

Lecture 16

Directions for the Setting Up of the Tabernacle, And for its Anointing

EXODUS 40:1-8, and 9-16

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation. And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and cover the ark with the vail. And thou shalt bring in the table, and set in order the things that are to be set in order upon it; and thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof. And thou shalt set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the testimony, and put the hanging of the door to the tabernacle. And thou shalt set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation. And thou shalt set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and shalt put water therein. And thou shalt set up the court round about, and hang up the hanging at the court gate.

The Tabernacle

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation (Ex. 40:1, 2).

The first day of the first month is significant of a beginning, or beginning anew. A type of the commencement of the Christian dispensation at Pentecost.

On the first day of the month the moon began to shine afresh on the earth with light reflected from the sun; so the Church, during the present night time of the world, is set to shine in the light of an absent Christ.

“The first day of the first month.” A dispensation altogether new; characterized by Messiah rejected, and the Comforter present, to communicate to the Church the truth of Christ, and to maintain his Lordship.

“The tabernacle of the tent of the congregation.” Both titles are here combined; the tabernacle being the type of a dwelling-place for God through the Spirit, and the tent of the congregation typical of believers assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The Ark

And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and cover the ark with the vail (Ex. 40:3).

The ark is first mentioned, for it sets forth Jesus, God’s center of gathering to his own people, and in whom they are builded together for an habitation of God (Eph. 2:22). God begins with Christ, and so should we.

But it is the ark covered with the vail; for it is Christ

incarnate in whose name we are to gather.

“The ark of the testimony.” Such is the title here given to it. The house of God, the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth, is set for the testimony and maintenance of that great mystery of godliness,

God manifest in the flesh,

with which is closely connected those other precious verities,

Believed on in the world;

received up into glory (1 Tim. 3:15, 16).

Until Christ came in the flesh, there was no Church of God on the earth, no

habitation of God through the Spirit {Eph. 2:22},

nor

living stones built up a spiritual house {1 Pet. 2:5}.

The tabernacle in the wilderness, indeed, foreshadowed the Church’s earthly sojourn, in connection with heavenly things (Heb. 8:5), and the temple in the land foreshadowed its heavenly glory. But until the Word had been made flesh, and from a crucified and exalted Saviour the pentecostal Spirit had been sent down, there was no Church on earth.

The Table

And thou shalt bring in the table, and set in order the things that are to be set in order upon it (Ex. 40:4).

Where believers are gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus, for an habitation of God through the Spirit, there, in God’s presence, the sweet and sacred memorials of a Saviour’s sufferings and death are to be observed.

It is remarkable that, after the ark, the table is first mentioned; and at Troas, on the first day of the week, the disciples came together to break bread (Acts 20:7). This was their first object; and although the inspired ministry of the Apostle Paul threw its light on the sacred subjects of the person, suffering, and glories of the Son of God, like the candlestick in the tabernacle over against the table, yet their object in coining together was to remember Jesus, and to enjoy the manifestation of his presence in the breaking of bread, to which all else was made subservient.

But if the communion of saints in the presence of God, and in the remembrance of the sacrifice of Christ, is to be observed, it must be observed in *God's order*. "And set in order the things which are to be set in order upon it."

God is not the author of confusion {1 Cor. 14:43}.

He has his order, and this order must be maintained. The table is to be a pure table, and all things which are done in connection with the table, must be done decently and in order -- as in the presence and fear of God.

The Candlestick

And thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof (Ex. 40:4).

Ministry, according to God, in the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit, and in testimony to the truth of Christ, has its place in connection with God's dwelling-place. It is to be brought in, and its light maintained.

The best gifts are to be earnestly coveted. The Lord of the harvest is to be entreated to send forth labourers, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ for testimony to him is to be sought and obtained by fervent and united prayer. Although it is possible for believers to meet together, and to edify one another by mutual exhortation, and the reading of God's word together, without distinct gift for ministry; and thus provision is made for weakness, and the present state of things: yet ministry, in the power of the Spirit of God, is God's order, and according to his mind and will; and the gifts of an ascended Saviour are

for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ {Eph. 4:12}.

The Altar of Gold

And thou shalt set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the testimony (Ex. 40:5).

The worship of the Father, in spirit and in truth, by purged worshippers drawing nigh in conscious acceptance through Christ Jesus, and in all the preciousness and perfume of his sacred name, -- this worship is to be presented and maintained before God.

The altar of gold for the incense was to be set

immediately before the ark of the testimony, as teaching that this worship is connected with Christ risen and glorified within the veil, through whom the believer has boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him, in drawing nigh to God.

The Hanging of the Door

And put the hanging of the door to the tabernacle (Ex. 40:5).

Christ is the door; and faith in Christ, and the confession of him, is the only way of access into the habitation of God. This is to be held up and insisted on. The entrance was not to be left unguarded, and nothing but the hanging for the door was to be put there.

Saving faith in Christ is indispensable; and no mere ordinance, or any thing else, is to take the place of Christ, as the way of entrance by whom alone any can be admitted into the fellowship of saints gathered together for an habitation of God.

The Altar of Burnt Offering

And thou shalt set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation (Ex. 40:6).

Christ, in death and resurrection, in his atoning and accepted sacrifice, is to be set forth as the only ground of communion with God and with his saints.

Before the door of the tabernacle, or dwelling-place of God. For it is only through the accepted sacrifice of Christ that communion with God can be enjoyed, or that any one can form part of God's habitation.

And before the door of the tent of the congregation. For only on this ground can real fellowship with saints be realized, or any one be admitted to their number.

The Laver

And thou shalt set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and shalt put water therein (Ex. 40:7).

Christ is also to be set forth as the sanctification of the believer; and the rich and full provision of the Spirit in him, for sanctification, is to be testified to.

The washing of water, by the Word. That is, the application of the truth of Christ, living, dying, risen, glorified, and separate from the world -- these truths, brought to bear on the conscience and the heart, in the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from Christ exalted, producing practical sanctification -- this cleansing is essential to living communion with God's saints, and living priestly service and

worship towards God.

The Court

And thou shalt set up the court round about (Ex. 40:8).

Consistency of character and conduct, duly and firmly maintained, and the exercise of fervent charity one towards another, is also to be pressed on the consciences of believers. A distinction between the Church and the world is to be maintained and exhibited, even when the saints are not assembled together in Church fellowship.

The Court Gate

And hang up the hanging at the court gate (Ex. 40:8).

And Christ is to be testified to as the only one, through faith in whom, any person can be considered as connected with the people of God in religious association.

The Anointing

And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and it shall be holy (Ex. 40:9).

The Anointing Oil

The directions for making the anointing oil are given in Ex. 30:22-25:--

Moreover, the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, and of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin: and thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil.

Pure Myrrh

Of pure myrrh five hundred shekels {Ex. 30:23}.

The *gum*, issuing spontaneously: bitter, but fragrant; flowing freely. Beautifully emblematic of the Spirit of Christ, -- a sympathizing Spirit, -- a Spirit which may be grieved, and touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Myrrh is also a soother of pain: and the sympathy of Jesus, how comforting!

Sweet Cinnamon

And of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels {Ex. 30:23}.

Sweet cinnamon is the *inner* bark -- sweet and also fragrant. Expressive of the sweetness and excellency, of the *internal character* of the Lord Jesus.

Sweet Calamus

Of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels {Ex. 30:23}.

Calamus is the *pith* -- sweet and fragrant also. Emblematic of the sweetness of the Spirit of Christ, in all his *internal* thoughts, feelings, and affections.

Cassia

And of cassia five hundred shekels {Ex. 30:24}.

The cassia is the *outer bark* -- sweet and fragrant. Expressive of the gentleness, sweetness, and excellency of the *external* character and conduct of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pure Myrrh	500 shekels.	Bitter.
Cinnamon	250 shekels.	Sweet.
Calamus	250 shekels.	Sweet.
Cassia	500 shekels.	Sweet.

500 shekels bitter, 1000 sweet -- such is the composition.

After the shekel of the sanctuary {Ex. 30:24}.

The weight or estimate was to be after the shekel of the sanctuary; for it is God's holy estimate of the graces of the Spirit of his Christ, which is here set forth.

Olive Oil

And of oil olive an hin {Ex. 30:24}.

This pure olive oil is typical of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God, as the holy anointing oil is the emblem of the Spirit of Christ, with its various and combined graces.

The Anointing Oil

And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil {Ex. 30:25}.

Two things strike us here: First, its holiness; this is twice mentioned; for the Spirit of Christ is a holy Spirit. Secondly, the tempering of the precious spices together. Expressive of the incomparable excellency of the Spirit of Christ, produced by the exquisite blending of the various graces of his character in perfect and harmonious oneness.

The *perfume*, described in Ex. 30:34-38, typifies the excellency of Jesus, God-ward. It was to be wholly burnt on God's altar, or in the censer of the high priest, which he carried into the holiest.

The *anointing oil*, on the other hand, is typical of the Spirit of Christ, and the various graces of his Spirit, which are communicated to believers, and shared by them, through the anointing of the Holy Ghost sent down from Christ exalted.

Like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments (Psa. 133:2).

Thus they become Christlike. Thus the character and graces of Christ are reproduced in those who drink into his Spirit.

The Tabernacle to Be Anointed

And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle (Ex. 40:9).

For believers

are builded together for an *habitation of God* THROUGH THE SPIRIT (Eph. 2:22).

So, on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit from Christ risen and glorified constituted the assembled believers the dwelling-place of God, and by that one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body.

The Tent of the Congregation

In Ex. 30:26 we read, --

And thou shalt anoint the tent of the congregation therewith.

When believers are gathered together in the presence of God, and in the name of the Lord Jesus, that which is of all importance is the presence and power, unquenched, of the Spirit. This makes the assembly of believers the place of power, and joy, and blessing.

The Contents of the Tabernacle to Be Anointed

And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and it shall be holy (Ex. 40:9).

We have these vessels mentioned in detail in Ex. 30. First,

The Ark Anointed

And the ark of the testimony (Ex. 30:26).

Christ risen from the dead, exalted at the right hand of God, *and anointed*, having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, is the center of gathering to the Church of God, and in him all the purposes of God meet. He is the subject of testimony, and in him all the promises of God are Yea and Amen to God's glory by us. A risen, glorified, and anointed Christ.

The Table Anointed

And the table and all its vessels (Ex. 30:27).

The communion of saints, in the precious and sacred remembrance of the sufferings and death of their divine Saviour, must be in the present power of the Spirit of Christ, and all things connected therewith should be done by the unction of the Holy Ghost.

Oh, for grace ever to remember this, when on the first day of the week we meet as disciples to break bread! The table and all its vessels -- our communion together, and all that is connected with it, is to be in

the unction of the Holy One {1 John 2:28}.

The Candlestick Anointed

And the candlestick and his vessels (Ex. 30:27).

Testimony to Jesus, and the ministration of God's word, is to be in the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit, given by Christ exalted, and by His present guidance and grace; and everything connected with this ministry is to be in the power of the Spirit of Christ.

The Golden Altar Anointed

And the altar of incense (Ex. 30:27).

The worship of the Father in spirit and in truth can only be by the Spirit of adoption -- the Spirit of an ascended Christ -- the unction of the Holy One. The Spirit helps our infirmities, he makes intercession, he causes our praises and our prayers to ascend, accompanied with all the fragrance of the preciousness of the name of Jesus.

The Brazen Altar Anointed

And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering, and all his vessels, and sanctify the altar: and it shall be an altar most holy (Ex. 40:10).

It was through the Eternal Spirit that Jesus offered himself without spot to God; and it is by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven that testimony is to be borne to the value of his blood, and to the fact of his resurrection, as the ground of communion between God and the soul. And it is by the Spirit that this communion is enjoyed.

And the Spirit of God renders the truth of Christ, crucified and ascended, a sanctifying truth, and communion with God through Christ, sanctifying communion. "An altar most holy," or literally, "Holy of holies."

The Laver Anointed

And thou shalt anoint the laver and his foot, and sanctify it {Ex. 40:11}.

The same remarks will apply to Christ looked at as our sanctification. The Spirit of God reveals Jesus in the holiness of his person and walk down here, and makes him practical sanctification to us. He also reveals to us a glorified Christ, and conforms us to him, changing us into the same image from glory to glory (2 Cor. 3:18). And he is the living link of union with this exalted one.

The Anointing of Aaron and His Sons

And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tent of the congregation, and bathe them in water (Ex. 40:12).

(So the Hebrew.) This is similar to the consecration service of the priests described in Ex. 29 and Lev. 8.

Aaron and his sons were types of Christ and his Church (Heb. 3:6). They were to be brought to the door of the tent of the congregation, which was the place of communion with God, on the ground of sacrifice. (See Ex. 29:42, 43.) They were then and there to be bathed in water. Not simply washed, but bathed in water; for so the Hebrew expression is rendered ten times in Lev. 15. This bathing in water is significant of death, burial, and resurrection. (See Rom. 6; Col. 2.) This bathing is one; that is, Aaron and his sons were washed or bathed at the same time, though anointed separately. So we are buried *with* Christ in baptism, wherein also we are risen with him (Col. 2:12).

Then Aaron was invested with the priesthood, and anointed.

And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest's office (Ex. 40:13).

For it is *as risen from the dead* the Lord Jesus was anointed for priesthood; and it is in resurrection he enters on his priestly office, in separation from the world to God.

For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens (Heb. 7:26).

After this, Aaron's sons were clothed and anointed.

And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats: and thou shalt anoint them as thou didst their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations (Ex. 40:14, 15).

It is as risen with Christ

through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead {Col. 2:12},

that we are invested with, and enter on, our priestly office and service in association with Christ, the high priest of our

profession. And it is by the Holy Ghost sent down on Pentecost, that we are anointed to this priestly service.

A priesthood which we enter on by faith, when we have realized our death, burial, and resurrection with Christ: and which we shall continue to exercise when we are conformed to him in the glory, and are associated with him in his heavenly and everlasting priesthood.

Lecture 17

The Tabernacle Reared Up, And Filled with the Glory

EXODUS 40:17-38

The Period When the Tabernacle Was Reared up

And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up (Ex. 40:17).

The first day of the second year of Israel's experience, as a redeemed people, was an important period in their history.

On this day the tabernacle was set up. On this day the commandment was given for the numbering of the children of Israel from twenty years old and upward; all that were able to go forth to war in Israel (Num. 1:1, 2). And on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and anointed it, and sanctified it, and all the vessels thereof, the princes of Israel, that were over them that were numbered, presented their offering to Jehovah of six covered wagons, twelve oxen, with twelve silver chargers, and spoons of gold full of incense, with the burnt offerings, sin offerings, and peace offerings, though twelve days were occupied with the presentation (Num. 7).

During the first year the lessons of the wilderness were learnt: -- What the wilderness was: what the flesh was; both under grace, and under law: and what God was, in the various manifestations of his character.

With the second year Israel's experience in connection with the tabernacle commences; and to this period the books of Leviticus and Numbers apply.

The first year is typical of the Christian's individual experience; the second, of his experience in connection with the Church of God, and in association with others professing Christianity.

The Tabernacle Reared up

And Moses reared up the tabernacle, and fastened his sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up his pillars (Ex. 40:18).

The *tabernacle* is first mentioned, before the tent of the congregation; for the first thought in the mind of the Spirit is

an habitation for God, before that which represents the assembly of God's saints is spoken of; though in Ex. 40:2 both thoughts are combined --

set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation.

"And fastened his sockets." The sockets of silver, composed of the redemption money of the children of Israel. Thus, typically, the foundations of God's tabernacle are laid in redemption.

"And set up the boards thereof." Typical of those believers who are gathered together to the confession of the name of Jesus; individually, standing firm on redemption; and collectively, forming God's tabernacle, or dwelling-place (Eph. 2:22).

"And put in the bars thereof." For the compacting and establishment of the whole. Like the joints and bands, the gifts of the Spirit for the edifying of the body of Christ (Eph. 4).

"And reared up his pillars." The four pillars which held up the vail, corresponding with the four inspired historians of the life and death of Jesus; and the five pillars which supported the hanging of the door, answering to the apostles and prophets, the evangelists, pastors and teachers, who exhibit Jesus as the way of entrance into the tabernacle of God. And thus the Church becomes not only the house of God, and Church of the living God, but also the pillar and ground of the truth, for the manifestation and maintenance of the truth of God in the world.

The Tent of the Congregation Spread

And he spread abroad the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as the Lord commanded Moses (Ex. 40:19).

The tent over the tabernacle, or the tent of the congregation, represents the assembly of believers, meeting in the name of Jesus, who in spirit also compose the habitation of God.

The covering of the tent was twofold. First, the covering of rams' skins dyed red; typical of the atoning work of the

Lord Jesus, under the shelter of which the Church is seen by God. And, secondly, the covering of badgers' skins, above and over all; significant of the external lowly form and pilgrim character of the Church on earth.

"As the Lord commanded Moses." All done according to the will and word of God.

The Ark

And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy seat above upon the ark: and he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the vail of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony; as the Lord commanded Moses (Ex. 40:20, 21).

The ark represents the Lord Jesus Christ as the center of gathering, of promise, and of blessing, and also the center of testimony to the Church of God.

The testimony put into the ark showed the perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus while on earth; and thus the ark became the ark of the testimony. The staves set on the ark show his adaptation to the wilderness condition and need of his people. The mercy seat put above upon the ark expresses that the exercise of the sovereign grace and mercy of God is founded on the person and work of Christ. The ark brought into the tabernacle teaches, that it is *in him* that believers are builded together for an habitation of God (Eph. 2:22). The vail set up is significant also of the truth, that through the vail, that is to say, his flesh, Christ having entered into the holiest of all, we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him: and all this according to the word of God. "As the Lord commanded Moses."

The Table

And he put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the vail. And he set the bread in order upon it before the Lord; as the Lord had commanded Moses (Ex. 40:22, 23).

"The table" is the type of Christ, as the center and ground of communion to the saints of God. "In the tent of the congregation." In the midst of God's assembly. "Upon the side of the *tabernacle*." For though the Church is looked at as the assembly of saints, it is also the dwelling-place of God. "Northward." The place of self-judgment and discipline. (See Ezek. 40:39-42, and 1 Cor. 11.) And on the north side the burnt offerings were killed (Lev. 1:11). "Without the vail." For it is here on earth we commemorate the dying love of an absent Lord, while waiting for his return. The bread set in order. Christ set forth as the bread of life -- the all-sufficient and life-sustaining portion of the children of God. And set in order, too! What a God of order is he with whom we have to do! And "set in order *before the Lord*." For it is in the presence of God that we are to remember Jesus, and take our portion as the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.

Exalted and blessed privilege! And all this, also, in the spirit of unhesitating and full obedience, according to the word of God.

The Candlestick

And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward. And he lighted the lamps before the Lord; as the Lord commanded Moses (Ex. 40:24, 25).

The candlestick sets forth Jesus as the center, source, and subject of ministry or testimony in the Church of God, through the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and by the various gifts of the Spirit. "In the tent of the congregation." Ministry has its place, a place assigned to it by God in his assembly. "Over against the table." Throwing its hallowed light on the person, sufferings, and finished work of Jesus, in order that God's children may feed on him. "On the side of the tabernacle southward." The place occupied by ministry in God's habitation is on the south side, the side of grace and mercy, and on the side occupied by the brazen sea in Solomon's temple (2 Chron. 4:10). For it is in order to the believer's sanctification,

through the washing of water by the word {Eph. 5:26},

that Christ is testified to. The lamps were to be lit before the Lord; reminding us that ministry must ever be exercised as in the presence of God, and the truth commended to the conscience in God's sight, and all in the spirit of obedience to God; "as the Lord commanded Moses."

The Golden Altar

And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation before the vail: and he burnt sweet incense thereon; as the Lord commanded Moses (Ex. 40:26, 27).

The golden altar typifies Jesus, through whom we worship in full and conscious acceptance before God, in all the preciousness and fragrance of the character and person of Christ. The position of the altar is in the tent of the congregation: for worship has its place in the assembly; but "*before the vail*," and not simply as the table (Ex. 40:22) "*without the vail*." For we worship in the very prospect of the holiest, -- faith penetrating within, and communing with God from off the mercy seat. "As the Lord commanded Moses." It is the expressed will of God that his people should thus worship him. The Father is seeking such worship from spiritual worshippers in spirit and in truth. This is the fifth time the expression occurs, "As the Lord commanded Moses."

The Door of the Tabernacle

And he set up the hanging at the door of the tabernacle (Ex. 40:28).

Christ is the door. He only is the way. No admittance but by the faith of him.

The Altar of Burnt Offering

And he put the altar of burnt offering by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the meat offering; as the Lord commanded Moses (Ex. 40:29).

Christ, by the offering up of himself in all the purity and holiness of his nature as man, and as a sweet savour before God, and accepted by God, as witnessed by his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension to the right hand of his Father -- Christ, once offered and for ever accepted, is the one by whom communion with God is maintained, and communion also with the saints of God. And as the burnt offering and meat offering were ever sending forth their sweet savour Godward on this altar, and in this appointed place of communion between God and his people, so the sweet savour of the name of Jesus ever secures the unbroken fellowship of saints with God and with each other. And this is according to God's will.

The Laver

And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water therein, to wash withal. And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat: when they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the Lord commanded Moses (Ex. 40:30-32).

Practical sanctification is to be maintained by constant communication between the soul and Christ, who of God is made unto us sanctification. The washing of the hands and feet, the purification of the actions and course of life, and that by the faith of Christ, and by the power of the Spirit of God. The living water, flowing from the fountain head above, the throne of God and of the Lamb. This practical sanctification capacitates the believer to enjoy in living power the fellowship of saints, and to engage in the worship and service of God.

"As the Lord commanded Moses." The seventh time this expression occurs in this connection, -- significant of the perfection of obedience, leading, as we shall see presently, to the perfection of blessing, and the fulness of glory.

The Court

And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So

Moses finished the work {Ex. 40:33}.

Showing the people of God separate from the world, even when not met together in church fellowship, having still God's tabernacle and God's altar as their center object, and Christ acknowledged as the only door and way.

"So Moses finished the work." All was now ready.

The Overshadowing Cloud, And the Indwelling Glory

Then the⁹ 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 (Ex. 40:34, 35).

The external and internal manifestation of the Divine presence, protection, and glory: Divine and Almighty protection above, and Divine glory within. For

he that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty {Psa. 91:1}.

God himself is

a wall of fire round about his people, and the glory in the midst {Zech. 2:5}.

The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon them.

The eternal God is their refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms {Deut. 33:27}.

This overshadowing cloud and this indwelling glory was a prefiguring of what took place at Pentecost, when the Church of God first commenced its history and its course, and when believers were first builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit.

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:1-4).

And again (Acts 4:31):

And when they had prayed, the house was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

What external and internal manifestations have we here of the presence and power of the Spirit of God! And what a Divine glory shines forth from all!

So also the inspired prayer of the apostle in Eph. 3:14-19:

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord

9. So the Hebrew.

Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith . . . that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

When Christ first foretells the setting up of his own Church, in Matt. 16, he says,

And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it {Matt. 16:18}.

This is the external protection. And he adds, in Matt. 18:20,

Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

This is the internal glory.

But what is the principle of all this, and the secret of its enjoyment? Obedience, implicit obedience.

Seven times the word of God had testified that Moses, the servant of the Lord, had done each particular “as the Lord commanded.” And at Pentecost the disciples were assembled in willing-hearted and united obedience to the command of the Lord Jesus. And the Lord Jesus testifies also concerning the Church in Philadelphia:

Thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name (Rev. 3:8).

Then, when all was in accordance with the word and will of God, and not till then, the cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle {Ex. 40:34}.

Lord, how is it, says Jude,

that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word (not words): and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him (John 14:23).

This is a principle of the utmost importance, and throws a Divine light on many a perplexing question.

When Solomon had finished the house of Jehovah, according to the Divine will and pattern, then

the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord (1 Kings 8:10, 11).

The cloud, and the indwelling glory is here seen again.

Isaiah prophesies of the time of future blessing to Israel, when

the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence (Isa. 4:5).

Here again is

the overshadowing protection. {See Heb. 9:4.}

Ezekiel, who saw in vision the glory taking its gradual

departure from the first temple (Ezek. 10 and 11), afterwards also in vision saw the glory returning to the millennial temple.

And, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord (Ezek. 44:4).

This again is the internal glory.

John, in the apocalyptic vision of the Church's future blessedness, saw that great city, the holy Jerusalem, but

saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof (Rev. 21:22, 23).

“There no temple rose before him, –
There no glory shone above;
All was temple, all was glory,
All in all was God and love.”

The saints in glory will dwell in God, and God in them. His glory is their overshadowing cloud; his presence is their indwelling glory.

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 {Ex. 40:35}.

So also, in the temple of Solomon,

the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord (1 Kings 8:11).

And so on the mount of transfiguration, when Moses and Elias appeared with Jesus in glory,

there came a bright cloud and overshadowed them: and the disciples feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone (Luke 9:34-36).

Thus, whether it be Moses, the servant of God, or the priests in their priestly ministry, or the two men on the mount of transfiguration, all give place to the glory of God and of the Lamb.

The Guidance of the Cloud

And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys {Ex. 40:36-38}.

The people of God are a journeying people, yet he will never leave them, nor forsake them. The great thing is to walk with God, so as ever to enjoy the light and guidance of his presence.

If thy presence go not with us,
says Moses,

carry us not up hence {Ex. 33:15}.

And who that values that presence but will often be presenting the same petition ?

This presence of God with us -- how seasonable! how suitable! Shade in sunshine. Light in darkness. Abiding with us while we tarry. Going before us when we move.

But there is one thing of all-importance taught us here. God's guidance of his people, and the manifestation of his presence with them, is connected with the tabernacle, his dwelling-place among them. It was

when the cloud was taken up *from over the tabernacle* that the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys {Ex. 40:36}.

Their individual movements were controlled by God's acting in connection with the tabernacle.

And so with us: if our individual actions are not influenced by the manifestation of God's presence and actings with the assembly, no wonder if we miss his guidance, and walk in darkness.

Not only were the children of Israel to pitch round about the tabernacle, having it as their center, the very place of their tents being regulated by the position of the tabernacle, because it was God's dwelling-place; but their every movement was to harmonize with God's movements in connection with it.

Oh, for grace ever to remember and to act on this! We are so prone to make self our center, and our individual interests and comforts, temporal or spiritual, the guides of our actions, that we need every now and then to be broken off from them, and to be brought back to God, and to the things of God.

May we value the presence of God with us in our individual pathway, and the unclouded sunshine of his smile on our private path. But may we also value the manifestation of his presence in the assembly of his saints, so as ever to "see his power and his glory as we have seen it in the sanctuary." And may the chill and the darkness, occasioned by the loss of his smile, be to us a warning of our wandering, if we turn aside to the right hand or to the left; whether it be in our individual course, or in our church associations. May we walk, O God, in the light of thy countenance, the confident language of our hearts being this,

Thou shalt guide us with thy counsel, and afterward receive us to glory {Psa. 73:24}.

Thomas Newberry, from *Bible Subjects for the Household of Faith*, 1863, 1864.

