

## THE CONTENTS OF THE TABERNACLE.

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Hebrews ix. 1-5.—"Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly."

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In my last lecture, I entered on the consideration of the holiest of all. We saw, brethren, that it is described in this passage in three ways, 1st, from its situation ; 2d, from its name ; 3d, from its contents.

I. First of all, we saw that it is described by its situation. Verse 3—"And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all." The first vail was only the hanging of the door of the tabernacle—it was only a curtain hanging upon five pillars : But there was a second vail hanging on four pillars, dividing between the holy place and the most holy. This curtain was made of blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen, and it was to keep the priests from looking into the holiest of all. The holiest of all was the innermost place ; so that there was no light from within, and no light from without entered it.

II. By its name.—"The Tabernacle which is called the holiest of all." It has got three names in the Bible : It is called the "holy of holies," "the most holy place," and, as in the text, "the holiest of all." I think it was so called for two reasons,—1st, Because it contained the bright types of the Lord Jesus : 2d, Another reason seems to be, that it contained the bright cloud which marked the presence of God. For these reasons it was called "the holiest of all;" and it is interesting to notice, that the same name is given to Christ in Daniel ix. 24—"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy." There can be no doubt that this is Christ, so that he is named by the same name. But I come now to its contents.

III. The contents.—Verse 4—"Which had the golden censer." 1st. The first thing described as belonging to the holiest of all, is the golden censer. We saw this is not meant of the golden altar of incense. The golden censer is that which was used by the high priest when he went into the holiest of all on the day of atonement. The first thing he did was to fill the golden censer with coals from the brazen altar, and then he filled his hands with incense beaten small ; he then went into the holy place ; then he pushed aside the curtain, and entered the holiest of all ; and as he entered, he put the sweet incense beaten small upon the fire, so that the place was filled with a cloud of incense. Now, there can be no doubt that this was intended to teach the Jews, and also to teach you, that Christ is our intercessor. It is what is spoken of in 1st John—"We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." [ 2:1 ] It is what is spoken of in Romans—"It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." [ 8:34 ] It was intended to teach us, brethren, that all prayer, if it would be answered, must be put into the hand of Christ. It is the very same as John saw in the Revelation—the angel standing at the altar, having a golden censer ; and it is said, "There was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." [ 8:3 ] Brethren, observe, for it is a most blessed lesson, that the prayers of the most eminent believers are so sinful, that they could not appear before God if they were not offered up with much incense beaten small. There is no other way of praying aright.

You may learn from this how the prayer of the wicked is an abomination to God : The reason is, you do not put your prayer into the golden censer. This is the reason why there are so many unanswered prayers. Brethren, put your prayers into the censer of Christ. It is a solemn truth, that, though the censer of Christ is so large, yet few put their prayers into it.

2d. But I come now to the second thing. The second thing in the holiest of all was the ark. Verse 4—"Which had ... the ark of the covenant ; " or, as it is sometimes called, "the ark of the testimony." It was nothing more than a chest of shittim-wood, and overlaid with gold. The use of this chest was to hold the tables of stone. Now, brethren, we are nowhere told in the Bible what the ark signified ; but you will notice that it was the principle thing in the Tabernacle ; for you read in Exodus, that it was the first thing that Moses was commanded to make ; and you remember, when Israel were fighting with the Philistines, that they sent for the ark of God ; and, when it came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again ; and when the Philistines heard the shouting, they said, "What meaneth this ? " and when they were told that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp, they trembled and said, "Woe unto us ! God is come into their camp." And you remember it was for the ark that Eli trembled. So that the ark of God was the glory of the Tabernacle, and the glory of Israel. And you remember that it was for touching the ark that Uzziah died ; and you remember, when Solomon built the Temple, there was nothing done till the ark was placed in it. Now, brethren, though we are not told what the meaning of the ark was, I think there can be no doubt that it was intended to represent Christ with the law in his heart—our law-fulfilling righteousness. I would not insist on this, however, having no warrant in the Word of God ; but I think that this is its meaning. You remember what Jeremiah says—"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch,"—and "In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS;" [ 23:5,6 ] and you remember he said to John, "thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," [ Mt 3:15 ] and you remember Paul speaks of a righteousness without works. Now, these passages show that Christ is our righteousness : And you will notice, that as the ark was the main thing in the Tabernacle, so Christ is the main thing in the Gospel ; and as the ark was the glory of Israel, so is Christ "the glory of his people Israel;" [Lk 2:32 alt. prep.] and as the ark was the main thing in the Tabernacle, so I believe that Christ is the main thing in a believer's heart. Do you look upon Christ as the Israelites looked upon the ark ? Have you received Christ ? You remember that the house of Obed-edom was blessed because they had the ark. You remember how the men of Beth-shemesh died because they looked into the ark.

3d. We come now to another thing in the holiest of all : It is the golden pot that had manna. You remember, brethren, that when God took Israel through the Wilderness, he fed them of the corn of heaven. It is said, "He gave them of the corn of heaven ; man did eat angels' food." [ Ps 78:24,25 ] And you remember how it fell every day, except on Sabbath ; and they gathered enough on the preceding day to serve for it. Now, at the same time, God commanded Moses to take an omer of it, and lay it up beside the ark of God. See Exodus xvi. 32 and 33—"And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations." We are not told by Moses what kind of a pot it was ; but Paul, speaking by the Holy Ghost, says it was a golden pot ; and so, brethren, we know that the pot and manna was intended to be a type of Christ. He says, "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven"[ Jn 6:32 ]—"I am the bread of life" [ Jn 6:35 ] Now, brethren, we can be at no loss in finding out the meaning of the golden pot that had manna. It was intended to represent Christ within the vail—the food of believers. Just as the manna was the food of Israel, so Christ is not only the food of believers now, but also in heaven. This is evident from what is said to the Church of Pergamos—"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." [ Rev 2:17 ] So that the manna within the vail was intended to teach Israel, and intended to teach you, that what we are fed on now is what we will be fed in heaven. Ah, brethren ! those of you who are feeding on Christ now will feed on him to eternity—"Man did eat angels' food." Those of you that feed on him now—that feed on his Spirit—on his word—on his promises —can say what heaven is, for you feed on what is within the vail. Brethren, if you have no relish for him now, you will never, never enter within the vail.

4th. I come now to the fourth thing within the vail ; and that is, the rod that budded "Aaron's rod that budded." It is a curious thing to trace the history of Aaron's rod. It was originally a shepherd's staff, which Moses cut down to help him in keeping the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law : And you remember, when God appeared unto him, he said, "What is that in thine hand ? " And he said, "A rod." And God said, "Cast it on the ground." And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent. Afterwards, it became the wonder-working rod in the land of Egypt. With it he smote the sea. It was with it he smote the rock at Rephidim, and water came out. It was the same rod with which he smote the rock a second time at Kadesh. It was the same rod which budded and yielded almonds. You read of it in Numbers xvii. 6-9. Now, this was the history of Aaron's rod. We are nowhere told in the Bible what is the meaning of this rod ; but I think it was to show forth Christ. And first, it was but an almond-rod growing in the Wilderness : So Christ was a root out of a dry ground, without form and comeliness. But, again, it became the wonder-working rod in the land of Egypt : So Christ, the root out of a dry ground, becomes the wonder of men and angels in the actions that he did—in the works that he performed. But, again, this rod was

that which smote the rock in the Wilderness, and the water flowed out : So Christ, the rod, smites himself, that the living water may flow out to sinners. But, again, the rod bloomed and bore almonds ; and so Christ, gone to God's right hand, becomes the blooming rod. The whole history of the rod is just the history of Christ.

5th. I come now to the mercy-seat.-Verse 5-"And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat." The mercy-seat was a lid of pure gold that cover the ark of the testimony. It was exactly the size of the ark, so that it made a lid for the ark of the testimony. We are told it was of pure gold, and that it was made all of the same piece. Now, brethren, with regard to the mercy-seat, there can be no doubt that it represents Christ, our propitiation. Just as the ark represented Christ, our law-fulfilling righteousness, so the mercy-seat represents him as our propitiation. You will see this from three things. 1st. Christ is called by the very same name in the New Testament. Romans iii.24-"Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation," &c. The word rendered here "a propitiation," is the same word in the Hebrew which is rendered "a mercy-seat". 1st John ii. 2-"He is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." It might be rendered, "He is the mercy-seat for our sins," &c. 2d. Another thing that proves that the mercy-seat was intended to represent Christ as our propitiation is, that the mercy-seat was always covered with blood. We are told in the 16th of Leviticus, that the high priest, when he went into the holiest of all, sprinkled the blood of the bullock on the mercy-seat. Verse 14-"And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward ; and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times." Now, brethren, we are nowhere told that the blood was ever wiped off. The high priest, we are told., was commanded to sprinkle the mercy-seat seven times,Â—that is, thoroughly ; but we are not told that he wiped it off, so that the pure gold would ever be covered with the blood-its clear shining would be continually dimmed with it. Ah, brethren ! how wonderfully does this represent Christ, our mercy-seat ! And even in heaven, he is as a Lamb slain, still bearing the marks of the nails and of the spear. I think, brethren, this shows plainly that Christ is our propitiation. 3d. There is another thing, I think, that shows that the mercy-seat represents Christ as our propitiation,Â—that is, that it was the meeting-place with God. Exodus xxv. 21-"And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above the ark ; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat." Observe, brethren, that the mercy-seat was the meeting-place between a sinner and God : It is Christ, and none but Christ, that is the meeting-place between a sinner now and God. There is no other spot on earth or heaven where God can say, "I will meet with you, and commune with you." Ah, brethren ! have you met with God at the mercy-seat ? This is what is spoken of in the 4th of Hebrews, 16th verse-"Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Can you say you have come to the mercy-seat ? God is inviting you to come,-yea, he is willing to meet with you. You will never meet with him in peace, if you do not meet with him there.

6th. I come now to the last thing of all. Verse 5Â—"And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat ; of which we cannot now speak particularly." We read of the cherubims in the 3d chapter of Genesis. When God drove out the man, he placed, at the east end of the garden of Eden, cherubims and a flaming sword, to keep the way to the tree of life. The next time we hear of the cherubims is when God told Moses to make them : They were to be beaten out of the mercy-seat, and to be standing on it, looking toward it ; and it is said that God was to dwell between them. We are told of the cherubims also by the Prophet Isaiah, 6th chapter, and by the Prophet Ezekiel, 10th chapter. Now, brethren, we are nowhere told in the word of God what the meaning of the cherubims are ; but I think they were intended to represent the redeemed Church of God. You will see this from many things. First, they were of the same piece with the mercy-seat, and they were standing on the mercy-seat : They could not stand at all if they did not stand on the mercy-seat, and the blood was sprinkled on them as well as on it. Just so is it with the Church and with individual believers : They are of the same piece-of the same nature. And then they were looking toward the mercy-seat. This is the constant employment of the redeemed. And then, still farther, the Lord dwells between the cherubims-"O ! thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth ! " But this is part of the redeemed Church that is spoken of-"Know ye not that ye are the temples of the Holy Ghost;" so God is called "he that dwelleth between the cherubims." And again, in the 4th chapter of Revelation, the cherubims join in that songÂ—"Thou art worthy, O, Lord ! to receive glory, and honour, and power ; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Now, this puts it beyond dispute that this represents the redeemed Church of God.

Ah, brethren ! what a solemn lesson does this teach! Learn that you will never stand in the presence of God unless you stand on the mercy-seat. Unless you stand on the mercy-seat, you will never be in heaven. Ah, brethren ! unless you stand on the mercy-seat as the cherubims did, you will never see God and live. The Lord bless his own word. Amen.