

Exodus part 2, Ex. 25 - 40.

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EXODUS — being a simple exposition.

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CHAPTER 17. THE TABERNACLE.

EXODUS 25: 1-9.

WITH this chapter we enter upon a new subject — that of the Tabernacle. It is not finished until the close of Ex. 30. But this again is divided into three parts. In the first place, in the directions for the construction of the Tabernacle and its vessels and furniture, those vessels are described which manifest God. This part reaches to Ex. 27: 19. Secondly, the dress and the consecration of the priests are given, in Ex. 28 and 29. Then, lastly, the vessels of approach — i.e. those that were necessary for drawing near to God, are detailed in Ex. 30. It will be observed

that some of those which manifested God — some part of His glory — are also used for approach; but if the chief design of each is remembered, confusion will be prevented, and the arrangement easily understood. Opportunity will be found, as the several parts of the Tabernacle pass under review, of indicating the meaning of each more precisely. In the mean time, the division given may help the reader to enter with more intelligence upon the study of this section of the book.

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

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

The tabernacle may, however, be viewed in another way. The house in which God dwelt must be of necessity the scene of the revelation of His glory. Hence, as will be seen when considering it in detail, every single part of it is fraught with some manifestation of Himself. As another writes, "The glories in every way of Christ the Mediator are presented in the tabernacle, not precisely, as yet, the unity of His people, considered as His body, but in every manner in which the ways and the perfections of God are manifested through Him, whether in the full

extent of the creation, in His people, or in His person. The scene of the manifestation of the glory of God, His house, His domain, in which He displays His being (in so far as it can be seen), the ways of His grace, and His glory, and His relationship through Christ with us — poor and feeble creatures, but who draw nigh unto Him — are unfolded to us in it, but still with a veil over His presence, and with God not the Father." On this account the spiritual mind traces with delight the typical teaching of the minutiae of this sanctuary, learning therefrom the various measures and methods in which God has revealed Himself, and that they are only to be understood when the key of every secret they contain is possessed in the person of Christ. Remembering this will check on the one hand all flights of the imagination, and invest on the other our meditations with a new interest, inasmuch as Christ Himself will ever be before the soul.

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

In this connection it may be mentioned, and this is the second point, that the tabernacle was made after the pattern shown to Moses in the mount (vv. 9, 40, etc.), and was therefore the type of heavenly things. This teaching is developed in the epistle to the Hebrews. We there read of Christ as "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 8: 2); and again it is said, "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these" (the blood of animal sacrifices); "but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are the figures of the true*; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (Heb. 9: 23, 24.) It is easily understood therefore that the tabernacle was the scene of priestly ministration; for since it was God's dwelling-place, it was also the place of the sinner's approach to God (or rather of the approach of a people brought into relationship with Himself) in the person of the priest. As a matter of fact, the high priest only entered once a year into the holy of holies (see Lev. 16); but this was in consequence of the failure of the priesthood, and in no way marred its original design. All this, indeed, together with the veil, and the exclusion of all but the priests from the holy place, will but teach, even by the contrast, the fuller and more blessed privileges which believers of the present dispensation enjoy. They have liberty of access at all times into the holiest of all, the veil being rent, inasmuch as they are perfected for ever, having no more conscience of sins, through the one offering of Christ (Heb. 10), and they draw near, not to Jehovah, but to their God and Father in Christ Jesus.

The last point referred to is the invitation addressed to the people to bring offerings of materials of which the tabernacle was to be composed. It is a bright exhibition of grace on the part of God thus associating the people with Himself in His desire to have a sanctuary to dwell in their midst. Hence it was only of willing hearts that the offerings were to be taken. This is exceedingly beautiful. God first produced the willingness, and then ascribed to them the offering

they rendered. He counted upon the fellowship of the people, expecting a response to the expressed desires of His heart. The people did respond, as will be seen later on in the book, and so fully that proclamation had to be made to stay the offerings. A fine example of this was seen also in David in regard to the temple: "He sware unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob; surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." (Ps. 132: 2-5.) If in lesser measure than characterized the king of Israel, yet the required offerings flowed out in abundance from willing hearts, hearts made willing by the grace of God, which thus enjoyed the privilege of contributing materials which, when made up according to the directions given, would form Jehovah's dwelling-place, and which separately would be employed as an emblem, and a manifestation of some ray of His glory.

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

CHAPTER 18. THE ARK WITH THE MERCY-SEAT.

EXODUS 25: 10-22.

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

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

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

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

The rings and the staves (vv. 19 - 15) have also a voice. The object of these was "that the ark may be borne with them." (v. 14.) This shows that God's people were pilgrims in the wilderness, journeying on to the place which God had prepared for them. But the time would come when the inheritance should be possessed, and when the temple, suited in magnificence to the glory of the king of Israel, should be built. The staves, which in the desert were no to be taken from the rings of the ark (v. 15), should then be withdrawn (2 Chr. 5: 9), because, the pilgrimage past, the ark would, with the people, have entered into its rest. (Ps. 132: 8.) The staves therefore in the rings speak of Christ, with His pilgrim host, as being Himself with them in wilderness circumstances. It is Christ in this world, Christ in all His own perfectness as man — Christ, in a word in all that He was as the revealer of God; for in truth, He was the perfect presentation of God to man. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." (Matt. 11: 27.)

Secondly, the ark, with the mercy-seat and its cherubim *formed God's throne on earth*, in the midst of Israel. "The ark of the covenant," says one, "was the throne where God manifested Himself, if any could go in in righteousness (not, I think, separate from holiness, or taking merely duty as the measure of what was accepted), and as the seat of His sovereignty over every

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

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

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

THE MERCY-SEAT.

The mercy-seat, while forming the lid, and thus completing the structure of the ark, is in another sense complete in itself, and as such, from its importance, deserving special notice. It was placed "above upon the ark" (v. 21), and was therefore in the holy of holies — the scene of the special manifestation of God, and indeed, as explained, the basis of His throne. God dwells there between the cherubim. It differed from the ark in that no shittim-wood entered into its composition. It was made of pure gold, as also were the two cherubim, which were formed out of the same piece as the mercy-seat. Gold is the emblem of what is divine — of divine righteousness. If then it is considered for a moment in connection with the testimony in the ark, there is the combination of human and divine righteousness, the testimony pointing to the law — human righteousness — which was in the heart of Christ (Psalm 40), and the gold to God's righteousness, which is displayed also in Him. The mercy-seat is therefore in a peculiar manner a type of Christ. The apostle indeed applies the term directly to Him. He says, "Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth a propitiation" (a mercy-seat, literally), "through faith in His blood," etc. (Rom. 3: 24, 25.)

This allusion will be at once understood if reference is made to the action of the priest on the great day of atonement. After putting the incense upon the fire before the Lord, it is said, And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward; and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood seven times. (Lev. 16: 14.) So also he did with the blood of the goat of the sin-offering for the people. Two questions will elicit the meaning of this act. First, Why was the blood sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat? To make propitiation for the sins of the people. Being sinners they could not stand of themselves in the presence of a holy God. The blood therefore was carried in by divine direction, and sprinkled, in the manner described, on the mercy-seat to make propitiation for the people's sins; and also before the mercy-seat, but here seven times, that when the priest approached he might find a perfect testimony to the efficacy of the work. Once, as is often said, was enough for the eye of God, but in grace He vouchsafed that it should be sprinkled seven times, as a complete assurance for the eye and heart of man. What, then, secondly, did it accomplish? It accomplished atonement, satisfied all God's holy claims as against the people — yea, if we think of the blood of Christ, glorified Him fully in all that He is, and glorified Him for ever concerning the question of sin, so that He who was against us because of our guilt, is now for us because of the blood. The mercy-seat therefore speaks pre-eminently of Christ; for, as John speaks, "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." (1 John 2: 2.) The sins of believers are gone, and gone for ever; and such is the value of the propitiation made that God can now righteously send out in His grace the gospel to the whole world, and beseech sinners to be reconciled to Him. (2 Cor. 5: 20.) Christ, we repeat, is figured by the mercy-seat; and hence we learn that God is now only approached through Him, as in the wilderness He could only be approached at the mercy-seat. But, blessed be His name, whoever does now approach to Him through Christ will find the perfect testimony to the value of His atoning work in God's presence. But observe it well, that the blood is the only ground of access. He is set forth a propitiation through faith in His blood. Believing therefore in the value of His blood, according to God's testimony concerning it, whoever comes may come boldly, nothing doubting, in the full confidence that the way is thus opened for the guiltiest and the vilest into the immediate presence of God. For "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more

perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption." (Heb. 9: 11, 12.)

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

CHAPTER 19. THE TABLE OF SHOWBREAD.

EXODUS 19: 23-30.

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

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

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

The bread on the table. It is in the book of Leviticus that we find the particulars of the loaves — "And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be

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

An illustration of this may be gathered from *the border of the table*: "And thou shalt make unto it a border of an handbreadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about." (v. 25.) It is very clear that the object of this border was to maintain the loaves in their position; and if the ornamental crown of gold be taken as an emblem of the divine glory of Christ, the lesson taught will be, that Israel is secured in its position through Christ before God by all that He is as divine.; nay, that His divine glory is concerned in their maintenance in it, as well as in preserving them. for all the blessing which He Himself has

secured, and on which they will therefore one day surely enter. But there is more than Israel's position in this symbol. It embraces in principle that of every believer. There in the holy place, ever before the eye of God, covered with the grateful fragrance of the frankincense, he is seen in Christ. It is indeed the perfect presentation of the believer to God. In other words, it is our acceptance in the Beloved.

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

Then we have *the provision for the journey*: "And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them." (vv. 26-28.) The children of Israel were pilgrims in the wilderness, and hence the tabernacle and all its furniture were made for them. in this character, and accompanied them in all their wanderings. Christ is ever with His people; and the very rings and staves, equally with the table itself, composed of gold and shittim-wood, point to Him as the God-man. But it is in the book of Numbers that the details for the transport of the table, when on the march, are given. "And upon the table of showbread they shall spread a cloth of blue, and put thereon the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls, and covers to cover withal: and the continual bread shall be thereon: and they shall spread upon them a cloth of scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put in the staves thereof." (Num. 4: 7, 8.) The inner covering, it will be observed, is a cloth of blue — symbol of what is heavenly; next, a cloth of scarlet — scarlet being an emblem of human glory or Jewish royalty; and outside came the covering of badgers' skins — a type of protection from evil as a consequence of holy watchfulness. Regarding the whole, the table with its showbread as Christ in association with Israel, to be hereafter displayed in perfection of administrative government, the meaning of this arrangement will be apparent. The cloth of blue was immediately upon the gold; i.e. the heavenly character of Christ was in intimate

association with what He was as divine. The scarlet next — royalty, or human glory, because being in the wilderness the time for its manifestation had not yet arrived. That will be connected with the kingdom at His appearing. The badgers' skins are therefore outside, as concealing His human or royal glory, and as expressive of that holy vigilance which guarded Him on every hand from evil while in wilderness circumstances.

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

CHAPTER 20. THE CANDLESTICK OF PURE GOLD.

EXODUS 25: 31-40.

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

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

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

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

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

But it may be further asked, What answers on earth to the perfect light of the Spirit as symbolized by the seven-branched candlestick in the holy place? Christ when here answered to it perfectly. He was thus the light of men, the light of the world, etc. (John 1: 4; John 8: 12.) Never for one moment was the light of the Spirit obscured in Him; it shone purely and steadily, illuminating the darkness through which He passed with its blessed, life-giving radiance

throughout the whole of His life. He was a perfect vessel. After His departure from this scene, and His ascension, the church was constituted the light-bearer. (Rev. 1: 20.) That is her character, however grievous her failure — a failure which will finally issue in her utter rejection as the vessel of testimony upon earth. (See Rev. 3: 16.) The individual believer answers to it also in the measure in which he presents Christ in his walk and ways. Paul thus writes to the Philippians, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation (generation), *among whom ye shine as lights in the world.*" (Phil. 2: 14, 15.)

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

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

CHAPTER 21. THE CURTAINS OF THE TABERNACLE.

EXODUS 26: 1-14.

THE last chapter closes with an injunction to obedience. Man's thought or design must have no place in God's house. There His authority must be upheld and acknowledged as supreme. This is a principle of the last importance; and is accordingly asserted again and again in

the course of these communications. Having then reminded Moses that the pattern shown him in the mount must be ever kept in view, the Lord proceeds to instruct him concerning the composition, size, etc., of the curtains which were to form the tabernacle, the tent, and their coverings.

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

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

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

Following the order of the scripture, the inner set — the tabernacle — may be first considered. These are made of four materials — fine twined linen, blue, purple, and scarlet. Besides this, there were cherubim embroidered (see margin) upon them. It is in these materials that their typical teaching lies. *The fine twined linen* is a symbol of spotless purity. The priests were on this account clothed with it (Exodus 28: 39-43); and on the great day of atonement Aaron was dressed in this material (Lev. 16: 4) that he might typify the absolute purity of the nature of the One of whom he was but the shadow. In the New Testament the fine linen is spoken of as the righteousnesses of saints. (Rev. 19: 8.) *The blue* is always a symbol of what is heavenly

— the very colour pointing unmistakably to this significance. *The purple* is emblematic of Gentile royalty. The gospel of John, for example, records that when the soldiers, with coarse brutality, were mocking the claims of Jesus to be the King, they put on Him a purple robe. (John 19: 2.) *The scarlet* sets forth human glory, and it may be at the same time, Jewish royalty. David thus speaks of Saul having clothed the daughters of Israel in scarlet with other delights (2 Sam. 1: 24) — as expressive of the dignity he had put upon them; and in Matthew's gospel, where Christ is specially presented as the Messiah, He is said to have been clothed by the soldiers in scarlet, ere they bent their mocking knee before Him, and cried, "Hail, King of the Jews!" (Matt. 27: 28, 29.) Applying all this to Christ the significance is most striking. It gives Christ in the absolute purity of His nature, Christ in His heavenly character, Christ as King of Israel (and, as King of Israel, invested with all human glory), and, last of all, Christ as reigning also over the Gentiles. The last two features coalesce, because when Christ shall sit upon the throne of His father David, it will be the period of His world-sovereignty, when all kings shall fall down before Him, and all nations shall serve Him. (Psalm 72: 11.) It is therefore Christ as He was as Man in this world, and Christ as He will be in the future display of His glory in this world, as Son of David, and as Son of man. But there is another thing. Cherubim were embroidered on these curtains. Cherubim have been explained to signify judicial authority. This gives an additional representation of Christ — of Christ as having authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man. (John 5: 27.) It is thus a full display of what Christ was essentially as Man, and of His glories and dignities connected with the earth. Blessed were those who, admitted in the exercise of their priestly office within the precincts of the holy place, had the privilege of gazing upon these varied displays of the excellencies and glories of the Christ of God!

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

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

Then *the couplings* have likewise a voice. There were fifty loops of blue and fifty taches of gold, by which the curtains were connected. Remembering that blue is the heavenly colour, and

that the gold is divine, and that the two numbers of ten and five, which have just been explained, enter into the composition of the fifty, we learn that the heavenly and divine character of our blessed Lord secured the perfect adjustment of His twofold responsibility as Man towards God and man; or that they were perfectly united by His divine and heavenly energy. These meanings, the reader is cautioned, are suggestions, but suggestions which are worthy of devout consideration in the light of Scripture, and which, if examined in the presence of God, cannot fail both to be interesting and profitable.

(2) The curtains of goats' hair. These came next to, immediately above, those which are denominated the Tabernacle, and formed the tent. This covering points also to Christ — "to His positive purity, or rather to that severity of separation from the evil that was around Him, which gave Him the character of prophet — severity, not in His ways towards poor sinners, but in separation from sinners, the uncompromisingness, as to Himself, which kept Him apart and gave Him His moral authority, the moral cloth of hair which distinguished the prophet." In confirmation of this interpretation, Zechariah says, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment (margin, a garment of hair) to deceive," etc. (13: 4; compare Matt. 3: 4.) The dimensions of these differ from the curtains of the tabernacle of the same width, they were two cubits longer — thirty cubits instead of twenty-eight — and there was one more curtain. While unable to suggest any typical value to the numbers, the reason of their larger size is yet evident. They were to extend beyond, on all sides, so as completely to protect the tabernacle curtains. "And the remnant that remaineth of the curtains of the tent e. the goats' hair curtains), the half curtain hat remaineth, *shall hang over the backside of the tabernacle*. And a cubit on the one side, and a cubit on the other side, of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent, *it shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle on this side and on that side, to cover it*. (vv. 12, 10.) The meaning will be, then, that Christ in all that He was, as symbolized by the inner curtains, was guarded by that perfect separation from evil which sprang from His positive and absolute purity. He could therefore challenge His adversaries with the words, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (John 8: 46.) Yea, He could say to His own, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." (John 14: 30.) So complete was His moral separation from all evil that He could even touch the leper and not be defiled.

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

(3) Above the "tent" — i.e. the goats' hair curtains — were two coverings; first, one of rams' skins dyed red, and next, another of badgers' skins. The ram was chosen as the consecration offering in connection with the setting apart of the priests to their office. It is called "the ram of the consecration." (Ex. 29: 27.) Dyed red will point very evidently to death. The meaning therefore is entire consecration, devotedness unto death; and where was that ever seen

in its perfection except in the One who humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross? The badgers' skins are an emblem of that holy vigilance exhibited in His walk and ways, which preserved Him from all evil. Jerusalem is said to have been "shod with badgers' skins," the provision the Lord had made to protect her from evil in her walk. The vigilance so symbolized is often expressed in the Psalms: "By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer;" and again, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." The coverings therefore likewise proclaim the perfectness of the One whom they typify. At the same time it must not be forgotten, that the features they portray ought to be seen in every believer. For in all that Christ was in His walk through the world He is our example. If therefore we admire the perfections and excellencies that were displayed in Him, we should remember that He is set before us as the standard of our responsibility.

"My Saviour, keep my spirit stayed

Hard following after Thee;

Till I, in robes of white arrayed,

Thy face in glory see."

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

CHAPTER 22. THE FRAMEWORK OF THE TABERNACLE.

EXODUS 26: 15-30.

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

"And thou shalt make boards for the tabernacle of shittim-wood standing up. Ten cubits shall be the length of a board, and a cubit and a half shall be the breadth of one board. Two tenons shall there be in one board, set in order one against another: thus shalt thou make for all the boards of the tabernacle. And thou shalt make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards on the south side southward. And thou shalt make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons. And for the second side of the tabernacle on the north side there shall be twenty boards, and their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. And for the sides of the tabernacle westward thou shalt make six boards. And two boards shalt thou make for the corners of the tabernacle in the two sides. And they shall be coupled

together beneath, and they shall be coupled together above the head of it unto one ring: thus shall it be for them both; they shall be for the two corners. And they shall be eight boards, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board.

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

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

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

Now, as explained, there were one hundred of these sockets — i.e. ten times ten. Ten is the number of responsibility towards God. The blood of Christ therefore, as represented by the silver, has met the highest expression of our responsibility God-ward, — has made an atonement

adequate — fully adequate — to all God's claims, and thereby cleared us completely and for ever. Well might the soul, in the perception of this perfect work, joyfully exclaim -

"On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand."

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

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

One thing more is noticeable — the provision made for their security when standing in their silver sockets. There were five bars of shittim-wood on either side, running through rings of gold (vv. 26-29); and the boards were, in addition, coupled at the corners by rings (v. 24.) The ring is a symbol of security — there being no end to it; and consequently, since the bars were to strengthen and secure the framework, the two together may well signify eternal security. And this both the church and the individual believer enjoy. Concerning the former, the Lord Himself said, "Upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16: 18); and of the latter, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand." (John 10: 27, 28.)

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

is the third time that this injunction has been given — showing the importance of obedience in the eyes of God.

CHAPTER 23. THE BEAUTIFUL VEIL, ETC.

EXODUS 26: 31-37.

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

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

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

(1) There are several distinct points in the description of the veil to be considered. As to its materials, it will be perceived that they correspond in every particular with those of the curtains forming the Tabernacle. (Ex. 26: 1.) As in these, therefore, so in the veil, it is Christ who is presented — Christ in what He is as to His nature and character, Christ in what He will be as Son of man and Son of David in the future glories of His millennial reign, and Christ, moreover, as Son of man invested with supreme judicial power. There is one difference to be noted. In the curtains of the Tabernacle the fine twined linen comes first; here the blue has the precedence, and the fine twined linen comes last. The reason is that the curtains display Christ in connection with the earth, and hence the absolute purity of His nature is the first thing declared; whereas the veil shows Christ rather in connection with heaven, and consequently the blue — His heavenly character — is prominent. The interpretation of the veil is found in the epistle to the Hebrews: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, *through the veil, that is to say, His flesh.*" (Heb. 10: 19, 20.) From this two things may be gathered. First, that just as the veil in the Tabernacle concealed the scene of the immediate presence and manifestation of God, so the flesh of Christ, Christ in incarnation, concealed from the natural eye the presence-chamber of God. He was God manifest in flesh; but His flesh, at the same time, was calculated to blind the eyes of

men to this astounding fact. The second is, that just as the veil was the only way into the most holy place, so Christ is the only way to God. He thus said to Thomas, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." (John 14: 6.)

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

The position of the veil is most important. "And thou shalt hang up the veil, under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the veil, the ark of the testimony: and the veil, shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy." (v. 33.) It thus shut off, as before explained, the holiest of all, in which the ark of the testimony — the throne of God on earth — was placed, so that none might enter there, save Aaron once a year on the great day of atonement. (Lev. 16) And what, it may be asked, was the meaning of this? The answer may be given in the words of Scripture: "The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." (Heb. 9: 8.) If then, on the one hand, as we have seen, the veil, as a figure of Christ, teaches the blessed truth that it is through Christ alone that access can be obtained to God, the veil in itself, on the other hand, speaks of distance and concealment. God indeed could not fully reveal Himself, could not righteously go out to the sinner, or bring the sinner in to Himself, until the question of sin should be taken up and settled once and for ever. This Christ did, and, as a consequence, immediately

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

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

(2) The arrangement of the holy furniture follows. (vv. 33-35.) It will be needful to remember once again that the altar of incense is not yet described, because it is a symbol of approach (and hence belongs to the last division of this section). The articles given are all symbols of display. Leaving on this account, for the present, any detailed exposition, a brief notice may be given of the arrangement in this scripture. The ark, first of all, was to be put into the holiest, and the mercy-seat upon the ark of the testimony — with "the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy-seat." Nothing else was found in the most holy place, because, as before explained, it was the scene of the presence and manifestation of God. There, dwelling between the cherubim, He was approached with the incense from off the golden altar, and with the blood of the sacrifices on the day of atonement; and there Moses stood to receive communications for the people. The beautiful veil shut it off from the holy place. It was therefore the inner compartment of the Tabernacle. Outside the veil, in the holy place, the table of showbread and the candlestick were arranged; the former on the north, and the table on the south side. To borrow the language of another, "Outside the veil were the table with its twelve loaves and the golden candlestick. Twelve is administrative perfection *in man*; seven, spiritual completeness, whether in good or evil. The two are found outside the veil, inside which was the most immediate manifestation of God, the Supreme, but who hid Himself, as it were, in darkness.

Here was light and nourishment; God in power in union with humanity; and God giving the light of the Holy Ghost. Therefore it is that we have twelve apostles attached to the Lord in the flesh, and seven churches for Him who has the seven Spirits of God. The twelve tribes were, for the time being, what answered externally to this manifestation. It is found in the new Jerusalem. The primary idea is the manifestation of God in man and by the Spirit." And these two truths are connected — shown to be connected by the relative positions of the table and the candlestick; the light of the candlestick indeed ever testifying to the truth embodied in the table of showbread

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

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

CHAPTER 24. THE BRAZEN ALTAR.

EXODUS 27: 1-8.

PASSING outwards from the holy place, the first thing met, when the Tabernacle and all its arrangements were duly ordered, was the laver. But this is omitted here for the same reason

that the altar of incense was not described in the last chapter. It was a symbol of approach, and not of display; and consequently the brazen altar is next given. This, as will be seen, had a peculiar character. It was a manifestation of God, and, at the same time, was the meeting-place between Him and the sinner. It is in this aspect the boundary of His display; i.e. He does not go out in manifestation beyond this limit; for, meeting the sinner here, the sinner (i.e. the priest acting on his behalf), when everything is prepared, has the liberty from this point of passing in, and would thenceforward need the symbols of approach.

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

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

*It should never be forgotten that while the burnt-offering sets forth God's part in the death of Christ, it was yet accepted for the offerer to make atonement for him. (Lev. 1: 4.)

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

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

The horns of the altar may also be considered. There were four — one on each corner. (v. 2.) In certain cases the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled upon these, as, for example, in the sin-offering for the ruler or for one of the common people. (Lev. 4: 25, 30, etc.) The horn is a symbol of strength. When therefore the blood was sprinkled upon the horns, the whole strength of the altar (and it was displayed in all its completeness) which had been against, is now exercised on behalf of the sinner. The horns of the altar became thus a place of refuge, an inviolable sanctuary, for all who were rightfully under their protection on the ground of the

sprinkled blood. Joab sought this protection when he fled from Solomon (1 Kings 2: 28); but inasmuch as he had no claim upon it, for he was a murderer, he was slain. This is like the sinner who, in his extremity, would fain claim the benefits of the death of Christ to escape the judgment, though he is still alienated in heart from Him. But wherever there is trust in the value of the sacrifice which has been offered to God upon the altar, there is no power in earth or hell that can touch the soul that rests under its shelter and protection.

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,

I will not, I will not, desert to its foes;

That soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,

I'll never, no never, no never forsake."

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

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

CHAPTER 25. THE COURT OF THE TABERNACLE.

EXODUS 27: 9-19.

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

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

It appears from this description that the court of the Tabernacle was one hundred cubits long, and fifty cubits broad. (vv. 9-13.) It was made as follows: first, there were twenty pillars on each of the two sides, north and south (vv. 10, 11), and ten pillars at each of the two ends, east and west — the pillars on the east side, the side of entrance, being made up of three on each side of the entrance, and four for the hanging of the gate of the court. (vv. 12-16.) Altogether there were sixty pillars. On these pillars — or, to speak exactly, on fifty-six of them — excluding the four which were for the hanging of the gate — were suspended the fine twined linen which formed the court. Of this there were one hundred cubits on each side, fifty cubits at the west end, and thirty on the east (vv. 9-15) — altogether two hundred and eighty cubits. The gateway, at the east end, was composed of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework — the same in every respect as the hanging for the entrance into the holy place — and was twenty cubits in length. The sockets of the pillars were all of brass, and the hooks and the fillets for the hanging were of silver. (v. 17.) The typical teaching of these things will be perceived to spring from their twofold symbolical presentation of Christ and of the believer.

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

There is another thing. These hangings were five cubits high (v. 18); and their lengths at the two sides one hundred cubits, and at the two ends fifty and thirty cubits. These latter numbers can all be divided by ten and five. Accepting then the power of these numbers as responsibility towards God, and responsibility towards man, it follows that the spotless purity of His life sprang from His perfectly meeting this twofold responsibility. He loved God with all His heart, and His neighbour as, yea, more than, Himself. To those therefore whose eyes were opened these curtains proclaimed the coming of One who should perfectly answer in His life and walk to every claim of God.

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

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

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

The pillars may also point to the believer. Socketed in brass, grounded in divine righteousness, whose claims have been met, and with the value of redemption, as typified by the silver upon our heads, are prerequisites for such a display of Christ. There were also pins and cords. (Ex. 27: 19; Ex. 35: 18.) These were for stability — to keep the pillars with the fine twined linen hangings in their place. Interpreting this of the believer, it will teach that the source of his strength is not in himself, that he needs a power from without if he is to maintain the exhibition of practical righteousness before the world; and, indeed, the wider truth, that, though he is given a standing on the ground of divine righteousness, and is under the value of redemption, he could not maintain the position for a single moment if left to his own resources. The pins and cords therefore reveal that the believer is "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Peter 1: 5.) All is of God; all that the believer is, has, and enjoys, is the gift of His grace. His position as well as his responsibility can only be maintained in dependence on the Lord. All these pins, equally with the vessels of the

Tabernacle in all the service thereof, and all the pins thereof, were of brass. (v. 19.) Thus everything outside the holy place and the holy of holies, was characterized by divine righteousness, but divine righteousness testing man in responsibility because it was the meeting-place between God and the people. (See Ex. 29: 42.) Since, however, man cannot of himself meet its claims, the righteousness of God is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe. While therefore he is saved by grace, he stands, as so saved, upon the immovable foundation of divine righteousness before God. For grace reigns, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom. 5: 21.)

CHAPTER 26. THE PRIESTHOOD.

EXODUS 28.

BEFORE entering upon this subject, it may be well to recall the point at which we have arrived. With the exception of the altar of incense and the laver, the tabernacle, with its sacred vessels, is now complete. Beginning with the ark of the covenant, the table of showbread and the candlestick were then described. The tabernacle (the beautiful curtains), the tent (the curtains of goats' hair), and the coverings of rams' skins dyed red, and of badgers' skins followed. Next came the boards of the tabernacle, and their erection, and the division between the holy of holies and the holy place by the veil, and the "hanging for the door of the tent;" i.e. the entrance from without into the holy place. The sacred vessels were then arranged: the ark, with the mercy-seat and its "cherubim of glory," was put into the holiest, and the table and the candlestick occupied the holy place. In the next place, the brazen altar was prescribed, and lastly, the court of the tabernacle. So far, everything given is a manifestation of God, or, as it is often termed, a symbol of display; i.e. it reveals in type or figure something of God in Christ. It is God, so to speak, coming out to His people. Thenceforward the order is reversed. It is not now the question of God coming out, but of going in to God. All that follows therefore concerns access into His presence; and consequently all the vessels that have been omitted are symbols of approach; i.e. vessels needed for drawing nigh to God. But before these are entered upon there is a break, and the appointment and consecration of the priesthood are detailed. The reason is, that there must be the designated persons for approach before the vessels could be used. There is therefore a divine order in this seeming confusion. God has come out in type and figure to His people; then He indicates those who are to be set apart for His service in the sanctuary — those who are to enjoy the special privilege of access to Him; and lastly, the vessels etc., are given, which they would need in their holy employment in the house of God. This arrangement will also help us to understand the introduction of the commandment concerning the provision for the oil for the candlestick at the end of Exodus 27. The oil, as has already been explained, is a type of the Holy Ghost. The children of Israel are enjoined through Moses to bring the oil, and thus are formally linked (in figure) with, and so represented in, the light of the candlestick which was to be ordered by Aaron and his sons from evening to morning before the Lord. In other words, the people are defined (though this truth will be more definitely stated when we come to the atonement money) for whom the priests are to act before the priests are appointed. It will thus be seen that every detail, and the position of every verse, as well as the order of the subjects, are stamped with divine wisdom and significance. All being thus arranged, the priests are to be set apart for their holy office.

"And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons." (v. 1.)

Two or three preliminary remarks will conduce to our understanding of this subject. The necessity for the appointment of priests lay in the fact that the people were sinners, and as such, inasmuch as there was no provision as yet for cleansing them from the guilt of sin, had no title to come into God's presence. Man as he is cannot, dares not, come before God. The object of the priestly office was, therefore, to minister unto God (v. 1); but to minister unto God on behalf of the people. (Heb. 5: 1, 2.) In this dispensation there is no such thing as some of God's people acting as priests on behalf of others in this special way. All believers are now priests (see 1 Peter 2: 5, 9); all alike enjoy liberty of access into the holiest of all. (Heb. 10) Aaron therefore is a type of Christ — a type of Christ when he is alone; but when he is associated with his sons, he with them is a type of the Church as the priestly family; but the Church, at the same time, in association with Christ. This distinction will appear most clearly in the next chapter. It is of the first importance to be clear upon this subject, because, through ignorance or indifference to the truth, thousands of professed believers have gone, and thousands more are going, back to Jewish ground, on which they accept the existence of a special order of men who claim to possess, like Aaron and his sons, the particular privilege of going to God on behalf of their fellow-men. The assertion of such a claim is to attack the very foundation of Christianity, inasmuch as it denies the perpetual efficacy of the one offering of Christ. Aaron then, be it remembered, is a type of Christ; but if he is seen together with his sons, then the privileges of the Church, in association with Christ as the priestly family, are presented. The choice of Aaron and his sons was of pure grace. An essential qualification for the office was divine appointment (Heb. 5: 4); but Aaron was not chosen on the ground of any merit in himself; he was simply in this matter the object of divine and sovereign favour. He had no claim whatever upon God for such an honour; but God gave it to him in the exercise of His sovereign prerogative.

The chapter contains two things — the priestly dress, and the priestly office. The two are intermingled, but the dress comes first for consideration.

"And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, for glory and for beauty. And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto Me in the priest's office. And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen. And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work. It shall have the two shoulder pieces thereof joined at the two edges thereof; and so it shall be joined together. And the curious girdle of the ephod, which is upon it, shall be of the same, according to the work thereof; even of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen." (vv. 2-8.)

There were six holy garments in all (v. 4), or, if we add the plate of pure gold put on the mitre (v. 36), seven, these constituting the garments for glory and for beauty. The ephod comes first, because it was pre-eminently the priestly garment. Without it the priest could not be in the

full exercise of his office. It was made of the four materials — blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, which have so frequently been considered, with the addition of gold. (v. 5.) The gold is mentioned first, and signifies that which is divine. If, however, we take the gold as an emblem of divine righteousness, it will signify that this is the ground on which Christ, as Priest, exercises His office; that His intercession is according to it before God, and therefore of necessity prevalent. In the remaining four materials there are the heavenly character of Christ (blue), His glories as Son of man and Son of David (purple and scarlet), and His spotless purity (fine twined linen), as holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. Two things are thereby taught. First, that Christ acts for us as Priest in all that He is as divine and human, as the God-man. The whole value of His person enters into the exercise of His office — the gold speaking of what He is as divine, and the varied colours of His perfections and dignities as man. The apostle combines these two things in the epistle to the Hebrews: "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God," etc. (4: 14.) He is Jesus, and He is the Son of God. It is this most precious truth that is displayed in type in the materials of the ephod. How it enlarges our conceptions of the value of His work for us as Priest to remember what He is in Himself, and that we are thus upheld in His intercession by all that He is as Jesus, and as the Son of God! Secondly, these materials reveal the character of His priesthood. There are royal glories portrayed as well as His essential nature and character. He will indeed be a Priest on His throne. (Zech. 6: 13.) Now He exercises His office on behalf of believers after the Aaronic pattern on the great day of atonement inside the veil; but the full expression of His priestly office for Israel will be seen in His Melchizedek character. (Ps. 110; Heb. 7) The ephod of Aaron spoke of these coming glories, which will be displayed when Christ will be both King of righteousness and King of peace. Strictly speaking therefore, the dress is emblematical of Christ as Priest for Israel, though Aaron never went in to the holiest. in the character it exhibited; for failure came in through Nadab and Abihu, and, as a consequence, he was forbidden to go into God's presence, except once a year, and then not in the garments for glory and beauty. (Lev. 10, 16) But Christ will take up all that these garments typified, and then will be seen, for the first time, God's thought of the priesthood for His people fully accomplished.

The girdle of the ephod, was embroidered with the same materials as the ephod itself. It is therefore to the significance of the girdle itself that our attention is directed. In Scripture it is constantly typical of service. One beautiful example of this is found in Luke — in the words of our blessed Lord Himself. He says, "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that He shall *gird Himself*. and. make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and *serve them*." (Luke 12: 37.) The girdle of the ephod will, then, signify the service of Christ as the Priest, the service He renders to us before God in this capacity. A Servant — the perfect Servant — ever delighting when in this world to do His Father's will, He in His love and grace, though He be glorified, remains a Servant still. He is gone into heaven to appear in the presence of God for us. (Heb. 9: 24.) It is in this character He maintains unwearied intercession on our behalf, whereby He secures for us those continual ministrations of mercy and grace — mercy for our weakness, and grace for our succour when we are tempted — which we need as a people passing through the desert. It is most consoling to raise our eyes, and behold Christ invested with His priestly girdle, for thereby we are assured that He will save us all the way through, bring us through the wilderness in safety, and introduce us into the rest of God, because He ever lives to make intercession for us. And how it reveals to us the depths of His own heart! Moses complained to the Lord that the burden of Israel — the

burden of leading them in their wanderings — was too heavy for him. But the Lord Jesus, as our great High Priest, is never weary, notwithstanding the continual failures and unbelief, and the going back in heart to Egypt, of His people. He is ever unwearied and unresting in His service, because His love is inexhaustible. Blessed be His name!

We have next the onyx stones and breastplate.

"And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: six of their names on one stone, and the other six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth. With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold. And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial. And thou shalt make ouches of gold; and two chains of pure gold at the ends; of wreathen work shalt thou make them, and fasten the wreathen chains to the ouches. And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it. Foursquare it shall be, being doubled; a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof. And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row. And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper; they shall be set in gold in their inclosings. And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes. And thou shalt make upon the breastplate chains at the ends of wreathen work of pure gold. And thou shalt make upon the breastplate two rings of gold, and shalt put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. And thou shalt put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings which are on the ends of the breastplate. And the other two ends of the two wreathen chains thou shalt fasten in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulderpieces of the ephod before it. And thou shalt make two rings of gold, and thou shalt put them upon the two ends of the breastplate, in the border thereof, which is in the side of the ephod inward. And two other rings of gold thou shalt make, and shalt put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, toward the forepart thereof, over against the other coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod. And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod. And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually. And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the Lord: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually." (vv. 9-30.)

First, there are *the two onyx stones*, with the names of the children of Israel, six tribes on each, engraven thereon, set in ouches of gold, and put upon the shoulders of the ephod, *etc.* That this description relates in figure to the exercise of the priestly office is clear from the statement that "Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial." The

onyx stones were gems — precious stones, figurative of the excellencies of Christ, and combining this with the fact that they were set in gold will give us two things; first, that the names of His people appear upon the shoulders of the Priest in all His beauty and excellency, and, as symbolized by the gold, set in divine righteousness. The shoulder is the emblem of strength. (See Isa. 9: 6; Isa. 22: 22, etc.) Christ therefore, as here portrayed, upholds His people in the presence of God in all His omnipotent strength; and He has the title to do so, seeing that they are set upon His shoulders in divine righteousness and invested with all the radiancy of His own beauty. What a comfort to us in the consciousness of our utter feebleness! He who upholdeth all things by the word of His power maintains us before God; and, as He bears us up in His presence, God beholds us as having an undeniable claim to be upon the shoulders, and sees us encompassed by all the excellency, of the High Priest. Our memorial is thus before Him continually; for Christ cannot be in the presence of God without our names being seen upon His shoulders. Remark also that the ouches in which the onyx stones were set were fastened by two wreathen chains of gold, binding them on His shoulders in divine righteousness.

The breastplate follows. Its materials corresponded with those of the ephod. (v. 15.) It was four-square in shape, and there were set in it four rows of precious stones; and on these stones likewise were engraven the names of the children of Israel according to their twelve tribes, etc. The typical teaching will then be of the same character — noting, however, the differences between the shoulders and the breast. (1) Aaron then bore the names of the children of Israel on his heart, as well as on his shoulders. The breast is symbolic of the affections. It teaches therefore that if Christ upholds His people before God, on the one hand, by everlasting strength, He bears them also, on the other, on His heart in everlasting love. Everlasting strength and everlasting love unite in the presentation of believers before God by the Priest. On the heart of Christ! And who shall sound its depths? If we think of power, we remember His words, "No one can pluck them out of My hand." If our thought is of love, we are reminded of the apostle's challenge, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" And these two — strength and love — and these two as united in Christ — are engaged in presenting us before God. He has bound us upon His shoulders — bearing our weight — with His own almighty strength, and He has fastened us upon His heart with His own deathless and unfathomable love. This will help us to comprehend a little of the efficacy of His intercession, based as it is upon the efficacy of His sacrifice, on our behalf. (2) The names of the children of Israel were graven upon the precious stones. The scene of the exercise of the priesthood, according to the thought of God, and actually so in the case of Christ, if not in that of Aaron, was immediately in God's presence — before the full blaze of the holiness of His throne. Now the action of light upon precious stones has the effect of bringing out their varied and manifold beauties. Hence, as was remarked in connection with the onyx stones, the names of God's people, as borne upon the heart of the priest, shine out in all the sparkling lustre and beauty of the stones on which they are engraven. This symbolizes the fact that believers are before God in all the acceptance of Christ. When God looks upon the great High Priest, He beholds His people upon His heart, as well as upon His shoulders, adorned with all the beauty of the One on whom His eye ever rests with perfect delight. Or, looking at it from another aspect, it might be said that Christ presents His people to God, in the exercise of His priesthood, as Himself. He thus establishes in His intercession His own claims upon God on their behalf. And with what joy does He so present them before God! For they are those for whom He has died, and whom He has cleansed with His own most precious blood, those whom He has made the objects of His own love, and whom finally He will bring to be for ever with Him; and He pleads

for them before God according to all the strength of these ties, according, as before observed, to all the claims which He Himself, on account of the work He accomplished on the cross, has upon the heart of God. (3) The breastplate was fastened by wreathen chains of gold, and "a lace of blue," and rings of gold to the ephod. We gather, then, that the breastplate cannot be detached from the ephod. It is bound up inseparably with the priestly office of Christ. It is fastened to the ephod — the priestly garment — by chains of gold, in divine righteousness, divine righteousness as suited to the nature of God, by all that Christ is therefore as divine. It is also an eternal connection as typified by the rings — the ring being without end, and hence, as seen when considering the framework of the tabernacle, an emblem of eternity. As Priest, Christ can never fail us. If He has once undertaken our cause, He will never lay it down. Surely this truth will strengthen our hearts in times of trial or weakness. We may be despondent, but if we look up we may rejoice in the thought that our place upon the heart and shoulders of Christ can never be lost. There are seasons when many believers feel as if they could not get into the presence, or obtain the ear, of God — doubtless through failure, or coldness of heart, or spiritual feebleness. These things are not to be excused; but surely it would prove an antidote to Satan's temptations at such periods to remember, that if we cannot pray ourselves, Christ never fails to bear us up in His prevailing intercession, and that we are bound inseparably upon His heart and upon His shoulders. Nay, it would soon dispel our gloom and coldness of heart, because it would lead us to look away from ourselves, and to expect all from Him, and from His continual ministry for us in the presence of God. As another has said, "He presents us, as that which He has on His heart, to God. *He cannot be before Him without doing so*; and whatever claim the desire and wish of Christ's heart has to draw out the favour of God, operates in drawing out that favour on us. The light and favour of the sanctuary — God as dwelling there — cannot shine out on Him without shining on us, and that as an object presented by Him for it." (4) Aaron bore the judgment of the people in connection with Urim and Thummim. These were put in the breastplate of judgment. (vv. 29, 30.) Urim and Thummim probably mean "lights" and "perfections." "These we need to get blessing, Stood we before God, such as we are, we must draw down judgment, or lose the effect of this light and perfection of God, remaining without. But, Christ bearing our judgment according to these, our presentation to God is according to the perfection of God Himself — our judgment borne; but then our position, guidance, light, and spiritual intelligence are according to this same divine light and perfection. For the high priest inquired and had answers from God according to the Urim and Thummim. This is a blessed privilege." All these things indeed do but teach how perfectly Christ as the Priest acts and cares for His people.

The robe of the ephod is next described.

"And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue. And there shall be an hole in the top of it, in the midst thereof: it shall have a binding of woven work round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of an habergeon, that it be not rent. And beneath, upon the hem of it, thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about: a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about. And it shall be upon Aaron to minister; and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not." (vv. 31-35.)

The robe of the ephod was all of blue — indicative of what is heavenly, adumbrating the heavenly character of the Priest, and it may be, at the same time, the scene of the exercise of His functions, or rather, that His character was suited to the place. He is thus spoken of in the Hebrews not only as holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, but also as made higher than the heavens. (Heb. 7: 26.) Care was to be taken that "it be not rent" (v. 32), for what is heavenly in character must needs be indivisible in its perfection. At the bottom of the robe there were to be pomegranates of blue, of purple, and of scarlet, and bells of gold in alternation; and the object is stated that it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not. (v. 35.) The symbolic significance of these two things is plainly marked; it is the fruits and testimony of the Spirit. And hence "going in" and "coming out" mark two distinct periods. Speaking now of Christ, of whom Aaron was but the figure, He went in when He ascended up on high, and the sound was heard on the day of Pentecost in the testimony which the Spirit of God then raised by the mouth of the apostles. There were also fruits connected with that testimony — fruits of the Spirit in the walk and life of those who were converted through the instrumentality of the testimony. (See Acts 2) The same thing will take place when He comes out, and both alike flow from Christ in His heavenly character. Peter links together the two periods. He cried to the multitude, who had come together in amazement at the witness of the Spirit, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams," etc. (Acts 2: 16, 17.) What was passing before their astonished eyes was but a sample of that, though of different character, which should be witnessed when the Priest comes out with blessing for Israel. It is in this last connection that the meaning of the colours of the pomegranates may be apprehended. The fruits of the Spirit are heavenly in character, and consequently "blue" is the first colour. But they are also "purple" and "scarlet," because they will be then associated with the kingdom-glories of Christ; yea, with the glories which He will inherit both as Son of man and as Son of David. The two periods — going in, and coming out — may thus answer to the early and the latter rain, at least in association with Israel. (See Hosea 6: 1-3.)

Then there is the plate of gold.

"And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre, upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord." (vv. 36-38.)

This is the gracious provision which God has made for the imperfections and defilements of our services and worship. He can only accept that which is suited to His own nature. Everything offered to Him, therefore, must be stamped with holiness. This being so, if left to ourselves, notwithstanding that we are cleansed and brought into relationship with Him, and having a title of approach, our offerings never could be accepted. But He has met our need. Christ, as the Priest, bears the iniquity of our holy things; and He is holiness to the Lord, so that our worship, as presented through Him, is acceptable to God. Blessed consolation, for without

this provision we were shut out from God's presence! Hence the apostle speaks not only of the blood and the rent veil, but also of the High Priest over the house of God. (Heb. 10)

The direction as to the coat of fine linen follows.

"And thou shalt embroider the coat of fine linen, and thou shalt make the mitre of fine linen, and thou shalt make the girdle of needlework." (v. 39.)

The fine linen, as ever, is a type of personal, and, as applied to Christ, of absolute personal, purity; and its being embroidered tells that, as such, He was adorned with every grace. All the garments alike therefore speak of Christ; although, be it remembered, they were the shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things. This caution is ever needed when considering types and figures. It should be also again stated that these garments for glory and beauty were never worn inside the veil. This fact makes them the more applicable to our position; for had Aaron enjoyed access, as thus arrayed, into the holy of holies, it would have been the sign of the full acceptance of the people whom he represented. We are accepted in the Beloved; and Christ, as glorified, ministers in the true sanctuary as the High Priest of His people, and consequently He puts us into the enjoyment of all the blessings here prefigured. This may be gathered from the epistle to the Hebrews, and explains to us how it is that Christ is there presented in every way as a contrast with that which, in the old dispensation, had fore-shadowed Him, whether in His person, His office, or His work.

The arraying of Aaron's sons together with himself (vv. 40-43) is more properly connected with the subject of the next chapter, the consecration of the priests.

CHAPTER 27. THE CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTS.

EXODUS 29: 1-35.

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

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

The first part of the process was *washing them with water*, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. (v. 4.) This action is most significant, as water is a symbol of the word of God,

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

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

Aaron and His sons present the Church as the priestly family, but as associated with Christ. First, as in the case of Aaron alone, they are all robed. These garments are not the same as those described in detail in the last chapter, but those briefly indicated at the close. They are said to be coats, girdles, and bonnets, and were of fine linen, and embroidered, and said also to be "for glory and for beauty." (Ex. 28: 39, 40; Ex. 29: 9.) The fine linen embroidered shows forth the purity of the nature of Christ adorned with every grace. The robing of Aaron's sons is really the putting on of Christ; and this, in fact, brings them into association with Him; for the Church possesses nothing apart from Christ. If believers, for example, are brought into the position of priests, and the enjoyment of priestly privileges, it is in virtue of their connection with Him. He is the Priest, and He it is who makes them priests. (See Rev. 1: 5, 6.) Everything flows from Him. Thus, when Aaron is put into company with his sons, it is not so much that he becomes merged into the priestly family, but rather to teach that all the blessings and privileges of the priestly family are derived from Christ. But in order to this they must first be invested with robes for glory and for beauty — robes which adorn them with the glory and beauty of Christ.

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

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

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

After the victim was slain *the blood was sprinkled*. It was put upon the horns of the altar, and the rest was poured out beside the bottom of the altar. (v. 12.) The blood was thus wholly for God. The life is in it (Lev. 17: 11), and this action consequently signified that the life of the victim was offered up to God instead of that of Aaron and his sons. This was done on the principle of substitution — God in grace accepting the death of the sin-offering in the place of that of those for whom it was offered. Further, *the fat that covered the inwards, and the caul, etc., were burnt upon the altar*. The fat was prohibited to the children of Israel equally with the blood. It is an emblem of inward energy, force of will, etc. It is burnt upon the altar because the sin-offering was a type of Christ, and thus teaches that, while He was charged with the sins of

His people, God found in Him, even as in the case of the burnt-offering, that which completely answered to His own mind — truth in the inward parts. His infinite acceptability to God was never more fully proved than when He bowed His head under the sins of His people. In grace He took our place; but in thus accepting the stroke of judgment that was our due, every thought of His heart, every movement of His will, every energy of His soul, were perfect before God. It was indeed in His death on the cross that He proved His obedience to the uttermost, that He showed that the glory of God was so completely the one motive of His giving Himself up to death, that not even the waves and billows of judgment could turn Him aside. Lastly, *the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung, were burnt without the camp*. It was a sin-offering, and as such must be cast out and consumed, inasmuch as it was looked upon as under the imputation of the guilt of Aaron and his sons. It was thus altogether a type of Christ — of Christ as suffering without the gate, rejected of men, forsaken by God, because He, in His grace and love, suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. This process completed, *Aaron and his sons were now under all the efficacy and value of the sin-offering*.

The burnt-offering follows the sin-offering.

"Thou shalt also take one ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. And thou shalt slay the ram, and thou shalt take his blood, and sprinkle it round about upon the altar. And thou shalt cut the ram in pieces, and wash the inwards of him, and his legs, and put them unto his pieces, and unto his head. And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a burnt-offering unto the Lord: it is a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the Lord." (vv. 1518.)

As in the case of the sin-offering, Aaron and his sons put their hands upon the head of the burnt-offering; but instead of the transference or the imputation of their guilt, they themselves are transferred, so to speak, so as to become identified with the ram about to be slain. In other words, while the actions are similar the effects are contrasted. The victim in the sin-offering is looked upon, after the laying on of hands, as laden with the guilt of those for whom it was about to be offered as a sacrifice; whereas in the burnt-offering Aaron and his sons are regarded by the same act as invested with all the acceptability of the sacrifice. Their sins were transferred in the first instance, and in the second their standing was changed on to the ground of the value of the offering. The ram was then slain, and the blood sprinkled round about upon the altar; the life was presented to God. This was not all; but the whole ram, having been cut in pieces, and its inwards having been washed, to make it a more fitting type of the spotlessness of Christ, was burnt upon the altar. "It is a burnt-offering unto the Lord: it is a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the Lord." In the sin-offering the flesh of the bullock, etc., were burnt with fire without the camp but the whole ram of the burnt-offering was consumed upon the altar because the whole was acceptable to God. The burnt-offering is a type of the perfect devotedness of Christ unto death; and in this aspect it is not looked upon as bearing sins, but as wholly consecrated to the will and glory of God. As such, therefore, Christ on the cross, under the action of the holy fire — tested, that is, by the searching judgment of God's holiness, was entirely a sweet savour to God. As bearing sins, God hid His face from Him; but as obedient unto the death of the cross, when through the Eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God, He furnished a new motive for love to the Father's heart. "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again." (John 10: 17.) In this aspect "He was in the place of sin, and God

glorified as no creation, no sinlessness could. All was a sweet savour in that place, and according to what God was as to it in righteousness and love." The difference between the two offerings is shown by the words used. The word "burn" in the burnt-offering is not the same as that used in connection with the sin-offering, but the one employed for burning incense. This of itself denotes the infinite fragrance and acceptance of Christ as the burnt-offering. But the point in our scripture is, that it was offered for Aaron and his sons; and accordingly as soon as it was consumed upon the altar *they were brought also under all its efficacy*. Their sins were cleared away by the sin-offering, but now they stand before God in all the positive acceptance and savour of the burnt-offering — both of these results being gained for the believer by the death of Christ, for these offerings do but present the varying aspects of His one sacrifice.

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

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

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

"And thou shalt take the ram of the consecration, and seethe his flesh in the holy place. And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, by the

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

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

*Compare the law for cleansing of the leper in Lev. 14, remembering that there it is a question of cleansing from sins, and not, as here, of consecration to the priesthood.

In the next place, parts of the ram of consecration (v. 22), "and one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer," etc., were put in the hands of Aaron and his sons to be waved for a wave-offering before the Lord. The loaf, the "oiled bread" (v. 2 compared with Leviticus 2) was a meat-offering, representing Christ in the perfection of His humanity, or rather the holiness of His life in devotedness to God, the entire consecration of every faculty of His soul to the will and glory of God. Taken then in connection with the parts of the ram, their hands

were, in fact, filled with Christ, with Christ in all that He was in life, and all that He was in death to God. Now the meaning of the word, which is translated in this chapter "consecrate," as may be seen from the margin, is "to fill the hand." This gives us the scriptural signification of consecration. The general thought is, that it lies in our yielding something to God, and hence the soul is thrown back upon itself to seek for strength to devote itself and all its energies to God's service; and, indeed, with this view, it is often called upon to attain it by a solemn act of self-surrender. Scripture reveals a better way. It lies, as seen in this chapter, in being filled with Christ. It is Christ possessing, absorbing, and controlling our souls. It requires no effort therefore on our part, though indeed it requires the maintenance of constant self-judgment, the abiding refusal of the flesh in every shape and form. For Christ is willing yea, desires, to possess us wholly, and if the Spirit be ungrieved, He will dwell in our hearts by faith; and as then He becomes the alone object of our lives, so He alone will be expressed in our walk and conversation. This is consecration according to God — as prefigured by filling the hands of Aaron and his sons.

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

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

Seven days these ceremonies were to be repeated; and seven days the altar was to be sanctified. (vv. 36, 37.) The priests must have a perfect consecration, and the altar at which they

were to serve must be perfectly sanctified. The consecration and the sanctification alike must be according to the perfection of the requirements of a holy God.

CHAPTER 28. THE CONTINUAL BURNT-OFFERING.

EXODUS 29: 38-46.

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

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

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

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

He is, so are we in this world;" for we are in the divine presence in all the savour of His sacrifice, and in all the acceptance of His person.

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

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

There is a further thing — the consequence of coming to meet and dwell with His people. God will sanctify the tabernacle by His glory; He will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar; and He will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons to minister unto Him in the priest's office. (vv. 43, 44.) In virtue of the sacrifice He claimed everything, and set all apart to Himself. The tabernacle, the altar, and the priests are alike sanctified — claimed as belonging to and for the service of, Jehovah. The expression "by My glory," as applied to the tabernacle, is remarkable. There only in all the earth, in the holy of holies, was His glory

manifested — in the bright cloud, the Shekinah, which was the symbol of His presence. Being thus displayed, it separated the tabernacle off from every other thing on the face of the earth, made it a holy place, sanctified it. But more. His glory being there became the standard of everything presented. The question — looked at in its higher aspects, in the light of the truth now possessed — for all who approached, and for everything that was offered, was accordingly that of suitability to God's glory. Hence we read in the epistle to the Romans that "all have sinned and come short of His glory," showing that unless we answer to its claims, could even stand before the immediate display of His glory, we are guilty sinners. It goes still further. The Tabernacle itself was on earth, and in the midst of God's earthly people. As sanctified by His glory, therefore, it became also prophetic — prophetic of the day when the whole earth will be filled with His glory. It was thus a bright promise of millennial blessing.

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

"But who that glorious blaze
Of living light shall tell!
Where all His brightness God displays
And the Lamb's glories dwell.
God and the Lamb shall there
The light and temple be,
And radiant hosts for ever share,
The unveiled mystery."

CHAPTER 29. THE ALTAR OF INCENSE.

EXODUS 30: 1-10.

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

"And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon; of shittim-wood shalt thou make it. A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be: and two cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of the same. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof: and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof. upon the two sides of it shalt thou make it.; and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy-seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it; a

perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations. Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat-offering; neither shall ye pour drink-offering thereon. And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sinoffering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the Lord." (vv. 1-10.)

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

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

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

Christ Himself entered with His own blood; but, if it may be so said, where all is inseparably connected, He Himself takes the precedence even of His blood. It is indeed what He is in Himself that gives the blood its unspeakable preciousness.

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

There is a connection, it will be observed, between the incense and the lamps. Aaron is directed to burn the incense when he dresseth the lamps morning and evening. The lamps, as explained when speaking of the candlestick, are the manifestation of God in the power of the Spirit. This was seen in perfection in Him who was the light of the world, and should be displayed likewise both in the Church and in the believer. But the point here is, that the light was maintained by priestly care. Aaron dressed the lamps. It is so now. The manifestation of God in the power of the Spirit is ever dependent upon the priestly action of Christ; and the burning of the incense — intercession or worship — will always be in proportion to the display of the Spirit's power. These three things indeed, are inseparable — the priestly care of Christ, the manifestation of God in the power of the Spirit, and the worship of His people. In other words, if believers are not shining as lights in the world, they cannot burn incense at the golden altar, they

are powerless for worship. Walk and worship are related; for if the believer is not in the presence of God in his ways throughout the week, he will not know what it is to be inside the rent veil when gathered around the Lord at His table to announce His death. Or, still to put another aspect, there will be no worship except as the result of the manifestation of God in the power of the Spirit. Hence the lamps must be dressed when the incense is burnt.

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

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

Finally, a remark may be made upon the provision for the carrying of the altar through the wilderness. The staves and the rings are given here, and need no observation, as they are of the same material as the altar. But in Num. 4: 11 we find that there were two coverings: first, a cloth

of blue, and secondly, outside, the badgers' skins. The blue — emblematic of what is heavenly — the heavenly character, as flowing from priestly intercession, and indeed as connected with the priestly position — was concealed. It was for the eye of God alone. Then came the badgers' skins — signifying that holy vigilance by which Christ guarded Himself from evil. This is outside, because it is a question of passing through the wilderness where evil abounds. It teaches therefore that if the heavenly character is to be maintained, there must be unwearied watchfulness, and incessant diligence to guard ourselves — through the use of the Word — from the contaminations and pollutions which beset us on every hand.

CHAPTER 30. THE ATONEMENT MONEY.

EXODUS 30: 11-16.

THE atonement money has been already referred to when treating of the sockets of silver under the boards of the Tabernacle. At first sight, the introduction of the subject in this place seems peculiar; but in truth it is another mark of the perfection of the design of the Spirit of God. The priests have been appointed and consecrated; the golden altar, with the manner of its service, has been described; but before Aaron can approach to burn incense, there must be a redeemed people on whose behalf he must act. For the very essence of the priesthood is that they were appointed on behalf of others. Hence, as soon as the golden altar has been given, the people are identified with the Tabernacle as represented by the atonement money. Every detail of the order of the subjects is therefore divinely arranged.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them when thou numberest them. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the Lord. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls. And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls." (vv. 11-16.)

Two things appear in the first verse of this direction — the occasion, and the object of the atonement money. The occasion was — "when thou numberest the people." When they were numbered each man was brought, as it were individually before God; and this was the precise moment chosen to remind them of their condition, and of their consequent need of redemption. As long as sin is not dealt with, if God is brought into contact with men as such, He must from the very holiness of His nature take cognizance of their guilt. Hence this gracious provision. Its typical significance is simply the truth which is found in every page of Scripture; viz., that all men need a ransom for their souls. The object is "that there be no plague." For, as has been remarked, if God notices the sinner in his sins, it must be for judgment, unless he is under the protection of atonement. A striking illustration of this is found in the reign of David. The king

was tempted, being proud of the strength of his armies, to have his people numbered. "Go," said he to Joab, "and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people." But he neglected the ordinance as to every man giving a ransom for his soul, and "the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel, from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people, from Dan even to Beersheba, seventy thousand men." (2 Sam. 24) This was the more remarkable from the fact that David confessed his sin immediately after the people were numbered; but though the Lord dealt with him in tender grace and compassion, and gave him the choice of the nature of the punishment, judgment could not in righteousness be avoided. The Lord's claims must be acknowledged. Every one of the people that was numbered was amenable to His righteous judgment, and this was to be acknowledged by the ransom money.

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

Another thing demands special notice. Every man, whether rich or poor, was of precisely the same value before God. "The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less." (v. 15.) When the question of sin is raised there is no difference between man and man in the sight of God. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Some may have gone further in outward iniquity, in open crimes; but as to state before God, all — the outwardly moral as well as the immoral, the rich as well as the poor — are sinners under condemnation. Wealth, position, attainments, or even moral character, are of no avail before God. All alike have sinned, for there

is none that doeth righteousness, no, not one, and all alike need the redemption that is to be found through the blood of Christ alone. Man's heart rebels against this; but the question is, whether it is the truth of God. (See Rom. 1 - 3)

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

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

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

CHAPTER 31. THE LAVER.

EXODUS 30: 17-21.

THE laver is the last of the sacred vessels enumerated. Together with this, the Tabernacle and its arrangements are completed. It was placed outside, in the court of the Tabernacle, between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar; i.e. between the brazen altar which was inside the entrance into the court, and the entrance into the holy place. Thus, passing the altar of

burnt-offering — on their way into the Tabernacle — the priests would encounter the laver on the road. The reason of this will be shown as we proceed.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat. When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not: or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord: so they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations." (vv. 17-21.)

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

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

*See, for an instructive illustration of this truth, James 1: 24, 25.

But this will be seen more fully as we consider the use of the laver. It was for Aaron and his sons to wash their hands and their feet thereat. "When they go into the Tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not," etc. It was an imperative, as well as a perpetual, obligation upon the priests to wash their hands and their feet on the occasions specified. Now, before explaining the character of this washing, it will clear the way, and aid the reader, to make a few preliminary remarks. Remark then, first, that the washing of the bodies of the priests, as at their consecration, is never repeated. It is the hands and feet only that are repeatedly to be washed in the laver. The reason of this is obvious. Washing the whole body is a

figure of being born again, and this cannot be repeated. Our Lord taught this truth in John 13. In reply to Peter He said, "He that is washed" (literally, bathed; i.e. washed all over) "needeth not save to wash" (another word) "his feet, but is clean every whit." The feet, or, as in the case of the priests, the hands and the feet might be defiled and need to be cleansed again and again, but the body never, for that was cleansed once and for all in water at the new birth. Observe, secondly, that it is water and not blood in the laver. It has often been attempted to deduce from this ordinance for the priests, that the believer needs the repeated application of the blood of Christ. Such a thought is not only alien from the whole teaching of Scripture, but it also tends to undermine the efficacy of the one sacrifice of Christ. Yea, it impugns the completion of atonement, and consequently the title of Christ to an abiding seat at the right hand of God. The blood of Christ has to do with guilt, and the moment the sinner comes under its value before God he is cleansed for ever; for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. The one object of the Spirit of God in Heb. 9 and 10 is to enforce this precious and momentous truth. That it has been lost sight of in the whole of Christendom is only too true; but the guide of the believer is not to be found in the current teachings of men, but in the immutable word of God. Whoever therefore will read the two chapters indicated — and read them with a sincere desire to understand their teaching — will at once perceive that there is never a question of the imputation of guilt to the believer, but that he is entitled to rejoice in having no more conscience of sins, if he has been once cleansed by the precious blood of Christ.

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

Bearing in mind, then, the difference of the dispensations (as shown by the inclusion of the hands), the teaching of the laver corresponds entirely with that of John 13. That is, it is a question of cleansing from defilements. We find thus our Lord seated with His disciples, and it is said, "having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." (v. 1.) This statement is significant on two accounts; first, as showing that it was a dealing with those who belonged to Him; and secondly, as revealing the motive of the ministry which He was about to perform, that indeed it flowed from His unchanging heart of love. "During supper" (not "supper being ended the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come

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

This truth — the truth really of the laver — is of all importance for the believer. It is essential, in the first place, to know that we are cleansed once and for ever as to guilt. But learning this, it is equally essential to understand that if sins after conversion are unconfessed and unjudged, we are shut out from communion with God, disqualified for priestly service and Worship; and not only so, but that if we remain in this state, sooner or later God will deal with

us, in answer to the intercession of Christ, to bring our sins to remembrance. The advocacy of Christ therefore meets the need of the believer — being, as it is, God's gracious provision for our sins — for the removal of our defilements, so that we may be free to go in, without let or hindrance, into His immediate presence for worship and praise. One thing more may be added. Aaron and his sons were always to wash at the laver when they entered into the tabernacle. This may teach us our need of continual self-judgment. How often are we hindered in prayer, worship, and service from neglect of this. There has been some failure, and we have not recalled it, or carried it into God's presence for confession and humiliation; and hence, even if unwittingly, we have been entering the tabernacle with defiled feet. As a consequence we have been made to realize our coldness and constraint, our inability to occupy our priestly position. May we never therefore forget the use of the laver — our constant need of having our feet washed by the loving ministry of our Advocate with the Father!

CHAPTER 32. THE HOLY ANOINTING OIL AND THE SWEET SPICES.

EXODUS 30: 22-38.

THE Tabernacle, with its sacred symbols, has now been completely detailed. Two things only are wanting — the anointing oil and the sweet spices.

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

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

The oil of holy ointment is given first. It was compounded, according to divine direction, from myrrh, cinnamon, sweet calamus, and cassia in their several proportions, mixed with an hin of olive oil. (vv. 23, 24.) The Psalmist, speaking of the Messiah, says, "All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia;" and in the preceding verse he says, "God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy Fellows." (Ps. 40: 7,8.) This will help us to understand the typical meaning of the holy anointing oil. The spices, then, speak of the graces of Christ. His very garments smell of these sweet perfumes. But they were mingled with oil, and oil, as has been frequently stated, is a figure of the Holy Ghost. Combining, then, these two things together, we learn that the graces of Christ — the moral fragrance of His excellencies — were expressed in the power of the Holy Ghost.

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

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

There are two warnings. First, "Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured." (v. 32.) This teaches that the Spirit of God cannot rest upon or dwell in the natural man. It is in direct violation of this truth that in ecclesiastical ordination unconverted men are professedly endowed with the gift of the Holy Ghost. The anointing is never received until after the new birth and known forgiveness of sins. When we are justified by faith, and have peace with God through our Lord

Jesus Christ, we are both anointed and sealed. (See Rom. 5: 1-5; 2 Cor. 1: 21, 22.) Secondly, no imitation of this anointing oil was to be made under the penalty of death. (v. 33.) It is thus a heinous sin to imitate the action of the Spirit. Ananias and Sapphira did this when they professed to devote the whole proceeds of the property they had sold to the Lord's service. (Acts 5) The same penalty, observe, was attached to putting it upon a stranger, upon those who had no title to it. God is holy, and He jealously guards His sovereign rights, and cannot but visit any infringement of them with punishment. If He seems now to pass by such sins unnoticed, it is owing to the character of the present dispensation — being one of grace; but the sins themselves are no less in His sight.

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

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

CHAPTER 33. QUALIFICATIONS FOR SERVICE.

EXODUS 31.

ALL the details of the Tabernacle have now been given. One thing only remains — the provision for the execution of the various commands which Moses had received * Both alike proceed from the Lord; for all must be of grace.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship. And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee: the tabernacle of the congregation, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy-seat that is thereupon, and all the furniture of the tabernacle, and the table and his furniture, and the pure candlestick with all his furniture, and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt-offering with all his furniture, and the laver and his foot, and the cloths of service, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office, and the anointing oil, and sweet incense for the holy place: according to all that I have commanded thee shall they do." (vv. 1-11)

We learn then from this scripture two things. First, that God alone can designate His servants for their work; and secondly, that He alone can qualify them for the service to which they are called. Both these points deserve special attention. It will be remarked that both Bezaleel and Aholiab are divinely named. They were distinguished by name, and called. This principle runs through all dispensations. The apostle adduces it when speaking of the priesthood of Christ. He says, "So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, today have I begotten Thee. As He saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Heb. 5: 5, 6.) In like manner he speaks of himself as "an apostle by the will of God." (1 Cor. 1: 1; 2 Cor. 1: 1, etc.) This is a point of great moment; for it were worse than presumption to intrude into the things of God uncalled and unsent. It is true that God does not call His servants by name in this dispensation — at least since the days of the apostle Paul; but every servant should look to be divinely certified as to his work, to be undoubtingly assured that he is doing, whatever he may be engaged in, the divine will. Such a conviction is the source both of confidence and courage. The Lord thus speaks to Joshua, "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." (Joshua 1: 9.) The essence of all service, indeed, lies in obedience; for if I am not doing God's will it is not service. The Lord Himself characterizes the whole of His life of service as obedience: "I came down from heaven," He says, "not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." (John 6: 38.) It should therefore be our first concern to ascertain whether we have been sent by the Lord, whether we have been called to our work and service, like Bezaleel and Aholiab; and if we are found sitting at the feet of the Lord, His mind in this respect will soon be revealed.

But the second thing is, that called by name they were filled with the Spirit of God, and made dependent on the Lord for wisdom and understanding, to execute the work entrusted to their care. Man's wisdom is of no avail in the service of God. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." The apostle Paul says, If any man thinks himself to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise. It is on this account that intellectual men — men who lean to their own understanding — exhibit oftentimes nothing but folly when dealing with divine things. But it is the servants of God who have the most need to remember this truth. How often are they tempted to bring their own reason, or understanding, to bear upon the Scriptures, or upon the difficulties in the church of God — to their own confusion. If, however, it were remembered that there can be no understanding or wisdom apart from God — none whatever, excepting as received of Him, they would be kept in constant dependence — the only condition of its reception. It would produce waiting on God rather than activity — activity surely when the word for action has been given — but waiting in order to obtain the needful wisdom for the service required. Another thing may be added. The proof of divine wisdom in service is that the thing done is according to the word of God. "According to all that I have commanded thee shall they do." The word therefore is both the guide of the servant and the test of his service — the proof of its being done with divine wisdom according to the divine mind. No discretion whatever was left to Bezaleel and Aholiab. There was no classification of the articles to be made, or of the materials to be wrought, into things essential and non-essential. There is not the slightest trace of a single thing being left to their own thoughts or imagination. On the other hand, nothing was left to their own wisdom. Everything was to be done according to the commands given to Moses. It was not open to Bezaleel to work after one, and Aholiab after another pattern. Both alike were bound in the most minute detail by specific directions from God. This fact needs to be emphasized in a day when even Christians are contending for liberty to do every man according to that which is right in his own eyes. The various sects of Christendom, with their manifold ecclesiastical polities, show that they have been formed by no Bezaleels and Aholiabs, but rather by those who have received no divine commission, and endowed with no spirit of wisdom and understanding. For they will not bear the test of the word of God, and on this account have to be rejected by all who have heard the word, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Sam. 15: 22.) It is then in this direction that any recovery must begin, where all is in ruin, and where everything is stamped with declension and departure from the word of God. We must begin by refusing everything that will not stand the divine test, and then we must seek, spite of our weakness and confusion, to order everything according to the mind and will of God.

Once more the sabbath is enjoined.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore, for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual

covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed." (vv. 12-17.)

As one has said, "The sabbath is always found whenever there is any principle whatever of relationship established between the people and God: it is the result proposed in every relation between God and His people, that they enter into His rest." The meaning of the sabbath has been expounded before, but its continual injunction as revealing the heart of God cannot be overlooked. He knew what His people were, and how they would always fail under responsibility, so that, in this sense, He was never disappointed in the result. On the other hand, the annexation of the sabbath to every relationship between Himself and the people shows how earnestly (if such human language may be employed) He longed that His people should enter into the consummation of His purposes for them, and have the enjoyment of blessed fellowship with Himself in sharing His rest. The rest of God is what the sabbath signifies, and this was the goal God proposed to His people. That they never entered into it we know, and it is fully stated in Hebrews 4; but His purposes never fail, and hence what is lost under responsibility will be established according to His own counsels of grace. There remaineth therefore a rest (a sabbath-keeping) for the people of God; and all who believe will enter into that rest — the object and result of all the counsels and ways of God with respect to His people. We therefore of this dispensation are, even as the children of Israel, pilgrims in the wilderness, journeying on to the rest of which God has spoken; but under the leadership of the Captain of our salvation, we cannot fail of its possession.

The chapter, and this section of the book, concludes by the record of the giving the two tables of testimony. "And He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." (v. 18.) It is necessary to recall that all the instructions from chapter 24 to this point were given in the mount. Moses had been alone with the Lord. The Lord had been "communuing with him" concerning the revelation of His mind for the people. Having ended, He gave him the two tables of stone, containing the terms of the covenant which He had made with His people. Moses has described this elsewhere. He says, "The Lord delivered unto me two tables of stone, written with the finger of God: and on them was written according to all the words which the Lord spake with you in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, in the day of the assembly. And it came to pass, at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the Lord gave me the two tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant." (Deut. 9: 10, 11) It appears therefore that the contents of the two tables were the ten "words," or commandments, spoken in Exodus 20, but now written by the finger of God — the commandments which Israel undertook to keep as the condition of blessing. They abandoned the ground of grace on which they had been put after they had crossed the Red Sea, and of themselves, and for themselves, on God's proposal, undertook the responsibility of obedience. Moses had been forty days and forty nights in the mount, during which he neither ate nor drank (see Deut. 9: 9), being as it were in a state above nature, in order to be able to become the channel of God's communications for His people. The flesh must not intrude, must indeed be set aside, and in some sort nature also, if we would hear the voice of God. The reader will not fail to remember the case of Elijah (1 Kings 19: 8), and also that of our blessed Lord — both of whom, like Moses, fasted forty days and forty nights. But as has been remarked by another, "The Lord Jesus must in all things have the pre-eminence. Moses, naturally far off, is separated from his natural state in order to draw near unto God. Christ was naturally near, and more than near;

He separated Himself from nature to meet the adversary on behalf of man." This contrast is most significant, and shows plainly that the most devoted of the servants of God can be no more than a shadow of (typifying even by contrast) the excellency of Christ. (Compare also the case of the apostle John in Rev. 1: 10.)

CHAPTER 34. APOSTASY, MEDIATION, AND RESTORATION.

EXODUS 32 - 34.

THE Lord had been occupied with the blessing of His people, giving instructions for the erection of His sanctuary that He might dwell in their midst. Moses was on high to receive these communications of His grace. The Lord was "communing" with His servant concerning the establishment of the precious things connected with the relationship on which He had entered in grace with Israel. But even while He was thus engaged, sin and even apostasy are witnessed in the camp at the foot of Sinai. Above, all is light and blessing; below, all is darkness and evil.

"And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play." (vv. 1-6.)

There is a striking resemblance, in one aspect, between this scene and that witnessed at the foot of the mount of transfiguration. In both alike Satan holds full sway. In the one before us it is the nation who have fallen under his power, in the other it is the child whom he has possessed; but the child again is a type of the Jewish nation of a later day. The absence of Christ on high (shown in figure also by Moses on Sinai) is the opportunity seized by Satan — under God's permission — for the display of his wicked power, and man (Israel) in the evil of his heart becomes his wretched slave. But it should be observed that Satan, whatever his activity, can never forestall God. He may seek to thwart, and he may appear to succeed in postponing the accomplishment of, but he can never frustrate, the purposes of God. Thus, in the scene before us, the Lord had made an end of communing with Moses (Ex. 31: 18), and had arranged everything according to His will, before the people fell into sin. It is so throughout the whole of the Scriptures. Satan, having no foresight, is always a day behind; so that if he seem to gain a momentary success, it is only to expose himself in the end to a more crushing defeat. This fact should encourage the hearts of believers while waiting for the moment, which will come "shortly," when the God of peace shall bruise Satan under their feet.

The act of the people is no less than open apostasy. Its several features may be briefly indicated. First, they forgot and abandoned the Lord. Secondly, they attributed their deliverance from Egypt to Moses: they described him as "the man that brought us out of Egypt." Finally, they fell into idolatry. They wanted visible gods — testifying against themselves that they were "children in whom was no faith." Aaron fell with them — apparently without a struggle. The man who had been designated to the priestly office, the one who was to enjoy the privilege of entering into the holy of holies to minister before the Lord, became the instrument, if not the leader, of their wicked rebellion. Priest and people alike accept the evil inspiration of Satan, and worship the gods which their own hands had made; and they cried, as they worshipped, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Another thing should be remarked, Aaron seeks to conceal the shame of their idolatry by putting the Lord's name upon it. Having built an altar, he made proclamation, and said, "Tomorrow is a feast to JEHOVAH." This is just what an apostate Christendom has done. Having set up their idols, they call it the worship of the Lord; and thereby souls are deluded into acceptance of that which is really an abomination before God. What was this golden calf? It was, Aaron would have said, but a symbol of Jehovah. So Romanists and Ritualists argue, and they thus dignify their idolatry with the name of Christ and Christianity. This scene therefore — picture on the one hand, it may be, of the last state of the Jews, which will be worse than the first, is no less instructive, on the other, for the present day. In fact, Israel rejected Jehovah, and His servant Moses. They became apostate, and apostasy is the only word which expresses the true condition of modern Christendom, which, while owning the name, really rejects the authority of Christ at the right hand of God.

It was no wonder that the wrath of the Lord waxed hot against His people.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people: now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation." (vv. 7-10.)

Israel had indeed exposed themselves to the righteous judgment of God. They had voluntarily promised obedience to God's law as the condition of blessing; and the covenant had been sealed by the sprinkling of blood — emblem of death — as the penalty of its breach. This penalty they had now incurred. God no longer therefore treats them as His people. They had rejected Him, and had spoken of Moses as the man who had brought them up out of Egypt; and the Lord takes them on their own ground. Hence He says to Moses, "Thy people, which *thou* broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves," etc. (v. 7.) Then, after describing their sin, He announced His solemn judgment: "I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people: now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation." (vv. 9, 10.) Thus Israel, if dealt with according to the righteous requirements of the law which they had accepted, and to which they had promised obedience as the condition of blessing, were lost beyond recovery, and would perish through their own wilful sin and apostasy.

The announcement which the Lord had made evoked from the heart of Moses an intercession of unparalleled beauty and force. The Lord had said, "I will make of thee a great nation." but in his magnificent love for his people, losing sight of himself, and utterly disregarding what might be termed his own interests, he thinks only of the Lord's glory, and the misery of Israel. Through grace he was enabled to take up the true place of a mediator; and he pours out his whole soul in his pleading intercession. The character of his appeal is most noteworthy. He does not for one moment extenuate the sin of the people — this he could not do: nor does he entreat for mercy, for there was no room for mercy in the covenant of Sinai. What he does therefore is to throw himself upon God — and upon what His glory necessitated in connection with the people He had redeemed. First, he urges the dishonour that would be done to His name among the Egyptians, if Israel should be destroyed. He reminds Jehovah of the link established with His people through redemption. God had said to Moses, "thy" people; but Moses pleads that they are "His" people. He will not accept the breaking of the link, but cries, "Lord, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against Thy people, which Thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did He bring them out?" etc. (vv. 11, 12.) Spite of their shameful apostasy, the plea of Moses was that they were still God's people, and that His glory was concerned in sparing them — lest the enemy should boast over their destruction, and thereby over the Lord Himself. In itself it was a plea of irresistible force. Joshua uses one of a like character when the Israelites were smitten before Ai. He says, "The Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of the land, shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: *and what wilt Thou do unto Thy great name?*" (Joshua 7: 9.) In both cases it was faith taking hold of God, identifying itself with His own glory, and claiming on that ground the response to its desires — a plea that God can never refuse. But Moses has another. In the energy of his intercession — fruit surely of the action of the Spirit of God — he goes back to the absolute and unconditional promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, reminding the Lord of the two immutable things in which it was impossible for Him to lie. (Heb. 6: 18.) A more beautiful example of prevailing intercession is not found in the Scriptures. Indeed, in the emergency which had arisen, everything depended on the mediator, and in His grace God had provided one who could stand in the breach, and plead his people's cause — not on the ground of what they were, for by their sin they were exposed to the righteous indignation of a holy God — but on the ground of what God was, and on that of His counsels revealed and confirmed to the patriarchs, both by oath and promise. The Lord heard and "repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people." What encouragement to faith! If ever there was an occasion when it seemed impossible that prayer should be heard it was this; but the faith of Moses rose above all difficulties, and grasping the hand of Jehovah, claimed His help; and, inasmuch as He could not deny Himself, the prayer of Moses was granted. Surely the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

"And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides: on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome; but the noise of them that sing do I hear. And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw

the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it. And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it of. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf." (vv. 15-24.)

The covenant of Sinai had been broken — broken irretrievably. Still Moses took the two tables of stone with him, as he turned from the presence of the Lord to go down to the camp; and the Spirit of God takes occasion from this circumstance to call attention to its divine and perfect character. "The tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables." (v. 16.) All was divine — divine in its origin, and divine in its execution. But these divine tables of the law never reached the camp. It was impossible. The people had made a complete breach between themselves and God; and there could be therefore no further question of obedience on the ground of pure law. They might be objects of mercy in response to intercession, but as open transgressors they had broken the covenant which they had so readily accepted, and had now become idolators. Joshua thought it was a noise of war he had heard in the camp; but Moses, who had been so long in the presence of God, was more quick to discern the true character of the sounds that reached their ears. "And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount." Remark, how completely Moses had fellowship with the Lord's own mind concerning His people. The Lord's anger had waxed hot against them, and though Moses as mediator had pleaded with Him on this account, yet his own anger waxed hot when he descended and saw the golden calf. If, therefore, he broke the tables of the law, it was only the expression of the necessity which had arisen on account of what the people had done with the covenant, and the act, at the same time, was in entire conformity with the mind of God. To quote the language of another, "His exercised ear, quick to discern how matters stood with the people, hears their light and profane joy. Soon after he sees the golden calf, which had even preceded the tabernacle of God in the camp, and he breaks the tables at the foot of the mount; and, zealous on high for the people towards God because of His glory, he is below on earth zealous for God because of that same glory. For faith does more than see that God is glorious (every reasonable person would own that); it connects the glory of God and His people, and hence counts on God to bless them in every state of things, as in the interest of His glory, and insists on holiness in them at all cost, in conformity with that glory, that it may not be blasphemed in those who are identified with it." These are true and weighty words, and should sink deep into the hearts of the Lord's people in a day like this — when the "camp" of professing Christianity presents an appearance not unlike that which Moses beheld when he came down from the mount; and they should be much pondered over by those of the Lord's servants who have it laid upon them to act for Him in any difficulties, and indeed by all who would be truly identified with the interests of Christ, in the church. For unless we are first zealous before God on behalf of His people, we cannot be zealous for His glory when dealing with His people below.

Moses in the next place deals with Aaron — charges him with bringing so great a sin upon the people. An additional circumstance, which may help us to understand this, is found in Deuteronomy. There Moses says, "And the Lord was very angry with Aaron, to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time." (Deut. 9: 20.) He is undoubtedly looked upon as the responsible head of the people during the absence of Moses, hence the special guilt with which he is charged; and it is evident from the narrative that he was not slow to fall in with the people's desires. As with Israel so with Aaron — both are spared through the intercession of Moses from the governmental consequences of their sin, but the guilt of the sin as toward God remained. This distinction must be carefully borne in mind, or the judgment afterward executed might seem inconsistent with the statement that "the Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people." The nation would have been destroyed but for the intercession of Moses, as the result of God's government on the basis of the law of Sinai. Delivered from this consequence, God was still free to deal with them — as we find, at the close of the chapter, that "the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made." Aaron is distinguished in these words; for, occupying the position he did, he is regarded as specially criminal. His answer to Moses reveals the heart of a convicted sinner. As Adam threw the blame upon Eve, and Eve upon the serpent, so Aaron shelters himself behind the people. It was true that they were "set on mischief;" but his sin lay in helping them to their object. He should have died rather than have yielded to their desires. His weakness — often exhibited, spite of the favour and grace of the Lord — was his shame and guilt.

Moses, seeing that the people were naked (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies), turns from the excuses of his brother, and burning with a holy zeal for the Lord, stood in the gate of the camp, and cried, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me." It was no time for concealment of the evil or for compromise. When there is open apostasy there can be no neutrality. Neutrality when the question is between God and Satan is itself apostasy. He that is not with the Lord, at such a time, is against Him. And mark, moreover, that this cry is raised in the midst of those who were the Lord's professing people. They were all Israelites. But now there must be a separation, and the challenge of Moses, "Who is on the Lord's side?" makes all manifest. He became the Lord's centre; and hence to gather to Him was to be *for*, to refuse his call was to be *against*, the Lord. What was the effect of his summons? Why that of all the tribes of Israel, Levi only was found faithful. "The sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him." Theirs was the distinguished honour — through the grace of God — of being on the Lord's side when the whole camp was in utter rebellion. How precious the fidelity of Levi must have been in the eyes of the Lord. It would seem indeed from Deuteronomy that the Lord claimed them for the special service of the Tabernacle in connection with their conduct at this time. Moses says, "At that time the Lord separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord, to minister unto Him, and to bless in His name, unto this day. Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren: the Lord is his inheritance, according as the Lord thy God promised him." (Deut. 10: 8, 9.) It was indeed no common fidelity; for no sooner had they responded to the call of Moses than they were commanded, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said,

Consecrate yourselves today to the Lord, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that He may bestow upon you a blessing this day." (vv. 27, 28.)

Thus Levi alone responded to the divine call, separating themselves from their idolatrous brethren, and unhesitatingly taking part with God against the iniquity of His people. It was a searching trial — a trial which demanded that Levi should put aside every claim of the flesh, yea, that he should, in the words of Moses, say to "his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed Thy word, and kept Thy covenant." (Deut. 33: 9.) It was obedience at all costs to the divine call, and hence complete separation from the evil into which Israel had fallen. God often tests His people in the same way; and whenever confusion and declension have begun, the only path for the godly is that which is marked out by the course of Levi — that of full-hearted, unquestioning obedience. Such a path must be painful — involving for those who take it the surrender of some of the most intimate associations of their lives, and breaking many a tie of nature — of kindred and relationship; but it is the only path of blessing. Well may all challenge their hearts, and inquire, if in this evil day they are found apart from all that dishonours the Lord's name in subjection to His word.

Moses on the next day returned to the Lord in the mount.

"And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold; yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin -; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written. And the lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, Mine angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them." (vv. 30-34.)

First, he charges the people with their sin, and then, in his love for the people, proposes to go on their behalf into the Lord's presence, saying, "*Peradventure* I shall make an atonement for your sin." The contrast between Moses and the Lord Jesus in this respect has been beautifully drawn by another. He says, "What a contrast do we here remark, in passing, with the work of our precious Saviour! He, coming down from above — from His dwelling-place in the glory of the Father — to do His will; and, while keeping the law (instead of destroying the tables, the signs of this covenant, the requirements of which man was unable to meet), He Himself bears the penalty of its infringement; and having accomplished the atonement before returning above, instead of going up with a cheerless 'peradventure' in His mouth, which the holiness of God instantly nullified, He ascends with the sign of the accomplishment of the atonement, and of the confirmation of the new covenant with His precious blood, the value of which was anything but doubtful to that God before whom He presented it." True, Moses was a mediator, but as such it is in the contrast rather that he typifies Christ in this character.

But he returned, confessed his people's sin, and pleaded in the intensity of his affection for their forgiveness. Even more — he could not go farther — he added, "If not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written." So fully had he identified himself with the

people — source of all strength in intercession when produced by the Spirit of God — that if they were unforgiven he desired to perish with them. It was the overflowing of his intense love for guilty Israel, as in the not dissimilar case of the apostle Paul, who said, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." (Rom. 9: 3.) God did not accede to the request of His servant, for he had no accomplished atonement on which to take his stand, nor had he wherewith to make atonement — the only basis on which a holy God could righteously forgive His people. But his intercession prevailed so far as to secure the people from the governmental consequences of their sin — their destruction as the penalty of their transgression. While however they were spared in the long-suffering of the Lord, He put them back individually under responsibility with the words, "Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book." (v. 33.) Thereon He commanded Moses to go, and to lead the people to the place He had promised, saying, "Mine angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them. And the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made." It is not now Jehovah dwelling in their midst, but an angel to go before them, and the people still under just judgment because of their sin. This change, producing a new action and intercession on the part of Moses, is developed as to its consequences in the next chapter.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swear unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it., and I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people; lest I consume thee in the way. And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned; and no man did put on him his ornaments. For the Lord had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiff-necked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb." (vv. 1-6.)

Several points in this statement should be noticed, as indicative of the position which the people now occupied. In the first place, the Lord did not yet take back the people into that relationship with Himself which they had forfeited through their transgression. They had rejected Him, and He keeps them as it were on that footing. He thus still says to Moses, "Thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt." Secondly, He promises them the land notwithstanding; this had been secured by the first intercession of Moses, when he appealed to the absolute and unconditional promises made to the patriarchs. (32: 13.) But, thirdly, He announces that He will not go up in their midst: "For," said He, "thou art a stiff-necked people; lest I consume thee in the way." A holy God, to speak after the manner of men, knew not how He could now dwell in the midst of a nation of transgressors. Lastly, He threatens judgment, and commands the people to strip off their ornaments that He might know what to do with them. God weighs, as it were, the condition of His poor people, and pauses before He smites, seeing that they mourned — humbled by their sin — at the tidings they had received. It is a striking if solemn, scene — the people stripped of their adornments, awaiting the judgment pronounced in bitterness and sorrow of heart; and the Lord pausing before the blow is struck.

But He who pronounced judgment upon the people for their sins, provided a way for their escape through a new action on the part of Moses. First of all, he pitched the tabernacle outside the camp.

"And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp. And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the tabernacle, that all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle. And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and [the Lord] talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door. And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle." (vv. 7-11.)

It does not appear that Moses, in pitching the tabernacle* outside the camp, was acting under any direct commandment from the Lord. It was rather spiritual discernment, entering into both the character of God and the state of the people. Taught of God, he feels that Jehovah could no longer dwell in the midst of a camp which had been defiled by the presence of the golden calf. He therefore made a place outside, afar off from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation. This was a totally different thing from what the Lord had said unto Moses: "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." They were no longer to be the Lord's people — grouped round about Himself as their centre; but He being outside, "every one who sought the Lord *went out* unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp." It thus became an individual thing; and the true worshippers were in the place of separation — they took the ground of separation from the camp which had acknowledged a false god. This gives a principle of the utmost value and importance. For it must be remembered that Israel professedly were the Lord's people; but their condition had become such that the Lord could no longer be in their midst. So it was in a later day, as we gather from the epistle to the Hebrews; and hence the exhortation which is there given, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." (Heb. 13: 13.) Whenever the Lord's name is dishonoured, and His authority is rejected, and another authority is substituted, there is no resource for the godly but to go outside of all that answers to the camp, if they would worship God in spirit and in truth. And it should be carefully remarked that, as in the case of Moses, the need for such separation is a matter of spiritual discernment. There are times and seasons — and those who have a single eye will not fail to apprehend them — when it becomes a high and holy privilege, as in the case of Levi at the end of the previous chapter, to take part with the Lord against His people, at least in testimony against their ways; and, as in the case of Moses, to take a place outside of all the declension, rejection of the Lord's authority, and idolatrous practices of His people. In taking such a step there must undoubtedly be the authority of the word of God — the only light to our feet in the darkness around, as it is our only resource in the evil day. But the application of the word to any given state of things must be a matter of spiritual wisdom and discernment through the Spirit of God.

*The reader will understand that this was not *the* Tabernacle, the pattern and details of which had been prescribed to Moses in the mount, but a tent which was now to be a tabernacle — a meeting-place between God and those who sought Him, pitched to meet the present need outside the camp in consequence of the people's sin.

The tabernacle having been pitched, Moses, in the sight of all the people, went out and entered into it; and, as he entered, the Lord immediately endorsed his act of faith, for the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and He talked with Moses. (v. 9.) Being in separation from the camp, the Lord revealed Himself as He had not done before, and so strikingly that the people "rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door. And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." This was a totally new thing, altogether different from the sublime communications of Sinai. It was an intimacy of approach and communion which Moses had never before enjoyed. The Lord Himself alludes to this as the distinguishing privilege of His servant, when vindicating him from the aspersions of Aaron and Miriam. (Num. 12: 5-8.) This fact is full of consolation — teaching as it does that, though ruin, and even apostasy, may characterize the professing people of God, a way into His presence may still be found by those who can enter into His mind, and are enabled by His grace to take a place outside of the corruptions by which they are surrounded; and that the Lord will reveal Himself to such, in response to their faith and faithfulness, in a most special and gracious way. The fact is, identified with the corruptions of an apostate people, we of necessity share their condition and even judgment; but apart according to the mind of the Lord, the barrier to the manifestation of Himself is removed. We are on a different footing — on the footing of individual faith and individual condition of soul. But then it must be remembered, that all who so act will find themselves together gathered individually around a new centre. The act of Moses indeed is, in some sort, the anticipation of that word, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18: 20.) And this assurance is the resource of the godly in this day of confusion and corruption, as the tabernacle of the congregation without the camp was that of those who sought the Lord in the midst of Israel's idolatry; and those who, in simplicity and faith, have recourse to it will receive, as Moses did, special manifestations of the Lord's favour and presence.

The act of Moses having been accepted, he returned to the camp — now the recognised mediator; but Joshua, type of Christ in spirit, as the leader of His people, remains in the tabernacle. Thereon Moses as mediator commences his intercession. He accepts the place into which the Lord had put him — as the one appointed to conduct the people to the promised inheritance. (v. 1.) He takes this ground as the basis of his plea.

"And Moses said unto the Lord, See, Thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and Thou hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me. Yet Thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in My sight. Now therefore, I pray Thee, if I have found grace in Thy sight, show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight; and consider that this nation is Thy people." (vv. 12, 13.)

He makes supplication in the first place for himself. He desires first to know whom the Lord would send with him. God had said that He would send an angel (v. 2); but Moses would know more; and he pleads for this knowledge on the ground that the Lord had said to him, "I

know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in My sight." Furthermore, he would know *God's* way, that he might know Him, that he might find grace in His sight. And then he brings the people before God. As everything now depended on Moses, as mediator, he presents his own cause first; and then he introduces the people. "Consider," he touchingly prays, "that this nation is Thy people." All this is exceedingly beautiful, as it is also full of interest and instruction. It was not enough for Moses that he had been divinely appointed to lead Israel, and that an angel should go before him in the path, but he desired to know, not his but *God's* way through the wilderness, that he might also know *Him*. He could not be satisfied short of knowing God and God's way — if he were to lead up the people. This is what every believer needs, and there is nothing beyond while in the wilderness.

The Lord graciously accepted the prayer of His servant. He said, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." This was a full response to the cry of the mediator, and all that he needed to carry him and the people through their desert path. This comforted and emboldened his heart — and he replied, "If Thy presence go not, carry us not up hence." (v. 15.) Now he identifies himself with the people. This is no mean adumbration of the heart of Christ — this intense love of Moses for Israel, linking them with himself in his place of favour before God. And not only so, but, rising higher, he now links them again with God. We have remarked that God took Israel on their own ground, and since they had rejected Him, He had said to Moses, "thy" people. But now — now that Moses, acting as mediator, has gained the ear of God, he says again "*Thy*" people. "For wherein," he proceeds, "shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? is it not in that Thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth." (v. 16.) He thus claims, as it were, as proof of divine favour — restoration of favour — God's own presence with His people. It could not be otherwise known; and the fact of His presence would separate them off from all other people. It is the same in principle during this dispensation. The presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, building His people into an habitation for God, separates from all else, and so completely, that there are but the two spheres — sphere of the presence and action of the Holy Ghost, and sphere of the action and power of Satan.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in My sight, and I know thee by name." (v. 17.)

The success of the mediation of Moses was thus complete, complete for the restoration of the people. They are once again the Lord's people — to be put under a new covenant, as will be seen in the next chapter, a covenant of law indeed, but law mingled with grace, according to the character of God as now revealed. The effect on Moses of the divine favour is remarkable. Every successive display of grace does but elicit larger desires; and Moses therefore now longs for himself that he may see God's glory.

"And he said, I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory." (v. 18.)

Such is ever the action of grace upon the soul. The more we know of God, the more we desire to know. But this very petition of Moses affords a contrast with the place of the believer. Now we behold with unveiled face the glory of the Lord; here Moses prays that he may see it.

The holy longing, however, which he thus expresses, shows the effect of intimacy with God, and the consequent energetic action on the soul of the Holy Ghost.

"And He said, I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And He said, Thou canst not see My face; for there shall no man see Me, and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand while I pass by: and I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts; but My face shall not be seen." (vv. 19-23.)

The Lord hears, and grants as far as was possible for Moses to receive, the request he had made. He would make all His goodness pass before him, and proclaim the name of Jehovah. Then He lays down the principle of His sovereignty, on which He must act in order to spare Israel; for had He dealt with them on the basis of righteous law, the whole nation must have perished. It is this very scripture that the apostle Paul cites to enforce the same truth — that Israel was spared on the one hand, and Pharaoh destroyed on the other, in the exercise of God's sovereign rights. His object is to reconcile the bestowal of grace on the Gentiles with the special promises made to Israel, and he thus leads them back to their sin in connection with the golden calf, to remind them that they were at that time equally indebted to the sovereign grace of God as were now the Gentiles — that, both the one, therefore, and the other, were alike the objects of sovereign mercy and grace. This word of the Lord to Moses is the fountain-head — so to speak — of this truth, though God had acted on the principle all down the line of Israel's history. (See Rom. 9: 7-13.) It is affirmed now as the foundation on which, in answer to the intercession of Moses, He could spare the people. But notwithstanding this favour accorded to Moses — this privilege of beholding the goodness of the Lord and bearing His name, he could not behold His face and live. The Lord would put him "in a clift of the rock" while He passed by. "And I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts; but My face shall not be seen." No, God was not yet fully revealed; the work was not accomplished through the efficacy of which God could bring the sinner into His immediate presence, and without a cloud between. Distinguished therefore as was the place which Moses occupied, the humblest believer of this dispensation is brought nearer to God. The Christian may behold all the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; but Moses must be hidden in a "clift of the rock" — type, it may be, of the believer in Christ — while that glory passed by. As another has said, "He will hide him while He passes by, and Moses shall see His back parts. We cannot meet God on His way as independent of Him. After He has passed by, one sees all the beauty of His ways." This is exemplified in the next chapter — on the re-establishment of the covenant with Israel.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first; and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest. And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to Me in the top of the mount. And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount. And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first: and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone. And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord.

And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." (Ex. 34: 1-7.)

Moses presented himself in obedience to the divine command, with the two tables of stone, to receive again the law under which Israel was to be placed. Sinai is therefore once more the scene of his interview with the Lord. The Lord, faithful to His promise, descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. Name in Scripture, in connection at least with God, is expressive of nature; and hence here it is significant of what God was as JEHOVAH. It is essential to remember that it is not the Father, but Jehovah in His relationship with Israel, who is thus revealed. It is therefore not a complete revelation of God. This could not be until after the cross; but it is the name of Jehovah — expression of what God was in this character — that is proclaimed. "It is not at all the name of His relationship with the sinner for his justification, but with Israel for His government. Mercy, holiness, and patience mark His ways with them, but He does not clear the guilty." The reader must study for himself this unfolding of what God was to Israel — each word employed being in this aspect the declaration of His immutable character. Mercy and truth are seen in combination, though it was not until the cross that they met together, and were harmonized in their activities, when also righteousness and peace kissed each other. Goodness and grace are also here, as well as long-suffering; but there is also holiness, and hence, while keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, Jehovah would by no means clear the guilty. There was indeed a heart of love for His people, but this heart of love was pent up, if it may be so expressed, until atonement should have been completed, when God could righteously justify the ungodly. But whoever traces down the line of God's dealings with Israel, from this moment until their expulsion from the land, and indeed until the cross, will find every one of these attributes in constant exercise. All that God is, as here declared, is revealed in His ways with His ancient people. The proclamation of His name is, in fact, the summary of His government from Sinai until the death of Christ. But while admitting to the full the wondrous character of the revelation thus made to. Moses, let it be again observed that it is not that which Christians now enjoy. If it is compared with the words of our blessed Lord, "I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17: 26), the immensity of the difference cannot fail to be apprehended. The difference is between what God was as Jehovah to Israel, and what God is as the Father to His children.

One other remark should be made. Satan had come in, and for the moment seemed as if he had succeeded in frustrating the purposes of God with respect to His people. But Satan is never so completely defeated as in his apparent victories. This is nowhere so fully illustrated as in the cross; but the same thing is perceived in connection with the golden calf. This was Satan's work; but the failure of Israel becomes the occasion, through the mediation of Moses, which God in His grace had provided, of the fuller revelation of God, and of His mingling grace with law. The activity of Satan does but work out the purposes of God, and his wrath is made to praise Him against whom all his malice and enmity are directed.

We may now consider the effect on Moses of the proclamation of the name of Jehovah.

"And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. And he said, If now I have found grace in Thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray Thee, go among us; for it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for Thine inheritance." (vv. 8, 9.)

The first effect is personal. It bows Moses to the ground in worship before the Lord. Every revelation of God to the heart of His people produces this result. This is remarkably illustrated in the experience of the patriarchs. Such records as this are common: "And the Lord appeared unto Abram . . . and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him." (Genesis 12: 7.) So with Moses. Overwhelmed by the revelation made in grace to his soul, he is constrained to worship. But he immediately takes up his position of mediator. Made to feel his own acceptance by the favour into which he had been brought, and his acceptance, too, as mediator for Israel, he commences his intercession; and he prays that the Lord would go among them, and for the very reason that had led the Lord to say He would not dwell in their midst. (Cp. v. 3.) Moreover, he besought the forgiveness of their sin; and that He would take them for His inheritance. It is exceedingly beautiful to note, now that Moses has obtained the full place of an accepted mediator, how entirely he identifies himself with those whose cause he pleads. He says, "among us;" "our iniquity and our sin, and take us for Thine inheritance." This is a principle of the highest importance. It was exemplified perfectly in Him of whom Moses was but a type. And it will apply to every kind of intercession for the people of God. Indeed, whenever any of the Lord's servants have occupied the place of intercessors, this feature has been distinctly marked. (See Daniel 9; Nehemiah 1, etc.) So now. We can never have power with God on behalf of others, unless by grace we are enabled to enter into the condition of, and identify ourselves with, those whom we would bear on our hearts before the Lord. Moses was enabled to do this, and his prayer was accepted, and, in response, the Lord established a new covenant with the people.

"And He said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the Lord; for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee. Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: but ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: for thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice: and thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods. Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.

"The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt. All that openeth the matrix is Mine; and every firstling among thy cattle, whether ox or sheep, that is male. But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem him not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before Me empty. Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest. And thou shalt observe the feast

of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end. Thrice in the year shall all your men-children appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year. Thou shalt not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning. The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk. And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." vv. 10-28.)

The terms of this covenant are not new, though they are newly enjoined. Almost every one of them has been already under consideration. (See Ex. 13 and Ex. 23) A brief notice of their character will therefore suffice. The foundation of all is laid in what God would do for His people. (v. 10.) Thereon He commands complete separation from the nations around, after they should have been put into possession of the land — separation from the people themselves, from their ways, and from their worship. They must worship the Lord alone; for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. (vv. 11 - 16.) But if, on the one hand, there must be separation from evil, there must be, on the other, separation to God. Hence the least of unleavened bread should be kept.* Seven days — a complete period, typical of their whole lives, they were to eat unleavened bread — the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (1 Cor. 5: 8.) They should, moreover, recognize God's claims both upon themselves and upon their cattle. "All that openeth the matrix is mine." (v. 19.) Thereon follows a remarkable provision — that both the firstling of an ass, and the firstborn of their sons, should be redeemed. Man in nature is thus associated with the unclean (see Exodus 13: 13) — teaching both his lost condition as born into this world, and his need of redemption, as well as his doom if unredeemed. The sabbath, the feasts of Pentecost and of Tabernacles, are again commanded — with the provision that three times in the year "all your men-children appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel."†

*See Ex. 13 for the exposition of this feast.

†These statutes have been considered in Ex. 23: 14-19.

"After the tenor of these words," the Lord made a covenant with Moses and with Israel. (v. 27.) The words "with thee" are significant. It shows how that the place of Israel had been made dependent upon the mediator, and indicates consequently the position into which Moses had been brought. For the second time he had been forty days and forty nights — in a state above nature — in the presence of God. He did neither eat bread, nor drink water. God thus sustained His servant in His own presence, and enabled him to listen to His voice and receive His words. In fine, he received once again two tables of testimony on which God had written the ten commandments, and descending from the mount, returned to the people.

Such was the covenant into which God in grace entered with His people after their failure and apostasy. "It is important to remark that Israel never entered the land under the Sinai covenant, that is, under simple law (for all this passed under mount Sinai); it had been

immediately broken. It is under the mediation of Moses that they were able to find the way of entering into it. However, they are placed again under the law, but the government of patience and grace is added to it." Israel had indeed forfeited everything, and become amenable to destruction, through the sin of the golden calf. They had lost thereby all title to blessing or the inheritance. The mediation of Moses availed, for governmental forgiveness, to restore them to their position as the people of God, and to secure for them the possession of the land. Moreover, God proclaimed the name of Jehovah — the revelation of His character in relation with Israel — and thereafter put them back under law. Israel therefore was never actually under the covenant of Sinai. It was broken before its terms — written on the tables of stone — reached the camp. The terms of the second covenant are indeed the same, but these were mingled with the grace and goodness and long-suffering which had been proclaimed in the name of Jehovah. In fact Israel, after their sin, were saved by grace through the intercession of Moses; and then they are put back under the law, with the additional elements named. Their position thenceforward was not unlike that of those believers who, not knowing the new place into which they are brought through the death and resurrection of Christ, put themselves under the law as the rule of their conduct and life. What wonder, then, if the path of both alike is marked by continual failure and transgression?

This section closes with a striking account of the effect on Moses of being in the presence of God on the mount.

"And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone: and they were afraid to come nigh him. And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them. And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him in mount Sinai. And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. But when Moses went in before the Lord, to speak with Him, he took the veil off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with Him." (vv. 29-35.)

There are three things in this description to be considered. First, the fact that the skin of the face of Moses shone as the consequence of being in the mount with God. brought, into the immediate presence of the glory of Jehovah, his face caught, and retained, some of the beams of that glory — though he "wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him." The contrast with our Lord on the mount of transfiguration cannot fail to be noted. He "was transfigured before them; and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." (Matt. 17: 2.) But this was the outshining of His own glory — a glory which transfused and irradiated His whole body before the eyes of the disciples, so that He appeared to them as a Being of light. The glory that shone from the face of Moses was but external, the reflection of that of Jehovah, the effect of his communion with God. Moses, absorbed in the communications he was receiving, and in contemplation of the One whose words he heard, knew not that his face had become irradiated with light. No; the believer never knows the outward effect of his being

alone with God. Others may see — they cannot fail to see; but he himself will be unconscious that he is reflecting the light of Him in whose presence he has been. For indeed it is ever true -

"The more Thy glory strikes mine eye,

The humbler I shall lie."

But Aaron and all the children of Israel beheld the glory shining from the face of Moses; and this brings us to the second point; viz., the effect it produced on them. They were afraid to come nigh him; and hence, while Moses was talking with them, giving them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him in mount Sinai, he put a veil upon his face. It is this incident which the apostle Paul adduces to show the contrast between "the ministration of death," and "the ministration of the Spirit;" or "the ministration of condemnation," and "the ministration of righteousness;" i.e. between the dispensation of law, and the dispensation of grace. The face of Moses, it should be remarked, did not shine when he came down from Sinai the first time; not until his return from his successful mediation on behalf of the people on account of their sin. Why, then, were they afraid to come near him? Because the very glory that shone on his face searched their hearts and consciences — being what they were, sinners, and unable of themselves to meet even the smallest requirement of the covenant which had now been inaugurated. It was of necessity a "ministration" of condemnation and death, for it required a righteousness from them which they could not render, and, inasmuch as they must fail in rendering it, would pronounce their condemnation, and bring them under the penalty of transgression, which was death. The glory which they thus beheld upon the face of Moses was the expression to them of the holiness of God — that holiness which sought from them conformity to its own standards — and which would vindicate the breaches of that covenant which had now been established. They were therefore afraid, because they knew in their inmost souls that they could not stand before Him from whose presence Moses had come. But in the "ministration" of righteousness and of the Spirit all is changed. This requires no righteousness from man, but reveals God's righteousness as a divine gift in Christ to every believer, and seals its bestowal by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Instead therefore of fearing, we rejoice as we behold the glory in the face of Jesus Christ at the right hand of God; for every ray of that glory speaks of accomplished atonement, and of the complete putting away of our sins if we are believers. For He who was delivered for our offences has been raised again for our justification; He who Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree, has been raised by God Himself, and exalted at His own right hand. God has glorified Him in Himself. That is, He has come in, and raised up the One that bore our sins, went down into death under them, and in token of His satisfaction with His work, He has put Him in the glory, so that the glory of God now shines forth in the face of Jesus Christ. It is this fact that gives confidence to our souls, enables us to draw near in peace, because the very glory that we behold is the evidence to us that all that was against us is cleared away. Hence, instead of putting a veil on His face, as Moses did, because the children of Israel were afraid to draw nigh, He is at God's right hand with unveiled face, and we delightedly contemplate the glory that is there displayed, and as we gaze we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Cor. 3, 4) The effect therefore on the children of Israel of the glory in the face of Moses forms a perfect contrast to that produced upon the believer as he beholds the glory of the Lord. It is quite true that Israel was no longer under pure law, that goodness and grace had now been mingled with it; but this very fact would make their sin the more heinous if they broke the

covenant a second time. In that case, it would not only be sin against righteousness, but also against the goodness and grace which had spared them, and restored them to relationship with God. This enhances, instead of diminishing the contrast, and should lead out our hearts in adoring gratitude in that we are brought into such a place — a place where we behold, with unveiled face, the glory of the Lord — knowing by the very fact of the glory we behold that our sins are gone from the sight of God for ever.

The last action must also be noted. When Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him he took the veil off, until he came out. (v. 34.) He unveils his face to speak to the Lord, while he covers his face to speak to the people. In this respect he becomes rather a type of the present position of the believer, to which reference has already been made. Moses was brought into the very presence of God without a veil, even as the believer is set down in the light as He is in the light. There is still the difference already noted. However intimate the access Moses enjoyed, it was as Jehovah that God spake with him; but the believer is before God according to all that God is, according to that full and perfect revelation of Himself which He has made in Christ as our God and Father. While, moreover, Moses was permitted thus to come before Jehovah to commune with Him, the believer is brought into God's presence as his abiding position. He is ever before God in Christ.

CHAPTER 35. DEVOTEDNESS AND OBEDIENCE.

EXODUS 35 - 40.

WE have now reached the concluding section of the book. Ex. 32 - 34 are parenthetical. The beginning of chapter 35 is consequently a continuation of Ex. 31; but if a continuation, it is only of God's grace. Had He dealt with Israel for their sin, according to the terms of the covenant into which they had voluntarily entered, their history as a nation, and the narrative of God's dealings with them, would have terminated after chapter 31. But we have seen how, notwithstanding their grievous fall, they were spared through the Lord's tender mercy at the mediation and intercession of Moses, and were brought back again into relationship with Himself as His people. Having therefore propounded the terms of His second covenant, He is free in grace to continue His presence with them, and hence we find, in these closing chapters, the actual execution of the commands Moses had received in the mount concerning the erection of the Tabernacle. But, as preparatory to this, the Sabbath is again enjoined.

"And Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said unto them, These are the words which the Lord hath commanded, that ye should do them. Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the Lord: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day." (Ex. 35: 1-3.)

The Lord, as has been stated before, always reminds the people of the end and object of all His ways with them; viz., entering into His rest. This was the end proposed, however impossible it became for them to attain it because of their unbelief. Hence the Sabbath is found again in this

place, as it always is whenever any new relationship is formed between God and the people. It becomes thus a kind of preface to the account of the construction of the sanctuary.

Moses thereon makes proclamation of the Lord's desire to receive an offering from His people — an offering of the several materials needed for the making of the Tabernacle. (vv. 5-19) God would have His people to enter into His own thoughts and desires for their blessing, and He permits them in His grace and mercy to bring these materials as an offering. He directs what they should bring, although everything they possessed was His own gift (see 1 Chr. 29: 14), and then He would reckon it as their offering. It is ever so. Believers cannot do a single good thing of themselves. Every good work is the product of the Spirit of God, and prepared before of God (Eph. 2: 10), and yet when done, God in His grace calls it theirs, and clothes them with the fine linen which is the righteousnesses of saints.

The willingness of God to receive from His people is thus proclaimed. The grace of God in this particular touched and opened their hearts; "and they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments." (v. 21.) And again we read, "The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord, every man and woman; whose heart made them willing to bring, for all manner of work which the Lord had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses." (v. 29.) There are principles involved in these statements which are applicable to all dispensations. The apostle Paul enforces the same when he says, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Cor. 9: 7; read the whole chapter.) It is therefore of the first importance to remember that everything offered to God must proceed from hearts made willing by His Spirit, that it must be spontaneous, not the result of persuasion or of external pressure, but from the heart. The church of God would have been in a very different state today if this had been remembered. What has wrought more ruin than the many worldly schemes for raising money? and what more humbling than the fact that solicitations of all kinds are used to induce the Lord's people to offer their gifts? Moses was content with announcing that the Lord was willing to receive, and he left this gracious communication to produce its suited effect upon the hearts of the children of Israel. He needed not to do more; and if saints now were in the current of God's thoughts they would imitate the example of Moses, and would shun the very thought of obtaining even the smallest gift, except it were presented willingly, and from the heart, as the effect of the working of the Spirit of God. And let it be remarked, that there was no lack; for in the next chapter we find that the wise men who wrought came to Moses and said, "The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much." (Ex. 36: 5-7.) If the first Pentecostal days be excepted, there has probably never been seen anything answering, to this even in the history of the church. The chronic complaint now is concerning the insufficiency of means to carry on the Lord's work. But it cannot be too often recalled — first, that the church of God is never held responsible to obtain means; secondly, that if the Lord gives work to do, He Himself will lay it upon the hearts of His people to contribute what is necessary; thirdly, that we are travelling off the ground of dependence, and acting according, to our own thoughts, if we

undertake anything for which the needful provision has not already been made; and lastly, that gifts procured by human means can seldom be used for blessing.

Moreover if liberality was the fruit of the action of the Spirit of God, so also was wisdom. Liberality provided the necessary materials, and wisdom used them according to the divine mind. The Lord filled Bezaleel with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; and He also put in his heart that he may teach, both he and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. (Ex. 35: 31-35.) The workmen were the gift of God, and the wisdom and understanding needed for their work proceeded also from Him through the action of His Spirit; and He also endowed them with the capacity to teach others; and there were thus associated with them "every wise-hearted man in whom the Lord put wisdom and understanding, to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the Lord had commanded." (Ex. 36: 1.) We may surely behold in these workers the pattern of all true servants in every dispensation. They themselves called of God, as was pointed out in Exodus 31, all their activity was the fruit of the Spirit of God. They were not sufficient of themselves to think anything as of themselves, but their sufficiency was of God. (2 Cor. 3: 5.) Human skill, human wisdom or inventions, would but have marred the perfection of the divine design; and hence the workmen were to be but vessels — vessels for the display of divine wisdom and understanding and teaching. Well is it for the workman when he remembers that, like Bezaleel and Aholiab, he is but a vessel; for then it is that the Lord can use him to His own glory in the execution of His own mind and will.

Passing on to Exodus 39, we learn that all the work was done as the Lord had commanded Moses. The essence of all service is obedience, and the test of everything done is its conformity or otherwise with the revealed mind of God. The Lord had given certain directions to Moses, and had instructed His servants for the work; and, as a consequence, the only question concerning their work, when completed, was, Did it correspond in every particular with the pattern given? The Spirit of God has answered this question, affirming in this chapter no less than ten times, that the work was executed as the Lord commanded Moses. (vv. 1, 5, 7, 21, 26, 29, 31, 32, 42, 43.) They therefore met their responsibility towards God, and accordingly received His approval and commendation in this repeated and significant statement: that all their work was characterized by obedience. This affords the important principle that everything which claims to be of God must submit to be tested by God's word. The same principle is affirmed by our blessed Lord in His message to the seven churches. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." (Rev. 2: 11, etc.) And there was never more need than in this day for its application. It cannot be conceived that Moses would have accepted, much less the Lord, any single thing, however innocent, or even beautiful, in itself, that did not correspond with the pattern showed him in the mount. Why then should it be expected now, that believers should accept and endorse anything in connection with the church of God which does not answer to the Scriptures? No; everything must be unsparingly rejected, however enshrined in the affections, or commended by its hoar antiquity, which does not bear the stamp and the sanction of the word of God. For is it for one moment to be supposed that the Lord is less jealous concerning His church — the church which He loved, and for which He gave Himself — than concerning the Tabernacle? Or that He permits man's wisdom, and man's order, to be introduced in the one when He so entirely excluded it from the other? The supposition is monstrous. Let it never be

forgotten therefore that the Lord measures everything, and hence that it is also our responsibility to measure everything, by His own word.

In the last chapter we have the actual erection of the Tabernacle, and the Lord taking possession of it as His dwelling-place in the midst of Israel. There are several points to be indicated. It will be observed, in the first place, that the Tabernacle was to be set up on the anniversary of their departure from Egypt (Ex. 12: 2) — on the first day of the first month. (Ex. 40: 2.) As their deliverance from the house of their bondage constituted the commencement of their spiritual history, so the dwelling of Jehovah in their midst formed morally a new period of time. The two things are brought together in Christianity. When the soul is brought out from under condemnation, and apprehends peace with God, the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ, God seals it by the gift of His indwelling Spirit. The commencement of spiritual life — spiritual life known and enjoyed — and becoming a temple of the Holy Ghost coincide.

The order enjoined in the arrangement of the sacred vessels differs both from that found in the directions given in the mount, and from that of their construction. The ark of the testimony, after the setting up of the Tabernacle, is first put into its place — that which specially distinguished the Tabernacle as God's sanctuary, seeing that the ark was His throne on the earth. Then the ark was covered with the veil; i.e. shut off from view. This formed the holy of holies. The table of showbread, was next brought into the holy place — the next compartment to the most holy — and the bread was set in order upon it; afterwards, the candlestick of pure gold was put into its place, and the lamps lighted before the Lord; then, the altar of gold, the altar of incense, was put "before the veil," before the ark of the testimony, and incense was burnt thereon; and finally, the hanging was set up at the door of the Tabernacle. This completed the arrangement of the holy place. The altar of burnt-offering came next before the door of the Tabernacle of the tent of the congregation — and the burnt-offering and the meat-offering were offered upon it; then the laver was brought and set between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and water put therein, and Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat, etc. (vv. 30, 31.) Thereupon the court round about the Tabernacle and the altar were reared up, and the hanging of the court-gate put in its place — and this completed the Tabernacle with all its arrangements. Moreover the Tabernacle was to be anointed with the anointing oil, and all that was therein, and hallowed with all the vessels thereof. It was to be holy. So also with the altar of burnt-offering — with all its vessels — that the altar might be sanctified. It was to be an altar most holy. The laver and its foot were also to be anointed to be sanctified. Lastly, Aaron and his sons were to be consecrated and robed, that they might minister unto the Lord in the priest's office; "for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations." (vv. 9-15.)

As in the case of Bezaleel and Aholiab, together with their co-workers, so with Moses, the Spirit of God set His seal of commendation upon the manner in which he performed the work entrusted to him. And what is the meed of praise which He bestows? It is that everything was done in obedience — "as the Lord commanded Moses." Eight times it is repeated that everything was done according to the instructions he had received. (vv. 16, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32.) Again, therefore, we learn the value of obedience in the eyes of the Lord. As Samuel said to Saul, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." As indeed our blessed Lord Himself said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." (John 14) If obedience be

wanting, whatever there may be of real devotedness and zeal, no service offered can be acceptable to God. And it is precisely here that so many Christians fail. There never was a time of greater energy and activity, nor when larger crowds gather together professedly for worship; but when these things are measured by the test which is supplied in the words, "as the Lord commanded Moses," then it is discovered that man's will, and not the Lord's, is often the paramount spring of all. Observe, again, what has been enforced more than once, that this commendation is given to Moses by the Spirit concerning his action in respect of God's house. The church is now the house of God — the habitation of God through the Spirit. Eph. 2: 22.) If therefore it was above all necessary that Moses should strictly and carefully carry out the instructions he had received concerning the Tabernacle, it is equally important that the word of God should be our only guide in all matters affecting the church. We find accordingly that, in the message which the risen Lord sent to the church at Philadelphia, the fact that they had kept His word was a special ground of His approval. (Rev. 3: 8.) No higher praise could be bestowed. "So Moses finished the work" — finished all in obedience to the word of the Lord.

Finally, the Lord takes possession of the sanctuary which had been made that He might dwell among them. The connection is most significant. "So Moses finished the work. *Then* a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." (vv. 34, 35.) It was not only Jehovah's public endorsement of the work which had been executed, but it was also His taking possession of His house in the sight of all Israel; for the cloud, the symbol of His presence, covered the tent of the congregation without, and His glory filled the Tabernacle within. It was so — in a still more striking way — when the temple was built. "It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." (2 Chr. 5: 13, 14.) Both alike are surely typical of that Pentecostal scene recorded in the Acts: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2: 1-4.) Here the two things are combined. The house of God was formed and filled by the descent of the Holy Ghost. In both cases, however, it was God taking possession of the house already made for Him; for from this time all the believers, who together composed the habitation of God through the Spirit, became also severally His temple, because indwelt by the Holy Ghost. We have already spoken on the significance of God's dwelling-place on earth (chapter 25: 8); and we then pointed out that His house in every dispensation points onward to the eternal state when the tabernacle of God will be with men, and His glory will fill the whole scene. (Rev. 21)

Moreover, the cloud of Jehovah's presence became also the guide of His people through the wilderness. "The cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys." (v. 38; see also Num. 9)

They needed only therefore to keep their eyes upon the cloud; for "when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up." (vv. 36, 37.) The Lord thus undertook for His people. He had visited them in their affliction in Egypt; He had brought them out with a high hand and an outstretched arm; and had led them forth through the Red Sea into the wilderness. But He Himself would lead them "by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation." "Happy," we might also exclaim, "is that people that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord." For surely there was nothing now wanting to the blessing of Israel. Jehovah was in their midst. The cloud of His presence rested upon, and His glory filled, the Tabernacle. It was indeed a brief period of unmingled blessing — the accomplishment of God's own desires in surrounding Himself with His redeemed people. How soon this bright and beautiful scene was marred is related in other books; but the very fact that Exodus thus ends is prophetic of the time when "the tabernacle of God" shall be "with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." (Rev. 21: 3, 4.)