

SIMPLE TALKS ON THE TABERNACLE

by

D. H. Dolman, M. A., D. D.

Copyright @ 1954

CHAPTER ELEVEN

GOLD-GILDED BOARDS ON SILVER SOCKETS

“And thou shalt make boards for the tabernacle of acacia wood standing up. Two tenons shall there be in one board, set in order one against another: thus shalt thou make for all the boards of the tabernacle. And thou shalt make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for his two tenons. And thou shalt make bars of acacia wood; five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle. And five bars for the boards of the other side. And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall reach from end to end. And thou shalt overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings of gold for places for the bars: and thou shalt overlay the bars with gold” (Exodus 26:15, 17,19, 26-29).

THE brazen altar and the ark stood at the two extremes of the court. We notice that in Exodus 25-30, the section devoted to the description of the tabernacle, God begins with the ark. Fallen man could not meet God at the ark, but God could meet men at the brazen altar.

In the incarnation God came to man in Christ; by the cross man is brought near to God. In incarnation, love, divine love, and truth was manifested in human form and God was manifested in the flesh, and John says: **“We beheld his glory (the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth,”** but atonement was won, through the blood through Christ's death and passion. **“By his own blood Christ entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us”** (Hebrews 9:12).

Not without blood. Man may object to the word, but it was the only way by which Christ could consecrate a new and living way to the heart of our Father. Thanks be to God, the veil is rent and we have free access to the throne of grace.

We have seen in a previous chapter that the length of the court was fifty yards and its breadth twenty-five yards. The length of the tabernacle was fifteen yards and the breadth five yards.

The tabernacle was designed by God Himself, and Moses had to make it according to the pattern he saw in the mount. The Holy Spirit shows us in Hebrews 9 that the tabernacle shadows forth the great truth that the way into the Holiest is open, and that in Christ we have our place in the Holiest of holies. The tabernacle is a type of the true one.

The Epistle to the Hebrews shows us that it must needs be of a temporary character. It was intended for wilderness use and had to be movable. As long as His people dwelt in tents, God was satisfied to have his habitation in a tent.

God Himself had called by name His servants whom He had honored to carry out His plans; and when God calls us in His service, He is responsible for our equipment. And so we find that they had been filled **“with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship”** (Exodus 31:3).

It may perhaps strike some of my readers that the fullness of the Holy Spirit was given them not for preaching nor teaching, but for all manner of workmanship. If we would only recognize that, the fullness of the Holy Spirit will help us in whatever work the Lord has entrusted to us; and He will not only help us in doing better work, but make us better men and women.

The readers will like to know the names of those two honored servants God Himself had chosen for this holy work. I feel sure God had been training them in their youth. Somehow I think that like brother Lawrence they practiced the presence of God.

Their names are significant. Bezaleel was the man who lived in the shadow of God. Where Bezaleel was, God was. Aholiab was the man who was at home in Father's tent. I do not wonder God could use Bezaleel and Aholiab.

Before we commence the study of the tabernacle, let us a moment fold our hands. “O Lord, give me the consciousness of Thy presence wherever I am, whatever I do, whatever I say, through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.”

Let us make a mental picture of the tabernacle. It would be the size of a small hall, fifteen yards long, and five yards wide. It was a collapsible tent, four curtains not resting as the tents we are familiar with on a pole, but on a framework of wood. This consisted of forty-eight boards all made of the same material, acacia wood, and overlaid with gold: twenty boards on the south and north sides, six on the west side and two additional ones for the corners. Each board had two tenons fastened into solid blocks of silver to keep them standing firmly upright. The sockets were each sixteen inches long, weighing each about an hundredweight and each pair dovetailed together — a silver foundation.

Besides this, to hold the twenty boards together there were five bars: two bars at the top, each going half-way along each side, and in the same way two bars at the bottom; the middle bar going from one end to the other of the sanctuary. These bars were also of acacia wood, overlaid with gold.

These bars were fastened to the boards by staples of gold both at the foot and the top. Having now a clear picture of the framework of the tabernacle — the boards, the sockets, and bars — let us pray the Holy Spirit to show us their spiritual meaning.

Why do I ask you to pray with me? I believe we are treading on holy ground. We shall have to meditate on our Lord.

- I believe that the tabernacle is a symbol of Christ in His twofold nature: human and divine.
- I believe that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.
- I believe also that Christ is the embodiment of the love of the Triune God to a fallen race.

I pray that the tabernacle may teach me more of the length and breadth, the depth and height of that love which passeth all understanding.

If the tabernacle is a symbol of Christ, it should also be a type of the church of Christ and its individual members.

“We are no more strangers and foreigners, but we are built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord” (Ephesians 2:19-21).

The apostle says to each individual member: **“Do you not know that ye are the sanctuary of God and that the Holy Spirit has made his home within you?”** (I Corinthians 3:16).

The framework of gilded board shows, therefore, the *Ecclesia*, the called-out one, the Church of Christ, as she is in Christ. We cannot separate the body from the head, which is Christ.

The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new creation
By water and the Word;

From heaven He came and sought her,
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood he bought her,
And for her life He died.

Elect from every nation
Yet one o'er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation
One Lord, one faith, one birth;

One holy name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses,
With every grace endued.

“In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9).

Human wisdom will never be able to understand this, the mystery of the holy Incarnation. Let us worship with the shepherds at that lowly manger in the stable at Bethlehem the babe conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary.

The boards of the tabernacle, acacia wood, overlaid with gold, speak to us of the twofold nature of our Lord, the human and divine.

- The acacia wood speaks of His humanity,
- The gold of His divinity.

“The wages of sin is death.”

If Christ were to be our substitute and bear the penalty of our sins, He must needs have a human nature. Since children are all alike sharers in perishable human nature, He Himself also, in the same way, took on Him a share of it (Hebrews 2:14).

May I point out to you that the words *“to be sharers”* and *“to take a share”* are two different words in Greek.

Christ's manhood was spotless; He became in the likeness of sinful flesh, but He was without sin in the flesh — a mediator between God and man.

The Son in whom the Father was well pleased, who did Father's will always and sought Father's glory — perfect man, perfect God. Friends, He is the only one whom I want to hold my hand when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

Death came by sin (Romans 6:23), but He never sinned and no guile was found in his mouth. Being truly human, He was capable of death; being perfect and sinless, death had no hold on Him. His was a voluntary death: **“I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and take it up again.”** Of His own freewill He died for you and me.

And yet acacia wood too. **“We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.”** He can feel for you when you have been for years on a sick-bed. He knows how it feels when you have a headache, and even when you should be without a roof over your head.

Remember, **“the Son of man had not where to lay his head.”**

- He could be weary and hungry;
- He could weep at the grave of His friend Lazarus, and rejoice with the young couple at the wedding of Cana.
- He can be touched.

Does that not bring Him very near to you?

In the world but not of the world.

The leper might touch Him; it would not harm Him. There are worse things than leprosy. Christ came from heaven, the only sinless man that ever walked the earth. He was surrounded by sinful men. His public life was lived in a polluted atmosphere: the hypocrisy of scribes and Pharisees; misunderstood by those who were near Him. He could only feel pity and give love — never wanting to receive, always willing to give. The polluted atmosphere in which He needs had to live could not affect Him. The impurity around Him did not stain His white garment.

“He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground” (Isaiah 53:2).

Acacia wood taken from the desert. Our Lord could find no nourishment in His surroundings, no help — dry ground for the root. **“Is not this the son of the carpenter?”** His own townspeople asked. Even His brothers believed not on Him. It was to His own disciples, not to scribes and Pharisees, that He addressed those words, full of reproach and grief as He came down from the mount of transfiguration:

“O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you?”

Unbelief in His disciples to whom He had given power to drive out demons. Christ obtained no help from His surroundings, yet that tender plant flourished.

What is the secret? He received His life from above; He lived through the Father. That heavenly life He again communicated to His surroundings. I have often seen fir-trees growing on bare rocks. Where do they get their nourishment? How is it possible for a tree to grow on a rock?

Botany teaches that those fir-trees have a juice in their roots which penetrates the rock to make room for the rootlets. They give before they take, and this makes it possible for them to flourish, where it would be impossible for other trees to grow — a hidden sacrifice.

Christ's life was a life of constant giving. When He gave His supreme gift on the cross, **“when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.”** No fruit without giving, without hidden sacrifices is the law of the kingdom.

How many of God's children complain about their surroundings, their churches — a root in dry ground. For those who **“follow the lamb whithersoever he goeth”** (Revelation 14:4), to whom the lamb could give a lamb-like nature, there are no conditions in which they cannot grow. There are two classes of Christians: Getters and Givers. Those who follow the Lamb are givers, and as long as you give you shall **“bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to shew that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him”** (Psalm. 92:14, 15).

Gamblers put in little, and hope to receive a fortune. Let us learn from the Lamb. His motto was:

“The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). Christ sowed first before he reaped.

My dear reader, what are you giving to the circle in which the Lord placed you? Do you bring hidden sacrifices which are so great in the eyes of our heavenly Father? Christ tells us we must lose our life in order to gain it. Christ was a root in dry ground, but He redeemed a lost world.

O Jesus Christ, grow Thou in me
And all things else recede;
My heart be daily nearer Thee,
From sin be daily freed.

Make this poor self grow less and less,
Be Thou my life and aim;
Oh, make me daily through Thy grace
More meet to bear Thy name.

~ end of chapter 11 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
