A decorative border with a repeating floral pattern of small, stylized flowers surrounds the entire text area.

LESSONS

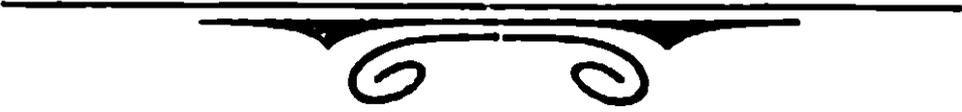
on the
Cabernacle.

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ONE HALFPENNY.

Lessons on the Tabernacle.



COMMUNION.

“ 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 ; and having a high priest over the house of God ; let us draw near.”—*Heb.* x. 19-22.

HERE is surely a step even beyond that figured at the golden altar of incense. Of old there was no passing the Veil. That wonderful curtain of fine twined linen, decorated with blue, purple, scarlet, and cherubim, shut God in and shut man out from that most holy place ; for that inner Sanctuary was the presence chamber of the God of Israel. His throne was there, and death was the penalty for entering, except as and when He appointed. Truly His

gracious purpose was to bless His people, but grace must reign through righteousness; the need is met, however; the person of the Lord Jesus, His moral glory and His work in death are all set out under God's eye, as we have seen, in Ark and Crown and Testimony; on such a foundation grace can be proclaimed. "Thou shalt make a mercy-seat" which was to be placed "above upon the Ark;" and then God said to Moses, "There I will meet with thee and I will *commune* with thee . . . of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel" (Ex. xxv. 17-22). Here then was in figure the place of communion, yet *the way in* was not made manifest while the first Tabernacle had its standing. But *now* that Christ has died, and God has responded to His work by rending the veil "from top to bottom," "in twain," and "in the midst," by the "new and living way," we may enter into God's own presence. Being "made nigh" by the precious blood of Christ, we are invited to "draw near . . . in full assurance of faith." What grace! What favour!

So all along the line, from gate to mercy-seat, we learn of Him, the Lord Jesus Christ; who He was and what He did; how He wrought

our redemption and brought us *to* God. And as, step by step, we ponder over these pictures of Him and of His work, we learn more and more of “the grace of God that bringeth salvation” (Titus ii. 11); grace rich and free, because it flows through Him who was ever God’s delight; grace measureless, because the eternal Son of God is its source and channel. He is the mercy-seat now to us; it is by Him we have access to this place of nearness and communion; we are permitted to speak to God and to learn His mind by His word to us. Do we use this privilege and blessing, finding our joy in Him and in His Word, having boldness of access, but with reverence and godly fear? Do we take our place as priestly worshippers, so that the glory of the Most Holy shines upon us? Or do we say it is too presumptuous, and we cannot reach such a position? It remains, as ever, God’s purpose for us in Christ Jesus, His unconditional gift, not our attainment; and our “great High Priest” is there, merciful and faithful. He died that He might bring us there, “*to God.*” And now, He not only sustains, but invites His own to “come *boldly* unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. iv. 16).

THE BUILDING

(Ex. xxvi. 15-30).

THE shadows recorded here have passed away ; the substance, Christ Himself, abides for ever ; but the former are left on record “for our learning” ; and in the construction of the tabernacle building we have before us picture upon picture of the Lord Jesus, as the dwelling-place of God in His human and divine perfectness and glory ; then, in view of Eph. ii. 21-22, as our foundation in the presence of God, as well as our acceptance and security.

Forty-eight boards were to be made for the building : 20 for the south side, 20 for the north side, 6 for the short side westwards, and 2 for the corners. They were to be of shittim wood, overlaid with gold, each 10 cubits in height and $1\frac{1}{2}$ in breadth, with 2 tenons to fit into the silver sockets which formed the foundation.

If we begin with this silver foundation, we are reminded of 1 Cor. 3-11, “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” In Ex. 30 we find the appointment

for providing the silver, "Then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, . . . half a shekel" (*i.e.*, 10 gerahs). Again in Ex. xxxviii., "The silver of them that were numbered" was used for the sockets on which the building stood. We are reminded of this atonement money by the words in 1 Peter i., "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as *silver* and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ." Thus we have atonement displayed in the silver sockets—the great foundation truth of redemption by the blood of Christ—and as they speak to us of His blessed work, so the wooden walls, overlaid with gold, tell us of Himself, the God-man, Christ Jesus, the Revealer and Glorifier of God. The shittim wood was truly there, but covered with gold, that which suited God in excellence and worth, and on which His eye could ever rest with infinite delight.

But we learn further, that in Christ God is building together those who are saved by His grace, for His "habitation through the Spirit." May we not trace, then, in these figures a foreshadowing of the rich blessings that flow to us through our Lord Jesus Christ?

Each board stood on *two* silver sockets,

competent witness to the truth of redemption ; each believer is to *know* that the precious shed blood is the abiding foundation on which he stands before God ; the ransom has been paid, all the debt we owed has been met in full, and “by Him all that believe are justified from all things.”

The covering of the boards with gold gives us surely a distinct thought from the sockets of silver—an added blessing, may we say ? The believer is not only redeemed, but is also seen by God in that which speaks to Him of His beloved Son ; a value not his own is upon him, he is taken into favour, “accepted in the Beloved.” Such is the believer to-day ; *on* the silver, but *in* the gold.

One more feature remains to assure our hearts : “The pins of the tabernacle and the pins of the court and their cords ” (Ex. xxxv. 18). No instructions are given as to how these pins and cords were applied, but their obvious use would be to maintain upright and secure the structure for which they were made ; and if each board had its tent-peg of brass and its cord attached thereto, carried across to the top of the building to the tent-peg on the opposite side, the boards would be kept firmly in the

place in which they were set. Sovereign grace secures in the place of blessing those whom it blesses. We are “kept by the power of God” (1 Peter i. 5). Redemption, acceptance, security, figured in the silver, the gold, and the cords, are all ours, and that for ever, for “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”

May we take with joyfulness from the Hand that gives so liberally, and delight ourselves in the Giver and in the gift.



THE BOARDS BUILDED TOGETHER.

“**A**ND thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was shewed thee in the mount” (Ex. xxvi. 30).

Having looked at the way in which each board was prepared and fitted for its place in the building, and seen the truths of redemption, acceptance, and security made plain by the figures of silver, gold, and cords, we may learn further, from the way in which the taber-

nacle was reared up, something more of God's ways in grace for His people to-day.

Firmly as each individual board was fixed by its two tenons into its silver sockets, yet when all the boards were in their places side by side, the structure, as a whole, was without tie or bond ; to make it one building other appointments were needed, and these were not wanting in the Divine instructions. In Ex. xxv. 22-29, we have a description of the corner-boards and of the rings and bars which united all together ; the boards had attached to them gold rings, through which were passed bars of wood overlaid with gold, and thus was each *side* compacted together ; but in the construction of the *corners* we see what gives solidity to the whole.

“And two boards shalt thou make for the corners of the tabernacle in the two sides ; and they shall be coupled together beneath, and they shall be coupled together above the head of it unto one ring : thus shall it be for them both ; they shall be for the two corners.” This piece of construction has been much debated, but it would seem to carry out the text if a board be placed anglewise across the corner, with a ring underneath, perforated with holes through which could pass the tenons of the

three corner-boards, so coupling them together "unto one ring"; let the same arrangement be repeated at the head of the corner, and the result is a solid piece of construction such as nothing can rack. Viewed from the outside, however, this wonderful bond is not seen; we must be inside with God ere we can understand how His habitation is builded together; there, in the holiest, the reality and power of the unity of God's house is learned.

Looking again at the corner, we see, first, in the silver sockets, redemption accomplished; then, in the ring, symbol of eternity, that the redemption is eternal; and eternal redemption being obtained, believers are builded together through the Spirit (Eph. v. 22). Again, the ring of eternity at the head of the corner, when the building is complete, would seem to intimate that the Church of God will for ever abide to give Him glory in that character (Eph. iii. 21).

How full is the picture, of blessing first, then of responsibility for those so blessed! For if our God has put us believers in such a place of privilege, are we answering to His gracious purpose? are we seeking there to abide, and careful to understand what are His divine appointments as shadowed by rings and bars? Gold, silver,

and cords may tell us of individual blessing, but rings and bars speak of corporate responsibility, of that which God, in infinite wisdom, devised to bind His people together. How are believers to-day carrying out this? Have not human appointments superseded the Divine? And so outward unity is gone.

In our figure, however, there is no thought of failure or imperfection; all is perfect in construction as from God's hand, telling us of His purpose in that spiritual house, fit for Himself to dwell in: "The house of God which is the church of the living God" (1 Tim. iii. 15). The one habitation, composed of all believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, bound together by Divine links which nothing can sever; one in His sight for ever.

May we more and more enjoy this place of wondrous privilege, and so, in some little measure, answer to it in our ways towards our fellow believers!



“THE TABERNACLE,” “THE TENT,”
 AND
 “THE COVERINGS” (Ex. xxvi. 1-14).

WHEN the boards of God’s material house were set in their place and builded together, they had thrown over them curtains and coverings, made, as all else, according to the Divine pattern, but wrought and spun by wise-hearted men and women, made wise by God Himself for the work (Ex. xxxv. 25-35).

The first of these curtains is called “the Tabernacle,” and consisted of ten curtains of fine twined linen, with a four-fold decoration of blue, purple, scarlet, and cherubim. The ten curtains were all of one measurement—*i.e.*, 28 cubits long by 4 broad; five of them were “coupled together,” and the other five were also “coupled together;” then, with 50 loops of blue and 50 taches of gold, the two fives were attached the one to the other, and became “one tabernacle” (Ex. xxxvi. 8-13).

This beautiful glory curtain was not seen from without; but displayed within, under God’s

eye, the glories of His beloved Son : for we have seen how the fine linen foreshadowed His blessed Person ; the blue, the purple, and the scarlet His glories as Son of God, Son of man, and Son of David. The further decoration of the cherubim may remind us of His administration in government, for they appear in Scripture as the executive of Divine government, the supporters of the throne of God ; and we look forward to the time when “the government shall be upon His shoulder,” who was rejected and cast out, for “the Father . . . hath committed all judgment unto the Son” (John v. 22).

The second curtain, which *was* seen from without, is called the “Tent,” and was of goats’ hair, undecorated, and made every way larger than the glory curtain. It would therefore completely conceal that from outside view. Compared with the first curtain, this one would have little or no beauty—nothing attractive to the camp around. The material is also significant. When Israel had forsaken God, then the prophet, as God’s man, wore hair, as a sign of his separation from the people *to* God. May we not see, therefore, in this Divine presentation of Christ to the camp, a picture of the true Nazarite, having

no beauty, "form, or comeliness" to the nation of Israel, so that they desired Him not, when in lowliness and meekness He dwelt among them. "He came to His own, and His own received Him not."

Ex. xxvi. 14 speaks of two coverings upon the tent, both of skins, and of no specified size. They are said to be "above upon," and if the Eastern practice of placing skins on the roof of the flat-topped tents be any guide, then they would be about 30 cubits by 10, laid on the top to keep out heat and weather. The first was of rams' skins, dyed red. Now the ram was the consecration offering, and the absoluteness of its colour (dyed red) may suggest the total devotedness to do His Father's will, even unto death, which characterised the Lord Jesus all the while He dwelt among us.

The second, or top covering, was of badgers' skins; a material mentioned only once beside in Scripture (Ezek. xvi. 10): "I have shod thee with badgers' skin,"—expressive of Jehovah's care for His chosen people in fully equipping them for the wilderness journey. Having its place here, in God's picture of His beloved Son, it reminds us of His perfection as He walked through this world—His ability to repel all

assault, whether it were “the wiles of the devil” or “the fiery darts of the wicked one.”

Thus we see in these curtains and coverings:—

- 1st. The glories of Christ.
- 2nd. His separation from the world.
- 3rd. His devotedness to God.
- 4th. His equipment against all evil.

But as in other features of the building our blessing in Christ is shadowed out, so here we may rejoice again in our portion in Him: for “if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ,” and the glory given to Him He has given to those who believe on His name.

Further, as He was not of the world, so those who belong to Him belong not to it, being delivered out of it when He “gave Himself for our sins” (Gal. i. 4). May we in heart and ways be separate from it, thus answering to His purpose; devoted too to learn and do the Father’s will, seeking truly to follow “in His steps.” Lastly, taking unto us “the whole armour of God,” that we may be “able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand” (Eph. vi. 13).

THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD

(Ex. xxv. 23-30).

ON the north side of “the holy,”—*i.e.*, the first division of the building—was placed the table for carrying the exhibition bread. It was made of shittim wood, overlaid with pure gold, having a crown of gold round about, with a border of an handbreadth beyond, and again a golden crown round about the border. It had also rings and staves for carrying it on the wilderness journeys.

The twelve loaves, which were to be set in order on the table, were of fine flour, baked, placed in two rows of six, with pure frankincense laid on each row. They were to be before Jehovah continually, but renewed every Sabbath, the ex-shewbread then becoming the food of the priests.

Another presentation of Christ is here before us. In the shittim wood and gold we recognise the human and divine met in His blessed person ; in the golden crown, His moral glory ; in the table bearing the loaves He is seen as Sustainer of His people in the presence of God

—for there were twelve loaves, Israel's representative number; not a part, but the whole nation seen before God in Christ. They may be scattered and broken, but are still in God's purpose, one and entire.

The fine flour is surely a figure of Christ Himself, but it has, in the *baked* loaves, been subjected to the fire, reminding us that He has gone through judgment for His people, and it is in resurrection life that they are seen in Him: for, "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." They are covered, too, with His fragrance, as seen in the frankincense laid upon them; and all are placed within one border and guarded by the crown of Christ's own glory.

How full of comfort is all this for believers to-day, for it is how grace works now. Point by point we can rejoice in the picture, and thank our God for such blessing and security. Fruit of His death and resurrection, we are seen in Christ before God, and there sustained by Himself, or the crown of His glory would be sullied! Surely no doubts need torture the heart of the feeblest babe in Christ when the ground of his security is so apprehended.

THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

(Ex. xxv. 31-40).

“**O**VER against the table” of shewbread, but on the opposite side, stood the Candlestick—a vessel of pure gold, the branches ornamented with bowls, knobs, and flowers, and crowned with seven lamps. This is a figure wholly divine. No wood was used in its construction; so, while it gives another presentation of Christ, the human thought is excluded. The beauty of the vessel itself was well displayed, as the lamps lighted up every detail of its triple ornament, while they also shone directly upon the shewbread opposite.

Divine perfection, completely displayed in our Lord Jesus Christ, may be seen figured in this golden candlestick. He is the true Light and the Revealer of God, the worthy object for our hearts, as we thankfully enjoy the place grace has given us, and in which Christ sustains us in the “most holy” with God; for the veil is rent, and no longer shuts us out from His presence.

The oil for the lamps reminds us that the light is given and the truth revealed by the power of the Holy Ghost ; so that God can and does tell us His will, and gives us Himself in Christ as our absorbing object.

These vessels of the Sanctuary, as well as all the other types of the Tabernacle, were set out on the bare ground of the desert—patterns of heavenly things brought down to earth for faith to lay hold of and enjoy now, while we are waiting and watching for the Lord Jesus to come again, when our glad eyes shall see Him face to face, of whose glory and beauty and excellence we have tried to learn something from these shadows of old.



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