

The Theology of the Tabernacle

Part 3

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Chapter III

The Laver of Brass: The Doctrine of Sanctification

The all-inclusive teaching here includes the ministries of Christ in His resurrection.

The instructions for the construction of the laver are found in Exodus 30:17–21: “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord; So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations.”

The laver was the other article of furniture that stood in the outer court with the brazen altar, and was constructed of the same substance as the altar, brass. It was filled with water. Quite evidently it had a top part for the washing of the hands, and a lower part, called its foot, for the washing of the feet. All service in the tabernacle, whether in the Holy Place, Holy of Holies, or at the brazen altar required the one serving to wash at the laver. It was probably used more frequently than any other article of furniture of the Tabernacle.

The primary and evident meaning of the laver is that of cleansing. This cleansing applies primarily to the child of God, for only priests served at the laver. Beyond the brazen altar the application of the teaching of the tabernacle is directly to the sons of God. There is a twofold application of the meaning of the laver in the ministry of cleansing, this being an earthly and a heavenly application. It applies first of all to Christ’s present resurrection ministry. He continues cleansing His own until He presents them faultless [blameless] before His throne with exceeding joy. This is the heavenly ministry of Christ in cleansing. Secondly, it applies to one phase of the work of the Holy Spirit in His present ministry on the earth. The Written Word, the audible voice of the Spirit, reveals the pathway of light for God’s children that will keep them from defilement along the way, and reveals new avenues of service. The indwelling Holy Spirit confirms and makes real in the life the ministry of the Written Word. These are not separate operations but one; for the indwelling Spirit does not direct apart from the Word or contrary to it. This is the earthly application of the meaning of the laver.

Let us examine more fully the earthly meaning in the light of the revelation concerning the laver. The earthly meaning grows out of, and is derived from, the heavenly meaning. Christ sent the Holy Spirit to include this ministry in His mission during this age. The laver was made of brass, which, we have already seen, speaks of judgment of sin. However, the laver was made of a particular selection of brass, the brazen mirrors of the women being used: “And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the looking glasses of the women assembling, which

assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation” (Exodus 38:8). Highly polished brass was used for mirrors in that day; and it is interesting to note that these folk, so soon out of slavery, possessed such luxuries. Their hard lot in Egypt had not deprived the women of their “vanity cases.” They brought these looking glasses as an offering to God, and it was specified that they be used in making the laver. The Spirit of God has used the mirror metaphorically as the Word of God: “For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was” (James 1:23–24). Evidently it was no accident that the laver was made of the mirrors of the women, and a mirror is that to which the Word of God is likened. This figure of the Word of God being a cleansing agency is further enlarged by the Holy Spirit speaking of the cleansing power of the Word. Let us pay attention to language like this, “Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Eph 5:25–26). The Word of God is both likened unto the laver itself, made of brazen mirrors, and unto the water contained in the laver. Both the substance and purpose of the laver are symbols of the Word of God. The laver’s primary purpose was for cleansing. The Word of God is for cleansing. Christ said, “Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” (John 15:3). The laver was filled with water and the priests were commanded to wash thereat repeatedly in the service of the Tabernacle. To wash in the Word of God is to apply the Word to the life. The Word washes because it reveals as the mirrors were revealers, and thus used in cleansing and beautifying. One of the benefits derived from the Word of God is declared by Paul in 2 Tim 3:16, to be “correction.” The Word is profitable for “correction,” it cleanses by correcting.

This cleansing by the Word is for the child of God. The sinner is shut out from earning favor by doing something, and is shut up to just one thing, the cross of Christ. Scripture has no word of exhortation or injunction for a lost sinner but “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” The Work of cleansing is confined to believers, and the Word corrects their lives. The laver stood between the altar (cross) and the Holy Place (service). Cleansing by the Word is for the sinner who has come to the cross and who desires to serve and to walk in the light, well pleasing to his Lord. In the Lord’s prayer in John 17, Christ prays for His own, and makes specific mention that He does not pray for the world, “I pray for them [those whom the Father gave Him]; I pray not for the world” (John 17:9). In the same prayer He makes this interesting and enlightening request of the Father, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (v. 17). The Word of God is a sanctifying agency for the children of God. The Holy Spirit is to the Word of God what the water was to the laver, and there is this added corollary between the laver and the Holy Spirit. The cross of Christ is where the sin of the sinner is settled. The Word of God is that by means of which a child of God learns to walk. As the priests spent more time at the laver than any other article of furniture, thus the child of God ought to spend more time in the Word of God. A daily bath in the Word of God is of inestimable value. Daily washing in the Word brings fragrance into the life.

No measurements were given for the laver in the blueprints of the Tabernacle. This is suggestive of the thought that the laver is further confirmed as a figure of the Holy Spirit, the author of the Word. Deity cannot be measured. The Word of God cannot be severed from the Divine Author and Illuminator of it. There is no sanctifying power in the letter of the Word apart from the Holy Spirit. The letter of the Word is dead; the Spirit maketh it alive. The Word is sealed to the unsaved, and the saved need the Great Teacher to open its treasure store. A

consideration of 1 Cor 2:10–14 will reveal this, but as this is not the immediate purpose of this thesis we merely refer to it.

The water of the laver furnishes a fine figure of the Holy Spirit. We have made a previous statement that the Holy Spirit is to the Word of God what the water was to the laver. This we shall dwell on for a moment. Water is used throughout Scripture as a symbol of the Holy Spirit in cleansing. Water was given for baptism as a symbol of the true baptism which is that of the Holy Spirit: “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” The laver had no cleansing power in itself. It contained water which did the cleansing, but the accepted language was that the laver cleansed. Thus the Word of God cleanses because it is applied by the Holy Spirit who is the power of the Written Word. Christ sent the Holy Spirit to perform this phase as part of His earthly ministry. Before He was crucified, He promised to send the Holy Spirit: “If I depart, I will send him unto you” (John 16:7). The book of Acts is the Acts of the Holy Spirit; yet Luke the author prefaces the book with this statement: “The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen” (Acts 1:1–2). There are two declarations we need to note here. First, Jesus continued to carry on His work after His death, resurrection, and ascension. The Holy Spirit was sent to perform this work of Christ on earth. He is in the world today, having come on the day of Pentecost, to do a definite work outlined for Him as His part in the scheme of redemption. One phase of His work is depicted by the laver.

The laver was used for the cleansing of the priests, those belonging to God and in His service. When the priests were ordained they were washed all over: “And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water” (Lev 8:6). That washing was for all time. It was never repeated, but there was continual and daily cleansing at the laver. The blood of Christ cleanses the believing sinner from all sin, but in his daily walk and service he becomes defiled, and needs cleansing. The Holy Spirit indwells each believer, but sin keeps Him from having full sway in the lives of believers today. Sin in the life of the believer retards and destroys His work of guiding and leading in the light. The Holy Spirit is anxious that sin be reduced to a minimum in the life of the child of God. He reveals the pathway of victory. He gives power to the life when the conditions are met: “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom 8:2–4). The Holy Spirit is the omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient leader for the children of God: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Rom 8:14). He is the victory for the Christian. This is His ministry in the sanctification of the believer.

It is patently evident today that many children of God are not walking in the light, neither is there a manifestation of power in their lives. They are walking in sin and sin has power over their lives. Now what is the remedy when a child of God sins as he most assuredly does?¹ We have seen that the cross of Christ deals eternally and completely with the sin question so that it will

¹ 1. Dr. Scofield was once asked if it were possible for a Christian not to sin, to which he replied, “Yes, but I never heard of one who did not sin.”

never become a barrier to the salvation of any believer. But sin in the life offends the holiness of God in the believer as well as the unsaved. What can a sinning child do after he sins? Certainly he does not wish to offend his Heavenly Father, and he does not want it to hinder his growth in Christ. What is the remedy for a saved soul who sins? This introduces to us the heavenly aspect of the meaning suggested by the laver.

When Christ ascended into Heaven, He took His place at the right hand of the Majesty of God as our great High Priest: “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others” (Heb 9:24–25). Part of His ministry in heaven is the daily cleansing of His own who have sinned and come to Him confessing the sin: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

The heavenly ministry of Christ in cleansing those who are His is set forth in figure by what occurred at the last supper in the upper room. Having laid aside His garments, He girded himself with a towel, took a basin, and began to wash the feet of His disciples. John, who alone of the gospel writers records this incident, prefaces his account with this statement, “Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them (kept on loving them) unto the end” (John 13:1). The cleansing was for those of His who are in the world, and He performed this ministry in light of the fact of His returning back to Heaven: “Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God” (John 13:3). He arose from the Passover (type of His death), and began the work of cleansing. His response to Simon Peter’s refusal at first to let the Lord wash his feet, and then his extreme desire to have his hands and head washed, reveals the true intent of the cleansing. “Jesus saith to him, He that is washed (*λελουμένος, bathed*) needeth not save to wash (*νίψασθαι, to wash*) his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all” (John 13:10). Jesus used two different words, it will be noted, but both are translated by the English word *wash*. In that day a person returning from one of the many public baths, where he had bathed, got his feet defiled on the way from the bath house to his home. There was placed at the door of the home a basin to rinse the feet. This had been omitted the night the disciples entered the upper room for some reason. Christ arose and took the basin and began to wash (*νίπτειν, to wash*) the disciples’ feet. The communion about the table was broken, and Christ took water and washed the disciples’ feet. The blood of Christ cleanses from sin, all sin, and the sin of saved souls is fully dealt with at the cross. But sin in the believer breaks communion with God, and on the basis of the death of Christ He can cleanse the child who comes to Him in confession. As the disciples placed their defiled feet in His hands for cleansing, thus today we come in confession of our sins and by so doing place our soiled feet in the nail-pierced hands of our Blessed Lord, and He cleanses us from all defilement. Fellowship is restored with the Father. The late Dr. George Guille put it beautifully in this way, “On the way from the cross to the crown our feet get soiled, but if we confess our sins, He takes the basin and girds Himself with the towel again, and cleanses us from all sin.” What a gracious thought it is to know our Lord is girded with a towel and with basin in hand, He keeps us clean if we place our feet in His hands by confessing our sins. Thus the laver spoke of this heavenly ministry of Christ. The laver stood between the altar and the Holy Place. The cleansing of believers by confessing stands between the cross and communion of the children of God.

The altar was for a sinner. The laver was for a son. The altar was where the sinner needed punishment. The laver was where the child needed cleansing. The altar spoke of blood; the laver of water. The altar suggests this verse of Scripture, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." The laver points to this: "Without holiness no man shall see God."

We have seen the meaning of the laver as it dealt with the sin in the life of the believer. We have seen that this contains a twofold application. One applies to the earth and is the work of the Holy Spirit. The other applies to heaven and is the work of Christ. These are both in relationship to the believer.

There is another side to the teaching of the laver which is derived from the former consideration. All that has gone before has grown out of the resurrection of Christ. The basis of the preceding remarks is the resurrection. Now let us consider the two articles of brass in the outer court for a larger meaning of the work of Christ in settling the sin question. The brazen altar speaks of His death. The brazen laver speaks of His resurrection. At the brazen altar is forgiveness of sin. At the brazen laver is imputation of righteousness, "Who [Christ] was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom 4:25). This is an application of the suggestive meaning of the laver to the sin question in relationship to the sinner rather than the child of God. In this connection the brazen laver speaks of justification.

Again we find that there is a twofold application of salvation to the sinner who believes in Christ. First, there is the work of Christ in Heaven. Second, there is the work of the Holy Spirit on earth. The work of Christ in Heaven is described by the word *justification*. The work of the Holy Spirit on earth is described by the word *regeneration*. These are two distinct elements of salvation, yet one is complementary to the other. One never takes place without the other. Justification is an act; regeneration is a work. Justification is external and does not change the condition of the sinner, but it changes his position. Regeneration is internal and it does change the condition of the sinner, but it does not change his position. Justification is a declarative act in which God declares a sinner justified on the basis of the death of Christ. This is a judicial act that takes a guilty and condemned sinner out from under condemnation, and stands him in the presence of God clothed with a righteousness that instead of meriting the condemnation of the court he receives its commendation. Not only are his sins forgiven, but there is added a righteousness that makes him accepted.

Regeneration, logically following justification, is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the sinner that changes him from a rebellious creature to a child of obedience. Regeneration is based on justification, but justification is just because of regeneration.

The resurrection of Christ made a ground for the justification and regeneration of a sinner. The death and resurrection of Christ do not themselves save an individual sinner. They make a ground for God to justify a sinner. They untie the hands of a Holy God, and permit Him to place them about a lost sinner. They give freedom and power to God in this twofold work in salvation.

We wish to pay particular attention to the statement that the death and resurrection of Christ provided the Holy Spirit who cleanses and regenerates the heart of a lost sinner. This is seen in an incident recorded by John which took place at the cross. When one of the soldiers thrust the spear into the side of Christ there came forth blood and water. John was very careful to make mention of both in his gospel account, and in his first epistle he adds, "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth" (1 John 5:6). The blood speaks of the ground of salvation; that which made God's power available in salvation. The water speaks of

the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. Now we are prepared to receive this startling statement: If the Holy Spirit had not come on the day of Pentecost and begun His work of regeneration, no soul would ever have been saved. The blood of Christ does not save a soul until the Holy Spirit does His work. There came forth both water and blood, for it takes both the blood of Christ and the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit to save a soul. Christ sent the Holy Spirit to do specifically this work. This is again part of the resurrection ministry of Christ.

The laver, therefore, suggests the resurrection of Christ as the altar suggests His death. Here we have both articles of furniture dealing with the sin question. Christ in His death settled the sin question, “the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin.” Christ in His resurrection made application of the finished work of Calvary. He regenerates the sinners who believe and cleanses the children who sin by their confession.

The laver was succeeded by a sea in the temple that held 24,000 gallons of water. In the temple in Heaven as seen by John on the isle of Patmos, there is a sea not of water but of glass, a figure of the fact that the sin question has been forever solved, the redeemed have been glorified and need no more cleansing, and the Holy Spirit has ceased His work of regeneration.

Chapter IV

The Three Entrances

The Doctrine Concerning Worship.

We now pass from the outer court into the Holy Place. The articles of furniture in the outer court, as we have attempted to show, dealt with solving the problem of sin. There the sin question was forever settled, never to lift its ugly jaws again in condemnation of the child of God.

The articles placed in the Holy Place spoke of communion and worship. There can be no communion or worship until sin is out of the way as an issue between God and man. After the sin question is dealt with, it is removed in such a way that it constitutes no part of worship. Only a remembrance is made of it. But God in His fellowship with His children remembers their sin no more. As we pass from the outer court into the place of worship we shall expect to find a radical change in the articles of furniture. However, before considering this change, it will be helpful, before proceeding further in consideration of the articles of furniture, to turn our thought to a description of the three entrances of the Tabernacle.

As stated in the Second Chapter, the most important part of the Tabernacle was the furniture. The Tabernacle furnished a setting for the furniture, and it may well be viewed from the standpoint of these furnishings, which we are endeavoring to do. We pause, however, to examine the three entrances which furnish a background for the articles in the Holy Place. The three entrances had these respective names: The gate of the court, 1st entrance; The door of the Tabernacle, 2nd entrance, but the first to the Tabernacle proper; and the Vail which separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. The way into the presence of God for the Israelite was through these three entrances. Christ said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). It is interesting to note that this threefold definition that Christ makes of Himself dovetails into the three entrances of the Tabernacle.

First, the gate of the court corresponds to Christ as the Way. The gate led into the outer court from the outside. It was the first threshold crossed, and separated the sinner on the outside from all within. Immediately upon coming through the gate the entrant was confronted by the brazen altar with the laver in the background. The way to God today is by way of the cross. Christ is that

way. The way is not a highway on which one travels by following a highway number, but a Person who is to be trusted. Many folk depend on some highway marker (denomination) to keep them on the right way, and they are proud of the fact that they are Methodist, Baptist, or Presbyterian. These are all very well, but it needs to be emphasized that the way to God is a Person. Christianity is not a church, denomination, system of ethics, rule of life, or a ceremony; Christianity is a Person and that One is Christ. He is the way to God. It is all important that God be approached in the right way; for there is a right way and there is a wrong way. The right way is exactly right and can be dogmatically stated as such, and the wrong way is absolutely wrong and can be dogmatically expressed as such. The right way leads *to* God, and the wrong way leads *from* God. Any other way than Christ is wrong, wholly wrong, incurably wrong, and leads to destruction. Christ emphatically declared “no man cometh to the Father but by me.” Sincerity does not overcome wilful ignorance or error in this important matter. A traveler may get on a wrong way by mistake, and go in the opposite direction from the desired goal. In all this he may be perfectly sincere, but he is on the wrong way and his sincerity, no matter how intense, will never enable him to arrive at his destination. On the contrary, the farther he goes the farther he is from being right. The only possible alternative is for him to get on the right way or be utterly wrong. “I am the way....” In making this tremendous claim, He repudiated every other way. The way into God’s presence, the place of communion and worship, is through Christ. He must settle the sin question in our lives before we can come into God’s presence to worship. In the Tabernacle it was essential for a priest coming into God’s presence to worship to pass through the gate and by the altar. There was no other way.

“The way of the cross leads home,
There is no other way but this.”

All worship is predicated on the cross of Christ. He not only constitutes the object of worship, but He makes the basis of worship. Sin must be settled at the cross before there can be real worship.

Second, the door of the Tabernacle corresponded to Christ who is the truth. The door led from the outer court into the Holy Place. It separated the one, who had made the sacrifice, from worship. The priest, having made the proper offering, must pass through the door of the Tabernacle if he would worship God. So today, God is worshiped through Christ in truth.

That was a novel thing Christ introduced to the Samaritan woman at the well, “Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father” (John 4:21). Both the Samaritans and the Jews agreed that God was worshiped in one place. They disagreed concerning the place. It was a question with them of “either-or.” Christ said something new when He removed the place by the “neither-nor.” Certainly the Scripture confirmed the belief of the Jew that Jerusalem was the proper place. There and there alone the Jew understood he could worship God. He never believed he could worship God elsewhere. In all this he was correct. The earthly place of worship was Jerusalem. Again in the future it is to be the place of worship for all earthly people, both Jews and Gentiles: “And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain” (Zech 14:16–17). God had declared to His people Israel that it was in Jerusalem that he set His Holy Name. Christ had given commandment not to swear by Jerusalem, and the reason given was that it was the city of the Great King. Therefore the statement of Christ to the woman at the

well, as well as the Jews, was a radical one, but He spoke of the church age. During this time the place of worship would not be localized: “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him” (John 4:23). The place was removed from Jerusalem to “in spirit,” and the manner would be “in truth.”

The door of the Tabernacle suggested Christ as the truth, for it led into the place of worship, and the manner of worship now is “in truth.” God is worshiped today anywhere (in spirit), but the way is not just any way. He is worshiped “in truth” which corresponds to the Holy Place in the Tabernacle. We shall see this more fully as we consider the articles of furniture in the Holy Place.

Third, the veil corresponds to Christ as the life. The veil separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. A separate consideration of the veil will be made when we come to consider the furniture in the Holy of Holies. It was the veil that was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. A person who enters by faith in Christ into the Holy Place today is in the Holy of Holies. True worship now brings the worshiper into the very presence of God. But it must still be offered in truth for the door of the Tabernacle was not rent in twain. God is worshiped only in truth; but that which is false does not get to Him. It is therefore imperative that a believer think clearly and sharply about worship, and that he be led aright, for all that parades in the name of worship is not worship.

“Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach” (Heb 13:13).

Chapter V

The Table of Shewbread

The Doctrine concerning Worship, Continued

As suggested in the last chapter the Holy Place speaks of worship. There were three articles of furniture in the Holy Place: the table of shewbread, the golden lampstand, and the altar of incense. All three set forth some item that pertains to worship and must of necessity enter into it. Let us first consider the table of shewbread.

The blueprint for the table of shewbread is given in Exodus 25:23–30: “Thou shalt also make a table of shittim wood: two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt make unto it a border of an hand breadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about. And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them. And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal: of pure gold shalt thou make them. And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before me alway.”

The table of shewbread suggests many things. It speaks of sustenance, provision, and supply. There are several suggestions we make in order to pass rapidly over them.

First, it is a table of salvation. Christ gave a parable in which a king gave a marriage supper for his son. The invited guests refused to come. This provoked the king to deal with the rejectors, and having done so, he extended the invitation to include those in the highways and byways.

These were bidden to come and eat. Thus an invitation has gone out to the world to come and partake of the salvation as it is in Christ.

Secondly, it is a table of Providence. God as creator provides all food for man and beasts today. Mankind eats at God's table in the physical realm. Yet how few recognize it, and give Him thanks for His bounty.

Thirdly, it is a table of the Lord. This suggests the Lord's table established by Christ at the last supper. It is the table for believers. It is a long table extending from the upper room to the upper air.

More specifically the table of shewbread is a prefiguration of Christ as the sustainer of spiritual life for the believer. It was two cubits long, one cubit wide, and one and one half cubits high. It was made of shittim wood overlaid with gold. The incorruptible shittim wood speaks of His humanity. As the wood was a product of the earth, but not subject to the action of it in a chemical way, thus our Lord had a body made of earth, conceived in the womb of the virgin. The gold speaks of His deity. The gold is not produced by the earth, but is separate from it, and because of that it has an inherent value. So Christ was not of the earth in His deity, but very God of very God. He came from the glory. This figure of the gold and wood will be further amplified when the ark is under consideration.

On the table were placed twelve loaves of bread, six in a row. The table and the bread were considered as one. The same terminology is used for both, and when the bread is mentioned the table is included and vice versa. Paul uses this manner of speech in instructing the church in Corinth on coming together "to eat the table of the Lord" (1 Cor 11:20). This metonymy is common in Scripture.

The bread was changed each Sabbath day, and the bread which was removed was eaten with wine by the priestly family in the Holy Place. This table does not prefigure Christ in the same way that the manna does. There is a sharp distinction here that must be made. It is a distinction which is probably not a difference. Both speak of Christ but not in exactly the same connection, although Christ is bread in both.

The manna speaks of Christ as the lifegiver. This is His own interpretation of the manna: "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.... I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:32–33, 35).

The shewbread speaks of Christ as the life sustainer. Eternal life is a gift and is the manna that came down from heaven. He that receives the manna receives eternal life. However, eternal life requires a special food to sustain it in growth and strength, and the shewbread sets forth Christ as the food for those who have partaken of the manna of life. This is seen in another bit of language Christ used. The shewbread was made of grain, ground, unleavened, made into bread and baked: "And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof; two tenth deals shall be in one cake" (Lev 24:5). The analogy of this to Christ is found in John 12:24–33. Christ is the corn of wheat that falls into the ground and dies: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." He was ground in the mill of suffering: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour" (vs. 27). He was brought into the fire of suffering and judgment, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this

world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (vss. 31–32). He came forth from the tomb in newness of life, for His soul did not see corruption. Now He lives a resurrection life. He is the shewbread now for believers to feed on to sustain eternal life in growth. The Christian is to feed on the living Christ. The believer is to appropriate Christ as He is today, living at God’s right hand. He said, “I am the bread of life.” There is an ancient proverb that contains the thought that a thing grows by what it feeds on. Thus a Christian is to feed on Christ. Again He said: “I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly.” Christ does not wish to take anything away from the Christian, but rather to give something. That something is Himself. If He does remove something from the life it is that He might add something more wonderful. The daily food of the Christian is Christ, and only by appropriating Him will there be growth in the life. Those who do come to Him will find full satisfaction, “he that cometh to me will never hunger.”

The liberal theologian continually directs his hearers to the life of Christ before the cross. The life of Jesus, as it is habitually designated, is given as a pattern for the man living today. The mere contemplation of the earthly life of Jesus will furnish food for the soul according to those of this school. We say it reverently, but we say it nevertheless, those who contemplate merely the earthly life of Jesus as a source for food and strength will starve to death. Certainly the earthly life of Christ was wonderful, worthy of emulation, but where is the power for the Christian to follow in His footsteps? It is the life of Christ after the cross that is the source of power and the mainspring for living. His resurrection life is the table for believers. There is where he is to go for food, and those feeding upon Him grow in grace. It is therefore not *imitation* of the earthly life of Christ, but *impartation* of the heavenly life of Christ that builds up the believer spiritually. Paul declared, “Christ liveth in me” now, and again, “for to me to live is Christ.”

The table was the center of union and communion for the priestly family. They were instructed to abide in the Holy Place and “eat it at the table” (Lev 24:9). The real unity of the priestly family was about the table: the real unity of believers is about Christ. It is well to understand and appreciate denominational difference. The differences today among denominations is principally psychological rather than theological. People with a certain frame of mind and peculiar bent of thinking get together. Differences among believers have been aggravated by personalities. However, believers, and by this designation we mean true believers, of all denominations and groups, are one in Christ. All true believers can meet in fellowship and worship about the blessed person of the Lord Jesus Christ. “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt 18:20).

Therefore these movements abroad in the land to bring together in the spirit of religious fraternity the Jew, Roman Catholic, and Protestant do not, and in the nature of their differentiating characteristics cannot, make for true unity. They are futile attempts to effect a ground for fellowship which is impossible apart from Christ. In such a meeting it has been impossible to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ without giving offense to some of the delegates or members of the assemblage. Such gatherings are called together, therefore, on the basis of “universal brotherhood” which is calculated to offend none of the parties involved. The Lord of Glory is unmentioned; Jesus of Nazareth perhaps receives a passing reference.

Certainly true believers ought to come together. A lover of the Lord’s work must decry the “rent asunder” condition of the church, but there is no Scriptural or permanent place to meet apart from Christ. It would be wonderful indeed if Roman Catholic, Jew, and Protestant could meet together about the table, which is the Lord. This would of necessity be where the middle wall of partition was broken down and all were made one in Christ, and the meeting would be

about His blessed person where He would receive all the praise and glory. In light of the coming together of all branches of the apostate church in antagonism to Christ, the Christian does well to be wary of any man-made attempt to federate professing believers on the basis of mere good will. That which is apart from Him is satanic, and can contain inherently no good will. The Christian should pray, however, for the union of all believers that they might be made one in outward manifestation, as well as unified in spirit.

There were twelve loaves placed on the table, one for each of the twelve tribes. Little Benjamin had the same kind of loaf as big Judea. Outcast Reuben had the same as priestly Levi. Each stood on the same ground of relationship, and shared alike in the participation of heavenly food. Man is equalized when Christ is exalted. It lifts and enobles man when he exalts Christ rather than man: "For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Cor 10:17).

One final feature of the table will occupy our attention in closing. In chapter 22 of Leviticus instructions were given that forbade the stranger, sojourner, defiled, servant, lame, blind, or blemished from eating at the table. The meaning of this is evident. Worship is the privilege of believers. It must be foreign to all others. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as public worship. No one can worship until brought nigh by the blood of Christ and made whole.

No stranger could eat. Only sons can worship God today, "ye must be born again." No servant could eat. Works do not make an approach to God. Again it is sonship that brings one into the place of worship. To be acceptable the worshiper must come by the brazen altar which is the cross of Christ. No blind, lame, or defiled could eat. Sin keeps many believers from enjoying participation in the things of the Lord. Even the believer must come by the laver for cleansing. The believer must confess his sins that he may be restored. But those who have come to the cross as sinners, and have confessed all known sin are privileged, yea urged to worship Him. "O! Come! Let us adore Him."

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