divine person, that while He ever remains a perfect Man, there is all the divine essence calling forth the worship that is His due as "God over all blessed forever" (Rom. 9:5).

Thus we are guarded against two specific errors: One is to think of our blessed Lord as simply Deity inhabiting a man; the other, is to think of His humanity in such a way as practically to lose sight of His deity. It is a joy for faith, wherever we behold Christ, to worship Him, and to say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God." Faith does not say, "We cannot worship Him here, because He is Man; but there we can, because He is God." No; faith bursts through any such unholy and human restrictions, and prostrates itself before Him, whether we behold the marks of the human sufferings in His hands and side, or see Him "crowned with glory and honor" (Heb. 2:9).

We will now look at these coverings of the Tabernacle. There were four of them—the outer one was of badger or sealskin; next was that of the rams' skins dyed red; then there were the eleven curtains of goats' hair; and lastly, the inner one, the most composite and complete of all, which was of fine white linen, upon which (as seems to be suggested) were embroidered cherubim in blue, purple and scarlet colors.

The cherubim will come more specifically before us when we examine the ark and mercy-seat. A few words will suffice as to them now. They were composite creatures with four faces—of a lion, of an ox, of a man, and of an eagle (Ezek. 4-14; Rev. 4:6, 7). They represented thus four classes of life: the majestic lion, type of kingly power; the patient ox, strong for labor and service; man with his sympathy and intelligence; and the eagle soaring heavenward.

The four Gospels present our Lord Jesus in this fourfold way. In the Gospel of Matthew we see Him as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," Israel's King. In Mark we see Him in service, bearing, as the patient ox does, His burden, the load of human need. In Luke we see the face of the Man throughout—human intelligence, sympathy, love and example. John shows us the eagle from heaven, soaring back there to the place where He was with the Father before the world was.

These linen curtains were ten in number, each 28 cubits long and four cubits wide, joined side by side together in two sets of five curtains each. These two parts were in turn joined to each other by fifty loops of blue, and hooked with golden hooks, which coupled all together, making one Tabernacle. Here then we have a fullness of form and material at which we must look carefully.

We will first gather the Scripture teaching as to the significance of the fine linen.1 On the great day of atonement, the High Priest laid aside his ordinary garments of glory and beauty, and wore only spotless white. He was going as the bearer of the blood of atonement into the presence of God, and the one thought to be emphasized in the minds of the people was the absolute need of spotless purity in that holy Presence (Levs. 16:4).

When God was about to judge His apostate people, in the day of Ezekiel, when He could no longer go on with their evil, He sent, as the prophet saw in his vision, a man clothed in white linen, with the inkhorn, throughout Jerusalem, to mark everyone who was sighing and crying for the abominations that were done (Ezek. 9:3, 4). The significance of the linen in such surroundings was evident. We shall find this to be the case throughout the Old Testament.

In the New Testament we have in the transfiguration a very striking illustration of the meaning of these white garments. Our blessed Lord's glory, His intrinsic character, was to shine forth on that holy mount—not as He went through the land in the lowly garb of badger skins, in which there was no form or comeliness to the eye of unbelief—but the outer coverings of God's Dwelling-place were removed, as it were, and the personal, moral glory of that Holy One shone out. "His face did shine as the sun"; " His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them(Mark 9:3), showing forth the essential and perfect purity of His nature.

The meaning of the linen is perhaps most definitely given in the 19th chapter of Revelation. Of the Bride, the Lamb's wife, it is said, "To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of saints" (Rev. 19:8, R. V.). This fine linen must not be confounded with the "best robe," which is Christ our righteousness (Luke 15:22). This is put upon the sinner the moment he turns to God in true repentance and faith. But the "fine linen" is the personal holiness, in actual life, produced by the power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of God's saints.

Thus there can be no question of the significance of this fine linen in the curtains. It tells us of the spotless holiness, purity, righteousness of the Lord Jesus, manifested in every act, word and thought of His daily life.

We have already noticed a correspondence between the four races of the cherubim and the four Gospels severally, and would now trace in each Gospel the resemblance to one of the four colors in the curtains. Of course there are characteristics of all these colors in each Gospel, but may we not find a predominant characteristic in each? Where, for instance, should we find emphasized and brought out in a distinctive way the humanity of our Lord, its spotless purity, apart from the thought of official position? Let us look at the Gospel of Luke.

In the first chapter, the birth of our Lord is foretold. It is not that of an ordinary person, but of the Word made flesh. "Therefore that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). His humanity was intrinsically holy, without the least taint of sin. David had to confess, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa. 51:5). David's Lord was "that Holy Thing!"

In the second chapter, the child Jesus has reached the age of twelve—a period of life causing especial anxiety to thoughtful parents, when the will of the boy begins to assert itself in a more definite way; restraint of parental authority is irksome, and companionship outside his home is sought after. It is the age of special temptations and dangers, needing the sovereign grace of God to uphold "in the slippery paths of youth." Look at the child Jesus at this age. He has been taken to Jerusalem, and as Joseph and Mary return to Nazareth they lose sight of Him for three

days. In what company has He been? They find Him in the temple in the midst of the doctors, and in answer to His mother's anxious question, He replies, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2:49). His one concern was to be engaged in the things of His Father. Was there ever a child like that, to whom God was Father in such a way that He absorbed His soul?

Trace Him a little further, and we see more of the fine linen. He goes back to Nazareth and is subject to His parents—for so the Scripture designates Joseph as well as Mary, recognizing the place of responsibility he occupied. There was absorption in His Father's business and subjection to those in the place of earthly responsibility. There was nothing abnormally precocious—like the silly stories of the apocryphal Gospels—only absolute purity in every relationship. "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). There is the fabric of spotless linen being woven before the eye of God.

Follow Him throughout the Gospel and you see everywhere the perfect Man. At Nazareth, in the synagogue, they may stumble at His lowly connections, but are constrained to admit the gracious words of love and truth which fall from His lips (Luke 4:16, etc.).

Look a little further and see Him in the Pharisee's house, where anything but fine linen surrounds Him. There is the Pharisee, puffed up with pride and self-righteousness; and prostrate at the feet of our Lord is a poor child of shame with soiled garments. But if the pride of the Pharisee and the "woman that was a sinner" illustrate the condition of humanity in its opposite extremes, of self-righteousness and misery. what shall we say of the perfect One at the table, ministering peace and pardon to the child of shame, and lowly reproof to the Pharisee? How the spotless purity shines out! The reproaches of His enemies only emphasized this. "This Man receiveth sinners and eateth with them" (Luke 15:2). They will class Him with them, and besmirch His white robes if possible. Oh, bring Him into closest contact with the evil; let Him sit down by the side of the poor sinner and what does it do? Does it leave a stain upon Him— anything that God cannot look upon with delight? Ah, no; it only brings out by contrast His spotlessness. Here is a Man in whom is a purity so absolute that its luster is only brought out into relief by the blackness of self-righteousness in the Pharisee, or the filthy garments of sin. How it must have rested the heart of God to gaze upon that spotless whiteness! He had been looking down on this sin-cursed earth all these centuries for something His eye could rest upon, something of obedience and devotedness. Alas, even in the most faithful, an Abraham or a David, there was the garment in some measure "spotted by the flesh" (Jude 23). But here was One whose garments gathered no defilement as He passed through this world of sin.

See Him at prayer, again and again through out this Gospel-turning away from the plaudits of those who admired His miracles and profited by them, to go off and be alone with God, and pour out His soul to Him; His blameless life emphasized by this constant dependence and obedience.

Coming to His death, we see the spotless white shining in all its purity. The world puts Him between two thieves. Ah, says Satan, I will at last besmirch His whiteness; I will associate Him with malefactors and turn loose the rabble against Him, railing and casting dust into the air. I will see what will become of His spotlessness. Yes, let us see what will become of His spotlessness! God only brings it out into clearer relief amidst the blackness of human and satanic wickedness. Pilate declares he finds no fault in Him. The very thief at His side is constrained to own His sinlessness: "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds"—our garments are all defiled — "but this Man hath done nothing amiss" (Luke 23:40, 41). The centurion, too, who presided at the crucifixion, declared Him a righteous Man.

This and much more we gather from the Gospel of Luke. The Gospel—might we not call it? —of the fine white linen.

We come now to the colors embroidered upon the white, as seems to be the thought. First we have blue.2 We will turn to our Bibles for the significance of this color. In Ex. 24:9, To we get the thought of blue. God had been revealing Himself at Sinai, so far as He could do so, for "No man hath seen God at any time (John 1:18). But He manifests something of His character, and does so in the symbolic way appropriate to the time of types and shadows. The elders of Israel ascend the mount and see beneath the feet of the God of Israel the "paved work of a sapphire stone, as it were the body of heaven in its clearness." The intense blue of the sapphire thus speaks of heaven.

This word "sapphire" is from the same root which means "to speak" or "declare," and also a "book." Thus in the 19th psalm, "The heavens declare the glory of God" is in Hebrew, "sapphire the glory of God." Blue is the color of truth, and in God alone is truth; "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). But the latter part of the same psalm speaks of that "law of the Lord," which is perfect. Here too is the sapphire in the Book—the Word which reflects the character of the God of heaven throughout.

Coming to instances or illustrations of the significance of blue, we are reminded of the fringe of blue, and the ribbon of blue, which God directed should be upon the border of the garments of His people (Num. 15:38-40). They were to wear upon that part of the garment which trailed nearest to earth the color of heaven, to remind them of the perfections of the law—which, as we have just seen, was the expression of the truth of God—that they might do His will. They would remember that they were the people of God.

Applying this to ourselves, how beautifully appropriate it is that we should be reminded that we are a heavenly people, united by the Holy Spirit to our Lord in heaven, and that our garments—the "habits" of the life, as the word means—should speak of heaven, even in the lowliest part, which comes in closest contact with the earth. But who has ever exhibited this character, save One? It is only as His image is produced in us by the Holy Spirit through faith that we in any measure can answer to His thoughts of us.

Heaven's color was upon our Lord from the beginning. How gladly would the angels who heralded His birth have accompanied Him through His whole course, ministering to Him in willing service as their Lord. He was from heaven, and all the host of heaven delighted to do Him honor. In Gethsemane, the hour of His deepest humiliation, save on Calvary, all heaven was at His disposal, as He said: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt. 26:53).

Now, is there one of the Gospels which specifically presents our Lord in this way? Many can at once reply: The Gospel of John is characteristically this. From the very first verse of that Gospel to its close we have Him before us as the heavenly One: "The Word was with God" — "The Word was made flesh" (John 1:1, 14). In the third chapter He says to Nicodemus, "If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not"—the necessity for new birth in order to enter the kingdom — "how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven" (John 3:13). Not the Son of Man who was in heaven before His incarnation merely; nor the Son of Man who will be in heaven when He returns to the Father; but the One whose whole life here breathes the air of heaven.

We call it sometimes the Gospel of the Deity, but is it not also characteristically the Gospel of the heavenly One? Trace Him through that wondrous Gospel and you find the blue everywhere apparent. He longs—may we not reverently say? —for His Father, though here always and only seeking His will even to laying down His life. But the One who sent Him is ever before His heart and on His lips. “As the living Father path sent Me, and I live by (or, because of) the Father” (John 6:57). What perfect dependence and subjection! The only reason for His life here was His Father, in whom as perfect Man He abode.

“This is that Bread which came down from heaven” (John 6:58). Notice that the Bread is the Son of Man who gave His flesh and blood; yet He speaks of it as the Bread which came down from heaven. Theology here may say we are not to confound the two natures, the divine Son and the Son of Man. The “Bread” is the latter. Thus we have been falsely accused of teaching that our Lord’s humanity was a heavenly thing in the sense that it came down from heaven. It is right to be jealously on our guard against false doctrine, especially as to the person of our most holy Lord; but we are here in the presence of a most precious truth. Did our Lord mean to say that His flesh was not born upon earth? Surely not; but that He was identified with His humanity, so that all spoke of the heavenly character of His whole person. Everything was heavenly, because He had come down from heaven: the Bread is Himself, our spiritual food, and His blood the life—eternal life. He is the heavenly food: “He that eateth of this Bread shall live forever” (John 6:58). Throughout eternity we shall feed upon this “Bread that came down from heaven.”

Thus we see the blue woven in “with cunning workmanship,” in divine skill and wisdom, where faith can see the beauty and adore, while it does not intrude into the “higher mysteries” which none but the blessed God can know.

We find the blue strikingly brought out in connection with the linen in the thirteenth chapter. There we read that our Lord girded Himself with a towel (or, as in the Version of J. N. D., a linen towel), and washed the disciples’ feet and wiped them with the linen towel wherewith He was girded. He applied to them the spotless purity of His own life, to make their ways practically clean—using both the Word and His own service to fit them for communion with Himself. In the third verse we see the blue: “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,” etc.

The One who girded Himself with the linen towel is the One who came from God and was returning to Him—the heavenly One.

Again, “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father” (John 16:28). We may say it is the Man who is speaking — “this same Jesus”—but He does not separate between His deity and humanity. He does not say, “My deity came forth from the Father, and My humanity and deity will go back to the Father.” No, it is the person, the whole Christ. H e came forth from God, and throughout His entire life this heavenly character marked Him. At His death He delivered up His spirit to the Father. Thus He goes back where His heart always was, to His Father in heaven. He said to His disciples, “If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice because I said I go unto the Father” (John 14:28). He was going where He wanted to be; His life here was a period of exile to Him. He ever spoke of His Father, longed to be with Him—His whole life was full of this: we see the blue woven upon the white throughout.

Remembering what we gathered from the word sapphire and its connection with the Book, how perfectly did our Lord show that His heavenly character was in absolute accord with the written Word. Though from and of heaven, He found not a thing in Scripture which did not manifest God. For Him, all Scripture was given by inspiration of God; its source was heavenly, not earthly. Therefore its Author was God and not man. It was this absolute subjection to and identification with the written Word which marked Him as heavenly. He lived by the heavenly Book. For Him it was, “Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven” (Psa. 119:89). He, the living Word, lived as Man by the written Word. What a sufficient answer to unbelief which, by ascribing to the Scriptures a human origin in contents or structure, would degrade them from heaven to fallible and fallen earth.

The next two colors, purple and scarlet, resemble each other, and during our Lord’s last hours robes of these two colors were put upon Him in mockery. In Matthew it was scarlet (chap. 27:28), and in John purple (chap. 19:2).

We need hardly say there is no contradiction in this, but a divine reason. It is not at all unlikely that the wretched soldiers should put different robes upon Him, to pour out all their scorn, just as Herod also arrayed Him in “a gorgeous robe”

(Luke 23:11). This may indeed have been the purple or the scarlet robe, in which He was afterward arrayed, while the governor’s soldiers may have put another upon Him. We may expect then to find the significance of purple and scarlet quite similar, though distinct.

Purple, “Argaman,” is, like the word for blue, the name of a dye obtained from a shell-fish. As we shall see, the scarlet was similarly obtained from a worm. Lydia (Acts 16:14) was a seller of purple. It was a gorgeous color, badge of royalty and luxury. How significant it is that all three of these brilliant colors were obtained by the sacrifice of animal life. In Judg. 8:26 we are told that the kings of Midian wore purple robes. This gives the thought, familiar to all, that purple is the royal color, and speaks of kingly dignity. So when our Lord was hailed, though in mockery, as “King of the Jews,” the robe corresponded. The rich man in Luke 16 wore purple and fine linen, clothing befitting kings.

We need scarcely say that our blessed Lord was indeed a King, and the Gospel which distinctively sets Him forth in that character is Matthew. We will look at a few characteristic passages. When the wise men came from the East, led by the star, they asked at Jerusalem, “Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the East and are come to worship Him” (chap. 2:2). They found Him in the royal city of David, Bethlehem, and presented Him with royal offerings, and worshiped Him as even more than King.

In the Sermon on the Mount (chaps. 5-7) we have the constitution of the kingdom, its organic law, and that which was to characterize its members. We see that while set up on earth, it was a spiritual kingdom; in fact it is called “the kingdom of heaven.” In the following chapters we have the works of the King— and what monarch ever gave such royal gifts as this King who blessed wherever He went—healing, cleansing, forgiving? There has been a superstition that the touch of a king would cure a certain kind of disease. But here we see the reality.

But as we pass on we find this gentle, holy, almighty King is rejected by His subjects. “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” (John 1:11). In the twelfth chapter they have practically decided upon His rejection. Therefore in the thirteenth chapter, though we find Him still contemplating His kingdom, He is about to be absent from it. During that time the responsibilities of the kingdom are entrusted to His people. Later on, when Peter confesses Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16), our Lord entrusts to him the keys of the kingdom of heaven. In the same connection He also speaks of that which is quite distinct—His Church: this He builds, and it is therefore perfect; but whenever we have things in man’s hands, weakness and corruption manifest themselves, until our Lord comes and sets up His

kingdom in power and glory, and reigns over it.

Before His crucifixion, well knowing all that awaited Him, He presents Himself once more to His beloved earthly people. He makes a triumphal entry into Jerusalem in fulfillment of the prophecy, “Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sit ting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass” (Matt. 21:1-11).

The King comes thus into “the city of the Great King” (Matt. 5:35), not in splendor and grandeur, but in the lowly guise which so perfectly became Him who had humbled Himself to be the Servant for the needs of man.

The people seem to recognize Him and to be ready to receive their King, crying, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” while His disciples take off their garments and lay them in the way with palm branches before Him. Even the children are crying aloud in the streets. Is He indeed to be recognized and accepted as King? Are they ready to adorn Him with the purple garment? Alas for man, for Jerusalem and for Israel! They knew not the time of their visitation, and soon in place of these shouts are heard the angry cries, “Away with this Man!” “Crucify Him!”;(Luke 23:18, 21). Our blessed Lord well knew that it would be thus, and gives them the parables of the rejected King: “This is the heir; come, let us kill Him,” and of the rejected people, the man without the wedding garment, who intrudes into the marriage of the King’s Son while rejecting Him—Christ, the best robe—who alone could give them fitness for the presence of God (Matt. 22:1-14).

So we find throughout the Gospel the purple embroidery of His kingly character. The last prophetic discourse is in accord with this (chaps. 24, 25): “When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations.” We see the glory of the King upon the throne who “scattereth away all evil with His eyes” (Prov. 20:8).

In the closing scenes—His arrest, trial and crucifixion—we still find the royal purple shining forth. In the Garden of Gethsemane, when Peter drew his sword in puny defense of the Lord, the King reminds him of the army, the heavenly hosts, at His disposal: “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matt. 26:53). But He had not come to fight a battle against man, even His enemies, but against sin, and in that conflict He must be alone. More wonderful than ever will be the royal display after that glorious victory.

He is challenged by Pilate, “Art Thou the King of the Jews?” and He answers, “Thou sayest.” The soldiers in mockery put on Him the scarlet robe, “and when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand: and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, flail, King of the Jews!” We take up those very words which they uttered in blasphemy, and make them the expression of that which is divinely true. He is a crowned King; the crown of thorns is the crown of glory now. They write over the cross His accusation—it was the truth as to what He was, “The King of the Jews,” for what charge could there be against the all-perfect One? They put Him between two thieves, in the place of Barabbas, who was a murderer—a Substitute for him—but “this Man hath done nothing amiss” (Luke 23:41). Yes, this is “Jesus, the King of the Jews.”

Everything hinges upon that, in Matthew. The people’s thought of a king was one who would enable them to throw off the Roman yoke and establish them in power. Such a kingdom Barabbas would have given them, if he could. But a kingdom based upon justice and judgment, of whose King it could be said, “Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness” (Psa. 45:7), was not the man after their heart. The Man who was here as a witness for God, who testified to the whole truth—shameful and humbling as it was—who rebuked sin in high places, they could not endure; rather a murderer than “this Man.” Blessed be God, He is also the King of grace—and the lowly, poor and helpless sinners who want Him, find His truth and righteousness for them.

We see Him as King to the very last. In the moment of death, we read, “He dismissed His spirit” (Matt. 27:50, lit.), such a word as was fitting to a King. Thus we see the purple throughout the Gospel. In resurrection He is still the King, with the mighty angel announcing in majesty His victory over death. Gathering His little company together He declares, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth,”

and sends them forth to spread His kingdom to earth’s remotest bounds, for He the King will be with them till the age of patient grace close, and the age of His kingdom and power come in (Matt. 28:18-29).

This brings us to the last color, scarlet. As has already been said, there is much that corresponds to the purple, but we will see if there are any distinctive characteristics to be gathered from Scripture.

In his lament over Saul, David calls on the daughters of Israel to weep for one who clothed them with scarlet (2 Sam. 1:24); and the “virtuous woman,” in Prov. 31:21, clothes her household similarly. In the 19th chapter of Numbers, in the familiar type of the red heifer, we have a similar use of the word scarlet. After the heifer was slain and its blood shed, it was burned without the camp, and as it was burning,” cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet” were cast into the fire (Num. 19:6). The cedar and hyssop are opposite extremes in the vegetable world: Solomon “spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall” (1 Kings 4:33). They thus stand for all that is highest and lowest in the world, while the scarlet would stand for the splendor of the world, its glory.

We have a characteristic use of the color in the book of Revelation, where the woman sits upon the scarlet-colored beast. She also is arrayed in purple and scarlet (Rev. 17:3, 4). She represents the false Church, not the “chaste virgin,” the heavenly bride, espoused to Christ; she usurps her name, but is really of the earth, and full of all abominations. She is arrayed in the gorgeous hues of earthly splendor, while the true Church is walking in humble garb, often in sackcloth, waiting for her splendid array when the Bridegroom shall come.

These scriptures give us one use of the color—the pomp and splendor of earth. But there is another and quite opposite use of the word, though related to this: “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Isa. 18). The full word for scarlet is Tolaath shani, “scarlet worm.” It is possible that shani, scarlet, means “double,” referring to the double dye which makes the scarlet. It is very suggestive that the pride and glory of man are closely ‘‘connected with the double dye of sin.

But there are other thoughts connected with the word “worm.” It is the coccus cacti, the cochineal, from which the scarlet dye is obtained. In the 22nd psalm our holy Lord, in the midst of His anguish as a sin-offering on the cross, says, “I am a worm and no man” (ver. 6). This is the word which is used in connection with the scarlet, as we have seen. Thus our Lord,” who knew no sin,” was made sin” (or sin-offering, 2 Cor. 5:21) for us, taking the place which we deserved. He took the place of being a worm, went down into death, crushed under the wrath and judgment of God, His precious blood shed to put away our scarlet sins.

But by this very suffering unto death He has won a place of highest glory, and to Him belong the kingdoms and glory of the world. Where sin and self had sway, He has acquired the right and power to rule. Where He is owned in faith, He takes His abode in the individual believer and reigns—subdues, governs, directs. Faith now sees Him “crowned with glory and honor” (Heb. 2:9). One day this world will be the scene of His splendor. The scarlet mantle will be upon Him whose right it is, not upon an apostate Church nor a godless world-power, but given by the Father into His hands who has purchased it.

As in the first part of the 22nd psalm we have His sufferings unto death for sin—the scarlet dye—so in the closing part we have the scarlet upon Him—royal authority and splendor. “All the ends of the world”—not only Israel — “shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee “ (vs. 27). This, we believe, gives us the scriptural thought of scarlet.

There is another and solemn significance of this splendor of scarlet. When the Son of Man appears with the armies of heaven, He will be “clothed with a vesture dipped in blood” (Rev. 19:13). The scarlet is the solemn pledge that He must and will judge His enemies. “Those Mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before Me” (Luke 19:27). So also in Isa. 63 the Victor is seen returning in triumph from the judgment of His enemies — “glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength.” But, even there, judgment is seen to be His “strange work,” and He speaks of Himself as “mighty to save.”

Our next question is: Is there one of the Gospels which presents our Lord according to the thoughts we have connected with the scarlet? Mark is the only remaining Gospel, but does it answer to this color? It is known as the Gospel of the perfect Servant, as Matthew is of the King. We see Him there taking the servant’s place, ministering to the need which everywhere appealed to His pity and love. He comes down into the lowliest place and then is raised to the highest. At the close of the 8th chapter and the beginning of the 9th we have the two thoughts of His sufferings and His glory blended together. “The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests and scribes, and be killed” (chap. 8:31). He is rejected, despised, downtrodden — “I am a worm and no man.” Look now at verse 38, “Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation” (the proud religious world clothing itself with scarlet) “of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels”—here is the scarlet worn by Him whose right it is.

We find an illustration of His glory in the next chapter: “Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power” (chap. 9:1). Then comes the Transfiguration, His coming glory displayed, as a pledge to His disciples that all these things shall be fulfilled.

Again in the l0th chapter we have the prediction of His rejection and death. In immediate connection we have the request of the sons of Zebedee that they should have places of honor in His kingdom. It is, alas, significant that when He spoke of His sufferings they were occupied with their own dignities in connection with His glories. They never seemed to realize the necessity of the cross before the glory till after the resurrection. It came upon them as a fearful shock at last. Even under the shadow of the cross, at the last supper, there was a dispute among them which of them should be the greatest. Let us remember that this is only natural to us unless faith is bright.

The sons of Zebedee desire the scarlet, to be arrayed in the pomp and dignity of power-but our Lord was going to give them scarlet in a way that will not foster their pride. They would drink of His cup and be baptized with His baptism; they would partake of His sufferings and rejection—of course not of the atoning sufferings. This was all He could promise them here, and it would be their honor and glory (as also they esteemed it afterward) to suffer for His sake. When the other disciples begin to murmur at these two, jealous of what they conceived to be some special honor to be conferred upon them, our Lord says to them (vs. 45), “Even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

So we find that the Lord’s path, and that of His servants is suffering and rejection first, and the glory afterward. The world’s thought of scarlet is glory without suffering, just the reverse of our Lord’s. His prophetic discourse brings out the same truth.

When we come to His death, the distinguishing feature of His suffering is that He is forsaken of God. We see the holy One made sin — “a worm and no man,” in order that those who were worse than worms might be clothed in the beauty of the Lord.

His resurrection is the divine answer to His having been forsaken. “He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God” (Mark 16:19). Thus He has entered into His glory, and the lowly Servant and Sin bearer is arrayed, as the world shall one day see, in the glory that is rightly His, which He refused to take save as the purchase of His cross that we too might share it with Him.

Briefly reviewing these thoughts, we have: The fine linen, which speaks of His holy, spotless humanity, illustrated in the Gospel of Luke; the blue of His divine and heavenly character, as in John; the purple shows His royal character, as in Matthew; and the scarlet reminds us of His humiliation and subsequent glory, as seen in Mark.

These various materials were wrought together in “cunning work,” literally, “the work of a thinker.” The cherubim were wrought, embroidered or woven with the four materials we have seen, according to a definite plan. The life of our Lord, which was the perfect expression of His person, was a beautiful, consistent, perfect whole. His life was the work of a “Thinker” —whose whole thought and purpose was to glorify God and set forth His character. So also in the record of that character and life, we have the Holy Spirit’s perfect work. The four colors, all woven and blended together, as seen in the four Gospels, are His work. There is perfect design in each, and this manifests at the same time the Lord and the divine skill of the Holy Spirit who has displayed Him. What effacement of the human instrument there should be even in speaking of these things that nothing should mar the “pattern” so perfectly devised and executed.

What themes are these, which may well move the heart to worship and praise. May our souls be mastered and filled with them, and our hearts glow with Spirit-given love and joy.

Lectures on the Tabernacle: A Full Exposition Examining the Types and Their Doctrinal Applications — Fully Illustrated, Anointing Oil, The

We will now speak of the “holy anointing oil,” as that is also spoken of in connection with the golden altar and the incense (Ex. 37:29). Its use will come before us more particularly in the dedication of the priests. Its ingredients and manner of preparation are given in the same chapter which described the incense (Ex. 30:2; 2-33).

1. Myrrh.—This was the gum from a dwarf tree of the terebinth family, growing in Arabia. The gum exudes from the trunk either spontaneously, or through incisions made for the purpose. That prescribed for the ointment was “pure,” literally “free”—the best, what had flowed spontaneously. Some have thought this described it as “liquid.” Be that as it may, there is evidently the idea that it was the best. It is fragrant to the smell, but very bitter to the taste. Indeed the word is the same as that for “bitterness” in the familiar “Marah” (Ex. 15:23). It was used as a perfume, as a medicine for deadening pain (Mark 15:23), also for correcting secretions, and as a modifier of other medicines.

We have already alluded to the significance of the word. The primary root means “to flow;” from this comes the idea of the gum which flows from the tree; but as this is extremely bitter, it gives its name to “bile” and other bitter things—the bitter water of Marah, the water of jealousy (Num. 5:18). Naomi called herself Mara, “for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me” (Ruth 1:20). The “discontented” who resorted to David at the cave of Adullam, were literally “bitter of soul,” and the prophet declares that it is “an evil thing and bitter” to forsake the Lord (Jer. 2:19).

The word for pure is, as we have seen, literally “free.” It is the word from which is derived the “swallow,” which flies in circles, at liberty (Psa. 84:3). “Liberty” was proclaimed in the year of jubilee (Levs. 25:10), to which allusion is made by the prophet, as that which is proclaimed by the Lord (Isa. 1:1).

To myrrh itself there are distinct scriptural references: “All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes and cassia” (Psa. 45:8). The Lord is described in the Song of Solomon, as coming out of the wilderness, “like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense” (SoS. 3:6). He also mentions the same fragrant spice in connection with the bride (SoS. 4:6, 14). The Beloved put it upon the handles of the lock as He withdrew from the door (5:5). The bride mentions His lips as “dropping sweet-smelling myrrh”(5: 23).

In the New Testament, myrrh was one of the gifts brought by the wise men (Matt. 2:11) It was brought, mixed with aloes, by Nicodemus, to embalm the body of the Lord as He was laid in the grave (John 19:39).

Gathering up these thoughts, we will see how they apply to our Lord. Flowing spontaneously from the tree, as well as through incisions, would suggest on the one hand how willingly He offered all that He was, even unto death, to God, and on the other the “piercing” to which He was subjected by man, but which only brought out the same fragrance. The bitterness of the myrrh suggests the reality of the sufferings through which He went. It was not physical discomfort and pain, nor even death, which gave intensity to His suffering, but the “contradiction of sinners against Himself” (Heb. 12:3). His very presence in a world where all was against God was bitter to Him. How His perfect soul, enjoying fullest communion with His Father, recognized what an evil and bitter thing it was for man to forsake the Lord! Who could measure sin like the sinless One? And it is He who has tasted, and drunk to the dregs, the bitter cup of God’s wrath against sin.

But all this bitter experience only furnished the occasion for the manifestation not only of a devotedness to God which was perfectly fragrant to Him, but of a love to His own which was as strong as death. Thus the myrrh left upon the lock of the door of the one dear to Him might well remind her, and us, of an unchanging love which would appeal to the closed heart, and ask for admittance to fullest communion.

And what has been the measure of this love? The myrrh again, from its association with death, may well tell us that it “passeth knowledge” (Eph. 3:19). “The Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20)—a measure which cannot be measured, freely flowing from Him whose heart was pierced by and for our sins. Feeble indeed is the estimate we put upon that love at best; but One estimates it at its full value.

Nor is such love narrowed, save by the unbelief of man; for its “fullness” may well speak to as not only of the voluntary character of all His devotion, even unto death, but that it is without money or price to “whosoever will.” It brings to every believer, “Liberty to the captive,” the true year of jubilee; for “if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36). And we already have the blessed earnest of the coming “liberty of the glory of the children of God,” while we wait for the adoption, the redemption of the body (Rom. 8:23). Then indeed will the fragrance of the myrrh pervade the wide creation, and the savor of His ointment bewray itself to an adoring universe. Meanwhile it is sweet to God, and to the saints, and good indeed as medicine for the sin-sick soul.

Our blessed Lord refused the wine and myrrh for Himself at the hand of men; He would drink to its dregs the bitter cup of their sin, without any attempt to mitigate or palliate it. March’s bitter waters are made sweet by the “tree” cast into them.

And do we not see this cup of comfort put into the hands of His suffering saints who are passing through fiery trials, even to facing death? “Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the crown of life,” is the promise of Him who “was dead and is alive”—a promise appropriately given to Smyrna, “myrrh,” as the word really is (Rev. 2:8-11).

In solemn contrast to all this wealth of love and grace is the blasphemy of that adulterous woman, who claims these fragrant odors for herself, and uses them as an attraction for the ungodly (Prov. 7:17). This is all the more terrible when we see in her the one who, we may say, beginning in Smyrna as “Jews” (professed people of God who have not owned their lost condition), goes on in Pergamos to stumbling the saints; and in Thyatira, teaching them to commit fornication with the world, and displayed as “that woman Jezebel,” who as the world-church, is finally seen as “Babylon the great” in all her lewdness, to meet her just doom (Rev. 2:12-29; Rev. 17, 18). There, too, she is seen trafficking in a stolen fragrance (for she has no heart for Christ) — “Cinnamon and odors and frankincense” (Rev. 18:13). Wherever she is recognized, let the saints of God heed the call: “Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Rev. 18:4).

2. Sweet Cinnamon.—The only other passages where this word is used is the sad one to which we have just referred (Prov. 7:17), and one in blessed contrast, where the true bride is described as having all these fragrant perfumes put upon her—surely, by grace alone (SoS. 4:14). Of the general meaning we are assured, but let us search if we may find what is distinctive in it.

There seems to be no doubt that this spice is the same that is familiar to us under the same name; it is the bark of a small evergreen tree of the laurel family. Another tree of the same family is the fragrant camphor. The odor of the cinnamon is sweet and its taste agreeable; it is

largely used for flavoring. A valuable essential oil is extracted from the bark having these properties in an intensified form. It is obtained chiefly from Ceylon, and probably brought from India in the times of the Exodus. The bark is obtained from the young shoots. As a medicine, it is a stimulant and cordial.

Seeking for light as to its spiritual significance from the etymology of the word, we are met with uncertainty. One authority derives it from a “doubtful and obsolete” root, nearly the same as the “calamus,” at which we will look next. The primary significance of this root, is to stand erect, and this might find justification in the fact that it is the canes, or reed-like shoots, from which the bark is taken.1 The erect rods of the young shoots would suggest all the vigor and energy and uprightness of our Lord. The bark removed would remind us of the removal of the skin from the animal—the outer covering. So to cut away the bark from a tree would take its life also. We need not be surprised to find this witness of death coming in with each of these perfumes. The cross was the great necessity of divine love if Christ was to make the Father truly known.

Connected with the word for cinnamon is one translated “sweet,” from a root allied with our “balsam,” and meaning “fragrance.” This would put double emphasis upon this fragrant spice. Possibly the mention of the balsam may suggest that the essence of the bark was extracted and used. At this we will look later.

It is well too to recall the fact that this tree was an evergreen, passing through no periods of inertness. So our Lord was ever the unchangingly devoted One, whose leaf did not wither in time of drought or cold. In the midst of the arid waste of unbelief—as at Chorazin and Bethsaida and Capernaum—there were no marks of feebleness upon Him: “I thank thee, O Father,” was His language there as everywhere.

Here too is medicine, a spiritual tonic and cordial for the faint-hearted. This love and devotedness of our Lord, which knew no change, is not only a most powerful example, but in His grace that which cheers and encourages the fainting of His beloved people. For all tendency to let the hands hang down, let His saints partake largely of that love which consumed Him—a love for His Father and His glory, and, for that very reason, for all His own.

3. Sweet Calamus.—There is no question as to the derivation of the word here, as it is one of frequent occurrence and varied application in Scripture. But for this reason we have little to indicate what was its specific character. The root-word means “to stand upright;” hence a cane, or reed. The “sweet,” as in the case of the cinnamon, tells of its fragrance, and this would seem to give us the clue to the article intended. A “sweet cane” is said to be found in Lebanon, also in India and Arabia. It usually grows in miry soil, from which it sends up the shoots from which its name is derived. The fragrant cane of India is supposed to have been the “spikenard” of Scripture.

The fragrance was obtained by crushing the plant. Various meanings of the word “cane are suggestive. It was applied to a” stalk “of grain (Gen. 41:5); to the” branches “of the golden candlestick (Ex. 25:31); to a” reed” shaken in the water (1 Kings 14:15); used also for measuring (Ezek. 40:3); to the balancing rod of a scale (Isa. 40:12); to a staff (Isa. 36:6). Its place of growth, the mire, is alluded to (Isa. 19:6). Its fragility is used to illustrate the grace of Him who will not break a bruised reed (Isa. 42:3). Most of these would have special application to our Lord: His absolute righteousness, uprightness, which also makes Him the balance and the measuring reed to weigh and measure men—to find them wanting, and yet to patiently wait on them, yea, to visit them in grace.

But it is with the fragrant reed that we have to do directly, though the qualities above referred to may suggest something of the character of the fragrance (see also Isa. 43:24; Jer. 6:20; SoS. 4:14; Ezek. 27:19). Its growth in the mire may remind us of One who in the mire of this world grew up erect and fragrant for God. Man grows in the mire and gravitates toward it—like the man with the muck rake, who was bowed to earth, and saw not the crown of glory offered to him. But our Lord had His eyes and heart only on the heaven above. The mire of earth was but the place where He had come for a special work. Men might grovel in that mire, as, alas, we have; a Job finds that his self-righteousness was covered with the mire of the ditch (Job 9:31). But His surroundings were only the contrast to that erect and perfect life which ever pointed heavenward. His treasure, His all, was with the Father. And wherever He found a “bruised reed,” to lift it from the mire and establish it erect was the purpose of His heart — “Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more” (John 8:11).

This reed was crushed by the “company of spearmen” (marg., “beasts of the reeds”—Psa. 68:30). Wicked men took Him, bound and bruised Him. But what fragrance has filled heaven and earth through that bruising. Again, the aromatic odor of the calumus reminds us that in our Lord there was nothing negative or insipid. That weak word “amiable” is unsuitable in connection with Him. Thus when the high priest commanded that He be smitten, our Lord neither resents it nor cowers under it; but with what holy dignity did He rebuke that unrighteousness, and bear witness of His kingship before Pilate. A heavenly fragrance pervaded the judgment hall-the vital fragrance and energy of Holiness, bearing witness to the truth (John 18:33-37).

4. Cassia.—This word is mentioned in but one other passage, and there also in association with calamus (Ezek. 27:19), as some of the articles in which Tyre trafficked. For the world would make merchandise of the excellencies of Christ, and Satan, its prince, seek to rob the Lord of that which is His alone. Another word is also translated “cassia” in psalm 45:8, where the garments of our Lord are perfumed with myrrh and cassia and aloes. That word is derived from a root to “scrape,” and suggests the way the bark of the cassia is removed. The ingredient we are now considering is thought to be derived from a root meaning to “split,” and refers to the rolls of bark being split.2 It is said to resemble cinnamon, and to be of the same family, but to be less fragrant. The Septuagint translates the word here “iris,” which is a species of flag (possibly the same as orris root).

It is said to be more pungent than cinnamon, and to grow in places not suited for other vegetation. It was used for flavoring and as a medicine. From a kindred variety, we are told the senna, a well-known drug, is obtained.

We have certain spiritual characteristics indicated here, though not so clearly suggestive of perfections in our Lord. As it was a species of cinnamon, it would therefore have a similar significance—the ardor of the love of Christ to God, which led Him on even to death; a love which reaches out also to sinful men in blessing and healing. The cassia was less fragrant but more pungent, and this recalls somewhat the nature of the galbanum. It might represent that devotedness of zeal to God in which the ardor of love takes the form of uncompromising rebuke of evil and half-heartedness. The scathing rebukes of formalism, the piercing probe of divine truth, by which He exposed all the falsehood of a mere outward religion, that left the soul unregenerate—these and such-like characteristics we may connect with the cassia, a bitter and humbling medicine, but one which purges that it may heal all that receive it.

Nor does this introduce a foreign element in what marks the full fragrance of our Lord to His Father. The sentimentalism of the flesh will wince under such searchings of heart, but loyalty to God admits of nothing divided with Him. As the cassia flourished where other plants would not grow, so it is at Calvary where the perfection of His faithfulness is fully seen. In that place of death, as a sacrifice for sin, such a fragrance was yielded that all else is as nothing compared with it.

We have next to consider the proportions in which these four ingredients were blended. But before that, we are reminded that the “vehicle” of their exhibition was the olive oil, of which we have already spoken (p. 322, and following). We have seen that it was a type of the Holy Spirit, by whom our Lord was anointed, in whose power He wrought miracles and gave His testimony for God. We are thus reminded that all true exhibition of the graces and excellences of Christ must be in and by the Holy Spirit. Any handling of these holy themes apart from the Spirit would be a mere mental exercise which would be barren or worse, and dry as the handling of the spices apart from the oil. To be an ointment, they must be formed by the Spirit into a holy compound, “after the art of the Apothecary.” And this would mean not merely that the Spirit guides as to the truth, but ministers it in communion to the soul.

But we must go back of this to find the fuller significance of the oil. These ingredients speak of the various characteristics which marked our Lord. There was nothing in Him that was not in fullest accord with the Holy Spirit. Indeed it was not only that He was anointed by the Spirit, but that His human nature was of the Spirit: “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee” (Luke 1:35). We have this, in type, in the cakes of fine flour which were mingled, as well as anointed, with oil. Holy mystery indeed is this, calling for our worship, as we think of the Holy One whose very presence as Man was by and in the power of the Holy Spirit. And the general teaching of Scripture connects thus the Holy Spirit with the person of the Lord. The Spirit ever presents Christ to us; He takes of the things of Christ to show them unto us. If He gives peace to the anxious sinner, it is not by occupying the sinner with what He, the Spirit, is doing in his heart, but by presenting Christ and His work for him. Likewise holiness is produced in the saint, not by self-culture, but by beholding the glory of the Lord, and being changed into the same image (2 Cor. 3:18).

And so when our Lord was baptized of John in Jordan and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily shape like a dove, the form He took suggests, may we not say, the character and office of our Lord Jesus. The dove is the bird of heaven; so He “came down from heaven” (John 6:38). The dove is the bird that loves and mourns; so He came in love and was the “Man of sorrows.” The dove is the bird of gentleness; and He was meek and lowly in heart. It was distinctively a “clean” bird; which fitted it to be used in sacrifice; so was our Lord without spot, and offered Himself thus to God (Heb. 9:14) “through the eternal Spirit.” Thus the dove is suggestive both of the Lord and of the Holy Spirit, who came in that form.

The oil, then, was a fitting vehicle for these sweet “principal spices.” One “hin” of this was to be taken. This unit of measure is of uncertain derivation, possibly from a word meaning to be wealthy, full, sufficient. This would suggest a full measure. “God giveth not His Spirit by measure,” that is, in a limited measure (John 3:34). So we read,” Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan” (Luke 4:1).

The “hin” was the measure used in connection with the drink offerings and the oil for the meat-offering (Ex. 29:40). (See also the special provision for the graded offerings, suggesting various aspects of our Lord’s sacrifice, and perhaps also different degrees of apprehension on the part of the worshiper, Num. 15:4-10.) As the cubit was for linear, the ephah for dry measure, and the shekel for weight, the kin seems to have been the ordinary unit for liquid measure. Thus “the measure of a man,” that which can be apprehended by man, is suggested as being brought by the Spirit to his comprehension, of that which “passeth knowledge,” “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. 3:8, 19).

The spices were apportioned by weight, the unit of which was “the shekel of the sanctuary.” The word is from the root meaning to weigh, originally, perhaps; to poise. It is that which forms a true estimate of the value of things. The shekel of the sanctuary, or sacred shekel, may have been of greater weight than the usual one, and the king’s shekel (2 Sam. 14:26) may have been the same. One thing we know, the shekel of the King of kings would be just and unvarying, for “divers weights and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the Lord” (Prov. 20:10). This shekel was divided into twenty gerahs, and a half shekel or ten gerahs was the ransom money for all the men of Israel (Ex. 30:12, etc.) At the significance of this we have already looked.

God is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed (1 Sam. 2:3). The proud king of Babylon was weighed and found wanting (Dan. 5:27). And “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” The Old Testament word for “glory” is “weight,” derived from a word “to be heavy.” So by God’s standard, all have come short of the full weight which alone can glorify Him. There is therefore but One in whom, when tested, full and true weight was found, who could say, “I have glorified Thee upon the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do” (John 17:4). And not only was the full weight of that which glorified God found in Him, but all was in true and proper proportion.

Here, as we have already had occasion to notice with other measures in the tabernacle, the number five enters prominently. It is the number which speaks of full capacity and responsibility, and has been realized in Him alone who was God and Man—one being the number of deity and four that of creation— 4 +1.

Of myrrh there were 500 shekels, and of cassia the same amount. The sweet cinnamon and sweet calamus were half as much, 250 shekels. Myrrh, as we have seen, tells us of the fragrance of our Lord’s devotion and love to God, even unto death. The factors of this would be 5 x 5 x 5 x 2 x 2, or responsibility in love met in a divinely perfect way, even unto death. None but God could weigh that love, that sorrow, and He has put the estimate of divine truth upon it. The cassia, mentioned last, was of like weight. That pungent, heart-searching detection and refusal of evil, was as absolute as the devotion of love unto death; it was present in equal measure with the sweet myrrh, and blended with it perfectly.

The sweet cinnamon, telling of the ardent zeal which consumed Him, was in the proper proportion, one half as much as the other two. The factors, however, speak rather of a testimony (2) to the meeting of responsibility. His “zeal” never carried Him beyond the will of God, or out of the current of God’s ways. He never called fire from heaven to consume those who would not receive Him.

The sweet calamus was in the same proportion, fitly joining the aromatic fragrance with the warmth of the cinnamon. Personal, absolute righteousness, growing in the mire of the earth, He shed nothing but fragrance around—a fragrance which, blending with all His moral characteristics, made the Beloved One a “precious ointment”—His Father’s complete delight.

And so all was perfectly and harmoniously blended in Him; resulting in that which was absolutely unique, where each trait was so permeated by the others that the fragrance of each was found in all. Nor was it that He acted according to one character at one time and another at

another. His love was as ardent in rebuking sin as His uprightness was absolute in soothing the broken-hearted. He did not put on or lay off these characters. At the Pharisee's table the sweet fragrance of His ways and words had all the features of tenderness, faithfulness, holiness, hatred of sin, in the rebuke of the self-righteous man and speaking the word of peace to the woman who was a sinner (Luke 7). Alas, the heart of man will not receive this, and for that reason must meet His judgment; but faith delights, and above all, God delights, to recognize these odors —each in all and all in each.3

This ointment was to be put upon the tabernacle and upon each article to sanctify them unto God, and upon Aaron and his sons. It was not to be put on man's flesh, and no imitation of it was to be made. Here again the sweet savor of Christ was to be put upon all that spoke of Him, His Son, in whom God ever finds "unchanging fresh delight." The materials spoke of Him; even their structure spoke of Him; the golden lamps illumined Him; and now the anointing oil again points to Him. The high priest too was a type of our High Priest, and the sons of Aaron typified the true people of God, on whom the holy anointing oil was sprinkled—Christ's fragrance is upon them.

The natural man has no place here: it were blasphemy to link the sweet savor of Christ with the unregenerate; they are enemies, whom God must cast out from His presence. Mere imitations of the excellence of our Lord, as heartless profession, will meet with His scathing rebuke (Amos 6:6). And does it not apply to the "flesh" in the saint? Wherever strife, pride, vainglory are allowed, they are but dead flies in the apothecary's ointment (Eccl. 10:1), which mar all its fragrance. How God's great lesson is impressed throughout His entire word, "The flesh profiteth nothing;" "Christ is all." His fragrance will pervade all heaven, and "all the mind in heaven is one." Let His name be in the hearts of His blood-bought people here "as ointment poured forth "(SoS. 1:3). This is the "ointment and perfume" which "rejoice the heart" (Prov. 27:9). Our Priest and King has passed into the sanctuary, into those ivory palaces where joy and gladness abound: "All thy garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia;" they are His by right of all that He has done. "Thou lowest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows" (Psa. 45:7, 8).

And in infinite grace and righteousness this fragrant ointment has reached down to the skirts of the High Priest's robe, yea, has come upon all His own, so that wherever brethren "dwell together in unity," in the unity of the Spirit, Christ is all, and the sweet savor of His ointment fills the sanctuary of His presence where they are gathered (Psa. 133).

Lectures on the Tabernacle: A Full Exposition Examining the Types and Their Doctrinal Applications — Fully Illustrated, Golden Altar, The

Exodus 30:22-38; 37:25-29

We have now reached, in the order of construction, the last article of furniture in the holy place, the golden altar of incense; this was made of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold. Its dimensions were one cubit square, and two cubits high. It was thus the highest of the three articles in the tabernacle, being half a cubit higher than the table and the ark, the size of the candlestick not being given. A horn was at each of the four corners—at least we gather this from the altar of burnt offering (Ex. 38:2), as the number of the horns is not given in connection with the altar of incense. It also had a crown of gold around its edge, and two rings of gold, under the crown, by the corners upon the two sides, for staves. Here too the number of the rings is uncertain, some believing that there were but two in all, at diagonal corners. Possibly, however, from the analogy of the ark and table, there may have been two rings for each side, or four in all, although the language is different. We may learn something from this silence as to the number of the horns and the rings, when we come to consider their spiritual significance.

This altar was placed in front of the veil, between the candlestick on the south, and the table on the north side of the holy place. It was called the "golden altar," doubtless to distinguish it from the brazen altar of sacrifice in the court. It was called the "altar of incense," as indicating its use. Upon its horns was placed the blood of the sin-offering for the sin of the priest, or of the whole congregation (Levs. 4:7,18); also once a year, upon the day of atonement (Levs. 16:18). Its constant use was for the burning of the divinely prescribed incense, morning and evening (Ex. 30:7, 8), in connection with the trimming and lighting of the lamps. It seems to have been used as a place of refuge (1 Kings 1:50), though this may have been the altar of burnt-offering.

Coming to the spiritual significance of the altar, as we have already learned, the acacia wood speaks of the perfect humanity of our Lord Jesus, and the gold, of His divine glory. We will see how appropriate these materials were, as setting forth His deity and His humanity, in connection with the offering up of praise and worship of which the burning of the incense speaks: Christ presenting His praises to God, and those of His people.

As illustrating our Lord's humanity in worship, we may take His thanksgiving at the grave of Lazarus: "And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me " (John 11:41, 42). He had but a little before wept over the death of Lazarus, showing His perfect and tender human sympathy; and in His work of raising the dead He still showed His dependence upon His Father.

Another scripture will make prominent the gold: "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight;" and He goes on to say, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father" (Matt. 11:25-27), which would suggest His deity—the "higher mysteries" of His fame which transcend the creature's grasp. But as in the altar the gold overlay the acacia wood, not separated from it, so we may distinguish between, but cannot separate, the two natures in our holy Lord.

In the great High Priestly prayer of our Lord (John 17), we have the blending of the gold and the acacia wood, where the gold is the more apparent. He speaks of having finished the work given Him by the Father, and immediately asks to be glorified with the glory He had with the Father before the world was (vss. 4, 5).

It may be well here to be reminded that while this address to the Father was upon earth, it has suffered no change by the Lord's passing into glory. "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8). So whatever characterized Him in His state of lowliness, is forever true of Him. The golden crown about the altar reminds us that He is now "crowned with glory and honor" where prayer and worship, connected with the altar of incense, are to ascend. This passage shows us the Lord, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death (that speaks of the acacia wood), now crowned with glory and honor; His deity, as it were, glorifying His perfect humanity:

the crown of pure gold is upon His head.

As risen and glorified, He is now “in the presence of God for us,” there presenting His praises in connection with and for His blood-bought people, confessing our names, and presenting them in all the savor and value of His own. A few scriptures will illustrate this: “Who is he that condemneth?” This is the answer to the question, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” The full answer is, “It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?” (Rom. 8:33, 34) The division of the verses obscures what follows, and which is connected with our present subject. It should read, “ It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us: who shall separate us from the love of Christ? “(Rom. 8:34, 35) The great answer to the first question is,” It is God that justifieth; “who therefore can condemn? Not one! for God is the judge of all; and if He in infinite grace has made provision for lost and guilty sinners who believe in His Son, no creature in the universe can say aught, but confess His righteousness and goodness in it all.

The second question is, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” And the answer, as it were, precedes it—Christ has died; that has made full satisfaction to divine righteousness. He has risen again; that is God’s declaration of His acceptance of His beloved Son’s perfect work. He is even at the right hand of God; no place in heaven too high for the One who humbled Himself unto death for our sakes; and He maketh intercession for us, presenting Himself as the plea for, and witness of, the eternal acceptance of His feeble people. How closely all is connected together—His death, resurrection and place at God’s right hand are all united with His all-prevailing intercession. What power, or cunning, or malice of the enemy, what tribulation or persecution, can separate us from the love of Christ? The exultant apostle cries out, “Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us” (ver. 37), and closes with that magnificent outburst, in which the sweet savor of a cloud of incense rises up in worship to God: “For I am 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).

Connected with this we have another passage: “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25). Though here we have the Priest, yet it is in connection with the intercession of which the golden altar speaks. His people are contemplated as in the wilderness, subject to every form of temptation, trial, or assault of Satan; but “He is able,” His power is complete, therefore He saves “to the uttermost,” completely, to the last step of the wilderness trial, them that come to God by Him. “To the uttermost” does not mean the depths in which the vilest of sinners may be —precious fact as that is—but completely, to the end, no matter what the future may have in store for us. Thus the altar of incense, speaking as it does of the glory of Christ, is also a pledge of His people’s eternal security. Significantly their praises are connected with this.

Coming to the special features of this altar, we notice its dimensions. It was square; one cubit each way, and its height was twice that much. These dimensions are different from those of the ark and table; the former being 2½ cubits long and 1½ broad, and the latter 2 x 1. Each was 1½ cubits high, while the altar of incense was two cubits high. Regarding the top of the altar, its being a perfect square would suggest the perfection of our Lord as the channel of praise to God. All in Him was “foursquare,” even as the heavenly city, which sets forth His perfections (Rev. 21:16). The one cubit might remind us of that divine uniqueness which was manifested in “the Man Christ Jesus.” How good it is that all the praises and prayers of the saints are presented to God according to the absolutely perfect nature and infinite value of the Son of God. Feeble indeed, and imperfect are our praises and prayers, but they are identified with Him who is of infinite value in the sight of God.

It was noticed that the number of the horns was not given, nor yet that of the golden rings in a definite way. It is conjectured, from the analogy of the brazen altar, that there were four; but may we not gather significance even from the silence of Scripture? Four, as we have had occasion to remark, is the number of earth, of the creature, of testing, and often of weakness. The altar of incense speaks of Christ as the channel and power of heavenly praise, and here there is no question of earth. Praise is in the sanctuary, the presence of God, and while, to meet the people in their condition, the altar was not in the most holy place, yet it is evident that worship, in its fullest sense, is directly in the presence of God. Two scriptures, connected with the incense, will bear this out. In Levs. 16:2, 12, God forbids Aaron to enter “at all times” into the holy of holies; he cannot do this but once a year, with the blood of the sin-offering and a cloud of incense in the censer.

At the details of all this—rich and full—we will look later, if the Lord please, when we come to consider the priesthood. It must suffice here to mark that the censer is taken into the holiest, and that it there answered to the altar of incense. The second scripture (Heb. 9:3, 4) makes this all the clearer. The epistle to the Hebrews contemplates the veil as rent, through the perfect sacrifice of Christ, and the “way into the holiest” is now manifest, whereas under the law the veil separated, and only once a year could the high priest alone, with the blood of the sacrifice and the incense, enter into that awful, because most holy, Presence. Therefore in en-numerating the various articles of furniture in the first tabernacle, “the figures of the true,” the altar of incense is singularly omitted, and instead we have “the golden censer” in the holiest. On the Day of Atonement, when the priest entered the holiest, he in some measure represented the truth of the altar of incense being for the heavenly place. As, however, the altar remained outside the veil, the censer is spoken of instead. Thus the very silence of God’s word is instructive.

May we not here have the clue to the absence of the number of horns? They were distinctly spoken of as four upon the brazen altar, for there could be no question that atonement had an earthly and a world-wide aspect; but the horns here in the sanctuary, while they bear the witness of the blood of the sin-offering upon them (Levs. 4:18), are not connected with atonement, save as its fruits are there displayed, but with the mighty intercession and worship of our Lord Jesus Christ. The horns were culminating points at the corners, and may in that way suggest that they set forth the intensity of meaning of the whole altar. Thus they would speak of the strength of our divine Lord, in all the energy of which He prevails as the Intercessor and Offerer of His people’s worship. The attention is thus drawn to this fact, rather than the need or earthly position of the saints, as would be suggested if the number four were given. In like manner the number four is wanting from the rings of this altar. Surely it is significant that this number of earth is not found here, even where we might naturally expect it.

The two cubits in height may also emphasize the heavenly character of the altar. Worship, the ascribing all honor and glory to God, is the highest function of His creatures. Christ, the true altar, has thus risen into the highest glory, “far above” everything in earth or heaven, and there as the leader of His people’s praises, sets forth the glories of God in a divine way.

Praise there is “by Him” (Heb. 13:15); it sets aside therefore all ritualism and “will-worship” in the holy things of God. The truths connected with the ark are those of acceptance, justification and access. May not the added half cubit by which the altar rises above the ark suggest that the time is coming when even those transcendent truths will be the groundwork and basis of an even higher joy in praise and worship?

Salvation, with its accompanying blessings fully realized, will so fully permeate the whole spiritual being, that the soul will be at leisure to rise above even its own blessings—though surely never to forget them, and how they were procured by Christ's death—and to praise and adore Him who is above all blessing and praise. Even here this may be in some measure realized, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The blood upon the horns of the altar, as we have said, is the ever-present witness that redemption has been accomplished and accepted, and is the basis of worship. And as the value of the blood of Christ endures for all eternity, so also will the praise of His redeemed people. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain" will eternally set forth the saints' joy in God's thoughts as to the person and work of His only begotten Son.

In this connection we may speak of the incense (Ex. 30:34-38); and, as closely connected with that, the holy anointing oil with which the tabernacle and all its furniture, and the priests, were anointed (Ex. 30:23-33).

The incense was composed of four "sweet spices," in equal proportions, blended ("salted") together. This has been taken, with some probability, as showing that salt also was added. If so, no mention is made of the proportions; indeed no exact quantity of salt is ever mentioned in Scripture. "Salt without prescribing how much" (Ezra 7:22). The word may however not refer to actual salt, but to the rubbing and tempering together of the various ingredients, which thus seasoned or "salted" each other.

The incense was to be offered night and morning upon the golden altar, upon coals taken from the altar of burnt-offering (Levs. 16:12). It was the fragrance offered within the sanctuary, as the burnt-offering presented the sweet savor outside. The latter was only for the sacrifice, and the former only for incense; the coals from the one to the other showing how intimately they were linked together. The same holiness accepted each, and sacrifice was the basis of praise.

The incense was composed chiefly of the gums which exuded from aromatic plants. They would thus seem to suggest the concentrated essence of the plant, and in that sense the moral significance and excellence of the acts rather than their detail. In nature they would represent probably all that was of value in the plant. In general we may say they represent all the moral excellence of Christ as apprehended by God. But as in the burnt-offering all was consumed, because all was a sweet savor to God, so in the incense—not the residuum, or the best, but all in Him was fragrant. Here the type would necessarily fail to set Him forth. But in another sense, the motive, spirit, and character of all that He did and was may be suggested in the spice; the essence of all this ever abides before God. It is difficult to contrast, where all was perfect, and where the inner and outer were absolutely of the same character. We may, however, distinguish between the outer details of His life, and the thoughts, desires and motives which were thereby expressed.

Another suggestive thought we get from this description of the incense. The general word, translated by "sweet spices," is derived from a root meaning "to be fragrant," and might be rendered "odors." There are in the same passage several other words of the same general significance: "perfume" is literally incense—that which smokes; "a confection," "seasoning," after the art of the "apothecary" or "seasoner" —the same root. This multiplication of words would suggest a fullness in the theme—Christ—which cannot be described in one word. The "perfume" would suggest His fragrance, as the fire of divine holiness tested Him even to death; "confection" might remind us of the blending of the various ingredients, according to the art of the blessed Spirit of God who is the true "Apothecary." May we not truly say:

We now come to the four ingredients:

1. Stacte.—This is the Greek word, given in the Septuagint, translating the Hebrew word nataph, meaning "to drop," "distil," so-called from the "drops" of gum which exude from the tree producing it; it has also been translated "balm," which is a more general word for sweet gums, and thought by some to be the styrax, a plant found in Syria; others regard it as a specific name for myrrh, found in Arabia; but of this there is no definite proof, and it is not probable.

Thus, beyond the fact that a fragrant substance is intended, and that it maybe the styrax, we are shut up to the significance of the word in other portions of Scripture, as giving us its ordinary use which, taken with its evident use in the incense, and probable identification with the spice already mentioned, will give us some suggestive thoughts.

The word is used for' rain," as in Judg. 5:4:" The clouds also dropped water;" "He maketh small the drops of water" (Job 36:27); and related to this we have the thought of any outflow, as, "The mountains shall drop sweet wine" (Amos 9:13). Growing out of this, or similar to it, we have it used in describing the speech as flowing forth, or distilling: "My speech dropped upon them; and they waited for me as for the rain" (Job 29:22); " Thy lips.., drop as the honeycomb" (SoS. 4:11) This last might well find its explanation in the direct language of the New Testament: "All bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth" (Luke 4:22). It is also rendered "prophecy," as in Mic. 2:6; Ezek. 20:46, etc.

From these uses of the word we get the idea of the expression, or distillation of the thoughts, as in refreshing speech, or in solemn warning.

We need not say how completely our Lord illustrated this in every word He uttered, whether words of grace and mercy to those who felt their helpless condition, or in warning and denunciation against hypocrites and the self-righteous; all was of sweet savor to God.

But what did such distillation mean for Him? He uttered no idle words, but only those of eternal truth, for which He was ready to die. We are therefore prepared for the thought that the distillation of fragrant gum came from the piercing of the tree. So with our Lord; the scorn, the mockery, the hatred that pierced Him, only drew forth the fragrant submission to God, which expressed itself in words of love and truth, even when they nailed Him to the cross. Thus the sweat "as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" is of eternally sweet fragrance to God, expressing the depths of "Not My will, but Thine, be done." The stacte then would suggest to us that outflow of the heart of Christ to God, both spontaneous and as enduring suffering even unto death.

2. Onycha is again the Greek word, meaning literally a "finger nail," given as the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew; also translated scale or shell, and might refer to a finger nail. The onyx (not to be confounded with the precious stone of the same name in English) is spoken of by ancient authors as a shell-fish found in the Red Sea, which being ground up yields a perfume. This would be suggestive and in line with what we would gather from the meaning of the incense. Christ indeed came into the place of death and judgment, but how unlike to the murmurings of Israel, as they stood trembling by the shore of the Red Sea, were His words of absolute submission and love. They said, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" (Ex. 14:11, 12). Yet God opened the way through

the Red Sea for that murmuring crowd to pass over dryshod. But our Lord, as He faced that dark sea of death and judgment through which He was to pass, to open the way for His own to go through in safety, said: “The cup which My Father hath given Me shall I not drink it?” (John 18:1). Here indeed was perfume upon the dark shore of death, from a life which yielded itself up to be crushed under judgment for us. We are told that this “onycha” was both a perfume and a medicine—fragrant to God, we may say, and healing to the sinner:

This shell-fish was said to feed upon the “nard or stems of fragrant plants by the water, and this again may serve to remind us that our Lord fed not from the flesh-pots of Egypt, but upon His Father’s will, even though it led to the giving up of His life: “This commandment have I received of My Father.”

3. Galbanum is found only in this place (as was the case also with the previous word), and we have therefore to glean its meaning largely from its etymology. Both Greek and English words are simply transliterations from the Hebrew, and not translations. The principal part of the root means to be fat or fertile, and in that way may refer to the sap, the “fatness” of the plant, the best or vital part. To this has been added the thought (from the termination) of “lamentation,” which would again recall those griefs of the “Man of Sorrows,” which, however, never marred the perfections of a “fatness” which was all for God.

What is now known by “galbanum,” is a resinous gum obtained from the eastern coast of Africa and from Arabia, of a bitter acrid taste, and musty or disagreeable odor, but which adds strength and persistence to the other ingredients.

It is said to have the power of driving away vermin and reptiles, and also to have medicinal virtues. We are not, then, without suggestive thoughts which are applicable to our Lord Jesus. How truly did all the energy of will, as suggested by the “fat,” express itself in devotion to His Father. This is set forth at large in the teaching of the sacrifices. What holy and sustained energy was His: “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me” (John 4:34). All this was absolutely and only given to God. Was the path one of suffering and of sorrow? It surely was; but never of murmuring or repining. Did not that very energy of a will that hungered only to obey God give character and tone to all the fragrance of His life? The “fatness” added persistence to the fragrance of His sorrows and love. To be sure, for those who had no heart for Him, to whom He was without form or comeliness, this “galbanum” was repulsive, because too pungent. For One never to have a thought but His Father’s will, never to take interest in the world apart from God, never to come down to the level of ordinary men, it was “too much.” Ah, how that divine energy galled the slothful pride of Pharisees and Heroclians. How its pungent savor pierced their shallow minds and hypocritical hearts. How the un-worldliness of it smote upon conscience and heart of those who lived for this world. And even with His own, the savor of the “galbanum” was at times beyond their faith, and disclosed their state of soul. Peter’s affectionate dissuasion, when the Lord foretold His cross, “Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee” (Matt. 16:22), met with no gentle words: “ Get thee behind Me, Satan; thou art an offense unto Me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” Mere earthly affection, expressed by one who should have had other motives, was an offense when it sought to turn Him from His Father’s will. But though thus seemingly harsh, how this very energy which refused an easy path, told out a devotion of heart to God which gave character, as we have seen, to all that was in Him. Thus the galbanum has its voice for us. How such pungent energy drives out the” serpent” and his whole vermin brood, while it heals the brokenhearted who come in their sin and need to Him.

4. Frankincense makes up in the frequency of its occurrence in Scripture for the rarity of the other words; it is also a well-known spice. The word in the original is from a root meaning “to be white.” Thus Mount Lebanon, the same word, received its name probably from the white limestone rock of which it is largely composed. The name has been supposed to be given to the frankincense because of the whiteness of the pure gum; this would also suit the white flame with which it burns. The Greek word is a transliteration of the Hebrew, and the English frankincense refers to its freely-burning qualities. This gum is obtained in Arabia, and is of a bitter taste it comes from a tree bearing flowers with five petals and ten stamens; the fruit is five-sided, and there are five species of the plant. It grows upon almost bare marble rocks, drawing its sustenance from these. The gum is obtained from incisions, and is very valuable. Besides being in demand for incense, it is useful as a medicine, and an antidote to poison.

Here, then, we have a fullness of suggestion as to our Lord who, “as a root out of a dry ground,” grew in the arid wilderness of this world, where naturally there was nothing to sustain. The characteristic number five, stamped upon so much of the tabernacle, would suggest, in the flowers, fruit and species of this plant, the truth of Him who was the Word made flesh. That it should extract nourishment and fragrance from marble, suggests the two-fold thought that He flourished in that pure and perfect will of God which put Him in a barren world, but where He gathered in every way that which was fragrant to God. The incision through which the gum flowed reminds us that His piercing drew forth the sweet perfume of entire submission to God—priceless indeed to God as a sweet savor, and the perfect antidote to Satan’s poison with which he drugged man, a healing medicine for the deepest ills of the soul.

These are merest hints which find illustration upon every page of the Gospels, to be used—may it be so!—as the real frankincense of worship, presenting the sweet savor of Christ to God.

We will also refer to several passages of Scripture where frankincense is spoken of, to gather illustrations of its meaning and use. The meat-offering of fine flour had frankincense put upon it, and when only part of the meal was to be burned, all the frankincense was consumed (Levs. 2:1, 2). The showbread which was put upon the golden table had frankincense put upon it (Levs. 24:7) “for a memorial.” Here the meat-offering and the showbread both speak of the person of our Lord, and the frankincense would suggest His preciousness to God, and to all who have the thoughts of God, as we sing:

“Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense?” (SoS. 3:6); “I will get me to... the hill of frankincense” (Sol. 4:6). Here, in the “Song of loves,” the excellence of Christ is set forth under this symbol of fragrant incense. That it was but a symbol is seen in God’s rebuke through the prophet when it became a mere form: “To what purpose cometh there unto Me incense?” (Jer. 6:20).

The blessing to the Gentiles in the coming day of Christ’s glory is set forth in this same symbolic language: “All they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord (Isa. 60:6). The visit of the” wise men” to the Holy Infant at Bethlehem was a foreshadow of this blessed time, and significantly their gifts, along with the gold of His divine glory, included the frankincense of His excellence, and the myrrh, foretelling His death (Matt. 2:11).

Gathering up what we have learned, the “stacte” suggests the fragrant outflow of speech, of act and of life yielded even unto death in our Lord. The “onycha” recalls especially His being crushed in death, but still yielding only the fragrance of complete devotedness to God. The “galbanum” recalls the holy energy which knew but one object, and which rebuked all halfhearted loyalty or pretense. The” frankincense” speaks of His purity, which found expression in absolute consecration to God.

These ingredients were to be taken in equal parts, and in the order mentioned; nothing was out of proportion. Each balanced the other, not by counteracting, as is so needed in man, but as enhancing the fragrance and bringing out its true character. Thus, we may say, if there had been an undue proportion of the stacte—of sweetness and fragrance alone—although this was first—it would have palled upon the sense; or if the galbanum had dominated the others, there would have been lacking the “meekness and gentleness of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:1). Too much onycha would have cast too dark a gloom upon all His life, and more than the proper amount of frankincense, burning so freely, would have hastened His departure to the Father before His hour “had come” (John 13:1).

But all was blended together in the power of the Spirit, so that the result was a “perfume, a confection,” absolutely sweet and delightful to the infinite God, and tempered together according to the “salt” of the eternal covenant (Levs. 2:13), which sets forth the perpetual character of Him of whom all speaks, and the eternal nature of that praise of which He is the theme.

Feeble indeed are words here to express that whichever exceeds our highest thoughts. But if God has in grace set before us the elements in the character of His Son, true humility will seek to gather the lessons He would convey.

Let us ever remember also that what is necessarily looked upon as composite in the symbol, and as wrought together by external power and skill, was in our Lord the necessary and only possible character. We say, If this or that had been out of proportion, but that could not be; He was perfect, only that, and could have been nothing else. No perfume like that of the incense could be manufactured by man: hence the blasphemy of those who talk of imitating Him, or who degrade Him by co-ordinating Him with—we do not say prominent characters in history, Is Buddha or Mohammed—but Moses, or Elias, or one of the prophets. No, this incense was but for one purpose, to be put upon the golden altar, and to shed its fragrance before One who alone fully “knoweth the Son” (Matt. 2:27). An eternal hell is the portion of those who refuse to give the Christ of God His true and only place before God. “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?” (1 John 2:22). We need not be surprised therefore to find that those who deny the hopelessly incurable nature of sin, and the eternal punishment for man’s guilt, should be the same who degrade the Son of God, and deny the value of His atoning death. These all stand or fall together. If sin is not what God declares it to be, reverently be it said, Christ is not what that same Authority sets Him forth to be. Along with this, however, would go all truth; there would be no God, no Creator, no creation —nothing stable for our faith. Such is the mad folly of Satan’s lie, and of man who following him would liken the Holy One of God to any of the children of men (Psa. 45:2).

While the character of our Lord shines forth with special luster in the four Gospels where He is the direct theme, we must ever remember that the entire Scripture is “the word of Christ” (Col. 3:16). Christ is God’s thought from the beginning to the close of the word of God. Therefore He is the Alpha and Omega of divine truth in that sense also. We shall therefore find Him set forth on every page, by type or symbol, in act or history, or human characters. It is the Holy Spirit who thus delights to lead the devout soul to bring the spices from afar—to gather the fragrant stacte from Genesis, the onycha from Exodus, the pungent galbanum from the frowning heights of Sinai itself and the Prophets, and the frankincense from the Song of Songs, and to find these all tempered together in those psalms of praise where Christ is the theme. Or, to vary the simile, faith will gather with delight each and all these species, or find them blended in every part of that “good land and large” spread out upon the word of God. Alas, that our hearts should be cold under such themes as these, or should ever traffic in this holy perfume to secure the praise of man! Let us not fail to be truly exercised in conscience, that obedience and a fruitful life may show our appreciation of God’s Son. Mary’s ointment was costly, and we may be sure it cost her much, but Christ so filled her soul that personal cost was not in her mind. There is a divine and necessary link between the character of the Lord and that of His people, who are fashioned, in some measure, by the truth which occupies them. May His grace effect this in the heart of writer and reader, to His praise.

The whole matter of the altar, the incense and the ointment is so closely connected with the priesthood that the significance is manifest. All true worship must be in the name of and by the Priest. All full and intelligent worship must be through Him who has passed into the holiest having obtained eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12). This emphasizes the fact that all worship must be based upon the accomplished sacrifice of our Lord Jesus. God must righteously judge sin; but in His love He has done this in the person of His beloved Son, who as the sin-bearer cried out, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Psa. 22:1). The answer to that question of the holy Sufferer is given by Himself: “But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel” (ver. 3). It is because God is holy that sin must be judged—most solemn, yet most blessed truth. What rest could there be for creation if its Author and Sustainer were not absolutely holy and righteous? But, blessed be God, the judgment has been borne by the divine Substitute, and therefore never will be visited upon His people. Now, therefore, God can dwell among them, and their praises flow forth. But they could not be near to Him, had not the holy One been forsaken of God; their songs of praise could not rise to Him, had not the anguish of Christ told out the awful yet blessed fact that God was there pouring out upon Him the wrath we deserved. Later on we shall see how all this truth shines out in the altar of burnt-offering, with which the altar of incense was indissolubly connected. The coals from the altar of burnt-offering, where the atoning sacrifice had gone up as a sweet savor to God, were used to kindle the incense at the golden altar.

This is gathered from the fact that fire was always burning upon the brazen altar (Levs. 6:12, 13). There was special warning as to “strange fire.” The one fire was that upon this brazen altar, type of that divine holiness and righteousness which on the cross consumed the perfect Sacrifice, Christ. All else is “strange fire” (Levs. 10:1). This fire upon the brazen altar came out from before the Lord and consumed the sacrifice (Levs. 9:24). This manifests the blasphemy of Nadab and Abihu who, in closest connection with that manifestation, despised the holy fire and took that of their own kindling to offer incense. Therefore the despised fire came forth again, not to consume the sacrifice, which had already been done, but to cut off in judgment those who refused to bow to God’s manifest will, expressed in perfect grace.

The two altars, therefore, must not be separated: praise must ever be based upon the sacrifice of Christ. It could not be otherwise without denying the very character of God and His truth. The praise of heaven, round the golden altar, will be “Unto Him that loveth us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever” (Rev. 1:5, 6).

Fittingly therefore does the Psalmist, in speaking of the house for the lonely sparrow and a nest for the restless swallow, refer to these two altars: “Yea, the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself where she may lay her young, even Thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God” (Psa. 84:3). Both altars are thus connected together, and form the solid and abiding rest for the poor and needy soul.

Thus too when Isaiah saw the glory of the Lord in the temple, and the adoring seraphim with veiled faces celebrating the majesty of the thrice holy, triune God, he was overwhelmed with the sense of his own and Israel’s uncleanness, until one of those “burning ones” (suggesting, perhaps, the fire of God as seen in His executors of judgment) flew with a live coal which he had taken from off the altar, and touched his lips, saying, “Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged” (Isa. 6:7). The coal of divine holiness had already consumed the sacrifice, and was also consuming the sweet incense. Thus symbolically the prophet’s lips were cleansed according to God’s estimate of the value of the sacrifice and the person of our Lord.

Recurring to another solemn scene of judgment, we get another view of this same vital truth, the more strongly emphasized by its connection with the true and effectual use of the incense. Korah and his company had disowned Aaron as the priest of God, by claiming equal sanctity and nearness for all Israel: “Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord” (Num. 16:3). With this “fair show” of piety, were they not claiming equal priestly privileges for all, and was not this right? But it filled Moses with horror, and he fell upon his face. He saw that it was not only a refusal of Aaron (ver. 2), but of the fact that, as a sinful people, they could have no possible standing before God save through the priest who offered the sacrifice. In other words, this “gainsaying of Korah” involved the denial of Christ’s person and His sacrificial work. It was in that sense a symbolic Unitarianism.

Speedily are all made to see the blasphemy of these “sinners against their own souls” (vs. 38, 39). They take brazen censers (significantly they are not of gold, but of that which speaks of judgment), and offer incense: “And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the 250 men that offered incense” (ver. 35). How all this reiterates the eternal truth-none but Christ, none but Christ.

But God is a God of grace as well as of judgment, and so the next day when for the murmuring of the people the plague was made to fall upon them, Aaron, the true priest, is told to Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar [of burnt-offering] and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them “ (ver. 46). Aaron does this, standing with his censer “between the living and the dead.” Faith recognizes here the Great High Priest, infinitely above us, who with the sweet savor of His person and the memorial of His sacrifice, interposes in behalf of His people in the fragrance that sets Him forth.

It is also suggestive that the word used for the burning of the burnt-offering and the burning of the incense is the same. It is from a word meaning to “ascend,” different from that used in burning the sin-offering without the camp, which is to “consume.” Thus we are reminded that it was not only the devouring judgment of God manifested in the atoning death of our Lord, but that His death was indeed “precious” to God. For special reasons, when dealing with sin as sin, He must show what is its only desert.

This must suffice, in this connection, to show the significance of the altar of incense and that which was connected with it. A few practical thoughts will close this part of our subject.

All the people of God have been made priests, by divine grace, through the precious blood of Christ: “Ye also... are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). Aaron was to burn incense on the golden altar when he trimmed the lamps in the morning and when he lighted them at night (Ex. 30:7). All is here seen to be the work of Aaron; for the fitting and preparing of His saints, whether for testimony or worship, is the work of our great High Priest, its effects being manifest in the saints. Our worship is produced by His grace, in connection with the needed work of correction, suggested in the trimming of the lamps.

All praise is to be “by Him” (Heb. 13:15). The incense is to be upon the golden altar alone. Thus the linking of the name of our Lord Jesus with every prayer and thanksgiving is not a form, but a reality, a necessity. Could there be one particle of praise or a single prayer acceptable to God, save “by Him?” This sacrifice of praise is to be continual, in times of darkness as well as of light; it is the fruit of the lips confessing His name. Christ is the altar, the basis of praise; and the incense, the material of praise. Nothing is so sweet to God as the name of Christ; that is praise which offers that savor to God in truth confessing what He has done and what He is. Praise is not offering our feelings or our state to God, though it will be accompanied by joy and gladness, but it is the confessing of Christ, and He produces joy in the heart of the true worshiper—the sinner saved by grace.

To all this Christ adds the savor of His own blessed person. Feeble and cold are the praises in themselves, but the High Priest has “much incense” to offer with them, and they go up to God with all the energy and in the perfect acceptance of Christ (Rev. 8:3, 4). It is Himself who says, “I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee” (Heb. 2:12). Here is the Priest in company with the priestly family, whom He is not ashamed to call brethren, leading their praises up to God. How this dignifies and elevates all true worship. It is the praise of Christ, even as David was said to praise God through the company of Levites who offered up thanksgiving in the tabernacle (2 Chr. 7: 6).

Linked with this offering of praise is the practical expression of it: “But to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb. 13:16). We have an illustration of this in the way the apostle speaks of the temporal ministry of the Philippians to his need: small it may have been if measured by the world’s standards, but of immeasurable value to God because produced by the Spirit of Christ: “An odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God” (Phil. 4:18). Nothing can be small or of slight value to God which has the savor of Christ with it. The “two mites” of the widow have pervaded all places where the savor of His name is made known (Luke 21:2-4).

And so, not only giving, but any true ministry to the people of Christ is associated with the golden altar. May we not say, to use the language of men, that God’s attention is arrested wherever He detects even a faint trace of the fragrance of His Son produced by His grace?

Reference is made, in a solemn way, to this savor of Christ’s name in 2 Cor. 2:14-17.

In the boldness and liberty of faith the apostle speaks of his journeying from one place to another with the glad tidings of Christ, as the progress of a triumphant soldier who himself through grace was a captive to Christ, and is now led along in the triumph of that victorious

Leader.

He is used to spread forth the glory of that triumph by making manifest the sweet savor of Christ in every place, both toward them that are saved and in them that perish.

It is said that sweet spices were burned at the triumphs of the Roman generals. As they made their entry into the city with a multitude of captives following, the burning of the sweet odors were a savor of life to those who participated in that triumph, but to the captives who were to be turned over to the lions, these odors were a savor of death. The odors were thus a savor and a foretaste either of life or of death. So with the excellence of Christ: to those who, through grace bow to Him, who receive forgiveness and life, those sweet odors of His praise are the foretaste of life in eternal fullness and joy; but to those who in pride reject His grace, these praises tell of judgment in eternal separation from the light and love and joy of heaven.

Lastly, we will speak of the staves by which the altar of incense was carried through the wilderness. It was to accompany the people through all their journey. It is in connection with this pilgrim character, separating from the world and its religion, that the true spirit of praise is maintained: “Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually” (Heb. 13:13-15). With their faces toward Christ, their backs to the world, and seeking the heavenly city, these are the true worshipers.

This golden altar was to follow Gods people in all their journeying, of which the staves wherewith to carry it remind us; for however long or dangerous the way, the praises of God are to characterize His people, as a foretaste of that eternal praise which awaits them in glory.

This is suggested in the 84th psalm, which speaks of a resting-place found at the altars first, so that, throughout the entire journey, valleys of Baca become wells of refreshing and strength for the way, until “Every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.”

The fifteen Songs of degrees (Psa. 120-134) bring out the same thought of the staves—praise while they progress, until the end is reached. These “songs” were the praises of the people as they went up to Jerusalem for the worship of their feasts, and suggest Israel’s recall in the latter day from their wanderings back to God, the source of all their joy; and in an even higher sense of the entire journey which leads up to the “city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God” (Heb. 11:10). Every stage of the journey, from the loneliness of the soul dwelling with those who “hate peace” (Ps. 120) to the songs of the servants of the Lord who cease not day and night to praise Him (Psa. 134), is marked by praise.

These are the true “stations,” marked by Him whose altar accompanies His beloved ones wherever He may lead them throughout their journey.

Lectures on the Tabernacle: A Full Exposition Examining the Types and Their Doctrinal Applications — Fully Illustrated, Sockets and the Boards, The

Exodus 36:20-24; 30:11-16; 38:25-27

Having looked at the wood and the gold which formed the boards of the tabernacle, we will now examine their form, dimensions, foundation and relation to each other.

As we have already seen, each board rested upon two sockets or foundations of silver of one talent each, cast from the silver of the redemption money which each man of responsible age had to pay for his ransom, half a shekel or ten gerahs. Thus standing side by side these boards not only rested securely upon their foundation, but were held firmly together by the three bars passed through the golden rings on the boards all around; while at the corners, whatever the details, provision was made for strength and to prevent any separation, where it would be most likely to occur.

Forty-eight boards in all formed the tabernacle—twenty for each side, six at the rear, and two at the corners. The front was open, save for the hanging and the five pillars from which it was suspended. There were also four pillars within the tabernacle, to support the veil which divided the Most Holy from the Holy place; each of the four pillars resting upon a silver socket.

Let us now look at the spiritual meaning of all this, as the Lord may enlighten us. We begin where the builder always begins, with the foundation. Unless this be right the whole superstructure is of no value. At the close of the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord speaks of the foundation rather than the character of the house built by His hearers. That being right, all would be secure. The wise man builds upon the rock of a genuine obedience to Christ; the foolish, upon the sand of an empty profession (Matt. 7:24-27.)

The meaning of these silver sockets is made so clear from the scripture that speaks of them, that there can be no question. God’s habitation—His redeemed people—was to rest upon the solid foundation of redemption. The necessity for this is strongly emphasized in that no man could be considered as His at all apart from the redemption-money paid for each one. No exemption was made, and no excuse could be pleaded. The rich were not permitted to pay more, nor the poor less than the half shekel.1

If God is to have a redeemed people among whom He will dwell, it must be according to His, not their, thoughts. The price is to be half a shekel, or ten gerahs, according to the shekel of the sanctuary -the divine estimation. Man might conceive that something else might be more suited for his redemption-his own works, his feelings, his worthiness, or his faithfulness. But God’s holiness and righteousness would not permit poor man to be so deceived. The foundation must be according to God’s estimation, the shekel must be according to the balances of the sanctuary.

Notice that the price was ten gerahs. We have this number in the height of the boards, and have already seen its significance, as in the Ten Commandments, the divine measure of man’s responsibility, and in the ten curtains which show how perfectly Christ met this. A ransom must meet this responsibility, or it cannot avail before God. The lawyer, “willing to justify himself,” cuts the law in two: “And who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:29). He leaves God out, the only One before whom man must be justified.

And how common, well-nigh universal, is this thought! Men's consciences seem to be asleep as to God's claims, and they profess to think that if they do their duty to their fellow-men—and even that according to their own estimation—it is a good ground of acceptance before God!

But could a man fully meet his responsibility to his fellow-men, could he love his neighbor as himself, would that meet his responsibility to God? The very image of God in which man was made declares God's absolute claim upon him for perfect allegiance and devotedness. Can man be independent of or indifferent to his Creator and Preserver's holy will and be guiltless? And obedience to God must be, like Himself, perfect in every part to be acceptable to Him. Thus all are "guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19), for none have kept His law in this way, nor can fallen man do so. Therefore he needs what God in His love has provided—a ransom which measures up perfectly to all that in which man has utterly failed; a ransom provided by God, and therefore perfect as Himself.

What this ransom is every child of God knows —that which meets the curse of the broken law. But " Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree "(Gal. 3:13). Thus while man never has and never could pay the ten gerahs of his responsibility, Christ has paid in full, according to the divine estimation, and thus provided the perfect ransom. This atonement price forms the solid and eternal foundation upon which the guiltiest sinner who believes upon Him can rest. In the type, this was the ten gerahs of silver. The anti-type is given thus:" Forasmuch as ye know that 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).

If we take up that holy law which declares our responsibility, and look at each commandment, we must confess we have utterly failed in keeping any part of it; we have broken it in heart if not outwardly, as our Lord shows in the Sermon on the Mount. But as we take up each command, instead of saying, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law," we can say, "Redeemed with the precious blood of Christ." Broken every command, in spirit at least—guilty of all in the sight of God, but "redeemed with the precious blood of Christ!" Here we rest—on a solid and eternal foundation upon which all the redeemed for all time will find that it can never be shaken. It is the assurance of this which by the Holy Spirit produces love and gratitude which constrain the soul to abhor sin and to walk in obedience to God.

But what did this "redemption through His blood" (Eph. 1:7) involve for our holy Lord? The parable of the pearl of great price, in Matt. 73:45, 46, will show us. The usual thought that the merchantman is the sinner seeking for salvation, which is the pearl—or perhaps Christ is considered that—is far from the truth; far from God's thought. The sinner giving up all that he has to buy salvation—to buy Christ?! What has he to buy with but his sins. Is this the gospel of the grace of God? But, thank God, the gospel He has sent His servants to proclaim is "that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3); and, "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). We know it is the Shepherd "who gave His life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

But, it may be objected, if the merchantman is Christ who is seeking the sinner, then the pearl, that beautiful jewel, must be the sinner! Yes, we reply; for this is the wonder of divine love and grace. No one but the practiced seeker would know that down at the bottom of the sea in the unsightly shell-fish is the pearl which, brought out and polished, is fit to adorn a royal crown. So no eye but that of our Lord, piercing down through the dark waters of death, where we lay in the mire of our sin, could see in us a beauty which He Himself was to put upon us. And no power but His could have gone down, at the cost of His own life, to bring us up and make us meet to adorn His crown of rejoicing for eternity. Yes, the Church is the pearl, as in Rev. 21:21, where each gate speaks of it.

This indeed shows us what price was paid for the pearl. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). How poor did the Son of God become? He laid aside His divine glory; took a servant's form; "had not where to lay His head," as He said. When asked about paying tribute to Cæsar, He asked for the tribute money. Women ministered to Him of their substance (Luke 8:3)—precious privilege, to be had even now in ministering to "one of the least" of His own. Yet all this could not measure His poverty. We must look at Calvary, where He laid down His life under God's judgment for our sins. So poor He became. From the glory of heaven down to be made a curse' Truly He sold all that He had.

Here then are the silver sockets—the redemption-price paid by our Lord on the cross. Thus was the foundation laid on which He builds His Church, on which the whole redeemed family of God rests, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it. Could we for a moment think of resting upon any other foundation? Would Moses have set up those boards on the shifting sands of the desert? "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). There is the foundation laid by God Himself, and every believer is upon it.

This gives us at once, then, the significance of the boards resting upon their sockets. For whatever rests upon the foundation must in some manner refer to the believer. Our Lord needed no salvation, but stood before God in the perfection of His own person and character. These boards then set forth His people who form the habitation of God in this world. Let us look at them.

The ten cubits in height, as already seen in the ten gerahs of the ransom money, speak of full responsibility; and how beautifully do these two fit together—a redemption price equal to the full demand of God's perfect law which had been broken by us, and an acceptance and standing in Christ which is equally perfect. These boards are standing up. The sinner may well prostrate himself before God in self-abhorrence: "Unclean, unclean;" "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13), is all he can say. But what a change for the believer; his leprosy is cleansed, his sins are forgiven, and now he stands upon the solid foundation of God's own providing, confessing it is all the merits of Christ in whom he is made to stand. There is no boasting of self, but in Christ Jesus is our all.2

This perfectly explains what would otherwise be an insurmountable difficulty. The materials of the board speak, as we said, of the two natures of our Lord—His humanity and His deity, united in His one Person. But someone will say, Is it not thoroughly unscriptural and blasphemous to speak of our being in Christ's deity, suggested by the gold? If it were only the acacia wood it might represent His people, but how can they be said to be in the deity?

This would indeed be blasphemy. But we must remember that while the link with us is His human nature, through death, yet He is but one person, and all that He is is for His people. The Last Adam is also the Son of God, and all who are partakers of life in Him are in Him according to the full value of what He is.

A passage from the second chapter of Colossians may make this clear: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him... For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power" (vss. 6-10). In Him, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, we are complete, or filled up. No one who knows God could think for

a moment of the creature being in Him as partaking of deity. But the value of the person to whom we are united is divine; and here again is seen the amazing character of that grace which stooped so low to lift poor rebels out of their lost condition and make them “heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17). In 2 Cor. 5:21 also we have, “For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” A divine standing in righteousness is ours who believe. Divine righteousness is so perfectly glorified in Christ, that it finds nothing in our acceptance unsuited to it.

The apostle John, speaking of relationship in the family of God by divine life, says, “As He is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17). And how is He?-so are we, “accepted in the Beloved” (Eph. 1:6). “We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life “(1 John 5:18-20). How amazing is all this! Of course, it is only through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ that it could be, but “This [One] is the true God and eternal life,” and all that He is imparts its value to what His people are in Him. Thus God sees fit to set forth His people’s standing, not only in the shittim wood but in Him who was both that and the gold. Thus we have a perfect foundation, a perfect redemption, and a perfect standing—Christ.

But the timid soul says, “I know both the work and the person of Christ are perfect, but if I could only be sure I had an interest in it!” This is divinely provided for in the boards. There were, not one, but two tenons on each board, each imbedded in its socket. The word for ten-on is “hand,” suggesting the hand of faith laying hold vitally upon the finished work of Christ, as the tenons found a secure resting-place and were held fast in their sockets of silver made of the atonement money.

How suggestive this is! Does the “hand” of faith, of felt need, reach out after God? Here is the divine provision for it in the work of Christ. Is the sense of sin, of guilt and helplessness upon us? Here is the hiding-place provided in the love of God. The very things in us which show our need, are provided for in this divine work. Are we without strength? ungodly? “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly “(Rom. 5:6). Are we sinners?” Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners “ (1 Tim. 1:15). So our God puts the very words in our mouth, and bids us welcome to the shelter of the Cross, to all that is secured through it. The sockets are fitted for the tenons, and there is nothing that fits so perfectly as the work of Christ and the poor needy sinner. Thus faith drops its hands into the place provided for it.

But after the tenons have found their place in the sockets, they are invisible. So with the believer. He cannot think about his wonderful faith; it is not on exhibition, but is hidden in that upon which it rests. It is not as though the boards were suspended from the sockets and held on to them, but they are resting upon them. So the believer is not “clinging,” nor “holding on” for salvation, as though all depended upon his strength: he is resting with his whole weight upon the provision in the work of our Lord Jesus. Thus His work, His redemption is alone before the soul, not the strength or weakness of the faith which has laid hold of Him. Faith rests on the bosom of redeeming love—is occupied with that, and not itself. The tenon would prevent the board from slipping off the socket; it was not held simply by its weight, whence a sudden jar might cause it to slip off. So, too, the saint, through a divinely-given faith, not merely rests with his own weight upon Christ’s work, but can never perish, for he is eternally united to the value of that work: “None shall pluck them out of My hand” (John 28).

The two tenons and sockets would speak of competent testimony and of salvation, and of the two-fold view of redemption provided for us. We have already looked at the two tables of the law—the Godward and manward aspect of responsibility. Both have been fully met by our blessed Lord on His cross. The full penalty of a broken law, of sin against God and against man, has been borne for us. We may also look at sin as transgression and as bondage or defilement. The Cross is the two-fold provision for this: redemption is from the guilt and from the power of sin. It is

“Of sin the double cure.”

Or we may look at sin as committed before conversion, and after also. What a dreadful thing it is that a child of God should thus fall into what brought our Lord Jesus to the cross! But the love that passeth knowledge has provided for all sin. Ours were all future when our Lord bore their penalty on the cross: all was provided for. May such grace soften our poor hearts and lead us to abhor sin and turn more fully unto our Lord.

We might think also of redemption in its twofold aspect, as securing the work in us as well as being the work for us. He has “condemned sin in the flesh,” by His Cross, and He also came “for sin,” a sin-offering (Rom. 8:3). Thus sin, the root, has been judged, and sins, the fruit, put away.

So we can look at this precious truth in many ways and see its two-fold character. We can think of it as a present and eternal salvation; as pertaining to the soul and to the body; as revealed in Old and New Testaments, in type and fulfillment; for the Jew and the Gentile. He is the God of all grace, and that grace has shown itself in its fullness in redemption by Christ our Lord.

Recurring again to the thought of testimony suggested by the two sockets and tenons, we are reminded that the full witness to all we have been seeing, and far more, is given in the word of God. Salvation depends alone upon the work of our Lord Jesus, but the assurance of that is given through the word of God. Thus we can never separate the work and the Word. Wherever this is done, it will be found that both are denied. Those who question the truth of Scripture, its authenticity, its inerrancy and divine perfection—all that unbelief which goes under the pretentious name of “ Higher Criticism”— will be found to think lightly of the Cross of Christ and the results of that work.

Before leaving the boards, looked at individually, we may inquire as to the significance of the breadth, one and a half3 cubits.

As showing a curtailment of time or number, as in psalm 102: 24, “In the midst [half] of my days” The sacrifice is made to cease “in the midst [half] of the week” (Dan. 9:27).

As expressing equal division, as the blood of the covenant, half upon the altar and half upon the people (Ex. 24:6. So Solomon proposed the division of the child (1 Kings 3:25, etc).

As suggesting a large proportion, “the half of the kingdom” (Esther 5:3).

As suggesting small proportion, with “not”-as in tilt, words of the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:7).

As suggesting, possibly, more still to follow (Num. 15:9, etc.).

There seem to be suggestions from a number of these as to the boards. The half is added to the width of one cubit. There is a character to the standing which is thus expressed. It is more than mere forgiveness, but fullest justification, as in the fifth part added to the payment of the trespass (Levs. 5:16). God is more glorified in the person and work of our Lord than in the mere obedience of unfallen man.

As length or height speaks of full measure, breadth might suggest the character of the measure, as in the curtains, and this character seen in our Lord and in His people, as responding to the claims of God's throne.)

Three being the number of divine glory, it has been suggested that it points to the fact that man has "come short" of that glory. But we must remember it is not man in his natural state of guilt that the boards represent, but as complete in Christ, in whom God is perfectly glorified. Perhaps a clue may be found in the height and breadth of the ark, where we have the same dimensions (in cubits). The ark, as we shall see later on, typifies Christ as the One who sustains the very throne of God. Thus if the ten cubits in height speak of Christ having fully glorified God in the place of human responsibility, the breadth might likewise remind us of Him in connection with the throne of God. There may be instruction in the proportion between the height and the breadth, which is 10 to 1½, or 20 to 3. This would give an infinite series of 6 as the expression of the relation—unending and eternal victory in Christ—blessed truth indeed, whether or not we are fully justified in gathering it from these numbers. Lastly, this half may possibly suggest "the whole" is yet to follow, in eternity. This seems to be the thought in the drink-offerings connected with the burnt-offerings (Num. 28:14). A fraction of a hin of wine was poured out, increasing from the fourth part of the hin for a lamb to a half hin for a bullock. The higher the apprehension of Christ the fuller the joy; but at best we must say with the Queen of Sheba, The half has not been told (2 Chron. 9:6).

We may also see the effect of this half cubit upon the length and width of the tabernacle. Had the boards been but one cubit broad, it would have been but twenty cubits long, and, perhaps, but seven broad. But instead of this the tabernacle was thirty cubits long—divine glory manifested in full responsibility, and that responsibility again seen in the ten cubits of breadth. In the temple these dimensions were doubled, which would confirm the thought that in the day of glory—for Israel millennial, for the Church heaven—the full measure of God's thoughts of His people in Christ will be manifest.

We pass now from that which speaks of the individual believer and the perfection of his standing in Christ to his corporate relations. Each board had a perfectly secure foundation apart from its connection with the other boards, as the individual believer's security does not depend upon his fellow-Christians, but upon Christ's work alone. But this gives no thought of a dwelling-place for God; but God's purpose is to build them together for His habitation.

At this very point we see that selfishness in our hearts, which is one great proof of our fallen nature. We think of our own salvation and security rather than of God's glory and His habitation; so there is often little exercise as to His abode on earth. But the same scripture which tells us we are builded upon the foundation, also declares that we are "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:20-22). The fact that each board in the tabernacle was prepared with a distinct purpose for its place in the building, shows that God, by the Spirit, has a distinct purpose to place each believer where he belongs in the house of God. Nor does this refer merely to its full display in glory, but to the present time, while He leaves us in this wilderness world.

This is learned in the rings, of which, as we have already seen, there were probably three upon each board through which the bars were to pass, thus uniting them all together. No board was complete until it had these rings upon it, and they plainly declared that no board was for itself, but had a connection with all the others. The rings (a complete circle) would remind us of the eternal link between the believer and Christ: the bars being passed through the rings could in no way be loosed from them. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" The gold of these rings speaks of the divine character of this tie—born, not of blood, nor of man's, nor of flesh's will, but of God. And the three rings would speak of the full manifestation of God in this blessed union. The three persons of the Godhead are engaged and pledged in it—the Father sent His Son, has accepted His work, and fully justifies the believer; the Son has perfectly accomplished redemption, and the Spirit has not only regenerated each believer, but has sealed him, as belonging to God until the day of redemption (Eph. 1:13). The work of the Spirit is further shown in His baptism of all believers into one body (1 Cor. 12:13). So the rings declare plainly that each believer is forever and by a divine work linked with his blessed Savior and Lord, and thus to all his fellow-believers.

We have already had the intimation of the meaning of the bars. Their material—acacia wood overlaid with gold—shows us the divine and human nature of our Lord. Five bars would also give us the number of the incarnate Son, as well as reminding us that full responsibility toward God in everything is met by Him. Five is composed of four and one, the numbers that speak of the creature in union with One, the Creator. The central bar extending from end to end would suggest the deity of our Lord, while the four others might well remind us of His humanity. Thus again and again are these precious facts brought before us.

Christ then, in the fullness of His person, unites His people together. The boards were placed upon their sockets, side by side, in alignment; then it was an easy matter to pass the bars through all the rings and form a complete wall for the house of God. According to God's mind and purpose, believers are "builded together," and set in the body, so that their union with Christ is also union with one another. Thus it was at Pentecost. One day it will be displayed in all its perfection. Faith is to exhibit this unity in a practical way, and this involves exercise and responsibility. Alas, the results of failure here are only too manifest even to the eye of the world.

If then our Lord's prayer for unity is to be seen even here, it must be along the lines suggested by what we have been learning. Every believer, a divinely prepared board, resting upon the finished work of Christ, is to recognize his union with his Lord and Savior so fully that there is no hindrance to His will and way being accomplished in him. This will bring him in alignment with all who are likewise subject to Christ, and a "tabernacle of witness" will be the result—a witness to the world as our Lord said, "That the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (John 17:21). Do we not seem to see the golden rings in that verse? — "As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us."

And how many errors as to the house of God on earth do these holy truths correct; and what shame and confusion of face should they produce in us, and what exercise of conscience and searching of heart. We hear of persons "joining the Church;" here we are first of all reminded that there is no room for empty profession; none but golden-covered boards, resting on silver foundations. None but those who are born again, and so "in Christ," shown by their resting upon His precious blood, our redemption, can find a place in this building of God. Even true Christians speak of "the church of their choice," and of joining it; not knowing that there is but one Church, one habitation of God, His building, or the Church to which He joins. Nothing is left for human will; all is provided for in God's word. The golden rings proclaim that all

must be according to divine order, as revealed in His Word.

Could we imagine Moses selecting a few boards and building a small tabernacle in one place, and Aaron doing the same in another, and Eleazar and Ithamar, Joshua and Caleb, repeating this? What a travesty each would have been upon God's plan! What would it have mattered if each had loudly claimed special recognition for his own little tabernacle? Nay, each one of these men of God would have said, Who are we, that you should rend the house of God asunder to provide a place for us? So God rebuked the thought of Peter to make three tabernacles — "One for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias" (Matt. 17:4). There was but One whom they should thus honor; He alone the Center of His people: "This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him." And if it be thought impossible that any man should thus be made a center for division where God intends unity, we need only read the first chapter of 1St Corinthians: "Every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ," which the apostle rebukes by: "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul?"

Let us not then defend the sad failure of the whole Church of God, which has established various divisions and defends them as right and good. If so, where is the testimony to the unity of God's house? What thinks the world of all this?

But let us go deeper than the outward testimony and ask, What state of heart has made all this division possible? Has not profession been given a place which has mixed together the true and the false? Are there not many claiming to be "boards" who have no divinely-given marks of being so? No "rings," no solid foundation? And how much insubjection to the word of God on the part of true believers also; how little is the Lord given His true place of lordship in heart and practice! It may be some doctrine, scriptural and true, perhaps, but given a place of undue prominence, and "the simplicity that is in Christ" has been clouded. Or, it may be, well-meant but humanly-devised provisions for order, ministry, etc., have been adopted; or the apparently harmless adoption of a denominational name has displaced the one only Name which we should confess, and to which His people are to gather (Matt. 18:20).

And these things are no trifles. The apostle asked, where these things existed in their germ only, "Are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (1 Cor. 3:3), that is, as men of the world. Alas, such a hint scarcely touches the conscience of the mass who have professed to be as a "chaste virgin espoused to Christ." But to the soul truly loyal to Him, constrained by His love, devoted to His fear, such a question would bring the blush of shame. "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world," said the Holy and the True. Can it be then a trifle in His eyes when His people walk as men of the world?

Oh for hearts to mourn over the ruin that has come in through our own folly! No place becomes us but that of true humiliation before Him. He still has, and ever will have, respect unto the lowly. Then, even though the boards be dispersed in the wilderness, He will have a word to say to the "afflicted and poor people" (Zeph. 3:12), even as to His testimony, which will comfort without filling with pride.

But returning from the confession of our common failure to the plan and purpose of God, let us examine a little more closely the passage already partly quoted from 1 Corinthians 12: "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body," etc. (vss. 12, 13). Here we have the individuality of each believer preserved: "many members," yet but one body. "There were twenty boards on each side, north and south; six at the west end, and one at each corner, making forty-eight boards in all. These would suggest the" many members "of the body of Christ. The factors of forty-eight are 6 x 8, in which six is the number of limitation of and victory over evil, and eight (7 + 1), the familiar number of new creation. God has by the Cross put a limit upon the world and man's day; it is going to end, however much the riches of divine patience are exercised toward it. But in amazing love, apart from human righteousness, God has, in the very cross which has declared the judgment of this world, gained the victory over evil. Christ has" spoiled principalities and powers, "and" made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:15), that is, in the cross. This victory is in perfect grace "to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16), so that now upon the ruins of the old creation, and independent of it, He has introduced the new creation: "If any man be in Christ, there is new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17). And this is the other factor, the companion to the victory over evil; the two taken together give the "new man, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Eph. 4:24). All this is seen in its perfection in Christ alone, until the day when He shall display His redeemed in the glory He has given them. Till then faith is ever occupied with Him, never with ourselves. It is of "the man in Christ" that we can glory and not in ourselves (2 Cor. 12:2, 5). The golden boards ever speak of Him, but, through divine grace, His people are "in Him," and thus are made "the righteousness of God."

But let it be remembered that for the full display of this victory over evil in new creation, every board is needed; forty-seven boards would tell us nothing of it. So our God has made it impossible for one to be wanting in His sight. Notice how the apostle speaks of this "one body" — "So also is Christ." He does not say, "the body of Christ." This brings out the golden boards again. So, when Saul of Tarsus was persecuting the saints, our blessed Lord from the glory asked, "Why persecutest thou Me" (Acts 9:4)? Saul was persecuting Christ—so completely He identifies His people with Himself. This then is "the Christ"—His people in Him, and He the Head. This is effected by no human agency, but by the Holy Spirit who baptizes all believers into this one body, this habitation of God.

We can see the Spirit's work in thus uniting believers to Christ and to each other, suggested by the rings and bars, in the unity and fellowship of believers at Pentecost. Saints might be persecuted and imprisoned, but "being let go, they went to their own company (Acts 4:23)." Ye are taught of God to love one another "(1 Thess. 4:9)." Holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God "(Col. 2:19). These and many other precious scriptures dwell upon the practical unity and fellowship of believers, the only standard for which is the perfect mind of God, displayed in what we have been, feebly enough, dwelling upon.

What special lessons are we to gather from the corner boards? They are, like all the others, to rest upon silver sockets, and therefore would speak of believers. But this position at the corners would suggest some other thoughts of importance. Next to the foundation, the corner is the most important part of a house. So our Lord is spoken of in the same verse as "a precious corner-stone" and "a sure foundation" (Isa. 28:16). He is the "Head of the corner" (Matt. 21:42), though rejected by His earthly people. It is at the corner that special care must be taken to bind the walls together, that there be no parting and making a rent. Christ has done this, so far as the eternal display in glory is concerned, but God has also made divine provision for it in a practical way, illustrated in these corner boards.

There may be architectural details which we could not fully represent in a model. But certain features are clear. "And they were coupled (twinned) beneath, and coupled together at the head thereof, to one ring: thus he did to both of them in both the corners" (Ex. 36:29).

Another version renders it, “And they were twain below; but they were whole together toward its head in the one ring” (Num. Bible). The evident thought is that what might naturally be two, and thus divided, is “fitly joined together” (Eph. 4: 16). A distinction is made between the bottom and top of these corner boards. They were twain below; or, even if “twinned” be the better reading, the thought of distinction from the adjacent boards is suggested. This is at the base, near the silver sockets. May not this emphasize the individuality of each believer? No matter what position he may have in the house of God—even though it be of the greatest importance, and in closest conjunction with others—he rests for himself upon the work of Christ. “If any man trust to himself that he is Christ’s, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ’s, even so are we Christ’s” (2 Cor. 10:7). These are the words of an apostle, a most important “corner” surely, but he does not boast of his apostleship; his place in the house of God is first of all by redemption; whatever of service he may have rendered to the saints, and thus to the Lord, he glories in the “man in Christ.” So also Peter writes “to them that have obtained like precious faith with us” (2 Peter 1:1); and in the Acts classes himself with all believers, Jew and Gentile alike: “We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they” (Acts 15:11). And so with John and all the writers of the New Testament: their official position made them not one whit different from the simplest saint; all alike rested upon the precious redemption price. So the wondrous truths which they ministered to us were the food and stay of their own souls.

And so it is with all true believers: gifts, service, miracles, can never interfere with this basic fact, that they rest for themselves alone upon Christ and His work. That distinguishes between those most closely united, whether in the family or in that which professes to be the house of God. Without that resting-place one might preach the gospel to others and yet be a castaway (1 Cor. 9:27). Paul was in no uncertainty as to his present and eternal security, for he knew whom he had believed; he did not base one shred of his soul’s salvation upon his apostleship and ministry: as our Lord said to His disciples, when they rejoiced that they could cast out demons, “Rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20). In the matter of our soul’s eternal salvation, we neither need nor can have any other resting-place than the foundation that is laid, “which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11).

But while at the base the boards are thus distinct, at the head or top they are firmly joined to the others—on each side — “in one ring.” This is a divine bond at just the point where it is needed. The sockets would hold them together at the base-no danger of a true believer being moved away from the work of Christ; but there is a danger of his drawing away from his true place with the people of God, “at the head.” He may become puffed up, “heady,” and so instead of a flawless union, there may be a yawning crevice at a crucial point. Here is where divine love encircles the saints and holds them fast in its eternal embrace; and where this is entered into fully, the “corners” and places of natural weakness, become special points of strength.

What makes corners naturally a place of weakness is that the direction of the wall being there changed a strain is felt, upon the upper part especially. We can easily apply this to the house of God, and see the importance both of the silver sockets below and of the ring above.

There were several such turning points in the book of Acts. A murmuring—a cleavage—arose of the Grecians (the foreign Jews) against the Hebrews (those of Palestine) “because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration” (Acts 6:1). Here was an apparent divergence of interests, and the Spirit of God, through the apostles, corrected the trouble at once. All these saints were upon the silver sockets, but the “corners” were weak, from the natural jealousy and selfishness of the human heart, particularly noticeable among the Jews. There was need of rings for the corner boards. So, divinely-designated men are set over the whole matter of temporal care. From their names it would seem they were all foreign Jews—the very class from which the complaint had come; and they embraced in the ring of divine love and care—for they were “full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom” (verse 3)—every needy saint, whether foreign or home-born. Thus the threatened trouble was averted. Does it seem extravagant to say that special strength came from this, as seen in Stephen’s blessed testimony and martyrdom (chap. 7)?4

But a more serious schism threatened the unity of the testimony which God was establishing, and that of which we have just spoken was but a premonition of it. The Church is composed of both Jew and Gentile by nature, but none in it are either Jew or Gentile, for all are “in Christ” (Eph. 2:14; Col. 3:11). But what divine care was needed that, as this truth was acted upon, there should be no violence done to weak and un-established consciences. When the gospel was carried down to Samaria—and it is noteworthy that this was done by Philip, one of the seven already mentioned—there was a fresh departure, a “corner” was made. But how careful the Spirit is to guard against schism. “The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans” (John 4:9). But here were precious souls saved through faith in Christ; the “boards” were upon the silver sockets. At Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit had been given to all believers in the Lord Jesus, but the Samaritans had received no such public seal as yet. That blessing comes through the apostles Peter and John, who come down from Jerusalem and lay their hands upon them. Thus the “ring” is put around both, and saints at Jerusalem, Jews by nature, and Samaritans, are held fast in the eternal bond of the Spirit’s seal and baptism (Acts 8:1-17).

The same is seen then in a farther step. The Spirit of God was leading onward in an entirely different path from what had hitherto been taken. “Salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22), but it was to be carried now to the ends of the earth. So Cornelius, a Gentile, awakened by God to the desire of the full blessing flowing forth, is brought to the knowledge of forgiveness through the name of the Lord Jesus. But we see again the Spirit of God putting on the “ring.” It is Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, who is seen as a corner board linking what might otherwise be apart. How beautifully he shows the “ring” of divine love when questioned by the saints in Jerusalem: “Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God?” (Acts 11:17).

Likewise in the great crisis of Acts 15. In spite of all that God had so plainly shown, the reactionary spirit of Judaism was asserting itself; and even after a mighty wave of blessing had swept in multitudes of Gentiles from many quarters, and where assemblies largely composed of Gentiles had been established, there were those who taught that these “must be circumcised and keep the law.” How easy would it have been for Paul at that point to have completely severed his connection with Jewish Christians, and devote himself to the beloved Gentile flock. A rash act, a few hasty words, and Jerusalem would have been left, and the words, so un-righteously used by the ten tribes, could have been adapted: “What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse... now see to thine own house, David” (1 Kings 12:16).

But the Spirit of God was guiding, and at the turning of this “corner” the strong “ring” held fast the beloved Jewish and Gentile saints together in divine fellowship. They go to Jerusalem, from whence these troublers of the Gentiles had come. There, assembled together concerning this matter, Peter recounts what God had done through him in bringing in the Gentiles, alluding also to the intolerable yoke of the law. Barnabas and Paul then recount the wonderful works of divine grace among the Gentiles; and James puts the “ring” of Scripture to bind all fast. The

letter of love was sent out, and for saints who bowed to God's truth the question could never again be raised. A breach was averted. In fact the "corner" in that way becomes a point of strength, holding both lines of truth fast, and the clasped hands of Peter and Paul show how freely the gospel was to go forth. Peter can write of " our beloved brother Paul (2 Peter 3:15), and though Paul may rebuke Peter for his inconsistency (Gal. 2), it is in the knowledge that the conscience of the beloved apostle of the circumcision was with the truth.

Thus were all united. Alas, when faith waned, and the guidance of the Spirit was no longer yielded to, as by the apostles, we see, by the later epistles, there was a drifting back toward Judaism and the very foundations were denied. Then it was no longer Christian love to hold fast to Judaism. Christ was openly rejected again, and the word for His own was: "Let us go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13:13).

Enough has been said to indicate the importance of these corner boards. Application can surely be made all through the history of the Lord's people, in the Church at large, and in remnant days too, among the saints in an assembly, or among all such as are seeking to hold and act upon the truth of the house of God. There are times of special stress and danger when the Spirit of God may be leading out into fuller truth. It is easier to hold back and walk only in the beaten paths, but this quenches the Spirit and hinders true progress, which also means the loss of what is already held. Progress is a divine law; "not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect" (Phil. 3:12). How needful then are the lessons we have been learning. Even truth unduly pressed, to the ignoring of other truth, may wound weak consciences, and be used of the enemy to make a breach when there should be unity. Let us note what we have learned; First of all, the great foundation fact of redemption by the work of Christ, and all other fundamental truths, must be fully owned. Secondly, the great principle of the holiness of the house of God must be bowed to—the headship and authority of Christ our Lord. If these are not recognized and obeyed there can be no testimony. But when these are recognized and owned to be of God, there is fullest room for the exercise of forbearance and of the love which knits the people of God together. We may well take the instances we have been looking at as our models and learn from them to apply the "ring" at the proper place.

But let us ever remember the solemn truth that it is the house of God we are dealing with, not a building of man, therefore no unity but the unity of the Spirit is to be kept. Rome has made outward unity her object, and has therefore put her rings—unholy ones indeed—about anything and everything, to call it her own. Verily, "Babylon the great" has been stamped upon her forehead; she has become the "cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (Rev. 18:2). Nor is professing Protestantism far behind when, for the sake of a falsely-called peace, divine truth is sacrificed, and everything calling itself by the name of Christian is allowed a place. We are living in days of "broad-minded liberalism," when men who deny the inspiration of the word of God, the eternal destinies of men, and even the deity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ are tolerated, welcomed and followed. What awful mockery is it to call such indifference by the holy name of "love." Is it love to despise Christ, to dishonor and disobey Him?

For many, the last-mentioned things may seem so glaring as to be needless. Let us be reminded then that the same principles may lurk under a very pleasing exterior. The sin of disobedience, which is the root of all sin, has many forms. The only way of safety is to hold fast the faithful Word. And in the matter of which we are speaking, it must ever be remembered that what is subversive of the very testimony which God would have cannot under any plea be allowed.

But, within these limits, what room there is for the exercise of love that all may be "fitly joined together." The weak need to be comforted, the feeble-minded, or those of little courage, need to be sustained, as well as the unruly to be admonished. What an honor it is in any sense to be privileged to be a "corner-board"—not filling a large place, but in just the place where God would have us, and furnishing the opportunity for the "ring" of divine love and truth to extend from us to our brethren on either hand.

A word remains as to the sockets. There were one hundred of them in all, 10 x 10 (Ex. 38:27), of one talent each, made of the redemption money of ten gerahs for each man. The word for "talent" is kikkar—a circle or globe, so called perhaps from its being a complete or rounded-out sum. From Ex. 38:25, 26, it was equal to 3000 shekels, or 6000 bekahs. The factors often are here so prominent that the great foundation fact of responsibility is emphasized—a responsibility in which we have utterly failed, but which our Lord has fully met on the cross and glorified God thereby. Resting securely on that foundation, the believer looks forward to that eternal day with joy and praise; and meanwhile, though treading the wilderness land, learns to answer in some little measure to the grace that has saved him, and to meet responsibilities which once he ignored.

Lectures on the Tabernacle: A Full Exposition Examining the Types and Their Doctrinal Applications — Fully Illustrated, God's Dwelling Place

Exodus 25:1-9

We have here a list of the materials which were necessary for the construction of the Tabernacle, God's dwelling-place. It was a wonderful building, which represented, for the time in which it was erected, and indeed for all time, the extreme of cost and value. No expense was spared, no magnificence was wanting, to make the dwelling-place of God as glorious and wonderful an abode as the eye of man had ever seen, and yet a fitting accompaniment to the wilderness.

Gold and silver and brass were the metals to be used. All the shittim wood in the Tabernacle was covered with gold—boards, ark, altar of incense, table of showbread; while the candlestick and mercy-seat were made entirely of this precious metal.

Silver formed the foundation of the building. Each board securely rested in two sockets of silver, having mortises into which the tenons of the boards entered. This gave solidity and firmness to the whole structure.

Brass was used in the court, forming sockets for the pillars at the entering of the Tabernacle, as also for the pillars of the entire court. Of this strong, unyielding material were also made the laver and the covering for the altar of burnt offering as well as its various utensils.

We have next the materials of which the curtains were formed—blue, purple, scarlet and fine linen. Then for the other coverings we have goats' hair, rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood for the boards. Each of these materials will come before us in detail as we take up the various parts of this wondrous structure.

Lastly, we have mentioned the oil, spices and precious stones, each of which yields precious thoughts when we come to look into their spiritual meaning. Let us notice now three points in connection with the enumeration of these articles: First, we are told that God invites a free-will offering of His people: “Of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart, ye shall take My offering” (ver. 2).

Second, we see that God would have a dwelling among His people: “And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them” (vs. 8).

Third, everything was to be made according to the pattern shown to Moses: “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” (vs. 9). This last point will occupy us in looking at the Tabernacle in detail; we will now consider the first two: As to the first point: All the materials speak in some way of Christ, in His varied perfections and glories, and yet they were to be brought as a willing offering by the people. God has revealed Christ to us in all His fullness; but if He is to have a dwelling-place among us, if we are practically to enjoy His presence and have communion with Him, is it not to be somewhat on the basis of a free-will offering of our own? It is no material offering now; we are not called upon, in that way, to bring our quota of gold, silver, or precious stones; but our hearts must be stirred up, be made willing to enter into what Christ our Lord is, and thus bring it, as it were, to God, who by His Spirit will reveal and cause us to enjoy the blessed Lord fully.

We are thus thrown, we might say, upon our own responsibility. Everything is of perfect grace, but it flows through hearts made willing by that grace. Thus Christ must, in some measure, be to our hearts what the gold, silver, etc., speak of. This is no mere intellectual apprehension, but a laying hold of the very springs of our life, thus enabling us to lay them, as it were, before our gracious God for His use and acceptance. What a thought that is! May the Holy Spirit produce its fruit in us. We are not merely to get, but to give. As we dwell on one feature after another of this wondrous building, may they so enter into our hearts as to flow forth in worship and a Christ-like life. This is what glorifies God: His ear delights to hear of His blessed Son. He loves to have us tell Him of our need, but the one precious, sweetest name to Him is that of Jesus, in whom all the glory of the Only Begotten shines.

So let us be a willing-hearted people, with hearts for Christ, who bring to God Christ our Lord and Savior as the enjoyment of our heart.

The next point to notice is the subject of God’s dwelling-place with man: “Let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell1 among them.”

1. When God began His work of creation He had in His mind to be in the midst of His creatures. This is beautifully brought out in the 8th chapter of Proverbs. There, One speaks who is called Wisdom—who was before the creation, before the earth with its hills and fountains were formed. He was ever with God, a member of the divine family—One in whom God delighted. But He adds, “My delights were with the sons of men” (Prov. 8:23-31). Notice thus that before creation existed, divine love, in the Son, was set upon His creatures, and His desire was to dwell with them.

The two thoughts of redemption and dwelling with man seem to be connected there. Just as surely as our blessed Lord was to be the Redeemer—the Lamb “foreordained before the foundation of the world” (1 Peter 1:20), so surely did He long to dwell with His redeemed people.

But let us look at this a little in detail, taking up a few scriptures which give us foreshadows of the dwelling of God with man. We look back first to Eden, man’s paradise, when our first parents in innocence dwelt there. We have a suggestion that God was on terms of holy intimacy, if we may use that expression, with them. For after the fall He is said to have walked in the garden in the cool of the day, and we may gather from the expression that this was no unusual visit on the part of the blessed God. While Eden, as the abode of unfallen man, was not the place of eternal righteousness, yet sin had not entered there, and God could, in some measure, have intercourse with His creatures. What a beautiful picture it is—the garden planted by His hand for the enjoyment and employment of man, and the Creator coming down into this place to enjoy such fellowship with him as was possible.

But, alas, sin soon marred all that. Satan, who himself could not endure the presence of a holy God, and could not endure the thought of creature subjection to Him, had already fallen from the estate in which he had been created. He had exalted himself against God, and therefore was the fallen, relentless, hopeless foe of all the holiness, goodness and mercy of God. He brings in the subtle doubt of that goodness and beguiles the woman. The man, with full knowledge, follows her. Thus sin enters the world, and so, when God comes down to have (may we not say?) His accustomed intercourse with His creatures, they flee from Him and hide among the trees of the garden.

Sin cannot endure the presence of God; from that day to this man has never been able to endure the thought of that holy Presence. What is the object of all the religions of heathenism? Not to give man the knowledge of God, but to enable him to get along without God. The grossest or the most refined rituals are alike in this, that in them man hides from God, self-deceived it may be, but quite willing to be so, and dreading nothing so much as the thought of a perfectly holy God. Conscience cries for something, and so man puts his religion between himself and God, but practically he is outside Eden. We know nothing of that original dwelling of God with His creatures, save as Scripture gives us the glimpse we have been speaking of. It is a thing of the past forever.

2. We pass next to another allusion in the book of Genesis to God’s dwelling with, or rather visiting man. What more lovely picture have we in that book than the visit of the three strangers to Abraham (chap. 18:1-8), as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day? The faithful patriarch sees these strangers draw near, and with alacrity offers them the hospitality of his home. One of these is the living God; the other two are His angels, whom He will shortly send on other service. The holy God accepts the hospitality offered, and becomes a guest in the tent of Abraham the pilgrim.

Here, in this first book of Scripture, we have a picture of the character of God’s intimacy with His people. In the unleavened cakes and the calf presented for food we have typified “the Bread of God”—the sinless person of Christ—and His sacrificial work. This is the only basis upon which a righteous and holy God could at all have communion with a fallen creature; faith ever recognizes this, from Abel onward.

In solemn contrast, the two angels are sent on to Sodom where Lot has found his home. There is neither tent nor altar there. Lot has sacrificed both his pilgrim and priestly character for earthly gain, therefore God does not even personally draw near to him. His angels in mercy rescue him, but there is no intimacy.

3. The next picture of God's dwelling with man is what is to occupy us in the following pages. It is not a transient visit to an individual, but an abiding with His people through the wilderness and onward.

4. When the Tabernacle was brought into the land, it was set up at Shiloh. After Israel's disastrous history, as seen in the book of Judges—one apostasy after another—the ark is taken captive by the Philistines, and though God delivered it out of their hands, yet it was never restored to the Tabernacle at Shiloh (see Psa. 78:60-72). And this, among other things, shows us that the Tabernacle had but a typical value-as it spoke of Christ. 2 Chr. 1: 3, 13, shows us the Tabernacle at Gibeon, but not, so far as we are told, for stated worship.

5. We pass next to that which is a type of God's permanent place of abode on earth—the temple. This, erected by Solomon, was the crowning splendor of his glorious reign. While the general plan of the Tabernacle is followed, all speaks of permanency: its stones speak of divine stability; its carvings and gold, of glory. But still it is only a figure. "Solomon built Him a house," declared Stephen, only to remind his hearers that "the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 7:47-50). Significantly, Stephen closes his resume of Israel's history with the temple; it was the highest point of the nation's glory, and we have only to follow on in Solomon's history to see that all was yet a shadow. The prayer of dedication, we may say, still echoed about the hills of Jerusalem when. Solomon fell into shameful sin and idolatry. Everything was but a type, and still waited till the full glory of God should be entrusted to One who perfectly, absolutely and permanently—in heart, life and nature—was the exhibition of God.

6. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the temple, burning it to the ground and carrying away its golden vessels to Babylon, with the people. In mercy, after seventy years of captivity, a remnant of the people is restored to Jerusalem, and the temple is rebuilt. To be sure, all was greatly reduced, and we do not read of the Shekinah-glory being seen. But there was the house of God, and the promise to the people that if they truly turned to God, He would make the glory of the latter house greater than that of the first (Hag. 2:9).

7. There are a few centuries of silence between Malachi and Matthew, when, suddenly, we see the Glory returning to Immanuel's land. God Himself is come! "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple" (Mal. 3:1). And how does He come? We see heaven opened, and His attendants ministering with delight in connection with the advent of their Creator upon earth. But when we look to earth to see where this Glory was to find a home: we find it not in the temple, nor yet at Jerusalem. We go out to Bethlehem, and as we look with the wondering shepherds, in a manger, we see the Temple of God, the Shrine where His glory has found its home and abiding-place. "The Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father." As we see the Man Christ Jesus, we are beholding the true dwelling-place of God. He could speak of His body in that way: "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up." At last God had found a suited habitation with man.

Here are two abodes, we might say: the one, the temple which had been without the Shekinah-glory, but connected with all the form and ritual in which the Jews boasted; the other, in the Man Christ Jesus, the blessed Son of God, who was presenting Himself as the witness for God upon earth. These two abodes are in contrast to one another. One is a witness of Israel's past history of sin and the need of salvation; the other is the spotless, sinless, the holy One. Which will the leaders accept?

Our Lord comes to the temple and drives out of it the buyers and sellers, saying: "Make not My Father's house a house of merchandise"

(John 2:13-17). He calls it later "a den of thieves" (Matt. 21:13)—that which should have been a house of prayer. Which temple will they have—the mere house, "your house" (Matt. 23:38), as He calls it, or Him who would purge the house, and who was Himself the dwelling-place of God? We know the awful answer. Pilate puts before them a murderer and Christ, and they cry (ah, our wicked hearts once said the same!) "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas" (Luke 23:18).

So the temple was destroyed, as far as human hands could do it. The blessed incorruptible temple of His body is laid away in the grave, and His spirit returns to the Father. That is man's answer regarding God's dwelling-place here. They will not have it. It brings God too near—His holiness rebukes sin, and man would prefer even a murderer to the holy Christ of God.

But God's purposes of grace are not to be thwarted by man's sin. This very crime, this enmity seen in the rejection and death of the Lord Jesus is the occasion for the fullest manifestation of the love of God:

"The very spear that piercedThy side Drew forth the blood to save."

His death provided the avenue for God's love to flow forth in abundant grace for the vilest and neediest of sinners.

We now pass on a little. God had had this wondrous dwelling-place on earth in His own beloved Son. But man could not endure and would not have this nearness of God dwelling with him, and cast out Jesus—Immanuel—by way of the cross. But God raised Him from the dead, and He has ascended on high. The "Temple" has gone within the veil, into the inner sanctuary.

8. But see the wonder of God's grace. The Spirit of God has been sent forth, from a glorified Christ and the Father, and now we have a habitation of God, formed by the Spirit (Eph. 2:22). Every believer in the Lord Jesus is a living stone in this spiritual house, which "groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." How wondrous is the grace of God! In the very world where His Well-Beloved was crucified, where men cried out, "Away with Him," a habitation is being formed from such material as that! Men who recognize their lost condition and accept the infinite grace and love of God, out of this quarry of nature are the great and costly stones dug for this temple of God. Thus, without great show, without the sound of a hammer (1 Kings 6:7), this eternal habitation of God is growing, until "He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it" (Zech. 4:7).

But even now does God by His Spirit dwell in the Church, His abode; and each believer is also individually a habitation of God. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" (1 Cor. 6:19). The moment one has received Christ, he is "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise," and indwelt by Him who is "the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession" (Eph. 1). What a holy thought that is—our bodies God's habitation by the Holy Spirit, who has taken up His abode there, on the ground of the finished redemption of Christ's atoning death.

9. We have been speaking of Israel having rejected Christ, and of the glory having forsaken their temple, the Lord saying, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate," not one stone to be left upon another; but in the book of Ezekiel we have a most beautiful picture connected with

the destruction of the temple under Nebuchadnezzar, and its restoration at the beginning of the millennium.

The prophet sees the glory of God departing from between the cherubim and standing over the threshold of the temple door (chap. 10:4). It shows how reluctantly the holy and gracious God was leaving the place of His abode. It is as though He were pleading with the people and asking if they would not yet give His holiness a place amongst them. Alas, there is no response; and reluctantly He leaves the threshold and takes His place outside the temple (chap. 10:18, 19). Still He lingers, and still there is no response, so that He leaves the temple hill and goes over to the Mount of Olives (chap. 11:22, 23). At last He departs, leaving them alone. His people then are carried into captivity, and the temple lies in ruins.

But turn to the latter part of the prophecy, which shows the remnant of the people restored, in the prophet's vision, from their captivity (chap. 43) This is due alone to the faithfulness of their gracious God, who works in them self-abhorrence and true repentance. They are restored to their land, each tribe to its appointed inheritance, and again their center is the temple of God, rebuilt in far greater glory than ever, and that glory which had departed from it is restored in much the same way as it had departed. God returns and takes up His abode in that future temple, and the glory shall be for a covering (Isa. 4:5). Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God will shine, and the name of the city shall be called JEHOVAH SHAMMAH, "Jehovah is there" (Ezek. 48:35). There we have God's earthly dwelling-place during the millennium. And the eye has but to be lifted up to see the glories of the heavenly city in whose light the nations of the earth will walk during that happy period, when the "King shall reign in righteousness" (Isa. 32:1), when our Lord Jesus shall be owned as the rightful Ruler over the very world where He was rejected and crucified.

10. Lastly, we have the final abode of God. Our blessed Lord promised His people: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3). We know the way by which He went to the Father. He might have ascended at any time during His peerless and holy life to His home in heaven, but it would have been alone. In the language of the Hebrew servant who refused to go out free, He said, "I love my wife, and my children, I will not go out free" (Ex. 21:5). So He was, as it were, pierced to the door-post, in the devotedness of His love. In other words, He ascended to the Father by way of Calvary; it was through death that He would go—crucified, and "raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father" (Rom. 6:4). Thus He laid the eternal and righteous foundation of that home where sin can never enter, and which judgment will never shake.

He has entered into heaven itself, and has taken possession of it as the abode of His redeemed people throughout eternity. In the close of the book of Revelation we see the heavenly city, "as a bride adorned for her husband," and we hear a voice saying, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes " (Rev. 2:1: 3).

God at last rests in His creation, dwelling in the midst of His people—a redeemed race; a people who no longer flee from His face as our guilty parents did in Eden. Nor is He, as we might say, paying them a visit as He did to Abraham, nor manifesting Himself dimly and conditionally as in the Tabernacle and the Temple; nor is He even manifesting Himself only in the spotless Son of His love in His humiliation as He walked this earth for a little season; it is not even the spiritual habitation by the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Church upon earth; but there is the full and eternal display of Himself in Christ, and through Him in the Church, in Israel, in the saved nations, and in the whole universe. When this is accomplished, God can say, "The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them."

As we dwell upon the Tabernacle, we are anticipating, if we grasp its spiritual truths, that which God desired from the beginning, and for which He has been laboring, and which His adorable Son, our Lord, has made possible through His atoning death. "He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing" (Zeph. 3:17).

The third point, that everything was to be made by Moses according to the pattern showed him in the Mount, will in its details occupy us throughout these pages. It will suffice here to remember that this left nothing to the natural mind of Moses. Real or fancied resemblances between the Tabernacle and Egyptian temples have no place here. Just as the religion of Egypt was a satanic perversion of the truth of God as made known to man, so the temples in which that religion was housed were a perversion of the truth of God's abode. The very points of resemblance were but counterfeits, leading into the vilest blasphemies. Blessed be God, He has left nothing to the mind of fallen man, but revealed all absolutely in His Word, no longer a "pattern," but Him who is His very image. The "pattern" will be full of Him in its minutest details. May it be our desire in all this pattern to behold the Lord; to say, "We would see Jesus."

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