

TABERNACLE TREASURES

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INHOUD

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CHAPTER 1

IN THE COURT

"There was a Tabernacle made" (Heb. 9:2), about thirty-four centuries ago; and a most remarkable structure it was. Something of its great importance and of its very remarkable nature may be gathered from the fact that God Himself both desired its erection and designed every part of it. His was the proposal that it should be built; His was the plan; and He it was Who solemnly charged Moses to make everything "according to the pattern" which He had shown to him (Ex. 25:9, Heb. 8:5).

The materials to be used in its construction, the shapes and sizes of the different parts, the details of the various articles of furniture, the number and measurements of its curtains, and even the colours which should adorn them, were all specified by God Himself.

This Divinely-desired and Divinely-designed Tabernacle was a *veritable treasure house*; not only because of the great quantities of gold and silver which were used in its construction, but also, and more particularly, because of the pictures - the invaluable illustrations - found in every part of it. For the Tabernacle was a *Divine picture gallery*: every detail of its structure, its ornamentation, and its furniture, was designed to represent some spiritual reality. No picture gallery in the world, however highly its works of art may be valued, can be compared with the treasures of the Tabernacle for the Tabernacle pictures were not mere representations of man's imagination, or man's reproductions of natural objects; on the contrary, they were Divinely-drawn pictures and symbols of heavenly and spiritual realities - "the example and shadow of heavenly things", "a figure for the time then present", "patterns of things in the heavens", "figures of the true", "a shadow of good things to come" (Heb.8:5, 9:9, 9:23, 9:24, 10:1).

Very many chapters in the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers are devoted to full and detailed descriptions of the Tabernacle, its contents, and the services connected with it; and something of its lasting importance may be learned from the fact that this building, which was desired and designed by God Himself, was also described by Him at such considerable length in His Holy Word. The gold and silver treasures of the Tabernacle disappeared many centuries ago; but, through these Divinely-inspired

accounts, its greater treasures - its invaluable types and pictures - remain to this day, for the edification and enjoyment of the children of God.

In the limited space at our disposal we cannot do more than give a general description of the Tabernacle and its furniture, with a brief pause here and there to indicate a few of its principal treasures. Even such a passing glance will, we trust, lead many Christians to a careful consideration of the Scriptures which describe these priceless Tabernacle treasures. Such a consideration will prove both delightful and profitable to anyone who loves the Lord Jesus; for here will be found many of "the things concerning Himself", which make the hearts of His people burn within them now as in days of old (Luke 24:27, 32). First then let us glance at some of the treasures in the Court before considering those in the Holy Place and in the Holy of Holies.

The encampment of the children of Israel in the wilderness was arranged, by Divine command, in the form of a hollow square; each side of the square being composed of the camps of three tribes. Within this hollow square there was another hollow square, three sides of which were formed by the tents of the three families of the Levites, while the fourth side consisted of the tents of Moses, Aaron and the priests. Within this inner square, and thus "in the midst" of the whole vast encampment, stood God's tent - the Tabernacle - surrounded by an uncovered rectangular enclosure, known as the Court of the Tabernacle (see Numbers 2 and 3, Exodus 27:9-18 and 38:9-20).

This enclosure, in which the Tabernacle stood, contained also the altar of burnt-offering and the laver: the altar was placed on the east side of the Tabernacle, near the entrance to the enclosure, and the laver stood between the altar and the Tabernacle.

The Court was 100 cubits long and 50 cubits broad and it was enclosed by hangings of fine twined linen suspended from pillars which were kept upright by sockets of "brass" (copper or perhaps bronze) and by cords fixed to brass pins or tent-pegs. These pillars had chapiters of silver and were united by silver "fillets" or connecting-rods. The white linen curtain, which thus surrounded the Court of the Sanctuary and separated it from the encampment, was five cubits in height.

This white wall of fine twined linen - which distinguished the Tabernacle from all the surrounding tents, and which separated it from the encampment of which it was the centre, clearly signified purity and righteousness (Rev. 19:8), and pictured both the difference and the distance

between the Holy God and sinful man. Man's boasted righteousness can only be likened to "filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6) in contrast to Divine righteousness, which was pictured by that pure white curtain of fine twined linen, which differentiated the Tent in which God dwelt from all other dwelling-places. So, when "the Word became Flesh and dwelt among us", when the Son of God became also the Son of Man, when the great Antitype of the Tabernacle was manifested, He differed from all other men in that He alone was "the Righteous", the "Just One", the One "Who knew no sin", the One Who was ever "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners". He was the Light amid the darkness, the "fine twined linen" amid the "filthy rags", the One Whose spotless righteousness was pictured by the fine twined linen with which the Court was surrounded, and with which also the Tabernacle was covered, and Aaron and the priests were clothed.

But, when the Lord ordered this separating curtain to be erected around the Court, He also gave directions for a "gate" to be made; for, though in these Tabernacle pictures He plainly signified man's unfitness to draw near to Him, He also clearly pictured the way by which, through His grace, man would be privileged to come into His Divine presence.

The Gate was at the eastern end of the Court. It consisted of a curtain, 20 cubits long and 5 cubits high, suspended from four pillars. This entrance curtain was of the same height and of the same material (fine twined linen) as the hangings which surrounded the Court, but, unlike those plain white hangings, it was adorned with three colours.

The position of the white linen barrier, between God's Tent and all other tents, signified *separation*; but the provision of a gate in that barrier, and of the same material as that barrier spoke of *invitation*, and clearly indicated God's gracious desire that men should draw near to Him and His gracious intention to provide a Way by which they should be enabled to draw near without compromising His holiness. Clearly then in that Gate we have a picture of the Lord Jesus Who said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6).

The three colours, by which the entrance-curtain was distinguished from the barrier-curtain, were (1) blue, (2) purple, (3) scarlet: they were Divinely-chosen colours; and, in the inspired description of the Tabernacle and its entrance-curtains, they are always combined and always mentioned in the order we have named. A consideration of these three colours, of their nature, and of their invariable order, will reveal choice treasures, for in these colours, which differentiated the gate from the barrier, God has given a wonderful picture of Him Who is the Way to Himself.

The first mentioned colour is **blue**; it is the colour of the sky, the colour of God's throne (Ex. 24:10, Ezek. 1:26), the colour which speaks of the heavenly and of the Divine, the colour which leads our thoughts to God Himself.

Next let us think of the last mentioned colour - the **scarlet**. It is the very opposite of the blue; no other colours could more completely picture the idea of absolute contrast. As the blue pictures the heavenly and the Divine, so the scarlet pictures the earthly and the human. It is, as someone has said, the colour which suggests both man and mud. We may find that thought almost at the beginning of the Bible, where we read that the first man was called Adam, a word which Newberry translates as "red earth". (A glance at a lexicon will show that "adam" is a word which is used some hundreds of times for "man", and that a form of it is used for "dyed red" in such Scriptures as Exodus 25:5, and that it is closely related to "adamah" which is used about two hundred times for "earth", "ground", or "land".)

The connection of the scarlet colour with the earth is also seen in the fact that, in the descriptions of the Tabernacle, the word scarlet is always a translation of two Hebrew words, one of which means "worm", and is elsewhere so translated (e.g. Psalm 22:6). It would be difficult, if not actually impossible, to determine now the exact shades of the three Tabernacle colours, but, by thus describing the scarlet as "worm-scarlet", the Holy Spirit has surely emphasised its connection with the earth and its contrast to the blue of Heaven. Here then we have the two contrasting colours, the blue of the sky and the scarlet of earth - the one signifying the heavenly, and the other signifying the earthly - the one speaking of the Divine, and the other of the human, of Adam, of flesh and blood.

But, as we have seen, there was another colour, and this other colour always has the central place when the three colours are mentioned. This central colour was **purple** - a colour composed of the other two colours - a colour which contained, combined and connected the blue and the scarlet. This purple, with its combination of blue and scarlet, reminds us of the Eternal Son of God Who became also the Son of Man and Who thenceforth was God and Man in one Unique Person, whose name was called "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23).

Looking at this beautiful combination of blue, purple and scarlet we may see a picture in colours of Him concerning Whom it is written, "the Word was God . . . and the Word became flesh, and dwelt (tabernacled)

among us". Here in this combination of contrasts we may see Him of Whom it is written that God sent "His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3). Thus we may see how *all these colours pictured the Lord Jesus*; and we need not be surprised to find that they all three appeared upon the Gate of the Court, upon the other entrance-curtains (the Door of the Holy Place and the Veil - which we are distinctly told represented "His Flesh" see Heb. 10:20), upon the ten curtains which formed the Tabernacle proper, and also upon the ephod and the girdle worn by Aaron, who in his office and dress typified our Great High Priest.

But, looking at these colours in a slightly different light, in a light which is perhaps the best for viewing the Gate, we may see the way in which the purple in particular pictured the mediatorial work of the Lord Jesus. The purple is always mentioned as the central colour, coming between the violently contrasted blue and scarlet, partaking of the nature of each, and linking the one to the other in itself. It is the "Daysman" colour, which is "betwixt" the other two, and which can, as it were, lay its hand upon them both (Job 9:33). It is the "Mediator" colour, the blue lays hold of the scarlet, through the purple and the scarlet is linked to the blue through the purple. No curtain had the contrasting blue and scarlet without the connecting purple, and the inspired description never gives these three colours in any other order than (1) blue, (2) purple and (3) scarlet - the blue first, the scarlet last, and the purple in between. Surely these facts are intended to remind us that "there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus". Surely they are intended to lead our thoughts to Him Who said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (1 Tim. 2:5, John 14:6).

(It is true of course that both purple and scarlet were subsequently used as colours denoting royalty, and that scarlet might also denote suffering; and very interesting and instructive connections with the Lord may be traced along these lines, but they appear to be subsidiary to the principal symbolism as given above.)

Thus we see how the purple pictured the Lord Jesus - the Mediator - the One through Whom (and through Whom alone) man can come to God, and we are not surprised that, when God said, "Let them make Me a Sanctuary that I may dwell among them", He ordained that the central one of the three Sanctuary colours should be purple. Truly, without the Incarnate Son, Who was pictured by that purple, man could not come to God. But, something more than the incarnation of the Son was necessary before man could be brought to God, and so we read that "God sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins", and that He "hath once suffered for sins, the Just

for the unjust, that He might bring us to God". Further, "we have access" through our Lord Jesus Christ because He "was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification" (1 John 4:10, 1 Pet. 3:18, Rom. 4:25 and 5:2).

Now let us carefully note the way in which God arranged that this significant purple - this central, connecting, combining colour - *should connect the Gate with the Brazen Altar*, upon which were offered those sacrifices which foreshadowed the one great Sacrifice by which alone "access" could be obtained and man could be brought to God.

The connection is found in the fourth chapter of Numbers where we have the Divine instructions for the covering of the vessels of the Tabernacle when the Israelites were on the march. In the thirteenth verse of that chapter we read that they were to "spread a purple cloth" upon the altar. This is the only time in all the Scriptures concerning the Tabernacle and its vessels that we read of the purple alone (i.e. without the blue and the scarlet), and how significant is the fact that *the one and only "purple cloth" was placed upon the altar of sacrifice*. How clearly it indicates the relation between the sacrifice and that central colour which linked together the contrasted blue and scarlet, both of which it combined in itself.

Whenever we read of blue, purple and scarlet - the colours which differentiated the gate from the barrier curtain - the colours of the curtains of that Sanctuary where God dwelt with man - the colours of the dress of the high priest - let us remember the connection of the central and combining purple with the altar of sacrifice, and let the significant connection remind us afresh that the way to God, fellowship between God and man, and the work of our Great High Priest, are all of them the outcome of the sacrificial work of the Incarnate Son, which was foreshadowed by the purple covered altar.

It is noteworthy that the Gate which we have been considering was **the only entrance** into the court of the Tabernacle. Although there were three tribes on each of the four sides of the Tabernacle there was but one entrance, and anyone, from any part of the camp, who wished to enter the Court must do so by the one gate and "the altar that is by the door" (Lev. 1:5) which was so closely connected with it. Separate entrances on the north, south and west sides might have been more convenient: but significance was much more important than convenience, and it was significant in the extreme that there was only one gate, and that the one and only gate was on the east side on which stood the altar. Persons of princely or priestly descent had no private entrance, all who would enter at all must enter by the one gate, which was common to all.

How plain is the lesson! The gate pictured Him Who said, "I am the Door . . . I am the Way . . . no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me"; and of Whom it is written, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other Name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

But we must notice that, *although there was only one gate, it was a very wide one* - indeed the width of the gate was equal to the length of the Holy Place. It was no less than twenty cubits in width (Ex. 27:16) - two-fifths of the total width of the Court, and twice the width of the Tabernacle itself - a veritable "whosoever" width, an "any man" width, a width for "all" (John 3:16, 10:9, Matt. 11:28).

Here again may be seen the close connection between the gate and the altar for the altar was a square, of which each side was five cubits long, and the gate was therefore as wide as (but no wider than) the length of all four sides of the altar. In the Tabernacle the size of the altar was thus related to the width of the gate of the Court, and in Solomon's Temple the size of the altar was related to the Holy of Holies, for each was twenty cubits square, and thus the Altar was equal to the Holiest. There was not one inch of the width of the Tabernacle Gate by which it exceeded or came short of the circuit of its Altar. There was not one square inch of the floor of the Holy of Holies in the Temple which was either less or more than the area of its Altar. These facts may remind us once again that our entrance in to God's presence is based entirely upon the finished work of Christ.

The Gate of the Court was, as we have already mentioned, *at the eastern end of the enclosure*, and thus the light of the rising sun shone upon it and upon the altar within it, and made clear and plain the way by which man could draw nigh to God. Even so at the coming of Christ, Who was the true Light and the true Way, it was recorded that, through God's tender mercy, "the Dayspring from on high hath visited us . . . to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:78-79).

Within the limits of this paper we cannot add much to what has already been said about the Altar. We must remember that, although it is usually called the altar of burnt offering, all the other sacrifices were connected with it in various ways. All these sacrifices were of great typical importance because they all pictured different aspects of the sacrificial work of our Lord, and as the altar was greater than the gift which it sanctified (Matt. 23:19) we may rightly expect to find in it invaluable pictures of the Incarnate Son Who put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Here there are treasures indeed, if space would permit us to examine them. Every detail of

material, of size and of shape - the brass and the wood in the one four-square altar, the three and the five in its measurements, its four horns (Ex. 27:1-8) - pictured in some way that Peerless Person or pointed in some way to the complete and perfect work of that Perfect One.

Between the altar and the door of the Tabernacle stood **the Laver** which contained water for the ablutions of the priests. It and its foot were made from brazen mirrors (Ex. 30:17-21, 38:8). The combination of the mirror and the water is clearly intended to lead our thoughts to something which can reveal defilement and can also remove it.

The washing of the priests by Moses was one of the most significant ceremonies in connection with their consecration (Ex. 29:4); this complete ceremonial washing, which was not repeated, pictured "the washing (laver, R.V. margin) of regeneration" of which we read in Titus 3:5. But, for the priests who were thus "bathed" once for all at their consecration, there was also a continual ceremonial washing, for no priest might enter the Holy Place or offer sacrifice upon the altar without having first cleansed his hands and feet with water from the Laver. This once-for-all bathing and these repeated washings remind us of our Lord's words to Peter, "He that is washed (bathed, R.V.) needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit" (John 13:10).

The Laver speaks of that cleansing of work and walk which the Lord continually accomplishes through His Spirit by the Word. The Word is likened to a mirror which reveals, and it is also compared to the water which removes the defilement contracted in the pilgrim path. Christ "loved the church and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word" (Jas. 1:23, Eph. 5: 26). "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word" (Ps. 119:9).

Space will not permit the examination of the many treasures which are connected with the Brazen Laver, but may it be ours, as the Lord's servants, continually to experience that necessary purification of our way, of our work and of our walk, which was pictured by the use of that Laver so long ago.

"Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isa. 52:11).

CHAPTER 2

IN THE HOLY PLACE

Having already considered some of the treasures in the Court of the Tabernacle, let us now turn our attention to those in the Tabernacle itself. We cannot gaze upon the foundation of silver, the walls and furniture of gold, and the wonderfully embroidered curtains, for all these treasures have long since disappeared, but, in the inspired description of these things, we may find types and pictures which are invaluable treasures to all who love our Lord.

The Tabernacle proper consisted of ten beautiful curtains of fine twined linen draped over a framework of gold-covered boards standing upon massive silver sockets. The whole structure thus formed was thirty cubits long and ten cubits broad, the north and south sides were each composed of twenty boards of a uniform width of a cubit and a half, and at the west end there were six similar boards and two corner boards which linked the end to the two sides. This therefore completed the gold-covered wooden wall which formed three sides of the Sanctuary.

The fourth side, the front or eastern end was the Door of the Tabernacle, consisted of a curtain suspended from five pillars (made of shittim wood, covered with gold and having gold chapiters) standing upon sockets of brass (the altar metal). Within the Tabernacle was another curtain, known as the Veil, which was suspended from four gold covered wooden pillars, apparently without chapiters, which stood upon sockets of silver. This Veil was stretched right across the Sanctuary at a distance of twenty cubits from the Door, and thus it divided the Tabernacle into two unequal compartments.

The larger part was known as the Holy Place. This was 20 cubits long, 10 cubits broad and 10 cubits high, at its eastern end was the Door (the means of entrance from the Court), at its western end was the Veil (separating it from the smaller compartment), on either side of it were the gold-covered boards, and above it were the beautiful curtains. The smaller of the two parts of the Tabernacle, that which was "within the Veil", was called the Most Holy Place, or the Holy of Holies. This inner compartment was a cube, being 10 cubits long, 10 broad and 10 high; the Veil formed its eastern side

(separating it from the Holy Place), the other three sides were formed by the gold-covered boards, and its ceiling (like that of the Holy Place) was formed by the beautifully embroidered curtains. Other curtains and coverings, which will be described later, were spread over these beautiful curtains.

The whole structure, as we have said, stood upon massive blocks of silver, and this **foundation of solid silver**, the weight of which has been reckoned at four tons, was of enormous intrinsic value, being worth many thousands of pounds. But, although this extraordinary foundation was of such great intrinsic value, it was chiefly valuable because it pictured another Foundation of incalculably greater worth. Great as was the treasure upon which stood the wooden boards of the Tabernacle, it was as nothing compared to the infinitely greater Treasure upon which stands the "habitation of God", of which every believer in Christ forms a part.

We shall see how clearly the silver foundation *pictured the Saviour* if we take note of God's directions regarding the special silver which was to be used for the foundation sockets, and of the way in which He described that particular silver. From Exodus 30:12-16 and 38:25-27, we learn that their silver foundation sockets represented the "ransom" of hundreds of thousands of souls. How clearly this points to Him Who said that He came "to give His life a ransom for many". Every Israelite, when he was numbered among the people of God, had to bring half a shekel of silver as "atonement money", as the "ransom for his soul", and this was, of course, a token or symbol of that true redemption price which is really essential for the souls of men. That true redemption price has now been paid, and it is clearly indicated in the Scripture which says, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

In this matter of the "atonement money" all who were numbered among the people of Israel were on one common level for the Lord's commandment ran thus, "The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls". The Divine requirement was the same for all, so too with us, "there is no difference", all alike were sinners, all stood in need of a Saviour, and all who are saved are partakers of "the common salvation" (Jude 3). The "atonement money" which the Israelite brought as "a ransom for his soul" is described as "an offering unto the Lord", and this description may well remind us that we could bring no acceptable offering to God, but that the Lord Jesus (the great Antitype of that atonement money), on our behalf, "offered up Himself". We could bring no "ransom"; we had nothing to pay, but Christ, "through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself

without spot to God". We could bring no acceptable offering, but Christ "hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour" (Heb. 7:27, 9:14, Eph. 5:2).

How noteworthy is the fact that the Tabernacle foundation was of such a valuable material as silver and how noteworthy also that this silver should be of such significance, as well as of such intrinsic value. Every hoard in the dwelling place of Jehovah stood upon this silver foundation. How plainly it showed that God can only dwell with man on the ground of atonement, that is, on the basis of the payment of the ransom price.

The curtain which formed the Door of the Holy Place was suspended from pillars which stood upon sockets of "brass" (copper or bronze), and, as we have seen, all the sockets of the pillars of the Court and of the Court Gate were likewise of brass. This brass, and the silver of which we have just spoken, together formed the foundation of the whole Tabernacle, and of its Court.

It will be remembered that **brass** was the fire-enduring metal which covered the altar of sacrifice. It symbolises enduring strength, and is closely connected with the thought of judgment borne. It clearly points to Him Who "endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God". The silver was the atonement money, and the brass was related to the altar of sacrifice, and so both of them pointed to the Saviour. Thus both of the materials used for the Tabernacle foundation pointed to Him of Whom it is written, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). Amid the surrounding wilderness, the Sanctuary of God stood firmly upon solid blocks of those two metals which, in different ways, pictured Him, Who, when He was owned as "the Christ, the Son of the Living God", said, "Upon this Rock I will build My Church" (Matt. 16:16-18).

At the eastern end of the Holy Place there were no gold-covered boards, but there was a curtain suspended from five pillars which were made of shittim wood and overlaid with gold. **This entrance curtain was "the Door" of the Holy Place.** It was made of fine twined linen and was ornamented with the three Tabernacle colours - blue, purple, and scarlet. This Door was the only entrance from the Court to the Holy Place. It was immediately opposite the Court Gate, and anyone going from that Gate to the Door of the Holy Place would pass both the Altar and the Laver, for a straight line drawn from east to west, through the centre of the Court Gate, would cross first the Altar and then the Laver, before reaching the centre of the Door of the Holy Place.

We have seen that the Court Gate was a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Door was another, and somewhat similar, picture of Him Who said, "I am the Door". All three of the entrance curtains - the Gate, the Door, and the Veil - pictured Him. Whether we come as sinners anxious to receive pardon from God, or as saved sinners anxious to render praise to Him, we can never find any other means of approach and access than the Lord Himself for He has said, "I am the Way . . . no man cometh unto the Father but by Me".

The Door, like the Gate and the barrier-curtain of the Court, was of fine twined linen, which spoke of the righteousness, the purity and the holiness which are essential characteristics of Him Who dwelt within that Sanctuary. Upon the Door too, as upon the Court Gate, were the three beautiful colours which, as we have already seen, pictured so clearly that Wondrous One by Whom we may draw near to God. There were the contrasting blue and scarlet; and there too was the connecting and combining purple, which pointed so clearly to that "One Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus".

Further, the Door into the Holy Place, which was of the same material and of the same colours as the Court Gate, was also exactly equal to that Gate in size, but we read concerning the Gate that "twenty cubits was the length and the height in the breadth was five cubits", whereas the Door was of the height and width of the Holy Place, viz., ten cubits by ten cubits. Thus the Door, which was only for the use of the priests (for none but priests might enter the Holy Place), was only half the width of the Gate but was twice its height. He Who was pictured by the wide Gate of welcome - the "whosoever will" Gate - was also pictured by that Door, which admitted the priests to many high and holy privileges of worship and service. Should not this remind us of the height of the privileges of God's believing people, His priests of today? Highly privileged indeed are those who are "an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"; and high indeed is the privilege of being "a royal priesthood" to show forth His praises.

Within the limits of this booklet it is not possible to say much of the **three wonderful vessels which stood in the Holy Place** - (1) the Golden Candlestick, with its seven lamps of gold which filled the Holy Place with a light in which none but priests were privileged to walk; (2) the Table of Showbread, with its twelve cakes upon which none but priests were privileged to feed; (3) the Altar of Incense, which filled the Holy Place with a sweet and sacred perfume which none but priests were privileged to enjoy,

since that perfume was only used in the Sanctuary which only priests could enter.

The Holy Place was full of light; there was no room in it for darkness, that expressive emblem and meet associate of death. All the light came from the seven lamps of gold, one of which was placed on the top of each of the seven branches of **the Golden Candlestick** (or rather Lampstand) which is described in Exodus 25:31-40 and 37:17-24.

This Candlestick, which so perfectly lighted up the Holy Place with its sevenfold brilliance, pictured the Lord Jesus Christ, "the true Light"; to Whom it is written, "Christ shall give thee light", and Who Himself said, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 1:9, 8:12, Eph. 5:14).

Undoubtedly the Candlestick, like the other holy vessels, pointed to the Lord Jesus, but, as there was no wood in the Candlestick and as its measurements are not recorded, we may expect to find that it not only pictured the work done in person by the Incarnate Son of God, but also, and more particularly, the work which He performs by His Holy Spirit. In Revelation 4:5 we read that, "there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God", and in Revelation 3:1 the Lord describes Himself as "He that hath the seven Spirits of God". Thus our Lord, Who has the Spirit of God in all His sevenfold perfection (Isa. 11:2), is the One from Whom, through that Spirit, comes all true spiritual light.

Life and light are continually linked together in the Word; light being frequently used as a symbol of life, as darkness is of death. The Golden Candlestick was designed to be suggestive of life as well as to give light. It was made in the likeness of a tree with stem, branches, flowers and fruit; and the tree which it represented was the almond tree, "the hastener", the early blossoming tree, a type of resurrection life (Jer. 1:11-12, Num. 17:8). Upon the tops of the flower adorned and fruit-laden branches of this golden almond tree were seven shining lamps. Could anything be more suggestive? How plainly *this tree of life and light pictured Christ*, of Whom it is written, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men".

In this Candlestick we may see also a picture of *the wondrous connection between Christ and His people*. It is hardly possible to think of this golden tree, with its central stem and its six spreading branches, without being reminded of our Lord's words, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches". How close is the resemblance between the two pictures, and how clearly each emphasises the connection of branch with tree, and of every believer with his

living Lord. "*All of it was one*", is the significant description of the Candlestick with all its branches; and "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are *all of one*", is the assurance concerning Christ and His redeemed ones.

And, looking at the Candlestick thus as a picture of Christ and His people, we observe that, as there was a lamp on the central stem, so also there was a lamp on each branch, and as the central stem bore flowers and fruit, so also did every branch bear flowers and fruit, not indeed in the same quantity as the central stem, but of the same kind. Could the lesson be more plainly pictured? He Who is the Light would have His followers "shine as lights". To them He says, "Ye were sometimes darkness but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Matt. 5:14-16, Phil. 2:15, Eph. 5:8). He Who is the True Vine would have His branches bear "much fruit", "the fruit of the light", "the fruit of the Spirit" (John 15:8, Eph. 5:9 R.V., Gal. 5:22-23).

Again and again we are told that *the Candlestick was of "beaten work"*. It was not cast, but hammered out "of beaten work made he the Candlestick". Is not this significant? If the True Vine would have fruit-bearing branches, if the True Candlestick would have light-bearing branches, if the True Corn of Wheat would not abide alone but bear much fruit, there must of necessity be "the sufferings of Christ" which are surely suggested by that "beaten work". Because He died, we live; because He went through the darkness of Calvary, we are now "children of light". Had He not died, the blackness of darkness must have been our portion, but the Lamb has died, and both life and light are ours through His death. The Candlestick was beaten work of pure gold, and the oil for the lamps was "pure olive oil beaten". The Risen Lord, "the Lamb that was slain", is the source of all our light and so we are not surprised to read concerning the Holy City, New Jerusalem, that "the lamp thereof is the Lamb" (Rev. 21:23 R.V.).

Opposite to the Candlestick, that is to say on the north side of the Holy Place, stood **the Table of Showbread** which is described in Exodus 25:23-30 and 37:10-16. It was of shittim wood overlaid with gold and had a crown of gold around it. There was also "a border of an handbreadth round about" and a crown of gold for the border. The Table was two cubits long, a cubit broad, and a cubit and a half high. These details cannot now be considered, but the significance of some of them will be indicated when we speak of the Ark of the Covenant.

Upon the Table were **twelve cakes of Showbread**. These cakes were made of "fine flour" without leaven, and were of considerable size and were arranged upon the Table "in two rows, six on a row". Pure frankincense was

put "upon each row" (Lev. 24:5-9 and 2:11). In this Showbread we have another treasured picture of our Lord, Who is the Bread of Life, "the True Bread from heaven" (John 6:32-58). Week by week, upon the Sabbath, the priests placed upon the Table this Showbread, in which God could find satisfaction and delight because it pictured Him in Whom the Father is ever well pleased. The purity and fineness of the flour, the absence of leaven, the baking of those "pierced cakes", the pure frankincense placed upon them, would all bring before the Father the perfection of the person and work of the Incarnate Son. No wonder the Showbread was described as "most holy".

And week by week, as they brought the new Showbread, the priests were privileged to eat that which during the week had been "upon the pure table before the Lord", and thus God had fellowship with the priests at that "pure table", and they received for their sustenance that "most holy" food which had given satisfaction to Him. How it all reminds us of Him Who is ever both the delight of His Father and the life and sustenance of His people.

From Numbers 4:7-8 we learn that when the Tabernacle had to be moved, the instructions given to the priests were as follows, "Upon the table of showbread they shall spread **a cloth of blue**, and put thereon the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls, and covers to cover withal: and the continual bread shall be thereon: and they shall spread upon them **a cloth of scarlet**, and cover the same with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put in the staves thereof". None of the other holy vessels had a covering of scarlet, and nowhere else in all the instructions for the erection, transport and services of the Tabernacle do we read of blue and scarlet without the intervening purple.

Here - and here only - we have the blue (which speaks of heaven and of God) and the scarlet (which speaks of earth and of man) without the intervening purple - the colour with which the altar was covered - the colour which speaks so plainly of the "one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus". But it is very significant that in this one and only place in which the blue and the scarlet are mentioned together without the purple we read of something which came between them - *something which took the usual connecting place of the purple* -and that something was "the continual bread". For this once the mediating purple was replaced, and that which replaced it was the showbread which so plainly pictured Him Who said, "I am the Living Bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world". Everywhere else the blue and the scarlet were connected by the purple; but, on the Table that which came between them was "the continual bread"; first the blue, then the bread, and then the

scarlet. Here we have, in picture language, the gracious God having fellowship with redeemed man through Him Whom the bread represented. At the Table then we see the picture of the Heavenly Father and His family both finding delight and satisfaction in Him Who is the Living Bread.

The other vessel in the Holy Place was **the Altar of Incense** which stood just in front of the Veil. This Altar was a cubit long, a cubit broad and two cubits high. It was made of shittim wood and overlaid with gold, had horns of the same materials, and there was a crown of gold around the top of it. A description of it, and of the Incense which was burned upon it, is found in Exodus 30:1-10 and 34-38. A few words must suffice to suggest some of the many precious pictures of our Lord which can be seen at this Golden Altar.

Fire from the Brazen Altar was used upon the Golden Altar to bring out the sweet perfume of the incense, for worship at the Altar of Incense was only possible because of that which was done at the Altar of Sacrifice. Aaron's work at the Golden Altar *speaks to us of the present work of our Great High Priest*, Who "ever liveth to make intercession for us"; and that which our Lord now does "in the presence of God for us" is based upon that which He accomplished long ago at "the place which is called Calvary".

In that which was done at this Golden Altar we may also see pictures of some *of the great privileges of believers*, the "holy priesthood" of this dispensation. The wonderful Incense pictured the incomparable excellences of the person and work of our Lord, and, by the close connection between prayer and the offering of incense (see Psalm 141:2, Luke 1:10, Rev. 8:3), we are reminded that acceptable prayer and praise must ever be in His Name and redolent of Him.

The burning of the "sweet", "pure", "most holy" incense was rightly regarded as the highest of priestly privileges, for it was the offering to God of that which pictured the excellence and preciousness of the Risen Lord. We need not be surprised, therefore, that Jehovah caused this privilege to be safeguarded by various prohibitions: (1) "strange incense" was forbidden; that which was offered to God must be made in exact accordance with the Divine instructions; (2) no incense so made might be used for any other purpose - "Ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof, it shall be unto thee holy for the Lord"; (3) the offering of incense with "strange fire" was also prohibited; and (4) the privilege of burning incense was confined to "the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense" (Ex. 30:9 and 37, Lev. 10:1, 2 Chron. 26:18).

Such safeguards should help us to realise, with ever increasing gratitude, how high a privilege is our priesthood as believers, and how precious is He Whose Name we plead in prayer and in Whose Name we present our praise. "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".

CHAPTER 3

IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES

It will be remembered that the Tabernacle was thirty cubits long, ten cubits wide and ten cubits high, and that it was divided into two unequal parts by "the Veil" which extended from side to side of the Sanctuary and hung down from its ceiling to the ground. The larger compartment, between the Tabernacle door and the Veil, was the Holy Place, of which we have already spoken, and the smaller one "within the Veil" was the Most Holy Place, the Holiest of all, or the Holy of Holies.

The height and width of **the Holy of Holies** were the same as those of the Holy Place, but, as the Veil was only ten cubits from the western end of the Tabernacle, the inner and smaller compartment - the Most Holy Place - was only half the length and half the size of the outer one. From these particulars it will be seen that the Holy of Holies, the innermost and most sacred part of the Sanctuary, was a cube of no great size - its length, its width, and its height each being ten cubits. This Most Holy Place, small though it was, contained some of the greatest of the Tabernacle treasures and some of its *most beautiful pictures of the Saviour*, for therein stood the Ark of the Covenant with the Mercy Seat and the Golden Cherubim upon it, and with three other great treasures within it.

But, before turning to the Ark and its contents, we must consider **the sides of the Holy of Hollies** and the curtains which formed its ceiling. The north and south sides of the Holy of Holies were, of course, continuations of the sides of the Holy Place, and were composed of gold-covered boards standing upon a foundation of solid silver. At the west end there were eight gold-covered boards (including the two corner boards which linked the end to the sides) also standing upon massive blocks of silver. All these boards stood upon that silver foundation which so plainly speaks to us of the Saviour because it was composed of the "atonement money", the symbolic half shekel paid by each Israelite as "a ransom for his soul" when he was numbered among the people of God.

The forty-eight boards, which stood upon the silver sockets and formed the framework of God's ancient dwelling-place, *may be likened in*

many ways to believers who now "are builded together for an inhabitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22).

The Lord commanded Moses to "make boards for the Tabernacle of shittim wood *standing up*", and it is recorded that "he made boards for the Tabernacle of shittim wood standing up" (see Ex. 26:15-30 and 36:20-34). Gone was the old standing, the chosen trees were cut down, they were cut off from their old association with earth, they were made of the desired size and shape, and they were given an entirely new standing, for they were firmly planted in the solid silver foundation, each board having two tenons fitting into two sockets of the precious "atonement money", and thus they became boards "standing up" in the habitation of God. How beautifully it all pictured those of whom it is written, "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus", and of whom it is written again, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (Eph. 2:10; 2 Cor. 5:17).

And the boards' new condition was shown by something more than their standing upon the silver foundation, for they were also *covered with gold*; none of the wood was seen, they were completely encased in the precious metal. How this also reminds us of that frequent and wonderful New Testament description of the believer as one who is "in Christ". The man who is "in Christ" has indeed been clothed with "the best robe", and he can truly say, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isa. 61:10).

The gold-covered boards were **united and kept in their proper positions by bars** of wood which were also overlaid with gold. Five of these bars were used for each of the three wooden walls of the Tabernacle (i.e., for its north and south sides and its west end). **The middle bar** of the five was differentiated from the other four; it was spoken of as "the middle bar in the midst of the boards", and it was made and fixed in such away that it should "shoot through the boards", and should "reach from end to end" (Ex. 26:28, and 36:33).

To what shall we liken this middle bar which was thus inserted "in the midst" of all the boards, and apparently passed unseen through the very heart of each of them linking them all together by that which was in the heart of each? Does it not speak, in God's picture-language, of the indwelling Christ? That middle bar went from end to end of the Tabernacle; every board which formed part of that "habitation of God" had the middle bar "in the midst" of it. Even so, Christ by His Spirit dwells in the heart of each one of His own.

We read of Christ dwelling in the heart by faith, we read of "Christ in you the hope of glory", and we are distinctly told that, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. 8:9). Well may we be reminded of all this by that middle bar which was in the midst of all the boards.

But to what shall we liken **the other four bars** which ran along each of the three sides of the Sanctuary, passing through rings of gold which were attached to each board? The middle bar was in the midst; it formed the unseen bond which united all the boards, but the other four bars were on the outside of the boards, and on the outside of the Sanctuary, they were the visible bonds between board and board.

Some have suggested that those four bars may be likened to the four great bonds, mentioned in Acts 2:42, by which the whole church was manifestly united at the beginning and in which all the Lord's people should have "continued steadfastly", as they did in those earliest days. It is recorded that, "they continued steadfastly in (1) the apostles' doctrine (2) and fellowship (3) and in breaking of bread, (4) and in prayers". Would that these four binding "bars" might still be manifested in the life of all believers, passing through the golden rings of love and uniting all in one.

The gold-covered wooden walls, of which we have been speaking, formed three sides of the Holy of Holies, but on its east side there was no wooden wall, for it was only separated from the Holy Place by a curtain suspended from four pillars. This curtain is called "**The Veil**", or more exactly, "the second Veil" (Heb. 9:3) - the first veil being the Door from the Court to the Holy Place. This second Veil was made of the same material, was of the same size, and was ornamented with the same three colours, as the gate of the Court, and the door of the Holy Place, but, unlike them, the Veil was adorned with symbolic figures of the cherubim. Like the other two entrance-curtains *it pictured Him Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life*. Its colouring of blue, purple and scarlet again reminds us of Emmanuel (God with us), Who was God's own Son but was sent by Him "in the likeness of sinful flesh". The fine linen of the Veil again reminds us of the pure and perfect life of the Lord Jesus and of the contrast between the "filthy rags", which represent man's fancied righteousness and the "fine twined linen" which pictured that Righteous One.

Very significant also was the appearance upon the Veil of **the figures of the cherubim**. This representation of the executive of the Divine administration (see Gen. 3:24; Ezek. 1:4-26 and 10:1-22) with its indication of willing and intelligent service, may remind us of that Perfect Servant, Who said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God". Never did the heavenly hosts

(ministers of God "that do His pleasure"), angels and archangels, seraphim and cherubim, serve Him as He was served by His Son. The Eternal Son "took upon Him the form of a servant", and, throughout His wondrous life, He, Who was both Son and Servant, always did the things that pleased the Father. "I am well pleased" was the Father's repeated testimony to that perfect life and service. We need not be surprised, therefore, that there were figures of the cherubim (the executive officers of the Divine will) upon that beautiful Veil, which pictured the Incarnate Son, Who, as the Servant of God, was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross".

That the Veil was indeed a type of the Incarnate Son is clearly stated in the twentieth verse of the tenth chapter of Hebrews, which speaks of the work of the Lord Jesus, and then connects the Veil with Him in these explanatory words, "The Veil, that is to say, His Flesh".

Only the high priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies, and it was only on the Day of Atonement that he had the awe-inspiring privilege of going "within the Veil", bearing with him incense and the blood of the sin-offering. Thus the Veil, which was the entrance-curtain to the Most Holy Place, proved to be a barrier-curtain to all but one man, and it barred the entrance, even of that one, on all the days of the year except one, and even on that day, he could only enter when he took with him the incense and the blood, which pictured the excellences and the perfect sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. *"The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest"*.

The first entrance-curtain, the wide Gate of the Court, seemed to say, "Come", to all. The second entrance-curtain, the Door of the Holy Place, seemed to say, "Come", to any priest whose hands and feet had been cleansed at the Laver, but the third entrance-curtain, the Veil of the Holiest of all, seemed to say, "Not yet". The Holy Spirit taught men, by that excluding Veil, "that the Way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest". The Veil, which excluded all men except one, said "Not yet", but the annual entrance of that one man was "a shadow of good things to come", it pointed Forward to the end of the "not yet" period, and pictured the manner in which "the Way into the Holiest" would one day be manifested.

Year by year, through century after century, first in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple, the high priest passed into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. *The Veil, however, was always there*; year by year, its corner was pulled aside momentarily, as the high priest entered and left, but when he withdrew the veil fell back again in to its proper place barring all

entrance far yet another year and saying, as plainly as God's picture-language could express the truth, "Not yet".

Far about fifteen centuries the Veil barred the way into the Holiest, but, in "the Fulness of time" there came that long-promised and oft-pictured One by Whom the lengthy "not yet" period was brought to an end. *Christ came. Christ died. And, as He yielded up the Ghost, "Behold, the Veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom"*. (Matt. 27:50-51). The true Sin Offering had been made, and the "not yet" period was over. The excluding Veil had been torn asunder signifying that the Way into the Holiest was at last made manifest.

We must now consider, very briefly, **the four sets of coverings** which were spread over the framework both of the Holy of Holies and of the Holy Place (Ex. 26:1-14). The innermost covering was "the Tabernacle" proper, which consisted of "ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, with cherubim of cunning work". Each of the curtains was 28 cubits long and 4 cubits wide and they were fastened together so as to form two large curtains (each composed of five small ones) and these two composite curtains were then coupled together, by loops of blue and taches of gold, so that the ten curtains thus united formed "one Tabernacle". This innermost covering was spread over the Tabernacle framework in such a way that the Veil was suspended immediately below the line of the uniting loops and taches.

Above these ten curtains, there was a second set of curtains, which formed "a covering upon the Tabernacle". This second covering was known as "the Tent". The curtains of the Tent were of goats' hair, and were eleven in number. Each of them was 30 cubits long and 4 cubits wide. They were coupled-together so as to form two large curtains (one composed of six small ones and the other of five, and along one edge of each of these two composite curtains 50 loops were made, and 50 taches of brass were inserted in the loops so as to "couple the Tent together, that it may be one". Ten of these goats' hair curtains were so arranged as to cover the ten curtains of the Tabernacle. The eleventh goats' hair curtain (the sixth in the larger of the two composite curtains) extended over the top part of the Door of the Holy Place, special instructions being given to "double the sixth curtain in the forefront of the Tabernacle".

The third covering was of "rams' skins dyed red". No other details of it are given, except that it is called a "covering for the tent". The fourth covering is simply described as "a covering above of badgers' skins" (or "seal-skins", R.V.). These four sets of coverings consisted only of linen,

goats' hair and skins, yet they *pictured the Lord Jesus*, and consequently the inspired description of them is greatly valued by those to whom He is precious, and to whom, therefore, all "the things concerning Himself" are priceless treasures.

Badgers' skins (or seal skins) formed the outer protective covering of the Sanctuary, as they formed the outer coverings of the holy vessels when the Israelites were on the march. Great was the contrast between this outside covering of sombre-looking skins and the beautiful linen curtains which formed the innermost covering, the colours of which shone resplendent in the light of the seven golden lamps. To those who saw only the sombre badgers' skin covering the Sanctuary may well have seemed to be lacking in splendour, to be lacking in beauty of form and colour, and altogether to be singularly unattractive in appearance. Here we may see Christ pictured as the One of Whom it is written, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him".

Under the badgers' skins there was a covering of **rams' skins dyed red**. A ram is mentioned in Genesis 22:13, where we read, "and Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son". That ram was a sacrifice - a substitutionary sacrifice - an "in-the-stead-of" sacrifice, and the covering of "rams' skins dyed red" is surely intended to remind us of the vicarious sacrifice and to picture the Lord Jesus as our Substitute. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed". The offering of a ram had a prominent place in the consecration of the priests (Ex. 29), and, in this respect also, it pictured Him in Whom consecration was seen in perfection.

Next came **the eleven curtains of goats' hair** which formed the Tent. The sin-offering for the people on the annual Day of Atonement was a goat, it was the blood of that goat which was sprinkled for them upon the Mercy Seat, and it was a goat also which had to "bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited". The prominence given to the slain goat and to the scapegoat in making "an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year", doubtless suggests the significance of the goats' hair curtains, and indicates how they picture the Lord Jesus. They set Him before us as the Sin-bearer, of Whom it is written, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all", and of Whom it is written again, "Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin", and yet again, "He was numbered with the transgressors,

and He bare the sin of many". The goats' hair curtains remind us that "God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh". (Rom. 8:3, RV.).

The taches which united the goats' hair curtains into one Tent were made of the Altar metal (brass); and, in this way also, these curtains remind us of "the sufferings of Christ". The eleventh goats' hair curtain, which was doubled "in the forefront of the Tabernacle", may serve as a reminder of the necessity of keeping "in the forefront" those truths which were typified by the Day of Atonement.

The innermost covering consisted of **the ten linen curtains, with their glowing colours**, which formed the Tabernacle proper. In many things these curtains were the same as the Veil made of the same sort of material, resplendent with the same three colours, and with the same representation of the cherubim, and, as the Veil pictured the Lord Jesus, doubtless the curtains also were intended to picture "that same Jesus". These curtains which were so like the Veil (but were not destined to be "rent in twain") bring before us the glorious person of "that same Jesus" as the Risen and Exalted Lord.

If we see in the goats' hair curtains His sufferings as the sin-offering, we may see in these beautiful curtains "the glory that should follow". We see Him here as the Risen Saviour, "alive after His passion", of Whom Isaiah said that though He was made a sin-offering and His life taken from the earth, yet "He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand". There were cherubim upon the Veil, suggestive of Christ's perfect accomplishment of the will of God in His life and death, and, very fittingly, there were cherubim upon these curtains also, for the Risen Saviour is still the perfect Doer of the Divine Will - "the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand".

Above the place where the Veil was suspended, the two sets of five curtains were united into "one Tabernacle" by taches inserted into loops of the heavenly blue. These taches were not of brass (the metal of the altar) but of gold (the metal of the throne), thus bringing before us yet again the glory of the Son of God our Risen Saviour.

We find then that, looking at these four coverings from the outermost to the innermost, we may read in God's picture-language of (1) Christ in His humiliation, (2) Christ our Substitute, (3) Christ our Sin-bearer, and (4) Christ in His resurrection glory; and, as may be seen from the quotations above, we may read the same four things, in the same order, in the prophetic language of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah.

Within the Holy of Holies stood **the Ark of the Covenant** which was the greatest of the Tabernacle treasures and one of the most important of the Old Testament types of our Lord. The Ark was two cubits and a half in length, a cubit and a half in breadth, and a cubit and a half in height, and was made of shittim wood and was overlaid, both inside and outside, with gold (Ex. 25:10-22).

The significant combination of *wood and gold* in Ark, Table and Altar foreshadowed the mystery of the Incarnation; in which perfect Manhood (pictured by the wood) and true Deity (pictured by the gold) are both revealed in Him Who, being God, became Man, and is very God and very Man in one unique Person.

Within the Ark were the unbroken **Tables of the Law** (the second Tables of Stone, the first having been broken almost as soon as they were given, as the result of man's sin). This again reminds us of the only perfect life, the life of Him who could always say, "I delight to do Thy Will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My Heart".

The top of the Ark was **the Mercy Seat** (made of pure gold, and with cherubim of gold on the ends of it) upon which the blood of the sin offering was sprinkled on the Day of Atonement. This also pictured the Lord Jesus, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (a propitiatory or mercy seat) through faith in His blood".

This blood-stained Mercy Seat was of exactly *the same length and breadth as the Ark* upon which it rested, and thus it completely covered the Tables of the Law. This is a reminder, surely, that Christ's atoning death so completely satisfied all the Divine claims and that now God can "be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus".

It is recorded also that this Mercy Seat was of *the same height as the grate of the Brazen Altar and the top of the Golden Table*, and there is no record that any other Tabernacle vessel was of that height. We are reminded, by this connection between these three things, that the table with its implication of fellowship could only exist because the claims of the throne were met by the sacrifice.

A crown of gold surrounded the top of the Ark, and the Golden Altar and the Table were also crowned with gold. The Altar of Sacrifice had no crown, but all the vessels of wood and gold had golden crowns. We are reminded, once again, of "the glory that should follow" the sufferings of Christ, and that He is now "crowned with glory and honour".

Upon the ends of the Mercy Seat were **the two cherubim of gold**. The living cherubim were first revealed, as the executors of the Divine will, at the gate of Eden, barring the entrance because of man's sin, but the Mercy Seat pictured a great contrast to this, for upon the Mercy Seat there were two golden figures of the cherubim with their faces directed towards that sprinkled blood, which prefigured "the blood of Jesus" by which we may now "enter into the Holiest" because of His perfect offering for sin.

Yet inasmuch as "the cherubim of glory" were of one piece with the Mercy Seat, it would seem that they primarily represented some characteristic of the Lord Jesus, and, doubtless here, as on the Veil and the ten curtains, they bore testimony to the perfect execution of the will of God by His perfect Servant. They were of gold, and were of one piece with the Mercy Seat, for the sufficient reason that the perfect Servant of God was also the very Son of God.

The Ark contained "**the golden pot that had manna**" which was a reminder of God's care for His people during their wilderness journey, and a picture of Him Who was "the true Bread from heaven". The Ark also contained "**Aaron's rod that budded**" (Heb. 9:4; Num. 17:8). This almond-bearing rod was a symbol of resurrection life, and a sign that Aaron was Divinely chosen as high priest. It directs our thoughts once again to the Risen Lord as our Great High Priest, Who "is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them".