Lecture 14

The Golden Altar, Or Altar Of Incense, and the Perfume

EXODUS 30:1-10 and 34-38

And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it. A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be: and two cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of the same. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make it; and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations. Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon. And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the Lord.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight: and thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy: and thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tent of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy. And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the Lord. Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people.

The Altar of Incense

And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it {Ex. 30:1}.

There are two altars, the brazen altar of burnt offering and the golden altar of incense. They are both typical of the work and person of the Lord Jesus Christ, but in distinct aspects.

At the brazen altar, we see Christ in death and resurrection, offering himself without spot to God, and accepted in all the sweet savour of his perfect sacrifice. The ground of the believer's acceptance and communion with God.

At the golden altar, we see Christ in resurrection life and ascended glory, in all the excellency of his character and ways before God, through whom the children of God draw near and worship with confidence and joy.

Both the brazen and the golden altar were made of shittim wood within, as showing that the incarnation of Christ lies at the foundation of his whole work on behalf of his people; for the children being partakers of flesh and blood, he himself likewise took part of the same.

The Dimensions

A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be: and two cubits shall be the height thereof (Ex. 30:2).

In size it is smaller than the other vessels, but it stands half a cubit higher than the mercy seat, the table, and the brazen grate of the altar of burnt offering.

The table is on a level with the mercy seat and the brazen grate, for the table sets forth *communion,* on the ground of atonement made, and in the remembrance of the death of Jesus.

The golden altar is half a cubit higher, for it shows *worship* in the apprehension of a risen and ascended Saviour, and in the apprehension of the preciousness of his character and ways.

The Horns of the Altar

The horns thereof shall be of the same (Ex. 30:2).

The horn is the emblem of strength; and there is power in Jesus, on which faith can lay hold in drawing nigh to God; while the human tenderness and sympathy of Jesus give sweet encouragement to faith in this its exercise.

The Overlaying

And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof (Ex. 30:3).

The Divine glory and excellency of the Lord Jesus, as well as his humanity, and in combination with it, is thus set forth.

And the horns also are overlaid with gold; for faith not only apprehends the human sympathy, but also the Divine all-sufficiency of Jesus, through whom we worship.

The Golden Crown

And thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about {Ex. 30:2}.

There was no crown to the brazen altar, for that sets forth Jesus in his humiliation, suffering, and death; and the only crown he wore on earth was a crown of thorns. But there is a golden crown to the alter of incense, for it presents to us Jesus risen, ascended, and crowned with glory and honour.

The crown also is significant of the Divine beauty and excellency of his character and office, as the one through whom we worship and draw nigh to God.

The Rings and Staves

And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two ribs thereof (margin), upon the two sides of it shalt thou make it; and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal. And thou shall make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold (Ex. 30:4, 5).

The Hebrew word translated in the text "corners," and in the margin "ribs," is the same word which occurs in Ex. 27:7, and which is there rendered *"sides"* –

> and the staves shall be upon the two *sides* of the altar to bear it,

– which gives the sense. Translating the word "corners," here and in Ex. 37, only, is apt to mislead. It signifies a side, or, as in the present instance, an appendage to a side.

In the table of Showbread the rings and staves were connected with the *border* (Ex. 25:26, 27), to teach us that in travelling through a polluted world, separation from evil ought to characterize our communion. But in the golden altar the rings and staves are connected with the *crown of gold,* for, though strangers and pilgrims here, we worship in connection with an ascended and glorified Saviour.

The rings and staves adapted the altar to the wilderness condition of Israel; they were

> to bear it withal {Ex. 30:4}.

that it might accompany them in their various journeyings. So Jesus, in the character in which he is presented to us by the golden altar, is ever present with us in Spirit wherever two or three are gathered in his name. And both his humanity and his Deity adapt him to our wilderness necessities.

The Position of the Altar

And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee (Ex. 30:6).

In Heb. 11 the golden altar in the holy place is omitted in the enumeration of the sacred vessels, and the golden censer in the holiest of all is inserted in its stead.

The reason of this appears to be, that in Heb. 9, as also in Heb. 10, the High Priest is represented as on the day of atonement, entered into the most holy place within the vail, typical of Jesus entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

But in the type before us, the same precious and Divine Saviour is represented as present in Spirit in the midst of his assembled and worshipping people on earth, by whom the sacrifice of praise is offered up to God continually, and their prayers go up with acceptance.

It is the vivid setting forth of those invaluable words in Matt. 18:19, 20:

> Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am in the midst of them.

The altar stands before, and not within, the vail in the holy place; for it tells of Jesus in the assembly, and yet it stands before the ark and mercy seat, from whence God holds fellowship with his servants; for by the faith of Jesus we have boldness to enter into the holiest. Yea, come boldly unto the throne of grace, and there may hold sweet intercourse with God from off the mercy seat.

And in Jesus, who is present in Spirit with us on earth, and present in person for us above, all the promises of God are yea and amen to the glory of God by us.

And all this is true to the believer individually, as well as to the saints collectively.

The Perpetual Use of the Altar

And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning (Ex. 30:7).

> A *perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations* (Ex. 30:8).

So Christ, the High Priest of our profession, ever liveth to make intercession for us.

In the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel by John we have the reality and substance of these Divine foreshadowings.

We there see Jesus on earth, surrounded by his disciples; but, in Spirit, entering into the holiest, his work finished, and the crown of glory won.

In *act* it is the High Priest at the golden altar -- *in anticipation,* the High Priest on the day of atonement entering into the holiest.

Let us look at him as at the golden altar, and listen to his words:

> Father, . . . I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. . . . I have manifested thy name {John 17:1, 4, 6}.

He is thus presenting before his Father, as sweet and fragrant incense, the memorial of what he had been in his character and life on earth; and then claiming for himself the just recompense of reward, he obtains on behalf of his disciples, and of believers through their word, the richest, choicest, highest blessings.

And these words he spake in the world, that we might have his joy fulfilled in ourselves, in being thus enabled to enter into his thoughts concerning us, through this magnificent specimen of his present and perpetual intercessions, in the knowledge of the glory which he has, and which he will share with us.

The Time of Incense

> *When he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it* {Ex. 30:7, 8}.

We have already considered the Candlestick, with its seven lamps, as the type of ministry or testimony in connection with Christ, and in the power of the Spirit.

It is Christ himself who *prepares* his servants for this ministry in the word, and he gives grace and power for its *exercise*. Just as Aaron dressed the lamps in the morning, and caused the flame to ascend at even, or between the two evenings. In Rev. 1, 2, 3, the Lord Jesus is thus shown as one like unto the Son of man in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, giving and directing the testimony which was to be borne in his name.

And testimony to Christ is a sweet savour unto God, as says the apostle in 2 Cor. 2:14-17,

> For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish.

But this is not all; the type before us beautifully and expressively shows the connection between the preparation and exercise of ministry, in fellowship with Jesus, and the fragrance of his own intercession.

When the servant is preparing, or being prepared for testimony, the intercession of Jesus is ascending on his behalf; and when he is giving his testimony, the sweet savour of the name of Jesus is going up before God.

Its Exclusive Use

> *Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon* (Ex. 30:9).

Thus the altar of incense is kept perfectly distinct from the altar of burnt offering. And we do well to remember this in drawing nigh to God.

No strange incense was permitted, any more than strange fire. Jesus pleads no other excellency than his own as the ground of the acceptance of our prayers and praises.

The believer's priestly access to God is a progressive thing. We go from strength to strength. The question of *sin* being settled, at the sin offering consumed without the camp. Acceptance in person and as to nature, and the joy of God's salvation, is realised at the brazen altar.

Here, at the golden altar, the soul draws nigh to God in full assurance of faith, having the heart sprinkled and the body washed, pardoned through the death of Christ, and accepted in his resurrection, and holding fast the profession of the hope without wavering, and in spirit entering within the vail.

In the sin offering consuming without the camp, we see Jesus *delivered* for our offences.

At the brazen altar, we see him *raised* again for our justification.

At the golden altar, he is presented as *ascended,* and ever before God in all the preciousness of his person, character, and ways.

In the first, we have Christ dying; in the second, Christ rising; in the third, Christ ascended, and ever living to make intercession for us.

As guilty sinners, the sin offering without the camp met us as we were, and where we were.

As pardoned sinners, we find acceptance at the brazen altar, through the accepted sacrifice of a crucified and risen Saviour.

At the golden altar, we have fellowship with God, and nearness of access to him, in all the preciousness of the life and person of Jesus, as he was and as he is.

> For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life (Rom. 5:10).

The Blood on the Horns Of the Altar of Incense

> *And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the Lord* (Ex. 30:10).

The foundation is laid in atonement, and we know from

Heb. 10 that this yearly act was a type of the one offering of Jesus, whereby he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

And while no burnt sacrifice or meat offering was to be offered on this altar, yet the blood of atonement on the horns of it speaks of peace once made, and the remission of sins once for all through the sacrifice of Christ.

The Perfume

> *And the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight* (Ex. 30:34).

The name of the first spice, "stacte," comes from an Hebrew word, signifying to drop, to fall in drops, to distil, as in S of S 5:13:

> His lips like lilies, *dropping* sweet smelling myrrh.

Beautifully significant of the grace and gracious words which proceeded from the lips of Jesus.

Onycha, in Hebrew, means also a lion, and suggests the thought of the uncompromising faithfulness, firmness, and decision of the character of Christ, setting his face like a flint, boldly acting for God, and reproving all manner of evil.

The root of the word for galbanum signifies milk or fat, and connects the thought with the "fat which covered the inwards," God's portion of the sacrifices, and emblematical of the internal preciousness of Jesus.

Frankincense, white and fragrant, speaks of the purity, piety, and acceptability of the character and ways of him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.

"Of each shall there be a like weight." How expressive of the character of Christ! What an even balance do we there discover! His grace, his firmness, his internal excellency, and outward piety, how exactly proportioned!

> *And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy* (Ex. 30:35).

Perfume and incense is the same. There is but one word in the original.

The graces and virtues which compose and make up the character of Jesus, how exquisitely tempered together! Not only equal, but harmonized, blended, and combined.

"Tempered together, pure and holy." What purity! what holiness also in the character and ways of Jesus!

> *And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tent of the congregation, where I will meet with thee; it shall be unto you most holy* (Ex. 30:36).

All these varied and combined excellencies of the Lord Jesus are to be discovered in the minutest act and thought, and are available for us in each particular.

And when met in the presence of God, the sweet memorial of all this is there for the encouragement of our faith, and for the comfort and joy of our souls before God;

> for ointment and perfume rejoice the heart {Prov. 27:9}.

And thus we realize our acceptance with God in his own beloved Son, and enjoy communion with him.

> *And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the Lord. Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people* (Ex. 30:37, 38).

This preciousness of Jesus is inimitable, and must not be counterfeited. Self-conceit, through supposed resemblance, will put the soul out of communion.

Strange fire is natural or fleshly excitement. Strange incense is nature's imitation of the peerless preciousness of Christ.

Both are alike forbidden of God. But fire from God's altar, and the sweet perfume of the excellency of Jesus, are provided for the true worshippers of the Father, through the Son.

Lecture 15

The Laver and His Foot

EXODUS 30:17-21

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tent [7] of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat. When they go into the tent of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord. So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations.

The Laver and His Foot

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal {Ex. 30:17, 18}.

These scriptures are "the word of God"; this gives them their importance and authority. They are also "the testimony of Jesus Christ"; this gives them their interest to us as redeemed sinners, and their value to our souls, as containing God's testimony concerning his Son.

God's thoughts about Christ are embodied in type, and given us in the scriptures, that we might have fellowship with the Father in his own estimate of his Son. In the laver and his foot, we have the divinely given figure or shadow of CHRIST *as our* SANCTIFICATION.

Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, *and* SANCTIFICATION, and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30).

In this 30th chapter of Exodus, from verse 11, typically the believer is regarded, first, *redeemed* by the *blood* (verses 11-16); secondly, *sanctified* with the washing of *water* (verses 17-21); thirdly, *anointed* with the oil (verses 22-33); and, fourthly, *accepted* in the *perfume* (verses 34-38).

The Spirit, the water, and the blood (1 John 5:6-8).

Or, in another aspect,

1st (verses 11-16), Christ is seen in his atoning death for our *redemption.*

2nd (verses 17-21), in his life, death, and resurrection, as our *sanctification.*

3rd (verses 22-33), ascended to God's right hand, receiving and *giving the Spirit,* for our anointing.

4th (verses 34 to end), in the assembly, and within the vail, appearing before God *in all his preciousness* on our behalf, for our acceptance.

In Solomon's temple there were ten lavers, standing on their ten bases, and one *molten sea,* standing on twelve oxen (1 Kings 7:23-26). In Ezekiel's temple there is no laver nor sea, but a *river,* whose waters issue out from under the threshold of the house eastward, deepening and widening as it flows.

In Rev. 4:6, we read of a *sea of glass* like unto crystal before the throne. In Rev. 15:2, of a sea of glass mingled with fire. And in Rev. 22:1, of a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

All these are so many figures of Christ, and of the cleansing, sanctifying, life-giving, life-sustaining power of the Spirit of God, full of the richest interest and instruction: but on these we cannot now enlarge.

The word "laver," in the Hebrew, signifies, "like a river"; and there is beautiful significancy in this.

The laver consisted of two parts, "the *laver* and his *foot*." The upper part, or laver, being a large reservoir of water, from which, when required, the water poured down "like a river" into the *foot* or basin at its base. The lower part being alone used for bathing or washing, so that the water in the laver remained always pure and undefiled.

This construction reminds us forcibly of the expression in the Epistle to Titus 3:5, 6:

The washing (or laver, λουτρον,) of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

The laver thus constructed presents Christ in two aspects;

7. Tent, not tabernacle.

the foot, Christ in humiliation on earth; and the upper part, or laver proper, Christ in his exaltation in heaven.

In his life on earth, Christ left us an example that we should follow in his steps. And on the Cross, front his pierced side came forth the water and the blood.

But it is from Christ crucified, risen, and exalted, that the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of purity and life, is now given.

> In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified (John 7:37-39).

In Eph. 5:25, 26, we read,

> Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word.

This is his present action,

> That he might (ultimately) present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing (Eph. 5:27).

Its Material

A laver of brass, and his foot also of brass (Ex. 30:18).

Brass is the emblem of strength: and Christ, as our sanctification, is the strong one, mighty to sanctify as well as mighty to save. Precious and encouraging truth! How many are there who trust in Christ for their salvation, but have recourse to their own efforts, or to the law, for sanctification! Justification by the faith of Christ is the doctrine of the Reformation; but sanctification by the faith of Christ, how little apprehended! How little have our souls entered into the depth and fulness of those words of Jesus to Paul, with the thorn rankling in his flesh,

> My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness {2 Cor. 12:9}.

There is *power* in the example of his life; constraining power in his dying and redeeming love; power in looking unto Jesus glorified at God's right hand above. And Stephen found it so. Power in the Spirit sent down from this ascended one. The secret of power in the Christian experience is having Christ "all" as our object, "and in all" as our life.

In Ex. 38:8, we read,

> And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the looking-glasses (or rather brazen mirrors) of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tent of the congregation.

This, doubtless, is significant, and intimates a connection between self-examination and sanctification. James writes,

> But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass; for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed (James 1:22-25).

Christ, in his life on earth, left us an example that we should follow in his steps. And it is well to compare our walk and life with his. The foot of the laver was made of burnished brass.

But sanctification to the believer now is especially and effectually connected with the contemplation of Christ, once crucified, but now risen and glorified, as exhibited in the mirror of the word, through the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Real and divine photography: "Now the Lord," &c.

The Position of the Laver

And thou shalt put it between the tent of the congregation and the altar (Ex. 30:18).

The progress of the soul in drawing near to God is thus set forth. The soul first realizing *pardon* at the sin offering without the camp.

Secondly, *acceptance* at the brazen altar within the court.

Thirdly, *sanctification* at the brazen laver.

Fourthly, *nearness in worship* at the golden altar.

Fifthly, *entrance into the holiest* through the value of the blood, and of the sweet incense from the golden censer, carried by the High Priest within the vail.

The Water

And thou shalt put water therein, to wash withal (Ex. 30:18).

> Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word (Eph. 5:26).

> Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth (John 17:17),

is his prayer to the Father.

> It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life,

he says (John 6:63). Not the word apart from the Spirit, nor the Spirit apart from the word. It is the truth that sanctifies, and the Spirit is truth. But it is the truth of Christ,

> as the truth is in Jesus {Eph. 4:21}.

The water which filled the laver in the wilderness came first from the smitten rock (Ex. 17); the type of Christ

crucified, from whose pierced side flowed forth the water and the blood. For

> that rock was Christ (1 Cor. 10:4).

Secondly, it came from the rock which was to have been spoken to, at the end of the wilderness wanderings, in connection with the blooming, blossoming, and fruit-bearing rod (Num. 20). Typical of Christ glorified, and sending down the Spirit in answer to prayer (Acts 2 and John 7). How significant! And how precious to the soul of the believer are these divine foreshadowings!

The Use of the Laver

> *To wash withal. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: when they go into the tent of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord: so they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations* (Ex. 30:18-21).

The laver sets forth Christ made of God unto the believer, sanctification practically (1 Cor. 1:30).

It is the action of the Lord Jesus in John 13 embodied in type.

The washing at the laver was twofold. First, of the entire person, as at the consecration of the priests, (see Ex. 29:4,) where it should be translated,

> *bathe* them *in water*.

This washing, or bathing in water, at their consecration was not repeated. To this the Lord refers in John 13:10,

> He that is washed, or bathed, (Ο λελουμένος) needeth not save to *wash* his feet, (νίψασθαι), but is clean every whit.

The signification of this bathing is given in Rom. 6, Col. 2, &c. It sets forth the death, burial, and resurrection of the believer with Christ, and faith's apprehension of it.

Secondly, this washing was partial, the washing of the hands and feet; and it is this which is here especially mentioned, -- its constant use.

"Aaron and his sons," typify Christ and the Church in their priestly character (Heb. 3:6). The sanctification is one:

> For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth (John 17:19).

And He is our sanctification.

"The hands and feet" express the whole character of the believer's *action* and *conduct*. In John 13 the feet only are mentioned, as including the whole course of the believer's walk.

> They shall wash their hands and their feet *thereat* {Ex. 30:19}.

It was not sufficient to wash elsewhere. It is the practical and conscious cleansing which flows from faith's apprehension of Christ, and not that which flows from mere moral considerations or precepts, which fits for God's tent and God's altar.

> When they go into the tent of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not {Ex. 30:20}.

This cleansing by the faith of Jesus is essential to living fellowship with the Father and the Son in the Spirit, and to true fellowship with the saints.

There is no *living* communion apart from this. Apart from the sanctification which results from association with Jesus, and faith in him, communion is a lifeless form, and the place of assembly a region of spiritual death. Holiness becomes God's house for ever.

> If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me {John 13:8}.

Solemn and weighty words! May our souls enter into their divine import! [8]

> Or when they come near to the altar to minister {Ex. 30:20}.

Priestly service to God in *living* power can only be carried on in connection with that practical separation from evil to God, which results from faith's apprehension of Jesus, who is made of God unto us sanctification, and abiding communion with him. Holiness becomes God's service, as well as God's house.

> Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord {Isa. 52:11}.
>
> I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord {Psa. 26:6}.
>
> That they die not {Ex. 30:20}.

This is repeated in verse 21. It may be taken as a warning.

> If ye live after the flesh ye shall die {Rom. 9:13}.

Spiritual deadness is the inevitable consequence of the foot defiled, and sanctification through personal intercourse with Christ neglected. Or it may be taken as a promise; for the words might be rendered, "and they shall not die"; an assurance twice given, that living communion with God and his saints, and living power of priestly service and worship, is indissolubly associated with that practical holiness which fellowship with Christ secures.

> It shall be a statute for ever {Ex. 30:21};

a principle from which God never departs.

> Without holiness no man shall see the Lord {Heb. 12:14}.

Grace meets the sinner outside the camp. And the sweet savour of the sacrifice is ever ascending from the brazen altar; while the laver ever stands between the door of the tent and the altar of burnt offering; and the water is ever there.

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8. Real, living, intimate communion with Christ, is connected alone with the practical sanctification which is effected by Christ himself.

Christ once died for our sins -- once was raised again for our justification, but he ever lives to make intercession; ever lives the source of life, holiness, and power to all that draw nigh to God by him. His grace is sufficient for us; his strength is made perfect in weakness. Because he lives, we shall live also; and our life will be a life of holiness, if

> we live by the faith of him {Gal. 2:20}.

Thus full provision is made in Christ, that the blood-bought heirs of glory, and the royal priests of our God might ever worship him in the beauties of holiness, as well as in the confidence of faith and love.