Isaiah - Commentaries by Henry William Soltau

The Tabernacle, the Priesthood and the Offerings, Cords, The

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Numbers 3:37; 4:32; 3:26: 4:26; Isaiah 54:2

Some of the Cords were the charge and burden of the Merarites. (Num. 3:37;4. 32.) The rest of the Cords were the charge and burden of the Gershonites. (Num. 3:26;4. 26.) This is rather a remarkable exception to the arrangement made for the charge and burden of the Tabernacle, its curtains and hangings.

In no other instance did the Merarites and Gershonites carry any similar portions of the Tabernacle, but the distribution of the burdens was in every other case kept quite distinct. It may be that the object of God in thus altering the rule, was to give us a little intimation of a truth important to be remembered, viz., that however varied and different the gifts and occupations of His servants, yet they are members of the one body of Christ. There are mutual interests which link them on together. There are common ties which unite them firmly as one assembly of God's people. There are bands of brotherhood which inseparably bind them in one bundle of life.

This same word " Cords" occurs with reference to the cords of a tent. " Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations spare not, lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes." Isa. 54:2. " My tent is spoiled, and all my cords are broken; my children are gone forth of me, and they are not; there is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains." Jer. 10:20. These two texts form a beautiful contrast between the past and present desolation of Israel and Jerusalem; and the future prosperity and glory of that city and people after the Lord's return.

The Tabernacle cords were evidently fastened to the pins, like the cords of a tent, and thereby kept the pillars of the court erect, and also being thrown over the external coverings of the tabernacle firmly tied them down, so that they could not be lifted by any blast of wind from the desert.

It is not stated of what materials they were made. We gather from Ex. 35:5-19, that they must have been fashioned of the blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen, as these were the only materials which could be used for such a purpose.

Our salvation rests on two great truths. First, on the Person of the Savior Himself, the Son of God, the Son of man, whose name is Jesus; and secondly, On the work He has wrought. These are inseparably connected together in the word of God, and we cannot rightly receive the one without the other. The pin would be no use without the cord connected with it. The boards of the Tabernacle would not form a dwelling place, unless the curtains were placed over them. The ordinary way in which we learn the truth of God is, by first hearing of the death of the Lord Jesus, and then contemplating Him, who thus died. Jesus lifted up upon the tree, attracts us by the cords of a man, the bands of love. We are drawn to Him away from other objects, by learning His wondrous grace and love, in thus placing Himself on the tree of curse for our sakes; and then we are led to contemplate the glorious person who there died. And our wonder and worship grow, as we ponder on the majesty and excellency, the holiness and beauty of Him who suffered for our sakes. The sorrows and love of Him, who loved us and gave Himself for us, are like the cords that bind our hearts to Himself, and that securely fasten the tabernacle of God-Love that endures forever; that many waters could not quench; that floods could not drown. Love that deserves the name of love. Not won by any attractiveness in us: not purchased by any " substance " we could give: any righteousness, any holiness we could bring. Love fixed on us from everlasting, spontaneous, out of the heart of Christ; and cleaving to us whilst we were yet enemies; haters of God, despisers of that which was good, and exhibiting nothing but death in trespasses and sins. Sorrows also equaled only by that love, of the same vast unexplored depth.

Though set up from everlasting, and brought forth from all eternity; and although delighting in God, and God's own delight, yet the delights of the Son of God were also with the sons of men. And wondrously His sympathies, His affections, and His joys, are linked on with creatures here below, who have caused the deep travail of His soul, and yet who will be the fullness of His glory. He will present them faultless in the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.