

A subject of enquiry is here presented to us, respecting which a great many strange mistakes prevail among men, some in one extreme, some in another. Let us in all humility, and in all sincere desire before God to hit the truth of the matter and to follow it out in our practice, endeavour to trace the general principles which should regulate our estimation of the sanctuary, and our duty in relation to the exterior provisions for public worship.

*This is the House of the Lord God.* If we go back to the simplicity of patriarchal times and to the individual acts of one in whose single person as well as name, *Israel* was once constituted and contained, we find that, upon a remarkable occasion, he makes use of very similar language: *How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the House of God, and this is the gate of Heaven.* It was the place where he had enjoyed communion with his God, *in thoughts from visions of the night when deep sleep falleth upon men*, and where he had been favoured by special manifestations made from above. And he proceeded to set up for a pillar, a stone on which his head had reclined, and to consecrate it by pouring oil upon the top of it, declaring that this stone which he had set for a pillar, should be God's House.

He alone, as we have said, was *Israel* then, (although the name had not yet been imposed). *Israel* his posterity, having become a great people, and having been rescued by the arm of God from Egyptian bondage, received a law from Heaven; and the provisions to be made for conducting divine worship were made the subject of revelation, in precise and minute details. The Tabernacle was to be reared in the wilderness. It was, as its name imports, a shifting sanctuary—in fact a vast tent—but it was, according to the pattern shewed in the Mount, in the utmost degree elaborate and gorgeous. Moses, the man of God, calls upon the people to manifest their zeal for the honor of Jehovah, and their appreciation of the value of their religion above all other objects of solicitude and regard, by their contribution of materials for the work, and their manual industry in preparing them. An immense amount of diversified and costly articles was required. Yet the people responded so well to the call, that their offerings far outwent the demand, and Moses was obliged to restrain their liberality.

This was at an early period of their history, and while they were still a wandering people. In an ulterior stage, and after the seat of their government had been established, under a line of Kings, at Jerusalem, we find David in great trouble