



REMARKS ON THE TABERNACLE.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE history of the Tabernacle, remarks on which form the subject of the following pages, spans a period of well nigh five hundred years. During all that time in form, in measurement, and in use, it remained unchanged.

In its *structure*, it foreshadowed the history in connection with earth of one man, the Lord Jesus, the like of whom had then not been seen by men, and whose history in connection with earth, commenced nearly nineteen centuries ago, is not yet finished; having this peculiarity, which can be read in the particoloured curtains, and in the veil, that the day of His triumph and power was only to come after that of His death.

It set forth in the *services* which went on at its altars, and in the holiest, various aspects of the death of Christ; the ritual in connection with it portraying in type, that the way of approach to God for any of Adam's race can only be by the death of the accepted sacrifice; and that entrance into God's presence for such could only be by blood—the blood of the sin offering. Yet, whilst the Tabernacle ritual was in force, that way was not made manifest.

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It represented in the *priesthood* connected with it the priestly service of the Lord Jesus in relation to His sacrifice, depicting in type, as Aaron moved through its chambers to the mercy seat, the entrance of the Lord Jesus into the holiest by His own blood.

It witnessed too of *God's delight* in the death of His Son, foreshadowed in the burnt-offering, which typified it, burning on the altar all night till the morning.

It witnessed too of His *delight* in His redeemed people, in that He could dwell among them ; yet its existence, and continued use declared, that the time for God to enter into rest, and for millennial blessing to be enjoyed upon earth, was still to be desired. With Solomon, the Prince of peace on the throne, and the Temple a fixed structure in existence, the Tabernacle's use and service was ended. It was never again seen, or resorted to.

With these prefatory remarks before him the reader is invited to peruse the chapters which follow.

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REMARKS ON THE TABERNACLE, ETC.

ITS ERECTION.

MOSES, on behalf of the people, had drawn near to God, and had received the terms of the covenant (Exod. xx. xxiii.) to be made between God and Israel; that covenant ratified by blood (xxiv.). Moses, by God's command, went up to Him in the mount to receive the Tables of the Law (xxiv. 12). There in the midst of the cloud, which covered Sinai, Moses remained with God forty days and forty nights, during which he received divine communications about the erection of a Tabernacle, and the institution of the Aaronic priesthood (xxv. xxxi.).

God had taken up Israel to be His people. He had redeemed them by the arm of His power at the Red Sea (Exod. xv. 13), in fulfilment of that promise to Moses, which He commissioned him to communicate to Israel (Exod. vi. 6). Redemption being now an accomplished fact, God would dwell among them. Now this was something quite new. In patriarchal days God had from time to time visited earth, but He had never dwelt upon it. As soon, however, as He had a redeemed people, He made known His desire and intention at once to dwell among them. The thought was His, for though, in the Authorised Version of Exodus xv. 2, the people are made to say, "I will prepare Him an habitation," it seems better to translate the Hebrew there, as the Revised Version has done "I will praise Him."* A Sanctuary the people looked for in the land (Exod. xv. 17),

* The A. V. can plead in support of its rendering the Targum of Onkelos, but the Revised Version is in harmony with the Septuagint, Vulgate, and Peshito Syriac translations.

but God's purpose was to have one in their midst in the wilderness, and about it He gave Moses full directions. He desired to dwell among them.

What a thought is this! The Holy One would dwell in the midst of His people. We say *His* people; for redemption, which made them His people, had recently been effected. Now, this is a cardinal principle. God *only* dwells on earth in the midst of those whom He has redeemed; but He does dwell in their midst. Of old it was in the Tabernacle, and subsequently in the Temple. Now His people are builded together for His habitation by the Spirit (Ephes. ii. 22). He dwells in the whole company of them by the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the Trinity, who is personally present on earth. Redeemed by the arm of divine power, God dwelt in the Tabernacle in the midst of Israel. Redeemed by blood, the blood of Christ (Ephes. i. 7), God makes His people now His habitation by the Spirit. In Israel's history there was seen displayed what can flow from redemption. In Christian times we learn the privileges connected with redemption by blood. For God to dwell amongst His people is a wonderful favour. To form His dwelling place is a greater. How precious His redeemed ones are to Him. What delight He must have in them!

To return. Moses on the mount with God learnt about the Sanctuary from God; and more, saw the pattern of it when up there with God. Hence, as the Hebrews reminds us (ix. 24), the earthly Tabernacle was not *typical* but *anti-typical* of the true one. Moses saw the heavenly one, the type to which the earthly one was to correspond.

It is manifest, then, that no one of the human race, unless taught as Moses was, could have devised the structure which was afterwards raised up, made as it was after the pattern, or type, showed to the law-giver in the mount. One must have known the type to have made the antitype.

Its appearance, the materials, and colours of it, all were revealed by God (Exod. xxv. 3-7); metals, textile

fabrics, skins, wood, precious stones, sweet incense, and oil, all these were to be pressed into service for the structure, or for the ritual connected with it. Of metals, gold, silver, and brass were used. Of textile fabrics, cloths of blue, purple, scarlet, and white, as well as of goats' hair, were to be employed. The wood was to be shittim wood, or acacia, which grew in the desert, and was, therefore, nigh at hand; whilst onyx stones and other precious stones would be required. Olive oil, too, and certain spices were all specially noted, some to be used in preparing the anointing oil (Exod. xxx. 23-25), others in preparing the sweet incense (34).

In this work Israel was to be employed. The unwrought materials were to be presented by the willing-hearted, and the working them up for use was to be done by the wise-hearted. Room would thus be found for all who were willing to have part in the work, to do what God had never required before—to “make Me,” He said, “a Sanctuary, that I may dwell among them” (Exod. xxv. 8). Minute were the directions, whether for the curtains and the boards of the structure, or for the vessels of the Sanctuary; size, shapes, colours—all were prescribed, leaving no room for man's suppositions to work; for who could possibly know, but God, what would suit Him? Who, on earth, but Moses, had seen the pattern to which the Tabernacle was to be conformed? For God's words were: “According to all that I show thee,* the pattern of the Tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it” (Exod. xxv. 9). God showed Moses the pattern when in the mount with Him.

He desired to dwell in the midst of Israel, and could, because they were redeemed. But what were the people in whose midst He would dwell? Whilst God was setting before Moses that which He desired, the people began to manifest what they were, and the golden calf and its worship was the result (xxxii.). Did God change

* The sense is plainer if we omit, as we have done above, the word in italics, *after*.

His mind consequent on their sin? No. He had redeemed them. On that ground He could dwell among them. Their sin did not alter that, though unsparing judgment on some had to be executed (xxxii. 27, 28, 35).

So after Moses had been up again for a second forty days and forty nights, and had brought down new Tables of the Law, the construction of the Tabernacle commenced ; and now for the first time he communicated to the people what he had learnt on his first sojourn on Sinai with God. How gracious on God's part was this ! He would give that people an opportunity of serving Him, and the privilege of having part in the erection of His Sanctuary amongst them. Privilege, we say, for God only asked an offering from *willing* hearts. Of this they now learned from the law-giver : "This is the thing which the Lord commanded saying, Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord ; whosoever is of a willing heart let him bring it, an offering of the Lord" (Exod. xxxv. 4, 5). Thereon follows the list of what was wanted (6-9). But more was needed than the materials. Who would work them up ? Again the law-giver spoke : "And every wise-hearted among you shall come, and make all that the Lord hath commanded" (10). Then follows the list of all that was required, even down to the pins, or pegs, and cords for the curtains of the court, and for those of the Tabernacle (11-19).

The congregation, which had been summoned to hear what was required, now departed from the presence of Moses (20). The Lord's offering was asked for. The favour was theirs to bring to Him what would be used in His service. Who would show themselves willing-hearted ? Who would prove themselves to be wise-hearted ? Soon was this settled. Let us read about it in the words of the law-giver :—

"And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, and

brought bracelets, and ear-rings, and rings, and tablets,* all jewels of gold; and every man that offered, offered an offering of gold unto the Lord. And every man with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins (or perhaps, as R. V., sealskins) brought them. Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought the Lord's offering: and every man with whom was found shittim wood, for any work of the service, brought it. And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. And all the women whose hearts stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' hair. And the rulers brought onyx stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod and for the breastplate; and spice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense. The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring, for all manner of work which the Lord had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses" (xxxv. 21--29).

What a sight it must have been! The camp aroused into activity. People trooping to the appointed place with their offerings; the witness and fruit of willing hearts. The spinning wheels at work, the shuttles passing to and fro; the smith's hammer dealing with the metals; the saws and planes making ready the boards; the jewellers setting the precious stones; men and women active and earnest in their occupations to get ready the Sanctuary in which Jehovah, their God, would dwell. All the offerings brought to Moses he distributed as materials to the workmen, the wise-hearted among them. Morning by morning the people brought them, till the wise men that wrought all the work of the Sanctuary came every man from his work, and told

* There is a difference of opinion as to the proper translation of some of these trinkets. For *bracelets* some would put *brooches*, and for *tablets* some would put *armlets*, perhaps more correctly.

Moses that the supply for each item was more than enough (xxxvi. 4, 5). Then a proclamation was made announcing that, and the offerings ceased to be brought. Enough, and more than enough, was willingly, heartily offered (7). What joy must have reigned in the camp, and how cheerily must the workmen have gone about their work !

• We have noticed the wise-hearted—the workmen, both men and women, this included. We must now mention the two specially set over the whole work. God chose them, and called them by name—the one Bezaleel, of the tribe of Judah ; the other, Aholiab, of the tribe of Dan ; the former was skilled to work in metals, and in cutting stones and wood ; the latter was an engraver, and skilled in textile work as well (xxxv. 30-35 ; xxxviii. 22, 23). No stint was there of offerings, as we have noticed ; and God has put on record the weight of metals used in the Sanctuary and Court. Of gold, 29 talents and 730 shekels were offered, and accepted, equal in weight to 1 ton 4 cwt. 2 q.s. and 13 lb. ; and in money value (we give it on the authority of the *Speaker's Commentary*), assuming it was pure, to £175.075 13s. Of silver there were 100 talents and 1,775 shekels, equal in weight to 4 tons 4 cwt. 2 qrs. 20 lb. ; and in money value to £38,034 15s. 10d. Of brass or bronze were used 70 talents and 2,400 shekels, representing a weight of 2 tons 19 cwt. 2 qrs. and 11 lb. The gold and the brass were the fruit of free-will offerings. The silver was obtained from the half-shekel, or *bekah*, paid by each male of 20 years and upwards as an atonement, in accordance with the law of Exod. xxx. 11-16.

The camp, we have said, was aroused into activity. The willing-hearted and the wise-hearted were busy proving—the former, by that which they brought, their title to be so reckoned ; and the latter, by their work, to be thus classed. But the stir of the daily toil ceased on each Sabbath day ; the spinning wheels were then at rest ; the shuttles lay unused ; saws and planes were laid aside on that one day in seven—the Sabbath of rest unto the Lord. Is not this the reason why the reminder

of Sabbatic observance prefaces the instructions to the people about the construction of the Tabernacle (xxxv. 1-3)? It was work for God to prepare the Tabernacle, but that was to be no excuse for the violation of the Sabbath. Instituted in Eden, the Sabbath was a sign given by God to Israel. Learning first about its observance on their way to Sinai, when the manna was given (Exod. xvi.), they were reminded of it at Sinai by the fourth commandment (xx.). Then, after Moses had received all the directions about the construction of the Tabernacle, and the institution of the Aaronic priesthood, God charged him to impress on the people the observance of that day (xxxi. 12-17). Accordingly, the law-giver, when about to instruct them in all that was needed for the Tabernacle, prefaces it by a reminder of the sanctity of the Sabbath.

What happy months these must have been, during which the preparations for God dwelling among them were proceeding--men and women earnestly, cheerfully, diligently at work! At length all was completed, and Moses surveyed it, and approved of it, for "they had done it as the Lord had commanded;" and then he blessed them (xxxix. 43). On the first day of the first month, a fortnight short of a year from the exodus, the law-giver reared up the structure, having first received a direct command from the Lord Jehovah to do it, curtained off the court in the midst of the camp, and, by divine directions, put each vessel in its place; and anointed the Tabernacle, and all its vessels, and the brazen Altar, and the Laver as well. Then the Lord took visible possession of the Sanctuary, "for the (not *a*) cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle; and Moses was not able to enter into the Tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle" (xl. 34, 35). But seven days more had to pass before all was in proper working order. The brazen Altar had to be dedicated, and the Aaronic priests had to be consecrated, and the fire to come down on the Altar (Levit ix. 24), which was never to be allowed to go out

(Levit. vi. 13). We must look into this ere taking a survey, as it were, of that which could be seen.

THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD.

ON the mount with God, Moses first heard who were to be the holy priesthood. Aaron, his elder brother, his mouthpiece before Pharaoh, was to have the privilege of being God's High Priest. "No man," we read (Heb. v. 4), "taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God." Accordingly, by Divine appointment, Moses was to take unto him Aaron, his brother, and his sons with him, that he might minister unto God in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar (Exod. xxviii. 1). The reader may remark the coupling together of the two elder, then of the two younger. Was that a fore-shadowing on the part of God of the future of those two, who were cut off judicially on the eighth day of Aaron's consecration, leaving the two younger to discharge the duties of priests throughout the wilderness journey?

Aaron and his sons, marked out by Divine appointment, their apparel and the ritual to be followed for their consecration are at once described (Exod. xxviii. ; xxix). God declared what the apparel was to be. Who else, considering of whom Aaron as High Priest was a type, could have designed it? Fitting, too, was it that the making of it all was to be entrusted to the wise-hearted in Israel; for they were filled with wisdom from God to make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he might minister unto God in the priest's office. Holy garments, then, they were, in which he and his sons were to be attired (Exod. xxviii. 4).

First and foremost we have full and minute directions for the High Priest's garments of glory and beauty, all of which, when made and brought to Moses, were passed by him as work properly executed (Exod. xxxix). We shall, however, best get an idea of them all if we turn to Levit. viii. For whereas Exod. xxviii. describes each item, and Exod. xxxix. attests the due carrying out of the Divine directions, Levit. viii. presents Aaron to the

reader as being dressed by Moses in his pontifical attire. So we may say that if Exod. xxviii. reminds us more of the workroom, Levit. viii. may be looked at as introducing us, as it were, to the vestry.

On the first day of his consecration all the congregation were gathered to the door of the Tabernacle, to see the solemn introduction of Aaron and his sons into the Holy Priesthood. They approached with a bullock for a sin offering, two rams, and a basket, in which was unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened tempered with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil, all made of fine wheaten flour. All this was required for their due installation into the Priesthood, and all spoke of Him who is God's High Priest, whether of His death, or of His life here below.

Now the work of the day began by Aaron and his sons being first washed all over with water; typical of that washing, connected with the new birth, which we all need as children of Adam. Of this it was that the Lord spoke in John xiii. 10, when He said, "he that is washed," and averred of such, that they were clean every whit. In this washing the eleven Apostles had already participated.

The next work for Moses was to dress Aaron in his High Priestly robes. This he proceeded to do, and here we must bear in mind the difference between Aaron as a type, and Aaron as a man like us. As we picture him arrayed in his robes, we view him as a type. As we remember that he was washed all over with water before he could put on even one of them, we behold him as a man, one of the fallen race of Adam in common with ourselves. So, too, we read of his sacrifices which spoke of the excellency, not of Aaron, but of another, even the Lord Jesus Christ, whose present *service* of priesthood is Aaronic in character, but the *order* of whose priesthood is after that of Melchisedec, for He abides a Priest for ever.

To be dressed, Aaron first had to put on the coat, and to be girded with a girdle. These were of white linen—denoting surely, as the undermost garment, the spotless purity of Him of whom Aaron was a type. Over the white linen coat came the robe, whose colour was blue.

It was called the robe of the ephod, the colour denoting the Lord as the heavenly one (1 Cor. xv. 47), for blue to us on earth is the colour of the heavens. This garment was a long flowing robe or cloak, reaching down below the coat, with a hem at the bottom, on which pomegranates were embroidered, made of blue, and purple, and scarlet; and between each was a golden bell, that the sound might be heard, when Aaron should go in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he should come out; that he should not die (Exod. xxviii. 31-35). Again, then, we are reminded that we have before us but a type.

Next came the ephod itself, the upper priestly garment, which was made of gold, and of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, the work of the cunning workman. These colours, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen are always mentioned in connection with the Tabernacle and Priesthood in the same order; for they betoken truth about the Lord as man, as the Book of Numbers (iv. 1-13) instructs us.

To invert the order of these colours would be to introduce confusion into His earthly history. *Blue* reminds us of Him as the heavenly One. *Purple* tells us of His sacrifice. *Scarlet* foretells that the glory of the world in government will be His. His history in connection with earth comes out then in regular sequence. Then the gold in the ephod witnesses of Him as a Divine Person, figuring, it would seem, God's intrinsic righteousness, viz., what He is in Himself. One who would be God and man the ephod prefigured, and to it belonged a girdle of the same fabric and colour as itself, called the curious, or cunningly woven girdle.

Now dressed, Moses put on Aaron the breast-plate formed of twelve precious stones set in gold. On each stone the name of one of the tribes was engraved. Further, he put in it the Urim and Thummim,* by

* What the Urim, *i.e.*, lights, and Thummim, *i.e.*, perfections, were, is unknown. They were wanting since the days of Jeshua (Ezra ii. 63). According to the Talmud, the High Priest did not enquire thereby for a private person, only for the King, or the Great Sanhedrim; so for Joshua, as the Captain of the Host (Num. xxvii. 21).

means of which the High Priest could learn, as occasion required, the Divine mind. Besides this there were two onyx stones, one for each shoulder, with the names of six tribes engraved on each of them. After that came the mitre, put on Aaron's head, to which, by a lace of blue, was attached a golden plate, inscribed with the words, "Holiness to the Lord."

By the onyx stones, the names of the tribes in the order of their birth were to be borne before the Lord for a memorial. By the breast-plate, the names of the children of Israel were to be on the High Priest's heart, when he should go in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually. And having the Urim and Thummim put in the breastplate of judgment, Aaron would bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually. Thus Israel was to be kept in remembrance before God by the one who, as the golden plate shadowed forth, answered to the holy nature of God. Of that, Aaron was but a type.

The next act on the part of Moses, in accordance with God's directions, was to take the holy anointing oil, and with it he proceeded to anoint the Tabernacle and all that was therein, and sanctified them, and he sprinkled thereof upon the Altar seven times, and anointed the Altar and all his vessels, both the Laver and his foot to sanctify them. And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him (Levit. viii. 10-12). In this anointing Aaron stood alone, anointed before sacrifice, the foreshadowing of Him who was anointed with the Holy Ghost after His baptism by John, the Spirit coming and resting upon Him, because in Himself He was perfectly holy.

To recapitulate—as Aaron now must have appeared, there was seen shadowed forth the characteristic marks of God's High Priest: but the marks of One who had never been seen in this world. Aaron in person, let us remind the reader, did not answer to that which by his pontifical garments was prefigured. Standing there in the sight of all the congregation, there was prefigured by the white coat, the undermost garment, the spotless

holiness within of the Lord Jesus Christ. The robe of blue shadowed Him forth as the heavenly One. The ephod, with its colours and gold, gave forth His history in connection with earth. One from heaven would come to earth and die, and after that have the sovereignty of this world ; whilst as to His person, He would be divine as well as human, and so perfectly holy that on Him the Holy Ghost would rest, apart from any sacrifice on His behalf. He would be a representative person, the High Priest representing the people before God. As such, all were borne upon his shoulders, and each by the breast-plate ever kept in remembrance before God. And competent would He be for such a service, for as the golden plate on the mitre showed, He would answer to the holy nature of God.

Was Aaron, then, as dressed, God's High Priest? No. He needed consecration for that. True, he was already anointed. But the anointing did not make him High Priest. For that he must be consecrated. See Exod. xxviii. 41 ; xxix. 29, which distinguish between these. In common with his sons he was consecrated, and here a cardinal principle is brought out, viz., that consecration for priesthood involves the necessity of death. There never was a High Priest of God's appointment consecrated without death first taking place.

At this juncture in the day's ceremonial, Aaron's sons appeared on the scene, and Moses dressed them in their priestly garments. Then the sacrifices were offered up, and in perfect character with the fact that Aaron was but a type, the first sacrifice dealt with was the bullock for the sin offering. Upon its head Aaron and his sons having laid their hands, Moses slew it, and sanctified the Altar with its blood. Next came the ram for a burnt offering, dealt with in the prescribed manner. Then followed the ram of consecration, which having been slain, Moses took of its blood and put it on the tip of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot. The same was done to his sons. The ear, the hand, the foot—all were to be consecrated to the service of God. Next followed,

according to Exodus, the anointing oil, which was sprinkled, but with blood, on Aaron and on his garments. and on his sons and on their garments with him. After that, all that was to be burnt on the Altar of that ram, and of the basket of unleavened bread, etc., was first put into the hands of Aaron and his sons, and waved for a wave-offering before the Lord. Then it was all burnt on the Altar, telling us that the strength, typified by the right shoulder—the energy of will, typified by the fat of the inwards—and the whole life, as typified in the unleavened bread, and cake and wafers—were all in Christ wholly for God.

Thus Christ in life, and Christ in death were both portrayed in the offerings put on God's Altar; and though He Himself was spotlessly holy, Aaron as a man, as well as his sons, could only be priests to God, if first were brought those offerings which tell of atonement by blood—the sin offering and the burnt offering, both typical of His sacrifice.

The day's service now ended. Moses had the wave breast on this occasion as his part. Aaron and his sons fed on the rest of the ram of consecration, and on the unleavened bread. For a whole week this service went on, repeated each day, Aaron and his sons remaining in the court of the Tabernacle all that time. At the end of the week, they fully consecrated, and the Altar cleansed, there was at length a holy priesthood, which could minister on behalf of God's people. So, on the eighth day, for the first time Aaron officiated at the Altar, and offered first for himself and his house, and then for the people. That done, before he came down from the Altar he blessed the people. He blessed them at once on the conclusion of the sacrifice, God thus showing on what *ground* it is that divine blessing can be bestowed on sinful creatures, viz., on that of the acceptance of the sacrifice.

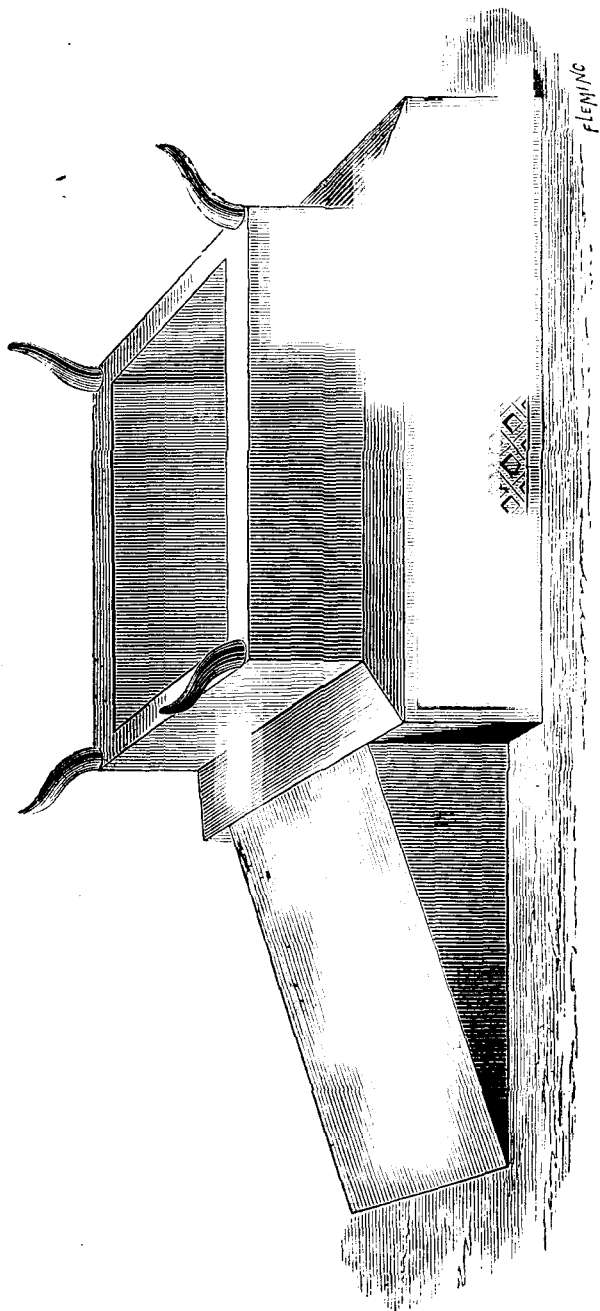
But another most interesting thing is also recorded in that same chapter of Leviticus (ix.). Moses and Aaron next went into the Tabernacle of the congregation. For a time, of course, they were hidden from the people.

Afterwards they came out, and together blessed them. The first time it was Aaron alone. On this occasion Moses and Aaron together did it. What did that mean? We believe it prefigured the *time* of Israel's blessing, as Aaron's act whilst still at the Altar set forth the *ground* of it. For when the Lord, who is to them both King and Priest; shall come out of the Sanctuary and reappear to their view they will be blessed. So Moses and Aaron, typical of Him, the former as King (Deut. xxxiii. 5), the latter as High Priest, together blessed the people. "And the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the Altar the burnt offering and the fat: which, when all the people saw, they shouted and fell on their faces" (Levit. ix. 23, 24).

God had taken possession of His Sanctuary. The fire now burned on the Altar. Henceforward the service could proceed. We may now, then, walk round, and see what went on.

THE COURT.

WE must now turn back to Exodus, where alone we can learn what would have met our eye, had we visited the court of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. Suppose we had taken a walk in the camp early on the morrow after the eighth day of Aaron's consecration, remembering the events of the previous day, to the Tabernacle, erected in the midst of the encampment of the twelve tribes, we should naturally have directed our steps. Around it, and inside the area occupied by the different camps of the twelve tribes, we should have seen tents on each of the four sides of the Tabernacle, occupied by the three great families of the tribe of Levi. Fronting the court on the south side, the tents of the Levites of the family of Kohath might have been counted on the one hand, and an unbroken line of white linen curtains, to the extent of 100 cubits, would have met us on the other. Turning to the west side, the family of the Gershonites would have been seen in their tents, with an unbroken line before them of white curtains of 50 cubits in length.



Reaching the north side, on which the Merarites were encamped, an unbroken line of white curtains, for 100 cubits in length, would again have met the eye. At length, coming to the east side of the court, opposite to which the tent of Moses and those of his brother Aaron and his sons were pitched, instead of the hitherto unbroken line of white curtains, we should have found a hanging of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen occupying the centre of that side for 20 cubits in length, or about 30 feet, reckoning 18 inches to the cubit, the rest of it being curtained with white linen.

Here, then, was the entrance to the court. There was but one, and to see inside it, men had to come to that parti-coloured hanging; for the white curtains on the three sides were five cubits high, equal to about $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet, precluding anyone but a giant from looking over them.

Entering the court by the hanging above mentioned, we should have found ourselves in an oblong enclosure of 150 feet say, by 75 feet, a holy place (Levit. vi. 26), as the white linen curtains would intimate. Immediately facing the entrance, we should have seen the Altar of burnt-offering, a brazen Altar. Directly behind that the brazen Laver to hold water, and behind the Laver the Tabernacle itself, to enter which both the brazen Altar and the brazen Laver must first be passed, significant of that which was needed ere entering the holy place of the Tabernacle of the Most High.

Let us look at these in their order. Fronting the entrance to the court, the Altar of burnt-offering met the gaze of anyone who would enter within. This altar was made of shittim wood overlaid with brass, of five cubits square and three cubits high. It was, it would seem, a hollow case (Exod. xxvii. 8), filled very probably with earth, when the Tabernacle was pitched at any of its camping stations in the wilderness. An incline of earth on its south side, in the place of steps, provided the needful ascent, by which the officiating priest could go up to do his work. Thus he must have been above the offerer and spectators. So we read of Aaron coming down from the

Altar (Levit. ix. 22). Surrounding the Altar was a brazen grating, with rings in the four corners of it, for the poles of shittim wood overlaid with brass to be inserted, by which on its march it was borne on the shoulders of some of the Kohathites.

Of two important things we are here reminded. First, that steps up to it had been forbidden, that the nakedness of the priest should not be discovered (Exod. xx. 26); and, second, that, poles to carry it being called for, there was intimated that the time for final rest had not come, nor had the place of rest been reached. Perfection had not yet been attained, and could not while the Tabernacle was in use.

The Altar, then, as it was, had a tale to tell. Its subsequent history in connection with Israel is not less interesting as we trace it out. For, coming down for a moment along the stream of time, we read of the brazen Altar in Solomon's temple (2 Chron. iv. 1), and again of the Altar in Ezekiel's temple (xliii. 13-17). To the former there was no need of staves, for the place of rest had been reached, the mount in which the Lord would dwell. For the latter, steps will be made—the very thing forbidden in Exod. xx. 26, for then, by virtue of the sacrifice of Christ, the rich results of which the priests in that day will be enjoying, their nakedness will not appear. How interesting is this the reader will surely admit, casting its light on the value of that one perfect sacrifice, by which rest for Israel will have been for ever secured, and the nakedness of the priests for ever covered. No perfection apart from that sacrifice. No lack of it when enjoying the fruits of the death of God's own Son.

Surveying Bezaleel's Altar in the early morning, we should have seen the priest, clad in his linen garments and linen breeches, busily at work prescribed by the law. Rekindling the fire? No. That was never to go out (Levit. vi. 12). What, then, was he doing? He was re-arranging the Altar, removing the ashes resulting from the consuming of the evening burnt-offering, putting fresh wood on the fire, and laying the morning

burnt-offering upon it. All night had the fire been burning, kept in by the evening burnt-offering. All night had God seen that which was well pleasing to Him. A little column of smoke had been ascending heavenward, which spoke to Him, whilst the people in the vast encampment were fast asleep. It spoke to Him of that which none could then understand but Himself, and which, indeed, none then really knew about. It spoke of the death of *His* son, of His self-surrender to do God's will. Never was the reminder of that to be absent from the eye of God. It was to be ever before Him. How this tells its tale of His delight in that sacrifice! We think, and rightly, of the way in which it has perfectly met our need. God thinks also of what it is to Him.

The Altar then re-arranged, the morning burnt-offering was offered up, accompanied by its appointed meat-offering and drink-offering, viz., a tenth part of an ephah of fine flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil for the meat, or meal-offering, and a fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink-offering (Exod. xxix. 38-42). Thus was set forth in that daily burnt-offering, and twice each day, first in the morning and then in the evening, the death of Christ and His life on earth as a man, in whom God can find joy. Of this last, the drink-offering it was that bore witness.

Had we stayed a little time longer, we should probably have seen an offerer approach with a sacrifice for a burnt-offering, or a peace-offering, or a sin-offering, or a trespass-offering, and have witnessed the dealing with the sacrifice, as prescribed in the Mosaic ritual. First, laying his hand on its head, he had to kill it, and, if it was of the flock, whether of sheep or goats, he would have taken its life at the north side of the Altar, the offal being deposited on the east side, by the place of the ashes (Levit. i. 11, 16). Then the priest, who ascended the Altar on its south side, would have dealt with the blood of the victim in the prescribed manner. That done the offerer would have prepared the whole, or the appointed part, for the Altar, washing, in the case of

A burnt-offering, the inward and yet so visible significance of the spotless holiness in Himself, and in His walk of the Lord Jesus Christ, nothing less than that being suited for God to make atonement for us. The whole victim, or the parts of it, now ready, the priest's services were again in requisition, to lay what had been prepared upon the fire on the Altar, to burn it as a sweet savour. For whatever was consumed on the Altar of burnt-offering was a sweet savour to God (Levit. iv. 31), speaking to Him, as it did, of the willingness of His own Son to bear divine judgment, and to maintain untarnished the holiness and righteousness of God.

We have spoken of the offerer, the victim, and the priest as ordinarily quite distinct, though all three were needed for a sacrifice to be offered to God. And we see also that priestly work in sacrifice did not begin till after the death of the victim. The offerer killed it, except in the apparently abnormal case of the bird. The priest's part was to deal with the blood, and to put the parts to be burnt on the Altar, to be thereon consumed. To this rule the ritual of the great day of atonement presents really no exception, since the High Priest, as representing his house, and representing also the people, killed, as the offerer, the victims. In the case of the true sacrifice, a great change was, however, to be marked. Then the victim, the offerer, and the High Priest were one person—the Lord Jesus Christ. How true was it, that the law, having a shadow of good things to come, was not the very image of the things. The priest and the offerer might in certain cases of old be combined, but the victim was always quite distinct. Who then understood that One man would combine in Himself all three, and be the true and acceptable victim before God?

Leaving now the Altar behind, and moving toward the Tabernacle, we should next have approached the brazen Laver, of the dimensions of which, the capacity, and shape we have no record, so different is this from the brazen Sea in Solomon's temple, described minutely and at length in 1 Kings vii. 23–26. The use of the

Laver for the Tabernacle, its place, and its material are, however, distinctly stated. Its *use* was for Moses and Aaron and his sons to wash their hands and feet in the water it contained ere entering the Tabernacle, or before the latter approached the Altar, and that on pain of death if any of them neglected such ablutions. (Exod. xxx. 18-21; xl. 30-32). Ceremonial cleanness must characterize those who served God at the Altar, or entered His Sanctuary, for He is holy. Its *place* on its foot, or base, was between the brazen Altar and the Tabernacle entrance (xl. 30). Its *material* was of brass, or bronze, manufactured out of the metal mirrors offered by the women of the congregation (xxxviii. 8). The institution of it, both for the Tabernacle and the Temple, indicated a need, and proclaimed by the providing for that need the lack in the priests of that purity which was suited for God. In Ezekiel's Temple a Laver is unnoticed. Can it be that, as the priest's nakedness will then have been perfectly covered, so the need of ablution ere ministering to God will be a thing of the past?

Passing the Laver, the Tabernacle itself would have immediately confronted us. But ere we entered within it, a glance round the court would have been but natural. Gold, silver, and brass had been freely offered for the structure. As yet, however, we should have seen no gold, and after entering the holy place we should have found no brass; for the last of the brass used in this service was to be seen in the sockets for the five pillars, overlaid with gold, by which the hanging for the door of the Sanctuary was supported (Exod. xxvi. 37). Evidently there was design in this, brass without and gold within. Within the Sanctuary was displayed what God was in Himself as revealed in Christ. In the court there was seen what the individual needed, in order to approach Him. Here brass was exhibited in the Altar, the Laver, and the sockets of the pillars of the court, and of those five also on which the hanging for the entrance of the Sanctuary was suspended. It may well, then, be, as we think of the vessels in the court, that the brass, as has

been suggested,* symbolised God's righteousness in judgment, and the gold symbolised His intrinsic righteousness. There remains to be considered the silver used, both for the court and for the Tabernacle. In the former it provided the hooks and fillets on which the white curtains were suspended from the pillars, and covered the tops of the pillars as well. In the latter the sockets for the boards were made of that metal (Exod. xxxvi. 24 : xxxviii. 17). Now, as all this silver was provided by the *bekah*, or half-shekel, which each man above twenty years of age brought as atonement money on his own behalf, we can readily understand how silver would speak to every thinking Israelite of divine grace, which provided atonement that he might be preserved alive on the earth. Of *atonement*, not of *redemption*, that silver was a witness (Exod. xxx. 11-16 ; xxxviii. 25-28). We draw attention to the term *atonement*, for redemption and atonement are in Scripture distinguished, and should be kept distinct.

Of God, then, and of His grace, and His righteousness, in connection with judgment, the silver and the

* We have said, "as has been suggested," for the typical meaning of the metals, the gold and the brass especially, is a question of deduction, not of direct revelation. We quote from the one already referred to: "Gold is intrinsic righteousness in God's nature—that which we approach in. Brass is the judgment of righteousness as applied to man; hence the Altar of burnt-offering was of brass, the Laver was of brass—one judged sin in a sacrifice, the other by the word. It marked the immutable nature of that judgment—God, who could not bear sin, must deal with it. What led me to it was: the sockets of the pillars of the court were of brass, and the fillets and hooks of them silver—what gave stability was judgment—was Gilgal work. The curtains separated the profane from the holy—God's people, as with Him, from the world at large—their hooks on the pillars were silver and their fillets.

"I am apt to think this is grace as displayed in man—God's grace; as the brass was God's judgment—firm and immutable—so did grace secure, but it was the ornament; judgment in God's ways secures, but it is their stability, and as the foundation God's immutableness. Grace, in fact, is what all hangs on in its actual maintenance."—*Notes and Comments on Scripture*, by Mr. J. N. DARBY (vol. i, page 321.)

brass could speak. Whether those outside the court could see the brazen sockets, may be questioned. But the silver which covered the tops of the pillars must have been visible, one would think, to those without as to those within, proclaiming to all that One, whose dwelling-place was within that enclosure, whilst holy and maintaining His holiness and righteousness, even at the cost of death sacrificially of the victim, was a God of grace, who provided atonement as required. And further, any who entered the Court could see that there was no way to the Tabernacle except by the Altar and Laver. The one who would draw nigh into the holy place must first avail himself of both of them. Not less instructive is it to remark that he must avail himself of these provisions in that order—first the Altar, then the Laver. Death, the death of a substitute, and that substitute able to bear divine judgment for others, must first take place, and be acknowledged by the worshipper availing himself of it, ere the Laver could come into requisition. The sacrifice must first be thought of, ere cleansing from defilement in walk for priestly service in the court or Sanctuary could avail. We know how true this is. For whilst the sacrifice of Christ can meet the guiltiest and the vilest, the Lord stoops to wash the feet of only His disciples.

Of the brass we have spoken. Was it a mistake, or a matter without significance, to make sockets of that metal for the five pillars at the entrance of the Tabernacle, when all the rest of its sockets were of silver? How perfectly in keeping was this arrangement. For as the priest crossed the threshold of the holy place, he was again reminded of the righteousness of God in connection with judgment, which had to be fully met, ere he could disappear from the gaze of those in the court behind the parti-coloured curtain, which screened the entrance of the Tabernacle.

THE HOLY PLACE.

To the Sanctuary we next come. This was a structure of boards overlaid with gold, with a curtained roof

overhead. It consisted of two parts, and was divided into two chambers. Of two parts was it composed, the one called the Tent *Ohel*, the other called the Tabernacle, or dwelling place *Mishcan* (Exod. xxvi. 1, 7). Into two chambers was it divided, the outer one called the holy place, the inner called the most holy (Exod. xxvi. 33). On three sides were the boards, viz., the south, the west, and the north. And like the court, on none of those sides was there any entrance. At its east end was the entrance behind a screen of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, which, stretching across the whole width of the Tabernacle, thus formed its eastern side.

The boards were of shittim or acacia wood, a tree which, as we have remarked, grew in the desert. Each board was ten cubits in length, and a cubit and a half in breadth. For the north and south sides twenty boards were allotted; for the west side but six, exclusive of the corner boards. The whole structure then was in length thirty cubits long by ten high, and about ten in width, each corner board, as has been suggested, adding half a cubit to the width. Expressing the dimensions in English feet it would give us an erection of about 45 feet long, 15 feet wide, and the same in height. The boards 15 feet long were each kept in an upright position by two tenons at their base, which were inserted into sockets of silver, and the whole side was kept together by five bars of shittim wood, which, like each board, were overlaid with gold. Each socket of silver has been estimated to equal about 94 lb. weight of metal. These would tend to keep the Tabernacle steady.

Over the boards, and forming the roof, were curtains stretched across, made of fine twined linen, and of blue, and purple, and scarlet, with cherubim on them, the work of the cunning workman. Ten curtains were required, to be each of twenty-eight cubits in length, and four in breadth. These were coupled together, and stretched across the upright structure, so that they hung down on the three sides of the boards. The curtained entrance, composed of the same material and colours,

but without the cherubim worked on it, was supported by five pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold, and their hooks also of gold, but the sockets of brass. Leaving aside for the present any notice of that part which was called the *Tent*, let us confine our observations to the *Tabernacle*. Into the holy place the priests alone, besides Moses, the mediator (Num. vii. 89), had the privilege of entrance. They only could see all that was there displayed, but only Aaron of the priests was to enter, and that but once a year, within the veil into the most holy place.

In the holy place what a sight, however, must have met their gaze. As they looked around, they could see nothing but gold. As they looked up, they saw the curtained roof of the same colours as were displayed at the entrance to the court and to the holy place, but now with the addition of the cherubim worked on them. The colours, we have already remarked, spoke of the Lord Jesus Christ, and gave forth an outline of His history reaching on to the future. The Cherubim worked on the curtains above, and on the veil in front of the most holy place, taught a further truth, viz., that the Holy One, who would come from heaven, and die as the sacrifice, and subsequently reign in power over earth, would also wield the power of God's throne. For the Cherubim are the supporters of that throne, and are connected in the Word with its action in judgment.*

Of Christ, then, those curtains spoke. Of Christ the shittim wood overlaid with gold spoke; these last intimating, we believe, something of that mystery of His person incapable of solution by human mental power, viz., that He who is man is also God; "so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say the Godhead and Manhood, are joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very

* NOTE.— God's throne was supported by Cherubim (Ezekiel i.; x.). "He rode upon a Cherub, and did fly" (Ps. xviii. 10). From between the Cherubim He gave commandments to Moses (Exod. xxv. 22; Num. vii. 89). The Cherubim, with flaming sword, guarded the tree of life after Adam's fall (Gen. iii. 24).

Man." All then that was seen of the sides and of the roof testified about Him that was to come, viz., who He was, and what would characterize Him in relation to this world, and in relation to the universe. Not only, as we have already remarked, would the glory of this world in connection with government be His, typified by the scarlet in the curtains, and in the veil; but He of whom that would be true would also wield the power of God's throne. This, we believe, the Cherubim embroidered on the curtains, and on the veil, were intended to intimate. The mystery of His Person the boards attested. His history the curtains could unfold. Of Christ, then, not of the Church, nor of Christians, did the Tabernacle teach.

We have spoken of that which was around, and was common to both chambers. Let us look next at the vessels which belonged to each. In the holy place were the Table of Shew-bread, the Golden Candlestick, and the Golden Altar. In the most holy was the Ark, whose lid was the Mercy-Seat.

In the outer chamber, or holy place, as one entered from the east, there would have been seen on the right hand, or north side of the Tabernacle, the Table of shittim wood overlaid with gold, on which were placed the twelve loaves of the shew-bread. Belonging to this Table were various utensils, as dishes, spoons, bowls, and flagons, as *Kesavoth* perhaps means, all of gold (xxxvii. 16). Beside these were the staves of shittim wood, overlaid with gold, to be inserted into the rings of gold on the four feet of the Table, for the Kohathites to carry it when the camp was on the march.

Turning to the left hand, or south side, one would have seen the Golden Candlestick, all of gold, the only vessel connected with the Sanctuary (unless the Mercy-Seat be viewed as distinct from the Ark of the Covenant) in which there was no wood. In the Laver all was of brass. In the Candlestick all was of gold. To the Candlestick six branches were attached, three on one side and three on the other—thus providing stands for seven lamps, one on each of the branches and one on

the middle stem. Connected with the Candlestick were its utensils, all of gold, as the snuffers or tongs, and snuff dishes. Of a talent of pure gold were it and its utensils made, and the whole of the Candlestick was one beaten work of pure gold (xxxvii. 22-24). A bar to carry it was provided (Num. iv. 10), but of what material that was made there seems to be no mention; nor are the dimensions of the Candlestick told us, though its appearance is minutely described. With the Table it is different. Its height, breadth, and length are all noted, as well as the depth of its border round about.

Next, and innermost, just fronting the veil, was the Altar of Incense—made of shittim wood overlaid with gold. It was a cubit square, and in height two cubits. Like the Altar of Burnt-Offering it had horns at its four corners, and it was borne on the march on the shoulders of Kohathites by two staves of shittim wood overlaid with gold, which passed through two golden rings placed on two of its sides under its crown.

Twice each day was the Golden Altar visited by Aaron, to burn incense upon it, at the time of the morning and the evening burnt-offerings; and once in the year on its horns atonement was made with the blood of the bullock and that of the goat, as prescribed in the ritual for the day of atonement (Levit. xvi. 18, 19). Once in the day, at the time of the evening incense, Aaron lighted the lamps of the Candlestick (Exod. xxx. 8), which were to burn all night until the morning (xxvii. 21; 1 Sam. iii. 3; 2 Chron. xiii. 11), having trimmed them in the morning, when he visited the Golden Altar to burn incense upon it. Once in the week was the Table specially attended to. For on the Sabbath it was that twelve fresh loaves, which had been baked for that purpose, each of two tenth deals of fine flour, replaced the twelve which had been there for seven days before the Lord (Levit. xxiv. 8). So far for the ritual.

What did all this mean? The incense compounded of four different ingredients, three of which are mentioned nowhere else (Exod. xxx. 34-38), and kindled with fire from off the Brazen Altar, typified the sweet savour of

Christ. A perfume it was, pure and holy, and had, it would seem, a fragrance in itself (38); but its full perfume only came out when burnt; teaching us that the sweet savour of Christ was brought out in its fulness by His bearing divine judgment on the Cross. For the fire on the Altar of Burnt-Offering, which never was to be extinguished, was that which came down from heaven on the eighth day of Aaron's consecration—a fitting emblem of divine judgment.

By the lamps kept alight all night, and giving light over against the Candlestick, the twelve loaves on the Golden Table opposite to it would be kept in light during all the hours of darkness (xl. 22–25). The twelve loaves typified the twelve tribes, and placed on that Table, which spoke of the Lord Jesus Christ, there was seen in the Tabernacle, and that especially at night, that the government on earth in connection with the tribes of Israel, which by and by will be exercised by the Lord Jesus, was a prospect pleasing to God. Outside in the court, whilst the world was asleep, a little column of smoke was all night ascending up to God. That spoke to Him of the death of His Son. Inside the Sanctuary, during the night, the twelve tribes were kept in the light under the eye of God, connected as they were, and are, in His thoughts, with the future glory of His Son. And this is foreshadowed in a very interesting way in Levit. xxiv. 1–8, in which, ere the sin of apostasy is mentioned and dealt with, of which many of Israel have been and will yet be guilty, the twelve tribes, as a whole, are seen, as it were, in the light cast on them by the Candlestick. For they will be preserved as a whole, though individuals among them may finally apostatise (Acts xxvi. 7).

Of Christ, then, there was typical teaching in connection with the vessels in the Sanctuary. By the sweet savour, of that which He was to God, brought out in its fulness by His death upon the Cross, there was proof—as well as of His coming day of power, by the loaves being at night in the light cast on them by the seven burning lamps of the Candlestick. Of Christ meeting

the sinner's need by death, the Brazen Altar in the Court could teach. Of the sweet savour of His merits before God, the Golden Altar in the Holy place bore witness, and the members of the priesthood were privileged to enjoy with God that sweetness in type, of which the Holy Ghost has taught us that we can share with our God in the present.

Of Christ who will have power and glory on earth, and that in connection with the twelve tribes, the names of which will be inscribed on the gates of the New Jerusalem (Rev. xxi. 12), the Golden Table with its loaves was a silent but constant witness; the lamps when lighted at night being like to those entering the Sanctuary, that which prophecy is to men now on earth a light shining in a dark place, till the day dawn and the day star arise in the heart (2 Pet. i. 19). Never was the coming day of power for the Lord Jesus to be left unsymbolized in the midst of Israel. By day there would be light enough in the holy place for any priest to minister, and to see the loaves. One curtain, as there only was, stretched over the whole eastern side must have permitted enough light to penetrate through it by day for all that was required. By night the lamps burned, so that the Table and its contents were never enshrouded in darkness.

In the permanent structure of the Temple there were of course no curtains for the roof. All was of gold, above and around. As regards the furniture, but one Golden Altar was made, but ten Golden Candlesticks and ten Tables were supplied. Ten,—be it remarked, not twelve, for perfection was not reached in that age. In Ezekiel's Temple the Incense Altar is mentioned, made of wood (xli. 22), for no gold or precious metals does the prophet tell us that he saw in his vision. Further, no Candlestick is mentioned, nor Table of shew-bread either. Can it be that as the Lord will then be reigning in power the type of all that will have passed away? Further, there is no veil mentioned; but doors to the oracle, or most holy place. Hence, after comparing the Tabernacle, Solomon's Temple, and Ezekiel's,

we mark progress. In the first there was a veil, and that only, between the two chambers. In the second there was still a veil; for the Lord had not then died, but doors to the oracle likewise. In 2 Chron. iii. 14, we read of the veil. In 1 Kings vi. 31, 32, we read of the doors: evidently things in Solomon's day were in a transitional state. The place of God's rest was reached; for the staves were drawn out of the Ark; but, the Lord had not died. So the veil was there, as well as the doors. By Christ's death the veil has been rent, so a veil will in the future be found no more. But Solomon, acting under the directions furnished by God to David, made doors for the oracle; a foreshadowing of the future Temple in which the chambers will still be separated.

One more remark may be made. The doors are seen in Ezekiel's Temple (Ezekiel xli. 3, 23), but are not described as standing open. And as the prince and people will not be allowed access to the Sanctuary (xlv. 1, 10), so, it may be, that the priests will not be allowed access to the most holy place. Under law, as they will be, though it will be written on their hearts that they should not break it, people are at a distance from God. Under grace they can draw nigh, and that into the holiest of all. What a difference!

THE HOLIEST, ETC.

To the holiest we must now turn. This was at the west end of the Tabernacle, curtained off from the outer chamber by a veil of blue, of purple, of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, with Cherubim on it, the work of cunning workmen. This stretched across the structure, and effectually screened off the holiest, so that no priest could see into it. What that veil typified Heb. x. 20 makes plain to us, even the flesh of Christ; its colours, and the Cherubim telling us, as we have before remarked, something about His history with which all men should be acquainted. On His death God rent the veil (Matt. xxvii. 51). But whilst it hung intact by Divine appointment, the way into the holiest was not made manifest; so Aaron the High Priest could only enter once every

year, in the way, and for the purpose prescribed in the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus.

Where exactly in the Tabernacle the veil hung, attached by hooks of gold to four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold, has not been made plain to us in Holy Writ, unless we are meant to understand from Exodus xxvi. 33, by "under the taches," exactly under the junction of the two sets of curtains which formed the roof. For, according to Exodus xxvi. 3, these ten curtains were coupled five together, and joined the one five to the other five by fifty taches, or hooks of gold. If we understand then by "under the taches,"* the hooks by which the two sets of curtains were joined, the veil must have hung about midway in the Tabernacle. Tradition, however, makes the holy of holies to have been a cubical area of ten cubits every way. This is in harmony with the proportions of Solomon's temple, and probably of Ezekiel's also.

Within the holy of holies but one sacred vessel was found—that was the Ark of the Covenant—a chest of acacia wood of two cubits and a half in length, a cubit and a half in breadth, and the same in height, overlaid with pure gold within and without, and having a crown or rim of gold upon it round about. Its top, or lid, was the Mercy-Seat, made of pure gold, with two Cherubim of beaten gold, one at either end which had their wings outstretched, and so covering it, and their faces towards it, *i.e.*, looking down on it. In this Ark were deposited the two Tables of the Law. And four gold rings at its feet, two on each side, in which the staves of acacia wood covered with gold were to be placed, for it to be carried aloft on the shoulders of the Kohathites, completed this sacred chest. This Ark with the two Tables of the Law was typical of the Lord Jesus with the law within His heart (Ps. xl. 8). It was the symbol of God's presence too, as we shall see clearly further on. On, or

* The word *keres*; a "tache" is only used of the hooks joining the two sets of curtains, both the parti-coloured ones, and those of goat's hair.

between the Cherubim, God was said to sit (Ps. lxxx. 1). So the Mercy-Seat was the place of His throne, from which He gave Moses commandments (Exod. xxv. 22 ; Numbers vii. 89) for the children of Israel. And on the Mercy-Seat the Blood of Atonement was sprinkled once every year, the cloud of glory, the token of Jehovah's presence, shining thereon.

Into this chamber no common priest could enter. Aaron only was permitted to visit it once a year, though probably Moses, as Mediator, had at all times access to it (Exod. xxv. 22, xxxiv. 34, 35) ; for the prohibition in Levit. xvi. 2, ran in this form, "Speak unto Aaron, thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil." Not a word was here said of restriction to Moses. With him, years after God declared, He would speak mouth to mouth, and the similitude (or form) of the Lord he should behold (Numb. xii. 8). Within that chamber only one voice that we read of was heard by human ears ; that was the voice of God (Numb. vii. 89). Within the veil only one service was conducted, and that on the day of atonement, when Aaron, having entered with the blood of the sin-offering sprinkled it on the Mercy-Seat and before it, and then retraced his steps in silence ; for no prayer, that we read of, escaped his lips, nor was any needed ; yet a voice, we may say, was heard that day, though not by Aaron. For it was not the voice of God addressing him, or speaking to the Mediator, Moses, but the voice of the blood speaking through the type *to God*, and speaking better than that of Abel (He . xii. 24).

Within the holiest of all the living God dwelt. No light was needed to burn therein. The cloud of the divine presence illuminated it, and the blood of the bullock and of the goat, sprinkled on the Mercy-Seat by Aaron, remained, as he put it, to be by night and by day under the eye of God. And as the Cherubim, the supporters of the throne, gazed down upon it, the action of that throne, which must otherwise have been displayed righteously in judgment, could be displayed towards Israel in grace. For on behalf of them alone was

atonement made. And just as none could, nor can fully understand, what the burnt-offering going up all night was to God, none could, none can understand, what that blood on the Mercy-Seat was to Him. Foolish then is it for any soul to remain in suspense about its acceptance, because it cannot fully appreciate the value of that blood. It never can ; nor is it asked to do that.

We are to know now, and to rest rejoicing in the knowledge of it, whose death, and whose blood it was, that were thus typically represented annually before God. Still, who but God can tell, what the surrender to death, and the blood of His only begotten Son are to Him. This, however, we see, that, though to enter the sanctuary we must leave the brazen Altar behind, we can never be before God on His throne, where that precious blood does not confront us. Nothing higher can there be for a creature to approach than God upon His throne (Heb. xii. 23). No higher place has a creature where he can stand, than before that throne. Of this the Tabernacle was a type, the holy of holies being a figure of the highest heaven. And if the reader for a moment conceives of the Tabernacle as placed on its end, its eastern side being the base, he will apprehend this, ascending in thought through the holy place up to the holiest before the Mercy-Seat. Beyond that, there was nothing. Higher than before the throne of God no mere creature can reach. And, as it were, on that throne remains ever before God that precious blood, by which all that He is has been glorified and harmonised.

We have said, we never get beyond where the blood confronts us. It is important to be clear as to this. As worshippers, part of the holy priesthood (1 Peter ii. 5), Christians have access to the holy place, and the veil being rent, can enter the holiest as well. Our place then is there before the Mercy-Seat, on the ground sprinkled with blood (Levit. xvi. 14, 15), and not before the brazen Altar. At the Altar was set forth the need of the death of the sacrifice, and substitute. At the Mercy-Seat was declared God's perfect satisfaction with that precious blood, and people being accepted on whose

behalf propitiation had been made. To be waiting for pardon, to be praying now for a sacrifice to meet one's need, would be virtually to stand at the Altar and not before the Mercy-Seat. Is not this where too many are found, instead of accepting God's gracious invitation to draw near with boldness into the holiest?

Are we not then to confess our sins, some may ask? Surely we are. Scripture teaches us that (1 John i. 9). It is one thing, however, to confess as a child, who knows the link of life, and of relationship never can be broken, and quite another to continue taking the place of an unpardoned sinner, who needs yet the wrath of God to be averted from him. Such an one is virtually at the Altar in the court, and not at the Mercy-Seat in the holiest.

To return. This Ark made by Bezaleel was the only material Ark of the Covenant that ever existed, which God accepted. It was, too, the only vessel of the Tabernacle which had a place in Solomon's Temple. For nine centuries that Ark remained as the place of God's throne on earth. The Ark, which had been with the people in all their wanderings from Sinai to the land, was the Ark which only entered into its rest in the reign of Solomon, the type of the Prince of Peace. On the Cherubim, which belonged to the mercy-seat, the Lord of Hosts sat in the midst of His people, till, Solomon's Temple being destroyed by the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar, the Ark disappeared, where and how is, we believe, unknown. In the second Temple it was one of the five important things wanting. In Ezekiel's Temple there is no mention of one being required. Neither Ark, nor Veil nor Candlestick, nor Table of Shew bread, nor Laver are hinted at as being called for. But an Altar of Burnt-offering will be required for the court, and an Altar, called the Table of the Lord, will be found in the holy place. For the atoning death of Christ, and the sweet savour of His merits will always be had in remembrance throughout the millennium.

One thing more must be noticed in connection with

Solomon's Temple. In its oracle the king made according to the pattern revealed to David (1 Chron. xxviii. 11-19) two large Cherubim, which with their wings outstretched spanned together the width of the holy of holies. Each Cherub was ten cubits in height, equal to about 15 feet, and from wing to wing ten cubits in breadth. The 1 faces looked down the house, for so the word "inwards" (2 Chron. iii. 13), really means, and were not turned downwards like those on the Mercy-Seat. So in that oracle, when the Ark had been carried thither into its place, there would have been seen two Cherubim looking down the house, and two looking still on the Mercy-Seat. Another intimation this seems to be of the transitional nature of that Temple, viz., a looking forward to the time when, Israel enjoying the benefit of atonement, the Cherubim would no longer need to be gazing on the blood, that judgment should be withheld; and also an acknowledgment by those two then gazing on it, that the perfect sacrifice had still to be provided.

We must now turn to the *Tent* of the Tabernacle, of which mention has been already made. The Tent was formed of eleven curtains of goat's hair; for Exod. xxvi. 7, if rightly translated, states, "Thou shalt make curtains of goat's hair for a Tent, *Ohel*, over the Tabernacle, *Mishchan*." Each curtain was thirty cubits in length, and four in breadth, about three feet longer than the parti-coloured ones which formed the roof of the Tabernacle. Ten curtains were ordered for the latter, and eleven for the former. Gold taches coupled the two sets of parti-coloured curtains, brass taches coupled the two sets, the one of five and the other of six of the goat's hair curtains, the sixth curtain being doubled over in the forefront of the Tent, *Ohel* (see Revised Version). And on each side of the Tabernacle, as well as on the back, or west side, those curtains of goat's hair covered it. A covering of ram's skins dyed red over them, with a covering of badger, or perhaps sealskin, as *tachash* probably here means, completed the tent.

We have noted what the different colours of the veil and curtains of the Tabernacle would teach us. Have

the curtains, which formed the Tent and their coverings, any symbolical meaning, it may be asked? We must speak with caution, and without dogmatising here, for it can be but a matter of deduction. We find that Elijah was clad in a garment of hair (2 Kings i. 8), and later on that kind of garment was the assumed dress of a Prophet (Zech. xiii. 4; Matt. iii. 4). We know that the ram was the animal selected at the consecration of the Priests, and all can understand how suited the seal, or dolphin skin covering would be to keep out the influences of the weather. Hence it may be that, as the parti-coloured curtains of the Tabernacle give us the history in connection with earth of the Lord Jesus Christ, a history, we would again remind the reader, as yet unfinished; so the coverings over the Tabernacle may have prefigured the character of His life in ministry down here, indicating His prophetic service, who was wholly devoted to do God's will (John viii. 29), and who could pass through this scene uninfluenced by the current of things around. For those then inside the Tabernacle there was prefigured the Lord's personal history. For those in the court, who looked at the Tent, His character in ministry was set forth. It was Christ, we must again say, not the Church, or Christians, which the Tabernacle prefigured. So to enter the court Christ was the way. To meet the sinner's need Christ was the sacrifice. To enter the holy place Christ was again the way. To enter the holiest, He had to die. Above and around, inside and outside, Christ in one way and another was prefigured, and yet none of those types, nor all of them together, could furnish a full history of Him that was to come. They were shadows, the body being of Christ (Col. ii. 17). There was more in Him than they could set forth.

We must, to complete this sketch of the Tabernacle, look at it when on the march, and call to mind the movements of the Ark.

THE LEVITES.

To the Tabernacle on the march we have to turn. But at the threshold of this part of our subject we meet

with the Levites, to whom duties were allotted in connection with the Sanctuary. So, ere proceeding further, we must trace out a little about Levitical service, as detailed in the Word.

God on that memorable night in the land of Egypt, when He destroyed the first-born of the Egyptians, preserved from judgment all the first-born males in Israel, both of man and of beast. And before ever that hitherto down-trodden people had left Egyptian territory, He made known to Moses the claim He had on all their first-born males, which He would not relinquish, but intended to enforce when they should have entered the land of Canaan (Exod. xiii. 11-16). That claim was again asserted, and inserted too in the Covenant ratified at Sinai between the people and God, as stated in Exod. xxii. 29. And that it should not become obsolete, or be forgotten, again were they reminded of it in another covenant, made by God in their favour shortly after they had sinned in the matter of the calf. Of course, having broken the first covenant, they could deserve no favour from God. He, however, in His grace, entered into an unconditional covenant, as far as they were concerned, by which He bound Himself to bring them into the land of promise. In that His claim on the first-born males was repeated (Exod. xxxiv. 20). Thus three times within one year God spoke of it to Moses, and through him to Israel.

Whilst, however, claiming them, God at the outset declared that they were to be redeemed, though in what way was not revealed till after the congregation had reached Mount Sinai. Of course, every creature ought to serve God, but He made this claim on those only whom He had sheltered from judgment—a claim, and the ground of it, with which generation after generation were to be made familiar (Exod. xiii. 14-16). And though reading of it, as we do, as an ordinance which concerned Israel, we may yet get instruction from it for ourselves, seeing that Christians, as we learn in Heb. xii. 23, are the assembly of *first-born ones*. A designation this is, the bearing of which those to whom the

words were written must surely have understood, and which we, with the light that the Old Testament throws on it, can easily lay hold of, viz., that, sheltered from divine judgment, like the first-born males of Israel, we should own His claim on us to be employed in His service. *His* claim, we say, for surely there is that ; yet, looked at in another light, we can call it, and should view it, as a privilege to be employed, as the Levites were, in the service of our God.

But to proceed in an orderly way. To Numbers we must turn to learn about God's way of redemption for the first-born males of the twelve tribes. The normal method, as we would call it, and that which was to hold good for all time, was by a money-payment of five shekels to be paid to the priest (Numb. xviii. 16). To this there was an exception, but only on one occasion. It is that which now occupies us. An exception, we call it, because it was a transaction which was never repeated though it held good for ever, the tribe of Levi having been taken instead of the first-born males of the twelve tribes, as far as man for man there could be such an exchange ; the overplus of the children of Israel being then redeemed by five shekels each, after the shekel of the Sanctuary, which was fixed at twenty gerahs (Numb. iii. 49-51).*

For the males of Israel redemption was imperative. For the first-born male of an ass it was optional, and depended on the will of its owner. For the first-born male of a clean animal it was impossible. That went

* The *redemption* money, it should be remarked, was quite different from the *atonement* money, of half a shekel in value (Exod. xxx. 11-16). This last was required from *every* male in Israel who reached the age of twenty, and it was dedicated to the service of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, and applied to the repair of the Temple in the reign of Jehoshaphat (2 Kings xii. 4). The redemption money was only required from the *first-born males* of the twelve tribes. It was due when such were a month old, and was part of God's inalienable provision for the maintenance of the priests (Numb. xviii. 16). The sum thus handed over in the wilderness amounted to above £200, valuing the shekel at two shillings and eightpence of our money.

upon God's altar. So the redemption of which we here speak was in no sense redemption from judgment, with which it has been too often confounded. There is a redemption from divine judgment, and in that every child of God shares. That is provided by the blood of Christ (Eph. i. 7 ; Col. i. 14). Now the redemption of the first-born males was in no sense like that. And this will be clear to the simplest reader, if he remarks that the *clean* animal could not be redeemed at all, and also that the males of Israel were redeemed at the outset by the Levites being taken in their place, as far as that could be effected. Were the Levites selected to bear divine punishment instead of the first-born males of the twelve tribes? No. They were taken to minister to Aaron. So we read, "and they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the Tabernacle of the congregation (or, Tent of meeting), to do the service of the Tabernacle. And they shall keep all the instruments of the Tabernacle of the congregation (or, Tent of meeting), and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the Tabernacle. And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron, and to his sons: they are wholly given unto him, out of (or, on the behalf of) the children of Israel" (Numb. iii. 6-9).

The position then, and the service of the Levites, was one of privilege indeed, and from that surely they had no desire to be excused. Moreover, it was appointed them by God, who reserves to Himself the prerogative of selecting the fitting instruments for His work. Quite an army of workers He would have, though at first, like the number of the priests, those available for active service were much fewer than in later times. In the reign of David (1 Chron. xxiii. 3) the Levites, numbered from 30 years old and upward, were 38,000. In the wilderness of Sinai, those between the ages of 30 and 50 years of age numbered 8,580 (Numb. iv. 48). We have spoken of those then fitted for full work. We read also of the number of males among them from a month old, which were taken in the place of first-born males of the twelve

tribes. These amounted to 22,000* leaving 273 of the first-born males of Israel to be redeemed by money, which, as has been already pointed out, was handed to the priests.

Following the order in Numbers in which all this is recorded, we next read more in detail of the service they were intended to perform. We have had already expressed in general terms what it was to be (i. 51). We have learnt, too, that they were to minister unto Aaron, given to him and to his sons, being wholly given unto him out of (or, on the behalf of) the children of Israel (iii. 6-9). But, above and beyond the ordinary work of a Levite when the Tabernacle was stationary, there were special duties which devolved on them when the camp was on the march, but all arranged by God. If He took them to be His servants, He left to no one, not even to Moses, to suggest what their work was to be. And the same principle is seen in the divine arrangement in the Church of God. "God hath set some in the Church—first, apostles ; secondarily, prophets ; thirdly, teachers" : etc., and the Spirit, we read, divides to each man severally as He will (1 Cor. xii. 11, 28). Would that this were more remembered. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord" (1 Cor. xii. 4, 5). In the right exercise of his gift let each one have full scope, whilst subject to the Word in that which he does.

Levitical duties were appointed then as it pleased God. So each Levitical family could set to work, and no one was to interfere with them. To God they were responsible ; and from Him had they received authority for their service. And here the principle of election was displayed. For whilst Gershon was the eldest son of Levi, and so his descendants might have expected that they would be selected to bear the sacred vessels on their shoulders, that work was entrusted to the descendants of

* The actual number of males of the Levites exceeded this by 300, but these were not included in the number taken instead of the Israelites, being probably themselves first-born males, and so could not be substituted for others.

Kohath, who was Levi's second son. How often do we see in Scripture, that blessing and privilege do not run in the order of nature. The Kohathites were designated as the bearers of the sacred vessels. To the Gershonites was appointed the charge of carrying the curtains, the hanging for the door of the Tabernacle, the hangings of the court, and the curtain which formed its door, and all their cords. To the Merarites were entrusted the boards of the Tabernacle, and the bars and the pillars, the sockets, and all the vessels thereof, and all that serveth thereto, and the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords (Numb. iii. 25, 26, 31, 36, 37).

Each great family thus set to work, would the Kohathites exalt themselves in their own eyes above the Gershonites? How foolish would that have been. For they were mutually dependent on each other, and on the Merarites, too, for the work to be properly performed. Of what use would it have been, had the Kohathites arrived at the camping ground with the holy vessels in their charge, to find nothing ready to receive them, because the Gershonites and the Merarites had not erected the Tent of the congregation. Co-operation was needed, for they all had part in the work.

But all that was Levitical service, not the work of the holy priesthood. So there was no ground for the Kohathites to exalt themselves as on a par with the priests. For though carrying the sacred vessels, among which was the brazen Altar, they could never officiate at it; nor, though they were admitted to cross the threshold of the Sanctuary, could they enter that holy chamber, till all the vessels had been duly wrapped up by the priests. "They shall not go in to see the Sanctuary even for a moment, lest they die;" so reads the *revised version* of Numb. iv. 20. Each time the camp moved there was the reminder, that the priest had a place and a service in connection with the Tabernacle which no mere Levite could ever attain to. There was a great gulf between the two, which could never be bridged over, and we know that when some of the Kohathites, led by Korah,

presumed to put themselves on an equality with priests, God signally dealt with them in judgment; and their censors, turned into beaten plates for a covering upon the Altar, served as a memorial to all time, that no one not of the seed of Aaron, was to draw near to burn incense before the Lord (Numb. xvi.). Yet the priests were not independent of Levite service. For God's work to be properly performed the ministrations of the latter were indispensable. How all was balanced, as it were, by the Divine arrangement; for efficiency and due performance of the work could only be secured as each filled their post, and did their part.

But more have we to notice. If God called people to do His work, He will provide all that is needed to carry it on. Of this the Gershonites and the Merarites had marked proof. Their work, when on the march, was more onerous than that of the Kohathites. Two wagons and four oxen, part of the offering of the princes of the twelve tribes when the Tabernacle was reared up, were allotted by Moses to the Gershonites; and four wagons and eight oxen to the Merarites (vii.). Thought was taken for both of these great families, and the one which had the heaviest burden had the greatest help. What consideration was there in this! Nor was it a solitary instance of it. To bear burdens required strength. Now God would not overtax the strength of any one called to labour for Him. So none were called on to take part in Levitical work of bearing burdens; till they had reached thirty years of age, nor were they asked to continue such service after fifty years of age. In the matter of help provided by the wagons the Gershonites and the Merarites alone profited. In the consideration, not to overtax the strength of any Levite, the Kohathites also shared. What a thing it was, and is, to be the servants of God. He, the Almighty, thinks of them, and considers them.

We have now to call the reader's attention to a most interesting ceremony which took place in the wilderness of Sinai, and in the presence of all the congregation, viz., the setting apart the Levites in accordance with the rite

prescribed by God, for the duties they were destined to perform. As with the priests, so with the Levites, it was for God to say how that should be done, for He only knows what is needful for those whom He will employ in His service.

In the most public way was this carried out ; and first both washing and shaving were called for. Their persons were sprinkled with the water of purifying, and the hair of their flesh shaved off ; their clothes, too, were washed, and thus they made themselves clean. The need of purifying by water proclaimed that in themselves they were not pure ; the shaving all their flesh, betokened the surrender of all thought of serving God just in their natural strength. These preliminaries gone through, they provided themselves with a burnt-offering and a sin-offering, and were ready then to approach the Tabernacle of the congregation. Before that Tabernacle the whole assembly of the Children of Israel was to be gathered. Called together a short time previous to witness the consecration of the priests, they were called together again to witness the setting apart of the Levites.

Spectators they were, yet not spectators only, for they had a part in the ceremony, having to lay their hands upon the Levites, and Aaron was to offer (or wave) them before the Lord for a wave-offering. Laying their hands on them acknowledged identification with them, in that the Levites were to stand henceforth in the place of their first-born males to do the Lord's work. The rightful claim of God on their first-born they thus fully owned, but they acknowledged likewise His way of redeeming their children from a service which He might righteously have enforced. After that the Levites took the initiative, and laid their hands on the bullocks about to be killed on their behalf, the one for a sin-offering, the other for a burnt-offering. Then the Levites set before Aaron and his sons were offered for a wave-offering before the Lord—a wave-offering it was called, because *all* the Levites were to be offered. That done, the days ceremonial was completed ; God had taken them instead of all the first-born of the Children of

Israel, and now, duly set apart, they could discharge the duties proper to their office. At twenty-five years of age they entered on the Tabernacle service. At thirty years of age they began to bear burdens. And they ceased from this last duty after fifty years of age, yet continued to minister with their brethren, keeping the charge, but doing no service. (Numb. viii. 23-26).

Interesting would it be to pursue the history of the Levites, pointing out their unique position, and their distribution in the land. But that would take us beyond our subject, which is the Tabernacle, and what was connected with it. So here we close, remarking that this subject of the Levites concerns Christians, who are, to speak in Old Testament language, both Levites and a holy priesthood (1 Pet. ii. 5). As a holy priesthood we offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ—a service this common to all. But answering to the Levites, we are to be for the Lord Jesus as they were given to Aaron; for as saints we have individually something to do conducive to the furtherance of God's work on the earth.

ON THE MARCH.

THE Levites duly set apart for the discharge of those duties which would otherwise have devolved on all the first born males of Israel, full provision was thereby made for the work of God upon earth. And now the passover having been kept at the foot of Sinai, the first passover celebrated outside Egyptian territory, the time drew near for a forward movement to take place. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of it, the congregation celebrated the passover. In the second month, and on the fourteenth day of it, those incapacitated the previous month kept their passover. Then on the twentieth day of that second month, the cloud was for the first time taken up from over the Tabernacle of the testimony, and the two silver trumpets blew an alarm.

All were at once astir in that vast encampment. The day had come when they were to begin their direct march towards the land of their inheritance. They had

started from Egypt for Sinai; for God had told Moses, "when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God on this mountain" (Exod. iii. 12). But called out as they were from Egypt to go to Canaan, their road to it was to be by the mount of God. So their arrival at Sinai was as it were the completion of the first stage of the journey, the second of which was Kadesh Barnea, reached by the people before the end of the second year after the Exodus. And the third was the plains of Moab, having left the wilderness for ever, when they had crossed the brook Zered (Deut. ii. 13, 14). Between Sinai and Kadesh are eleven days' journey (Deut. i. 2). Between Kadesh and the brook Zered thirty-eight years ran by.

To return. With the wilderness of Sinai and its adjacent valleys the people must have become familiar. Nearly a year had passed since they first encamped at the foot of what is now called Ras Sufsâfeh in the large plain called *Wady Er Râhâh*.* They had reached the base of Ras Sufsâfeh, now supposed to be the mount of God, in the third month of the year of the Exodus—the twentieth day of the second month of the second year was to witness their final departure from it. For never in all their wanderings do we read of their return to Sinai, or to Horeb.

The silver trumpets sounded an alarm (Numb. x. 5). All were at once astir, but surely in no confusion. Each camp of the twelve tribes had been already made acquainted with its place in the order of march; and each family of the Levites had been instructed as to its special service, and its place in the host, as the vast company march on to Canaan.

At the sound of the alarm a spectator would have seen

* "An accurate survey of the plain of Râhâh shows it to be 400 acres in extent; and when the open wadies near and surrounding are taken into account, there are in all 940 acres of excellent standing ground in front and in full view of Ras Sufsâfeh, which is the Arabic name of the bold bluff or cliff which fronts the plain."—*The Bible and Modern Discoveries*, by H. A. Harper, p. 138.

a movement in the camp of Judah ; for, its standard reared up, it would have begun the march, leading, as that tribe did, the advance guard of the host. Behind it, but following its standard, would have been seen the host of the tribe of the children of Issachar, after which marched in their appointed place the host of the tribe of Zebulun ; meanwhile there must have been great activity displayed by both priests and Levites. The former would at once have repaired to the Sanctuary, and have set busily to work, covering the sacred vessels. Some of the latter would have been seen getting ready the oxen and yoking them to the wagons, so that they might be laden with the heavier portions of the Tabernacle, and probably with the pillars of the court and their sockets also. The vessels covered, the Kohathites, now called in by Aaron and his sons, would prepare to carry them as God had directed ; while the Gershonites and the Merarites would then concentrate their efforts on the taking down of the Tabernacle, curtain by curtain, and board by board, being careful that nothing was left behind—neither a socket nor a pin.

Whilst this was going on in the centre, the movement already referred to would have been visible on the eastern side of the huge encampment. Tents had been struck, women and children had been got ready, and the tribal possessions had been gathered together. An army in itself of 186,400 men had already begun to lead the way, the standard of the camp of Judah being, as we have said, that to which the advance guard rallied. The Tabernacle by this time taken down, the Gershonites and the Merarites with their wagons and oxen, helps for the burdens they carried, would be prepared to follow, numbering 5,830 between the ages of 30 and 50, all able for their work. Following thus early they could re-erect the Tabernacle ere the Kohathites came up.

Behind them would be seen the standard of the camp of Reuben, setting forward according to their hosts. With Reuben was connected the host of the tribe of Simeon, and that also of the tribe of Gad, numbering altogether 151,450 of those who could go forth to war.

Following them, and immediately preceding the standard of the camp of Ephraim, were the Kohathites with the sacred vessels, the number of whom available to bear burdens was 2,750. With them probably marched the priests, and Eleazar, whose special charge was the oil for the light, and the sweet incense, and the daily meat offering, and the anointing oil (iv. 16). And here perhaps would have been the bulk of the camp of the Levites, embracing all the women and children (ii. 17). We have spoken of Eleazar, who had supervision of the Kohathites. The reader should remember that Ithamar superintended the Gershonites and the Merarites (iv. 28, 33).

The next standard to be displayed was that of Ephraim, with whom were joined the tribes of Manasseh and Benjamin, numbering in all 108,100 men able for war. Behind them, forming the rear guard, floated the standard of the camp of the children of Dan, with which were classed the host of Asher, and that of Naphtali, which last closed the long procession. The rear-guard amounted to 157,600 fighting men. Thus of the two largest hosts one led the way and the other brought up the rear.

What a sight it must have been! In what order they reached Sinai we know not. They left it to outward eyes a disciplined host, whom it would have been perilous for the tribes of the desert to attack. Amalek had done so at Rephidim before the people reached Sinai, and had been signally defeated, for God was with Israel, and the intercession of Moses brought down the desired help for victory (Exod. xvii. 11-13). Subsequently, near the place which was afterwards known as Hormah, the Amalekites, in conjunction with the Canaanites, inflicted a defeat on those of Israel who went up to the top of the mountain against the advice of Moses, for God was not with them in that action (Numb. xiv. 41-45). When God was with them none could be against them, and no desert tribe throughout all the years after they left Sinai ventured to attack them on the march, or to surprise them by a night assault on the camp. Even Midian,

whose power and number must have been of no small account, made no direct attempt to check their progress ; but sought under Balaam's advice to draw down divine judgment on them in the matter of Peor (xxx. 16). To succeed against them whilst under the protection of Jehovah was impossible. If His shield could be withdrawn their enemies might succeed. Skilfully designed was the counsel of Balaam, yet it did not effect its purpose.

In the order in which they left [^] Sinai so they left their different camping stations in the wilderness, the names of which are often indicative, either of what they found at them, and so of the character of the country, or of that which happened to them. Of the former we may find illustrations in Rithmah, Rimmon-parez, Libnah, Rissah, etc. Of the latter Kibroth-hattaavah has fixed for ever in remembrance the lusting of the people for flesh, promoted by the mixed multitude, who seem to have perished then, for we never read of them again (xi. 4). Then Hazeroth (hamlets), and Bene-Jaakan (children of Jaakan), are suggestive of places inhabited, or visited by desert tribes. As often as they moved their camp the lawgiver spoke and addressed God, " Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee " (x. 35). With the order of march in our remembrance how suited are the words. They were moving on in order under the guidance of Jehovah of hosts. And when the ark rested, the lawgiver said, " Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel." Truly could Israel thus be described, whose number was upwards of 600,000, besides women and children.

Here we would notice two points connected with this part of our subject. First, in the grouping of the tribes into four great camps we may observe a plan. The four leaders were Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, and Dan. After their standards the tribes annexed to each moved, and in each case, Manasseh excepted, the younger followed the elder. To this one exception no just cause of complaint could be found, for Jacob had settled the precedence of

Ephraim over Manasseh, when he blessed them, guiding, we read, his hands wittingly. Judah led the way; not Reuben the first-born, though the latter tribe was chief of the second camp. Reuben had lost his place as the eldest ere Jacob died, and to Judah the aged patriarch prophetically declared that his father's brethren should bow down. For that tribe to lead the way would seem natural; and to us, who are acquainted with its subsequent history, as the tribe to which the Lord belonged, its place as leader was but fitting. Dan, the chief of the last camp, had Asher and Naphtali attached to his standard—all three were children of handmaids, but Dan was the eldest son of the three, so fittingly he had here the pre-eminence. No tribe, then, could complain of its place in the order of march. No jealousy arising out of it could have been engendered in the breast of any. Jacob's dying words and dying act settled questions which might otherwise have arisen. Surely divine wisdom was displayed in these different groupings, which were intended only for the wilderness journey: for the arrangement of the tribes in the land, we may remark, was very different to their wilderness association. Issachar and Zebulun were then far removed from Judah; and Simeon and Gad were separated by the Jordan, and by a great part of the territory of Judah as well.

Secondly, the other point to which we would draw attention is the illustration we get from Numb. x. of Pss. lxxiii. and lxxx. The former predicts the triumph of God over His enemies on earth in the future. So that psalm opens with the thoughts, and almost word for word the language of Moses when the ark set forward on the march. The latter is a cry for God's intervention after the temple has been defiled and Jerusalem laid in heaps (Ps. lxxix. 1), a state of sorrow to be known in the future. So the godly remnant will say, "Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up Thy strength, and come and save us" (Ps. lxxx. 2); an allusion this evidently to the normal place of the Ark, which was just in front of the camps of these tribes. How that psalm,

then, bears witness to the fact of the wilderness march. We have said that the normal place of the Ark was just in front of the standard of the camp of Ephraim, carried on the shoulders of some of the Kohathites. But on one occasion, and only one that we know of, this order was not adhered to. For as they were leaving Sinai to traverse a desert unknown to any of the Israelites, though well known to Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses, who was with them, Moses requested the continuance of his presence to be instead of eyes to them. He probably was acquainted with the tracks, and with the places where wells could be got, and pasture found for the flocks and herds which accompanied them. The request was a natural one, and in ordinary circumstances would have been deemed a prudent one, for to direct so vast a company through an unknown country was no light matter. But the circumstances were not ordinary. God was in their midst, and He would guide them. So the Ark, we are told, went before them a three days' journey to seek out a resting-place for them. God would Himself guide them, and that far better than Hobab (Numb. x. 33). What a reproof to Moses this must have been. God as it were took the matter into His hands, and led the way to find out a resting-place for His people! And the cloud of the Lord was upon (or, over) them by day when they went out of the camp (34).

From place to place they moved. Their camping stations between Egypt and the plains of Moab were never to be forgotten. They are written in Numbers xxxiii., recorded there, when the wilderness journeys were over, but before they entered into final rest on the west of the river Jordan, in the land of the Canaanites.

Viewing the wilderness journey as over, we have next to trace out the movements of the Ark, till it entered into its resting-place in the temple on mount Moriah in the days of Solomon.

THE MOVEMENTS OF THE ARK.

ISRAEL had reached the plains of Moab by the Jordan near Jericho in the fortieth year after the Exodus. An

eventful year it was. In the first month of it Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Moses and Aaron, had died, and was buried at Kadesh (Numb. xx. 1). Aaron too had died, and Eleazar had succeeded him in the High Priest's office; being dressed in the pontifical attire ere his father expired; for the two together were a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. All the men of war too, who had come out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upwards had passed away by death (Deut. ii. 16). What changes these were! Besides all this the wilderness wanderings had ceased, and for ever, the moment Israel had crossed the brook Zered (Deut. ii. 14, 15). Arnon too had been crossed, and the plains of Moab were occupied by the vast encampment of that victorious host.

For victorious it was, seeing it had waged war with success against Sihon the Amorite king, and against Og, King of Bashan, who was of the giants. Neither could stand against them. A war of extermination it had been. Every man, woman, and child had been cut off, without, that we read of, one Israelite having been wounded (Deut. ii. 33-34; iii. 6). The Amorites, who had wrested part of Moab's ancient territory from them, were found to be too feeble to dislodge Israel from their border. And Og, one of the Rephaim*, an ancient and most powerful race, found that his fenced cities with their high walls, gates, and bars could afford him no protection against the invading host. Like a flood, which carries all before it, Israel had overspread his land. All his cities were taken. All the inhabitants were slaughtered. All the cattle and spoil were taken for a prey.

For the Amorite territory east of Jordan was to form

* The Rephaim, or giants as A. V. calls them, were old inhabitants of the land. Against them Chedorlaomer waged war (Gen. xiv. 5). And their territory God promised to Abraham (xv. 20), excepting as we afterwards learn those districts where they had once been, which were subsequently inhabited by the Moabites and the Ammonites (Deut. ii. 9-22). Some of them had dwelt west of Jordan (the valley of Rephaim near Jerusalem preserves a record of it), and of their descendants individuals remained there till the days of David (1 Chron. xx.).

part of the inheritance of Israel; of this God told Moses. "Rise ye up, and take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon; behold I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land; begin to *possess* it, and contend with him in battle." Again, "Behold I have begun to give Sihon and his land before thee: begin to *possess*, that thou mayest *inherit* his land" (Deut. ii. 24, 31). Thus they *possessed* the country of Sihon, and that also of Og (Numb. xxi. 24, 35; Deut. iii. 12). On both sides of the Jordan then was the land of Israel's inheritance, as predetermined by God, though it does not appear that He intended any of them to dwell on the east of that river. The tribes, however, who asked for their portion there got it. But soon did they discover the drawback of it (Josh. xxii. 24-28). By-and-by all the tribes will be located west of Jordan (Ezek. xlvii. 15-20; xlviii.), yet they will possess the territory east of it as well, feeding in Bashan and Gilead as in the days of old (Jer. l. 19; Micah vii. 14; Zech. x. 10). We must remember then, that on the east of Jordan as well as on the west the inheritance of the people, as designed by God, was to be found; a picture this of the full inheritance of the heavenly saints, which comprises heaven and earth; or to express it in symbolical language, that which is on the east of Jordan, as well as that which is on the west, for Jordan is typical of death.

The unparalleled success of Israel against the Amorites, startled, as we know, the nations across the river, making their hearts melt, and depriving them of any more spirit (Josh. ii. 10, 11). No wonder therefore that Balak, king of Moab, when he saw his nation's old antagonist and victor, Sihon the Amorite, had been helpless before Israel, and he and all his people swept off the earth—no wonder that Balak was convinced of the impossibility of Moab successfully contending with Israel, unless God could be brought to be against them. Hence in conjunction with Midian he hired Balaam to curse them, but without success. God was for Israel, so none could be against them. The people irresistible in

war, yielded, however, to the seduction of the Midianitish women ; and, though not a man fell in battle against the Amorites, twenty and four thousand died by the plague inflicted by God in the matter of Baal-peor. God's wrath was turned away at that time by the faithfulness of Phineas ; but the tribe of Simeon for many a day bore testimony to what had gone on, in the reduction of its numbers by upwards of thirty-seven thousand, as ascertained at the second census when compared with the first (Numb. xxvi. 14).

Now fresh victory awaited Israel in the expedition against Midian. Twelve thousand went out to war. Twelve thousand returned victorious. Not a man was lost, though the five kings of Midian—Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba—were slain, and every Midianite likewise, besides Balaam the son of Beor, who, possibly, when discredited in the eyes of Balak, betook himself to the Midianites, and with them met his justly deserved doom. After all this the people were summoned to hear the terms of a covenant to which they were to be parties, and which they entered into in the land of Moab (Deut. xii.—xxix. 1). On the observance of it depended their continuance in the land, the western part of which under Joshua they were about to conquer. For the time for the departure of Moses had arrived. At the age of 120 he went up Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, saw the land west of the river, but never returned to Israel. He died there alone with God. Of his birthday he had spoken in Deut. xxxi. 2. Near now was the day of his death.

That fortieth year thus came to a close—an eventful one indeed. Death had been busy throughout. The prophetess, the priest, the mediator, all had gone—a year to be remembered for that ; but to be remembered, too, for the victories achieved over the Amorites and the Midianites without the loss of a single Israelite. But rest in the land was still future, and for that they must cross the Jordan, and fight with their enemies on the west of that river, ere they could take possession of the country there assigned them by God (Numb. xxxiv.)

Another year equally to be remembered now began, and on the tenth day of the first month the passage of the Jordan took place. This necessarily brings the movements of the Ark prominently before us.

Israel had been facing the Jordan, which was in full flood, as was customary during the time of harvest ; fords there were in the river, but at that season, doubtless, they were few, and impracticable for a great host, though the two spies had managed to cross and to recross near Jericho (Josh. ii. 7). The passage, then, of the river had to be effected, and not merely attempted, and was no ordinary matter. It was to be the passage of the people of the Lord into the land of their dwelling-place. At the most unfavourable time, and under the most adverse circumstances, it was to be carried out. God, therefore, would take all into His hand, and direct what was to be done. So the Ark had in this a most prominent place, and was to be carried in a new and remarkable way. In front of Israel's hosts, and preceding all the better part of a mile in advance, it was to lead the way, borne on this occasion, as on three others, to which we hope in due course to draw attention, on the shoulders of the priests, and not on those of the Kohathites. The instructions issued by Joshua were as follows : "Come not near unto it (the Ark), that ye may know the way by which ye must go : for ye have not passed this way heretofore" (Josh. iii. 4). A space of about two thousand cubits was to be left between the Ark and the advanced guard of the people, which was to be thus alone, silently carried on the shoulders of the priests to the brink of the rushing river.

All arranged for, and the people sanctified, the morning of the eventful day on which the Lord would do wonders among them dawned upon earth. At the command of Joshua, the priests took up the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the earth, and passed over before the people. "And as they that bare the Ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the Ark were dipped in the brim of the water (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest),

that the waters which came down from above stood, and rose up upon a heap very far from the city Adam (or, at Adam), that is beside Zaretan; and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground, in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan" (iii. 15-17). Such is the historical account of that wonderful passage by the Israelites, but evidently it is the record of an eye-witness (v. 1). The river in flood tide was suddenly arrested, and its waters held back by the presence of the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the earth. No word was spoken that we read of, no prayer put up by Eleazar or by Joshua; but suddenly and mysteriously the stream ceased to flow, and the waters which were descending its channel were arrested at Adam, supposed to be the same as the modern *Ed Damieh*. From that to the Dead Sea (a distance of more than twenty miles if we reckon the windings of the river), the Jordan bed must that day have become suddenly dry.

What caused that? The presence of the Living God, symbolised by the Ark. The waters, which would have been death to the host, were arrested by the power and presence of God. A way that day was made through the Jordan for the redeemed of the Lord to enter the land of their dwelling-place. The people saw how the presence of the Living God had held back the waters of the rapid, and then also deep, flowing river, till all had passed over on dry ground. The passing, begun doubtless in the morning, was finished before night. Till all had crossed, the priests bearing the Ark stood still in Jordan. Before the people had reached the river, the Ark, as we have said, preceding them by a distance of two thousand cubits, entered the river's bed. How this speaks to us of the Lord Jesus, who Himself has passed through death, and now has annulled it, for all His own (2 Tim. i. 10). Death is no impassable barrier to the

heavenly saints going in to their everlasting dwelling. As typical of this it was, we believe, that the priests, not the Levites, carried the Ark that day.

The Jordan crossed, the people circumcised, the Passover kept, the enemy had next to be defeated in his stronghold. Again the Ark, carried by the priests, had a prominent but a different place in the work which had to be done. All was of God, so by Him the order was arranged. This time those armed for war led the way. After them came seven priests to blow with trumpets. Then followed the Ark, behind which was the rearward. For six days in that order, and the priests blowing the trumpets, the Ark and the host made a circuit of the city's walls. Apparently there was no result; and what could such tactics avail against the fortified city of Jericho, those within it might have said. At the close of the sixth day the walls remained intact. The seventh morning dawned. The same tactics were resorted to on the part of the besiegers, but instead of one circuit they made seven. At the seventh time of their compassing the city, the priests blew with the trumpets, the people shouted, and the walls fell down flat; so that the people went up every man straight before him, and then took the city. The stronghold of the enemy succumbed to the presence of God. The Lord with His people, and for them, Jericho fell. With the captain of salvation victory was sure.

We must now turn to another scene in which the Ark prominently figured. The war went on; Ai in turn was taken, then the way was laid open for Joshua and all the people to reach the valley between Ebal and Gerizim. Thither they went, unhindered by their enemies still around them. Moses had told them to go there, and though he had never seen the place, he described it as "on the other side Jordan, by the way where the sun goeth down, in the land of the Canaanites, which dwell in the champaign (or Arabah) over against Gilgal, beside the plains (rather oaks) of Moreh" (Deut. xi. 30). He had further told them what to do when they got there. Six tribes, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and

Benjamin, here named in the order of birth, were to stand on Mount Gerizim to bless. The other six tribes, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali, were to stand on Mount Ebal to curse. And an altar was to be built of unhewn stones, presumably in the valley between the two mountains, on which burnt offerings were to be offered, and peace offerings also (Deut. xxvii. 1-7).

All that Moses had enjoined, Joshua faithfully carried out. But what we read of in Joshua, viz., the prominence given to the Ark, is not mentioned in Deuteronomy. "All Israel," we read, "and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the Ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against Mount Gerizim, and half of them over against Mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the Law" (Josh. viii. 33, 34).

Now, what did all this mean? Why was the Ark there and no mention of the Tabernacle with it? Once only was it taken to the valley between Ebal and Gerizim. Its position was here again changed. How plain it is that there was no imitation. God was directing in all that took place. At Jordan, as we have seen, it had preceded all Israel. There it must have been alone. At Jericho it followed the armed men in their daily march round the doomed city. God was to be seen with His people in the war. Here how different. It was in the valley, borne aloft on the shoulders of some of the priests, with half of the tribes on Mount Gerizim on the one hand, and half on Mount Ebal on the other. What were they all doing there? No enemy had concentrated its forces at that spot. It was not war which drew them to the vicinity of Shechem; it was the ceremony of taking formal possession of the land

that had called them thither, in obedience to the directions communicated by the lawgiver. They had come to take possession, as one might say, in the presence of their enemies. For as yet the Amorite confederacy in the south had not been crushed, nor had the northern confederacy under Jabin, king of Hazor, been defeated and dispersed. Much the greater part of the land was still unconquered. But their *right* of possession was not dependent on conquest, though their enjoyment of it necessitated warfare. Their right of possession rested on a gift, a grant by God centuries before to Abraham. Here they had met to read their title deeds, as it were, to their continued enjoyment of it as their home.

But why was this place selected for this purpose? No other spot on the whole earth was so suitable. It was at Shechem under the oak (or, terebinth) of Moreh that God first promised to Abraham to give his seed the land (Gen. xii. 7). There, close upon five centuries later, his descendants were assembled by the word of God, and in token of the fulfilment of that promise to their father. Faithful He was who promised. He had also done it, and they were assembled there in witness of it. An oak was there, evidently a well known tree (Josh. xxiv. 26), perhaps the same by which Abraham had pitched his tent, for trees live long. From Shechem Abraham moved to Bethel and Ai. From Bethel and Ai his descendants pass to reach that valley which divides Ebal from Gerizim.

Over ground, then, which Abraham had once travelled his descendants also travelled, but in the contrary direction. He left Shechem for the neighbourhood of Bethel and Ai. They pushed on from the latter locality to reach the vicinity of Shechem. Never again was Abraham at Shechem that we read of. Never again was the Ark carried to the valley between Ebal and Gerizim. But what associations for those acquainted with Abraham's history must that visit have called up!

On those three occasions then the Ark was carried by the priests, namely, at the passage of the Jordan, at the

investing and fall of Jericho, and at the gathering of all the tribes to Ebal and Gerizim. At the Jordan we read in type of the passage through death unto the home made for the saints by the Lord Jesus Christ. At Jericho we view the walls of the stronghold of the enemy falling flat before the Lord of all the earth. In that valley between Ebal and Gerizim God took possession of the land in and through His people, reminding us of what Eph. i. 18 speaks—God's inheritance in His saints. For as the land was the land of the possession of the Lord (Josh. xxii. 19), He possessed it in His people; so will it be with the still wider inheritance in which we are concerned—which we shall share with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The other occasion on which the Ark was carried by the priests must in order be noticed, but important events took place, and years ran by ere that was witnessed.

THE ARK IN CAPTIVITY.

“He delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand.” So wrote Asaph (Psalm lxxviii. 61), the contemporary, we believe, of David, of the capture of the Ark by the uncircumcised Philistines.

Israel smitten before them, with the loss of about four thousand men, bethought themselves of the Ark of God. Remembering, doubtless, the victory at Jericho, they attempted to use it as a charm. “Let us fetch the Ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies” (1 Sam. iv. 3). *It* they thought of, not *God*. What was the Ark but the symbol of His presence? But as is ever the way, when declension has come in, and ere a recognition of the true cause has been made, things or rites are resorted to as charms. Happy is it when such idle dreams are dispelled. The Ark entered the camp. God allowed it. “All Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.” The Philistines, when they enquired about the noise, and learnt what gave rise to it, were afraid, for they said, “God is come into the camp,” and they said “Woe

unto us ! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. Woe unto us ! Who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods ? These are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. Be strong and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you ; quit yourselves like men, and fight " (1 Sam. iv. 7-9). The battle was fought with the Ark on the field, and thirty thousand men of Israel fell, more than seven times the number slain in the previous engagement. The Ark, too, was taken, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

Was God's hand shortened, that it could not save, or His ear heavy, that it could not hear ? No. Israel's iniquities had separated between them and their God, and their sins had hid His face from them that He would not hear (Isa. lix. 1, 2). This was made manifest twenty years after, on that same battle field, when it got its name of Ebenezer (1 Sam. vii. 12) ; for the Lord gave Israel a decisive victory, which terminated the forty years of the Philistines' oppression. On the second occasion they were strong, for they had confessed their evil ways and had put away their idols ; and the Lord's intervention had been sought by the burnt-offering which Samuel had offered. The first time they trusted to the presence of the Ark, without confession and without sacrifice. They were shamefully smitten. The second time, confession made, and the sucking lamb offered—the death of Christ thus brought in remembrance before God—the Lord thundered with a great thunder on the Philistines and discomfited them, and they were smitten down before Israel, the Ark being some miles off in its resting-place at Kirjath-jearim, though much nearer the battle-field than when it was at Shiloh. What was needed then for victory was made plain. It is the same in principle now.

But to return. The Ark taken, the Philistines transported it to Ashdod, which was near the sea coast, thus traversing with it as captive the whole breadth of their country in its widest part, till they reached the temple of

Dagon in that city. What a triumph it appeared for the enemy! The God of Israel unable to protect the symbol of His presence! But soon was it seen and felt how dreadful for the Ashdodites to have the Ark in their midst. The Lord could not work for Israel, but He would care for His own glory, and that at once. Woe indeed it was for Philistia when the Ark was taken. Sorrowful too for Israel, for their glory was departed (1 Sam. iv. 21).

The Ark deposited in the temple, and confronting the idol, night overshadowed the city, and all lay down to sleep. Far off from Israel was it now, and alone, without a priest or a Levite to wait on it; still it was the symbol of the divine presence on earth, and that was to be manifested. Day dawned, the men of Ashdod arose from their slumbers, and found their idol, even Dagon, prostrate in its own temple before the Ark of God. "Dagon," we read, "was fallen upon his face to the ground, before the Ark of the Lord," a silent yet expressive witness of the existence and power of the true God. Dagon in his temple rendered homage to Jehovah. But was that an accident? They took Dagon and set him in his place again. An idol, what could Dagon do? As it fell there it lay, till its votaries picked it up and restored it to its place and position. That was done, and throughout that day it remained as they set it, confronting the Ark of the Lord. Night came, and morning succeeded that night, when the Ashdodites found that Dagon's previous fall was no accident. There lay the idol, not merely prostrate and helpless, but now broken to pieces, the head and the palms of its hands cut off on the threshold, and only the stump, or fishy part of the idol left.* The Ashdodites evidently had been aware of nothing unusual during the night. No earthquake upset the idol's equilibrium. God, the true God, had thrown it down. Dagon must bow before the Ark of the Lord. How quietly yet effectually did the Lord thus

* The image was in the form of a fish, with the upper part like a man.

work for the maintenance of His own glory! "Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore,"—these words of the Philistines received an illustration they never expected. Dagon was broken in pieces by the hand of God.

Nor was that all. The Lord's hand was heavy on the men of the place. He destroyed them, and smote them with tumours, even Ashdod, and the borders thereof (v. 6). Now this was not a general epidemic visiting the land. The tumours only attacked those where the Ark was held captive. God was teaching the Ashdodites that His presence and power were solemn realities. Aware of it—made aware in this distressing way—they desired to be rid of the presence of the Ark. So long as it remained so long would disease and death make havoc among them. In an agony of distress they said, "The Ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us; for His hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our God." What a confession from the conquerors of the Israelites!

Immediate steps were taken to free themselves from further sorrow. To Gath it was conveyed, the most southern of the five cities of the Philistines. This is proved by the recovery of its site, now called *Abu Gheith*, as marked on the map of the *Palestine Exploration Fund*.^{*} Would Gath fare better than Ashdod? Soon was it found in that city that the Ark was a most unwelcome visitant. No idol of Dagon was there to do homage to the God of Israel; but the people of Gath, like those of Ashdod, were visited by disease and death, "The hand of the Lord" we read "was against the city with a very great destruction, and He smote the men of the city, both small and great, and tumours brake out upon them." The same visitation that the people of Ashdod had experienced the men of Gath fell under, only it would seem intensified. For we read of a *very*

^{*} We refer the reader to their *reduced* map adapted to Old Testament history. All maps of an older date place Gath farther north, and still we have to say its site is a matter of debate, for several would locate it further north at *Tell-es-Safi*.

great destruction. As with the Ashdodites, so with the Gittites, they traced their trouble to its right cause—the presence of the Ark. To get rid of it, then, as the men of Ashdod had done, was their only resource. So to Ekron they sent it, the most northern city of the Philistine territory.

When first taken captive it was carried in triumph across the whole width of their country. Now it made the journey from the south to the north of their territory, and entered Ekron to the dismay of its inhabitants, who cried out, "They have brought about the Ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people" (v. 10). Evidently the report of its visits in Philistia had reached them. Its presence had been accompanied in each place with the infliction of death and disease. And to that Ekron proved to be no exception—it fared no better. The same mysterious visitation attacked their men. "There was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there. And the men that died not were smitten with tumours: and the cry of the city went up to heaven" (v. 11, 12). That Ark taken in triumph to Ashdod, made a triumphant progress indeed, throughout the length of the country, and its track was marked by desolation, mourning and woe. Death claimed many victims, and with the tumours with which God had threatened Israel, if disobedient (Deut. xxviii. 27), the Philistines were now afflicted. God's presence was to them an awful calamity. All in those cities writhed under it, and perhaps Ekron more than all.

On Dagon, and on all the men of the cities, God's hand was heavy. But the land too was visited. Mice marred it. In these different ways did God show Himself to be God. It was power without grace. God, to whom they were strangers, was laying His chastening hand upon them. Those uncircumcised ones were painfully conscious of His presence and power. But all this was new. The Ark's presence in Israel caused no such effects. What explanation could there be of that? The explanation is at once simple and instructive. God's

presence amongst a redeemed people can be productive of blessing. His presence amid the unredeemed can only induce judicial dealing. Between Israel and the Philistines morally there was nothing to choose. But the former were redeemed, the latter were not.

To return, then, the Ark was the desire of the five lords. Thus without the slightest compulsion on the part of the Israelites, or yielding to the entreaty of the twelve tribes, they were only too glad at the end of seven months to send it away, for its presence was burdensome indeed to them.

But how should they do that? The advice of their priests and diviners was sought, and, when given was strictly followed. A new cart was to be prepared for it, and two milch kine, on whom never yoke had been laid, were to be harnessed to it, and five golden tumours and five golden mice were to accompany it in a coffer, as a trespass offering to the God of Israel.

The cart was made, the trespass offering was prepared, the kine were yoked, and off it set. No driver directed them that human eye could see, yet they went straight along the highway, and lowing as they went, for they had calves shut up at home. Unaccustomed to the yoke they nevertheless pulled together, as if trained for their work, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left; and though their calves were shut up at home, and maternal feeling was manifested by their lowing, they left their offspring to do the bidding of the Lord of all the earth. Bethshemesh was in the valley of Sorek on the slope of the mountains of Judah. All that distance they went, patiently drawing their burden. What a sight it must have been to the lords who watched them. Dagon could never have done that. But they were the creatures of Him of whose presence the Ark was the symbol. They were creatures doing the will of the Creator, and furthering that day His glory.

Seven months had the Ark been in captivity. Israel had apparently rested quiet under its loss. Now to the surprise of the men of Bethshemesh, one of the cities of the priests, it suddenly appeared on the cart, drawn by

the kine. Reaping their harvest in the valley they saw it approach, and rejoiced. The Ekronites had cried out when they first saw it. The men of Bethshemesh could rejoice at beholding it. God was returning to His people. The kine guided by Him had taken the straight way to Bethshemesh, and now, guided also surely by Him, the cart entered the field of Joshua, the Bethshemite, and there stopped beside a great stone. The journey was over. The creatures had served the Creator, and were now to be devoted to Him in death. The Bethshemite offered them for a burnt-offering unto the Lord, and He evidently accepted the sacrifice.

What a difference between them and the Philistines ! The latter offered no sacrifice. They sent the golden offerings, a witness of God's hand having been on them ; an acknowledgment too that they were unfit, and unable to bear His presence among them. With the Ark's departure they trusted His hand would be lifted from off them ; but acceptance before Him they did not contemplate. To be freed from His presence, and from the tokens of His power was all their desire.

The lords of the Philistines returned to Ekron, satisfied that it was the hand of God that had been on them, which was now to be lightened from off them, their gods and their land. The Bethshemites rejoiced at the Ark's return, and offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings. But their joy was turned to sorrow, because, venturing to look into the Ark, the Lord smote them. Lifting the lid of the mercy-seat they must have seen the two tables of the law. Who could be confronted with that, even if a priest, and live ? The law was the ministration of death (2 Cor. iii. 7). "Who is able to stand before the Lord, this Holy God ?" was their exclamation, "and to whom shall He go up from us ?" was their inquiry. To the men of Kirjath-jearim therefore they sent, who came and fetched up the Ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep it (1 Sam. vii. 1). There it abode till David took it to Jerusalem, for never

again was it in the Tabernacle ; and from the year it left the Tabernacle till it entered its final resting-place in the Temple, the ritual of the day of atonement must have been in abeyance. So in the present, for a Jew there can be no atonement made, nor will they as Jews rejoice in what has really been done, till they welcome back their rejected and crucified Messiah (Zech. xii. 10). When that has taken place, the Mosaic ritual, in accordance with the revision of it set forth in Ezekiel, will again be observed.

One more remark may be made. We have seen how God cared for His own glory, making His presence terrible to the uncircumcised Philistines, and dealing with the men of Bethshemesh for the liberty they took in looking into the Ark. On both His hand was heavy. But the difference was great. Throughout Philistia there was sorrow and death, wherever it was carried, and mice marred the country. In Israel, whilst the men of Bethshemesh suffered for their temerity, the men of Kirjath-jearim were not visited by any plague. The Ekronites deprecated the Ark's entrance into their city. The men of Kirjath-jearim welcomed it, and carried it up to them. They were part of the redeemed people, God's people, and He was their God. None but the redeemed can be at home with Him.

Its captivity thus terminated, the Ark's entrance into final rest had yet to be effected.

THE ARK AT JERUSALEM.

THE presence of God with His people could again be affirmed, the Ark, the symbol of it, being at Kirjath-jearim, in the house of Abinadab in the hill, and kept by Eleazar his son. God had thus shown His desire to be amongst His people, little though they cared for Him. The site of this town has been recognised, it is thought, in 'Erma, about four miles east from Bethshemesh, in the hills, and about 1,000 feet above that Levitical city. "The most curious feature of the site is the rock platform, the area of which is 50 feet north and south, by 30 feet east and west ; the surface artificially levelled, is

10 feet above the ground outside.”* It is suggested that this platform may have been where the house of Abinadab stood. Here for about a century the Ark abode, till David assembled all Israel together from Sihor of Egypt (or, the *brook* of Egypt) to bring it up to Jerusalem. For during Saul’s reign, David tells us, they inquired not at it (1 Chron. xiii. 3), a remark which would strengthen the thought, that in 1 Sam. xiv. 18, the Septuagint has preserved the true reading, substituting as it there does, *ephod* for *Ark*. We say, strengthen the thought, for there being no variation of reading in Heb. MSS. in that place, one would hesitate definitely to affirm that the Greek translation was right, and the Hebrew text wrong.

Eleazar, to whom the care of it had at first been entrusted, had evidently passed away, ere David took counsel to bring it up to Jerusalem, for in his stead we read of Uzza and Ahio, lineal descendants of that Abinadab whose house was in the hill. To Kirjath jearim Israel went, with David at their head, for the king desired the symbol of God’s presence to be with him in Jerusalem, in which he by divine favour now dwelt. Now began those memorable steps in its further history which would end with its entrance into final rest. Israel had entered on their inheritance in the days of Joshua, but the Ark had no final resting-place till the days of Solomon, between four and five centuries later (1 Kings vi. 1). The reason of this we can now understand, for till the throne of the Lord was established at Jerusalem, and the Prince of Peace was seated on it, typical of the coming day of power of the Lord Jesus, rest for the Ark there could not be.

With David, then, seated upon the throne of the Lord (1 Chron. xxix. 23) the first steps were taken to bring the Ark into its resting-place. The first steps, we say, for we may speak of them as three. The first was the move from Kirjath-jearim to the house of Obededom the Gittite. The second from Obededom’s house to the

* *The Bible and Modern Discoveries*, by Henry A. Harper, p. 266.

city of David, which is Zion. The third from Zion to its place in the oracle of the house on Mount Moriah. On the first journey it was carried on a cart. On the second it was borne on the shoulders of the Kohathites. On the last it was carried by priests into its final resting place.

All Israel were called by the king's invitation to Kirjath-jearim to bring up from thence the Ark of God the Lord, that dwelleth between (rather, sitteth upon) the cherubim; of this the Psalmist subsequently sung, "Lo we heard of it at Ephratah; we found it in the fields of the wood" (Ps. cxxxii. 6).^{*} A new cart was provided for it, and oxen were yoked to it to draw it. On a cart, as we know, it had reached Bethshemesh, though we read not by what means it was transported to Kirjath-jearim. On a cart they proposed to move it to Jerusalem, a distance of upwards of seven miles. Now this was imitation, which, though at times may be right, is often just the reverse. It was to be so in this case, for they were copying the Philistines, in the place of learning from the written word what the mind of the Lord was about it. God, however, would remind them of that word, and the means taken for that were the stumbling of the oxen, and the death of Uzza on the road for attempting to steady the Ark, as if God needed support from His creatures. So that day which had commenced so brightly was clouded over by the stroke upon Uzza. The anger of the Lord was kindled against him; and David was displeased because the Lord had made a breach (or, had broken forth) upon Uzza. The work of removal was then stopped, and the Ark was carried aside into the house of Obed-edom, the Gittite, where it remained for three months.

Two things are noticeable in the order of that day's proceedings. There was no sacrifice offered up, and for

^{*} Kirjath-jearim, *i.e.*, city of woods, is evidently referred to by "fields of the wood," and that city was inhabited by descendants of Caleb Ephratah (1 Chron. ii. 50), hence, probably, the introduction of Ephratah by the Psalmist.

the first time was a service of song introduced ; David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets (1 Chron. xiii. 8). We have no hint that God ordered this ; but we see in it the proof of spiritual instinct in David, as will be manifested more fully later on.

God was displeased with Uzza. He was not displeased with Israel. This He graciously showed, for Uzza was not smitten because the Ark should have remained at Kirjath-jearim. So the Lord, we are told, blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had. David heard of that, and was encouraged to proceed with his work. The *first* stage in the Ark's journey was over. The *second* now began.

The king learnt how the Ark should be carried, and now directed the Levites to do it. All Israel were again assembled, coming from all quarters to Jerusalem. Everything being now arranged, the Levites lifted it up by the staves which belonged to it, to carry it out of the house of Obed-edom up to Jerusalem. Again was there a day which commenced with joy, but this time no cloud arose to dim its brightness. The Levites, with all kinds of instruments of music as before, were present to make a joyful sound. And what had been lacking previously was lacking no longer. For when "God helped the Levites that bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, they offered (rather, sacrificed) seven bullocks and seven rams" (1 Chron. xv. 26). They sacrificed, we read, for this seems to have partaken of the character of a peace offering rather than of a burnt offering. But six paces had the Levites moved (2 Sam. vi. 13) when these animals were sacrificed. They commenced well, and all went on well, and the Ark entered the tent on Zion, which David had prepared for it. Music and dancing were the accompaniments of that journey. The Levites played, the singers amongst them sang, and David danced. With shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet the Ark entered Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was keeping high festival that day. All

seem to have been of one accord with the exception of Michal, Saul's daughter, who entered not into her husband's joy. "She despised him," we read, "in her heart" (1 Chron. xv. 29), when she saw him dancing and playing before it. During her father's reign that Ark had been neglected. Evidently to her its entrance into the city of David was a matter of no concern. But that only showed how far she was from the current of God's thoughts, and how wide was the gulf in that matter which divided her from David. She had no part in his joy.

It is true the event of that day took place in the midst of a comparatively small nation, and to celebrate it in a becoming festal way none of the surrounding nations had been invited. No representatives from the King of Tyre were there. No ambassadors from Egypt, no Moabite, Edomite, or Ammonite was asked to witness the ceremony, or to share in the feasting which ensued. Yet what took place concerned the *whole* earth, for it was God entering for the first time that capital in which He will yet delight to dwell (Ps. cxxxii. 14). Evidently David entered somewhat into the importance of it, and the portions from the Psalms which he selected bear witness to it. These 1st Chronicles alone has recorded; Gad and Nathan, to one or both of whom, we believe we are indebted for that part at least of the second book of Samuel (1 Chron. xxix. 29), having omitted all reference to them in their history of that time.

Three Psalms, cv., xcvi., cvi., all of them from the fourth book of the Psalter, and none of which are ascribed to David, were selected by the king to furnish fitting expression for all on that occasion.* With a

* The reader may remark the variations in the Psalms as here given from their text as presented in the Psalter. We call attention to some of them. Ps. cv. in its place in the Psalter is an historical composition, reciting God's way in power on behalf of Israel, as Ps. civ. had celebrated His ways as Creator in connection with this creation. So in Ps. cv. 8, we read the historical statement, "He has remembered His covenant for ever," etc. In 1 Chron. xvi. 15, on that festal occasion the people were exhorted to "Remember His covenant, etc." The

portion of Ps. cvi., viz., vv. 1-15, they began; for David connected that day's ceremonial with the fulfilment of God's promise to the patriarchs to give their descendants the land. So they sang the first fifteen verses of it, and there stopped. Next Ps. xevi. was sung; for the Ark's entrance into Jerusalem was the earnest of the coming day of glory, when God's supremacy over the nations will be manifested and be owned. All on earth then had a concern in that event taking place in the little kingdom of Israel. But that supremacy, though sure to faith, and clear in prophecy, was not then to be made good: and still it is a prospect to which they look forward, for it cannot, we know, be accomplished till Israel are restored to their land. So they closed that day with the first and two last verses of Ps. cvi., which predict a state of things, and a need to which at that time they were strangers; but which we understand, and into which the godly remnant of the future will fully enter. "Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the nations, to give thanks unto Thy holy name, and to triumph in Thy praise" (1 Chron. xvi. 35, *Revised Version*). At that time no nation oppressed them.

Other things must now be noticed. When the Levites had gone six paces from the house of Obed-edom, David, as we have seen, sacrificed oxen and fatlings. When the Ark entered the tent which he had pitched for it in the city of David, they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God (1 Chron. xvi. 1). Then the king blessed the people, an act which no other king but

alteration was in character with the occasion on which they sung it. Looking at Ps. xevi. in the Psalter, the variations from it in 1 Chron. xvi. are more, and in full keeping with the character of David's day. The first sentence, which speaks of a new song, is omitted, for the *new* song seems connected with accomplished redemption through the death of Christ (Ps. xl. 3), and the final blessing of Israel (Isai. xlii. 10), events then future. Then the "sanctuary of," v. 6, and the "courts of," v. 8, of the Psalm are changed respectively to "in His place," and "before Him:" changes the suitability of which we understand, for the Temple was as yet not erected.

Solomon ever attempted, these two being together a type of the King who will be able to bless the people in the future. Now this was the last occasion on which sacrifices were offered before the Ark whilst it dwelt in the tent on Zion. So now arranging for the service before it in the future, David kept Asaph and his brethren to minister there, with two priests to blow trumpets; and sent Zadok the priest, and his brethren, to the Tabernacle at Gibeon, there to sacrifice as the law enjoined, with Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest with them, to praise the Lord.

The king then instituted a service of song in connection with the worship of God. Till the throne was set up, nothing of that kind was known. Ever after that service was to have its place in divine worship (2 Chron. xxix. 25; Ezra iii. 10; Neh. xii. 24). We who are in the kingdom can thus worship God, for there is no altar now at which service in accordance with the mind of God is to be carried on. In David's day it was different, and the presence of the Ark in Jerusalem, whilst the Tabernacle with the brazen Altar was at Gibeon, made it plain that things were not in perfect order. What then was to be done? The king arranged it all. At Gibeon the Mosaic ritual was to be carried on, but with the addition of a service of song; music was to accompany it, seeing that the kingdom was in existence. So the priests were sent back there, and Heman, Jeduthun, and their brethren were ordered to accompany them. But, before the Ark, Asaph and his brethren were to minister in their service of song. Two things were then witnessed by all. At the Tabernacle it was set forth how to approach God, and *which is, and must always be by sacrifice*; then by the daily and annual sacrifices, and now by virtue of the one perfect sacrifice. Before the Ark it was seen, and it was daily expressed, what is the suited service for those who are *where the presence of God is known*. That was and must be one of song. Hence, in the thirty-ninth and fortieth verses of 1 Chron. xvi., we are reminded of the way of approach to God; and in verse thirty-seven of the same chapter we are taught what is

suited for those who can be in His presence. In other words, there was seen at Jerusalem that which we now know is the proper character of Christian worship, for we are permitted to be in the presence of God, entering within the veil. It was spiritual instinct, as far as we know, which thus guided David—an instinct true indeed, as we through grace can testify.

To approach God at all, each and all must come as it were by the Altar, *i.e.*, by the sacrifice of Christ. But once in God's presence, on that ground, praise and thanksgiving are the suited form of worship. This, David understood and carried out. No sacrifices went on before the Ark, only the service of song. Of that which David understood, should Christians, we may ask, be ignorant? He could teach a lesson which many, it seems, have yet to learn. We never can forget the sacrifice, we never, indeed, can get beyond the blood which has been sprinkled, as it were, on the throne; but where we worship is in the holiest, and the character of Christian worship is that of praise and thanksgiving. It would have been just as incongruous to have put the Altar inside the veil, as for Christians to resort to a sacrificing priesthood for the due carrying on of their worship. No sacrificing was permitted by David to go on before the Ark—a lesson for us in this so simple to learn, and when learnt to be maintained tenaciously.

With rejoicing the day ended. The king dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine, or perhaps it should be, a cake of raisins.

The *second* stage in the Ark's entrance into rest was reached. In that tent it remained between thirty and forty years, before its *third* and final journey could be undertaken.

THE ARK ENTERING INTO ITS REST.

A RED letter day it had been in Israel, when the Ark was placed in its tent on Zion, and perhaps at that moment it was all that David desired, though it did not fully answer to God's thoughts.

There are times, however, when God leads on His people into fuller comprehension of things. Accordingly we read that when David dwelt in his house, built for him by Hiram, King of Tyre (2 Sam. v. 11), and after the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies round about, that he thought of the contrast, the Ark dwelling in curtains whilst he dwelt in a house of cedar; so he desired for it a permanent habitation. His spiritual instincts were right. The proper dwelling-place for the Ark was a house, but the time for that had not arrived; nor had that one been born, as we learn from 1 Chron. xxii. 9, 10, by whom the house was to be erected. David's son, the King now learnt, was to build it, and that son's name was revealed, for he was to be called Solomon, in whose days the Lord would give peace and quietness to Israel. But David whilst on earth was never to behold the house. After his decease his son sitting on his throne would carry out the desires of his father's heart (2 Sam. vii. 12; 1 Chron. xvii. 11, 12). Yet the King was not to be a stranger to all that would go on, for though he was not to witness the gradual erection of the Temple, or ever to tread its courts; with the form of the house, its dimensions, and the details connected with it he was made acquainted by divine revelation made directly to himself. "All this," said David, as he handed the pattern, etc., to Solomon, "have I been made to understand in writing from the hand of the Lord, even all the works of this pattern" (1 Chron. xxviii. 19, *Revised Version*). As with the Tabernacle, so with the Temple, all was designed by God. For who but He could tell what kind of habitation would be suited for the Living God?

But where was that house to be erected? The Ark was in the city of David, which is Zion. Now, it was not till near the close of the King's life that he learnt about the locality. Throughout the greater part of his reign common interest was chiefly centred in that part of Jerusalem called the City of David. Human thought would certainly have selected a site in Zion, connected as that was with the early triumph of David (2 Sam.

v. 6-9) and which he had selected as his place of residence. But God's eye was on another spot, unnoticed hitherto in the history of the kingdom, and till then in the possession and occupation of the Jebusite named Araunah, or Ornan.

The King in the pride of his heart, and allowed to act as he wished, to carry out God's purpose in government to Israel, had ordered the people to be numbered. For that chastisement had to be inflicted, and David being allowed to choose the form of it, a pestilence for three days raged in the land, cutting off seventy thousand men. At the instance of Gad, the seer, the King went to rear an altar on Araunah's threshing floor, that he might there sacrifice, and so the plague be stayed. The floor bought, and an altar reared, burnt offerings and peace offerings were offered. Then the Angel's sword was sheathed by the command of the Lord, and David said, "This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the Altar of the burnt offering for Israel" (1 Chron. xxii. 1). The place where the sacrifice was accepted was to be the spot where Israel were to worship. It is on the acceptance of the sacrifice that true worship is based.

The person who was to build the house, the spot on which the Altar connected with it was to be erected, and the pattern of the structure, having all been revealed, and much wealth collected for its adornment, the aged monarch charged his son Solomon to attend to it, and charged all the princes to help him in it, saying, "Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God; arise therefore, and build ye the Sanctuary of the Lord God, to bring the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built to the name of the Lord" (1 Chron. xxii. 19). Shortly after that he died, and "Solomon sat upon the throne of the Lord as King, instead of David his father" (1 Chron. xxix. 23).

But a little time elapsed ere that work which was to signalise him was commenced, for in the fourth year of his reign "Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in Mount Moriah, where the Lord

appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite" (2 Chron. iii. 1). Seven years were occupied in building it (1 Kings vi. 38). At length finished and beautified, nothing was wanting but the symbol of God's presence to be carried into the oracle, and the cloud of glory to fill the house, the token that Jehovah had taken possession of His temple. In the month Ethanim, the seventh month, suited preparations were made for this.

All the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chiefs (or princes) of the fathers of the children of Israel, were by the King's invitation gathered together at Jerusalem, to keep the feast of the Dedication prior to that of Tabernacles. For seven days they kept the former, after which came the eight days of the latter. Met together to keep the former, to the Ark in its tent on Mount Zion all hearts and eyes were directed. "All the elders of Israel," we read, "came; and the Levites took up the Ark. And they brought up the Ark, and the Tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the Tabernacle, these did the Priests and the Levites bring up" (2 Chron. v. 4, 5). We have quoted the Chronicles, because though the account in Kings agrees very closely with it, there are a few things noticed in the former of which we read not in the latter.

The priests trooped up from Gibeon, situated in Benjamin, and north of Jerusalem, and with them the great bulk of the Levites carrying the Tabernacle associated so closely with the wilderness wanderings of the people of Israel. The Levites too, with the trumpet-blowing priests, whose duties had kept them on Zion, prepared to move also. For years there had been two centres of interest, the Tabernacle with the Altar at Gibeon, and the Ark in the City of David. From henceforth there was to be but one, not by Gibeon yielding the palm to Zion, but by both retiring as it were in favour of Mount Moriah. The place of interest, however, on that day was at its outset the city of David, for there still was the Ark of the Lord of all the earth.

So before the Ark was found the King, and with him all the congregation of Israel sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude. Now what was it all about? A change of residence for the Ark? That was certainly true yet not all the truth. The day was a high day, and what was taking place was that which really concerned all the earth. It was God, the God of Israel, but the one Living and true God, entering into His resting place on earth, a foreshadowing of that which will take place when the Lord reigns in power and in peace. Till Solomon the Prince of Peace was on the throne, the Ark did not enter into its final resting-place. God will not rest till the true Prince of Peace shall be made King over all the earth. As then that which was taking place was a foreshadowing of the future, just referred to, the priests were appointed to carry the Ark into its final abode. When the people went through Jordan, that river typical of death, by the way prepared for them, the priests bore the Ark on their shoulders. The Lord, it was foreshadowed, would make a way for His own through death. When the Lord was pulling down the stronghold of the enemy, the Ark was again carried on the shoulders of the sons of Aaron. When God took possession of the land through His people the priests carried the Ark. And now about to enter His resting-place on earth, on the shoulders of priests was it taken into its prepared place in the oracle, never to leave it.

Further, the Levites, Asaph and his brethren, separated locally for so long from Heman and Jeduthun, joined company never again to part. And all arrayed in fine linen and standing on the east side of the Altar, the furthest side from the holy place, the priests having all come out of the sanctuary, there was heard the sound of the cymbals, and the psalteries, and the harps, and with them one hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets. "It came even to pass as the trumpeters and the singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord: and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and

instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, "For He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever": that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God" (2 Chron. v. 13, 14). The Ark had reached its final resting-place, never more, according to the ritual, to be seen by any one but the High Priest, and that on the day of atonement. Its journeys were over. It rested in the house of God, and well did Solomon understand that; for at the close of his prayer as recorded in 2 Chron. vi. 41, he took up the language of Psalm cxxii. 8, 9: "Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into Thy resting-place, Thou, and the Ark of Thy strength; let Thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let Thy saints rejoice in goodness. O Lord God, turn not away the face of Thine anointed, remember the mercies of David Thy servant."

David's desire was fulfilled. The habitation for the mighty God of Jacob had been found, and was consecrated by the presence of the Lord. The Ark was there, and the cloud of glory filled the Temple, as it had of old the Tabernacle.

We have said the Ark was there, for till the Babylonish captivity that Ark made by Bezaleel under the shadow of mount Sinai, and so intimately connected with all Israel's wilderness wanderings, as well as with their entrance into, and victory in the land, that Ark remained in the Temple. There never was another Ark. And remembering that it was the symbol of the presence of the unchanging One we can understand the suitability of this. Moreover there never will be another owned by God. So we read in Jeremiah iii. 16. "And it shall come to pass when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The Ark of the covenant of the Lord; neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more." For the Lord Himself will be there (Ezek. xliii. 7; xlviii. 35).

But what became of it? This is enshrouded in mystery. It just disappeared. The Temple was burnt by Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard under Nebuchadnezzar, but not till one month after the capture of the city (Jer. lii.). Much spoil was taken to Babylon, but no mention is made of the Ark. Was it burnt? Was it hidden in some subterranean chamber under the Temple area? We know not. A tradition in 2 Maccabees ii. 4, 5 states, that the prophet Jeremiah, being warned of God, commanded the Tabernacle and the Ark to go with him; so he went forth into the mountain, where Moses climbed up, and saw the heritage of God. And when he came thither he found a hollow cave, wherein he laid the Tabernacle and the Ark, and the Altar of Incense, and so stopped the door. To this record no credence can be given, for the writer of it proceeds in verses 7, 8 to put into Jeremiah's mouth words at variance with the tenour of his prophecy quoted above. But whilst regarding this account as fabulous its existence confirms the fact, that nothing is known of the Ark's disposal or of its end.

Here then we must stop, and bring these papers to a close with one more word about the Tabernacle.

It came up from Gibeon, and presumably was carried into the Temple with all its sacred vessels. It had done its work. The Kingdom was established in the hands of the Prince of Peace. A settled state was reached, and in accordance with that the Temple was erected. Aholiab's work therefore was no longer in requisition. And all Bezaleel's, save the Ark, must have been regarded as obsolete. So, like a dissolving view, the Tabernacle fades away, and there is seen in its place that Temple, which was exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries (1 Chron. xxii. 5).

C. E. S.