

## **THE TABERNACLE – No. 2.**

### **THE LAVER – EXOD. 30:17-21.**

Having in our last, advanced as far as the Altar of Burnt Offering, we will now consider the Brazen Laver. It stood between the altar and the door of the tabernacle. Its dimensions are not given. It was made of copper alone, from the polished copper mirrors (incorrectly – looking glasses. A.V.) of the Hebrew women. The laver was kept filled with water for the washing of the priests. When Moses, by command of God, would consecrate Aaron and his sons, he brought them first to the laver. Not only so, but the priests were bound under penalty of death, to always wash their hands and feet before entering the tabernacle or engaging in the work of sacrifice. They were not to wash simply if they thought it necessary, or when it was convenient, or in any way they imagined would pass for the ceremony and not incur God's displeasure. They might not wash one hand or one foot, or sprinkle a few drops on each. No! the thought must be ever before them: "Be ye holy for I am holy." They must wash and be clean.

Thus the laver clearly typifies baptism. We come by the brazen altar to the laver. It is not our offering, however, which entitles us to the benefits of the laver. Jesus is the altar, and by or through Jesus' offering, we approach to be washed. Without this washing, we have no part or lot in the matter.

The consecration of the priests, as we have seen, began at the laver. The law said: Cast off your filthy garments, be washed, be clean, and be robed in the pure linen of the priesthood – Christ's righteousness. There was but one laver. At this and this only, the priests must wash – We find no other provision made. But, says some one: The high priest washed in the holy place on the day of

atonement. True, but the laver and the altar were in the holy place. The difficulty arises from an obscure translation of Paul's description of the tabernacle in Hebrews. All within the snowy linen curtains of the court was holy. [See Ex. 28:43.]

The laver was of one metal – copper. There was no wood in its construction. As we have seen in the brazen altar, and in the posts of the court, the corruptible wood symbolizes the fleshly, or human nature, and enduring copper, the divine. We find, then, in the laver, no provision for the flesh. Morality is of no account; natural goodness and self-righteousness have no place. That which we receive – the anointing, and the clothing upon with the pure linen robe of Christ's righteousness, fits us for our work as priests. And now fully consecrated, we may approach the altar and offer sacrifice. Being justified to life by being in Christ who is the end of the law to every one that believeth, we may even come and lay ourselves down with Christ on the altar, being called to be partakers of the sufferings of Christ – to die with him, that we may also live with him. Rom. 6:8, Phil. 3:10. As so beautifully brought out in the March No. by Bro. Russell, we can, in the type of baptism, symbolize this death. As Jesus, the great sacrifice, voluntarily laid down his flesh life, and after burial and through a resurrection, received from his Father spiritual life, so we, his followers, crucify our fleshly nature and rise to live a new – a spiritual life, and though not really dead as to the flesh, nor really alive as to the spirit, until the resurrection, yet God who "calleth those things, which be not as though they were, [when in process of accomplishment, as time is nothing to him,] allows us to reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Being dead then, [in this sense,] we are buried with him by baptism; for as Paul says, "Know ye not that all we who were immersed into Jesus Christ, were immersed into his death?" [Amer. B. Un. version.] He says further: "For we have

become united with the likeness of his death, we shall be also with that of his resurrection. Rom. 6:2-5.

[Query. – When and how did Christ die? Let him that understands, mark.]

Is baptism necessary to salvation? we are often asked. Do you believe God will send a christian to hell because he was not immersed; or do you suppose a few drops of water will keep any one out of heaven? We can at least answer it is always safe to do God's will, and it ought to be a pleasure. The popular notions of heaven and hell, baptism and salvation, are not of the Bible, and although the disobedient may sometimes seem to be greatly blessed, it proves nothing to the point, for even the wicked may flourish like a green-bay tree. We are sure of this: that those who know the Master's will, and did it not, will be beaten with many stripes and compelled to obey in the coming age, when alas, it will be too late to gain the high calling; for certainly in God's word we find no way revealed of entering the priesthood and the holies but by the laver. If any will climb up some other way, he must abide the consequences. See also, Ex. 30:20, Num. 16:1, 1 Chron. 13:10.

There was but one laver, not three. It was a laver too, not a hyssop branch. If sprinkling is baptism, how can it symbolize Christ's death and resurrection – or how indeed illustrate our faith and hope in dying with him that we too may rise to live a new and Spiritual life? While the laver is primarily a type of baptism, yet as a symbol and more particularly, because it is in a further sense a symbol of life, it would seem to point to several objects. Like nearly every type, it points to Christ – to Christ as the fountain of cleansing; to Christ as the resurrection and the life. It seems peculiarly to link together the spirit, the water, and the blood, as the agents by which we are washed from our natural filthiness, and through which we attain to life.

Water in its purity, in its beauty, and in its all pervading power, is a fit symbol of Christ our Life, since it is the life of all organic nature. The tiny blade of grass and the giant oak are alike supported by water. In the glistening dew drop, in the refreshing rain and in the mighty torrent we see its power. The colors of the humble violet and of the grand heaven-spanning rainbow, alike reveal its beauty. The gentle murmur of the brook and the ceaseless roar of old ocean unite in proclaiming the praises of our Creator and Life-giver. Through the veins of the vegetable world circulates the (water) sap, causing the apparently dead plant to spring up into new life, and to send forth shoots covered with beautiful flowers and fruits. Through the arteries of the animal kingdom, darts the bright, red blood, carrying life and power to every member. Ascending still higher in the scale of creation, we find the blood-life superceded by the life spiritual with correspondingly higher powers. And so the vegetable kingdom, the animal kingdom, and the spiritual kingdom unite in one, witnessing for Christ, our life.

Here at the laver the new life of the christian begins. Jesus said to Nicodemus: "Truly, truly, I say to thee, if any one be not born of water and spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." [Em. Diag., John 3:5.] Here the begetting by the spirit and the word takes place; it is reckoned as a full birth and symbolized by the rising from the watery grave – the grave of the old carnal nature. Of course the carnal nature does not really die here, but it is so reckoned, (the process having begun) because if faithful, we will ultimately kill it by crucifixion of the flesh.

Water is a symbol of truth, both as a cleansing and as a life-giving power. Paul tells us that Christ gave himself for the church, "that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by (or through) the word." In praying for his own, Christ said: "Sanctify them through thy truth – thy word is truth." To his disciples he said:

"Now ye are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you." As water cleanses the natural, so truth cleanses the spiritual. As water is the life of the natural, so the truth of God develops the life – spiritual. Thus Jesus could say: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." (John 17:4.)

The laver in its washings, typified not baptism only, but the daily washing of the word. Not an instantaneous sanctification as taught by some, but a continual process or purification following a growth in the knowledge of the truth. No water – no washing, no truth, no sanctification. It is impossible for us to grow in the image of God only as we grow in the knowledge of God. We cannot copy that which we have not seen.

In Gen. 1:2, we find the spirit brooding over the face of the waters, impregnating them with the principle and power of life, till, under the guiding hand of God that which was powerless and dead, is quickened into life. In Rom. 8:1-11, we find man as powerless on account of sin, as were the waters in the beginning, quickened into new life by the same life-giving Spirit. Not resurrected from the dead by the power of the Father as some claim, (The passage has no allusion to the resurrection – See context) but quickened from a life in the flesh to a life in the spirit during this present Gospel age. Thus Jesus said to the woman of Samaria: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Again: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. (Jno. 4:14, 7:37-39.) In the millennial age, "the Spirit and the **[R118 : page 5]** Bride shall say, come and take the water of life freely." Now we see but the brazen laver of the tabernacle – then Solomon's brazen sea; now a well of water in each believer's heart, overflowing many

times, then the pure river of the water of life flowing wide and deep from out the city and over the world.

The laver was a type of the Blood of Christ.

"There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains."

This is the fountain of fountains – the one and only cleansing laver. Is there a well of living water springing up in each christian heart? This is its secret spring. Is there a stream that makes glad the city of God? It rises here. Is there a river of life flowing out to the nations? Behold its source:

"Oh! the blood! the precious blood!  
That Jesus shed for me."

How strange it seems that some who were once enlightened, have begun to despise this fountain. To them Christ's death is but a human offering – fleshly, not spiritual. They have grown too wise to have faith **[R118 : page 6]** in a "wooden cross." Surely, if he that swears by the altar, swears by all things thereon, he that despises the cross, despises him who died on it. We claim to belong to the priesthood, to have a right to minister in the tabernacle. How came we here? Whence this exalted privilege? Did not Satan triumph over Adam who was our head and lord of creation? Has not Satan become Prince of this world, and were not we his slaves? Yes, but we have been REDEEMED. How? Bought with a price. What price? Not with silver and gold, "but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

The dimensions of the laver are not given, therefore, as a type, it must be considered unlimited. Under the Jewish dispensation, the people supposed that they had all the truth; that God's favor and love extended only to them; that all the promises, honor, and salvation

were theirs; that the Lord really could not save but through them. The Gospel church affects to despise their narrow, ignorant prejudices, and claiming all the light and honor and promises and every prerogative for herself; she too, in blind ignorance, limits the blood and the truth and the powers of the Mighty One. In vain the church boasts herself against Atheistical Scientists, who limit nature's God by the laws he himself hath made, while she, claiming to magnify him, measures his thoughts and his Almighty arm by the puny grasp of her arm. Let us not forget that when Elijah our type began to tell the Lord how faithful he had been, and that he alone was worthy, God's answer was: "I have left seven thousand in Israel who have not bowed under Baal."

Now we see God's grace or favor, perhaps we even catch a glimpse of the riches of his grace, but Paul tells us that it is only in the ages to come that he will show "the exceeding riches of his grace towards us in Christ Jesus," and "that in the dispensation of the fullness of times (the millennial age to which all prophetic times point) he will gather for himself into one, all things in the Christ." Let us beware of limiting God's power and truth and love. Rather let us remember the oft-repeated declaration of the Psalmist: "His mercy endureth FOREVER."

"There's a wideness in God's mercy,  
Like the wideness of the sea;  
There's a kindness in his justice,  
Which is more than liberty."  
W. I. M.

**[R118 : page 6]**

By putting on Christ you will put off the love of this world; you will live above the world while you live in it. If Christ be in the heart, the world will be in its proper place. If you are clothed with the sun, the moon (all sublunary things) will be under your feet.