

Theology of the Tabernacle

Part 1

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Preface

In any study of the Tabernacle, there is not much to say which has not already been said. “Of making many books there is no end” has definite application to treatments of the Tabernacle. Therefore the desire for novelty has not entered into the making of this thesis. The works of others have been drawn upon copiously. Most of the thesis is a restatement which constitutes a revision of previous works.

Wherein does this thesis differ from others, and what purpose prompts its appearance are questions which justify an adequate answer? The paramount purpose has been to reveal, very inadequately and briefly to be sure, that God wrote Systematic Theology in the very web and woof of the Tabernacle. All the great doctrines of the Christian faith are contained therein. The Tabernacle is the ABC’s of Salvation for babes in Christ. It was God’s purpose to do just this. The Tabernacle was Theology prewritten. The whole gamut of theology was run from Dan to Beersheba.

The treatment of this thesis is from the standpoint of the furniture. No time has been spent in hair-splitting interpretations of the meaning of the tent pins and bars and bolts. However, we firmly believe that there is meaning in the minutest thread, but the approach here has been from the furniture.

It is interesting to note that only one verse of Scripture records the creation of the Heavens and Earth (Gen 1:1) while fifteen chapters are devoted to the Tabernacle (Exodus 25–40), and a whole book (Leviticus) to the service of it. Evidently God meant to convey to our hearts more than arithmetic measurements of a lifeless structure whose sole interest at best lies in the realm of architecture. The Tabernacle tells the story of God’s bared arm in action, while creation tells out the account of His finger work. God’s finger work (Psalm 19) does not require the space of God’s bared arm work. (Isaiah 52:10). The Tabernacle tells in picture book form the story of Salvation or the accomplishment of the bared arm of Jehovah. With that arm He built a dwelling place in the midst of sinner man. All is in anticipatory preparation for the day when “the Tabernacle of God is with men.” “He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people.”

Chapter I

In His Presence

The problem of establishing a dwelling place with man is of supreme importance with God. In the pages of Scripture it is of chief concern to Him. In Genesis we find God coming down in the cool of the day for purposes of fellowship. In a very real sense God had a dwelling place with man. What blessed experiences the first man must have had in communing with his Creator. What marvelous condescension on the part of God to come down and spend precious moments with one of His creatures. This relationship was accentuated by the ready response of the man to every touch of God. In the cool of the day God sought out this man, and they had fellowship one with the other. In all likelihood man recounted the day’s experiences to an interested and loving

father, and God responded with praise and suggestion. All this was a daily occurrence and the possession of the first man.

The communion of God and man on this blessed basis would have continued indefinitely, but a terrible tragedy took place which interrupted and disrupted the relationship. There came a day when sin intervened, and broke the tranquil peace of the garden. It was fully capable of forever ruining man, and wrecking him for eternity. Sin broke the sweet fellowship between God and man in the garden. So heinous and devastating is sin in its effect that it separates man from God for eternity, unless a remedy is found to avert its effect and penalty.

The man chose to disobey God. It was necessary for him to suffer the disastrous results of disobedience. It was not a question as to the palatableness of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Its fruit was good to the eye and to the taste. God had made it and it was very good. It is even possible to imagine that this tree was more attractive than any other tree in the garden. There was nothing inherent in the fruit that wrought such a change that took place in the man. The fruit contained no poison or any chemical that would be detrimental to the physical man. The change in man was not chemical, nor was he suffering from food poisoning. The record in Genesis is on a much higher plane. The question about the tree of knowledge of good and evil was this-would the man obey God or would he in disobedience go in his own self-will. It is altogether a matter of obedience. This is fundamental. God said not to eat; that was enough. Man should have gone on in faith trusting God to do that which was best for his interests and guarding him and protecting him from the things that were not best. Man should have moved on the impulse that God was not only doing good by him, but that he was doing the very best for men. That was the route of blessing, peace, and communion.

Now the question is-how bad is it to disobey God? That can be known in examining the disastrous effects of Adam's transgression on the human family. The first man plunged his progeny along with himself into the pit of sin. Tragedy went in the wake of man. Suffering and misery entered the race. Death and destruction came like an avalanche to engulf man. The human family, potentially in Adam, was innately sinful and possessed a nature wholly given over to sin. "Born in sin" is the language of Scripture. All the heartaches, sorrows, broken homes and lives are the result of "one man's disobedience." The stooped shoulder, tottering step, and gray head bear a testimony to the awfulness of disobedience. Death, the arch-enemy of the human family, came into the race on the tide of disobedience. This picture does not fully exhaust the meaning of disobedience. The cross of Christ bears witness to the grim reality of the awful thing that Adam did. The sufferings of Christ speak audibly of the depth and extent of the disobedience in Eden. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.... For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.... Therefore as by the offence of one [one offence] judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom 5:12, 15, 17-18). Look at the one dying on the cross if you would catch something of the significance of the thing Adam did. It was no small thing-neither was it a puerile or trifling matter. The account in Genesis is not a childish story from mythology, but the solemn record of how sin, man's very real enemy, entered the world.

After man had chosen to disobey God, he became an anarchist in the government of God-an ingrate toward the love of God-a sinner in the presence of the Holiness of God-he committed spiritual suicide in the moral order of the universe of God. He broke his fellowship with the One

in whose likeness he was, and found himself incapacitated to restore it or make restoration. Sin now stood between a Holy God and sinner man. Any overture must originate in God as he alone could remove sin and solve the problem. It is with profound reverence that we make this comment-this was God's problem and He alone could solve it and make a dwelling place with man.

Has God solved this problem? Has He "done anything about it"? For an answer to this inquiry let us turn to the other side of the Bible, the very conclusion, and we read of a day in the future, "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Rev 21:3). Again we read in this same chapter of the Book of Revelation in the 22nd verse, "And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." In the beginning fellowship was lost-in the ending fellowship is to be restored. Today the race as an integral group are out of harmonious relationship with God. But there is coming a day when God will restore His children on a more permanent basis of fellowship. For that day the redeemed heart and regenerated mind wait in the eagerness of glorious anticipation.

In a certain sense the pages of Scripture from the fall in Genesis to the New Jerusalem scene in Revelation is the story of how The God of all patience has solved this mootable problem of making anew His dwelling place with man. This was no easy problem. How a Holy God can dwell with sinners is a problem that a rational mind must face, but only God could fashion the solution. This solution is beyond the ken of man's mind, and it is not in the scope of his thinking. It is not according to man's schemes or the gyrations of psychoanalysis. God's answer to this whole question may be expressed briefly and succinctly in these words: THE CROSS OF CHRIST. As we shall enlarge upon this answer in the succeeding pages, suffice it to say here with terseness and certainty that any dwelling place God has made with man since the expulsion from Eden, or will make with man on into eternity will rest upon the finished work of Christ on the cross. This is God's wisdom, for God's solution is His best. However, it is not wisdom to the natural man but foolishness. Regardless of man's attitude God has gone on with His program. "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars" (Prov 9:1). The cross of Christ may appear to man to be only a trifle and an unnecessary procedure at best. Not so with God. He was confronted with a very tangible problem, and His solution was costly but it alone was the answer. The cross of Christ is the answer of infinite wisdom to this problem. This was the only foundation for erecting a dwelling place for God with man. It was God's answer to sin. It was God's response to man's lost estate. But the cross of Christ does more than save sinners. Hear Paul, "And through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens" (Col 1:20). About the cross of Christ God's purposes gather, and his universe resolves about the cross. Therefore, the final explanation of the cross is not the salvation of sinners; although that is included in it. Henry C. Mabie in the "Divine Reason of the Cross" has this to say, "The Logos of the cross is the coordinating centre of the cosmos-the rationale of the universe." The universe is "redempto-centric" using Dr. Mabie's own expression. The cross of Christ gives meaning and explanation to God's universe and God's dealings with and through it. The cross, therefore, furnishes the basis of restored fellowship with God for man on a higher and more secure basis. Again we quote from Dr. Mabie, "Notwithstanding the certainty which confronted the Most High, that the man He was about to create would fall into sin and death, God resolved in creating him to make common cause with him: He determined to become a suffering Deity, only so that

He might bring man through the impending discipline into the higher and more secure perfection.” Scripture is more than the story of Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained. It is rather the declaration of how a Holy God could be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. It is the supreme love story telling out that God was true to Himself when He provided a salvation that redeemed sinners. He satisfied every demand of His holiness, and freely lavished His love on man. About the cross gathers all the meaning and mystery of God. The cross furnishes a foundation for God’s dealings with man in the Old Testament, and it likewise furnishes a basis for God’s dealings with man since Calvary.

Before Christ came God established sacrifices and ceremonies as shadows of the work of Christ. These sacrifices served a twofold purpose:

(1) To impress the observer before Christ came with the necessity of removing sin before coming into the presence of a Holy God. God could only fellowship with sinners who had settled the sin problem.

(2) To teach us this side of the cross in the meaning of the death of Christ.

Christ and His cross are in type in the tabernacle with its ceremonies and sacrifices. Even before Christ came He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. He is the eternal sacrifice for sin and the only sacrifice that brings a sinner into fellowship with God. The death of Christ is more than an historical event that took place about nineteen hundred years ago. It is the purpose of God through eternity, not an emergency measure brought forward as an afterthought. The cross is God’s first aid, not His second best. The cross is God’s first and final expression to His intelligences that He exhausted infinite wisdom and love. The cross is the proof that “Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” So important is the cross that even now He is still the lamb slain from the foundation of the world; although the crucifixion is an event incorporated in the history of man. Ordinarily we think of the cross as an historical fact that is in the past, and in so doing we emphasize a great fact but minimize another. Paul never thought of Christ as primarily an historical person who had died on an historical cross. That was true and he believed it, but to him Christ was more than one who had died on a cross in time. He spoke of Christ, not as Jesus who *was* crucified, but Jesus who *is* the crucified one. Before Golgotha the cross was in the mind of God. Before Calvary the death of Christ was in the purpose of God. It is not strange or alarming that we, therefore, find the lamb, which taketh away the sin of the world, prefigured in the Tabernacle. In fact the Tabernacle speaks of Him in every shade of color, the minutest thread, the tent stakes, all speaks of Him.

When God led His chosen people, Israel, out of Egypt, He set up a temporary dwelling place among them. This was called the Tabernacle or tent of meeting. The very name spoke of the temporariness of it-“tabernacle or tent.” It was to be pitched in the desert with the stakes driven in sand. It was never to abide in one place very long. All was equipped for the desert march. In the instructions the reader is impressed with the constant repetition of “staves” for everything. All was to be carried. Permanency was not one of its characteristics. All this suggested that it served for the time then present, waiting for a time when it would be set aside for that which abideth forever.

The Tabernacle was merely a link in the chain from the sacrifice of Abel to the cross of Christ, which gave an approach for those then present to the presence of God. From Abel’s altar outside of Eden to God’s altar outside of Jerusalem we find a continuous and unbroken line of sacrifices which made an approach to God. Along the route we find God meeting the situation by supplying the need. God became to His people just what they needed. Always and in all ways we

find God seeking out man and making a basis for dwelling with him. The altar sacrifices of Cain and Abel forever distinguished between them. They were children of the same parents with the same environment, and both were born in sin. Their sacrifices made the difference. Cain was merely performing a ritual, while Abel was making an approach to a Holy God. After the flood Noah first made an altar and offered a sacrifice thereon. That sacrifice made an approach to God who came down and confirmed the covenant with Noah. As Abraham dwelt upon the plains of Mamre, God came down to fellowship with him. In response to this generous overture on the part of God, Abraham hastened to make a sacrifice, “and Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it” (Gen 18:7).

After God redeemed His people from Egypt, He had them construct a tabernacle, in which offerings were to be made, that He might dwell in their midst. It is often affirmed by the critic that the Tabernacle of the wilderness had a counterpart among the pagan peoples of that day. Similarities are mentioned between Israel and some other heathen religion to confirm this supposition. This is to forget that the Tabernacle of Israel was constructed out of earthly materials. Heathen religions were able to duplicate these materials. In a ritualistic religion there can not be many variations in the form that is adopted or the liturgy performed. It is well to recall a statement of the late Dr. Kyle, “There are not many things to be done in a ritual; the wearing of robes, marching about, carrying of candles, performing before an altar, and burning incense about exhaust the repertory of religion.” It is not strange to find the Wilderness Tabernacle service similar in certain phases to other religions. It would be phenomenal should it have been otherwise. These resemblances do not preclude a supernatural origin of the Tabernacle.

Wherein did the Tabernacle differ from other religions of that day? There was a line of demarcation. There was one aspect about the Tabernacle that forever separated it from natural religion. There was a supernatural occupant of the Tabernacle. Other religions merely had cheap counterfeits. The presence of God indwelt the Tabernacle, “then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle” (Exodus 40:34).

In the day the pillar of cloud directed the way on the wilderness march. In the night the pillar of fire furnished light and protection for the camp. What marvelous provision God made for His people when He was in their midst. Israel had the supernatural presence of God. Materialistic philosophy rejects the fact that God in a supernatural way was with His people. This is to forget the eternal fact that all true religion is supernatural. This is the acid test of religion. Anything less is counterfeit and poor imitation.

The Temple of Solomon superseded the Tabernacle. After its completion at the dedication the Shekinah Glory came to dwell in it, “Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house” (2 Chronicles 7:1). The Shekinah presence abode there until the sin and wilful disobedience of the people caused Him to withdraw and return to Heaven. Ezekiel saw the vision of the departure of the Glory, “Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city” (Ezekiel 11:22, 23). The Glory lifted and paused a moment as if loathe to leave sinner man. He lingered a moment, but there was no turning back to God on the part of the people; so the Glory withdrew to the walls of Jerusalem, and there for another brief moment he lingered, but still there was no turning back to God on the part of the people. The Glory passed over the walls to the Mt. of Olives and rested for one last moment, and we may well imagine that it was with tear-stained eye He consigned that sinful city to the Babylonian captivity. Then quite

suddenly He was caught up to heaven. At some future day the Glory will stand again on the Mt. of Olives not bent on departure but coming again to the earth.

Both Israel and Judah, the divided kingdom, went into captivity. After seventy years in Babylonian captivity, a remnant of Judah returned along with some from the other tribes. The temple was rebuilt, but no evidence persuades us that the Glory returned. In truth the temple was left unto them desolate. For four hundred years the heavens were silent and the sky was brass. No message came from God. After Malachi had spoken all was silence. Then one day a priest was about the weary round of a cold ritual of a stagnant religion. As he served in his course at the altar of incense an angel appeared. The silence was broken, and God again was speaking out of heaven. All this was but the preparation for the coming of the Glory again, but with this difference; this time the Glory was to be veiled in human flesh and walk among men, not secluded in the awful sanctity of the Holy of Holies. The Glory this time would eat with publicans and sinners. On that auspicious and conspicuous night the Shekinah Glory appeared, the Second Person of The Godhead, and He took upon Himself human flesh. Jesus was born back of an inn in a stable, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. God was dwelling among men. Joy to the world, the Savior is born-Immanuel-God with us. This time He was dwelling in human flesh, a tabernacle not made with hands, but by the supernatural act of the Holy Spirit on the virgin's womb. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" [tabernacled-ἐσκήνωσεν] (John 1:14). His body was His temple. On one occasion He said, "Destroy this temple and I will restore it in three days." They who heard this thought he meant the desolate temple of cold stone, called Herod's temple, that had become a place of merchandise and a den of thieves. But He referred to His own body, and even His disciples did not get the full implication until they stood in the resurrection light. His enemies did destroy "this" body, God's tabernacle. Sinful man does not want God to dwell with him. How erroneous is the modern but ancient notion that man is seeking after God, and religion is the result of man's labors, and its evolution is the crown of success of man's efforts. Man is not seeking after God, but is running from God as the father of the race did in Eden. God is the one seeking and searching, "where are thou Adam? is God's longing after man's leaving. Man in rebellion does not want God ruling over Him. It is ever, "We will not have this man to rule over us." That is not only the cry of the mob, but final decision of a lost race.

It is written, "And there they crucified Him." They destroyed His body-"This Temple." On the third day He raised up the earthly temple as a glorified temple in which the glory shone through, but He took that temple back to Heaven. There He will abide until the times of restitution of all things when that temple will again be seen on this earth when His feet shall stand again upon the Mt. of Olives.

In the interval between the rejection of the King and the reception of the King; between the cross and the crown; between the upper room and the upper air; between His humiliation and exaltation; between the parousia of Grace and the parousia of Glory He is building a dwelling place again among men. This time it is altogether new. His church is His temple that He is building in this age, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5). This is the new thing that God is doing that characterizes this age. Under this figure of a temple the purpose of the church is further disclosed, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9). Also, the individual believer is said to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit, "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost

which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Cor 6:19). When Paul began with the expression "Know ye not," and he used it several times, it is always imperative to add that those addressed "knew not." This is the truth in connection with a dwelling place of God that is peculiar to this age. God now indwells each believer. This is the unique fact of this dispensation. This truth alone distinguishes the church age from all others, for never could it be said in any other age that the believer's body is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, it cannot be said in this age that there is a possibility of God taking His Holy Spirit away from the believer as David prayed.

God now dwells in each believer. This is a more permanent arrangement and far superior than dwelling with man. This is the unique fact of this age.

The Tabernacle in the wilderness is therefore just a link in a chain, whose links are God's different dwelling places with man. It is of tremendous importance because it furnishes the true typology for the person and work of Christ. The Tabernacle is an adequate adumbration of Christ. It is the correct place to look for the true figures of His Theanthropic Person and vicarious work. It sets forth more accurately the death of Christ than the temple that superseded it and the sacrifices prior to it. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews adopts it as setting forth the things of Christ. The typology of the Tabernacle sets forth in a clear and concise manner the doctrine of the New Testament. It is God's story book with pictures for babes in Christ. It is well at this juncture to recall the dictum of Hengstenberg in his Christology, "The elucidation of the doctrine of types, now entirely neglected, is an important problem for future theologians." The theology of the Tabernacle is set forth in typology. A consideration of its types will well repay the time and trouble spent in a study of their meaning.

Before turning to a detailed consideration of the Tabernacle, there remain other general remarks that require elucidation.

Mention has been made beforehand that the Tabernacle was constructed of earthly materials. These earthly materials were the physical possessions of the people. God did not provide miraculously the material out of which the Tabernacle was constructed as He did the manna from Heaven or water from the rock. The people supplied the material with a free-will offering. "Speak unto the children of Israel that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering" (Exod 25:2). There follows this passage in Exodus a detailed enumeration of the different materials that they were to furnish. Many and varied were the materials mentioned. There were materials of great value. Different estimates have been made by scholars as to the value of the materials that went into the construction of the Tabernacle.

These vary from one hundred eighty-five thousand, two hundred five English pounds (Jamison, Fausset, and Brown) to two hundred fifty thousand English pounds (Pulpit Commentary). A conservative estimation of the value of the Tabernacle is between one-half million to one million dollars. This is a staggering amount in light of their circumstances and modern giving. Certainly, this was no seventeen dollar offering made from a rummage sale or pie supper given by the Ladies' Missionary Society of Israel. The question naturally arises as to where these people, so soon out of slavery, got this much of material things. A careful consideration of Exodus 12:35-36 will reveal that they literally drained the wealth of Egypt when they left. They collected back pay for the long years of slavery, for Egypt was in arrears in the matter of reimbursing Israel for long hours of labor. "And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed (*αἰτήσῃ*-Septuagint, ask, demand; collecting what was

due them-F. C. Cook) of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent [gave] unto them such things as they required, and they spoiled the Egyptians.” The children of Israel left Egypt wealthy in the things of this world. As an earthly people it is fitting and proper that they should possess the physical things of the earth. When the Jews return in the future to Palestine, they will again take the wealth of the world with them (Isaiah 60:9, 16). The money capital of the world is Jerusalem (Zech 14:14), in God’s future program. The Christian as a heavenly citizen and a pilgrim and stranger in the earth has a higher aim than gathering the wealth of the world. His treasure is in Heaven, and his riches are the riches of God’s Grace. The Christian is even now seated in the heavenlies where his heart is at peace and his treasure is safe.

The Israelites were to bring their gifts willingly. This was a new experience for slaves who had been compelled to do everything. God placed no compulsion on them to give. All was to be a free will offering.

The gifts of labor and material things were not to be made grudgingly or of necessity. No slave labor was to enter into God’s dwelling place. No forced help could build the Tabernacle. God redeemed them and they must serve Him freely. God could only inhabit a dwelling place that was the fruit of thankfulness, “But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel” (Psalm 22:3). This twenty-second Psalm that speaks so audibly of the redeeming death of Christ on the Cross makes it perfectly clear that God dwells only in the heart songs of His redeemed people. How, the thoughtful mind is led to inquire, especially in the light of the present day failure in giving to the Lord scripturally, did these people respond to God’s method and motive in giving? The answer is stated simply in Exodus 36:5–6, “And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing.” This is probably the only instance on record where people were asked to refrain from giving to the Lord’s work. God never commands His people to give, but there is an occasion where He commanded them not to give-this is it. This statement is made in full knowledge that Israel was commanded to bring the tithe to the priests. But the tithe is part of the Mosaic economy. It was never considered as giving to the Lord, but rather as keeping the Law. Israel was a Theocracy with the priesthood as the center of government as well as religion. The tithe was for the support of the priesthood. There is some evidence to support the theory that Israel paid three tithes (Sermon notes-Dr. A. C. Dudley). The tithe is wholly related to the Law, and for a people under the Law as a national institution. Most assuredly there is no suggestion that a Christian under Grace is to tithe. Giving is not on the basis of law but grace. Paul in urging the Corinthians to give is careful to state, “I speak not by commandment” (2 Cor 8:8).

One other general statement concerning the Tabernacle that needs amplification is a consideration of the blueprint of it. Moses did not draw up the plans and submit them to the people for their approval. Neither did a committee function in order to arrive at the measurements. This is not the method by which they came to conclusions about details. It was not left to Moses or Israel to decide the plans. “And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it” (Exod 25:8–9). God gave the blueprint for every detail; the color of the curtains, the type of tent-pin, the number of boards, and the size and shape of the articles of furniture. Nothing was left to the imagination of man. It

was not God's suggestions augmented by the ingenuity of man. There was no guess-work in the designs. It was not man's ideas plus the approval of God. It is barely possible that Moses and Aaron could have made the place more pleasing to the natural man. However, that is not a legitimate presumption for it was God's dwelling place, and it must please Him and meet His requirements. The Tabernacle was not man's speculation on how things ought to be, but God's arrangement on how things must be if He dwells with a lost race. This is very important. Again and again Moses' attention was drawn to the fact that each item was to be made according to the pattern shown him in the holy mount. Even the men were Spirit-directed men who constructed the Tabernacle. It was not even left to their ingenuity to follow faithfully the blueprints, but the Spirit supervised the building of the many parts (Exod 31:1-6). Why was God so insistent on such strict adherence to the minutest details? It is evident that since God is the only one who can solve the problem of establishing a dwelling place for Himself with man (A Holy God with sinner man) that His solution to the problem is the only one that will accomplish this purpose. Therefore, strict adherence to His will will accomplish this wonderful benefit for man. His insistence to the details is part of His graciousness. This strictness is not that of dogmatism or selfishness but a wonderful revelation of the love and grace of God in wanting man to receive that which will bring him to the heart of God when all else has failed.

However, this explanation does not exhaust the meaning of God's injunction, "according to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the Tabernacle." Scripture suggests other implications. The blueprints were taken from another Tabernacle. The wilderness Tabernacle was a miniature and model of a Tabernacle in Heaven. In the ninth chapter of Hebrews the writer begins by describing the wilderness tabernacle and the service of it. He shows that Christ fulfilled the wilderness tabernacle and its service, and is therefore, better than it, for it was merely a figure. He sums up the meaning of the wilderness tabernacle with these words, "which was a figure [wilderness tabernacle] for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, *by a greater and more perfect tabernacle*, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." The wilderness tabernacle was not only an adumbration of Christ but also of a tabernacle in Heaven. There is a Tabernacle in Heaven which is the original Tabernacle, and the one on earth was merely a figure. Does this imply that there is a literal tabernacle in Heaven, and the one on earth was only a duplication? If by literal we understand that it is one of earthly materials, certainly the answer is an emphatic, No. But if we understand that there is a real tabernacle in Heaven, and through it there is the only approach to God; then the answer must be in the affirmative. There is in Heaven a tabernacle as real as the wilderness Tabernacle, for the wilderness Tabernacle conformed to it and corresponded to its detail. The wilderness Tabernacle is merely a figure. The genuine cannot be less real than the figure. The words of Ford C. Ottman are pertinent at this point; speaking of figurative language in Scripture he says in "*God's Oath*," "But we must remember that it is figurative of facts, and beyond Scripture we cannot go to determine what the facts may be." It is highly illogical to make the facts less real than the figure. The Tabernacle in Heaven is a reality. But how are we to consider the reality? Scripture uses fire as a symbol of Hell. Does this mean that Hell is a literal fire? The use of the symbol of fire does not force such a conclusion, but it does mean that Hell is a reality, and fire is the best symbol that can be used which will convey to our feeble minds the

awfulness of Hell. The symbol can never be more real or actual than that which it symbolizes. Fire is a very feeble figure of Hell, but it furnishes the best figure for our thinking. Let us further illustrate this use of symbolic language. Mental suffering is more acute than physical. Nevertheless a figure must be adopted to describe intelligently the intensity of such suffering. A person suffering from some mental malady could describe the disease as producing a sensation like a knife cutting across the brain. There was in reality no knife, but the pain was more intense than if there had actually been one. Symbolic language can not be explained away into thin air, especially since the symbol is less real than that of which it speaks.

Is it possible for us to identify this Tabernacle in Heaven. Although the tabernacle in its final explanation is an adumbration of Christ; that is evidently not the thought here, for the blueprints were of a Heavenly sanctuary. Again, the Tabernacle in the wilderness was a figure of the humanity of Christ as well as His Deity. His humanity was not in existence, and certainly not in Heaven at the time of the giving of the pattern to Moses. His humanity was formed in the Virgin Mary on this earth in the little town of Nazareth, and was brought into this world at Bethlehem.

The Wilderness Tabernacle was a pattern of the one in Heaven. There was a sanctuary in Heaven that corresponds to the earthly Tabernacle. The earthly Tabernacle furnishes us with some of the geography of Heaven. Sin has not only entered the human family on this earth, but it extends to the whole creation of God, even to Heaven. God evidently abides in a heavenly tabernacle to protect the creation from His holiness. If God dealt only in righteousness and justice He would be forced to destroy in judgment His universe and creatures touched by sin. This Heavenly Tabernacle sets forth His redemption by the blood of Christ. Hear the 20th verse of the first chapter of Colossians again, "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." If God dealt only in righteousness He would destroy in judgment His universe and creatures touched by sin, but the Heavenly tabernacle made it possible for God in righteousness to salvage His creation. In this tabernacle Christ is the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. When He died on the cross He ascended with His own blood into the Heavenly Tabernacle, "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb 9:12).

We are not going to insist that Christ presented His literal blood in Heaven, but we do insist that such an explanation is tenable and is in perfect harmony with Scripture. The commentaries consulted on this passage in the ninth of Hebrews, for the most part, avoid any explanation as to whether Christ presented His blood literally or not. However, there are commentators who face this question. Grant in the Numerical Bible places the emphasis on the phrase, "Having obtained eternal redemption for us," and draws the conclusion that Christ did not present His literal blood in Heaven. The fact that He returned to Heaven is evidence of a finished redemption. Dr. A. T. Robertson in his word studies, Vol. V, p. 399, suggests the literalness of the offering of the blood in heaven. In his comment on Acts 20:28, where the preposition (*διὰ*) is used with the genitive (*τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος*), he states this is the preposition used with the genitive to denote agency. Westcott says that it is (*διὰ*) means, but not *mode* (*μετά*); Christ through His own blood. A comparison is made between the approach of the High Priest on the Great Day of Atonement into the Holy of Holies and the approach of Christ into the Heavenly sanctuary is evidently correct as Delitzsch in his commentary has well pointed out, "And since it is by means of this, His own blood, that Christ enters into the holy of holies (even as the Levitical high priest made his entrance by means of the blood of goats and calves" (p. 83). However, Delitzsch concludes that Christ did not present His literal blood in Heaven separate from the body. It is his conclusion that

the glorified body of Christ did contain blood, the inevitable conclusion, to our judgment, of those who reject the presentation of the literal blood in Heaven. The blood was presented in the glorified body of Christ according to Delitzsch. There are a host of scholars who think the blood was presented separately as the high priest in the old economy did; among these are such names as Hofman, Bengel, Oetinger, Steinhof, and a company of present day students of the Scriptures. What did become of the blood of Christ? His blood was shed and He was raised in a glorified body that is described by himself as a body with flesh and bone. He had said that flesh and blood could not inherit the Kingdom of God. The implication is that the glorified body of our Lord did not contain blood. What is the life-giving element in the natural body is evidently not the motivating force in the glorified body. At this point of our discussion we are not attempting to force dogmatic opinions, but suggest some possibilities. Is the blood of Christ therefore, like the blood of Abel, spilt on the ground, and crying unto God from the ground. That seems tenable for the writer to the Hebrews says that the blood of Christ speaketh better things than that of Abel. The blood of Christ was evidently presented by Himself at the throne of God either in His Glorified body or out of it. His body was evidently a bloodless body. The inference, therefore, is that Christ presented His blood in Heaven as an atonement for sin (Heb 10:19–9:14).

The objection to the idea that the blood of Christ was presented in Heaven is that it offends the sensibilities of folk. It is contrary to the highest aesthetic tastes of culture and civilization. To this we would affirm that the whole Bible doctrine of blood atonement is offensive to the natural man. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan made a timely retort to a listener one time who remarked that the cross with its blood was crude and offensive. “There is nothing crude and offensive I see in the cross with its blood but your sin and mine,” was Dr. Morgan’s rejoinder. The liberal theologian discounts the blood with this sneering remark, “I do not care for a religion of the shambles; there shall be no slaughter house religion for me.” The cross of Christ with its attendant blood ever remains a stumbling block and foolishness to the world. Over against man’s hasty estimation of the blood there stands God’s evaluation of it, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” That which is precious to God would not be out of place in His Heaven. To those in Heaven the blood of Christ would not be offensive, since the redeemed in Heaven will sing about it, “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou was slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” The crudity of having the literal blood of Christ in Heaven exists alone in the minds of those who consider it such. God will not destroy or remove from Him that which is precious. The blood of Christ makes it possible for God to go forward with His program of redemption (Col 1:20). Our great high priest has ascended into heaven itself, and has taken His seat on the right hand of God in the Holy of Holies. As He is in Heaven in a literal body, He likewise presented His literal blood in a real tabernacle in Heaven. The blood furnishes meaning for the program of God, and it is the very foundation of His purposes in all His creation whether in Heaven or earth. God’s universe is redempto-centric. Why would it be consistent for that which is the symbol of a suffering Deity, and which is the basis of the inauguration of the divine undertaking, to be absent from the presence of God. His blood has made the judgment seat of God a mercy seat where we as sinners can come with boldness (Heb 10:19–22). The high priest in the Aaronic order did not dare linger in the Holy of Holies, but our great high priest has sat down on the right hand of God in the Sanctum Sanctorium (Heb 10:12). One day He will arise from His Father’s throne of Grace and come forth to take His own to be with Him (Heb

9:28). During the intervening interval those who are Christ's through faith in Him, have a position in Him which lifts them into the Heavenlies which is the Holy of Holies. All believing children are even now "in Christ" inside the veil, closeted with Him positionally. These who once were shut out from God's presence because of sin are now lifted into the Heavenly Tabernacle into the very Sanctum Sanctorium. The place where the high priest of the old order did not dare to linger or make a mistake, and where he only came once a year and always with blood; that place in the true sanctuary is the rightful portion and position of every true child of God in this dispensation, where he loves to linger and where he even makes confession of his sins (1 John 1:9).

"Near, so very near to God,
Nearer I cannot be
For, in the person of His Son,
I am as near as He.

"Dear, so very dear to God,
Dearer I cannot be
For, in the person of His Son,
I am as dear as He."

Cleburne, Texas