

::R0100 : page 6::

THE TABERNACLE

The law being a shadow of good things to come, it is necessary, if we would grasp the substance, to trace very closely the outline there given. While our Father has granted us, as a part of his children, a great deal of light we believe there are mines of wealth in His precious word, that are, as yet, but little known. We think *The Law* is a whole mining district. Paul has opened some large crevices in it, through the letter to the Hebrews and in other places, and we can see the gems sparkling brightly as he lets the light in upon them; but these are given only, it would seem, to lead us on, to incite us to search as men search for hidden treasures.

We wish, at this time, to look at the Tabernacle and its contents, and before entering into details, will first glance at its general appearance. The outer inclosure was called the court of the tabernacle. It was surrounded by posts or pillars, evidently of wood, with bases of copper, [incorrectly *brass* in A.V.] and caps, hooks, &c., of silver, from which hung a continuous curtain of fine twined linen. Within this was the tent or tabernacle, constructed of gold-covered boards on three sides, with posts and a curtain on the front or east end. Ex. 26:18-27, covered above with curtains of goats' hair, of rams' skins dyed red, and uppermost, of badgers' skins. The inside of the tent was hung with curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet adorned with cherubim.

This beautiful curtain evidently formed the ceiling and hung down each side within the tabernacle. The tent was divided into two compartments by a veil of the same description as the curtains. We are not given the position of the veil, but probably, as in the temple, [1 Kings, 6:2,17,20,] the holy place was twice the size of the most holy.

Outside the tabernacle, near the door, and apparently directly in front of it, stood the altar of burnt offering. Between the altar and the door stood the laver of brass, [copper.]

In the holy place were: the table of show-bread, upon the north or right hand side; the golden lampstand opposite on the south, and the altar of incense directly in front, close to the separating veil. Ex. 40:5-30. Within the veil stood alone the ark of the covenant, hidden in the secret place, unseen by the common priest, and shrouded in impenetrable darkness. Even when approached by the high priest once a year, although then probably illuminated with the shekinah of glory, it must still be covered from him by a cloud of incense. Lev. 16:12-13.

THE COURT OF THE TABERNACLE

was 100 cubits long by 50 cubits wide, with posts 5 cubits high and 5 cubits apart; standing, as it were, within reach of each other, yet too far apart to lean upon one another. Their only connection was the curtain, which, hanging upon each, tied them all together. The curtain was apparently without seam for the whole length of each side, excepting, perhaps, the front. It was made of fine twined linen and symbolized, we believe, the righteousness of Christ. Being without seam, it reminds us of the seamless linen robe that Jesus wore. John 19:23, 22:25. A robe that cannot be put on by inches, and when it covers, covers completely. The posts of corruptible wood firmly set in bases of incorruptible brass, would seem to symbolize the church, composed of weak mortals liable to fall, yet standing by the power of God; not built on the *sand* of the desert, but having a sure foundation. Their caps, fillets and hooks were of silver. As we are told to search for truth as for silver, and as David likens the words of the Lord to silver purified seven times, we conclude that *truth* is symbolized by silver, which thus adorned the posts, clothing their heads with beauty, forming the ornaments of the body, and being the hook or connection which bound them to the curtain of linen, and by it to each other.

What has been the work of the church in the past ages, what can it be in the future, but simply to hold up to the view of the world without, the spotless righteousness of Christ? Hidden behind that snowy curtain, covered by that seamless robe, standing alone by divine power, linked together by the truth, they form a long united row, reaching down the stream of time.

“A glittering host in bright array,”

or, as Peter says: “A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people,” living for what purpose? to “*show forth* the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” Truly, as Paul says, we are surrounded by a “cloud of witnesses.” Within the court there were solemn mysteries transpiring, and many beautiful sights which it was not lawful for those without to even catch a glimpse of. They must first see and appreciate the righteousness of Christ. “For he who cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.”

Being drawn toward Christ by what we have already seen, we come to the gate of the court. “And for the gate of the court shall be a hanging of twenty cubits, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework.” Ex. 27:16.

Here we behold Christ as the Door, and as we draw near, we find him radiant with beauty. What mean these colors? “A True Blue” is the synonym for a faithful one. The blue of the national flag of many countries stands for fidelity. We think the symbol is of divine origin. In Num. 15:37-41, we find that the Lord commanded Moses to make a ribbon of *blue* on a fringe for their garments. They

were to look upon it and remember their duty to God. It was to inspire their fidelity by recalling his faithfulness. Purple is the badge of royalty. The purple robe that the mocking soldiers placed on Christ, was an emblem that had its origin in very early times. In Judges 8:26, we find the kings of Median robed in this color. Scarlet was also worn by kings, but we think it spoke of blood when used under the law. Thus the beautiful gate of the court pointed to Christ, as the “Faithful and True,” as the “King of Kings,” and as the great “High Priest,” the “Redeemer” and “Saviour” of the world.

::R0101 : page 6::

Passing through the door and advancing towards the tabernacle we come to

THE BRAZEN ALTAR

The altar of Burnt Offering was made of shittim wood covered with plates of brass [copper]. It was a beautiful type of Christ. Christ as the man of sorrows, as the Lamb of God. Christ in his human nature [corruptible wood] clothed with power divine [the copper plates]. The wood alone must have burnt up—Adam fell.

It was four-sided, presenting a full breadth of side to every quarter of the earth. Being square it typified the perfection of Christ. It was five cubits long, five wide, and only three cubits high. Its dimensions speak chiefly of length and breadth as a Saviour of *all* men, who saves to the uttermost. It was comparatively low, typifying one easy of access, and a free salvation.

It had four horns to which the victims could be tied that were to be sacrificed, and to which persons in danger of being slain might flee for safety. Ps. 118:27, 1 Kings 2:28. These evidently pointed to Christ as our Refuge, and to his abundance of *power* and grace to all who should come to him. The fire continually burning upon it, and never allowed to go out (Lev. 6:13) speaks of consecration complete and continuous.

Fire is used as a symbol of love. Here it would be love unceasing and unchangeable. Not that we first loved him, but that he first loved us. Not that he loves us because we are good, or since we began to be good, but “God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Oh that not only the world, but the church might understand the meaning of the words, “GOD IS LOVE.” The words by the last prophet ring down through the ages. “For I am Jehovah, I change not, *therefore* ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” As the altar of *burnt offering*, consuming whatever was laid upon it, it points to the absolute devotedness of Christ to his Father’s will; and also to what is required of his followers who profess to lay themselves upon that altar. “Whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy.” “The altar sanctifieth the gift.”

Fire is a purifying agent, but it purifies by destruction. Jesus came in a body prepared, and offered himself a whole burnt offering. His sacrifice was not the stepping down *temporarily* from a higher to a lower plane. That was necessary as a part of the preparation for the sacrifice, as was the presentation of the victim to the priest at the door of the tabernacle. Or as Paul says: “We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death ... that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” Heb. 2:9. “For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.” 2:19. Why? For the simple reason that angels cannot die. Luke 20:36. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them, who, *through fear of death* [same kind of *death*] were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” The son of Mary—not the pre-incarnate word, as such—was called Jesus; not because he had, but because “he *shall* save his people from their sins.” Jesus came to die. “He is brought as a lamb [dumb] to the slaughter.” He made his “soul [life] an offering for sin. ... He hath poured out his soul unto *death*.” What death? After “being found in fashion as a *man*, he humbled himself, [not humbled himself to be a man] and became obedient unto *death*, EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS.” Phil. 2:8. We pity those who profess to be christians and despise “the death of the cross.” Yes! the altar spoke of death; and when the high priest went into the holy of holies he did not carry in the restored life of the victim by any means; he rather took in the sure proof of its utter destruction; so, “though we have known Christ after the *flesh*, yet now henceforth know we him no more.”

From the golden altar inside the tabernacle, every morning and evening there floated heavenward a cloud of sweet incense—making acceptable the prayers of the saints—but that altar itself was only acceptable because it had been sprinkled with the atoning blood taken from the side of the altar of burnt offering. In other words, the risen Saviour—the golden altar—was only acceptable because of the work [obedience unto death] of the man Christ Jesus—the altar of wood and brass.” Woe to those who despise “a dead Christ” in their prayers. We do pray in the

::R0101 : page 7::

name of him who *was* dead, but now ever liveth to make intercession for us. Christ was our forerunner, and we too must lay ourselves upon this altar; our *old nature* is doomed to death; while we are separated, delivered from this body of death through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Christ by the pouring out of “his own blood” has redeemed us from the condition in which Adam’s sin placed us and so a resurrection is assured us. “For as in [or *through*] Adam all die, even so in [or *through*] Christ shall all be made alive.” If any would attain to the *Divine nature* and life, they must take their sinning nature—the old man—and bring it to this altar, Jesus, and put it to death: crucify it with the affections and lusts. Gal. 5:24. “Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine

altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon." Exod. 20:26.

We cannot come to Christ by steps. We must come as we are and come at once. When we realize our degradation and sin, human nature says: do not present yourself in that condition, tone up, break off bad habits, try to be good, and after climbing up a few steps, come to Christ. Vain resolve! ending only in broken vows and bitter disappointment; and as the pure light of Heaven streams upon us, we realize our own weakness and nakedness and poverty; that our righteousness is but filthy rags, and that our great want is the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness to cover us completely, that the shame of our nakedness do not appear.

In antitype, the fire of this altar has not yet gone out. We see a groaning creation loaded down with sin and sorrow, waiting, hoping for a better day. We expect to see the dross all burned up, with every vestige of miasma and taint of sin: and to rejoice in the joy of a purified world even though purged by "the fire of his *jealousy*," for "our God is a consuming fire." W. I. M.

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— May, 1880 —



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