

SERMON X

ON THE TABERNACLE, WITH ITS COURT, AND THE SACRED UTENSILS IN IT, WITH THE REARING IT UP WHEN THE CLOUD OF GLORY FILLED IT; ALL OF WHICH WAS FULL OF CHRIST, AND VERY EXPRESSIVE SYMBOLS OF HIM.

EXODUS xl. 33, 34.

“ And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle, and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate: so Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.”

WHILST Moses was in the mount with God, he had a view of a glorious tabernacle, and its furniture, according to the exact form of which he was to form one, with all its vessels and symbolical figures. Moses went up into the mount with God, after the Sinai covenant and

transaction had been ratified and confirmed by the sacrifices, blood, and death of sacrificial beasts, on the seventh day of Sivan, which answers to part of May and June. He remained there forty days and forty nights. When he came down, he saw the golden calf which had been made by Aaron, during his absence, and worshipped by the Israelites. Out of holy detestation of their idolatry, he cast the tables of the law, which he had received from the Lord, out of his hands, and brake them before their eyes. As their intercessor, he went up the following day again into the mount, and fell down before the Lord, as at the first, forty days and forty nights, and had a sight of the glory of the Lord. On the thirtieth day of the month Ab, which answers to part of July and August, he went up again with the two tables, which he prepared at the command of God, and fasted again forty days and forty nights, and had a sight of the glory of the Lord, who proclaimed himself, "THE LORD GOD, GRACIOUS AND MERCIFUL, PARDONING INIQUITY, TRANSGRESSION, AND SIN," and received some commands from him. On the tenth day of the month Tizri, which answers to our September and October, Moses came down from the mount, with the tables reinscribed by the Lord, and with a commission to set about making the tabernacle.

As the tabernacle, with all its vessels, the high priest and priests, with all their garments, together with the persons who were to be the chief workmen in making the tabernacle, its utensils, and priests garments, had been nominated by the Lord, Moses gathered all the congregation of Israel together, and made known to them the Lord's will and command: they immediately yield obedience to the good pleasure of the Lord's revealed will and command. The things requisite for building the tabernacle, and making the priests garments, and all other things commanded, are brought; and under the direction of Moses, and inspection of Bezaleel and Aholiab, the whole is wrought and finished in about five months and a half.

The thirty-ninth chapter informs us, that the tabernacle, with all its vessels, the hangings for the court, with all belonging thereunto, the brazen altar and laver, the garments for the high priest and priests, with the vails, and all that the Lord had commanded, being made and brought to Moses, and being surveyed by him clearly and distinctly, apart and separate, and found altogether agreeable to the pattern shewed him in the mount, he blessed the persons who had wrought them.

This chapter informs us, that all being completed, the Lord commanded that the tabernacle

should be reared, and the time is also fixed for it: this was to be on the first day of the first month, in the new moon. Among the Jews, the months of the year were the months of the moon, as their years were the years of the sun. And all new moons, or first days of the month, were solemn feasts unto Israel. See Numb. xxviii. 11, 14. Psalm lxxxi. 3. This, which was the first month of the second year after their coming out of Egypt, was solemnized the first day by rearing up the tabernacle. A very particular account is given from the Lord, who spake out of the cloud to Moses concerning the placing every part of the furniture belonging to the most holy and holy place; and also about placing the brazen altar and laver in the open air in the court. The Lord commands that the tabernacle and all its vessels, the laver and its foot, the altar, with all belonging unto it, and also Aaron and his sons, should be anointed; all which seems to have been performed at the time when they were inaugurated into their office. See Levit. viii. Some account of the unction of the tabernacle, and the high priest and his garments, will come under consideration elsewhere. I shall, in my present discourse, with a professed and particular design to cast light upon the old testament scripture, endeavor;

First, to treat of and set before you the tabernacle and its sacred utensils, or furniture.

Secondly, I will speak concerning its court, hangings and vessels of worship, viz. the brazen altar and brazen laver.

Thirdly, I shall treat concerning the rearing up the tabernacle, and placing in it the sacred types and emblems of Christ which belonged to it, in the most holy and holy place. And,

Lastly, shew how the cloud of glory filled it, which was a full proof of the Lord's acceptance and approbation.

These are the particulars. May the Holy Ghost help and assist me in setting before you each of these heads.

With a professed and particular design to cast light upon old testament scripture, I will,

First, treat of, and set before you the tabernacle and its sacred utensils.

The command for making it, with the matter of which it was composed, is recorded in the 25th chapter of this book; and in the 35th, you have Moses repeating the divine directions which he had received concerning the sabbath, with the command concerning what they were to bring towards building the tabernacle, and the voluntary contribution which they brought for the rearing and furniture of it. The tabernacle was a figure, or type of the body of Christ, which, in allusion to it, is called by the apostle, the "True tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." Heb. viii, 2. It was a kind of tent, or pavilion, in

the form of an house. It was the dwelling-place of the Most High. It was in length thirty cubits, and ten in breadth, and in height. Dr. Light-foot says, the cubit by which the tabernacle was measured, was the common cubit, or half-a-yard. The tabernacle had pillars, boards, and bars of shittim wood. Its foundation was silver sockets. The pillars were fixed in ninety-six sockets of silver. Forty-eight boards of shittim wood served as the walls of it: these were bound together with five cross bars of the same wood. It was divided into two partitions: the first was called the holy place, which was twenty cubits long, and ten wide; the second was called the most holy place, the length of which was ten cubits, and breadth ten.

The frame when reared, was covered with four sets of curtains: the innermost consisted of ten embroidered curtains of fine linen, each about seventeen yards in length, and about two yards and a half in breadth, coupled with tatches or buttons of gold. Over this was a covering of eleven curtains of goat's hair, coupled with tatchets of brass. The next was of rams' skins, dyed red. The uppermost was of strong leather, called badgers' skins.

The whole east end was the entrance into it; and over it was hung a fine veil, or curtain of fine linen, embroidered with cherubic emblems; this was suspended on five pillars of shittim

wood, overlaid with gold, and hooks of gold; and five sockets of brass received those pillars, and were the supports of them, as the hooks of gold held the curtain at the top. The holy and the most holy place, were separated by means of a very rich curtain, or vail of fine linen, curiously embroidered, which was hung on four pillars of shittim wood, which were covered with gold. All the inside of the tabernacle was covered with plates of gold.

The furniture of the tabernacle was the ark, mercy-seat, cherubims, the altar of incense, the table of shew bread, and the golden candlestick. In the holy of holies, which was directly west, was placed the ark, with its mercy-seat, and cherubims of glory. The vail being hung up, which separated the most holy from the holy place, the golden altar was placed just by the vail; and on the north side of the tabernacle, the table with the shew bread was placed; and on the south, the candlestick, so that the altar of perfume was just in the middle betwixt them. I omit here to speak of what these sacred things prefigured, reserving it for the third head of this discourse; and proceed,

Secondly, to speak concerning the court of the tabernacle, its hangings, and vessels of worship.

The court of the tabernacle was an inclosure six yards long, and half as much in breadth; it

was surrounded with hangings of about nine feet in height, suspended by silver hooks, on fifty-six brazen pillars, filleted with silver, and fixed in large sockets of brass. The only entrance from the east was twelve yards wide, and hung over with a fine vail, or curtain, of embroidered linen, suspended on four pillars: here stood the brazen altar, and laver with water, at which the priests washed their hands and feet when they entered on divine service. At the west end of the court stood the tabernacle itself. In this open court the sacrifices were offered and burnt on the altar, and all the camps were pitched round about it; so that the tabernacle was in the midst, like as Christ is in his church, and with his people.

I proceed to my third head, concerning rearing up the tabernacle, and placing in it the sacred types and emblems of Christ, which belonged to it, in the most holy and holy place.

On the first day of the month Abib, when the children of Israel had been out of Egypt almost a full year, Moses, at the command of the Lord, reared up the tabernacle under mount Sinai, after the following manner. He laid the silver foundations in their rows, and in them he set the pillars, and placed between them the boards, and bound or fastened them with the bars. Then he set up the four pillars in the tabernacle, whereon to hang the vail, and the five

pillars at the east end, on which to hang that vail also. Then he spread abroad the linen curtains, and hung them up, and afterwards placed the other set of curtains and covers according to their order. Then the ark, with its staves, mercy-seat, and cherubims, were placed in the holy of holies. And he hung up the curious vail, which hid the most holy place from view. Next he placed the table, and set on it the shew bread in the holy place, on the north side of the tabernacle. Then he placed the candlestick of pure gold on the south, and the altar of perfume just in the middle, before the vail. Then he hung up the vail, at the east end of the tabernacle, having burnt sweet incense, all which was done exactly as the Lord commanded. Thus all within the tabernacle was concealed from common and open view. Next, therefore, Moses set up the brazen altar before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the first time of using it, he offered the burnt-offering and meat-offering, as the Lord commanded. Then he set the laver between the tent, or tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar of burnt-offering, and put water therein to wash withal. And then he encompassed the whole tabernacle, altar, and laver, with a pale of hangings round about.

That you may clearly see the truth of all this, I will transcribe the preliminary verses, going before my text, beginning at ver. 16. "And it

came to pass in the first month, in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up. And Moses reared up the tabernacle, and fastened his sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up his pillars; and he spread abroad the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it, as the Lord commanded Moses: and he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy-seat above upon the ark: and he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the vail of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony, as the Lord commanded: and he put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the vail: and he set the bread in order upon it, before the Lord, as the Lord commanded Moses: And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, over against the table, on the south side of the tabernacle: and he lighted the lamps before the Lord, as the Lord commanded Moses; and he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation, before the vail, and he burnt sweet incense thereon as the Lord commanded Moses: and he set up the hanging, at the door of the tabernacle: and he put the altar of burnt-offering, by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the burnt-offering, and the meat-offering, as the

Lord commanded Moses. And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there to wash withal. And Moses, and Aaron, and his sons, washed their hands and their feet thereat; when they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the Lord commanded Moses." And thus I am brought to my text, "And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate; so Moses finished the work."

I will here endeavour to set before you briefly, what the tabernacle, with its sacred emblems, and the court, with its sacred furniture, signified. And first, of the tabernacle. It was a type, symbol, and pledge of our Lord's incarnation; a figure of his body, as was the temple, of which our Lord, speaking of himself as the antitype, says, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. But he spake of the tabernacle or temple of his body." John ii. 19, 21. The tabernacle and temple were both one and the same, as to their symbolical meaning. The walls of the temple, which were of shittim wood, were covered with plates of gold on the inside, and on the outside with various coverings; so that it might be said to be mean in its outward appearance, though all-glorious within. So Christ in our nature appeared in the form of a servant, and

in the likeness of sinful flesh. The tabernacle being to be taken down and set up, as occasion required, might serve to point out how our Lord's body would be pulled down by death, and raised up again by his resurrection from the grave, and power of death. The tabernacle being all-glorious within, served to point out Christ, who though essentially and personally glorious, as one in the incomprehensible Jehovah, and as God-man, all fulness of grace and glory was inherently in him, yet it was suspended and concealed under and within the tabernacle of his earthly body. The fine linen sculptured curtains were emblematical of the immaculate purity and perfection of his human nature; which was prepared by the Father, framed and articulated by the Holy Ghost, and assumed by the only begotten Son of God into personal union, so that God and man became one Christ. The man and lion, and the lion and man united in the profile cherubic figure on the curtains of fine linen, were a memorial of the union of the Second Person in Jehovah, to the man Christ Jesus. The colours of blue, purple, and scarlet, with which the figures of the cherubs were wrought in the curtains, may be considered as expressive of the bloody sweat, the bleeding body, and the death of Christ. The several coverings might denote the protection and safety which Christ affords his church. The tabernacle was Jehovah's dwelling-place. It

shadowed forth Christ's becoming incarnate, and tabernacling with his people.

The tabernacle and its vails also were types of the body of Christ. The first veil or curtain, by which the priest entered into the holy place, was expressive of Christ, who is the way of access to God. Our Lord says of himself, "I am the door; by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved." As the priest entered, he saw the golden candlestick, with its seven lamps; an exhibition of Christ, the light of everlasting life. Opposite to it was the table of shew bread, with the cups of frankincense; expressive of Christ, who bears up his people in remembrance before the Lord; he is always in his Father's presence on their behalf; he perfumes both their persons and services, so that they are a sweet perfume to God: Christ remembers his church and people with everlasting kindness. It was also expressive of Christ, the bread of everlasting life. The golden altar of incense was typical of Christ, the intercessor of his church. The curious veil or curtain, which parted the holy from the most holy place, was expressive of the body of Christ: it pointed out his flesh, as rent by death, to open a passage way into the holiest of all. The ark, mercy-seat, and cherubims of glory, were sacred records of the covenant transactions of the eternal Three; they were symbolical of Christ, who

is the most holy ; they were memorials of him, as the propitiation ; they pointed him out as the great law-fuller, " Who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." The cherubims were the figures of the great ones, the Three in the Essence, who engaged before all worlds, by their covenant transactions and oath, to save the elect in Christ, with an everlasting salvation. And the golden pot of manna, in the holy of holies, was typical of Christ, the everlasting life and glory of his people.

The court of the tabernacle, which was the inclosure of the tabernacle, as it surrounded it, might serve to shadow out the church of Christ as a sacred inclosure, guarded, secured, and surrounded by the Lord, who is as " a wall of fire round about his people, and their glory in the midst." The altar of burnt-offering, was a solemn memorial of Christ, as God's ordinance of salvation ; his oblation and death being the true and only atonement for sin. The laver of brass, with the water in it, was emblematical of Christ's blood, as a fountain opened to the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.

Having thus set before you in this brief manner, what the tabernacle, with its sacred emblems, and the court, with its sacred furniture, signified, I am brought to my last head of discourse, and shall go on to shew,

Lastly, how the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord filled it, when it was set up, according to the divine command.

The tabernacle, with all its sacred emblems and symbols, and the court, with its peculiar and mystical furniture, being perfected according to the divine command, it pleased Jehovah to testify his divine acceptance and approbation thereof, as says my text, "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." Jehovah descended in this cloud, which, I conceive, was the same in which he went before the people when he had brought them out of Egypt, and covered the tent or tabernacle with it. Its covering the tent was a symbol of the Lord's immediate presence, and shewed his acceptance of what had been done in preparing and rearing it. The tabernacle was itself a symbol of the Lord's presence with his people, and by the cloud and glory of the Lord which now filled it, Jehovah took up his dwelling in this his tent or pavilion thus prepared for him. As it was a testimony of his divine approbation, so it shewed that he was come to dwell with them, according to his promise, *Exod. xxv. 8.* "And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." And again, *Exod. xxix. 43.* "The tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory." The Lord at this time

fulfilled these promises, and gave a full and open pledge to their faith that he would, as Jah, the Saviour, in due season become incarnate, and fill the tabernacle of his humanity with all the fulness of deity. This supernatural, visible appearance of fire, light and splendor, surrounded with a cloud, was a solemn prefiguration of the future incarnation of the Son of God. This fire, light, and glory, was surrounded with a cloud ; by it the Lord miraculously attested his presence with his own divinely instituted worship. The Lord had promised thus to meet Moses, and to commune with him from above the mercy-seat, and from between the two cherubims. Exod. xxv. 22. He says to Moses, " I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat." Levit. xvi. 2. And the glory of the Lord, or the Lord of glory, in this cloud took up his seat, and shone forth between the cherubim in the holy of holies. And I doubt not, but there was the appearance of the God-man over the cherubim, in the holy of holies. ' They were (says the truly excellent and learned Mr. Parkhurst) proper emblems of the three eternal persons in covenant to redeem man, and of the union of the divine and human nature in the person of Christ.' Thus the Lord sanctified the tabernacle with these visible evidences of his presence, as he afterwards did the temple built by Solomon.

The tabernacle being erected, the princes of Israel brought waggons and oxen for the service of it, and other offerings for the dedicating of the altar; which solemnity lasted twelve days. On the fourteenth day of this month, the Israelites kept the feast of the passover; and on the new moon following, which was on the first day of the second month, the Israelites were numbered, and their tents pitched in order, four square, round about the tabernacle. On the twentieth day of that month, the cloud removed, the tabernacle was taken down, and the people took their journies out of the wilderness of Sinai.

Soon after the tabernacle was reared, Aaron and his sons were consecrated, which solemnity lasted seven days. The cloud covering the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filling the tabernacle, Moses could not enter it: nor the priests into the temple, when the same glory filled it. 2 Chron. v. 14.—vii. 1. This shews the weakness of all saints. The more the Lord's glory shines forth, the more ashamed and confounded they are at the views of their own sinfulness and unworthiness. "And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." And this cloud was a direction to the people: and when the cloud was taken up from over the

tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journies ; but if the cloud was not taken up, then they journied not till the day that it was taken up. " For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the children of Israel, throughout all their journies." A full proof that it was the same cloud in which the Lord went before them, when he had brought them out of the land of Egypt by their armies.

May the Lord the Spirit bless the reading of this to you, and lead you to see into the exhibition of Christ in the types, symbols, figures, and memorials of him, in what hath been in this discourse set before you. Remember, Christ is with his church ; he is the light, life, and glory of it ; he is its defence and security ; and were it to be wholly covered with a cloud, the splendor and brightness of his shining, and manifestative favour, would be found all-sufficient to dispel it. The Lord bless his truth unto you. Amen.