

BRIEF NOTES ON THE TABERNACLE.

By C.E.WIGG, YOLLA, TASMANIA.

AUSTRALIA. 7325.

*Dear **Brother Johnson**, Thanks for the email. I do not have my own study note on Tabernacle. This note is from uncle Wigg, sent to me many years ago for Grace and Peace. Today he is with the Lord. I am sure this note will give some help to you. If I get more I will forward it for you. May the Lord bless your ministries. **Nelson Thomas** Mumbai*

ALTERNATIVE VIEWS:

There are several differing views held by Bible scholars on the Tabernacle and a brief description of some are given below. The Tabernacle a type of Christ: Most hold the view that the Tabernacle is a type of Christ, of different aspects of His person and work. Most books on the subject that I have seen put forward this view. It is very useful in the presentation of the Gospel.

The Tabernacle as a type of the believer: Others hold that the Tabernacle is a type of the believer, as the dwelling place of God. This view puts forward the idea that the court represents the believer's body, the Holy Place represents the believer's soul, and the Holy of Holies, represents the believer's spirit.

The Tabernacle as a type of heaven: Others hold the view that the Tabernacle, according to the words of Hebrews ch. 9;23 & 24, however the ninth chapter of Hebrews speaks more of heavenly things, rather than heaven itself. It is our intention to present the Tabernacle as a type of the Church, the House of God, the assembly in the wilderness, though in many of the details we shall see the glory of Christ's finished work, as well as the glory of His person, which glories are both human and divine.

THE TABERNACLE AS A TYPE OF THE CHURCH, GOD'S HOUSE;

In introducing His desires regarding the Tabernacle, God said, "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them", this clearly shows the purpose of the Tabernacle, it was to be the dwelling place of God, He wished to dwell in the midst of His people.

What is the house of God today? Paul tells us that it is the "Assembly of the living God" 1Tim.3;15, Whose house are we, Heb. 3;6. "Ye also are built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit", Eph. 2;22. "Ye are the temple of God ...the Spirit of God dwells in you", 1Cor. 3;16, & 17. There are other references, but these are sufficient to prove our point. The tabernacle was in the wilderness, and for the wilderness, because once they reached the Promised Land, and the kingdom was established, the temple, (which represents the eternal, the permanent idea,) was built. The wilderness is where we are now. It is what the death of Christ makes the world for the believer. Once sheltered by the blood of the Passover Lamb; the children of Israel were saved from the judgment due to them because of their sins, but

they were not saved from the bondage and slavery of Egypt until they crossed the Red Sea. Both are types of the death of Christ, the Passover delivering from sin's guilt, the Red Sea from its power, and dominion over us. Once they crossed the Red Sea, there was only wilderness, harsh, hot dry, and barren. Never again would they enjoy the leeks, garlic, melons etc. of Egypt, the Red Sea cut them off from that forever. Gal. 6;14. Nor would they ever again hear the shout of the slave driver, or feel the sting and pain of his whip.

THE TABERNACLE WAS PORTABLE;

The tabernacle was made portable, so that it could be quickly dismantled, then quickly re-erected in another place. This teaches us that while ever the Church is here, it will not be static; we are following the path of the will of God that has been trodden before us by the Son of God.

UNCHANGING: Though the situation of the Tabernacle changed often, the Tabernacle itself did not change. This is important for us to notice, lest we think that the church should change according to its surroundings, or the culture and generation in which it is found.

ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN SHOWN IN THE MOUNT+

Before the details of the specifications of the Tabernacle were given to Moses, God made the strict command that he was to make everything "After the PATTERN", Ex. 25;9.. This is repeated twice, Ex. 25;40, ch.26; 30, and is quoted in Heb. 8;5. Neither Moses or his helpers were to introduce any design, or ideas of their own. This is very important to see. The principle continues into the N.T. where we are also responsible to follow the pattern, and the doctrines revealed to the Apostles, (Paul especially), because the light, the pattern, the details of the Assembly constitution and practice, were given to him by revelation. To introduce our own ideas, or to change what is clearly taught in the New Testament with regard to doctrine and practice, for mere convenience, or any other reason, is sin.

THE CHURCH, UNIVERSAL AND LOCAL:

We have seen that the Tabernacle represents the Church, but the Church is seen in two aspects in the New Testament, that is UNIVERSAL, & LOCAL. The Church universal embraces every born again believer, on the earth, who when they were saved, were baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ, the Church. (1Cor.12;13, EPH. 4;4.) That is the Church universal

Though there is but one universal Church, there are many local Churches, and each if properly constituted, is to be a local expression of the one universal Church. The local Church is a company of believers who are gathered out of the world, or the community, and gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus alone, (Mat. 18;20)

Each Church is independent of the other, but because led and formed by the Holy Spirit, and governed by the word of God, there will be a great similarity between them. There will also be a sweet, but unorganized fellowship between the local Churches in any given area, and between the Churches in different countries. All this is accomplished without any formal

hierarchy, there being only local government of each assembly by a plurality of elders, who are placed over the local Church by the Holy Spirit as shepherds, but recognized by the local Church as such. The Tabernacle embraces both concepts, but principally and practically is seen in the life and practice of the local Church.

The placing of the Tabernacle

The Tabernacle was to be placed in the very centre of Israel's encampment; They were all instructed to pitch their tents in the allotted place according to their tribes, around the Tabernacle.

Judah etc. on the East side

Reuben etc. on the South side

Ephraim etc. on the West side

Dan etc. on the North side.

Thus every tent of the families of Israel was pitched facing the Tabernacle, showing in the type that the Tabernacle, (for us the Local Church), was central to every aspect of their lives.

As each time any person emerged from the tent door, the first thing they saw was the cloud of Glory, and the Tabernacle. The local church should also occupy a similar place of importance in the lives of those who are received into its fellowship.

If this principle was followed, the local assemblies would be in a strong and healthy spiritual state. All of the gatherings of that assembly would be well attended, (Heb. 10:25)

The east side:- The place of the sun-rising represents those who live in the daily expectation of the coming of the Lord Jesus first for His Church then as the "Sun of Righteousness" to "arise with healing in His wings" Mal. 4; 2, Heb. 9; 28.

Judah was the royal tribe, Gen. 49; 10, and Rev. 5: 5, where the Lord Jesus is called the "Lion of the tribe of Judah".

The South side:- Represents the place of warmth, comfort and blessing. Job. 37:17.

The West side:- is the place of the sunset, and suggests those who are constantly reminded of the brevity of time. As each day ends and the sun sinks beneath the Western horizon, another day has passed into history, into eternity, never to come again. Opportunities that we have failed to grasp have gone forever.

Countless souls have passed out of time into eternity, some to an eternity of indescribable blessing and joy, others to an eternity of indescribable horror, and eternal punishment. It reminds us to "Redeem the time", Eph.5;16, and that "The night cometh, when no man can work", John 9;4.

The North side: - To the North of Israel's boundary stands Mount Lebanon, which is forever clad with snow. The name Lebanon means "whiteness". The winds that sweep down from that quarter are icy cold.

All remind us of the trials, and troubles of life that God in His love allows us to experience, which when we accept them, and are "exercised thereby", bring the "peaceable fruits of righteousness".

From the North comes Gold. Job 37; 22, (J. N. D.) That is the acceptance of trouble, and learning from it makes us spiritually rich. Job said "I know that when I am tried I shall come forth as GOLD", (Job 23:10.)

Around the Tabernacle: - Levites were to camp, and they were a protection to the rest of the tribes, to protect them from the wrath of a holy God. Because of their Godly lives and ministry, because they lived close to God, and especially because of their intercession, they were a protection and a blessing.

They represent those who are spiritual, Gal. 6:1, such as Epaphroditus, Philippians 3;25-29, Epaphras, Col.4;12, those of the house of Chloe, 1Cor.1;11, Stephanas, 1Cor. 16;15, whom we may take as examples. Such are a protection and a blessing to the less spiritual members of the local Church.

Charles E.Wigg

The court of the Tabernacle.

When God gives us the details of the Tabernacle, He begins with the ark and the Holy of Holies, and then works out. But for the purpose of our studies, we are going to go the other way, that is to approach the matter as one would who was coming to God in His house. The first thing that such would see is the court of the Tabernacle.

The size of the court: - We notice that the court was very large, much larger than the Tabernacle itself, this would remind us of the largeness of God's heart, and the provision that He has made in the sacrifice of Christ, so that "whosoever will", may come and take freely of the "water of life", Rev. 22;17, that God desires that "All "men may be saved" 1Tim. 2: 4. God gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish", John 3; 16. It brings to mind the parable which the Lord Jesus told in Luke 14; 15-24, where the one who prepared the feast told the servants, after they had told him, "yet there is room", "That my house may be filled"

The fencing: - None can see over. The court was made of a linen fence 5 cubits, (about 8 feet) high. Because of its height, none could see over it, so that to know what went on inside, or to draw near to God, all must come through the gate. The Lord Jesus said, that "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God", John 3: 3. This explains why so many who fill important posts in "liberal" bible colleges etc, teach error, and

sometimes destroy the faith of their students, they have never been born again, and thus the Kingdom of God remains a mystery to them.

None can climb over. Because it was made of linen, none could climb over, like the thief and the robber of John 10: 1, and 8, to enter into salvation, one must enter by the "Door of the sheep", the Lord Jesus, the gate of the court.

The construction of the court

The fence was made of linen sheets attached to brass pillars, which stood in brass sockets, and silver rods which joined pillar to pillar, and the pillars were held upright, in spite of the strong prevailing winds of the wilderness, by chords that were attached to silver hooks, formed in silver bands around the top, or neck of each pillar, and to brass pegs driven into the desert, Ex. 27;9-15.

The pillars: The way the scripture reads indicates that the pillars were of the same metal as the sockets of brass. The pillars were strong; they stood upright, never leaning one way or the other. I would suggest that they represent the responsible brethren or elders. This view is supported by the statement of Paul in Gal.2;9, where he says that James, Peter and John seemed to be pillars, also the reference to the over comer in the Church at Philadelphia, whom the Lord said He would make "a pillar in the temple of My God", Rev.3;12.

The Sockets of Brass

The pillars were not embedded in the desert, and did not stand in their own strength, but stood in sockets of brass. There was evidently a stout tendon on the base of the pillar which fitted snugly into a slot or mortise in the top-centre of the socket.

The sockets of brass represent the person of Christ and His finished work, in which we alone can stand. "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" 2 Tim.2;1. So the elders are to stand firm, not leaning this way or that, according to the prevailing winds, Eph. 4;14, but not in any self confidence, for such will fall, 1 Cor. 10;12.

The brass or bronze is a metal that can withstand, and absorb the heat of fire, and thus speaks to us of the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All through His life, He stood the fire of persecution that was directed against Him by those who made themselves His enemies, but when hanging on the cross, during those three hours of darkness, He bore, and exhausted, the fierce and unmitigated wrath of a holy God against sin. All that the justice and righteousness of a holy God could demand against man and his sin, the blessed substitute fully paid.

The casting of the sockets.

We have seen that the pillars of the fencing of the tabernacle stood in the sockets of brass which typifies the Lord Jesus Christ who went through all the sufferings.

The sockets were cast, and to do this the bronze had to be subjected to extreme heat sufficiently severe to melt the metal so that it would pour like water into the mould. This emphasizes the terrible nature of the fierce wrath of God, which the Lord Jesus bore when He hung on the cross. Before He died, He cried "It is finished", blessed words! The work was done to the eternal satisfaction of our righteous God, nothing remains to be done, all the judgment was borne, exhausted. What a socket in which to stand. "I am resting in the finished work of Christ!"

As the socket of brass cut off the pillar from contact with the desert, so the death of Christ separates me from the world. I stand complete in Him, strong in His strength, "Perfect and complete, in all the will of God.

The bands of silver:

Around the tops and bottoms of the pillars were bands of silver, in which hooks were formed on four sides. To the hooks on the desert side, and the Tabernacle side chords were attached, and these were attached on the other end, to bronze pins that were driven into the desert. The pins or pegs were strong, and provided an anchor that would not move, and speak of God's power to keep.

The saints of the dispersion, to whom Peter wrote, had suffered much. All the wrath of the gates of Hades, and of Rome had been hurled against them, but Peter tells that they were "kept by the power of God through faith, unto salvation". I would suggest that the pegs represent the power and the chords the faith.

The hooks on the other sides were to receive silver rods, which united pillar to pillar, thus combining the strength of all, and providing a strong unyielding support, to which the linen sheets were then attached.

The silver speaks of redemption; it was obtained when the people were numbered, when each had to pay the atonement money, a half shekel for each, rich or poor, young or old, high or low. This reminds us that the Lord Jesus paid the same price for each one of us. Peter tells that we have not been redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, ----- but with the precious blood of Christ, 1 Pet.1: 18-19. The communion of the blood of the Christ, along with the "unity of the Spirit"(1 Cor. 10; 16 and chapter 12; 13) that unites the saints together, and combines their strength, leads them to support each other.

THE PILLARS OF BRASS:

As we have seen, the pillars were also of brass, the same as the socket in which it stood. This shows that if one is to stand for God, they must also expect to suffer, 2 Tim. 3; 12. Though none can share the atoning sufferings of Christ, nor even understand them, yet we are called to share His sufferings, that is, His testimonial sufferings, the sufferings of reproach, persecution, reviling etc.

In Philippians Paul tells us that it is given to the believer not only to believe on Christ but to suffer for Him also, Phil.1;29. Then in chapter 3, he speaks of knowing Christ and, "The fellowship of His sufferings", ch.3; 10. To the Colossians he said that he filled up "That which is behind of the afflictions of Christ" in his flesh, "for His body's sake". So today any who will stand for Christ, and will not lean before the winds of persecution or of doctrine, must expect to invoke the criticism, condemnation and persecution of others, sometimes even of those with whom they are in fellowship.. Eph.4;14.

However the brass pillars, though the strong winds of the wilderness would hurl the sand and grit against them, it would only polish the brass and make them shine the brighter.

THE SILVER RODS:

These rods connected to hooks on the bands of silver, and joined pillar to pillar, thus uniting the fence into one continuous thing. In contrast to the pillars which stood up, the rods laid down. This brings to mind the verse in 1 John 3;16, which tells us that "because He laid down His life for us", (the silver), "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren". The fact that the rods are silver, suggests persons who have a very deep sense of the mercy of God, such as Paul, "the chief of sinners" had. The Lord Jesus said "Her sins which are many are forgiven; for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little". Luke 7;47.

Dear believers like these, seldom insist on having their own way, or stand up for their own "rights", but by their humility and self denial unite the believers in the local assembly and their testimony.

Charles E.Wigg

THE LINEN SHEETS

Linen in the scriptures speaks of righteousness. The Bride the Lambs wife is clothed in "Fine linen, pure and white;" for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints", Rev. 19;9.. The linen fence would be the first thing that one approaching the tabernacle would see; it formed the mass of material to fill the view.

This emphasizes the need for practical righteousness and holiness in the life of each believer. Paul said that the Corinthians were their letter written in their hearts, "known and read of all men",2 Cor.3;2-3.Any person who seeks to draw near to God, the first thing that they see of Him is what they see in the lives of His people, we are God's love letter to lost men. It is most important then that our lives commend the Gospel to others, that we "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things", Titus 2; 10.

We must let our light so shine before men, that they may see our good (or upright), works and glorify our Father, who is in heaven. Mat. 5; 15. We are to attract men to Christ, the "gate", not turn them away.

The purpose of the fence:

The fence was there, not to keep people out, but to direct them to the gate; even a blind person could find his way to the gate, by following the fence around. This demonstrates the purpose of the believer's testimony, both individually, and as members of the local assembly. We are meant by our clean and upright lives, to attract and to guide people to Christ, who is the "gate", the only way by which any person can come to God.

Charles E. Wigg

The gate of the court.

The gate (as indicated earlier), clearly typifies the person of Christ, and the different aspects of His glorious character. He said "I am the door, by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved, John 10;9. It is also borne out by the statement of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, "I am the way, and the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by Me", John 14; 6. Peter also stresses this when he said, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved", Acts 4;12.

The colours of the gate:

The gate was a curtain, which was made of fine twined linen, on which were embroidered the colours of blue, purple, and scarlet. These colours represent different aspects of the various glories of Christ, as set out for us in the four gospels.

BLUE:- the colour of heaven, and represents the heavenly glory of Christ as the SON OF GOD. It is John's Gospel that emphasizes the glory of the Son of God. He first tells us of His Deity, His Eternal nature, His glory as the Creator, and then tells that "The Word became flesh and tabernacled amongst us, and we have contemplated His glory, the Glory as of an only-begotten with the Father, full of grace and truth", ch.1;14, (J.N.D. Trans). He stresses His heavenly character in chapter 3, 13, and 31. The miracles of John's Gospel are called signs, a sign points to something, and these signs point to the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

PURPLE:- the royal colour, the colour worn by Kings and the richest of the nobility, thus it represents the Royal Glory of Christ as the SON OF DAVID; It is Mathew who presents the Lord Jesus to us as the Son of David. Right from chapter one, where in the genealogy he traces the line back to David, to the last chapter, where we hear the Lord Jesus say, "All power is given unto Me, in heaven and in earth".ch.28;18, these are the words of the King. In chapter 2; 2, we hear the wise men ask, "Where is he that is Born King of the Jews? The honour of being born king, is unique in human history, no other person was ever born king. In chapter 9; 27, we hear the blind men cry, "thou Son of David have mercy on us". In chapter 12; 23, the people ask, "Is not this the Son of David". In chapter 22; 42, the Lord

Jesus asks the Pharisees, "What think ye of Christ, whose son is he?, and they reply, The Son of David", the Lord Jesus then goes on to point out that He is not only David's son, but David's Lord.

Many other passages could be cited, but for the purpose of these 'Brief Notes' these will suffice.

SCARLET:- the distinctive colour, it stands out, it catches the eye. The children of the virtuous woman are said to be clothed in scarlet (Prov. 31.). It is interesting to note that the scarlet dye is made from the crushed bodies of the worm *Coccus Illicus*, the female of this creature attaches its body firmly to a tree, spreads scarlet dye around itself, and gives birth to its eggs, then dies, its dead body remaining as a protection for the eggs until they hatch, and begin their new life.

How suggestive this is of our Lord Jesus, who in life and in death was absolutely distinctive. Denying Himself constantly, living for others, and finally dying for others on the tree, for you and for me! Shedding His precious blood so that we might have life, "Hallelujah what a Saviour!" We see the scarlet of Christ's distinctive and unique humanity in the Gospel of Luke, who presents the Lord Jesus to us as the SON OF MAN. Luke gives us details of Christ's humanity that are not given by any other of the other Gospel writers. He alone tells of His conception, birth and boyhood.

The miracles of Luke's Gospel emphasize the perfection and beauty of Christ's humanity, His perfect compassion, as well as His deity. Let us take two examples, the first being the healing of the man full of leprosy in chapter 5. There in verse 13 we are told that the Lord Jesus put forth His hand and touched the leper. The word translated touch, means to handle freely: we might ask why He did this, when the power of His divine word was sufficient to heal the man completely? It was because of His perfect human compassion, that poor man had not felt a human touch for many years. He was cut off from his family, feared and shunned by all, and had to cry out "Unclean, Unclean", wherever he went.

How it must have moved his heart, when he felt the warm hands of our blessed Lord pass over his diseased body! Here was One who understood how he felt, and felt for him and with him. He was perfectly human, yet absolutely divine. The second example is in chapter 7 ; 12-15, where the Lord Jesus first healed the broken heart of the grieving widow, with His words, "Weep not," then with the word of His divine power, called the young man back from the dead. But then it adds in verse 15, "He gave him back to his mother." Here is the expression once again, of His perfect human feelings and understanding. He not only called the young man back from the dead, but put him back into his mother's arms. Thus we see the glory of the Son of Man.

As the dying thief witnessed the calm and graceful way in which the Lord Jesus bore the sufferings of the cross, he was led to exclaim, "This man has done nothing amiss". The centurion cries, "Certainly this was a righteous man," whereas both Matthew and Mark tell us that he said that He was truly the Son of God. Luke closes his gospel by showing us the Lord Jesus as man, being carried up into heaven, while in the act of blessing His disciples.

The perfect manhood of the Lord Jesus Christ was an absolute necessity for Him to be our Saviour. No angel could accomplish our redemption, it was man who had sinned, it was man who must pay the price of our redemption. It was also necessary to enable Him to be our Great High Priest. Thus we see the meaning of the colour scarlet.

Charles E. Wigg

Fine Twined Linen:

This speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ as the perfect Servant, and emphasizes His perfect righteousness. The fine linen, clean and white in which the Bride is arrayed in Rev. 19 ; 8, is said to be the "righteousness of the saints". The Lord Jesus did what was right, not out of any sense of duty, but because He loved it, Psalm, 45 ; 7.

In Isaiah 53 ; 11, God calls Him, "My righteous servant". Linen has great wearing qualities, and will wear longer than any cloth made of natural fibers. While teaching on this subject on one occasion, I was emphasizing this aspect of linen, and after the meeting and old sister came to me and told me that she still has a beautiful linen table cloth that was used by her grandmother. This sister and her husband had been married for more than 60 years, so the cloth would have been more than a hundred years old, and she told me that it was still in good condition.. So we may rightly speak of the fine twined linen as being the cloth of service.

It is Mark's gospel that emphasizes the glory of Christ as God's perfect servant. We could write as a caption over that Gospel the words that God spoke through Isaiah "Behold my servant whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth", chapter 42 ; 1. Mark gives us no details concerning the conception, birth or boyhood of Christ, nor of his years of adolescence. He introduces Him to us as a servant, preaching the Gospel, working in the service of His heavenly Father. Mark constantly uses the words "immediately and straightway", to emphasize the fact that the Lord Jesus never wasted a moment.

In chapter 7 we hear the people say of God's servant, " He doeth all things well". verse 37. Then as the Gospel closes he tells us that though the Lord Jesus was received up into heaven, yet when the disciples went forth everywhere to preach, the Lord was "working with them", Ch. 16 ; 20, still serving. Thus the gate brings before us the fourfold aspects of the glory of Christ, the only one, through whom men can draw near to God. Entering through the gate, represents the repentant sinner, coming to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. When one does this, the new birth takes place, they are then able to see the kingdom of God, things that had remained a mystery before, and to enter the kingdom of God, by surrendering their lives to trust and to obey the Lord Jesus , the King.

The Brazen Alter:

After entering through the gate, the first thing that the worshipper sees is the great brazen altar, with the fire blazing there, and the smoke of the sacrifice ascending as a sweet savour to God.

This **altar speaks of** Christ as the one by whom alone we can approach God, and by whom we can offer the sacrifice of praise, prayer and worship, Heb. 13 ; 10-15. But the altar speaks to us more of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He did for us, when He suffered and died on the cross, on Golgotha's hill, in contrast to the gate and its colours, which reminded us of the many glories of the person of our blessed Lord.

Acacia wood: In Exodus Ch. 27; 1-8, we are given the details of the construction of the brazen altar, and in verse 1 we are told that it was to be made of acacia wood, which was then overlaid with brass, or bronze. The acacia tree grew in the desert, and was a comparatively small and stunted tree. It speaks to us of the perfect, incorruptible humanity of Christ, as the one who grew up here in this waste and barren wilderness-world.

Isaiah describes the acacia tree in verse 2 and 3 of chapter 53 of his prophecy. There he says that He, (our Lord Jesus Christ,) would grow up before Him, (God, our Heavenly Father,) as a tender plant, (more correctly, sapling, a young tree,) and like a root out of a dry ground. When the Lord Jesus came into this world, it was indeed a dry ground, there was so little that God could take pleasure in, but when God looked down upon His Son, for the first time since the fall of Adam, He saw one in whom He could find all His delight.

Because of the harsh, dry, and barren environment, the desert acacia never grows to a very large size, seldom more than 12-15 feet in height, it is a humble desert tree. That is why Isaiah says; He hath neither form nor comeliness, (lordliness,) and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. The world saw no beauty in the Lord Jesus; His humility was an offence to those who looked for a conquering Messiah, a charismatic political figure who would draw the masses after him in a national revolt that would overthrow the occupying Roman power, and establish Israel once again as the head of the nations.

They said of Him, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" and they were offended in Him, Matt. 13 ; 55-58. But God found in Christ what He could find in no other. Everything that He had ever sought in man, God found it in Christ. That is why twice, once at His baptism, and later on the Mount of Transfiguration, God declared that He found all His delight, in the person of His dear Son. The acacia wood then, reminds us of the humble, holy, incorruptible humanity of Christ, without which He could never have been our Savior.

The Brazen Alter(contd)

Overlaid with bronze

As mentioned earlier, the brass, or bronze, represents the Lord Jesus as the one who has borne all the wrath of a holy God against our sin, and our sins. Bronze, or copper, is renowned for its ability to stand and to absorb heat, it has a very high melting point.

Though outwardly meek, lowly in heart, yet He had the strength to endure all that men did to Him, but in addition to bear the unmitigated fury, the fire of God's wrath against sin. All that God could righteously demand of lost and guilty sinners, He, the sinless one paid it all. That is why before He died, He cried in mighty triumph, "It is finished", He died in the full knowledge that nothing remained of the wrath of God. Blessed be His Holy Name!

The acacia wood was overlaid with bronze, this bronze must have been quite thick, because all of the burnt offerings, all of the peace offerings, the oblations, the trespass offerings, the consecration offerings, were burnt upon this altar, during the 40 years of the wilderness journey of the children of Israel, and also for many years afterwards, when they were in the land, right up to the time of Samuel, were burned upon this altar. We never read of it being either repaired, or replaced. Thus for so many years the fire burned both night and day in this great altar of bronze, for we are told that the fire was never to go out, Lev. 6 ; 9-13. This would teach us, that our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our "altar", is never to be replaced by another, that as long as we are here in this wilderness-world, we are to continually offer the sacrifice of praise and worship, to Him, and through Him to God, and our Father.

The dimensions of the altar:

We are told in Ex.27: 1, which the altar was to be 5 cubits long, 5 cubits broad, and 3 cubits high, which will show that it was very large. We are told in Eph. 3; 18-19, about the dimensions of the love of Christ, there 4 dimensions are mentioned, the breadth, length, depth and height, and assured that those dimensions are inscrutable, passing knowledge.

So here we are reminded of the tremendous scope of the sacrifice of Christ. It is so long, that in the patience of God it can reach those who have wandered farthest away, even the chief of sinners is reached by that love and patient sacrifice, God using Saul as a sample case to display in him the length to which His mercy can reach, displaying His whole longsuffering, so that all might have hope. 1 Tim.1; 14-16. So broad in its extent, that it is sufficient so that if all men were to repent and to receive Christ's salvation, all could be saved. John tells us that "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world", 1 John, 2; 2. So deep that it has measured and borne the horrible, depth of man's sin and guilt, and the awful depth of God's judgment against that sin.

The Brazen Alter(contd)

Five cubits square:

Presuming that Moses used the Egyptian cubit, which was approximately half a meter, or twenty inches, this would have meant that the brazen altar was more than eight feet square, (two and a half meters.) A big man may measure 6'8" from finger tip to finger tip, so that it was beyond the power of man to span, or to grasp the mighty extent of that altar, and for us

the mighty extent of the redeeming work of Christ. The hymn says that it is "Broader than the scope of my transgression, Deeper than the mighty rolling sea".

The sacrifice of Christ not only redeems lost man to God, but also a vast creation that was stained by the sin of man. The world to come - the millennial age- is all based on the mighty scope of the sufficient sacrifice of Christ. When Adam fell, not only did he plunge the whole human race into ruin, sin and death, but he also made the creature, the innocent animals, subject to the bondage of corruption.

When the Lord Jesus comes in His glory to reign, the whole creation that now groans and travails together in pain, will then be set free, but only because Christ died, Rom. 8;18-23. We are told in Heb. 2; 9, that the Lord Jesus "tasted death for everything", (J.N.D. trans.)

The fact that it was foursquare, would teach us the universal scope of the sacrifice of Christ. The number four in typical teaching, usually represents what is universal, there are the 4 points of the compass, North, South, East and West, there are the four winds of heaven, and there are the four corners of the earth. It is because of the universal scope of Christ's sacrifice, and the salvation He purchased through that suffering, that we can now go to men, wherever they are, from North to South, from East to West, and joyfully proclaim the Gospel of Salvation.

Charles E. Wigg

The Brazen Alter (contd)

The height:

The height of the altar was 3 cubits, or about 5 feet, (1 1/2 meters) high. This meant that if one was to see what was happening inside the depths of the altar, one had to draw near. While everyone remained at a distance, they would see the fire, and the smoke as it ascended to God, but would never see the sacrifice consumed by the fire.

The altar was hollow, the acacia wood boards, covered with thick bronze, formed an outer wall, and fixed to the internal corners of those bronze walls were hooks, from which a grating, (network,) of bronze, was hung, by bronze rings on the corners of the grating. This grating hung down inside the altar, and because of this, the fury of the fire that consumed the sacrifice would only be seen by those who cared enough to come near.

In our days, there are so many who have truly trusted Christ as their Saviour, but who have a very shallow and superficial appreciation, and understanding of all that He passed through for them, when He hung on the cross. How often we talk of Christ dying on the cross, but rarely do we come (in our minds), to that place of the skull. So few have heard that cry of agony, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" Has your heart ever been torn by the agony of that cry?

Have you ever wept as you have thought of what He passed through for you? Have you ever seen, with the eyes of your heart, His lovely bruised and blood stained body, hanging limp and lifeless on that tree, and said to yourself, He did it all for me?

There is a solemn depth about the agony and sufferings of Christ the most of us never realize. The Psalmist says, "Thy judgments are a great deep", Psalm 36;6. "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy cataracts; all thy waves and thy billows have gone over me". Psalm 42; 7.

My dear brother and sister let us "draw near, and see the Saviour die, on the cross, on the cross", as the hymn says. To see the fire consume the sacrifice, was an awesome sight for the offerer to behold. It leaves upon our souls a deep sense of the hatefulness of sin, and of the terrible cost to our blessed Lord, that we might be His.

The Brazen Alter(contd

The horns:

We are told in verse 2, (Ex..27,) that there were four horns, one on each of the corners of the altar, these were places where the guilty could come and plead for mercy, as we see in 1 Kings, 1;50, and 2;28. The blood of the sacrifices was placed on those horns, and all represents our coming to Christ and His cross, when convicted of our sin, to plead for mercy, but mercy based on the righteous sacrifice of our Substitute. "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling".

The rings and staves:

In verse 6 and 7, we are told about the staves of acacia wood, which were overlaid with bronze, and the rings of bronze into which they were inserted, and these were then used for carrying the altar from place to place. It would seem that no mechanical means were used to transport the altar, even though because of its large size, and its construction, it would have been very heavy. It was to be carried on the shoulders of the Levites. This would teach us, that as we move on in the testimony of God, we are to carry all that the brazen altar represents, in our hearts. This calls for spiritual strength and energy which can only be gained by feeding on the right kind of food, the strong meat of the deeper things of the word of God. (Heb. 5; 11-14.)

The strong meat is rich in protein, and calcium, which build muscle and bone. So many today have no appetite for the deeper things of the word of God, which they consider to be too dull and boring, too heavy. They want the light and sweet things, things that please the palate of the flesh, they want to live on spiritual "candy floss", such will never develop muscle and bone, and perhaps why so many are weak, and are unable to accept responsibility, or to stand for Christ.

The limit of the people's approach:

Only the priests and the Levites were permitted to advance further than the brazen altar, and today there are so few who ever get beyond the knowledge that their sins are forgiven. This is of course a wonderful knowledge to have, but there is much more for us to enjoy than that. The brazen altar brings all that to mind, but it also emphasizes the worth of the person of Christ, what He means to the heart of God.

As believer-priests, we all have the privilege to enter the Holy place, to "draw near to God". Let us not be content just to know that our sins are forgiven, let us enter into the full enjoyment of all the privilege that God has bestowed upon us, through Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit!

THE BRAZEN LAVER

Exo. 30:17—21

This was a kind of wash basin, placed between the brazen altar and the entrance to the holy place. The priests were to wash their hands and feet in its water, before they entered the holy place, "that they died not". It would show us the necessity of our daily cleansing by the power of the word of God, so that we may enjoy sweet communion with God, and the life of Christ that He has imparted to us.

We need to point out here the difference between the judicial cleansing through the blood of Christ, and the moral cleansing through the water of the word of God.

We are cleansed from our sins, through being washed by our Lord Jesus Christ in His precious blood on the day of our conversion, Rev. 1; 5-6. The precious blood that He shed on the cross, satisfied the righteous claims of the holy judgment of God, and when we are washed in that blood we are forever cleansed from the guilt of our sins. That washing is never repeated, and never needs to be repeated, because the "Blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, goes on cleansing us from all sin", (the Greek word for cleanses, has the continuous, active sense.) That precious blood ever avails for me, and silences the voice of the "Accuser of the brethren", Rev. 12; 11.

When the soldier pierced the side of the Lord Jesus, both blood and water flowed out. The blood was to satisfy the righteous claims of a Holy God in judgment; the water was to cleanse the sinner from the defilement or pollution of sin. This water is applied through the reading of, and obedience to the word of God, and is to be repeated often, even daily. Through the precious blood of Christ, I am forever delivered from the judgment of God, and can never again bring myself under that judgment. But because I walk in a world that is full of pollution, and because I possess a sinful fallen nature, I am in constant need of cleansing from the corruption of sin. This takes place, when convicted by the word of God, I confess them to the Lord Jesus, in genuine repentance, He then cleanses me from all unrighteousness, 1 John. 1:9.

When the Lord Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, before the last supper, Peter first refused the kindly ministrations, but when the Lord told him that without washing, he could have no part with Him, Peter went to the other extreme, saying "not my feet only, but my hands and my head". But Jesus replied "He that is washed,(all over,) needeth not to wash,

except his feet, but entirely clean:" John.13:10. The "All over", washing takes place at conversion, but the washing of the feet, is a continuing daily experience..

THE BRAZEN LAVER

Special Bronze:

We are told in Ex. 38; 8, that the laver was made of the bronze looking glasses, (mirrors,) that had been used by the women who served at the door of the Tabernacle. Three times in the New Testament, we are told that the word of God is like a mirror, 1 Cor. 13; 12, 2 Cor. 3; 18, and James, 1; 22-25. All this emphasizes that this cleansing comes through the word of God, Eph. 5; 26.

It works out like this: You read in the word of God, it becomes a mirror, and shows you, by the enlightening of the Holy Spirit, things that are unclean, faults, sins in your life. The same Holy Spirit then convicts you through the word, and leads you to repentance. The sins are then confessed by you to the Lord Jesus, they are forgiven and cleansed away out of your life. The link of communion that the sins had broken is then restored, and you can go happily, without fear into the holy place, the immediate presence of God.

Charles E. Wigg

THE BRAZEN LAVER Ex. 38 (Contd)

The Laver's foot:

We are not given any details of the design of the Laver, only the "Laver and its foot, (or stand,)" are mentioned. I have seen many illustrations of what Bible Teachers thought the Laver was like, and most depict it like a cup and saucer, the upper vessel for washing the hands, the lower for the feet.

The model that impressed me most, was that which was used by the late brother Handley Bird, an English missionary who was mightily use of God in India.

His model of the laver was a vessel resting on the back of a bronze ox. He had no doubt got that idea from the details that are given of the Temple built by Solomon. The Temple was really an enlarged version of the Tabernacle, but built of solid durable materials.

In the Temple there was a bronze sea, which rested on the backs of twelve oxen. Some believe that the sea was a huge reservoir, and the water continually poured from the mouths of the oxen, and was collected in a lower receptacle, and drained away.

In that case the oxen would remind us of the unfailing patience of God. How patiently He bears with us in our failures, and when we turn to Him for cleansing and forgiveness, He never turns has us away, and James told us that "In many things we often offend".

We are commanded that before attending the remembrance meeting, to partake of the Lord's Supper, we are to examine ourselves, and only then to eat of the bread and drink of the cup, and to do so worthily.

That he die not:

If the priest was to ignore the instruction to was, and entered the holy place in a defiled state, he exposed himself to the disciplinary judgment of God. Similarly, if we ignore the commands of scripture regarding personal holiness, and continue to participate in the holy things, we too may come under the disciplinary judgment of God.

This actually happened to the Corinthians, they were turning the Lord's Supper into a drunken feast, and as a result some had died, and many were weak and sickly amongst them. 1Cor.11: 30. Much sickness is the result of sin, even today. It may be the result of abusing the body by the practice of sin in pre-converted days, or the indulgence in sinful habits in the present. Even apart from this, though today people do not fall down dead when they commit sin, like Ananias and Sapphira did, in Acts,5; 1-11, yet people do die spiritually, and this may explain why there is so much deadness in the assemblies of God's people today. People taking an active part in the ministry of the assembly, yet not in the joy of life.. Let us heed the warning!

Charles E.Wigg

The outer veil of the Tabernacle

Having washed his hands and feet, the priest was then to enter the Holy Place to do his service there. To do this, he had to pass through the outer veil, which was made of the same materials as the gate, using the same colours, Ex. 26; 36-37.

This veil again speaks of Christ, as the only one through whom we can approach into the presence of God. The colours as in the gate set forth the different glories of Christ, i.e. Blue, Son of God, Purple, Son of David, Scarlet, Son of Man, Linen, the Perfect Servant. As you pass through a curtain it tends to cling to you, unless it is brushed aside. Thus as the priest entered the Holy Place he was literally clothed in the beautiful colours of the curtain, or veil. Eph. 2;18 tells us that "Through Him we both,(Jew and Gentile), have access by one Spirit to the Father", and it is through Him alone that we can enter there. But as we do, we enter as those who are clothed in His worth and excellence, taken into favour, "in the beloved", Eph.1;6, for we have become the "righteousness of God in Him", 2cor.5;21.

The pillars of the veil:

This beautiful curtain was hung from 5 pillars of acacia wood, that were overlaid with gold, and upheld by hooks of gold, but the pillars stood in sockets of bronze. The acacia wood, as we have seen, and will see continually in these notes, represent the incorruptible, perfect, yet humble manhood of Christ, but the Gold represents His deity, for though He was truly Man, yet He was, and ever is , truly God. The Hebrew word for gold, means that which shines, as though there was ever a mystery about the precious metal. There is a mystery about the Person of Christ, that human mind will never understand. The Lord Jesus said the

"no one knows the Son but the Father", Matt.11;27, showing us that in His person He is so great that His essence and being, no man can know, Him, only the Father. He the Word who is God, became flesh, and dwelt amongst us, John, 1;1 and 14. He is God, "manifest in flesh, 1Tim.3;16, and is the "Effulgence of His glory, the express image of his person, Heb.1;3.

There were 5 pillars, again reminding of His human weakness, for He was crucified in weakness, 2Cor,13;4, and they stood in sockets of bronze, showing us that all that He is could only be made available to us through His sufferings and death.

THE HOLY PLACE:

As the priest entered the Holy Place, a sight of the most exquisite beauty and glory met his eyes, Psalm 29;9 says that in His temple, everything speaks of His glory, so also in the Tabernacle's Holy place, everything spoke of His glory. As the priest looked around he would see the boards, or frames that made the walls of the Tabernacle, covered with pure gold. If they were solid boards, then it would appear as walls of solid gold. If they were frames, then he would see the beautiful curtain, with its figures of cherubim embroidered in threads of pure gold, framed in the frames of pure gold.

If he looked up, he would again see that beautiful curtain, because it formed the ceiling of the Tabernacle. If he looked to the North, he would see the second veil in all its glory, and before it on the right hand, the golden table of showbread, in the centre, the lovely golden altar, and on the left side, the beautiful golden lamp stand, with its seven golden lamps shedding a soft and flickering light over all, and making all the gold to shine and to sparkle. What a sight it must have been, enough to fill the soul with awe, and the heart with worship, yet all was but a tiny manifestation of the glory of the One whose house it was. Let us now look at each thing in detail, and see what they will teach us.

THE GOLDEN TABLE OF SHEW-BREAD

The instructions regarding the construction and use of the golden table are given to us in Ex. 25;23-30. Its size was fairly small, only a metre long, half a metre wide, and .750 MM high. The smallness emphasizes the intrinsic worth and glory of the One of whom it speaks, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Its purpose was to bear the loaves and the vessels that were placed upon it. Just as it states in Zech. 6; 13, "He shall bear the glory". It was made of acacia wood, showing that the present service of our glorified Lord, is all dependent upon His sinless manhood, and the gold reminding us again of the glory of his deity, the One upon whom we rest, and who upholds us in the presence of God, is both perfectly human, and absolutely divine. It had a rim, or surround like a crown, and this kept what was placed upon it from falling down. This rim was of a handbreadth, and would remind us of the lovely doxology found in Jude;24, "Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen"

These verses set out for us beautifully, the typical meaning of the Golden Table of Shew-bread. It was on that table that the twelve fresh loaves of show-bread were placed each Sabbath, and remained there through the seven days of each week that followed. Those loaves were "faultless", as were the vessels that were also placed upon the table, vessels that had been used in the making of the loaves of shew-bread.

The Table bore the loaves and vessels constantly in the presence of God, and the Lord Jesus presents His saints faultless in the presence of His glory. Just as Isaiah tells us in chapter 63 ; 9, of his prophecy, "He bore them and carried them all the days of old". The hand breadth, brings to mind the lovely words of the Lord Jesus in John,10;28-29, where He tells us that none, (neither men, angels, or demons,) can pluck us out of His mighty hand, nor out of the mighty hand of His Father, whom He says is "greater than all."

Psl. 73;23, tells us that with His hand He grasps our right hand, to hold us and to keep us from falling. Psl. 116;8, tells us of the things from which He keeps us, and Nehemiah continually refers to the "Good hand of my God upon me". The Lord Jesus was able to say to His Father about those whom the Father had given Him, "I have kept them in thy name", "those.....have I kept, not one of them is lost".

The loaves of Shew-bread:

These were twelve in number, and each one represented one of the tribes of Israel, and thus they represent the saints as they appear before God, in their order and beauty, sprinkled with frankincense, which speaks of the very perfection of the grace of Him on whom we rest.

They were to be placed in two rows, six in a row. The two is the number of witness, or testimony, & the six is the number of man, according to Rev. 13 ; 18, thus if we bring both together, it would remind us that though we are but men, yet we appear before God, as a testimony to His marvelous work of grace in us, and according to His eternal purpose.

Here we see then a testimony to the divine nature in the believer, that which is purely the work of God by His Holy Spirit, which cannot and does not sin. We are not here introducing the doctrine of sinless perfection, as taught erroneously by some, but reminding ourselves that what God is doing in us, is sinless and perfect. It is thus we appear before God, whoever takes delight in His own work in the believer, as He did in the creation at the beginning.

God sees us thus, resting on Christ, wrought by the Spirit in His divine character, and as the loaves were sprinkled with frankincense, exhaling the very fragrance of Christ manifesting in some small measure, something of the perfect human graces that shone in all their fullness in Him.

THE GOLDEN ALTAR

This stood in the very centre of the Holy Place, immediately before the veil, it was on this altar that incense was burned as a sweet savour to God, each morning when Aaron dressed the lamps, and each evening, at 3 PM, "the hour of incense".

IT'S SIZE:

The first thing that we notice about the golden altar is, that compared with the brazen altar, it is quite small, it is only one cubit square, (i.e. a half meter), and two cubits tall. The emphasis then is different with the golden altar; it is not the scope, or magnitude of Christ's sacrifice that is emphasized, but the intrinsic worth of His person. Like the Ark, it was made of acacia wood, reminding us once more of the incorruptible manhood of Him who is our intercessor.

Hebrews makes much comment on this, the preparation for His intercessory service, through the things that He suffered here. He learned obedience, He suffered being tempted, He was tempted in all things like as we are, but yet was without sin. He was, and still is, man as God intended man to be. But it was overlaid with pure gold, reminding us once more that though He was truly man, yet He was just as truly God.

It was pure gold; there was no mixture, no alloy of other metals. Pure gold is not available today, each biscuit or ingot is stamped "99% pure", but not so with our Altar, for Paul tells us that "All the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in Him, and that it pleased the Father that all the "fullness" should dwell in Him, Col. 2; 9 & 1;19. Not only is He our intercessor, but it is through Him that we can draw near to God, and it is by Him, that we can offer the sacrifice of praise continually to God, Heb.7;25, & 13;15.

Charles E.Wigg TASMANIA.

THE GOLDEN ALTAR

The Rim:

Exodus chapter 30; 3, tells us that the altar had a rim, or crown around its top. As with the golden table, its purpose was to prevent the censer in which was the fire, upon which the incense was placed, from falling. This connects with the verse already quoted in Heb, 7; 25, where we are told that He is able to save to the uttermost, (completely), those who come unto God by Him...

The Horns:

As with the brazen altar there were four horns, showing us that wherever we may be, or may come from, no matter what point of the compass, we may come there and cling to those horns, and there plead the promises of God, which He has made to us in His word, and when we do so, God is both pleased and honoured, because when we expect Him to keep His promises, we set to our seal that God is true, and thus please and honour Him, John, 3;33.

The Rings and Staves:

The purpose of these was for the carrying of the altar, it was never to be carried on a cart or wagon, but carried on the shoulders of the Kohathites. It would teach us that all that the altar represents, we are to carry with us wherever we go on our wilderness journey, we are to carry ever in our hearts a deep and flowing appreciation of the matchless worth of the One through whom we approach to God, and by whom we are to offer continually the sacrifice of praise, the incense of adoration and worship.

Aaron: was to burn incense on it morning and evening, reminding us once more of the service of our Great High Priest. We have an example of this in John chapter 17, where we are privileged to hear our blessed Saviour praying for us. There He reveals His hearts deepest longings for us, He does not pray about our health, about our financial, or temporal needs, but asks for things so much more wonderful than those things. Things that relate to the Father's pleasure and glory. He does not ask for us to be taken out of the world that was about to crucify Him, but He does pray for us to be kept from the evil that abounds. He prays that we might be one, thus expressing in our personal and collective testimony, the very nature of God. He asks that we may each enjoy a sweet sense of nearness to Himself, to enjoy the bliss of His company in the glory of the Father's presence.

Charles E. Wigg TASMANIA.

THE GOLDEN ALTAR (contd)

The priests were also to burn incense there, and are warned not to ever offer strange incense. The composition of the incense that was acceptable to God is given to us in chapter thirty, 34:38, and each ingredient speaks of some different aspect of the glory of Christ.

We live in a day when both strange incense and strange fire are very common, when what is pleasing to God, as set out for us in His word is ignored, and what is popular in the world, and pleasing and entertaining to men is substituted for biblical worship.

People are often moved by powers or spirits, other than the Holy Spirit, who alone can prompt and move the redeemed heart of man in true worship.

IN THE HOLY PLACE:

The golden altar stood in the Holy place so is not a reference to the prayers or worship that we offer to God in our homes. It is important to notice this, because from the very beginning of the Church's testimony, it was the practice of the believers to gather together for collective prayer. It is sad, today, the assembly prayer meeting has been almost completely neglected, and because of this there is a great lack of power, and blessing. It has been proved that where believers are so concerned to experience the power and blessing of God, that they are willing to gather together in the Lord's name, to beseech the throne of God, that God does honour the promises of His word. However incense does not only represent prayer, but especially adoration and worship.

THE GOLDEN ALTAR: A place of enlightenment

Luke's Gospel begins with the story of Zacharias who was accustomed to enter the Holy place, to burn incense at the Golden Altar. It would seem that for many years he and his wife had been praying for a child, especially for a son. The years dragged by, and in spite of all their prayers and attempts to have a child, no child was conceived. But on this momentous occasion, as he was doing what he had done many times, he had a heavenly visitor, none other than the mighty angel Gabriel himself. The visit was totally unexpected, and Zacharias was filled with fear. However the first words of the heavenly messenger were, "Fear not, Zacharias; for thy prayer is heard". He then went on to reveal the plan of God, and the glorious fact that God was about to act, and to fulfill the promise that He made to Eve, on the day that they sinned.

This incident justifies our assertion that the Golden Altar is the place of enlightening. If we are in the habit of coming regularly to what the Golden Altar represents, we may expect God to unfold His purposes and His truth to us. However He does not send Gabriel to us for this purpose, but because we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and we have the completed word of God in our hands, He communicates to us by His Spirit, through His word. When at length Zacharias emerged from the Holy place, he was unable to speak, but his appearance convinced the people who were waiting there, that he had seen a vision, had a communication from God. I would suggest that if we would exercise a ministry that will; profit the people of God, then we need to come frequently to the Golden Altar.

GOLDEN ALTAR PRAYERS

The prayers offered at the Golden Altar, always relate to what is for God's pleasure in His people. We have some fine examples of Golden Altar Prayers in Paul's letter to the Ephesians. He begins in chapter 1:3 of that epistle by offering the incense of pure adoration and of worship. His soul bursts out with that spontaneous exclamation; "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ", and he then goes on to describe the wonder of the eternal purposes of God.

This is an example that we might well follow, that is, when we approach God in prayer, we should rise above our own personal needs, and first offer to God, the worship and adoration of our hearts, should allow our hearts to be caught up in the wonder of what God is, in the glory and majesty of His being, the greatness of His plans, His eternal purpose, His ways in matchless grace, this is the incense of adoration.

Then from v. 16 to 23, he records one of his beautiful prayers. This is truly a "Golden Altar prayer." He is not at all occupied with the physical or material needs of the Ephesian believers, nor is he thinking or praying about their circumstances. Though today collective prayer is not popular, and often those leading will insist that there should be only "sentence prayers", yet even then those prayers are taken up with things that are physical, (sickness etc.) material, (success in education, work, business, etc), circumstantial, (personal comfort, better house, an easy life, without persecution, etc). How seldom do our thoughts and desires centre on the things that Paul prays about in this prayer. I commend it to your consideration.

Further on in ch.3:16-21, we have another such prayer, full of such lofty spiritual desires, that rises in character until it concludes with a lovely doxology, a spontaneous outburst of praise in verse 21. This is another "Golden Altar Prayer".

The Brazen altar was the place for the mention of the other things that we have spoken about. The ordinary people never passed beyond that point, it was only the priests that went into the Holy Place. You and I have that privilege, but do we use it as we should?

So many of us never get beyond the Brazen altar, where we are occupied with our sins, Christ's sacrifice, God's forgiveness, our needs etc. We so often fail to make full use of our God given privileges. The understanding of the meaning of the Golden Altar would then come as a challenge to us.

The Golden Lamp stand

On the left side of the Holy Place, (the south side), stood the beautiful golden lamp stand, (for details see Exodus, 25:31-40), It was made from a solid block of pure gold of a talent weight, it was not cast, but formed out of that block of gold by the process of beating with hammers of different sizes, the personal work of Bezaleel, whom God had called by name, and specially enabled to accomplish this task.

Some expositors regard the lamp stand as speaking of Christ, who said "I am the light of the world", however in these brief notes we are going to look at it as a type of the Church, as it appears before God, the bearer of light and testimony.

Let us remember that He who said "I am the light of the world", also said, "Ye are the light of the world", (Matt. 5:14.) In Revelation chapter one, we see the Lord Jesus in judicial garb, standing in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, or lamp stands, those lamp stands represented the seven Churches in Asia. In spite of all their failures, those seven Churches were the bearers of God's light to Asia Minor.

Made of pure gold:

The first thing that we are told is that the lamp stand was to be made of pure gold. We have seen earlier that the pure gold, when it applies to the person of Christ, or the types of Himself, is a reference to His Divine character, His absolute Deity. But here we are looking at an object that is a type of the Church.

The Church does not partake of Deity; however each individual member of that Church has been made partaker of the Divine Nature, 2 Pet. 1; 3. We are not sinless, but what God is doing in us is sinless, it is His own work, it is in that sense divine.

When we look at the Church publicly, (as it appears before men), we see division, confusion, much that is evil, both in doctrine and in practice, we see many tares amongst the wheat, and like the grain of mustard seed, it has become great, it involves a large percentage of this world's population, and as the Lord Jesus told, the birds of the air have come to lodge in its branches.

Thus we have the Roman Catholic Church. Whose membership is estimated to be more than one billion, one fifth of the world's population? But we must add to that the members of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, The Protestant denominations, including the many varieties of Pentecostals. Also those who claim to be un-denominational, or non-denominational, are part of the public Church, then add to these the false cults, Jehovah's witnesses, Mormons, Christadelphians, and Christian Science.

Now while this is how the Church appears publicly, yet this is not the true Church which the Lord Jesus loved and gave himself for. Scattered amongst the great mass of the public Church, there are millions of true believers, those who have been born again by the Holy Spirit of God, and through the word of God, and are now indwelt by that Holy Spirit, and mystically united together by that same Holy Spirit, and baptized by Him into the Body of Christ.

Each member of that body is far from perfect, and is certainly not sinless, yet there is in them because of God's gracious and sovereign work, that which is sinless, which is His pure work alone. When the Church is at last raptured to meet her Lord and to be with Him forever, only what God has done will remain, thus the Lord Jesus will present the Church to Himself, "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing".

Now it is this aspect of the Church, in all its glory and perfection that is brought before us in the Golden Lamp stand. Zechariah was given a vision of a lamp stand, "All of Gold", chapter 4;2, this was to remind him that in spite of the outward weakness, the divided state, and the disobedience of the remnant of Israel that had returned from exile in Babylon, yet God had not given up, but was continuing His testimony. Likewise it is confirming, and re-assuring to us in these days of decline and confusion, to be able to enter into the Holy place, and to see the beauty and glory of that Lamp stand, all of Gold.

The Golden Lamp stand (Contd..)

Of beaten work:

Now we notice that the lamp stand was not cast in a mould, but was made of beaten work. This was done by the skilful hands of Bezaleel, who is a type of the Holy Spirit. From that one block of solid, pure gold, with hammers of different sizes, by beating, he patiently laboured until the lamp stand was complete. The beating was a work of forming, as God said of His people, "This people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise", Isaiah. 43: 21. The fact that it was made from the one block of gold, reminds us of the perfect unity between the saints of the Church in the mind of God. The beating reminds us that it through the pressure, troubles. Disappointments, even the disasters of life, which the Holy Spirit is patiently forming us, or transforming us into the image of Christ, that is reproducing the image of Christ in our lives.

At the beginning of this work Bezaleel must have used big and heavy hammers, and as the work preceded, smaller hammers, until at the end. For the delicate formation of the knobs and flowers, with their petals, he must have used the finest hammers, but possibly all was

done on the same anvil, which for us represents the anvil of truth, which truth is embodied in the word of God, 'Thy word is truth'.

Let us remember this when we pass through life's trials and difficulties, God's Holy Spirit is beating us, seeking to conform us to the Divine pattern, to conform us to the image of God's Son. It is to this end that we have been predestined.

The base:

Though it is not mentioned here, this beautiful chandelier was not a candlestick, as translated in the Authorized Version, but a "Lamp stand", the Hebrew word in 'Menorah', thus because of its base, the lamp stand stood, unaided, un-supported, was not propped up in any way.

This brings to mind what Paul wrote to Timothy about the Church, that it is the "Pillar and ground, (base) of the truth", 1 Tim.3;15. What God does is solid, reliable, does not need to be propped up. Like the Church which the Lord Jesus is building. even though the Gates of Hell, (all the wisdom, cunning and might of Satan's system) is set against it, yet it will stand Hell's gates will not prevail.

The branches:

There were six branches and a central stem, all came out of the lamp stand, each was the same as the other, and all were of the same design. This is characteristic of the work and testimony of God. The six branches would remind us of how the Christian testimony has spread, through the agency of man, to every corner of the Globe. It began at Jerusalem, (the central stem), but has spread all over the world. Yet wherever that pure testimony is, there is sameness about it. This is brought about, not by men, or by organizations, but by the leading of the Holy Spirit, and obedience to the word of God, by following the simple pattern set out for us in the New Testament, especially in the book of the Acts. Whatever men establish, by their own labours, following their own ideas, will always be confusion; there will be sad contradictions of practice and of doctrine.

The Golden Lamp stand (Contd..)

The Flowers:

The lamp stand's branches were in the form of an almond branch; this brings to mind the passage in Numbers chapter 17, where Aaron's rod that had been cut off, budded, blossomed and brought forth ripened almonds. The Almond is the first of the fruit trees to blossom, and the appearance of its pure white flowers is a sign that the long winter during, which time the trees seem to be dead and dormant, is now over and signs of new life appear, life from the dead, thus denoting resurrection.

The flowers that are both beautiful and fragrant are the first sign of this new life. They then remind us of the beauty and fragrance of first love that is to be seen in the life of a newly converted soul. There is something very sweet and precious, very beautiful about a soul that has newly come to Christ. To them the love of Christ is so wonderful; everything about the life they have received is both new and wonderful.

However it seems that the original joy, fragrance and enthusiasm do not last for a long time. As with the tree, the flowers soon fall, this is of course a part of life, as development and growth takes place. If the flowers continued on month after month, there would be no fruit. Near to my home in Tasmania, there are some very beautiful flowering cherry trees, which when in full bloom are extremely beautiful, but there are never any cherries on those trees.

But with the lamp stand, the beautiful flowers are fixed in golden glory, the petals never fall. There should be in each local Assembly, representations of the different stages of spiritual growth and development. The Church at Ephesus began so well, with real sacrifice, the burning of those things that related to their old life, even though those books could have been sold for a large sum. But when the Lord Jesus sent his message to them through John, He has to tell them, "You have left your first love" God appreciates, and always remembers our brightest days, even when we forget them. He said to Israel through Jeremiah 2;2, "I remember (for) thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown, Israel was holiness unto the Lord".

However after the first flush of joy passes, the new believer comes to realise that they have chosen to walk a path that is difficult. Often there comes opposition and reproach from without, and struggles with the sinful nature within, nevertheless these very things enable the believer to grow on, to develop in the character of Christ.

The Golden Lamp stand (Contd..)

THE KNOB:

Once the petals of the flower fall, there develops where they were, a green swelling. It is small at first, but continues to grow and to swell until it becomes a knob. So the knob represents a further development in the growth of the character of Christ in the believer. Inside that green swelling there begins to form a shell, then as time goes on, inside the shell, the kernel is formed, and it is that kernel that is of value, the outer green covering, and the inner shell are of no use at all, yet these things develop first.

When young and immature, we tend to give great importance to the exterior, how we appear. But we have to learn, (as Samuel did in 1 Sam. 16;7), that God is not concerned so much with the outer self, but He looks on the heart. As the believer matures, the petty things, the things that were once important, become less important, we think less of trying to impress others with outward show, and it becomes more important to us, that the character of Christ should be formed in us. We come to learn that we have to die to self, to accept the cross of Christ as our own. To make His cross ours, by faith and daily surrender to His rule and control, by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. We begin to understand

and to apply the word of God to our lives, and we come to a point where we are able to say with Paul, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me". Thus we come practically into the gain of the teaching and power of sanctification.

The almond shaped lamp:

Each branch was crowned with a cup-like lamp, shaped like an almond, which represents the reaching of maturity in the believer's life. The Lord Jesus said, "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father.....is perfect", Matt, 5;48. That word "Perfect", simply means mature, growth in godliness. Earlier in that same chapter, He commands us to let our light shine before men, that they may see our upright works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven, verses 14-16.

Before the Master can taste the sweetness and richness of the almond, the kernel, the once green outer skin, now dead shriveled and dried, must be removed. Then the inner shell must be broken, and only then can the kernel be exposed. Taken and enjoyed. It makes me think of what Paul said to the Galatian believers, "My little children, of, (with), whom I travail in birth gin until Christ be formed in you", Gal. 4;19. They had been concentrating on the externals, circumcision, the works of the law, etc, but all was a sign of their immaturity.

The bowls:

There were three bowls for each branch, each with a knob and a flower, and four for the middle stem. These bowls were obviously reservoirs in which the oil for the lamp was stored, and from which each lamp was replenished. These Bowls obviously represent spiritual people who constantly contribute to the maintenance of the testimony in each local Assembly. It shows us how that though many contribute to the testimony borne in a place, that though there are many stages of spiritual growth to be found in the membership of any local fellowship, yet there is unity in the testimony borne. All are to combine, and to contribute to the maintenance of the light, this is what God intends, and what obedience to His word will produce. It is what Paul said to the Ephesians, "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the (uniting), bond of peace", Eph. 4;3.

The Golden Lamp stand (Contd..)

Oil for the lamp

Even when the lamp was formed, and put in its place, crowning the branch or stem, still it was incapable of giving any light; it had first to be filled with oil. This oil we are told in Ex. 27;20, was only to be Pure...Beaten...Olive ...Oil, reminding us at once of the Holy Spirit, without whose indwelling and power, the believer is unable to, shine, to witness, to give light.

First it was Pure, we should ever bear in mind that the Holy Spirit who has indwelt us from the moment of our conversion, if the Holy Spirit, not just a Spirit, or the Spirit, but the Holy Spirit, He is holy, and demands, and by His patience and power, produces holiness in the lives of those within whom He dwells.

Secondly it was beaten, a reference to the suffering that the blessed Holy Spirit passes through within us as He seeks to confirm us to the image of Christ. If Paul compared his sufferings and agony of soul for the Galatians to the agony of child-birth, then how much more does the Holy Spirit suffer as He seeks to reach God's end in us. That is why we are told to "Grieve not the Holy Spirit", and to "Quench not the Spirit". That is why we are told that He makes intercession for us, "With groaning that cannot be uttered", Rom. 8; 26

Thirdly it is Olive Oil that is obtained from a living source. It is interesting to note that He is called the "Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus", in Romans 8;2, So many verses in the Bible speak of Him as the giver and sustainer of life, the One who quickens us, see the following verses in Romans chapter 8, from the verse already quoted. We have seen in the case of Aaron's rod of almond, which it spoke of Christ in resurrection, remember that it was by the Holy Spirit that Christ was quickened and raised. It is His power alone, which enables the believer to give light, to bear witness.

Oil for the lamp Golden Lamp stand

Brought by the people:

The pure olive oil was to be brought by the people as an offering to God. It was first brought by the rulers; Ex. 53; 28, and later the people were to bring it. Lev. 24:1-4. This teaches us the part that the elders and all the Assembly members are to play in the maintenance of the testimony in the local Church.

It is a sad feature of our day that often the men are so taken up with material things and in their leisure time with sport or relaxation of some kind, watching television etc that they have lost all concern to contribute what they should to the local Assembly. Often they come to the meetings with nothing to contribute, and are quite happy to encourage women to take a public place of leadership, all of which is contrary to the explicit and repeated commands of the New Testament.

Pure olive oil:

It is also important to notice that only pure olive oil was to be used. We have already seen that this is a type of the Holy Spirit, however it is another disturbing feature of the days of departure from God's word in which we are, that many are being deceived by other spirits, who though posing as, and claiming to be the Holy Spirit, yet cause people to act in direct disobedience to the word of God that the Holy Spirit has inspired.

We may be sure, that any spirit that cause people to act, or behave in ways contrary to the word of God that He has inspired, is not the Holy Spirit. Let us take to our hearts what the word of God teaches us, and refuse these other spirits any place in our minds, hearts or Assemblies.

The Tongs and Snuff dishes or boxes

These instruments were for the tending, or trimming of the wicks of each lamp. We read in Lev. 24, that Aaron was to "order, or trim" the lamps from the evening to the morning, this is repeated in Ex. 27:20-21. Though the wicks are not mentioned, it is well known that the lamps would not burn without a wick made of cotton, or some other soft, absorbent fibre. The wick soaks up the oil and enables the flame of the light to burn.

As the wick burns carbon is formed, which prevents the proper absorption of the oil. This has to be removed before the lamp will burn with its proper brilliance. The High Priest, or one of his sons, would come, take the golden tongs in his hand, and the snuff dish in the other, and without extinguishing the lamp, he would gently crush the carbon, a little at a time, catching the black dust in the golden snuff dish, thus preventing the carbon from falling on the beautiful lamp stand, for if it did, then it would tarnish its beauty.

Once the carbon was removed, the lamp would continue to burn with a bright and even flame, and because the snuff dish was used, the beauty of the lamp stand was not tarnished, or defiled. How this reminds us of the tender grace of our Great High Priest, as through the long night of His public absence He has been patiently tending each member of each local Assembly, gently removing the burnt out self, that hinders the free flow of the Holy Spirit in our lives, so that we may "so let our light shine before men". He does it so gently, and confines the defilement, so that others are not tarnished by that which He has to remove.

He does this in different ways, it may be through our personal reading of the Bible, He will cause some verse to convict us, by the Holy Spirit, of something that is wrong in our lives, that is causing our light to burn dim. It may be carelessness, apathy, materialism, (serving mammon instead of serving God), it may be sin of some kind, or disobedience to His word. He may do it through the reading of a little paper like this, or through a word of ministry given in the local Assembly. Though it may hurt at the time, and may even provoke resentment in us, yet He does it only in love, for our good, and especially for the good of the testimony.

But then

Aaron's sons were also given this task, each of us are members of the priestly family, and we are to serve one another, just as Christ serves us. The public ministry in the Assembly is to be exercised by the men alone, 1 Cor. 14:34-35, 1 Tim. 2; 9-15. But sometimes sisters may do this privately, in a humble and comely way. However we must be careful to use only the Golden tongs, and the snuff dishes, and to do it in the same gracious way that our Great High Priest has dealt with us. In Matthew chapter 5;23-26, and chapter 18;15-18, the Lord Jesus teaches us how we are to serve each other, so that what hinders and grieves the Holy Spirit may be removed, and the lamp of testimony burn more brightly. In chapter 18;15 He emphasizes that when we seek to serve each other in this delicate ministry, we must be careful not to spread the defilement, "between him and thee alone".

How often we break this code of conduct, we are prone to tell every one of our brother or sisters faults, or misdeeds, and often do not even have the courage to face the person themselves, especially alone. Because of this, the defilement is spread, the Lamp stand is tarnished, and its gold does not sparkle as it should. May the Lord help us to learn these lessons, and above all to put them into practice!

The Golden Lamp stand (contd..)

Never to go out:

We are told both in Ex. 27: 20-21, and Lev. 24: 1-4, that the lamps were to burn "always", "continually", and that they were to be continually tended in each generation, they were never to be neglected, never allowed to go out. There have been times when the testimony publicly seemed to be totally gone.

Down through the dark Middle Ages, it seemed that there was only the terribly corrupt, false, Roman Catholic Church, in Europe and the Western world, and the equally dead, but perhaps not quite so corrupt Eastern Orthodox, with its different branches in the East. However because of the faithfulness of God, there was always a small minority, in every generation, who maintained a well as they knew, the purity, and simplicity of the true New Testament Church, the lamp has never gone out.

It will continually burn until the Lord Jesus comes to take His Church away, at the rapture. But it is for us, the sons of Aaron, to see that the testimony of God in the Church is maintained in purity and simplicity until the end. We can only do this by maintaining a simple obedience to the word of God, in our individual lives, and in our collective, Assembly testimony. Disobedience to that word, even partial disobedience, whether individual, or collective, will cause the lamp to go out.

It is a sad fact that in these days, Assemblies that once had the truth, who were happy to obey the word of God, and though despised by other Christians, groups, or denominations, would not allow the practice of things that were contrary to that word, have failed very miserably. They have allowed the entrance of other spirits, who have led them to disobey the plain commands of scripture, and at the same time have both grieved and quenched the Holy Spirit. This has been done under the pretence of making their testimony "Relevant to the 21st., century". May the Lord open our eyes, and cause us to return to a life of obedience to His word!

THE VEIL:

Behind the furniture of the Holy Place, dividing it off from the Holy of Holies, there hung a beautiful veil, Ex. 26:31-35. It was made of fine twined linen, on which were embroidered the colours of blue, purple, and scarlet, making a very heavy and very beautiful tapestry. It is to be noticed that the colours are exactly the same as those of the gate, by which we entered the court of the Tabernacle. We have already seen that those colours, and the fine twined linen on which they were embroidered, speak of the different aspects of the glory of Christ, as they are presented in the four Gospels of the New Testament. The blue, the colour of heaven, being the glory of Christ as the Son of God, seen in John's Gospel.

The Purple, the royal colour, represents the glory of Christ as the son of David, Matthew's Gospel. The scarlet, the outstanding, distinctive colour, the glory of Christ as the Son of Man, as presented by Luke in his Gospel, and the fine twined linen, speaks both of righteousness and service, and it is Mark who presents Christ as the perfect servant in his Gospel. All of

these colours were blended together, and we are not told whether there was any pattern, or design.. Hebrews chapter 10 verse 20 tells us what the veil represents, it is "His flesh", it is the perfect humanity of Christ, that alone through which we can approach into the Holy presence of God.

On the day that the Tabernacle was inaugurated, a very sad thing happened. It seems that the two sons of Aaron were intoxicated, in that state, they put strange fire in their censers and entered the Holy of Holies to offer incense, fire went out from Jehovah's presence and devoured them. Thereafter God decreed that only the High Priest was to enter the Holy of Holies, then only once a year on the Great Day of Atonement, and only then with the blood of the sin offering. All this means that because of sin, man was barred from entering the presence of God, but the Lord Jesus became man, and offered Himself without spot to God, as a sacrifice, to atone for our sins. When He died, the veil of the Temple was rent in two, this showed that God had accepted the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf, and the way was now open for man to enter the presence of God, through the blood of Jesus, the new and living way.

THE CURTAINS:

We now look up, and there above us we see the beautiful curtains, Ex. 26;1-6. These curtains were made of fine twined linen, embroidered with the same colours as the veil, except that over those colours embroidered in threads of gold, were the beautiful figures of Cherubim. I suggest that these curtains, speak to us of the saints, made righteous by God through the sacrifice of Christ, and formed in His image, in whom the rights of God are upheld. Wherever the Cherubim appear, they seem to be the defenders of the rights of God's holiness. They first appear in the Garden of Eden, after Adam had sinned, where with the flame of the flashing sword, they guarded the way to the tree of life. That sword was sheathed in the very heart of Christ when He suffered on the cross; its flame was quenched by His precious blood. Now God imputes to His children all that Christ has done.

TEN CURTAINS:

There were ten of these beautiful curtains, and that number speaks of responsibility. This is suggested in the fact that there are Ten Commandments, which are the measure of man's responsibility. These were joined together in groups of five, which number in scripture suggests human weakness. We deduce this from the fact that we each have five senses, the sense of smell, sight, hearing, taste and touch. We have five fingers on each hand, suggesting our feeble grasp, and our feeble service. We have five toes on each foot, suggesting our feeble walk. Though we have been wonderfully blessed of God, with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, yet we never cease to be men, human.

Each group of five was linked together at the edges by loops of blue, these loops being joined together by clasps of gold. The joining speaks of fellowship, coupled is the word used, and this word in Hebrew means married, showing the intimate nature of fellowship,. The loops of blue remind us of the heavenly character of the fellowship to which we are called, the "Fellowship of God's Son", 1 Cor.1;9. The clasps of Gold may refer to the Divine person of the Holy Spirit, by whom we are united to each other. Thus it is, as we stand in the Holy

Place we see so much that reminds us of Christ, and of the saints, as they appear in God's sight, and His divine work in them. This sight, this knowledge will keep us stable in a day of great confusion.

THE BOARDS:

We now look around, and we see the beautiful boards of the Tabernacle, standing in sockets of silver, Ex. 26;15-28. Silver is the metal used in redemption, the atonement money. we are able to stand in the presence of God because of the redeeming work of Christ,- His finished work. The boards were made of the same wood as the altar of brass, the golden altar, and the table of show bread, acacia wood, which reminded us of the incorruptible humanity of Christ. But these boards speak of the saints, who though they do not partake of Deity, yet have been made partakers of the Divine nature.

These boards were made standing up, they were 5 meters high, and .75 meters wide, and possibly .075 to .100 meters thick. The acacia tree is but a humble desert growth, and the trunk of the tree would seldom be more than 2.4 meters high, so it is probable that either these boards were frames, or else they were made by laminating many small pieces together. However they were made, they were covered with gold, reminding us again of the Divine Nature in the saints, the redeemed people of God. Thus as we gaze around, we do not see the wood of which the boards were made, but we see either frames of gold, or a solid wall of gold. This brings to mind the words of the Psalmist, who says "In thy house everything says glory", Psl. 29;9, (Darby Trans.)

The boards were couple, (married) together, beneath and above, again reminding us of the two aspects of fellowship, the practical, (beneath) and the positive, (above), that is fellowship from our side, involving separation from the world, walking in the light, 1 John 1;7, and our fellowship with God, and His Son Jesus Christ verse 3. They were held together by five golden bars, which passed through golden rings that were formed in the overlay of gold on the outside of the boards. We have seen that the number five represents human weakness, and fellowship can so easily be broken. There was also another bar that went right through the middle of the boards, from end to end, and this bar was unseen if the boards were solid. The middle bar represents the Holy Spirit who unites the saints together, in that uniting bond of peace, Eph. 4; 3-4.

THE HOLY OF HOLIES:

We enter now through the veil into the inner shrine of the immediate presence of God, Here rests the Ark of the Covenant, and here the cloud of the Shekina glory dwells. Though as we have seen, only the High Priest was permitted to enter here, engulfed in a cloud of incense, and bearing the blood of the sin offering, yet now because of the one perfect offering which the Lord Jesus offered, because the veil is now rent, and because He has entered there with His own blood, we are now commanded to enter in the holy boldness of faith and assurance, into the glorious, the holy presence of the Almighty, the Eternal God. What a wondrous privilege is ours!

THE HOLY ARK:

The ark is perhaps the most perfect type of Christ that we have in the scriptures, and it speaks of Him as the vessel of the will of God, because it was in the ark that the tables of stone, on which were written the Ten Commandments, were placed and kept. Just as the Lord Jesus said through the Psalmist, "I delight to do Thy will O God, Thy law is within my heart", Psl. 40;8.

In Ex. 25;10-22, we are given the details of the ark, as with the other things, it was made of acacia wood, all is based upon the incorruptible, the sinless humanity of Christ. Without that there could be nothing for the pleasure of God in man, and no hope for man of ever coming to God to experience His salvation and blessing. It was quite small, 1.25 metres long, .625 metres broad, and .625 metres high. This brings to our minds the fact of the lowly humility of our blessed Saviour, "Is not this the carpenter's son" they could say of Him.

It was overlaid with pure gold, telling us of the glory of His Deity, though a lowly, humble, loving, tender man, yet He was truly and eternally God. John tell us that He was God, that He created everything, yet He became flesh and tabernacled amongst us. In the miracles that He performed, we see the glory of His deity shine through, and it bows our hearts in worship. It was overlaid both within and without, it was no mere outward show, He could say, "I am altogether that which I say unto you". It had four golden rings, and two staves by which it was carried, it journeyed with the people of Israel during their 40 year pilgrimage.

The ark contained the tables of stone, as we have seen, Jesus came to do the will of God, it was His delight, it was His food, He did always those things that pleased the Father. Even when facing the cross, when in the garden of Gethsemane, when He anticipated all the horror of what was to follow in the later hours of that day? His holy soul shrank from the prospect of being made sin. Satan sought to turn Him from doing that will, yet he wrestled, was in conflict with the enemy, and at last He cried, "Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, " Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done".

The lid of the ark was a solid slab of pure gold, and on each end of it stood the Cherubim, their wings were spread forward to cover the mercy seat, their faces toward each other, looking down upon the mercy seat. They continually gazed upon the blood of the sin offering that was sprinkled there on the Great Day of Atonement. These guardians of the rights of God in His holiness, saw those rights fully upheld by the blood of the sacrifice of the sinless victim. Paul tells us what all this means in Romans 3;25, where he says, "Whom God has set forth a propitiation, (mercy seat), through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness", by Christ and His sacrifice God was justified in extending pardon and forgiveness to those who had exercised faith before Calvary, and in justifying all who have or will believe after it.

Here at the mercy seat was the meeting place of God and man, the place of communion, because God said to Moses, "There will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are above

upon the testimony". It was the testimony to both the Holiness and righteousness of God, and also of His wondrous mercy. So that God is just, yet the justifier of them who believe in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Beside the ark was the golden pot that had the manner, and Aaron's rod that budded. The Manna a type of Christ in His humility, His purity, his sustaining richness, as the food for His people during their wilderness journey, Aaron's is rod a type of Christ in resurrection, God having showed His perfect satisfaction with the work that He had done by raising Him from the dead.

THE ARK WENT BEFORE:

In all the journeys of the children of Israel, the ark went before them, three days journey, to seek out a resting place for them Num. 10;33. The hymn writer has said, "The Lord has Himself gone before, He has marked out the path that we tread, It's as sure as the love we adore, we have nothing to fear, nor to dread". It scattered the enemies of God's people,

"Arise O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, they cried when the ark set forward. It entered the waters of the Jordan, when it was overflowing all its banks, and when it did, those waters were cut off, as far as the city Adam. Thus the children of Israel crossed on dry ground, and it remained until the very last one had passed over. The ark as a type thus has to do with our sanctification, our entrance into the inheritance that God has for us in Christ, and our enjoyment of that inheritance.

TAKEN CAPTIVE:

When the ark was taken captive by the Philistines, it brought judgment on them and their gods. When placed in their idol temple, it brought down their idol and destroyed it. The Philistines were forced to return it, with a trespass offering for their presumption and guilt. The men of Beth Shemesh, in idle curiosity tried to prize into its secrets, and were smitten, but the family of Abinadab were blessed when the ark came to their house and their son was sanctified to minister to it.

ITS FINAL RESTING PLACE:

The ark found its final resting place in the Holy of Holies in the Temple built by Solomon. On the day that temple was dedicated, it was carried by the Kohathites into the Naos, the shrine itself, and those staves that were never to be removed, were at last drawn out. It had come to rest at last, no longer to be carried, no more to journey. last seen in heaven in the temple of God, there the one who could say, " I have glorified the on the earth, I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do", has found His eternal rest in the presence of His Father whom He has glorified. The wonder of it all is that we too shall find our eternal rest, in that

same blessed place, in that same blessed presence, where we shall ever find our deepest joy, in praising and worshipping Him of whom the ark is a type.

THE COVERINGS:

We now leave the Holy of Holies to retrace our steps, so as to view the Tabernacle from outside. This brings us to Ex. 26;7-14 again, where we read of the different coverings that were placed over the beautiful curtains. There were three coverings, one of goats hair cloth, immediately over the beautiful curtain. over this was placed a covering of ram's skins dyed red, then over all a covering of badger's skins, or dolphin's skins.

GOAT'S HAIR:

The goat's hair was patiently spun by the hands of wise hearted women into a strong and durable thread, after this they wove it into a kind of canvas or very durable cloth. This shows us what an important part, sisters can have without leaving their God appointed place. to spin goats hair is a work of both patience and skill, this would be done in their homes. Then hour by hour, they sat at, or laboured over the loom, to weave that thread into curtains, two meters wide, and fifteen meters long. The goats that produced the hair, were clean animals, and could be used in sacrifice. These speak to us of the saints, and some of their characteristics. Our family has used goats for milk and meat for thirty five years, so I have become familiar with those animals.

First they are very intelligent, In my country often people say you silly goat, when they want to criticize someone, but I have never yet seen a silly goat. They have personality, no two are exactly alike, they are very friendly animals, and enjoy the company of their own kind, or of humans whom they know and can trust. If given a choice, they will eat only the very best pasture that is available, they only eat paper, or things harmful to themselves when they are bored. They readily accept leadership; they have a respect for age, seniority. Though their feet do not seem to be designed for climbing, yet they are very sure footed, some can even climb trees, while others can reach great heights. I remember seeing a picture of a mountain goat standing like a king on a lofty crag of rock, surveying a vast area, as though it was Ruler of all it could see. Even Solomon tells us that they "go well and are stately in going", Prov. 30;29-31.

But on the negative side they can be very destructive, they resent being restricted or confined, they often regard fences as a challenge more than a restraint, they can also be very stubborn, and the males aggressive. I think that my reader will agree that many of these things can be found in believers also. The cloth made from their hair is very durable, and was used to protect the beautiful tapestry curtains from the heat and rigors of the desert climate. It is still used by the Bedouin who inhabit the Sinai wilderness.

There were eleven curtains of goat's hair, five were joined together, and six were joined together. The five represent human weakness, the six, and the number of man. These were joined by loops in the edge of each curtain, which were held together with clasps of

bronze. The fact that the clasps were of bronze, would remind us that the basis of our fellowship, is the sufferings and death of Christ.

RAM'S SKINS DYED RED:

This covering speaks of Christ our substitute whose precious blood and sacrifice cover all of our faults and failures. The Hebrew word for ram, simply means a strong one and is used of a beam in a building, or a column that carries weight. It was a ram that was offered in the stead of Isaac, and the Psalmist says "Thou hast laid help on one that is mighty; Isaiah tells us that He is mighty to save. Thank God for our substitute.

THE BADGER'S SKINS:

The last covering, the outer one, that which was seen by men, was of the skins of the rock badger, or the dolphin, or dugong. It seems that the colour of such is a kind of red. If it means the rock badger, it is said by Solomon to a feeble animal, but it makes its home in the rock, and it is its habit that when danger comes, it runs to the safety of its home. This is an apt picture of the believer, we have no strength of our own, but our protector is mighty, and while ever we hide in Him we are safe and need not have fear.

If it means the dolphin or dugong, both are not fish, but animals, mammals. They are able to survive in a hostile environment. Both are able to communicate with their own species, and the dolphin has sometimes shown a desire for the companionship of man, all of which makes us to think of the children of God. We too are here in a hostile environment, we do not belong here, our home our commonwealth is in heaven, from whence we await our Lord Jesus as Savior.

To obtain the skins of either would necessitate the death of the animals, many of them. Thank God for those noble saints of God, beginning with Stephen, who were willing to lay down their lives to protect that which is so precious to God, what a debt we owe to them!

The last thing we notice is that the appearance of this covering was not very attractive, yet it was very durable, it lasted between three and four hundred years, until the Tabernacle at Shiloh was destroyed. To the world the believer is not very attractive either, the object of shame, reproach, derision. We must pass through many of the storms of life, yet to such as we God has given the task of protecting that which is so precious to Himself.

CONCLUSION:

Dear reader, I trust that the reading of these brief notes may have shed a little more light on their wonderful subject. That it may have whetted your appetite to search the scriptures further. The author does not claim to be an authority on the subject, on any subject for that matter, but commends to God the thoughts gleaned from His word, that it

may please Him to bless what is of Himself in them, to the encouragement, and the spiritual enrichment of many of his dear people. May it be so, for His glory alone.

Charles E. Wigg,

4 East Yolla Road,

(R.S.D. 287B,)

Yolla, Tasmania, Australia. 7325. Finished Suva, Fiji Islands,

18/8/97.w

Tabnotes.doc. Charles Edward Wigg, Tasmania