

THE SANCTUARY

Exodus 25

God has from the beginning wrought towards a purposed end. Of all the more important things by which He will finally surround Himself, He has given glimpses very early in His word. These early unfoldings of His mind contain briefly the main principles of what is thus revealed, which is afterwards developed more and more at each successive reference to it. In due time His people walk in the light of a full revelation, eventually forming part of and participating in the fulfilment of it. These initial revelations are never really given up, though at times they may be held in abeyance. They are always carried through to the end, but finally accomplished by different means to those originally proposed and always by the power of God alone.

REST is the first thing thus revealed. It is successively presented to man's responsibility under different forms. For example:— The rest of creation, the rest of the land, the rest of the kingdom. These were all presented to man's responsibility, and successively broken through by his absolute inability and failure to fulfil any responsibility. It shall be brought about at last, upon a righteous and imperishable basis, when a people, the work of His own hands, are brought into GOD'S REST. Meantime a Sabbatism remains for the people of God and we who are of faith, are they who are entering into it.

Another thing early revealed is God's House, and this to erring Jacob (Genesis 28:10-22). Some of the principles connected with it are:— Jehovah is there, it is thus His House upon earth. Heaven and earth are linked together by it; it is "The Gate of Heaven". Here, again, man tries his hand to bring it about and

fails. Jacob begins, "This stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's House". His seed attempt it afterwards and come to the conclusion, "Except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it". (Psalm 127:1). There are also other characteristics of the House. It is, for example, a dreadful place to nature. Jacob said, "How dreadful is this place". In the Sanctuary, too, the Psalmist understood the end of the men of this world; as also his own folly and ignorance. (Psalm 73:17,22). There, he saw the power and glory of his God (Psalm 63:2); and "The goings of my God my King, in the Sanctuary" (Psalm 68:24).

A little later on the Sanctuary appears (Exodus 15). This is evidently an important subject, bound up inseparably, as it is, with both God's House and God's Rest, but this does not come upon the scene till after redemption is figuratively accomplished. The children of Israel redeemed, delivered from Egypt and brought to God, speak first of building Him a habitation (v.2). Then they apply, in spiritual perception, the strength that has delivered them from Egypt, to all the enemies that remain between them and the land; they close by saying, "Thou shalt bring them in and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, the Sanctuary, O Lord, which THY HANDS have established" (v.17). In this we have, not only the thought of their building God a house to dwell in, but also that of God bringing them into the Sanctuary, which His own hands have prepared for Himself. Into this inner place He brings His people at last, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, His Son.

In Exodus 25 it is proposed by Jehovah to His people, through Moses, that He should dwell among them. He says:—

“LET THEM MAKE ME A SANCTUARY”,

“According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the Tabernacle and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it” (v.8-9). He then first proceeds to describe the golden vessels which form this Sanctuary. The description of the Tabernacle is not given till ch.26:1-6, where He begins, “Moreover thou shalt make the Tabernacle”. The curtain then first described is the Tabernacle proper. The other curtains and the boards are necessary and accessory to the display of it, but the curtain first spoken of, in which are the colours, and which is thrown over the boards, is called The Tabernacle.

Here, again, the dwelling and the Sanctuary are mentioned together, and it is evident the Tabernacle is built to contain the Sanctuary, though the latter is, in these chapters, first described as the more important. God will dwell among His people in a double sense. Not only in a house in their midst, but He will also have a people to dwell inside that house with Himself, in the Sanctuary, in which He will manifest Himself in full display. The golden vessels in ch.25 set out this full display of God, in type. Faith discerns it fulfilled now in Christ. It will shortly be actually brought about before and in His own in heaven. This double thought of Tabernacle and Sanctuary is ratified also in the New Testament, as in Hebrews 9:2,3 where we read, “There was a tabernacle made, the first wherein was the Candlestick and the Table and the Shewbread, which is called the Sanctuary (or holy place), and after the second veil the tabernacle which is called the holy of holies”.

While in a general way there is doubtless a sense in which the Tabernacle and Sanctuary are identical, we may see from the above that specifically the outer part

is called the Tabernacle, and the inner the Sanctuary. It is also noticeable that two words are used in John, in connection with and translated "the Temple": one indicating the holy buildings as viewed externally, the other the inner house or shrine.

In this way it cannot be doubted that Exodus 25 describes the Sanctuary and gives much more light about it than heretofore revealed. In this chapter it is introduced as the place where God may gratify His own desires to have His people dwell with Himself, consistently with the display of all His own perfections and excellencies. This He could by no means accomplish, even to satisfy the yearnings of His nature, apart from such a maintenance of His attributes and character.

It is well known that in the general description of the Tabernacle given in these chapters, there are two lines of truth. The first is the display of God Himself as He comes out to meet man; the other is man's way of approach to meet God. The latter is the consequence of the former. In this we may see how rightly the Tabernacle is called "The tent of meeting". Now God, in coming out to meet man, displays Himself typically in the golden vessels which form the Sanctuary or holy places. Thus, the Ark and the Mercy Seat, though distinct, form one vessel and sets forth the display of God in Christ alone. The Table and the Candlestick set forth the display of God, in man in Christ.

It may be noticed in passing that when the Tabernacle is set up actually, these vessels are separated by the Veil, and occupy the two parts, called "the holy" and "the holy of holies", which two parts are called in the epistle to the Hebrews "the holy places". In Exodus 25 they are described without a veil between them, and this is God's idea, and shall be carried out. Man also is introduced, in the person of Moses, into that

place where there is no veil, and has always access to it. "There will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the Mercy Seat from between the two cherubim, which are upon the Ark of the Testimony" (v.22). Note also that it is twice said, "Thou shalt put into the Ark the testimony which I shall give thee" (v.16 and 21). And with reference to the Table, "Thou shalt set upon the Table, shewbread before me continually" (v.30). And as to the Candlestick, "They shall light the lamps thereof, that they may light over against it" (v.37).

We may gather from the above that the Sanctuary is a place which sets forth the outcome of the desires of God's own heart of love, a place where He will have man always in His presence without a veil between, according to all the claims of His own divine perfections and holiness; that the testimony is maintained in the Person of Christ; that man is exhibited always before God in the unleavened perfectness of Christ; while the glories of Christ are brought out in the power of the Holy Spirit through human instrumentality. This is what God proposes and this shall be brought about, as it only can be, by Himself.

How divine is this thought, fruit of God's infinite wisdom! May it take full possession of our spirits. God in the full display of Himself needs a place where He may have man always in His immediate presence. Always. And without a veil between! The full idea comes out in the Heavenly Jerusalem, where there is no Temple; nothing to hide God from His own. So shall we be there with God ever in our midst. The righteous basis has already been laid upon which God will put us into that place for eternity, spite of ourselves, spite of all the powers of evil. Even now by His grace He ministers faith to walk in the light of it.

But when this is fairly though provisionally proposed to man in responsibility, the Veil is dropped immediately, forming the two places, and the priests themselves never went beyond that Veil, save the High Priest alone, once a year, and that not without blood. Man can never enter the presence of God on that ground — never!

Now the two parts of this Sanctuary are:—

TYPICAL OF TWO SYSTEMS

When the Veil was let down, the Sanctuary was divided into two parts, and Hebrews 9 shows that each part typifies a distinct system of worship. The first, or outer part called “the Holy” typified the Jewish system of worship. The second, or inner part, called “the Holy of holies,” typified the Christian, or New-creation system of worship. The first is connected with the Old Covenant, the second with the New.

The Jewish Tabernacle was connected with the Old Covenant, and was characterized by distance. The priests reached but the outer part of the Sanctuary, and even this was only a figure of that which is true in “the Present time” (Hebrews 9:9). It was a ritualistic service, where nothing was realized, not even the meaning of the place to which the priests had at all times access, nor of the vessels amid which they accomplished the service of God. They never really reached God, nor realized the glory of His idea of having His own always in His presence: though they may have had the sense of serving the One True God in contrast to the idols of the Gentiles, which in itself was something. The Holy Spirit showed by all these things that the way into “the Holy Places” was not made manifest, while the first Tabernacle was yet standing (He-

brews 9:8). Mark! It is “Holy places”, the outer as well as the inner.

The second or inner part sets forth the Christian system, where all may be realized and both places are thrown open to faith. But a New Covenant, with a New Tabernacle, are necessary to this, where all things are new and all characterized by life and nearness, not by ritual only. So, “Christ having come, High Priest of good things to come, by the better and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands (that is, not of this creation) nor by blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, has entered in once for all into the holy places, having made an eternal redemption” (v.12 New Translation). By this means, also, he purges the believer’s conscience to worship the living God, and is the Mediator of the New Covenant; by which is ministered redemption from the transgressions which were under the Old, and the promise of eternal inheritance.

The believer today is brought into this blessed place, where he may understand the meaning of all the vessels in which God has displayed Himself, performing his Service amid the glories thus set forth and in the light of the very glory of God from heaven, “the holy of holies”, without a Veil between.

Let us turn now for awhile to:—

THE MINISTER OF THE SANCTUARY

This subject is introduced as follows: “Now of the things of which we have spoken this in the sum, We have such a High Priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, minister of the holy places, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man” (Hebrews 8:1,2). In the Revised Version this is translated “holy things”. The word so rendered, being neuter, may equally apply to

both places and things, and in this connection it appears to apply to the things as well as the places which contain them. That is to say, to the Ark, the Mercy Seat, the Table, and the Candlestick. This blessed Priest, who has taken His seat on the right hand of the Throne, ministers to us the full display of God as set forth in the place and the vessels which form the Sanctuary; but which is now fulfilled in Himself in the true Tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man.

This is not all He does, it is indeed only a means to an end. There is another side to His ministry, which is really the main object of it. It is of necessity that He have somewhat to offer, some gift to present from us to God. In our passage this double character of ministry is indicated in two ways. First: The word translated “minister” is the same that Paul uses of himself in Romans 15:16, and indicates a liturgical service. “That I should be the minister¹ of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles ministering the Gospel of God; that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit”. Here He first ministers from God the gospel to the Gentiles; then, when they have received this ministry, he takes the Gentiles themselves and offers them to God for His service, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit; in the same way as Moses of old offered the Levites for service, they being made acceptable by ceremonial sanctification (Numbers 8). There is distinctly a double ministry, toward man and toward God.

Again, He says that the sum or chief point of what he had spoken is that “we have such a High Priest” (He-

¹ NOTE: *Leitourgon*; an administrator, officially employed (See note to this verse in New Translation by JND)

brews 8:1). Now in ch.7 he has been speaking of the Melchisedek priesthood, and shows that our Priest is superior, being Son; but that He, like Melchizedek, exercises just such a double ministry as we have been speaking of. Melchizedek went out to meet Abram with bread and wine, ministering thus to him the meat of the mighty, food and joy; and blessing him from God, saying, "Blessed be Abram of the Most High God" (Genesis 15:18,19). He then ministers to God on the part of Abram thus, "Blessed be the Most High God" (v.20). That is, it is a double ministry, toward man and toward God.

Now our High Priest carries on a ministry of this sort. He first of all ministers to us the things in which God has displayed Himself, as some little bit of Christ which had not been before appreciated (and how little has been), then He takes up the resulting adoration and ministers it to God, who lives in His praise.

The passage we have been considering (Hebrews 8:2) contains the first reference to:—

THE HOLY PLACES

This term occurs seven times in the plural in Hebrews. There are four occurrences of it in ch.9, two of which (v.8,12) we have already considered. If now we look at the two other occurrences, we shall learn something more about it. "For Christ has not entered into holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself" (v.24). Here it is shown that heaven itself forms the inner part of the holy places, that is, the holiest, in the New creation system. "Nor yet that he should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters into the holy places with blood of others" (v.25). It is then shown that Christ once appeared in the consummation of the ages, to put away

sin absolutely and for ever by His own sacrifice, before entering into heaven, as Man and for men. By that act the heavens are opened now. The HEAVENS! Stephen, the proto-martyr, looked up and saw the glory of God and Jesus at God's right hand. He exclaimed, "Behold I see heaven opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God". THERE is the full display of God, in that BLESSED MAN AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND. Heaven is thus part of the holy places now (the Sanctuary), and of the true, the New creation Tabernacle. Into heaven itself Christ has gone, the Son of Man, in whom is set forth in full display all the glory of God.

He is there, too, as our High Priest, having taken His seat at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens, the Minister of the holy places, which He has opened by His own blood. This is what was figured of old, but was never known then. Now, the holy places are thrown open to faith, and we enter, beholding the marvellous display of God, in the Person of Christ, His Son.

The sixth use of this term is in ch.10:19, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy places by the blood of Jesus". Here we have liberty to enter into both places by His precious blood; while the Jew never entered either place in spirit. This precious blood it is which constitutes the New and living way, through the Veil, into the second place also, the Holiest of All.

Access to both places by faith, and in spirit being characteristic of Christianity. In this place we find ourselves in the presence of God in full display, in Christ. As we perform our service about the Table and Candlestick, in the full light of God, which floods both places, we are drawn to the Mercy Seat in adoration

and praise, as these things are made good to us by the Minister of the Sanctuary.

The last use of the term is in ch.13:11. This speaks of those sacrifices for sin, whose blood was brought into the holy places and the bodies burnt without the camp. Of such are the first two offerings in Leviticus 4. The one was for the priest; the other for the congregation. Their blood was brought into the Tabernacle and sprinkled before the Veil of the Sanctuary and put on the horns of the Golden Alter (see v.6,7 and 17,18). This fixes the outer place as part of the Sanctuary, or holy places. It gives us also our place without the camp, where Jesus suffered. The blood that sanctifies, giving access to the holy places, demands the answer from loving hearts to go forth bearing His reproach.

May the Lord by His Spirit now hold our hearts to the Scriptures as we turn for a moment to look at:

THE VEIL

In Exodus 25 there is no Veil. In Hebrews there is no notice of the actual rending of the Veil. But the Veil itself is twice mentioned there. First, to those who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them in ch.6:19. Here, hope is spoken of as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast and that entereth into that within the Veil. This is a reference to the City of Refuge (see Numbers 35), and is corroborative of the previous part of the chapter. The apostle had urged them to continue to the full assurance of hope to the end; to go back was destruction. He then first instances Abraham, father of the faithful, whom the God of glory called from the idolatry of the Chaldeans to a new land which he should afterward receive as an inheritance. When once he had left Ur of the Chaldees, there was nothing behind; his inheritance lay before

him. Having continued in the path for sometime, God confirmed it by an oath to him and to his seed on the ground of resurrection. Because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself. The oath in Genesis 22:16 is confirmatory of the promise in 12:7. So after long patience they obtained the inheritance. Here God pledges Himself by both promise and oath; and the basis of fulfilment is shadowed — resurrection.

There is, however, more than inheritance at stake with us, our very life is forfeited. As the man-slayer fled from the Avenger of Blood, so we have fled for refuge from him who has the power of death (Hebrews 2:14,15), to lay hold of the hope set before us (Hebrews 2:10). Judgment also hovers over the whole of this scene, because of the murder of the Messiah, the Son of God. But the last word as to righteousness is the Man in the glory as Forerunner for us, proclaiming righteousness accomplished. Our Priest has obtained both eternal redemption and eternal inheritance, in that place where He is. We, however, need endurance also, though we have more as to encouragement than those of old.

The hope of the manslayer was that at the death of the High Priest he might go back to his inheritance. Our hope is bound up with the life of our blessed Priest, who will never die again, and is coming to usher us into our inheritance in glory with Himself. The word of the oath which was since the law, maketh the Son a Priest consecrated for ever more. Not only, then, have we the promise and the oath, but the fulfilment of them both in the ascended and risen Christ. God swore by Himself when Abraham received Isaac back from the dead in a figure; He swore also and will not repent to the actually risen and ascended Christ, "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek".

Our Priest, then, never dies, and we have never title to go back to an earthly inheritance; but our inheritance, blessings and life are all in heaven in Christ. They are pledged to us by the life of God Himself, who was sworn by the accepted sacrifice of Christ, His intercession and continuous Priesthood in heaven. We shall surely reach Himself, be actually and for ever with and like Him there, within the Veil, from which flesh and sense now shut us out. Our hope is before us; behind is the Avenger of Blood. We are involved in the death of Christ either as manslayers or as murderers. To draw back is to crucify to ourselves the Son of God, to prove ourselves murderers.

But blessed be His name, to such as draw near, the glory is before, into which the Forerunner is already entered for all such as still run on steadily to that within the Veil. This is an anchor both sure and steadfast, having good holding ground, the promise and oath of God and the resurrection of Christ, by which we may ride out all the storms that lie between us and the glory itself. There we now see Jesus. To Him may we go forward with diligence, to the full assurance of hope to the end. As to actuality, we are not yet in the inheritance, our flesh and sense also hinder our seeing it with mortal eyes. It lies within the Veil where Jesus is. Faith sees Him and hope sustains our souls until we reach both Him and it.

The second reference to the Veil is in ch.10:20 where it is said we go through the Veil. Moses as we have seen, had at the first access into the presence of God without a Veil; this is God's original idea and it is the place of communion and worship. "There will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee". When the Veil was set up, he had always access within the Veil (see Numbers 7:89). Until the death of Aaron's sons

the priests also could go at all times within the Veil. After their death this was prohibited (Leviticus 16:2). Thenceforth the High Priest alone was allowed to go within the Veil, and that not without blood. No-one in those days ever went through the Veil; any who were allowed, went within.

NOW, however, we have boldness to go through the Veil, we enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus. That blood forms the new and living way which He hath dedicated for us, through the Veil, His flesh, even into the holiest of all. The words used indicate that this is the instrumental means by which we enter the holiest; we go through the Veil. The blood is the righteous basis by which we shall be in and form the holiest for ever. By faith in this we enter now, and the very entrance discovers to us the means by which we are brought into that place, to meet God in full display there. That way is His flesh; this is surely an added joy to us.

It may be that the rending of the Veil is not mentioned in Hebrews because the epistle will be useful to the Jewish remnant in a coming day, and they will never get beyond the Veil. It is true also that the Veil of the Tabernacle was never rent, and the figures in Hebrews are drawn from the Tabernacle.

But the Veil of the Temple God's habitation when Christ died, was rent, and indicates a Christian privilege, which once being introduced by God is never abandoned during the existence of the system it is connected with. Now here the apostle is arguing upon the privileges of Christian worship, as superior to the Jewish system. He shows that by Christ's blood we are brought practically back to the original idea which God reveals in Exodus 25. His presence floods the holy places, and man is there without a Veil, in the

Sanctuary which His hands have prepared for Himself to dwell in.

We are not yet actually in heaven, hence the effect of the Veil may be upon us, as to sight, as in ch.6. But as to our relationship with God, the Veil has been rent from top to bottom, and we have boldness to enter into the holy places by the blood of Jesus. This is, however, spiritual privilege, not public display. Our veil as to that, our body, is not rent; but Christ's, as the title of entrance, is. Our body hinders our beholding, by mortal sight, this display of God in heaven; hence we need faith to enter into the holiest (ch.10:22).

In Exodus 25, then, we have in type:—

THE THINGS WHICH ARE MINISTERED TO US.

These are the things with which Christ, High Priest after the Melchizedek pattern, Minister of the Sanctuary, fills our spirits. The golden vessels setting forth a full display of God in Christ. First in Christ, personally, as in the Ark and the Mercy Seat. Then in man in Christ, in the Table and the Candlestick. (The golden altar is not mentioned as not being in the line of display but of approach). Let us try to trace something of this.

The first vessel is:—

THE ARK

It is formed of wood and gold. The wood is an incorruptible acacia wood growing in Sinai, and sets forth the incorruptible humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, we have in Him an incorruptible, because a Holy Man. "Thou wilt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption". This wood is covered within and without with gold, setting forth divine righteous-

ness as suiting God in the holiest — heaven. All the while that blessed Man was down here He was suitable to heaven, and could have gone there at any time. He would not go until God's will was accomplished; nor would He go in any other way than by death, that He might open the way for us also.

A crown of gold surrounded and stood above the Ark. This sets forth Glory. He who was suitable at all times to heaven, could but glorify God in every word and deed here, right on to death. It was in view of this He said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in Him".

At this stage the covenant is first introduced. "Thou shalt put in to the Ark the testimony which I shall give thee". This first mention of it may set forth the first covenant, which man undertook but could neither understand nor keep it; it was therefore put into the Ark, a figure that Christ alone fulfilled and contained the covenant of man with God. "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11).

THE MERCY SEAT

This was all of gold. It formed the lid of the Ark and fitted into the rabbet formed by the Crown, which projected above it. The Mercy Seat sets forth Christ in resurrection; this is all divine, there is nothing human about it. The very thought of mercy is divine, all is of God and suited to Himself in heaven. How blessedly suited to God was the risen Christ. The Crown stood above the Mercy Seat, indicating that God was still glorified by Christ in resurrection. Having glorified God on the earth, God glorifies Him in heaven, that He may glorify God there in a new place.

A Cherub on each end was formed of the gold of the Mercy Seat. These Cherubim are symbols of the government of God, and are first seen at Eden's gate, where God placed a Cherub with a flaming sword to keep the way of the tree of life . The government of God was against the man that failed in responsibility, and was driven from Eden. In this second notice of them, there are two, and without a sword, and they shadow the Mercy Seat. God has set forth Christ a Mercy Seat, through faith in His blood, and the government of God was ever on behalf of that Man who was at all times suitable to the Sanctuary, and who made atonement for the man who failed in responsibility. The faces of these Cherubim were toward the Mercy Seat, indicating that all the time of the life of Christ until He became the Mercy Seat in resurrection, He was upborne by those in whose hands were the providence and government of God. It was written, "He shall give His angels charge concerning thee". At His birth they all praise God; in the temptation they minister to Him; at His death they keep guard over His tomb. A mighty angel rolled away the stone and had in derision the veteran guard of the empire, foolishly placed there to prevent His resurrection.

These Cherubim formed the sides of the throne whence God ruled Israel, and the world through them as His people; a figure of His Throne in heaven now, whence He overrules all, even though apparently Satan rules here. Upon the Mercy Seat was the blood of the Sacrifice, the righteous basis furnished by His own love, upon which He can deal in mercy to all.

The testimony is now again spoken of in connection with the Mercy Seat, indicating this time the New Covenant, God's covenant with man. All God's "I wills" can now be fulfilled, through Christ risen from

the dead. This is now God's testimony. The testimony of our Lord, the Lord of heaven and earth.

We have thus in the Ark and the Mercy Seat the display of God in Christ alone. Man is not there at all save as the object of all this display. So we have "There will I meet with thee". Man in the person of Moses has access to this place, to commune with God about all He has set forth in Christ. This is now our portion; our privilege. Is it too difficult a place? Not if we have tasted it in the power of life, by which power (that is, the Spirit), we are competent to enter into all that is there set forth, and if we have at all met God there, we shall understand what it all means as ministered to us. We desire, then, with the Psalmist, "To see thy power and thy glory so as we have seen thee in the Sanctuary".

We may note that in Romans 3:25, the righteousness side of this Mercy Seat is brought out. In Hebrews 1:2, the communion side; God has communicated all His mind to us in the Person of the Son, the Mercy Seat.

This one vessel of two parts occupied the inner part of the Sanctuary. It sets forth what Christ, as High Priest of the Sanctuary, ministers to our souls as we reach that place by faith and in communion. This produces from us that adoration and praise, which He takes up and presents as "Gifts" from us to God. Of necessity this Priest must have somewhat to offer, and thus in the power of the Spirit He produces it.

The next vessel is:—

THE TABLE

This is the same height as the Mercy Seat, which sets forth the risen Christ. All these golden vessels of the Sanctuary in a way set Him forth thus. Made of wood

and gold, as the Ark, this vessel carries generally the same idea of incorruptible humanity and the divine in righteousness as suiting God in heaven. But on the Table were two Crowns, with a "border" or keep between. There the Shewbread, which was to be set upon the Table before God continually, was exhibited, and there it was kept within this double Crown of Glory. The Shewbread set forth the twelve tribes of Israel maintained before God by Christ in resurrection and in all the unleavened perfectness of Christ himself. There they were continually upborne, spite of all else that might and did happen to them on earth. There also were the Cups and Goblets, to pour out withal the wine of the drink offerings. Twelve is the administrative number, so that not only was Israel maintained before God in unity, but the food and joy which sustained God's heart was administered to them thence; it became the food of the priests. "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures " (Psalm 36:8).

These things are shown to be for us also in the New Testament. The One loaf of the Lord's Table sets forth all God's people today on earth. They are maintained before God in the unleavened perfectness of Christ and in unity as one loaf, one body, by the risen Christ. Food and joy, too, are administered to them thence; while there they are kept with a double security. "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30), is certainly in connection with the keeping of the sheep, though the Father and the Son are one in eternal being also; but this is an additional security for the sheep. Did believers but realize this, they would surely show it forth in practise, for this is God's desire for them all. Were all there practically how happy should we be! How secure! As these precious thoughts of God are

ministered to us by the High Priest of the Sanctuary, what praise and adoration must they produce!

Over against the Table stood:—

THE CANDLESTICK

This was all of gold, like the Mercy Seat, and was the most beautiful vessel in the Sanctuary. It sets forth (being higher than the Mercy Seat) Christ in ascension, Object and Sustainer of Ministry in the Sanctuary. In its shaft, with its six branches and seven lamps, we have four lines of seven times the triple figure, knob, bowl, and flower. It was supplied with pure olive oil, which was burnt through a wick. The lamps threw their light over against the Candlestick itself, bringing out its beauties; the light fell on the Table also, opposite to which it stood. The Candlestick is Christ, the oil the Holy Spirit, come from an ascended Christ to testify of His glory; the wick, the human instrumentality of this ministry; the knob, bowl and flower are just bud, blossom, and fruit. So that we have set forth in the numbers and figures above (4) complete display on earth by the power of the Spirit of the glories and beauties of Christ, in (7) spiritual and (3) divine perfection; transforming those who receive this testimony into conformity to His image and fruitfulness for God.

In the New Testament we have both the pure testimony of the Holy Spirit, sent from the Father by Christ, and the testimony through men in the power of the same Holy Spirit. “When the Spirit of Truth is come, He shall bear witness concerning me; and ye also shall bear witness” (John 15:26,27). In this way we have in the epistles the pure testimony of the Spirit; while in the gospels we have the testimony (of the same Spirit, but) through those who had followed Him from the beginning. John 16 also refers to the former

while in 1 Corinthians 14-16 we have the ministry of the same Spirit through the gifts in the body, setting forth the glory of the ascended Christ; just as in the symbol, the lamps throw their light over against the Candlestick, to bring out its beauties.

In the light of all this are all those who are represented by the Shewbread on the Table in the Old Testament, and the One loaf in the New.

Now man may fail, and has failed grievously here, but the Holy Spirit will never fail; He will raise up others, and thus maintain this testimony. Even though every man on earth should fail, the Holy Spirit is able to sustain a testimony to Christ; He is here for that purpose, and He will do it. It has not, however, come to such a pass, and blessed be His name, we may count upon Him that it will not. It is important however, for each to realize the above truth.

In these last two vessels we have the display of God in man in Christ. In the loaves upon the Table, His ability to produce in man in Christ that which His presence demands in those who approach Him, filling them with food and delight. In the Candlestick His ability to use man in Christ as a vessel of testimony to His own Glory, displaying Himself in them in Christ; while in the Ark and Mercy Seat is set forth the display of God in Christ alone, the One through whom all this has been brought about. To this we are brought now in spirit, "We all beholding the glory of the unveiled face of Christ are metamorphosed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Lord the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:16).

As all this is made good to us by the Minister the Sanctuary, it leads to the presentations of:—

GIFTS TO GOD

Any such gifts He takes up and presents to God, as from us, adding the much incense of His own precious name to all thus presented, and leading us on as sons to deeper worship. Food and light are ministered to us from the Table at the supper, and then the soul advances with Christ in spirit to the Mercy Seat to worship; no Veil being between to faith. We “eat and worship” now; as all they that be fat upon the earth shall do in a coming day (Psalm 22:29). Any ministry under the hand of the High Priest here would surely be on this line of ministry to priests, to draw them out in worship, as some little bit of Christ in any of those aspects which quickens the spirit and sets it worshipping. This is welcome to all and goes back to God as sweet incense. To minister Christ as the Ark of the Covenant is above all blessed, and brings all hearts into the presence of God. Then, from hearts filled with Himself, Christ takes up every little bit of that which is the fruit of His own ministry, and in the light of the Sanctuary presents it as gift to God. Let us remember that it is of necessity that He have somewhat to offer! Let us remember, also, that He has done for ever with the Sin Offering; but that those which are distinguished as “Gifts” remain, the Burnt and Meat Offerings, and the Peace Offering, and these are acceptable to God.

God help His people to enter more into His thoughts concerning these things! To avail themselves more of their liberty of access into the holy places! To know more what are the functions of the Minister of the Sanctuary. Let us draw near! We know very well the place is open to us, yet how little we draw near. Why? Is it not because man ever seeks to take his blessings from the hand of God and then go away to enjoy them

out of His presence? Or, on the other hand, he shrinks from the outside place and is thus unable to enjoy access to the Father? “Let us draw nigh with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:22).

G J Stewart