

ALTAR, ver. 30. The LAVER was made of the brass mirrors contributed by the pious "women . . . of the congregation." Exod. xxxviii. 8; compare Exod. xxxv. 22, 25. This brass was doubtless of a very superior quality. Neither the size nor shape of the laver is mentioned. It was probably very large, as a great quantity of water was necessary for the daily service of the tabernacle. The priests were required to wash parts of the sacrifices, and to wash also their own hands and feet before attending to their various duties in the Court and the Sanctuary. Exod. xxx. 19-21. The laver and the water symbolize regeneration. God's people must be clean and pure. Only the pure in heart shall see God. The blood of Jesus alone can cleanse. The Holy Spirit alone can keep us pure. Compare Job. xiv. 4; xvii. 9; Psa. li. 7, 10; Isa. lli. 11; lxvi. 20; Ezek. xxxvi. 25; Matt. v. 8; viii. 2; 1 John i. 9; Rev. xix. 8, 14.

English Teacher's Notes.

The Mosaic institutions and ritual presented a series of *object-lessons*, by which a people who were "children in understanding" were to be educated in the knowledge of God and his truth. And these same object lessons are of the highest value to us. The best instructed Christian finds deep revelations of God's ways and of Christ's work in those old ordinances.

Now the Israelites had learned the *power* of God in the judgments on Egypt, and in their own wonderful deliverance; the *providence* of God in the miraculous provision made for their wants; the *will* of God in the divinely-given law; the *mercy* of God in his gracious forgiveness of their idolatry with the golden calf. But there was one thing above all others necessary for them to learn, namely, the *holiness* of God; that they might see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and rightly value the appointed means of its removal.

Imagine, then, a devout Israelite coming to worship. God has given a symbol and token of his presence—that presence which, as we saw last time, was restored to the people after their sin, at Moses' earnest prayer. This symbol is the ark; where the ark is there God will be. Not that God's presence could not be with his servants wherever they might be scattered; but, to bring the sense of it more home to the

mind of a nation so "slow of heart," it was (so to speak) *localized*.

What is our Israelite worshipper to do? Can he approach the ark? No: he cannot even see it, though he knows where it is. He comes to the gate of the court or enclosure. Just inside is a great altar of brass. On that altar must be offered his sacrifice—else no acceptance. But he cannot make the offering himself. He must hand over the bullock or the goat to the appointed priest, and *he* will sacrifice it. Can he, then, go inside yonder tent, where the ark is? No: only the priest goes in there to offer incense, the type of acceptable worship, while he stands praying without, (see Luke i. 9, 10.) But does the priest see the ark? No: he is in the holy place, but the great curtain or veil separates him from the "holy of holies," God's chosen dwelling-place upon earth, where the symbolic ark rests in silence. In there only one man can go, the chosen high-priest, and even he only once a year on the great Day of Atonement. And even then "not without blood." See Heb. ix. 6, 7.

What could more deeply impress on the mind of the Israelite the sense of God's holiness, of his own unworthiness to approach Him, and of the necessity of sacrifice and of a mediator? "The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest." (Heb. ix. 8.) And such a picture as has just been briefly sketched may do much to fasten the same ideas on the minds of our Sunday scholars. Only *they* can go further, and see that we now have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." (Heb. x. 19.)

The Golden Text suggests a different line of thought. It bids us regard the tabernacle more simply as just the place of Jewish worship, and so the type of every place of Christian worship, and reminds us that as David loved "the works of the Lord," so should we care for and reverence the sanctuaries in which, more especially, the Lord meets his people now. In this view it may be useful to refer to the *building* of the tabernacle. It was by the offerings, free and liberal, of the people, that the materials were provided. (Exod. xxxv.) What are we doing to supply "houses of God in the land?"—and what, above all, to build the Spiritual Church, the temple whose stones are living souls?