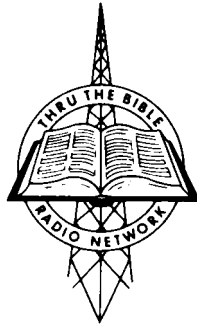


The Tabernacle: God's Portrait of Christ

by Dr. J. Vernon McGee



Published and distributed by
Thru the Bible Radio Network
P.O. Box 7100
Pasadena, California 91109-7100
(800) 65-BIBLE
www.ttb.org

All Scripture references are from the *King James Bible*.

Revised Edition
2002

Preface

In any study of the Tabernacle, there is not much to say that has not already been said. “Of making many books there is no end” (Ecclesiastes 12:12) has definite application to treatments of the Tabernacle. Therefore, the desire for novelty has not entered into the making of this thesis. Rather, the works of others have been drawn upon copiously, and most of this thesis is a restatement that constitutes a revision of previous works.

Wherein does this thesis differ from others, and what purpose prompts its appearance, are questions that justify an adequate answer. The paramount purpose has been to reveal, very inadequately and briefly to be sure, that God wrote systematic theology in the very warp and woof of the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was theology prewritten; the whole gamut of theology was run from Dan to Beersheba. The Tabernacle is the ABC’s of salvation for babes in Christ. All the great doctrines of the Christian faith are contained therein.

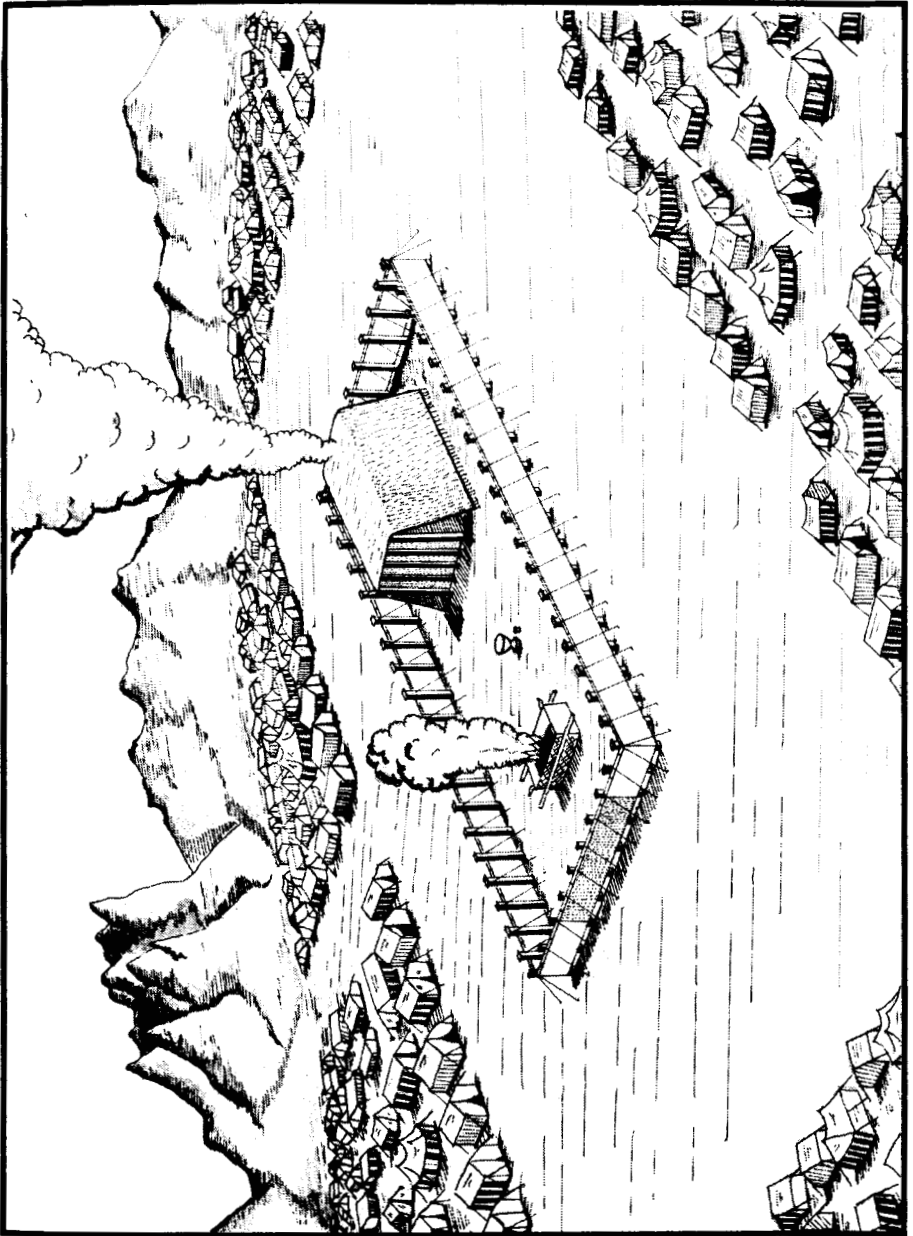
The treatment of this thesis is from the standpoint of the furniture. No time has been spent in hair-splitting interpretations of the meaning of the tent pins, bars, and bolts. We firmly believe that there is meaning in the minutest thread; however, the approach here has been from the furniture.

It is interesting to note that only one verse of Scripture records the creation of the heavens and earth (Genesis 1:1), while fifteen chapters are devoted to the Tabernacle (Exodus 25 — 40) and a whole book (Leviticus) to the service of it. Evidently God meant to convey to our hearts more than arithmetical measurements of a lifeless structure that’s sole interest, at best, lies in the realm of architecture.

The Tabernacle tells the story of God’s bared arm in action, while creation tells out the account of His finger work. God’s finger work (Psalm 19) does not require the space of God’s bared-arm work (Isaiah 52:10). The Tabernacle tells the story of salvation or the accomplishment of the bared arm of Jehovah. With that arm He built a dwelling

place in the midst of sinner man. All is in anticipatory preparation for the day when “the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people” (Revelation 21:3). Therefore, the Tabernacle is the finest portrait of Christ and of His redemption that there is in the Old Testament. God sent a picture before He sent the Person. The Tabernacle is God’s picture book for babes in Christ.

In the New Testament the masterpiece is the church, “for we are his workmanship (*poiema* — poem or masterpiece), created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10). In the Old Testament God’s masterpiece is the Tabernacle. Both are the dwelling places of God for the particular age to which each belongs. Both reveal Christ, for both are an adumbration of His own glorious Person.



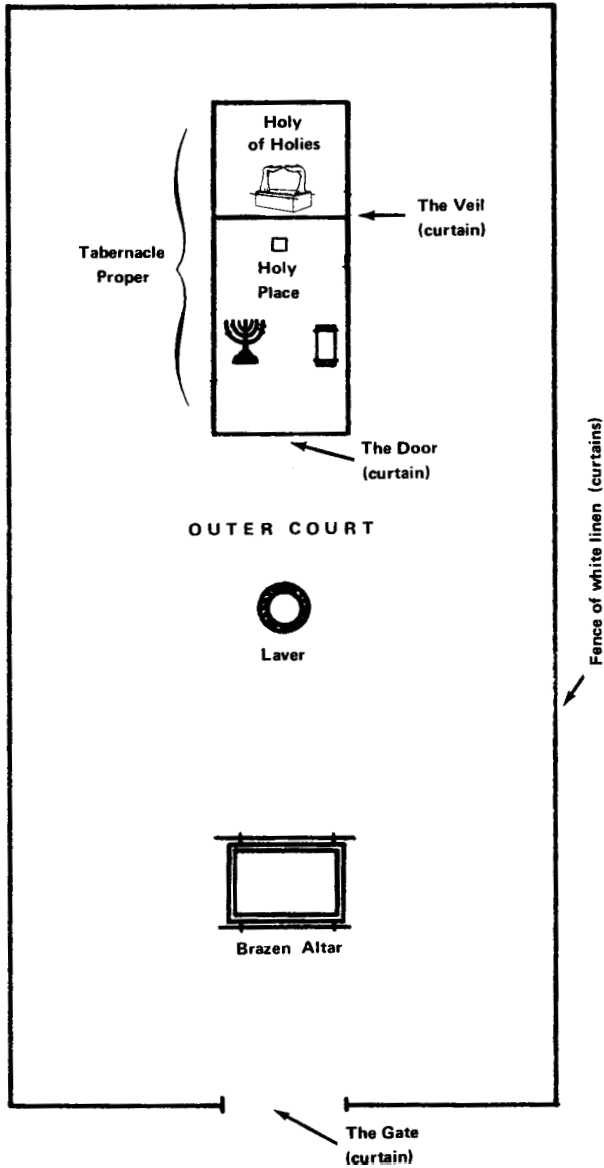
[BLANK PAGE]

Table of Contents

CHAPTER

I. In His Presence.....	9
II. The Altar of Brass: The Doctrine of Satisfaction.....	29
III. The Laver of Brass: The Doctrine of Sanctification.....	57
IV. The Three Entrances: The Doctrine of Worship.....	67
V. The Table of Shewbread: The Doctrine of Worship...71	
VI. The Lampstand of Gold: The Doctrine of Worship....77	
VII. The Altar of Gold: The Doctrine of Worship.....81	
VIII. The Veil Which Was Rent: The Doctrine of the Incarnation.....	87
IX. The Ark of Gold and Wood: The Doctrine of Christology.....	91
X. The Mercy Seat of Gold: The Doctrine of Propitiation.....	97
NOTES.....	101

TABERNACLE FLOOR PLAN



CHAPTER I

IN HIS PRESENCE

The problem of establishing a dwelling place with man is of supreme importance to God. In the pages of Scripture it is of chief concern to Him. In Genesis, we find God coming down in the cool of the day for purposes of fellowship. In a very real sense, God had a dwelling place with man. What blessed experiences the first man must have had in communing with his Creator! What marvelous condescension it was on the part of God to come down and spend precious moments with one of His creatures! This relationship was accentuated by the ready response of the man to every touch of God. God sought out this man, and they had fellowship one with the other. In all likelihood, man recounted the day's experiences to an interested and loving Father, and God responded with praise and suggestion. All this was a daily occurrence and was the possession of the first man.

The communion of God and man on this blessed basis would have continued indefinitely, but a terrible tragedy took place that interrupted and disrupted the relationship. There came a day when sin intervened and broke the tranquil peace of the garden and the sweet fellowship between God and man. So heinous and devastating is sin in its effect that it separates man from God for eternity, unless a remedy is found to avert its penalty.

The man chose to disobey God, and it was necessary for him to suffer the disastrous results of disobedience. It was not a question as to the palatableness of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Its fruit was good to the eye and to the taste. God had made it, and it was very good. It is even possible to imagine that this tree was more attractive than any other tree in the garden. Also, there was nothing inherent in the fruit that wrought such a change in the man. The fruit contained no poison nor any chemical that would be detrimental to the physical man. The change in man was not chemical, nor was he suffering from food poisoning. The record in Genesis is on a much higher plane. The

question about the tree of knowledge of good and evil was this: Would the man obey God or would he, in disobedience, go in his own self-will? It is altogether a matter of obedience. This is fundamental. God said not to eat; that was enough. Man should have gone on in faith, trusting God to do that which was best for his interests and to guard and protect him from the things that were not best. Man should have moved on the impulse that God was not only doing good by him, but that He was doing the very best for him. That was the route of blessing, peace, and communion.

Now the question is: How bad is it to disobey God? That can be known in examining the disastrous effects of Adam's transgression on the human family. The first man plunged his progeny, along with himself, into the pit of sin. Tragedy went in the wake of man. Suffering and misery entered the race. Death and destruction came like an avalanche to engulf man. The human family, potentially in Adam, was innately sinful and possessed a nature wholly given over to sin. "Born in sins" (John 9:34) is the language of Scripture. All the heartaches, sorrows, broken homes and lives are the results of "one man's disobedience" (Romans 5:19). The stooped shoulder, tottering step, and gray head bear a testimony to the awfulness of disobedience. Death, the arch-enemy of the human family, came into the race on the tide of disobedience. This picture does not fully exhaust the meaning of disobedience. The cross of Christ bears witness to the grim reality of the awful thing that Adam did. The sufferings of Christ speak audibly of the depth and extent of the disobedience in Eden:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned...For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many...Therefore as by the offence of one [one offense] judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience

many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. (Romans 5:12, 15, 18, 19).

Look at the One dying on the cross if you want to catch something of the significance of what Adam did. It was no small thing — neither was it a puerile or trifling matter. The account in Genesis is not a childish story from mythology but the solemn record of how sin, man's very real enemy, entered the world.

After man had chosen to disobey God, he became an anarchist in the government of God — an ingrate toward the love of God, a sinner in the presence of the holiness of God. He committed spiritual suicide in the moral order of the universe of God. He broke his fellowship with the One in whose likeness he was made, and found himself incapacitated to restore it or to make restitution. Sin now stood between a Holy God and man. Any overture had to originate in God, as He alone could remove sin and solve the problem. It is with profound reverence that we make this comment: This was God's problem and He alone could solve it and make a dwelling place with man.

Has God solved this problem? Has He done anything about it? For an answer to this inquiry, let us turn to the other side of the Bible, the very conclusion. We read of a day in the future:

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. (Revelation 21:3)

And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. (Revelation 21:22)

In the beginning, fellowship was lost; in the ending, fellowship is to be restored. Today, the human race as an integral group is out of harmonious relationship with God. But there is coming a day when God will restore His children on a more permanent basis of fellowship. The redeemed heart and regenerated mind wait in the eagerness of glorious anticipation for that day.

In a certain sense the pages of Scripture, from the fall in Genesis to

the New Jerusalem scene in Revelation, are the story of how the God of all patience has solved this moot problem of making new His dwelling place with man. This was no easy problem. How a Holy God can dwell with sinners is a problem that a rational mind must face, but only God could fashion the solution. And that solution is beyond the ken of man's mind and out of the scope of his thinking. It is not according to man's schemes nor to the gyrations of psychoanalysis.

God's answer to this whole question may be expressed briefly and succinctly in these words: THE CROSS OF CHRIST. As we shall enlarge upon this answer in the succeeding pages, suffice it to say here with terseness and certainty that any dwelling place God has made with man since his expulsion from Eden, or will make with man on into eternity, will rest upon the finished work of Christ on the cross. This is God's wisdom, and God's solution is best.

However, it is not wisdom to the natural man but is foolishness. Regardless of man's attitude, God has gone on with His program. For "wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars" (Proverbs 9:1). The cross of Christ may appear to man to be only a trifle and an unnecessary procedure at best. But it was not so with God. He was confronted with a very tangible problem and His solution was costly, but it alone was the answer. The cross of Christ was the answer of infinite wisdom to this problem and the only foundation for erecting a dwelling place for God with man. It was God's answer to sin; it was God's response to man's lost estate.

But the cross of Christ does more than save sinners. Hear Paul:

And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.
(Colossians 1:20)

About the cross of Christ, God's purposes gather, and His universe revolves about it. Therefore, the final explanation of the cross is not the salvation of sinners, although that is included in it. Henry C. Mabie in *The Divine Reason of the Cross* has this to say: "The Logos of the cross is the coordination centre of the cosmos — the rationale of the uni-

verse.” The universe is “redempto-centric,” using Dr. Mabie’s own expression. The cross of Christ gives meaning and explanation to God’s universe and to His dealings with and through it. The cross, therefore, furnishes the basis of restored fellowship with God for man on a higher and more secure basis. Again quoting from Dr. Mabie, “Notwithstanding the certainty which confronted the most High, that the man He was about to create would fall into sin and death, God resolved in creating him to make common cause with him: He determined to become a suffering Deity, only so that He might bring man through the impending discipline into the higher and more secure perfection.”¹ Scripture is more than the story of “Paradise Lost” and “Paradise Regained.” It is rather the declaration of how a holy God could “be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Romans 3:26). It is the supreme love story telling out that God was true to Himself when He provided a salvation that redeemed sinners. He satisfied every demand of His holiness, and freely lavished His love on man. About the cross gathers all the meaning and mystery of God. The cross furnishes a foundation for God’s dealings with man in the Old Testament, and it likewise furnishes a basis for God’s dealings with man since Calvary.

Before Christ came, God established sacrifices and ceremonies as shadows of the work of Christ. These sacrifices served a twofold purpose:

- (1) To impress the observer, before Christ came, with the necessity of removing sin before coming into the presence of a holy God. God could only fellowship with sinners who had settled the sin problem.
- (2) To teach us, this side of the cross, the meaning of the death of Christ.

Christ and His cross are in type in the Tabernacle with its ceremonies and sacrifices. Even before Christ came, He was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). He is the eternal sacrifice for sin, and the only sacrifice that brings a sinner into fellowship with God. The death of Christ is more than a historical event that took

place about nineteen hundred years ago. It was the purpose of God through eternity, and not an emergency measure brought forward as an afterthought. The cross is God's first aid, not His second best; it is His first and final expression to His intelligences that He exhausted infinite wisdom and love. The cross is the proof that "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (John 13:1). So important is the cross that even now He is still "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," although the crucifixion is an event incorporated in the history of man. Ordinarily we think of the cross as a historical fact that is in the past. In so doing, we emphasize a great fact but minimize another. Paul never thought of Christ as primarily a historical person who had died on a historical cross. This was true and Paul believed it, but to him Christ was more than one who had died on a cross in time past. He spoke of Christ, not as Jesus who *was* crucified, but as Jesus who *is* the Crucified One. Before Golgotha, the cross was in the mind of God. Before Calvary, the death of Christ was in the purpose of God. It is not strange or alarming that we, therefore, find "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) prefigured in the Tabernacle. In fact, the Tabernacle speaks of Him in every shade of color, in the minutest thread, and in the tent stakes; all speak of Him.

When God led His chosen people, Israel, out of Egypt, He set up a temporary dwelling place among them. This was called the Tabernacle or tent of meeting. The very name spoke of the temporariness of it — "tabernacle or tent." It was to be pitched in the desert with the stakes driven in sand. It was never to abide in one place very long. All was equipped for the desert march. In the instructions, the reader is impressed with the constant repetition of "staves" for everything. All was to be carried. Permanency was not one of its characteristics. All this suggested that it served for the time then present, waiting for a time when it would be set aside for that which "abideth for ever" (John 12:34; 1 Peter 1:23).

The Tabernacle was merely a link in the chain, from the sacrifice of Abel to the cross of Christ, that gave an approach for those then present to the presence of God. From Abel's altar outside of Eden to God's

altar outside of Jerusalem, we find a continuous and unbroken line of sacrifices that made an approach to God. Along the route we find God meeting the situation by supplying the need. God became to His people just what they needed. Always and in all ways we find God seeking out man and making a basis for dwelling with him. The altar sacrifices of Cain and Abel forever distinguished between them. They were children of the same parents with the same environment, and both were born in sin. But their sacrifices made the difference: Cain was merely performing a ritual, while Abel was making an approach to a holy God. After the flood, Noah first made an altar and offered a sacrifice thereon. That sacrifice made an approach to God who came down and confirmed the covenant with Noah. As Abraham dwelt upon the plains of Mamre, God came down to fellowship with him. In response to this generous overture on the part of God, Abraham hastened to make a sacrifice, “and Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it” (Genesis 18:7).

After God redeemed His people from Egypt, He had them construct a tabernacle in which offerings were to be made that He might dwell in their midst. It is often confirmed by the critic that the Tabernacle of the wilderness had a counterpart among the pagan peoples of that day. Similarities are mentioned between Israel and some other heathen religions to confirm this supposition. This is to forget that the Tabernacle of Israel was constructed out of earthly materials. Heathen religions were able to duplicate these materials. In a ritualistic religion there cannot be many variations in the form that is adopted or the liturgy performed. It is well to recall a statement of the late Dr. Melvin Kyle: “There are not many things to be done in a ritual; the wearing of robes, marching about, carrying of candles, performing before an altar, and burning incense about exhaust the repertory of religion.” It is not strange to find the Wilderness Tabernacle service similar in certain phases to other religions. It would be phenomenal should it have been otherwise. These resemblances do not preclude a supernatural origin of the Tabernacle.

Wherein did the Tabernacle differ from other religions of that day? There was a line of demarcation, one aspect about the Tabernacle that

forever separated it from natural religion: There was a *supernatural occupant* of the Tabernacle. Other religions merely had cheap counterfeits. The presence of God indwelt the Tabernacle:

Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. (Exodus 40:34)

In the day, the pillar of cloud directed the way on the wilderness march. In the night, the pillar of fire furnished light and protection for the camp. What marvelous provision God made for His people when He was in their midst! Israel had the supernatural presence of God. Materialistic philosophy rejects the fact that God, in a supernatural way, was with His people. This is to forget the eternal fact that all true religion is supernatural. This is the acid test of religion. Anything less is counterfeit and a poor imitation.

The temple of Solomon superseded the Tabernacle. At the dedication of the temple, the Shekinah Glory came to dwell in it.

Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. (2 Chronicles 7:1)

The Shekinah presence abode there until the sin and willful disobedience of the people caused Him to withdraw and return to heaven. Ezekiel saw the vision of the departure of the Glory:

Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city. (Ezekiel 11:22, 23)

The Glory lifted and paused a moment as if loathe to leave sinner man. He lingered a moment, but there was no turning back to God on the part of the people. So, the Glory withdrew to the walls of Jerusalem, and there for another brief moment He lingered; but still there was no turning back to God on the part of the people. The Glory passed over the

walls to the Mount of Olives and rested for one last moment, and we may well imagine that it was with tear-stained eyes that He consigned that sinful city to the Babylonian captivity. Then quite suddenly, He was caught up to heaven. At some future day the Glory will stand again on the Mount of Olives, not bent on departure but on coming again to the earth.

Both Israel and Judah, the divided kingdom, went into captivity. After seventy years in Babylonian captivity, a remnant of Judah returned, along with some from the other tribes. The temple was rebuilt, but no evidence persuades us that the Glory returned. In truth, the temple was “left unto them desolate” (see Matthew 23:38 and Luke 13:35). For four hundred years the heavens were silent and the sky was brass. No message came from God. After Malachi had spoken, all was silence.

Then one day a priest was about the weary round of a cold ritual of a stagnant religion. As he served in his course at the altar of incense, an angel appeared — the silence was broken and God again was speaking out of heaven.

All this was but the preparation for the coming of the Glory again, but with this difference: This time the Glory was to be veiled in human flesh and was to walk among men, not secluded in the awful sanctity of the Holy of Holies. The Glory this time would eat with publicans and sinners. On that auspicious and conspicuous night the Shekinah Glory, the Second Person of the Godhead, appeared and took upon Himself human flesh. Jesus was born back of an inn in a stable, was wrapped in swaddling clothes and lay in a manger. God was dwelling among men. Joy to the world, the Savior is born — Immanuel, God with us. This time He was dwelling in human flesh, a tabernacle not made with hands, but by the supernatural act of the Holy Spirit on the virgin’s womb.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt [tabernacled — *eskenosen*] *among us.* (John 1:14)

His body was His temple. On one occasion He said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19). Those who heard this thought that He meant the desolate temple of cold stone, called Herod’s temple, that had become a place of merchandise and a den of thieves. But He referred to His own body, and even His disciples did not

get the full implication until they stood in the resurrection light.

His enemies did destroy “this” body, God’s tabernacle. Sinful man does not want God to dwell with him. How erroneous is the modern but ancient notion that man is seeking after God, and religion is the result of man’s labors, and its evolution is the crown of success of man’s efforts. Man is not seeking after God, but is running from Him as the father of the race did in Eden. God is the One seeking and searching; “Where art thou, Adam?” (see Genesis 3:9) is God’s longing after man’s leaving. Man in rebellion does not want God ruling over him. It is ever, “We will not have this man to rule over us.” That is not only the cry of the mob, but is the final decision of a lost race.

It is written, “There they crucified him” (Luke 23:33). They destroyed His body — “this temple.” On the third day He raised up the earthly temple as a Glorified One in which the Glory shone through, but He took that Temple back to heaven. There He will abide until the time of restitution of all things when that Temple will again be seen on this earth and when His feet shall stand again upon the Mount of Olives.

In the interval between the rejection of the King and the reception of the King, between the cross and the crown, between the upper room and the upper air, between His humiliation and exaltation, between the *parousia* of grace and *parousia* of glory, He is building a dwelling place again among men. This time it is altogether new. His church is His temple that He is building in this age:

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:5)

This is the new thing that God is doing that characterizes this age. Under this figure of a temple, the purpose of the church is further disclosed:

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. (1 Peter 2:9)

Also, the individual believer is said to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit:

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (1 Corinthians 6:19)

When Paul began with the expression “Know ye not,” and he used it several times, it is always imperative to add that those addressed “knew not.” This is the truth in connection with a dwelling place of God that is peculiar to this age. God now indwells each believer; this is the unique fact of this dispensation. This truth alone distinguishes the church age from all others, for never could it be said in any other age that the believer’s body is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, it cannot be said in this age that there is a possibility of God taking His Holy Spirit away from the believer, as David prayed. God now dwells in each believer. This is a more permanent arrangement and is far more superior than dwelling with man. This is the unique fact of this age.

The Tabernacle in the wilderness is therefore just a link in a chain of God’s different dwelling places with man. It is of tremendous importance because it furnishes the true typology for the Person and the work of Christ. The Tabernacle is an adequate adumbration of Christ. It is the correct place to look for the true figures of His theanthropic Person and vicarious work. It sets forth more accurately the death of Christ than did the temple that superseded it and the sacrifices prior to it. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews adopted it as setting forth the things of Christ. In fact, the typology of the Tabernacle sets forth in a clear, concise manner the doctrine of the New Testament. It is God’s story book with pictures for babes in Christ. It is well at this juncture to recall the dictum of Ernst W. Hengstenberg in his *Christology*: “The elucidation of the doctrine of types, now entirely neglected, is an important problem for future theologians.”² The theology of the Tabernacle is set forth in typology. A consideration of its types will well repay the time and trouble spent in a study of their meanings.

Before turning to a detailed consideration of the Tabernacle, there remain other general remarks that require elucidation.

Mention has been made beforehand that the Tabernacle was constructed of earthly materials. These earthly materials were the physical

possessions of the people. God did not provide miraculously the materials out of which the Tabernacle was constructed as He did the manna from heaven or water from the rock. The people supplied the materials as a free-will offering.

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. (Exodus 25:2)

There follows this passage in Exodus a detailed enumeration of the different materials that they were to furnish. Many and varied were the materials mentioned.

There were materials of great value. Different estimates have been made by scholars as to the value of the materials that went into the construction of the Tabernacle. These vary from 185,250 English pounds³ to 250,000 English pounds.⁴ A conservative estimation of the value of the Tabernacle is between one-half to one million dollars. This is a staggering amount in light of their circumstances and modern giving. Certainly, this was no seventeen-dollar offering made from a rummage sale or pie supper given by the Ladies' Missionary Society of Israel.

The question naturally arises as to where these people, so soon out of slavery, got this many material things. Careful consideration will reveal that they literally drained the wealth of Egypt when they left. They collected back pay for their long years of slavery, for Egypt was in arrears in the matter of reimbursing Israel for long hours of labor:

And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed [aistesei — ask, demand; collecting what was due them] of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent [gave] unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians. (Exodus 12:35, 36)

The children of Israel left Egypt wealthy in the things of this world. As an earthly people, it was fitting and proper that they should possess the physical things of the earth. When the Jews return in the future to

Palestine, they will again take the wealth of the world with them (Isaiah 60:9, 16). The money capital of the world is Jerusalem in God's future program (Zechariah 14:14). The Christian, as a heavenly citizen and as a pilgrim and a stranger in the earth, has a higher aim than gathering the wealth of this world. His treasure is in heaven, and his riches are the riches of God's grace.

The Israelites were to bring their gifts willingly. This was a new experience for slaves who had been compelled to do everything. God placed no compulsion on them to give; all was to be a free-will offering. The gifts of labor and of material things were not to be made grudgingly or of necessity. No slave labor was to enter into God's dwelling place. No forced help could build it. God redeemed the Israelites and they had to serve Him freely. God could only inhabit a dwelling place that was the fruit of thankfulness. This twenty-second Psalm that speaks so audibly of the redeeming death of Christ on the cross makes it perfectly clear that God dwells only in the heart songs of His redeemed people.

But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. (Psalm 22:3)

In the light of the present day failure in giving to the Lord scripturally, the thoughtful mind is led to inquire: How did these people respond to God's method and motive in giving? The answer is stated simply:

And they spake unto Moses, saying, 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. (Exodus 36:5, 6)

This is probably the only instance on record where people were asked to refrain from giving to the Lord's work. God never commands His people to give, but there is an occasion where He commanded them not to give — this is it. This statement is made in full knowledge that Israel was commanded to bring the tithe to the priests. But the tithe is part of

the Mosaic economy. It was never considered as giving to the Lord, but rather as keeping the Law. Israel was a theocracy, with the priesthood as the center of government as well as of religion, and the tithe was for the support of the priesthood. There is some evidence to support the theory that Israel paid three tithes (sermon notes — Dr. A. C. Dudley), but the tithe is wholly related to the Law and is for a people under the Law as a national institution. Most assuredly, there is no suggestion that a Christian under grace is not to tithe. Giving is not on the basis of law but of grace. Paul, in urging the Corinthians to give, is careful to state, “I speak not by commandment” (2 Corinthians 8:8).

One other general statement concerning the Tabernacle that needs amplification is a consideration of the blueprint of it. Moses did not draw up the plans and submit them to the people for their approval. Neither did a committee function in order to arrive at the measurements. This is not the method by which they came to conclusions about details. It was not left to Moses or Israel to decide the plans.

And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it. (Exodus 25:8, 9)

God gave the blueprint for every detail: the color of the curtains, the type of tent-pin, the number of boards, and the size and shape of the articles of furniture. It was not God’s suggestions augmented by the ingenuity of man; nothing was left to the imagination of man. There was no guesswork in the designs. It was not man’s ideas plus the approval of God. It is barely possible that Moses and Aaron could have made the place more pleasing to the natural man. However, that is not a legitimate presumption, for it was God’s dwelling place, and it had to please Him and meet His requirements. The Tabernacle was not man’s speculation on how things ought to be, but God’s arrangement on how things must be for Him to dwell with a lost race. This is very important. Again and again Moses’ attention was drawn to the fact that each item was to be made according to the pattern shown him in the holy mount. Even the men who constructed the Tabernacle were Spirit-directed men. It was

not even left to their ingenuity to follow faithfully the blueprints, but the Spirit supervised the building of the many parts (Exodus 31:1-6).

Why was God so insistent on such strict adherence to the minutest details? It is evident that since God is the only One who can solve the problem of establishing a dwelling place for Him with man (a Holy God with sinner man), His solution to the problem is the only one that will accomplish this purpose. Therefore, strict adherence to His will accomplishes this wonderful benefit for man. His insistence to the details is part of His graciousness. It is not dogmatism or selfishness, but a wonderful revelation of the love and grace of God in wanting man to receive that which will bring him to the heart of God when all else has failed.

However, this explanation does not exhaust the meaning of God's injunction, "According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle" (Exodus 25:9). Scripture suggests other implications. The blueprints were taken from another Tabernacle. The Wilderness Tabernacle was a miniature and model of a Tabernacle in heaven. In the ninth chapter of Hebrews the writer begins by describing the Wilderness Tabernacle and the service of it. He shows that Christ fulfilled the Wilderness Tabernacle and its service, and is therefore better than it, for it was merely a figure. He sums up the meaning of the Wilderness Tabernacle with these words:

Which [Wilderness Tabernacle] was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But 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 for us. (Hebrews 9:9-12, emphasis mine)

The Wilderness Tabernacle was not only an adumbration of Christ but

also of a Tabernacle in heaven. There is the original Tabernacle in heaven, and the one on earth was merely a figure.

Does this imply that there is a literal Tabernacle in heaven, and the one on earth was only a duplication? If by literal interpretation we understand that it is one of earthly materials, certainly the answer is an emphatic “No!” But if we understand that there is a real Tabernacle in heaven, and through it there is the only approach to God, then the answer must be in the affirmative. There is in heaven a Tabernacle as real as the Wilderness Tabernacle, for the Wilderness Tabernacle conformed to it and corresponded to its detail.

The Wilderness Tabernacle is merely a figure, and the genuine cannot be less real than the figure. The words of Ford C. Ottman are pertinent at this point. Speaking of figurative language in Scripture, he says in *God's Oath*: “But we must remember that it is figurative of facts, and beyond Scripture we cannot go to determine what the facts may be.”⁵ It is highly illogical to make the facts less real than the figure. The Tabernacle in heaven is a reality. But how are we to consider the reality? Scripture uses fire as a symbol of hell. Does this mean that hell is a literal fire? The use of the symbol of fire does not force such a conclusion, but it does mean that hell is a reality, and fire is the best symbol that can convey to our feeble minds the awfulness of hell. The symbol can never be more real or actual than that which it symbolizes. Fire is a very feeble figure of hell but it furnishes the best figure for our thinking. Let us further illustrate this use of symbolic language. Mental suffering is more acute than physical. Nevertheless, a figure must be adopted to describe intelligently the intensity of such suffering. A person suffering from some mental malady could describe the disease as producing a sensation like a knife cutting across the brain. There was in reality no knife, but the pain was more intense than if there had actually been one. Symbolic language cannot be explained away into thin air, especially since the symbol is less than that of which it speaks.

Is it possible for us to identify this Tabernacle in heaven? Although the Tabernacle in its final explanation is an adumbration of Christ, that is evidently not the thought here, for the blueprints were of a heavenly sanctuary. Again, the Tabernacle in the wilderness was a figure of the humani-

ty of Christ as well as of His deity. His humanity was not in existence, and certainly was not in heaven at the time of the giving of the pattern to Moses. His humanity was formed in the Virgin Mary on this earth in the little town of Nazareth and was brought into this world at Bethlehem.

There is a sanctuary in heaven that corresponded to the earthly Tabernacle which furnishes us with some of the geography of heaven. Sin has not only entered the human family on this earth, but it extends to the whole creation of God, even to heaven. God evidently abides in a heavenly Tabernacle to protect the creation from His holiness. If God dealt only in righteousness and justice, He would be forced to destroy in judgment His universe and creatures touched by sin. This heavenly Tabernacle sets forth His redemption by the blood of Christ and makes it possible for God in righteousness to salvage His creation.

And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.
(Colossians 1:20)

In this Tabernacle, Christ is the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. When He died on the cross, He ascended with His own blood into the heavenly Tabernacle:

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 for us. (Hebrews 9:12)

We are not going to insist that Christ presented His literal blood in heaven, but we do insist that such an explanation is tenable and is in perfect harmony with Scripture. The commentaries consulted on this passage in the ninth of Hebrews, for the most part, avoid any explanation as to whether Christ presented His blood literally or not. However, there are commentators who face this question. Frederick Grant, in *The Numerical Bible*, places the emphasis on the phrase, “having obtained eternal redemption for us,” and draws the conclusion that Christ did not present His literal blood in heaven.⁶ The fact that He returned to heaven is evidence of a finished redemption. Dr. A. T. Robertson, in his word

studies, suggests the literalness of the offering of the blood in heaven. In his comment on Acts 20:28, where the preposition (*dia*) is used with the genitive (*tow idiou aimatos*), he states this is the preposition used with the genitive to denote agency. B. F. Westcott says that it is *means* (*dia*), but not *mode* (*meta*): Christ through His own blood. A comparison as made between the approach of the high priest on the great Day of Atonement into the Holy of Holies and the approach of Christ into the heavenly sanctuary is evidently correct as Franz Delitzsch in his commentary has well pointed out: “And since it is by means of this, His own blood, that Christ enters into the Holy of Holies (even as the Levitical high priest made his entrance by means of the blood of goats and calves).”⁷ However, Delitzsch concludes that Christ did not present His literal blood in heaven separate from the body. It is his conclusion that the glorified body of Christ did contain blood. And that, in our judgment, is the inevitable conclusion of those who reject the presentation of the literal blood in heaven. The blood was presented in the glorified body of Christ, according to Delitzsch. There is a host of scholars who think that the blood was presented separately as did the high priest in the old economy; among these are such names as Hofman, Bengel, Oetinger, Steinhofer, and a company of present-day students of the Scriptures.

Actually, what did become of the blood of Christ? His blood was shed and He was raised in a glorified body that is described by Himself as a body with flesh and bone (see Luke 24:39). Yet Scripture also says “that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (2 Corinthians 15:50). The implication is that the glorified body of our Lord did not contain blood. What the life-giving elements are in the natural body is evidently not the motivating force in the glorified body. At this point of our discussion we are not attempting to force dogmatic opinions, but to suggest some possibilities. Is the blood of Christ, therefore, like the blood of Abel, spilt and crying unto God from the ground (see Genesis 4:10)? That seems tenable, for the writer to the Hebrews says that the blood of Christ “speaketh better things than that of Abel” (Hebrews 12:24). The blood of Christ was evidently presented by Himself at the throne of God, either in His glorified body or out of it. His body was evidently a bloodless one. The inference, therefore, is that

Christ presented His blood in heaven as an atonement for sin (see Hebrews 9:14; 10:19).

The objection to the idea that the blood of Christ was presented in heaven is that it offends the sensibilities of folk. It is contrary to the highest aesthetic tastes of culture and civilization. To this we would affirm that the whole Bible doctrine of blood atonement is offensive to the natural man. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan made a timely retort to a listener one time who remarked that the cross with its blood was crude and offensive. "There is nothing crude and offensive I see in the cross with its blood but your sin and mine," was Dr. Morgan's rejoinder. The liberal theologian discounts the blood with this sneering remark, "I do not care for a religion of the shambles; there shall be no slaughterhouse religion for me." The cross of Christ with its attendant blood ever remains a stumbling block and foolishness to the world.

Over against man's hasty estimation of the blood there stands God's evaluation of it:

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. (1 Peter 1:18, 19)

That which is precious to God would not be out of place in His heaven. To those in heaven, the blood of Christ will not be offensive since the redeemed in heaven will sing about it:

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. (Revelation 5:9)

The crudity of having the literal blood of Christ in heaven exists alone in the minds of those who consider it such. God will not destroy or remove from Him that which is precious.

The shed blood of Christ enables God to go forward with His program of redemption (Colossians 1:20). Our great High Priest has ascended into

heaven, and has taken His seat on the right hand of God in the Holy of Holies. As He is in heaven in a literal body, He likewise presented His literal blood in a real Tabernacle in heaven. The blood furnishes meaning for the program of God, and it is the very foundation of His purposes in all His creation, whether in heaven or earth. God's universe is redemption-centric. Why would it be consistent for that which is the symbol of a suffering Deity, and which is the basis of the inauguration of the divine undertaking, to be absent from the presence of God? His blood has made the judgment-seat of God a mercy seat where we sinners can come with boldness (Hebrews 10:19-22). The high priest in the Aaronic order did not dare linger in the Holy of Holies, but our great High Priest has sat down on the right hand of God in the *Sanctum Sanctorum* (Hebrews 10:12). One day He will arise from His Father's throne of grace and will come forth to take His own to be with Him (Hebrews 9:28). During the intervening time, those who are Christ's through faith in Him have a position in Him that lifts them into the heavenlies, which is the Holy of Holies. All believing children are even now "in Christ" inside the veil, closeted with Him positionally. These who once were shut out from God's presence because of sin are now lifted into the heavenly Tabernacle into the very *Sanctum Sanctorum*. There was a place where the high priest of the old order did not dare to linger or make a mistake, and where he only came once a year and always with blood; that place in the true sanctuary is the rightful portion and position of every true child of God in this dispensation, where he loves to linger and where he even makes confession of his sins (1 John 1:9).

Near, so very near to God,
Nearer I cannot be
For, in the person of His Son,
I am as near as He.

Dear, so very dear to God,
Dearer I cannot be,
For, in the person of His Son,
I am as dear as He.⁸

CHAPTER II

THE ALTAR OF BRASS: THE DOCTRINE OF SATISFACTION

*Where Satisfaction is Made to the Holiness of God that
Wholly and Completely Vindicates the Sinner*

The blueprints and patterns for the Tabernacle are given in the latter part of the Book of Exodus (Chapters 25 — 40). The placing of these instructions is not accidental. Exodus is the book of redemption. It opens in the gloom of slavery of a nation born in the brickyards of Egypt; it closes in the glory of the Tabernacle. It tells the story of how God came down and delivered a people whose only appeal to His heart of love was their need, suffering, and burden. He did not deliver them because they were good folk, moral people, or better than others; these things were not true of them. They had no claim on God whatsoever, but “they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage” (Exodus 2:23). Their destitute condition and hopeless circumstance made a real appeal to God stronger than a hoop of steel. For that reason — and because of His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob — He led them out of Egyptian bondage. He brought them to Himself on the wings of infinite grace. Through Moses, He told them the manner of their release: “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself” (Exodus 19:4). At Sinai they were given the privilege of substituting the Law route for the grace route — eagles’ wings for the yoke of the Law. Even with law, which cannot save, there must be some manifestation of grace, else there can be no salvation. These people stood utterly condemned by the Law; so it was essential to have the intrusion of a way of grace. In other words, God must be free to save sinners who are now law-breakers with the offense added to and magnified. The Tabernacle was the means of grace for a people who deliberately chose law instead of the wings of grace.

The Law was in three divisions: the commandments, the judgments, and the ordinances. The commandments were an expression of the

Person of God. He commands what He does because of what He is. The judgments conditioned the relationship of man toward those about him. The ordinances conditioned the relationship of man toward God. The instructions for the Tabernacle were found in the ordinances.

The ordinances provided a temporary hiding place for the sinner in the presence of the holiness of God. In the midst of the Tabernacle instructions, between the giving of the instructions and the construction of the Tabernacle, there is the incident where God hid Moses in the cleft of the rock. The Tabernacle was a cleft in the rock for sinning Israel until the revelation of God in human form, the Lord Jesus Christ. All this was done in anticipation of the work of Christ upon the cross.

The ordinances are as much a part of the Mosaic Law as the commandments. The only proper distinction between them is found inherently in them. The subject matter makes the division. If it is proper to make a comparison where all is divine, it is very likely that the ordinances were the more important, as they provided an acceptance for a sinner who had broken God's commandments. It is well for those who do not make a clear-cut distinction between law and grace to see this; namely that there can be no division made between the commandments and ordinances that neglects one while exalting the other. The dispensation of the Law did not make a basis of acceptance before God of a sinner by keeping the commandments, but by providing a substitutionary sacrifice in the Tabernacle as contained in the ordinances. If a person in this age desires to thrust himself back under the Mosaic Law he must, in order to be logical, construct for himself a tabernacle in which to make sacrifices as contained in the ordinances. By what authority can one make such radical differences between the commandments and the ordinances? There are no just grounds for any such division.

The Christian has been delivered from the Law in all of its parts. It is not his rule of life, for he has been lifted to a higher plane of living. Deliverance from the Law does not lower the standard of living under grace, but lifts it to a more exalted sphere. Christ has completely fulfilled the Law. In His life He fulfilled the commandments and judgments; in His death He fulfilled the ordinances relating to a sacrifice for

sin. The Law in all of its manifold parts is but a lesson to lead Christians to better things.

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. (Hebrews 10:1)

Those who insist on thrusting the church back under the Law have not provided a tabernacle made according to the pattern shown Moses on the mount. The Mosaic Law requires the Tabernacle. Without it Judaism was the most hopeless religion ever offered to mankind, ten thousand times darker than paganism, for Judaism revealed a plane of living and an ideal that were unattainable. It had the ethic but lacked the dynamic.

But it is absurd to insist that there should be such a tabernacle today, and it is equally absurd to include the Christian under any part of the Mosaic system to the exclusion of the other parts. The Mosaic system served as one of the highway markers, pointing on to Christ and to His cross as the place where God completely and finally worked out in His sufficiency and suffering a way back to Himself for man. The Law was given to lead the sinner to Christ:

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. (Galatians 3:24)

What God demanded in the Law He now supplies freely to those who do no more than to believe in Jesus.

There is a very striking feature about the blueprints for building the Tabernacle. The instructions for the articles of furniture were given first. This is not the commonly accepted method of doing things today. The choosing of the furniture is always reserved for a time when the interior of the house is finished — not so with God's house. The furniture came first. The purpose in this method will become more and more evident as we continue in this study. Suffice it to say here that the articles of furniture constituted the approach to God. The Tabernacle proper merely furnished a housing for the furniture. About these articles of

furniture cluster all the meaning of the Tabernacle worship; the furniture, therefore, is the most important part of the Tabernacle. The position of these articles in the Tabernacle lent dignity to their place (e.g., the Holy of Holies was so called because of the presence of the ark and mercy seat). We should not be surprised to find God putting first things first, and therefore giving precedence to the instructions concerning the furniture.

These articles of furniture pictured the Person and work of Christ in redemption, but no article was a picture or image of Him. The second commandment was strictly adhered to in the furnishings of the Tabernacle:

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. (Exodus 20:4-6)

In all the furniture of the Tabernacle, there is a careful avoidance of making an image of God. In no detail was Deity photographed. All was by way of suggestion and shadow. There was no idol in the Tabernacle; in a world of idolatry, this was a unique feature about it that should arrest the attention of any thinking person. In an age wholly committed to the worship of idols, there was a purposeful absence of idolatry in the Tabernacle. This is even more striking and strange when we remember that these people had lately come out of Egypt where idols were numerous, and had themselves constructed a golden calf to worship. It is amazing to note that the most important part of the Tabernacle was not an image or idol, but furniture.

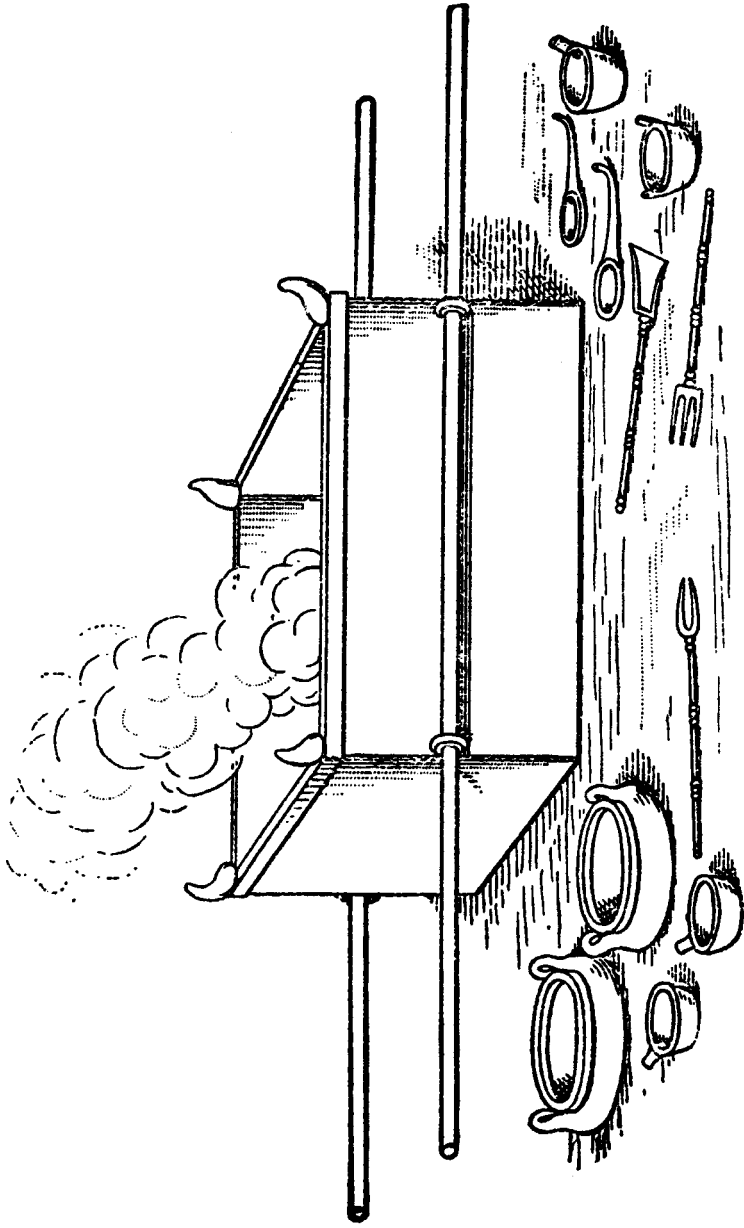
There were seven articles of furniture: the ark, the mercy seat, the altar of incense, the table of shewbread, the lampstand of gold, the laver of brass, and the altar of brass. These articles occupied the following

respective places: two articles in the Holy of Holies — ark and mercy seat; three articles in the Holy Place — table of shewbread, lampstand of gold, and altar of incense; two articles in the outer court — altar of brass and laver of brass.

The first plan among the articles of furniture that God gave to Moses was that of the ark. The plan of the mercy seat was linked with that of the ark, as both belonged together. An emphasis is given in Scripture to the ark that is not ascribed to other articles of the Tabernacle furnishings. Even a cursory examination by a casual reader of these instructions would give the impression that the ark was the most important part of the Tabernacle plan, as well as the leading article of furniture — the ark and mercy seat being the very center of the divine plan. The ark thus epitomized all that the Tabernacle stood for in the minds of God's people. It played a prominent part in the history of Israel. When the ark was in its rightful place in the thinking of Israel, there was a real blessing; when, on the other hand, it was relegated to a secondary place, the blessing was withheld. It was the ark, as the preeminent piece of furniture, that David brought up to Jerusalem. In the plans of the Tabernacle, God again placed first things first.

Furthermore, the brazen altar was given last, together with the laver. It now becomes evident that in this thesis I am changing the order of the articles as given in the command to Moses. Why change the divine order of things by considering the last first and the first last? It is well to remember that these instructions were God's own and were issued from His viewpoint as He abode in the Holy of Holies, looking out to the sinner on the outside. The instructions move from Jehovah out to the sinner. Jehovah was in His temple in the Holy of Holies, but the sinner stood without, and forever shut out unless Jehovah brought him to Himself. Man should take his rightful place as sinner and move in toward Jehovah. What was to God the last article of furniture as He looked out was to the sinner as he came in the first article of furniture.

We pause to make this comment: What a contrast this is with the Laodicean condition that is prevalent in the present-day church, where Christ is apparently out of the church and is found standing at individ-



THE ALTAR OF BRASS

ual heart doors and knocking for an entrance. Under the Old Testament economy, the sinner had to make certain sacrifices to get in to God; he did the knocking. Now the Lord Jesus stands outside of individual hearts and knocks. Then, a sinner had to be brought to God; now, God comes to the sinner.

The specifications for constructing the brazen altar are found in Exodus 27:

And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height hereof shall be three cubits. And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns shall be of the same: and thou shalt overlay it with brass. And thou shalt make his pans to receive his ashes, and his shovels, and his basins, and his fleshhooks, and his firepans: all the vessels thereof thou shalt make of brass. And thou shalt make for it a grate of network of brass; and upon the net shalt thou make four brasen rings in the four corners thereof. And thou shalt put it under the compass of the altar beneath, that the net may be even to the midst of the altar. And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with brass. And the staves shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar, to bear it. Hollow with boards shalt thou make it: as it was shewed thee in the mount, so shall they make it. (Exodus 27:1-8)

The brazen altar was constructed of shittim (or acacia) wood overlaid with brass. Shittim is a hard, durable, and close-grained wood. Josephus speaks of its strength. Dr. J. T. Davis in his Bible Dictionary says that it was used for shipbuilding in Egypt. It grew in the wilderness through which Israel marched for forty years, and it furnished all the wood for the Tabernacle. The altar was five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high. Just how long the cubit was is not easily ascertained. Some of the lengths given for the Hebrew cubit are: 17.70, 18.22, 18.36, and 18.9 inches long. It is impossible to be dogmatic

about the length of the cubit, and there is much speculation on the subject, but these measurements are conservative, coming from Dr. Davis.

The altar was overlaid with brass, from which it gets its name, brazen altar. Half-way up the sides of the altar there was a grating of brass. One and one-half cubits from the ground and one and one-half cubits from the top this grating was fastened with four brazen rings. Two staves were made to carry the altar on the wilderness march. The staves were made of shittim wood, overlaid with brass, and ran through rings on the sides.

This altar was sometimes called the table of the Lord or the altar of burnt offering, and it stood at the very entrance of the Tabernacle:

And he put the altar of burnt offering by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the meat offering; as the LORD commanded Moses. (Exodus 40:29)

It was the first object that confronted the sinner at the entrance of the Tabernacle. It was on this altar that every sacrifice was made in Israel. There were five offerings in the Levitical ritual, and all of these were made on this altar. The burnt offering was made thereon:

And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces. And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire. (Leviticus 1:5-7)

The meat offering was made thereon:

And thou shalt bring the meat offering that is made of these things unto the LORD: and when it is presented unto the priest, he shall bring it unto the altar. And the priest shall take from the meat offering a memorial thereof, and shall burn it upon the altar: it is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. (Leviticus 2:8, 9)

The peace offering was made thereon:

And Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which is upon the wood that is on the fire: it is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. (Leviticus 3:5)

The sin offering was made thereon:

As it was taken off from the bullock of the sacrifice of peace offerings: and the priest shall burn them upon the altar of the burnt offering. (Leviticus 4:10)

The trespass offering was made thereon:

And he shall offer the second for a burnt offering, according to the manner: and the priest shall make an atonement for him for his sin which he hath sinned, and it shall be forgiven him. (Leviticus 5:10)

On the great Day of Atonement, two goats were brought in to the brazen altar, and the one which was not the scapegoat was offered on the brazen altar:

And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. (Leviticus 16:9)

Israel was forbidden to erect an altar in any other place for sacrifice. It was God's command that offerings be made only upon this altar. In the recorded history of Israel, it is written that the people built altars elsewhere and served heathen gods, which God condemned through the prophets. Most of the written prophecies contain a polemic against idolatry; Isaiah furnishes an instance of this in the forty-sixth chapter. Elijah, who wrote prophecy but left no record of it (2 Chronicles 21:12), stood on Mt. Carmel, a solitary figure testifying to the true altar that was broken down.

Finally, all twelve tribes went into captivity; the ten tribes of the northern kingdom were carried to Assyria, and the two tribes of the southern kingdom were carried away to Babylon. One of the reasons given when the northern kingdom of Israel went into Assyrian captivi-

ty was their disregard for the statutes of God and their service at the altars of other gods.

For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods....And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities....And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree: and there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger: for they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing. Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. (2 Kings 17:7, 9-13)

Every lamb that was sacrificed during the interval of the Tabernacle as a substitute for a sinner Israelite or sinning Israel was offered on the brazen altar. It was the unique place of sacrifice. The blood of bulls and goats was shed in profusion about this altar. It was the place of substitution for Israel, for the brazen altar was a figure of the cross of Christ. Leviticus 1:9 and Ephesians 5:2, when compared, have this analogy: The offering of the burnt offering on the brazen altar and the offering of Christ of Himself in His glorious Person on the cross are both called a “sweet savour” unto God. The brazen altar finds a perfect fulfillment in the work of Christ upon the cross. A further analogy is found in the materials of construction and in the purpose of the brazen altar as compared with the accomplishment of Christ on the cross. This we will now examine.

The altar was of brass. This was the identifying feature in it. Brass in the divine arrangement speaks of judgment of sin. To illustrate this, we

go to the Book of Revelation. On the Isle of Patmos, John's first vision was that of the ascended Christ who is coming in all His glory some day to judge sin.

For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. (John 5:22)

At His first coming, Christ did not come to judge. On one occasion, when one of the company asked Christ to speak to his brother about the inheritance, He abruptly responded, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (Luke 12:14). Again, Christ said, "Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man" (John 8:15). Nevertheless, one of the titles at His coming again will be that of Judge, "the Lord, the righteous judge" (2 Timothy 4:8); "the judge standeth before the door" (James 5:9). This vision that John had on Patmos is Christ in His holy glory as Judge of all the earth. When John saw this One, he "fell at his feet as dead" (Revelation 1:17). How strange in the light of the fact that John was the one who reclined upon His bosom at the Last Supper in the upper room! Here he falls at His feet as dead, but this Judge is righteous and His first word to John is "fear not." John's sin had been put away perfectly at the cross and judged there, and he had passed from judgment unto life. One of the features noted about the glorious vision was that the Judge had feet like brass:

And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.
(Revelation 1:15)

When He comes the second time, He rests everything He does on judgment. Before, He was the criminal at the bar of judgment, taking our place; then, He will be the Judge upon the bench in His rightful and own position. Next time, He works on the basis of judgment. This One with feet of brass will smite the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Gentile world powers) upon the feet of miry clay and iron. This One with feet of brass will tread the winepress of the wrath of God. Isaiah gives us this picture of Christ coming to judge:

I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there

was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth. (Isaiah 63:3-6)

This refers to Christ's second coming to the earth to set up His kingdom. John was given this same scene in his vision, and he makes record of it in Revelation 19:11-21. When Christ came the first time, He bore the judgment of sin in Himself on the cross. When He comes the second time, it will be to inflict judgment on sin. Those who refused to accept His judgment that He bore, must receive the judgment of sin themselves when He returns. If His judgment on sin at His second coming seems terrible, let it be remembered that He bore that judgment Himself, and those who will have it so can escape the coming judgment. The brass of the brazen altar speaks of the judgment of Christ upon the cross for the sin of the world.

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.
(2 Corinthians 5:21)

The fire of the brazen altar likewise speaks of judgment. Fire, associated in Scripture with the judgment of sin, is the symbol of hell itself — the ultimate place for the punishment of sin:

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (Revelation 20:10)

We are not concerned here about a literal fire. Suffice it to say that the language is symbolic. What it is a symbol of, is another question. Fire is connected here with judgment on sin whether it be literal or not.

The fire of the brazen altar was never quenched, and it was not permitted to expire: “The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out” (Leviticus 6:13). The fire of judgment was to burn continually and continuously. As long as there is sin, there is judgment.

There were three phases connected with the brazen altar which set forth in a threefold manner the teaching of it as a symbol of the cross. These three were relative to the altar and its service. They are as follows: (1) The one making the sacrifice, the sacrificer. (2) The substitute, the sacrifice. (3) The Altar, the place of sacrifice. These three will now be considered in this order.

(1) *The One Making the Sacrifice, the Sacrificer*: The Israelite on the outside, who was a sinner, was forever shut out from the presence of God. He brought his sacrifice to the door of the Tabernacle, and there he slew it at the side of the altar:

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock. If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD. And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. (Leviticus 1:2-5)

The Israelite could proceed no farther than the side of the brazen altar. There he halted and offered his sacrifice (“it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him”), and the animal substituted for him. The blood of the animal covered over his sin, and made him a forgiven sinner. This did not give him the prerogative to go into God’s presence. From this point on he went into the presence of God in the person of the priesthood, Aaron’s son. The nation went into the Holy of Holies only

once a year in the person of the high priest who took in blood for the sins of the people. The individual sinner only got into God's very presence in a corporate group, through the person of the high priest. From the brazen altar, there was not only substitution in the sacrifice itself but in the personnel of those engaged in service and worship. The sinner Israelite went only so far, and there substitution took place. An animal died for his sins, and then the high priest went into the presence of God for him on the basis of that sacrifice. This very fact precluded any notion that there was finality in the service of the Tabernacle or that the comers thereunto were made perfect. From the brazen altar, the sinner went into the presence of God only in the person of a substitute, a priest. Both the sacrifice and the sacrificer substituted for the sinner Israelite.

In this present age, God is drawing out a people unto Himself. These are the (*ekklesia*) called-out ones. They are sinners without respect to race, color, sex, condition, circumstance, or of the dispensational difference of Jew and Gentile. All are made one in Christ. This is fully set forth in the second chapter of Ephesians:

And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. (Ephesians 2:16, 17)

This new relationship in Christ is realized through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. "Ye must be born again" is a commandment used of the Holy Spirit in His work of regeneration of the sinner. "The Son of Man must be lifted up" is the *must* of the Second Person of the Godhead. "Ye must be born again" is the *must* of the Third Person of the holy Godhead (see John 3:7, 14). All a sinner can do is to receive Christ as his own personal Savior. This acceptance by the sinner of the "must" work of Christ procures for him the "must" work of the Holy Spirit:

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his

name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12, 13)

To receive Christ is the “must” work of the sinner, and this is imperative. It is a simple and easy matter for the sinner in one sense, but that does not lessen its importance. A sinner must be born again. When a sinner accepts Christ’s work *for* him, the Holy Spirit does a work *in* him. This is the infallible identification of a Christian.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. (Galatians 6:15)

Christ died that the Holy Spirit might take a rebellious sinner, deserving the wrath of God, and make him an obedient son, a recipient of the favor of God. The sinner is brought into the family and household of God. The new birth that brings him into the family of God not only makes him a son of God, but also a priest unto God. He is born again into a priestly family.

Only those of the tribe of Levi were priests in Israel. It was a birth privilege, and not a badge of merit. Paul could never have been a priest in the Mosaic economy; he was a member of the tribe of Benjamin. No priest ever came from that tribe. Even the Lord Jesus could never have been a priest in the earthly sanctuary. He was of the tribe of Judah. It was the kingly tribe but not the priestly tribe. King Uzziah of this tribe was smitten with leprosy for intruding into the office of priest. Every priest in Israel was born a priest.

The new birth that makes a son out of a sinner, not only brings him into the family and household of faith, but also brings him into a priestly family. At the moment of the new birth the sinner is made both a son and a priest as it is written:

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ....But ye are a chosen generation, a

royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. (1 Peter 2:5, 9)

Believers constitute “a kingdom of priests” (Revelation 1:6; 5:10 ARV).

It was God’s original purpose with Israel that the whole nation should be “a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Exodus 19:6), but the nation so miserably failed that God only used one tribe of the twelve to serve in the Tabernacle. The superiority of the church over the nation Israel is evidenced here, for the believer priest today is brought into his exalted position through the Person and work of his great High Priest, the Lord Jesus, and he can no more lose the privilege of his priesthood than he can lose his sonship. The Christian is a believer priest today, and he does not stop at the cross but is “in Christ in the heavenlies” in position, and is permitted to come “into the holiest by the blood of Jesus” (Hebrews 10:19), and this he does with boldness. What exalted position and glorious privileges belong to the believer in this present age of grace! The tribe of Levi had come by the brazen altar. We do not have to remain outside as did the nation Israel, because we have been made priests by the blood of the Lamb, and are bidden to come with boldness to His throne of grace. This precious truth will occupy our minds in a succeeding chapter.

(2) *The Substitute, the Sacrifice.* The sacrifice was a substitute for the sinner:

And he [the sacrificer] shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. (Leviticus 1:4)

The Israelite slew the sacrifice at the side of the altar with his hand placed upon its head, thus identifying himself with the sacrifice. This whole act speaks of substitution. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4) is the unalterable law of God that transcends all dispensations, and forever abideth the unchangeable law of an unchangeable God. This law expresses the character of a changeless God who would be untrue to Himself should He deviate one hair’s breadth from this dic-

tum. Because of His character, He cannot compromise with sin, for should He do so He would be a partaker in it. This law expresses the inflexible will of a resistless Deity. But “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). This is not the arbitrary arrangement of a revengeful God, but is the simple statement of fact concerning the condition of the human race. Therefore, the sinner must die, for the penalty must be paid; but the sacrifice was dying for him. It was his substitute. By faith he placed his hand upon it and God accepted this arrangement, looking on to the time when the Lamb of God would take away the sin of the world, “for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4). This was the gracious provision of God of “all grace,” for the time then present, waiting for the perfect substitute — even God Himself, bearing the penalty in His own body on the tree. The Creator suffering for the creature, a Holy God burying the sword of justice in His own heart instead of inflicting the penalty on those who hurt Him, wounded Him, and in rebellion murdered Him. This is the wonderful display of divine grace.

The death of Christ was substitutionary. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners:

For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. (Hebrews 7:26).

He was the spotless Lamb of God. He stood before a woman taken in adultery whence all but He had fled, because He was the only one without sin. He demanded of those who knew Him in the days of His flesh, “Which of you convicts me of sin?” (See John 8:46.) On another occasion He said, “For the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me” (John 14:30). When the prince of this world cometh unto any of the rest of the sons of Adam, he always finds something in us, a wedge that lets him in and we succumb to temptation. Christ was the impeccable man, the Lord of glory wrapped in the swaddling clothes of perfect humanity.

The Lord Jesus, the God-Man, did not have to die. The wages of sin is death. All the sons of Adam are in the doleful funeral procession.

They came to live, but they have to die. The sons of Adam all have this brief biography: they were born, they lived, and they died. Christ was exempt from all this. Nevertheless, He came into this world to die. This unique Person came on a unique mission. We come into the world to live, but alas, we must die as sons of Adam. The moment that gives us life begins immediately to take it from us. Christ only could say, “No man taketh [my life] from me, but I lay it down myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (John 10:18).

Christ died — this is a fact of history. What is the explanation? Paul added to this statement of fact, “for our sins.” That is the theological explanation. He substituted for us on the cross. He died that we might have life. He took our place, that He might offer us His place. He took our hell that we might have His heaven. He bore the scars of the cross that we might be presented spotless before His presence with exceeding joy. Likewise, His death was not only substitutionary, but penal. Paul gathered the mystery of the cross into this sublime statement:

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.
(2 Corinthians 5:21)

God hates sin and when Christ became sin, God treated Him as He must treat all sin. Christ became an unclean thing on the cross. God executed sin in the Person of Christ. The cross is the judgment of God on sin for the believer and reveals God’s attitude toward it. When Christ was made sin, God spared not His only begotten Son, but made Him an offering for sin. Paul could point to the cross and say, “He loved me and gave himself for me” (see Galatians 2:20).

There was a time in eternity when God permitted sin to enter His creation. Creation and creatures came forth from the hand of the Creator in perfection, but He permitted the leaven of sin to penetrate both. At the moment God permitted sin, He was willing to bear the penalty that His creatures might escape the penalty, and in time He came and bore that penalty for His creatures. What wondrous grace! God became a suffering Deity. The cross of Christ was enveloped in darkness, and in that darkness God endured all the suffering of hell. He went to the very

depths and drank dregs for His sinning creatures who were His enemies and whose sin had wounded and hurt him. The Judge left the judgment seat and came down and took His place with the prisoner at the bar. He bore the penalty that He had pronounced. What unspeakable grace, yet couched in the simple and sublime statement of the most familiar verse in the Bible:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

What amazing grace!

Little wonder that Henry C. Mabie speaks of the universe as redempto-centric. It is not primarily Christo-centric or theocentric. The liberal theologian emphasizes the Christo-centric aspect, and thereby he has made of Christ only a great man, the greatest teacher, a wonderful example, but one incapable of saving sinners; His death is valueless, for He is philanthropic. On the other extreme, there is a certain school of orthodox theologians who emphasize the theocentric aspect with a resultant dead orthodoxy. They have a sovereign God who goes through some mechanical process to redeem man. God is wholly detached from the life of man, and the story of salvation sounds like running machinery rather than like the pulsating heart of God beating in yearning love after lost man. This form of dead orthodoxy has failed to reveal God as a suffering Deity who has displayed His grace so wondrously that man is led to respond to His proffered offer of salvation. He took my place because He loved me, and would not let anything stand in the way. When His holiness forbade Him to come to me, His law condemned, and I was utterly undone, then He came and took my place. He lifted me out of the pit, and I can sing:

Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. (Revelation 5:9, 10)

The divine melody that rings in the ears of the redeemed is, “In the cross of Christ I glory, tow’ring o’er the wrecks of time; all the light of sacred story gathers round its head sublime.”¹

Other aspects of the death of Christ, with which we will have occasion to deal further on, are redemptive, propitiatory, reconciling, and efficacious.

(3) *The Altar, the Place of Sacrifice.* What wonderful light the altar casts upon the cross, the place of God’s sacrifice! The cross of Christ was more than a Roman gibbet. It was more than a public place of execution of criminals. It was an altar where a priest was offering a sacrifice to God. Nay, it was more than that; it was the place where God Himself became both the offering and the offerer at the eternal brazen altar. The cross was God’s chosen altar of sacrifice. The death of Christ on the cross is vividly foretold in Psalm 22, where is recorded an accurate description of death by crucifixion. In verse 21, there is this portrayal of the cross, “thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.” This is an accurate and apt account of our Lord on the cross (the horn of the unicorn). The death of Christ was more than the consummation of Roman legal procedure and of Jewish plotting and conniving. If a person sees in the death of Christ only the movement of machinery on the human plane, he has not read the Scripture aright.

There are two sides to the death of Christ — the human and the divine aspects. God and man were both busy at the cross. Man was doing his worst; God was doing His best. Man was acting in hate; God was acting in love. Man was destroying; God was restoring. Man was inflicting death; God was bestowing life.

Those about the cross saw only the human element, and seeing that, they thought that they saw all. But today we know that they did not see all. Even today, we cannot plumb the depths of the death of Christ or gather all its meaning into our minds. We can only stand in submissive awe in the light of it.

Simon Peter gathered both the divine and human elements together in his first sermon on the Day of Pentecost:

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-

knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. (Acts 2:23)

Those who slew Him were murderers, but they were not beyond the control of God in their action. On the contrary, they were moving in the same direction, but with different motives. Both were moving in the consummation of the death of Christ.

When Christ was arrested and brought to trial that night, it is recorded that He did not open His mouth in His own defense. He was innocent, but He did not attempt to defend Himself. Was this weakness on His part? Isaiah had prophesied:

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. (Isaiah 53:7)

When Christ began His public ministry, John pointed to Him and said, "Behold the Lamb of God." This One was in His blessed Person the Lamb of God. On another occasion John again pointed to Him and declared, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Now a lamb was for sacrifice. The work of the Lamb of God was to take away the sin of the world. He did it by the sacrifice of Himself. When the Lamb of God was arrested, He was innocent of the charges brought against Him or of any other charges ("which of you convinceth me of sin?"), but He was the Lamb on the way to the altar to die for the sin of the world; so He "opened not his mouth." Had it been only a matter of the charges brought against Him by His accusers, He would have defended Himself, and would never have died on the cross. As the Lamb of God He opened not His mouth.

He was on the way to the place of sacrifice, and He was going to the cross voluntarily. His will was to do the Father's will. He was not being forced or coerced, nor was He caught helplessly. The Father was not compelling Him, and man was not forcing Him. He was in perfect accord to the terrible thing that was happening to Him. He was not trapped by clever Jews. He was not caught between the upper millstone

of Jewish hatred and the nether millstone of Roman cruelty. He was moving toward the cross as a lamb to the altar of sacrifice. His only compulsion was that of love for those who were nailing Him to the cross. Definitely and directly He had been moving toward the cross for six months. Up in Caesarea Philippi, He had told His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem to die. From that moment on He set His face like flint toward Jerusalem, and He moved toward the cross with purposeful precision.

When he arrived in Jerusalem there was a plot by the rulers of the Jews to take Him, but in their discussions they had definitely decided that He would not be crucified during the feast:

But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people. (Matthew 26:5)

Yet Christ had previously told His disciples that he would die during the feast:

Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified. (Matthew 26:2)

It is recorded that He was indeed crucified during the feast. He even made His captors do His bidding! He was master of every situation. He set the date of His execution, and it was contrary to that of His captors. He died on the date that He had determined.

A careful examination of what is commonly termed the trial of Jesus will reveal that in the final analysis He was not on trial that night. His judges were on trial. Pilate, as the puppet of the Roman Empire, was on trial, and in the economy of God that man and that nation came to an ignoble end. That nation, which for over five hundred years had marched her legions over the world, was soon to go down in corruption and defeat. A little lame man, Paul by name, came into the city of Rome shortly after the death of Christ and preached the death and resurrection of the Nazarene whom Rome had executed. That gospel was a contributing factor in the downfall of the Roman Empire and is so stated by historians. P. V. N. Myers says: "Another consequence of the fall of the Roman Empire in the West was the development of papacy. Bury

makes slavery, oppressive taxation, the importation of barbarians, and Christianity the four chief causes of the weakness and failure of the empire.”²

Those who see in the death of Christ only the seizure and execution of a helpless and poor man have not read the Gospel account aright. He was the master of circumstances.

No man taketh [my life] from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. (John 10:18)

Christ did not open His mouth because He was the Lamb of God, dying willingly upon God’s appointed altar for the sin of the world. Even in the agony of death He did not die as other men die. It is recorded that He dismissed His spirit. Other men gasp for the last breath in death, but He by the divine fiat of command dismissed His Spirit.

Even before six months of His death, Christ had been moving steadily toward the cross. He is “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). He endured the sorrow and suffering of the cross “for the joy that was set before Him” (Hebrews 12:2). He was working in beautiful harmony with the Father.

Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. (John 10:17)

He was not acting apart from God, nor had the Father forced the Son into this place of pain. No, God was acting in it all, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19). The Son came forth from the Father in perfect accord with the Father to carry through a plan that was formulated by the Trinity in the eternal Godhead. The entrance of sin had incurred suffering for the creatures. God came forth to share that suffering and to bear the sin,

Once in the end of the world [age] hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (Hebrews 9:26)

Now, let us turn to the death of Christ for examination of the fact that His death was more than man venting his hate, but was rather God dis-

playing His love; more than a breach of Jewish tradition or Roman law, but rather Christ meeting the demands of a Holy God.

Christ was nailed to the cross at the third hour (9:00 A.M.), and He expired at the ninth hour (3:00 P.M.). So He was on the cross six hours. At the sixth hour (noon) it is recorded that there was a darkness over the whole face of the land until the ninth hour, so for three hours He was in darkness.

And it was now about the sixth hour, and a darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, the sun's light failing. (Luke 23:44, 45 ASV)

This darkness was supernatural. It would seem to be confined to the land of Palestine, or more particularly to Judea. One of the plagues brought on Egypt was darkness, but in the land of Goshen they had light. The Jews had light while the rest of Egypt had darkness. God kept His own people in light in Egypt, but when they crucified their Messiah and His Son, that supernatural darkness they'd escaped in Egypt came upon them in their own land. It was a greater miracle than the one in Egypt, because it is more difficult to produce darkness in the presence of light than light in the presence of darkness. Light overcomes darkness, but darkness is the negation of light. Luke used the aorist tense and not the imperfect in Luke 23:44, as the King James Version has it, "there was a darkness." The aorist tense denotes completeness of the act and therefore the suddenness of it. The darkness came at once. At high noon a darkness settled down on the earth like a blanket, remained three hours, and then lifted and departed as suddenly. It could not have been an eclipse, for it was the time of the Passover and there was a full moon. It meant that the moon was removed from the earth at such an angle as to catch the full reflection of the sun. An eclipse does not last more than a few moments at the most, but this darkness lasted three hours. It is impossible to explain the phenomenon on naturalistic grounds. It seemed that the sun, the physical source of light, was put out or veiled with sackcloth when the Author of all light, both physical and spiritual, was hanging on the cross. There is nothing like it in all the annals of history. It is there in the annals, however; both Celsus (an enemy of the

cross) and Tertullian (a reliable Christian recorder of fact) state that it took place.

What is the explanation of this darkness? In the light of the sun, men had put forth every effort to humiliate Christ and make Him suffer. The Roman soldiers, hardened by such experiences over a long period of time, were performing just another day's task. The Jewish rulers and mob were jeering and chiding Him. Man was busy about the cross for three hours doing despite to the Savior. At high noon, man's energies ceased. There was darkness and no man could work; the hearts of men were held by a gripping terror. The soldiers stood aside in fear; the ruthless jibes of the rulers' tongues were silenced. Stillness enveloped the scene. Unspeakable horror hung over the cross while the mighty mechanism of nature rolled on, but its Maker had stepped in and intervened in His creation. He veiled the sun in sackcloth, and spread the mantle of night over the cross.

The first three hours were man's moment; the last three hours were God's moment. With His intervention, the cross ceased to be a Roman gibbet and became an altar. Pilate wrote above the cross, retaining it against protest: "The King of the Jews." But God veiled that inscription for the time being, that John's words might echo from the hilltops, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). In that period of darkness Christ was made sin for us (see 2 Corinthians 5:21), and thereby He fulfilled the prophecy of the slain Lamb in Isaiah 53. That darkness speaks of the inscrutable and unspeakable sufferings of Christ when He became sin for us. God slew Him upon the altar — as it is written, "smitten of God" (Isaiah 53:4), but His suffering is unrecorded, for it is veiled in the darkness of Calvary. As the darkness ceased, there came the piercing and anguished cry from the dying Lamb, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). In those last three hours Christ endured all the sufferings of hell. He plumbed the depths of pain, and He bore the full penalty of sin. God did not spare His Son but gave Him freely. When Christ bore our sin, it was no make-believe of a deluded person, not a mere creedal gesture, not alone a public representation of a religious

doctrine, nor a half-hearted rehearsal of a covenant agreement; but in baldest reality, substitution for sinful man was consummated in the stark darkness of that historic hour. Looking back upon His deepest hour of anguish, we cannot plumb the depths of darkness to discern the dire distress of His soul; we can only repeat: "It pleased the LORD to bruise him" (Isaiah 53:10), for He loved me "and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). It was God who buried the sword of justice in the heart of Christ. Now, the sword of justice is sheathed in His heart, and God is free to accept sinners who do no more than receive Christ. The cross of Christ was an altar of eternal sacrifice where God displayed His love by paying the penalty of sin Himself which His holiness demanded, for "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19).

But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed,
Nor how dark was the night
That the Lord passed through,
Ere He found His sheep that was lost.³

As we peer into the darkness of Calvary, there breaks forth a flash from the fire of the altar, as we behold the dear dying Lamb. Then, we can lift our hearts in hushed harmony to reverently sing,

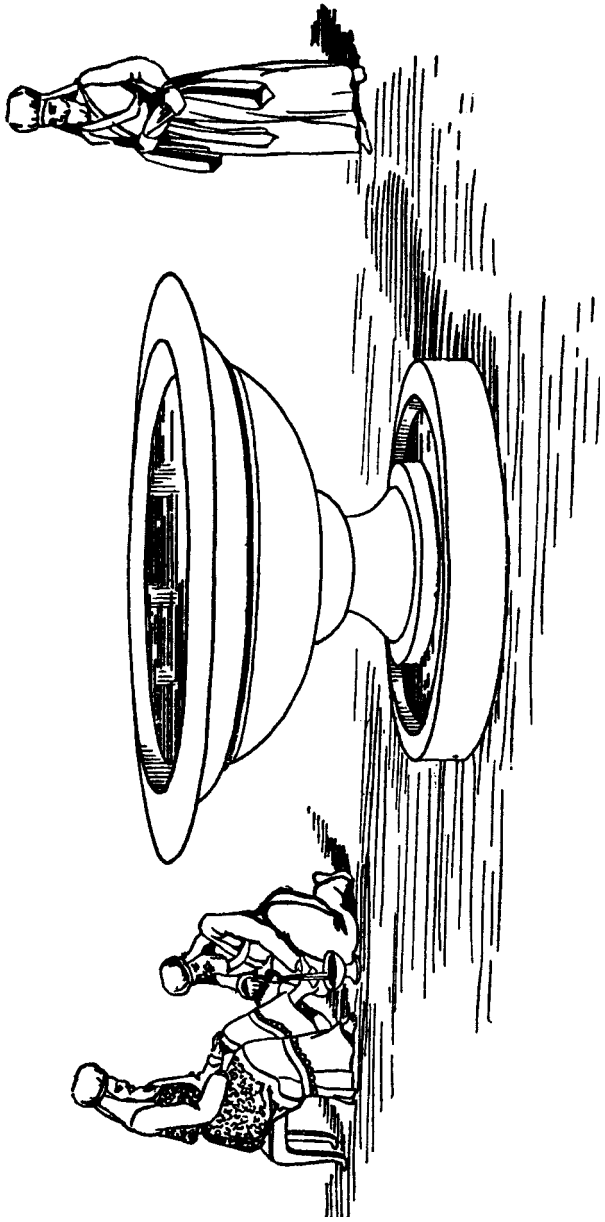
Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut his glories in,
When Christ, the mighty Maker, died
For man the creature's sin.⁴

The concluding feature about the brazen altar, which is suggestive, was the measurements. The altar was foursquare, "And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad" (Exodus 27:1). This suggests the equality of all at the altar. All who come to the cross must come as sinners on the same plane, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). It required the death of Christ for each one. This is not to ignore the fact that there are big sins and little sins, and that some have sinned more than others.

But all are sinners by nature and it requires the same cleansing agency for each: namely, the blood of Christ. Therefore, this does not fail to recognize that there are degrees of sinning, but it reveals that both the little and big sins are inspired by the same sinful nature in which there “dwelleth no good thing” (Romans 7:18). All come to the cross as sinners, for Christ died for sinners.

The altar was three cubits high, “and the height thereof shall be three cubits” (Exodus 27:1). The brazen altar was the tallest article of furniture in the Tabernacle. It towered above them all. The substitutionary death of Christ is the foundation of all God’s dealings with man, and is above all His actions to us. Not only does the cross reveal that God did His best for us, but that all good things must come from the cross. It surpasses them all and furnishes the basis for all.

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:32)



THE LAVER OF BRASS

CHAPTER III

THE LAVER OF BRASS: THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION

*The All-inclusive Teaching Here Includes
the Ministries of Christ in His Resurrection*

The instructions for the construction of the laver are found in Exodus 30:

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. (Exodus 30:17-21)

The laver was the other article of furniture that stood in the outer court with the brazen altar. It was constructed of the same substance as the altar — brass — and was filled with water. Quite evidently it had a top part for the washing of the hand and a lower part, called its foot, for the washing of the feet. All service in the Tabernacle, whether in the Holy Place, Holy of Holies, or at the brazen altar, required the one serving to wash at the laver. It was probably used more frequently than any other article of furniture in the Tabernacle.

The primary and evident meaning of the laver is that of cleansing. This cleansing applies primarily to the child of God, for only priests served at the laver. Beyond the brazen altar, the application of the teaching of the Tabernacle is directly to the sons of God. There is a twofold

application of the meaning of the laver in the ministry of cleansing, this being an earthly and a heavenly application. It applies, first of all, to Christ's present resurrection ministry. He continues cleansing His own until He presents them "faultless [blameless] before the presence of his glory [throne] with exceeding joy" (Jude 24). This is the heavenly ministry of Christ in cleansing. Secondly, it applies to one phase of the work of the Holy Spirit in His present ministry on the earth. The written Word, the audible voice of the Spirit, reveals the pathway of light for God's children that will keep them from defilement along the way, and it also reveals new avenues of service. The indwelling Holy Spirit confirms and makes real in the life the ministry of the written Word. These are not separate operations but one, for the indwelling Spirit does not direct apart from or contrary to the Word. This is the earthly application of the meaning of the laver.

Let us examine more fully the earthly meaning in the light of the revelation concerning the laver. The earthly meaning grows out of and is derived from the heavenly meaning. Christ sent the Holy Spirit to include this ministry in His mission during this age. The laver was made of brass which, as we have already seen, speaks of judgment of sin. However, the laver was made of a particular selection of brass: the brazen mirrors of the women.

And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the looking glasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. (Exodus 38:8)

Highly polished brass was used for mirrors in that day, and it is interesting to note that these folk, so soon out of slavery, possessed such luxuries. Their hard lot in Egypt had not deprived the women of their "vanity cases." They brought these looking glasses as an offering to God, and it was specified that they be used in making the laver. The Spirit of God has used the mirror metaphorically as the Word of God:

For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he

beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. (James 1:23, 24)

Evidently, it was no accident that the laver was made of the mirrors of the women, and a mirror is that to which the Word of God is likened.

This figure of the Word of God as being a cleansing agency is further enlarged by the Holy Spirit speaking of the cleansing power of the Word. Let us pay attention to language like this:

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.
(Ephesians 5:25, 26)

The Word of God is being likened unto the laver itself and unto the water contained in the laver. Both the substance and purpose of the laver are symbols of the Word of God. The laver's primary purpose was for cleansing. Likewise, the Word of God is for cleansing. Christ said, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). The laver was filled with water, and the priests were commanded to wash thereat repeatedly in the service of the Tabernacle. To wash in the Word of God is to apply the Word to the life. The Word washes because it reveals as the mirrors were revealers, and thus is used in cleansing and beautifying. One of the benefits derived from the Word of God is declared by Paul in 2 Timothy 3:16 to be "correction." The Word is profitable for correction; it cleanses by correcting.

This cleansing by the Word is for the child of God. The sinner is shut out from earning favor by doing something, and is forced to come face to face with just one thing: the cross of Christ. Scripture has no word of exhortation or injunction for a lost sinner but "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). The work of cleansing is confined to believers, and the Word corrects their lives. The laver stood between the altar (cross) and the Holy Place (service). Cleansing by the Word is for the sinner who has come to the cross and who desires to serve and walk in the light, well pleasing to his Lord. In the Lord's prayer in John 17, Christ prays for His own, and makes specific mention that He

does not pray for the world: “I pray for them [those whom the Father gave Him]: I pray not for the world” (John 17:9). In the same prayer He makes this interesting and enlightening request of the Father: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (v. 17). The Word of God is a sanctifying agency for the children of God. The Holy Spirit is to the Word of God what the water was to the laver, and there is this added corollary between the laver and the Holy Spirit. The cross of Christ is where the sin of the sinner is settled. The Word of God is the means by which a child of God learns to walk. As the priests spent more time at the laver than at any other article of furniture, thus the child of God ought to spend more time in the Word of God. A daily bath in the Word of God is of inestimable value. Daily washing in the Word brings fragrance into the life.

No measurements were given for the laver in the blueprints of the Tabernacle. This further confirms that the laver is a figure of the Holy Spirit, the author of the Word. Deity cannot be measured. The Word of God cannot be severed from the divine Author and Illuminator of it. There is no sanctifying power in the letter of the Word apart from the Holy Spirit. The letter of the Word is dead, and the Spirit makes it alive. The Word is sealed to the unsaved, and the saved need the Great Teacher to open its treasure store. A consideration of 1 Corinthians 2:10-14 will reveal this, but as this is not the immediate purpose of this thesis, we merely refer to it.

The water of the laver furnishes a fine figure of the Holy Spirit. We have made a previous statement that the Holy Spirit is to the Word of God what the water was to the laver. This we shall dwell on for a moment. Water is used throughout Scripture as a symbol of the true baptism, which is that of the Holy Spirit:

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

The laver had no cleansing power in itself. It contained water which did the cleansing, but the accepted language was that the laver cleansed. Thus, the Word of God cleanses because it is applied by the Holy Spirit,

who is the power of the written Word. Christ sent the Holy Spirit to perform this phase as part of His earthly ministry. Before He was crucified, He promised to send the Holy Spirit: “If I depart, I will send him unto you” (John 16:7). The Book of Acts is the acts of the Holy Spirit; yet Luke, the author, prefaced the book with this statement:

The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen. (Acts 1:1, 2)

There are two declarations that we need to note here. First, Jesus continued to carry on His work after His death, resurrection, and ascension. The Holy Spirit was sent to perform this work of Christ on earth. He is in the world today, having come on the Day of Pentecost, to do a definite work outlined for Him as His part in the scheme of redemption. One phase of His work is depicted by the laver.

The laver was used for the cleansing of the priests, those belonging to God and His service. When the priests were ordained, they were washed all over: “And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water” (Leviticus 8:6). That washing was for all time. It was never repeated, but there was a continual and daily cleansing at the laver. The blood of Christ cleanses the believing sinner from all sin, but in his daily walk and service he becomes defiled and needs cleansing. The Holy Spirit indwells each believer, but sin keeps Him from having full sway in the lives of believers today. Sin in the life of the believer retards and destroys His work of guiding and leading in the light. The Holy Spirit is anxious that sin be reduced to a minimum in the life of the child of God. He reveals the pathway of victory. He gives power to the life when the conditions are met:

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for

sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Romans 8:2-4)

The Holy Spirit is the omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient leader for the children of God: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14). He is the victory for the Christian. This is His ministry in the sanctification of the believer.

It is patently evident that today many children of God are not walking in the light, neither is there a manifestation of power in their lives. They are walking in sin, and sin has power over their lives. Now, what is the remedy when a child of God sins, as he most assuredly does?¹ We have seen that the cross of Christ deals eternally and completely with the sin question so that it will never become a barrier to the salvation of any believer. But sin in the life offends the holiness of God in the believer as well as in the unsaved.

What can a sinning child do after he sins? Certainly, he does not wish to offend his heavenly Father, and he does not want it to hinder his growth in Christ. What is the remedy for a saved soul who sins? This introduces us to the heavenly aspect of the meaning suggested by the laver. When Christ ascended into heaven, He took His place at the right hand of the majesty of God as our great High Priest:

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: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others.
(Hebrews 9:24, 25)

Part of His ministry in heaven is the daily cleansing of His own who have sinned and who come to Him confessing the sin:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9).

The heavenly work of Christ in cleansing those who are His is set

forth in figure by what occurred at the Last Supper in the Upper Room. Having laid aside His garments, He girded Himself with a towel, took a basin, and began to wash the feet of His disciples. John, who alone of the Gospel writers recorded this incident, prefaced his account with this statement:

Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them [kept on loving them] unto the end.
(John 13:1)

The cleansing was for those of His who are in the world, and He performed this ministry in light of the fact of His returning back to heaven:

Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God.
(John 13:3)

He arose from the Passover (type of His death), and began the work of cleansing. His response to Simon Peter's refusal, at first, to let the Lord wash his feet, and then his extreme desire to have his hands and head washed, reveals the true intent of the cleansing.

Jesus saith to him, He that is washed [léloumenos, bathed] needeth not save to wash [nipsasthoi, to wash] his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. (John 13:10)

Jesus used two different words, it will be noted, but both are translated by the English word "wash." In that day a person returning from one of the many public baths where he had bathed, got his feet defiled on the way from the bath house to his home. There was placed at the door of his home a basin to rinse the feet. This had been omitted, for some reason, the night that the disciples entered the Upper Room. Christ arose, took the basin, and began to wash (*nipstein*, to wash) the disciples' feet. The communion about the table was broken, and Christ took water and washed the disciples' feet.

The atoning blood of Christ cleanses from sin — all sin — and the sin of the saved souls is fully dealt with at the cross. But sin in the believer breaks communion with God, and on the basis of the death of Christ, He can cleanse the child who comes to Him in confession. As the disciples placed their defiled feet in His hands for cleansing, thus today we come in confession of our sins and, by so doing, place our soiled feet in the nail-pierced hands of our blessed Lord who cleanses us from all defilement. Fellowship is then restored with the Father. The late Dr. George Guille put it beautifully in this way: “On the way from the cross to the crown our feet get soiled, but if we confess our sins, He takes the basin and girds Himself with the towel again, and cleanses us from all sin.”² What a gracious thought it is to know that our Lord is girded with a towel, and that with basin in hand He keeps us clean if we place our feet in His hands by confessing our sins. Thus, the laver spoke of this heavenly ministry of Christ. The laver stood between the altar and the Holy Place. The cleansing of believers by confession stands between the cross and the communion of the children of God.

The altar was for a sinner; the laver was for a sin. The altar was where the sinner needed punishment; the laver was where the child needed cleansing. The altar spoke of blood; the laver spoke of water. The altar suggests this verse of Scripture: “...Without shedding of blood is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22); the laver points to this: “Without holiness no man shall see God.”

We have seen the meaning of the laver as it dealt with the sin in the life of the believer. We have seen that this contains a twofold application. One applies to the earth and is the work of the Holy Spirit. The other applies to heaven and is the work of Christ. These are both in relationship to the believer.

There is another side to the teaching of the laver, which is derived from the former consideration. All that has gone before has grown out of the resurrection of Christ. The basis of the preceding remarks is the resurrection. Now, let us consider the two articles of brass in the outer court for a larger meaning of the work of Christ in settling the sin question. The brazen altar speaks of His death; the brazen laver speaks of

His resurrection. At the brazen altar is forgiveness of sin; at the brazen laver is imputation of righteousness, “[Christ] was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:25). This is an application of the suggestive meaning of the laver to the sin question in relationship to the sinner rather than to the child of God. In this connection, the brazen laver speaks of justification.

Again, we find that there is a twofold application of salvation to the sinner who believes in Christ. First, there is the work of Christ in heaven. Second, there is the work of the Holy Spirit on earth. The work of Christ in heaven is described by the word “justification.” The work of the Holy Spirit on earth is described by the word “regeneration.” These are two distinct elements of salvation, yet one is complementary to the other. One never takes place without the other. Justification is an act; regeneration is a work. Justification is external and does not change the condition of the sinner, but it changes his position. Regeneration is internal and it does change the condition of the sinner, but it does not change his position. Justification is a declarative act in which God declares a sinner justified on the basis of the death of Christ. This is a judicial act that takes a guilty and condemned sinner out from under condemnation, and stands him in the presence of God, clothed with a righteousness that, instead of meriting the condemnation of the court, gives him its commendation. Not only are his sins forgiven, but there is added righteousness that makes him accepted. Regeneration, logically following justification, is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the sinner that changes him from a rebellious creature to a child of obedience. Regeneration is based on justification, but justification is *just* because of regeneration.

The resurrection of Christ made a ground for the justification and regeneration of a sinner. The death and resurrection of Christ do not themselves save an individual sinner; they make a ground for God to justify a sinner. They untie the hands of a holy God and permit Him to place them about a lost sinner. They give freedom and power to God in this twofold work in salvation.

We wish to pay particular attention to the statement that the death

and resurrection of Christ provided the Holy Spirit who cleanses and regenerates the heart of a lost sinner. This is seen in an incident recorded by John which took place at the cross. When one of the soldiers thrust the spear into the side of Christ, there came forth blood and water. John was very careful to make mention of both in his Gospel account, and in his first epistle he added:

This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

(1 John 5:6)

The blood speaks of the ground of salvation; it was that which made God's power available in salvation. The water speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. Now, we are prepared to receive this startling statement: If the Holy Spirit had not come on the Day of Pentecost and begun His work of regeneration, no soul would ever have been saved. The blood of Christ does not save a soul until the Holy Spirit does His work. There came forth both water and blood, for it takes both the blood of Christ and the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit to save a soul. Christ sent the Holy Spirit to do specifically this work. This is again part of the resurrection ministry of Christ.

The laver, therefore, suggests the resurrection of Christ as the altar suggests His death. Here we have both articles of furniture dealing with the sin question. Christ in His death settled the sin question, "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Christ in His resurrection made application of the finished work of Calvary. He regenerates the sinners who believe and cleanses His children by their confession.

The laver was succeeded by a sea in the temple that held 24,000 gallons of water. In the temple in heaven, as seen by John on the isle of Patmos, there is a sea not of water but of glass — a figure of the fact that the sin question has been forever solved, the redeemed have been glorified and need no more cleansing, and the Holy Spirit has ceased His work of regeneration.

CHAPTER IV

THE THREE ENTRANCES: THE DOCTRINE OF WORSHIP

We now pass from the outer court into the Holy Place. The articles of furniture in the outer court, as we have attempted to show, dealt with solving the problem of sin. There the sin question was forever settled, never to lift its ugly jaws again in condemnation of the child of God.

The articles placed in the Holy Place spoke of communion and worship. There can be no communion or worship until sin is out of the way as an issue between God and man. After the sin question is dealt with, it is removed in such a way that it constitutes no part of worship. Only a remembrance is made of it. But God in His fellowship with His children remembers their sin no more. As we pass from the outer court into the place of worship, we shall expect to find a radical change in the articles of furniture. However, before considering this change, it will be helpful, before proceeding further in consideration of the articles of furniture, to turn our thoughts to a description of the three entrances of the Tabernacle.

As stated in the second chapter, the most important part of the Tabernacle was the furniture. The Tabernacle furnished a setting for the furniture, and it may well be viewed from the standpoint of these furnishings, which we are endeavoring to do. We pause, however, to examine the three entrances which furnish a background for the articles in the Holy Place. The three entrances were respectively, these: first, in the gate of the court; second, the door of the Tabernacle but the first to the Tabernacle proper; and third, the veil which separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. The way into the presence of God, for the Israelite, was through these three entrances. Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). It is interesting to note that this threefold definition that Christ made of Himself dovetails into the three entrances of the Tabernacle.

First, the gate of the court corresponds to Christ as "the way." The gate led into the outer court from the outside. It was the first threshold

crossed, and it separated the sinner on the outside from all within. Immediately upon coming through the gate, the entrant was confronted by the brazen altar and the laver in the background. The way to God today is by way of the cross. Christ is that way. The way is not a highway on which one travels by following a highway number, but is a person who is to be trusted. Many folk depend on some highway marker (denomination) to keep them on the right way, and they are proud of the fact that they are Methodist, Baptist, or Presbyterian. These are all very well, but it needs to be emphasized that the way to God is a person. Christianity is not a church, denomination, system of ethics, rule of life, or a ceremony; Christianity is a person and that One is Christ. He is the way to God. It is all important that God be approached in the right way, for there is a right way and there is a wrong way. The right way is exactly right and can be dogmatically stated as such, and the wrong way is absolutely wrong and can be dogmatically expressed as such. The right way leads *to* God, and the wrong way leads *from* God. Any other way than Christ is wholly and incurably wrong and leads to destruction. Christ emphatically declared, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Sincerity does not overcome willful ignorance or error in this important matter. A traveler may get on a wrong way by mistake, and may go in the opposite direction from the desired goal. In all this he may be perfectly sincere, but he is on the wrong way and his sincerity, no matter how intense, will never enable him to arrive at his destination. On the contrary, the farther he goes, the farther he is from being right. The only possible alternative is for him to get on the right way or be utterly wrong. "I am the way. . . ." In making this tremendous claim, He repudiated every other way. The way into God's presence, the place of communion and worship, is through Christ. We must settle the sin question in our lives before we can come into God's presence to worship. In the Tabernacle it was essential for a priest, coming into God's presence to worship, to pass through the gate and by the altar. There was no other way.

The way of the cross leads home,
There is no other way but this.

All worship is predicated on the cross of Christ. He not only constitutes the object of worship, but He makes the basis of worship. Sin must be settled at the cross before there can be real worship.

Second, the door of the Tabernacle corresponded to Christ who is “the truth.” The door led from the outer court to the Holy Place. It separated the one who had made the sacrifice from worship. The priest, having made the proper offering, must pass through the door of the Tabernacle if he would worship God. So today, God is worshiped in truth through Christ.

That was a novel thing that Christ introduced to the Samaritan woman at the well: “Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father” (John 4:21). Both the Samaritan and the Jews agreed that God was worshiped in *one* place. They disagreed concerning the place. It was a question with them of “either/or.” Christ said something new when He removed the place by the “neither/nor.” Certainly, the Scriptures confirmed the belief of the Jews that Jerusalem was the proper place. There, and there alone, the Jew understood that he could worship God. He never believed that he could worship God elsewhere. In this he was correct. The earthly place of worship was Jerusalem. Again in the future it is to be the place of worship for all earthly people, both Jews and Gentiles:

And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. (Zechariah 14:16, 17)

God had declared to His people, Israel, that it was in Jerusalem that He set His holy name. Christ had given commandment not to swear by Jerusalem, and the reason given was that it was the city of the great King. Therefore, the statement of Christ to the woman at the well, as well as to the Jews, was a radical one. But He spoke of the church age.

During this time the place of worship would not be localized:

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. (John 4:23)

The place was removed from Jerusalem to “in spirit,” and the manner would be “in truth.”

The door of the Tabernacle suggested Christ as the truth, for it led into the place of worship, and the manner of worship now is “in truth.” God is worshiped today anywhere (in spirit), but the way is not just any way. He is worshiped “in truth,” which corresponds to the Holy Place in the Tabernacle. We shall see this more fully as we consider the articles of furniture in the Holy Place.

Third, the veil corresponds to Christ as “the life.” The veil separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. A separate consideration of the veil will be made when we come to consider the furniture in the Holy of Holies. It was the veil that was rent in twain from top to the bottom. A person who enters by faith in Christ into the Holy Place today is in the Holy of Holies. True worship now brings the worshiper into the very presence of God. But it must still be offered in truth, for the door of the Tabernacle was not rent in twain. God is worshiped only in truth, and that which is false does not get to Him. It is therefore imperative that a believer think clearly and sharply about worship and that he be led aright, for all that parades in the name of worship is not worship.

Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. (Hebrews 13:13)

CHAPTER V

THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD: THE DOCTRINE OF WORSHIP (CONTINUED)

As suggested in the last chapter, the Holy Place speaks of worship. There were three articles of furniture in the Holy Place: the table of shewbread, the golden lampstand, and the altar of incense. All three set forth some item that pertains to worship and must of necessity enter into it. Let us first consider the table of shewbread.

The blueprint for the table of shewbread is given in Exodus 25:

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 hand breadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about. And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them. And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal: of pure gold shalt thou make them. And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before me alway. (Exodus 25:23-30)

The table of shewbread suggests many things. It speaks of sustenance, provision, and supply. These are several suggestions that we make in order to pass rapidly over them.

First, it is a table of salvation. Christ gave a parable in which a king gave a marriage supper for his son. The invited guests refused to come. This provoked the king to deal with the rejecters, and having done so,

he extended the invitation to include those in the highways and byways. These were bidden to come and to eat. Thus, an invitation has gone out today to the world to come and partake of the salvation as it is in Christ.

Secondly, it is a table of providence. God, as Creator, provides all food for man and beast today. Mankind eats at God's table in the physical realm. Yet, how few recognize it and give Him thanks for His bounty!

Thirdly, it is a table of the Lord. This suggests the Lord's Table established by Christ at the Last Supper. It is a long table for believers that extends from the Upper Room to the upper air.

More specifically, the table of shewbread is a prefigurement of Christ as the sustainer of spiritual life for the believer. It was two cubits long, one cubit wide, and one and one half cubits high. It was made of shittim wood overlaid with gold. The incorruptible shittim wood speaks of His humanity. As the wood was a product of the earth but not subject to the action of it in a chemical way, thus our Lord had a body made of earth, conceived in the womb of the virgin. The gold speaks of His deity. The gold is not produced by the earth but is separate from it, and because of that it has an inherent value. So Christ was not of the earth in His deity, but very God of very God. He came from the glory. This figure of the gold and the wood will be further amplified when the ark is under consideration.

On the table were placed twelve loaves of bread, six in a row. The table and the bread were considered as one. The same terminology is used for both, and when the bread is mentioned the table is included and vice versa. Paul used this manner of speech in instructing the church in Corinth on coming together to eat the table of the Lord. This metonymy is common in Scripture.

The bread was changed each Sabbath Day, and the bread which was removed was eaten with wine by the priestly family in the Holy Place. This table does not prefigure Christ in the same way that the manna does. There is a sharp distinction here that must be made, although it is probably not a difference. Both speak of Christ but not in exactly the same connection; however, Christ is the bread in both. The manna speaks of Christ

as the life giver. This is His own interpretation of the manna:

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world....I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. (John 6:32, 33, 35)

The shewbread speaks of Christ as the life sustainer. Eternal life is a gift and is the manna that came down from heaven. He that receives the manna receives eternal life. However, eternal life requires a special food to sustain it in growth and strength, and the shewbread sets forth Christ as the food for those who have partaken of the manna of life. This is seen in another bit of language that Christ used. The shewbread was made of grain — ground, unleavened, made into bread and baked: “And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake” (Leviticus 24:5). The analogy of this to Christ is found in John 12:24-33. Christ is the corn of wheat that falls into the ground and dies:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. (John 12:24)

He was ground in the mill of suffering:

Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. (John 12:27)

He was brought into the fire of suffering and judgment:

Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. (John 12:31, 32)

He came forth from the tomb in newness of life, for His soul did not see corruption (see Psalm 16:10). Now, He lives a resurrected life. He is the

shewbread now for believers to feed on to sustain eternal life in growth. The Christian is to feed on the living Christ. The believer is to appropriate Christ as He is today, living at God's right hand. He says, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35). There is an ancient proverb that contains the thought that a thing grows by what it feeds on. Thus, a Christian is to feed on Christ. Again He said: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Christ does not wish to take anything away from the Christian, but rather to give something; that something is Himself. If He does remove something from the life, it is that He might add something more wonderful. The daily food of the Christian is Christ, and only by appropriating Him will there be growth in the life. Those who do come to Him will find full satisfaction, for He also says, "He that cometh to me shall never hunger" (John 6:35).

The liberal theologian continually directs his hearers to the life of Christ before the cross. The life of Jesus, as it is habitually designated, is given as a pattern for the man living today. The mere contemplation of the earthly life of Jesus will furnish food for the soul, according to those of this school. We say it reverently, but we say it nevertheless: Whoever contemplates merely the earthly life of Jesus as a source of food and strength, will starve to death. Certainly, the earthly life of Christ was wonderful and worthy of emulation, but where is the power for the Christian to follow in His footsteps? It is the life of Christ after the cross that is the source of power and the mainspring for living. His resurrection life is the table for believers. Here is where he is to go for food, and those feeding upon Him grow in grace. It is therefore not *imitation* of the earthly life of Christ, but it is *impartation* of the heavenly life of Christ that builds up the believer spiritually. Paul declared, "Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20), and again, "For to me to live is Christ" (Philippians 1:21).

The table was the center of union and communion for the priestly family. They were instructed to abide in the Holy Place and eat it at the table (see Leviticus 24:9). The real unity of the priestly family was about the table; the real unity of believers is about Christ.

It is well to understand and to appreciate denominational differences. The differences today among denominations are principally psychological rather than theological. People with a certain frame of mind and peculiar bent of thinking get together. Differences among believers have been aggravated by personalities. However, believers, and by this designation we mean true believers, of all denominations and groups are one in Christ. All true believers can meet in fellowship and worship about the blessed Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

***For where two or three are gathered together in my name,
there am I in the midst of them.*** (Matthew 18:20)

Therefore, these movements abroad in the land to bring together in the spirit of religious fraternity the Jew, Roman Catholic, and the Protestant do not, and in the nature of their differentiating characteristics cannot, make for true unity. They are futile attempts to effect a ground for fellowship which is impossible apart from Christ. In such a meeting it has been impossible to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ without giving offense to some of the delegates or members of the assemblage. Such gatherings are called together, therefore, on the basis of "universal brotherhood," which is calculated to offend none of the parties involved. The Lord of glory is not mentioned; Jesus of Nazareth perhaps receives a passing reference.

Certainly, true believers ought to come together. A lover of the Lord's work must decry the "rent asunder" condition of the church, but there is no scriptural or permanent place to meet apart from Christ. It would be wonderful indeed if Roman Catholic, Jew, and Protestant could meet together about the table, which is the Lord. This would of necessity be where the middle wall of partition was broken down and all were made one in Christ, and the meeting would be about His blessed Person where He would receive all the praise and glory. In the light of the coming together of all branches of the apostate church in antagonism to Christ, the Christian does well to be wary of any man-made attempt to federate professing believers on the basis of mere goodwill. That which is apart from Him is satanic and can obtain inherently no goodwill. The Christian should pray, however, for the union of

all believers that they might be made one in outward manifestation as well as unified in spirit.

There were twelve loaves placed on the table, one for each of the twelve tribes. Little Benjamin had the same kind of loaf as did big Judea. Outcast Reuben had the same as priestly Levi. Each stood on the same ground of relationship and shared alike in the participation of heavenly food. Man is equalized when Christ is exalted. It lifts and ennobles man when he exalts Christ rather than man:

For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. (1 Corinthians 10:17)

One final feature of the table will occupy our attention in closing. In chapter 22 of Leviticus, instructions were given that forbade the stranger, sojourner, defiled, servant, lame, blind, or blemished from eating at the table. The meaning of this is evident. Worship is the privilege of believers, it must be foreign to all others. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as public worship. No one can worship until brought nigh by the blood of Christ and made whole. No stranger could eat; only sons can worship God today, for “ye must be born again” (John 3:7). No servant could eat; works do not make an approach to God. Again it is sonship that brings one into the place of worship. To be acceptable, the worshiper must come by the brazen altar, which is the cross of Christ. No blind, lame, or defiled could eat. Sin keeps many believers from enjoying participation in the things of the Lord. Even the believer must come by the laver for cleansing. The believer must confess his sins, that he may be restored. But those who have come to the cross as sinners, and who have confessed all known sin are privileged, yea, urged to worship Him. “Oh, Come! Let us adore Him.”

CHAPTER VI

THE LAMPSTAND OF GOLD: THE DOCTRINE OF WORSHIP (CONTINUED)

The floor lamp is not a modern invention, but it is as old as the Tabernacle at least. The Tabernacle contained a floor lamp, and that is what the golden candlestick was in the Holy Place. We are substituting the more descriptive title, “lampstand,” for the King James rendering of “candlestick.” It was more than a candlestick, as we designate such. The blueprint for it is given in Exodus 25:

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 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 snuffdishes 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 shewed thee in the mount. (Exodus 25:31-40)

The substance of the material for the furniture of the Tabernacle was different in the Holy Place. In the outer court, brass was the prevailing material since it had to do with the judgment of sin. In the Holy Place, gold was the material that predominated. This was no accident or chance occurrence. Gold was the only object that set forth in such a visible way the deity of Christ. Two objects of furniture, the lampstand and the mercy seat, were made entirely of gold.

The lampstand was the perfect symbol of Christ as the Son of God:

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. (John 1:9)

He was a “light of the Gentiles” (Isaiah 42:6). Had He been philanthropic and had not come out of God, He would have been merely another teacher “that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge” (Job 38:2). He would have only added another ethical system to the already multitudinous and multifarious systems, and He would have been but the harbinger of darkness “through philosophy and vain deceit” (Colossians 2:8). But as the Son of God, He “is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5).

The lampstand was handmade of beaten work and was highly ornamented. There was a central shaft with three branches on a side, making seven branches in all. Each branch contained three sections, each section being beaten into the shape of an almond blossom and a knop. On top of each shaft was an open almond blossom. On each of these were placed the olive oil lamps.

The almond blossoms looked like wood but they were gold, reminding us of Aaron’s rod that budded. When Aaron’s priestly prerogative was in question, the budding of his almond rod established it. The almond rod, a dead branch, was made to live and to bear fruit. Christ was established as the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead. It did not make Him Son of God, for He was that from the eternal counsels of God. Resurrection only confirmed it. Aaron was the God-appointed high priest, and it was confirmed by resurrection in the dead almond rod. The resurrection of Christ, likewise, established His priesthood. Christ is our great High Priest because He became a man, partook

of our nature, and “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). But the primary basis of His priesthood is His deity. The priest represented men before God. Christ is God who became a man, and it is now the God-man who represents man. The resurrection which declared Him to be the Son of God likewise declared His priesthood.

There were no measurements given for the lampstand of pure gold. That which speaks of His deity alone cannot be measured, for deity is beyond the computation of man. Neither can a tape measure be placed along that which speaks of God. Again, the priesthood of Christ, which is conditioned on the fact that He became a man, is made to rest on His deity. There is not recorded any incident in the life of Christ in the Gospels which does not instantly record His deity with every mention of His humanity, yet never confusing or fusing the two. In the shortest verse of the Bible, “Jesus wept” (John 11:35), there is recorded a perfectly human incident in His life. It is a characteristic of humanity to weep; it is perfectly natural. But the tears were not dry upon His cheeks before He commanded, “Lazarus, come forth” (John 11:43). And Lazarus came forth. That was perfectly divine — only Deity has the power over death.

One technical point about the lampstand is of interest: It was a lightholder. The olive oil lamps were placed upon the lampstand. The lampstand supported the flame, but the flame revealed the beauties of the golden lampstand. The olive oil lamp is a scriptural symbol of the Holy Spirit. The analogy is striking. Christ sent the Holy Spirit into the world and He supports the Holy Spirit in His work, but the Holy Spirit takes the things of Christ and reveals them unto believers. As the olive oil lamps were supported by the lampstand and they in turn revealed the beauties, thus Christ is the foundation and support for the work of the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit in turn reveals the things of Christ (see John 16:12-15).

The lampstand gave light in the Holy Place — it not being possible for natural light to penetrate there. The priest inside walked by divine light, and he had to go outside for natural light. True worship today is

in spirit and truth; it is where the Spirit takes the things of Christ and reveals Him unto the believers. Walking by the light of reason, intellect, science, or the golden rule may be fine and proper for the natural man, but these never lead the soul into the place of fellowship with God. Natural light is the extent of these, and by virtue of the appeal to the natural man, they are indeed dazzling. The moths are attracted, and the light that draws them is their destruction. But the true worshipers behold only Christ, and this is never discerned by the natural man without the aid of the Holy Spirit. The beauties of Christ are never beheld by the natural man but are revealed only by the Holy Spirit.

Divine light was only found in the Holy Place. Only as worshipers in the present age pass by the cross and laver and come to Christ for light are they truly worshiping God. Christ is the Lamp unto our feet, and the Holy Spirit is the Light unto our path (see Psalm 119:105). Christ said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). The true believers alone know that to be true.

Believers today have been sent into the world as lights: "Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). We are merely reflectors, to reflect His light. Only as we walk in Him can we be lights in the world. A reflector must be where the light is, in order to reflect it.

Come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD. (Isaiah 2:5)

CHAPTER VII

THE ALTAR OF GOLD: THE DOCTRINE OF WORSHIP (CONTINUED)

The third and final article of furniture that stood in the Holy Place was the altar of incense or the altar of gold. There were two altars in the Tabernacle. These were distinguished in a threefold manner: first, as to the kind of material out of which they were made; second, as to the location of each; and third, as to the kind of offerings made thereon. These distinguishing differences will be enlarged upon as we proceed in our consideration of the altar of gold. The instructions for the same are found in Exodus 30:

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 sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD. (Exodus 30:1-10)

The altar of gold was the place where incense was burned. Sacrifice of any kind was forbidden, only incense could be offered. Made of shit-tim wood overlaid with gold, the altar was 1x1x2 cubits. It speaks of Christ.

Incense is the symbol of prayer and praise, as several Scriptures assure:

And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours [incense], which are the prayers of saints. (Revelation 5:8)

And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. (Revelation 8:3, 4)

David cried:

Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense. (Psalm 141:2)

After the close of the giving of the Old Testament canon, heaven was silent for about four hundred years. Then the silence was broken by the intrusion of the presence of an angel at the time of incense:

And it came to pass, that while [Zacharias] executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. (Luke 1:8-10)

God initiated a new dispensation at the altar of incense as the people were in prayer.

The altar of gold is first of all a figure of Christ as our great Intercessor. This altar was where Aaron, the great high priest, ministered. Aaron ministering before the altar was a figure of Christ, our High Priest in heaven:

We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. (Hebrews 8:1)

Christ is in the heavens today praying for His own. The seventeenth chapter of John is a fair sample of the prayer that He offers for His own. It is the Lord's prayer. In this prayer He declares specifically that He prays for His own: "I pray for them [those the Father gave Him]: I pray not for the world" (John 17:9). The writer to the Hebrews made this further arresting comment:

Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25 ASV)

There were two articles of furniture that spoke of His work in heaven for us: the laver and the altar of gold. The instructions for both are given in the great worship chapter. The laver speaks of His work in cleansing His own in preparation for worship, and the altar of gold speaks of His intercessory work when He protects and perfects us:

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. (Romans 8:34)

A contrast of the two altars at this point will throw light upon our subject. The altar of gold is where God dealt with a saint; the altar of brass is where He dealt with a sinner. The altar of gold speaks of heaven; the altar of brass speaks of earth. The altar of gold has to do with holiness; the altar of brass has to do with sin. The altar of gold, as a fig-

ure, represented what Christ does for us in heaven; the altar of brass, as a figure, represented what Christ did on earth.

When the writer to the Hebrews catalogued the articles of furniture of the Tabernacle in the ninth chapter, he included the altar of gold with the furniture in the Holy of Holies. We are not attempting to settle that moot problem, but we believe it to be suggestive. Now the veil is removed, and the believer can come with boldness to the throne of grace because he is in Christ. He has a position in the very presence of God. The altar of gold belongs rightly in both places. In the Holy of Holies it suggests the intercessory work of Christ for us; in the Holy Place it suggests our part in worship. It suggests the place where we pray and praise God. Christ is the One who genuinely worships God. He truly praises God in His prayer work for us. We have no merit that makes our prayers and praise acceptable to God. The basis of our prayers is not ourselves — God does not hear and heed our prayers because we are who we are, but because Christ is who He is. This is seen in the altar of gold. It was not a bloody altar; sacrifices of every description were forbidden. But it was consecrated with blood once a year, evidently on the Day of Atonement. The death of Christ upon the cross is the basis of the prayers of the saints. Our prayers are acceptable because “he hath made us accepted in the beloved” (Ephesians 1:6). When Christ was on earth, a voice out of heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). Christ is the only One who pleases God, and God is pleased to hear the prayers of His own only in Christ. Again, the voice out of heaven said, “This is my beloved Son...hear ye him” (Matthew 17:5). This beloved Son is not only the One for man to hear, but is in truth the only One whom God hears. Positionally, to pray in the name of Christ means to present all His merit, worth, and work as grounds for acceptance and the instrumental cause for answering prayer.

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. (Hebrews 13:15)

There is one final word about this altar. Aaron was instructed to offer a “perpetual incense” (Exodus 30:8) upon it. This reminds us of the injunction of Paul to the Thessalonians, “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Again, “strange incense” (Exodus 30:9) was forbidden to be offered. Also, the formula for the incense was not to be duplicated. The “strange incense” speaks of any attempt to worship God which is contrary to His Word. Duplication is equally as bad, for it speaks of trying to please man while trying to serve God. A dead ritual and a lifeless liturgy are an abomination to God and produce spiritual deadening to man. Adjuncts to worship that are calculated to draw crowds and to give man the impression that he is worshipping God, when in fact he is not, are bound to kill true worship and appeal merely to the natural man.

Praise ye the Lord.

[BLANK PAGE]

CHAPTER VIII

THE VEIL WHICH WAS RENT: THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION

Before going into the Holy of Holies, a brief word concerning the veil will suffice to aid us in understanding the articles of furniture therein. The veil was the third curtain that separated a holy God from sinner man. It separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. It was made of fine-twined byssus linen, in which were wrought cherubim of gold. It was dyed blue, purple, and scarlet. On the wilderness march it furnished a covering for the ark:

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 testimony with it. (Numbers 4:5)

The word “veil” means to hide or to cover. It protected the holiness of God, whether on the wilderness march or when it was in its place in the Tabernacle. It protected the holiness of God from the profanity of man. In fact, it protected both God and man.

When the temple of Solomon was erected, the veil was perpetuated in the temple, only it was larger and more elaborate. It was a beautiful work of art, gorgeous in design, artistic in color, superb in the minutest detail, and rich in adornment. It was exquisitely wrought in its texture, being of “cunning work” (Exodus 26:1). Josephus tells us that it was four inches thick in his day and renewed each year. Wild horses tied to each end of the veil, after it had been taken down, were not able to rend it asunder.

The veil was a figure of the humanity of Christ. The writer to the Hebrews made this evident:

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. (Hebrews 10:19, 20)

The veil stood silently reminding man that God would be manifest in human flesh.

***And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:
God was manifest in the flesh.*** (1 Timothy 3:16)

God was in Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:19)

The veil was a prophetic picture-parable of the humanity of Christ — a silent symbol of the Incarnation.

As long as the veil hung in its place, it separated God and man. The sinner could come no farther than the gate of the outer court. From there to the Holy Place, only priests served. But even the priests were forbidden to pass the veil. Only the high priest could come past it, and then only once a year on the great Day of Atonement — but he could never enter without blood. All this revealed to man how far his sin had separated him from God. The veil was the final separating object. As long as it was not rent, it was a wall of separation that shut man out. Likewise, as long as Christ walked the earth, He separated God and man. His perfect life, “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Hebrews 7:26) condemned man. His life revealed the awful chasm and deep abyss that stood between God and man. If the humanity of Christ is the requisite humanity in which God can dwell, then is the race of mankind woefully undone. If the life of Christ is the only life that is acceptable to God, then we are horribly lost. No man can measure up to Christ. It is blasphemy for a man to pillow his head at night and say even for one day that he has lived like Jesus. If we have to be as good as Christ in order to get to God, then are we forever shut out. His spotless life only mirrors our imperfections; His teachings merely reveal how far short we have come. The life of Jesus can never save us. That spotless humanity must be rent on the cross if man is to be saved. Someone once said, “I got into the heart of God through a spear wound.” That is the teaching of the rent veil. It is not rhetorical style that prompted the Gospel writer to include the agonized and pierced cry of Christ on the cross with the rending of the veil in the temple:

***And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.
And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to
the bottom.*** (Mark 15:37, 38)

When Christ expired, the veil was rent, telling out in a symbolic way that the way into God was now open, and that it required nothing short of the death of Christ. Thus, the purpose of the incarnation is revealed. Christ did not come in human flesh to set us an example, to teach us about God, or to propound a system of ethics. He did all this, but the primary purpose of His coming in human form was to offer that body as a sacrifice for the sin of the world.

Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me. (Hebrews 10:5)

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. (Hebrews 10:22)

[BLANK PAGE]

CHAPTER IX

THE ARK OF GOLD AND WOOD: THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTOLOGY

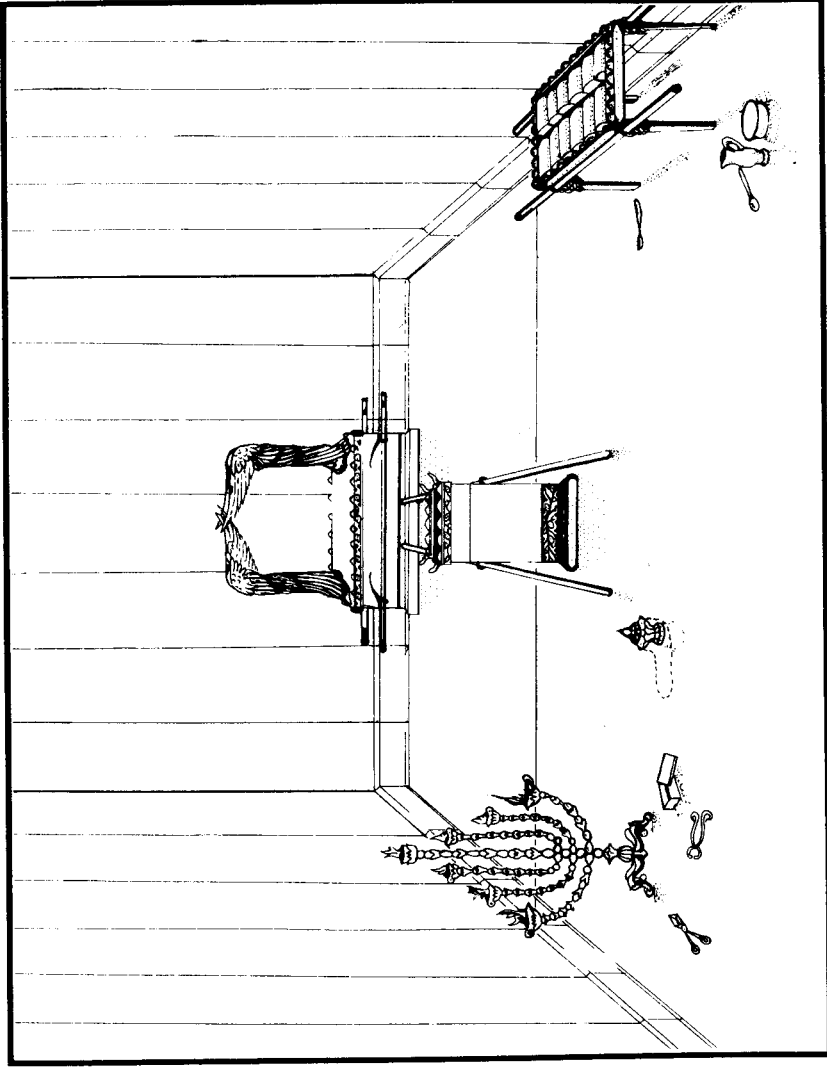
We have now come to the *sanctum sanctorum* of the Tabernacle. As we come in closer to the dwelling place of God, the emphasis is removed from the work of Christ to the Person of Christ. There were two articles of furniture in the Holy of Holies: the ark and the mercy seat. We shall direct our attention first to the ark. The instructions for it are found in Exodus 25:

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. (Exodus 25:10-16)

Israel was a theocracy, and Jehovah was King. In this they were unlike the nations round about them. The ark was God's throne. He did not sit upon it in any anthropomorphic sense, but He dwelt between the cherubim:

The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims. (Psalm 99:1)

If its place in the blueprint had anything to do with it, the ark was the most important article of furniture, for the instructions for it were the



The artist, George Howell, has sketched the Tabernacle interior without the separating veil. The rear compartment shows the Holy of Holies which housed the Ark of the Covenant. The front compartment pictures the Holy Place in which were the Lampstand of Gold, the Altar of Gold, and the Table of Shewbread.

first given of any part of the Tabernacle. The fact that it was God's throne lent importance to it. No Israelite ever saw it, so sacred was it. Only the high priest was permitted to behold it. On the wilderness march it was carefully wrapped, first in the veil and then with badgers' skins. The chest, measuring two and one-half by one and one-half by one and one-half cubits, was made of shittim wood, overlaid both inside and out with gold. It was thus a true symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ, setting forth both His deity, represented by the gold, and His humanity, represented by the wood. It spoke of Him in the hypostatic union — very God of very God and very man of very man. The ark could not be spoken of as merely a wooden box, for it contained gold; and it could not be called a golden chest, for it contained wood. It required both to maintain the symbolism pointing to Christ as the God-Man. To overlook this duality is to entertain a monstrous notion of His Person. There is no doctrine of Scripture so filled with infinite mystery, so far removed from the skein of man's thinking, so foreign to the realm of explanation, than is the hypostatic union in Christ. Yet there is no symbol so simple as the ark — merely a box made of wood and gold — yet it speaks of things unfathomable. Truly, God chooses the simple things to confound the wise. That simple box tells out the whole story, so far as man can take it in, of the unsearchable mysteries of the blessed Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He was not merely a thaumaturgist. Neither was He a man with an over-developed God-consciousness. He was God.

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.
(Colossians 2:9)

He spoke as God. He put Himself on the same plane with God:

Ye believe in God, believe also in me. (John 14:1)

And again,

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father [God]. (John 14:9)

Likewise, He was perfect man. He grew tired and sat down at a well

in Samaria in the cool of the day. He slept, He ate, He drank, and He laughed and wept. And beyond all that, He suffered. All these are human characteristics.

The gold and the wood in the ark were both required; yet neither was mingled with the other, nor was the identity of one lost in the other. Christ was both God and man, but these two natures were never fused or merged. He never functioned at the same time as both God and man. What He did was either perfectly human or perfectly divine. Christ was a theanthropic Person and the only Mediator between God and men.

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 2:5)

The ark was not merely an empty box. It contained three items:

Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant. (Hebrews 9:4)

The tables of the covenant speak of the kingship of Christ. He was born a king, He lived a king, He died a king, He rose from the dead as a king, and He is coming again to this earth as the King. God's program is moving today, and has been from all eternity to the time when Christ shall rule over this earth, for he will turn and turn until He comes whose right it is to rule (see Ezekiel 21:27). This earth needs a ruler, man needs a king, and some day He is coming as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The pot of manna speaks of Christ as prophet. He spoke for God:

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. (John 6:32-35)

Christ not only spoke for God, but He was God's message to man. He was the Logos, the Word of God, the very Alphabet of God, and the Alpha and Omega. He was God's final message to man. Since Christ came, heaven has been silent, for God has no addenda to place after Christ. There can be no postscript to the letter where Christ is the embodiment of that letter. God has told out His heart in Christ.

Aaron's rod in the ark speaks of the work of Christ as Priest. The prophet spoke for God before men; the priest spoke for man before God. As a priest, Christ offered Himself. As a priest, He passed into heaven, and even now sits on God's right hand. We have spoken previously of the work of Christ as Priest. Suffice it to say here that there is a man in the glory at this very moment for us. As Aaron's rod which budded (the authority of His priesthood) was in the Holy of Holies, thus today there is in heaven at God's right hand the man Christ Jesus, who was raised from the dead. He is the unique example of resurrection up to the present hour. He is there for us.

These threefold functions describe the office of Christ as Mediator. There must be one who can represent man before God and one to represent God before man. He must have authority to rule. Christ fulfills all this, for He was God before man, and today He is man before God. Because He is both God and man, He is able to bring a holy God and sinner man together. He is the answer to Job's heart cry:

For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.

(Job 9:32, 33)

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt [tabernacled] among us. (John 1:14)

[BLANK PAGE]

CHAPTER X

THE MERCY SEAT OF GOLD: THE DOCTRINE OF PROPITIATION

We come now to the final chapter as we consider the last of the seven articles of furniture of the Tabernacle. We have attempted to examine the Tabernacle from the viewpoint of the furniture, for it constituted the important position of the Tabernacle. The tent and coverings were primarily for the furniture. The curtains served as means of separation for the articles of furniture. The furniture has afforded us a vantage point from which to make examination of the theology of the Tabernacle. Quite properly, this discussion could be enlarged in order to take in the other phases of the Tabernacle, but there could be very little elaboration made of the doctrines examined herein which could be found in the articles of furniture.

There were two articles of furniture in the Holy of Holies. The appearance of them seemed as one, but careful examination revealed two, for the mercy seat furnished a top for the ark. They would appear to be the same thing, but they were separate and distinct. However, the instructions for both are given together. The blueprint for the mercy seat follows the blueprint for the ark:

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.

(Exodus 25:17-22)

The mercy seat was a top for the ark, but it was a separate piece of furniture. It was made of pure gold, two and one-half by one and one-half cubits. On top of the mercy seat and coming out of it were two cherubim of gold. The mercy seat was highly ornamented, and was probably the special work of Bezaleel. We are bold enough to affirm that the mercy seat was the most important article of furniture, and where all was God-appointed, it was supreme. In the instructions God interjects this revealing declaration: "And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat." On the great Day of Atonement God issued a warning to Aaron not to come at all times within the veil, "For I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat" (Leviticus 16:2). On the wilderness march it was from above the mercy seat between the cherubim that God directed Israel:

And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto him. (Numbers 7:89)

In 1 Chronicles 28:11 the temple is defined as "the place [house] of the mercy seat."

The mercy seat is where God communed with man. It was where God was found. There is no anthropomorphic notion that God sat upon the mercy seat. He dwelt among the cherubim. The mercy seat of gold sets forth the deity of Christ again. There is a resurrected Christ upon the throne of the universe today. The Man in the glory is sitting at the Father's right hand, waiting until the time when His enemies shall be made His footstool and when He will receive the throne of David.

As we approach the teaching of the mercy seat in its primary import, it is essential to see what made it a mercy seat. In order to ascertain this, a consideration must be made of the great Day of Atonement, for only on this day did the high priest approach the mercy seat. At the time of the great Yom Kippur, Aaron, after casting lots for the scapegoat, offered the other on the burnt altar. After offering a bullock for himself, an analogy which finds no parallel in Christ, Aaron brought the basin of blood within the veil and sprinkled it upon the mercy seat. The blood made it a mercy seat. God did not look down upon the merit of Aaron, or upon the goodness of the people, but He saw the blood. The sinning nation was made nigh by the blood. Christ is in the mercy seat today:

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.
(Romans 3:25)

The word, translated “propitiation” is in the Greek the same word for the mercy seat. Christ is the mercy seat today for the world. This phase of His work is enlarged upon in Hebrews 9:24-28, where Christ is seen as the sacrifice which taketh away the sin of the world.

God is propitious today toward the world. He is “mercy seated,” as it were, toward it. It is extraneous to try to do something to make a ground to approach God; God has already done that work, and He is propitious to an infinite degree. God does not have to be won over by the sinner; He is already won over. God’s face is not turned away from the world in anger; His hands are outstretched toward a gainsaying world, and His mighty bared-arm of salvation is revealed. When the sin of man stood between God and man, He came forth and bore the penalty that there might not be anything that would shut man out from the heart of God. He says, “Come on, come on, I have provided the mercy seat.” God now can save a sinner who does no more than to trust in Jesus. That question now is, “Will ye be reconciled to God?” God is waiting, wanting, and yearning to save the last, the least, and the lost. The mighty bared-arm and the on-surging and pulsating heart of God are revealed today toward a world in sin and darkness that does not

know that God loved them to the nth degree. The publican does not have to cry for mercy now, for God has a meeting place where publicans and sinners can come. There is a mercy seat in heaven. Men talk about committing the unpardonable sin today. What is this thing that they call the unpardonable sin? There is no act that one can commit today that will shut that one away from the mercy seat. To remain in a state of unbelief alone will shut one out. There is a mercy seat.

Rising, He justifies
 Freely forever;
One day He's coming —
 O glorious day!
Living, He loved me;
 Dying, He saved me;
Buried, He carried my sins far away.¹

NOTES

Chapter 1

1. Mabie, Henry C., *The Divine Reason of the Cross* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1911).
2. Hengstenberg, Ernst W., *Christology of the Old Testament*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1856-58).
3. Jamieson, Robert, A. R. Fausset and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Hartford: S. S. Scranton, c. 1877).
4. Spence-Jones, H. D. M. (Ed.), *The Pulpit Commentary* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., c. 1890).
5. Ottman, Ford C., *God's Oath* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1911).
6. Grant, Frederick W. (Ed.), *The Numerical Bible* (New York: Louizeaux Brothers, 1899).
7. Source unknown.
8. Author unknown.

Chapter 2

1. "In the Cross of Christ," lyric by Sir John Bowring.
2. Myers, P. V. N., *Ancient History*, revised edition (Boston: Ginn, 1904).
3. "The Ninety and Nine," Elizabeth C. Clephane.
4. "At the Cross," lyric by Isaac Watts.

Chapter 3

1. Dr. C. I. Scofield was once asked if it were possible for a Christian not to sin, to which he replied, "Yes, but I never heard of one who did not sin."
2. Source unknown.

Chapter 4

1. Author unknown.